

Education

January



Washington, DC—Richard Sternberg, a prominent researcher at the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of Natural History (and a practicing Catholic), was punished by the Smithsonian for publishing a scholarly article by a prominent biologist, Stephen Meyer. Meyer, who holds a doctorate in the philosophy of biology from Cambridge, is a leading proponent of Intelligent Design. Sternberg, who serves as managing editor of the museum's nominally independent journal, *Proceedings of the Biological Society of Washington*, was banned from his office for publishing the review/essay by Meyer.

Sternberg told WorldNetDaily.com that his supervisor informed him, "There are Christians here, but they keep their heads down." After inquiring what religious organization Sternberg belonged to, Smithsonian Zoology Department chairman Jonathan Coddington denied him access to his office and to specimen collections Sternberg needs for his research. Coddington told Sternberg in a complaint, "Yes, you are being singled out." Sternberg filed a religious discrimination complaint with the U.S. Office of Special Counsel. The Special Council office found his claim meritorious, but lacked the jurisdiction to pursue the matter.

January 24

Baton Rouge, LA—Six Louisiana State University students were arrested on charges of vandalizing thousands of crosses that had been erected on the campus parade ground by the college's Students for Life. The St. Mary and St. Joseph Memorial Foundation, which had been loaning Students for Life the crosses for 10 years, filed civil charges against the six students. Replacement costs for the crosses were estimated at \$9,000.

February 18

Toledo, OH—A Christian rock band's scheduled performance at Rossford High School's anti-drug assembly was canceled. The school board said they feared a lawsuit over having the religious band play. Members of the band had previously stated that they were not going to perform any songs that made reference to religion.

March 9

Lemon Grove, CA—The principal of Palm Middle School removed Kathy Villalobos from her position as an instructor for the Dance Exploration class. Ms. Williams informed Ms. Villalobos that the religious music she used for instructing students was "offensive" to others "now" and "potentially" in the future. Ms. Williams further stated that the music was inappropriate and possibly "went against school standards." The person who complained about the music was not a student or a parent of a student, merely someone who was upset by hearing Jesus mentioned in a song. Ms. Villalobos was originally asked to secure a waiver from the children in the class for their parents to sign. However, on March 16 she was terminated from the school.

Spring

The United States Court of Appeals for the Seventh District issued a preliminary injunction stating that Southern Illinois University at Carbondale cannot deny official recognition to a Christian club on campus. The Christian Legal Society's university privileges were revoked during the fall semester after the university decided the group's stance on homosexuality violated antidiscrimination laws.

March 31

Pittsburgh, PA—A photo display at Point Park University by Tom Altany used Twinkies as stand-ins for Christ and the apostles in a representation of "The Last Supper." Altany, chair of the 24-photo show, said some have suggested his work might be sacrilegious, a charge he denied. "After 24 years of Catholic

schooling, I'm not looking to do that," he said. "I'm looking to have fun." The display ran through Lent and the Easter holiday.

April 1

Marquette, MI—The *Southern Blow* is the April Fool's Day edition of the weekly Northern Michigan University newspaper, The North Wind. There was an article headlined, "Listen Up, it's The Big J.C.," presented as an open letter from Jesus to his followers telling them to relax, and not take things too seriously. The piece disrespected the apostles by saying that "they were just some Galilean mo-fo's I hired to write wise crap about me." The Ten Commandments were referred to as the "Ten Have-no-fun-ments." The article told people to lighten up and that "you're going to make it, I guarantee" (referring to getting into Heaven). It continued, "It's not like I have any say in it. I only got nailed to the freaking cross for the good of all stupid human kind. But whatever..."

April 1

Hershey, PA—The April Fool's Day edition of the Hershey High School newspaper featured an article titled "God vs. Satan" about a showdown between the two. God says, "I accept cash gifts and songs addressed to His Lordship." He also says, "We've got our fair share of hottie angles...we've claimed...Madonna (Mary got a kick out of 'Like a Virgin' and threw in a good word.)"

April 14

El Paso, TX—Texas's Ysleta Independent School District proposed a new dress code for the 2005-2006 school year that barred t-shirts and other clothing with religious pictures.

William Donohue wrote the Ysleta Independent School District superintendent, Hector Montenegro, relaying his objections to the policy and how it violates a 1997 ruling of the United States Court for the Southern District of Texas. The school district then amended part of its dress code to allow for the

wearing of clothing with religious messages.

April 23

Kent, WA—A Christian group ran into difficulty attempting to gain funding at a high school that okayed a homosexual club. The ACLU attempted to block the funding.

April 29

Boca Raton, FL—The Florida Atlantic University Curriculum Committee accepted a proposal for a class titled, “The Unholy Trinity.” The course was advertised as one that addresses various religious symbols that are allegedly divisive. The instructor was a playwright with no background in history.

May 3

Philadelphia, PA—The parent of a kindergartner was denied the right to read her child’s favorite book, the Bible, to her class during “Me Week.” “Me Week” is when the child picks her favorite book and has her parent read it aloud to the class. The mother sued the school district, school board, superintendent and the principal for discrimination. She cited the fact that the school allowed readings on Judaism and that the dreidel game was taught to students. The Star of David and menorah were also placed on a calendar and song book. Students at the same school were prohibited from making Christmas decorations.

