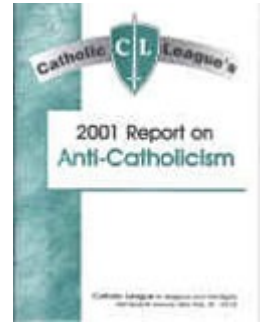


# Activist Organizations

## January 8

**Massac County, IL** – The American Civil Liberties Union attacked Massac County High School's plan to offer its students a class in Bible history. The ACLU stated that "this is faith, not academics." The school responded that the students will be taught from the perspective of history and it will not be a "Sunday school class." Illinois law allows schools to teach Bible courses.



## February

**Providence, RI** – The American Civil Liberties Union objected to a bill in the Rhode Island Senate that would have children in the state recite the preamble to the state constitution at the opening of each school day. The ACLU objected that reciting the preamble, which mentions God, in the context of a classroom would be the same as saying a prayer. As such, reciting part of the Rhode Island constitution would be unconstitutional according to ACLU standards.

## February 3

**Defiance, OH** – A portrait of Jesus was removed from the Defiance County courthouse after a local Defiance College professor filed a lawsuit. The American Civil Liberties Union of Ohio considers the case now settled but supported the lawsuit. The portrait had been hanging in the courthouse for at least 16 months. The lawsuit charged that the portrait's display was government promotion of Christianity.

## March 8

**Cleveland, OH** – The American Civil Liberties Union of Ohio filed a federal lawsuit saying that a poster of the Ten Commandments in a local county courthouse violated constitutional separation of church and state. The poster appears on the wall of a courtroom in the Richland County

office building in Mansfield, OH. "The display of so plainly a religious image as the Ten Commandments in a public building is a textbook violation of the First Amendment," claimed Sara DeCaro, a Cleveland attorney representing the ACLU.

### **March 16**

**Cincinnati, OH** – A federal court ruled that Ohio's motto, "With God, all things are possible," is constitutional. The ruling reverses an earlier court judgment. The motto, adopted in 1959, was compared to "In God We Trust" by attorneys for the state. The American Civil Liberties Union said the Ohio motto was much more specific and therefore unconstitutional.

### **March 19**

**New York, NY** – On the FOX News Channel program "Hannity & Colmes," Quanell X, minister of information for the New Black Panther Party, defended the statement of the former party minister, Khalid Abdul Muhammed, that "the pope is a no-good cracker." Quanell X stated that "When he spoke of the pope being no good, he used...the cracker as a metaphor to symbolize his position over black people...he meant that the pope would crack the whip from the Vatican that would allow people to continue racism and apartheid."

### **March 22**

**Los Angeles, CA** – The American Civil Liberties Union of Southern California filed a lawsuit in federal court seeking to compel National Park Service officials to remove a large cross installed in the Mojave National Preserve in San Bernardino County. The cross was used as a site where Christian veterans gather to remember war dead in special services.

### **April 2**

**Pulaski County, McCreary County, KY** – The Kentucky chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union sued to have displays of the Ten Commandments removed from courthouses in Pulaski and McCreary counties, respectively. Earlier, U.S. District Judge

Jennifer Coffman ruled that the displays had the “overwhelming effect of endorsing religion.” The judge was rehearing the cases.

### **April 3**

**Nashville, TN** – Atheists and civil rights groups went before the state legislature to oppose a bill sponsored by state representative Mark Windle that would add the legend “In God We Trust” to the Tennessee state flag. They also plan to oppose the posting of the Ten Commandments at public buildings.

### **April 17**

**Denver, CO** – The American Civil Liberties Union sued the city of Grand Junction alleging a monument of the Ten Commandments outside city hall violates the separation of church and state. The city council previously voted to keep the monument and even added a sign disavowing any intent to establish a religion.

### **April 18**

**Cumberland, KY** – A room in a local school that once served as a storage area and teachers’ lounge was converted to its new use as a chapel. The project was immediately condemned by the Kentucky chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union. ACLU state official David Friedman said, “Public schools cannot have chapels.”

### **May**

**Lexington, VA** – The Virginia Military Institute’s long-standing practice of offering a blessing before meals came under attack as the American Civil Liberties Union filed a lawsuit. ACLU officials said cadets felt pressured to pray even though it is not a requirement to participate or even bow their heads. Saying grace before the evening meal has been a tradition at VMI for 50 years.

### **May 14**

**Chicago, IL** – The American Civil Liberties Union, saying they were looking for a demonstration of tolerance and respect, called on Washington Community High School's principal to cancel plans to include an invocation and benediction at their graduation ceremony.

#### **May 17**

**Lincoln, NE** – The American Civil Liberties Union sued the city of Plattsmouth for refusing to take down a display of the Ten Commandments. The display has been in the same city park since 1965. Nebraska ACLU Executive Director Tim Butz said the display amounted to the city of Plattsmouth telling its citizens what religious tenets are preferred by the government.

