

# Catholic Left Has Lost Its Moorings

*Bill Donohue*

*May 2009*

Throughout American history, there has been an uneasy relationship between those on the left side of the political spectrum who are religious, and those who are secular. It has been obvious that the two groups share the same politics, but just as obvious has been their point of departure—the origin of their values is quite different. This may now be changing: the religious left is becoming increasingly secular. The obverse is not true, i.e., the secular left is not becoming more religious.

Why the shift? The religious left has lost its moorings. Importantly, this is a phenomenon that has not gone unnoticed in the philanthropic community. Take what has been happening in Catholic circles.

The establishment has long hated the Catholic Church. We know this because the Foundation world has been awash with cash flowing to causes that specifically undermine Catholicism. The population control movement—which has long screened out so-called undesirables like blacks and Catholics—has been funded by the Rockefeller Foundation since its inception. The Ford Foundation, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation (sponsors of the so-called genius awards), the Hewlett Foundation, the Packard Foundation and the Buffett Foundation (named after the famed tycoon, Warren Buffett), have all contributed mightily to Catholics for Choice (formerly Catholics for a Free Choice). Which means they underwrite abortion and anti-Catholicism.

There is another foundation that gives to Catholics for

Choice, and that is the Open Society Institute. Sounds professional. It is. It is professionally anti-Catholic. The guy who runs it is George Soros, the billionaire left-wing activist who has his teeth in every radical cause. Lately, Soros has expanded his reach by funding dummy Catholic groups like Catholics in Alliance for the Common Good and Catholics United.

Catholics United is listed on the IRS form of Catholics in Alliance, and is the more extreme of the two. Soros funds Catholics in Alliance directly via the Open Society Institute, and thus indirectly funds Catholics United. His goal is to undermine organizations that promote traditional values, and he is pretty good at it. Both of these shell organizations work closely with Catholic Democrats, another association of disaffected Catholics.

Catholics in Alliance, Catholics United and Catholic Democrats are all pro-abortion. If you ask their spokesmen, they will deny it. They will say that even though someone like Obama has a 100 percent approval rating from NARAL, and is the darling of Planned Parenthood—he has never taken a stance against abortion—none of this should matter. They still believe he is anti-abortion. Somehow they expect us to swallow their moonshine.

When Kansas Governor Kathleen Sebelius was nominated by President Obama to be secretary of health and human services, she was roundly criticized by the Catholic League and others for her unyielding pro-abortion positions. Her local bishop, Archbishop Joseph Naumann, asked her specifically what laws she had ever supported restricting abortion rights in her 30 years of public service. She couldn't come up with any. But this didn't matter to Catholics United—they praised her for her “deep Catholic faith” and opposition to abortion.

When the Obama administration took a position against conscience rights for healthcare workers, the Catholic League

and other Catholic groups weighed in heavily against the administration. Catholics in Alliance, Catholics United and Catholic Democrats said nothing. This is telling: there is no more basic right than the right to refuse to perform an act that violates one's conscience (and in some cases results in the certain death of innocents), yet none of these Catholic groups could summon the moral courage to defend Catholic doctors and nurses.

When Connecticut lawmakers sought to take over the Catholic Church (see the last issue of *Catalyst*), the Catholic League worked overtime with the state's bishops to defeat them. We won. And what did these same Catholic groups do? Absolutely nothing. Now if they will sit on the sidelines and do nothing while fascistic legislators embark on a power grab to control the Church, how can they in any way be taken seriously as Catholic entities?

Voice of the Faithful is another fraud. In New York State, two bills are being considered dealing with the sexual abuse of minors. On one side are the bishops, the Catholic Conference and the Catholic League; all of them support a bill that treats public and private institutions equally. On the other side are the professed enemies of the Catholic Church. Voice of the Faithful is on their side: it is actively supporting a bill that works against the Church and gives the public schools a pass.

It is one thing for the ACLU to work against us. We expect that. It is something else altogether when those who purport to be on our side do.

But we remain emboldened. All across the nation bishops are stepping up to the plate in greater numbers than we have seen in years. So keep the faith! This isn't over by a long shot.

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# Moral Basis of the Financial Crisis

*William Donohue*

*March 2009*

On December 18, Pope Benedict XVI told 11 new ambassadors to the Vatican that economic development and financial policies must be based on firm ethical grounds. This was not a throw-away statement: the pope has long understood that at the root of contemporary political, economic and social problems is a cultural collapse. Western civilization, to be exact, has abandoned its Christian heritage; it has thus lost its moral bearings.

The financial crisis that has enveloped the U.S., and much of the developed world, is an expression of the rot found in Western civilization. To wit: a preoccupation with the rights and appetites of individuals. Quite frankly, our monistic fixation on satisfying every individual want—sexual as well as materialistic—has been achieved at the expense of civility and community. It is a recipe for disaster.

Greed is a sin. It is not just a problem. Though it has always been a property of mankind, there are times in the course of human history when it is culturally celebrated. We live in such a time. When well-educated men and women go to work every day with the single goal of borrowing more money to make more money—and are lavishly rewarded for doing so—there is something seriously wrong on Main Street, and not just on Wall Street.

We should not be surprised that a lack of ethics abounds in

American society. All ethical commitments are expressions of the interests and well being of others. Our society is so self-absorbed that it undercuts the ability to sustain a truly moral order. And when ethics are weighed, they are typically of the situational variety. In other words, the idea that there are absolutes, some principles which apply to all human conduct, is considered taboo. We can thank the much heralded Sixties for this mess.

It was in the 1960s when radical individualism triumphed in our culture. From drug use to sexual experimentation, from the nihilism found in music, art, the theater, movies and television, our culture has been on a binge for decades. To think that this promotion of greed wouldn't affect ethical standards on the job is as astonishing a thought as it is revealing of our hubris. We just don't get it.

Why are we surprised that legions of financiers put their own interests above the interests of their clients? Why are we surprised that we were lied to by some of the "best and brightest"? Why are we surprised when unscrupulous lenders extend irresponsible loans to equally culpable borrowers? Why are we surprised when unethical banks offer endless credit card deals to equally unethical individuals, all of whom think they can roll over their debt until they die?

Well, folks, the gig is up. We will be paying for this indulgence for decades. Those who look to Washington to fix this debacle are living in fantasy land. If people appointed to high office don't pay their own taxes, how careful can we expect them to be with our money? If others constantly consort with single-minded lobbyists, how can we expect them to look out for our interests?

When almost half of a so-called stimulus package is slated to go to federal, state and municipal workers, and much of the rest goes to wasteful pork spending, it is impossible for real economic recovery to take place. When CEOs who are on welfare

from the taxpayers still demand a bonus, and think they are entitled to paid business/vacations in Las Vegas, it is another sign that we've learned nothing.

There is so much blame to go around that it makes no sense to finger just one segment of our society. That's what happens when cultural toxins are embedded in our institutions—no one escapes their effect. Even those among us who have acted with discretion and restraint must pay the price of the moral recklessness that millions of others have exercised. It is so sick and so out of control that it will take a religious revival of the most serious kind to turn things around. But there's the rub: our mania for rejecting any kind of "Thou Shalt Not" ethic stands in the way of reform.

