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Dr. Laura hitting hot buttons left and right

■ Far left's criticism of show indicative of new totalitarian role

Hate! It's a favorite word that left-wingers use today to describe the opinions of people who disagree with them.

It reminds me of the right-wingers of the Joe McCarthy era in the 1950s and later, who called anyone with liberal views a "pinko" or a "fellow traveler." Only the conservatives were "patriots."

Today, it's the crowd on the far left who have become the new totalitarian. Dissent from liberal orthodoxy cannot be tolerated. Blacklists and boycotts are their stock in trade for stamping out offending sentiments.

A case in point is the current radical frenzy over radio and now TV personality Dr. Laura Schlessinger (on Jackson's WLBT-Channel 3 on Monday).

She advocates "shocking," "incendiary" and "hate-filled" positions such as that women should be married before they have children, that staying at home to raise them is preferable

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Columnist

to day care, that our society should not glorify and promote homosexuality.

Another term of left-wing jargon, less intense than "hateful," is "hurtful," often used when referring to critics of voluntarily single mothers who have growing families they cannot feed, house, clothe or educate.

To criticize their lifestyle is "hurtful" psychologically to these mothers, who should have all the children they want and then expect society to support them.

Among the leaders of the anti-Dr. Laura campaign are several gay-rights organizations. She does not, as I understand her, advocate taking any rights away from gays and lesbians, but she does not wish to give them additional ones, such as legal marriage.

She believes, furthermore,

along with a lot of religious and conservative organizations, that many if not most homosexuals can through religious and psychological counseling cease being homosexual.

Clinically right or wrong, does this mean she and her Christian allies (she is Orthodox Jewish) "hate" gay people? There is no indication that these religious critics hate those whose behavioral practices they find objectionable, any more than they hate drug addicts and alcoholics. They argue that they want to help them, whether or not that help is desired.

Some liberal organizations are selectively offended by censorship.

A national ACLU leader was quoted recently as saying his organization — supposedly a champion of free speech — was opposed to the right's modest anti-lesbian boycott of the TV series *Ellen* but does not have a problem with the left's effort to censor Dr. Laura and boycott her advertisers.

So the culture wars go on. In the current presidential race, the Gore campaign defends the

homosexual agenda, single motherhood and the racial hostility-generating denial of equal rights and equal justice known as affirmative action.

The Bush campaign is just plain confused.

They have opted to ignore the Ronald Reagan model of conservative moral leadership and are now trying to out-promise the Democrats on economic issues, which is not easy to do.

If the Republicans borrowed some of Dr. Laura's (or even Pat Buchanan's) cultural and social message and grafted it to their own economic growth and world trade message, they could win the election handily. But don't count on it.

They're afraid *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* might call them racist or homophobic or even worse, insensitive — which would be very hurtful.

■ David Bowen of Jackson is a former member of Congress who represented Mississippi's 2nd District. Bowen, a writer and consultant, is a regular contributing columnist to *The Clarion-Ledger*.

We have a right to turn off 'Dr. Laura'

David Bowen ("Dr. Laura hitting hot buttons left and right," Sept. 30 guest column) is confused about the objections some people have to Laura Schlessinger.

While many of us disagree with her understanding of gender and sexual orientation, that alone would not be enough to prompt so many to protest her being rewarded for her comments by corporations which want people's business.

Dr. Laura is not a doctor in a field that would make her an expert on sexual orientation, and in fact, her opinion is directly contrary to mental health professional associations.

Despite her misuse of the title, she has also been inconsistent as to whether her opinions are medically or religiously based. She calls the attempt to secure constitutionally-guaranteed equal rights for sexual minorities a conspiracy.

Dr. Laura defames people—whether they are listening to her or not. That is her right, but it is also the right of corporations to choose not to associate with her message, and the right of citizens to tell those corporations that their footing the bill for her message is not appreciated.

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