

# Colonizing African Values



*How the U.S. Christian Right is  
Transforming Sexual Politics in Africa*

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A PUBLICATION OF POLITICAL RESEARCH ASSOCIATES

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BY KAPYA JOHN KAOMA

**Political Research Associates** (PRA) is a progressive think tank devoted to supporting movements that build a more just and inclusive democratic society. We expose movements, institutions, and ideologies that undermine human rights. PRA seeks to advance progressive thinking and action by providing research-based information, analysis, and referrals.

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Political Research Associates

1310 Broadway, Suite 201

Somerville, MA 02144-1837

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# Foreword

Uganda's infamous 2009 Anti-Homosexuality Bill, which would institute the death penalty for a new and surreal category of offenses dubbed "aggravated homosexuality," captured international headlines for months. The human rights community and the Obama administration responded forcefully, the bill was tabled, and the story largely receded from U.S. headlines. But as the Rev. Dr. Kapyra Kaoma reveals in this important exposé, the "Uganda problem" is continental in scale and its underlying cause continues unabated: the U.S. Christian Right, which engineered Uganda's so-called "Kill the Gays" bill, continues to open new fronts across the African continent in its distinctly American culture war against homosexuality and abortion. *Colonizing African Values* serves as a clarion call to the human rights and social justice communities to counteract such right-wing neocolonialism by increasing both the scale and sophistication of support for human rights promoters in Africa.

Kaoma has served as one of the principal chroniclers and analysts of the unfolding politicization of homophobia and abortion in Africa. He was an eyewitness to many of the events that precipitated the Uganda bill, including a March 2009 Kampala conference at which U.S. evangelicals regaled political and civil society leaders with apocalyptic tales of a coming collapse of the African family at the hands of the international "gay agenda." The results of his investigation for Political Research Associates (PRA) were published in the groundbreaking report, *Globalizing the Culture Wars*, and Kaoma's findings garnered deserved attention from news media outlets, activists, and policy makers on several continents. Human rights advocates in both Africa and the United States used PRA's findings to hold American actors accountable for their roles in orchestrating the demonization and political repression of African sexual minorities. Under pressure, U.S. anti-gay campaigners—including Holocaust revisionist Scott Lively and megachurch pastor Rick Warren—disowned the legislation and apparently downscaled their engagement with Africa. In spring 2012, Sexual Minorities Uganda—whose advocacy officer David Kato was murdered in 2011—underlined the foreign origins of the anti-gay agenda by filing suit against Lively in U.S. courts, charging him with human rights violations.

Despite these critical interventions, Kaoma dem-

onstrates in *Colonizing African Values* that the American culture wars in Africa are growing *hotter*. Tracing conflicts over homosexuality and women's reproductive autonomy back to their sources, Kaoma has uncovered the expanding influence of an interdenominational cast of conservative American interests. Anti-gay legislation has passed in Malawi and Nigeria and violence against sexual minorities is on the rise. Increasingly, anti-gay politics are wrapped in African colors, with church leaders and opportunistic politicians alike charging that *homosexuality*—rather than the Christian Right agenda—is a Western neocolonial project. In short, the U.S. social justice community has much to do in order to interrupt the continuing export of the American culture wars.

In this expanded examination of the Christian Right's designs on the continent, Kaoma highlights the role of several organizations that are steadily building political networks and legal infrastructure across Africa. Emanating from right-wing Roman Catholic, Mormon, and Protestant evangelical traditions, groups like the American Center for Law & Justice, Human Life International, and Family Watch International work both separately and in tandem to renew and expand colonial-era proscriptions on sexual rights. Some of these players may be familiar to U.S. audiences. The Pat Robertson-founded American Center for Law & Justice (ACLJ) recently opened offices in Kenya and Zimbabwe and actively intervenes in those countries' constitution-making processes. ACLJ is run by Jay Sekulow, a prominent figure in anti-gay, -abortion, and -Muslim legal strategies, who advised the George W. Bush administration on judicial nominees and is embraced by presidential hopeful Mitt Romney. Other players in this American crusade, such as Mormon activist Sharon Slater of Family Watch International, are little known outside of international sexual health and rights circles, yet they wield influence well beyond their modest budgets.

Perhaps the most confounding trend Kaoma highlights is the force with which African politicians and newspapers have come to reframe the human rights struggle of African sexual minorities as a neocolonial import by Western powers. Kaoma reveals that opportunistic African politicians—particularly those heading authoritarian regimes—use the myth of a foreign homosexual conspiracy to discredit opposition parties and divert attention from

their own inadequacies. In *Black Skin, White Masks* French-Algerian psychiatrist and anti-colonial activist Frantz Fanon famously wrote of the colonized African's aspiration to imitate the culture and manners of White colonizers. Sixty years later, we find White Christian Right *neocolonialists* seeking legitimacy through a process of *Africanizing* the local leadership of their operations and leveling charges of neocolonialism against Western governments and international human rights groups. This tactical inversion of the colonial relationships described by Fanon might aptly be characterized as "White skin, Black masks." The neocolonialism charge leveled by U.S. Christian conservatives and their African allies carries a particularly bitter irony given the active support once provided by Pat Robertson and other Christian Right figures to White colonial regimes. Unfortunately, few Africans are familiar with the U.S. groups profiled in this report and their campaign to impose a decidedly American conservative theological understanding of family values onto Africa.

The alert U.S. observer will not fail to notice that the targeting of African women and sexual minorities parallels the increased racialization of domestic culture war battles. The reproductive autonomy of African-American and Latina women is increasingly being recast by conservative religious campaigners as a population control conspiracy perpetrated by White feminists. The recent leak of internal documents from the Christian Right group National Organization for Marriage reveal a deliberate strategy to mobilize African-American ministers and congregants in opposition to the civil rights of LGBT people here at home. In the United States as in Africa, such strategies require popularizing the fiction that homosexuality is a "White thing," and, in so doing, denying the very existence of African and African-diasporic sexual minorities, along with all LGBT people of color. The parallels between Christian Right tactics in Africa and the United States reinforce a fundamental insight of Kaoma's research: the struggle for human rights and gender justice in the United States and in Africa are inextricably linked.

Equally important, Kaoma's growing body of research serves as a corrective to common misconceptions about Africa. Stories in Western media—particularly those about human rights crises—typically feature Africans as either victims or perpetrators of tragedy. News accounts and viral YouTube videos are replete with images of corrupt rulers and ruthless warlords on the one hand, and long-suffering refugees and survivors of violence on the other. Such visuals reinforce narratives that present Africans either as savages prone to unspeakable acts of inhumanity or innocents requiring the protection of some civilized guardian, and tend to engender, respectively, callous complacency or well-meaning paternalism. Uganda's Anti-Homosexuality Bill readily lent itself to this familiar perpetrator/victim frame: would that country's despotic president allow the bill's enactment, or would

sexual minorities and their advocates be spared persecution through the intervention of Western powers and international human rights organizations?

Kaoma disrupts such ideas about perpetrators and victims. His painstaking research—including exclusive interviews with leading American and African Christian conservatives—conclusively demonstrates that the fury over sexuality in Africa has been orchestrated by *American* figures and groups who continue to systematically impose their theological views and public policy prescriptions on the continent. The resultant persecution of those exercising their sexual freedoms has indeed claimed victims. However, Kaoma, himself an Anglican priest from Zambia, urges the human rights community to stand in solidarity with the courageous leadership of African LGBT and other human rights leaders who must and will be the principal agents of their own liberation. Kaoma challenges human rights defenders in the United States to focus our considerable resources where they are most needed. We must stop the insidious and deadly export of the American culture wars by our fellow countrymen and women. Fortunately for us all, *Colonizing African Values* identifies practical opportunities for taking up that challenge.

Tarso Luís Ramos  
Executive Director  
Political Research Associates

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# Acknowledgements

**A**s an African cleric with a special interest in ethics and human rights, I find it disturbing when Christians use religion to destroy rather than build. My interactions with human rights activists in various African countries have made me wonder whether my fellow Christians know the level of damage they are wreaking on the continent. I know that we have the right to disagree, but it is immoral to use the authority of religion to destroy innocent lives. Jesus, the center of my religion, taught love not hatred toward neighbors. That gay person or young woman being demonized is surely the image of God.

Since the publication of my 2009 report *Globalizing the Culture Wars*, I've expanded my understanding of the U.S. Christian Right's activities fomenting homophobia and anti-choice politics in Africa. While it may be tempting to see all religious figures as preachers of hate, that is not the case. Bishop Christopher Ssenyonjo of Uganda, Rev. MacDonald Sembereka of Malawi, and Rev. Michael Kimindu of Kenya are among those standing up for the rights of the oppressed in Africa.

I am grateful for the constant support of the Political Research Associates staff: Abby Scher, Maria Planansky, Debra Cash, Alex DiBranco, Charles Ocitti, Jean R. Smith, Adrienne Roach, Malika Redmond, Aramis Tirado, PRA senior consultant Pam Chamberlain, research intern Dennis Matanda, and all the interns who provided support on this report. I am especially indebted to Executive Director Tarso Luís Ramos, Research Director Abby Scher, Maria Planansky, and Alex DiBranco, who dedicated countless hours to this project.

This work would not have been possible without the dedicated commitment of my research assistants—Felix Mpuka of Malawi, Rutendo Millicent of Zimbabwe, Chola Kambafwile of Zambia, and Micheal Kimindu of Kenya—who dedicated their time and energy to investigations on-the-ground in Africa. In Malawi, this research was made possible by MacDonald Sembereka, a colleague and friend in the struggle for equality. To those who asked to remain anonymous, I thank for your insights and permitting detailed interviews.

Unlike my previous report, this work benefits from detailed supplementary profiles by renowned experts: Brian Tashman, a Research Associate at People for the American Way, on the American Center for Law and Justice; Kerry Eleveld on Family Life International; Rachel Tabachnik on the Transformation movement; and Catholics for Choice, who gave us permission to excerpt their thorough study of Human Life International. Their works give this report an extra punch.

Thank you to the Arcus Foundation and the Wallace Global Fund for your generous support of this important work.

To my wife Phie, and our children Dorothy, Natemwa, Namaka, and Takudzwa, whose love and support made it possible to finish this study I say: thank you, zikomo, tatenda, Natasha, Asante sana.

Finally, this work is an attempt to help human rights defenders widen their moral lens in doing justice work in Africa. I believe that this is needed if we are to live together as one family; God's family.

Kapya Kaoma

# Executive Summary

When Uganda's parliament ended its session in May 2011 without passing the Anti-Homosexuality Bill levying the death penalty for "aggravated" homosexuality, human rights activists in Africa and around the world thought they had defeated the legislation, first proposed in October 2009. But parliamentarians reintroduced the "Kill the Gays" Bill in February 2012 with the same inhumane penalties, similar bills showed up in other countries, and anti-gay measures passed in Burundi in 2009, Malawi in 2010 and Nigeria in 2011.

The Uganda Anti-Homosexuality Bill of 2009 proved to be just the warning shot for growing attacks on LGBT—and reproductive—rights across the African continent.

Political Research Associates provided early warning of the campaigns in its 2009 report, "Globalizing the Culture Wars: U.S. Conservatives, African Churches, and Homophobia," and singled out the true instigators of the hateful legislation in Uganda: U.S. Christian Right figures including the internationally prominent Baptist pastor and bestselling author, Rick Warren; Scott Lively, the anti-gay, Holocaust revisionist; and Lou Engle, head of the revivalist group, The Call, and a leader in the right-wing New Apostolic Reformation movement. The world applauded when Warren, and later Lively, spoke out against the Ugandan bill.

But while these leaders backed off, key institutions of the U.S. Christian Right *stepped up* their efforts to bring their style of persecuting sexual minorities—and opposing reproductive rights—to the continent. Not only are they promoting legislation targeting LGBT people and abortion (a procedure that is already largely illegal), they are contributing to the atmosphere of intolerance that is resulting in "instances of harassment, discrimination, persecution, violence and murders committed against individuals because of their sexual orientation or gender identity," as Amnesty International has reported.<sup>1</sup>

This report investigates how key U.S. Christian conservatives of various backgrounds—Roman Catholics and Mormons, as well as right-leaning evangelicals—are expanding the U.S. Christian Right infrastructure on the African continent with new institutions and campaigns that are reshaping national political dynamics and even laws based on an American template. Within the past five years, the Roman Catholic Human Life International (HLI), the Pat

Robertson-founded American Center for Law and Justice (ACLJ-USA), and Family Watch International (FWI), led by a Mormon, have launched or expanded their work in Africa dedicated to promoting their Christian Right worldview. A loose network of right-wing charismatic Christians called the Transformation movement joins them in fanning the flames of the culture wars over homosexuality and abortion by backing prominent African campaigners and political leaders.

They build off of decades-old encounters of the U.S. Christian Right on the continent. That includes right-wing evangelical Pat Robertson's involvement with repressive former Liberian president—and war criminal—Charles Taylor and White-led apartheid governments during the Cold War, the deep penetration of his Christian Broadcasting Network and the Trinity Broadcasting Network into African homes, and Bible schools and universities founded and funded by conservative U.S. Christians.

We identified three reasons why these U.S. organizations and networks can be so influential with relatively modest outlays. First, white people and Americans continue to enjoy influence in Africa, in an echo of past colonial relationships, both because they are from powerful countries and because they have scarce money to spend. Second, these right-wing organizations and movements espouse charismatic and other conservative theologies that may not be mainstream in the United States, but resonate with many African Christians. The politicization and policy implementation of these theologies has translated into the persecution of sexual minorities and increased oppression of women through attempts to restrict reproductive freedoms. Third, the campaigners are successful in painting African campaigners for LGBT rights as dupes of neocolonial forces trying to impose an alien philosophy on the continent.

By hiring locals as office staff, ACLJ and HLI in particular hide an American-based agenda behind African faces, giving the Christian Right room to attack gender justice and LGBT rights as a neocolonial enterprise imposed on Africans and obstructing meaningful critique of the U.S. Right's activities.

On the parliamentary front, the groups aim to bring about a new legal infrastructure in Africa that enshrines their Christian Right worldview. These



infrastructure changes include constitutional reforms saying life begins at conception, expanding beyond colonial era “carnal knowledge” laws barring same sex relations, and blending Church and State—an incendiary goal when the Christians share the continent with Muslims and traditional religions. Bills banning same-sex marriage or adoption demonstrate an obvious American influence in countries where LGBT people do not yet have the right to exist much less marry or adopt. Similarly, U.S. conservatives support more regressive action against abortion, even though it is both largely illegal and fairly common. Since abortion is widely accepted as a personal matter, even when viewed as morally wrong, the Christian Right has thus far not secured a foothold in further undermining reproductive rights.

Among the groups’ recent activities in Africa:

- In an aggressive attempt to establish a new legal infrastructure on the African continent that reflects the U.S. Christian Right’s ideals, the Washington D.C.-based American Center for Law and Justice opened two Africa offices while Uganda was debating its anti-homosexuality bill in 2009 and 2010.

Named the East African Center for Law and Justice’s (EACLJ) in Kenya and the African Center for Law and Justice (ACLJ) in Zimbabwe, these U.S. institutions aim to lobby African parliaments “to take the Christian’s views into consideration as they draft legislation and policies.”<sup>2</sup>

In both African countries, we found the center uses influential evangelical African religious leaders to gain access to top political leadership. In Zimbabwe, the ACLJ is enlisting the government of homophobic autocrat Robert Mugabe as an ally, echoing the unscrupulous alliances Pat Robertson built in the 1980s with repressive apartheid and military governments to expand his influence on the continent.

During a constitutional reform battle in Kenya in 2010, the EACLJ succeeded in inserting “culture war” language saying life begins at conception in the approved draft, but critically failed to remove a woman’s ability to secure an abortion if her health is in danger. Similarly, they promoted language asserting marriage is between a man and a woman, but failed to remove language defending all people’s equal protection before the law.

- The conservative Catholic Human Life International spends one quarter of its overseas budget in sub-Saharan Africa and has aff-

iliates in Kenya, Malawi, South Africa, Tanzania, and Zimbabwe among other African countries.<sup>3</sup> It campaigns against contraception, a popular practice in Africa, and mirrors anti-LGBT campaign tactics by claiming against evidence that birth control is a Western import. In a stark deviation from African culture, which considers violations of anti-abortion law a personal matter, Human Life International missionaries in Uganda turned in a clinician who performed an abortion for prosecution.

- Despite her marginal status in the United States and small budget, Sharon Slater of Family Watch International influences Africans with alarmist rhetoric that the United Nation’s population control strategy will destroy the African family—and that LGBT people are somehow to blame. “This manipulation of the UN system by individuals and organizations promoting their own sexual agenda and not the collective and unified agenda of all UN member states must cease,” Slater said in a 2010 speech to the United Nations. “All of this push for sexual rights undermines the institution of the family.”<sup>4</sup> She is trying to harness Christian Right arguments that have demonized LGBT people to demonize reproductive rights, a tactic that must be challenged lest it take hold.

With a Christianity saturated with demons and the prosperity gospel (which claims that simple faith in Jesus Christ will bring wealth and well-being), Africa provides a receptive home for Christian Right movements that may be more marginal or a minority in the United States. Similarly, the embrace of reproduction as a virtue and childlessness as a tragedy in much of sub-Saharan Africa provides an opening for HLI and FWI’s promotion of “family values” and even claims that campaigns against overpopulation are a Western conspiracy to reduce African development. Finally, U.S. Christian Right influence adds a distinctly homophobic spin to an African cultural tradition open to viewing same-sex orientation as a sign of a respected ancestral spirit rather than a demon possession.

We found certain countries were more hospitable to U.S. Christian Right campaigners than others, in part because of ideological support from government officials. The presidents of Zambia, Zimbabwe, and Uganda themselves accused opposition parties of promoting homosexuality to undercut their influence and cater to powerful African religious conservatives. The nephew of Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni, Joseph Okia, leads the east African wing of the International Transformation Network, which sees LGBT people as literally embodying demons. Malawi, by contrast, has become a less hospitable home to the Christian Right since its new president, Joyce

Banda, supported decriminalizing same-sex relations in the spring of 2012. But it is also the site of renewed efforts to dislodge her.

Win or lose, these campaigns have triggered a rise in militant homophobia and anti-gay violence across much of sub-Saharan Africa and have reshaped national debates. Perhaps the most notorious instance of violent homophobia occurred in January 2011 when David Kato, an advocacy officer for the group Sexual Minorities Uganda, was found bludgeoned to death in his Kampala home. Kato had received death threats in the months before his killing, after a local newspaper *Rolling Stone* published his photo alongside a cover story charging that homosexuals recruit children. Kato's name and home address, along with Uganda's other "top homos," were listed in the article.

Thinly organized with little societal support or financial backing and effectively no government protections, the African LGBT community's main concern is survival. Yet human rights activists find their efforts to support this targeted community—and to forestall attacks on abortion—immensely challenging. African allies of the U.S. Christian Right echo their friends in deriding African and Western human rights campaigners as pursuing a neocolonial agenda. To better support the communities, allies around the world need to be more attuned to the complexity of theological and institutional ties between Africa and the U.S. Christian Right that this report exposes.

## Recommendations

**Our research suggests the following actions can help support LGBT people in sub-Saharan Africa and forestall campaigns against women's reproductive rights that stem from U.S. Christian Right influence.**

### 1. **Confront the myth that human rights advocacy is Western neocolonialism**

The U.S. Christian Right and its African allies charge that human rights activists are neocolonialists out to destroy Africa through the imposition of Western gender norms and policies. This myth is fueled by deep seated suspicion regarding Western powers and their motives. We can challenge this myth by exposing the *Americanness* of the recent politicization of homosexuality and abortion in Africa.

### 2. **Respect and follow the leadership of African human rights promoters**

We must practice principled solidarity with African human rights promoters. Human rights advocates in the West can and should provide increased educational, financial, media, and other resources that better enable African social justice voices to be heard above the din of U.S. right-wing campaigns that demonize sexual minorities.

### 3. **Tell Africans what the U.S. Christian Right really stands for**

The U.S. culture wars are still not understood in African circles. While some tendencies within African Christianity share charismatic beliefs with U.S. Christian Right campaigners, the African Church in general is more social-justice-oriented and concerned about the poor and the disenfranchised. Human rights advocates must expose the U.S. Christian Right's opposition to social justice initiatives in the United States—and their historic alignment with White supremacist and repressive regimes in Africa.

### 4. **Support the visibility of LGBT Africans as a means of curbing homophobia**

Many African sexual minorities exist at the margins of society, invisible and vulnerable. Broader visibility will enable their *Africanness* and humanity to become more broadly evident. Human rights advocates can assist by establishing educational opportunities for African LGBT activists in their home countries and abroad. Such support can assist Africans in maintaining leadership over their own human rights struggle.

### 5. **Support African leaders who courageously stand for human rights**

Africans politicians and religious leaders—such as Malawian president Joyce Banda and Ugandan Bishop Christopher Ssenyonjo—who have stood up for human rights need the support of international social justice advocates. While many Westerners will understandably fear being labeled "neocolonialist" for any public expression of solidarity, we must stand with—and aid—those defending human rights principles.

