

# HATE CRIME DATA

In November, the FBI released its annual report on hate crimes. The media gave much attention to the fact that racial prejudice was the number-one motivating factor behind hate crimes in 1998. What was ignored almost entirely was the fact that prejudice over religion came in second, beating out hate crimes motivated by sexual orientation. Of the 1,720 victims of religious prejudice, more than 67 percent involved crimes against property.

The media silence on crimes motivated by hatred of religion is part of a disturbing pattern: when gays are victimized it qualifies as a national story, but when churches are vandalized it is treated as a local occurrence. This bias is not the result of a conspiracy, rather it is part and parcel of the ideological mind-set that colors the media. It just comes with the territory, so to speak.