

Are Catholics Christians?

In one sense, it sounds like an awfully dumb question to ask “Are Catholics Christians?” It is a matter of historical record that the Catholic Church is the world’s longest living institutional testimony to Christianity. But as the sociologist W.I. Thomas once said, “perception is reality,” and on that count, it may very well be that Catholics are not Christians.

When sociologists are asked who is a Jew, the textbook reply is, “someone who considers himself a Jew and is considered by non-Jews as a Jew.” And that is why everyone knows that Sammy Davis, Jr. was never a Jew, despite his own convictions. The same is true of Christians. When that term is invoked, it typically refers to Protestants, not Catholics, though technically Catholics are Christians. To be a Catholic, then, is to be someone whose primary identification is with Catholicism, notwithstanding nominal inclusion in the family of Christians.

The term “Religious Right” is typically employed by those who are critical of Christian conservatives, and by that they mean Protestants, not Catholics. Even those Catholics who are conservative generally don’t think of themselves as part of the “Religious Right,” and neither are they thought of that way by most conservative Protestants. So in “reality,” Protestants are the real Christians and Catholics are not. They are Catholics.

Theologically speaking, then, Catholics are Christians, but sociologically speaking, they most certainly are not. For the purpose of this analysis, it is the sociological reality that is operative.

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It is just as true to say that most anti-Catholics are

Protestants as it is to say that most Protestants are not anti-Catholic. The former is true simply because of size: almost 6 in 10 Americans are Protestants, and when the quarter of the population that is Catholic is factored in, that doesn't leave too many others to bash Catholics. The latter is true because Protestants have no monopoly on bigotry. To wit: Catholics are no more free of prejudice than their Christian brothers are.

So if we have prejudiced Catholics and prejudiced Protestants, why is it that we have so few, if any, well-known Catholics who are anti-Protestant bigots, but we have no shortage of well-known Protestants who are anti-Catholic bigots? From Jimmy Swaggart to Dave Hunt, there are not a few Protestants of notoriety who have been known to bash Catholics. But can anyone name a Catholic who is a public figure who has a track record of bashing Protestants?

Take the 1994 Evangelical-Catholic accord, formally known as *Evangelicals and Catholics Together: The Christian Mission in the Third Millennium* (ECT). ECT was designed to have Catholics and Evangelicals put aside their doctrinal differences so that they might work together on cultural issues of joint interest. Led by the Catholic intellectual, Rev. Richard John Neuhaus, and the prominent Protestant spokesman, Chuck Colson, ECT showed great promise. But soon after the non-binding accord was signed, the grumbling began, and it came almost exclusively from Protestant circles.

The Protestant rebellion against ECT was the subject of a six part series of television programs hosted and moderated by John Ankerberg. Entitled "Evangelicals and Catholics Together," the series featured Ankerberg, D. James Kennedy, John McArthur and R.C. Sproul, all of whom are of some standing in Protestant circles. Their goal is to persuade the Evangelical signers to the accord to reconsider their position and remove their name from ECT. They have not been without some success and they show no sign of stopping.

What bothers the dissenters of ECT is that cooperation with Catholics on social issues will necessarily mean theological prostitution in the long run. Now if that were all there were to the grumbling, it would matter little in the end. But, unfortunately, the dissenters have not been able to broach their dissent without engaging in some old-time Catholic bashing along the way.

To Ankerberg, Kennedy, Sproul and McArthur, Catholicism is not merely a religion that has doctrinal differences with Protestantism, it is "a false religion." Catholics, according to McArthur, are "trapped" in a "system of superstitious and religious ritual." But not to worry, there is a solution: the dissenters boldly defend the noble cause of "sheep stealing," that is, the process of systematically seeking to proselytize Catholics, bringing them over, it is hoped, to the one true religion.

The reaction among Catholics to all this has been one big yawn, and that explains why the bashing that has taken place over this accord has come from one side, not both. Meanwhile, "sheep stealing" efforts are lavishly funded in Latin America by U.S. Christian organizations. It would be interesting to know, for example, how Christians Evangelizing Catholics would explain the absence in the Catholic community of any organized effort to "steal" Protestants. Christians Evangelizing Catholics is known for its aggressiveness in converting Catholics, and for entertaining some wild-eyed views of Catholicism. That there is no Catholic analogue of any standing says something important about both communities.

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Not only are there no Catholic public figures who are known to bash Protestants, there are no Catholic publishing houses that bash Protestants either. To be sure, there are plenty of Catholic publishers who print books that defend Catholicism

from its Protestant detractors. But I know of none that publishes what could fairly be called anti-Protestant books. Protestants, however, cannot say the same as there are Protestant publishing houses that bash Catholics.

If the only anti-Catholic material being published by Protestants was the junk that Chick Publications has to offer (little cartoon type book- lets), it may not matter too much. But when one of the largest Christian publishers in the nation regularly releases anti-Catholic books, it matters greatly. Harvest House boasts that it is one of the five or six largest Christian publishing houses in the country, and among its bestsellers are volumes like *The Gospel According to Harvest House: Six Hundred and Sixty-Six Ways to Bash the Church*. The reader can guess what Church they mean.

What makes this all the more disconcerting is the legitimacy that Harvest House has gained from respectable Protestant publishers. Harvest House is a member in good standing in the Evangelical Christian Publishers Association, an organization that has no policy on publishing anti-Catholic books. As I said before, there is no shortage of Catholics who are bigots in this country, but for the life of me I cannot envision any anti-Protestant books being released by a big Catholic publishing house, much less one that would earn inclusion in respectable Catholic quarters. Once again, it seems Protestants have a monopoly on this kind of bigotry.

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There are Catholic pro-life groups and there are Protestant pro-life groups, and there are Christian pro- life groups that say they welcome both Protestants and Catholics. I don't know of one Christian pro-life organization that doesn't welcome all Protestants but there is at least one pro-life company, LifeLine (see p.l) that doesn't welcome Catholics, not, at least, if it's discovered that they're "too Catholic."

I think I know the real reason why Karl Keating's Catholic Answers was denied participation in LifeLine's program. Keating's organization, and his influential publication, *This Rock*, specializes in educating Catholics about their faith, and it is his special mission to educate Catholics about the myths that some Protestants have spread about Catholicism. LifeLine says that Catholic Answers was denied participation in its program because of the "threats and demands" made by Keating's organization. When pressed by the Catholic League to identify the nature of those threats, LifeLine failed to answer. Having spoken to Karl Keating, and to the person at LifeLine that worked with Keating, it is clear that the only "threat" that took place was the threat that Keating's work posed to LifeLine's work. A full audit of how LifeLine spends its money might reveal the real reasons for their discomfort with Keating.

This is not the only instance where Catholics have been made to feel unworthy by Protestants in the pro-life camp. Complaints from around the country have reached this office about the tendency on the part of some Protestants to question the Catholic commitment to the pro-life cause, resulting, in some cases, of attempts to commandeer the pro-life movement away from Catholics. Yet the irony is that it was the Catholic bishops who first led the pro-life cause. (Much the same could be said about the school voucher issue, only worse. There was a time when Catholics not only led the movement for vouchers, they did so while being resisted by Protestants, many of whom have now joined the campaign for vouchers.)

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It is not likely that a Catholic campus would embarrass itself by hosting a Catholic who is well-known for his Protestant bashing. This is one area where supply and demand are equal: there are no such figures in the first place and there is no such demand. But as we saw with Regent University, and with the sponsoring Rutherford Institute, the same does not hold

for Protestants (see pg. 6).

Regent University, after some stumbling, got the picture and did the honorable thing by denouncing the appearance of Ian Paisley on campus. But Rutherford, long-time foe of the ACLU's, all of a sudden became more civil libertarian than the ACLU.

All Rutherford had to do was make a statement similar to that of Regent's and move on. But no, Rutherford tried to take the high road and instead got lost in doing so. It fell back on legalisms, always the mark of those who can't win on moral grounds. And even there, Rutherford lost.

As I said in my statement to Rutherford, no one has a right to speak at any private institution; it is always a privilege to do so. Censorship occurs when government stops speech before it is uttered, not when a private university says no to an Ian Paisley, a Mark Fuhrman or a Louis Farrakhan or anyone else. "Let's face it," I wrote, "you are trying to hide behind a First Amendment that doesn't give you protection." Even worse, I added, "Not one word of condemnation of Ian Paisley can you utter."

What was particularly galling about the Rutherford response was the way it tried to pretend how open-minded it was about Catholics. "Let me remind you," I was told, Rutherford defends many Catholics, as evidenced in the defense of Catholics arrested for picketing an abortion clinic.

My reply was as follows: "Here's another reality check for you: you tout your defense of Catholics engaged in pro-life work as proof that you are not anti-Catholic. But you know as well as I do that such action is taken out commitment to your pro-life stance (a commendable one, I might add) and not because you are pro-Catholic. And I hasten to add that there is nothing wrong with Rutherford not being pro-Catholic (that is not your mission), but, alas, there is something wrong

with Rutherford when it sanctions anti-Catholicism.”

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I can't imagine a Catholic, unprovoked, going up to a Protestant at a Catholic function and asking him whether he believes in Jesus. Perhaps there are such people, but I've never met them. But that is exactly what happened to Catholic League staffers at this year's Christian Coalition conference in Washington. We were also asked-not by the same person-whether we were Americans or Catholics. In addition, more than one of the attenders asked us to explain, in a hostile way, why Catholics needed a civil rights organization in the first place.

Ralph Reed and Pat Robertson, the executive director and president of the Christian Coalition, respectively, are no more to blame for this bigotry than I am for the bigoted behavior of some Catholic League member. Indeed, Robertson has signed the Evangelical-Catholic accord and is comfortable with keeping his distance from the dissenters. And Reed has made a determined effort to reach out to Catholics. So if Reed and Robertson aren't to blame, why mention this at all?

During the civil rights movement of the 1960s, it was common for well-meaning whites to ask blacks how they could help. Malcolm X had the best advice of all when he said that whites should go back into their own communities and clean up the bigotry that exists. Much the same needs to be said to Reed and Robertson: their new auxiliary, the Catholic Alliance, should rethink its emphasis on protecting Catholics from bigotry and instead focus on cleaning up the anti-Catholicism that exists in the Protestant community.

When plans were being made to launch the Catholic Alliance within the Christian Coalition, its goal was political mobilization. But that's risky business as the Catholic hierarchy takes no position on most of the issues the

Christian Coalition wants to address. It is one thing for Evangelicals to say that the line item veto, tax cuts and gun control are positions that merit a specific Christian response, quite another for lay Catholics to slap the Catholic label on these issues and offer what is in essence nothing but the Republican response.

Even more difficult is dealing with all those issues (capital punishment, immigration, the U.N., social welfare programs) where the Catholic Church, either through the bishops or through the Vatican, has taken a stand that is in direct opposition to the one favored by the Christian Coalition's Catholic Alliance. The fact is that the Catholic Church is liberal on some issues and conservative on others. Not to realize this is to make a big mistake.

Even trickier for the Catholic Alliance is its new-found goal of combating anti-Catholic bigotry. It's tricky for the reason I said earlier, namely, that most anti-Catholic bigots are-for no other reason than because of supply-more likely to be Protestant than anything else. So when Protestants bash Catholics, that puts the Catholic Alliance in the uncomfortable position of fighting Protestants who are anti-Catholic bigots. For this reason alone, I wouldn't dream of forming an auxiliary within the Catholic League called the Protestant League. Besides, who am I to defend Protestants from bigots?

The proof that the Catholic Alliance has reached too far came with-in a few weeks of its launching. To my knowledge, the first public statement that the group made was to join with the Catholic League (at our invitation) in condemning anti-Catholic bigotry on the campus of the person who is president and founder of the Christian Coalition and president and chancellor of the university where the incident took place, namely on the campus of Pat Robertson's Regent University. Talk about awkward.

It would also be advisable for the Catholic Alliance to stay away from the affairs of the Catholic Church. I say this because the Alliance's parent, the Christian Coalition, has had a tendency to stick its nose in where it doesn't belong. For example, when an allegedly controversial Catholic funeral was said in Seattle this past summer for a state senator who died of AIDS, the state chapter of the Christian Coalition in Washington publicly criticized the priest for presiding over the service.

It is important to note that this action was defended by the national office of the Christian Coalition, so we are not speaking here about some trigger-happy operative in the state of Washington. When the national office asked for my advice about this matter at the time, I replied by saying "I think it would be ill-advised for the Christian Coalition to pursue this matter." They didn't listen and continued to press the issue. Now if this is an indication of the way the Catholic Alliance is going to behave, we will all be in for some fireworks.