### 6. **Put meaningful pressure on African political leadership to respect human rights**

African politicians have the power to resist and reverse the persecution of LGBT persons—President Joyce Banda's stance on decriminalization of LGBT persons in Malawi showcases this. But bold statements coupled with equivocal action by Western politicians can prove counter-productive; public pronouncements can easily be characterized as Western bullying by African press and politicians. Western governments have the tendency to make threats that they do not enforce—this is unproductive and unhelpful.

### 7. **Engage African diplomatic missions on issues of Human Rights**

Establishing direct relationships with African diplomats associated with the United Nations

and other African embassies will help dispel the rumors that U.S. human rights activists are out to recolonize Africa. This direct contact can counter the false information presented by various Christian Right groups and figures.

<sup>4</sup> “Sharon Slater’s Speech to the UN Commission on Population and Development, April 14, 2010,” Family Watch International: Promoting Family Based Solutions to World Problems, [www.familywatchinternational.org/fwi/sharon](http://www.familywatchinternational.org/fwi/sharon).

#### **8. Rally Against Bigotry Across Ecumenical Lines**

Christian groups need to step up and cross denominational lines to challenge the Roman Catholic Right. They must extend their ecumenical alliances beyond their challenge to rightwing evangelicals. All Americans must continue challenging Christian Right organizations at home—exposing their unpalatable work in Africa and compelling organizations, individuals, and religious hierarchy to distance themselves from their African allies and actions.

#### **9. Demonstrate Respect for Religion**

Africa is a deeply religious continent. U.S. Conservatives regularly present human rights activists as godless liberals, with no respect for religion. This perception needs to be challenged and changed. Religious-based human rights groups and leaders can play a vital role in defending sexual minorities and women by locating their commitments in sacred scriptures. Secular advocates should take care not to degrade the Bible, the Quran, or faith traditions more generally when challenging religious justifications for denying human rights.

#### **10. Build Infrastructure for the Long Term**

The Christian Right is committed to a long-term strategy to influence human rights policies in Africa. Western and African human rights activists must keep sight of their mutual long-term strategies of meeting universal human rights goals. Human rights struggles in Africa, as elsewhere, require powerful infrastructures for leadership development, mobilization, and communications.

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<sup>1</sup> “Africa: End discrimination against LGBTI on international day against homophobia.” Amnesty International (May 16, 2010). <http://amnesty.org/en/news/africa-end-discrimination-against-gays-international-day-against-homophobia-2012-05-16>.

<sup>2</sup> “About Us.” EACLJ.org. <http://www.eaclj.org/about-us.html>.

<sup>3</sup> “Mission Field: English-Speaking Africa,” Human Life International. <http://www.hli.org/index.php/mission-field/english-speaking-africa>; “Mission Field: Francophone (French-Speaking) Africa,” Human Life International. <http://www.hli.org/index.php/mission-field/francophone-africa>

# Methodology

This study looks at the impact of the U.S. religious conservatives on LGBT and women's reproductive rights in Africa. We tracked the activities of three U.S. Christian Right organizations and one movement: the right-wing evangelical American Center for Law and Justice (and its African chapters), Family Watch International (a nondenominational NGO headed up by a Mormon, Sharon Slater), the Roman Catholic group Human Life International, and the Transformation Network. While FWI, HLI, and the Transformation movement operate below the radar in the United States, they are able to have a real influence in Africa with relatively small international budgets.

We analyzed data from seven African countries—Uganda, Liberia, Zambia, Malawi, Zimbabwe, Kenya, and Nigeria—chosen because of evidence that U.S. groups or movements are operating there and active in anti-gay or abortion politics. For instance, Zambia and Zimbabwe were redrafting their constitution in the last two years and campaigners sought to bar homosexuality and abortion in the redrafts.

We employed on-the-ground researchers in four countries, Kenya, Malawi, Zambia, and Zimbabwe, to track these trends; each researcher was a native of the country under investigation and was fluent in the language, as well as familiar with the issues researched. They conducted individual and focus-group-style interviews with clergy members, LGBT activists, reproductive justice activists, nonprofit and service organizations, Africans employed by U.S. Christian Right outlets and other individuals. Whenever possible, interviews were recorded. The report also relied on Africa-based researchers in Kenya, Malawi, Zambia, and Zimbabwe who tracked local newspapers and gathered other data from May 2011 to January 2012.



Police officers gather outside the Esella Country Hotel in Kampala, Uganda, on June 18, 2012, following a raid on a gay rights workshop.  
Photo by Michele Sibiloni/AFP/Getty images

# Colonizing African Values

## *How the U.S. Christian Right is Transforming Sexual Politics in Africa*

Over the decades, the U.S. Christian Right has invested vast resources in promoting their ideologies across sub-Saharan Africa through schools, universities, and perhaps most visibly, in the television empires of Christian Broadcasting Network and Trinity Broadcasting Network. Christian Right leaders, including those based at Human Life International and American Center for Law and Justice, successfully challenge Western governments for using their influence to promote sexual tolerance and reproductive freedom. Yet homophobia may itself be challenged as a product of colonialism. Anthropologist Marc Epprecht found that early European colonists were scandalized “by African willingness to bend the supposed natural laws of sexuality”<sup>1</sup> and that Europeans imported the homophobia now touted as African culture. “Traditional culture” Epprecht asserts, “was de facto more tolerant of sexual diversity than modern literalists recognize.”<sup>2</sup>

The extent to which today’s U.S. Christian Right influences African Christians was first seen globally during the controversy over the 2009 bill in Uganda that would criminalize and even give the death penalty for some homosexual activities. In our 2009 report, “Globalizing the Culture Wars” PRA explained how U.S. Christian conservatives rallied African clerics

to block the full recognition of LGBT equality in mainline U.S. denominations, painting LGBT-rights campaigners as neocolonialist intruders. One “collateral consequence” of bringing the U.S. culture wars to Africa was the fomenting of homophobia, including the draconian bill in Uganda. The same report exposed the role of megachurch leader Rick Warren and Holocaust revisionist Scott Lively in directly instigating the “Kill the Gays” bill.<sup>3</sup>

Many considered the international response to the bill a victory for the human rights community: the legislation was tabled, Warren acquiesced and denounced the bill, and many African leaders who followed U.S. conservatives’ anti-gay teachings felt betrayed and abandoned.<sup>4</sup>

In fact, while global outcry over Uganda’s Anti Homosexuality bill did forestall implementation of the legislation, legislators reintroduced it in February 2012, conservatives in other countries introduced similar legislation, and the single victory did little to diminish the climate of intolerance of sexual diversity on the continent. The opposite happened: anti-gay protests, policies, and violence increased; the senate in Nigeria and the parliament of Malawi enacted anti-gay legislation; religious leaders in Zimbabwe, Zambia, and Ghana pushed for anti-gay bills. According

to Gays and Lesbians of Zimbabwe, incidences of homophobic arrests and violence increased in Zimbabwe, as well as in Senegal, Malawi, Liberia, Ghana and other African countries; in the most high-profile case, Ugandan human rights activist David Kato was found bludgeoned to death in his Kampala home.

Homophobia proved a powerful rallying point for many established leaders on the continent. Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe, the late Bingu wa Mutharika of Malawi, and former Zambian President Rupiah Banda all derided their opponents as in bed with the homosexual agenda when their leaderships were threatened.<sup>5</sup> These leaders found they could earn easy support from religious factions, while winning nationalist votes for denouncing the West as neocolonial.

Africans working for U.S. rightist groups also lodge the charge. Human Life International's regional coordinator Emil Hagamu praised the Ugandan parliament as "typically African" for promoting the "Kill the Gays" bill. "It strives to protect African traditional and cultural values against Western encroachment in areas such as homosexuality and same-sex unions. Uganda is the center of attraction for population control bigots."<sup>6</sup>

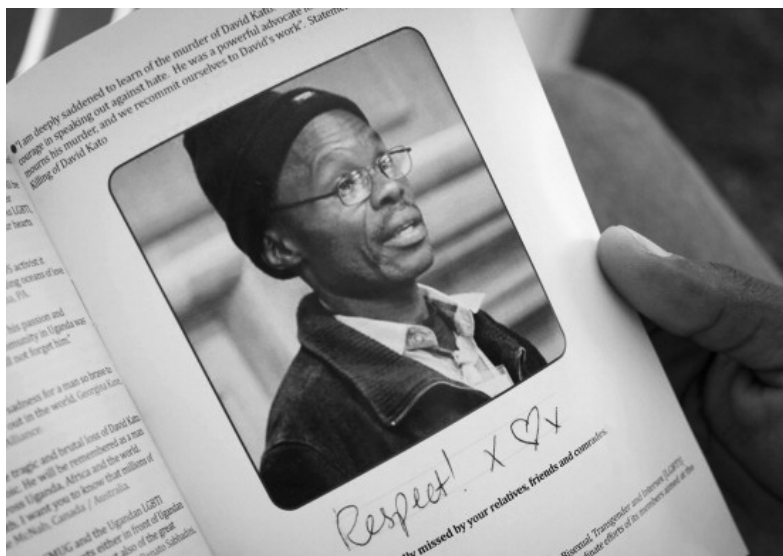
Apostle Julius Oyet of the Transformation movement derides homosexuality as a product of Western deception, praying, "Father, our children today are being deceived by the West. To buy them, to give them school fees so that they

can be homosexuals. We say no to that."<sup>7</sup> Oyet himself sees nothing wrong with his receiving funding from U.S. Christian Right groups.<sup>8</sup>

The neocolonial battle cry is so potent that American conservatives attacked PRA's research—conducted by an African—as neocolonialist, imperialistic, and racist "designed deliberately to add credence to the 'fact' that Africans still hover in the Dark Ages."<sup>9</sup>

Meanwhile, the neoconservative Institute for Religion and Democracy challenges U.S. mainline denominations as being "neocolonial" when they stand up for LGBT rights.<sup>10</sup>

U.S. conservatives avoid being themselves perceived as neocolonialist intruders in part by controlling the framing. From employing African workers to staff regional chapters to injecting American conservative language into country constitutions, these



Kampala Memorial service for Ugandan gay rights activist David Kato, above, on January 26, 2012, one year after his murder.

Photo by Michele Sibiloni/AFP/Getty images

Western organizations are also doing a good job at "Africanizing" their American conservative teachings by speaking in the charismatic Christian language that African Christians themselves largely speak.

## The Resonance of U.S. Christian Right Theologies in Africa:

### *From Charismatic Christianity to the Case of the Transformation Movement*

#### Charismatic Christianity

Many U.S. Christian Right campaigners can establish credibility in Africa—even when accusing Africans of neocolonialism—because their form of charismatic or neo-Pentecostal Christianity aligns with that of Africa. Leading African theologian John Mbiti points out that "Africans are notoriously religious" and "religion permeates into all the departments of life so fully that it is not easy or possible always to isolate it." In this regard, they have more in common with elements of the U.S. Christian Right, even those who are not charismatic, than with even faith-based Western human rights campaigners.<sup>11</sup>

Charismatic Christians believe in modern day miracles and the supernatural. Signs of this are faith healing, speaking in tongues and prophecy. Emerging from the U.S. neo-Pentecostal movement that gained particular force in the 1980s, these beliefs spread to Roman Catholics, and mainline and evangelical Protestant churches in the United States and worldwide. One recent survey found 36 percent of Americans were Pentecostal or charismatic.<sup>12</sup> A recent Pew study put African Pentecostals or charismatics at 20 percent, but that is at best a minimum because a strict definition excludes the vast number of African-founded churches that retain indigenous practices

***U.S. Christian Right organizations are doing a good job of "Africanizing" their conservative teachings.***

similar to charismatic ones. More revealing are Pew questions about whether a person has witnessed faith healing or exorcisms—30 percent to over 50 percent answer yes in Kenya, Zambia, Uganda, Liberia and Nigeria.<sup>13</sup> Former Alaska Governor Sarah Palin’s Assembly of God church in Wasilla made the U.S. charismatic movement’s ties to Africa visible when Rev. Thomas Muthee, an African minister tied to the International Transformation Movement, cast out demons in the congregation.<sup>14</sup>

Also flowing from the influence of neo-Pentecostalism is the prosperity gospel, the idea that if Christians are faithful, they will experience material prosperity on Earth and that wealth is a measure of their virtue. Many of the U.S. Christian Right actors active in Africa—Pat Robertson, T.D. Jakes, and Peter Wagner—preach the prosperity gospel, and it saturates the U.S. Christian airwaves of African households. The prosperity gospel is very popular on the continent and yet anathema to many human rights campaigners who fear it short-changes the role of social and government action in challenging economic ills.<sup>15</sup>

In Africa, Pentecostalism resonates with indigenous African religions and African-initiated churches holding strong belief in spirits and exorcism, speaking in tongues, prophecy, and convulsions when demons

over every aspect of secular society, following Jesus’ call for his disciples to make “disciples of all nations.” In the United States, Christian Nationalists are dominionists who believe that the greatness of the United States—as God’s chosen land—is being undermined by liberal secular humanists, feminists, and homosexuals. Abortion, tolerance of gays and lesbians, and prayer in schools are core issues with the nation’s very existence at stake.<sup>18</sup> These theocrats believe that men are ordained by God to rule society, women and children, although they have been challenged by support for gender egalitarianism among conservative Christians, particularly during the vice presidential bid of Sarah Palin.<sup>19</sup> Followers are intrinsically Christian ethnocentric, treating non-Christians as second-class citizens; they are therefore implicitly antisemitic and anti-Muslim.

*Dominionists believe Christians are biblically mandated to occupy or take dominion over every aspect of secular society.*

While they are divided on the question of eschatology—the issues associated with Christ’s second coming—they agree that “taking control of all spheres of the secular world” is a Christian mandate.<sup>20</sup>

### The Transformation Movement

While widespread on the U.S. Christian Right, the teachings of dominionism and the prosperity gospel are also found among African campaigners and particularly within the relatively recent Transformation Movement—many of whose leaders are currently active promoting anti-gay and reproductive restrictions in Africa. The Transformation movement does not found new churches, but rather reorganizes existing ones under the authority of modern-day apostles and prophets into a global network, connecting Africans with conservative American neo-Pentecostals in so doing.

The Transformation campaign emerged within the past ten years from the neo-Pentecostal sector of Christianity and has played a significant role in promoting the ideology of the apostolic and prophetic movement also known as the New Apostolic Reformation (NAR), which advertises itself as the most dramatic change to Protestantism since the Reformation. NAR believes in the Seven Mountains Mandate, which states that God has appointed Christians to “take over” the “seven mountains” or spheres of society: “business, government, media, arts and entertainment, education, the family and religion.”<sup>21</sup> [See profile]



The Seven Mountains Mandate, part of the International Transformation Movement, promotes Christian evangelicals taking “dominion” over the pillars of society. Seven Mountains Mandate/Transformation Network

are cast out of people.<sup>16</sup> Harvard theologian Harvey Cox explains that “for any religion to grow in today’s world...it must be able to include and transform at least certain elements of preexisting religions which still retain a strong grip on the cultural subconscious.”<sup>17</sup> “A sympathetic approach to local culture and the retention of certain cultural practices might explain the growth of the prosperity gospel in Africa.

Networking Africans directly with conservative American neo-Pentecostals is the Transformation Movement, a movement of charismatic Christians who are dominionists. Dominionists believe Christians are biblically mandated to occupy or take dominion

*U.S. conservatives in Africa believe LGBT rights and reproductive freedoms are encroaching upon family values.*

Some of the most prominent entities in the movement include the International Transformation Network (ITN) led by Ed Silviso; George Otis Jr.'s Sentinel Group, which produces the Transformation series of movies; and Peter Wagner, the president of the International Council of Apostles.<sup>22</sup> Lou Engle, a member of Wagner's inner circle of apostolic leaders and founder of the revivalist group The Call, was one of the major supporters of Uganda's Anti-Homosexuality Bill. Speaking at an event in Kampala, he "felt like The Call was to come and join with the church of Uganda to encourage you that in the nation who are showing courage to take a stand for righteousness in the earth."<sup>23</sup>

Rather than address the root causes of poverty in most African countries, the Transformation Movement blames poverty on evil powers and demons.<sup>24</sup> Wagner teaches that societal problems are the result of real demons controlling cities, nations, and ethnic or religious groups.<sup>25</sup> Societal improvement or "transformation" is achieved through "strategic level spiritual warfare" and the expulsion of these demonic beings from a geographic area. Government and business leaders have no control over challenging poverty except by developing their spiritual fitness like anybody else. As Apostle Silviso puts it, "In Uganda, church leaders have joined hands with those involved in business, recognizing that they have a key role to play in the transformation of the nation. Together they are working to see God establish His Kingdom in the areas of business, education and government."<sup>26</sup>

Casting out demons is claimed to be responsible for drops in crime and corruption; miraculous healing including of HIV/AIDS; instantaneous reversal of environmental degradation; and even the growth of oversized vegetables. Many African Christians across denominations—even Roman Catholics—take such teachings as mainstream. For example, in July 2011, the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops Conference, Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe, and Zimbabwe Council of Churches all invited Silviso to their country, showing the ecumenical embrace of the movement's ideas. Silviso told Zimbabweans that he had prayed for the nation's transformation during the Transformation Conference in Hawaii that took place in November 2010 and claimed credit for lowering AIDS rates in Uganda.<sup>27</sup>

The underlying theme is eliminationist: if demonic beings and those under the control of demonic beings can be eliminated from society, the community can become a utopia of peace, wealth, and health. This belief gives social struggles an apocalyptic drive.

In Africa, these teachings have derived support from the widespread belief in demons, ancestral curses, and witchcraft. It is natural to want to move from poverty to economic prosperity; here is a spiritual path to reach that goal. Don't blame the corrupt and broken government system for your poverty, says the Transformation Movement. Blame the demons and evil powers around you—blame LGBT people, blame abortion.<sup>28</sup>

We found that the Transformation movement's view that LGBT people are possessed by demons which can be cast out through prayer is shared by both prominent African religious leaders and grassroots followers. Virtually all of the LGBT persons we

### **ZIMBABWE**

*Population 12.5 million*

*Christian population 9.8 million*

*Protestants 8.4 million*

*Roman Catholics 1.3 million*

A former British colony, Zimbabwe gained independence in 1980, though it has retained its colonial-era laws outlawing sodomy and abortion.<sup>1</sup> Since the 1990s, President Robert Mugabe has used anti-gay rhetoric—such as characterizing gays as "worse than pigs and dogs"—and politics to mobilize resentment against the West and defend his autocratic rule.<sup>2</sup> Under his leadership, LGBT persons have been subject to office raids, arrests, and violence. In a high profile case in the late 1990s, Zimbabwe's first president, Canaan Banana, was imprisoned for forcing men who worked for him during his presidency into homosexual acts.<sup>3</sup> In 2006, Zimbabwe expanded on the colonial laws with the passage of a more explicit law criminalizing any sexual contact between men.

Despite employing state machinery to intimidate, torture, and even murder opposition members, Mugabe lost the 2008 presidential election to his main rival, Morgan Tsvangirai. He refused to concede the election and called for another vote, which Tsvangirai boycotted, citing violence towards protestors.<sup>4</sup> Subsequently, Mugabe declared himself president and entered into a unity government with Tsvangirai as prime minister.

Zimbabwe is currently reviewing its constitution, which Mugabe has vowed will exclude gay rights.<sup>5</sup> Sometime next year, under the new constitution, the country is set to go to the polls. Tsvangirai, who remains Mugabe's main challenger, has come out in support of LGBT rights since the last election, so Mugabe will likely use the issue to mobilize support from Christians and other sectors of the society. With the upcoming election and the recent establishment of the Africa Center for Law and Justice in Zimbabwe in 2010, Mugabe will likely stoke anti-gay rhetoric and possibly cause a rise in violence. A complicating economic factor is the recent discovery of diamonds within the country, which has brought new hope to Zimbabweans and may also affect next year's elections.<sup>6</sup>





Malawi President Bingu wa Mutharika announces his pardon of an incarcerated gay couple following a meeting with United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon in May 2010.  
Photo by REUTERS/Evan Schneider/United Nations/Handout

interviewed in Zimbabwe and many in Uganda told PRA that their families took them to pastors to have their demons of homosexuality cast out.<sup>29</sup> Such beliefs can break up families. In Zimbabwe, we learned one family was convinced that their suffering was due to their 17-year-old daughter being a lesbian. Because the family believes her demons will continue to impoverish and trouble them, they see nothing wrong in physically abusing her. Due to criminalization of homo-sexuality, the girl cannot seek protection from the police for fear of arrest, but is in no position to leave her family's home.<sup>30</sup>

*The Transformation Movement's views of LGBT people as demon-possessed is shared by prominent African religious leaders and grassroots followers.*

While the Transformation movement's focus on demons resonates with certain African traditions, homophobia as preached by the Christian Right is utterly foreign. Another African lesbian from a Roman Catholic family told us that the attempts to exorcize her demons ended after her grandmother said her body was inhabited by the ancestral spirit of her rich late uncle who wanted to marry a woman. Given the imprimatur of traditional ancestor worship, she is now valued and encouraged to date women. "I am even allowed to drink by my family," Melissa commented, indicating a typically male privilege. "We are Christians but they say that I have a male spirit."<sup>31</sup> Contrary to the Transformation teachings that all homosexuals have demons, African religious tradition can view the difference as the respected action of a spirit.

