# THE WAR ON AMERICA:
## HOW A POLITICAL RELIGIOUS MOVEMENT IS THREATENING OUR DEMOCRACY

*Jonathan Dane*
*Freelance Writer*

In the early 1930s, twelve hundred young businessmen came together to oppose FDR's New Deal. Calling themselves The Order, they managed to take control of Seattle's city council through fear tactics and replaced state governance with a regime based on moral and economic standards reflecting their fervently held conviction that government was of God, not the people, and therefore social programs were morally wrong. Poverty was no business of the government, they claimed.

With financial backing from a wealthy patron, their plan to address the sluggish economy was to slash the budget, cut taxes on the wealthy, and attack vice. They replaced their local police force with special troops trained at "retooled state colleges." They then targeted the fire department, "considered of low moral character," as well as public school teachers whom they accused of "indoctrinating the children." They passed a Draconian budget and put into office a governor who reflected their belief in "government by God."

These events led to the establishment of "*The Fellowship*" in 1938 and ultimately "The Family" in 1980.[1] The Family has grown over the years and today includes such well-known members as John Ashcroft, Ed Meese, Pete Domenici, Don Nickles, Republican Senator of Iowa Chuck Grassley and Republican Senator of South Carolina Jim DeMint.[2] The influence of The Family on current politics has been widely documented.

Fast forward to 2011 and a similar scene unfolding in Wisconsin. On March 11, 2011, the new Republican governor, Scott Walker, under the pretense of reducing the state's budget deficit, signed into law a bill eliminating the collective bargaining rights of unions. (The deficit did not exist before he gave massive tax cuts to the wealthy as one of the first acts of his tenure.)

Simultaneously other governors were taking similar actions. Republican Governor Mitch Daniels of Indiana cut $1.7 billion from schools and gave it to the wealthy in tax breaks. Republican Governor Rick Scott of Florida cut $1.75 billion from schools and gave it to the rich as corporate and property tax breaks. In Ohio, Republican Governor John Kasich cut millions from public schools and restricted, through Senate Bill 5, collective bargaining for 350,000 police officers, firefighters, teachers and other public sector workers.

Republican Governor Rick Snyder of Michigan gave business a $1.8 billion tax break while raising taxes on seniors and the poor. Michigan citizens are currently in the process of losing the right to elect their own government through a bill that would, in

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[1] Jeff Sharlett, *The Family: The Secret Fundamentalism At The Heart Of American Power* (Harper Perennial Publishers, 2009) p. 117.

[2] Idem, "Sex and power inside '"the C Street House,'" in Salon.com, Tuesday, July 21, 2009. http://www.salon.com/news/feature/2009/07/21/c_street

case of a fiscal crisis (loosely defined), give the governor the authority to appoint an emergency manager. This manager could be a person or corporation with the ability to dissolve an elected body and nullify all existing contracts or collective bargaining agreements. Whole towns could be privatized.

Each of these actions was taken under the guise of addressing a fiscal crisis and reducing the state budget deficit. None of them actually had any impact on the deficit as the money from the cuts was promptly given to the wealthy in the form of tax reductions.

In a recent prank phone call with a man Governor Walker thought to be David Koch, a billionaire and major contributor to the Tea Party Movement, Walker said, "This is our moment to change the course of history." No one can know exactly what he meant but his actions speak for themselves and are eerily similar to those of the early men of The Order, whose aim it clearly was to dismantle the social structure of our society.

These wide spread attacks on the American worker have the same goal, to be sure, but are more than an attack against labor and the working class of this country. They are an attack against the democracy the American people have painstakingly created over the course of more than two hundred years.

Jeff Sharlet, contributing editor at *Harper's* and *Rolling Stone* and a visiting research scholar at the New York University Center for Religion and Media, lived with The Family for a period of time and writes about how the ideology that drives Dominionism came about. In his book, *The Family: The Secret Fundamentalism At The Heart Of American Power*, he traces its development from "The Fellowship," around 1938, to its transformation by Doug Coe in the late 1970s into what is now known as "The Family."[3] He notes that The Family's beliefs "appear closer to a more marginal set of theologies sometimes gathered under the umbrella term of dominionism…."[4]

Katherine Yurica writes in depth about Dominionism in her 2004 article entitled *Dominionism: The Despoiling of America.*

> This article is the documented story of how a political religious movement called Dominionism gained control of the Republican Party, then took over Congress, then took over the White House, and is now sealing the conversion of America to a theocracy by taking over the American Judiciary. It's the story of why and how "the wrath of God Almighty" will be unleashed against the middle class, against the poor, and against the elderly and sick of this nation by George W. Bush and his army of Republican Dominionist "rulers.''[5]

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[3] Sharlet, The Family: The Secret Fundamentalism At The Heart Of American Power (Harper Collins Publishers, 2008)

[4] Ibid, p. 44.

