

PASTOR HAGEE APOLOGIZES; DONOHUE-HAGEE MEET

In a letter to Bill Donohue dated May 12 ([click here](#)), Pastor John Hagee apologized for offending Catholics. "I want to express my deep regret," he said, "for any comments that Catholics have found hurtful." Donohue was quick to accept the apology. On May 15, the two men met at Catholic League headquarters for the first time.

Hagee's letter effectively ends the dispute the two men have had. The controversy started after Pastor Hagee endorsed Sen. John McCain for president. The Catholic League has long objected to some of Hagee's comments about the Catholic Church, especially in relation to its dealings with Jews. That is why the league was critical of McCain's embrace of Hagee. McCain subsequently distanced himself from Hagee's objectionable remarks about Catholicism.

"After weeks of meeting with various Catholic leaders, and accessing scholarly literature on Catholic-Jewish relations," Donohue told the media, "Pastor John Hagee has demonstrated an improved understanding of the Catholic Church and its history." We were particularly pleased to see Hagee pledge "to provide a more complete and balanced portrayal going forward that will not reinforce mischaracterizations of the Catholic Church."

Hagee made it clear that his invocation of terms like "apostate church" and the "great whore" were never meant by him to describe the Catholic Church. However, he acknowledges that anti-Catholics have long employed such language.

Donohue praised Hagee's for his candor: "The tone of Hagee's letter is sincere. He wants reconciliation and he has achieved it. Indeed, the Catholic League welcomes his apology. What

Hagee has done takes courage and quite frankly I never expected him to demonstrate such sensitivity to our concerns. But he has done just that.”

It is a tribute to Catholics such as Deal Hudson of InsideCatholic.com that they succeeded in sitting down with Pastor Hagee over a period of weeks trying to bring about reconciliation. Hagee was able to access books he never read before, e.g., works by Martin Gilbert and Rabbi David Dalin that detail the heroic role of Pope Pius XII in rescuing Jews during the Holocaust. These were the kinds of things that moved Hagee to write his letter to Donohue.

It is now hoped that traditional Catholics and evangelical Protestants will be able to work together more effectively on those moral issues where they find common ground: abortion, embryonic stem cell research and doctor-assisted suicide. It is a sure bet that this alliance will continue to gel.