Many African pastors, most notably the Ugandan anti-gay preachers Martin Ssempe and Joseph

Mulinde and Prophet Emmanuel Makandiwa of Zimbabwe, promote Transformation teachings on LGBT people as cursing their nations. Both Apostle Julius Oyet and Joseph Mulinde were among those pastors who claimed credit for Uganda's infamous Anti-Homosexuality Bill; the spoke alongside Engle at the notorious Kampala rally in support of the bill.<sup>32</sup> But in Zambia, Malawi, and Zimbabwe, we interviewed less prominent Christians who also thought the decriminalization of homosexuality brought various curses on the nation, likening it to God's revenge on Sodom and Gomorrah. "If we go to scriptures Gen. 19:1-22," said one Paramount Chief Lunda in Malawi "it states how Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed due to homosexual acts. As chiefs we will not allow such acts to continue in our country. It is an abomination. We will not accept this. It is better to remain poor than to accept same sex marriage."

In Zambia, International Fellowship for Christian Churches' president Simon Chihana said homosexuality was not a human rights issue, but a demonic right.<sup>33</sup>

### Reaching out to government

Ed Silvoso's International Transformation Network nurtures government influence by placing its African operations in the hands of Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni's nephew, Joseph Okia, who stated his belief at a 2008 Transformation conference that "Uganda is critical and important for world conquest."<sup>34</sup> Uganda First Lady Janet Museveni has also attended Transformation conferences, although she was unable to fulfill a speaking role at a 2008 conference in Argentina and sent a surrogate.<sup>35</sup>

Okia supported the Uganda Anti-Homosexuality bill as "an effort to give young boys protection under the law" from sexual "predators."<sup>36</sup> Okia opposes what he sees as recruitment into homosexuality, saying, "there is a lot of money flowing from gay rights

organizations. They are even going to displaced people and promising them that if they engage in homosexuality, they stand a better chance of being airlifted to Canada and Europe.” Despite his distaste for Western pro-LGBT influence, Okia confirmed to Political Research Associates that U.S. conservatives were mentoring African religious leaders like himself: “Definitely there is a link between conservative Christians in American and conservative Christian leaders in Uganda. And a lot of strategic geopolitical thinking that is pioneered by people like Ed Silvos and Peter

*Transformation followers find common cause with organizations like the American Center for Law and Justice, Family Watch International, and Human Life International.*

Wagner. [They have] had a profound impact on the thinking of leading Christians in Uganda... For sure, there has been a close intellectual and mentoring relationship between people like Ed Silvos and myself, and different Christian leaders in Uganda.”<sup>37</sup> [See Appendix for a transcript of the full interview.]

In “An Unconventional War,” a video produced by U.S. Christian conservatives, Apostle Julius Peter Oyet of Uganda claimed to have cleansed Northern Uganda of the demonic powers that were responsible for rebel leader Joseph Kony causing suffering to millions of Ugandans. “The video portrays guerilla leader Joseph Kony as having demonic powers and blames Uganda’s Northern Acholi people for the savage attacks and child kidnappings they suffered from Kony’s Lord’s Resistance Army—because they had disobeyed the will of God by practicing idolatry and witchcraft.”<sup>38</sup>

Os Hillman of the Transformation movement reported in 2004 that when he visited Uganda: “Julius led a team and a group of soldiers into the northern districts to pray over the areas that were revealed to them as the centers of the demonic strongholds. It was not long after that a breakthrough came in the war and Kony was driven into the Sudan. Today, the war is almost over. Only a few remnants of the rebel activity remain.”<sup>39</sup>

Kony is still at large but his durability has not undercut the belief that ministers can diminish his power by casting out demons.

In Kenya, David Muhia Githii, the former moderator of Presbyterian Church in East Africa, saw demons in stained glass windows and artwork at the parliament.<sup>40</sup> Further, he blamed the post-election violence in Kenya on demons associated with the country’s motto, “Harambe,” which means let us pull together; Githii claimed the motto had roots in an Indian goddess.<sup>41</sup>

Not all U.S. conservative Christians active in Af-

rica accept ideologies that demonize LGBT persons and pro-choice women. Yet the Transformation adherents find common ecumenical cause with organizations like Family Watch International (led by a Mormon), the American Center for Law and Justice (led by a right-wing evangelical), and the Roman Catholic Human Life International. Together they promote militant homophobia and restrictions to reproductive freedom among their African allies. In terms of African Christianity, this is represented as an ecumenical movement—these religious players are trying to become one Christian body. Yet what brings these different groups together are the culture war issues. Usually, evangelical Africans are suspicious of Roman Catholic theology, worse still Mormonism. Nonetheless, they have found common ground in the global NGO scene, particularly the World Congress of Families, an umbrella for international “pro-family” advocates, and in Africa, especially on issues of LGBT and reproductive freedom.<sup>42</sup>

## **Changing Africa’s Laws Governing Sexual Minorities: *The Backdrop***

The aggressive attempt to establish a new legal infrastructure on the African continent reflecting the U.S. Christian Right’s ideals begins in a landscape where abortion is largely illegal and same sex relations outlawed.

Abortion is a target even though public opinion polling in sub-Saharan countries shows at least 75 percent to 95 percent of those surveyed believe abortion is wrong—and the practice is largely outlawed.<sup>43</sup> Uganda, Malawi, Nigeria and Tanzania all permit abortion to save the life of a woman. Kenya and Zimbabwe also permit it for a woman’s health, broadly defined, and Liberia specifies a woman’s mental health as a reason for an abortion.<sup>44</sup> As we will discuss, women do seek out abortions, illegally or legally, through “loopholes.” Those so-called loopholes win the attention of the U.S. Christian Right.

Regarding sexual minorities, British colonialism in Anglophone Africa left a widespread legacy of anti-gay laws which prohibit “carnal knowledge against the order of nature.” Supported by religious teachings on the continent, namely Christianity and Islam, this colonialist import has fully assimilated into African society and is now defended with national pride. These “carnal knowledge” laws—and more recent criminalization against homosexuality—are present in more than 35 African countries.<sup>45</sup> Moreover, countries broadly ban the adoption of children by homosexuals, including all the countries studied here.

Then the campaigns began. In 2006, Zimbabwe expanded antisodomy laws to more explicitly ban sexual contact between men. [See full timeline of bills and laws.] Then Uganda, the most notorious case that created a template for what was to come. Its Anti-Homosexuality Bill 2009 was introduced in

## LIBERIA

Population approximately 3.9 million

Christian population 3.4 million

Catholics 290,000

Protestant 3 million

Liberian LGBT activists formed an advocacy group in December 2011 right after U.S. President Barack Obama and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton promised to support gay rights groups around the world.

Archie Ponpon and Abraham Kamara called their new organization "Movement for the Defense of Gays and Lesbians (Modegal)" and took to the radio waves to publicize their human rights work. A broad-based counter-mobilization involving the public, religious leaders and politicians formed in response, with the stated aim of ridding the nation entirely of gays. They called their group Movement Against Gays in Liberia, or MOGAL.

Reminiscent of the homophobic organizing in Uganda, where conservative Christian activists published the names of "top homos" in newspapers, MOGAL published the names of suspected gays in the country on fliers distributed around the capital city of Monrovia. The fliers read, "Having conducted a comprehensive investigation, we are convinced that the below listed individuals are gays or supporters of the club who don't mean well for our country...Therefore, we have agreed to go after them using all means in life."<sup>1</sup>

While the flier was not signed, a man named Moses Tapleh told the *Guardian* that he was a member of MOGAL and that LGBT individuals would be subjected to "dangerous punishments" including "flogging and death."

"We will get to them one by one," Tapleh said.<sup>2</sup>

Violence immediately broke out. Ponpon's mother's house was set ablaze. Kamara's daughter was expelled from school. West Africa Democracy Radio reported in January 2012 that Kamara himself was stoned, assaulted, and booed by students only to be rescued by Liberian Police.<sup>3</sup>

A Baptist pastor, the Rev. William Vambram, called on Christians to rise up against lawmakers who supported gay rights. He warned that should homosexuality be accepted, children of gay couples would also be gay, and the society would be changed entirely. He went on to say, "If gay rights are legislated, what will happen to drug addicts, thieves, and murderers? These are sins and crimes just as homosexuality is considered a crime in our society. They, too, will have the right to ask for legislation of their rights."<sup>4</sup>

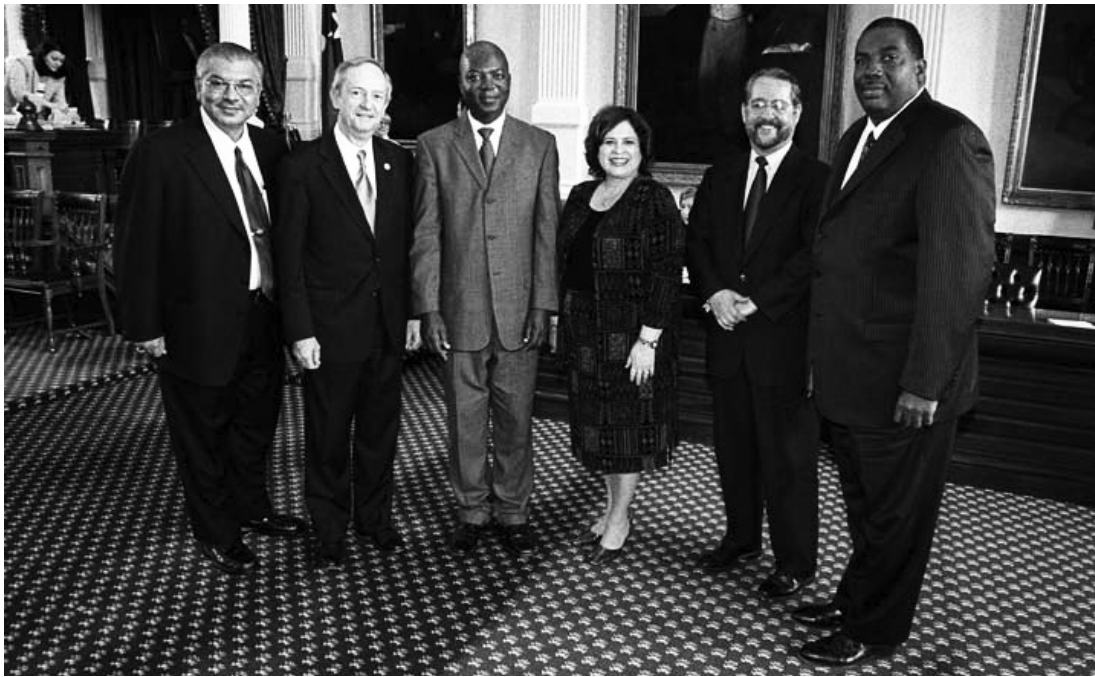
Prominent politicians also increased their persecution of LGBT persons. In January 2012, the former chairman of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Liberia, Jerome Verdier, Sr., "called on the government of Liberia, the Liberian people, and the Liberian Council of Churches (LCC) to rally against the legalization of gay and lesbian practices in Liberia." He insisted that "legalizing homosexuality will further erode and degrade the moral fabric of our nation and degenerate its civilization and godliness." Aside from stating that God "hates homosexuality because it is unnatural and a bestial form of submission to the devil," Verdier warned that "Our GOD will destroy this nation, like great powers and civilizations of the past, if we endorse any form of devil worship or homosexuality."<sup>5</sup>

Current senior senator Jewel Taylor, the ex-wife of the brutal former president—and war criminal—Charles Taylor, submitted a bill to Liberia's senate in February 2012 that would outlaw same-sex marriages and make homosexuality a felony punishable by ten years in prison. At present, homosexuality is a misdemeanor offense; those found guilty would suffer no more than one year in jail. "Some media are reporting that I said anyone found guilty of involvement in same sex should face the death penalty, I did not say so, I am calling for a law that will make it a first degree felony," she told the BBC. "We are only strengthening the existing law," she said.<sup>6</sup>

Many in the international community consider current Liberian President and Nobel Peace Prize winner Ellen Johnson Sirleaf progressive on most social issues. But unlike Malawi's new President Joyce Banda, Johnson Sirleaf defended her country's anti-gay laws. "We like ourselves just the way we are," Johnson Sirleaf told *The Guardian*, when asked about the law, as well as proposals for even stricter anti-gay legislation. "We've got certain traditional values in our society that we would like to preserve."<sup>7</sup> When pressed as to whether she would work to decriminalize the current laws, she responded, "I have just said to you, we gonna maintain our traditional values."<sup>8</sup>

Johnson Sirleaf made these comments in a March 2012 joint interview with former U.K. Prime Minister Tony Blair who was visiting Liberia on behalf of the Africa Governance Initiative, a charity that aims to strengthen African governments. At the time, he would not comment on her remarks and refused to answer, when asked, whether human rights were part of good governance.

Tamasin Ford, a freelance journalist based in Monrovia covering the issue for *The Guardian* newspaper and the BBC, told National Public Radio that the backlash against LGBT rights began after Secretary Clinton's remarks. "Unfortunately, they were misreported in the media here, claiming that America wants Liberia to introduce same-sex marriage or else it will stop giving aid to the country, which obviously is not true," she said. "But then it sparked this huge debate involving the West telling Liberia what to do, how homosexuality is a Western thing, it's un-African, it's not traditional."<sup>9</sup> Once again, the U.S. Christian Right storyline that LGBT rights are a neocolonial import had taken hold.



Malawi President Banda's main challenger, James Nyondo, joins Texas State Senators on the senate floor in April 2005. From left to right: Senator Mario Gallegos, Senator Jeff Wentworth, Nyondo, Senator Leticia Van de Putte, Dr. Richard Gambitta, and Senator Royce West.  
Photo by Texas State House

Uganda's 8th Parliament in October 2009 and reintroduced in the 9th parliament on February 7, 2012.<sup>46</sup> The reintroduced version of the bill still mandates that all those convicted of homosexuality serve prison terms and in some cases face execution.<sup>47</sup> As detailed in Political Research Associates' investigation "Globalizing the Culture Wars," the Ugandan legislation directly resulted from U.S. conservative religious activists mobilizing African clerics and politicians against the so-called "homosexual agenda."

While Uganda has not yet passed this anti-gay legislation, the bill inspired similar draft legislation in Liberia and the anti-gay law in Nigeria. In November 2011, the Nigerian Senate passed the Same Sex Marriage (Prohibition) Bill 2011 which criminalizes not just same-sex marriages but also registration and operation of any gay organization or clubs in the country. As with the Ugandan bill, anyone who witnesses a same sex-marriage or "supports the registration, operation and sustenance of gay clubs, societies, organisations, processions or meetings in Nigeria commits an offence and shall be liable on conviction to a term of 10 years imprisonment."<sup>48</sup> New anti-gay laws are also being promoted in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Zambia, and Zimbabwe (see country profiles).

In Malawi, a gay couple was arrested and sentenced to 14 years in prison in 2010 under existing law criminalizing homosexuality. Following international outcry and a visit from U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon, the couple was pardoned, unwillingly, by the late President Bingu Wa Mutharika, who still asserted, "These boys committed a crime against our culture, our religion and our laws."<sup>49</sup>

While the international community welcomed the pardon, Malawi suffered a backlash of anti-gay senti-

ment, as occurred after the temporary defeat of the Uganda Anti-Homosexuality Bill, and hostility toward Western interference through financial pressure. Bishop Joseph Bvumbwe, head of the Malawi Council of Churches (MCC), the country's major grouping of protestant churches, asserted, it was "morally wrong and unacceptable for any rich countries or donor agencies to use their financial muscle to push for the so called gay marriages in Malawi."<sup>50</sup> The secretary general of the Roman Catholic Episcopal Conference of Malawi, Father George Buleya, stated, "By the way, why are you forcing us to accommodate homosexuals when there are many thieves, adulterers and a lot of people who do evil?"<sup>51</sup>

Ban Ki-Moon personally appealed to Malawi's National Assembly parliamentarians "to reform outdated laws that discriminate against homosexuality;" instead, in December 2010, the Malawian Parliament amended the country's penal code to outlaw same-sex relations between females.<sup>52</sup> President Mutharika—who like Zimbabwean president Robert Mugabe had described gays as "worse than dogs"—signed the bill into law in January 2011.<sup>53</sup> The legislation, section 137a Indecent Practices Between Females, states that "any female person who, whether in public or private commits any act of gross indecency with another female shall be guilty of an offence and liable to a prison term of five years."

Fortunately for LGBT Malawians, after President Mutharika died, the new Malawian president Joyce Banda vowed in May 2012 not to honor those laws and barred the government from prosecuting anyone under them. But the laws remain on the books and reformers do not think they have the necessary repeal votes.<sup>54</sup> Meanwhile, President Banda's main challenger, James Mbowe Nyondo, is a born again

Christian with deep American ties. A perennial presidential hopeful in Malawi, Nyondo was mentored by South African Pastors Theo and Beverley Wolmarans, faith healers and leaders of Christian Family Church International, which has anchor churches in both Johannesburg and San Antonio, Texas. During his 2009 presidential bid, Nyondo said the pastors took him under their wing, brought him to Texas to study and financially underwrite his campaigns.<sup>55</sup> A 2005 graduate of University of Texas at San Antonio, Nyondo has said that one of his life's highlights was the time he spoke during the National Prayer Breakfast in Washington, D.C. in February 2006 in front of President George W. Bush.<sup>56</sup>

Anti-gay legislation and constitutional prohibitions are often drafted by Africans who are “ideologically mentored” and trained by U.S. conservatives, and the bills reflect American, not African, realities. The widening breadth of anti-gay legislation betrays its origins by addressing less relevant battles from the U.S. culture wars, according to Meredith Weiss, a political science professor at State University of New York, Albany. For instance, draft legislation bars same-sex marriage and adoption of children by same-sex couples even though marriage and adoption of children are not yet on the radar of most African sexual minorities.<sup>57</sup> As one activist told PRA, “It is like asking for dessert before your main meal. We need freedom to exist first!”<sup>58</sup>

Furthermore, the drafting of regular bills also shows an Americanization of the politics—traditionally, African campaigners rely on constitutional reform for such important changes, a more frequent process than in the United States.

The further criminalization of LGBT people makes them vulnerable to extortion and blackmail

by law enforcement and public officials, as the International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission (IGLHRC) showed in its 2011 report, “Nowhere to Turn: Blackmails and Extortion of LGBT People in Sub-Saharan Africa.” As the criminalization of LGBT people forces them to keep their “sexual orientation and gender identity secret for fear of prosecution, violence, and other persecution,” the result is that



Jay Sekulow of the American Center for Law and Justice with 2012 Republican President candidate Mitt Romney (R-MA) in 2007, consulting during Republican Party meetings around 2008 presidential nominations.

Photo by Joe Raedle/Getty Images

“blackmail and extortion are part of the daily lives of many LGBT people who are isolated and vulnerable to abuse.”<sup>59</sup> Although blackmailing is a crime in many African countries, if LGBT Africans report the perpetrators to the police, they will be arrested. If they ignore these threats, they are likely to be attacked. This no-win situation has forced many LGBT persons to exist in a perpetual state of fear for their lives.

### **American Center for Law and Justice: Reconstituting the Colonial Legacy**

The key organization involved in ensuring African constitutions and laws criminalize homosexuality and reproductive freedom is the American Center for Law and Justice (ACLJ), led by the lawyer Jay Sekulow. The Center’s founder, Pat Robertson, is one of the Christian Right’s most influential leaders and institution builders. He also launched the Christian Broadcasting Network (CBN), International Family Entertainment Inc., and the Christian Coalition, and hosts the evangelist show *The 700 Club* broadcast worldwide. CBN says its programs are broadcast in 39 languages, reaching 360 million people yearly.<sup>60</sup>

In founding the legal center in 1990, Robertson envisioned it as a counterweight to the American Civil Liberties Union, which Robertson believed was undermining “family values.” The Washington D.C.-based center positions itself as the legal arm of conservatives in the U.S. culture wars; the group defends “the sanctity of human life, and the two-parent, marriage-bound family.”<sup>61</sup> Its critics view it as “a strong supporter of the Federal Marriage Amendment intended to ban same-sex marriage” and strong opponent of “legal, safe abortion.” In America, the center “provides legal help to pro-life protesters who harass women seeking reproductive services.”<sup>62</sup> It also challenges domestic partnership benefits and

*The American Center for Law and Justice positions itself as the legal arm of conservatives in the U.S. culture wars—it recently expanded its operations to Africa.*



President Mobutu Sese Seko of Zaire (third from left) and Pat Robertson, U.S. evangelical minister (right) in Kinshasa, Zaire (now the Democratic Republic of the Congo), 1995. Photo by Corinne Dufka/AFP/Getty Images

anti-discrimination ordinances that include sexual orientation.<sup>63</sup> (see profile)

While Pat Robertson’s television show *The 700 Club* is watched across sub-Saharan Africa, most Africans remain ignorant of his role during colonialism. Robertson was one of many U.S. conservative evangelicals, some of whom came to Africa as missionaries in the 1980s, who sided with oppressive White minority governments in Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) and South Africa in their effort to stop the spread of liberation theology.

In post-independence Africa, Robertson is remembered for his diamond dealings with dictators such as Liberia’s former president—and convicted war criminal—Charles Taylor and Mobutu of the Congo, as well as his support to the rebel leader Jonas Savimbi—whose activities led millions of innocents to lose their lives.<sup>64</sup>

The legal organization Robertson founded is proving equally unscrupulous in building alliances with repressive governments in pursuit of its homophobic Christian Right agenda.

