

KENTUCKY EDUCATOR PENALIZED FOR HER CATHOLICISM

Last April, after learning that there was an opening for the position of principal at Atherton High School in Louisville, Kentucky, Nina Bedford asked the superintendent of the Jefferson County Public Schools to submit her name as a candidate for the post; Mrs. Bedford is the assistant principal at Atherton. For reasons which appear to be bogus, Dr. Stephen Daeschner did not do so.

In February, 1997, Mrs. Bedford was appointed by Louisville Archbishop Thomas Kelly as a board member of the Catholic Educational Endowment Foundation. Without delay, Dr. Daeschner asked the principal of Atherton High School to ascertain whether or not there was a conflict of interest between Mrs. Bedford's public school position and her Catholic post. Moreover, she quickly found herself cut from school committees and task forces that she otherwise would have been expected to serve.

Mrs. Bedford, who is African American, has filed a lawsuit against the Jefferson County Board of Education alleging religious discrimination. She is supported in this effort by the Kentucky Alliance Against Racism and the Rainbow Coalition. She has now won the support of the Catholic League as well. League president William Donohue explains why:

"Even after the search committee rejected the first round of candidates, Mrs. Bedford's name was not forwarded. This is strange given that as assistant principal Mrs. Bedford has received numerous awards and citations of achievement, including certificates of excellence from the Jefferson County Public Schools in 1996 and 1997.

"Nina Bedford is right to smell a rat in this process. The rat

is the stink of anti-Catholicism. Now that the new school year is about to begin, it behooves the Jefferson County Public School authorities to come to their senses and settle with Mrs. Bedford out of court. To do otherwise is to postpone justice.”

RALEIGH DIOCESE UNFAIRLY TARGETED BY EEOC

The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) has ordered the Roman Catholic Diocese of Raleigh, North Carolina, to rehire a woman whom the diocese fired as its director of music ministry; EEOC has also mandated that all diocesan employees be trained in Title VII of the Civil Rights Act. The diocese is refusing to cooperate saying that EEOC has no authority to make the ruling. The woman who was fired, Joyce Austin, has filed several lawsuits against the diocese since 1992, even though she continues to work there part-time.

Catholic League president William Donohue outlined the league’s position:

“How many times have the advocates of separation of church and state told us that churches should not encroach upon the affairs of government? But where are these same people when it is the state that encroaches upon the affairs of churches?

“It is mind-boggling that an executive agency of the federal government should try to tell a Catholic diocese who it should hire as its music director. That is why the Catholic League will now contact the offices of North Carolina Senators Jesse Helms and Lauch Faircloth, as well as Raleigh Congressman David Price. It is not the Diocese of Raleigh that needs to be

disciplined, it is the zealots at the EEOC who have thrown the First Amendment to the wind.”

“MILLION YOUTH MARCH” RUN BY BIGOT

Khalid Abdul Muhammad, former aide to Louis Farrakhan, says he plans to hold a “million youth march” in Harlem on September 5 despite being denied a permit for the march on that date or in Harlem. Muhammad has rejected offers by New York City to hold the march on September 19 on Randalls Island or in Van Cortlandt Park.

In November 1993, Muhammad gave a speech at Kean College in New Jersey that was laden with anti-Catholic and anti-Semitic rhetoric. As a result of his disparaging remarks, Muhammad was denounced by the U.S. black Catholic bishops, the U.S. Civil Rights Commission, the Catholic League, ADL and other civil rights organizations.

William Donohue voiced his concerns over the march today:

“Mayor Rudolph Giuliani is right to condemn the bigoted comments made by Khalid Abdul Muhammad. An equal opportunity bigot, Muhammad does not discriminate between Catholics and Jews in launching his attacks: he hates both groups.

“Hate mongers have a right to march, but no one has a right to inform the authorities of the time, place and manner of the march. If the authorities decide that another time and place is in the best interest of public safety, that is their call. For Muhammad to say that he will march anyway is to show contempt for the law.

“In 1994, Mayor Giuliani allowed radical gays to march naked past St. Patrick’s Cathedral without a permit. It will be interesting to see whether he allows Muhammad to march without a permit on September 5 in Harlem.”

CHRISTMAS WILL REMAIN LEGAL HOLIDAY

A Cincinnati attorney is suing the United States government because Christmas is recognized as a legal holiday. Richard Ganulin filed suit yesterday in U.S. District Court arguing that it is unconstitutional for Congress to proclaim Christmas as a national holiday. In his lawsuit, Ganulin said that because he does not celebrate Christmas or the birth of “Jesus Christ” (his quotes), he is “consequently damaged” by enforcement of the law.

Catholic League president William Donohue aired his views in today’s edition of the *Cincinnati Enquirer* and now offers the following additional remarks:

“Ganulin doesn’t have a leg to stand on. In 1984, in *Lynch v. Donnelly*, the U.S. Supreme Court said that the ‘Christmas holiday in our national culture contains both secular and sectarian elements.’ Five years later, in *Allegheny County v. Greater Pittsburgh ACLU*, the high court declared that both Christmas and Hanukkah ‘are part of the same winter holiday season, which has attained a secular status in our society.’

“In short, while the Supreme Court knows that the origin of Christmas is religious, it also acknowledges that it has acquired a secular meaning. And that settles the issue: by having a secular as well as a religious purpose, the

celebration of Christmas is in accordance with the strictures laid down by the Supreme Court in *Lemon v. Kurtzman* (1971).

“But beyond the legalisms lies the real issue—the determination of secular zealots to scrub our society clean of all religious influence. This represents not only a war against our heritage, it represents an authoritarian impulse to restructure our culture according to the dictates of devout atheists. In the end, what bothers these people is that those who believe in Christ have Christmas to celebrate while those like themselves have, by definition, nothing to celebrate. That they are ‘consequently damaged’ as a result of their own doing is a mystery only to them.”