

MEDIA SMEAR ALLIANCE

DEFENDING FREEDOM

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on how some in the mainstream media are smearing Alliance Defending Freedom:

Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF) does some of the best legal work in the United States defending religious liberty. U.S. Attorney General Jeff Sessions spoke at one of its meetings on July 11, and some in the media treated it as if he spoke before the Klan.

ABC News released a story headlined, "Jeff Sessions Addresses 'Anti-LGBT Hate Group,' but DOJ Won't Release His Remarks." It referred to ADF as "an alleged hate group," citing as its source the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC), a left-wing activist group.

NBC News was worse. It not only repeated the accusation made by SPLC, it sought a comment from the Democratic National Committee. It was not disappointed: it branded ADF a "hate group." NBC also asked a prominent gay outfit, the Human Rights Campaign, for a statement, and it repeated the smear that ADF is a "hate group." Not to be outdone, NBC attacked ADF co-founder, Dr. James Dobson, as anti-gay.

CNN won first prize. It began its news story referring to ADF as "a self-described Christian religious freedom advocacy group known for its anti-gay stance." [Question: Would not CNN object if it were called "a self-described media outlet known for its anti-conservative stance"?] It then offered a quote by someone from the National Center for Lesbian Rights that was priceless. She accused ADF of being "so extreme that it does not concede even that gay or transgender people should be permitted to exist as such."

NBC, ABC, and CNN treat SPLC as if it were some kind of gospel

source of information. Yet no serious observer would give credence to an organization that lumps ADF, and the Family Research Council (FRC), with the Westboro Baptist Church. ADF and FRC are prominent and well respected organizations that defend traditional moral values and religious liberty. Westboro Baptist Church is a bona-fide hate group: it unambiguously hates Catholics and gays.

Dr. James Dobson, founder of Focus on the Family, is a decent and courageous defender of Christianity. He is not a hateful man. NBC owes him an apology.

CNN should fire Laura Jarrett, the reporter who quoted an activist for contending that ADF believes gays have no right to exist. She should be fired not for smearing ADF, but for incompetence.

On July 10, a Pew survey was published on the public's perception of major institutions. The media fared the worst: most Democrats say the media have a negative impact "on the way things are going in the country," and only ten percent of Republicans think it has a positive effect.

It is biased stories such as the Sessions-ADF one that give rise to public mistrust of the media. This is beyond "fake news"—it is a mean-spirited and ideologically driven assault on Christian activist organizations.