At the time when Uganda was debating the Anti-Homosexuality Bill in 2009 and 2010, the Center opened its African offices and placed Jay Sekulow’s son Jordan in charge of the overall Africa mission. Named the East African Centre for Law and Justice’s (EACLJ) in Kenya and the African Center for Law and Justice (ACLJ) in Zimbabwe, the offshoots provided an African base for work in both countries and nearby Rwanda, Uganda, Tanzania, and South Sudan. The aim is “lobbying [African parliaments] to take the Christian’s views into consideration as they

draft legislation and policies.”<sup>65</sup>

In Kenya and Zimbabwe, the Center used influential evangelical African religious leaders Bishop Mark Kariuki of Deliverance Church in Kenya<sup>66</sup> and Goodwill Shana of Word of Life International Ministries in Zimbabwe to gain access to political leadership.<sup>67</sup> In Zimbabwe, for example, the “ACLJ Team met with leaders from all three of Zimbabwe’s main political parties, including Prime Minister Tsvangirai, Vice President John Nkomo, Deputy Prime Minister Arthur Mutambara, Minister of Constitutional and Parliamentary Affairs Eric Matinenga, and Minister of Tourism Walter Mzembi.”<sup>68</sup>

### The ACLJ in Kenya

According to Jordan Sekulow, the organization’s work in Kenya began when a pastor from Iowa introduced ACLJ to a Bishop from Kenya who wanted to open “an operation similar to ACLJ-USA.” The “Bishop wanted to make sure that he and the thousands of pastors that are part of his denomination knew how to properly comment on the draft constitution when speaking to their parishioners and the media.... The Bishop and his fellow pastors have decided to

*Offshoots of the American Center for Law and Justice aim to criminalize homosexuality and reproductive freedom in African constitutions and laws.*

speak out against the constitutionalization of the Sharia Courts and have called on the ACLJ to travel to Kenya to setup a full-time legal and government affairs operation in Nairobi where we'll work with church leaders on this crucial issue."<sup>69</sup>

Joy M. Mdivo, the CEO of the East African CLJ, confirmed to PRA that her organization works closely with American Center for Law and Justice (ACLJ-USA) and was born out of the U.S. organization. The organization, Mdivo explained, was founded on Christian evangelical beliefs and works to promote pro-life and anti-homosexual policies in East Africa, and is also rooted in the African Born Again Faith, an evangelical movement that emerged in the 1930s which now has deep roots in East Africa.<sup>70</sup>

The first test of the East African CLJ was the drafting of the new Kenyan constitution. Using American resources and mainly African staffers, the East African CLJ worked to ensure that the

new constitution, drafted in 2010, would bar abortion and homosexuality. When that failed, the center used American resources and galvanized Kenyan Christians to attempt to defeat the new constitution when it was put to a vote in June 2010.

U.S. Vice President Joe Biden called on Kenyans to resist those who sought to divide Kenyans on the basis of ethnicity, religion, and region; the East African CLJ, in turn, employed American culture war issues relating to homosexuality and reproductive choice to campaign against the proposed constitution. While Sekulow initially explained his organization's involvement in Kenya as pushing back on the influence of Islamic courts, the East African CLJ also campaigned around abortion and homosexuality, calling homosexuality a "foreign concept" and arguing that Kenya's draft constitution would allow "abortion on demand."<sup>71</sup>

Despite the East African CLJ's on-the-ground organizing and pleas from conservative African clergy and politicians, the Kenyans passed the constitution with over 64 percent of the total vote.<sup>72</sup> Yet while the organization failed to achieve its ideal, the constitution as passed is not a final victory for LGBT and reproductive rights advocates. The proposed constitution stated that "the life of a person begins at conception," which Sekulow cited as "traditionally pro-life wording." But the defenders of women's reproductive health were pleased that the same section permits a minor exception for abortion if "in the opinion of a trained health professional, there is need for emer-

gency treatment, or the life or health of the mother is in danger, or if permitted by any other written law."<sup>73</sup> For Sekulow and the East African CLJ, this so-called loophole "essentially permits abortion on demand" because the term "health" could be defined broadly.<sup>74</sup>

Sekulow and the East African CLJ had a similar response to the constitution's handling of homosexuality. The center interpreted the Kenyan constitution as creating openings for LGBT rights and condoning homosexuality. Indeed, the center may be correct. Article 27:1 of the constitution reads, "Every person is equal before the law and has the right to equal protection and equal benefit of the law." Article 27:4 reads, "The State shall not discriminate directly or indirectly against any person on any ground, including race, sex, pregnancy, marital status, health status, ethnic or social origin, colour, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, dress, language or birth."<sup>75</sup> This was a victory for LGBT rights supporters. Still, article 45:2 of the Kenyan constitution, in defining marriage between a man and a woman—"every adult has the right to marry a person of the opposite sex, based on the free consent of the parties"—tacitly opposes attempts on the part of sexual minorities to realize marriage equality.<sup>76</sup>

The East African Law and Justice Center is aggressively re-organizing its work in Kenya to erase the openings provided to LGBT and reproductive rights advocates. The center is working with groups such as Human Life International, Kenyan lawyers, and Kenyan Council of Churches to see to it that homosexuality and abortion become political issues again. With the country heading for the 2012 elections, the center is promoting anti-choice and anti-gay politicians to the socially conservative electorate with the help of professional teams and networks such as the Christian Lawyers Association.<sup>77</sup> Mdivo told us the group built alliances with much of the Christian community, including Christian universities, the Episcopal Conference (Roman Catholic Bishops), the National Council of Churches, the law society of Kenya, some members of parliament, media houses, and evangelical churches.<sup>78</sup>

In short, East African CLJ is preparing for another opportunity to change the constitution in line with its conservative ideologies. As Mdivo told PRA, "the current constitution promotes gay rights and abortion. We are working on going to court over those two issues. We shall also carry out further civic education to warn people of the dangers of homosexuality and abortion in Kenya."<sup>79</sup>

### **A Little Help From a Friend: Human Life International**

One of the organizations the East African CLJ allied itself with in its constitutional campaign was the Roman Catholic group Human Life International (HLI), a U.S.-based anti-choice group with operations throughout Africa (see below). Father Raphael Wanjohi, a Kenyan academic who directs HLI's Kenya

*The East African Center for Law and Justice is aggressively re-organizing its work in Kenya to erase any openings provided to LGBT and reproductive rights advocates*

office, posted a video to the HLI website after the Constitution passed in which he blamed American progressives for its passage, singling out Vice President Joe Biden and America's power as a prosperous, developed country with a lot of clout."<sup>80</sup> He explained to us that very few Kenyans understand the constitution; and said that "[his] office...sent people to most of the dioceses to educate the priests and then to educate...those people."

Wanjohi took up the line shared by East Africa CLJ that Kenya's new constitution was the result of meddling Westerners. Pro-abortion Western leaders, he explained, targeted Kenya because "if they succeed in Kenya, they have succeeded in the whole of East Africa, Central Africa and other African countries. When they fail in Kenya, then they will fail, because Kenya has greater influence among other African countries."<sup>81</sup> Wanjohi ends his video interview with an appeal to Americans for continual support: "[Americans] will be able to assist us, assist us financially so that we are able to carry on this work. Financially, we will be able to boost up our branches wherever they are and have family life education.... assist us financially and materially and we should do the job ourselves." And in Swahili, he said, "America thank you for the support you have given us in the past. I hope you will continue with your support [sic] so that we can fight for the unborn and women."<sup>82</sup>

### The American Center for Law and Justice in Zimbabwe

Zimbabwe is also working on a new constitution, and the African Center for Law and Justice is involved in the process.

"The American Center for Law and Justice partnered with the Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe to sensitise pastors and key church leaders on issues that the church needs to take a stand on," said Vicky Mpfu, executive director of the African Center for Law & Justice. "We've had a lot of support from ACLJ in America because for me to be able to go around the country to visit the ten provinces we've received some help financially and also we've received some help from the teams from America visiting and working with us," Mpfu said. "The support has been tremendous."<sup>83</sup>

The country's longtime leader, President Robert Mugabe, is already aggressively anti-gay. "Animals in the jungle are better than these people because at least they know that this is a man or a woman," President Mugabe said in 1998. In 2006, Zimbabwe expanded laws against sodomy to mean any physical contact between men. In 2010, Mugabe rejected even the possibility of including LGBT rights in the new constitution: homosexuality "is not debatable, it's not up for discussion... It is just madness, insanity. The ancestors will turn in their graves should we allow this to happen."<sup>84</sup> In 2011, Mugabe told his audience that, "We say no to gays and we will not listen to those ad-

vocating for the inclusion of their rights in the constitution".<sup>85</sup> While initially, opposition leader Prime Minister Morgan Tsvangirai concurred with Mugabe in denouncing gay rights,<sup>86</sup> he recently shifted positions, saying of LGBT rights, "To me, it's a human right."<sup>87</sup>

Jordan Sekulow, as international director of ACLJ,

### ZAMBIA

*Population 13 million*

*Christian population 12.8 million*

*Protestant population 8.4 million*

*Roman Catholic population 2.7 million*

When the late Frederick Chiluba, a Pentecostal influenced by the U.S. Christian Right, came to power in December 1991, he declared Zambia a "Christian Nation," though it was not until 1996 that Zambia's constitution reflected this.<sup>1</sup> Zambia became independent in 1964, but despite three constitutional reviews (1973, 1991, 1996), British colonial laws prohibiting homosexuality and abortion remain on the books. Article 12:2 of the Zambian constitution states, "No person shall deprive an unborn child of life by termination of pregnancy except in accordance with the conditions laid down by an Act of Parliament for that purpose." The constitution alludes to an act of parliament that provides for abortion when trained doctors approve of its need. Abortion may be allowed in some instances, but since 2005, there have been attempts include pro-life terminology within the constitution. Article 10.7.2 of the 2010 Draft Constitution (which was rejected in 2011) defined life as beginning "at conception." The same document defined marriage as between only members of the "opposite sex" and openly outlawed same-sex marriage. Article 47, re-numbered as Article 52 (5) reads, "Marriage between persons of the same sex is prohibited." Homosexuality was already outlawed in 2005 when Penal Code Chapter 87 was amended by No. 26 of 1933 and repealed and replaced by Act No. 15 of 2005, Section 155, which criminalizes homosexuality for "a term not less than 15 years and may be liable to imprisonment for life."<sup>2</sup>

While homosexuality and abortion were not at the forefront of the Zambian politics, the former ruling party, Movement for Multi-Party Democracy (MMD), used these issues in 2011 to mobilize voters against the then-opposition Patriotic Front (PF), accusing the latter of planning to legalize homosexuality. Patriotic Front candidate Michael Chilufya Sata consistently stated he would not legalize homosexuality, though the MMD party attempted to characterize him as pro-gay rights and therefore unfit to rule Zambia. Despite these tricks, the PF won the 2011 elections. LGBT rights were dropped from political rhetoric until United Nations' Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon called on the Zambian government to decriminalize homosexuality during his speech to Parliament, resurrecting the issue. While the country does not go to the poll until 2016, the new leader of the opposition MMD is Pastor Nevers Mumba, former televangelist and High Commissioner to Canada and ambassador to Cuba. Mumba is featured on U.S. evangelical leader Pat Robertson's website; Mumba is likely to receive U.S. Christian Right support and will be one to watch in the 2016 contest.



works closely with Goodwill Shana, the president of the Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe, a grouping of theologically conservative churches in Zimbabwe.<sup>88</sup> “Because of this familiarity and trust in our organization,” Sekulow commented, “we were granted access to leaders in Zimbabwe and created new relationships that we could not have even imagined before this trip.”<sup>89</sup> According to Jordan Sekulow, Shana was familiar with the American group through its weekly show broadcast “on the Christian satellite network Daystar.”<sup>90</sup>

The ACLJ, along with other groups, asked the constitutional commission to include the prohibition of homosexuality. While Article 4:6:3 of the draft constitution defines marriage as between a man and woman, it also prohibits discrimination on various social, economic, religious, and “natural differences or condition.” As in Kenya, ACLJ and other religious and political leaders interpreted the phrase “natural differences or condition” as permitting homosexuality.

Abortion is currently illegal in Zimbabwe and the draft constitution wouldn’t change that. Article 4:1 of the draft constitution states that “everyone has the right to life” and article 4:2 reads, “An Act of Parliament must protect the life of unborn children, and the Act must provide that pregnancy may be terminated only in accordance with that law.” This staking out of American culture war language, couched by potential safeguards to allow abortion for health reasons is similar to Kenya’s constitution.

In Zimbabwe, Jordan Sekulow explains the purpose of the African Center for Law and Justice to be threefold: (1) help train attorneys while working on the draft constitution, (2) promote economic empowerment, and (3) provide humanitarian assistance when we are able.<sup>91</sup> Felix Kachere, a reporter with the official government newspaper *Sunday Mail* told PRA that African religious leaders working with Americans were not helping Zimbabwe, but their funders. “If you are funded, you have to produce results,” he noted, “we don’t want to see Americans, they must go home.”<sup>92</sup>

## The New Push Against Reproductive Freedom: *Human Life International*

Widespread revulsion against arresting women who’ve had an abortion—as well as the simple fact that many people are aware of friends and family members who have undergone the procedure—has made it difficult for U.S. allied organizations to mobilize a large anti-abortion social movement on African soil.<sup>93</sup> Generally, Africans turn a blind eye to abortion. “Abortions happen but since people know it’s against the law they never report them to us,” said a Malawian police spokesman Titan Chadwala.<sup>94</sup> Even in places where abortion may technically be legal in some instances, the complexity surrounding abortion laws forces many women to opt for an illegal procedure.<sup>95</sup> Seodi White, the Director of Women

and the Law in Southern Africa Research and Education Trust (WLSA Malawi) noted that the restrictive laws force many women into procuring unsafe abortions using unconventional means such as “drinking surf (washing powder), using wires, and poisonous herbs. So what we are asking is that our laws should be liberalized so that those who want to carry out abortion should be accessing assistance from trained medical personnel in hospitals instead of going for unsafe abortion.”<sup>96</sup> Teenagers and young unmarried women are the ones most likely to die due to unsafe abortions.<sup>97</sup> A survey of health professionals in Uganda suggested that 23 percent of women sought abortions from traditional practitioners, 56 percent from doctors or nurses and 15 percent try to induce abortions themselves using dangerous procedures. Another 7 percent buy drugs that induce abortions.<sup>98</sup>

Public demand, however, is weighed against competing viewpoints of abortion’s morality and necessity, restrictive or confusing policy on abortion access, and religious teachings. This gray area has left an opening that U.S. religious conservatives recognize and rush to exploit. One active organization is Human Life International (HLI), a Roman Catholic anti-choice group with a blanket opposition to contraception, sex education, vaccines, population control, in vitro fertilization, stem cell research, and euthanasia as part of a “culture of death.” Catholics for Choice indicates that HLI reserves particular “vitriol” for attacks on the LGBT community and homosexuality, and was “an early supporter of the controversial psychologist Paul Cameron,” whose 1980s “research” included the finding that gay people have a higher likelihood of becoming serial killers, child molesters, murderers, and thieves.<sup>99</sup> [See profile]

HLI has formed relationships and partnerships with mainstream U.S. evangelical groups working in Africa and initiated relationships with African religious leaders, with offices in various African countries.<sup>100</sup> Part of HLI’s anti-choice, pro-life mission on the continent is to shut down and render ineffective pro-choice NGOs like Stopes International and Planned Parenthood. HLI claims that contraception causes abortion and that overpopulation is a myth. As Catholics for Choice has noted, the staff at United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) “know only too well that local policymakers are willing to accept HLI’s assertions as fact.”

IRS documents reveal that HLI spends almost a quarter of its overseas spending—\$400,000 annually—on its anti-abortion and anti-gay activities in sub-Saharan Africa alone.<sup>101</sup> HLI Director of Research and Training Worldwide Brian Clowes told PRA that his

*Human Life International reserves particular “vitriol” for attacks on the LGBT community and homosexuality*

organization funds about 37 affiliate offices across Africa in order to defend African family values and campaign against the culture of death manifested in homosexuality and abortion. "Until I went to Africa, I did not know anything about African family values," he told PRA. "But after I met with Africans, they told me that their culture is family affirming. Care for the elderly and love for children are part of the African values. These I believe were part of the original American values."<sup>102</sup>

Tanzania-based Emil Hagamu is one of HLI's two regional coordinators who, the group claims, has "broaden[ed] the mission fields of his pro-life outreach throughout Tanzania and now beyond. He and his team have travelled to literally every diocese of the whole country of Tanzania and have trained over 100,000 couples in NFP [Natural Family Planning]."<sup>103</sup> In 2008, HLI funded and promoted a Tanzania anti-contraception billboard campaign that depicted a skeleton as a "Faithful Condom User."<sup>104</sup> Although the organization wants to present this campaign as a success, Clowes admitted to PRA that the billboards did not last long since people took them down.

In HLI's latest country report for Uganda in 2010, Hagamu said he considered the pro-life movement in Uganda successfully rejuvenated.<sup>105</sup> Challenging the idea that there is a "direct relationship between population growth and poverty," he argued that "Contraception and abortion are major modern vices confronting mankind. These vices have a multiplier effect in the sense that they lead to other evils, such as euthanasia, stem cell research, human cloning and homosexual life styles."

In October 2011, the anti-choice missionaries of Human Life International in Uganda reported an abortion to the police, leading to the clinician's arrest. "We will pursue the case to its logical conclusion. The Constitution is clear that no person has the powers to terminate the life of another unlawfully," said Lawrence Muchunguzi, a HLI Uganda staffer, in an interview with Uganda's *Daily Monitor* newspaper.<sup>106</sup>

Clowes praised the Uganda team, arguing "Prolifers must continue to expose the criminal abortion industry in Africa to put an end to the killing of the innocent unborn."<sup>107</sup> Clowes later complained that the case didn't go anywhere because it was "corrupted" by international pro-choice groups like Marie Stopes.<sup>108</sup> In truth, the U.S. group's tactic is new to Africa, where even those opposing abortion who were interviewed never reported the "murderer" to the police. As one Zimbabwe resident put it, "You can't just report everything to the police. A person has his or her personal life. I believe you don't have the right... to probe into someone's life. A person has the right to live his or her life freely."<sup>109</sup> The pro-life movement may not be as rejuvenated as Hagamu believes.

In Malawi, the climate for procuring any kind of abortion is precarious, given that the procedure is outlawed and the country's religiosity has translated

## MALAWI

*Population 15 million*

*Christian population 12.3 million*

*Protestant population 8.2 million*

*Roman Catholic 4 million*

Malawi was a British colony until its independence in 1964, and inherited its sodomy and abortion laws, which are still upheld today. Its abortion laws are highly restrictive; only allowing abortion after two independent obstetricians and the spouse have consented that the health of the mother is at risk.<sup>1</sup> The issue of homosexuality, currently illegal in Malawi, made headlines when Steve Monjeza and Tionge Chimbanga were arrested after the couple expressed their intention to marry and sentenced to a 14-year prison term. U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon to Malawi intervened on the couple's behalf, prompting the late President Bingu wa Mutharika to pardon the couple in 2010.<sup>2</sup> Despite Mutharika's pardon, his anti-gay views on same-sex relations remained unchanged: "These boys" he told Malawians, "committed a crime against our culture, our religion and our laws." He later described gays as worse than pigs. Following Ban's official visit and the pardoning of the sentenced couple, Malawi passed an anti-gay bill in 2011 that expanded the criminalization of same-sex relations to women. The law, Section 137A "Indecent Practices between Females," makes same-sex relations between women, whether in public or private, illegal and punishable by five years imprisonment.

