

Gays in the military?



Judicial power • CAIR's lies • New saints

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The conservative movement is in crisis. Modern conservatism was born in 1955 with the founding of *National Review*. Its editor, William F. Buckley Jr., said the publication's mission was to "stand athwart history, yelling stop!" But history has kept rolling along, smashing every traditional institution in its path. Family, faith, capitalism, our constitutional republic—they have all been shattered by modern liberalism. In the face of this ideological juggernaut, conservatives have offered sporadic and weak resistance. Their ideas have become stale. Too many prefer power to principles. The movement has become corrupt, lazy and ineffective. Having come to Washington to confront the political rot and moral decay, conservatives have become part of the establishment. In other words, they have become part of the problem.



The mission of *Reflections Magazine* is to launch a conservative moral and intellectual revival. We will bring together the finest minds and writers to defend the eternal principles of God, country and family. We seek to forge a reinvigorated conservative movement for the 21st century—one that champions a new nationalism, rooted in a culture of life, small government, a restoration of federalism and victory over Islamist terrorism. Capitol BuildingThe time has come for a one-nation conservatism that reaches out to minorities and women, the unborn and the poor, workers and students. The movement must go beyond its traditional base or else suffer a slow, agonizing death. Our goal is unabashedly counter-revolutionary: to roll back the forces of progressivism. Since the 1960s, a destructive liberal revolution has swept across our land. Characterized by radical secular humanism, sexual permissiveness and milk-toast socialism, it is transforming America into something our Founding Fathers would not only find unrecognizable but repugnant. We stand for the real America, the historic America, the eternal America—an America based on moral traditionalism, an America of limited government, self-reliance and entrepreneurship, an America that won its independence from imperial British rule, triumphed over Nazi Germany and Communist Russia, and has shed precious blood and treasure to liberate hundreds of millions of people around the world, and an America that champions human rights and freedom, in which every individual—regardless of race, color, gender or religion—possesses innate dignity and equal value in the eyes of our creator. We ask like-minded Americans to join us in this struggle for the heart and soul of America.

Edmund Burke, the great philosopher and godfather of Western conservatism, once said: "All that's necessary for the forces of evil to win in the world is for enough good men to do nothing." We refuse to do nothing. We will fight for what is right, true and good. This is the rock upon which we take our stand.

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Mission:

The Edmund Burke Institute for American Renewal was founded in June, 2005 in the nation's capital, Washington, D.C. We are a non-partisan, non-profit, education and outreach organization which aspires to engage and mobilize the millions of African Americans, Hispanics, women and other minorities in this country who share conservative values. We will inform conservative leaders about the needs and aspirations of minorities in order to make the latter feel welcome amongst us. Also, we want minorities to appreciate fully how conservatism is congruent with their values and goals. In short, we will build a steadfast alliance between conservative leaders and minority groups. We hope to preserve all those elements in the American republic that render us a strong and vibrant nation. Simultaneously, we are open to new ideas that will allow more citizens to enjoy the blessings of freedom, prosperity and moral renewal.



How We Differ From Other Conservative Organizations:

1. We seek to update conservative thought. We want to find original ideas on how to bolster timeless principles.
2. We are attentive to the needs of women and minorities. These are not peripheral but are a primary focus of our institute. We want the conservative movement to make adjustments in order to accommodate the unique aspirations of previously marginalized groups. We also want minorities to learn how the conservative movement can benefit them.
3. We are devoted to cultural issues, not just politics. The main battle of our time is to seize the initiative in the cultural arena.
4. We hope to foster a broad alliance with those who adhere to traditional moral principles. We seek to build bridges with individuals of all faiths in order to combat assaults on human dignity.
5. We write policy initiatives, opinion articles and monographs as well as organize symposiums and conferences that appeal to our audience. Hence we do not just think and write: we take action!
6. We do not focus exclusively on one group or on one issue. There are excellent minority conservative organizations across the United States that are currently working in isolation from one another. Instead, we bring these groups together on a variety of issues in order to find common ground and, thus, to be effective in achieving political and cultural change.

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The Next Frontier: Gays in the Military

By Grace Vuoto

President Barack Obama has pledged to continue to make his administration a transformational one: His next major endeavor will be to revolutionize our armed forces.

In a speech to about 3,000 gays, lesbians and their supporters on Saturday, Oct. 10 at the annual dinner of the Human Rights Campaign, a gay civil rights advocacy group, the president repeated the promise he made on the campaign trail in 2008: "I will end 'don't ask-don't tell,'" he said to a rapturous crowd and a standing ovation.

