

# ADL CENSORS CHRISTIAN MESSAGE

The Anti-Defamation League's (ADL) Pacific Southwest regional office has succeeded in getting officials of Riverside County, California, to censor a quote by Theodore Roosevelt that reads, "The true Christian is the true citizen." Those words, which are engraved in gold letters on a mahogany wall in the local courthouse, will be covered while the court is in session; they will be uncovered during historical tours. The ADL says the quote should be covered because it could be seen as "a specific endorsement of the Christian faith."

Catholic League president William Donohue today offered the following alternative resolution to the controversy:

"There are several issues at work here. One is whether it can reasonably be maintained that the government is establishing a religion simply by posting a religious message offered by a president of the United States. If this is the test, then we will have to censor the figure of Moses with the two tablets that sits in the U.S. Supreme Court building. Indeed, we will also have to censor the engraved quote of Thomas Jefferson, 'The God who gave us life gave us liberty,' that can be found in the very same Riverside County courthouse that features the Roosevelt remark.

"The other issue is freedom of speech. How ironic it is that in the 1970s, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that it was freedom of speech for a man standing in line in a California courthouse to wear a jacket with the words 'F- the draft' on it. But what California courthouses in the 21<sup>st</sup> century cannot tolerate, apparently, is Teddy Roosevelt's comment on Christianity and citizenship. Profanity is okay, but

Christianity is taboo.

"The ADL's Pacific Southwest regional office says it does not object to the entire statement by Roosevelt (some 80 words); its problem is that the remark in the courthouse is taken out of context. Fine. I am writing to the ADL, courthouse officials and the judge who heard the case proposing an alternative resolution: the Catholic League will pay for a new engraving, one which includes Roosevelt's entire comment. It's time someone called the hand of those who harbor an animus against Christianity."