

Government



October 13, 1994 – April 2, 1995

Fort Worth, TX – The Fort Worth Museum of Science and History presented an exhibit on “The History of the Bible” which included 25 Bibles dating from the 12th century to the early 19th century. It also included a video which accused the Catholic Church of trying to suppress the Bible due to the Church’s fear of losing power. The video claimed the Church resisted the translation of the Bible into the vernacular because it did not want it to get into the hands of the people. Scenes of books burning were included to illustrate the charge that the Church bought and burned several copies.

January

Milwaukee, WI – Governor Tommy G. Thompson’s proposal that state vouchers be offered to parents to send their children to religious schools drew strong reactions from opponents. According to *Education Week*, “some [opponents] claimed that it masked the Roman Catholic Governor’s real motive: to funnel public dollars into the coffers of the Catholic Church.” The president of the Freedom from Religion Foundation, said, “What this is designed to do is aid the Catholic Church.”

February

Hennepin County, MN – Catholics in Hennepin County charged that the mandatory county employee diversity program singled out their faith for criticism as a “rigid and inflexible belief system counter to the goals of cultural diversity.” The program and materials accuse the Pope and the Vatican with having supported the Holocaust and imply that the Catholic Church condones the persecution of homosexuals. In response to protests, the county agreed to drop all references to Catholicism and the pope from the diversity program and launch

an investigation into all aspects of the program.

March

Steubenville, OH – Within minutes of dropping off a letter addressed to Opus Dei in Washington, D.C. in a nearby mailbox, a man received the letter back in his own mailbox marked “Return to Sender” because of an incomplete address. However, in the short time between his depositing the letter in a U.S. Post Office box and the return of the letter, a swastika had been drawn next to the name “Opus Dei.”

September 16

Eugene, OR – The city of Eugene held its annual Celebration parade and awarded \$200 of taxpayer money to a group called the “Rickies” for their entry “Pope Goes the Weekend,” a play on the parade theme, “Pop Goes the Weekend.” The eighteen person group featured people in clerical garb, including the Pope. As the float passed by St. Mary’s Church, some of the Rickies ran onto the steps and made exaggerated bows and genuflections. As a result a local citizen filed a complaint with the Human Rights Commission. Mayor Ruth Bascom would not denounce this until they made a decision. The case was eventually accepted by the U.S. Civil Rights Commission when it was not adequately handled by the authorities in Eugene.

October 24

Phoenix, AZ – The city is apparently rejecting ads for the sides of buses if they are religious in nature. A group called Children of the Rosary, a not-for-profit group, wanted to buy ad space to feature quotes from Scripture and a pro-life message. The groups submitted another ad idea, a Scripture quote about helping the poor. It was not accepted based on the rationale that, since it was religious, some people would probably be offended.

November 7

California – An attempt to force Judge John Noonan to recuse himself from an abortion case failed when Judge Noonan defended himself on Constitutional grounds. An attorney cited Noonan's Catholicity as a detriment to his objectivity, asserting that his "fervently-held religious beliefs would compromise his ability to apply the law."

November 11

Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt maligned Catholics in a speech before the National Religious Partnership for the Environment by saying that the Church, along with the Judeo-Christian ethic, was "silent on our moral obligation to nature." He said such silence "implicitly sanctioned the prevailing view of the earth as something to be used and disposed however we saw fit, without any higher obligation." The league objected to Babbitt's speech, charging him with historical revisionism and a false presentation of Church teachings on the subject.