

PROPAGANDA MASKED AS EDUCATION

The substitution of propaganda for objective reporting is bad enough, but when it is transmitted as education to unsuspecting students, it is unconscionable. This explains our reaction to some recent broadcasts by Channel One Network that made their way into classrooms around the country, including Catholic ones.

Channel One is used by many teachers as an educational resource (free TV's are supplied as an incentive to use the network). News programs on current events are made available and are often of high quality. Unfortunately, coverage of the pope's trip to the Holy Land was propaganda disguised as education. We told Andy Merlis, the network's producer, that the work of Cindy Lin was more than tendentious—it smacked of bias.

Lin said that “While the pope has made apologies before, this is the first time any pope has made a public plea for forgiveness for the *horrors committed by Catholic groups over the centuries.*” (Our emphasis.) This is just one example of the kind of exploitative language that marred the presentation.

Lin's sense of history is even worse. She said that the pope's apology did not specifically mention the Holocaust and the failure of the wartime pope “to do anything to help the Jews during World War II.” As we pointed out, there is a reason for this—no one saved more Jews than Pope Pius XII—a pope that the current pope continues to defend.

Lin would have students believe that in recent centuries, “the church is said to have treated badly groups such as women, gays, minorities and the poor.” But said by whom? Bigots? That

more women than men attend Mass is something Lin would have a hard time explaining, just as she would have a hard time pointing to the anti-gay teachings and practices of the Church. And it is beyond comprehension that anyone would accuse the Catholic Church of being against minorities and the poor.

What Lin did was to use the pope's statement of contrition as a club to whip the Church. While she was not alone in doing so, her offense was worse than most simply because it was sold under the guise of education.