

# ARE RELIGIOUS GAYS SUICIDAL?

Catholic League president Bill Donohue, who holds a Ph.D. in sociology, comments on an article on gays, religion, and suicide:

Four researchers with Ph.D.s have published an article in the *American Journal of Preventive Medicine* titled, "Association of Religiosity With Sexual Minority Suicide Ideation and Attempt." It seeks to determine the effects of religion on suicidal ideas and attempts at suicide.

The data were culled from a larger study, one taken in 2011 by the University of Texas at Austin's Research Consortium; it collected data on over 21,000 college students aged 18-30.

Consistent with other studies, this one concluded that lesbians, gays, bisexuals, and those who are questioning their sexual identity, have a higher rate of suicidal ideas and attempts at suicide than heterosexuals. But it breaks with most other studies on an important point: it asserts that gays who take their religion seriously are more likely to have suicidal thoughts, and are more likely to attempt suicide, than those who are not religious.

Most studies show an inverse relationship between how religious a person is and the likelihood of being suicidal. In one of the most impressive research undertakings to date, cited by the authors, it was found that "adults who attended religious worship at least once a month had lower odds of attempting suicide over the next 10 years compared with those who did not attend, and individuals who sought spiritual comfort had lower odds of suicide ideation for 10 years compared to people who were not spiritual."

Similarly, in Austria, a noted study found that lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) individuals "with a religious affiliation had lower odds of attempting suicide than LGB adults who were

not affiliated, and those who felt a greater sense of belongingness to their religious organization were less likely to endorse suicide ideation.”

Even more important, “LGB individuals who left their religion to resolve the conflict between their sexual orientation and religious affiliation had greater odds of attempting suicide than those with unresolved conflict.”

Unfortunately, the authors fail to probe how seriously this undercuts the popular notion that once a gay person “liberates” himself from religious strictures, he will be at peace with himself. Just the opposite appears to be true, at least from this study. Falling back on oneself, especially during times of adversity, can be stressful, if not dangerous.

The most controversial finding by the four university researchers, as already indicated, reveals that gays, lesbians, bisexuals, and questioning individuals “do not experience the benefits of religiosity’s protective association against suicide ideation and attempt.”

From this conclusion, the researchers contend that faith-based organizations “may not be appropriate for LGBTQ individuals in distress, especially when religion may be a contributing element in distress for LGBTQ individuals.” But their data, as the authors readily concede, are contradicted by other studies (in Austria those who left their religion experienced worse problems). It is thus quite a leap to conclude that faith-based organizations do more harm than good.

The undercurrent of bias that is evident in this study is affirmed when the researchers maintain that “two of the world’s most common religions, Christianity and Islam, largely condemn homosexuality as a sin,” and are therefore a large part of the problem.

Astonishingly, they do not cite Judaism, which was the first world religion to condemn homosexuality, and from which

Christianity and Islam drew upon copiously in crafting their teachings on marriage and the family.

More bias can be detected by considering a remark made by John R. Blosnich, one of the four authors. He spoke to the Huffington Post about the problem facing religious-minded gays, commenting, "It can be very scary to be caught in a space where your religion tells you that you are a 'sinner' just for being who you are."

He should identify which religion he is talking about. It is certainly not true of Catholicism: homosexuals are regarded as children of God, the same way heterosexuals are. Why this needs to be said at all is troubling as this teaching is not new. But to those who want to put a negative tag on Christianity, it makes sense to distort the truth.

If a heterosexual commits adultery, he is no more condemned for being straight than a homosexual who practices homosexuality is for being gay. It is the behavior—adultery and homosexuality—that counts as a sin, not sexual orientation.

One of the findings that the researchers uncovered deserves more attention than they allow. They found that "questioning individuals had the highest prevalence of recent suicide ideation (16.4%) and bisexual students had the highest prevalence of lifetime attempts (20.3%)."

The authors do not speculate why this is so. But if there is one thing that those who question their sexual identity have in common with bisexuals—and this is not true of gay men and lesbians—it is their tentative status. Who are they?

Living with this kind of indeterminacy may explain their desperate condition. It may also suggest that programs that encourage young people to experiment—to find out whether they are straight or gay—may actually be creating a kind of sexual dissonance that is harmful to their wellbeing. Regrettably,

this is currently going on in some schools, the effect of which is to promote a serious identity crisis.

Those who question their sexual identity deserve our compassion, as well as our assistance. What they don't need is further experimentation. The fact that so many young people are caught up in this quandary today is a tribute to the postmodernist belief that denies the existence of nature.

Fatuously, they hold that all human behavior is a social construction. This is not only unscientific—it is an ideological contention—it leads to many wrongheaded policies. It is also the driving force behind the problems incurred by boys who think they are girls, and vice versa.

Of course, the central problem remains, and it is independent of religious practice and affiliation: Why are gays more suicidal than heterosexuals? There are plausible explanations, none of which comport with the ideological leanings of the authors of this study.

Is there a link between promiscuity and suicide, and are gays more promiscuous than heterosexuals? The answer to both questions is an unqualified yes.

In a 2004 article published in the same journal as the study by the four authors, it found that girls who are sexually active are almost three times more likely to attempt suicide than girls who abstain. For boys, those who are sexually active are eight times more likely to attempt suicide. A more recent study published in the *Journal of Abnormal Psychology* established a strong correlation between casual sex and depression among teenagers.

According to practicing psychotherapist Zev Ballen, "The correlation between sexual promiscuity, depression, and suicide is very clear. Multitudes of people are attempting to fill up with sex—this breeds guilt, self-hatred, emptiness and shame." Yet one strains to find researchers and educators who

are willing to admit that promiscuity is a gateway to self-destructive behaviors.