It's too bad the whole country isn't observing Lent. Can you imagine what the reaction would be if it was suggested that everyone practice self-denial for six weeks? There would be an uproar! And that's because we are so used to a culture which prizes self-gratification that the very idea of sacrifice is regarded as absurd, if not obscene. We want it all, and we want it now. In other words, we have become a society of brats.

The American tendency to think that there is a quick fix, and our collective superstition that education can solve every problem, also stands in the way of reform. It's time we took a good look at ourselves and our society and began to understand that constraint and discipline are not the enemies of happiness and progress. Indeed, they are its foundation. In other words, when we clean up Main Street, the clean up on Wall Street will follow.

*(A shorter version of this article was published in The Bulletin, a Philadelphia newspaper.)*

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# I'm Catholic, Staunchly Anti-Racist, and Support David Duke

William Donohue

November 2008

I'M CATHOLIC, STAUNCHLY ANTI-RACIST, AND SUPPORT DAVID DUKE

*The following is Bill Donohue's tongue-in-cheek reply to Nick Cafardi's serious article, "I'm Catholic, Staunchly Anti-Abortion, and Support Obama." Donohue's article first appeared on [insidecatholic.com](http://insidecatholic.com) and is reprinted here with permission. We wanted to run Cafardi's piece side-by-side but we were unable to do so, and that is because the National Catholic Reporter (where Cafardi's article was printed) never responded to our multiple requests asking permission to reprint it. It seems the dissident Catholic newspaper lacks both orthodoxy and a sense of humor.*

*Cafardi stunned orthodox Catholics, as did another Catholic constitutional scholar before him, Doug Kmiec, when he made public his support for Barack Obama. Cafardi served as Dean of Duquesne Law School and on the bishops' National Review Board. When he aligned himself with Obama, it created a problem at Franciscan University of Steubenville, on whose board of trustees Cafardi served. In short order, he resigned after it became obvious that he had alienated his base of support.*

*What Donohue did, in essence, was to use almost the identical language that Cafardi used to show his support for Obama and flip it around to show how David Duke could be supported.*

*Where Donohue writes of racism, Cafardi wrote of abortion.*

I believe racism is an unspeakable evil, yet I support David Duke, who is pro-racism. I do not support him because he is pro-racism, but in spite of it. Is that a proper choice for a committed Catholic?

As someone who has worked with minorities all his life, I answer with a resounding yes. Despite what some say, the list of what the Catholic Church calls “intrinsically evil acts” does not begin and end with racism. In fact, there are many intrinsically evil acts, and a committed Catholic must consider all of them in deciding how to vote.

Last November, the United States bishops released “Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship,” a 30-page document that provides several examples of intrinsically evil acts: abortion, euthanasia, embryonic stem-cell research, torture, racism, and targeting noncombatants in acts of war.

Duke’s support for racist rights has led some to the conclusion that no Catholic can vote for him. That’s a mistake. While I have never swayed in my conviction that racism is an unspeakable evil, I believe that we have lost the racism battle—permanently. A vote for Duke’s opponent does not guarantee the end of racism in America. Not even close.

Let’s suppose the 1964 Civil Rights Act is overturned. What would happen? The matter would simply be kicked back to the states—where it was before 1964. Overturning the 1964 Civil Rights Act would not abolish racism. It would just mean that racism would be legal in some states and illegal in others. The number of racist incidents would remain unchanged as long as people could travel.

Duke’s opponent has promised to appoint “judicially activist” judges who would presumably vote not to overturn the 1964 Civil Rights Act. But is that sufficient reason for a Catholic to vote for him? To answer that question, let’s look at the

rest of the Church's list of intrinsically evil acts.

Both Duke and his opponent get failing marks on embryonic stem-cell research, which Catholic teaching opposes. The last time the issue was up for a vote in the Senate, both men voted to ease existing restrictions.

There's another distinction that is often lost in the culture-war rhetoric on racism: There is a difference between being pro-choice [e.g., the right to choose racist practices] and being pro-racism. Duke supports government action that would reduce the number of racist incidents, and has consistently said that "we should do everything we can to avoid unprovoked confrontations that might even lead somebody to consider racist behavior." He favors a "comprehensive approach...where we teach the tenets of civility to our children." And he wants to ensure that therapy is an option for bigots who might otherwise choose to commit a racist act.

What's more, as recent data show, racist incidents drop when the social safety net is strengthened. If Duke's economic program will do more to reduce racism than his opponent's, then is it wrong to conclude that a Duke presidency will also reduce racism? Not at all.

Every faithful Catholic agrees racism is an unspeakable evil that must be minimized, if not eliminated. I can help to achieve that without endorsing the immoral baggage associated with the Party of Duke's opponent. Sustaining the 1964 Civil Rights Act is not the only way to end racism, and a vote for Duke is not somehow un-Catholic.

The U.S. bishops have urged a "different kind of political engagement," one that is "shaped by the moral convictions of well-formed consciences."

I have informed my conscience. I have weighed the facts. I have used my prudential judgment. And I conclude that it is a proper moral choice for this Catholic to support David Duke's

candidacy.

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# Kerry Kennedy Catholics

*William Donohue*

*November 2008*

A Pew survey recently revealed that no religion has lost more adherents, proportionately speaking, than Catholicism. That may be true, but it is also true that no other religion is beset with more ex-patriots who refuse to walk out the exit door. They prefer to hang out. Psychologically, that is.

Kerry Kennedy, daughter of Robert F. Kennedy, is an expert on such matters. Her book, *Being Catholic Now*, is chock full of tales from ex-Catholics, and those with one foot out the door, that would make the heads of practicing Catholics spin. And not just them. Few non-Catholics would recognize these people as Catholic. Oh, yes, included in her book are some genuine, practicing Catholics. But they are not as much fun to read about as the malcontents who dominate her work.

These men and women, all of whom were raised Catholic, cannot stop thinking of themselves as Catholics. Take Kennedy. She disagrees with the Catholic Church on immigration, contemporary interpretations of the just war doctrine, the role of women in the Church, homosexuality, birth control, abortion, euthanasia, stem cell research, etc. And so do most of the authors in her book. When asked why she chose to title her book *Being Catholic Now*, Kennedy said the other title she was thinking about was *We Are All Good Catholics*. Revealing.

I like steaks. That's why I don't call myself a vegetarian.

Now consider this: Suppose I were to tell vegetarians that despite my fondness for dry-aged steaks, I consider myself to be a vegetarian. In all likelihood, they might conclude that I was hallucinating. Or simply delirious. Perhaps they would call 911. Who could blame them?

Why anyone would persist in identifying himself with a group that he manifestly rejects is an interesting psychological question. More important, however, is the fact that self-identification is not all that matters: What matters is whether those who are members in good standing accept as a colleague those who reject the tenets of their group.

