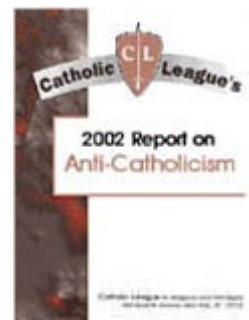


# Education

## January

**Byron, CA** – The Byron Union School District instituted a three-week intensive course on Islam, which drew criticism from many parts of the country. According to one report, students had to “learn the tenets of Islam...wear a robe, adopt a Muslim name and stage their own jihad.”

They also had to “memorize many verses in the Koran” and were taught to pray “in the name of Allah.” The chant “Praise to Allah, Lord of Creation” was also taught, and students were asked to dress as Muslims. As one outraged parent said, “We could never teach Christianity like this.”



The textbook used in the school district, *Across the Centuries*, was first published by Houghton Mifflin in 1994 and is still widely used in many of the nation’s middle schools. In the book, Christianity is unfavorably contrasted with Islam, and the treatment of Roman Catholicism is strewn with inaccuracies and tendentious remarks. For example, in a chapter on the English monarchy, students learn falsely that Elizabeth I did not make Catholicism illegal. They are also asked to write a speech on what they would say if they were brought up on charges of heresy during the Inquisition.

## January 24

**New York, NY** – The New York City Board of Education banned the written phrase “God bless you” on school property. The board ordered Beach Channel High School in Queens to remove a sign containing the slogan from a greeting board outside the school. Teachers’ union representatives questioned whether the slogan violated the U.S. Constitution. Beach Channel High School is in the Rockaways, a community devastated by the World Trade Center attack. The sign was put up by the parents association.

## **February 1**

**University Park, PA** – Pennsylvania State University architecture major Christopher Rzomp constructed an art installation that cut a confession window in the wall dividing two stalls in a men's bathroom. He filled the 7 by 7 inch hole with a metal screen, hung red velvet curtains and golden tassels and installed an overhead light. A spokesman said the art would be removed, the window fixed, and the College of Arts and Sciences—the college that assigned the art project—billed for the repairs.

## **February 1**

**Ann Arbor, MI** – The student newspaper at the University of Michigan, the *Michigan Daily*, ran a parody edition dedicated to the paper's seniors. One of the articles was about the rock band Creed, known for its Christian messages in its music. The article pretended to interview Jesus about the band. Under the headline, "Creed finds Jesus: 'Go f— thyself' says Jesus," the article had Jesus saying, "I'd rather hang out with Judas than listen to Creed."

## **February 15**

**Philadelphia, PA** – Archbishop Wood High School had a program of rewarding students with extra credit for participating in pro-life demonstrations outside a Planned Parenthood clinic. Planned Parenthood and Catholics for a Free Choice (CFFC) registered their objections. Frances Kissling, president of CFFC, said that giving the students extra credit amounted to "coercion." Both Planned Parenthood, and especially CFFC, have a long history of anti-Catholicism. Although this was a Catholic school's internal matter, these two organizations could not resist interfering.

Reporter Matthew Blanchard of the *Philadelphia Inquirer* described the teacher who gave the extra-credit, June Littel, as a "morality-class teacher," and called the student club involved in this issue an "antiabortion club." The teacher was a theology teacher and the club was the "Pro-Life"

club.

## **February 22**

**Santa Cruz, CA** – The Paul Rudnick play, “The Most Fabulous Story Ever Told,” was presented at the University of California Santa Cruz. The *Santa Cruz Sentinel* described the play as a version of the Bible “starting with the Garden of Eden to the Exodus from Egypt, all the way to the nativity, all from the perspective of homosexuality.” The University of California Santa Cruz is a public university, funded by taxpayers.