Mr. Obama did not provide a timeline for the intended change to the 1993 law that bans gays from serving openly in the armed forces. Yet there is no doubt that he means what he says. In the forthcoming year, he hopes to enact his radical agenda on the world's most effective fighting force—regardless of the fact that the majority of the members of the armed forces, even the younger generation who have enlisted in the past decade, are opposed to the change.

The president is under increasing pressure to uphold his pledge. Gays and lesbians have been among his most stalwart supporters, have filled his campaign coffers and are now growing impatient by his inaction. Mr. Obama reassured them that he remains committed to their cause.

"I appreciate that many of you don't believe progress has come fast enough," he said. "Do not doubt the direction we are heading and the destination we will reach."

On Sunday, the day after his speech, thousands participated in the National Equality March in the nation's capital, demanding full civil rights for gays and lesbians. Many in the crowd said the president is



not securing the rights he promised in an expeditious manner. They are calling for full federal equality regarding marriage, adoption, the workplace and the military.

The president is now between a rock and a hard place. He is well aware that the majority of active duty members reject lifting the ban. He needs a strong, united military to conclude the vexing wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and cannot afford a major upheaval now. Yet the left flank will not relent for long. For now, he can only continue to make grandiose speeches and stall for time.

The facts, however, are little different than in 1993 and will remain unchanged throughout the president's term. The military community has expressed itself unequivocally this year in two major incidents. On March 31, more than 1,100 retired admirals and generals, known as The Flag and General Officers of the Military, delivered an open letter to the White House and Congress expressing their disapproval

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of any changes to the existing law. The Center for Military Readiness (CMR), a nonprofit organization specializing in military personnel policies, was active in the campaign. The petition said:

“We believe that imposing this burden on our men and women in uniform would undermine recruiting and retention, impact leadership at all levels, have adverse effects on the willingness of parents who lend their sons and daughters to military service, and eventually break the all-volunteer force. ... Forcing soldiers to live so closely with openly gay troops for months at a time does hurt morale and cohesion.”

Among those who signed the petition are 51 four-star generals. Hence, changes to the policy are alarming to many of America’s leading military figures—individuals with a proven record of success and who have intimate knowledge of the armed forces. The petition cannot be easily dismissed by the Commander-in-Chief if he expects to be taken seriously about being effective in battle.

In addition, an online poll conducted by the Military Officers Association of America (MOAA) this year also had conclusive results: the majority of active-duty service members oppose integrating gays openly in the military. MOAA is the nation’s largest association of military officers, with over 370, 000 members.

The poll of 1,664 respondents revealed that active duty members, including those younger than 45, do not condone changes to the current legislation: 16 percent said the current law is working, 31 percent said it should be repealed to allow all individuals to serve regardless of sexual orientation, and 52 percent supported “an outright ban on military service by homosexuals.” Thus, 68 percent want either the status quo or even stronger restrictions against homosexuals. The MOAA poll was initially posted on their Web site and then removed; a source who leaked the information said some members of MOAA disagree with the decision to bury the poll and want the organization to be more vocal on the issue.

Nonetheless, efforts to downplay the poll are fruitless since the MOAA online results are in line with polls conducted by the Military Times four years in a row: In 2008, that poll showed that 58 percent

of active-duty respondents oppose repealing the ban and 24 percent of active-duty service members said they would either not or consider not re-enlisting if the policy is repealed. Opponents of repeal insist this loss, amounting to over 750,000 troops, would be devastating to the all-volunteer force.

This means little to the zealots who want change such as Rep. Patrick J. Murphy, Pennsylvania Democrat, who is sponsoring the Military Readiness Enhancement Act of 2009. The bill seeks to repeal the ban. It was introduced in the House in March and has over 180 sponsors. The bill was referred to the House Committee on Armed Services and the Subcommittee on Military Personnel. Congressional leaders are expecting its passage in 2010.

Advocates insist it is in the national interest of America to integrate gays in the military since vital skills these warriors possess are being squandered. They lament the fact that more than 15,000 openly gay soldiers have been discharged from the armed services since 1993. Some of these individuals had vital skills that, in the view of reformers, have now been wasted.

Advocates for repeal argue that tens of thousands more warriors would join the forces if the ban is lifted, tens of thousands within the forces are under the constant fear of dismissal and that the persecution of gays in the military is a waste of taxpayer dollars. They also maintain that the focus for disciplinary measures should not be on sexual orientation but on sexual misconduct—a standard that must be upheld for heterosexuals as well as homosexuals. Proponents of change point out that only the U.S. among NATO nations still prohibits the service of open homosexuals and nations such as Britain and Israel, for example, have effective armies while nonetheless permitting the open participation of gays.

