

NATIONAL PRAYER BREAKFAST DRAWS HEAT

The National Prayer Breakfast is held the first Thursday of every February, and is attended by senior members of the incumbent administration and Congress. The Washington event, which attracts some 3,500 leaders from the U.S. and abroad, is organized by a Christian group, The Fellowship Foundation (a.k.a. "The Family"), that keeps a low profile. This year the secular left pressured the president, and others, not to attend.

The stated reasons for opposing the event included the organizer's alleged "shadowy" nature and the invitation extended to David Bahati, the Ugandan lawmaker who wrote a bill labeled as anti-gay. Those leading the charge included pundits and activists like Adele M. Stan, Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington, Huffington Post writers, *Mother Jones*, et al. A press conference protesting the event was held by the likes of practicing gay Episcopal Bishop Gene Robinson, Americans United leader Barry Lynn, and spokesmen for assorted homosexual groups.

The real reason for the opposition had to do with censoring the voice of religious conservatives in Washington. Bahati, for example, did not go, so that issue was a non-starter. Moreover, Hillary Clinton is a long-time member of The Fellowship Foundation, making silly the "shadowy" accusation. Indeed, if the Secretary of State isn't bothered by the group, then that just goes to show how utterly fringe the opposition is.

Surely the secular left see in President Obama one of their own. But he knows how it would look if he broke stride with precedent, especially at a time when the public is not exactly jumping for joy over his performance. Not surprisingly, he

went to the event. He also did not disappoint his supporters: he condemned the Ugandan law in question.

The Catholic League recognizes that parts of the Ugandan bill are downright intolerable: it is immoral to even consider legislation that calls for the death penalty to be invoked against gays *qua* gays. But we also must protest those who have an ulterior motive by seeking to shut down the National Prayer Breakfast altogether.

For the record, the Catholic Church in Uganda is working to delete the most offensive parts of the bill. We hope they prevail.