#### **May 29**

**Indianapolis, IN** – The U.S. Supreme Court let stand a lower-court ruling that said the display of the Ten Commandments violated the Constitution's establishment of religion clause. The suit was originally brought by the American Civil Liberties Union.

#### **May 30**

**Indianapolis, IN** – The Indiana Civil Liberties Union filed a lawsuit accusing state officials of giving gambling proceeds to religious groups, including one that sponsors an elaborate Easter pageant. The Marion, Indiana Easter Pageant hosts a six-scene pantomimed musical pageant each year. The lawsuit says the Marion group received \$25,000 in 1999-2000.

#### **June 3**

The gay Catholic group "Rainbow Sash Movement" carried out a protest at churches across the country. Members of the group put on their sashes during the opening hymn and wore them to receive Holy Communion. If refused, members of the group would stand silently for the remainder of Communion.

#### **July 12**

**La Crosse, WI** – The Madison, WI based Freedom From Religion Foundation formally asked the city of La Crosse to remove a Ten Commandments monument from a local park. The group said the monument violates the separation of church and state. The same group challenged the legality of the monument back in the 1980s, when it brought suit against the city. In 1988, the 7th Circuit Court of Appeals upheld a ruling by the U.S. District Court in Madison that said the foundation was not injured by the marker's presence, so it lacked legal standing in the case.

### **July 13**

**San Francisco, CA** – The Gay Asian Pacific Alliance held a pageant in which male contestants dress up as glamorous women. One contestant paraded on stage as a pregnant Virgin Mary in a thong.

### **July 29**

**Washington, DC** – The head of American Atheists, Ellen Johnson, is quoted in the Washington Post as saying one of her goals is to ensure there be no tax aid to parochial schools. In making her point she said Catholic clergy "have abused and molested America's children for long enough."

### **August 10**

**Fort Wayne, IN** – At the opening of the controversial play "Corpus Christi" at Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne, shouting matches broke out in front of the theatre. Demonstrators from various activist organizations shouted anti-Christian remarks to those protesting the play. The play depicts a gay Jesus-figure who has sex with his disciples.

### **August 15**

**Honolulu, HI** – The Hawaii chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union filed a federal lawsuit against the city of Honolulu because the city refused to allow a painting of a nude woman on a cross to be displayed on public property. The painting by Daria Fand, "Last of the Believers" was banned

from an exhibit last March at Honolulu Hale. The Catholic League asked that if the lawsuit by the ACLU is successful, a traditional Catholic crucifix be placed next to the Fand interpretation.

### **September 13**

**Madison, WI** – In the wake of the terrorist attacks of September 11, the Freedom From Religion Foundation released a statement that said in part:

"[President] Bush's proclamation of Friday, September 14 as a 'National Day of Prayer and Remembrance' shows the pitfalls of the 'God is on our side' mentality, and the dangers of religious patriotism....

"In fact, it appears that the terrorist disasters of September 11 may well have been the ultimate 'faith-based initiative.' These terrorists apparently expected to find a reward 'in heaven' and were bent on starting a 'holy war' with our nation...Religion is not the answer, it is probably the problem...Prayer had its chance on September 11, and it failed. Imagine the unanswered prayers of hundreds or thousands of the victims of these terrorists. Official prayer will not solve any problems. We believe it is appropriate for President Bush to call for a Day of Remembrance, but leave prayer up to individuals.'"

### **September 14**

**Washington, DC** – The American Civil Liberties Union filed a motion to block students in Virginia schools from participating in a "moment of silence" even as kids and adults alike were trying to come to grips with the loss of friends and loved ones in the terrorist attack on the Pentagon. The ACLU argued the "moment" was a violation of the Establishment Clause of the U.S. Constitution. U.S. Supreme Chief Court Justice William Rehnquist dismissed the ACLU motion.

### **September 27**

**Madison, WI** – The Freedom From Religion Foundation called upon the Wisconsin State Department of Public Instruction, as well

as the Madison Metropolitan School District, to substitute the national anthem for the citing of the Pledge of Allegiance. Foundation President Anne Gaylor said the anthem was “the most secular and the least coercive alternative.” A statutory amendment passed in the state budget mandated that either the pledge or the anthem be offered. The foundation objected to the pledge because it contained the words, “under God.”

## **October**

***Palestine, TX*** – The Texas chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union threatened to sue the school where Texas Governor Rick Perry previously bowed his head in prayer. Gov. Perry attended an assembly at Palestine Middle School where the student body said a prayer that ended in the phrase “in Jesus’ name.” Perry responded “Amen.” David Kahane of the Texas ACLU said of Perry, “He has shown that he doesn’t accept the importance of separating church and state.”

