

# OBAMA AIDES HOST CATHOLIC BASHERS

Several officials from the Obama administration are scheduled to meet today with representatives of the Secular Coalition for America. Commenting on this meeting is Catholic League president Bill Donohue:

People of faith, especially Christians, have good reason to wonder exactly where their interests lie with the Obama administration. Now we have the definitive answer. In an unprecedented move, leaders of a presidential administration are hosting some of the biggest anti-religious zealots in the nation.

No one opposes men and women who are incidentally agnostic or atheist from expressing their concerns, even to the White House. The problem with today's meeting is the profile of the coalition's members and organizations. On the advisory board of the Secular Coalition for America are such activists as Robert Boston, Richard Dawkins, Sam Harris, Christopher Hitchens, Susan Jacoby and Michael Newdow. Member organizations include American Atheists, the American Ethical Union and the Council for Secular Humanism. All of these persons and groups have a track record of open hostility to people of faith, and some have been downright bigoted in their assault on Christianity, especially Catholicism.

If President Obama does not want to go to church, that is his business. But it is the business of the American people, most all of whom are believers, to know where the president and his administration stand with regards to their concerns. It is not likely that this outreach to anti-religious activists—many of whom would crush Christianity if they could—will do anything to calm the fears of people of faith. Indeed, it will only alienate them even further.

It is important that the public learn of the contents of this meeting. We will do what we can to find out what happened.

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## **TONY PERKINS CENSORED AT AIR FORCE BASE**

Tony Perkins, president of the Family Research Council, was scheduled to speak today at a National Prayer Luncheon at Andrews Air Force Base. But the invitation was recently withdrawn by the chaplain's office because Perkins has spoken out in favor of the military's "Don't Ask, Don't Tell Policy."

Addressing this issue is Catholic League president Bill Donohue:

The decision to silence Tony Perkins, an ordained minister and Marine veteran, represents political correctness at a dangerous level. There are legitimate reasons to accept and reject the current policy regarding gays in the military. No one, therefore, should be censored from speaking at any private or public forum—much less a military installation—because of his or her views on this subject. While the most immediate issue is the blacklisting of Perkins, the larger issue is the "chilling effect" this decision will have on the free speech and religious liberty rights of all those who serve in the military, especially clergymen.

As a religious leader, and as a veteran of the U.S. Air Force, I am doubly troubled by this outrageous decision. Accordingly, we will call for an investigation of this matter. The damage to Perkins cannot be undone, but steps can certainly be taken to ensure that something like this never happens again. I will now contact Major General Darrell D. Jones, Commander of the

Air Force District of Washington, at Andrews Air Force Base asking for a probe into this matter. It is important that the Public Affairs Office at Andrews hear from Catholic League members about this very disturbing issue.

Contact: [afdw.pa@afncr.af.mil](mailto:afdw.pa@afncr.af.mil)

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## NO PROBE OF USAFA NEEDED

On February 3, Catholic League president Bill Donohue issued a news release regarding an incident at the United States Air Force Academy (USAFA) that was troubling. At issue was a remark by USAFA Superintendent Lt. Gen. Michael Gould: he was upset with a wooden cross placed at the site of a pagan worship area.

Donohue objected to Gould's characterization and was impelled to ask for a Congressional probe given past problems with the Air Force Academy and the rights of Catholics on campus. He explains today why he is contacting Senator James Webb, Congresswoman Susan Davis and other members of the House and Senate Armed Services Committee:

Following our news release, I spoke to Father Robert Bruno, the Catholic Chaplain at the Air Force Academy. Without going into details, he convinced me that positive steps have been taken to ensure the religious liberty rights of all cadets, and that Lt. Gen. Michael Gould has played a central role in that effort. Accordingly, there is no need for any probe, and that is why I am contacting those who were initially asked to look into this matter to discontinue their investigation.

Father Bruno, I am pleased to note, is the first Catholic chaplain to work at the USAFA since 1991, a sign that Gould is

taking these matters seriously. However, because there are outside influences that are inimical to religious liberty on campus, we will continue to monitor this situation.

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## **OBAMA OKAYS ABORTION FUNDING**

Responding to President Obama's health care proposal is Catholic League president Bill Donohue:

Every time President Obama's spokesmen are asked about the Senate health care bill that authorizes federal funds for abortion, they reply that none of the bills put forth are the president's own. Moreover, the president has said that he would never sign a health care bill that funds abortion.

This issue is now settled, once and for all. President Obama's own proposal, which modifies some aspects of the Senate bill, has just been released. According to Newsweek, "The President makes no changes to the controversial abortion language included in the Senate bill."

While it is true that the pro-abortion camp will not be happy with the president for not striking some restrictions it deplores, the fact remains that President Obama could have adopted the pro-life friendly

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## **THERE IS ONLY ONE CATHOLIC**

# CHURCH

Mary E. Hunt, who runs a group called the Women's Alliance for Theology, Ethics and Ritual (WATER), has launched a vile assault on the Catholic Church. The pretext of her article is the decision of the Archdiocese of Washington to discontinue its foster-care program; the archdiocese maintains that as a condition of public funding it would have to compromise Church teachings on gay marriage.

In a piece posted on the website Religion Dispatches, Hunt accuses the entire Catholic Church of "bigotry" and says that the Church's position on gay marriage "is but one among differing Church theologies of sexuality"; she adds that "the hierarchy does not speak" for its members.

