

Elite Don't Get Trump's Appeal

This article by Bill Donohue was originally published by Newsmax on February 10, 2016.

In 1972, Pauline Kael, film critic for the New Yorker, famously said after the presidential election, "I can't believe Nixon won. I don't know anyone who voted for him." Following the New Hampshire primary, former New Hampshire Governor John Sununu said, "By name, I know only five people supporting Donald Trump. So I can say I cannot understand this electorate."

The difference between Sununu and most conservative pundits is that he is honest about his cluelessness. For several months, night after night conservative talking heads have been bashing Trump, dismissing him as if he were a carnival freak. Oh, yes, they readily concede, he may be able to whip up the masses, but he cannot engage them for the long fight. That they look increasingly silly cannot be denied.

The fundamental problem with conservative critics of Trump is their class bias. They don't understand the working class. Sheltered in prep schools and Ivy League institutions, their world is one where ideas count, and not much else. They don't understand the visceral appeal of someone like Trump.

What is Trump's appeal? Candidness and an intolerance for business as usual (Bernie Sanders employs these qualities as well). The working class has long believed that most politicians—it matters not a whit whether they are Republicans or Democrats—neither speak *to* them or *for* them. They speak above them, or past them, but never to them.

How is it possible for a billionaire to connect to blue-collar workers but polished politicians cannot? Because Trump speaks

their language: he is bold and decisive, and he is not owned by the political class. Regarding the latter, he is not surrounded by big donors, consultants, handlers, pollsters, and lobbyists who seek to manipulate the public. This is music to the ears of blue-collar men and women.

The political class is so well orchestrated, so fine-tuned, that it lacks the kind of authenticity that appeals to the working class. The jeans, boots, and lunch-bucket guys and gals like their politics straight up—they can spot a phony a mile away. Moreover, they like those who (unlike Mitt Romney) are not apologetic about their wealth. After all, they want to be rich, too, and if they can't be, they want their kids and grandkids to be.

Who speaks for cops, firefighters, construction workers, barbers, bus drivers, bartenders, small businessmen, truckers, military personnel, and the like? Who of the candidates, save for Trump, can relate to their alienation? Moreover, many of these workers are veterans, and they have no patience for those who commit troops abroad but won't let them finish the job.

The working class also resonates with Trump's no-nonsense approach to Mexico and China. When conservative pundits tout the virtues of immigration, saying nothing about the free ride that illegal aliens are getting, they are treating workers with contempt. Similarly, when blue-collar jobs are being lost to nations who don't believe in reciprocity, conservatives who tout the virtues of free trade sound like professors who never left the comfort zone of their library carrel.

One might have thought that Republicans would have learned something from the phenomenon of Reagan Democrats. They haven't. Secure in their elite ghettos, they think they can finesse their way to victory. They usually can, but not this time.

The biggest mistake that Republicans can make—many are already talking about it—is to try to unseat Trump at the convention. That would ignite a backlash the likes of which the elites have never seen.

If Trump's conservative critics want a crash course on what makes the working-class tick, they ought to stop by a blue-collar pub and listen. Just don't order a glass of wine.

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CHARLIE HEBDO AND THE MEDIA ARE COWARDS

Bill Donohue

The publisher of Charlie Hebdo, Stephane Charbonnier, was among the 12 people killed in Paris on January 7 last year. The New York Times described him as a “staunch left-wing activist, raised in a family of communists.” He was also an unrelenting bigot.

Charb, as he was known, did not deserve to be shot, but attempts to lionize him are grossly misplaced. Make no mistake about it, he was no martyr—he was a narcissist who deliberately taunted people of faith in a vile fashion.

Now Charb's successor—eight of the staffers were killed in the massacre—Laurent "Riss" Sourisseau, is capitalizing on the killings by publishing an anniversary issue.

On the cover of the newspaper is a depiction of a blood-soaked God carrying an assault weapon; it appears under the headline, "The assassin is still out there." In case there is any doubt who he means, he explains it in his editorial: God is to blame.

Looking back on what happened, Riss condemns "fanatics made stupid by the Koran, but also bigots from every religion who wished upon us the hell they believe in, because we dared to laugh at religion."

If the "holy rollers" are the bad guys (this is the term favored in some translations to describe the "bigots"), then the good guys are atheists like him. He ends his editorial by noting, "The convictions of the laity and of atheists can move more mountains than the faith of believers."

There are many things wrong with this picture. To begin with, Riss is a coward. If he had any guts he would not put "God" on the cover—he would put Muhammad. If the killers were Christians, it's a sure bet he would grace the cover with a depiction of Jesus—not a generic "God."

Furthermore, it is nothing but cowardly not to call the guilty by their name: It was radical Islamic terrorists who killed the innocent, not anyone else. But Riss can't even complete a sentence about the killers drawing inspiration from the Koran without also indicting the "holy rollers" from other religions.

Riss is also clueless. Charlie Hebdo was not hated because it dared to "laugh at religion": it was hated because it engaged in pornographic attacks on beloved religious figures—depictions so obscene that no newspaper or TV station would show them. That's not fun—it's deliberately insulting

the faithful.

He is just as clueless to argue that the laity and atheists are to be treasured for changing history for the better. Perhaps he never heard of Hitler, Stalin, Mao, and Pol Pot. They were all mass-murdering atheists who persecuted the Catholic Church and punished those who belonged to any religion.

Moreover, Riss is just as narcissistic as his predecessor. When admonished by a cartoonist from Le Monde to "take into account the feelings of other people," he snapped, "What about my feelings as an atheist?"

