

# Government

February



The Sixth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that the Army violated the First Amendment by denying couples who provided day care in their homes the right to engage in religious activity as part of their program. In a decision with which the Marine Corps is also going to conform, the court said that if day care providers inform parents of their intent to perform religious activities, then it is permissible for them to do so.

April

Lane County, OR – When inmate Conan Wayne Hale asked for a priest to administer the Sacrament of Reconciliation, Father Tim Mockaitis went to the prison as he had on many occasions in the past. Unbeknownst to both men, DA Doug Harclerod got a court order to tape the confessional.

The league then conducted a public relations campaign against Harclerod. At first adamant, Harclerod eventually apologized and pledged never to tape a priest in the confessional again. To prevent such occurrences in the future, the league called for federal legislation, a Congressional inquiry, and a US Civil Rights Commission investigation.

June

San Francisco, CA – The San Francisco Arts Commission wanted to replace a monument that showed an Indian at the feet of a conqueror with a plaque that read: “With their efforts over in 1834, the missionaries left behind about 56,000 converts – and 150,000 dead. Half the original native American population had perished during this time from diseases, armed attacks and mistreatment.” At the league’s insistence, San Francisco Mayor Willie Brown worked out a compromise with Archbishop Levada,

and now the plaque reads: "With their efforts over in 1834, the missionaries left behind about 56,000 converts. As the result of colonial occupation, half the original Native American Population had perished from diseases, armed attack and mistreatment."

Washington, D.C. -Catholics in the Air Force were ordered by the Pentagon not to participate in the National Conference of Catholic Bishops' (NCCB) protest against President Clinton's veto of the partial birth-abortion ban. On May 29, Reverend Monsignor Aloysius R. Callahan, Chancellor of the Archdiocese for Military Services, wrote to Catholic priests in the military asking them to urge the faithful to participate in the postcard and letter writing campaign. As a result of the military's order, men and women in the Air Force were prohibited from exercising their First Amendment rights.

## November

Norfolk, VA -The ADL protested the U.S. Navy's attempt to be the main sponsor of "Wake-Up Call," a men's Christian rally. Because of the protest launched by the ADL, Navy Secretary John H. Dalton refused to let the Navy become involved. Full sponsorship of the event was then taken up by Military Ministries. Rabbi Daniel Lapin, president of Toward Tradition, a conservative Jewish group, stated that the ADL was guilty of "anti-Christian bigotry" and that "the ADL's obsession with removing all signs of religion from the public square is not warranted."

## December

Chicago, IL – The city of Chicago proposed that Good Friday be eliminated as a government holiday; the City Council was expected to vote on the measure. The official reason given for the change was "the increasing diversity of religious viewpoints among our work force." The league learned that a woman threatened a lawsuit if Good Friday was not eliminated

as a holiday. Citing fiscal reasons, Mayor Richard Daley said it would be cheaper to delete the holiday than to test the case in court.

Washington, D.C. – B.J. Rudell, a staffer for Congressman Bob Clement of Nashville, Tennessee, posted via e-mail and the Internet The Hotline: Daily Briefing on American Politics. In the Hotline, Rudell submitted a list of the “Top Ten Surprising Confessions made by the Pope.” Included in this “humorous” list were such comments as “Stopped sending alimony checks” and “Scratches himself during prayers.” The remark listed as #1 was: “His imaginary friend is Jewish.” After the league issued a press release on this incident, Rep. Clement called and sent a letter apologizing for Rudell’s actions. Rep. Clement also informed us that Rudell had been suspended without pay pending further review and possible further disciplinary action.