Don't these Kennedy Catholics understand that they are not the final arbiters of their religious identification? We make that decision, and by we I mean practicing Catholics who accept the teachings of the Magisterium. Frankly, their opinion counts about as much as a steak-eating "vegetarian's" opinion counts in the real world.

What's bugging the malcontents? The usual stuff. The book describes the angry Irish author, Frank McCourt, as someone who "no longer follows the Catholic faith." Similarly, actor Gabriel Byrne "is no longer a practicing Catholic." Ex-priest James Carroll, who regularly maligns the Catholic Church, says "My beloved Roman Catholic tradition is full of things I reject." Bill Maher is boastfully identified as someone who has "consistently been listed in the Catholic League's Annual Report on Anti-Catholicism." Some are not well known. Ingrid Mattson made the cut despite (because of?) the fact that she is president of the Islamic Society of North America. Her scarf, wrapped around her head, looks nice.

"Throughout her career," the introductory note says, "[Susan] Sarandon has promoted progressive causes, including gay, transgender, and transsexual rights." In her own words, Sarandon expresses her nostalgia for times past. "I loved the incense. I loved the whole spectacle of it." It's just the

teachings she objects to. Anne Burke, who previously said that accused priests should not be given due process rights, is also in the book. Andrew Sullivan is introduced as an "HIV-positive, gay, libertarian." Not just gay, but "HIV-positive."

Catholic feminists, we have long known, are more feminist than Catholic. This book is loaded with them. Anna Quindlen, the only type of Catholic the *New York Times* will ever hire as a columnist, protests against what she calls the Church's "gynecological theology." Sister Joan Chittister tells us that when she decided to junk her habit, she posed the question, "Are you or are you not a Benedictine in the bathtub?" Sister Laurie Brink is angry that she cannot advocate women's ordination at the seminary where she teaches, and Nancy Pelosi and Cokie Roberts both see the priesthood through the lens of power, not spirituality.

Most of these people are pro-abortion and some, like the late Father Robert Drinan, have been known to defend the legality of partial-birth abortion. Some like bestiality. Correction: They would like it if cats and dogs could consent. Here is what actor Dan Aykroyd says: "I'd embrace gay and lesbian priests, because I don't believe homosexuality is immoral. I draw the line at bestiality because it's unfair to the dog or the cat. If the dog or the cat had consciousness, then that'd be OK with me. Sexuality has nothing to do with morality." Warning: Don't leave Fido with this guy when you go away for a weekend.

Reared Catholic, these so-called progressives are the most reactionary persons in our society—they are stuck in neutral, unable to move forward. They simply can't find it within themselves to admit that it just didn't work out. That would be the manly thing to do, but manliness is not one of their notable virtues.

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# Militant Atheism Unleashed

*William Donohue*

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When I spoke to a reporter from Providence about a play that mocked the Eucharist, I unloaded. Fortunately, he listened to me explain the source of my anger. "Because this is the fourth incident this summer of someone playing fast and loose with the Eucharist," I told him. He understood.

The first incident occurred when *Washington Post* religion editor Sally Quinn decided she would show how much she cared about the late Tim Russert by doing something she hated to do—receive Communion; Quinn is not Catholic. The second incident was worse: a brazen student from the University of Central Florida walked out of Mass with the Eucharist to protest some innocuous school policy. The third was obscene: University of Minnesota Professor Paul Z. Myers desecrated a consecrated Host to protest my criticism of the Florida student. So when the reporter called to ask why I was unhappy with some woman who decided to mock the Eucharist in a play, he touched a raw nerve.

For fifteen years I have been president of the Catholic League, and never have I seen such a series of assaults on the Eucharist. What's going on? And what accounts for the total failure of the University of Minnesota to hold Myers accountable?

What's going on is that militant atheism is all the rage. Books by Richard Dawkins (a personal friend of Myers who lies about me the same way Myers does), Sam Harris, Daniel Dennett and Christopher Hitchens have all sold well, and what they are

selling is hate. Hatred of religion in general, and Christianity in particular. The bulls-eye, of course, is Roman Catholicism. I'll give them this much: At least the religion bashers are smart enough to know who's on top.

What these authors do is embolden their base. To be specific, they energize atheists to be more in-your-face about their convictions, the result of which is an agenda to attack Catholicism. And what better way to do so than by trashing the Eucharist? This may not explain what Quinn did, or for that matter what the Florida student and the playwright did, but it sure explains Paul Z. Myers' boldness.

The sick climate that these zealots have created could not have succeeded without a little help from their friends. In the case of Myers, that means the administrators at the University. They had several options available to them, and they passed on every one of them. Predictably, they hid behind academic freedom, claiming they were impotent to do anything about Myers' off-campus behavior.

This is utter nonsense, and I will prove it right now: Does anyone believe that the University of Minnesota would do absolutely nothing about a white professor who packed them in at a local comedy club on weekends doing his racist rendition of "Little Black Sambo"? Would the very same administrators plead helplessness about a professor who spoke to community groups off-campus about the mythology of the Holocaust?

Lest anyone not be convinced, need I remind you that Larry Summers was driven out of his job as president of Harvard University for remarks that radical feminists found objectionable. It cannot go unsaid that Summers' comments were made off-campus. Moreover, when Summers spoke, it was made explicitly clear that he was not speaking as president, but as an academic. But that didn't matter to the ever-tolerant ones on the faculty—he offended them because he disagreed with them, and that was enough to get him kicked out.

Academic freedom was instituted to protect contrarian professors from being hounded out of the academy for challenging the conventional wisdom on a particular academic subject. It was not instituted to protect hate speech. Myers is free to say whatever he wants about his specialty, which is zebrafish, but he has no moral right to assault the sensibilities of any religious group. So what should the administrators have done?

At the very least, the president should have convened an assembly, with members of the press invited, to unequivocally condemn what Myers did. Even if what Myers did was outside the purview of the president's authority, there was nothing stopping him from holding such a forum. And there was certainly nothing stopping the chancellor of the Morris campus from doing the same. She was actually worse—she tried to play both sides of the street.

As I said to Ray Arroyo, this may not be over yet. Over the summer, Myers' personnel file ballooned: everything that happened regarding this issue is in it. Which means that he'd better be careful about bringing his religious bigotry to bear in the classroom. If just one Catholic student complains that he is being treated unfairly because of his religion, Myers will have to answer.

Because of the hate-filled milieu that Myers and his ilk have created, all kinds of copy-cats have come forth. Some have put videos of themselves up on the Internet. They all go after me big time, and that is as it should be. They know who the enemy is, and for that I am eternally grateful.

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# Power to the People?

*William Donohue*

*July-August 2008*

In the 1960s, left-wing radicals loved to shout, “Power to the People.” They didn’t mean it then, and the aging extremists sure don’t mean it now. Laura Ingraham means it—she even wrote a splendid book by that title. Luckily for us, she’s not one of them. Indeed, she’s a proud Roman Catholic and a strong defender of democracy.

But not the Left. They hate democracy. Indeed, the thing they fear most is “Power to the People.” They don’t want, as Lincoln said, government by the people, for the people and of the people. They want government by them for us. Here are a few recent examples.