It could also be questioned why a Catholic Alliance is necessary in an organization called the Christian Coalition. Why is there no Lutheran Alliance or Methodist one? But then again, maybe that's because Catholics aren't Christians.

Qualifying the Culture of Death

By William A. Donohue

In his encyclical letter, *Evangelium Vitae*, Pope John Paul II warns against what he calls a "perverse freedom," one that

awards “*absolute power over others and against others*,” resulting, he says, in a “culture of death.” His concern is borne out of the reality that “broad sectors of public opinion justify certain crimes against life in the name of individual freedom.” The roots of this “perverse freedom” lay in a conception of liberty that “exalts the isolated individual in an absolute way, and gives no place to solidarity, to openness to others and service to them.” In short, the Holy Father is saying that when radical individualism is interpreted as freedom, the consequences include a “culture of death.”

To make clear the association between radical individualism and the “culture of death,” it might help to consider how the killing of unborn children, as well as infants, has been justified in the name of liberty. And what better person to listen to than Frances Kissling, the infamous anti-Catholic baiter from Catholics for a Free Choice. When Pope John Paul II laid bare his thoughts on abortion infanticide, euthanasia, the death penalty, ecology and biological engineering in *Evangelium Vitae* Kissling responded by saying that “What he calls the ‘culture of death’ is really human freedom being able to make choices based on conscience.”

Kissling’s idea of freedom is the “perverse freedom” that the Pope advises us against. For her, the taking of innocent human life is “really human freedom” because it is a choice “based on conscience.” Such logic, of course, could be used to justify serial killing and genocide, both of which are presumably authorized by persons making choices “based on conscience.” To regard this as “really human freedom” shows the depravity of Kissling’s conscience and the wisdom of the Pope’s concerns.

Those who counsel feticide and infanticide must know in their heart of hearts what it is they are counseling, and that is why this debate has become so intellectually dishonest.

The recent U.N. Conference on Women that was held in Beijing

provided more evidence of how dishonest this debate has become. In the pages of the *New York Times*, an organization titled International Women's Health Coalition placed an ad addressing its concerns about the Beijing Conference. It stood squarely for abortion rights, stating that "We are ensuring that reproductive and sexual health and rights are central in all programs and policies that affect our health." But after having acknowledged its support for abortion, the organization decried the fact that "100 million women are not alive today due to discrimination that leads to malnutrition, poor health care and pre-natal sex selection."

Notice the selective concern over "pre-natal sex selection." It appears that the ladies who comprise the International Women's Health. Coalition are bothered by the Third World practice of killing babies in the womb once it has been determined that they are female babies. But, of course, why should it matter to them, if in fact, human life isn't present in the womb?

On September 16, the editorial board of the *New York Times* echoed the same fears when it approvingly noted that the final Beijing document warned of "discrimination against girls, even before birth in some countries all over the world." Once again, those who claim that abortion doesn't take innocent human life suddenly switch gears when female feticide is practiced. But isn't it just "matter" that is being discarded? And if some abortions artificially reduce the population, then why don't all abortions?

It is not just sexism that the pro-abortion advocates are guilty of, It's homosexism as well. According to the latest ideological fad, it is one thing to kill a heterosexual baby (or at least one that is male), quite another to kill a homosexual baby. If this sounds crazy, consider the following.

About a year and a half ago, I was watching some TV talk show hosted by Tom Snyder. Two gay guys were on the air talking

about gay rights, etc. I didn't pay much attention until the discussion turned to the possibility that there might be some gay gene that determines homosexuality. Admittng that the book is open on this subject, the participants all expressed grave concern over what might happen if a gay gene really were discoverable. Wouldn't that lead many parents to opt for an abortion if they knew that their child would be gay? And wasn't that an awful thing to contemplate?

Well as it turns out that brave new world of aborting gay kids may never be upon us. In February 1994, the scientist who discovered a possible genetic marker for male homosexuality said that if his team finds the gene they'll hold the patent on its uses and "won't license it for use in amniocentesis" to screen fetuses. Whew!

So there we have it, folks, the pro-abort crowd goes bonkers at the thought that we might run out of homosexuals. Now it may not be comforting for straight guys to learn that affirmative action for women and homosexuals has now extended into the womb, but the reality is that even those who favor abortion- on-demand are beginning to have second thoughts. Now if we could only convince the pro-abortion activists that every child might be either a female or a homosexual-and a physically challenged person of color as well-we might very well end abortion altogether.

The Catholic Church is also happily out of step with the radical animal rights movement. Citing the Bible, Catholic doctrine understands the right of humans to exercise dominion over animals. Yet those who want to protect all animals at all cost from extinction typically have no problem with killing unborn chil- dren. Ingrid Newkirk, co-founder and chairman of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, once summed up the sentiments of her ilk by saying, "A rat is a pig is a dog is a boy." Now wouldn't that make you nervous if your kid was invited to her house for dinner?

Every spring, the residents of Stuart, Florida, are warned that loggerhead turtles are an endangered species and that anyone who disturbs their eggs is in violation of the law. But it is not just those animals that are accorded special protection, even animals that have been downgraded to a "threatened" status (e.g., the Bald Eagle) have their nesting sites protected by law. It says something sinister about our "culture of death" that the nesting site for humans isn't accorded the same protection.

Women, homosexuals, endangered and threatened species-these are the ones that give pause to the pro-abortion crowd, and that is why their support for a "culture of death" is qualified. Unfortunately, some in this crowd show less interest in preserving infants than birds and turtles. And it is not just handicapped infants that I am talking about.

The founder of the animal rights movement is an Australian philosopher, Peter Singer. In a book he wrote in the 1970s, *Animal Liberation*, he argued that some animals are more self-aware than infants and should be given due recognition in society. This same man admitted in the 1980s that the pro-life people had a good point when they maintained that it was impossible to mount a moral argument in favor of feticide that couldn't also be used to justify infanticide. After all, Singer reasoned, there really was no moral distinction between killing a child in the womb and killing a child out of the womb. But "the solution," as he called it, was "to abandon the idea that all human life is of equal worth," thereby coming to the perverse conclusion that if it is okay to kill unborn kids, it was okay to kill them once they were born.

Singer is not alone. The theologian Joseph Fletcher once said that infants may properly be killed if they didn't measure up to his fifteen "indicators of personhood" (one of which was I.Q.) Newborns, he said, were not "persons," only "human lives." Fletcher, it should be known, had previously won the Humanist of the Year award.

Speaking of children with birth defects, James Watson opined in the 1970s that "If a child were not declared alive until three days after birth, then all parents could be allowed the choice...the doctor could allow the child to die if the parents so chose and save a lot of misery and suffering." Dr. Watson was the scientist who cracked the genetic code and won a Nobel prize for his work.

Philosopher Michael Tooley takes an even bolder stand when he argues that to have a right to life it is necessary to be able to desire to continue living, and this in turn requires a degree of self-awareness no newborn infant possesses. Thus, the Jeffersonian ideal of inalienable rights is now given a new twist: there can be no rights until humans are able to see themselves as separate beings with a past and a future. This position, shared by historian Mary Anne Warren, is an open assault on the natural rights doctrines that have informed both the Catholic and the American traditions.

It is little wonder why the Catholic Church is targeted for abuse by so many in our society. Against this "culture of death" stands a 2,000 year old institution that continues to preach the dignity of the human person. Unlike its adversaries, it does not tailor its teachings to trendy ideological paradigms or to selfish and base motives. Those who champion the "culture of death" know who the enemy is and that is why they continue to rail against the Catholic Church. But it is precisely for reasons like this that this is a great time to be a Catholic.

What Is Wrong With This Picture?

**By Most Reverend Donald W. Wuerl
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If you have ever watched a child look for the inconsistency in a “What is wrong with this picture?” puzzle, you have seen the joy of discovery as the child points out a bird flying upside down or circles a clown with his head on backwards. Recently, while I was listening to the turmoil generated over a number of high school seniors who thanked God at their commencement exercises, the “What is wrong with this picture?” exercise came to mind.

In a society that prides itself and even boasts of the right of free expression that every citizen enjoys, no matter how crude, vulgar or ignorant it might be, suddenly a number of people reached near hysteria because these young people out of joy and faith-filled hearts simply said “Thank you, God.” Mind you, this was not a call for insurrection. They had not denounced any parties in the blood bath in the Balkans. Nor had they waved condoms, burnt the American flag, or held up religious articles for profanation – all constitutionally guaranteed expressions of free speech, some of which are actually paid for from taxpayers’ dollars. Those who represent the future of our nation had merely said “Thank you, God.” The results of their action were editorials, articles, interviews, threats of lawsuits, a call for punishment, even the suggestion that they be arrested simply because they had said in a public forum, “Thank you, God.” When we hear of the outrage directed at those youngsters we have to ask “What is wrong with this picture?”

We live in an age where serious effort is being made to sterilize the context in which our young people grow and are

educated – to sterilize it of any moral content. This is regularly done in the name of a supposedly valueless secular order which children are to enter when they begin their education. It is precisely in this so-called secular and “neutral” or valueless world that things get turned upside down. While it is perfectly legal and, in some cases, even mandated at taxpayers’ expense that condoms be distributed, thus encouraging young people to sexual promiscuity; while it is perfectly legitimate for the National Endowment for the Arts to use taxpayers’ money to support the public desecration of religious articles that are sacred to people; and while the burning of a flag or a radio talk-show host’s explanation of how you can best shoot a law enforcement officer are considered worthy of national freedom of speech awards, a simple “Thank you, God” is denounced as attacking the very foundations of American liberty. What is wrong with this picture?

What is essentially wrong is the blurring of some very basic distinctions that have served our nation well from its foundation until recently. There is a clear difference between supporting any one religious group or church at the expense of the taxpayer and the simple public recognition that “God is.” It is simply wrong to say that recognition of the existence of God by the people of this nation is the same as establishing a state- supported religion. Using taxpayers’ money to foster abortions and encourage so-called “safe sex” among kids is far more an imposition of a moral code and doctrine on our school-age children than any “Thank you, God” could ever be. The so-called “wall” that separates Church and state is intended to protect the Church from any unwarranted or increasingly intrusive action of the state that limits the effectiveness of the Church in preaching its message. The First Amendment was established to protect the state from the hegemony of any one Church, religious group or denomination. This was clearly the mind of the founding fathers who had witnessed the imposition of “state churches” in the colonial period.

Such a prohibition is necessary and healthy. Government should not attempt to regulate religious faith by telling bishops, for example, where they should establish parishes, what church building should be left open and when or how the sacraments should be celebrated. Nor should any one faith community become the state-supported "official" Church such as we see in England or Sweden.

The so-called separation of Church and state is a far cry from the exclusion of God from any expression in public life. Separation of Church and state, until very, very recently, was never understood as the separation of God from our communal lives-our society. The attempt to interpret the separation of Church and state to mean the elimination of any mention of God from public life is not only new, it is having a devastating effect on the life of our nation. By bleaching out the mere mention of God we wash out as well the source of moral responsibility and the foundation of moral obligation.

To call our young people to a sense of truth, justice, obligation to others and personal integrity in the name of a vague secular "correctness" is to offer them little of any lasting value for either their own lives or for our efforts together to build a truly good and just society. We struggle for racial equality, justice in the workplace and care for the poor and elderly not from a vague sense of momentary political correctness but rather from the profoundly theological reason that we are all children of the same God, sisters and brothers of one another and sharers in God's bounty-the goods of this earth. To erase God from this picture, to silence the recognition of God's place in our lives, is to remove the very substance that holds us together, gives us common purpose and calls all of us to moral obligation.

One of the most firmly held convictions of the vast majority of American citizens is the important role that God plays in our lives. Regardless of the church, synagogue, mosque or other worship place that we attend, there is a common and

widespread – not to say nearly unanimous – conviction that life without God is meaningless.

In recent years, as litigation has become more narrowly focused and court rulings have become more constrictive, attention has shifted from concern over fostering the beliefs of specific churches, religious groups, synagogues, faith communities and congregations of all types to the very mention of a supreme being. The desire to eradicate the very mention of God now drives the engines of litigation. While you could take a crucifix, immerse it in body waste and have the federal government pay for it as the National Endowment for the Arts did, you could not mention the name of the person depicted on the crucifix in a public setting without risk of a lawsuit, threats of fines and now even arrest.

What is wrong with this picture? You can celebrate “sparkle season” with government support but face expulsion from some public schools for wishing another student “Merry Christmas” on school grounds. What is wrong with this picture?