Catholic League president Bill Donohue took Hunt to task:

It is one thing to contest the teachings of the Catholic Church, quite another to say that dissident voices are authentically Catholic: there is only one official teaching body of the Catholic Church, and that is the Magisterium (the pope in communion with the bishops). Moreover, just as labor union leaders speak for union members, the Church's hierarchy speaks for Catholics. Anyone is free to disagree, but they are not free to distort. Hunt is a long-time master of such disinformation.

If anyone doubts that the website itself is corrupt, let them check out the picture that accompanies Hunt's screed. It shows two men frolicking with a young boy on their laps. One is dressed as a priest.

*Contact the website's managing editor, Evan Derkacz:*  
[evan@religiondispatches.org](mailto:evan@religiondispatches.org)

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# NEW YORK TIMES GETS FREE ADVICE

In the "Weekend Arts" section of today's *New York Times*, there is an article about a satirical comedy group, Capitol Steps, that is taking its D.C. show on the road to New York City tonight.

The piece describes some of the skits, none of which apparently deal with Catholicism. Nonetheless, in a color photo accompanying the article, there is a picture of a man grabbing the breast of a woman dressed as a nun in full habit (three men dressed in bizarre attire are also in the picture).

Catholic League president Bill Donohue responded as follows:

We know it's just a spoof. Or is it? Here's the test for the *New York Times*: next time they get the urge to get edgy, show a picture of two obviously gay guys grabbing each other's crotch in a photo accompanying an article about a play that has nothing to do with homosexuals. One more thing—tell complaining gays it's just a joke.

Contact NYT public editor Clark Hoyt: [public@nytimes.com](mailto:public@nytimes.com)

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# ELTON JOHN CALLS JESUS GAY

It is being reported that Elton John told *Parade* magazine that Jesus was gay. "I think Jesus was a compassionate, super-intelligent gay man who understood human problems."

Catholic League president Bill Donohue issued the following rejoinder today:

Jesus was certainly compassionate, but to say He was “super-intelligent” is to compare the Son of God to a successful game-show contestant. More seriously, to call Jesus a homosexual is to label Him a sexual deviant. But what else would we expect from a man who previously said, “From my point of view, I would ban religion completely.”

We’re not sure what’s worse—John’s ignorance or intolerance. In any event, if we thought we could persuade him to issue an apology, we would try. But given his recidivism, we won’t even bother to ask. One thing is clear: someone needs to straighten John out.

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## **ARE LIBERAL RELIGIONS DISAPPEARING?**

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on the data just released by the National Council of Churches:

The 2010 edition of the *Yearbook of American & Canadian Churches* is out and the results are strikingly similar to the overall pattern that has been evident for many decades: the more conservative the religion on moral issues, the more it continues to grow (or lose relatively few members); and the more liberal it is, the more it declines.

The big winners as reported in this year’s volume are the Roman Catholic Church, which is up by 1.5 percent; The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons), which grew by 1.7 percent; and the Assemblies of God, a Pentecostal group,

which jumped by 1.3 percent. Catholics now stand at 68 million, literally dwarfing every other religion in the nation. The big losers, as usual, are the mainline Protestant denominations.

What are we to make of this? The more “relevant” a religion tries to be, the more irrelevant it becomes. Seems like everyone save for liberals can figure this out. That’s good news for the traditionalists, and lousy news for the

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## **JOE BIDEN RIDICULED FOR WEARING ASHES**

Fox News analyst Bob Beckel today criticized Vice President Joe Biden for wearing ashes on TV; today is Ash Wednesday and Biden is Catholic.

In the middle of a discussion on President Obama’s stimulus plan, Beckel gratuitously said, “Sorry about laughing, but I looked at Joe Biden’s forehead, and I know it is Ash Wednesday, but I’m not sure I would wear that ash on the air. Anyway....”

Catholic League president Bill Donohue wasn’t amused:

Bob Beckel’s admonishing remark, “I’m not sure I would wear that ash on the air,” makes us wonder whether it is the public display of ashes he finds risible, or the religion that sports them.

In any event, there is no record of Beckel ever lecturing a Jew about wearing a yarmulke on TV or a Muslim wearing a turban. Must be something about Catholicism that bothers this



guy. We'd love to know what it is. At the very least, a clarification about what he meant is in order.

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## **CATHOLIC FOSTER CARE IN D.C. FORCED OUT**

As reported in today's *Washington Post*, Catholic Charities in the Archdiocese of Washington has ended its foster-care program. At issue was the right of the archdiocese to reject gay marriage and remain a city contractor; a bill legalizing same-sex marriage recently passed in the District.

Catholic League president Bill Donohue supports the archdiocese:

Archbishop Donald Wuerl is a man of principle and prudence: he did not want to end the foster-care program, but he was left with no realistic option. District lawmakers could have granted the kind of religious exemptions that would have ensured a continuation of services, but instead they sought to create a Catch-22 situation for the archdiocese. Surely they knew that Archbishop Wuerl was not going to negotiate Catholic Church teachings on marriage, yet that hardly mattered to them. The real losers are the children who were served by the Catholic Church.

Those who say that Wuerl is throwing the kids overboard are phonies. If Planned Parenthood were told that as a condition of public funding it had to refer Catholic women having second thoughts about abortion to a crisis pregnancy center, it would scream violation of church and state, refuse the money and end this program. Well, Archbishop Wuerl isn't about to allow the state to run roughshod over Catholic doctrine, and that is why

he is being forced to drop the foster-care program.

Prudent lawmakers interested in balancing church and state interests and servicing children would not seek to impose secular views on sectarian institutions. But that's not what D.C. legislators opted to do, leaving Archbishop Wuerl with no realistic alternative.