

changes in sexual morality can be independent of its two great catastrophes.

Liberalism won't disappear any time soon, but its underlying ideology is wearing thin. Progressives now grudgingly support sex within marriage, but the reasons they come up with for doing so—like the career obstacles faced by single mothers—are so ludicrous nobody takes them seriously. With luck, this will further discredit liberalism, not marriage. Welfare is in retreat. And despite their penchant for butting into other people's business, progressives have left America's armed forces too weak for a major war. Under these conditions people may begin to recall that real chastity is important: it matters to men, and therefore to happy marriages. [RRR]

REPUBLICAN AMNESIA

PAUL GOTTFRIED

In his syndicated column, liberal journalist David Broder deplored the fact that the late Barry Goldwater had voted against the Civil Rights Act of 1964. By no means an isolated trespass by a principled but wrong-headed reactionary, this act illustrated what was wrong with Goldwater's party: "Republicans are still struggling to overcome the distrust of minorities

who exercise growing political power."

This opinion was published about five weeks after I heard Christian rightist James Dobson interviewed by Larry King on a related subject.

Despite the hype and hysteria surrounding Dobson as the Robespierre of the right, an impression one might draw this spring from reading either *Time* or *National Review*, the real article is a middle-aged, fashionably coifed version of Ralph Reed.

Dobson went on about Lincoln as a principled abolitionist and how those who favor an anti-abortion amendment are following in his footsteps. Wishing to expose his speaker as a hypocrite, King loudly interjected that the "party of Lincoln, if you can believe it, voted against the Civil Rights Act of 1964." Whereupon Dobson, looking contrite, explained that "we don't always do the right thing."

There are several inaccuracies in this exchange, which should be noted to set the record straight. First, there is no reason to assume that Lincoln, who was a demonstrable racist and waffled on the slavery question, would have supported the Civil Rights Act of 1964. When a similar act, integrating intrastate commerce and public accommodations, was passed by the Reconstruction Congress in 1874, a predominantly Republican Supreme Court struck it down.

Like the Supreme Court Chief Justice, Salmon Chase, whom Lincoln had nominated in 1864, the Great Emancipator was not a

Radical Republican, and would not likely have backed civil rights legislation as sweeping as that passed in 1874—or 1964. Lincoln savagely crushed Southern secessionists, but there is no evidence that he envisaged the permanent power-grab by the federal government set up by modern civil rights legislation.

The presentation of Dobson as a man of the American right is dangerously misleading. In the American contest, rightists are supporters of distributed power, dual sovereignty, and a strenuously contained federal power.

Second, the presentation of Dobson as a man of the American right is dangerously misleading. In the American contest, rightists are supporters of distributed power, dual sovereignty, and a strenuously contained federal power. The right, as opposed to its media imitations and pc critics of pc, favors having power exercised from the bottom up, through families

and community—and not by federal administrators. By contrast, Dobson identifies conservative interests with runaway federal management: i.e., with having federal administrators wage crusades against pornography, abortion, and anything the Christian right finds sinful, including, needless to say, racial discrimination.

Unfortunately, Dobson has or else shows no knowledge of how American constitutional government is supposed to work. Nor does he exhibit, despite his Evangelical fervor, any real sense of original sense. If one believes that human beings are tainted by radical imperfection, why should one trust a Jacobin regime of intrusive administrators to purify society, without venting their own lust for power?

And why should a managerial state, which until now has subverted traditional social morality, be expected to enact a moral counterrevolution? Though Dobson will certainly get part of his wish list, a continued crusade against white racism, he will nonetheless not achieve his specifically Christian goals courtesy of the federal or most state governments.

Third, despite the collected wisdom of Larry King, David Broder, and other “moderates,” the Republican Party did not lose the minority vote by opposing the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The majority of Republicans in both houses voted for the act, once a face-saving deal had been worked out between Senate Minority Leader Everett Dirksen and Majority Leader Hubert Humphrey.

Republicans who had opposed the act in 1964, particularly Goldwater, Ronald Reagan, Bill Buckley, George Will, and George Bush, subsequently expressed remorse over their social insensitivity. This is what contributed to the confusion now being nurtured by Broder and King: Republican apologies over imaginary sins directed against nonwhites.

Last year the Evangelical Republican Congressman from Lancaster County, Joe Pitts, in cosponsoring a national apology to blacks for slavery, deplored the

**Why should
a managerial
state, which
until now
has subverted
traditional social
morality, be
expected to
enact a moral
counterrevolution?**

past record of his party on civil rights issues.

Despite the fact that Republican administrations invariably reach out to blacks, by introducing and perpetuating affirmative action and fighting “discrimination” in the workplace, Republicans continue to be depicted by black leaders and the media as racially insensitive. That may be at least partly due to the desperate

willingness of leading Republicans like Kemp, Pitts, and Gingrich to seek absolution from blacks and left-liberals, or not turning on black voters.

The obvious reason for this rejection, aside from conspicuous acts of Republican self-flagellation, is the identification of Republican politicians with cuts in public spending that affect the underclass.

Though Republicans in practice do not behave very differently in this matter from the Democrats, they do ritualistically criticize underclass welfare and Democratic softness on crime (long taken as a code word for racism). Such rhetoric, as Sam Francis points out, is aimed at solidifying a Middle American base (made up largely of white males); though Republicans apologize to minorities and uphold affirmative action, they understand where their political base lies and will appeal to that base through circumlocutory symbols.

But such rhetoricizing rarely leads to substantive concessions. For the Republicans assume that the Middle American vote is theirs for the taking. And since self-identified Republican voters typically trail Democratic ones by between 7 and 10 percent, Republican politicians for strategic as well as misguided sentimental reasons cuddle up to the Left, including the civil rights lobby. Such strategy has not paid big dividends, but Republicans continue to pursue it. After all, they are, as Dr. Francis tirelessly assures us, the “stupid party,” which has also become the amnesiac one. RRR