May 10

Frenchtown, NJ—A second grader at the Frenchtown Elementary School in western New Jersey was prohibited from singing a religious song at a talent show; administrators felt it was inappropriate. Even the ACLU said this was a free speech issue.

May 12

Knox County, TN—The principle of the Karns Elementary School barred students from reading the Bible during recess.

May 27

Terrytown, LA—The principle of the Terrytown Elementary School attempted to ban the song, “I Can’t Give Up Now,” from a talent show because of the lyric “I don’t believe he brought me this far to leave me.” The principle believed that “he” referred to God, which is why she objected.

May 30

Napa, CA—Some students at Napa High School objected to a mural, painted by a student, that depicted a castle in the sky. The objecting students said the painting looked too religious.

May 31

Yakima, WA—A teacher of “Current World Problems” at Zillah High School harassed Catholic students by deriding their religion and intimidating them. The harassment got so bad that parents refused to allow their children to take the teacher’s class. The Catholic League contacted the superintendent of the Zillah School District and asked him to stop the harassment. According to a letter sent by the school superintendent, action was taken to remedy the situation.

June 3

Berkeley, CA—Rosemary Radford Ruether wrote in the National Catholic Reporter:

The recent election of Joseph Ratzinger as Pope Benedict XVI has been greeted with choruses of negative comments in the progressive communities where I teach and live. The other night a group of seminarians at the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, Calif., was preparing a bonfire for a cookout on the campus. As I walked by, one invited me to share the meal, calling out cheerfully, “We’re going to burn Ratzinger in effigy.”

June 9

Brooklyn, NY—Timothy Shortell, a professor at Brooklyn College, withdrew his name from consideration as chairman of

the sociology department after he came under criticism for making a bigoted statement about religion. Shortell wrote in an online publication that religious followers “are an ugly, violent lot. In the name of their faith these moral retards are running around pointing fingers.”

June 22

Colorado Springs, CO—The Air Force Academy released its report answering charges leveled by the ACLU and Anti-Defamation League (ADL) that religious discrimination was taking place at the school. The report focused on 55 complaints from 13 people over a four-year period. Complaints included a flier that was placed in the dining hall advertising “The Passion of the Christ,” and the singing of “God Bless America.” Moreover, some evangelical students complained of reverse discrimination.

June 30

Novato, CA—A student at Victor Valley Community College in southern California was given an “F” on a paper for mentioning “God.” She was told by her instructor that her paper, “In God We Trust,” would offend other students.

July 27

In 2005, the National History Day announced its 2006 program, “Taking a Stand in History: People, Ideas and Events.” The flier for the event invited college students to write an essay on the topic. It said, “The student might choose a National History Day topic involving a situation where a person or group failed to act. For example, what were the circumstances leading to Pope Pius XII’s decision not to oppose Adolph Hitler before and during World War II?” Bill Donohue wrote to Professor Cathy Gorn, the executive director of National History Day, saying that this contentious claim was being presented as a historical fact. Gorn apologized for what happened, saying, “I most sincerely regret that a leading statement found its way into the information for our 2006 program.” The remark was deleted from the NHD website.

September

Tempe, AZ—Arizona State University agreed to recognize the Christian Legal Society after they reached an out-of-court settlement. The club agreed to open membership to all students, heterosexual or homosexual, just so long as they uphold the group's religious values on sexuality.

September 20

Anna, IL—A junior high school was forced to remove a painting of Leonardo Da Vinci's "The Last Supper," along with two portraits of Jesus that had been on display for 50 years. The school decided it was not worth the money it would take to challenge Americans United for Separation of Church and State.

November 2

Eau Claire, WI—The University of Wisconsin at Eau Claire banned resident assistants (RAs) from leading Bible studies in their dormitories. According to the university, RAs who lead Bible studies may not be "approachable" to some students.

December

San Antonio, TX—The Atheist Agenda sponsored the "Smut for Smut" program, offering students at the University of Texas-San Antonio adult magazines in exchange for Bibles and other religious texts. The president of the organization claimed that what is really smut "is religious scripture ... the stuff that says a woman is worth half a man, the things that say, you know, you should beat children."

December 1

Lincoln, NE—The University of Nebraska-Lincoln opened its production of the Terrance McNally play "Corpus Christi." The play depicts Christ having sex with the 12 apostles and is replete with obscene statements directed at the Catholic Church.

December 1

Auburn, AL—Auburn University's Student Government Association

renamed the university's annual Christmas tree a "Holiday tree" in a press release announcing the tree-lighting event.

December 9

Madison, WI—Chavez Elementary School officials called off a planned third grade field trip to raise money for the Salvation Army after a parent complained. School officials called the trip unconstitutional because it was a violation of the separation of church and state.

December 20

San Bernardino, CA—California State University-San Bernardino banned a Christian organization from forming on campus because it claims the group will discriminate against non-Christians and homosexuals. The Christian Student Association's constitution included a statement about sexual morality and it also required that members and officers be Christian.