

Activist Organizations

January 3



Madison, WI—In a split decision, a three-judge panel of the 7th Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals ruled against a 2002 suit brought by the Freedom From Religion Foundation. The panel found that the city of La Crosse's sale of its Ten Commandments monument to the Fraternal Order of Eagles (the monument's original donor) was constitutional. The anti-religion group wants to excise religious expression from the public square.

March 9

New York, NY—A U.S. Court of Appeals decision granted AmeriCorps teachers the right to teach in religious schools, so long as they provide instruction in non-religious subjects. If they do provide religious instruction, the hours worked will not count toward their service hours and they may not wear the AmeriCorps logo. The ruling disappointed the Anti-Defamation League, which challenged the program on constitutional grounds.

March 29

San Francisco, CA—The “Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence,” a group of gay men who dress as nuns in outrageous costumes, held a “Hunky Jesus” contest at Dolores Park. The winner was “Viva Las Jesus,” a man dressed in a gold loincloth.

April 7

Tangipahoa Parish, LA—The ACLU asked a judge to jail or hold the school board in contempt because a community member recited a prayer over the PA system before a high-school baseball game.

April 19

Catholics for Free Choice, an anti-Catholic group, attacked Pope Benedict XVI as soon as he was named the new pontiff.

Headed by Frances Kissling, the group lectured the new pope on what he must do during his first 100 days to satisfy them. Nothing short of a wholesale rejection of what the Catholic Church stands for was brazenly put forth by Kissling.

April 27

Odessa, TX—People for the American Way and the ACLU condemned a decision made by the school board of Odessa that added a Bible class to its high school curriculum. The class was passed not as a religion class, but as part of a history/literature course. Nonetheless, the two groups accused the class of promoting religion.

May 2

Planned Parenthood began a campaign to have its members give Pope Benedict XVI advice on abortion and reproduction health. Posted on its website was the following: "The ultra-conservative views of new Pope Benedict XVI pose a serious threat to the health and rights of women and girls around the world. Please write a Letter to the Editor letting the new Pope know how you feel about his dangerous stance on reproductive rights and sexuality."

May 9

The Catholic League website was hacked and its homepage changed. The following text is some of what was posted:

PRI[11 was here
F— BUSH — F— SHARON
FREE PALESTINE — FREE IRAQ
Morocco Rulez

May 12

The Catholic League website was hacked a second time. The following text is some of what was posted:

Defaced by PRI[11!! Agauain?? Hmmm why?
well the site was defaced okay? then what?
FBI? police? LOLZ nah

May 15

Members of the Rainbow Sash Movement, a radical gay activist organization, entered churches across the country to protest the Catholic Church's teachings on homosexuality. The group's May 2 press release said that the purpose of its presence was to "counter the lies that Pope Benedict XVI is promoting about our community"; it also said that many gays and lesbians saw the new pope as an "aggressive homophobe."

May 19

The PAC arm of MoveOn.org, the Internet-based organization funded by George Soros, made a despicable statement on its website against the pope and American Roman Catholics. As part of its campaign protesting Republican efforts to change the filibuster rules governing Federal court appointees, MoveOnPac.org posted a picture of a smiling Pope Benedict XVI holding a gavel outside the U.S. Supreme Court. Above the picture was the following inscription:

God Already has a job...
He does not need one on the
Supreme Court
Protect the Supreme Court Rules

May 31

London, KY—A judge's decision to offer drug and alcohol offenders the option of attending worship services instead of going to rehab or jail upset the ACLU. The group claimed that the judge raised some "serious constitutional problems." It maintained that the judge "strays from government neutrality towards religion," when all he did was to provide another option.

June 5

The National Secular Society asked Bob Geldof, the producer of Live8, to rescind his invitation to Pope Benedict XVI to attend the event. The event's purpose was to expand awareness of poverty in Africa, but the National Secular Society in its

press release decided it was the proper time to attack the pope on the use of condoms:

Bob Geldof could make one big difference to the plight of Africa by demanding that the Pope immediately lift restrictions on the use of condoms. If he does not, then the million marchers ought to converge on Vatican City to condemn the Pope's intransigence. If the Vatican accepted the invitation, the National Secular Society would do its best to ensure that everyone who is contemplating joining Live8 is made aware of the shameful part the Pope and his predecessor have played in the spread of AIDS in Africa. Involving religion in this event—especially one very controversial element of one particular religion—will change the nature of the protest. Live8 must be for everyone—it must not be hijacked by one particularly inappropriate religious personality.

June 7

The ACLU showed its bigoted colors when it protested a decision by a commissioner in Harris County, Texas naming a new 865-acre park after Pope John Paul II. The ACLU, we hasten to add, not only has no problem with schools and parks named after Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., it does not object to the holiday that honors his legacy.

June 22

Chicago, IL—A federal judge ruled that the Pentagon can no longer spend money to ready a Virginia military base for the Boy Scouts. This ruling followed an ACLU suit claiming that the Defense Department was violating the First Amendment by sponsoring the events of an organization that requires its members to swear an oath to God.

July

Catholics for a Free Choice issued "The Making of a Papacy: A Report on the First One Hundred Days of Pope Benedict XVI," which was replete with charges that the new pope had failed to

renounce Catholicism during his first 100 days. In doing so, the group confused its mission with that of the new pontiff's.

October 13

Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD) president Neil Giuliano issued an alert asking his members to contact NBC's "Today" show to protest its decision to invite Bill Donohue on the program. Giuliano accused Donohue of defaming gays and using "malicious smear tactics." Then, on October 24, when Donohue was called by Viacom's gay cable channel, Logo, to appear on its news program, Donohue said he would do so on condition that Giuliano agree to debate him. The invitation was granted but Giuliano said no.

October 30

Tijeras, NM—The ACLU filed suit against the village of Tijeras, NM to force it to remove a small cross from the village seal. The seal also contained a Native American religious symbol, but that was of no interest to the ACLU.

October 31

Eleanor Smeal, president of the Feminist Majority, said the following about the nomination of Samuel Alito to the Supreme Court: "Not only is the Court not representative in terms of race and gender, but also in terms of religion—with Alito, the majority of the Court would be Roman Catholics, which would underrepresent other religions, not to mention nonbelievers." The Catholic League quickly denounced her selective interest in proportional representation.

November 5

Abraham Foxman, the head of the Anti-Defamation League, accused Evangelical organizations and others of trying to "Christianize America." He demonized Christian groups by charging that they were seeking to advance their "Christian worldview." Their goal, he proclaimed, was "to Christianize America. To save us!"

December 1

Salt Lake City, UT—American Atheists filed a federal lawsuit attempting to get the state of Utah to remove steel crosses from roadways. The crosses were placed there to memorialize Utah Highway Patrol troopers who were killed in the line of duty.