He did not cite a single person, from any religion, who consistently inflames the passions of atheists by portraying them in a vulgar manner. But Catholics should take note of his pledge to publish fewer caricatures of Muhammad: look for him to balance his work at their expense.

The media are just as cowardly. In their account of what happened last year, Money.cnn.com and the Daily Beast use the term "terrorists" without identifying their Islamic roots. Similarly, Scotland's The Herald and France's The Connexion discuss "attacks" without ever mentioning that they were Islamic attacks.

Politico, the Washington Post, and NBCNews.com prefer to speak about "extremists" but never say what religion the extremists followed. New Europe brands the killers "fundamentalists" but never cites Islam.

The Independent.com tells us who was to blame: "three armed men." If you think that is cowardly, consider that both England's The Guardian and our own Newsweek settle for discussing two "brothers" who did the killings. Best of all is the New York Times: it chalks up the Islamic terrorist attacks as the work of "gunmen." Must be those NRA types.

Political correctness is not just a bad idea—it's pernicious. When Christians act badly, their religious identity is often mentioned in news reports. But if Muslims murder in the name of Allah, they are reduced to gunmen. Real journalists report the news—they don't manipulate it. Too bad there are so few real journalists left.

Schools Should Celebrate Christmas

This article by Bill Donohue was originally published by Newsmax on December 10, 2015.

Religious expression in the schools is a perennial issue, but at no time in the school calendar is it more controversial than at Christmas. This year is no exception.

Just recently, the University of Tennessee sought to ban Christmas celebrations, but thanks to a public outcry, which included input from the Catholic League, the draconian guidelines issued by the Office of Diversity and Inclusion were rescinded.

Now the Catholic League is drawing attention to the banning of religious songs at a concert on the campus of Virginia's James Madison University. A university spokesman says, "JMU is a public university, so because it was a school-sponsored event, the song choice ["Mary Did You Know"] needed to be secular." He is wrong.

As the Catholic League demonstrated, many public colleges and universities in Virginia have already held concerts this year featuring sacred music. And guess what? There have been no

lawsuits and no arrests.

This problem is also commonplace at the elementary and secondary levels. The fact is that public schools, at all levels, are neither required nor prohibited from holding Christmas celebrations, including concerts that feature religious lyrics. But due to the lack of a clear affirmative ruling on this subject, many school officials, worried about a lawsuit, play it safe and opt for a censorial approach.

The lack of clear guidance from the federal courts is what allowed a New Jersey school district to lose in a circuit court ruling in 2009: the Supreme Court refused to hear the case that banned "Silent Night" from being sung at a school concert. However, the same ambiguity allowed a Wisconsin high school in 2013 to reverse its decision banning religious songs: the concert featuring sacred music was held without a problem.

In 1992, President Bill Clinton summoned his secretary of education to work with his attorney general on this issue. He asked them to devise a set of guidelines for school superintendents across the nation on the subject of religious expression in the schools. They did a splendid job.

In 1995, those guidelines were published, and among them was a statement of neutrality. While teachers could not encourage religious activity, they "are also prohibited from discouraging activity because of its religious content, and from soliciting or encouraging anti-religious activity." Regrettably, those guidelines have too often been ignored.

The closest the Supreme Court has come to settling this matter was in 1980. In *Florey v. Sioux Falls*, it took a mostly favorable stance on the issue of religious beliefs and practices in the schools. As to be expected, it prohibited the promotion and disparagement of religion by school officials, but it also called for tolerance of religious expression.

As a direct result of this decision, the Sioux Falls School District issued its own guidelines. They included the following: "Music, art, literature and drama having religious themes or basis are permitted as part of the curriculum for school-sponsored activities and programs if presented in a prudent and objective manner and as a traditional part of the cultural and religious heritage of the particular holiday." In other words, summarily banning "Silent Night" in the schools finds no support in this Supreme Court ruling.

In this decision, the majority opinion leaned on the 1948 ruling in *McCullum v. Board of Education*. In that decision, Supreme Court Justice Robert Jackson wrote that "Music without sacred music, architecture minus the cathedral, or painting without the scriptural themes would be eccentric and incomplete, even from a secular point of view."

Such a commonsensical approach to this subject is sorely missing these days. Perhaps that's because we have too many lawyers on the bench: Justice Jackson was the last Supreme Court justice appointed who did not graduate from law school.

So what should the schools do? They should allow Christmas celebrations, including religious songs at a Christmas concert. It is not only constitutionally acceptable, it makes good common sense: America was founded by Christians, and its heritage is based on the Judeo-Christian ethos.

It must also be said that the much-vaunted commitment to diversity—which is all the rage in the schools—argues persuasively for celebrating this Christian holiday. Those who seek to neuter Christmas celebrations in the name of inclusion do violence to the principle of diversity.

Those who bear an animus against America's heritage have a right to free speech, but they have no right to prevail in their quest to censor Christmas in the schools.

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When the Pope Tried to Kill Hitler

Church of Spies: The Pope's Secret War Against Hitler

by Mark Riebling

Basic Books, New York, 2015

375 pages, \$29.99.

Ronald J. Rychlak

Pope Pius XII and the Nazis: far too many writers have wandered into this fascinating subject without bringing anything new to the table. Many of the late pope's critics have simply repeated information that appeared in already discredited books and articles, but even some supporters have done little more than parrot earlier accounts. Thus, as one who has read almost all of the books on the topic, I approached Mark Riebling's *Church of Spies* cautiously.