[5] Katherine Yurica, "Yurica Report", The Despoiling of America, 2004. http://www.yuricareport.com/Dominionism/TheDespoilingOfAmerica.htm, p. 3.

Yurica's article traces the development of Dominionism and explores how it plans to replace democracy with theocratic rule based on the Dominionist interpretation of Biblical Law, including the inferiority of women, of homosexuals and of the poor who they believe "have earned God's wrath by their *licentiousness* and *undisciplined* lives."[6] Dominionists present themselves as the chosen people to lead the governments of the world into a new God-based reality where people will look to God, not the government, for assistance. They see labor unions, human rights laws, and public school programs as morally wrong. Their obsession with tax breaks for the wealthy stems from their belief that material wealth is given only to God's "elect,"--those who follow His laws and not the laws of humans or government.

Dominionism is not a Christian religion but is based in part on the principles of Machiavellianism, which hold that the end justifies the means.[7] Machiavelli taught that goodness should not be practiced, but pretended, as a means of achieving one's goals and asserting power. He advised that success depended on seeming to do good things, then actually doing the opposite.

In this manner the Dominionists hope to bring about the transformation of the American culture. Their time table to achieve this goal was 2004. The movement is behind schedule and the push in Wisconsin by Governor Scott Walker and now other GOP governors across the country may be a concerted effort to make up for lost time.

Katherine Yurica explains that a primary goal of the Dominionists is control of the judicial system which would enable them to roll back America's laws to what they were one hundred years ago. There is speculation that Justice Scalia himself is a Dominionist. Yurica quotes him in "God's Justice and Ours" as follows: "…government – however you want to limit that concept - derives its moral authority from God." [8] Further, "government is not only the '"minister"' of God but it has the authority to '"execute God's wrath.'"[9]

Justice Scalia is now meeting regularly with select members of the GOP behind closed doors to instruct them on the Constitution as he understands it. His understanding is greatly influenced by a former student of Leo Strauss, the father of the neo-conservative movement, Dr. Harry Jaffa. Jaffa holds that the Constitution should be interpreted according to what its meaning was when it was first adopted. The implications of this are chilling. "All a willing Dominionist Republican controlled congress need do is to extend the death penalty to those people who practice witchcraft, adultery, homosexuality, heresy, etcetera, is to find those particular death penalty laws existing as of November 3, 1791, and re-instate them."[10]

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[6] Ibid., p. 2.

[7] Others who studied and practiced Machiavellianism are Mussolini, Hitler, Stalin and Lenin.

[8] Antonio Scalia, "God's Justice and Ours," in First Things 123 (May 2002): 17:21, http://www.firstthings.com/ftissues/ft0205/articles/scalia.html

[9] Op. cit., Yurica. p. 18.

[10] Ibid., p. 18

It seems that members of The Family are exempt from the moral standards to which they hold others due to their "elect" status. They deal with moral issues internally, "man to man", as did three Republicans who were in the media recently for having extra marital affairs: Senator John Ensign of Nevada, Governor Mark Sanford of South Carolina, and former Mississippi Congress member, Chip Pickering.

The Dominionists' plan to heavily influence education and weaken the public school system is not just about money. They would like to see our children in private schools where the principles of Dominionism can be taught. Governor Walker is trying to pass a bill that would cut $900 million from public education as a first and large step to the ruination of the excellent public school system in Wisconsin.

Other States are following suit. In an interview with a public school teacher by Ed Schultz of MSNBC one teacher, protesting Walker's actions in Wisconsin, commented that teachers help shape the future. By all accounts, that is exactly what Dominion theology hopes to take over as part of their effort to change the face of American culture.

Other things that would come about under Dominionist control include:

- The relegation of women to hearth and home;
- The elimination of Social Security and Medicare;
- The prohibition of taxation of the rich;[11]
- An extension of the death penalty to all murderers and to those who practice abortion;
- The denial of citizenship or the execution of insufficiently Christian men; and
- Capital punishment for blasphemy, heresy, adultery, and homosexuality.[12]

Regarding social programs Yurica writes:

In the end, Dominionism should be viewed as a backboard that bounces the New Deal and FDR's social safety net programs, social security (as well as Medicare) into its political opposite: *laissez-faire* economics (the motto of 18th century French economists who protested excessive government regulation of industry.) *Laissez-faire* is a doctrine opposing governmental interference (as by regulation or subsidy) in economic affairs beyond the minimum necessary for the

[11] The opposition of ruling members of the GOP to any consideration of raising taxes on the rich, even in time of great need, becomes more understandable when seen in light of Dominionist doctrine.

