

BACHMANN'S BELIEFS UNDER SCRUTINY

In a recent lead story that ran on the website of The Atlantic magazine, it was noted that Rep. Michele Bachmann was a longtime member at a church affiliated with the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS), a church that believes the pope is the Antichrist. The Atlantic's senior editor, Joshua Green, called Bill Donohue for his take on the issue.

Donohue said, "Clearly, [considering the pope the Antichrist] is anti-Catholic. This kind of hatred is reminiscent of Bob Jones. I believe [Bachmann] has in the past condemned anti-Catholicism. But there's no question—all you have to do is read it—that [WELS] clearly has anti-Catholic statements" on its website. Donohue refrained from passing judgment on Bachmann, due to the lack of evidence of bigotry on her part, but stated that she must address the matter promptly.

Donohue went on to say, "We never went after Obama for sitting there for 20 years listening to Rev. 'G**d*** America' Wright. I don't want to give him a pass, but I saw no bigotry on Obama's part. Similarly, I have seen none on Bachmann's part. But it's clear that the [WELS'] teachings are noxious and it's important for her to speak to the issue. Obama had to answer for Wright, McCain had to answer for [the Rev. John] Hagee, and this is something that Bachmann has to answer for."

Unsurprisingly, soon after The Atlantic article was published, Donohue was criticized by the left for not condemning Rep. Bachmann. Indeed, it is telling that it took an article about a Republican presidential candidate's church, for the left to discover anti-Catholicism.

Perhaps the most spectacularly dishonest attack was the one delivered by Ben Adler of The Nation magazine. He was not only

angry with Donohue for not slamming Bachmann, he was upset that he compared her membership in a church affiliated with WELS to Barack Obama's membership in a church run by Rev. Jeremiah Wright. Most reasonable people got the point.

Adler, however, was not reasonable, which is why he accused Donohue of partisanship. Was it also partisan when Donohue criticized Sen. John McCain, during his presidential bid, for his cozy relationship with a minister who had previously made anti-Catholic statements? [Note: Pastor John Hagee subsequently made a 180-degree turn.]

Interestingly, Adler's article appeared in *The Nation*, perhaps the oldest anti-Catholic magazine in the U.S. In the 20th century, it was home to Paul Blanshard, the most notorious anti-Catholic bigot of his day. Today, it is known for bashing the Catholic Church on all matters sexual.

These people haven't suddenly discovered anti-Catholicism—they are angry that attempts to smear Bachmann have failed. There is nothing principled about them.