## **February 28**

**Gainesville, FL** – Santa Fe Community College hosted an art exhibit by Pat Payne titled “A Look at Violence in Religious and Sexual Imagery.” It depicted Jesus being sodomized, with pierced genitalia and being masturbated by a woman. Leslie Lambert, chairperson of the Creative Arts and Humanities Department, said of the art, “If it causes people to stop and think, and to confirm their own value system or to reevaluate their value system, then I am pleased as an educator.” After complaints from the Catholic League and the community, the material was removed from the public viewing area and placed in a professor’s office.

## **March 12**

**Hampton, VA** – A volunteer charitable drive at a local high school was forced to rename its activity because of a reference to Easter. A faculty advisor to Kecoughton High School’s “Warriors for Christ” club told the group it had to change the name of its “Easter Can Drive” to the “Spring Can Drive.” The students were told the school would not allow the original name because some students of other faiths would be offended by what the club was doing.

## **March 18**

**Ann Arbor, MI** – For Pioneer High School’s Diversity Week, student Betsy Hansen submitted a speech and asked to

participate in a panel discussion on homosexuality and religion. Sunnie Korzdorfer, the coordinator, censored the speech and refused to allow Hansen to participate in the panel. When Hansen asked if a Catholic priest could participate to give the Catholic viewpoint, that too was refused. On the day of the discussion, Korzdorfer issued a handout that said that “any staff member had the right to ask/demand that you rethink or redirect your comments.” The panel consisted of Protestant clergy and a rabbi who all had the viewpoint that homosexuality is compatible with religion. Hansen is suing the school for censoring her and for promoting a religious viewpoint.

#### **April 10**

**Denver, CO** – The University of Colorado Health Sciences Center’s Office of Diversity hosted “Seeing through the Eyes of Others: A film series honoring diversity.” Among the movie offerings was “Priest,” a film about dysfunctional gay priests. The written notice about the showing of the film read, “This is an accurate account of the dilemmas that modern-day priests face in the ultra-conservative Catholic Church. Banned in many cities, this provocative film treats with tenderness and compassion the men we often wonder about.”

#### **April 18**

**Lansing, MI** – The student newspaper of Michigan State University, *The State News*, ran a cartoon that showed two priests interacting. One priest asks, “Why are you so happy?” The other is shown walking away with a newspaper that reads, “Supreme Court Strikes Down Part of Child Pornography Act.”

#### **May 22**

**Chappaqua, NY** – A group of boys at Horace Greeley High School who play on the freshman lacrosse team were scheduled to go on a retreat in preparation for their Confirmation. When they told the coach they would have to miss a weekend’s worth of practices and/or games, the coach allegedly told them, in front of the entire team, “Why, so you can be f— by some

priest?"

Following several complaints from people in the community, a Catholic League official called the high school and asked to talk to the principal. She confirmed the story. After the school investigated what happened and found that the allegations were true, the coach was immediately dismissed. The league complimented school officials for acting in a prompt, fair and responsible manner.

## **June**

The spring edition of *Law and Courts*, a newsletter published by the American Political Science Association (APSA), contained an article about possible Supreme Court nominee Judge Emilio Garcia. It said Garcia "is single, is a devout Catholic and is said to regularly attend Mass during his lunch hour. Associates report that he maintains a 'priestly' bearing in the courtroom...." When the editor, Professor C. Neil Tate of the University of North Texas was challenged with this, he fell back on legalisms—the author only speaks for himself and neither he nor the APSA should be held accountable.

## **June**

**Los Angeles, CA** – Pierce Community College offered two lectures as part of the Encore/Oasis continuing education program. They were titled "The Sex Lives of the Popes" and "Crime and Immorality in the Catholic Church." Scheduled for August 5 and 12, they were to be given by Charlotte Poe, a woman with no academic credentials and described as a "Freethinker." The Catholic League wrote to the college pointing out that the lectures were based on two books, one by a sensationalist journalist, the other by an ex-priest. It was also pointed out that no lectures were offered attacking any other religion; in fact all the other religious lectures were positive. Although the league did not request it, the college canceled the lectures.

