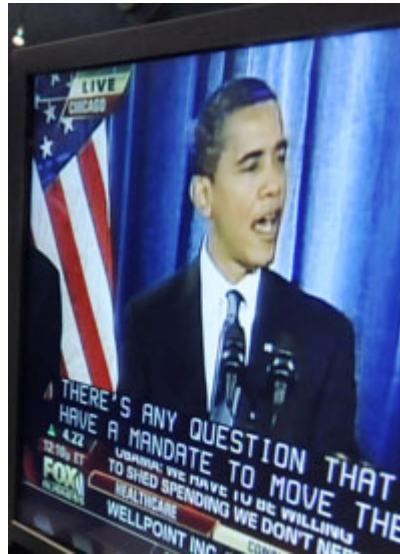




Media Bias Against Traditional Values

The ad was created by Fidelis, a Chicago-based Catholic organization that was raising money to pay for the air time. Set to classical music, it is a compelling 40-second spot that intermixes a sonogram image with text relating information about the baby's plight. We are told that the "child's future is a broken home," that "he will be abandoned by his father," and that "his single mother will struggle to raise him." Thus, at this point a viewer could almost believe it's a pro-abortion ad. It is then we learn that the child entering the world under these unfortunate circumstances would become America's first black president, Barack Obama. It is a message about how there is potential in every life, how from even the most troubled beginnings can rise the most talented people.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=39OHL2-pBRg>

In NBC's defense, it also refused to air a commercial for the People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA), so at least insofar as this snapshot of time goes, it cannot be accused of inconsistency. Yet the big picture tells a far different story, one reflecting a Stalin-like effort by the left to airbrush traditionalist messages not just from history but out of current events as well. I'll elaborate on this shortly.

This certainly is a far cry from what we once were. In the 1950s, for instance, there could be someone on television such as Bishop Fulton J. Sheen. He did his own weekly show, *Life is Worth Living*, appearing in full clerical garb during prime time on a mainstream channel (and we only had a handful back then) and held his own running opposite the immensely popular comedian Milton Berle (could you imagine a prelate rivaling the audiences of an entertainer today?). And he remained on the air, doing a similar program, until 1968.

Today, however, things traditional often don't even get news coverage, let alone their own forums. For example, the annual pro-life event March for Life took place on January 22, yet we would have never known it from media reportage — or, that is, the lack thereof. (The event was covered live by the EWTN global Catholic network, alone.) And this was no trifling event. As Don Feder of [boycott.NYT.com](#) [said](#), "More than 300,000 people assembled in Washington, D.C. for the 36th Annual March for Life. But as far as the *New York Times* is concerned, it never happened." He then put the matter in perspective, saying, "If 50,000 feminists had gathered on the Mall in D.C., to demand passage of the so-called Freedom of Choice Act, it would have been above-the-page-one-fold coverage in the *Times*, accompanied by an aerial photo of the crowd."

This is true, only, Feder understates the issue. Other media proved no better as most followed the



Written by [Gary Benoit](#) on February 10, 2009

Times' lead, and the result was that relatively few outside of the pro-life movement and news junkies heard about the march. I can also say without indulging hyperbole that 50,000 feminists are not necessary to capture media exposure. If you have the right cause — which is invariably a left cause — less than a couple of hundred will suffice. Examples of such abound, but one I'll mention is a 2005 financial-aid protest at Yale University. Although it involved a mere 170 students, it received gratuitous media coverage. As to this, can you guess what illustrious news organ was present to document this momentous event? You guessed it: the *New York Times*. But that is the new media math: 170 protesters + leftist cause > 300,000.

This points to an often overlooked aspect of media bias: it manifests itself not just in how matters are covered but in what gets covered in the first place. And this selective reporting is integral to the task of shaping public opinion. After all, if you give only your side the microphone, people will only be listening to you; and you don't have to worry about winning the debate if your opponents cannot disseminate their message, for then there is no debate. It's much like Al Gore and his pronouncement about global warming, "The debate is over." Well, if the other side is relegated to a soapbox on a street corner, it certainly can seem that way.

Speaking of corners, the left is increasingly boxing traditionalists into one, as it is slowly but surely limiting the avenues through which traditionalists can deliver their message. Let's examine this phenomenon.

We are now very far from the days of Bishop Sheen on primetime TV. It has reached a point where if traditionalists want coverage, they have to buy air time. Yet this is more difficult than ever, and I don't say that just because of the Super Bowl incident. The fact is that leftist outlets frequently find rationalizations for rejecting ads incongruent with their agenda (Power Line documents some cases [here](#)). Then we have the McCain-Feingold campaign reform act, which disadvantages the right. Why? Because any legislation limiting what can be spent on advertising during campaigns will hurt traditionalists — who actually have to buy their microphone — more than leftists, who have the best public relations team in the world: the mainstream media.

