

MEET THE NEO-XENOPHOBES

Xenophobia is the fear of strangers, and it typically refers to foreigners or recent immigrants. But there is a new expression of xenophobia afloat in our culture today, and it is one that is harbored by many of our cultural elites: it is the fear of the faithful.

This new strain of xenophobia is evidenced by those who warn that we are fast becoming a theocracy. Why do they say such things? Because they fear the faithful. Or, to be more specific, it is the rise of activism among people of faith, particularly Christians, that brings out the phobia of our elites. And nothing scares the daylights out of these deep-thinkers more than when traditional Catholics, evangelical Protestants and Orthodox Jews come together on moral issues.

Take Nicholas von Hoffman, a noted writer, who today pens a column for the *New York Observer*. He recently wrote of Christians, "Like the Islamists, with whom they are brothers under the skin, they are intent on imposing a Christian form of sharia [Islamic law] on believers and non-believers alike." Christians also remind von Hoffman of Communists: "The Communists represented an external threat by a foreign power; Christian subversion constitutes an internal threat by a domestic power with a foreign agenda."

In other words, if Catholics and Protestants lobby against abortion and gay marriage, they really are no different than Islamic fascists who murder "the infidel" and throw homosexuals off rooftops. Similarly, Christians who protest the removal of "under God" in the Pledge of Allegiance are cut from the same cloth as Communists who commit genocide.

There is no way to understand why an educated person like von Hoffman would write such nonsense apart from citing his irrational fear of Christians. He is a true neo-xenophobe,

casting the Christian as the stranger.

William A. Donohue

George Will is known to millions through his syndicated columns and Sunday-morning appearances on ABC-TV. He is a man of enormous intellect. But when it comes to the subject of religion, he is a dunce.

Will released an article this past spring complaining that “many Christians are joining today’s scramble for the status of victims.” He concedes that attacks on Christmas observances are real, but he does not hesitate to add that they are simply “petty insults and indignities.” And, he says with extreme confidence, haven’t we noticed how well “The Passion of the Christ” did at the box office? And have we not taken stock of the fact that the millions who have read *The Da Vinci Code* “are getting religion, of sorts”? For kickers, he throws in the success of the *Left Behind* series.

Will needs a reality check. Christians aren’t complaining merely about a few ACLU types seeking to ban crèches from public property, but about school superintendents, store owners, diversity consultants, town council members, multicultural specialists, activist judges—as well as an army of radical lawyers—all of whom have declared war on Christmas (as well as every public celebration of religion). In the name of inclusion, they are promoting censorship, and there is nothing petty about that.

Will’s other argument blows up in his face: it proves the exact opposite of the point he wishes to make. Yes, the Mel Gibson’s classic proved there is a strong appetite for religious-based movies, but the fact that he was roundly condemned by many in the Hollywood community for making such a film is the real issue. Why, Will should ask, in a country that is largely Christian, has it become near impossible to make a movie about Christianity (at least one that doesn’t

insult Christians)?

And why does George Will cite a book that trashes the heart and soul of Christianity, and a series that is nothing but anti-Catholic, as proof that religion is alive and well? For whom? The bashers?

Charles Krauthammer, the psychiatrist-pundit, said it best when he recently wrote the following: "The Op-Ed pages are filled with jeremiads about believers—principally evangelical Christians and traditional Catholics—bent on turning the U.S. into a theocracy. Now I am not much of a believer, but there is something deeply wrong—indeed, deeply anti-American—about fearing people simply because they believe. It seems perfectly O.K. for secularists to impose their secular views on America, such as legalized abortion or gay marriage. But when someone takes the contrary view, all of a sudden he is trying to impose his views on you. And if that contrary view happens to be rooted in Scripture or some kind of religious belief system, the very public advocacy of that view becomes a violation of the U.S. constitutional order."

It's time the neo-xenophobes gave it a rest. Christians are the backbone of this country, and we're not about to be marginalized by those who are positively phobic about us.