

FALLOUT FROM THE EDWARDS CONFRONTATION

Just before we went to print with our last issue of *Catalyst*, news reports exploded with accounts of the resignation of Amanda Marcotte and Melissa McEwan from the John Edwards presidential campaign. While we were able to feature this story on our front page, there was a lot of fallout from this issue that we were not able to cover. Here's more on this subject.

Double Standard

- When confronted with the news story—broken by the Catholic League—that two women on his payroll had written several graphically obscene and defamatory statements assaulting Our Blessed Mother, Catholic teachings and religious conservatives, John Edwards called their language “intolerant” and immediately forgave them. After writer Ann Coulter used a slur against homosexuals, Edwards branded her one-word “hateful” and exclaimed that “we can’t stand silently by and allow this kind of language to be used.”
- After she quit, Marcotte tried to spin her way out of trouble by saying that the words she used “had been insufficiently reverent of his [Donohue’s] religion.” Note: The New York Times said it would not print her remarks because it violated their policy on obscenity.
- The Philadelphia Daily News downplayed the hate speech by saying the women bloggers had previously written comments “attacking the virgin birth.” Yet it never printed exactly what was said.
- The Boston Globe was worse—it said the bloggers were shown the door because of “allegedly insensitive remarks.”

- Democratic consultant Jane Fleming was asked by Bill O'Reilly if she would have fired the two anti-Catholic bigots. Fleming, an Irish Catholic, said, "No, I would have stood by them." When O'Reilly asked if she would have fired someone "who said anti-Black things in the past," she said, "Yes."

Smear Jobs

- On February 14, Jeffrey Feldman, a Ph.D. author who writes for Arianna Huffington on "The Huffington Post" weblog, accused Donohue of fomenting violence against the two women. "Bill Donohue, it seems, has achieved his objective: to use the threat of violence to silence political debate in this country," he said. Donohue demanded a retraction and Feldman rewrote this to say, "The authoritarian right in America, it seems...."

- On February 15, Feldman wrote that Bill Donohue used "his media connections to incite his followers to issue death threats against the two women." Donohue demanded a retraction and "The Huffington Post" issued a correction making it clear that they did not mean to suggest "that there was any direct link between them [the threats] and either the Catholic League or Donohue."

Hate Mail

Here's a very small sample of the hate mail directed at Bill Donohue and the Catholic League over the confrontation with Edwards' bloggers. While we are accustomed to rantings of this sort, the sheer volume of letters, e-mails and phone calls in this case was noteworthy.

- Anonymous Man: "Bill Donohue can go to Hell!"
- Anonymous Man: "Yeah Bill...who in the hell are you to talk about what people think!"
- Anonymous Man: "[Dr. Donohue] has a hateful outlook

towards those who have different opinions. I hope he apologizes and does something positive to diffuse the hate engendered towards these two people.”

- Anonymous Man: “Hey Bill...if anything happens to Amanda, Melissa, or their families...I will engage a lawyer from Hell that knows all about your Catholicism and you will be sorry! Have a nice day.”

- Anonymous Man: “I am a life long Catholic and I am disgusted at this human being who calls himself a Catholic. He is not a Catholic...This Bill Donohue. To call people gooks...to call Obama white...What is wrong with you! You are a sick human being and I hope God and God is waiting and God is going to reject you and send you to the seventh level of hell that you deserve and burn! You’re gonna burn, burn, burn in Hell! You rotten evil man...burn! You and your associates are gonna burn, burn, burn! You rotten evil human being! You’re gonna burn, burn, burn in Hell”

- Anonymous Man: “[To Bill] Yeah! You’re an ugly anti-American bigot! I hate you!”

- Anonymous man: “I just wanted to remind you that Bill Donohue is a f–ing moron.”

- Anonymous man: “Bill Donohue is an ignorant pig-f–er and I hope he chokes on a turd and dies!”