

McCAIN'S NEXT MOVE

Catholic League president Bill Donohue issued the following remarks today regarding Sen. John McCain's ties to Pastor John Hagee:

"Now that he has secured the Republican nomination for president, and has received the endorsement of President Bush, McCain will now embark on a series of fundraising events. When he meets with Catholics, he is going to be asked about his ties to Hagee. He should also be asked whether he approves of comments like this: 'A Godless theology of hate that no one dared try to stop for a thousand years produced a harvest of hate.'

"That quote is proudly cited by David Brog in his recent book, *Standing with Israel*. Both Brog and Hagee clearly identify the Roman Catholic Church as spawning a 'theology of hate.'

"This is nothing if not hate speech. There are so many good evangelical leaders in this country—Dr. James Dobson, Dr. Richard Land, Tony Perkins, Gary Bauer, Dr. Al Mohler, Chuck Colson—and none has ever insulted Catholicism. To be sure, they have expressed theological differences, and that is to be expected; that is all fine and good. But they have never sought to denigrate Catholicism. That's what makes this situation so outrageous. Of all the great evangelical leaders, the one McCain cites as 'the staunchest leader of our Christian evangelical movement' just happens to be a Catholic basher.

"In 2005, when I was fighting with those senators who were making it all but impossible for pro-life Catholics to get on the federal bench, I said the following: 'So as not to be misunderstood, let me repeat what I've said before: the Catholic League believes there are no anti-Catholic senators.'

That remains true.

“So no one should take from my criticism of McCain on this issue that I in any way think he is anti-Catholic. If anything, John McCain has been a good friend to Catholics. But he and his staff have thus far grossly mishandled this issue. We await their next move.”