Religious, political and traditional leaders have condemned homosexuality, usually linking it to the Western countries. In a major speech given in December 2011, U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton linked foreign aid to gay rights, defining "gay rights are human rights and human rights are gay rights."<sup>3</sup> Following Clinton's address, Malawi's then-Justice Minister Ephraim Chiume announced that the country would begin reviewing its laws banning homosexuality.<sup>4</sup> However, the Obama administration soon clarified that the new directive to defend LGBT rights would not result in withdrawal of aid; instead, the United States would grant additional monies to empower LGBT communities.<sup>5</sup> The government of Malawi responded by dropping its review and resuming its public condemnation of homosexuality. Bishop Joseph Bvumbwe, head of the Malawi Council of Churches (MCC), a grouping of protestant churches, added that "It is ... morally wrong and unacceptable for any rich countries or donor agencies to use their financial muscle to push for the so called gay marriages in Malawi."<sup>6</sup> Despite the unpopularity of homosexuality, Malawi's new president Joyce Banda recently declared that she had no intention of prosecuting homosexual crimes. However, with Malawi's elections coming up in 2014, the question of homosexuality will likely be crucial. James Nyondo has already indicated that he is going to contest the elections. With his strong American conservative connections, he is definitely the man to watch.

into policing women who opt to undergo the procedure. Osborne Joda-Mbewe, the General Secretary of Malawi Council of Churches, said that the position of the Church is “abortion is murder; it contradicts the 8th commandment, ‘You shall not kill.’” Thus

*Unlike  
homosexuality,  
packaging  
abortion as a  
“Western”  
vice is a  
difficult sell.*

anyone who aborts has “offended God the author of life, our culture and the entire village.” Joda-Mbewe said that anyone who undergoes an abortion or performs an abortion “is reported to the police,” but he admitted that abortion was, indeed, common in Malawi despite the laws that criminalize it.<sup>110</sup> To counter this, the HLI Malawi affiliate has formed five local pro-life groups;<sup>111</sup>

if their organizing leads to more women being turned into police, religious women may be the most likely victims—they are the ones most likely to have unsafe illegal abortions, according to IPAS.<sup>112</sup>

Unlike Uganda and Malawi, whose anti-choice and anti-abortion efforts HLI has praised, in his *Mission Report* to Namibia in 2010, Clowes complained that international groups were imposing their pro-choice philosophy in Africa. Family Health International, Marie Stopes International, the Namibia Planned Parenthood Association (NAPPA), the Open Society Institute, Population Services International, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), and other United Nations agencies were “attempting to make Namibians into Americans and Europeans with their fanatical meddling.”<sup>113</sup>

Through their “evil work,” he argued, “*many Namibians have fallen victim to anti-life thinking, simply because they haven’t heard the other side of the story* [emphasis his]. They did not comprehend why explicit sex education and contraception are intrinsically evil, he wrote, “and they found it very difficult to understand the scientific evidence and Church teachings on these issues. Some even thought that abortion could be acceptable under certain ‘hard case’ conditions. Namibia is a prime example of how abortion is one hundred times harder to get rid of once it is established than it is to stop it from infecting the culture in the first place.”<sup>114</sup>

Clowes warned that U.S. conservatives should continuously attempt to break up and soften this moral ground which accepts abortion if “the pro-life message is wholeheartedly accepted by the people.”<sup>115</sup> Clowes and his African followers are mistaken in attributing abortion to Westerners. Africans were ending pregnancies using various traditional methods long before colonialism.<sup>116</sup> Unlike homosexuality, packaging abortion as a “Western” vice is a difficult sell. Despite public condemnation, repro-

ductive justice issues are not yet an organizing issue in most of Africa’s political discourse. As Jackson Kaliponda, Church Elder in Masaiti, Zambia noted, unlike homosexuality, “abortion is somehow tolerated in public discourse [and] most people look at it as normal and the most affected are youths from 15 to 28 years old”<sup>117</sup> But he also insisted that “abortion is wrong in all its forms.” Still, he argued that “those people who abort should not be condemned instead they must be helped in any way possible. The Bible says that vengeance belongs to God.”

### **Dismissing International Detractors— *The Population Growth “Hoax” and the U.N.***

By the end of this century, the world population will be 10 billion with “a billion more than previously expected,” says Helen Epstein, the author of *The Invisible Cure: Why We Are Losing the Fight Against AIDS in Africa*. “Nearly all of these extra billion people will be born in Africa, where women in some countries bear seven children each on average, and only 1 in 10 uses contraception.” Epstein continued by outlining the negative implications of this growth: “In many parts of Africa, people already scramble to obtain food, land and water, and discontent provides fertile ground for extremism. So it is important to think carefully about the response to Africa’s exploding population.”<sup>118</sup>

At the international level, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) is mandated to address the impending population crisis in Africa. The UNFPA creates programs to reduce poverty and “to ensure that every pregnancy is wanted, every birth is safe, every young person is free of HIV/AIDS, and every girl and woman is treated with dignity and respect.”<sup>119</sup> But, as advocate and author Jennifer S. Butler has shown, the United Nations is a battlefield for conservative and progressive ideologies.<sup>120</sup> In the PRA report “UNDOing Reproductive Freedom,” Pam Chamberlain argued that “The U.S. antichoice Right (such as FWI, C-FAM) has for years been entrenching itself as a legitimate advisor to the United Nations. Its many organizations use their ‘consultative status’ to broadcast their anti-abortion and anti-woman messages not only in an attempt to influence U.N. policy, but to a broader audience as well through U.S. and international media channels.” One of the conservative organizations with U.N. “consultative status” is Sharon Slater’s Family Watch International (FWI).<sup>121</sup> She founded the organization in 1999 and has since continued to lobby for “family values” at the international level, and has called on Africans to resist U.N. efforts to promote homosexuality as an assault on African “family values.”<sup>122</sup> Most notably, Slater has been essential in constructing FWI’s investigative and confrontational approach to the United Nations and LGBT rights.

Slater’s attitude towards the United Nations is not purely antagonistic; her stance depends upon the

particular position she finds herself in. As Chair of the Families for Orphans project, a subsidiary of FWI, Slater views the United Nations as a neutral organization crucial in solving the fight against orphaned children. However, Slater's relationship with the United Nations seems to be one of deep mistrust and moral doubt. Her international work is based upon the premise that LGBT rights are encroaching upon family values and that the population crisis is a hoax designed by progressives to destroy the family—and that the United Nations is the main actor destroying the family. “We lobby African governments to withstand the anti-family agenda at the U.N. ... We are opposed to the world's sexual rights, comprehensive sexuality, and reproductive rights. The words are used by homosexual activists to destroy the family,” says Slater.<sup>123</sup>

Despite her organization's tiny budget [see profile], Slater is quite visible in Africa. She began to build ties to leaders on the African continent during a period of inactivity at Family Watch International, when she served as president of United Families International (UFI) from 2001-2005. Founded in 1978 by Mormon Susan Roylance,<sup>124</sup> UFI's total assets were as high as \$1.5 million during Slater's tenure.<sup>125</sup> While promoting programs like the abstinence-only-until-marriage curriculum “Stay Alive” for African youth ages 9-14, Slater made connections in countries such as Uganda, Nigeria, Mozambique, Swaziland, and Kenya.<sup>126</sup>

Slater also has a platform as a regular featured speaker at the World Congress of Families, which has identified right-wing organizations including FWI, C-FAM, and Focus on the Family as co-conveners.<sup>127</sup> A fellow World Congress of Families speaker and event organizer, Theresa Okafor, runs Life League Nigeria and the Foundation for African Cultural Heritage, a key ally that has collaborated with FWI on forums for U.N. diplomats.<sup>128</sup>

In July 2011, Slater was a keynote speaker at the International Law Conference on Challenges in Upholding the Rights of Women and Children in Nigeria.<sup>129</sup> The conference was attended by government leaders, social workers, lawyers, educators and American anti-gay activists. In her speech, Slater condemned U.S. President Barack Obama's and the United Nations' calls to decriminalize homosexuality. Slater claimed that legalizing homosexuality would result in losing religious and parental rights. As she put it, legalizing same-sex relations will curtail parents' rights to guide “the education of their children and remove the rights of churches and individuals to publicly practice their own religious beliefs in these areas.”<sup>130</sup>

Following the conference, Slater's husband and FWI legal adviser Greg Slater informed supporters in an email: “In her speech Sharon described the situation with the UN as the proverbial ‘cockroach in the ice cream’—and encouraged Nigerians to pick out and push back hard against the controversial elements and the cultural imperialism of the UN and many developed nations.”<sup>131</sup> He went on to claim, “As

the most populous and one of the wealthiest African counties, Nigeria can serve as a strong role model for other governments in the region to follow on how to hold on to their family values despite intense international pressure. In fact, several days after the conference, the head of the Anglican Church called upon the Nigerian government to withdraw from the United Nations because of its push to further the cause of homosexuality.”<sup>132</sup>

During the same meeting, Slater promoted her book, *Stand for the Family: A Call to Responsible Citizens Everywhere*, giving copies “to the wife of Nigeria's Vice President, the Minister of Children and Family Affairs, and the President of the Senate to help educate them more on international developments.”<sup>133</sup> In this book, Slater presents what she claims to be first-person accounts of how gays are promoting anti-family policies at the United Nations. Slater presents LGBT rights, feminism, environmentalism, reproductive rights, population control and many other human rights issues as assaults on the traditional family.

Slater also attacks the environmental movement which she links to promoting homosexuality and abortions. As she puts it, “Abortion is an important part of population control because no matter how hard activists try to get people to use contraception, many pregnancies will occur due to unprotected sex and contraception failure. They [environmentalists] promote homosexuality because same-sex unions cannot produce children and if more people choose homosexuality, there will be fewer heterosexual breeders.”<sup>134</sup> Slater argues that homosexuals are “significantly more promiscuous” and “more likely to engage in pedophilia.”<sup>135</sup>

FWI's affiliation with the United Nations has led to Slater being mistaken for “a spokeswoman of the United Nations,” as one Nigerian news outlet identified her in 2011. This compounds her harmful views attacking the concept of overpopulation in Africa. The Nigerian news article quotes Slater promoting beliefs that directly oppose the stance of the United Nations: “The developed countries are actually importing people from other countries because they don't have enough workers, they don't have enough people to support their social security system, to support the old people and run their economies.” She further warned that any attempts at reducing Africa's population growth would cause the same problem.<sup>136</sup>

That was probably the same 2011 visit in which Slater keynoted the Nigerian Bar Association Conference, encouraging attendees “to resist the

*FWI's Sharon Slater sees the population crisis as a hoax designed by progressives to destroy the family.*



Pastor Martin Ssempe, one of the architects of Uganda's Anti-Homosexuality Bill, screens gay pornography during a press conference to boost support for the country's anti-gay laws. Photo by Benedicte Desrus

United Nations' calls to decriminalize homosexuality." Dr. Warren Throckmorton writes for the online magazine *Religion Dispatches*, "Slater told delegates that they would lose their religious and parental rights if they supported 'fictitious sexual rights.' One such 'fictitious right' is the right to engage in same-sex sexual relationships without going to jail."<sup>137</sup>

Throckmorton's article also points out that FWI "considered Uganda's notorious anti-gay pastor, Martin Ssempe, a volunteer coordinator for Africa" until his support for Uganda's Anti-Homosexuality Bill attracted public outrage and forced the organization to distance itself.

Although Slater's arguments lack scientific grounding, she is one of many U.S. conservatives on the African continent who present themselves as experts on issues of human sexuality and reproductive rights, and get a hearing despite her marginal status in the United States. FWI echoes HLI's alarmist rhetoric that population control will destroy the African family, and that LGBT people and abortion are to blame. Slater, like Clowes of HLI, has positioned herself as an authority; her claims that the population crisis is a hoax designed by progressives to

destroy the family is particularly disturbing for the future of Africa. While the U.S. Christian Right are not yet successful in painting abortion and contra-

ception as Western plots, FWI and HLI's tactic of opposing population control seems more dangerous.

## Intercepting the Human Rights Agenda

Even if we did not yet find widespread opposition to population control as a Western conspiracy, we found disturbing signs that many Africans embrace the U.S. Christian Right's claim that homosexuality is a sign of both Western imperialism and neocolonialism.

When British Prime Minister David Cameron threatened to cut funding to African countries that persecute LGBT persons during the October 2011 Commonwealth Heads of Governments Meeting in Perth, African religious and political leaders did not just condemn the move as immoral but also used it as evidence that homosexuality is another imperialistic instrument of oppression that the West intends to employ on Africa. Be it in Kenya, Zimbabwe, Zambia or Malawi, the sentiment was the same. Both independent and government news media houses reacted with indignation as the following headlines show: "Ghana tells off UK over threat on gays" (*Daily Nation*, Ghana); "Is the west still colonizing Continent," (*Tanzania Daily News*, Tanzania) and "UK's Cameron touched wrong button on gays" (*The Observer*, Uganda). "Amoral and horrendous culturally imperialistic" is what Mobhare Matinyi of *The Citizen* in Tanzania called Cameron's move. While some responses such as the one from *The Observer* seem to accept homosexuality as part of the African heritage, most responses saw the Prime Minister's position as imposing homosexuality on the continent.

**Brian Clowes and Sharon Slater, like many U.S. conservatives on the African continent, present themselves as scientific experts on sexuality.**



Former British Prime Minister David Cameron and Malawi President Joyce Banda at the Commonwealth Heads of Government lunch in London, June 6, 2012.

Photo by Adam Gasson/Commonwealth Secretariat/Flickr

U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon's February 2012 address to Zambia's Parliament on human and LGBT rights, coming as that country delves into a constitutional process, was also widely criticized as paternalistic.

In a major speech given in December 2011, U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton linked foreign aid to gay rights, saying, "gay rights are human rights and human rights are gay rights."<sup>138</sup> The inherent threat to withhold aid from nations that persecute sexual minorities was certain to provoke a backlash, but also could produce some results. Soon after Secretary Clinton's address, Malawi's then-Justice Minister Ephraim Chiume announced that the country would begin reviewing its laws banning homosexuality.<sup>139</sup> However, the Obama administration soon clarified that the new directive to defend LGBT rights would not result in withdrawal of aid; instead, the United States would grant additional monies to empower LGBT communities.<sup>140</sup> The government of Malawi responded by dropping its review and resuming its public condemnation of homosexuality. In backing away from its threat to cut aid, the Obama administration got the worst of both worlds—the predictable flak, without any progress on policy.

With its announcement of a \$3 million global equality fund to civil society organizations working on LGBT rights across the world,<sup>141</sup> the administration reinforced the conservative narrative that LGBT groups and the West are flooding the continent with money to impose foreign sexual mores onto the continent. If the Obama administration's commitment to LGBT rights everywhere is to bear fruit, there is need to demand stiffer penalties to countries that have systematically abused sexual minorities. In most cases,

the African public reacts to these Western human rights efforts by demanding that their governments enact new laws so as to signal their independence to Europe and North America. Just as politicians objected to widening the human rights lens to encompass LGBT individuals in Africa, religious leaders objected. Bishop Joseph Bvumbwe of the Malawi Council of Churches (a group of 27 Protestant churches) accused Western financial donors of using "their financial muscle to push for the so called gay marriages in Malawi," which he claimed threaten "the family unit as instituted by God, but would also contradict Malawi's rich traditions, culture and its spirituality as a God fearing nation."<sup>142</sup>

U.S. Christian Right groups, including Human Life International, Family Research Council and Family Watch International, have celebrated African resistance to the liberation of LGBT persons.<sup>143</sup> Aside from insisting that the U.N and the Obama administration are forcing African countries to accept the gay agenda, U.S. rightist groups such as Human Life International and Family Watch International have celebrated such responses as indicative of Africans' opposition to LGBT rights. It is ironic that American conservatives are quick to criticize Western countries' involvement in Africa while pushing American-born bigotry on Africa. As PRA's Pam Chamberlain puts it, "When other nations hold conservative views, U.S. Christian Right groups laud an international coalition that reflects their own values. When it is in their interests, however, anti-choice NGOs accuse Western states of imposing their values on developing nations [or simply] 'sexual imperialism.'"<sup>144</sup>

The growing chorus of public condemnation given the growing persecution of sexual minorities on the continent, is frequently tone deaf and may endanger the very people it intends to defend. Threats of punitive measures from the United States and Britain, if not followed up with actions, will only legitimize religious conservatives' contention that homosexuality is a Western import and recast human rights advocates in the role of neocolonialists, and endangers further human rights work on the continent. It also threatens to destabilize efforts to promote reproductive rights, since the U.S. Christian Right is attempting to deploy similar arguments in waging the culture war in that arena.

*Public condemnation from Western and U.N. officials is frequently tone deaf and may endanger the very people it intends to defend.*

# Recommendations

Our research suggests the following actions can help support LGBT people in sub-Saharan Africa and forestall campaigns against women's reproductive rights that stem from U.S. Christian Right influence.

1

## Confront the myth that human rights advocacy is Western neocolonialism

The U.S. Christian Right and its African allies charge that human rights activists are neocolonialists out to destroy Africa through the imposition of Western gender norms and policies. This myth is fueled by deep seated suspicion regarding Western powers and their motives. We can challenge this myth by exposing the *Americanness* of the recent politicization of homosexuality and abortion in Africa.

2

## Respect and follow the leadership of African human rights promoters

Perhaps the most powerful response to the spurious charge of neocolonialism is simply to practice principled solidarity with African human rights promoters. Human rights advocates in the West can and should provide increased educational, financial, media, and other resources that better enable African social justice voices to be heard above the din of right-wing media campaigns that demonize sexual minorities and seek to codify conservative Western theological edicts as public policy. At the same time, Western human rights advocates should applaud and publicize their good works—providing material aide and social supports to African communities, whether through religious missions or buying benches for primary school children in Malawi. It is important to reveal that those on the side of social justice are actively engaged in promoting Africa's wellbeing beyond the arena of sexual health and rights. If human rights activists of all countries improve their messages, treat religion respectfully, and visibly support social justice projects like helping rural communities access fresh water, they can win broad African support. African human rights defenders have a special responsibility to create educational materials for African theologians.

3

## Tell Africans what the U.S. Christian Right really stands for

While some tendencies within African Christianity share charismatic beliefs with U.S. Christian Right campaigners, the African Church in general is significantly more social-justice-oriented and concerned about the poor and the disenfranchised than is the U.S. Right. The U.S. culture wars are still not understood in African circles, and conservative religious interests from the United States successfully present themselves as representing the mainstream of Western Christianity. It is important for human rights advocates to expose the historic alignment of the U.S. Christian Right with White supremacist and repressive regimes in Africa, as well as their continued opposition to social justice initiatives in the United States. Many African Christians would likely oppose significant portions of the Right's policy agenda, such as Human Life International's strident opposition to contraception, were it made known to them. It might be strategic to support creation of a guide to U.S. conservative religious players active in Africa, written by and for Africans. Exposés of the U.S. Right in Africa should also consider the need to redeem the sullied image of the United Nations, which is demonized even by the very conservative U.S. groups that work within its processes.

4

## Support the visibility of LGBT Africans as a means of curbing homophobia

Many African sexual minorities exist at the margins of society, invisible and vulnerable. Broader visibility will enable their *Africanness* and humanity to become more broadly evident. Human rights advocates can assist by establishing educational opportunities for African LGBT activists in their home countries and abroad. Such support can assist Africans in maintaining leadership over their own human rights struggle.

5

**Support African leaders who courageously stand for human rights**

Africans politicians and religious leaders—such as Malawian president Joyce Banda and Ugandan Bishop Christopher Ssenyonjo—who have stood up for human rights need the support of international social justice advocates. While many Westerners will understandably fear being labeled “neo-colonialist” for any public expression of solidarity, we must stand with—and aid—those defending human rights principles.

6

**Put meaningful pressure on African political leadership to respect human rights**

President Joyce Banda’s stance on decriminalization of LGBT persons in Malawi shows how political will is essential to the realization of human rights for all. Her leadership suggests that African presidents have the power to resist and reverse the persecution of LGBT persons. Just as the Obama administration refused to enforce the Defense of the Marriage Act (DOMA) in the United States, African presidents should be challenged to stop hiding behind the most intolerant religious voices in their nations. President Museveni of Uganda, among others, should be challenged to follow in Banda’s footsteps. Bold statements coupled with equivocal action by the U.K. and U.S. governments arguably have resulted in a lose-lose scenario: these Western governments have failed to evade charges of neocolonialism and likewise failed to compel more affirmative action from African governments in defense of human rights. The United Nations Secretary General’s office has likewise issued bold statements that rally the spirits of the human rights communities but can prove counter-productive. It would perhaps be more effective to offer fewer public pronouncements that can easily be characterized as Western bullying by the African press. Western governments have the tendency to make threats that they do not enforce—this is unproductive and unhelpful.

7

**Engage African diplomatic missions on issues of human rights**

Establishing direct relationships with African diplomats associated with the United Nations and other African embassies will help dispel the rumors that U.S. human rights activists are out to recolonize Africa. Through such relationships, activists can share information about what human rights groups are doing in various countries and why such activities are important to Africa. This direct contact can

counter the false information presented by various Christian Right groups and figures.

8

**Rally against bigotry across ecumenical lines**

Roman Catholic groups promoting homophobia around the world win attention from Catholics for Choice but other Christian groups need to step up and cross denominational lines in challenging the Roman Catholic Right. They must extend their ecumenical alliances beyond their challenge to rightwing evangelicals. And all Americans must continue challenging Christian Right organizations at home—exposing their unpalatable work in Africa to the American public and compelling organizations, individuals, and religious hierarchy to distance themselves from their African allies and actions. The Christian Right’s united front in Africa calls for sustained coordination across denominational lines in defense of human rights.

9

**Demonstrate respect for religion**

Africa is a deeply religious continent. U.S. conservatives regularly present human rights activists as godless liberals, with no respect for religion. This perception needs to be challenged and changed. Religious-based human rights groups and leaders can play a vital role in defending the rights of sexual minorities and women by sharing the sources of their commitments in sacred scriptures. Secular advocates, when challenging religious justifications for denying the full humanity of any population, should take care not to inadvertently degrade the Bible, the Quran, or faith traditions more generally.

10

**Build infrastructure for the long term**

The Christian Right has committed itself to a long-term strategy—including providing financial support to African church leaders—to influence human rights policies in Africa. Western and African human rights activists must keep sight of their own long-term strategies of meeting universal human rights goals and not fall into being reactive to the provocations of the Right. Human rights struggles in Africa as elsewhere will require powerful infrastructures for leadership development, mobilization, and communications. One idea suggested by African activists interviewed for this project was the creation of a social-justice oriented radio station that plays Christian music and shares social justice voices not heard in the conservative Christian media.