The problem of promiscuity in the gay community is particularly acute. In a brutally honest article last year in the Huffington Post, journalist Michael Hobbes wrote that “Gay people are now, depending on the study, between 2 and 10 times more likely than straight people to take their own lives. We’re twice as likely to have a major depressive episode.” It is for reasons such as this that gay activist Larry Kramer once said there is no such thing as a gay lifestyle—it’s a deathstyle.

“In a survey of gay men who recently arrived in New York City,” Hobbes says, “*three-quarters* suffered from anxiety or depression, abused drugs or alcohol or were having risky sex—or some combination of the three.” (His italics.) Which begs the question: Why are most gay men who move to New York City unable to live a normal life? Heterosexuals seem to have little problem making the adjustment. Hobbes provides an answer, and it is one that needs to be taken seriously.

Hobbes maintains that “Despite all the talk of our ‘chosen families,’ gay men have fewer close friends than straight people or gay women.” This speaks volumes about the lonely lifestyle that so many gay men experience, calling into serious question their ability to form long-lasting bonds.

Consider what one young man, Adam, cited by Hobbes, said about his coming out. “I went to West Hollywood because I thought that’s where my people were. But it was really horrifying. It’s made by gay adults, and it’s not welcoming for gay kids. You go from your mom’s house to a gay club where a lot of people are on drugs and it’s like, this is my community? It’s like a f\*\*\*ing jungle.”

Adam has touched on something real: real communities don’t act this way. What he is describing is a constellation of fully

atomized individuals, not a community where social bonds thrive. This matter needs to be studied more fully, but for political reasons it will not be.

How can it be that at a time of growing acceptance of gay rights so many gays are unhappy? The conventional wisdom, one widely shared by the media and in the schools, is that the legalization of gay marriage, and its acceptance by the public, would lead to an overall increase in the wellbeing of gays. It may sound plausible, but there is no evidence to support this outcome.

Indeed, as Hobbes shows, "In the Netherlands, where gay marriage has been legal since 2001, gay men remain three times more likely to suffer from a mood disorder than straight men, and 10 times more likely to engage in 'suicidal self-harm.'" It's no different in Sweden, the sexual Shangri-La of elites. The Swedes have had civil unions since 1965, and gay marriage since 2009, but "men married to men have triple the suicide rate of men married to women."

Were gays better off in the closet than out? As Hobbes points out, "A study published in 2015 found that rates of anxiety and depression were higher in men who had recently come out than in men who were still closeted." This is not a brief to force gays back into the closet, but it is a wake-up call to those who think that the decline in stigma redounds to better psychological health for gays.

It must be stressed that promiscuity, while endemic among gay men in more recent times, was not always so. Kinsey found that homosexuals were less promiscuous than heterosexuals. Even as late as 1960, researchers were finding that homosexuals were relatively sexually inactive. But once the sexual revolution hit stride in the 1960s, sexual experimentation increased among men and women, straight and gay. So did STDs.

It is promiscuity that is the biggest threat to those who

practice it, not social stigma or religious strictures. But many elites in the health profession and higher education are in a state of denial over this verity, and those who know better are too often intimidated from speaking the truth. Until this changes, there will be little or no progress in reversing the experience of many gay men.

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## THE FLAWS IN CNN'S EPISODE ON PIUS XII

*University of Mississippi professor Ronald Rychlak, one of the world's foremost scholars of the Catholic Church's role during the Holocaust, was included in last night's episode of the CNN series on the papacy. He serves on the board of advisors of the Catholic League. He prepared the following assessment of the April 8th edition for the Catholic League. Here are his remarks:*

For the past month, CNN has been running weekly episodes of a series called *Pope: The Most Powerful Man in History*. Each episode focuses on an era and lays out issues that faced the papacy at that time. On April 8, the episode was on the World War II-era popes, Pius XI (1922-1939) and Pius XII (1939 to 1958). The episode focused on the Vatican's response to the Holocaust. I participated as a commentator.

Unfortunately, it is impossible to properly lay out and evaluate all the facts and circumstances of this era in an hour-long program (minus time allotted for commercials). My book *Hitler, the War, and the Pope* is over 600 pages long, and I wrote two other books on the topic just to analyze some of the issues raised by these facts. The episode did not come

close.

CNN avoided the pop journalists who too often populate such debates, but even among serious scholars, there is debate and confusion. Given the time constraints, it was necessary for the producers to make cuts and avoid many details. Of course, when that happens, the tendency is to raise the controversial point, ignore the details and the nuance, and leave the viewer to assume the worst. That happened quite a bit in this episode.

One such instance related to the 1929 agreement between Italy and the Holy See, the Lateran Treaty. This agreement reconciled a difficulty that had existed since the fall of the Papal States in 1870. In it, the Vatican recognized the kingdom of Italy, received compensation for property that had been seized, and defined the rights and obligations of the Church and State. According to CNN, it also set a precedent that the Vatican would be willing to negotiate with dictators for sovereignty. That is simply not correct.

Fascists from around the world viewed this treaty as a betrayal by Mussolini and thought he sold out to the Church. Perhaps regretting that he had gone so far, in the month following its signing Mussolini stated: "Within the State, the Church is not sovereign, nor is it even free... because it is subordinate... to the general law of the State. We have not resurrected the Temporal Power of the Popes, we have buried it." For his part, Pius XI noted that Catholicism was in significant ways inconsistent with Fascism. He explained the agreement by saying: "Where there is a question of saving souls, We feel the courage to treat with the Devil in person." A few years later he issued the encyclical, *Non Abbiamo Bisogno* (We Have No Need) in Italian to make it accessible to the Italian people. He released it, however, in Paris rather than the Vatican because otherwise Mussolini might have prevented its distribution.



