

IS PBS ANTI-MUSLIM?

Last night, Catholic League president Bill Donohue saw the documentary, "Islam vs. Islamists: Voices from the Muslim Center," at a private screening in New York City. Originally scheduled to air on PBS as part of an 11-part series dealing with post-9/11 developments, the film has run into trouble with PBS for being "alarmist."

Donohue addressed this issue today:

"The only thing alarmist about this film is PBS: How dare a public entity take money from the taxpayers for an allegedly public service and then spike a documentary that doesn't accord with its politics. In the insular world that PBS officials live in, real Muslims are Islamists—radical extremists who want to kill the infidel (read: mostly Jews and Christians). Yet this documentary demonstrates that most Muslims are not extremists. Which begs the question: Is PBS anti-Muslim for trying to censor this look at the way most Muslims live?

"By casting Islamists as unrepresentative of Muslims, this documentary is able to do more to generate positive relations between Muslims and non-Muslims in the Western world than anything PBS has previously aired. To ban it is to contribute to the invidious stereotype that most Muslims are machete-wielding thugs.

"If there is one criticism of the film that needs to be made it is the unchallenged assertion, made by several Islamists, that they desire to live in Western nations as 'parallel societies.' This is absurd: the Amish live parallel to the rest of us—these extremists want to impose *sharia* law on everyone. And on this score, there can be no compromise.

"Pope Benedict XVI was unfairly criticized last year for citing Islam as a religion that too often allows reason to

become unbuckled from faith. This film offers proof that he was right. It also shows, as the Holy Father understands, that most Muslims do not incline to violence."

Contact PBS President and CEO Paula Kerger: pkерger@pbs.org and tell her you want PBS to air this film.