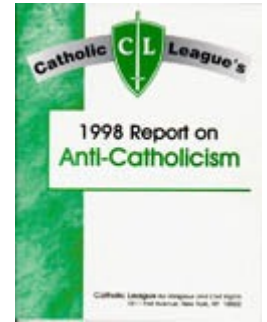


Education

January



Medford, NJ – The parents of Zachary Hood, now eight, filed an appeal after a federal court upheld a teacher's decision to bar their son from reading a Bible story in his public school class. Two years earlier, when he was six, Zachary's first grade class had been instructed by their teacher to bring one of their favorite stories to school to read to the class. Deciding that the Dr. Seuss book he had first chosen was too long, Zachary settled on a 21 line Old Testament story from *The Beginner's Bible: Timeless Children's Stories*. The teacher made Zachary read it to her privately, then told him it would not be appropriate to read to the class. A federal judge unfortunately upheld the teacher's decision—despite the fact that President Clinton's directive on religion in schools clearly states that "students may express their beliefs about religion in the form of homework, artwork, and other written and oral assignments free of discrimination based on the religious content of their submissions."

January 20

Lee County, FL – While permitting Lee County public schools to teach the Old Testament segment of their Bible history course, a U.S. District Court judge continued an injunction blocking implementation of the course's New Testament curriculum. Judge Elizabeth Kovachevich questioned whether New Testament teachings on miracles and the Resurrection of Jesus could be presented as secular history. She did not say why the Old Testament, which also describes miracles, should be

allowed.

March 13

Allentown, PA – After the league protested an anti-Catholic display in the school chapel, Muhlenberg College President Arthur Taylor made matters far worse with his bigoted response. The league had objected to an icon of Mary accompanied by a statement chastising Catholics for not recognizing her Jewish origins, and indicting Pope Pius XII for alleged “silence” during the Holocaust. Dr. Taylor accused the league of violating the college’s freedom by trying “to force your point of view on us.” This, he said, “brings the Catholic Church to a position which it held centuries ago.” He then declared himself unwilling to engage in any further dialogue on the matter.

March 25-26

University Park, PA – Gregory Nagurney, writing a column in the *Daily Collegian* of Penn State University, ridiculed his Catholic upbringing, caricaturing Church teachings and suggesting that CCD stands for “Creating Catholics Through Dictatorship.”

April 14

Newark, NJ – According to a letter-to-the-editor published in the *Home News Tribune*, The Gay Student Association at Rutgers University School of Law in Newark, “with faculty members in supportive attendance, has used (its) public facility to erect posters setting forth vulgar condemnations of the Catholic Church.”

May

Santa Fe, NM – Public school officials sought to ban students from wearing T-shirts with an image of Our Lady of Guadalupe. School officials were concerned because some gang members had

incorporated their gang insignia on the religious symbol. Archbishop Michael Sheehan met with school officials, and a distinction was drawn between legitimate use of religious symbols, which was henceforth permitted, and what Bishop Sheehan termed "singling out a religious symbol in a negative way," which was prohibited.

May 9

Madison, WI – The Freedom From Religion Foundation found itself beyond the extremes of even the American Civil Liberties Union when it denounced permission for a Mass to be held in a public high school during non-school hours. Angela Pienkos, principal of Kettle Moraine High School in Waukesha County, agreed to permit a Mass in the school's orchestra room, so that Catholic students would not have to choose between attending prom events or traveling to Church for Mass. Although the Mass was not sponsored by the school, foundation president Anne Gaylor was aghast. "Somehow the idea of Mass before prom sounds like something a nun would dream up," she said derisively. The fact that Pienkos, a Catholic, gave a reading at the Mass, was "an unconstitutional endorsement of religion," according to the foundation. This was too much even for ACLU Wisconsin spokesman Peter Koneazny, who recognized the principal's "right to express her religious beliefs. I don't think she would have to put her religious beliefs aside" when she is not acting in an official capacity, he noted.