Yet Elaine Donnelly, President of the Center for Military Readiness, does not accept these arguments and urges Americans to be wary: “It is imperative that the law be defended, since repeal would do great harm to the ‘3 R’s,’ recruiting, retention, and readiness in the only military we have,” she said in a June 14 Newsmax interview.

“Repeal also would do irreparable harm to the culture of the military, which depends on high morale,

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discipline, and unit cohesion based on mutual trust. Introducing unprecedented, demoralizing sexual tension into all military units, including Marine and Army infantry, Special Operations Forces, Navy SEALs and submarines, would be tantamount to forcing military women to live constantly with men in conditions of little or no privacy,” Mrs. Donnelly said.

She regards the issue as part of a larger pattern of the president’s degradation of American traditions.

“Obama is wrecking many institutions of American life—we cannot let him wreck the culture of the military too,” she said.

The president has already demonstrated that he is animated by a revolutionary zeal to “change” America. He has expanded and continues to expand the size and scope of the federal government. On the world stage, he is a relentless appeaser who has thus far made concessions without gaining concomitant provisions in America’s national interest.

His policies are effete, both at home and abroad:

He is rendering Americans more dependent on the government and gradually pairing down our super-power status. Ultimately, he wants a weaker population and a diminished nation.

For Mr. Obama, it is more important to enact his radical ideology than to uphold the current power and strength of the military: It is more important to him to satisfy his left flank than to shore up American forces.

By persisting in his promise to repeal the ban despite the objections of the troops, the president is also showing that he is the Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces in name only: it is not the military that he seeks to lead for he evidently cares little for its opinion and the concerns of its members. He is, after all, the magician who has come to remake the world. As he pledges to dismantle the pillars of sound military policy, Mr. Obama is endangering the very liberties he thinks he is so gallantly advancing.

-Grace Vuoto is the executive director of the Edmund Burke Institute for American Renewal.

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The Obama Competence Gap

By Joseph Beaudoin

A year ago, Americans thought Democrat candidate Barack Obama was qualified to be president because of his alleged superior intellect and judgment. In the past nine months, Mr. Obama has shown Americans that he has neither; that he is a publicity-seeking dilettante who has trouble with facts and priorities.

Mr. Obama thrives on the adulations of liberals and foreigners—especially when he decries with the arrogance of a self-appointed demi-god—what he calls America’s moral failures, namely, denying constitutional rights to terrorists. One of his first executive orders was the closing of Guantanamo Bay. He repeated that commitment before the United Nations on September 23 and gave it a moralistic overtone. Yet, within days, his administration had to admit that it did not know how to close Gitmo; so much for Mr. Obama’s moral imperative.

The announced closing of Gitmo, with much fanfare but without a plan, constitutes a shocking display of incompetence. And there is mounting evidence that it reflects Mr. Obama’s approach to policy-making. Mr. Obama is given to, and excels at, theatrical rhetoric, but his pronouncements have been mostly devoid of substance.

Mr. Obama invested as much thinking in healthcare reform as he did in the Gitmo closing. It is now obvious that he never had a healthcare reform plan. The key issue of his campaign was merely a slogan and it remains undefined nine months after he took office. Vague speeches about healthcare reform do not constitute reform; they are just empty rhetoric.

Americans witnessed the same approach with the Obama stimulus plan. Then, the empty rhetoric was about 3.5 million jobs. These jobs have proven as elusive as the Gitmo closing. We explained in these pages (*“Obama’s bogus economics,”* April 2009) how the stimulus jobs were fabricated by an economic model designed to deliver pre-ordained



results.

The Obama competence gap—the difference between his rhetoric and the reality—is significant; it is increasing; and it is increasingly worrisome. It suggests both confusion and an inability to prioritize and execute. But Americans should not be surprised. The competence gap was predictable.

Mr. Obama is as confused as candidate Obama was secretive about his qualifications, or lack thereof.

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No responsible organization would hire an inexperienced executive without first reviewing his academic records. But Americans elected a candidate promoted as an intellectual goliath without finding out how well, or badly, he did in university a few years earlier. Americans were so impressed with Mr. Obama's one-year presidency of the Harvard Law Review that they did not demand to see his Harvard Law School transcripts.

The media and the Obama campaign promoted Mr. Obama as immensely more intelligent than George W. Bush whom Democrats treated like the village idiot. Yet, Mr. Bush did release his university transcripts whereas Mr. Obama, the intellectual colossus, did not. Non-disclosure of relevant facts is always motivated by the need to hide those facts. One can only conclude that Mr. Obama's transcripts would have been embarrassing and would have obliterated the claim of his superior intellect. And, without that claim, candidate Obama would have been left with only one qualification: his own claim of superior judgment.

