HOLLYWOOD'S RELIGIOUS BIAS

Bill Donohue comments on the results of a new survey on the subject of Hollywood and religion:

The Barna Group recently conducted a survey of Republicans and Democrats asking them whether Hollywood is biased against Christianity. It found that 32 percent of Republicans, and 5 percent of Democrats, believe that Hollywood generally portrays Christianity in a negative way.

We know from other surveys that Republicans are much more likely to attend religious services on a regular basis than Democrats, and that the latter are home to most agnostics, atheists, and the unaffiliated. It therefore does not surprise to learn that Democrats are more inclined not to see Hollywood's portrayal of Christianity in a negative light; such depictions are more likely to be seen as accurate representations.

The anti-Christian bias is not new to Hollywood. Over a decade ago, actress Jennifer O'Neill remarked that "If you mention the name Jesus Christ in Hollywood, all hell breaks loose." Right about that time, Mel Gibson validated her observation when he tried to find a studio for "The Passion of the Christ."

In 1997, John Dart wrote for the *Los Angeles Times* that "Hollywood and organized religion have regarded each other with deep suspicion, and sometimes open hostility, since the days of the flickering silents." But it never got really bad until the 1980s, and while things have turned around somewhat, it is no credit to the big Hollywood studios that they have.

"Frustrated with Hollywood, which shied away from making films with spiritual themes or religious characters," wrote Andre Chautard for the *Los Angeles Times* in 2002, "a handful of independent producers are striking out on their own to make

Christian-themed films to entertain more than preach."

Hollywood should start treating Christians the way it treats gays. But then the moguls would have to suffer blowback from some in their own party.