## **September**

**Queens, NY** – A group called Queens College Messianic Group, which is related to Chosen People Ministries (a group similar to Jews for Jesus), passed out Chick Publications' tracts, including "Love the Jewish People," which blames the Vatican for the Holocaust and asserts that "Hitler worked closely with the Jesuits." After complaints by the Catholic League and the school's Catholic chaplain, Rev. Paul Wood, the head of the organization apologized and promised not to distribute the literature again. The president of the college, Dr. James Muyskens, wrote that he shared the league's distaste for the tracts and promised to promote respect and sensitivity to all religions.

### **September**

**Tracy, CA** – A history teacher at Tracy High School, attempting to show how strange our culture looked to others, asked the Catholic students of his class to raise their hands. He asked whether they went to Mass and received the "wafer/cracker...the thing you call the Body of Christ." A week later he ridiculed the fact that Catholics do not believe in reincarnation.

### **September 21**

**New York, NY** – At the half-time show of a football game between Fordham University and Columbia University hosted at Columbia, the announcer, Andy Hao, said, "Fordham's tuition is going down like an altar boy." The crowd approved. The script for the show was approved by Columbia staff person Catherine Webster. After demands for an apology from the Catholic League and Fordham students, a spokesman for Columbia extended one on September 23. Wishing to get an apology from Lee Bollinger, the president of Columbia, the league wrote to area and Ivy League colleges and to the university's trustees pointing out Bollinger's inaction. On October 8 Bollinger personally apologized to William Donohue.

### **October 4**

**Pullman, WA** – *The Daily Evergreen* campus newspaper for Washington State University contained a front-page story that

said the *Nuestra Senora de Buena Esperanza*, the galleon that brought the first Filipinos to California, translates to “The Big Ass Spanish Boat.” It actually translates to “Our Lady of Good Hope.” The newspaper later apologized.

#### **November 16**

**San Francisco, CA** – At a seminar of the University of California San Francisco School of Dentistry, a visiting lecturer was discussing sedation methods. While talking about the rectal route of administering sedation, he stated that, although excellent, “I do not use this method because I’m not a Catholic priest.” After protest, the dean of the school and the chancellor of the university apologized as did the lecturer who agreed to write a written apology to all participants.

#### **December**

**Los Angeles, CA** – The Los Angeles Unified School District forbade all religious songs from being sung at holiday concerts. They were replaced by songs about snowballs.

#### **December 9**

**Sacramento, CA** – The principal of a local elementary school ordered teachers not to use the word “Christmas” in the classroom or in written materials.

#### **December 10**

**Yonkers, NY** – Yonkers Public Schools banned all Christmas and Hanukkah decorations. Holiday assemblies including religious songs were still permitted. Interim Superintendent Angelo Petrone directed officials to remove all holiday decorations and children’s artwork from bulletin boards.

#### **December 13**

**South Orange, NJ** – The administration of South Orange Middle School at the last minute cancelled a proposed trip of sixth graders to see Charles Dickens’ “A Christmas Carol.” It was replaced by a trip to “The Great Railroad Race.” Kirk Smith,

the principal, said the trip was cancelled because the Dickens play didn't mesh with the school's curriculum. But he acknowledged "there is a great sensitivity to putting students in awkward situations."

### **December 13**

**Reno, NV** – Officials at Reno High School allowed a student Bible club to distribute candy canes with the message "Jesus Loves You" to other students. At first they had been denied, but the threat of legal action caused them to change their minds.

### **December 20**

**New York, NY** – At Jesse I. Straus Elementary School, the song "We Wish You a Merry Christmas" was changed to "We Wish You Happy Holidays." Hanukkah songs were still being sung two weeks after the holiday ended. Hanukkah symbols were prominently displayed and the story of that holiday was discussed. The story of Christmas was not told and books about Christmas (the secular aspect) were relegated to an unseen part of classroom bookshelves. Secular stories about Christmas were minimal. The school officials justified all this with the memo from the Department of Education.