Candidate Obama assured the American people that his lack of experience was more than offset by his superior judgment. That claim rests on a speech he made against the Iraq war when he was an Illinois state senator. Hillary Clinton thought it was a ridiculous claim.

Unless superior judgment also involves friendships with those who hate America, Mr. Obama's association with Reverend Jeremiah Wright and William Ayers ought to have put that claim to rest. But Mr. Obama denied a close friendship with Ayers and Americans chose to believe him. Likewise, Mr. Obama assured Americans that he was unaware of Mr. Wright's racist ranting and Americans took him at his word.

A new book by Christopher Andersen, "Barack and Michelle: Portrait of an American Marriage" is shedding light on Mr. Obama's judgment and truthfulness. It looks like there is not much of either. Mr. Obama's relationship with Ayers was much closer than Mr. Obama revealed during the campaign. Ayers and Obama were close friends and collaborated on each other's books for several years.

These revelations contradict Mr. Obama's statement about Ayers and cast doubts on Mr. Obama's truthfulness. Did Mr. Obama lie to the American people about Mr. Wright as well? How could Mr. Obama not know about his preacher's racist ranting? They were close friends for 20 years.

The problem with claiming that one has superior judgment is the arrogance required to make that claim. Arrogance is the enemy of wisdom. And Mr. Obama's need for attention runs contrary to his presidential priorities. More than anything, Mr. Obama's recent actions prove that his claim of superior judgment is bogus.

In a single day, on October 2, Mr. Obama paid more attention to the International Olympic Committee (IOC) than he had, over several months, to General Stanley McChrystal, the U.S. commander in Afghanistan. At a critical time for the "war of necessity" in Afghanistan, the Commander in Chief's greatest concern was the 2016 Summer Olympics.

Courting the IOC is beneath the dignity of the president of the United States, and a little digging into that organization would show why. But devoting more time to the unaccountable IOC aristocracy than to the Afghan war commander provides unassailable evidence that Mr. Obama does not understand the priorities of his job.

Mr. Obama delivers speeches well when he can read from a teleprompter. But in the first nine months of his administration, he has shown that his competence is questionable.

Hopefully, Americans have learnt that when a candidate to the presidency has no relevant experience, no proven leadership abilities, hides his academic records and refuses to provide a list of his law clients, and when he associates for years with questionable characters, including an unrepentant terrorist, that candidate is unfit for the Oval Office.

-Joseph Beaudoin holds degrees in economics and finance and has worked in the banking and investment industries for 20 years. He is a regular contributor to Reflections.

CAIR's lies

By Jeffrey T. Kuhner

The Council on American-Islamic Relations is a mendacious, malevolent and anti-American organization. An Oct. 14 [letter](#) published in The Washington Times by Ibrahim Hooper, CAIR's national communications director, is a case in point.

Mr. Hooper took issue with my Oct. 11 [column](#), "Silencing Savage," which ran in The Times. He falsely asserted that I claimed CAIR supports "the ban on controversial radio talk show host Michael Savage entering Britain." Mr. Hooper added that CAIR has never called for Mr. Savage to be "yanked off the air."

Mr. Hooper is a smear merchant, whose penchant for double-talk and hypocrisy is legendary in Washington. Not once in my piece did I state that CAIR supported Britain's ban on Mr. Savage. If that was the case, Mr. Hooper would have pointed to a specific sentence or clause. But he didn't for one reason: He could not. He simply asserted it. The reason: to deflect attention away from CAIR's long, well-documented and sordid history of ties to Islamic extremists. What I did write is that CAIR organized an advertising boycott against the fiery conservative's show—in effect, seeking to starve it of ad revenues and thereby hoping to force it off the airwaves. In other words, CAIR has been on a campaign to have Mr. Savage "yanked off the air." For Mr. Hooper to suggest otherwise was disingenuous and deceitful.

Recently, the conservative news site World Net Daily (WND), which is edited by Joseph Farah, published an in-depth [story](#) revealing how CAIR spent over \$160,000 in an effort to run Mr. Savage off the air. The WND piece is based on an explosive new book by David Gaubatz and Paul Sperry, "Muslim Mafia," which quotes CAIR Executive Director Nihad



Awad as saying the boycott campaign was "worth every penny" even though it was unsuccessful. This is because it resulted in the radio star losing at least \$1 million in advertising.

For years, CAIR has sought to muzzle and censor Mr. Savage. Mr. Hooper, however, is now trying to portray himself as a paladin of the First Amendment. Mr. Savage rightly does not buy it.

