

New right movement offers dangerous solutions

By Kit Eisterhold

There is an incredible danger on the horizon to freedom in this nation," began Dr. Mel White, an innocuous-looking, middle-aged man, his receding hairline accentuated by the lighting arrangements of the "60 Minutes" camera crew. "This is not just a gay and lesbian issue."

Having worked for years as a ghostwriter for such new right television evangelist bigwigs as Pat Robertson and Jerry Falwell, he had come out of the closet, quite gay, quite distressed and ready to tell all about the new right and its agenda for subverting civil rights in this nation.

"The entire nation should be staggered by what is happening out there... they don't believe in democracy... they don't believe in the First Amendment... they want the shelves of our nation's libraries stripped of our authors... our rallies shouted down... our churches closed..."

He had come to Eugene because he felt the people here were at the forefront of a nationwide ideological battle. With the recent passage of Ballot Measure 20-08 right next door in Springfield, and with the recent narrow defeat of state Ballot Measure 9, homosexuals, and no small number of concerned "straight" people have been set on edge. They are anxious about the rising intolerance in the present political climate, a tense atmosphere exacerbated by growing, seemingly insoluble economic problems, and a feeling among the nation's electorate that America is adrift, without national purpose.

"We declare war on homosexuals (and their) godless, humanistic scheme to destroy America's traditional moral values..." says Dr. White, describing the headline of a recent new right mailer that he had received. The homosexual community, he explained, was being targeted as a scapegoat for the rest of America, in a political witchhunt that has a litany of historical precedents.

From time immemorial, fringe elements of society have served in scapegoat capacity for the frustrations of societies in times of duress, providing an evil "other," a personification of their fears and a locus point of hatred from which political opportunists can unify a divisive people. Christians were fed to the lions amid a collapsing Roman Empire, and millions of Jews (and no small number of homosexuals) became fodder for Nazi death camp ovens after Hitler had marked them, and their depraved lifestyles, as being the root cause of the woes of a depression-wracked Germany.

"I'm not hysterical..." asserted White. "I'm convinced that the gay and lesbian communities are being set up to be sacrificed... we're being marginalized... in preparation for what they have to do to get this economy rolling again."

And these are hard times for America. Plagued with such problems as debt, drugs, government corruption and a rotting educational system, America seems lost in, as *Time* magazine put it, a "moral morass." People want answers, they yearn for direction and the new right is only too ready to provide these for them.

"Would you like the church to be forced to hire queers to teach your little boys?" those from the new right prod us. They tell us they have found the cause of our woes, something concrete to attack. Witchcraft-practicing feminists are trying to destroy God and family with their unholy agenda for an Equal Rights Amendment. This must be stopped. The slovenliness of drug addicts is ruining the economy as they cowardly hide behind the technicalities of the Bill of Rights. Some of these rights must go, as should the "special rights of the homosexuals," which they wield in their "militant agenda" to subvert our children and the effectiveness of our armed forces.

While the minorities the new right attacks are disparate, the net effect of its crusade is chillingly consistent: Subversion of (all of our) civil rights to further empower a government that the new right aspires to mold into its own personal theocracy, from our city councils all the way to the White House.

"When I was working with Jerry Falwell," White explained,

"He never let a day go by when he didn't call two congresspersons and one senator on the phone..." And they would call him by his first name. "Hello, Jerry."

"Jerry," Reagan had said at the beginning of his multi-trillion dollar (nuclear) arms build-up back in 1981. "I sometimes believe we're heading very fast for Armageddon, right now." They both believed in an imminent nuclear showdown with the Soviet Union, one that would herald Armageddon, in fulfillment of the Scriptures.

"There is sin and evil in the world and we are enjoined by Scripture and the Lord Jesus to oppose it, should deterrence fail," said Reagan. "Time is running out..." said Weinberger. Pat Robertson predicted the nukes would go off by 1982. The doomsday clock hit two minutes to midnight.

