

SPECTRUM

NOT that you asked... by Frank Pearce

It has become politically astute in recent years to herald the cry of family values. Whenever a government passes a bill which the opposition does not favour, then it seems that instantly the cry goes up that the government is anti-family. Legalised gambling is a threat to family values; the sale of alcohol outside of NBLC store is a threat to family values; the legal acceptance and protection of homosexual couples is a threat to family values. The litany goes on and on.

The most amusing example of all of this in recent years was Dan Quayle's speech prior to the 1992 Presidential election where he acquainted Murphy Brown's pregnancy as a single mother (all, of course, as a fictional character on television) as an attack on family values. He decided the plot as being unacceptable as being "just another lifestyle choice."

It is easy to take potshots at Dan Quayle and to point out the ludicrousities of many of the things he says, but it would be dangerous to underestimate the influence of the interests which represents. This is especially true since the Republican Party took control of Congress in last year's fall elections, and have since promoted Newt Gingrich as their voice for the Contract for America. Even up here in Canada, where liberals like to think that we are safe from the hysteria of radical conservatives, we

find people like MP Rosanne Skoke of Central Nova ranting about how homosexuals will destroy the Canadian family. Here in New Brunswick the CoR Party has made family values an issue of importance second only to French bashing. The Reform Party has made the topic a major aspect of their platform as well.

What I think about when I hear the words 'family values' is that somebody's human rights are about to be trampled upon. These people are so frantic that the traditional family is going to be supplanted that they see threats to the family everywhere they look. This ultimately leads to a paranoia which would bring tears of sentiment to all those who look back upon the McCarthyism of the 1950s with fondness. What they fail to realise is that by insisting that the traditional family act all of the legislated protection available, while excluding non-traditional families from these same protections, they are implicitly stating that the traditional family is unable to survive without government support.

The ridiculousness of some of their claims would be almost laughable were it not for the number of people who take these claims to be gospel truth. Let me assure you that there are not hordes of homosexuals waiting to infiltrate our school systems with the express purpose of converting our youth to homosexuality. Some

people point to cases like Karl Toft at the Kingsclear Correctional Institution as proof that homosexuals are after our children. This is a complete fallacy. Adult men who have sex with male children do not do so because they are homosexuals, just as adult men who have sex with female children do not do so because they are heterosexuals. In both cases, they do so because they are pedophiles. Gender preference has nothing to do with their crime.

The case for family values is made through fear. It is a fear that the world may be changing, so to forestall that change they try to ensure that the family represented by the Cleavers in *Leave it to Beaver* is the only one that is acceptable. They have romanticised this type of family to such a point that they now honestly believe that no other type of family has a right to exist in our society. Once this leap of faith is taken, it becomes a simple matter to try to affect the denial of their right to exist. They have done this by striving to keep any and all legislative protections the exclusive domain of the traditional family.

Their paranoia has absolutely no grounding in reality. Non-traditional families are not trying to convert the world to their way of living. Single parents are not trying to tell people that this is the only way to live, just that it is an acceptable way to live. Homosexual couples are not trying to

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tell people that this is the only way to live, just that it is an acceptable way to live. Their life choices do not really affect anybody but themselves. The only people trying to impose their wills upon anybody else are those people who promote the traditional family and 'family values' as they define them as the only acceptable way of life. I'm sorry, but I'm not about to let Dan Quayle, Rosanne Skoke, or Jerry Falwell tell me how to live my life.

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