Yet this is just the tip of the iceberg. The truth is that there is an iron muzzle being dropped over traditionalist dissent the world over. First, in most of the West we have hate-speech laws, which don't really stifle hate, just whatever the left happens to hate. Thus do we find average citizens being criminally punished for expressing traditional opinions. For example, there was a Canadian man named Mark Harding who was convicted in 1998 of a "hate crime" for distributing pamphlets critical of Islam. Then, his countryman Hugh Owens was forced to pay damages of 1,500 Canadian dollars after taking out a newspaper advertisement in which he criticized homosexuality and cited Bible passages. And the thought police intrude even into the Church. In Sweden, Pastor Ake Green was punished for preaching against homosexuality from the pulpit.

While we don't yet have these types of hate-speech laws in the United States, they may be on the horizon. For sure, the groundwork — a mentality that politically incorrect words can be worse than sticks and stones — has been laid. We already have private-sector versions of hate-speech laws — speech codes in schools, colleges, and workplaces — and a modern version of Brownshirts, who sometimes enforce them. These would be the mobs we've seen in places like college campuses, such as the Ivy League geniuses at Columbia University who [stormed the stage](#) and stopped Minutemen representatives from speaking in 2006, or the 2004 University of Arizona incident wherein students threw pies at columnist Ann Coulter.



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Then there are efforts to [resurrect](#) the inappropriately named “Fairness Doctrine” — or institute measures that have the same effect, such as “localization rules” — which are designed to neuter talk radio. Coincidentally, I’m sure, this just happens to be one of the only media arenas not dominated by leftists.

Of course, there is always the Internet, that Wild West of bits and bytes where the pro-life ad — and lots of other things — can spread their wings. But it may not remain a First Amendment paradise forever. For just as information can be transmitted at the touch of a button, so can it be suppressed. And we already have witnessed such government intrusion, with measures such as the “Great Firewall of China,” a Communist Chinese [censorship program](#) designed to block websites disseminating information of which the regime disapproves.

Yet, it may surprise many to know that government action isn’t necessary for Internet censorship. For a group to spread its message online, it’s dependent upon many other entities, such as a registrar, a hosting company, and search engines. Thus, it can be thwarted at many levels.

Consider, for example, the site you’re at right now. It has a domain, TheNewAmerican.com, which is basically an Internet address; it also has what you see when you log on (the page), which you could call the edifice. The domain is hosted by what is known as a registrar, and the page is provided by a hosting company, either of which could effectively take down a site. The registrar could do this by “freezing” the address and the hosting company by eliminating the edifice. And both of these things are exactly what happened to Dutch politician Geert Wilders when he released his anti-Islamist movie *Fitna* in 2008, with Liveleak.com refusing to host it and NetworkSolutions.com suspending the domain.

Of course, at this juncture, such actions are still rare. But as society becomes increasingly politically correct, it could become more of a factor. These businesses could bow to boycotts and bad press and decide that servicing traditionalist entities just isn’t worth the trouble.

Yet a more immediate threat pertains to search engines, and at the moment it can be summed up in one word: Google. The corporate giant has well-known leftist tendencies, with approximately 98 percent of its [employee contributions](#) going to Democrats. And it hasn’t shrunk from using its search engine as a vehicle for political activism. It has a history of censoring traditionalist websites from its news search, for instance, with The New Media Journal, Michnews.com, and The Jawa Report having been victims in the past. It also has a history of [blocking](#) conservative ads while allowing corresponding ones from the left side of the aisle. And as the kicker, Google has announced that it will use human input to fine-tune search results. Input from whom? You guessed it, the 98-percenters.

This is no small matter. Not only does Google [enjoy](#) a 70-percent share of the ads accompanying search results and articles and 90 percent of U.S. advertising profits, but it also accounts for almost 70 percent of [U.S. searches](#). This means if Google buries a site, an archeological dig may be necessary to find it. That is, for most Americans, anyway.

We should also note that Google has forged quite an alliance with Barack Obama. Not only did CEO Eric Schmidt campaign for the president, he also was on Obama’s economic advisory committee. This isn’t surprising, given that they’re ideological soulmates. But this similarity does bring to mind my observation that people not only get the government they deserve, they also get the media they deserve. Let’s just hope they don’t end up being one and the same.

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