We are a nation of people who place our trust in God. We say so on our money and in our oaths. We proclaim it on our buildings and, more importantly, we try to live it in our hearts. The prohibition of any reference to a supreme being in our public life is not the time-honored application of our Constitution, nor is it the will of the people, but rather an exercise in “political correctness” gone to the extreme. It also has the effect of making our society schizophrenic. We tell our young people, “You may mention this important value and determinate factor in your life at home but in public God does not exist.” Most children, by the time they reach the midpoint of their elementary education, are aware that God is illegal in public school.

This curious twisting of the Constitution for the purpose of removing any public reference to God has resulted in the devastating effects that we see increasingly around us as the

bitter fruit of a secular society. Once any reference to God is omitted, moral obligation, virtue or that internal sense of responsibility which calls us to more than just minimal adherence to manmade and imposed laws also disappear. Virtue rests on religious conviction. Religious faith is a response to God. Break that chain at any point and our society begins to unravel.

Is it any wonder that in our streets, in the schools, in homes and communities across this land we witness increasing violence, disregard for human life, and a harshness and coldness that is increasingly described as "remorseless." Some of the older prisoners in jails have told me that they do not want to associate with younger prisoners precisely because they are "Godless" and have no feeling, respect or sense of right or wrong.

The secular model of life has failed us. It has not served us well at all in its claim to exclusive possession of the public order and its pretension that it can take the place of God. While the secular model of life can bleach out moral integrity, self-restraint and virtue as it does the mention of God, it has nothing to offer in their place. The belief that we can sustain our human society and our community life simply by the power of externally imposed laws enforced by police and supported by an ever-increasing number of prisons and jails is baseless. The secular model of life is essentially and ultimately bankrupt. Not by bread alone do we live.

The recognition of God in our public life is not a call to establish a theocracy. Nor is it a claim to control of the state by any one religious community. In the past, when this has happened in our country we Catholics have suffered severely. What I am emphasizing is that we cannot build a good, free and just society without the recognition that God is a part of our lives. Ultimately what we will be as a people, as a society, as a commonwealth, will reflect the personal values that each of us holds most dear, most

fundamental and most important.

What is wrong with this picture?

Do we really need to ask what is wrong with threatening to censure young people because in their joy and faith they mention God?

What is wrong with a society that places condoms into the hands of our young people and slaps those same hands if they fold them in prayer-all of this in the schools that we have established, paid for and sustained to teach our children how to live?

The next time you see one of those pictures with the bird flying upside down and with the caption "What is wrong with this picture?" think of our nation, our society, our community. Do we really want-does the Constitution truly demand-a nation where God has been removed of any aspect of public life? What is wrong with this picture?

What to Expect At the Beijing Conference

By Dale O'Leary

The following is an excerpt from Dale O'Leary's monograph, "Gender: The Deconstruction of Women." Dale is a frequent commentator on international issues. It is especially timely given the commencement of the Fourth World Conference on Women on September 4; it extends to September 15 and is being held in Beijing, China.

At the Preparatory Committee (PrepCom) meeting at the UN in

March, many of the delegates as well as members of the Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), met to discuss the issues that will be voted on in Beijing. The conference was heavily staffed by "gender feminists," a term that Professor Christina Hoff Summer has coined to describe radical feminists.

Dale O'Leary's analysis of the role of gender feminists is an invaluable guide to understanding the workings of the Beijing Conference. We are reprinting those portions of her work that are of direct interest to the readership of the Catholic League.

Sexual and Reproductive Rights and Health are the very heart of the Gender Feminist agenda as the following quote from the Council of Europe meeting in preparation for Beijing made clear.

The right to free choice in matters of reproduction and lifestyle was considered [by the participants at the meeting] fundamental for women. The enjoyment of sexual and reproductive rights is a prerequisite for women to have genuine self-determination.

"Free choice in reproduction" is code for abortion on demand; "lifestyle," a code word for homosexuality, lesbianism, and all other forms of non-marital sexuality. The Council of Europe participants want this "self-determination" extended to adolescents, unmarried women, and lesbians.

The voices of young women should be heard since sexual life is not solely attached to married life. This leads to the point of the right to be different whether in terms of lifestyle – the choice to live in a family or to live alone, with or without children – or sexual preferences. The reproductive rights of lesbian women should be recognized.

This recognition of the rights of lesbian women would include the right of lesbian couples to conceive children through artificial insemination and the right of lesbians to legally

adopt their partners' children.

In demanding sexual and reproductive rights, the Gender Feminists are demanding legal and social sanction for behaviors which legal codes, religious teachings, and cultural norms throughout history and around the world have condemned. The Gender Feminists insist that the condemnation of these behaviors was the result of men's desire to control women:

It is overwhelmingly men who control the process of interpreting and defining the relevant religious, cultural, or traditional practices, and as a consequence these norms are defined in patriarchal ways which limit women's human rights, especially in asserting control over women's sexuality and in confining women in roles that reinforce and perpetuate their subordination.

Societies condemn sexual relations outside marriage, particularly sexual relations with adolescent girls, because these behaviors result in the conception of children outside of marriage. The social norms are sustained by experience of the social costs of such behaviors and not by men's desire to control women. Indeed, it is the mothers who are often the most concerned about the enforcement of these norms because they want to protect their daughters from sexual exploitation and their potential grandchildren from the tragedy of fatherlessness.

Every child has a biological father and mother. No matter the circumstances of their birth, children feel a need to establish a relationship with their biological parents. The power of blood ties is not an invention but a reality, as the experience of many adopted children verifies. When tragedy prevents a child from growing up in a home where his biological mother and father are present, people can react heroically by providing the child with as near a normal a family life as possible, but there is no denying that a tragedy has occurred. To purposefully or carelessly make a

tragedy by conceiving a child outside a stable marriage constitutes the most devastating form of child abuse. Women do not have the right to abuse children.

Every human being has a right to life which, according to the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, article 25, includes "the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and his family." The Gender Feminists want this right restated as an absolute 'right to health,' and they insist that this be extended to a right to sexual and reproductive health as an amendment to the Beijing document.

Health naturally includes health of all organs including the sex organs and reproductive organs, but the Gender Feminists have manipulated the UN into defining reproductive health to include abortion. Thus, the right to life would include the right to health, which would include abortion and death to unborn human beings.

Gender Feminists attempt further to confuse the issue by linking sexual and reproductive rights with sexual and reproductive health. The term sexual and reproductive rights as used by Gender Feminists refers to the right to engage in various behaviors. Health does not include the right to engage in behaviors some of which are unhealthy, others of which are dangerous to society and particularly to children. Neither women nor men can be said to have absolute sexual and reproductive rights. Human beings do have the right to marry and form a family. On the other hand, government and society have a duty to discourage behaviors which endanger the health and safety of citizens and particularly behaviors which put children at risk. To claim abortion as a reproductive right denies the prior and primary right of the unborn human being to life.

A booklet prepared for a series of workshops held during the Cairo Conference on Population entitled "Sexual and Reproductive Rights And Health as Human Rights: Concepts and

Strategies; An Introduction for Activists," by Rhonda Copelan of International Women's Human Rights Law Clinic at

CUNY and Berta Esperanza Hernandez of International Women's Human Rights Project of the Center for Law and Public Policy, St. John's University (NY), spelled out how the Gender Feminists intend to use the concept of human rights to push for abortion and lesbianism.

The strategy outlined in the booklet is very simple: Push the evolution of human rights protected by the UN to include "sexual and reproductive rights and health" and use the mechanism of the UN to enforce these rights worldwide. In effect, they hope to create new "rights" which are based not on natural law and common consensus, but rooted in radical ideologies, and to use these rights to overthrow traditional cultures and religious values, as the following quotes demonstrate:

Women have put the issue of acknowledging reproductive and sexual rights and health as human rights within the framework of economic and social justice and international solidarity...

By insisting that our basic needs in the areas of reproductive and sexual health are human rights...

Having abortion and sexual rights for lesbians and adolescents declared fundamental human rights would give the Gender Feminists a powerful weapon to enforce their agenda, as the authors state:

Human rights constitute limitations on the sovereignty of states; they constitute principles to which states, donors, providers, intergovernmental organizations and ultimately, the private economic sector must be held accountable.

Human rights do not depend on whether a state has acknowledged them, for example, by ratifying a particular

treaty. Widely endorsed human rights norms are relevant regardless of whether a state has ratified a particular treaty.

Sexual and reproductive rights are broadly defined in the booklet:

...sexual and reproductive rights means respect for women's bodily integrity and decision-making as well as their right to express their sexuality with pleasure and without fear of abuse, disease or discrimination. It requires access to voluntary, quality reproductive and sexual health information, education and services.

"Bodily integrity and decision-making" are code words for abortion, as is reproductive health services. The authors recognize that there is opposition to their agenda, which they claim is opposition to elemental human rights.

This demand for elemental human rights is being met with opposition by religious fundamentalists of all kinds, with the Vatican playing the leading role in organizing religious opposition to reproductive rights and health including even family planning services.

The Gender Feminists claim that religion, tradition, and cultural practices are being used to oppose women's human rights; in fact it is the Gender Feminists themselves who are weakening support for real human rights by trying to manipulate the concept of human rights to serve their ideological agenda.

Archbishop Renato Martino, delegate of the Holy See to the UN, in a November 1994 statement unequivocally restated the Catholic commitment to inalienable human rights for all persons and expressed concern over the misuse of the concept of human rights:

Currently, there is a tendency to believe that society

itself has formulated what is known as human rights. However, human rights are such precisely because they are inherent to the dignity of the human person. A society may acknowledge or violate human rights, but it cannot manipulate the existence of human rights, since these rights precede even the state.

Gender Feminists have used other strategies besides sexual and reproductive rights and health to push abortion and lesbian rights into the text of UN documents. Pro-life and pro-family activists at the UN have been diligent in informing delegates about the true intentions behind the introduction of terms like “safe motherhood” (which would include the decriminalization of abortion), “diversity” (which would include acceptance of lesbianism) and “other unions” (which would protect homosexual relation- ships).

Pro-life, pro-family activists maintain constant vigilance since no sooner is one term exposed and discredited than another surfaces.

While the Gender Feminists insist that abortion-on-demand is essential to women’s self-determination, women who have had abortions talk about having no choice or being forced by others. There is nothing pro-woman about abortion. It always represents a failure: a failure of society to provide for the needs of women and their children; a failure of men to accept their responsibilities; or a failure of women to recognize their ability to cope with a crisis. The authentic women’s perspective recognizes human rights are truly inalienable and indivisible and extend to every human being, even those still nestled in their mothers’ wombs.

Freedom of Religion Under Attack

Gender Feminists view religion as a major cause of the oppression of women. Gender Feminists among UN NGOs have demonized “fundamentalists” as the enemy of the aspirations of

women. A video, promoting the NGO forum of the Beijing Conference made by independent producer Judith Lasch, attacked Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism, stating among other things:

Nothing has done more to constrict women than religious beliefs and teachings.

According to Ms. Lasch, the video was shown at the UN to key people including Gertrude Mongella, chair of the Conference, and "Everybody loves it."

The Women's Global Strategies meeting report contained numerous references to fundamentalists and to the necessity of countering their supposed attacks on women's rights. The NGO lobbying document contained the following recommendation for an addition to paragraph 93:

All forms of fundamentalism, be they political, religious or cultural, exclude women from internationally accepted norms of human rights and make women targets of extreme violence. It is the concern of the international committee that these practices be eliminated.

It was made clear throughout the PrepCom that the term fundamentalists included "Catholic Evangelical, and Orthodox Christians, Orthodox Jews, and Muslims" and referred to any person who refuses to alter the teachings of their religion to conform with the Gender Feminist's agenda. Pro-life Evangelical Christian NGOs were repeatedly accused of being lackeys of the Holy See. Catholics were accused of being fundamentalists.

One of the most publicized and well attended NGO sponsored events during the PrepCom for Beijing was a panel discussion entitled "Counter-Attack: Women Stand Up to Fundamentalism." To no one's surprise, Frances Kissling, the head of Catholics for a Free Choice, attacked the Catholic Church. Rev. Meg Riley, Director of the Unitarian Universalist Association's

Office of Lesbian, Bisexual and Gay Concerns, whose work involves helping "local groups across the US deconstruct the conservative right's propaganda on civil rights issues," attacked the Religious Right. She accused Dr. James Dobson of Focus on the Family of wanting to control women. Indira Kajosevic, a woman from the former Yugoslavia, seemed more concerned about the pro-life, pro-family statements made by her country's religious leaders than the mass rape of her country-women.