## **October**

***Rocklin, CA*** – The American Civil Liberties Union demanded that Breen Elementary School remove a “God Bless America” sign from a marquee in front of the school. ACLU attorney Margaret Crosby said, “By displaying a religious message, the Breen Elementary School is driving its young students along religious lines. School officials are hurting and isolating their schoolchildren of minority faiths when they should be supporting them and the values of pluralism and tolerance.” The demand by the ACLU prompted some 250, many clad in red, white and blue, to turn out and support the message on the marquee.

## **October 10**

***Madison, WI*** – The Freedom From Religion Foundation wrote a letter of complaint to Wisconsin Governor Scott McCallum over remarks he made criticizing a vote of the Madison School Board. The board directed schools to play the national anthem rather than recite the pledge to comply with a new state law. McCallum said, “some people are looking for ways to diminish

our belief in God and country.” The foundation chastised McCallum for “equating ‘belief in God’ with ‘belief in country.’”

### **October 17**

**West Chester, PA** – The American Civil Liberties Union filed a federal lawsuit against Chester County, PA, over a Ten Commandments plaque that hangs in the county courthouse. The suit alleged, “Chester County creates the appearance to a reasonable observer that the government is taking a position on questions of religious beliefs rather than maintaining a position of neutrality toward religion.” The plaque has been in place since December, 1920.

### **October 18**

**Washington, DC** – Following the U.S. Congress’ action to promote the slogan, “God Bless America” in the nation’s schools, the Freedom From Religion Foundation condemned the resolution. The Foundation said the phrase “God Bless America” was a prayer that should not be promoted in public schools.

### **October 26**

**Washington, DC** – The debate over expression in the nation’s schools continued in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks of September 11. Americans United for the Separation of Church and State opposed the words “under God” in the Pledge of Allegiance as well as “God Bless America” as either a song or a slogan in front of schools.

### **October 30**

**Mobile, AL** – Americans United for the Separation of Church and State and the American Civil Liberties Union of Alabama filed a lawsuit against state officials. The two groups said a Ten Commandments monument in the rotunda of the Alabama State Judicial Building violated the U.S. and Alabama constitutions. Alabama Supreme Court Justice Roy Moore unveiled the four-foot-tall, granite display of the Ten Commandments weighing over 5,000 pounds.



## **October 31**

**Ringgold, GA** – The American Civil Liberties Union threatened to file a lawsuit against the city of Ringgold after officials hung the Ten Commandments, the Lord's Prayer and an empty frame in city hall. City Councilman Mill McMilton said the empty frame was "for those who believe in nothing." The ACLU of Georgia wrote, "An empty frame does not ameliorate the city's religious message."

## **November 6**

**Brunswick County, NC** – The Brunswick County School Board voted 3-2 against a proposal to display the Ten Commandments. The North Carolina General Assembly previously passed a law allowing school districts to create such displays in their schools. The officials of the state chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union have said they will sue any district that allows such a display.

## **November 7**

Following election day, Americans United for the Separation of Church and State accused the bishops in New Jersey of interfering in the electoral process. The bishops had urged Catholics to "use their voting privilege to reflect a choice of candidates who respect and sustain the dignity of all human life." From that, Americans United alleged that the pro-life candidate in the governor's race, Brett Schundler, received an "implicit endorsement."

The group took specific aim at Archbishop John Myers of Newark. It said the new archbishop "is well known in the Catholic Church for his hardline approach to politics." The group mentioned that while serving as bishop in Peoria, IL, Myers issued a pastoral letter saying it is "morally illicit" for Catholics to vote for pro-abortion candidates. Americans United for the Separation of Church and State has long been an advocate of abortion rights.

## **November 14**

**Los Angeles, CA** – Rabbi Marvin Hier, founder of the Simon

Wiesenthal Center, issued a news release on a topic dealing with World War II. In it, he wrote, "Prime Minister Churchill and Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden adamantly refused, pointing out that the Pope had overstepped his neutrality by declaring himself ready to protest damage to historic buildings in Rome while remaining silent regarding the crimes of aggression committed by the Fascists." Catholic League president William Donohue challenged the statement asking Hier to provide the evidence that (a) Churchill and Eden actually charged the pope with "overstepp[ing] his neutrality" and (b) they also charged him for "remaining silent" regarding crimes of aggression committed by the Fascists.

In a December 19 letter to Donohue, Hier directed him to pp. 245-46 of John Cornwell's thoroughly discredited book, *Hitler's Pope*. But even Cornwell didn't make the statements Hier credits him with. Donohue then asked Hier to delete these remarks as there is no basis in history for them. Hier refused to do so.

## **November 29**

***Washington, DC*** – Frances Kissling, president of Catholics for a Free Choice (CFFC), announced that she was launching a global campaign to change the Catholic Church's teachings on sexuality. She wanted to end what she calls "the Catholic bishops' ban on condoms." The campaign advertisement read as follows: "Catholic people care. Do our bishops? Because the bishops ban condoms, innocent people die." Kissling went so far as to say, "The Vatican and the world's bishops bear significant responsibility for the death of thousands of people who have died from AIDS."