June

Cincinnati, OH – The public school calendar for Sycamore Community Schools avoided mentioning the religious significance of their Christmas and Easter holidays, listing them instead as part of "Winter Break" and "Spring Break." In contrast, the Jewish holy days of Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur were specifically identified as such.

June 11

Madison, WI – John Benson, state superintendent of the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, reacted to the Wisconsin Supreme Court's ruling in favor of school choice by asking, "Will Timothy McVeigh start the next church in Milwaukee and see this as a profit-making venture and solicit enrollment and succeed? That's going to happen." After the league protested this vicious stereotype of parochial school parents as fanatics and religious schools as primarily motivated by profit, Mr. Benson wrote a letter of apology.

June 19-20

Washington, DC – Among the winners in an annual essay contest sponsored by the New York-based Alliance for Young Artists and Writers was an anti-Catholic essay. The author, a high school senior, received the Silver Award in the annual Scholastic and Writing Awards contest for a piece about a child-molesting Catholic priest.

July

Rochester, VT – *Rocketimes*, the student newspaper, reprinted an article by a sophomore at Rochester High School ridiculing her father's faith and the devotional practices of Irish Catholics. The essay had won an Honorable Mention in the Kingdom Awards. Following protests by the league, as well as the local Catholic pastor and others, the paper printed an apology from the editor-in-chief, a member of the school faculty.

July 6

Allentown, PA – Muhlenberg College Chaplain Rev. Donald King, responding to a letter from a league member, insisted that the college's chapel display had not singled out Catholics as denying the Virgin Mary's Jewishness. Rev. King failed to address, however, the display's clear singling out of Pope Pius XII as being largely responsible for "Christian indifference" to the Holocaust; nor did the chaplain address

the offensive comments directed toward the Catholic Church by the school's president, Arthur Taylor, when the league contacted him to register its concerns about the display.

July 21

Louisville, KY – Nina Bedford, assistant principal at Atherton High School, filed suit against the Jefferson County Board of Education, alleging that she was refused consideration for promotion to principal of the school because of her involvement in an endowment fund for Catholic education.

Mrs. Bedford noted that in February of 1997, after she accepted an appointment from Louisville Archbishop Thomas Kelly to the board of the Catholic Educational Endowment Foundation, Jefferson County Public Schools Superintendent Dr. Stephen Daeschner instructed her principal to ascertain whether this created a conflict of interest with her public school post. She also found herself being excluded from public school committees and task forces on which she would have normally been expected to serve.

When her principal retired in April of 1998, Mrs. Bedford asked that her name be submitted for consideration. This was not done, even though she had been the school's assistant principal for nine years, and had received numerous awards and citations of achievement.

An African American, Mrs. Bedford was being supported by the Kentucky Alliance Against Racism and the Rainbow Coalition—not because they alleged any racial bias, but because they agreed that Mrs. Bedford was being unfairly penalized for her activities on behalf of Catholic schools.

August

Eagle Nest, NM – The parents of a third grade girl filed a civil rights suit after their daughter's teacher allegedly told her class that Catholics cannot go to heaven. According to the

suit filed in U.S. District Court by Wayne and Debra Anderson, teacher Devonna Todd, after telling their daughter Jenny's class that "Christians goto heaven," ridiculed non-Christian religions, saying that non-Christians would notgo to heaven. She pointedly included Catholics in the non-Christian group, and declaredthat Catholics would not go to heaven. The teacher allegedly told the students not to telltheir parents about any of this, and the Andersons claim that their daughter was twiceadmonished by the teacher for telling her parents. To top it all off, the parents claimthat when they brought their complaint to the principal, he suggested that they either tryhome schooling or switch to another district.

August

Washington, DC – "NEA Now," the newsletter of the National Education Association, published a cartoon suggesting that the purpose of religious schools is to destroy public education. The cartoon showed a church sitting atop therubble of crumbled public schools. Above the door of the church was the inscription, "Public funding of religious schools," and the caption read "Upon This RockI Will Build My Church..." That reference to Christ's words to Peter made clear thatCatholics were a particular target of the cartoon. After being contacted by the league, the NEA's president responded with an apology, and a pledge not to run the offensivecartoon again.

