

# BEWARE OF CATHOLIC EDUCATORS

In the February edition of educational journal, Phi Delta Kappan, there appeared an article by author Alfie Kohn entitled, "How Not to Teach Values: A Critical Look at Character Education." Kohn argues that it is not a change in the character of students that should be sought, but a change in "educational structures," the result of which ideally will mean "turning schools into caring communities."

How Kohn expects to accomplish his vision of schools as "caring communities" without addressing the debased character of many of today's students he does not say, but that is not the league's concern. What the league is concerned about is Kohn's stab at Catholic educators.

Kohn says that character education relies, in part, on religion. Anticipating criticism for what he is about to say, Kohn opines that "it is of no relevance that almost all of the leading proponents of character education are devout Catholics. But it is entirely relevant that, in the shadows of their writings, there lurks the assumption that only religion can serve as the foundation of good character."

This is truly remarkable. If the Catholicity of many pro-character education scholars "is of no relevance," then why did Kohn feel compelled to make it relevant? And while we're at it, just how does Kohn know that the authors he is speaking about are "devout"?

Imagine for a moment if someone said that "it is of no relevance that almost all of the leading proponents of abortion are non-observant Jews," and then tried to squirm out of it by saying that what counts is the assumption that only a secular approach to the subject of abortion makes any sense. No one in his right mind would understand that as anything less than an anti-Semitic slur. Similarly, no one in his right

mind can understand Kohn to be doing anything but engaging in Catholic-bashing for writing what he did.

Many thanks to Boston University professor Kevin Ryan (cited by Kohn as one of those “devout Catholic” troublemakers) for bringing this magic to our attention.