In reaching accord with Italy, Pius XI treated it the same way he treated other nations. Even if a state might stand to gain in the short term, governments do not last, and eventually the Church would be better positioned if it had a relationship with the people. Moreover, the Lateran Treaty provided that the Church reserved "the right to exercise her moral and spiritual power in every case." So, while the Holy See was officially neutral, it did not relinquish the right to speak on moral truths. None of this was seen on CNN.

Similarly, the 1933 concordat with Germany was portrayed as a capitulation to Hitler. In reality, it was a defense mechanism that permitted the Church to save souls. Naturally, the Church insisted on a provision permitting it to speak to moral issues. Hitler, who first thought he could exploit the concordat, soon saw it as being used by the Church to protect Jews (with real or forged baptism certificates), and he vowed to end it immediately after the war. That was not mentioned on CNN.

The show did a nice job of explaining the importance of Pius XI's anti-Nazi encyclical, *Mit brennender Sorge*, but it ended by saying that this was the only time he spoke to all of Germany about the Nazis and the horror faced by Jews. Not only does that overlook numerous statements by the Vatican's radio and newspaper, it also fails to explain that the encyclical was immediately suppressed, doing no actual good for the victims; only leading to more persecution. In fact, two other messages – one from Poland and one from Holland – urged the pope not to speak, lest he cause more suffering. Neither was mentioned on the show.

CNN gave Pius XII credit for his significant role in drafting *Mit brennender Sorge*. Unfortunately, it suggested that the wording was diplomatic and not sufficiently forceful. No mention was made of the numerous drafts that were recently discovered. Some were more forceful while others were less so. Obviously, the pope and his assistants were struggling to hit

the right tone. One might quibble, but they got it about right.

CNN mentioned an encyclical that Pius XII was working on at the time of his death. Fortunately, it did not call this a "hidden encyclical," as is often done. There was, however, no mention of Pius XII's first encyclical, *Summi Pontificatus*, which drew the same research while eliminating anti-Semitic passages from the earlier draft. *Summi Pontificatus* is essential to understanding Pius XII's approach to a wartime papacy. I devoted a chapter to it in my book, but CNN did not even mention it.

CNN told of Pius XII's 1942 Christmas message, but omitted the most important passage in which he said mankind owed a solemn vow "never to rest until valiant souls of every people and every nation" arise and "devote themselves to the services of the human person and of a divinely ennobled human society." Mankind owed this vow to "the hundreds of thousands who, through no fault of their own, and solely because of their nation or race, have been condemned to death or progressive extinction."

Listeners on both sides of the war understood that this was a direct reference to the Jews. A Christmas Day editorial in the *New York Times* praised Pius XII for his moral leadership in opposing the Nazis: "No Christmas sermon reaches a larger congregation than the message Pope Pius XII addresses to a war-torn world at this season. This Christmas more than ever he is a lonely voice crying out of the silence of a continent." The Nazis also understood. According to a report by Heinrich Himmler's Superior Security Office:

"In a manner never known before, the Pope has repudiated the National Socialist New European Order.... It is true, the Pope does not refer to the National Socialists in Germany by name, but his speech is one long attack on everything we stand for.... God, he says, regards all people and races as worthy of the

same consideration. Here he is clearly speaking on behalf of the Jews.... [H]e is virtually accusing the German people of injustice toward the Jews, and makes himself the mouthpiece of the Jewish war criminals."

CNN included Mark Riebling and his important work showing Pius XII's involvement with the plot to assassinate Hitler. Unfortunately, the show suggested that this was an unsettled proposition because there was no written evidence. As Mark explained, there are tape recordings proving his involvement!

Similarly, after explaining that the pope knew that written evidence could get people in trouble with the Nazis, a commentator questioned the papal role in sheltering Roman Jews because there are no surviving written papal orders. Some mention should have been made of the numerous eyewitnesses who testified to receiving or overhearing orders from the Vatican.

Near the end of the program, one commentator, Suzanne Brown-Fleming, receives much attention as she assesses whether Pius XII deserves to be called a saint. As an initial matter, that seems a particularly internal matter for the Church, not for commentators. She, however, professes to speak not only as a historian but also as a Catholic, so perhaps she has standing. Her analysis, however, is weak.

First of all, without any context (which may be due to editing by the producer), she quoted from a 1919 letter written by the future Pope Pius XII. It used some offensive-sounding language while referring to certain "Jews." Left unexplained was that this was a grossly distorted translation, with pejorative words that are not faithful to the original Italian. When this letter was first published in its original Italian, no one suggested that it was anti-Semitic. The tone of anti-Semitism was introduced only by a calculated mis-translation by a noted papal critic. I included an accurate translation in the second edition of *Hitler, the War, and the Pope* (2010).

Moreover, any disrespect reflected in the language did not stem from racial or even religious differences, but from the Bolshevik activity in Munich. There was animosity between the Church and the revolutionaries, and they were the focus of the comment, not all Jewish people. This letter described the leaders of a rogue government that had persecuted the people of Bavaria. It was written 14 years before Hitler came to power and the Jewish persecution began. Its misuse in the television program was offensive.

Brown-Fleming also suggested that Pius XII's diplomatic response to the Holocaust may have been influenced by anti-Semitism. Earlier in the program, however, I had noted that 2,500 Catholic priests were interned at Dachau. The diplomatic approach that Pius used toward these leaders of his own church was the same that he used for Jewish victims. Priest or peasant, the pope did not vary his approach to the problem. One might legitimately question whether he made the right call, but one cannot honestly question his intent.

Brown-Fleming says that one must wait until the remaining archives are opened before a decision can be made on Pius XII's sainthood cause. She is wrong. It is probably time to open the archives, and whether prudential judgments were correct can be debated, but that is not the issue. One can make a reasoned decision about Pius XII's intent and motivation on the basis of the evidence that is already available. In fact, the Congregation for the Causes of Saints has done that. It has concluded that Pius XII led a life of heroic virtue. The bishops and theologians have also approved him for canonization. The work continues only to verify a miracle.

