

ELECTION TRIGGERS HYSTERIA: “THEOCRACY” FEARED

“Can you believe those Catholics telling people how to vote?” That’s exactly what a woman said to her friends as she exited the elevator at the end of the workday. It was Election Day.

This anecdote wouldn’t amount to much if it were just that—an anecdote. But as pages 4-7 of this issue demonstrate, it reflected the sentiments of a large sector of our nation’s elite. Never before have we seen such an outburst of anti-Christian remarks aired in such a short period of time.

For example, Maureen Dowd of the *New York Times* said, “America has always had strains of isolationism, nativism, chauvinism, puritanism and religious fanaticism.” But today, she maintained, “We’re entering a dark age, more creationist than cutting edge, more premodern than postmodern.” We’re headed, she insisted, to “a scary, paranoid, regressive reality.” All because Christians won on many moral issues.

Dowd’s colleague, Paul Krugman, blamed Christians for wanting to “break down the barriers between church and state.” Similarly, civil rights attorney Mickey Wheatley wrote in the *Los Angeles Times* that we have become “a fundamentalist-leaning nation, increasingly hateful and hated.” What made these people crazy was the American electorate’s insistence that moral values are of utmost importance to them. And by that they meant the importance of being pro-life and pro-marriage.

For our part, we criticized Catholic politicians who broke from Catholic teachings on these subjects. This explains why we went after California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger when he backed public funding for embryonic stem-cell research, as well as Senator Kerry for being pro-abortion.

While our criticisms were measured, the remarks of the bigots were not. To demonstrate the depth of the hatred against Christians, consider that the *Los Angeles Times* printed the following letter on November 10: "So many Christians, so few lions."

Not to be outdone, here's how William Donohue replied: "The letter by Gerald S. Rellick that says, 'So many Christians, so few lions,' has a certain ring to it. But so does, 'So many Jews, so few ovens,' yet it is a sure bet that this newspaper would never publish such hate-filled bigotry. Get the point?"

In other words, reasoned discourse went out the window before and after the election. And most of the profoundly bigoted comments were made by secularists against people of faith.

CENSORS TARGET CHRISTMAS

The attempt by radical secularists to censor Christmas started early this year. They not only want to bar nativity scenes on public property, they want to shut down Christmas celebrations in the workplace.

On November 10, in a legal newspaper out of San Francisco, *The Recorder*, two lawyers advised those who work in human resources to protect their company by censoring Christmas. Putting up Christmas decorations, they warned, might create "a hostile environment based upon religion." Their conclusion: "When in doubt, go secular with decorations."

Here's what led them to that conclusion: "One police department in another state had to face that issue [what to do about Christmas decorations] when it received a religious discrimination complaint filed by a Jewish employee. The

employee complained that the display of Christian-related holiday decorations [in this case, a nativity scene] violated his religious beliefs. As a result, the department banned all decorations with a Christmas theme, resulting in no Christmas tree, no Santas, no lights—nothing associated with the holiday season.”

Then there are the proverbial battles over nativity scenes on public property. Town officials in La Grange, Kentucky decided in November to stop a 14-year old tradition of putting a nativity scene on the courthouse lawn; they feared an ACLU lawsuit.

Please let us know of any anti-Christmas activities in your area.

CALIFORNIA COURTHOUSE TRIGGERS BIG CONTROVERSY

The Catholic League weighed in quickly and decisively in a raging controversy over an attempt by the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) to censor a religious message that is posted in the Riverside County courthouse in Riverside, California.

The ADL’s Pacific Southwest regional office has sought to get officials of Riverside County to censor a quote by Theodore Roosevelt that reads, “The true Christian is the true citizen.” Those words, which are engraved in gold letters on a mahogany wall in the local courthouse, were to be covered while the court was in session; they were to be uncovered during historical tours. The ADL says the quote should be covered because it could be seen as “a specific endorsement of the Christian faith.”