During the final days, and across 400 television and 500 radio stations nationwide, Falwell spread the good news to his flock. You "don't have to worry," he told them, because all God-fearing (heterosexual, regularly donating, anti-feminist) Christians would be lifted up into Heaven, just before the warheads hit, in the Holy Rapture, while the rest of the scum (fags, feminists, potheads, Buddhists, i.e. the rest of the planet) would be blown to kingdom come in tens of thousands of thermonuclear fireballs.

Ka-blooney! The final solution. Everyone who doesn't agree with members of the new right dies. It warms the soul to know that they are that fond of the rest of us. Their imploding, self-destructing world view "raises frightening memories of Jim Jones and David Koresh," Dr. White warned pointedly.

But the massacres at Jonestown and Waco were isolated incidents, microcosms. The narcissism of the religious right's infective pathology is shared by tens of millions of red-blooded God-fearing Americans living all over the country, who must now figure out some other way of dealing with the rest of us, seeing how their blessed nuclear holocaust never arrived.

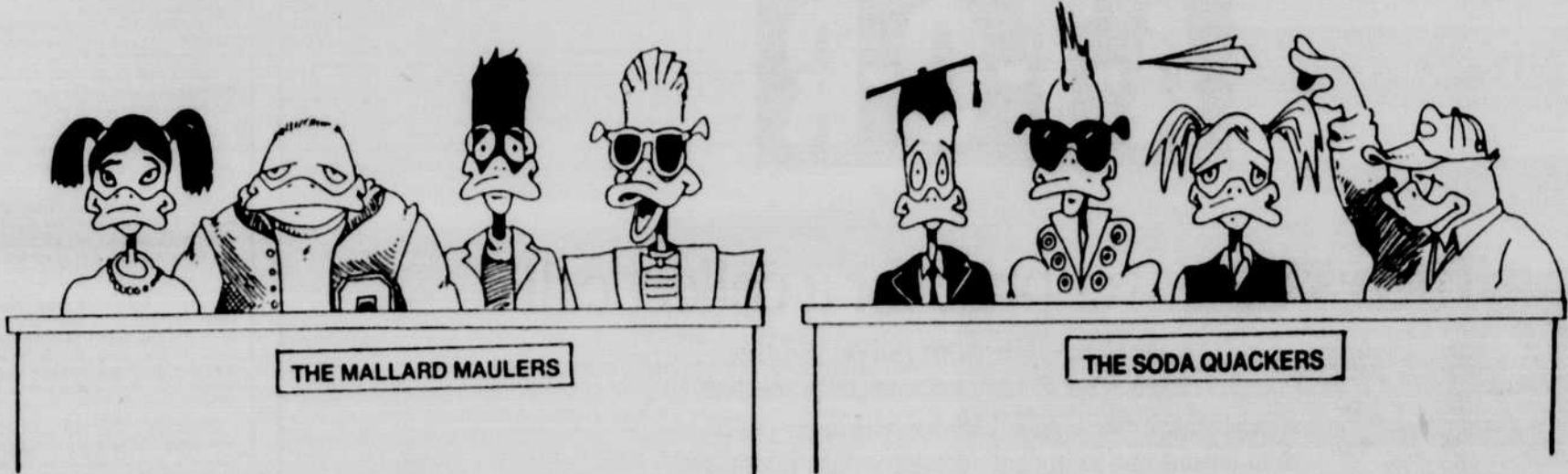
And this is why the Oregon Citizen's Alliance is back, more subtle in its semantics this time, in an effort to win over those precious percentage points that stood between them and victory last year.

So if you have taken the time to read this far, I urge you to oppose this measure. I urge you to get involved. Because the logical culmination of this way of thinking is to deny the legitimacy of our existence, of anybody's existence, which doesn't comport with the narrow world view of the new right, and to deny us our right to live in peace with one another on this planet.

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