CNN should have noted that Jewish groups from around the world praised Pius at the end of the war and at his death. Also unmentioned was that Pope Francis – an apparent favorite of the producers – has often praised Pius XII. Just last June he asked: "How many, beginning with Pius XII, took risks to hide

Jews so that they wouldn't be killed, so that they wouldn't be deported? They risked their skin!"

While there is much to learn about the popes of World War II, viewers should not think that they have learned the full story just by watching this series, much less a single episode. Even well-intended producers and commentators are limited by the constraints of the clock.

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# Where Are the Women at The New York Times?

By [Bill Donohue](#)

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Pleas for more diversity and inclusion are a mantra at The New York Times. For example, it demands more inclusion in the Catholic Church's clergy – women must be ordained – and rails against the glass ceiling in the corporate world that keeps women from reaching the top.

There is one exception: When it comes to hiring a new publisher at The New York Times, it throws diversity and inclusion to the wind. Not only does it confine its search to narrow categories, it only considers blood relatives. The New York Times is not only a patriarchy, its affection for hiring along patrilineal descent lines is boundless.

Mark Thompson, who heads The New York Times Company, announced today that Arthur Gregg Sulzberger is the new deputy publisher of the newspaper.

This appointment is critical because it signals the continuation of the Times monarchy: Arthur Gregg's father, Arthur Sulzberger Jr., is the current publisher, and his son is next in line to succeed him on the throne. Sulzberger Jr. got his job because his predecessor, Arthur Ochs Sulzberger, was his father.

A.G., as Arthur Gregg is now known (it was confusing at the newspaper so they settled on his initials), would represent the fifth generation of his family since the Grand Patriarch, Adolph S. Ochs, bought the newspaper in 1896.

To elect Arthur Gregg Sulzberger, the Times erected a cement ceiling: the only other two candidates for the job were Sam Dolnick and David Perpich. All three are cousins.

No women were interviewed. No blacks were interviewed. No Latinos (including the undocumented) were interviewed. No Native Americans were interviewed. No Asians were interviewed. No Catholics were interviewed. No Protestants were interviewed. No Muslims were interviewed. No Mormons were interviewed. And to the best of my knowledge, no transgender persons were interviewed.

This triumph of patriarchy was not, however, equally distributed along descent lines: no one from the Ochs family, or any of the other branches of the family, was considered.

This is a cement ceiling that even ISIS couldn't crack.

In keeping with its incestuous tradition, the selection committee included senior executive Michael Golden and his sister-in-law, Trudy Golden. Carolyn Greenspon was on the committee: she is a family trustee and board member of The New York Times Company.

Thompson, chief executive of the company, was also on the committee.

No one not from the inner circle of the board, newspaper, or the family, was included.

Who needs affirmative action? Who needs to advertise? Who needs a head hunter?

This is an old-boys club par excellence.

Thompson said the selection “was done in an extraordinarily careful, systematic way.” On that, everyone can agree. It would be instructive to learn what Maureen Dowd thinks about this nativistic, misogynistic, racist, non-inclusive, diversity-be-damned, rigged hiring system at The New York Times.

But this is not likely: she has long settled in, and knows exactly what her place is.

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# **Hillary's Campaign Chair Must Be Fired for Catholic Slam**

By [Bill Donohue](#)

*This article was originally published by Newsmax on October 13, 2016.*

Yesterday, I stopped short of asking Hillary Clinton to fire [John Podesta](#), her campaign chairman. In light of the latest Wikileaks revelations, she has no choice but to cut all ties with this man. The man is hell bent on creating mutiny in the Catholic Church and must therefore be fired.

We have long known that George Soros is the single most influential donor to dissident, and anti-Catholic, organizations. Now we know from Wikileaks what I long have suspected: John Podesta has been the most influential point man running offense for Soros.

Together, they have sought to manipulate public opinion against the Catholic Church.

In 2012, Sandy Newman, founder of the left-wing group, Voices for Progress, [asked Podesta](#) for advice on how best to “plant the seeds of the revolution.” The revolution he sought was an attempt to sunder the Catholic Church.

Newman, who is Jewish, confessed that he was a rookie at trying to subvert the Catholic Church. But he was determined to do so. “There needs to be a Catholic Spring,” Newman told Podesta, “in which Catholics themselves demand the end of a middle ages dictatorship and the beginning of a little democracy and respect for gender equality in the Catholic Church.”

Podesta not only endorsed the plan to create a revolution within the Catholic Church – he boasted that he had been working on this for years. “We created Catholics in Alliance for the Common Good to organize for a moment like this,” he said. “Likewise Catholics United. Like most Spring movements, I think this one will have be bottom up.”

He recommended that Kathleen Kennedy Townsend be consulted on this effort.

The evidence is indisputable: Both of these groups, Catholics



in Alliance and Catholics United, were created by Podesta, and funded by Soros, for the express purpose of staging a revolt within the Catholic Church. In 2008, Archbishop Charles Chaput, then of Denver and now of Philadelphia, accused both entities of doing a “disservice” to the Catholic Church.

Catholics in Alliance is known for sponsoring dissident Catholics, including priests, to give talks around the nation. Catholics United was the force behind a contrived effort by the [IRS](#) to go after me in 2008.

The latter story is illuminating.

On Oct. 23, 2008, I appeared on CNN to discuss the George Soros connection to Catholics United. Before I went on, Chris Korzen of Catholics United contacted CNN in an effort to have me booted. Fortunately, he was so stupid as to share with a producer a lengthy document (it was leaked to me) detailing how unfair I had been to Barack Obama, especially noting his rabid support for abortion.