[12] Paraphrased from "Christian Reconstructionism: Theocratic Dominionism Gains Influence," by Fredrick Clarkson, *The Public Eye Magazine*, Vol. VIII, Nos. 1 & 2, March/June 1994, Part 1 of a four part series. http:///www.publiceye.org/mmagaine/v08n1/chrisre1.html

maintenance of peace and property rights. Dominionism opposes the licensing and regulating power of the government."[13]

To further understand the agenda of the Dominionist movement one only need listen to their accusations against others, especially liberals and members of the Democratic Party (the *licentious* and *undisciplined)*. They simply accuse others of what they themselves are doing making it more difficult to place the blame where it belongs.

Leo Strauss shows us how the Dominionists hide their true motives in his book, *Thoughts on Machiavelli*.[14] Katherine Yurica paraphrases his words as follows: "One ought not to say to those whom one wants to kill, 'Give me your votes, because your votes will enable me to kill you and I want to kill you,' but merely, 'Give me your votes,' for once you have the power of the votes in your hand, you can satisfy your desire."[15] As an example, she cites the Clean Air Act passed by George W. Bush during his presidency that did exactly the opposite of what it proclaimed. It ended up cutting government control and weakened measures needed to keep air and water safe.

More recently, Governor Rick Snyder of Michigan did a masterful job of deceiving the people of his state in order to win the election. Filmmaker and advocate of the middle-class Michael Moore says Snyder "has pulled off one of the biggest Jekyll and Hyde ruses I've ever seen in electoral politics."[16] He ran as "just a nerd from Ann Arbor" but the people soon learned he is a multi-millionaire intent on passing laws that support the interests of his friends on Wall Street and makes life more difficult for senior citizens and the poor.

It would be tempting to dismiss all of this as a conspiracy theory were it not for the extensive research and documentation that has come to light on this organization that tries to remain secret.[17] It is doubtful that most Americans, Christian or otherwise, are aware of the underlying agenda of the 35 million[18] or more Dominionists in this country today. It is time for America to wake up to their traitorous agenda which Katherine Yurica calls "subversive, seditious, secretive, and dangerous."[19]

Our liberty, our democracy, and our very lives are at stake.

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[13] Op. cit., Yurica, p. 23.

[14] Leo Strauss, *Thoughts on Machiavelli*, University of Chicago Press, 1978, p. 9.

[15] Op. cit., Yurica, p. 2.

[16] Michael Moore, *Letter to My Fellow Michiganders – from Michael Moore*, p. 1. https://mail.google.com/mail/?shva=1#search/michael+moore/12eb609ac4072995

[17] See the last page of this article for links to more information on Dominionism and actions you can take.

[18] These data are from 2004

[19] Op. cit., Yurica, p. 3.

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***WHAT YOU CAN DO:***

- *Share this information with your state legislators, newscasters, talk-show hosts, teacher's associations, unions, and friends.*
- *Learn more about Dominionism and join the discussion at http://godsownparty.com/blog/*
- *Read an interview with Leah Burton, author of "God, Guns & Greed ~ The New Conservative Vision for America," by Sarah Jones - http://www.politicususa.com/en/radical-dominionists.*

***Other links:***

Article about Jeff Sharlet's book, The Family: The Secret Fundamentalism at the Heart of American Power.
http://jeffsharlet.blogspot.com/2008/02/blog-post.html

Joan Bokaer of Cornell University's Theocracy Watch
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fc8XS-PxFFA

Rachel Maddow of MSNBC interviews Jeff Sharlet
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_F3nDIdHcnE

Thom Hartmann interviews Jeff Sharlet
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hUdg1TS-leE&NR=1&feature=fvwp

Article about The Family - Salon.com July 21, 2009
http://www.salon.com/news/feature/2009/07/21/c_street

Article about The Family – Harpers
http://www.harpers.org/archive/2003/03/0079525

Amy Goodman interviews Jeff Sharlet
http://www.democracynow.org/2009/8/12/sharlet

Interview with Jeff Sharlet by Chuck Warnock
http://chuckwarnockblog.wordpress.com/2009/07/13/interview-with-jeff-sharlet-author-of-the-family-part-1/