

"700 CLUB" ERRS ON CHURCH AND HITLER



Bill Donohue comments on the April 19 episode of "The 700 Club":

In a segment titled "God and Hitler," Gordon Robertson (son of Rev. Pat Robertson), hosted a discussion on the Catholic Church's response to Hitler. Several errors of fact were made.

1) It is wrong to paint Hitler as a Catholic. Though he was baptized, he excommunicated himself, *latae sententiae*, when he sought, in his words, to "crush [the Catholic Church] like a toad." He made good on his pledge by persecuting 8,000 priests, over 500 of whom were killed in concentration camps. He also sought to assassinate the pope.

2) The 1933 Nazi-Vatican Concordat was not a show of solidarity. As Rabbi David Dalin has shown, it was a protective measure designed to protect German Catholics from persecution. In fact, at least 34 letters of protest were sent from the Vatican to the Nazis between 1933 and 1937, culminating in a 1937 encyclical that condemned Nazi violations of the Concordat and its racial ideology. It was smuggled out of Italy and distributed on Palm Sunday to Catholics in Germany. Nothing like this happened in Protestant churches in Germany.

3) It is not true that Hitler met resistance from Protestants alone. Former Israeli Diplomat Pinchas Lapidé estimated that the Catholic Church, under the auspices of Pope Pius XII, saved as many as 860,000 Jewish lives. During the war, the *New York Times* twice said the Church was “a lonely voice crying out of the silence of a continent”; Albert Einstein also singled out the Church during the war. After the war, Golda Meir praised the work of the Church, as did the ADL, the World Jewish Congress, and scores of other Jewish organizations.

4) It is factually wrong to say the Vatican archives have “never been seen.” Many scholars have had access. As for Pope Pius XII being “Hitler’s Pope,” it should be noted that John Cornwell, the ex-seminarian who originated this term, retracted it years ago. So why does “The 700 Club” continue to cite it?