"Really? So you believe Farah's investigation is false? CAIR wants me on the air to expose the Islamists amongst us?" the radio host told The Washington Times. "Where does CAIR stand with regard to Islamists who want to impose Sharia law in the U.S.?"

CAIR has slandered Mr. Savage by falsely—and repeatedly—calling him a religious bigot and an anti-Muslim hater. The British government and so-called "Muslim advocacy" groups in Britain have picked up and repeated the charge. It was such smears that laid the basis for Britain's ban.

The ban on Mr. Savage represents a fundamental assault on freedom of speech and freedom of the press. He has been put on a British government

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blacklist alongside Hamas terrorists, Russian skinheads responsible for murdering 10 immigrants and neo-Nazi white supremacists. It is a shameful abrogation of an American citizen's right to freedom of expression. It seeks to accomplish by governmental dictate what CAIR has attempted to do through boycotts and public intimidation.

Moreover, CAIR has consistently defended Islamists and suspected Muslim terrorists: the record is clear and irrefutable. For example, a report by the highly respected Investigative Project on Terrorism (IPT), a Washington-based, non-profit research group that tracks radical Islamic terrorist activities, documents CAIR's close ties to Hamas. The Palestinian terror group has not only committed countless atrocities against Israeli civilians, but calls for the destruction of the Jewish state—actions that CAIR has never disavowed.

“CAIR was designed to give a political cover and political front for Hamas in the United States and then it branched out to do other things,” said IPT's Executive Director Steven Emerson. “Its *raison d'être* is really to influence policy on the Middle East and lobby for Hamas. They are the political lobbying arm for Hamas.”

In other words, CAIR is not—and never has been—a Muslim “civil rights” organization. It does not speak for most Muslim-Americans, the overwhelming majority of whom reject its virulently anti-Israel, anti-American ideology. Rather, CAIR is a Saudi-financed public relations operation designed to do one thing: weaken America's resolve to confront the rising global tide of radical Islam.

In the eyes of the British government and the United Kingdom's pro-Islamist lobby, Mr. Savage's real sin is that he has the courage to speak out against the slow but relentless expansion of Sharia law—in Europe, Canada and across the Middle East and Asia. As I pointed out in my Times column, England already has more than 85 courts that adhere to Sharia. Anjem Choudary, a Muslim fundamentalist preacher and leader of the Islamist organization al-Muhajiroun, told a cheering crowd in June 2009 in London's Red

Lion Square that Britain's “destiny” is to become an Islamic country ruled by a theocracy. Mr. Choudary has openly called for the murder of Pope Benedict XVI, as well as American and coalition troops in Iraq and Afghanistan. Yet, according to Britain's perverse liberal elite, the problem is not Mr. Choudary. He is not on any government blacklist. Instead, it is Mr. Savage, who allegedly poses a “threat” to public safety “and inter-community” harmony. This is the logic of appeasement and moral cowardice.

As a media commentator, I have had the privilege of guest-hosting for Mr. Savage on numerous occasions. Contrary to the lies of Mr. Hooper and his Islamist fellow travelers, Mr. Savage and his audience are not primitive hate-mongers bent on destroying Muslim civilization. If anything they are the opposite: principled conservative nationalists, who believe in moral traditionalism and an America First foreign policy. Globalist interventionism repulses them. Islam's opposition to abortion, gay marriage, drugs, pornography and family breakdown are values they welcome and embrace. What they do not respect—and should not respect—is the support for jihad and hatred of Western democracy by countless Islamic fundamentalists. This more than anything else explains CAIR's systematic campaign to vilify Mr. Savage and destroy his career.

CAIR's record as an apologist for Islamist radicals is obvious. What is less obvious is why it continues to enjoy any kind of credibility in American public discourse. For Mr. Hooper and his ilk, Sharia always trumps the U.S. Constitution. Otherwise, he would denounce the likes of Mr. Choudary who call for its destruction—and not Mr. Savage.

CAIR's goal is to cynically use American freedoms to advance a pro-Islamist agenda. Whenever someone exposes this—Mr. Savage, Mr. Emerson, me—it resorts to lies, character assassination and distortions. This may work for awhile. But it is immoral, cowardly and unAmerican.

-Jeffrey T. Kuhner is the president of the Edmund Burke Institute and a columnist at The Washington Times.

Saints to offset the sinners

By Loredana Vuoto

The Vatican canonized five saints this month. In an era obsessed with celebrities—many of whom lead personal lives in direct defiance of traditional morality—the Vatican’s latest move is a refreshing exaltation of worthy individuals.

