

League Assists Colorado Catholic

The Catholic League has come to the assistance of Michael Cyrus, father of a daughter who attends Centauri High School in La Jara, Colorado. Mr. Cyrus contacted the League to help him in his dispute with teacher Gary Benson. It seems that Mr. Benson has taken liberties with his academic freedom, especially as it pertains to teaching about Roman Catholicism.

Mr. Benson has some rather bizarre ideas about the history and teachings of the Catholic Church and is using classroom time to disseminate his views. According to reports from Mr. Cyrus, Mr. Benson is teaching students that Catholic missionaries are in it for the money, that Catholicism and Voodoo are the same thing, that there is no such record of Jesus having ever existed, etc. And did you know that the Catholic Church invented Tarot cards, and did so as a means to control people? All of this is being taught in a class in Cultural Geography.

In a letter sent to Kurt Cary, Superintendent of the North Conejos School District, the Catholic League stated that "the rank display of bigotry in the classroom" is not covered by academic freedom. The League pledged "to see this matter through until such time as justice has been rendered."

In response, Superintendent Cary wrote that "I want to assure you that we take matters of this nature seriously and will investigate the matter to the fullest extent possible. Upon studying the facts pertaining to the investigation, we will take the appropriate steps to remedy the situation."

That's all fine and good, except nothing short of removal of Mr. Benson from the profession of teaching will satisfy the Catholic League, and that is exactly what we will demand. More recent information about this case has convinced us that the

teacher actually believes the nonsense that he is teaching. Accordingly, the League will move against Mr. Benson and the school system to have him removed on the basis of academic malpractice.

If a math teacher were to teach that $2+2=5$, he would be barred from the classroom in a moment. The same outcome should happen when “educators” teach falsehoods about Roman Catholicism. Mr. Benson is not simply offering a critical perspective of Catholic teachings (which would be defensible), he is actively engaged in the promotion of misinformation about the Catholic Church. Ergo, he has no more legitimate role to play in the teaching of Cultural Geography than a math dimwit would have in teaching arithmetic.

Because of the nature of this case, we do not expect quick results. But we will press forward , and we will make the authorities explain to us why someone who exercises the level of competency that Mr. Benson shows ought to be allowed to continue in the profession of teaching.