

THEY REALLY, REALLY HATE US

By Don Feder

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If you're an evangelical Christian, a Jew, a Catholic or any kind of believer – you have an implacable enemy – one who hates you and wants to destroy you. When I say hate, I'm not talking about pique, annoyance or a vague aversion. I mean hate the way Nazis hated Jews, the way white supremacists hate blacks, the way the Hutus hated the Tutsis.

Once you reach this realization, it gives you an almost Zen-like clarity of vision and focus. Because then you understand your enemy, what motivates him, and what he is capable of. And you begin to comprehend what you must do to defeat him.

Submitted for your disapproval, (to paraphrase Rod Serling) one Timothy Shortell, professor of sociology at Brooklyn College. Last Wednesday, Dr. Shortell withdrew his name from consideration to be the next chairman of his department – a heavy blow to higher education and learning generally.

With the endorsement of his departmental colleagues, Shortell seemed a shoo-in, until certain of his writings came to light.

As would be expected of a practitioner of sociology (a smoke-and-mirrors social “science”), Shortell is anti-capitalism, believes Bush is a war criminal, thinks the proponents of Social Security reform are “spewing lies knowing there is no consequence for their mendacity,” calls America a “fascist state” and insists “the megalomania of the ruling elite is paid for in working class blood.”

With such views, it's a wonder they didn't make him the president of Brooklyn College. But even in a world dominated by giants like Ward Churchill, Noam Chomsky and Nicholas De Genova (Mr. I'd-Like-To-See-One-Million-Mogadishus), it's still possible to go too far. A national outcry over Shortell's diatribes against people of faith sunk his candidacy.

In 2001, Shortell published an essay in an on-line journal in which he described believers as "moral retards."

"On a personal level, religiosity is merely annoying – like bad taste," the professor wrote. However, "This immaturity (*a belief in God*) represents a significant social problem ... because religious adherents fail to recognize their limitations. So, in the name of their faith, these moral retards are running around pointing fingers and doing real harm to others."

Warming to his subject, Shortell continued: "One has only to read the newspapers to see the results of their handiwork. They discriminate, exclude, and belittle. They make a virtue of close-mindedness and virulent ignorance. They are an ugly, violent lot."

This is a typical elitist conceit – If you disagree with me, you're a drooling idiot, a cretin, a slack-jawed, knuckle-dragger, the result of inbreeding. Here -- shorn of euphemisms and code-words, revealed for all to see -- is what secularists really think of us.

Did not Marx instruct them that religion is the "opiate of the masses" and Nietzsche that "God is dead." For them, belief in a personal God – especially one with commandments and absolutes – is the result of fear and superstition, and the root of every anti-social attitude.

Thus the prof dismisses Thomas Aquinas, Thomas Moore, Maimonides, Isaac Newton, George Washington, Tolstoy, Doestoevsky, C.S. Lewis, J.R.R. Tolkein, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Martin Luther King, Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn and John Paul II as imbeciles and nitwits.

Were he better educated, Dr. Shortell might understand that representative government, human rights and charity all rest on a foundation of faith. Not for nothing did America's founding document declare that men were "endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights" or John Adams observe that, "Our constitution was made for a moral and religious people."

Ironically, in a round-about way, religion has given Shortell a livelihood. The university originated in Europe as a Christian institution. In America, Harvard was started to train ministers for the Puritan clergy.

Isn't it odd that there are no atheist medical missionaries, or charities founded by agnostics. In the American cemetery at Normandy stand row upon row of crosses (with a Star of David here and there) but no question marks. For over two centuries, millions of Americans braved death bolstered by their faith in God. (Praise the Lord and pass the ammunition.) Try to imagine Marines going into battle shouting: "Give me The Humanist Manifesto II or give me death!"

In response to public outrage over his screed, Shortell: 1) Whined that his academic freedom was being violated (poor thing!) and 2) Declared that in rejecting religion, he was in "the company of such esteemed social theorists as Karl Marx, Sigmund Freud, Friedrich Nietzsche ... company I will gladly keep."

What can one say of an academic ideologue who's proud to be in the company of Karl Marx – a man who inspired an ism

which led to the deaths of 100 million human beings, from the murder of the Kulaks, to the Stalinist purges, to the Cultural Revolution to the Killing Fields of Cambodia? One and a half million Vietnamese boat people didn't flee a regime founded on the worldview of Norman Vincent Peale or Bishop Fulton J. Sheen.

But Shortell forgot some other "esteemed social theorists" in whose company he finds himself – Robespierre, the Marquis de Sade, Lenin, Stalin, Mao ("Religion is poison"), Pol Pot, Kim Il Sung, Kim Jong Il and Adolf Hitler.

In his Table Talk, the Fuhrer commented, "Christianity is an invention of sick brains," also "The best thing is to let Christianity die a natural death."

The architect of genocide reportedly told his friend Herman Rauschnig: "We are fighting the perversion of our healthiest instincts...That devilish: Thou shalt! And that stupid: Thou shalt not...We commence hostilities against the so-called Ten Commandments; the tablets from Sinai are no longer in force. Conscience, like circumcision, is a mutilation of man."

As they burned down synagogues on Kristallnacht, the Hitler Youth sang, "We have no need of Christian virtue. Our leader is our savior. The pope and rabbi shall be gone. We shall be pagans again."

Besides their hatred of God, modernity's ideological killers showed us what a world without God is like. It is a world without moral absolutes, a world where human beings are crucified in the name of humanity – a world of guillotines, planned famines, firing squads, torture cells, reeducation camps, gas chambers and crematoria.

On a more mundane level, consider the degeneration of American society as we've moved to a public square sanitized of expressions of faith, as we've replaced Biblical morality with the ethos of secular humanism – 1.3 million abortions annually, millions of cohabiting couples, illegitimacy rates of over 80 percent in the inner cities, soaring rates of venereal disease, rampant addiction, girls from middle-class families losing their virginity at 14, pharmaceutical companies getting rich selling prescription drugs for peace of mind and a pornographic culture.

Shortell gave the game away when he condemned believers for “running around pointing fingers” for being closed-minded and discriminating, excluding and belittling – in other words, for making moral judgments.

Dostoevsky wrote, “without God, all is permitted.” That's precisely what secularists want – a world where all is permitted: premarital sex, extra-marital sex, sex with adolescents, homosexuality, sex without commitment or consequences, the elimination of inconvenient life (through abortion, doctor-assisted suicide and euthanasia), legalization of so-called recreational drugs and the forced social-acceptance of deviancy.

They hate us for standing in the way of their grand utopian vision – for spoiling their fun.

Don't for a minute imagine that Timothy Shortell is part of a lunatic fringe. Rather, he is the vanguard of the cultural elite. Hollywood, the news media, public education, academia, politicians raving about the religious right, and activist groups from the ACLU and People for the American Way to the National Organization for Women -- all reflect Shortell's venomous hatred of believers, even if their rhetoric is more discreet and couched in euphemisms.

All of our most contentious political battles (over abortion, stem-cell research, the killing of the disabled, homosexual marriage, sex education, the public display of the Ten Commandments, even the fight over judicial nominations) involve the clash of two cultures – Judeo-Christian and militantly secular. One was first revealed at Sinai, the other forged in the fires of the Reign of Terror. One finds its highest expression in noble sacrifice for the common good – the other in sacrificing others to one’s vanity and lust.

The answer is not to hate in return, but to understand that this isn’t – you should pardon the expression – an academic debate. In Timothy Shortell’s vision of the future, there’s no place for you and me. Fight as if your life depended on it. Quite literally, it does.

This column originally appeared on GrassTops USA