Pope Benedict XVI presided over the canonization mass at St. Peter’s Basilica in Rome October 11. These men and women “did not put themselves at the center but chose to go against the current and live according to the Gospel,” said the Pope. He encouraged the flock to learn from “the luminous examples of these saints.”

Among those elevated to sainthood is the 19th-century Belgian missionary Damien de Veuster, better known to the world as Father Damien. He dedicated his life to caring for leprosy victims who had been placed under a government-sanctioned medical quarantine on the island of Molokai in Hawaii. By doing so, he also obtained the disease from which he died in 1889, at the age of 49. After praying fervently to him for years, 80-year-old Hawaiian teacher Audrey Toguchi is believed to have been cured from lung cancer. The Vatican proclaimed this as a miracle—an event that led to Father Damien’s canonization. The woman attended the canonization mass in honor of her saint and the miracle she received.

The other men and women canonized also exemplified selflessness. Jeanne Jugan of France founded the order of the Little Sisters of the Poor in the 19th century. By the time of her death in 1879, her order had grown to 2,500 workers who cared for elderly and solitary women in 177 homes around the



world.

The 19th century Polish Archbishop of Warsaw, Zygmunt Szczesny Felinski, was the founder of the Congregation of the Franciscan Sisters of the Family of Mary in 1857. As a sign of protest against the bloody repression by the Russians of the January Revolt of 1863, Archbishop Felinski resigned from the Council of State and wrote a letter to the Emperor Alexander II, urging him to put an end to the violence. He demonstrated bravery in light of the oppression of his countrymen.

Another new saint, Spanish Dominican monk Francisco Coll y Guitart founded the Congregation of the Dominican Sisters of the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary in 1856. Saint Francisco was a popular preacher of missions in various dioceses

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of North Eastern Spain. His life was characterized by a fervent zeal for preaching; he prayed long hours, studied and dedicated a great deal of time to preparing the sermons for his missions.

Spanish Trappist monk Rafael Arnaiz Baron's commitment to Christ began in 1930, just after he graduated from high school. By the time of his adolescence it became clear that he had special human, intellectual, artistic and spiritual gifts. He possessed a positive, joyful attitude that was filled with good humor, respect and humility. In 1933 he renounced his wealthy upbringing and entered the Trappist monastery. Despite being struck with a severe case of diabetes and plagued with other hardships, the monk remained committed to loving God and doing His will. Pope John Paul II beatified him in 1992 and proclaimed him as a model for contemporary youth.



In a statement two days before the canonization, President Barack Obama extended praise for Father Damien whose legacy he was familiar with since the president is from Hawaii. He said the Belgian priest can inspire us to action: "In our own time, as millions around the world suffer from diseases,

especially the pandemic of H.I.V./AIDS, we should draw on the example of Father Damien's resolve in answering the urgent call to heal and care for the sick."

At the canonization ceremony there were over 10,000 pilgrims from all over the world. Dignitaries such as King Albert II and Queen Paola of Belgium, Washington's new ambassador to the Vatican Miguel H. Diaz and Democrat Senator Daniel K. Akaka of Hawaii also attended. A large delegation of 500 people from Hawaii was also present.

The elevation of these five saints is in stark contrast to the individuals who usually receive widespread media coverage. Consider for example the media's attention to the death of pop singer Michael Jackson in June. Jackson's death dominated nearly every U.S. news organization. What did the King of Pop do to warrant this media blitz? He was at best a good singer and dancer—a far cry from having served his fellow man in a selfless manner as did the five saints.

A recent Pew Research Center poll found that 64 percent of Americans believed that Jackson's death received too much media coverage. The Project for Excellence in Journalism also found that media coverage of Jackson's death for the week of June 22-28 received 18 percent of all news coverage, second to protests in Iran against the re-election of President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad which accounted for 19 percent of media stories. In fact, from June 25-26, coverage of Jackson accounted for 60 percent of all news programming, with coverage of Iran dropping to seven percent. The public's distaste for the inordinate media emphasis on Jackson's death, as expressed in the poll, points to a growing hunger for worthy role models.

By canonizing these five men and women, Pope Benedict XVI is sending a clear message regarding the values we should uphold and celebrate. Unlike many contemporary celebrities, these saints made daily sacrifices in order to serve others. They responded to Christ's call to love thy neighbor as thyself. They also bore witness to Christ's charity and they defended the truth of the Gospel. They deserve our respect and admiration. They are the worthies of our time—much needed to counterbalance the many exalted celebrity sinners who are all too often little more than false gods.

-Loredana Vuoto is president of Eloquence, LLC, a speechwriting and writing services firm in Washington, DC. She is also the associate editor of Reflections.