The first chapter seemed promising as it covered the outbreak of World War II and the new pope's first encyclical, *Summi*

Pontifictus and its striking condemnation of racism. Unlike many other writers, Riebling acknowledged Pius XII's profound and express statement that there was no room for distinction between Gentiles and Jews in the Catholic Church. That was good, but Riebling also wrote about the perception that Pius was insufficiently outspoken and the problems that created between Catholics and Jews. It looked like the book might go either way, but then Riebling came out with a line that smacks the reader upside the head: "The last day during the war when Pius publicly said the word 'Jew' is also, in fact, the first day history can document his choice to help kill Adolf Hitler." Fasten your seatbelt; you're in for one heck of a ride.

It has long been known that the pope tipped off the Allies about at least one planned coup attempt and certain German troop movements, and other writers have noted that Pius was involved on the periphery with efforts to topple Hitler. Riebling, however, uses documents from German, Italian, Vatican, and other archives to prove that rather than being on the periphery, Pius was deeply involved in the various plots to assassinate Hitler.

The assassination plot began inside the German high command in August 1939. Hitler had already ordered the extermination of those who were mentally or physically defective, he had begun his war against the Jews, and he was just days away from invading Poland. He called together his top generals and admirals to brace them for the invasion, which would be carried out with "merciless severity." The Führer, who saw Catholicism as incompatible with Nazism and particularly hated Pope Pius XII, capped off his talk by saying that he would "snuff out the least flicker of Polish strength by liquidating thousands of Catholic priests."

The head of German military intelligence, Admiral Wilhelm Canaris, had once admired Hitler. A year earlier, however, he became disillusioned when

Hitler began turning ferociously on Germany's own citizens, including some German officers. Although he was a Protestant, extermination of Catholic priests was the final straw. Canaris already had a small circle of like-minded friends. Now they made the fateful decision to depose Hitler, even if they had to kill him.

The logistics of any coup would be complicated enough, but the Canaris group was also concerned about how the Allies would respond. They did not want to see a repeat of the Treaty of Versailles, the harshness of which had assisted Hitler's ascendance to power. They needed to communicate and coordinate with the Allies.

The question was how to make contact with Allied leadership. Canaris determined that the only person with sufficient prestige and freedom to act was the pope. Canaris had known the future pope as a Vatican diplomat in Germany back in the 1920s. He knew about Pius XII's many talents and his utter disdain for Hitler. He just needed someone to help him make contact.

Munich attorney Josef Müller was a war hero and devout Catholic who had represented the Church against the Reich in legal matters. Riebling described him as "part Oskar Schindler, part Vito Corleone." In 1934, Müller survived a beating and interrogation at the hands of SS Commander Heinrich Himmler, who asked the lawyer about a controversy that had taken place in Bavaria. Without apology, Müller admitted that he had advised the Bavarian prime minister to have Himmler killed. Impressed by his courage, Himmler invited Müller to join the SS. Müller replied: "I am philosophically opposed to you. I am a practicing Catholic, and my brother is a Catholic priest. Where could I find the possibility of compromise there?" Himmler appreciated this "manly defense," and let the lawyer go. This made Müller somewhat of a legend even among Hitler loyalists.

Riebling introduces Müller in the prologue to *Church of Spies*. He is in leg irons at Flossenbürg concentration camp in 1945, hands tied behind his back, and forced to “eat his food like a dog from a plate on the floor.” On the next page, he is being led to the gallows. The chapters that follow explain how and why he got there.

In addition to being an attorney, Müller was a pilot, and he often traveled to Rome on business. So, in 1939, when the conspirators tapped him as their messenger, his trips did not draw undue attention. For his first mission, German intelligence gave him a dossier of Nazi atrocities in Poland. He flew to Rome and asked the pontiff’s top assistants whether Pius would be willing to contact the British government and ask for support.

Not only did Pius XII agree to assist the conspirators, saying “the German opposition must be heard,” he also mobilized Catholic religious orders, especially the Jesuits and Dominicans. These orders did not report to local bishops, who might be susceptible to Nazi pressure, but to leaders of their orders, who reported directly to the pope. The head of the Jesuits in Northern Germany, Augustin Rösch, had been battling the Gestapo since well before World War II, and he became the driving force behind the pope’s team in Germany. Rösch linked his group with the military intelligence unit headed by Canaris and worked on planning the coup.

Müller also built a spy network among “army, college, and law-school friends with access to Nazi officials—a community of the well-informed, who worked in newspapers, banks, and even ... the SS itself.” His office soon became a clearinghouse of information for the Vatican.

The issue of a political assassination, even of Hitler, raised many questions. Riebling, however, explained that: “Over the centuries, Catholic theologians had developed a nuanced doctrine of tyrannicide, covering virtually every conceivable

context.” After peaceful means had been exhausted, the assassination of a tyrant could be justified if it would improve conditions in a subjugated nation without sparking a civil war. Unfortunately, Lutheran and Calvinist generals were tied to a Protestant theory of state authority, and they had a much harder time justifying such an action.

Although initially suspicious, British Foreign Secretary Lord Halifax and Francis D’Arcy Osborne, British ambassador to the Holy See, were won over by the pope’s personal intervention. They would negotiate with “The Decent Germany” if Hitler could be removed. Unfortunately, there were many doubts in high British circles, and the Allies failed to take advantage of much reliable information.

The plotters organized several attempts on Hitler’s life, but he had “the luck of the devil,” surviving repeated assassination attempts. He canceled speeches without knowing that snipers were in position and ready to take him out. He missed parades where bombs were set to explode. Plotters attempted to kill him by blowing up his plane, but the bomb didn’t go off. By shifting a meeting from a concrete bunker to a wooden barracks, Hitler evaded another attempt, memorialized in the movie *Valkyrie*.