The report from the Council of Europe meeting to prepare for Beijing, contained numerous attacks on religion, including the following:

The rise of all forms of religious fundamentalism was seen as posing a particular threat to the enjoyment by women of their human rights and to the full participation of women in decision-making at all levels of society.

– women themselves must be empowered and provided with the opportunity to determine what their cultures, religions, and customary backgrounds mean for themselves.

...governments, religious institutions, and all sectors of society should recognize the legitimate claims of women to have a significant role in the definition and interpretation of religious, cultural, and customary norms and should take active steps to encourage women's involvement in these processes.

...the Council of Europe should initiate comparative studies into the influences that different cultures, religions and traditions play in enhancing and impeding the full realization of women's human rights within the member States of the Council of Europe.

In order to understand the threat these statements pose to freedom of religion it is necessary to understand the Gender Feminist view of religion as something people have made up

and that the major religions were made up by men to oppress women.

Women should have and do have the right to participate fully in the religion of their choice. Women trained and believing in their faith can and have made important contributions; however this is not what the Gender Feminists have in mind. Gender Feminist theologians want the right to remake religion so that it conforms to the Gender Feminist agenda. These women “theologians” are not in any real sense “believers” in the religions they demand the right to rewrite nor even in a real God.

For examples, feminist theologian Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza denied the central teaching of the Christian faith – the possibility of revelation:

Biblical texts are not verbally inspired nor doctrinal principles but historical formulations... Similarly, feminist theory insists that all texts are products of an androcentric patriarchal cultural and history.

Gender Feminists want the Christian God “re-imaged” the Christian God as Sophia-female wisdom. Gender Feminist theologian Mary E. Hunt of WATER (Women’s Alliance for Theology, Ethics and Ritual) who is active in the movement to re-image God contributed to the PrepCom for Beijing. Along with Frances Kissling, she sponsored a “Catholic Feminist” report attacking the Catholic church. Mary Hunt’s theology could hardly be considered Christian, let alone Catholic, as this quote from her newsletter demonstrates:

I believe that life, pleasure and justice are to be valued equally, that the God of creation is at the same time the Goddess of pleasure and the spirit of justice.

In the same article she quoted with approval the accusation that Christianity is the cause of child abuse which was made by feminist theologians Joanne Carlson Brown and Carole R.

Bohn's:

Christianity is an abusive theology that glorifies suffering. Is it any wonder that there is much abuse in modern society when the dominant image of theology of the culture is 'divine child abuse'- God the Father demanding and carrying out the suffering and death of his own son? If Christianity is to be liberating for the oppressed, it must itself be liberated from this theology.

No religion is obliged to grant non-believers the right to define the tenets of its faith. Religious leaders are not supposed to make up religion; their duty is to hand on what they have received.

Gender Feminists accuse "patriarchal" religious leaders of imaging God in male terms to keep women oppressed, control their sexuality, and deny their rights.

Women who are faithful Catholic, Evangelical and Orthodox Christians, Orthodox Jews, and Muslims defend their religious traditions as the best protection of women's rights and dignity. In particular, they support their religions' teachings on marriage, family, sexuality, and respect for human life.

Women believers support freedom of religion as defined by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, for all persons including those inaccurately labeled as "fundamentalists:"

Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance (Article 18, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948.)

The use of the UN by Gender Feminists as a platform from which

to lobby against freedom of religion is a violation of the spirit of the UN and should be condemned as such.

Anti-Life, Anti-Catholic

By K. D. Whitehead

If there are still any Catholics around today who imagine that their faith and their Church are going to be the beneficiaries of tolerance and respect, these Catholics have evidently not been paying very close attention to the kind of world it is that has been emerging out there in recent years. The kind of world that has been emerging is a world that is willing, and believes itself able, to go it alone, without God. God is not supposed to count any longer-or even necessarily to be mentioned-in the brave new world of today.

“Religion,” especially Christianity (and Judaism too), are objected to today, and officially placed outside what is permissible in public discourse, because they claim to be able to pronounce moral standards for the regulation of people’s moral conduct, i.e., the Ten Commandments; that is, they claim to expound God’s standards for human moral conduct.

But today such standards can no longer be admitted, and precisely because they are religious. Certainly they can in no way be “imposed” on anybody. The law itself no longer presumes to say that people must keep their marriage vows, for example-thus making marriage the one “contract” that is no longer legally enforceable in our country!

In many instances, the law no longer attempts to require people to exercise any control over their sexual impulses; certainly, educators who have brought such things as today’s

brand of sex education to our schools no longer believe that anybody can exercise any control over sexual impulses; and "society" has today more or less ratified that viewpoint for the moment.

Meanwhile, of course, both society and the law can and do continue to come down hard on those who violate certain purely human and secular contemporary standards, such as smoking in specified public situations, for example, or violating certain environmental laws and regulations. Neither society nor the law hesitates to "legislate" or "impose" morality in these cases. The principal rules that have been thrown out are the religious and moral rules, particularly those related to sexuality.

In this sort of new moral and legal climate, an institution as visible as the Catholic Church, with views as definite as the Church's on what is right and wrong, is virtually bound to run into trouble. The Church cannot escape being resented today, precisely because she continues to insist that there is a God, and that He has issued a law which is actually supposed to be followed.

From the modern point of view, the Church also has another annoying habit of descending into considerable detail in specifying certain things as right and wrong; and thus today, the Church is often found declaring to be wrong the very things that society has decided are good or, at least, optional.

Those who like and accept the way things are going in America today cannot but see Catholics and the Church as the "enemy." To be anti-life- as our world definitely is anti-life today-is necessarily and inevitably to be anti-Catholic as well. It has now become clear that this is an unmistakable and unavoidable fact.

And, in fact, the world that we see out there today is anti-

Catholic. We need to recognize this, even if we do not necessarily have to like it; we need to recognize it, if only in order to understand that we cannot avoid having to deal with it, indeed combat it.

Given what our world has unfortunately now become, though-Pope John Paul II's "culture of death"-we Catholics should also be proud, we should also be glad, to be on the receiving end of what this world, of all worlds, has to dish out; what we have to deal with out there today is surely an authentic case of what Our Lord, Jesus Christ, Himself described when He said: "Blessed are you when men revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely, on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so men persecuted the prophets who were before you" (Mt 5:11).

Yes: in the anti-life world of today, we Catholics are called to be "prophets" by virtue of the truth that has been given to us.

An example of how today's prevailing anti-life mentality quickly becomes transformed into sharp anti-Catholic bias is provided by the issuance of Pope John Paul II's encyclical *Evangelium Vitae*, "The Gospel of Life," itself.

This encyclical has already been the subject of considerable public attention, and we need not summarize its contents at any length. While not neglecting to condemn in fairly strong terms the deadly effects of war, the arms race, economic injustice, pollution of the environment, and capital punishment, the Pope's emphasis in the document is clearly on abortion and euthanasia (or assisted suicide): that is, the emphasis is on intentional, legalized killing at the beginning and at the end of the human life cycle.

The Pope also focuses strongly on some other evils he sees as inseparably related to legalized abortion and euthanasia,

namely, contraception, artificial insemination, in-vitro fertilization, and experimentation on human embryos and fetuses. All these things are gravely wrong, inadmissible, according to the Holy Father.

An unusual feature of this encyclical is that the Pope explicitly invokes his full authority as the successor of Peter and Vicar of Christ in condemning abortion and euthanasia, and, indeed, the killing of the innocent generally. These teachings are not new, of course; the Church has never ceased to condemn them; but in this document the Pope has reiterated this condemnation in a solemn way calculated to attract maximum attention.

Not surprisingly, the encyclical immediately did attract maximum attention. And although a relatively new note of perhaps grudging respect for the Pope, and for what he represents, was discernible in some of the media coverage-as in a *Newsweek* cover story on the encyclical and in a *Chicago Tribune* editorial which admitted that "it is hard to brush off the Pope's assertion that there is a growing 'culture of death' in the world"-the fact remains that plenty of the other coverage of the appearance of this major papal document was as sneering and patronizing as we have unfortunately long since come to expect as the typical public reception given to papal pronouncements.

References to the "aging" Pope at the head of his "outdated" Church were definitely not lacking in the reception accorded the encyclical, while references to how little the Pope is actually believed and heeded today, even by many Catholics, were practically universal features of the coverage about the encyclical.

The encyclical is "a political and social document that is out of step with the developed world," declared Pamela J. Maraldo, President of Planned Parenthood. This is the same "developed world," of course, which the Pope characterizes in his

encyclical as determined upon perpetuating what he calls "a state of barbarism which one had hoped had been left behind forever." Pamela Maraldo, however-who, incredibly, claims to be a Catholic herself-sheds crocodile tears because, in her words, "the only source of hope" for sufferers from Parkinson's disease, "fetal tissue research...(is) condemned." But the Pope merely points out that we cannot morally use one class of human beings, the unborn, as objects, even for the laudable goal of helping others (if it does help them).

"In the face of the AIDS epidemic," Ms. Maraldo goes on, "the encyclical bans condoms." But condoms prevent the transmission of the AIDS virus little more than fifty per cent of the time. Who would ever take an airplane, if the chances of crashing were even remotely close to that percentage?

A *Washington Post* columnist, Colman McCarthy, scored off what he called "the Vatican keepers of the truth against the ungovernable committing the unspeakable." Mr. McCarthy did not blush to ask: "Is the Pope a scold or a teacher?" His own answer was, unhappily, predictable: according to him, the Pope "scoldingly lashes out at those with whom he disagrees." Since when, it is necessary to ask, did intentional killing of the innocent become simply a matter about which people simply "disagree?" What is the truth about it? Who is right about it, the Pope or his detractors?

This sort of sneering, condescending opposition to the Pope's words proves John Paul II's thesis more dramatically than almost anything the Pope himself says: we have indeed entered into a modern culture of death; we have gotten so far into it that shallow, self-righteous commentators such as Mr. McCarthy, who think the pope is merely a "scold," no longer even notice the kind of world that we have entered into.

It was probably predictable how Massachusetts Senators John Kerrey and Edward Kennedy would react to the Pope's encyclical: they both issued statements denying that the

Pope's words applied to American legislators and judges. "It would be wrong for any public official, whatever their religion," Senator Kennedy's statement said, "to attempt to legislate the law of their church"-but then the Pope's main point is that abortion and euthanasia, and the other evils he condemns, are violations of God's law, not any church law; and for that reason, the Pope logically holds, any civil law authorizing them "ceases by that very fact to be a true, morally binding civil law."

"There is no obligation in practice to obey such laws," the Pope continues. "Instead there is a grave and clear obligation to oppose them."

Incidentally, all of the above comments critical of the Pope's encyclical which I have cited so far come from people who apparently still consider themselves, at least in some sense, as Catholics. We must realize that we have a particularly serious problem today when we find such people so ready to rush to defend the modern world and its culture of death against the solemn words of the Vicar of Christ. How can it be that these Catholics have not noticed that the anti-life culture of today is necessarily anti-Catholic?

In the midst of all of the evils of today's culture of death, we are surely fortunate to have the voice of John Paul II. Let us try to imagine how bad things would be, if we had only the evil and immoral spectacle that our world has become, and if at the same time we did not have the Vicar of Christ, not only able to define and delineate and speak out against these evils, but, what is more, able to make himself heard! Nobody can say this Pope has not managed to make himself heard! And more than anyone today imagines at the moment, he is going to be increasingly heeded, as well as merely heard; the culture of death, as we observe it today, cannot keep going on indefinitely; it bears within itself too many of the seeds of its own destruction.

On the other hand, those who, unfortunately favor this modern culture of death cannot but see anything but an enormous obstacle in this Pope and in his Church-and, hopefully, also in all of us who will reaffirm our resolve to follow the lead of this man whom Christ has providentially given to us. To be anti-life is to be anti-Catholic, for those who have unfortunately bought into the culture of death. But their plans are destined to fail; they have, precisely, chosen death.

A Protestant Looks A I Catholic Bashing

by Waller W. Benjamin

My boyhood years during the 1940s were spent in a small town in southwestern Minnesota. There were many virtues in that idyllic community but religious tolerance and ecumenism were not among them. The virus of anti-Catholicism was as pervasive then as was polio during the dog days of July and August. Only unlike polio, hating Catholics was popular and widely supported.

Catholics were second class citizens, not quite fully American in belief, practice, and ethnic origin. Catholic adjudicatories were supposed to have a secret plan to subvert cherished American institutions by means of parochial schools. The board of our public school was entirely Protestant and the superintendent was on notice not to hire more than a token number of Catholics.