I say Korzen was stupid because when the IRS contacted me the next month, right around Thanksgiving, I recognized the complaint: it was basically the same as the one that Korzen’s lawyers had sent to CNN.

(The IRS probe finally ended without penalties.)

See the connection: Podesta creates Catholics United; Soros funds Catholics United; and Catholics United sponsors an IRS complaint against me (after trying to get me kicked off CNN). Their attempt to intimidate me was a monumental failure, but the fact that they tried is what counts.

Podesta’s recommendation that Kathleen Kennedy Townsend be [consulted](#) as a source to create havoc in the Catholic Church was a good one. On March 29, 2012, I quoted her saying that the Catholic Church’s teachings “encourage bigotry and harm.”

Any Catholic who thinks that the Podesta-Soros connection is just another activist alliance is kidding himself. They are creating and funding a campaign to promote a revolution in the Catholic Church.

Dr. William Donohue is the president and CEO of the Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights. The publisher of the Catholic League journal, Catalyst, Donohue is a former Bradley Resident Scholar at the Heritage Foundation and served for two decades on the board of directors of the National Association of Scholars. He is the author of seven books, and the winner of several teaching awards and many awards from the Catholic community. Read more of his reports – [Click Here Now](#).

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# Media Have Enormous Tolerance for Intolerance Against Catholics

By [Bill Donohue](#)

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Most of the media have been delinquent in reporting on the latest Wikileaks story involving Hillary Clinton's campaign chairman John Podesta, communications director Jennifer Palmieri, and Center for American Progress senior fellow John Halpin.

[In a series of email exchanges](#), Palmieri and Halpin made patently disparaging remarks about Catholics, and showed disdain for evangelicals as well. They shared their vitriol

with Podesta, who did not respond (the source we quoted from yesterday mistakenly attributed a remark by Halpin to Podesta).

Fox News was the most responsible media outlet reporting on the Catholic bashing: Fox News Website, Megyn Kelly, Sean Hannity, and Fox and Friends all cited the bigotry. CNN's Anderson Cooper also did a good job.

CBS, NBC, PBS, and MSNBC all reported on the Podesta Wikileaks story, but failed to mention the anti-Catholic remarks; ABC News didn't report the story at all, though its affiliates mentioned the controversy without citing the Catholic bashing.

Among the most prominent newspapers and wire services that ran the story without reporting on the anti-Catholic comments were the following: Associated Press; CNN Wire; *Baltimore Sun*; *Boston Globe*; *Boston Herald*; *Hartford Courant*; *Miami Herald*; *New York Daily News*; *New York Post*; *New York Observer*; *New York Times*; *Newsday*; *San Diego Union Tribune*; *Spokesman Review*; UPI; *USA Today*; *Washington Post*; *Washington Times*. It comes as no surprise that The White House Bulletin also covered up the bigotry.

I have been doing this job for over 23 years, so it is no mystery why the mainstream media are hyper-sensitive about "micro aggressions," and other slights, when they are made about many protected groups, yet there is enormous tolerance for intolerance when it is exhibited against Catholics and evangelicals. It's called bigotry, plain and simple.

It would be a grave mistake to conclude, however, that an anti-religious impulse explains this phenomenon. No, when it comes to Muslims, the media will bend over backwards to show how sensitive they are to any perceived intolerance.

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# Cults In the Workplace

By [Bill Donohue](#)

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A federal judge has ruled that a Long Island health care company must submit to a trial for allegedly discriminating against its employees by forcing them to pray and participate in an array of spirituality exercises. In 2014, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission [sued the business](#), accusing it of violating the religious rights of employees. Now the case is moving forward in the courts.

The evidence shows that this was a full-throated attempt to establish a cult in the workplace. It also exhibited an animus to Christianity, especially Catholicism (e.g., banning Catholic statues from desktops while erecting statues of Buddha). While this particular program is unique, workplace spirituality is a growing enterprise, and much of what is happening is cause for concern.

United Health Programs of America, a subsidiary of Cost Containment Group, is charged with forcing workers to join programs such as “Onionhead” and “Harnessing Happiness.” Mandatory counseling sessions, most of which violated every professional tenet, were routine. Fortunately, some workers, which included Catholic women, had had enough and brought suit.

Onionhead was created 20 years ago to allegedly help people live more peaceful and successful lives. The program that is under litigation was introduced by the CEO of United Health Programs in 2007; he argued that it would improve communication and teamwork. He conveniently hired his aunt, Linda "Denali" Jordan, as chief consultant. She is the founder of Harnessing Happiness, and the driving force behind this attempt at cult formation.

The list of objections raised by employees is plentiful. At their worst, they represent a serious attempt at mind control. Indeed, as will be pointed out, some of the techniques used by United Health Programs were perfected by totalitarian dictators in the 20th century. The following examples are representative of the *least offensive* exercises.

- Workers were required to "pray, hold hands in a prayer circle, read spiritual texts, light candles, burn incense to remove bad energy, listen to meditation music playing throughout the workplace, and use low lighting in their offices because, according to Denali, demons came through the overhead lights."
- Workers were required to say "I love you" to colleagues and management.
- Workers were required, on a weekly basis, to "take part in group staff meetings where managers led discussions of religious issues."
- Workers were required to "hold hands in a prayer circle," leaving customer service phones unanswered during these sessions.

The following represent the *most offensive* exercises: they are classic cult-forming tactics.

- Workers were required to meet monthly with Denali for their "one-on-one sessions." They were pressured to "share personal and private, non-work related matters, including a friend's suicide, parental issues, family

and marital strife, the death of loved ones, and the employees' serious health conditions."

- "After employees discussed their private matters in one-on-one sessions under Denali's guarantees of confidentiality, Denali frequently revealed the private matters to other employees, including family members of the sharing employee. Denali would often use the private, confidential information to pit employees against each other."
- When Denali was traveling, she selected some workers to be her "eyes and ears at the office, requiring them to notify her of any expression of opposition to the religious practices."

