

IS UNIV. OF MICHIGAN-DEARBORN FUNDING ISLAM?

Today's edition of the *Detroit News* is reporting that "The University of Michigan-Dearborn plans to spend \$25,000 for foot-washing stations, making it easier for Muslim students to practice their religion but sparking questions about the separation of church and state."

Catholic League president Bill Donohue is sending the following letter to all Michigan lawmakers today via e-mail:

I was surprised to learn that the University of Michigan-Dearborn plans to spend \$25,000 for foot baths so that Muslim students can practice their religion without difficulty. What surprised me was the novelty: the trend in recent years has been for American campuses to neuter Christmas parties, ban the display of nativity scenes and essentially censor the public expression of Christianity. But not at the University of Michigan-Dearborn—they're going the other way. Or are they?

Here's what I'd like to know. Do you regard this as accommodating religion or offering special privileges? If your answer is the former, would you be open to suggestions on how to accommodate the needs of Christian students on campus? I hope so because I have lots of ideas. If your answer is the latter, what are you going to do about it?

I look forward to hearing from you about this important issue.

LOOK WHO'S SUPPORTING OBAMA

Yesterday, Senator Barack Obama became the first presidential contender to launch a religious outreach website, faith.barackobama.com. Commenting on it today is Catholic League president Bill Donohue:

"On Sen. Obama's new website, he lists the testimonials of three controversial clergymen: Rev. Jeremiah A. Wright Jr., senior pastor of Trinity United Church of Christ in Chicago; Rev. J. Alfred Smith Sr., senior pastor of Allen Temple Baptist Church in Oakland, California; and Rev. Michael Pfleger, a Roman Catholic Chicago priest.

"Rev. Wright was scheduled to give the invocation at the forum of Obama's presidential announcement on February 10, but the night before the event Obama rescinded the bid: the Illinois senator knew that his spiritual advisor was so divisive that he would cloud the ceremonies. The black liberation theologian has a record of giving racially inflammatory sermons and has even said that Zionism has an element of 'white racism.' He also blamed the attacks of 9/11 on American foreign policy.

"Rev. Smith was honored by the notoriously violent Black Panther Party of Oakland in 1975, and in 1990 was given a community award by the Nation of Islam, an anti-Semitic, anti-Catholic and anti-gay group.

"Rev. Pfleger has allowed Nation of Islam chief Louis Farrakhan to preach in his church; he has been arrested for defacing billboards; he has paid prostitutes to worship at his church; and only last week he staged an anti-gun rally in front of a gun store where he exhorted the crowd to hunt down the owner 'like a rat' and 'snuff' him.

"While Obama is not responsible for the record of these three clergymen, he is responsible for giving them the opportunity to prominently display their testimonials on his religious

outreach website. If these are the kinds of clergymen he admires, perhaps it's best he shut down his new website and start all over again. It will take more than 'God talk' to get Obama out of this jam."