

TAX-EXEMPT STATUS OF CHURCHES IMPERILED



Bill Donohue comments on how the legalization of gay marriage will not be enough to satisfy radical activists:

There aren't enough homosexuals to wage war on religious institutions—they comprise only 1.6 percent of the population—but they have plenty of support among elites. From Wall Street to Wal-Mart, the corporate elite has gone lavender, embracing the gay-rights movement with as much gusto as exercised by elites in education, the arts, the entertainment industry, and the media. Will they now take the next step and attempt to shut down the churches?

Anyone who thinks that radical activists will stop with gay marriage is ignorant: The big prize has always been to force the churches to fall in line. Consider Mark Oppenheimer, who writes a biweekly column for the *New York Times*. His post of June 28, featured at Time.com, calls on the IRS to revoke the tax-exempt status of houses of worship.

The only difference between Oppenheimer and others in the lavender camp is his willingness to put down a marker right after the high court victory. Others will wait. Now if this becomes an issue in the presidential campaign—it is up to those opposed to gay marriage to make it one—it is going to be very hard for Hillary to make Oppenheimer's case. Even so,

this offers little comfort.

Stealth politics is what the left is good at, and on this issue they will have their unelected surrogates at the IRS do their bidding. There will also be legal challenges—the ACLU sued before trying to shut down the Catholic Church—so keep your eye on left-wing non-profits. Count on Americans United for Separation of Church and State to flex its muscles, along with a host of other militant foes of religious liberty. Surely extremists in the atheist community will relish the fight.

Religious leaders are going to be pressed on this issue like nothing we've seen before. They had better be ready—the other side is.