

SUSTAINABLE CHARGE OR CALUMNY?

There is much to admire about Dr. David Bennett. As superintendent of schools in Sarasota County, Florida, he is an outspoken proponent of school choice who wants the Sarasota school district to be one of the first charter districts in the state, indeed in the nation. But in the course of a recent interview he gave in *Sarasota* magazine, he attributed to the Catholic Church a legacy which calls into question his charge and reason for doing so.

Dr. Bennett wants us to believe that his early interest in civil rights came from hearing racist stories about the Catholic Church in Chicago in the 1950s and 1960s. At the dinner table, he says, there was much chatter regarding the Church's alleged practice of buying up local homes so that blacks couldn't purchase them. He provided no independent evidence for this charge, though he did offer specifics when referring to other chapters of his life growing up, chapters which had nothing to do with the Church.

We asked Dr. Bennett to supply us with independent verification. A charge like this should be relatively easy to demonstrate. If it isn't, it's called a calumny against the Catholic Church.