"Teachers, especially coaches, get very close to students," reflected one board member. "We don't want any proselytizing."

Protestants inwardly rejoiced when a succession of priests were unsuccessful in raising money to build a parochial school. They breathed a sigh of relief when the inadequate funds went to refurbish a bingo parlor. "How characteristically Catholic," mused a Baptist pastor.

Fifty years ago we called Catholics "mackerel snappers" and nuns "penguins." There were lurid tales of lascivious sex between priests and imprisoned sisters behind monastery walls. The pope was called the anti-Christ by a number of minor precursors of Jimmy Swaggert.

Those were the days before John F. Kennedy. His election in 1960 was supposed to have symbolized the final acceptance of Catholics as full-fledged citizens. His ancestors had seen signs "No Catholics or Dogs Need Apply" in Boston. Mobs had burned monasteries and rectories when Nativism and the Know-Nothing Party rode high in the saddle. During the Civil War, many WASPs subject to the draft paid Catholic immigrants \$120 to wear the Union blue in their stead. Tens of thousands of Catholic proletarians died to preserve the nation and free the slaves.

But Kennedy's election proved, said most political scientists, that this form of religious bigotry was now finally over. Tragically, recent events, many of them chronicled in *Catalyst*, have proved them wrong.

I am deeply troubled, as a Protestant religion professor, that the media have failed to come to the defense of the Catholic Church. If such attacks were directed against a Black Church, and Islamic mosque, or Native American rituals, outrage by the media, the professorate, and the opinion makers, would be fortissimo. When the Pope visited Denver in 1993, the media again gave the back of its hand to Catholics. It focused on those who disagree with established Church doctrine, such as Catholic feminists, homosexuals, and those who no longer participate in the church.

When a gay man, infected with HIV, suddenly recovered a “repressed memory” after 20 years and said Archbishop Bernardin sexually abused him, why did the media give knee jerk credence to his charges? The accusation has now been withdrawn but a sterling character has been defamed and sullied. Meanwhile, both the California and Minnesota Board of Medical Examiners are bringing charges against psychologists and psychiatrists who have been charged with injecting “repressed memories” of sexual abuse in their adolescent clients. The Catholic Church, it seems, has “deep pockets” for unethical counselors and their clients.

Catholic bashing makes good copy for there is a deep and visceral hatred of Catholicism among the media elite and opinion makers. To be sure, at times church officials have not properly handled mentally and sexually sick priests. But then, had not this also been true of the legal, medical, and Protestant church adjudicatories? But where in the media is fairness, compassion, and understanding?

Hilton Kramer, a former *New York Times* reporter and now a writer with the *New York Post*, states that “the bias that the media has against Catholics has no rival anywhere in the population.” Among many of my liberal and intellectual friends, it is fashionable to bash Catholicism. It is their form of anti-Semitism. The very existence of the Catholic Church offends them. “How can people believe ‘that stuff’” - is their common mantra. Of course, as a Protestant, there are Catholic doctrines with which I disagree. That’s why I am a Protestant.

Nevertheless, I am pleased that the Catholic Church is strikingly countercultural. It holds to a moral hierarchy in spite of the moral rot, drift, and pathology that stalks our land. A “go-with-the-flow” morality is no morality worthy of a name. Instead, Catholic moral universals are an anchor of comfort and guidance to millions in a way that a “feel-good” situationalism, relativism, and nihilism do not provide.

Unlike the mainline Protestantism, Protestant evangelicalism is forging common bonds with Catholic social witness. Both are against the increasing disrespect for life, media sensuality, public school incompetence and arrogance, Statist intrusion into familial and private matters, and the increasing diminishment of decency and civility in our public life. Both see the collapse of sphere sovereignty where an omniscient government ignores the historic boundaries of a free society and the canons of subsidiarity.

As a Protestant, I want Catholicism to flourish. The church has a core of teaching and tradition that has endured. It knows that modernism is not necessarily right nor tradition necessarily archaic. It is not a weather vane that is subject to every changing moral or cultural fad. After thirty-seven years of teaching, I find that many of my Catholic students have a firm hold on life. They have been enriched, not impoverished, by their faith. There is little that is antiquarian, regressive, or bigoted in their familial or church training. They seem to have a spiritual centeredness and a moral compass that will guide them well in life.

So I plead with my liberal friends to embody that cardinal virtue of liberalism, tolerance, and take the pledge: "I promise to make Catholic bashing as politically incorrect as antipathy toward African Americans, Jews, Hispanics, Native Americans, and homosexuals." Moreover, I urge them to read contemporary Catholic theology and ethics so that their data base is larger than some hoary stories of those who have left the Church some time ago. Let us get beyond the paradigm of "Us versus Them" of an earlier bigoted America.

Our society needs a vibrant Catholicism to help heal the terrible social pathologies of our society. And that is why I want Catholic bashing to stop.

Walter Benjamin is Professor of Religion and Applied Ethics at Hamline University, St. Paul. This is an edited version of his

"Stop The Catholic Bashing!" that appeared in the October 1994 edition of The St. Croix Review.

CATHOLIC LEAGUE'S SURVEY OF AMERICAN CATHOLICS

By William A. Donohue, Ph. D

Surveys of American Catholics abound, so why is there a need for another one? Because those who have commissioned such surveys haven't asked all the right questions, that's why. It's not as though those who have done the polling have been incompetent or dishonest, it's just that, for a variety of reasons, they haven't seen fit to ask the kinds of questions that the Catholic League would like to see answered.

Surveys of Catholics have been done for good, honest intellectual reasons and for pure, unadulterated ideological reasons. Those who have done the former type of research have a heuristic interest in contributing to sociological research. But it is not epistemology that drives the latter group, it is politics. This is not to say that those who are interested in changing the political culture of the United States necessarily produce methodologically tainted polls. Most, clearly, do not. On the other hand, it is true that *some* of those who have a political interest in survey research have indeed "cooked" the data. Let me explain.

There is no denying that some of the earliest polls conducted of American Catholics were done not only for political purposes, they were done dishonestly. To be specific,

beginning in 1971-two years before *Roe v. Wade*-the National Abortion Rights Action League (NARAL) began planning its "Catholic strategy," the purpose of which was to discredit the Catholic Church. According to Dr. Bernard Nathanson, who at that time was chairman of the Medical Committee of NARAL as well as a member of the Executive Committee, NARAL's arsenal included "fictitious polls and surveys designed to make it appear as if American Catholics were deserting the teachings of the church and the dictates of their consciences in droves." Indeed, he reproduces memos from early NARAL meetings to buttress his point.

Things have changed somewhat since the 1970s (there are no more fictitious polls), but what has not changed is the desire of pundits to paint a picture of American Catholics that is sharply at odds with the Vatican. How many times have we heard that many American Catholics do not accept certain Church teachings, setting up the familiar conclusion that unless Rome changes with the times, American Catholics will walk away from their church. That relatively few have walked down the block to the nearest Episcopal church seems to be overlooked. More startling, it is precisely those religions that have become most assimilated to the culture that have lost the greatest number of the faithful.

It is for these reasons, and others, that the Catholic League decided to commission a scientific poll of its own. The firm of Fabrizio, McLaughlin and Associates is a well respected survey research organization. In February, 800 Catholics 18 years and older were sampled. They were selected from every major demographical grouping, and were weighted in accordance with their proportionate national distribution. For example, there are more females than males in the population and there are more Catholics living in the Northeast than anywhere else in the nation. Our survey reflects these distributions.

It is often said that it is impossible for a small selection of the population to be an accurate gauge of the American

populace. As a sociologist who is trained in survey research, I can say without equivocation that survey research that is methodologically sound can indeed provide for a fairly accurate picture of the population it seeks to study. What it provides may only be a snapshot, but if survey research is done properly, it can be of enormous value.

This is not the place to explain how survey research is done, but it can be said that in this survey, there is a very high degree of probability that if every Catholic over the age of 18 had been questioned, the final tally would differ by no more than 3.5%, plus or minus, from the answers reported here. There is nothing exact about this, and polls can certainly be given far more weight than they deserve, but, if they are methodologically scientific, they should not be dismissed willy-nilly.

THE FINDINGS

There are several related issues that this survey tried to tap: (a) the extent to which American Catholics disagree with some of the official teachings of the Church (b) the identity of those Catholics who are most likely to disagree (c) the degree to which disagreement affects commitment to the Church and (d) the level of support that Catholics, and especially parents, give to those Church teachings that directly address moral conduct.

Given that most men and women are waiting longer to marry these days, it is understandable that only 5.7% of young people (18-25) have received "all" the sacraments (for obvious reasons, "all" means baptism, penance, Eucharist, confirmation and matrimony). However, an impressive 68.6% have received baptism, penance, communion and confirmation. Overall, 60.5% of adult Catholics have received all the sacraments.

In contrast to some other surveys, we found that a majority of Catholics, 51.8%, attend Mass once a week or more. Indeed,

68.2% attend once a month or more, while 20.5% go once or several times a year; 10.4% never go to Mass. Of those who have received all the sacraments, 77.7% attend Mass once a month or more, versus 52.4% who have only been baptized. Senior citizens (those 65 and over) go much more often than young people, e.g. almost 80% of seniors go once a week or more (79.7%) compared to only 29.6% of young people.

When asked what is it that people like most about the Catholic religion, the top ten answers were:

1. Tradition
2. Everything
3. Mass
4. Community/Togetherness
5. Attitude/Belief
6. Comforting/Familiar
7. Principles/Values
8. Teachings
9. Faith
10. Sacraments

When asked what is it that people like least about the Catholic religion, the top ten answers were:

1. Inflexible
2. Prohibit Use of Birth Control
3. Too Many Requests for Money
4. Pro-Life Position
5. Priests Can't Marry
6. Close-Minded
7. Confession to a Priest
8. Has Become Too Contemporary
9. Divorce Stand
10. Hypocritical Policies

Judging from the first list, it appears that faith and community are the two qualities that Catholics find most

appealing about their religion. But if it is tradition that Catholics value most it is the underside of tradition, namely inflexibility, that leaves other Catholics cold. Notice, however, that the third most disliked element of Catholicism—too many requests for money—is non-ideological. More revealing is the multidimensionality of the complainants: there are those who think the Church has become too contemporary (#8), as well as those who think it isn't contemporary enough.

Interestingly, those who listed confession to a priest (#7), tended to be the two oldest segments of the population (56-65 and 65 and over). This says something positive about the changes that were made in recent years regarding Reconciliation. Not in the top ten were complaints about the role of women in the Church. "Catholicism does not treat women as equals" finished twelfth, and the complaint that "women can't be priests" was fourteenth on the list.

Only 38.8% think the Church is unfairly criticized by the media on social issues, while 48.6% think the reporting is fair. However, those who are the most disaffected from the Church are also the most likely to see media criticism as being fair. For example, those who go to church once a month or more are split on the issue, with 44.6% saying the media are fair and 43.3% saying they are unfair. But among those who don't go to Mass at all, the breakdown is 51.8% fair and 26.5% unfair. Similarly, those who think the Church should change its beliefs, as opposed to those who think it should stick to its founding principles, look more kindly on media criticism: for the former group, the breakdown is 64.4% fair and 25.6% unfair, but for the latter group, the difference is 40.8% fair and 47.6% unfair. It makes sense that those who are most critical of the Church are also the most indulgent of media criticisms of it.

"When, in your opinion, the Catholic Church is unfairly criticized by the media, who should respond on behalf of the Church?" Almost 7 in 10 (68.8%) say both lay and clergy, while

13.6% say it should be the clergy only; 5.1% preferred the laity to speak up but not the clergy. This is good news for the Catholic League, and indeed it is good news for all lay Catholic organizations: most Catholics want the laity to respond to unfair attacks on Catholicism. We hope not to disappoint them.

How Much Change Should a Religion Experience?

What kind of religion do Catholics want? One that follows public opinion, or one that sticks to its founding principles? The results of table 1 are as follows.

Table I

Generally speaking, in your opinion should a religion change its beliefs and principles to conform to the modern day opinions of its members or should a religion stick to its founding principles and beliefs?

1. Change to conform to modern day opinion of its members.....	33.8%
2. Stick to its founding principles and beliefs.....	51.8%
3. Neither (VOLUNTEERED).....	1.8%
4. Both (VOLUNTEERED).....	9.9%
5. Don't know/Refused.....	2.9%

There is a significant difference between those who regularly attend Mass (once a month or more) and those who never go to church. Among the regulars, 56.5% want the Church to stick to its principles while only 28.4% prefer keeping up with the times. But even among the no-shows, a plurality prefer the Church to stick to its founding principles, by a margin of 45.8% to 41%. Men are more likely than women to prefer constancy to change: for men, the split is 55.8% versus 29.5%, while for women it is 47.9% versus 37.8%.

