

PASADENA'S PR PROBLEM

Bill Donohue visited Pasadena in the 1990s and found it to be a great city. Unfortunately, its reputation has been tarnished by a series of blunders, all made by public institutions.

Filmmaker Dustin Lance Black contends he was invited to give this year's commencement address at Pasadena City College (PCC), and was then disinvited because a video of him having sex with his boyfriend surfaced. PCC officials say a student leader was to blame for inviting him. PCC then invited Dr. Eric Walsh, head of the Pasadena Public Health Department, to take his place. Then it was learned that he has made bigoted comments about gays, Muslims, and Catholics. So he stepped aside. Then Black was formally invited to speak, and he accepted.

Dr. Walsh has accused Catholics of idolatry for "worshipping" the Virgin Mary. Similarly, statues of the Virgin of Guadalupe, he says, are "a lie of Satan." He has also slammed, and distorted, the Church's teachings on evolution. Moreover, he contends the devil established Catholicism, and the pope is the "anti-Christ."

Donohue was accurately quoted in the *Pasadena Star-News* saying, "Dr. Walsh is not fit to be the head of the Pasadena Public Health Department. It is not worth attempting to rebut the man's bigotry, so outlandish is it. Anyone whose judgment is that impaired has no legitimate role to play in public life."

Regarding the decision to invite, or reinvoke, Black, it smacks of cultural politics to say that "details of Mr. Black's personal life have no place in public discussion." But if the Internet videos of Dr. Walsh's comments are sufficient to disqualify him, why are not the Internet videos of Black?

Pasadena City College and the Public Health Department are

funded by the taxpayers. Regrettably, the city now has a major PR problem.