There has never been a state where the people have voted in favor of gay marriage. In 2004, the issue was placed on the ballot in 11 states, and it lost in every one of them. Not even the voters in Oregon, which are among the most liberal in the nation, were prepared to sanction marriage between two guys or two gals.

California is pretty liberal, too, and in 2000 the people voted to reject gay marriage. But on May 15, the California Supreme Court voted 4-3 to allow same-sex marriage. Chief Justice Ronald M. George, writing for the majority, said, “In view of the substance and significance of the fundamental constitutional right to form a family relationship, the California Constitution properly must be interpreted to guarantee this basic civil right to all Californians....”

This is a curious ruling. First of all, homosexuals cannot—because of nature—form families. Some disagree with this reasoning by pointing out that gays can adopt children.

True enough, but that is only because of the union between a man and a woman. In other words, homosexual families depend upon the sexual capital of heterosexuals.

More important, if forming families is such a “basic civil right,” why isn’t it in the U.S. Constitution? Are we to believe that the Framers overlooked that one? And precisely where in the California Constitution does it say anything about this issue?

The fact is that four unelected judges decided to make up a right out of whole cloth and impose their vision of the family on the public, going against the express will of the people as recorded in Proposition 22 in 2000. It so happens that the very same issue will be before the voters in California in November. But not if the ACLU and gay rights groups have their way—they are trying to stop the measure from being on the ballot!

Want to see another example of tyranny disguised as democracy? Following the California ruling, Gov. David A. Paterson of New York directed all state agencies to change their policies regarding the recognition of gay marriages performed in other states. In one full swoop, he overturned 1,300 statutes and regulations governing marriage. This was striking on several levels.

New York State does not have a law recognizing gay marriages. Yet its chief executive wants to allow married gays from California to enjoy rights in New York that the people in the Empire State never voted to recognize for their own homosexual residents. It is worth noting, too, that Governor Paterson was never elected the governor of New York: He succeeded Gov. Eliot Spitzer—another gay marriage advocate—when Spitzer had to quit over his involvement in a prostitution ring. Yet this unelected man has now decided that he knows what is best for the people, their will to the contrary.

In Florida, “Power to the People” came under attack in June when left-wing activist organizations, working in tandem with the selfish interests of the teachers unions, decided to sue the state to stop the people from having the right to decide for themselves whether they want school choice programs.

In November, the people of Florida are slated to vote on school voucher programs, but in June the enemies of religious freedom took steps to stop them: the ACLU, the ADL, Americans United for Separation of Church and State and People for the American Way filed suit trying to block the people from voting on two amendments to their state’s constitution. Their fear, of course, is that if the people have their way, too many of them—especially the poor—will elect to send their kids to a Catholic school.

Forget the issues for a moment. What is at stake is greater than the consequences of toying with the institution of marriage or allowing parents to exercise school choice. What is at stake is democracy. Should unelected judges, and unelected governors, along with unelected activist lawyers, be making decisions about matters that are the proper reserve of the people?

What is so amazingly hypocritical about all this is that these same people are the ones who accuse the Catholic Church of trying to “impose” its will on the people. As Pope John Paul II said many times, we don’t impose anything—we propose. But the Left knows a few things about imposing its will, and it will stop at nothing to achieve it.

“Power to the People”? You bet. But beware of those who sing the lyrics while violating its precepts.

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# INTERNET PLUSES AND MINUSES

*William Donohue*

*June 2008*

Libel laws in this country divide the population in two: private persons and public persons. Following *New York Times v. Sullivan* in 1964, the former category is entitled to plenty of protection while the latter is not. In other words, if someone smears the average person, he or she can sue and has a good chance of winning. If someone smears me, I have to prove that the offender knew that what he was saying was false when he said it and that he had malicious intent. In other words, good luck.

Is this fair? Probably. After all, if free speech is to be prized, then those who hate me need to be protected in exercising their free speech rights. I am, after all, a public person. Imagine what it would be like if every time you wrote something about some public person whom you can't stand you had to worry about being sued. You'd likely shut up. The loser, then, would be free speech.

Having granted all this, even though people have a legal right to bash me, no one has a moral right to misrepresent me. And this happens all the time, especially lately. Why especially lately? Because we are all over the place—TV, radio, newspapers, magazines, the Internet—we are riding high. And while our fans love it, our adversaries do not.

The Internet is a medium that can be used or abused. For researchers like me, I love it. But I also know that the quality, in terms of accuracy, ranges from A-Z. An undiscerning user can easily be misled, the results of which can be far reaching.

Recently, there has been a spew of articles, investigative

reports, blog stories and immense chatter about the Catholic League. In one such instance, a pro-abortion group got a generous grant from an elite foundation to do a hit job on me. They looked for dirt but couldn't find any. So what did I do? I wrote them a letter correcting their typos.

Those who write on obscure blog sites don't bother me because only idiots would cite them as a credible source. But when the *Washington Post* allows bloggers to attack me with abandon, that's another thing altogether. So it was with Anthony Stevens-Arroyo who wrote "Catholic League Shenanigans" on May 16.

Here is how he starts: "The Catholic League is not the 'All Catholic' League. It is not official Catholicism: still less does it speak for each and every one of the nation's 60 million Catholics."

That's right, the Vatican is the "All Catholic" League and we never claimed to represent "each and every one of the nation's 60 million [we're actually closer to 70 million, but never mind] Catholics." But I hasten to add that the Catholic League is listed in the *Official Catholic Directory* and is not, therefore, some wayward organization that goes about willy nilly slapping the name Catholic on its masthead.

The next part is priceless. "As someone who once endeavored to work with the League, I was disappointed to learn that it is run out of a single office by a single ego. So while I find newsworthy the recent exchanges between the League's president, Bill Donahue [sic] and Evangelical pastor, John Hagee, they don't amount to dogma."

I asked our staff if anyone had ever heard of this guy, and no one had. So I take it that when he says he "endeavored" to work here, what he really means is that he didn't get an interview. Perhaps that's because he can't spell my name. In any event, it is true that we don't have multiple offices, but

it is not fair to say that our office has just one ego—there are ten others. All of whom can spell my name.

Stevens-Arroyo questions why the Catholic League “waited until February of 2008 to become angered by Hagee’s career of bigotry over two decades?” He says it is because February was when Hagee endorsed McCain.

Now if he had bothered to read our website, he would have learned that I first wrote to Hagee in 1997. Therefore, the answer he supplies to his own question implodes. But this is small potatoes compared to this gem: “The Catholic League demanded the dissolving of Obama’s Catholic support committee, accusing all of the members of disloyalty to the faith and labeling the actions of the Democratic Senator as ‘Hitlerian.’”

In actual fact, I never made such an accusation. What I did was to report on the NARAL voting record of those members of Obama’s advisory group who were, or currently are, public office holders. And I never labeled “the actions” of Obama “Hitlerian.” What I said is that Obama made a “Hitlerian decision” when he voted to allow a baby who survives an abortion to die without attending medicinal care. I stand by that accusation.