Under Hitler, Stalin, and Mao, they routinely turned family members against each other, forcing them to make accusations—all of which were patently false—against their loved ones: they were ordered to do so in their presence. Before the masses could give of themselves to the state, the tyrants reasoned, they had to first rid themselves of their most important allegiances.

It is a staple in the arsenal of cult leaders to smash the most natural bonds that exist—between family members—so that the broken individual will be drawn to find a new bond with the cult guru. This is exactly what Jim Jones did to his subjects in Jonestown—he owned them financially, sexually, and psychologically—resulting in the mass suicide of over 900 persons.

What makes Denali different from Jones is that her recruits were involuntarily chosen—the fully atomized individuals who joined Jones did so at their own volition. This also explains her failure: she did not have a captive audience, though she sought to create one.

Since the 1990s, there has been a spike in workplace spirituality. Much of it is an expression of the larger

multicultural agenda, which is expressly opposed to the Judeo-Christian ethos. And some of it is destructive.

It is hardly controversial to say that our society has an abundance of narcissistic and dysfunctional men and women, poor souls in desperate search for meaning. Many are looking to find religious experiences shorn of the kinds of commitments and commandments associated with Christianity. They want a New Age experience, one that allows them to feel good without submitting to authority. Unfortunately, instead of finding Nirvana, they find Denali.

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# Blasphemy Rights Day Is a Farce

By [Bill Donohue](#)

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Friday is International Blasphemy Rights Day. On paper, its stated goal appears eminently worth defending: it is opposed to laws, such as those in Muslim-run nations, that punish the free speech rights of those who criticize religion.

For example, it says, "Sometimes religious militants make their own laws, deciding for themselves that expressions of

dissent justify brutal killings, like the grisly murders of secularists in Bangladesh, or attacks on religious minorities in Pakistan.”

No one could reasonably argue with this assessment. But upon closer examination, it is clear that those who sponsor this event are not friends of liberty: they are rabidly opposed to religion, harboring a special hatred of Catholicism. In short, the whole project is a farce.

The [Center for Inquiry](#) is the force behind International Blasphemy Rights Day. It was once a respectable organization, but that ended in 2010 when its founder, philosopher Paul Kurtz, was forced out by a new board of directors. Led by Ronald A. Lindsay, the new board was comprised of militant, religion-hating, atheists. Kurtz died two years later.

When he was a young man, Kurtz studied under Sidney Hook, the brilliant New York University political philosopher whose intellectual migration traveled from Marxist to neo-conservative. I, too, studied under Hook, though more than two decades after Kurtz did. Hook had a tremendous effect on me (though not on my religious convictions), and to this day I remember him with affection. Both of these men were atheists, but neither was a hater. In fact, they both hated the religion haters.

Kurtz founded several secular humanist organizations, and was the editor of “The Humanist,” an organ of the American Humanist Association. He insisted on putting a positive face on atheism while simultaneously adhering to a religion-friendly line. Unfortunately, over time American atheists became increasingly extreme, and so, too, did those drawn to organizations such as the Center for Inquiry.

By the time Kurtz was forced to resign, he had had it with what he called the “angry atheists.” He was referring to the “new atheists,” writers such as Christopher Hitchens and



Richard Dawkins. He properly called them “dogmatic” and atheist “fundamentalists,” men whose malice toward religion was deeply offensive.

In 2010, just before Kurtz left the Center for Inquiry, he witnessed the first International Blasphemy Day. He was not happy with what happened. With good reason, he objected to a “Free Expression Cartoon Contest”: top prize was given to a bishop ogling altar boys.

Two days before the event, I wrote a news release slamming it for its scheduled foray trashing Catholicism.

“Artist Dana Ellyn will wander to Washington, D.C. to show her masterpiece, ‘Jesus Does His Nails,’ a portrait of Jesus polishing a nail jammed into his hand. In Los Angeles, there will be a film about a gay molesting priest and another about a boy who is so angry about being sent to bed that he asks God to kill his parents.”

One person who loved these displays of bigotry was PZ Meyers. He correctly said that the day was established to “mock and insult religion without fear of murder, violence, and reprisal.” The University of Minnesota professor is known for intentionally desecrating a consecrated Host with a rusty nail.

In recent years, the participants at these Blasphemy Rights Day events have been better behaved—owing to the backlash—but the fundamental problem remains. The Center for Inquiry believes that “free speech is the foundation on which other liberties rest.” Wrong. Freedom of religion is the foundational liberty, but to admit that would undercut its mission.

To demonstrate how committed the Center for Inquiry is to hate speech, consider that it will soon be home to the Richard Dawkins Foundation for Reason & Science. Dawkins is to Catholics what the Imperial Wizard of the Ku Klux Klan is to

blacks. A few months ago, he said, "I'm all for offending people's religion. I think it should be offended at every opportunity."

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# Catholics for Choice Gambit Fails

By Bill Donohue

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Advocacy campaigns, especially when conducted in the print media, are very expensive. Fortunately, whether they work or not is not hard to determine: if they generate a lot of controversy, they work; if not, they fail. Catholics for Choice's (CFC) latest effort has failed. Indeed, it is a monumental failure.

How do I know? Two days after its print advertisement blitz in several newspapers, it has been cited in less than a half-dozen papers. Even that is an exaggeration: the only place it garnered any attention is in the letters section. More bad news: the letters-to-editor are uniformly critical of CFC. Most important, there has not been a single news story about its bigoted campaign in any newspaper in the nation.