# Notes

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- <sup>23</sup> Wilkerson, "American Supports Ugandan Anti-Gay Bill."
- <sup>24</sup> See David Muhia Githii, *Exposing and Conquering Satanic Forces over Kenya* (Kenya: Ragrancia Books Pub, 2008).
- <sup>25</sup> Peter Wagner, "Territorial Spirits and World Missions," *Evangelical Missions Quarterly*, Volume 25:3 (1989), 278-288.
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- <sup>27</sup> Newfrontiers, "Zimbabwe, Churches' Response to the Trumpet Call!" eNewsletter (January 2011). [http://www.newfrontierstogether.org/Groups/151337/Newfrontiers/Worldwide/Zimbabwe/eNews\\_Jan\\_2011\\_Central/eNews\\_Jan\\_2011\\_Central.aspx](http://www.newfrontierstogether.org/Groups/151337/Newfrontiers/Worldwide/Zimbabwe/eNews_Jan_2011_Central/eNews_Jan_2011_Central.aspx) "There was a real sense of hope and that God is moving when many people prayed for Zimbabwe at the Transformation Conference hosted by Ed Silvano in Hawaii in November 2010. Prayer was organised to 'clear the skies.'"
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- <sup>41</sup> In his book, *Exposing and Conquering Satanic Forces Over Kenya*, Githii argues that the problems of Kenya lie in the government's failure to confront satanic powers dominating the country represented in various national symbols such as the Court of Arms, the Baphomet at the top of the Speaker of the National Assembly's chair, the blazing star at the entrance to parliament, and snake-like sculptures within parliament buildings. Harambee Avenue and Harambee House were dedicated to Ambee, an Indian goddess, he claims.
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# Timeline of Anti-LGBT Bills and Laws in *Colonizing African Values*

2006

**Zimbabwe** expands laws against sodomy to mean any physical contact between men: Homosexuality, Sodomy: Criminal Law (Codification and Reform) Act [Chapter 9:23], Act 23/2004 (Effective July 1, 2006) Section 67, Indecent Assault; Section 73, Sodomy and Criminal Law (Codification and Reform) Act (Effective July 8, 2006); Section 73 Sodomy.

2009

**Uganda** Anti-Homosexuality Bill, often referred to as the ‘Kill the Gays’ Bill, is introduced in Uganda’s 8th Parliament by David Bahati in October. Legislation issued to complement the existing language and address the lack of clarity within the Constitution of Uganda and the Penal Code Act Cap. 120.

2010

**Uganda** Anti-Homosexuality Bill 2010 remains under review.

During redrafting of the Constitution of **Zimbabwe**, President Robert Mugabe rejects even discussion about including LGBT rights in the new constitution.

**Kenya** redrafts its constitution but maintains abortion as illegal under Part 2: Rights and Fundamental Freedoms. The Right to Life is detailed in Section 24.4. Revised constitution passed in 2010. Constitution states in Chapter 4: Bill of Rights, Part 1: General Provisions Relating to the Bill of Rights Section 45.2 that marriage is between persons of the opposite sex.

**Malawian Parliament** amends the country’s penal code to include Section 237A, outlawing same-sex relations between females in December. Passes January 2011. Section 137A, captioned “indecent practice between females,” provides that any female person who, in public or private, commits “any act of gross indecency with another female,” shall be guilty of an offence and liable to a prison term of five years.

2011

**Ugandan parliament** adjourns without voting on anti-homosexuality bill in May. Debate reopens in October.

In November, the **Nigerian Senate** passes the Same Sex (Prohibition) Bill 2011 (SSMPB 2011), which criminalizes not just same-sex marriages but also registration and operation of any gay organization or clubs in the country.

**Zambia** rejects a constitutional draft that would outlaw homosexuality. The rejection is due to dissatisfaction with then-president Rupiah Banda—homosexuality is already barred by the country's penal code.

**Malawi's** then-Justice Minister Ephraim Chiume announces that the country would begin reviewing its laws banning homosexuality. The Obama administration, however, soon clarifies that the new directive to defend LGBT rights would not result in withdrawal of aid. The government of Malawi responds by dropping its review and resuming its public condemnation of homosexuality.

New anti-gay laws are also being promoted in the **Democratic Republic of Congo**: The Sexual Practices Against Nature Bill was introduced in its Assembly last year. Section 2 of the bill lumps same-sex relations together with bestiality as 'sexual practices against nature.' The bill also apparently criminalizes Gay porn, sex education and HIV/AIDS prevention materials, and any activities that promote LGBT rights. Section 174h3 of the Bill, provides that 'all publications, posters, pamphlets, [or] films highlighting or likely to arouse or encourage sexual practices against nature are forbidden within the territory of the DRC.' It goes on to say that 'all associations that promote or defend sexual relations against nature are forbidden within the territory of the DRC.' According to section 174h1 of the proposed law, violations would be punished by three to five years in prison and a fine of 500,000 Congolese francs - about \$55.25. This is a huge fine in a country where the World Bank estimates yearly household consumption at only \$57.

2012

**Uganda** anti-gay bill reintroduced to the 9th Parliament on February 7, 2012.

In spring, the new **Malawian president** Joyce Banda vows not to honor anti-homosexuality laws and barred the government from prosecuting anyone under them. Those laws, however, remain on the books and reformers do not think they will have necessary votes to repeal.

In **Kenya**, anti-gay activists work hard to put constitutional amendments to vote in the fall.

Draft legislation similar to Uganda's Anti-Homosexuality Bill arises in **Liberia**: Chapter 14, Sub-Chapter D of the New Penal Code is amended with an addition stating that a person is guilty of Same Sex Sexual practice if he or she has sexual intercourse with another person of the same gender with or without the consent of either person.

**Zimbabwe** decriminalization of homosexuality debate continues in light of intense international pressure. 2006 laws remain in place.



# Glossary of Terms

## **African Evangelicals**

African Christians who are theologically conservative but can be socially progressive. Mostly, these Christians uphold the Bible as inherently inspired. Although most Protestant and some Pentecostal Churches claim to be Evangelicals, African Anglicans, United Methodists, and Presbyterians in Nigeria, Uganda, and Kenya identify themselves as Evangelicals. Please note that this understanding is different from Pew Forum.

## **African Center for Law and Justice (ACLJ)**

Launched by the U.S.-based American Center for Law and Justice. Based in Zimbabwe, but along with sister organization East African Centre for Law and Justice in Kenya, Zimbabwe it lobbies for African legislation that represents the U.S. Christian Right's ideology. The offshoots provided an African base for work in both countries and nearby Rwanda, Uganda, Tanzania, and South Sudan. It has been active in the Zimbabwean constitutional debates over including anti-gay and antichoice language.

## **American Center for Law and Justice (ACLJ-USA)**

Founded by Pat Robertson in 1990 and run by Executive Director Jay Sekulow, the organization has the stated goal of defending "traditional" marriage and abolishing abortion. The group now works in Africa to ensure that family values are included in newly drafted constitutions throughout Africa. Created the East African Center for Law and Justice and the African Center for Law and Justice as home bases for operations in Africa.

## **Anti-Homosexuality Bill (Uganda)**

Uganda's **Anti-Homosexuality Bill** (often called the "**Kill the Gays bill**" in the media) is a legislative proposal that would cause the unprecedented persecution of LGBT people; in some instances, homosexuals could receive life imprisonment or death. The bill was submitted by Member of Parliament David Bahati in October 2009, and reintroduced in February 2012. The bill was a direct response to the Family Life Network's March 2009 "Seminar on Exposing the Homosexuals' Agenda," which featured Holocaust revisionist Scott Lively and Dan Schmierer

of the ex-gay group Exodus International.

## **Apostle**

A title used to describe the leaders of the New Apostolic Reformation or Transformation movement. "Prophet" is also used.

## **"Carnal knowledge" laws**

One legacy of British colonialism in Anglophone Africa are antigay laws which prohibit "carnal knowledge against the order of nature." Supported by religious teachings on the continent, namely Christianity and Islam, this colonialist import has fully assimilated into African society and is now defended with national pride. These "carnal knowledge" laws—and more recent criminalization against homosexuality—are present in more than 35 African countries.

## **Charismatics**

All Pentecostals are likely to be Charismatics, but not all charismatics are Pentecostals. Usually, the term refers to Christians who emphasize the gifts of the Holy Spirit. In addition to Pentecostal churches, they are found in the Roman Catholic, Orthodox, and mainline Protestant Churches.

## **Conservative Evangelicals**

A subset of evangelicals, this group is both theologically and socially conservative but not necessarily politically active.

## **Demonization**

Portraying a person or group as totally malevolent, sinful, or evil -- perhaps even in league with Satan. A precursor to scapegoating and conspiracism which encourages discrimination and violence against the target, demonization involves marginalization (using propaganda and prejudice to set people outside the circle of wholesome mainstream society) and dehumanization (negatively labeling the targeted persons so they become perceived more as objects than as real people).

## **Discrimination**

A set of actions or methodology that denies equal treatment to a targeted group. Discrimination can appear in three forms: Individual, Institutional, and Structural.

### **Dominionism**

The theocratic idea that regardless of theological view or eschatological timetable, heterosexual Christian men are called by God to exercise dominion over secular society by taking control of political and cultural institutions. Competes in Christianity with the idea of Stewardship, which suggests custodial care rather than absolute power. Used here in the broader sense, some analysts use the word only to refer to forms and offshoots of Reconstructionism, a neo-Calvinist right-wing religious movement.

### **East African Center for Law and Justice (EACLJ)**

Launched by the U.S.-based American Center for Law and Justice. Based in Kenya, but along with sister organization African Centre for Law and Justice in Zimbabwe it lobbies for African legislation that represents the U.S. Christian Right's ideology. The offshoots provided an African base for work in both countries and nearby Rwanda, Uganda, Tanzania, and South Sudan. EACLJ actively promoted anti-LGBT and anti-abortion language in the redrafted Kenyan constitution in 2010 but failed to remove language it felt provided "loopholes" to its opponents.

### **Ecumenical movement**

A movement aiming to promote understanding and cooperation among Christian churches; aims ultimately at universal Christian unity.

### **Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe (EFZ)**

A grouping of theologically conservative churches in Zimbabwe. Founded in 1962, it represents denominations, churches, parachurch movements, and individual Christians of the Evangelical persuasion. The fellowship now has more than 100 member-churches and more than two million individual members.

### **Evangelicals**

Members of a broad Protestant movement born from various religious revivals that requires its adherents to be born again, accept Biblical authority, actively share the gospel, and embrace the death and rebirth of Jesus Christ as the Son of God as essential to their own salvation.

### **Family Watch International**

Founded in 1999, Family Watch International has consultative status with the United Nations, giving it an international platform from which to lobby for "family values." The founder of Family Watch International, Sharon Slater, maintains that population growth is a hoax created by progressives with the aim of destroying families. Homosexuality, environmentalism, and abortion are also to be blamed for the destruction of families, and thus eliminated/outlawed.

### **Foundation for African Cultural Heritage**

A coalition of Nigerian 20 pro-life and pro-family NGOs, including the Nigerian Life League. The Foundation – and Director Theresa Okafor – is a close Family Watch International (FWI) partner and has co-sponsored forums for U.N.diplomats.

### **Fundamentalists\***

Protestants who believe the Bible is to be read literally and who maintain ecclesiastical separation from those who believe differently. They generally are hostile to the "gifts of the Spirit," believing they were bestowed only during the early church period described in the New Testament.

### **Human Life International**

A Roman Catholic anti-choice group, Human Life International is working to eliminate homosexuality, abortion, and anything it considers "anti-life" globally.

### **International Fellowship for Christian Churches**

Operates in Zambia under the auspices of the Fellowship Christian Church of Zambia. An affiliate member of the Christ Church Fellowship International since the year 1995, except for a period from 2002-2006.

### **Gifts of the Holy Spirit\***

Listed in 1 Corinthians 12:4-14, these gifts include speaking in tongues, healing, prophecy, spiritual discernment and the performing of miracles. Some Christians contend the Holy Spirit gave these gifts or "charisms" only during the New Testament period, but Pentecostals and charismatics believe such gifts are still manifested today among believers.

### **Global South**

A term in current usage describing the developing World, formerly called the Third World, which includes Africa, Central and South America, and parts of Asia. Usually, it is used in contrast to the global North.

### **Life League Nigeria**

A pro-life organization with operations in Nigeria, LLN was established for young professionals committed to promoting the dignity of the human person, character formation, and sanctity of life. Life League Nigeria's current CEO is Theresa Okafor; she is also a director of the Foundation for African Cultural Heritage (FACH), a network of 20 anti-choice and pro-family Nigerian organizations.

### **Mainline Churches**

Established Protestant denominations, such as Episcopal, Presbyterian, Methodist, Lutheran,

and the United Church of Christ organizations. Often used loosely to contrast these groups with evangelical, fundamentalist, and non-denominational churches.

#### **Mainline Protestants\***

Members of the once-dominant Protestant denominations such as Presbyterian and Lutheran. Although affirming many traditional beliefs, these churches are known for their generally progressive theology and openness to new ideas and societal changes. These denominations do not stress the gifts of the Holy Spirit but are often tolerant of such practices, and thus include charismatics in their ranks.

#### **Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)**

Eight international development goals United Nations member states and some international organizations have agreed to achieve by the year 2015. These include reducing extreme poverty, reducing child mortality rates, improving maternal health, ensuring environmental sustainability, provision of universal primary education, fighting diseases such as HIV/AIDS, and developing a global partnership for development.

#### **New Apostolic Reformation**

A rapidly growing charismatic Christian movement, also called the apostolic and prophetic movement, which teaches that human agency is required to retake the earth from Satan and enable Jesus' return. The New Apostolic Reformation advocates reorganizing churches under modern-day apostles and prophets, whose authority would extend to all areas of society and eradicate separation between church and state, eliminate denominational divides, and unite evangelical Christians.

#### **Pentecostalism**

A diverse Christian religious movement that emerged in 19th century United States emphasizing individuals' direct experience of God and that sees the Holy Spirit alive and operating in the present, as evidenced in modern day miracles and the supernatural. Signs of this are faith healing, speaking in tongues and prophecy. Pentecostals also may embrace what they see as literal readings of an inerrant Bible.

#### **Presbyterian Church in East Africa (PCEA)**

Established as an offshoot of missionary work done by the Church of Scotland in the late 1800s. The PCEA plays a significant role in Kenya, having established many medical and educational facilities, in addition to its political activities. The PCEA maintains relations with the Church of Scotland, the United Church

of Canada, the Presbyterian Church USA, the Reformed Church of America, and the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.

#### **Prophecy\***

A spontaneous utterance spoken in worship settings believed to be inspired by the Holy Spirit; not necessarily a prediction of future events as the term is commonly understood. One of the spiritual gifts listed in 1 Corinthians 12.

#### **Prosperity gospel\***

A teaching that has emerged in recent decades in some pentecostal and charismatic circles that emphasizes biblical verses on health and wealth to make the point that God wants believers to prosper; to release intended blessings, believers must have unwavering faith and practice certain principles, such as donating one tenth of their income (tithing) to a church. Some critics say the movement is too simplistic and overlooks biblical verses on hardship and suffering.

#### **Reproductive Rights**

According to the World Health Organization, having the basic information, means, and right to make reproductive decisions with being subject to discrimination, coercion, or violence. Also, the right to a reasonable standard of sexual and reproductive health care.

#### **Roman Catholic**

The Roman Catholic Church is a Christian denomination of believers who are "in communion" with the papacy. The largest Christian church currently in existence, it is characterized by an episcopal hierarchy with the pope as its head, a belief in seven sacraments, and the authority of tradition alongside scripture. Roman Catholicism is largely centered around the doctrine that God's grace is conveyed through seven sacraments, but especially through the sacrament of eucharist (communion) celebrated at mass. The other six sacraments are baptism, confirmation, penance, holy orders, matrimony, and anointing of the sick.

#### **Renewalists\***

An umbrella term used to refer to Pentecostals and charismatics.

#### **Roman Catholic Episcopal Conference of Malawi (ECM)**

The coordinating body of Malawian Bishops. Roman Catholic Episcopal Conferences exist in all regions and/or relevant countries to act as an organizing consortium of local Catholic Bishops.

#### **Scapegoating**

Blaming a person or group wrongfully for some problem, especially for other people's misdeeds. Scapegoating deflects people's anger and griev-

ances away from the real causes of a social problem onto a target group demonized as malevolent wrongdoers. The problem may be real or imaginary, the grievances legitimate or illegitimate, and members of the targeted group may be wholly innocent or partly culpable. The scapegoats are wrongfully stereotyped as all sharing the same negative trait or are singled out for blame while other major culprits are let off the hook.

### **Sexual Minorities**

This term is used to refer to LGBTIQ persons. It is based on the assumption that these persons are likely to be a minority in any given society.

### **Seven Mountains Mandate**

The mandate states that God has appointed Christians to take over the “seven mountains” or spheres of society: business, government, media, arts and entertainment, education, the family, and religion.

### **Social movement**

A dissident mass movement that seeks to transform society and challenge existing power relationships by means other than (but often including) the political electoral process. Social movements are frequently confrontational, but they do not necessarily resort to violence. Many social movements are essentially reformist, while some are insurgent or even revolutionary. Dissident groups generally still hope for the reform of the existing system, even when their reforms are drastic, and the dissidents are dubious their goals will be reached.

### **Social witness**

A term describing how churches respond to God’s call to work for peace and justice in the changing world. It is also called prophetic witness.

### **Speaking in tongues\***

Ecstatic worship or prayer using unintelligible speech that is considered a gift of the Holy Spirit; also called prayer language or glossolalia.

### **Spiritual discernment\***

A spiritual gift to recognize and differentiate the workings of the Holy Spirit and the devil.

### **Transformation Movement**

The Transformation Movement consists of modern-day apostles who reorganize existing churches under their leadership, connecting African and conservative American churches into a global network. Characterized by the belief in demons and evil’s constant presence in the world, the leaders of the Transformation Movement prescribe exorcisms in order to rid the world of evil and eliminate poverty.

### **Theocracy**

A system where the only appropriate political leaders are persons who see themselves as devoted to carrying out the will of God as interpreted by a common religion.

### **U.N. Consultative Status**

An official status that applies to non-governmental organizations with clearance to participate in the formal deliberations of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (ECOSOC) of the United Nations. This privilege was introduced under Article 71 of the U.N. Charter. The U.N. states that consultative status is granted by ECOSOC upon recommendation of the ECOSOC Committee on NGOs, which is comprised of 19 Member States.

### **United Nations Population Fund**

An international development agency that runs programs and support policies that combat poverty and overpopulation, and promote women’s rights.

### **U.S. Christian Right**

A range of right-wing Christian social movements and organizations characterized by strong support of conservative social and political values. Includes conservative factions of mainline Protestant denominations, evangelicals and Roman Catholics. An influential part of the Republican Party, it represents about 15 percent of the voting public.

### **World Congress of Families**

A coalition of leading international advocates against abortion and reproductive and sexual rights that meets every few years to network and strategize. It is coordinated by the Rockford, Illinois-based Howard Center for Family, Religion & Society, led by the “natural family” advocate Allan Carlson. Past congresses took place in reliably socially conservative countries like Poland, Nigeria, and Mexico, and drew hundreds and sometime thousands of participants.

### **Zimbabwe Council of Churches**

Formed in 1964 to unite churches and Christian organizations for collaboration on responses to political and socio-economic problems through missionary work and advocacy.

### **Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops Conference (ZCBC)**

The coordinating body for the Zimbabwean Bishops, formed in 1969 by Roman Decree. The Bishops are under the authority of the Pope, lead their own dioceses, and work on behalf of the Church as a whole.

*\*Definitions from Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life*

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# Sharon Slater, Family Watch International

By Kerry Eleveld

Family Watch International (FWI) serves almost exclusively as a vehicle to advance the conservative views of its Mormon founder and president, Sharon Slater, abroad and in the United Nations. FWI's work originally revolved around advancing conservative ideologies about traditional family structure (one man, one woman-headed households) and the importance of abstinence until marriage, advocated as the key to curtailing abortion and ending the spread of HIV/AIDS—although the organization has shifted to a greater focus on the harms of homosexuality since its founding in 1999.<sup>1</sup>

References to the traditional or “natural family” appear throughout FWI's policy briefs as well as Slater's writings and speeches, reflecting the conservative religious doctrine that idealizes the nuclear family as the lynchpin to political change and the antidote to all societal ills.<sup>2</sup>

Dr. Allan Carlson, a co-author of *The Natural Family: A Manifesto*, is the founder of The Howard Center for Family, Religion and Society, a conservative research institution, and the World Congress of Families, an umbrella organization of international “pro-family” advocates that draws upon conservative ideologies across the religious spectrum.<sup>3</sup> “Before attending my first World Congress of Families in Geneva in 1999, I had never been involved in a cause,” Slater wrote. “That experience changed the direction of my life, as I learned about the assaults in almost every area of family life and was instilled with the hope that if we all worked together, we could effectively stop many of these attacks.”<sup>4</sup> Slater says she founded Family Watch International that year, and she has maintained a close relationship with the World Congress of Families.