Obamacare's veiled attack

By Michael Fowler

Methinks thou doest protest too...*little*. Every parent knows that when the kids are suddenly quiet for more than a few minutes this means trouble. Children wrongly believe that silence will reduce unwanted attention from their parents when doing something wrong. Silence is information. When I was in the U.S. Marines, Force Recon unit, we learned that the first attack was generally a diversion for a far more serious and silent attack. Sun Tzu's wrote about this in *The Art of War*, "Big noise in east; attack in west." It may seem like crazy advice America, but look out behind you.

Right in front of us is the main attack: Socialized medicine. We must fight it, it is a real attack and President Barack Obama will fight for it if he can. This is a big noisy assault on liberty from the east called socialism. I believe that there is good reason to think Obamacare is not the main attack but a diversion. Allow me to lay out a few points.

Point One: Insurance companies are silent. If the insurance companies thought for one second that they were going to lose one dime on this deal they would be screaming bloody murder, and spending millions on advertising telling us how this plan would ruin health care in America. There would be no end to "Chicken-Little" television. However, Aristotle's dictum tells us "silence implies consent."

Point Two: Health care workers are silent.

Point Three: Money buys political power.

Point Four: Capitalism operates on two basic principles of liberty, which equates power being in the hand of the people, the buyer. One is the power to choose between products or services offered at market. Two is the power not to purchase the product or services. These two basic principles give the buyer the ultimate power to spend the fruit of his labor (income) *how* and *if* he pleases.

Point Five: A true government takeover of health insurance would destroy the entire industry. Again we hear nothing.

Point Six: Fifty-two fiscally conservative House Democrats known as the Blue Dogs receive considerably more in contributions than those Democrats who support a public option.

Point Seven: The Athenian Democracy collapsed when politicians discovered the ability to rob the public treasury. Now, industry has learned how to rob the public treasury by buying politicians.

Holding those points in mind, let's also include a little history from California. In the 1960's the auto-insurance industry was successful in lobbying Sacramento to pass a mandatory insurance law. The reasoning was that when everyone paid it would lower the costs. Yet, after passage rates did not change, nor did purchasing increase. Then, in the mid-1980's, lobbyists urged the state again to pass a new law: enforcement. Now a trooper could require you to prove you had auto insurance. All of sudden, rates which had hardly changed since 1910, when indexed, shot up like a rocket. This was exactly the opposite of what the insurance companies had promised. This caused the insurance revolt of 1988 and the passage of Proposition 103—which the insurance companies fought in court for 20 years. This happened because the second principle of capitalism was removed, the power to refuse the product. When this occurred, there was a lack of motivation on the part of the seller to keep the price low. Thus, the people had to use the legislative process to regulate the price.

The logical conclusion of this evidence is that insurance lobbyists are paying off the Democrats for their votes. Is there evidence to support this? Max Sieben Baucus, Democrat senator from Montana, is the current chairman of the United States Senate Committee on Finance. He is influential in the

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debate over healthcare reform and has received more “contributions” than any other senator—a staggering \$3,973,485 from 2003 to 2008 from the health sector. It is no surprise he is opposed to the single-payer option. While running for presidential office, then Illinois Senator Barack Obama received over 19 million dollars from the health industry. Why would they donate so much money to someone who would shut down their industry—unless, the deal was in the bag all ready?

Attack from the West

Silence is information just as noise is information. I submit that insurance companies are silently working every angle in order to achieve mandatory health insurance—the Baucus plan. They have given millions to Mr. Obama, the Democrats, Blue Dog Democrats and Republicans. They are covering all of their bases.

As the baby boomers age and continue to vastly outnumber the next generation, the so-called Generation X, they are no longer funding the insurance agencies coffers, and the Gen Xers are not a significant source of new customers to cover the growing bill. So the insurance companies are looking to Mr. Baucus to create a government mandate that will force all Americans to purchase their product. When the baby boomers were young and healthy, the money from premiums abounded, and everyone got rich. Now it's pay day for the baby boomers and the money is gone. The insurance companies ran a scam, and they need Sen. Baucus to bail them out with our money.

Obamacare will fail; it has never really been the plan. The real plan is to pass mandatory insurance consumption by all citizens. But first they have to scare the public with the specter of socialism in order to get them to accept a lesser option of mandatory insurance. Everyone on both sides has agreed that reform is needed. This may or may not be true, but it

is common ground that will provide a foundation for a return to a government-sponsored “company-store” of yesteryear or debt bondage, which is tantamount to slavery.