Here are some indisputable facts. CFC is not Catholic: it is expressly anti-Catholic. Its idea of choice does not extend to safeguarding the premier human choice—the right to be born. In fact, it works tirelessly to undermine this fundamental right. It is not an organization: it is a letterhead greased by the establishment; it has no members. Twice condemned as a fraud by the bishops, it is kept alive solely by such sources as the Ford Foundation, the MacArthur Foundation, and the [Warren] Buffett Foundation. Rank-and-file Catholics have nothing to do with it.

CFC's latest gambit is two-fold: It wants the public to pay for abortions; it wants the public to believe that child abuse in the womb is a legitimate Catholic social justice issue.

This is a war it cannot win. First, the public is strongly opposed to taxpayer-funded abortions, and this includes a large swath of those who are not pro-life. Second, there is nothing in Catholic social teachings that justifies the intentional killings of innocent human beings.

The latest campaign by CFC has a long pedigree.

CFC was founded in 1973 as Catholics for a Free Choice, setting up shop in the headquarters of New York's Planned Parenthood office building. Once *Roe v. Wade* legalized abortion, CFC joined with the Religious Coalition for Abortion Rights, moving decisively to counter efforts for a Human Life Amendment.

Its first president, Father Joseph O'Rourke, was expelled from the Jesuits in 1974; he served as CFC president until 1979. Frances Kissling took over in 1982 and has been more responsible for shaping its agenda than anyone else. Jon O'Brien succeeded Kissling in 2007.

In October 1984, CFC ran an ad in the *New York Times* titled "Catholic Statement on Pluralism and Abortion." Not surprisingly, it was designed and marketed by Planned

Parenthood. The ad illegitimately maintained that there were “legitimate Catholic positions” on abortion. Such reasoning fast became a staple of CFC’s agenda. Today, it is being prominently promoted by Senator Tim Kaine, vice presidential candidate for the Democratic Party; he also supports CFC’s call for taxpayer-funded abortions.

CFC continued in the 1980s hawking the line that there is “an authentic prochoice Catholic position.” It was due to lies such as this that on November 4, 1993, the bishops released a statement saying CFC is not “an authentic Catholic organization.” Indeed, it stressed that “It has no affiliation, formal or otherwise, with the Catholic Church.” It issued a similar condemnation in 2000.

Perhaps the most severe blow to the reputation of CFC came on April 21, 1995. That was the day the *National Catholic Reporter*, a dissident newspaper that rejects the Church’s teachings on sexuality, printed a letter by Marjorie Reiley Maguire blasting CFC. She was a prominent CFC activist for years, and no one doubted her credentials or credibility. But like many others who came of age in the 1960s, Maguire began to have second thoughts; included in her intellectual migration were second thoughts about CFC and Catholicism.

In her letter, Maguire branded CFC “an anti-woman organization,” one whose agenda is “the promotion of abortion.” She argued that Kissling’s organization defended “every abortion decision as a good, moral choice,” adding that it pursued a “related agenda of persuading society to cast off any moral constraints about sexual behavior.”

Maguire explained that it was not the Catholic Church that was “hung up on sex;” rather, it was liberals who were obsessed with sex. Questioning the right of CFC to call itself Catholic, Maguire said that “When I was involved with [CFC] I was never aware that any of its leaders attended Mass. Furthermore, various conversations and experiences convinced

me they did not.”

Nothing has changed since. In other words, CFC is the propaganda arm of pro-abortion anti-Catholics, funded by fat cats. Its latest campaign is such a bust that one wonders just how stupid its donors are. When the best it can muster is a few letters-to-the-editor nationwide—and they all slam CFC as a fraud—then it’s time to regroup. Better yet, it’s time to pack it in.

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# Federal Agency Trashes Religious Liberty

By [Bill Donohue](#)

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It is the most anti-First Amendment report issued to date by any agency of the federal government. On September 7, the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights released a scathing assault on religious liberty titled, *Peaceful Coexistence: Reconciling Nondiscrimination Principles with Civil Liberties*.

The title of [the report](#) is only one of many fundamental errors in the document: the findings and recommendations make it clear that there is no attempt to reconcile any competing

rights. Instead, the document says that when there is a conflict between religious liberty and nondiscrimination, the former should be subordinate to the latter. Never mind that religious liberty is enshrined in the First Amendment and the latter right is mostly encoded in statutes.

The lead finding in the report is dismissive of the First Amendment. "Civil rights protections ensuring nondiscrimination, as embodied in the Constitution, laws, and policies, are of preeminent importance in American jurisprudence."

That is factually wrong: laws against discrimination are important, but they are not preeminent. What is preeminent is the first right found in the First Amendment, namely, the right to religious exercise. This agency has now decided to invert these rights. This is indefensible.

The second finding all but guts the meaning of religious exemptions. It holds that when such exemptions are granted from civil rights laws, e.g., statutes governing race and sexual orientation, they "significantly infringe upon these civil rights." The obverse is more accurate: the denial of religious exemptions, in most instances, significantly infringe upon the First Amendment.

Rights are not absolute, so when two rights conflict, decisions to favor one over the other must be made; this requires sound jurisprudential reasoning. For example, the Bill of Rights explicitly protects religious liberty, and it says absolutely nothing about gay rights or gay marriage. Why, then, is this federal body awarding preferential treatment to rights nowhere found in the Constitution while diminishing rights plainly encoded in it?

The findings and recommendations both speak about the First Amendment's "Free Exercise Clause" and the "Establishment Clause." Such literary casting is factually wrong.

Constitutional scholar John Noonan [says it best](#): “There are no clauses in the constitutional provision. Clauses have a subject and a predicate. This provision has a single subject, a single verb, and two prepositional phrases.”

Noonan is not being cute. His point is substantive: the Framers never contemplated disharmony between religious liberty and the establishment of religion. Indeed, these provisions complement each other. The free exercise of religion puts brakes on the power of the federal government to deny religious liberty; the establishment provision puts breaks on the federal government to prescribe religious exercise.