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

The other issue is freedom of speech. How ironic it is that in the 1970s, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that it was freedom of speech for a man standing in line in a California courthouse to wear a jacket with an obscenity printed on it.

Officials at the ADL's Pacific Southwest regional office said they did not object to the entire statement by Roosevelt (some 80 words); their problem was that the remark in the courthouse is taken out of context. So we decided to call their bluff.

As soon as this case made the news, Donohue immediately wrote to the ADL, courthouse officials and the judge who heard the case proposing an alternative resolution: the Catholic League will pay for a new engraving, one which includes Roosevelt's entire comment. "It's time someone called the hand of those who harbor an animus against Christianity," Donohue said.

Because a lawyer has now sued the ADL, courthouse officials have decided to take no action until it is adjudicated. But our offers still stands.

HIGH COURT PICKS KEY CASES

The U.S. Supreme Court has agreed to accept three important religious-liberty cases. No rulings are expected before next spring.

Two of the cases deal with the constitutionality of posting copies of the Ten Commandments on public property. Those opposed to such displays maintain that it is wrong for the government to sponsor any religious display. Those who favor such displays say it is simply part of our religious heritage and is no more unconstitutional than having "In God We Trust" on our coins.

There are approximately 4,000 Ten Commandment monuments in the United States. Most of them were donated by the Fraternal Order of Eagles in the 1950s and 1960s. At issue is whether the Supreme Court will require such symbols to be surrounded by purely secular symbols, as it does with regard to Nativity scenes at Christmastime.

The third case involves the right of Wiccans, Satanists and white supremacists to practice their alleged religious practices in prisons without interference by prison officials. Prison wardens say that some inmates have used their religious liberties to subvert the authority of prison guards, hence leading to institutional breakdown.

In another development, the House of Representatives passed legislation that prevents the federal courts from ruling on whether the words "under God" should be deleted from the Pledge of Allegiance. The Senate has not ruled yet on this issue.

All of which proves that when it comes to religious liberty, all eyes are on the courts.

PULPIT POLITICS IN HIGH GEAR; IRS COMPLAINTS FILED

The Catholic League has filed two formal complaints with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) alleging illegal pulpit politics.

The first complaint was made against a Miami Baptist church for allowing the church to become the venue of a political rally. On August 29, Bishop Victor T. Curry of Miami's New Birth Baptist Church welcomed Rev. Al Sharpton, who ran against Senator John Kerry for the Democratic nomination, and Terry McAuliffe, the chairman of the Democratic National Committee. Jamie Malernee of the *Sun-Sentinel* reported that Curry "made no apologies for turning his Sunday service into a political rally."

Rev. Sharpton, speaking from the pulpit, added to the politicized atmosphere by shouting, "We've got to win Florida." But no one was more partisan than McAuliffe: "Bush has misled us for four years and will not mislead us for the next four years. Get out to vote and we'll send Bush back to Texas."

The second IRS complaint was filed on September 15 against two Protestant black clergy groups from Pennsylvania. On September 13, the Pennsylvania State Coalition of Black Clergy endorsed Rep. Joseph M. Hoeffel, the Democratic candidate for U.S. senator; it represents about 800 churches. The next day, the Black Clergy of Philadelphia and Vicinity, a chapter of the Pennsylvania State Coalition, endorsed Arlen Specter, the Republican candidate and incumbent senator; it represents about 450 churches.

Regarding the matter in Pennsylvania, we noted that not one media outlet registered a protest about this blatant violation of the law. We said to the press, “There is nothing benign about white liberal racism—racism is racism, and all expressions are equally offensive.”

The IRS *Tax Guide for Churches and Religious Organizations* says that “churches and religious organizations” are “absolutely prohibited from directly or indirectly participating in, or intervening in, any political campaign....” That would seem to settle the matter in both the Miami and Pennsylvania cases.

The Catholic League wants the clergy of all religions to engage in robust freedom of speech. What we object to is newspapers condemning Catholic bishops for threatening to deny Communion to pro-abortion politicians while looking the other way when the clergy of other religions literally endorse candidates for public office.