In every age group, support for holding the line dominates the

voices of change, including, by the way, young people: 54.3% of those aged 18- 25 say stick to founding principles and 30.5% say the Church should change to conform to public opinion. In fact, those in the 26-40 and 41-55 age brackets want more changes than do young people: 39.5% of the former group and 37% of the latter want the Church to change its beliefs, while 44.4% and 49.8% of the two groups, respectively, want the Church to stick to its principles.

In another question concerning change, respondents were asked what they thought about the pace of change in the Catholic Church. Over the past thirty years, or since Vatican II, 18% said "too many changes and gone too fast"; 32.9% said "too few changes and gone too slow"; and 42.5% said "just about the right amount of changes at the right time." Of those who think there have been too few changes, 38.6% never go to Mass, compared to 27.3% who go once a month or more. Of those who think there have been just about the right number of changes made at the right time, 50.3% attend Mass once a month or more, compared to 24.1% who never attend. The figures for men and women on this question were almost identical, but not so among the different age groups.

Once again, young people are less likely to say that there have been too few changes than is true for the middle age groups. For example, 30.5% of young people think there have been too few changes, but 38.7% of the 26-40 year olds and 38.4% of the 41-55 year olds feel this way; the older groups are much less likely to feel this way, with 25.8% of the 56-65 year olds and 18.7% of the seniors believing there have been too few changes. Most of those in their middle years are members of the baby boomer generation and many of them experienced the social turbulence of the 1960s. Their experiences seem to have found expression in their restlessness with the Church, but it appears that this discomfort was confined to their cohorts: young men and women are more at home with the pace of change.

Table 2 provides a close-up look at the level of satisfaction with the Catholic Church's willingness to hold the line.

Table 2

Which of the following statements comes closest to your opinion regarding the church and its position on issues?

1. I agree with most every position the Catholic Church takes on issues and the church should remain true to its principles and not change its positions 22.5%
2. I differ with the church's position on some issues, but the church shouldn't change its beliefs or positions, just because of public opinion 39.6%
3. I differ with the church's position on some issues and the church should modernize its beliefs by changing its positions to reflect current public opinion 28.9%
4. I disagree with most every position the church takes on issues and the church should absolutely change its positions to reflect modern day beliefs 4.6%
5. None of the above (VOLUNTEERED) 2.5%
6. Don't know/Refused 1.9%

If we collapse the data from responses 3 and 4, we find that one-third of the respondents think the Church should change with public opinion (33.5%), a figure that dovetails with that found in question # 1 of table 1. Of those whose differences with the Church beckon them to support changes, 45.7% never go to Mass, as opposed to 27.9% who attend regularly (once a month or more). There is a difference between men and women on this question, with 29.2% of the men and 37.6% of the women desiring a more updated Catholic Church. Nonetheless, a total of 66.7% of the men and 57.8% of the women-strong majorities-found agreement in questions 1 and 2. Two-thirds of those who have received all the sacraments prefer a religion that doesn't bend with the wind (67.2%) while only 30.4% express the contrary view.

Table 3 gets down to specifics.

Table 3

Please tell me whether you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.

14. The Catholic church should ordain women as priests.
Agree-55.0% Disagree-39.5% Don't know/refused-5.5%

15. The Catholic church should abandon its pro-life position on abortion. Agree-29.0% Disagree-63.6% Don't know/refused-7.4%

16. The Catholic church should ordain married men as priests. Agree-66.5% Disagree-28.1% Don't know/refused-5.4%

17. The Catholic church should abandon its opposition to artificial birth control.

Agree-58.4% Disagree-33.8% Don't know/refused-7.9%

18. The Catholic church should ordain known homosexuals as priests. Agree-27.6%

Disagree-64.9% Don't know/refused-7.5%

19. The Catholic church should abandon its teachings on homosexuality. Agree-31.5%

Disagree-55.8% Don't know/refused-12.8%

On the question of women's ordination, it may come as a surprise to learn that men are much more supportive than women. Six in ten men (59.7%) but only 5 in ten women (50.6%) agree that women should be ordained as priests; 35.9% of the men and 42.9% of the women disagreed.

If this seems surprising, it should be recalled that in virtually every poll that was taken in the 1970s and early 1980s on the subject of the Equal Rights Amendment, it was found that men were more supportive of the ERA than women. Similarly, support for a women's right to abortion has always been more popular with men (especially single men) than with women. What this seems to say, among other things, is that women are somewhat wary of certain status changes,

notwithstanding a vocal minority among them who rail against the status quo.

A slight majority (51.2%) of those who have attended to all the sacraments agree with women's ordination, while 42.8% disagree. Of those who attend Mass regularly, there isn't much of a difference, with 48.6% expressing agreement and 45.5% saying no. But among those who never go to church, there is a major difference: 71.1% want the change and only 24.1% don't. Those who think the Church should change to reflect public opinion are predictably more sympathetic to women's ordination, with 74.8% saying yes and 24.1% saying no. There was a big difference between singles and widowed persons on this question: 63.7% of the singles and 27.4% of the widowed want the change while 32.3% and 62.9%, respectively, oppose women becoming priests.

I will come back to the question of abortion after first discussing the rest of this section of the survey.

There is even greater agreement among Catholics regarding the question of ordaining married men as priests. Indeed, in every category there is support for the right of priests to marry. In fact, even those who go to church once a week or more are prepared to accept the change by a margin of 53.2% to 37.2%.

With regard to the Church's position on birth control, there isn't much difference between the way men and women feel about this issue: 57.4% of the men and 59.3% of the women think the Church should abandon its position, while 35.1% of the men and 32.4% of the women think it should keep the prohibition. There were no significant differences across all the categories, though it is interesting to note that among young people, there is less support for abandoning the Church position's than might be expected: 53.3% prefer a change but a surprising 41.9% say to the line (this figure was the highest of any age grouping). As we have already seen, few of these young people are married, so it remains to be seen whether they will

change their minds once they think about starting their families.

The data show strong support for not ordaining known homosexuals to the priesthood. Even among those who never go to Mass, 48.2% say the Church should not ordain known homosexuals while 41% counsel otherwise. Seven in ten of those who go to Mass regularly (69.9%) prefer that the Church do not ordain known homosexuals, while only 22.6% think it should. Men are more likely to say no to homosexuals being ordained than women: 68.7% of the men say no compared to 61.3% of the women; 26.6% of the men and 28.6% of the women would like a change in policy.

Similarly, most respondents do not want the Church to change its teachings on homosexuality. More than any other variable, Mass attendance explains where the support is on this subject. Those who go to church once a month or more want the Church to hold the line, with 58.3% saying no to a change in teachings and 28.8% saying yes. But among the non-church going crowd, 47% want the church to change and 37.3% say no to change.

Abortion may be the most contentious issue of our day. However, it does not follow that there is no consensus of the subject. As table 3 indicates, 63.6% do not want the Church to change its position on abortion while only 29% think it should. The most important determinants of attitude on this issue were Mass attendance and thenumberofsacramentsreceived. Sevenin ten (69.5%) of the regular attendees at Mass think the Church should not change its position while only 22.9% think it should. Among those who do not attend Mass at all, 42.2% are in agreement with the Church's position and 49.4% disagree. Those who have received all the sacraments support the Church by a margin of 68% to 24.4%, but the figures for those who have only been baptized differ widely: 52.4% are in favor of the Church abandoning its position and 47.6% are against.

Table 4 offers a personal look at the subject.

TABLE 4

Which of the following statements regarding abortion comes closest to your opinion?

1. I am personally opposed to abortion and believe it is wrong for anyone to have one22.5%
2. I am personally opposed to abortion, but I believe that in a few instances it is a choice best left up to the individual.
... .. 40.3%
3. I am personally opposed to abortion, but I believe that in most instances it is a choice best left up to the individual.
..... 19.8%
4. I personally favor abortion and believe it should be available for any individual that chooses to have one 13.9%
5. None of the above (VOLUNTEERED) 1.8%
6. Don't know/Refused 1.9%

By a margin of 2-1, the respondents say abortion is wrong in most cases: by collapsing answers 1 and 2, we find that 62.8% are opposed to abortion in most instances and by combining answers 3 and 4, we find that 33.7% think that abortion is right for individuals to choose in most instances. More than seven in ten of those who attend Mass regularly are opposed to abortion in most instances, with 72.3% expressing this view and only 24.4% expressing the contrary view. 59% of those who never go to Mass say abortion should be an individual decision in most instances while only 31.3% think otherwise. Those who have received all the sacraments track those who go to Mass regularly, with 71.3% in opposition to abortion in most instances. More women than men feel abortion is wrong in most instances: 66.6% of the women and 58.7% of the men feel this way.

Remarkably, even those who think the Church should conform its beliefs to reflect public opinion are inclined to oppose

abortion in most instances: the figures are 50.3% versus 45.9% who think it should be up to the individual.

Regarding current laws on abortion, 13.3% think they are too restrictive, 46.8% think they are too liberal and 34.1% say the laws are about right. How often someone attends Mass explains a lot: 10.1% of those who regularly attend Mass and 25.3% of those who never go think that the laws are too restrictive; 54.9% of the regulars and 24.1% of the no-shows say the laws are too liberal; those who think the laws are just about right split 29% to 42.2% between the church-goers and those who stay at home. While it is true that the older segments of the population are the least likely to support the right to abortion, even among the young 41.9% think the laws are too liberal, which is greater than the 38.1% who think they're just about right and the 14.3% who think they're too restrictive.

Does It Really Matter if People Disagree?

For a very long time now, we have been led to believe that if American Catholics disagree with certain Church teachings, it signals a lack of commitment to their religion. Not so. Just as most marital disputes do not end in divorce, so it is with Catholics who disagree with the Church: most are not about to quit.

Table 5 is quite revealing.

TABLE 5

If the Catholic church did not change its positions as many have suggested, how would that affect your commitment to the church? Would you be

1. Definitely more committed to the church 9.5%
2. Probably more committed to the church 9.8%
3. As committed to the church as you were before 63.6%
4. Probably less committed to the church 9.0%

5. Definitely less committed to the church 4.8%
6. Don't know/Refused 3.4%

The results to this question are perhaps the most significant in the survey. Not only would almost two-thirds not be affected if the Church didn't change, two in five (19.3%) would be even *more committed* than they were before if change *did not* happen [collapse the first two answers]. The commitment of a mere 13.8% [combine 4 and 5] would be negatively impacted by a failure to change. If we add those who wouldn't be affected to those whose commitment would be stronger, we find an astonishing 82.9% who would be just as committed, if not more so, if the Church didn't make the changes that many have suggested.

Among those who attend Mass once or more a month, 90.3% would be just as committed, if not more so. Even among those who never go to Mass, the figure is 60.3%. For those who have received all the sacraments, 87% would be just as committed, if not more so. To top it off, 73.3% of those who think that the Church should change its beliefs to conform to public opinion admit that they would be just as committed, if not more so, if the Church refused to change. So much so for the argument that the Church had better tailor its teachings to popular opinion lest it risk losing the faithful.

Church Teachings and Moral Conduct

"Do you agree or disagree that if more people practiced the teachings of the Catholic Church, our country would be better off?" 66.4% agree and 25.1% disagree with this statement. Attendance at Mass and to the sacraments are most important in explaining the different responses to this question. 72.3% of those who attend to Mass regularly agree while 20.7% disagree (the figures are exactly the same for those who have attended to all the sacraments).

Among those who never go to Mass, we find that 44.6% agree and

42.2% disagree. Even among those who want the Church to change its beliefs to conform to public opinion agree that the country would be better off if the teachings of the Church were practiced by more people: 54.8% say yes and 38.9% say no. A clear majority in all age groups agree with the question, and the percent of men and women who agree is 70% and 63%, respectively.

When it comes to the 35.6% of Catholics who have children under the age of 18 (by the way, those who never go to Mass are the least likely to have children), 92.3% say it is important that their children follow Church teachings on abstaining from pre-marital sex, while only 6.7% disagree. Among those who never go to Mass, the figures are still 80% to 20%.

What about Church teachings on choosing a child instead of having an abortion? Fully 80.4% think it is important that their child follow Church teachings while only 11.6% think it is unimportant. Though the figures are different for those who never go to Mass, 68% to 24%, the pattern is still the same.