Resistance to the Führer at home began to melt away after his military victories in Belgium, the Netherlands, Norway, and France. Outside of Germany, others began to lose patience with the conspirators. Upon becoming prime minister, Winston Churchill put no faith in “decent Germans” taking out Hitler.

German military intelligence eventually learned about Müller’s work with the pope and brought him in for questioning. The lawyer was shocked when they asked him to work with them against Hitler. They gave him a cover story. He was to be a German operative using his contacts with the Vatican to spy on Italians. He would do this by posing as a conspirator seeking out Italians who might rally against Mussolini. “Müller would

advance the war effort by pretending to talk peace,” explained Riebling. “But he would only be pretending to be pretending.” He actually was the anti-Axis plotter that he was pretending to be. Müller, of course, informed the Vatican of what was going on. It dramatically escalated the risk and potential reward of the pope’s work with Müller.

At this point, Vatican officials introduced the German lawyer to the concept of *Disciplina Arcani*—the “way of secrecy.” Those involved in the Vatican spy ring developed code names. Müller was known as “Herr X,” and Pius XII was called “the Chief.” Some high security meetings were held in the most secure place possible, excavation sites under Vatican City.

Plotters from Germany’s intelligence services asked “the Chief” to keep quiet: “Singling out the Nazis,” one later explained, “would have made the German Catholics even more suspected than they were and would have restricted their freedom of action in their work of resistance.” Explaining this to a French diplomat, Pius once said: “You know which side my sympathies lie. But I cannot say so.”

In 1943, as the SS narrowed its focus, a member of German intelligence finally revealed the names of the conspirators. Müller’s dramatic flights across the Alps came to an end, and the Gestapo found his secret files, including the conditions that the plotters had established to kill Hitler, which were printed on Vatican letterhead. This sent Müller into Dachau for the remainder of the war.

When Mussolini was ousted in July 1943, Hitler ordered a division of paratroopers to the borders of St. Peter’s Square. “On one side stood German soldiers in black boots and steel helmets, with carbines on their shoulders and Lugers on their hips. On the other side were the Pope’s Swiss Guards, in ruffled tunics and plumed hats, holding medieval pikes in white gloves.” Fortunately, Hitler’s advisors talked him out of an immediate invasion, though Hitler vowed to finish the

job after the war.

Hitler ultimately avoided assassination and died by his own hand, but not before the SS tracked down the resistance. The SS interrogated conspirators, tortured them, and executed or sent them to concentration camps. Some were subjected to show trials before being publicly executed.

Church of Spies reads so well that one is inclined not to reveal what happened to Müller and Rösch (spoiler alert: it's not as bad as the prologue might suggest). In fact, that aspect of *Church of Spies*, involving multiple death sentences, paperwork problems, and well-timed favors, could be a book unto itself.

Church of Spies reads like an adventure novel, but it is documented history. It explains the virtually universal perception of Pius XII during and after the war as a staunch opponent of the Nazis and defender of the Jews. It also reveals Moscow's perception that Pius was anti-Soviet, which certainly could account for the post-war assault on his reputation. It's a great read and an enormously important book.

Movie on Child Rape in Hollywood Overlooked

This article by Bill Donohue was originally published by Newsmax on November 6, 2015.

In the run-up to the November 6 debut of "Spotlight," movie reviewers hailed it as an eye-opening account of the sexual abuse scandal that occurred in the Boston Archdiocese.

But Hollywood has no interest in turning its cameras on itself, which is why the public's eyes have been shut tight from seeing a movie that documents child rape in Tinseltown.

In 2011, when word surfaced that actor Corey Feldman was going public with accounts of child sexual molestation in Hollywood, it caught the attention of Boston producer Matthew Valentinas.

He had been contemplating doing a film on sexual abuse anyway, so when Feldman's revelations hit the news, he decided the time was ripe to strike.

Feldman was interviewed by ABC's "Primetime Live" in August 2011. He astonished viewers when he exclaimed, "I can tell you that the No. 1 problem in Hollywood was, and is, and always will be, pedophilia."

He said that when he was 14, he was "surrounded" by child molesters who acted like "vultures." Pointedly, he blamed "a Hollywood mogul" for the premature death of his friend, Corey Haim; he died the year before.

Stories about Hollywood sexual predators have been around for decades, but it took Feldman's admission to make people take a second look. As it turned out, however, the interest that Valentinas had in pursuing this story was atypical.

For example, quite unlike the way the media pounced when revelations about priestly sexual abuse in Boston were made public in 2002, newspapers didn't go near this story.

In fact, following Feldman's interview, only one newspaper, the International Business Times, carried a story about the nest of child abusers in Hollywood.

Valentinas was not deterred. He wanted to give high profile to the pedophilia rings that dot Hollywood, and to that end he enlisted Amy Berg to do the film. She was a veteran: She was nominated for an Oscar for her documentary about molesting

priests, "Deliver Us From Evil."

Berg's film, "An Open Secret," is a devastating look at the way Hollywood predators manipulated, intimidated, and raped aspiring child actors.

The rapists were not strangers – they were their mentors. To be specific, they were managers, publicists, and agents, men who were held in high esteem by everyone, including the child actors and models whom they molested.

Not only did they use their positions of power to sexually abuse innocent kids, they did so with impunity.

Valentinas assumed it would not be hard to find distributors interested in his film. He was wrong. "We approached most studios and everyone passed," he said. "We thought, we have a great director, everything was cleared and legally vetted – why would it be a risk for a company to take it?"

It is not hard to figure out why Valentinas hit a brick wall. He was treading in dangerous waters, offending the Hollywood establishment. For similar reasons, no one in Hollywood was interested in picking up Mel Gibson's classic, "The Passion of the Christ."