Stevens-Arroyo makes a desperate, and failed, attempt to equate abortion with “major Catholic teachings like forgiveness of Third World debt” and other related issues. But there is no Catholic teaching on this subject, nor is there a listing for it (unlike abortion) in the Catholic Catechism.

So continue to use the Internet, but beware of the charlatans, demagogues and liars who populate it.

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# In Defense of Catholic Sexual Ethics

*William Donohue*

*May 2008*

In the mid-1990s, Father Andrew Greeley released a book wherein he argued that “Catholics have sex more often than do other Americans, they are more playful in their sexual relationships, and they seem to enjoy their sexual experiences more.” Was he right? Who knows? One thing is for sure: at least he challenged the conventional wisdom that Catholics are plagued with sexual hang-ups. It is also worth noting that if Catholics are so guilt-ridden about sex, it needs to be explained why they have such large families vis-à-vis the adherents of most other religions.

The time has long past when Catholics should be defensive about Catholic sexual ethics. After all, it is not those of us who put a premium on restraint who are ruining their lives with psychological and physiological problems of a mountainous sort—it is those who have chosen to do the opposite and abandon restraint altogether. Let me share with you an anecdote on this subject.

The last group debate of “Firing Line” that Bill Buckley did was on the merits of the ACLU. Held at Bard College several years ago, I was one of the participants on Bill’s side. The upstate New York college has a reputation for being cutting-edge radical, so it was not surprising that when ACLU president Nadine Strossen attacked me for being against sex education, the earrings-in-the-nose crowd smirked. But their smile didn’t last long: I quickly informed them that I was not unequivocally opposed to sex education (there are responsible curricula available), and then I hit them with a question that

literally wiped the smile off their faces. I asked them why, if restraint is so bad, do they spend so much time going to funerals. There wasn't a peep.

Sexual license—the very opposite of what the Catholic Church teaches—kills. It kills psychologically, socially, spiritually and physically. For instance, the reason why legions of heterosexuals and heterosexuals wind up with sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) is because they don't value restraint. As a result, some die young. Which explains the funerals.

Of all the killer STDs, none is worse than AIDS. But like all other STDs, it is (with some exceptions) behaviorally induced; promiscuous drug use, especially when combined with dirty needles, and reckless sex, straight or gay, accounts for most of the AIDS cases. It follows that because the disease is behaviorally induced, it is behaviorally preventable. Those who don't take drugs are not going to get AIDS. Those who don't engage in dangerous sex acts, and those who don't sleep around, are not going to get AIDS. But those who rebel against an ethos of sexual reticence are not so lucky—they are precisely the ones who suffer. It really isn't too hard to figure out.

The reason we have AIDS, and other STDs, is because we have made restraint a dirty word. So instead of telling people to slam on their brakes, we counsel research, technology and education. Never mind that all three have proven to be a monumental failure, and that only a return to Catholic sexual ethics will save us from ourselves, our society appears to have learned absolutely nothing.

In 2006, the U.S. spent an average of \$48 per diabetes patient on research. We spent \$144 for those suffering from Alzheimer's and \$154 for those suffering from Parkinson's. For AIDS patients, we spent \$3,084. And what are we told is the answer to AIDS? More research. The tragedy is that those with

Alzheimer's and Parkinson's did nothing voluntarily to cause their malady.

Technology, in the form of condoms, pills and the like, are also supposed to save us. But they never do, and no one has demonstrated this better than Edward C. Green, director of the AIDS Prevention Research Project at the Harvard Center for Population and Development Studies.

In a piece he recently co-authored in *First Things*, Green concluded that "In every African country in which HIV infections have declined, this decline has been associated with a decrease in the proportion of men and women reporting more than one sex partner over the course of a year—which is exactly what fidelity programs promote." He adds, "The other behavior that has often been associated with a decline in HIV prevalence is a decrease in premarital sex among young people." As for the utility of condoms reducing HIV/AIDS, he properly calls it a "myth."

In other words, in countries like Uganda, which have adopted Catholic sexual ethics, AIDS is declining. In the wealthy and well-educated countries in southern Africa, where condoms are promoted and restraint is shunned, AIDS is taking a terrible toll. Which raises the question: Why are the educated so dumb?

In 1987, six years after AIDS was discovered, gay journalist Randy Shilts wrote a provocative and startling honest book about the gay lifestyle. He said that the two segments of the homosexual community who refused to change their behavior were the most educated and those who frequented the bathhouses. The latter was easy to understand—it was in the bathhouses where lethal sex practices occurred. But the well educated? Shilts said it was their sense of invincibility that led them not to change.

The learned ones still don't get it. Thanks to a recent national study of STDs among young girls, we know that

approximately 20 percent of white teenage girls and 50 percent of African-American teenage girls are infected with at least one of four STDs. The situation is so sick that in Leflore County, Mississippi, health officials are offering 9-year-olds vaccines for the most common STD, the human papillomavirus.

In response to this study, Chicago talk-radio host Laura Berman spoke for many when she said, "we as a country have allowed our school system to limit sex education in the classroom." Really? Never before have more boys and girls learned at such a young age the entire panoply of the sexual experience, including practices that are as dangerous as they are disgusting. Never before have more young people been indoctrinated with the most "value-free" propaganda about the wonders of condoms, pills and other devices. And yet the rates of STDs continue to skyrocket.

The entire failure of "progressive" sex education started in Sweden in the 1950s, and it was instituted at a time when illegitimacy rates were declining; they've been cresting ever since. In short, when adolescents knew the least about sex, they engaged the least in it. Now that they've all become sexual Einsteins, they're burdened with unwanted pregnancies, abortions and diseases. Does this mean that the answer is to keep kids ignorant? No. It means that sex education programs must stress the 3 "R's"—responsibility, respect and restraint; they should also stress that the proper context is the institution of marriage.

If you really want to see stupidity at work, consider New York City. In 2006, the government gave away 17 million free condoms. The result? The rate of syphilis went through the roof (in that same year, the rates of chlamydia, gonorrhea and syphilis nationwide broke all previous records). So what did New York City do last year? It more than redoubled its efforts: it distributed 36 million free condoms. By the way, it also embarked on a new advertising campaign, the theme of which is "Get Some."

The biggest losers in this totally mindless sex-crazed crusade are young women. Think about it. What segment of society has *always* been the most irresponsible—in any society? Young men. They account for more violence and predatory behavior than other demographic group. And who are their sexual victims? Young women. So when government workers are telling guys on the street corner to “Get Some,” we shouldn’t be surprised if they do just that. Without their trusty condoms, it needs to be said.

And why, if condoms are so available, do matters not improve? Several years ago I debated a health official on the “Today Show” about this issue. He made the point that laboratory studies show that if used properly, condoms can save lives and stop unwanted pregnancies. He had no response when I told him that the real laboratory was the back seat of a Chevy. He looked positively dumbfounded when I said that the Centers for Disease Control says there are about 15 steps that must be taken for condoms to work, and that the average teenage boy doesn’t have enough discipline to do his homework on time—never mind faithfully execute the 15 steps.