D.C. LOVES VOUCHERS

After years of debate, the District of Columbia now has in place the nation’s first federally funded voucher program.

The beneficiaries of the program are almost all non-white: African-Americans, Asians, Hispanics and African immigrants make up 85 percent of the District’s public school students. They may receive as much as \$7,500 a year for tuition and fees. All must come from low-income families.

It is a tribute to Catholic schools that more than half of the students have elected to go to one of the 22 schools run by the Catholic Church. A total of 1,011 students have been

placed in 53 schools. Mayor Anthony A. Williams said, "The fact that so many families applied for and accepted these scholarships shows the demand for quality educational options."

It is no wonder families are flocking to Catholic schools. The public schools in D.C. are so bad that they have had five superintendents in nine years. Enrollment is down, and that is because more than 10,000 students have left for publicly funded charter schools. Violence in public schools is also endemic.

The voucher program gives priority to those students who have attended failed public schools. This is part of the Bush administration's No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. The demand for vouchers has been greatest at the middle and high school levels.

Opposing school choice have been the teachers' unions and others committed to maintaining the near monopoly the public schools have enjoyed.

DNC IMPLODES ON RELIGION; RELIGION CZAR QUIT

Op-Ed by Terry Eastland, *Wall Street Journal*, 8/6:

"On Monday, the New York-based Catholic League publicized Ms. Peterson's position, and by Wednesday, she had resigned from the DNC, explaining that it was 'no longer possible for me to do my job effectively.' ... When the Catholic League (ever the watchdog) noted Ms. Vanderslice's left-wing activist past and said she was more suited for a job with Fidel Castro, the campaign quarantined her from the press."

The Catholic League scored another victory in August by getting the top religious advisor to the Democratic National Committee (DNC) to resign. We had previously managed to get John Kerry's religious director silenced by his campaign.

On Friday, July 23, Democratic National Committee Chairman Terry McAuliffe announced the appointment of Rev. Brenda Bartella Peterson as the first-ever Senior Advisor for Religious Outreach to the DNC. One week later, on Friday, July 30, we learned of this hire and immediately investigated her.

On Monday, August 2, we issued a press release noting her support for atheist Michael Newdow in his attempt to get the words "under God" stricken from the Pledge of Allegiance. We issued two more news releases on Peterson on Tuesday and Wednesday. She quit late-day Wednesday, saying she couldn't take the pressure any more. We declared victory on Thursday. By Friday, the Catholic League was being cited all over the Internet and newspapers across the nation. To find out exactly how we pulled this off, **read pages 4-7**; we have reproduced all the news releases that finally finished her.

This was the second time in less than two months that the Catholic League scored a victory on this issue. In the last issue of *Catalyst* we noted our defeat of Mara Vanderslice, the woman who was appointed by the Kerry campaign as his Director of Religious Outreach. The Kerry campaign put a gag on her once she was revealed as a Left-wing extremist who was known to associate with anti-Catholics.

The reaction to our latest effort ran the gamut from exuberance to condemnation. We got phone calls and e-mails from across the country congratulating us for a job well done. But we also received our share of nasty and sometimes vulgar comments.

It is important for both parties to reach out to people of faith. But they must do it in a way that is sincere. It is

really not that difficult a task, considering that when it comes to public policy issues, practicing Catholics, Protestants, Jews and Muslims have more in common with each other than they do with the non-observant in their own ranks.

The issue of religion is not going away in this presidential campaign. Our role is that of a monitor—of both parties—and it is a job we will not shirk.

QUALITY JUDGE GETS THE NOD

On July 6, the U.S. Senate voted 51-46 to put J. Leon Holmes on the federal bench in Arkansas. The Catholic League had worked hard to persuade the lawmakers to appoint this quality judge; Holmes is a practicing Catholic who accepts the teachings of the Magisterium.