Whenever a film maker cuts sharply against the Hollywood grain, he can expect to be stonewalled. This is the way the "tolerant class" operates: it works overtime to ensure culturally correct movies.

The resistance to "An Open Secret" was evident from the beginning. On Sept. 8, 2014, New York magazine said, "The Amy Berg documentary . . . has been slow to find distribution."

It also noted that "discussions with Mark Cuban's Magnolia Pictures went nowhere." Two months later, Screen International observed that "few distributors will dare to release a film with such incendiary claims."

Fast forward to the spring of 2015. Deadline did a piece titled, "'An Open Secret's' Difficult Road to Distribution," noting that "Executive producer Gabe Hoffman wouldn't name names, but said, 'We went to everybody and anybody at all the biggest companies and got turned down everywhere.'"

The Guardian, an influential U.K. publication, alerted readers to what was going on: "But the content of the film . . . had led to difficulties getting people to see it. It's been rejected by major film festivals, including London, [and has] struggled to find distribution."

On Sept. 17, Diane Dimond, a columnist for the Rockland County Times, really let loose: "I've expressed hope that throngs go to see the documentary but, not surprisingly, the producers have had a difficult time getting movie theaters to agree to show it. Are movie-house operators afraid of offending Hollywood executives?"

Dimond added that "The union representing actors [SAG-AFTRA] has threatened to sue Amy Berg, the director of the film." She concluded, "Note that you haven't heard a peep from studio executives, big talent agencies or entertainment unions about steps they've taken to protect young actors against sexual predators."

"An Open Secret" has already played at theaters in Los Angeles, New York, Denver, and Seattle, and it has been accepted for the documentary competition at the Stockholm International Film Festival starting Nov. 11.

But don't look for it to come to your neighborhood cinema anytime soon.

The Hollywood moguls, who claim a fierce allegiance to free speech, don't want you to know about the dirty little secret of child rape in Tinseltown.

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Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights, the nation's largest Catholic civil rights organization. The publisher of the Catholic League journal, Catalyst, Bill is a former Bradley Resident Scholar at the Heritage Foundation and served for two decades on the board of directors of the National Association of Scholars. The author of six books, two on the ACLU, and the winner of several teaching awards and many awards from the Catholic community, Donohue has appeared on thousands of television and radio shows speaking on civil liberties and social issues. Read more reports from Bill Donohue – [Click Here Now](#).

Playboy Wins the World Over With Corruption

This article by Bill Donohue was originally published by Newsmax on October 13, 2015.

If they want to keep their jobs, the girls at Playboy have to put their clothes back on (or at least their pants).

As reported in the Oct. 13 edition of The New York Times, that is the considered judgment of the magazine's executives; even founder Hugh Hefner is on board. Have they gone prudish?

No, it's strictly a business decision: porn is so popular that going the other way, they hope, may have a strange allure.

CEO Scott Flanders explains that Playboy is a victim of its own success. "That battle has been fought and won. You're one click away from every sex act imaginable for free. And it's just so passé at this juncture."

Flanders did not say who Playboy fought. Nor did he say what the victors won. The former is easy to figure out; not so the latter.

Marilyn Monroe graced the first issue of Playboy in 1953. Important as that was, it was the first installment of "The Playboy Philosophy" that was really ground-breaking. "Our society's repressive and suppressive anti-sexualism is derived from twisted theological concepts that have become firmly embedded in Christianity during the Dark Ages," Hefner wrote.

He blamed "totalitarian church-state controls of both Catholic and Protestant origin" for creating this alleged oppression.

The answer to the first question, therefore, is uncontested: Playboy was launched to battle Christianity, specifically Christian sexual ethics. But it is less certain who the victors are and what they won.

If Playboy's mainstreaming of pornography has triumphed over Christianity, it does not follow that Playboy won. In fact, by its own admission, it lost.

To wit: In 1975, the magazine had a circulation of 5.6 million; today it stands at 800,000. And there is no assurance that when the girls put their pants back on the numbers will spike.

The Internet, as Flanders indicates, is responsible for making Playboy passé. But if it is the consumers of Internet porn who have won, what exactly did they win? By any honest assessment, they lost.

Those who traffic in Internet porn not only destroy their own lives, they destroy the lives of those closest to them. The research on this subject is not conflicted – it is near unanimous.

In 2010, a wide range of scholars issued a document that

contained impressive data. "The Social Costs of Pornography: A Statement of Findings and Recommendations" found the support of agnostics and atheists, along with Catholics, Protestants, Jews, and Muslims.

Liberals and conservatives were represented, as well as specialists in economics, medicine, psychiatry, psychology, sociology, journalism, and law.

Its first finding was that the Internet has made possible a historic level of access to pornography. Second, it found that today's pornography is qualitatively different from what has been available in the past, and that addiction is now at record levels.

The effect on women is dramatic: they feel betrayed and devastated by their partner's pornography problem.

Fourth, children and adolescents use pornography to coerce each other into sexual behavior. Fifth, the report found that "Women of all ages comprise 80 percent of those trafficked, children comprise 50 percent, and of those women and children 70 percent are used for sexual exploitation."

Sixth, users undermine marital and other intimate relationships.

This report is hardly unique. Many studies have found that marital relations suffer greatly.

The users of pornography find it more difficult to get sexually aroused; they also lose interest in their partner.

Just as important, partners are made to feel inadequate, and many see pornography as an expression of infidelity. Moreover, children and adolescents drawn to online pornography experience psychological and behavioral consequences that are traumatic.