So what is the answer? We didn’t get kids to stop smoking by simply preaching abstinence in the classroom. We got Hollywood to stop glorifying smoking. When I was growing up, TV talk-show hosts and their guests smoked on the air, and there was hardly a detective or a bad guy in a drama who didn’t light up as well. Now almost no one is seen smoking. If Hollywood exercised half as much restraint in dealing with sexuality—from TV commercials to the big screen—we wouldn’t be drowning our kids in this sexual swampland.

The only way to curtail the negative consequences of promiscuity is to deal with sexuality the way we’ve dealt with smoking, and that means a full-court press involving every segment of society. Right now we are sexually engineering young people from K-12, using sexual situations in advertisements, television, newspapers, magazines and movies

to lure them. Indeed, we have eroticized the culture to such an extent that it would be mind-boggling if we didn't suffer from a surfeit of sexually driven problems.

Hollywood and Madison Avenue, of course, are not likely to cooperate. The cultural and corporate mavens are infinitely more concerned about the effects of second-hand smoke and trans fats than they are illegitimacy, abortion and disease. As long as the sex is consensual, they preach, that's all that matters. But bribery, the drug market, prostitution and dueling are all consensual acts, yet we outlaw them all, never mind fail to give our blessings to them. In other words, consent is not an absolute moral good.

In short, Catholic sexual ethics is what works. What doesn't work is the rejection of it. Because the evidence is so clear that the current approach—the one that stresses research, technology and education—has done nothing but increase sexual problems of all sorts, it is incumbent on Catholics to stand up and proudly promote Catholic teachings on this subject.

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# **Catholics and Democrats: The Unraveling of a Relationship**

*David R. Carlin*

*July-August 2007*

Once upon a time—let's say from the time of Franklin Roosevelt till the time of Lyndon Johnson—the Democratic Party was the clear party of choice for American Catholics. The party had a special concern for the urban working classes and for the children and grandchildren of immigrants; its social justice

ideas were often very similar to the social justice ideas outlined in papal encyclicals such as *Rerum Novarum* and *Quadragesimo Anno*; it was emphatically patriotic and, like the Vatican, emphatically anti-Communist; it was strong on military defense; and it did almost nothing to defy or to undermine Catholic moral values. It was a party that Catholics, at least Catholics of the kind that flourished in those long-ago days, could feel very comfortable with.

I myself was one of those Catholic Democrats. Born in 1938, the second year of FDR's second term, I first voted for president in 1960, the year that represented the summit of Catholic satisfaction with the Democratic Party, since that was the year John Kennedy was elected president. I was elected as a Democrat to the Rhode Island Senate in 1980; in 1989-90 I was the Democratic Majority Leader of the Senate; and in 1992 I was the Democratic candidate (alas, a losing candidate) for the United States House of Representatives.

During my political career, despite my prominent position in the party, I was becoming increasingly uncomfortable with the new direction the national party had taken. Today I am worse than uncomfortable; I am downright distressed and disillusioned.

The Catholics of the United States have changed greatly since those far-off days of FDR and LBJ. They used to be, religiously speaking, a relatively homogeneous group, but they are now divided between what may be called "real Catholics" and "nominal Catholics." By "real Catholics" I mean those who go to church every weekend, who actually believe the doctrines of the Church, and who make a serious effort (while not always succeeding) to let their lives be guided by the moral rules and moral values endorsed by the Church.

By “nominal Catholics” I mean those who are quite opposite. They rarely or never attend Mass, and they have a “pick and choose” attitude when it comes to faith and morals. They are Catholic in the sense that they were baptized Catholic and have not yet sent in a letter of resignation. And of course there are shades of gray between these two extremes: Catholics who may be called semi-real or semi-nominal.

If Catholics have changed over the last three or four decades, so has the Democratic Party “changed utterly” (to use the words of Yeats). From being a party that Catholics could feel very comfortable with, it has become a party that Catholics—at least “real Catholics”—feel profoundly uncomfortable with. Not to put too fine a point on it, the national Democratic Party has become an anti-Christian party.

At about this point some Catholic Democrat will tell me that my assertion is preposterous. I’ll be told that Catholic politicians who play a leading role in the Democratic Party—for instance, U.S. senators and representatives—are for the most part Sunday churchgoers of good moral character. No doubt this is true, but the Democrats who sit in Congress are only the tip of the party iceberg: nearly 90% of the typical iceberg is under water. That is to say, the relatively invisible people who mainly determine the policies of the party are the political contributors and activists, not to mention those who spread pro-Democratic propaganda from the “command posts” of American culture—by which I mean the press, the entertainment industry, and our leading colleges and universities (including law schools).

Julius Caesar once said that money is the “sinews of war,” and it is most definitely the sinews of modern American politics. The old local Democratic political “machines” used to deliver the vote for Democratic governors and senators and representatives, but these machines largely vanished decades

ago. And so now the vote has to be delivered (or perhaps a better word would be "incited") by TV advertising, and it is a notorious fact that TV advertising is colossally expensive. Politicians running for higher office, then, need great amounts of money, and they therefore have to cater to those who contribute. ("He who pays the piper calls the tune.")

The demographic base of the old machines consisted of working-class and lower-middle-class voters; and so, with the waning of the machines, there has been a corresponding waning of influence in the Democratic Party of these voters. An influence vacuum was created, which was soon filled by upper-middle class professionals with enough disposable income to be able to throw cash at politicians who hold views pleasing to these contributors. Not only that, but these relatively well-to-do Democratic contributors usually hold an ideology; that is, they are secularists (or semi-secularists) and moral liberals.

Now what do I mean by a "secularist"? I mean a person with three striking traits: (1) In his personal life he has no use for religion; he is normally an atheist or agnostic (and if an agnostic, his agnosticism is barely distinguishable from atheism). (2) He considers religion to be not just useless, but positively harmful; and therefore he is anti-religious, especially anti-Christian. He doesn't mind "liberal" Christians all that much, since their Christianity is a kind of semi-secularism; but he detests and fears Christians of a more orthodox kind, whom he suspects of wishing to impose a "theocratic" regime on the United States. (3) He believes in and promotes a new morality that is intended to replace traditional Christian morality, e.g., the morality of the Ten Commandments. This is a morality of moral liberalism, whose two fundamental principles are: the Personal Liberty Principle (you are free to do whatever you like provided you don't harm non-consenting others in a tangible way), and the Tolerance

Principle (you must tolerate the conduct of anyone who is not harming others in a tangible way).

The Personal Liberty Principle and the Tolerance Principle have most notably been invoked to justify a new personal morality whose characteristic note is sexual freedom. In other words, they have been used to justify the sexual revolution: premarital sex, unmarried cohabitation, easy divorce, cheap and readily available contraception, a somewhat lax attitude toward adultery (remember the tolerance moral liberals exhibited toward Bill Clinton's relationship with Monica Lewinsky), abortion, pornography, and homosexuality, including in recent years same-sex marriage. "How do any of these things hurt innocent bystanders?" asks the moral liberal. "And if they don't hurt, then they are morally permissible." (It's a bit puzzling that moral liberalism feels that abortion is justified, since abortion obviously causes harm to another. Moral liberals get around this difficulty by the clever device of not thinking about it.)