How so? The American people will be forced give the fruits of their labor to the insurance companies without their consent or agreement. Arguments will be made to justify such actions. Slave owners likewise made such arguments to justify their actions. They claimed that they provided a service to slaves: food, housing, education, security and healthcare in exchange for labor—yet it was slavery. The difference between slavery and freedom is *choice*. We must explain to others that the most basic form of power is the right to be free, the right to say no and the right to refuse a company's product.

We have a socialist-communist system of distributing medical care. Instead of letting people hire their own physicians and pay them, no one pays his or her own medical bills. Instead, there's a third party payment system. It is a communist system and it has a communist result. - Milton Friedman

If Obamacare passes, the Democrats win socialism and if Mr. Baucus wins, the insurance companies win our money—either way the American people will lose. In the end, this will be the largest theft of liberty to ever occur. Both can be stopped cold once the people can see that what is happening is a direct infringement of their rights.

Healthcare reform is the domestic enemy that waits snarling in the dark to strike at liberty today. If allowed to pass, it will invalidate the deaths of every fallen soldier from Valley Forge to Gettysburg and beyond who fought for a right to be free.

-Michael Fowler is an instructor of Christian apologetics, author and talk-radio host.

Judicial power

By Peggy and Kerry McCarthy

Republicans, independent voters, and an increasing number of Democrats await the 2010 midterm elections as a way to express dissatisfaction. However, by the time we vote again, an increase in unelected bureaucrats and appointed judges may have changed the political landscape.

Our judiciary presumes to interpret the Constitution in such a way as to transfer power away from those who are responsible to their electorate and to the regulatory class composed of government agencies and bureaucrats. This poses a direct challenge to the sovereignty of the people. Courts increasingly intrude into areas of civil society, reliably expanding government control in areas as diverse as eminent domain and expressions of religious freedom. On the other hand, when it comes to acting against government control over industry (which smacks of fascism), they say nothing.

The Federal government took a direct role in supporting unions by taking over GM and Chrysler. Just as a public option in medical insurance would make it impossible for private insurers to compete, eventually Ford may eventually be driven out of business or put into government protection. The government has taken over the banking industry, the student loan program and is on the verge of controlling all mortgages and mortgage loans in the country. One version of the healthcare bill provides for the Internal Revenue Service to electronically remove funds from peoples' bank accounts.

Americans should be able to rely on Federal courts to find these activities unconstitutional, except that our constitutional firewall has been breached.

An unsettling and mostly unrecognized facet of the controversial Terri Schiavo case illuminates the disposition of judges to take control. Judge George Greer of the 6th circuit court of Florida issued an order restraining the Department of Children and Families from fulfilling their statutorily designated role of protecting children and disabled adults. He further directed "that each and every singular sheriff of the state of Florida are hereby directed to take such actions or action as is necessary to enforce the

provisions hereof."

Florida Governor Jeb Bush's avoidance of a constitutional crisis highlights his impotence as governor, but, chillingly, also sets a precedent: a judge presiding over two counties effectively expanded his authority to command the sheriffs in every county and override the governor of his state. Others may not have recognized his actions as a power grab, but his peers did; Mr. Greer received congratulations from judges all over the country for his stand.

An autocratic judge's attempt to increase his power is not so surprising. What's amazing is that there was no rumble of protest from the governor or the sheriffs. Why? Maybe they know something we don't. The secret is: Those whose power is transferred are often complicit. They willingly shrug off accountability. When people protest, they are not responsible.

The progressive project of rendering elections irrelevant proceeds apace.

What is known as the Progressive Era could be said to have begun in 1887 with the creation of the Interstate Commerce Commission, in reaction to legitimate concern over railroad freight rates. Measures introduced by Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson proved the workability of bureaucracy, and Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal accelerated and gave permanence to big government.

The timing of Vermont Democrat Senator Patrick Leahy's bill proposing to expand the judiciary (ostensibly to reduce the workload and speed up the judicial process) is interesting. Democrats now enjoy filibuster-proof control of the Senate, a huge majority in the House of Representatives, no criticism from the press, and a far-left president. In truth, Mr. Leahy's bill effectively packs the courts. Healthcare and government takeover of business can arguably be seen as a diversion: the big game is control of the judiciary.

Mr. Leahy is a member of a small, power-wielding club who always win their elections. They know that when they use Blue Dog Democrats to pass unpopular

bills such as cap and trade and the healthcare bill, there will be electrical repercussions. Liberals are willing to throw their moderate colleagues under the bus once their aims have been achieved.

It's not about elections any more. Elections come and go but judges are forever.

-Peggy and Kerry McCarthy are writers living in Indiana.

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