

# EVANGELICALS AND USAFA GET BUM RAP

Catholic League president William Donohue explained today why he believes evangelicals and the Air Force Academy have gotten a bum rap:

“At yesterday’s hearing before a House Armed Services subcommittee, former U.S. Air Force Academy (USAFA) chaplain Melinda Morton, a Lutheran minister, accused the school of having a ‘pervasive and systemic climate of religious intolerance.’ She memorized her talking points very well: her ideological co-conspirator, Barry Lynn of Americans United for Separation of Church and State, had previously charged that a ‘systemic and pervasive’ climate of intolerance exists. Strong words given that of the thousands of cadets who have been at the Academy in the last four years, only thirteen have had cause to complain.

“Even more telling is the fact that not one Roman Catholic has complained. The panel that investigated the school interviewed many cadets, faculty and staff; they were split into various focus groups. Speaking of the First and Second Class Catholic Cadets, the Academy’s report concluded that ‘The overall, unanimous position of these cadets was clear: free exercise of religion is not a problem at USAFA.’ Of the Third and Fourth Class Catholic Cadets, the report said, ‘These cadets were surprised that this is an issue at USAFA’; it also said, ‘None of these cadets had specific instances of religious intolerance or bias.’

“Now this is bizarre. In those instances when evangelicals have crossed the line with heavy-handed proselytizing efforts, Catholics have typically been the target audience. So why

have no Catholics—who are 30 percent of the student body—complained? After all, according to a Jewish graduate who has frequently complained to school officials about the alleged problem, ‘This is not Christian versus Jew. This is evangelical Christians against everybody else.’ Other complainants have made similar comments.

“No one has been more maligned in this scam than Dr. James Dobson. Repeatedly, it has been said that the close proximity of his Focus on the Family headquarters and the USAFA is problematic. Nice try by the left-wing zealots, but we Catholics aren’t biting. Dobson is our friend.”

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## AIR FORCE ACADEMY HEARING WELCOME

On June 28, the House Armed Services Military Personnel Subcommittee will hold a hearing on the religious climate at the U.S. Air Force Academy. Catholic League president William Donohue sent the members of the House subcommittee a [letter today outlining his concerns](#).

Donohue outlined three issues: a) the most-often cited examples of bigotry against non-Christians have nothing to do with bigotry b) robust freedom of speech on religious matters is now at risk, and c) a climate inhospitable to Christians has been created at the institution. He offered specific examples to buttress his case.

Donohue concluded by saying that the criticisms mounted against the Air Force Academy are largely bogus and are driven by those who have an ideological agenda.

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# AIR FORCE ACADEMY INSENSITIVE TO CHRISTIANS

Catholic League president William Donohue commented today on the release of a report on the religious climate at the Air Force Academy:

“The report concludes that there is no ‘overt religious discrimination’ taking place at the Academy, but there are examples of ‘insensitivity.’ What is not being reported is the insensitive climate that has been created for practicing Christians.

“Comments from various ‘Focus Groups’ are revealing. The cadets said that ‘Reverse religious discrimination is rampant and evangelical Christians are under constant attack,’ even to the point of despair: ‘The Air Force I signed up for didn’t say I had to leave my religion at the door.’ Other cadets said the Academy is too ‘politically correct’ and that Christians cadets ‘are now being discriminated against.’ The AOCs (Air Officers Commanding) said that ‘the pendulum has swung too far and now open discussion is discouraged among cadets.’ And so on.

“Interestingly, ten years of cadet survey data on the subjects of race, gender, discrimination, reprisal, intercollegiate athletics and religion, show that ‘religion was consistently the first and second most positively rated climate area.’ So why all the fuss? Because some cadets put a flyer (as they do for many films) at the place setting in the dining facility advertising ‘The Passion of the Christ’? Or because ‘God

Bless America' was sung at an event? Or because a Protestant chaplain at a Protestant service asked Protestant cadets to chant, 'This is our chapel and the Lord is our God'? All of these incidents are eminently defensible: What is not defensible are efforts to censor them.

"In my letter to the Air Force Academy, I will stress the need for members of minority religions to exhibit greater tolerance for Christians: minorities have rights, but not among them is the right to trump the rights of the majority. Moreover, I will ask that all cadets understand that freedom of speech includes religious speech. Finally, I will ask the Office of the Chaplain to report instances of anti-Christian bias to us."