Another way of putting all this is to say that there is a "culture war" going on in the United States between moral liberals and moral conservatives; or more exactly, between secularists and Christians. The secularists, who hold Christianity in disdain, would like to drive Christianity out of the public arena and into a corner, where those nitwits who like to practice it would still be free to do so, to the infinite amusement of the more "enlightened" people. Christians of the old-fashioned kind, both Catholic and Protestant, would like to preserve their religion, not just as a private hobby, but as an important factor in the public culture of the United States. As for the third party in this culture war, the liberal Christians: they have a nostalgic and sentimental attachment to Christianity, but in most of the actual battles between moral liberals and moral conservatives—e.g., battles about abortion and homosexuality—

they come down on the side of moral liberalism, although they do so (let it be noted to their credit) with something of a long face.

This culture war has long since spilled over into politics. And in politics the Democratic Party has allied itself with the secularists/moral liberals, while the Republican Party has decided to ally itself with the Christians/moral conservatives. I don't mean to say that the Republican Party has become the Christian party. For one thing, while the party is anti-secularist, it has many features that are not especially Christian. For another, as history teaches, it would be very dangerous for Christians to identify their religion with a political party.

But although I won't say that the Republican Party has become the Christian party, I will say that the Democratic Party has become the anti-Christian party; for to take sides with the secularists/moral liberals in the culture war, as the Democrats have done, is to take sides against Christianity.

And so, the Democratic Party has gone from being a Catholic-friendly working and lower-middle class party to being a secularist and upper-middle class party. Can a Catholic be a Democrat today? It is virtually impossible, assuming that the Catholic in question is a "real Catholic," is acquainted with policies of the party such as its support for abortion and homosexuality, and is capable of reasoning logically. And this is what is actually happening: Increasingly, "real Catholics" are leaving the Democratic Party, although "nominal Catholics" (who are really semi-secularists) remain. Since there are millions of "real Catholics" in America, their exodus from the party should cause alarm among party leaders. But apparently it does not, at least not much, they are so in thrall to their secularist/moral liberal supporters.

Nonetheless I confess (with some embarrassment and perhaps even shame) that I remain a registered Democrat, even though this doesn't mean that I can be counted on actually to vote for Democrats. But I feel that my protest against the anti-Christian course the party has taken will be more effective if I remain officially a Democrat. After all, it was my party before it became the party of the secularists. Why should I allow them to drive me out?

*David R. Carlin is the author of Can a Catholic Be a Democrat?: How the Party I Loved Became the Enemy of My Religion, published by Sophia Institute Press.*

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# Christianity on the Firing Line During Lent

*(March, 2007)*

*The following is a list of books, articles and television shows that have called into serious question the core beliefs of Christianity during the Lenten season. No other religion is subjected to such scrutiny and none has its central tenets questioned during its holy days.*

## **2007**

- “Titanic” director James Cameron and TV-director Simcha Jacobovici claimed they have evidence of a Jerusalem tomb that allegedly houses the remains of Jesus and his family. The men present their extraordinary claims in a March 4 documentary for the Discovery Channel.

## **2006**

- On April 2, NBC's "Dateline" discussed The Jesus Papers, the new book by Michael Baigent, coauthor of *Holy Blood, Holy Grail*. Baigent contends that Jesus wasn't divine, wasn't born of a virgin birth, married Mary Magdalene and sired a child.

When Baigent was recently asked where he got the proof that Jesus was alive in A.D. 45, he said he got it from reports about a book he cannot find (we're not making this up!). When asked how he knows the tomb was empty because Jesus needed some R&R, he said, "Unfortunately, in this case, there are no facts." Put differently, the guy is a crook and "Dateline" has been had.

## **2005**

- In 2005, Easter was on March 27. Pope John Paul II was dying at the time and so the ABC special "The Resurrection: Searching for Answers," didn't air until May 20. Hosted by Elizabeth Vargas, it reported: "Nearly every single detail of the Easter story remains a question of debate. Among them: Was the tomb really empty? And even more basic: Was Jesus ever buried in the first place?"

- On March 28 (Easter Monday), *Newsweek* ran a lengthy piece by Jon Meacham called "From Jesus to Christ" that was quite good. But even in this article, the reader is asked to ponder, "How much of this is remembered history, and how much heartfelt but unhistorical theology? It is impossible to say."

## **2004**

- The April 12 (Easter Monday) issue of *Time* magazine featured a major cover story called "Why Did Jesus Die?" It presented both liberal and orthodox Christian beliefs on the meaning of Jesus' resurrection.

- On April 5 (during Holy Week), ABC had a Peter Jennings special report, "Jesus and Paul, the Word and the Witness." Lasting three hours, it included the Doubting Thomas' from the

so-called Jesus Seminar. Viewers were treated to the work of Robert Funk and John Dominic Crossan, skeptics who believe that Jesus' body was eaten by wild dogs. The documentary clearly did not take the New Testament seriously.

## **2003**

- On April 20 (Easter Sunday), the Discovery Channel showed a documentary called "James: Brother of Jesus." It was based on a book which claimed that James was Jesus' brother and that he was the true leader of the early Church.

## **2002**

- On March 19 (Easter was March 31st), NPR's "Talk of the Nation" ran a segment on "Biblical archaeology" wherein the host said, "Two central holidays for Jews and Christians are right around the corner, Passover and Easter. Both are based on those religions' holiest book, the Bible. For Jews, the story is the exodus from slavery in Egypt; for Christians, the story is the crucifixion of Jesus and his return from the dead on the third day. But what if those stories were not literally true? What if the ancestors of the Jews were never slaves? What if Jesus did not rise from the dead? What would happen to Judaism and Christianity?"

## **2001**

- On April 15 (Easter Sunday), the Discovery Channel aired a three-hour documentary called "Jesus: The Complete Story." According to the *Houston Chronicle*, the film was about scientists, archaeologists, theologians and historians whose "mission is to confirm or deny the facts of Jesus' life and death as written in the Gospels, that billions of Christians around today's world accept as gospel truth." The documentary suggested that perhaps Jesus and Judas planned for Judas to hand Jesus over ahead of time.

- On April 13 (Good Friday), ABC's 20/20 had a segment called

"Modern Archaeologists, Theologians and Scholars Develop New Theory About Death of Jesus, and Who Was Responsible." Barbara Walters announced, "Tonight, with the help of leading religious experts, we bring you startling revelations about the life and death of Jesus. In the nearly 2,000 years since his crucifixion, countless acts of love and terrible acts of hate have been carried out in his name. But even as the story endures, it continues to change. Tonight, Bob Brown takes you back to Jerusalem in search of the real Easter story." A Catholic priest, Fr. Jerome Murphy-O'Connor discussed how the seven last words of Jesus should not be taken historically and said of the words in Matthew "His blood be upon us and our children": "This was the root of anti-Semitism in Christianity. This was the root of the Holocaust."