Madison, who authored the First Amendment, did not keep us guessing as to what he meant by the establishment provision: It was designed to stop the establishment of a national church and to prohibit government favoritism of one religion over the other. Moreover, it had no application to the states, which is why state churches existed until the fourth decade of the nineteenth century.

The rendering offered in the report incorrectly pits the two religious liberty provisions—free exercise and the establishment of religion—against each other. According to this logic, the two rights cancel each other out. This is bad history and lacks common sense. But it does allow the report to erroneously conclude that the establishment provision precludes a robust understanding of the Religious Freedom Restoration Act.

If there were any doubt that this report is a searing indictment of the First Amendment, the statement by the chairman of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights settles the matter. Martin R. Castro, an Obama appointee, is blunt in his contempt for religious liberty.

“The phrases ‘religious liberty’ and ‘religious freedom’ will

stand for nothing except for hypocrisy so long as they remain code words for discrimination, intolerance, racism, sexism, homophobia, Islamophobia, Christian supremacy or any other form of intolerance.”

Absent from his list of horrors is the real threat to the Constitution: militant secularism. And who is he talking about when he cites “Christian supremacy”? He should man up and be specific. Or is the term “man up” another horror?

Castro then blames religion for slavery. “In our nation’s past religion has been used to justify slavery and later, Jim Crow laws.” Perhaps he missed those classes on the religious basis of the abolitionist movement; or Catholic teachings on natural law; or the efforts of Rev. Martin Luther King, and all the other faith-based opponents of discrimination.

Interestingly, Castro’s remarks are preceded with a quote from John Adams: “The government of the United States is not, in any sense, founded on the Christian religion.” Tell that to the U.S. Supreme Court. In 1892, it ruled that the U.S. “is a Christian nation.”

Leaving that debate aside, it is undeniably true that the U.S. was founded on the Judeo-Christian ethos. More important, it was Adams who pointedly said that the Constitution was made “only for a moral and a religious people.” This explains why attempts to diminish our religious heritage—including this salvo by the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights—must be resisted.

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# Media Still Bashing Phyllis Schlafly

By Bill Donohue

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Ten years ago, when liberal activist Betty Friedan died, the media greeted the news with bouquets. But there are no accolades being bestowed by the media for conservative activist Phyllis Schlafly, who died on Labor Day. Indeed, the disparate treatment is stunning.

When Friedan died, the *Associated Press* (AP) noted her passing by saying, "Feminism Pioneer Betty Friedan Dies at 85." It heralded her book, "The Feminine Mystique," saying, "Few books have so profoundly changed so many lives as did Friedan's 1963 best seller."

"Far-Right Activist, Author Phyllis Schlafly Dies at 92." That is the way the *AP* notes her death. It calls her 1964 book, "A Choice Not an Echo," "a manifesto for the far right," noting that she founded the Eagle Forum, an "ultraconservative group."

The *Washington Post's* obituary on Friedan was titled, "Voice of Feminism's 'Second Wave.'" It labeled her a "writer, thinker and activist who almost single-handedly revived feminism with her 1963 book, "The Feminine Mystique."

The death of Schlafly is treated with a provocative headline in the *Washington Post*: "Fierce Anti-Feminist Pushed GOP to Right on Social Issues." It also brands her "an experienced

anti-communist Republican Party activist.”

The passing of Friedan was observed by the *New York Times* as, “Betty Friedan, Who Ignited Cause in ‘Feminine Mystique,’ Dies at 85.” She was remembered as a “feminist crusader” who “permanently transformed the social fabric of the United States and countries around the world.”

“Phyllis Schlafly Dies at 92; Helped Steer the United States to the Right.” That is the headline afforded by the *New York Times*. She is described as “one of the most polarizing figures in American public life” who “displayed a moral ferocity reminiscent of the ax-wielding prohibitionist Carry Nation.” She also “joined a right-wing crusade against international Communism in the 1960s,” and supported “the hard-right” Senator Barry Goldwater for president.

AP would never refer to Friedan as a “far-left activist” who founded the National Organization for Women, nor would it call it an “ultraliberal group.” It would be unthinkable for the *Washington Post* to call Friedan a “fierce feminist [who] pushed Democrats to Left on social issues.” Similarly, the *New York Times* would never label Friedan “one of the most polarizing figures in American public life,” much less say she “joined a left-wing crusade promoting international Communism.”

In fact, in her youth, Friedan was a Communist sympathizer, but none of these media outlets mention her fellow-traveling days promoting Stalinism. While they cite her role in establishing the National Organization for Women in 1966, they fail to say that she warned the group against an encroaching lesbian “menace.”

Nor do the media speak about Friedan’s “Fifty Shades of Grey” sexual appetite. In 1984, when she arrived at the Democratic National Convention in San Francisco, her luggage burst open on the luggage carousel, revealing “S&M magazines depicting

women in extreme bondage.”

When Bill Clinton was all over the news for his affair with Monica Lewinsky, Friedan rushed to the predator’s defense. “Even if he did what he’s alleged to have done, what is the big deal? It’s not a matter of public concern. To have our will overthrown by a bunch of dirty old white men, trying to use sexual issues wrongly ... this is a disgrace.” The accusers were “dirty old white men,” not Clinton.

Regarding Schlafly, the media fail to tell the reader that her opposition to the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) accurately expressed the will of women. In 1975, Linda Greenhouse of the *New York Times* credited women in New York and New Jersey—not men—with decisively defeating the ERA at the ballot box. It should also be noted that the ACLU strongly opposed the ERA from the 1940s to the 1970s, making Friedan the outlier on this issue.

Phyllis Schlafly was a courageous and principled woman. That she is still enraging the adversarial press is a tribute to her legacy, and another blot on the profession of journalism.

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