From 2001-2005, Slater served as president of another Gilbert, Arizona-based organization, United Families International (UFI), which was founded by Mormon Susan Roylance in 1978 and had total assets ranging from almost \$1.5 million to \$500,000 during Slater's tenure. Slater forged many of her ties in African countries such as Uganda, Nigeria, Mozambique, Swaziland, and Kenya while promoting programs like “Stay Alive,” which taught African youth ages 9-14 an abstinence-only and fidelity-in-marriage curriculum.<sup>5</sup>

During Slater's years at UFI, International Policy Director E. Douglas Clark appears to have helped shape both Slater's and the organization's approach to lobbying the United Nations. Clark, who earned his M.B.A. and J.D. from Brigham Young University and has written several books and articles about Mormonism, now serves as director of U.N. Affairs at The Howard Center.<sup>6</sup>

Domestically, UFI worked to protect “the institutions of traditional marriage and the natural family from the growing threats they face today,” according to its tax forms. In that vein, UFI made grants to the Marriage Law Foundation, a Utah-based nonprofit founded and directed by Mormon William Duncan that provides legal resources “to defend and protect marriage between a husband and wife.”<sup>7</sup> Maggie Gallagher, the former president of the National Organization for Marriage (NOM), sits on the foundation's board. NOM itself has close ties to both the Catholic Church and LDS Church, and received a \$10,000 donation from Mormon Republican presidential nominee Mitt Romney for the 2008 Prop 8 campaign against marriage equality in California.<sup>8</sup>

While the majority of Family Watch International's efforts are geared toward the United Nations and appearances abroad, the group makes limited efforts to stymie the rights of same-sex couples in the United States, filing amicus briefs in marriage and adoption cases in states including New York, Louisiana, and Rhode Island.<sup>9</sup>

“It is one thing to allow others the right to engage in self-destructive behavior,” Slater warned in a 2009 article. “But allowing and even granting those same individuals the right to introduce this behavior as normal and healthy to society at large, especially to children, is a very different proposition. This is why we have laws that prohibit sexual acts such as incest, sexual abuse, and rape as well as drug dealing, assaults, and other crimes.”<sup>10</sup>

Though FWI's tax forms show, for the years they are available, that the organization has never claimed assets totaling more than \$35,000 nor an annual intake in “gifts, grants, contributions, and membership fees” exceeding \$150,000,<sup>11</sup> Slater is opportunistic

in continually finding ways to impact the international debate about families, abortion, and the LGBT population that seemingly exceed the resources of her modest organization.

## The United Nations

Slater's organization was founded under the name Global Helping to Advance Women and Children (Global HAWC). The organization operates under its legal alternative name, Family Watch International, at essentially all times—except at the United Nations, where “Global Helping to Advance Women and Children” is listed as approved for Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) consultative status.<sup>12</sup> This status permits participation in important meetings on economic and social issues, where Slater's group is part of an effort to limit international advancement of comprehensive sexuality education, reproductive health services that include abortion, and basic rights and protections for LGBT persons.<sup>13</sup> (An organization that shares this agenda, Human Life International, created an offshoot group to regain access to the U.N. after losing ECOSOC-approval over its controversial reputation.<sup>14</sup>)

To advance her agenda, Slater helped assemble the “The U.N. Pro-Family Handbook,” which advises U.N. diplomats on how to negotiate consensus language to produce a “more family friendly outcome” on matters like abortion, sex education, and LGBT rights. For instance, on proposals for reproductive health services, which the guide calls “a term often misinterpreted to include abortion,” it suggests modifying the phrase with “to enable women to go safely through pregnancy and childbirth and provide couples with the best chance of having a healthy baby.”<sup>15</sup>

If unable to change the language altogether, Slater and her colleagues are content to block the United Nations from reaching consensus. Slater's prepared remarks from a speech at the regional World Congress of Families in London in 2010 illustrate this:

Did you know that UNAIDS, the UN agency charged with trying to stop the AIDS pandemic, is actually seeking to legalize and promote the very behaviors that fuel the AIDS pandemic such as prostitution, homosexuality and sexual promiscuity—even among children? Family Watch was instrumental in getting UN Member States this year and last year to reject a provision endorsing the International Guidelines on HIV/AIDS and Human Rights created by UNAIDS which calls upon member states to: Legalize abortion and same-sex marriage; Punish people who criticize same-sex relations; Repeal laws against adultery, fornication, oral sex and sodomy; and Provide children with explicit sex education.<sup>16</sup>

How “instrumental” FWI was and is in foiling certain U.N. votes is unclear. While they are not singlehandedly disrupting negotiations at the United Nations, they seem to be an integral part of a web of conservative players trying to slow the advancement of women's and LGBT rights.

Slater has close ties to Theresa Okafor, CEO of the pro-life Nigerian group Life League and director of the Nigerian-based Foundation for African Cultural Heritage (FACH), which cosponsors forum for U.S. diplomats with FWI. In 2012 in Gilbert, Arizona, FWI staged a repeat performance of the “Global Family Policy Forum” it first held with FACH the year before<sup>17</sup> for U.N. delegates. Slater claimed this two-day conference was attended by 26 delegates from 23 countries (mostly developing and/or culturally conservative), for the purpose of briefing them on international issues regarding marriage, the family, and sexual rights. Last year's attendees reportedly included representatives from Asia, the Middle East, the Caribbean Islands, and Africa.<sup>18</sup>

The programming at the 2012 Global Family Policy Forum emphasized promoting the traditional family and understanding sexual orientation and gender identity. The “Family Policy Brief” on Homosexuality included in the forum's literature began: “Issues related to homosexuality and so-called ‘homosexual rights’ are driving much of the current worldwide assault on marriage, the family and family related issues.”<sup>19</sup>

Conference panelists varied from a new brand of less vitriolic pro-traditional family advocates such as Dr. W. Bradford Wilcox, director of the National Marriage Project at University of Virginia, to Piero Tozzi, an attorney for the right-wing Christian group the Alliance Defense Fund, to Floyd Godfrey, a practitioner of the harmful and discredited practice of reparative or conversion therapy for “treating” same-sex attraction.<sup>20</sup>

Godfrey recently defended his work to Arizona news outlet KTAR.com: “With this kind of therapy, you are trying to heal the wounds that cause [same-sex] attraction... The belief is that homosexuality is a symptom of emotional needs and wounds.”<sup>21</sup> Slater purposes to delegitimize the idea that homosexuality is genetic and therefore cannot be cured through various treatments, which she views as a grand deception advanced by LGBT activists.

This stance attracted the National Association of Research and Therapy of Homosexuality (NARTH), which gave Slater a platform during its annual conference last year.<sup>22</sup> As “scientific” organizations that used to employ discredited research in support of curing homosexuality continue to be marginalized, they seem to be reaching out to Christian Right figures such as Slater, and in return FWI's website utilizes NARTH resources on ex-gay therapy.<sup>23</sup>

Though Slater appears to have kept news of the most recent Global Family Policy Forum to a minimum, last year in a newsletter she recounted “one of

the most moving presentations” as given by a person “successfully reorienting” from homosexuality to heterosexuality.<sup>24</sup> According to Slater: “For many of these diplomats, this was their first exposure to the scientific and clinical evidence that **proves homosexuality is not genetically determined and fixed like skin color or race and that in many cases, individuals who experience same-sex attraction can be helped by therapy.**” (emphasis hers)

In order to curry favor with foreign diplomats and people from developing countries, Slater continually drives home themes of the West imposing its bankrupt and deleterious values on the rest of the world. FWI’s latest documentary, “Cultural Imperialism,” is described as a “hard-hitting exposé of how the U.S. and other Western governments and UN agencies are blackmailing developing nations to accept controversial sexual rights in the guise of fighting AIDS.”<sup>25</sup>

FWI’s affiliation with the United Nations has led to confusion about Slater’s status, particularly troubling for African leaders taking on the issue of overpopulation. One Nigerian news outlet quoted Slater following a speech at a Nigerian forum: “Slater, a spokeswoman of the United Nations, said: ‘The developed countries are actually importing people from other countries because they don’t have enough workers, they don’t have enough people to support their social security system, to support the old people and run their economies.’” The article went on, “She stressed that if Africa took the advice to limit its population, it would eventually run into the same problem of lack of human capacity.”<sup>26</sup>

It was likely during that same sweep through Nigeria in summer 2011 that Slater “encouraged delegates attending a law conference in Lagos, Nigeria to resist the United Nations’ calls to decriminalize homosexuality,” as Dr. Warren Throckmorton reported for the online magazine Religion Dispatches. He writes, “Keynoting the Nigerian Bar Association Conference, Slater told delegates that they would lose their religious and parental rights if they supported ‘fictitious sexual rights.’ One such ‘fictitious right’ is the right to engage in same-sex sexual relationships without going to jail.”<sup>27</sup>

## Conclusion

While Slater’s homophobic and pro-life messaging may seem more-or-less common in the marketplace of conservative rhetoric within the U.S., what exactly she is conveying while traveling abroad is more troubling.

Sharon Slater seems driven by the notion that anti-choice and anti-gay advocates can eventually impact the course of those two issues worldwide by enlisting the help of foot soldiers in other countries – connecting with like-minded individuals and educating and persuading others. With her keen understanding of the inner workings of the United Nations, international savvy, and tenacious views, Slater, and thus Family Watch International, is committed to building those

relationships and pushing that trajectory forward.

*Kerry Eleveld is a journalist who spent four years covering Barack Obama, first as a political reporter on the Campaign trail and then as a White House Correspondent for The Advocate. She is the only reporter from an LGBT news outlet to get a one-on-one sit-down interview with Obama as president. Since she began covering LGBT issues in 2006, Eleveld’s work has won numerous accolades, including the 2010 Sarah Pettit Memorial Award for “Excellence in LGBT Media” from the National Gay and Lesbian Journalist Association and the 2011 “Outstanding Digital Journalism Article” for her weekly View from Washington column from the Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD). Eleveld’s work has been published at Salon, The Atlantic, The Daily Beast, and the Washington Post. Eleveld also offers insights about political developments to news outlets such as PBS NewsHour, MSNBC, CNN, The New York Times, Washington Post, and the Associated Press.*

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- 4 “Join Us at the World Congress of Families in Madrid!” Family Watch International. <http://www.familywatchinternational.org/fwi/newsletter/0573.cfm>
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- 6 “E. Douglas Clark J.D., M.B.A.,” The Howard Center. <http://profam.org/people/thc.clark.htm>
- 7 “Form 990: Return of Organization Exempt From Income Tax – 2004,” United Families Foundation, 18, 20.
- 8 “NOM Exposed,” Human Rights Campaign. <http://hrc.org/nomexposed/section/religious-ties>
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- <sup>13</sup> Sharon Slater, “CSW 2012: The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly,” *The Family Watch* (March 26, 2012). <http://www.familywatchinternational.org/fwi/newsletter/0572.cfm>
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- <sup>15</sup> Family Watch International, *UN Pro-Family Handbook*, vi.
- <sup>16</sup> Sharon Slater, “A Strategic Plan to Defend the Family.” <http://worldcongress.org/wcfreg.spkrs/wcf.reg.uk.slater.pdf>
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# CATHOLICS FOR CHOICE

## Human Life International

*This is an edited summary of the Catholics for Choice investigative report on Human Life International (2011), from the Opposition Notes series.*

A staunch opponent of reproductive choice, Human Life International defines human life as beginning at the moment of conception and aims to “save” every one of those lives without exception.

The self-described Catholic organization has often opted for shock over substance, mailing graphic medical images, displaying fetuses in jars to children, and regularly appropriating the memory and circumstances of the Holocaust to describe abortion and stem cell research.<sup>1</sup> In one of its most successful attacks on family planning, an HLI offshoot group caused the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) to lose \$34 million in funding from the United States.<sup>2</sup>

Human Life International representatives have spoken out against almost every conceivable minority group, expressing concerns that Asians, Latinos and Muslims will overrun the world; proclaiming that Jews were responsible for abortions worldwide; labeling homosexuality and feminism as degraded and satanic, respectively; and condemning black leaders in the anti-apartheid movement. In 2010, HLI’s then-president Thomas Euteneuer admitted to sexual impropriety while performing an exorcism on a young woman.<sup>3</sup>

Two groups were instrumental in HLI’s 1981 founding by Father Paul Marx: the American Life League (ALL)—one of the most polarizing groups on the far-right wing of the anti-choice movement—and the Free Congress Foundation (FCF), a leading think tank in the New Right movement.<sup>4</sup> HLI swiftly developed a global distribution empire of “teaching materials”—not only literature but also films, audio and photographs—as well as the direct-mail fundraising that accounts for the majority of HLI’s income.<sup>5</sup> HLI regularly mailed images that one Connecticut lawmaker would later refer to as “material depicting violent acts, clinically graphic material... unsuitable for persons under 18 years of age.”<sup>6</sup>

In the wake of John Salvi’s 1994 abortion clinic shootings, high-profile media outlets such as the *New York Times* probed the consequences of HLI’s distribution of graphic images as “an incitement to deadly violence”—such as an article which opens with HLI’s Father Matthew Habiger “proudly

displaying a laminated poster of a bloodied fetal head pinched by forceps.”<sup>7</sup>

HLI has repeatedly provided a platform for right-wing individuals using violent rhetoric, for instance, welcoming anti-choice activist Don Treshman as a national spokesperson soon after he applauded sniper attacks on abortion doctors as a “superb tactic.”<sup>8</sup> Longtime HLI advisor and leading member of the conservative, conspiracy theory-oriented John Birch Society, Charles Rice, argued that blowing up abortion clinics is morally and legally defensible.<sup>9</sup>

A frequent speaker at high-profile HLI events, Operation Rescue founder Randall Terry, who has been arrested more than 40 times for clinic harassment, is on record encouraging crowds to “let a wave of intolerance [and] a wave of hatred wash over you.”<sup>10</sup> Following the 2009 murder of late-term abortion provider Dr. George Tiller by an anti-choice zealot who said he supported Operation Rescue, Terry refused to apologize for his inflammatory rhetoric, calling Tiller a “mass murderer” who “reaped what he sowed.”

### Issues

For the purpose of an overview, it is sufficient to say that if HLI has an opinion on any given “life issue”—contraception, abortion, sex education, vaccines, vasectomies, tubectomies, population control, in vitro fertilization, stem cell research, euthanasia—then that opinion is an inflexible and staunchly conservative one. The same can be said of opinions about any ideologies and lifestyles that run contrary to its philosophy of “life”—such as feminism and homosexuality.

Hormonal methods of family planning are referred to in almost all instances as “abortifacients.” HLI has unequivocally stated on numerous occasions that contraception is directly linked to, and frequently the cause of, abortion.<sup>11</sup> An HLI position statement further claims, “The cheapening of human life brought about through legalized abortion leads to infanticide and widespread child abuse.”<sup>12</sup>

Brian Clowes, director of research and training worldwide, joined HLI in 1995 and is the most visible and quoted figure aside from the organization's presidents. As HLI's chief agent of doctrinal clarification, Clowes denounces even "hard case" abortions ("life of the mother, rape and incest, and fetal defect") in his book *The Facts of Life*. Clowes rounds out his argument by asserting that through the termination of pregnancy generated by incest or rape — circumstances referred to as "less than perfect" in their beginning — we are "rejecting God's gift to us."<sup>13</sup>

HLI is also skilled at creating and convincing policymakers of spurious conspiracies around the issue of population control, claiming that overpopulation is a "myth" that is "promulgated for assorted purposes, including the redistribution of wealth and power."<sup>14</sup>

HLI has reserved special vitriol for gay rights. Jason Jones, former HLI public relations director, alleged in 2006: "Homosexuals reproduce sexually by molesting children."<sup>15</sup> Human Life International was an early supporter of the controversial psychologist Paul Cameron, who suggested castration and the death penalty as a means of combating the homosexual lifestyle.<sup>16</sup> His proposed solution to the AIDS crisis was the "elimination of the carrier," if other steps like branding HIV positive patients on the face had proven unsuccessful.<sup>17</sup>

In a 2010 document titled "Homosexuality and the Church Crisis," Clowes insists that "the sexual desire for adolescent boys, has always been a hallmark of homosexuality." He brushes off much of the public outrage over the clergy sex abuse scandal and the calls for church reform as coming from "homophile groups," alleging that "the moral authority of the Roman Catholic Church has been subjected to an opportunistic siege."<sup>18</sup>

## Offshoots and Affiliates

By the end of 1980s, HLI was so hampered by its own poor reputation that it set up front organizations to remain operational: Seminarians for Life International and the Population Research Institute.

Located on the same compound as HLI's headquarters, the Population Research Institute was created to counter mainstream scientific research. Its history displays an emphasis on attacking groups that promote family planning while "proving" that overpopulation is not a problem for developing nations.<sup>19</sup>

Perhaps PRI's most infamous attack came in its 2001 report to the House of Representatives' International Relations Committee (which Brian Clowes' HLI bio states he authored<sup>20</sup>), claiming that UNFPA recipients financed family planning projects that led women to have "suffered forced abortion, forced sterilization and destruction of personal property."<sup>21</sup> Investigations by Catholics for Choice, the British Parliament, and the U.S. State Department found no substantiating evidence. Despite the repeated, high profile debunking of PRI's claims, the Bush adminis-

tration did not reverse its decision to block \$34 million in congressional funds previously allocated to UNFPA. Representative Carolyn Maloney of New York later claimed that this decision was "based solely on testimony from the Population Research Institute... the only organization that has ever made these claims."<sup>22</sup>

In the 1990s, the organization's troubles continued in the form of multiple lawsuits and the United Nations' refusal to admit Human Life International to Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) status — an important form of U.N. accreditation that allows NGOs access to meetings about economic and social matters in a consultative capacity — on the grounds of its aggressive language, attacks on Islam and stance "against the purposes of the United Nations."<sup>23</sup> <sup>24</sup> Rather than change its ideological course or tone, HLI created a shadow organization as a way to infiltrate the UN.

The Catholic Family and Human Rights Institute, now known as C-FAM, was founded in 1997 under the guidance of Theresa Bell, then executive director of HLI Canada (which had recently lost its charitable status for engaging in political activity).<sup>25</sup> While technically a legally separate entity, minutes from the first meeting reveal the true relationship: "Not public knowledge that HLI is funding office [...] don't volunteer that fact to uncertain/non-friendly persons."<sup>26</sup> HLI in the guise of C-FAM received ECOSOC approval and quickly went about the business of undermining any and all efforts at advocacy for family planning within the UN.<sup>27</sup>

HLI claims to have 99 satellite offices in 87 countries; in other places it is said to have affiliates and associates in over 100 countries, while in 2006 and 2007 HLI's grant recipients tally up to only about 50.<sup>28</sup> In some, possibly most, cases HLI's branches appear to have been groups established independently by local Catholic church leaders or antichoice activists.<sup>29</sup>

If it is difficult to determine the extent and depth of HLI's true reach worldwide, in some countries, HLI has been manifestly quite disruptive. In the Philippines, the organization has obstructed immunization campaigns by spreading the misinformation that they were secret sterilization programs conducted by the World Health Organization and the United Nations Children's Fund.<sup>30</sup> During the country's 2010 elections, HLI actively supported anti-choice candidates, and the following year had a hand in frustrating the passage of a Reproductive Health Bill in the Filipino House of Representatives.<sup>31</sup>

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The full report by Catholics for Choice on Human Life International may be read online at <http://www.catholicsforchoice.org/oppositionwatch/documents/HLIweb2.pdf>.



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# The American Center for Law and Justice

By Brian Tashman, *People for the American Way*

After his unsuccessful 1988 presidential bid mobilized Christian Right voters, televangelist Pat Robertson channeled his campaign's energy into forming two influential right-wing organizations: the Christian Coalition of America, and the American Center for Law and Justice (ACLJ)<sup>1</sup>.

The similarity of the ACLJ name and acronym to the American Civil Liberties Union is no accident; Robertson declared that he founded the group to "stop the ACLU in court."<sup>2</sup> The group claims to serve supposedly persecuted Christians by representing them in the courtroom, drafting proposed laws, and promoting a right-wing interpretation of the Constitution that opposes strict separation of church and state.

The ACLJ is particularly active in battles over marriage equality; the group helped draft the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA),<sup>3</sup> the federal law that defined marriage as the "legal union of one man and one woman."

Despite claims of protecting "freedom of religion," the group vigorously supports organized prayer in public schools and insists that Muslims cannot be loyal American citizens.<sup>4</sup> Other current cases listed on the ACLJ's website include opposition to reproductive rights and "ObamaCare," defense of Arizona's draconian anti-immigrant law, arguments for government promotion of religion, and campaigning against "Sharia Law."

The ACLJ is now one of the principal legal advocacy groups in the conservative movement, along with the Alliance Defense Fund, Liberty Counsel, the Liberty Institute, and the Thomas More Law Center. The group has built strong partnerships with many Religious Right groups, including the Christian Defense Coalition, Faith and Action,<sup>5</sup> the American Family Association,<sup>6</sup> and WallBuilders.<sup>7</sup> Its reach has expanded globally with affiliates in countries including France, Israel, Kenya, Pakistan, Russia, Zimbabwe, and Brazil.

To lead ACLJ, Robertson tapped Jay Alan Sekulow, a messianic Jew and a former General Counsel of Jews for Jesus. Sekulow's son, Jordan, became the ACLJ's executive director following

a stint in Mitt Romney's unsuccessful 2008 presidential campaign; both Sekulows are staunch Romney supporters, who has expressed admiration for the Sekulows in turn.