72.3% say it is important that their children choose marriage over cohabitation while 24.2% say it is unimportant. Only among those who never go to Mass do we find a contrary view: 44% say it is important and 48% say it isn't. It would be interesting to know what percentage of the no-shows have had children out of wedlock.

CONCLUSION

In the end, what do we know about American Catholics? The greatest divergence between Catholics in the U.S. and Church teachings is clearly on the subject of married priests. But despite what some pundits would like to make of this, celibacy is not a matter of doctrine, rather it is a discipline that the Church chooses to impose. This is not to say that such a divide doesn't matter, it is just that it doesn't matter as

much as some would have us believe.

It makes common sense that those who are most committed to the Church-as witnessed by attendance at Mass and the number of sacraments received-would show up time and again as the most supportive of Church teachings *as they are*. Conversely, those who have shown the least interest in the Church tend to be the most critical of it.

The magisterium of the Catholic Church does not, nor should it, consult the latest Gallup poll to determine whether certain changes ought to be made. But even if it did, any honest social scientist would have to agree that-after seeing the results of this survey-it would be foolish to listen too closely to those who want the most changes. As we have seen, it is precisely the disaffected who want the most changes.

The rank-and-file are not only not raging for change, they are quite at home with the Church the way it is.

As important as anything in this survey, the level of commitment that Catholics have for their religion is strong enough to override the few differences that separate them from Church teachings. Though most surveys do not indicate this, there is surely a difference between preferences and demands. That most Catholics prefer priests to marry is not the same as saying that most Catholics demand that priests have a right to marry. Many Americans would like to adopt "America the Beautiful" as our National Anthem, yet their patriotism is unaffected by having to stick with the "Star Spangled Banner."

Come late summer and early fall, there will be many occasions to draw on this survey. The U.N.'s Beijing Conference on Women in September and the arrival of the Pope in the U.S. in October will provide lots of opportunities to discuss the so-called divisions between Catholics in the U.S. and the Vatican. It will be most helpful to draw on the results of the Catholic League's survey to help set the record straight.

From My Viewpoint

John Cardinal O'Connor Archbishop of New York

Every once in a while a movie reminds you of how lucky you are, especially if you don't even have to go see it. Michael Medved's reviews are usually good enough for me. When he calls a movie blatantly anti-Catholic, I usually don't bother checking further. This time, out of curiosity, I read Anthony Lane's review in *The New Yorker*, Don Feder's in the *Boston Herald*, Jack Garner's in the *Gannett News Service* and Barbara Reynolds' remarks, in passing, in *USA Today*.

No doubt whatsoever. The movie "Priest" has to be as viciously anti-Catholic as anything that has ever rotted on the silver screen.

So why feel lucky? Because I'm the Archbishop of New York. Five out of five of the priests in the "Priest" is twisted in his own way, a thoroughly unsavory character, with fewer redeeming features than a black beetle in a bowl of black bean soup. In the Archdiocese of New York, we have so many good, well-balanced, faithful priests to the square inch that any single one gone wrong gets headlines, big, black, lurid.

But let me not be chauvinistic. In a life getting longer by the minute, I have traveled the world more than somewhat, and seen the world's priests at work in mudholes and cathedrals, in classrooms and soup kitchens, in confessionals and hospitals and leprosariums. For every nasty caricature of a "Priest" kind of priest, I have met a hundred, a thousand, God knows how many, celibate, loyal, self-sacrificing men of Christ. They are not gods, they are human beings, tempted at times, slipping on occasion, never pretending to be perfect,

never blaming the Church because they are imperfect. The overwhelming number of priests I have known in almost fifty years of being one are realists. They are at ease with their priesthood, they accept the celibacy that goes with it, they accept life as it is.

Every priest knows he's a volunteer. Nobody forced him to be ordained. Nobody has a gun in his back to keep him "in the league." He's not a whiner.

He knows that married men and women have their problems, their temptations, their hard knocks, their agonies often far worse than any priest celibate, as do many single people in the world.

I have known rogue priests, too. Some have been very evil characters, really evil. Some have simply been weak. Some have wreaked havoc on other human beings. Some have been walking tragedies. Anybody who knows one of them knows that he's an aberration. To paint him as the norm is ludicrous.

"Priest" is ludicrous. "Sister" Maria Monk was infinitely more convincing in her day, when she illicitly told the world the sordid story of life behind convent walls. Maria's main problem was that she had never been behind convent walls, primarily because she had never been a nun.

I'm disappointed by Disney, of course, owner, I'm told, of Miramax, distributor of "Priest." As to Miramax itself, and everyone who had anything to do with this basically childish pout at the Church, what can be said but, "Grow up"? Your movie is little more than the kind of thing kids used to take delight in scrawling on the walls in men's rooms. Call it art, go into ecstasy over its sophistication, exult in exposing the "horrors" of Catholicism, ladies and gentlemen of Disneymax, if you will, but what you have done is cheap and odorous. You may attract enough curiosity seekers to the box office to pay for the movie, but what you make in the bananas you will

almost certainly lose in the coconuts, and far, far more.

It's hard to wash your hands of this kind of thing, Disney and company. Pilate has been trying unsuccessfully for two thousand years.

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Something Stinks in the Magic Kingdom: "PRIEST"

By William A. Donohue

The movie "Priest" is a cruel caricature of Roman Catholic priests, one that is so blatantly unrepresentative of most priests as to qualify as an invidious stereotype of the Catholic clergy. Worse, the movie invites the audience to see the Catholic Church as the causative agent of priestly despair.

There are five priests in the movie and every one of them is a thoroughly tortured individual. Indeed the priests are either living a life that directly contravenes Church teachings or they are mean, even psychotic, individuals. Two of the priests are having affairs, one with the female housekeeper and the other with his newly acquired male friend. Another priest is a drunk, the country pastor is obviously a madman and the bishop is simply wicked. In short, there is not a single priest who is well-adjusted and faithful to the Church.

Perhaps most alarming, the depraved state of the priests is not cast as a manifestation of aberrant behavior, rather it is directly attributed to the warped nature of Catholicism. For

example, the priests who have violated their vow of celibacy are portrayed in a most sympathetic fashion, the real villain being the celibacy requirement itself. In the case of the gay priest, he carries the additional burden of not being allowed to disclose what he has heard in the confessional, namely that a 14 year-old girl is an incest victim. True to form, the priest calls Christ a "bastard" for bequeathing the Catholic Church and its horrid rules.

Sympathy is also afforded the drunkard priest: we learn that it's too late in life for this unhappy priest to leave the order, albeit it is not too late for him to counsel the gay priest to "get out" while he's still young. Our sympathy deepens for the gay priest when his sexual orientation is made public (he is caught having sex in a car by a police officer). However, our sympathy quickly turns to hate when we see how harshly he is greeted by the country pastor and the bishop. Make no mistake about it, the viciousness of these two clergymen is a function of their role as enforcement agents of the Catholic Church. The bottom line, then, is that the institution of the Catholic Church is responsible for the twisted lives of the priests.

At the end of the movie, the straight priest who is sleeping with the housekeeper defends the gay priest in front of the congregation, lecturing the parishioners on the wrongness of the Church's teachings on sexuality. Using vulgar language, he asks the faithful at Mass whether God cares what men do with their sex organ, beckoning them to focus their attention instead on such real outrages as war, famine and disaster. This concluding statement is most revealing: the Catholic Church is seen as oppressive because it does not accept the philosophy of freedom as entertained by sexual libertines.

There will be those who will say that the only movie about Catholicism that the Catholic League would approve of is one that paints all priests in a favorable light. That view, however, is just plain wrong. We do not expect that every

movie on the Catholic Church will, or should, resemble "The Bells of St. Mary's," nor do we flinch from honest criticism of the Catholic Church, no matter how tough. But when a movie, or any other medium of communication, presents the Catholic Church as an institution to be reviled, it should be expected that the Catholic League, and, we believe, most Catholics, will greet such characterizations with disdain. Our fundamental complaint is not with the way the flawed priests are portrayed, but with the way their flaws are all pinned on the Catholic Church.

Had "Priest" included even one priest who was well-adjusted, content with his vocation, honorably serving the Church, it would have been an anomaly. The reason there is no such priest in the movie is because the point of the film is to convince the public of the Catholic Church's malevolence; to show a normal priest might have confused the message. Indeed, the appearance of a normal priest would have made inexplicable the movie's theme of blaming the institution of the Church for the maladies of its priests.

We know that there will be some people who will tout the artistic merits of the movie to the exclusion of its central message. That is regrettable. By way of analogy, if a Disney-owned enterprise made a powerful movie entitled "Rabbi" that nonetheless did violence to the honorable heritage of Judaism, surely we would expect a vigorous response from the Jewish community. Similarly, high creative drama could be sustained in a movie that portrayed African Americans as a morally destitute people. Or a movie called "Gays" could be well-done and at the same time depict homosexuals as depraved human beings. And Hollywood could certainly show these Jews, African Americans and gays as victims of their own heritage or lifestyle.

Now ask yourself, in the unlikely event that these movies were made, would there not be an outcry from the various civil rights organizations established to combat defamation in

these communities? If the answer is yes, then it should be readily understood why the Catholic League objects to "Priest."

Those who cannot see past the movie's artistic merits might benefit by knowing what the director and the writer of "Priest" have had to say about Catholicism; it might prove to be a much needed reality check. For example, director Antonia Bird told *US* magazine that the movie is "a celebration of Catholicism but questions its rules and regulations." I asked Gina Gardini of Miramax what element of Catholicism was "celebrated" and she was speechless. Appropriately, I might add.

Bird was more revealing when she commented to *Premiere* magazine that her goal was to make a statement about celibacy. "I met a lot of priests from the inner city," said the non-Catholic. "You could just see these guys repressing a whole positive energy that they could be putting into their work." Having subjected the Catholic priests to her Freudian microscope, Bird was in a position to tell the *Los Angeles Times* that the movie is "against a hierarchy adhering to old-fashioned rules without looking at the way the world's changed." Such hubris makes intelligible Bird's approach to the movie.

It is instructive to note that Bird was "seething with rage" when in 1993 she heard again of the Pope's opposition to condoms. That her rage has informed her work is not to be disputed. Indeed, her hatred of the Catholic Church as depicted in "Priest" is a manifestation of her deep-seated rage against Catholicism.

The writer, Jimmy McGovern, is fond of dubbing the priests of his youth "reactionary bastards." In doing so, McGovern affords us the insight we need to understand his sentiments. Moreover, as the *Los Angeles Times* reports, McGovern takes great delight in his "ability to dissect people's motives,

even apparently altruistic ones, and to debase them by finding elements of selfishness in them." It is obvious that McGovern found in Catholic priests much to debase, but in doing so he exposed his own character as well.

If there is one aspect of Catholicism that is driving the hostility of both Bird and McGovern, it is the conviction that the Catholic Church plays by two sets of rules when dealing with straight and gay priests. For example, in the pages of the *New York Times*, McGovern says that "There's very little comment made on the relationship between the older priest and the housekeeper." And that is because, as McGovern contends, "The community can co-exist alongside that priest. It's heterosexual, it's indoors, and he handles it well. But a gay affair, that's different." Director Bird is of the same opinion. She told the *Los Angeles Times* that "There's also no doubt the [Catholic] church draws a veil over heterosexual relationships, but if gay priests attempt monogamous relationships with other men, they're out."

This appalling ignorance of Catholicism is symbolic of the bias that is evident in the movie. Let it be said one more time: the Catholic Church teaches that celibacy is the proper discipline for the priesthood. It follows that priests who have sexual relations, either with women or with men, are in violation of their vows. In addition, fornication, sodomy and adultery are proscribed for lay Catholics. Individuals are free to disagree with these teachings, but they have no right to distort them.

It is not just the Catholic League that has seen in this movie an animus against Catholicism. For example, there is no one who is more knowledgeable about the way Hollywood views religion than movie critic Michael Medved. He told me personally that the film "displays the most profound hostility to the Catholic Church that I have seen in the last 15 years of reviewing movies." It is not without significance that the *Los Angeles Times* noted that "Priest" is "an angry piece of

invective directed at the Catholic church's hierarchy."

Nor should it go unnoticed that *Premiere* said of director Antonia Bird that she "is basking in her blasphemy."

That the movie has a political agenda was not lost on some reviewers. *Newsweek* commented on how "mechanical" the film is, noting that "the issues are dictating the drama." Anthony Lane in *The New Yorker* stated that the Catholic Church is treated like a "dysfunctional family" and wondered "what the system did to deserve all this." He added that "The sole purpose of its existence [the Catholic Church], apparently, is to hang there like a punching bag and get pummelled." Similarly, it is worth citing *Newsday* columnist Liz Smith's observation that "Miramax is obviously looking to push Catholic sensibilities-bruised already-to the limit."