August

Kingston, NY – The public school calendar for the Kingston Consolidated School District, while specifically identifying days off for the Jewish holy days of RoshHashana and Yom Kippur, secularized the Christmas and Easter holidays as Winter and Springbreaks.

September

New York, NY – *Time/The Princeton Review* carried an article advisingstudents to consider taking some time off from school

between high school and college. Author Ronald Lieber cited as one example a student who had “graduated from Catholic school in Chicago,” and “felt beaten down by the repressive atmosphere.”

September

Peekskill, NY – The Peekskill public school district included in its calendar days off for the Jewish holy days of Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur. Christmas and Good Friday, however, were not identified as religious holy days.

October

Andover, MA – Phillips Academy lent its prestige to the effort to appropriate Jesus as an advocate for homosexuality. The school displayed, as part of an art exhibition, a painting by a student showing Jesus “locked in a passionate kiss with another man.” The student artist made clear that he hoped the painting would help persuade Christians to rethink their ideas about homosexuality.

October

Syracuse, NY – Gay activists disrupted a talk at Syracuse University by Catholic political commentator and former presidential candidate Patrick Buchanan. A Bible was burned outside the chapel during Buchanan’s talk, while inside the chapel some protesters staged a lesbian “kiss-in,” while others screamed insults and tried to shout Mr. Buchanan down.

October

New Canaan, CT – The New Canaan Board of Education issued its calendar for the 1999-2000 public school year. While the Jewish holy day of Yom Kippur was properly identified, time off during the Christmas season was identified as “Winter vacation.”

October 29

Staten Island, NY – The Halloween issue of the *Banner*, newspaper of the College of Staten Island, included among its off-color listings of “Things That Scare Us,” “Cardinal O’Connor porn star” and “any priest with genital Herpes.”

November

Hanover, IN – Hanover College staged a production of Clive Barker’s play, “Crazyface,” and a Catholic student who reviewed the play for the student newspaper found that it “insulted me by insulting my religion.” She described a play which featured a Catholic priest “depicted as an imbecilic oaf”; Cardinals portrayed as “effeminate, homosexual men”; and a Pope who is discovered to be a woman.

November 24

New York, NY – *Envoy*, the student newspaper of Hunter College, ran on its art page a graphic and shocking illustration of Jesus crucified to the cross, with an erection and wearing a condom. Above that were two drawings of a man putting a condom on his penis. Above the graphics were the words, “Condom Use Made Easy: Let Jesus Show You How.” It continued, “Begin Copulation With A Fresh Latex Virgin Mary Immaculate Conception Condom.” The inscriptions on the Jesus graphic read “Jesus” at the top and “The King of Kings” at the bottom.

Dr. David Caputo, president of Hunter—which is part of the City University of New York—apologized, as did the paper’s editor and the student responsible for this “art.” *Envoy*’s production manager, however, defended the publication of this work. Speaking with the league, he acknowledged that the paper has a policy against printing anything that is “racist, denigrating to women or homosexuals.” There was no such policy, however, when it came to offending Catholics.

December

Ledyard, CT – Ledyard High School moved the performance of the Hallelujah Chorus, which used to be the finale of its winter concert, to the middle of the concert, in order to place “less emphasis on a classical selection with Christian influences.”

December

Hillsborough, NJ – The school board decided to change the name of the Christmas holiday to the “December season” in order to avoid “religious overtones.” Classroom gift-giving was also banned as a religious activity. The same school board had previously changed its designation of February 14 from Valentine’s Day to “Special Person Day,” because too many students were referring to it as “Saint Valentine’s Day.”

December

Shillington, PA – A school administrator issued a directive banning any religious songs, religious teachings or religious decorations from school holiday celebrations.

December

Lawrence, KA – School officials told room mothers at the local elementary school that they could not bring in any Christmas cookies or Christmas decorations for the holiday party.

December

Darien, WI – Administrators of a state school for the deaf told employees that they must remove any holiday decorations that contain the word “Christmas.”