

# RELIGIOUS SCHOOLS IN NYS MERIT EQUAL TREATMENT

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on New York State's handling of private schools:

Earlier this year, the New York State Department of Education said it would issue guidelines on state oversight of private schools. What occasioned this decision were reports of the academically weak curriculum offered by some yeshivas operated by Orthodox Jews.

When this was announced, I expressed concerns that while there are legitimate state interests in seeing to it that standard academic courses are being offered in every school, it was also important to guard against state encroachment on the autonomy of religious schools. Now there has been a new development.

The budget that was recently passed in New York addresses the issue of state oversight of private schools. Of concern to the Catholic League are passages within it that appear to provide less state scrutiny for yeshivas than other parochial schools. This would not only be patently unjust, it would be perverse: the trigger for more oversight was not the Catholic school curriculum, it was the one used by some yeshivas.

To read my letter to the New York State Commissioner of Education, click [here](#).

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# BIAS      PERVADES      SOUTHERN POVERTY   LAW   CENTER

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on how bias affects decision making at the Southern Poverty Law Center:

Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) is regarded by many journalists as the gold standard for information on hate groups. But its record is dotted with inconsistencies—it has itself engaged in hateful discourse against some traditionally minded organizations: branding the Family Research Council a hate group is one glaring example. Not as well known are its more subtle ways of emitting bias.

SPLC issued a statement on April 3 about a federal court judge's decision against Matt Hale, an imprisoned neo-Nazi who sued the Federal Bureau of Prisons for violating his religious rights; prison facilities monitored his mail, disallowing incendiary material. U.S. District Judge Marcia Krieger of Colorado ruled that Hale's religion, the Creativity Movement, failed to meet four of the five legal determinants of what constitutes a religion. Ergo, his religious rights were not violated.

Judge Krieger's decision was a model of excellence: Hale's "religion," she said, was essentially a secular philosophy, and a hateful one at that.

The issue for the Catholic League is why SPLC, which accurately cited Hale's hatred of Jews and African Americans, didn't mention his anti-Christian, especially anti-Catholic, animus. A thorough check of its many reports on Hale, and his predecessor, Ben Klassen, found scant mention of either man's hatred of Christianity, in general, and almost no mention of his hostility to Catholicism.

Hale is serving time for soliciting a hit man to kill a

federal judge. A failed lawyer, he is a real wacko. According to SPLC, "He never had a serious job, sported a Hitler wristwatch and used an Israeli flag as a doormat outside his room [he spent almost his entire life living in his father's house in East Peoria]. He kept a collection of teddy bears on his bed, and although he eventually married—twice—neither union lasted more than a few months."

Hale took over the Church of the Creator once its founder, Klassen, committed suicide in 1993. Hale renamed it the World Church of the Creator in 1996, and in 2003 it became known as the Creativity Movement.

Klassen, even more than Hale, made known how much he hated Christianity. He called Jesus a "fiction," whose fictitious followers practiced celibacy, self-denial and pacifism. They also professed to love their enemy, all of which he said were "wimpish ideas attributed to Jesus Christ, the holy guru of the Roman Catholic Church."

Regarding Jesus, and the first appointed pope, Peter, Klassen said that "this actually has no historical basis in fact, any more than the story of Mother Goose or Santa Claus. There is no historical evidence that either Christ, or Peter, or Matthew, Mark, Luke and John ever existed."

Given all this, how did the Church proceed? It used "terror, torture and tyranny," perfecting "the Jewish techniques of total mind enslavement." Furthermore, the Church "is outright hostile to the White Race and strongly favors the rights and interests of the niggers, Indians and mud races of the world. From its inception, the creed and teachings of the Catholic church have been an unmitigated disaster for the White Race."

Klassen and Hale were hateful men who took aim at Christians, as well as Jews and African Americans. So why does SPLC fail to profile their bigotry targeting Protestants and Catholics?

This is not the first time this has happened, and it is not

unique to SPLC. When the media talk about the Westboro Baptist Church, we hear about the church's hatred of African Americans and homosexuals, but not much about its animus against Catholics. Similarly, the Ku Klux Klan is anti-Catholic, anti-Jewish, and anti-African American, yet we hear little about its hatred of Catholics.