The remark by Liz Smith deserves comment. She notes, quite correctly, that the movie was originally scheduled for nationwide release on April 14, which just happened to be Good Friday. Now if there is anyone so naive as to wonder whether the timing is a coincidence, just ponder this. In her interview with the *Los Angeles Times*, Antonia Bird said to reporter David Gritten, "Did I tell you when 'Priest' opens wide in the States? Good Friday. Sort of appropriate, wouldn't you say?"

This remark by director Bird settles the issue. The movie is designed to stick it to the Catholic Church and the timing of the release was designed to add salt to the wounds. It was the decision to release the movie on Good Friday-and with apparent glee-that was the final straw: any fair-minded person will admit that this crosses the line of decency. It is precisely this kind of "in-your-face" attitude that warrants a strong and unconditional reaction from non-Catholics as well as Catholics. Had it not been for the League's strong condemnation of the planned release date, "Priest" would have opened on Good Friday.

Finally, a word about Miramax and Disney. Miramax, as “Entertainment Tonight” said, “is no stranger to controversy.” According to the *Wall Street Journal*, Miramax is most popular with “the art-house crowd” and the “cappuccino-sipping audience.” It makes sense, then, that the persons behind these films, namely Miramax co-presidents Bob and Harvey Weinstein, have earned a reputation “as sometimes-abrasive entrepreneurs.”

But when all is said and done, it is Disney that is responsible for “Priest.”

It is a matter of record that Disney has leaned on Miramax when it was felt that Miramax’s battle with the Motion Picture Association of America was going too far. As the parent company, and as the quintessential producer of family-based entertainment, Disney holds a very special place in American life. It will not do, therefore, for Disney to wash its hands of being held accountable for “Priest.”

The Catholic League is proud to lead a nationwide revolt against Disney. The Disney we once knew no longer exists, and its new face is not very pretty. We hope that all of our members join with us in sending Disney a message, one that might cause it to think twice the next time it is tempted to make a ideological statement about Catholicism. We liked Disney so much better when it confined itself to Mickey Mouse. Unfortunately, those days are gone. Fortunately, the days when Catholics took it on the chin are also gone.

WHAT TO DO ABOUT THE FIRST

AMENDMENT

By Robert H. Bork

The text of the First Amendment is quite simple: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press, or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances." These are not words that would lead the uninitiated to suspect that the law, both with regard to religion and with regard to speech, could be what the Supreme Court has made of it in the past few decades.

Where religion is concerned, for example, a state may lend parochial schoolchildren geography textbooks that contain maps of the United States but may not lend them maps of the United States for use in geography class; a state may lend parochial schoolchildren textbooks on American colonial history but not a film about George Washington; a state may pay for diagnostic services conducted in a parochial school but therapeutic services must be provided in a different building.

The First Amendment's establishment clause – "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion" – clearly precludes recognition of an official church, and it can easily be read to prevent discriminatory aid to one or a few religions. But it hardly requires the conclusion that government may not assist religion in general or sponsor religious symbolism. An established religion is one which the state recognizes as the official religion and which it organizes by law. Typically, citizens are required to support the established church by taxation. The Congress that proposed and the states that ratified the First Amendment knew very well what an establishment of religion was, since six states had various forms of establishment at the time; ironically, one reason for the prohibition was to save these state

establishments from federal interference.

The history of the formulation of the clause by Congress demonstrates that it was not intended to ban government recognition of and assistance to religion; nor was it understood to require government neutrality between religion and irreligion.

And as we shall see, it most certainly was not intended to erase religious references and symbolism from the actions and statements of government officials.

Had the establishment clause been read as its language and history show it should have been, the place of religion in American life would be very different from what it now is. But in modern times, the Supreme Court has developed a severe aversion to connections between government and religion. Nowhere is that more evident than in the Court's alteration of its fixed rules to allow such connections to be challenged far more easily than other claimed violations of the Constitution.

Major philosophical shifts in the law can occur through what may seem to laymen mere tinkering with technical doctrine. Thus, the judiciary's power to marginalize religion in public life was vastly increased through a change in the law of what lawyers call "standing." Orthodox standing doctrine withholds the power to sue from persons alleging an interest in an issue only in their capacities as citizens or taxpayers. An individualized personal interest, some direct impact upon the plaintiff, such as the loss of money or liberty, is required. But in 1968, in *Flast v. Cohen*, the Supreme Court created the rule that taxpayers could sue under the establishment clause to enjoin federal expenditures to aid religious schools.

Though the opinion offered a strained explanation that would fit some suits under other parts of the Constitution, the Court has managed to avoid allowing such suits with still more strained rationales. Every single provision of the

Constitution from Article I, Section 1 to the 37th Amendment is immune from taxpayer or citizen enforcement – except one. Only under the establishment clause is an ideological interest in expunging religion sufficient to confer standing.

The unhistorical severity of establishment-clause law was codified in the Supreme Court's opinion in *Lemon v. Kurtzman* (1971). To pass muster, the Court held, a law must satisfy three criteria: (1) the statute or practice must have a secular legislative purpose; (2) its principal or primary effect must be one that neither advances nor inhibits religion; and (3) it must not foster an excessive government entanglement with religion.

So few statutes or governmental practices that brush anywhere near religion can pass all of those tests that, were they uniformly applied, they would erase all traces of religion in governmental affairs. But there are too many entrenched traditions around for *Lemon* to be applied consistently. While a case challenging the use of a paid chaplain in Nebraska's legislature was pending in the Supreme Court, the appeals court on which I then sat gathered to hear a challenge by atheists to the practice of paying the chaplains who serve Congress. We and counsel stood while a court officer intoned, "God save the United States and this honorable court," an inauspicious beginning for the plaintiffs since the ritual, followed in the Supreme Court as well, would appear to violate all three prongs of *Lemon*.

Our case was later rendered moot because the Supreme Court approved the Nebraska legislature's chaplain in *Marsh v. Chambers* (1983). Justice William Brennan, dissenting, argued that the state's practice could not pass the *Lemon* test since it hardly had a secular purpose, and the process of choosing a "suitable" chaplain who would offer "suitable" prayers involved governmental supervision and hence "entanglement" with religion. The Court majority, however, relied on the fact that employing chaplains to open legislative sessions

conformed to historic precedent: not only did the Continental Congress employ a chaplain but so did both houses of the first Congress under the Constitution which also proposed the First Amendment. In fact, they also provided paid chaplains for the Army and Navy.

Presumably for that reason, Chief Justice Burger, who had written *Lemon*, did not apply it in *Marsh*. And quite right he was. The Court often enough pays little attention to the historic meaning of the provisions of the Constitution, but it would be egregious to hold that those who sent the amendment to the states for ratification intended to prohibit what they had just done themselves.

But if the *Lemon* test should be ignored where there exists historical evidence of the validity of specific practices or laws that could not otherwise pass muster, then it is a fair conclusion that the test itself contradicts the original understanding of the establishment clause and is destroying laws and practices that were not meant to be invalidated.

As matters stand, *Lemon* makes it difficult for government to give even the most harmless or beneficial forms of assistance to religious institutions. New York City, for example, implemented a program, subsidized with federal funds, under which public-school teachers could volunteer to teach in private schools, including religious schools. The program offered instruction to educationally deprived children in remedial reading, mathematics, and English as a second language. The teachers were accountable only to the public-school system, used teaching materials selected and screened for religious content by city employees, and taught in rooms free of religious symbols. The teachers were generally not members of the religious faith espoused by the schools to which they were assigned. There was no evidence that any teacher complained of interference by private school officials or sought to teach or promote religion.

The court of appeals said this was "a program that apparently has done so much good and little, if any, detectable harm." Nevertheless, constrained by *Lemon*, that same court held the program an impermissible entanglement because the city, in order to be certain that the teachers did not inculcate religion, had to engage in some form of continuing surveillance. The Supreme Court, in *Aguilar v. Felton* (1985), affirmed on the same ground. The educationally deprived children were then required to leave the school premises and receive remedial instruction in trailers.

The Supreme Court has found the "establishment of religion" in the most innocuous practices. A lower court held that it was unconstitutional for a high school football team to pray before a game that nobody be injured. Another court held that a Baltimore ordinance forbidding the sale of non-kosher foods as kosher amounted to the establishment of religion. A federal court decided that a school principal was required by the establishment clause to prevent a teacher from reading the Bible silently for his own purposes during a silent reading period because students, who were not shown to know what the teacher was reading, might, if they found out, be influenced by his choice of reading material.

The list of such decisions is almost endless, and very few receive Supreme Court review, not that that would be likely to change things. After all, the Supreme Court itself decided in *Stone v. Graham* (1980) that a public school could not display the Ten Commandments. (The school authorities were so intimidated by the current atmosphere that they attached a plaque stating that the display was intended to show our cultural heritage and not to make a religious statement; no matter, it had to come down. It also did not matter that the courtroom in which the case was heard was decorated with a painting of Moses and the Ten Commandments.)

So, too, in *Lee v. Weisman*, decided in 1992, a five-Justice majority held that a short, bland nonsectarian prayer at a

public-school commencement amounted to an establishment of religion. The majority saw government interference with religion in the fact that the school principal asked a rabbi to offer a nonsectarian prayer. Government coercion of Deborah Weisman was detected in the possibility that she might feel "peer pressure" to stand or to maintain respectful silence during the prayer. (She would, of course, have had no case had the speaker advocated Communism or genocide.) Thus was ended a longstanding tradition of prayer at school-graduation ceremonies. The law became a parody of itself in *Lynch v. Donnelly*, a 1984 decision concerning Pawtucket, Rhode Island's inclusion of a creche in its annual Christmas display. The Court held that the display passed muster, but only because along with the creche, it also included such secular features as a Santa Claus house, reindeer pulling Santa's sleigh, candy-striped poles, a Christmas tree, carolers, cut-out figures representing such characters as a clown, an elephant, and a teddy bear, hundreds of colored lights, and a large banner that reads 'SEASON'S GREETINGS.' The display of a menorah on a public building has been subjected to a similar analysis. In other words, the question to be litigated nowadays is whether there is a sufficient number of secular symbols surrounding a religious symbol to drain the latter of its meaning.

Despite all this, governments regularly and inevitably take actions that do not have a secular purpose, whose principal effect is to advance religion, and which entangle them with religion.

Aside from the examples already given, there are property-tax exemptions for places of worship, which do not have a secular purpose and do advance religion. Government, in the form of boards, courts, and legislatures, determines what qualifies as religion in order to award draft exemptions for conscientious objectors, aid to schools, and the like. In order to see that education is properly conducted, states must inspect and

demand certain levels of performance in religious schools. Federal employees receive paid time off for Christmas, and the National Gallery preserves and displays religious paintings.

In short, our actual practices cannot be made consistent with the complete separation of religion and government.

The tendencies of the Supreme Court's unhistorical applications of the First Amendment are fairly clear. The late social critic Christopher Lasch asked what accounted for our "wholesale defection from standards of personal conduct – civility, industry, self-restraint – that were once considered indispensable to democracy." He concluded that though there were a great number of influences, "the gradual decay of religion would stand somewhere near the head of the list."

Despite widespread religious belief, public life is thoroughly secularized. The separation of church and state, nowadays interpreted as prohibiting any public recognition of religion at all, is more deeply entrenched in America than anywhere else. Religion has been relegated to the sidelines of public debate.

As religious speech is circumscribed in the name of the First Amendment, however, the Court – in the name of that same amendment – strikes down laws by which communities attempt to require some civility, some decency in public expression. The Ten Commandments are banned from the schoolroom, but pornographic videos are permitted. Or, as someone has quipped about the notorious sculpture by Andres Serrano, a crucifix may not be exhibited – unless it is dipped in urine, in which case it will be awarded a grant by the National Endowment for the Arts.

The result of all this is an increasingly vulgar and offensive moral and aesthetic environment, and, surely, since what is sayable is doable, an increasingly less moral, less happy, and more dangerous society.

The Supreme Court should therefore revisit and revise its First Amendment jurisprudence to conform to the original understanding of those who framed and enacted it. Religious speech and symbolism should be permissible on public property. Nondiscriminatory assistance to religious institutions should not be questioned. Communities, if they so desire, should be permitted to prefer religion to irreligion.

There is no justification whatever for placing handicaps on religion that the establishment clause does not authorize.