The sad fact is that there are no winners in Playboy's battle

against Christianity. Being “one click away from every sex act imaginable for free” has not made us a better society. Indeed, consumers of Internet pornography are increasingly dysfunctional.

And because their loss is not confined to them, they ineluctably poison relations with others.

Winning battles with no victors sounds like an oxymoron. But in this case, it happens to be true. Playboy’s hedonistic values may have triumphed over Christianity’s more mature understanding of sexual ethics, but it has left a trail of social and moral debris in its wake.

That’s not the mark of a winner – it’s the signature of a loser.

Dr. William Donohue is the president of and CEO of the Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights, the nation’s largest Catholic civil rights organization. The publisher of the Catholic League journal, Catalyst, Bill is a former Bradley Resident Scholar at the Heritage Foundation and served for two decades on the board of directors of the National Association of Scholars. The author of six books, two on the ACLU, and the winner of several teaching awards and many awards from the Catholic community, Donohue has appeared on thousands of television and radio shows speaking on civil liberties and social issues. Read more reports from Bill Donohue – [Click Here Now.](#)

Bill Maher, Ann Coulter Lead

Pack of Crazies Against the Pope

This article by Bill Donohue was originally published by Newsmax on September 28, 2015.

What do Ann Coulter and the Westboro Baptist Church have in common? Both are obscene anti-Catholics. Indeed, they are the worst of Pope Francis' vile critics to emerge during his visit to the United States.

Coulter tweeted last week that the Catholic Church was "largely built by pedophiles." This is the kind of comment we might expect from the likes of Bill Maher.

No wonder these two bigots are best of friends. Coulter also tweeted, "I'm an American and this is why our founders (not 'immigrants') distrusted Catholics and wouldn't make them citizens."

If she doesn't already belong to the Klan, they would love to have her.

"The Pope is a Lying Whore." That's the way the maniacs at the Westboro Baptist Church greeted the Pope. A few protesters from this group showed up in Philadelphia with signs that read, "Pervert Pope Francis."

Predictably, Coulter's buddy couldn't resist insulting the Pope on his weekly HBO show. "The Pope said the one regret he had was he didn't go inside the Statue of Liberty because it would be nice to say that, for once in his life, he spent some time inside of a woman." Vintage Maher.

Freedom From Religion Foundation loves abortion and hates the Catholic Church, so it was fitting that it spent over \$200,000 in full-page ads condemning the church.

Sounding like 19th century nativists, the atheists sounded the alarms in last Thursday's New York Times warning us of "A Dangerous Mix." What was so scary? The Pope's speech before the Congress. On the same day, in the Washington Post, the same crazies blasted the Congress for inviting the leader of the "aggressively homophobic, patriarchal and undemocratic religion."

The microphone was hot when CNN picked up a rant by a violent woman who threatened to throw her shoe at the Pope's head.

Violence was more than threatened when vandals wrote "Saint of Genocide" on a headstone at the Carmel Mission in California where Saint Junipero Serra is buried.

They poured green paint on a statue of this champion of human rights (the Pope canonized Father Serra last week), smashing headstones with blood-red paint; only the headstones of people of European descent were targeted by the racists.

They were encouraged by people such as Randy S. Woodley, a professor with little credentials who teaches at a "Christian" school in Oregon: without a scintilla of evidence, this "Intercultural" guru blamed Serra for torturing Indians. Pity his students.

Alex Jones is known for dabbling in conspiracies, so it came as no surprise that this radio talk-show genius would accuse the Pope of hiring mercenaries to shield him from immigrants.

Meanwhile, the deep-thinkers at Charisma News were raising the question, "Why so Many People Think Pope Francis is the Antichrist?" Similarly, some guy named Tom Horn showed up on the online "Jim Bakker Show" wondering whether the Pope is "demonically inspired."

George Will showcased his brilliance on all matters Catholic when he lambasted the Pope for allegedly standing "against modernity, rationality, science and, ultimately . . . open

societies.”

Someone should ask Will if he knows which institution gave us the first universities, the Age of Science, and the world’s greatest music and art, just for starters.

Judge Andrew Napolitano went off the rails when he accused the Pope of changing the church’s long-standing teaching that abortion is murder. He is factually wrong – nothing of the sort ever happened. Worse, he throws dirt at the Pope by branding him a “false prophet”; this is the kind of lunacy we are accustomed to hearing from those in the academy or the asylum.

To top things off, Daily Kos writer Frank Coccozzelli is so upset with me for not criticizing the normally level-headed judge that he incorrectly attributes to me words written by Napolitano.

Many notable conservatives were critical of the Pope’s previous remarks on capitalism and income inequality. Disagreeing with the Pope is entirely acceptable, which is why such commentary merits no attention in this article.

I only wish they listened more attentively to what Pope Francis said in the United States, instead of relying on his past, admittedly controversial, remarks. For example, in his address before the Congress, the pope called business a “noble vocation, directed to producing wealth and improving the world.” That’s a far cry from his previous, Bernie Sanders-type, comments.

Pope Francis is open to fair criticism, but when facts are distorted, they need to be corrected. Worse, the kind of rank anti-Catholicism voiced by Coulter cannot go unchallenged. It’s about time conservatives called her out for her hate speech.

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Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights, the nation's largest Catholic civil rights organization. The publisher of the Catholic League journal, Catalyst, Bill is a former Bradley Resident Scholar at the Heritage Foundation and served for two decades on the board of directors of the National Association of Scholars. The author of six books, two on the ACLU, and the winner of several teaching awards and many awards from the Catholic community, Donohue has appeared on thousands of television and radio shows speaking on civil liberties and social issues. Read more reports from Bill Donohue – [Click Here Now.](#)

War on Boy Scouts Will Continue

This article by Bill Donohue was originally published by Newsmax on July 29, 2015.