When SPLC whitewashes the anti-Christian bigotry of Klassen and Hale—focusing almost exclusively on their hatred of African Americans and Jews—the implication is that the victimizers are Christians. After all, if 70 percent-75 percent of Americans are Christians, who would the offenders be?

All manifest demonstrations of bigotry should be condemned equally. When politics intercedes—elevating some expressions over others—it does a disservice to justice. And it calls into question the sincerity of those who purport to be outraged.

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## **EASTER SPARKED A RASH OF OFFENSES**

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on some anti-Easter fare disseminated over the past few days:

Easter is a joyous day in the Christian calendar, but for those who are either hateful or ignorant, it is also time to mock Christianity. There was a flurry of such examples in the run-up to Easter this year, though some were rather innocuous while others were more serious.

On the day before Holy Thursday, Big Fish Enterprises took the first below-the-belt attack. The self-styled “full service

content production company," which creates all sorts of media programming, posted some obscene comments about Jesus on its website, offering a portrait of him extending his middle finger.

On Holy Thursday, Frank Rich, the *New York Times* has-been theater critic, took a shot at Laura Ingraham *and all Christians* when he tweeted, "Religion remains the last refuge of scoundrels. 'Holy Week' my ass." All this from a guy whose antenna searching for anti-Semitism is up in the sky.

On Good Friday, NBC's Chuck Todd got himself in trouble when he tweeted, "I'm a bit hokey when it comes to 'Good Friday.' I don't mean disrespect to the religious aspect of the day, but I love the idea of reminding folks that any day can become 'good,' all it takes is a little selflessness on our part. Works EVERY time." I take him at his word that he meant no harm. There is a difference between a flip remark and a low blow designed to hurt.

On Easter morning, NBC News posted an opinion piece by some evangelical Christian writer, Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove, saying that Easter is used to "prop up white nationalism and bigotry." This is irresponsible. To be sure, the holy days in all religious calendars have been used by some bigots to justify their actions. So what? Why is this cited on Easter Sunday?

Easter did not pass without an insulting statement made on the Showtime program, "Our Cartoon President."

The animated series, which delights in taking pot shots at President Trump, featured the Trump character saying, "Was that Joseph guy a putz [*slang for penis*], or what? Clearly, he wasn't taking care of Mary's needs. I mean, if God knocked up my wife, he'd never drink again. I'd cut off God's penis." The same character also said, "They love me. I'm like Jesus, only with twice as many prostitutes."

The co-founder and executive producer of this show is Stephen Colbert. His pathological hatred of Trump is one thing, but for him to produce a show that assaults Christian sensibilities on Easter Sunday is low class. Because of who he is, and what he sanctioned, his attack was clearly the most egregious of them all.

Contact Showtime VP for Entertainment Public Relations, Frank Marchesini: [frank.marchesini@showtime.net](mailto:frank.marchesini@showtime.net)

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## CHILD VICTIMS ACT FAILS AGAIN

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on New York's Child Victims Act:

New York Governor Andrew Cuomo included the Child Victims Act in his budget this year and he failed. It was pulled over the weekend. He said he hopes it will succeed legislatively, and if that fails, he hopes to make it a campaign issue in November.

This is a victory for those who believe in justice, and a failure for those salivating at the thought of yet another lawsuit against the Catholic Church.

The "look-back" provision, the most controversial element of the bill, would allow victims to bring suit against offenders, no matter how long ago the alleged offense occurred. This kind of "roll-back-the-clock" idea of justice is fraught with problems: many of the accused, and witnesses, are dead, and the recollections of those still alive are not exactly reliable. That's why we have a civil libertarian protection called the statute of limitations.

Moreover, many of the dioceses in New York already have an institutional mechanism to deal with real cases of abuse that took place in the past, making moot the “look-back” provision. In short, Cuomo and the professional victims’ lobby are guilty of moral grandstanding—it would not protect one young person.

Congratulations to those who stood for justice by defeating this sham of a bill. We are proud of our effort to tell the truth about the Child Victims Act (click [here](#) to read about it). All principled civil libertarians have reason to rejoice.