For about a year, the Catholic League has publicly criticized some Democrats on the Senate Judiciary Committee for their unfair treatment of Holmes. To be specific, pro-abortion Catholic senators on the committee like Patrick Leahy, Dick Durbin and Ted Kennedy have subjected Holmes to a *de facto* religious test. Indeed, when Holmes was considered for the federal bench last year, Leahy, Durbin and Kennedy, along with non-Catholics like Chuck Schumer, ganged up on Holmes because of his orthodox Catholic beliefs.

When this issue first arose, the Catholic League made it clear that we were not accusing any senator of being anti-Catholic. But we hastened to add that religious profiling, even when indirectly invoked, was anathema. In the case of Leon Holmes, some of the Democrats were upset with a biblical remark the judge previously made about gender roles. They would have been on more persuasive grounds had they been able to point to a

single instance when the private religious beliefs of Holmes had unfairly colored his ability to render a fair judgment. Their failure to do so proved to be telling. It was a narrow but important victory. Justice was finally done.

RELIGION AND POLITICS: BISHOPS SPEAK WITH CLARITY

When the bishops recently assembled in Colorado, they overwhelmingly approved a policy statement on “Catholics in Political Life.” Presented on June 18, the position that the bishops staked out on what to do about pro-abortion Catholic politicians was greeted with enthusiasm by the Catholic League.

From our point of view, the bishops spoke with convincing clarity on the subject of politics and religion. Though there are many public policy issues that Catholics are rightfully concerned about, none is more important than the killing of innocent human life. That is why this statement, which gives priority to abortion, is so important: it says that issues like the minimum wage are morally inferior to abortion. As a corollary, it also suggests that shutting down a soup kitchen is not morally analogous to shutting down an abortion clinic. That this even needs to be said shows how morally bankrupt many Americans, including Catholics, have become.

The statement also shows due respect for the autonomy of the bishops. The question of denying Holy Communion to pro-abortion politicians is something every bishop should decide for himself. It needs to be said that it is one thing to get

the bishops to agree on the immorality of abortion—that's easy—but it is quite another to get a group this large to agree on the right remedy for lawmakers who violate this teaching.

The Catholic League was delighted to learn that the statement dealt directly with Catholic institutions that honor pro-abortion public figures. For too long, Catholic colleges and universities have bestowed honors on those who have worked overtime to advocate abortion rights, including partial-birth abortion. They would never honor someone associated with anti-Semitism or racism, but when it comes to abortion, too many have let radical feminists on the faculty rule the day.

The bishops also did not dodge the phony argument over church and state. "The separation of church and state does not require division between belief and public action, between moral principles and political choices, but protects the right of believers and religious groups to practice their faith and act on their values in public life," is how the bishops put it.

"That remark," we told the media, "is cogently written and without a single flaw." Our recommendation was, "It should be widely disseminated to public officials and the law schools."

PLEDGE CASE VICTORY

Last year, the Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights filed a joint friend-of-the-court brief with the Thomas More Law Center supporting the right of public school students to recite the Pledge of Allegiance. The June 14 ruling by the U.S. Supreme Court, though made on grounds that the plaintiff lacked standing, upholds the constitutionality of the Pledge.

It is too bad that the substantive issue of whether recitations of the Pledge in school are legal wasn't addressed. But it was understandable that the high court would scrutinize the right of Michael Newdow, the devout atheist who brought the case, to speak for his non-custodial daughter.

It is regrettable that this issue wasn't put to bed once and for all. And that is because there is a concerted effort in this country, led by organizations that are openly hostile to religion, to eliminate all public vestiges of our religious heritage. This movement, which is at root totalitarian, seeks to impose a radical secular agenda on all Americans. It must be stopped dead in its tracks if religious liberty is to survive.

Even if the win wasn't exactly what we wanted, it is important to remember that we didn't lose—the other side did. Here's what we told the press the day the decision was reached: "This is not a good day for the radical secularists. Which is why it is such a good day for everyone else."