On July 27, Robert M. Gates, president of the Boy Scouts of America, announced that the National Executive Board ratified a resolution ending the ban on openly gay adult leaders and employees.

He admitted that the new policy was necessitated by “social, political, and legal changes,” and that the “staggering cost” of more litigation was a major factor in the decision.

Will this ruling put an end to the lawsuits? Not a chance. Gay militants won't stop until the religious exemptions allowed under the new policy are stricken.

“Religious chartered organizations may continue to use religious beliefs as a criterion for selecting adult leaders,

including in matters of sexuality,” Gates said. That sounds great, but since 70 percent of Boy Scout chapters are run by religiously affiliated institutions, and the secular assault on religion is real, this issue is hardly over.

The Human Rights Campaign, the most aggressive gay group in the nation, wasted no time denouncing the religious exemption. Its president, Chad Griffin, was pleased with the new policy overall, but he still complained that “including an exemption for troops sponsored by religious organizations undermines and diminishes the historic nature of today’s decision.”

Mormons, Catholics, and Evangelicals have all questioned whether the exemptions are sufficient to ward off new attacks. Their concerns are valid.

In 1996, the Center for the Study of the Natural Law at The Claremont Institute published the second edition of my monograph, “On the Front Line of the Culture War: Recent Attacks on the Boy Scouts of America.” I detailed attempts by homosexuals, atheists, and feminists – gays, godless, and girls – to force the Boy Scouts to accept their constituents.

Starting in 1980, they all sued, claiming discrimination, but no community succeeded more than gays. They seized on the Scout Oath as the basis of their objections.

The Scout Oath was first published in 1911. “On my honor I will do my best to do my duty to God and my country and to obey the Scout Law; To help other people at all times; To keep myself physically strong, mentally awake, and morally straight.” The term “morally straight” was read as a Christian obligation.

To be exact, the “Official Boy Scout Handbook” explained it by saying, “[w]hen you live up to the trust of fatherhood your sex life will fit into God’s wonderful plan of creation. Fuller understanding of wholesome sex behavior can bring you lifelong happiness.” If that sounds antiquated, it is.

To be “morally straight” now reads, “[to] be a person of strong character, your relationships with others should be honest and open. You should respect and defend the rights of all people. Be clean in your speech and actions, and remain faithful in your religious beliefs. The values you practice as a Scout will help you shape a life of virtue and self-reliance.”

“Fatherhood.” “God’s wonderful plan of creation.” “Wholesome sex behavior.” These verities have all been junked; in their place are platitudes about cleanliness. This is more than a bow to gays – it is a wholesale dismantling of the founding principles of the Boy Scouts.

Changes in the handbook will not stave off new lawsuits. That’s because the widespread belief that sexual orientation is analogous to race and ethnicity has created mass confusion. But to compare the exclusion of African-Americans from leadership positions in the Boy Scouts to the exclusion of homosexuals is illogical.

Those who object to African-Americans as troop leaders may not rationally assert that what they object to is related to character or behavior.

The opposite is true of gays. To speak about homosexuals without addressing sodomy, which is what homosexuals do, is as irrational as talking about vegetarians without discussing vegetables, which is what vegetarians eat.

Having gay kids belong to the Boy Scouts is not an issue for most Mormons, Catholics, or Evangelicals. At issue is the propriety of having gay Scout leaders interact with boys in settings that are potentially problematic.

To be sure, it would be just as worrisome to have heterosexual men interacting with girls in settings that are potentially problematic. The difference is that Boy Scout policies make the latter concern moot.

Contrary to conventional elite opinion, sexuality is not analogous to ascribed demographic characteristics. Americans of faith know this to be true, especially parents. Now if only our judges acknowledged this verity, religious exemptions would be insulated from secular assault.

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Let's Have an Honest Discussion About Bruce Jenner

This article by Bill Donohue was originally published by Newsmax on June 3, 2015.

Only a cruel person would wish Bruce Jenner ill will now that he has morphed into Caitlyn Jenner. Hopefully, he is now at peace with himself. Assuming he is, what are the chances he will stay that way? Regrettably, they are not good. Worse, the glamorization of his condition is risky: It will only encourage those who are in rebellion against their nature not to seek professional help.

It is important to clarify what Jenner's condition is. Contrary to the conventional wisdom, he is not a transgender:

he is a transsexual. Gender refers to socially learned roles that are appropriate for males and females; sex connotes a nature-determined status, as exemplified by the two sexes.

Gender roles, moreover, typically take their cues from nature; this explains the similarities in the way boys and girls are raised in different cultures. Moreover, boys are more aggressive than girls – in every society – and this has important social and cultural consequences. The reason has everything to do with nature: Boys have a higher level of testosterone than girls.

Are transsexuals mentally ill? Until two years ago, the answer was yes. In the 3rd edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, published in 1980, those who underwent sexual surgery were seen as suffering from a psychological disorder, often schizophrenia.

When DSM-4 was published in 1994, they were also considered mentally ill. But when DSM-5 was published in 2013, they were no longer listed. Instead, it was determined that such persons suffer from “gender dysphoria,” not “gender identity disorder”; the new term refers to an emotionally distressful condition. What changed, however, were mores, not science.

Not everyone is buying into this politically correct interpretation of what is now called transgenderism. Dr. Paul McHugh is former psychiatrist-in-chief at Johns Hopkins Hospital. Not shy about challenging the conventional wisdom, he is adamant in his conviction that people like Jenner suffer from a mental disorder. What they need, he says, is treatment.

