

CRITICS OF SEC. PAIGE HAVE A LARGER AGENDA

The recent attacks on U.S. Secretary of Education Roderick Paige have escalated. But in the view of Catholic League president William Donohue, the attack is really aimed at expelling Christian values from the public square. He explains why today:

“The transcript of the remarks made by U.S. Secretary of Education Rod Paige, in an interview with Baptist Press writer Todd Starnes, is now available. Any fair-minded person who reads the entire transcript will conclude that no apology needs to be extended by Secretary Paige. The obverse, however, is not true: he is deserving of an apology by all those who have unfairly maligned him. After today’s irresponsible article in the *Washington Post*, columnist Richard Cohen should lead the way.

“Cohen accuses Paige of seeking to inculcate his ‘strong faith’ into the curriculum. And what faith is Paige guilty of wanting to spread? Why ‘the Christian one.’ Cohen then chastises Paige for his insensitivity to Jews, Muslims, et al. But this is all nonsense. Here’s what Paige was asked: ‘Given the choice between private and Christian—or private and public universities, what do you think—who do you think has the best deal?’ To which Paige said, ‘That’s a judgment, too, that would vary because each of them have real strong points and some of them have some vulnerabilities. But, you know, all things being equal, I would prefer to have a child in a school where there’s a strong appreciation for values, the kind of values that I think are associated with the Christian communities, and so that this child can be brought up in an environment that teaches them to have strong faith and to understand that there is a force greater than them personally.’

“For Cohen to twist this into saying Paige wants the Christian faith taught in the public schools is malicious. There is a profound difference between teaching values grounded in Christianity and teaching the Christian faith. What Cohen, and others, are doing constitutes an attempt to eradicate the Judeo-Christian heritage that is the underpinning of our society. Christians take note: their goal is larger than Paige.”