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## **FARRAKHAN CRONY SHOWN THE GATE**

Yesterday, Catholic League president William Donohue e-mailed and faxed a letter to the seven-member New Orleans City Council requesting that they stop a Nation of Islam official from conducting sensitivity training for the New Orleans Police Department.

Police Chief Edwin P. Compass was prepared to pay \$15,000 to Nation of Islam security chief Captain Dennis Muhammad, but ran into trouble with fellow officers, local leaders and the Catholic League. Compass has now decided to rescind the offer and will replace Muhammad with another person, just as the Catholic League requested.

Donohue commented on this quick reversal today:

“We are happy that the New Orleans police officers will be spared the indignity of having to sit through lectures on tolerance given by a Nation of Islam official. Those familiar with the speeches of Minister Louis Farrakhan know him as a Minister of Hate, and anyone who supports his bigotry has no legitimate role to play in public affairs. We are thankful to those in New Orleans who pressured their police chief to show Farrakhan’s crony the gate.”

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## **FARRAKHAN CRONY TO ADVISE COPS?**

Catholic League president William Donohue wrote a letter today to the seven members of the New Orleans City Council requesting that they intervene to stop New Orleans Police Superintendent Edwin P. Compass from allowing the security chief of the Nation of Islam, Captain Dennis Muhammad, from conducting sensitivity training for the police. Here is the text of his letter:

“As president of the nation’s largest Catholic civil rights organization, I am appalled that a close associate of Nation of Islam leader Minister Louis Farrakhan has been chosen to give sensitivity training to the New Orleans Police Department. For Police Superintendent Edwin P. Compass to commission Captain Dennis Muhammad, Farrakhan’s security chief, to conduct sensitivity training for the police is on the order of having David Duke advise public school teachers on how to conduct Black History Month events. It reeks of ignorance.

“Farrakhan is anti-Jewish, anti-Catholic and anti-gay. He has

mocked Catholicism, ridiculed the pope and insulted Catholics everywhere with his vitriolic comments. In short, he's a bigot. Common sense, never mind common decency, argues against any Nation of Islam official lecturing the police on tolerance. I ask that you intervene to find someone with impeccable credentials to carry out this task."

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## **CBS PETITIONED TO PROBE SHOWTIME**

Catholic League president William Donohue explained today the league's strategy for dealing with Showtime, the cable network that recently aired a hate-filled episode of "Penn and Teller":

"On May 23, 24 and 27, Showtime's 'Penn and Teller' aired the 'Holier Than Thou' episode that has so enraged Catholics, as well as people of all faiths (). The obscene assault on Mother Teresa, her Missionaries of Charity and the Catholic Church was arguably the most vicious anti-Catholic fare ever shown on television in the United States. An excerpt of this show was sent to 350 persons of influence, including every bishop who commands a diocese. Now we want results.

"Beginning today, we are launching a nation-wide campaign demanding that CBS initiate a probe into this matter. Why CBS? Showtime is owned by Viacom, and Viacom has many subsidiaries in the entertainment and communications industries, none of which is more prominent than CBS. Now it may be that those who work at CBS had nothing to do with the offending Showtime episode. Nonetheless, CBS bears corporate responsibility. Just as important, the famous CBS name has been sullied by what

Showtime did.

“We are focusing our attention on two persons: Leslie Moonves, Chairman and CEO of CBS, and Nancy Tellem, President, CBS Paramount Network (Showtime is a Paramount TV studio that will remain with CBS even if Viacom splits into two entities this summer). The petition ([click here](#)) seeks justice: We want those responsible for this bigoted assault on Catholicism to be held accountable for the damage they have done.

“In addition to pushing this petition on our website, we will ask our members to get involved: the July-August edition of *Catalyst*, our monthly journal, will reprint the petition. We are most proud of the support that we have received from those outside the Catholic community. They know what’s at stake and they look to CBS to correct it.”

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## HOWARD DEAN’S IDEA OF “RELIGIOUS OUTREACH”

Howard Dean’s acceptance speech upon assuming the chairmanship of the Democratic National Committee (DNC), February 12, 2005:

*“We are definitely going to do religious outreach.”*

Howard Dean’s speech in San Francisco, June 6, 2005:

*“It’s [the Republican Party] pretty much a white, Christian party.”*

Catholic League president William Donohue’s response is as follows:

“Dean’s comment in San Francisco was the kind of snide remark

that we would expect from someone who regards white Christians as the enemy—not from someone who is the titular leader of the Democratic Party. Precisely how Dean expects to do religious outreach when he writes off the majority of the nation is not known, but it is a sure bet that if his counterpart in the Republican Party were to refer to the Democrats as the party of blacks and secularists, he'd be canned.