He maintains that “the idea of sex misalignment is simply mistaken – it does not correspond with physical reality.” Also, this sex-change experience “can lead to grim psychological outcomes.”

McHugh’s fears are not unfounded. The majority of those who undergo a “sex change” suffer from an increase in depression.

Conversely, the vast majority of those who say they had transgender feelings when they were young, but did not undergo surgical treatment, spontaneously lost those feelings later in life.

Also, we know that 41 percent of those who are transgender have attempted suicide – nine times the national average. Those who attribute this condition to transphobia are wrong: In fact, those who are out in the open about their transgender status are more likely to attempt suicide.

Many are saying that Jenner is absolutely happier now that he is “out.” Hopefully, s/he will stay that way. But the likelihood that s/he will is dim. McHugh notes that in a long-term Swedish study released a few years ago, “beginning about 10 years after having the surgery, the transgendered began to experience increasing mental difficulties. Most shockingly, their suicide mortality rose almost 20-fold above the comparable non-transgender population.”

The widespread elite reaction to Jenner – lauding him as a fabulous role model for others struggling with their nature – is tragically mistaken. It will only serve to convince these troubled persons not to seek the help they need. It has already led some states to ban psychiatric efforts to help these people come to terms with their sex.

Recent conversations about Jenner’s transformation assume that “sex changes” are a reality.

They are not. A male who undergoes surgery can never ovulate or conceive, and a female who makes the switch can never produce sperm. In truth, there is no such thing as a biological sex change.

From a Catholic perspective, all persons possess equal human dignity, and this certainly would include Jenner. But the church also sees body mutilation as sinful. In 2003, the Vatican released a confidential document to church leaders

about this issue.

The text defined transsexualism as a psychic disorder. The fact that most of those who believe they need to change their sex suffer from a dissociative disorder only confirms the wisdom of this document.

We need to have a healthy and honest discussion about this issue. Sadly, those who want to hijack Jenner's experience and use it to advance their own political agenda are not doing anyone any good. Nor does it help when elite pressure invites the public to think that getting Jennerized is simply an expression of different strokes for different folks. It is not. It is an expression of an underlying psychological problem that demands attention.

Dr. William Donohue is the president of and CEO of the Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights, the nation's largest Catholic civil rights organization. The publisher of the Catholic League journal, Catalyst, Bill is a former Bradley Resident Scholar at the Heritage Foundation and served for two decades on the board of directors of the National Association of Scholars. The author of six books, two on the ACLU, and the winner of several teaching awards and many awards from the Catholic community, Donohue has appeared on thousands of television and radio shows speaking on civil liberties and social issues. Read more reports from Bill Donohue – [Click Here Now.](#)

Church needs to change its style, not its teachings

This article by Bill Donohue was originally published by the *Asbury Park Press* on May 21, 2015.

The most important thing that can be done to revitalize the Catholic Church is to study what has worked and then clone it nationwide. To be explicit, in terms of getting more priests and nuns, the models we need to emulate are those dioceses and orders of nuns that are not having a problem gaining new recruits. Research done on this subject yields incontrovertible evidence: what sells is orthodoxy. Conversely, heterodoxy is a failure.

To put it differently, the key to success is to be countercultural. Forget Catholics for a moment. The Pew Research Center survey released this month shows that among Protestants, evangelicals are growing and the mainline denominations are rapidly declining.

Evangelicals are orthodox: they don't engage in social experimentation with their clergy, nor do they adopt post-modernist ideas. By contrast, the Episcopalians, Lutherans, Methodists and Presbyterians are losing numbers big time, and they are all considered quite progressive. They are – that's the problem.

The same phenomenon is true in Judaism: Orthodox Jews are the only branch that is actually growing. Conservative and Reform Jews, like the mainline Protestant denominations, are more progressive, and thus less successful.

Back to Catholics. Dioceses such as those in Lincoln, Nebraska, aren't hurting for young men to join the priesthood, and the Sisters of Life in New York City are doing just fine. Both are bastions of orthodoxy.

It isn't hard to figure out, unless one is an ideologue. Why would a young man or woman want to give up the joy of getting married and starting their own family if the religious community they join entertains ideas that are indistinguishable from the views trumpeted by the liberal establishment? Why not just become a grief counselor and get

married?

Orthodoxy, like any other virtue, can be corrupted if it becomes extreme. Turning out priests and nuns who cannot engage with modern society does no one any good. I've met them: some are so uptight, or have turned completely inwards, that they cannot negotiate the real world. We need vibrant, happy, well-adjusted men and women in the seminaries and convents, not nerds.

The Catholic Church does not need to change its teachings – many of them cannot be changed anyway – it needs to change its style. Theology on Tap is a great program reaching young people in many cities and dioceses. These are gatherings in a local pub where men and women come together to listen to a speaker and have a good time. Programs like this need to be expanded.

To be successful, revitalization efforts must be grounded in truth. There are tough issues to confront, and blemishes on the Church record that need to be acknowledged. They cannot be dodged. But we must also trumpet the great strengths of Catholicism.

Regrettably, too many Catholics have no idea of the incredible contributions that the Catholic Church has made in founding the first universities, pioneering science (Galileo notwithstanding), advancing art, architecture, and music, fighting slavery, defending human rights, providing for the needy. It's hard to move forward without a grounding in history.

None of this will happen without leadership. The role of the bishops is indispensable, but it is not sufficient. Progress works best when it is locally inspired and exercised, which is why the parishes are the best venue for change.

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