

# ADL Attacks “Religious Right”

This past June the Anti-Defamation League released a new publication entitled *The Religious Right: The Assault on Tolerance & Pluralism in America*. The work sparked controversy, and justly so. It is a highly critical volume, one which takes Christian conservative leaders to task for making extremist remarks. Most of the commentary focuses on fundamentalist and evangelical Christians; there is little said about Catholics.

Supporters of the document took the opportunity to rail against Christian conservatives. Critics, and they included prominent Jews, blasted the ADL for promoting a bit of defamation of its own. Our reading of the publication is one of regret. The ADL has played an important role in combating defamation and discrimination in our society. It is regrettable, therefore, that such a respectable organization would succumb to the politics of the moment and enlist in the war on Christian conservatives. Sure, irresponsible comments have been made by Christians – of every denomination and of every political bent – but to tar with a broad brush all those whose conservative politics is informed by their religious convictions is wrong.

There is much in the report that needs explaining. On the same page as the following comment, “Like anyone else, evangelical Christians have the right to organize, to run for office, to lobby, to boycott, to demonstrate, to attempt to implement their views,” it is said that “The religious right goes wrong, however, because it would respond to the problem of moral authority by asking the state to mandate values – a state upon which it means to impose its own religious identity.” The ADL needs to make up its mind: Which is it? Our reading of this remarkable double-talk is that the ADL thinks it’s fine for Christian conservatives to get involved politically just so long as they don’t win.

We await the ADL's volume on how the Christian left has managed to practice its politics without imposing its values on the rest of us. It should make for interesting reading, but we won't hold our breath waiting for its release.