## **2000**

- The April 24 (Easter Monday) issue of *U.S. News and World Report* had a cover story called "Why Did He Die?" Jeffery L. Sheler's piece stated: "But while the Gospel story has inspired piety and devotion through the centuries, it also has spawned darker passions. From the rise of the Holy Roman Empire to the fall of the Third Reich and even today, purveyors of anti-Semitism have sought to justify their prejudices by appealing to the Gospels' depiction of Jews as jealous villains who plotted against Christianity's founder."

## **1999**

- The April 5 (Easter Monday) issue of *U.S. News & World Report* featured a 2317 word article called "Reassessing an Apostle: The Quest for the Historical St. Paul Yields Some Surprising New Theories."

The article by Jeffery L. Sheler reports that scholars suggest that as St. Paul believed the Second Coming was imminent, "he did not intend his sometimes stern judgments on doctrinal matters and on issues of gender and sexuality to become church

dogma applied, as it has been, for nearly 2,000 years.” It also reports that many say he didn’t write many of the letters in the Bible attributed to him.

## **1998**

- On April 9 (Holy Thursday), NPR’s “Talk of the Nation” with Lynn Neary did a segment called “The Historical Jesus” with John Dominic Crossan (ex-priest and former co-director of the Jesus Seminar) as a guest. It was all about the Jesus Seminar theories. While Lynn Neary simply interviewed Crossan about his beliefs on the resurrection, it did give him quite a platform.

## **1997**

- On March 28 (Good Friday) PBS’s “News Hour” with Jim Lehrer presented a piece called “Considering Jesus” by Richard Ostling of *Time* magazine. The piece was all about the Jesus Seminar and asked the question, “Should New Testament accounts of his [Jesus’] life be taken literally or figuratively?”

While Ostling did not take any positions, the entire piece was about the Jesus Seminar, and how they say much of what is in the Bible didn’t happened. Professor Marcus Borg (Oregon State University) was one of these men who says the resurrection was only symbolic. He was given a lot more time than N.T. Wright, a scholar (Dean of Lichfield Cathedral) who said the resurrection literally happened.

## **1996**

- The April 8 (Easter Monday) issue of *Time* magazine featured a big story called “The Gospel Truth?” The subtitle accurately conveyed the gist of the story: “The Iconoclastic and Provocative Jesus Seminar Argues that Not Much of the New Testament Can Be Trusted. If So, What are Christians to Believe?”

- The April 8 issue of *Newsweek* ran a lengthy article called "Rethinking the Resurrection" by Kenneth Woodward. The piece was fairly written, though much space was given to those like John Dominic Crossan, the Jesus Seminar writer who likes to try to debunk the story of the resurrection.

## **1995**

- The April 10 issue of *Time* magazine included the cover story called "The Message of Miracles." The piece contrasted the faith of American individuals who believe in miracles with the claims advanced by heterodox Christian theologians. The article paid special attention to the group of theologians known as the Jesus Seminar, who had declared in the days before Lent began that Jesus did not literally rise from the dead and who had previously denied the virgin birth.

The article also described other scholars who claim that modern science and archeology show that the miracles of the Bible did not actually happen. Special attention was paid to the renegade professor of biblical studies and ex-priest John Dominic Crossan, who claims that Jesus' followers were too afraid to bury him, so Jesus' body was left hanging on the cross or eaten by wild dogs. Also mentioned was Episcopal Bishop John Shelby Spong, who rejects much of the Bible and declared, "I'd like to think Christianity is something that would appeal to people who are also well educated and who are modern people."

## **1994**

- On March 31 (Holy Thursday) CNN aired a segment featuring a debate between Episcopal Bishop John Shelby Spong and Rev. Peter Stavinskas. Spong claimed that the Gospel story of an angel appearing, putting the soldiers to sleep and rolling back the stone of Jesus' tomb is "stuff of legends."

He also stated that, "I just don't believe that modern men and women are going to be called into faith by things like the

story of the empty tomb. If you look at the first Gospel to be written, the first time the tomb story appears, no faith is born.”

- The April 4 (Easter Monday) edition of the NPR show “Weekend Edition” hosted by Scott Simon included a segment with Episcopal Bishop John Shelby Spong where he discussed his new book, *Resurrection: Myth Or Reality?* Spong said of the resurrection, “I don’t think it’s fair to say that what the resurrection originally was was a physical resurrection, or Jesus sort of walking out of the grave and being seen in a physiological way. The question is, what happen to the story between whatever it was that occurred, and the first writing of that?”

- The April 4 (Easter Monday) issue of *Newsweek* featured a story titled “A Lesser Child of God” about the Jesus Seminar and its portrait of Jesus. The seminar claims that the real Jesus was not the Son of God, but an illiterate Jewish peasant. The Jesus Seminar contributors also believe that Jesus did not physically rise from the dead, rather he was taken down from the cross and buried in a shallow grave where he may have been eaten by dogs.

## **1993**

- Harper waited until the month of Easter to release *The Lost Gospel: The Book of Q and Christian Origins*, a book by Burton Mack that challenges orthodox Christian beliefs; Mack summoned Christians to “rethink how to live in a multicultural world.” The *Boston Globe* chose Easter Sunday to review it and the *Chicago Tribune* published its piece on the book on Easter Monday.

## **1992**

- Ex-priest and Jesus Seminar guru John Dominic Crossan published his famous book, *The Historical Jesus*, in 1991 but the major newspapers waited until the Lenten season to promote

his heterodox views about Jesus being nothing more than a nice peasant who entertained egalitarian ideas. For example, though the *New York Times* had already given Crossan's book a front-page story, just one week before Easter it ran another story on it. The *San Francisco Chronicle* treated Christians to a review of the book on Good Friday, the *Los Angeles Times* delivered one on Holy Saturday and the *Washington Post* gave its Easter-present review on Easter Sunday.

## 1991

· On March 28 (Holy Thursday), CNN's "Larry King Live" featured a debate between two Episcopal leaders, Bishop William Frey and Bishop John Shelby Spong. Spong had recently released a book called "Rescuing the Bible from Fundamentalism." Larry King introduced the show by asking, "Was Saint Paul a repressed homosexual; Mother Mary not a virgin? These are the claims of" Bishop Spong.

Throughout the show, Bishop Spong advanced his heterodox views. When a caller challenged him, the bishop stated that his ideas were new, and "I would like to say that every new idea that's come about in the Christian faith has always been resisted...we don't believe that the earth is the center of the universe, but we surely did persecute Galileo when he first suggested that."

## 1990

The "Horizons" section of the April 16 (Easter Monday) edition of *U.S. News & World Report* featured three articles by Jeffery L. Sheler titled "The Last Days of Jesus," "The Burial," and "The Resurrection." The pieces focus on the "controversy" over the crucifixion of Jesus, noting scholars who claim the historical accounts of Christ's death and resurrection do not hold up and others who maintain the Easter narrative is a mix of legend and fact.

Sheler describes critics who maintain that the accounts of the

burial of Jesus conflict with the likely behavior of Jews of that time, as well as theologians who hold that Jesus' resurrection was purely metaphorical.