Robertson continues to serve as president of the ACLJ's board, bringing the full benefit of his powerful foothold in Christian Right politics and media. The Sekulows and other ACLJ attorneys frequently appear on Christian Broadcasting Network programming and its flagship show, *The 700 Club*, which is hosted by Robertson. Both Jay and son Jordan Sekulow host their own radio talk shows, where they frequently entertain Republican members of Congress and presidential candidates.<sup>8</sup>

The Better Business Bureau says the ACLJ does not meet ten of its twenty standards for charity accountability, citing problems with oversight, compensation, accuracy of expenses, financial transparency, and disclosure; even the founder of the conservative Rutherford Institute has criticized the group's financial mismanagement.<sup>9</sup> An *Associated Press* investigation found that since 1998, the ACLJ and Christian Advocates Serving Evangelism (CASE), Sekulow's family-controlled charity, "have paid more than \$33 million to members of Sekulow's family and businesses they own or co-own."<sup>10</sup>

The primary source of revenue for CASE lies in rerouted ACLJ donations. In fact, more money—even three times as much—ends up in CASE's coffers, which helps support his family's "lavish lifestyle" of multiple homes, exorbitantly priced meals, and trips in corporate jets.<sup>11</sup> Sekulow also lists himself as a private contractor for the ACLJ to avoid salary reporting requirements.<sup>12</sup>

## Jay Sekulow

Jay Sekulow believes that the United States is a "Christian nation, founded on Christian principles,"<sup>13</sup> but that secular humanism has "replaced the Judeo-Christian ethic as the moral base for society"<sup>14</sup> and is its own established religion.<sup>15</sup> He says "Satan's legions have... perverted the precious guarantees of freedom found in our nation's First Amendment" to the

detriment of Christians, who must take political and legal action in response.<sup>16</sup>

As Sekulow's clout has grown, he has toned down such "spiritual warfare" language for a wider audience, particularly with his frequent appearances on outlets like Fox News.<sup>17</sup> However, the central message that Christians are facing persecution from an inimical secular government remains. "If you are a God-fearing Christian, then powerful forces in our culture say YOU are the dangerous radical that needs to be censored, chastised and even punished!" Sekulow writes in a 2009 direct mail appeal providing an "Anti-Christian Bigotry Alert." "It is as if 'open season' has been declared in the courts on Christians."<sup>18</sup>

With a growing political voice and financial success, Jay Sekulow emerged as a top adviser to the George W. Bush administration on judicial nominations, including the selection of Supreme Court justices. He backed Mitt Romney for the 2008 Republican presidential nomination, and is now assisting Romney's campaign with outreach to Religious Right activists. ACLJ attorney David French founded the group Evangelicals for Mitt,<sup>19</sup> co-authoring a book with his wife, *Why Evangelicals Should Support Mitt Romney (And Feel Good About It!)*.<sup>20</sup>

Jay Sekulow's son Jordan bragged in a radio interview with right-wing pseudo-historian David Barton that his father "was one of four people that were involved in the [judicial] nomination process in the Bush White House" and promised that a future Romney administration will listen to the elder Sekulow. "Do you want more Alito and Roberts? He's made these pledges," he said.<sup>21</sup>

Romney welcomed the endorsement from Jay and Jordan Sekulow, saying, "On issues of great importance to me, including religious freedom and protecting human life, Jay and Jordan have been tireless leaders. I look forward to working with them to ensure that we can bring conservative change to Washington."<sup>22</sup>

## LGBT Rights

In a 1997 fundraising note, Jay Sekulow accused everyone from the entertainment industry and public schools to Fortune 500 companies of promoting the "homosexual agenda," which he described as a "run-away train bent on destroying our communities."<sup>23</sup>

"Homosexuals are not only out of the closet, they are out to destroy the family as we know it," Sekulow warned, writing that gay rights advocates intend to make America "the world's greatest promoter of every form of sexual deviancy." He insisted that "the state has a compelling interest to ban the act of homosexuality."

Though Sekulow has toned down his rhetoric, the ACLJ still lists the "radical homosexual agenda" as a principal concern, alleging that "there is a continuing threat against the free speech rights of those who refuse to subscribe to the notion that homosexuality is an inborn trait that is morally neutral."<sup>24</sup>

According to Sekulow, the ACLJ has employed an "aggressive strategy of defending the traditional view of marriage in each significant marriage case that existed anywhere in the United States,"<sup>25</sup> including California,<sup>26</sup> Connecticut,<sup>27</sup> Massachusetts,<sup>28</sup> Nebraska,<sup>29</sup> New Jersey,<sup>30</sup> Oregon,<sup>31</sup> Vermont,<sup>32</sup> and Washington.<sup>33</sup> In 2010, in an attempt to force Washington, D.C., to put its own marriage equality law up to a popular referendum, the ACLJ filed a brief on behalf of 49 Republican members of Congress.<sup>34</sup>

In addition to helping to draft and defend DOMA, Sekulow testified before the U.S. Senate in 2004 on behalf of the Federal Marriage Amendment, which if passed would have defined marriage in the Constitution as between one man and one woman. He predicted that "the legal recognition of any relationship on the same level as traditional marriage will wreak irreversible harm on American society."<sup>35</sup>

Beyond marriage, ACLJ works against any efforts to end anti-LGBT discrimination. The organization even opposed the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd Hate Crimes Prevention Act, which in 2010 made it a federal hate crime to attack someone based on their sexual orientation, gender, or gender identity. Sekulow called the law a "slippery slope" meant to "change a social structure" and "serve as a muzzle," eventually giving attorneys a chance to prosecute "a pastor for giving a sermon."<sup>36</sup>

Sekulow has championed the Boy Scouts of America's ban on openly gay scoutmasters for years, telling donors in March 2000 that the Scouts have "come under attack from homosexual activists—who may well set their sights on *your church* next."<sup>37</sup> In an amicus brief to the Supreme Court, the ACLJ defended the Boy Scout's finding that homosexuals are not morally "clean," writing, "Men who by word or deed condone homosexuality cannot, therefore, be good role models."<sup>38</sup>

The group unsuccessfully defended state bans on sodomy in *Lawrence v. Texas* (2003), arguing in an amicus brief to the Supreme Court that "the ban on same-sex sodomy clearly passes constitutional muster" in order to further "public morality" and combat "health risks."<sup>39</sup>

Most recently, the ACLJ has championed the poorly-named Military Religious Freedom Protection Act, which would prohibit facilities on military property from use in same-sex marriage ceremonies.<sup>40</sup> Sekulow's son Jordan hosted the bill's chief sponsor, Rep. Tim Huelskamp (R-KS), on his radio show, where the congressman alleged that the Obama administration is "using the military as a guinea pig" for the "radical homosexual agenda."<sup>41</sup>

## Reproductive Rights

The ACLJ built its "pro-life" reputation by defending opponents of abortion rights who harassed health care workers and clients. In a 1996 Supreme Court case, Sekulow argued with partial success on

behalf of ACLJ's executive vice president at the time, Paul Schenck, who was leading blockades intended to prevent access to abortion clinics.<sup>42</sup>

During the George W. Bush administration, an ACLJ fundraising appeal warned that "babies are still at risk of the gruesome torture-murder called partial-birth abortion," and called for donations to fight the "multi-million-dollar abortion industry." The Partial-Birth Abortion Ban passed in 2003 and was upheld by the Supreme Court in 2007.<sup>43</sup>

In 2011, the ACLJ won a settlement for a Texas bus driver fired after refusing to transport two women to a Planned Parenthood clinic.<sup>44</sup> That same year, the ACLJ won a lengthy legal battle representing four Illinois Walgreens pharmacists who were fired for denying customers the "morning-after" pill.<sup>45</sup>

The ACLJ claimed that under Obama, the Department of Homeland Security labeled "pro-lifers [to be the] most dangerous domestic terrorists,"<sup>46</sup> in what Sekulow called an "inflammatory" report.<sup>47</sup> The report in question mentioned "opposition to abortion" in a single footnote as an example of a single issue that might motivate some homegrown terrorists.

A leading proponent of defunding Planned Parenthood, the ACLJ filed an amicus brief in May 2012 supporting the state of Texas's decision to strip funding from the women's health organization.<sup>48</sup> ACLJ founded the Committee to Stop Taxpayer Funding of Abortion in order "to stop this atrocity,"<sup>49</sup> even though the Hyde Amendment already bars federal dollars from going towards abortion services. Sekulow boasted that the ACLJ has brought "a whole series of lawsuits" against Planned Parenthood.<sup>50</sup>

The ACLJ also started the Committee to Protect America's Constitution to protest the Obama administration's decision to require birth control coverage in insurance plans, including those at institutions affiliated with religious denominations. Sekulow called the move a "an unprecedented...assault on religious freedom and the rights of conscience in the United States" and has filed an amicus brief against the new regulation.<sup>51</sup>

"It is clear we have a president who is doing everything he can to change the history and heritage of this nation," Sekulow wrote in response to the administration's move. "His vision and actions put at risk the Judeo-Christian values that have been the cornerstone of our republic."<sup>52</sup>

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*Brian Tashman is the research associate at People For the American Way. He has been with People For the American Way since 2010 and writes about politics and religion for the Right Wing Watch blog, which monitors and exposes the activities of right-wing figures and political organizations. His work has been featured on shows such as "The Rachel Maddow Show," "The Last Word with Lawrence O'Donnell" and "The Daily Show." Brian focuses on civil rights, LGBT equality, reproductive justice, immigration reform, Islamophobia and corporate influence in politics.*

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<sup>1</sup> For the purposes of this profile, the American Center for Law and Justice will be referred to as ACLJ. In *Colonizing African Values*, the American Center for Law and Justice is referred to as ACLJ-USA and the African Center for Law and Justice goes by ACLJ.

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<sup>7</sup> Kyle Mantyla, "Why The Religious Right Opposes Government Assistance For The Poor," *Right Wing Watch*, People for the American Way. <http://www.rightwingwatch.org/content/why-religious-right-opposes-government-assistance-poor>

<sup>8</sup> The 700 Club, "Jay Sekulow," *CBN.com- The Christian Broadcasting Network*. [http://www.cbn.com/700club/guests/bios/jay\\_sekulow.aspx](http://www.cbn.com/700club/guests/bios/jay_sekulow.aspx)

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# The “Transformation” Movement

By Rachel Tabachnik

“Transformation” describes a dramatic shift in strategy for conservative evangelicalism: rather than convert souls on a one-by-one basis, followers of the Transformation movement attempt to assert “dominion” over a geographic area.

Since the 1990s, the term “Transformation” has been used to brand a franchise-like international network of groups espousing a belief in using “strategic level spiritual warfare” to transform entire communities, cities, and—ultimately—nations. Often described as the Seven Mountains Mandate, this concept demands that evangelical or “born again” Christians unite in order to take control over seven spheres of society: the arts, business, education, family, government, media, and religion.

The Seven Mountains Mandate and the Transformation organizations are products of a rapidly growing undertaking called the apostolic and prophetic movement or New Apostolic Reformation (NAR), which teaches that human agency is required to retake the earth from Satan and enable Jesus’ return. The New Apostolic Reformation advocates eliminating denominational divides and reorganizing churches under modern-day apostles and prophets, whose authority would extend to all areas of society and eradicate separation between church and state.

In his 2008 book *Dominion!: How Kingdom Action Can Change the World*, C. Peter Wagner, one of the movement founders, claims that Christian dominion can take place through democratic means when like-minded Christians are in the majority and “rules and sets the ultimate norms for society.”<sup>1</sup> Wagner states that this will not be a theocracy but occur through aggressive evangelism facilitated by a “worldwide prayer movement” employing spiritual warfare methods. Resistance to evangelization is blamed on literal demons who control most communities or “people groups,” including adherents to all other religions and non-evangelical Christian faiths.

## Origins

The apostolic and prophetic movement is rooted in the

Pentecostal and Charismatic stream of Christianity. Charismatic refers to a second conversion experience beyond being “born again” and the receipt of supernatural “spiritual gifts,” which may include speaking in tongues, faith-healing powers, and ability to prophesy.

In the 1990s, born-again Christian Ed Silviso led the founding of the Transformation philosophy in Argentina before going on to establish the International Transformation Network and initiate Transformation organizations in Africa, Asia, and the Americas.<sup>2</sup>

Both Wagner and George Otis, Jr., another early movement leader, had leading roles in the missionary project “AD2000 and Beyond,” a massive international project to evangelize as much of the world as possible in the decade before the millennium. The project grandiosely claimed to network hundreds of millions of participants around the world, providing a stage for Otis and Wagner to promote the new Transformation ideology.<sup>3</sup>

Wagner had been a well-known professor, but as AD2000 and Beyond drew to its scheduled close, he moved to Colorado Springs to continue his efforts to pioneer the movement he would dub the “New Apostolic Reformation.” There, he established a strong partnership with Ted Haggard (later the president of the National Association of Evangelicals), building his World Prayer Center adjacent to Haggard’s New Life Church.<sup>4</sup>

The movement has achieved a significant measure of international success since its founding—NAR’s apostles have described Uganda and Guatemala as the most “transformed” nations of the world—but seen less traction in the U.S, which apostles blame on the population’s Enlightenment mentality and unwillingness to acknowledge the impact of supernatural beings.

## Political Impact of Transformation Organizations

Prior to the 2010 midterm elections, Silviso and other apostles declared Hawaii the state closest to being “transformed.”<sup>5</sup> The Republican gubernatorial

nominee, Lt. Gov. James “Duke” Aiona, was a Catholic involved in the Hawaii Transformation organization for many years. International Transformation Network promotional material, featuring Aiona and Silviso side-by-side at a rally, states that Aiona offered a prayer that “in effect unleashed a spontaneous movement toward transformation that began to reach throughout the islands and touch not only schools, but also the marketplace sectors of government and business.” The Transformation Hawai’i core team claimed to meet with 23 key state leaders, at which point “The dream to equip and commission 10,000 Christians as ‘marketplace ministers’ was birthed.”<sup>6</sup>

Duke Aiona lost the gubernatorial race following media coverage of his participation in ITN, although most outlets were hesitant to cover this story.<sup>7</sup> After activist organizations challenged Aiona, he denied all involvement with ITN,<sup>8</sup> a claim countered by ITN video and promotional materials made available to the press.<sup>9,10</sup> Conference video showed participation of Lt. Gov. Aiona and other Hawaiian politicians, including the Republican U.S. Senate candidate, at an ITN event where Canadian Apostle Pat Francis declared, “We put our foot on Hawaii... we will rule.” Participants chanted warfare prayers to evict demons and claim Christian rule over the state.<sup>11</sup>

Another well-developed statewide Transformation effort exists in Texas, where Apostle Alice Patterson, credited with much of the state’s NAR organizing, stood quietly to the side of Gov. Rick Perry while he spoke at the day-long prayer event in Houston in August 2011 that kicked off his presidential campaign. Patterson’s ministry is known for outreach to African Americans for Perry and the Republican Party, and hosted a conference promoting school privatization and vouchers that featured former Secretary of Education Rod Paige and Gov. Perry.

Though the politicians involved in the Transformation movement are primarily Republican, one exception is movement apostle and Jacksonville, Florida, city councilperson Kimberly Daniels, celebrated in *Charisma Magazine* as a “demon-buster.”<sup>12</sup> In June 2011, a month after her election, Jacksonville became the first U.S. city to host the Global Day of Prayer (GDOP)—an evangelizing event developed in South Africa—which reportedly involved 10,000 people and broadcast to 500 million more (many of whom likely know nothing about NAR or the Transformations movement).<sup>13</sup>

Jacksonville has followed the model of other Transformation projects under the authority of Apostle Silviso, which includes the adoption of each street in the city by a “prayer warrior,” often with precincts and neighborhood “prayer captains.”<sup>14</sup> These adoption programs are described as prayer evangelism, but organized more like political campaigns. While solid evidence of the prayer network’s impact is lacking, the extent of infrastructure development and its applicability to political campaign organizing is notable.

Specific assignments include selecting local leaders to head the effort of taking control over each of the seven “mountains.” For instance, an apostle typically assigns prayer warriors to each school in the area, leaders who meet with local principals and administrators to set up church adoptions of schools. Transformation efforts are presented as charitable activities providing services to underfunded and struggling municipalities, often with inner city populations—which provides them the access to public institutions necessary for establishing dominion.

## Transformations Ideology Promotion and Film

Much of the promotion of the Transformation ideology has occurred through the series of films produced by George Otis, Jr. and the Sentinel Group, which have been seen by millions, including members of “renewal groups” and Anglican/Episcopalian, Presbyterian, Methodist, and other Mainline Protestant churches. Like the Transformation organizations, the films are superficially about unity, peace, and charitable activities. The “documentaries” show the “move of God” through communities around the world that Otis claims have been transformed and overcome poverty, crime, corruption, and even environmental degradation.

The films portray that after communities reject denominational divides and join together to repent, they have the power to supernaturally dislodge the demonic principalities claimed to control their geographic area. Early films depict witches driven out of town or suddenly dying following the prayer and repentance of the community, and show the destruction, often by fire, of the icons or structures of other belief systems. Outside of the films, many leading apostles and prophets describe the humans harboring these demons as homosexuals, freemasons, and those of other religions and faiths.<sup>15</sup>

The first Transformations film had such an impact on the Anglican Charismatic renewal group Sharing of Ministries Abroad (SOMA) that it held a four-day international conference with Otis and the film’s stars in South Africa in 2000.<sup>16</sup> In 2006, the film was the topic of the keynote speech given at the international symposium on Pentecostalism at the University of Southern California, where leading American Pentecostal scholars listened to NAR pioneer and Guatemalan Apostle Harold Caballeros, currently the country’s minister for foreign affairs and one of the film’s stars. The symposium was sponsored by the Pennsylvania-based Templeton Foundation, which has provided millions in grants to studies at American universities promoting NAR apostles and prophets as “exemplars of godly love” and capable of miraculous healing.

Some of the Transformations movie financing for comes from the family foundation of Ken Eldred, which has also made large grants to the virulently



anti-LGBT American Family Association.<sup>17</sup> In turn, the American Family Association financed Rick Perry's aforementioned Houston prayer event in August 2011, which was organized and led by numerous NAR apostles and prophets. Eldred is also a known funder of the United in Purpose nonprofit and its efforts to register millions of conservative evangelical voters prior to the 2012 presidential election.<sup>18</sup>

## Conclusion

Behind the smiling faces, charitable acts, and claimed miracles of the Transformation movement PR machine lies an agenda bent on ending separation of church and state and bringing about "dominion" over the institutions of society and government worldwide. With the Transformation ideology's growing popularity and the wide reach of its propaganda films, the media's continuing inattention to the movement is an object for concern.

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*Rachel Tabachnick is a researcher/writer/speaker on issues pertaining to the impact of the Religious Right on policy and politics in areas including education, economics, environment, and foreign policy. She has provided research to political campaigns from the local to national levels (for both Democratic and Republican candidates) and has spoken at conferences on progressive activism, labor, environmental policy, and the impact of Christian Zionism on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Rachel has been interviewed on NPR and other radio across the nation on issues ranging from the privatization of public education to the political impact of the New Apostolic Reformation.*

*She is a regular contributor to Talk2action.org and has written for other print and online media.*

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## About the Team



Author **Rev. Dr. Kapya John Kaoma** is an ordained Anglican priest with a particular interest in human rights. From 1998 to 2001, he served as dean of St. John's Cathedral in Mutabe, Zimbabwe, and a lecturer

at Africa University, where he coauthored a text in ethics, "Unity in Diversity." From 2001 to 2002, he was academic dean for St. John's Anglican Seminary in Kitwe, Zambia, where he launched its women's studies and church school training programs. After joining Political Research Associates as a researcher in 2008, Kaoma produced the 2009 report "Globalizing the Culture Wars: U.S. Conservatives, African Churches, and Homophobia" that prompted invitations to testify before the United States Congress and the United Nations. He is currently the Rector of Christ Church in Hyde Park, MA, and a Visiting Researcher at Boston University Center for Global Christianity and Mission. Kaoma is originally from Zambia and received his doctorate in Ethics from Boston University.

**Tarso Luís Ramos** assumed the role of executive director of Political Research Associates (PRA) in June 2009 after serving as PRA's research director for three years. As research director, he focused on anti-immigrant groups and the rise of "colorblind" ideology. He also launched three new research projects on civil liberties, right-wing attacks on mainline churches, and Islamophobia and antisemitism on college campuses. Before joining PRA, he served as founding director of Western States Center's racial justice program, which resists racist public policy initiatives and supports the base-building work of progressive people of color-led organizations. As director of the Wise Use Public Exposure Project in the mid-'90s, he tracked the Right's anti-union and anti-environmental campaigns.

**Abby Scher, Ph.D** is interim research director of Political Research Associates. A sociologist and journalist, she previously served as PRA's editorial director. Her research interests at PRA include conservative women, the tea party movement, and the economic right, including attacks on the labor movement. While director of Independent Press Association-New York, the Ford Foundation recognized her

with its Leadership for a Changing World award for her work organizing New York's immigrant press and her post-9/11 bridge building across communities.

**Maria Planansky** serves as research deputy and edits Political Research Associates' quarterly *The Public Eye*. During her time at PRA, she has worked on a number of projects, including PRA's exposé "Manufacturing the Muslim Menace" and the organization's investigation into antisemitism and Islamophobia on college campuses.

# About the Publisher

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POLITICAL RESEARCH ASSOCIATES

Political Research Associates  
1310 Broadway, Suite 201  
Somerville, MA 02144-1837

Voice: 617.666.5300

Fax: 617.666.6622

[www.publiceye.org](http://www.publiceye.org)