

# HUCKABEE CATHOLICS

# DISAPPOINTS

When it was reported that Republican presidential hopeful Mike Huckabee would speak at the Rev. John Hagee's church in Texas on December 23, the Catholic League was inundated with requests from the media for comment. As readers of *Catalyst* know, it is no secret that Hagee has a long history of anti-Catholicism. The league had no trouble pulling together information about the bigoted comments and slanderous lies Hagee has aimed at the Church in the past.

Over ten years ago, Bill Donohue wrote to John Hagee asking him to stop with his Catholic bashing. Specifically, he complained about the falsehoods told about the Catholic Church in his video "Southern Steps: Jerusalem & Bible Prophecy." Hagee's film, which was designed to drive a wedge between Catholics and Jews, attempted to link the Church with Hitler's program of genocide. The preacher never responded to Donohue's letter.

On April 3, 2000, a Polish Catholic Holocaust survivor, Michael Preisler (Auschwitz No. 22213), wrote to Hagee saying the following: "On May 11, July 11 and December 23, 1999, I asked you to remove the falsehood in your book, *Final Dawn Over Jerusalem*, accusing Polish Catholics like me of creating the ovens at Auschwitz." Again, Hagee didn't bother to reply to Preisler, who is co-chair of the Holocaust Documentation Committee of the Polish American Congress and a member of the Catholic League.

But one needn't look back several years to reveal Hagee's contempt for Catholicism. In his latest book, *Jerusalem Countdown* (revised edition, 2007), Hagee wrote the following: "Most readers will be shocked by the clear record of history linking Adolf Hitler and the Roman Catholic Church in a

conspiracy to exterminate the Jews.”

This is far from the only incendiary claim Hagee makes in *Jerusalem Countdown*. He also rails, “Anti-Semitism in Christianity began with the statements of the early church fathers, including Eusebius, Cyril, Chrysostom, Augustine, Origen, Justin, and Jerome.... This poisonous stream of venom came from the mouths of spiritual leaders to virtually illiterate congregants, sitting benignly in their pews, listening to their pastors. They labeled the Jews as ‘the Christ killers, plague carriers, demons, children of the devil, bloodthirsty pagans who look for an innocent child during the Easter week to drink his blood, money hungry Shylocks, who are deceitful as Judas was relentless.’”

He also adds: “The Roman Catholic Church, which was supposed to carry the light of the gospel, plunged the world into the Dark Ages.... The Crusaders were a motley mob of thieves, rapists, robbers, and murderers whose sins had been forgiven by the pope in advance of the Crusade.... The brutal truth is that the Crusades were military campaigns of the Roman Catholic Church to gain control of Jerusalem from the Muslims and to punish the Jews as the alleged Christ killers on the road to and from Jerusalem.”

Readers are also treated to his charge that “The Spanish Inquisition was perhaps the most cynical plot in the black history of Catholicism, aimed at expropriating the property of wealthy Jews and converts in Spain for the benefit of the royal court and the Roman Catholic Church.”

And returning to his attempts to blame the Holocaust on Catholicism, Hagee alleges: “Adolf Hitler attended a Catholic school as a child and heard all the fiery anti-Semitic rantings from Chrysostom to Martin Luther. When Hitler became a global demonic monster, the Catholic Church and Pope Pius XII never, ever slightly criticized him. Pope Pius XII, called by historians ‘Hitler’s Pope,’ joined Hitler in the infamous

Concordat of Collaboration, which turned the youth of Germany over to Nazism, and the churches became the stage background for the bloodthirsty cry, 'Pereat Judea'... In all of his [Hitler's] years of absolute brutality, he was never denounced or even scolded by Pope Pius XII or any Catholic leader in the world. To those Christians who believe that Jewish hearts will be warmed by the sight of the cross, please be informed—to them it's an electric chair."

This is just a glimpse of what Hagee thinks about Catholics. He has raised tens of millions for Israel and his outreach to Jews has been commendable. But he simply can't do so without sucker punching the Catholic Church, thus discrediting him as a responsible voice. That is why Catholics are so disappointed with Mike Huckabee.

When Huckabee spoke at Hagee's Cornerstone church, he called the bigoted minister "one of the great Christian leaders of our nation." When Donohue was asked by a Reuters news service reporter about this, he said, "Hagee has a history of denigrating the Catholic religion." How anyone could label him "one of the great Christian leaders of our nation" is astounding. It's also revealing.

What amazes us most is that it was just eight years ago that George W. Bush made the mistake of speaking at Bob Jones University, home of another anti-Catholic. Don't these guys learn?

The Catholic League has no dog in this hunt. Like many Americans, we are not happy with the slate of candidates from both parties. On the one hand, this is discouraging, but on the other hand it gives us maximum freedom to go where the action is. That's good news for us, but not necessarily for others. Just ask John Edwards—we forced two of his anti-Catholic staffers out of their jobs last winter.