“This is not the first time Dean, or the DNC, has insulted Christians, especially Catholics. When Dean sought the nomination for president in the Democratic Party, he drew support from the nation's largest anti-Catholic group, Catholics for a Free Choice. The DNC, under Terry McAuliffe, offended Catholics for years by keeping a link on its website to this bigoted organization; it was dropped after we led a lengthy protest against the DNC. Furthermore, the Catholic League was responsible for having the Kerry campaign silence its religious outreach advisor, and for pressuring the DNC's religious outreach director to resign (both were way out of the mainstream).

“Catholics are about evenly split between the two parties, but that could change. Why either party would allow its leader to offend people of faith is beyond belief.”

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## **BIAS MARKS BROWARD COUNTY ART SHOW**

Catholic League president William Donohue offered the following remarks today regarding Florida's Broward Art Guild:

“On May 31, I was informed about a May 27 news article that appeared in the *Sun Sentinel* regarding the ‘Controversy’



exhibit at the Broward Art Guild. The article said that one of the artists, Michael Friedman, had complained to Mary Becht, Director of the Broward County Department of Cultural Affairs, about the 'Yahoo!' entry by Alfred Phillips; it shows President Bush being sodomized. Becht agreed it was offensive and told the guild's director, Susan Buzzi, to move it to 'a less prominent space within the gallery'; it was subsequently 'set near a corner of the gallery facing the wall.' The irony is that Friedman's own contribution was allowed to stand: it shows Pope Benedict XVI surrounded by swastikas.

"In my letter of May 31 to Ms. Becht (which was faxed that day and mailed for next-day delivery), I said that 'I would like to see equal treatment afforded the anti-Catholic art of Michael Friedman that you gave to the work by Alfred Phillips.' In short, I wanted Friedman's offensive work set next to Phillips' offensive work.

"On June 2, I left a message for Becht to call me explaining her response. She said she never received a letter from me, though we have proof that it was delivered and signed for by someone in her office on June 1. So I faxed it again. She faxed back an evasive letter that refused to come to grips with the request that I made.

"Consequently, I am writing today to the following persons requesting that they address this matter in a serious way: Broward County Commissioners; Broward Cultural Affairs Council Members; Broward County Administrator; President, Greater Ft. Lauderdale Convention and Visitors Bureau; Florida Arts Council Members; Secretary of State.

"The duplicity is sickening: gay bashing is out but Catholic bashing is in. That's the message being sent and that is why justice must be done."

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# CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE COVER-UP

Catholic League president William Donohue commented today on why the nation's child sexual abuse cover-up is coming undone:

"It is not the Catholic Church that is impeding justice for the victims of child sexual molestation, it is Planned Parenthood and the ACLU.

"On March 1, some medical records of Planned Parenthood clinics were seized by the Medicaid fraud control unit of the Indiana attorney general's office. The seizure was authorized to determine 'whether or not children were neglected by virtue of a failure to report instances of child molestation to the proper authorities.' Immediately, Planned Parenthood instructed its clinics not to cooperate. Yesterday, an Indiana judge ruled that Planned Parenthood must turn over its records. (In Indiana, anyone who is under 14 and is sexually active is considered a sexual abuse victim, and health care providers are required to report such cases to the authorities.) The local ACLU affiliate is representing Planned Parenthood: They consider it a 'fishing expedition.'

"If a Catholic diocese were to refuse to turn over its priest personnel records to the authorities on the grounds that the request was a 'fishing expedition,' it would be labeled an obstruction of justice by every major media outlet in the nation; no doubt '60 Minutes' and Showtime would find it grist for a story or a movie. But because the cover-up is being done by the darlings of the liberal establishment—Planned Parenthood and the ACLU—not a howl of protest can be heard.

"And it's not just in Indiana—it's all over. This is why I am writing today to every member of the New York State

legislature urging adoption of a bill by State Senator Stephen Saland that would make no exemptions for abortion providers in mandating that child sexual abuse be reported to the authorities. Again, Planned Parenthood and the ACLU are the ones trying to stop this legislation (along with the National Association of Social Workers and the New York State Coalition Against Domestic Violence), and they have been doing so for three years. It's time to end the cover-up, protect the kids and have one law for everyone."