

MEDIA BIAS ON RELIGIOUS COVERAGE

On March 9, we drew several examples of media bias from various newspapers from around the world.

Orthodox Rabbi Baruch Lebovits was found guilty the previous day on eight counts of sexually abusing a 16-year old boy in Brooklyn. When a Catholic priest is accused of embezzlement—never mind sexual abuse—it typically merits a front-page story in the *New York Daily News* and the *New York Post*; the *New York Times* usually places such stories in a less prominent spot. On Rabbi Lebovits, the *Daily News* ran a 334-word story on p. 15; the *Post* put a 143-word piece on p. 6; and the *Times* ignored it altogether.

The *New York Times* ran another lengthy story about Charles Pellegrino, author of a book on Hiroshima that has been withdrawn by his publisher over concerns that Pellegrino used fraudulent sources and has been less than candid about his credentials and other matters. Both that day's story, and the one from March 2, discussed some of Pellegrino's other writings, but neither mentioned a book he co-wrote, *The Jesus Family Tomb*, that was widely shown to be a hoax: the book said there was evidence of a tomb housing the remains of Jesus and his family.

There are lots of Protestants and Jews who are pro-abortion and support the health care bill currently being considered, but their religion never seems to get mentioned in the press. The AP ran a story citing opposition to the bill from Rep. Bart Stupak, noting that he is a "Roman Catholic" who has been questioned about his religious views.

Regarding the Muslim murder of Christians in Nigeria, we found 34 headlines citing "religious" violence; four mentioned "Christian-Muslim violence"; and only one, *The Times* (of London), said anything like "Rampaging Muslim Gangs Trap Christian Victims in Nets."

None of this is by accident, and none of it is indicative of a cabal. It's all a reflection of a deep-seated anti-Catholic animus on the part of many elites. And these examples were all drawn from just one day's news stories.

VOTE NEARS ON DAWN JOHNSEN

On March 4, the Senate Judiciary Committee approved the nomination of Dawn Johnsen to head the Office of Legal Counsel; after failing to be approved for the post last year, she was renominated by the president in January. Her nomination now sits before the entire U.S. Senate.

In the minds of many, on both sides of the aisle, she is considered controversial. Our only interest is her anti-Catholic bigotry.

In 1988, Johnsen worked on a brief, *United States Catholic Conference v. Abortion Rights Mobilization*, that sought to strip the Catholic Church of its tax-exempt status.

Although there are legitimate reasons to oppose Johnsen, Bill Donohue wrote a letter to every member of the Senate voicing our concern. The letter contained just one question: "Are you aware that Dawn Johnsen, who will soon be voted upon by the full Senate, sought to strip the Roman Catholic Church of its tax-exempt status in 1988?"

As we went to press this issue was not yet resolved.

KANSAS WEIGHS BILL TO TAX

CHURCHES

A bill in the Kansas House of Representatives that was initially introduced to repeal the sales tax exemption of all non-profit organizations was recently amended to target only religious non-profits. The bill, which was debated in March, sought to penalize the Catholic Church and organizations like Catholic Charities, as well as other religions and charitable groups. As we went to press, this legislation was yet to be debated.

This is the type of stunt that would be expected in states like New York, Illinois or California, not Kansas. Surely the sponsors know that in the unlikely event they succeed, the courts will strike the legislation. Not only do houses of worship and their charitable ancillary groups fulfill the express purpose of granting a tax-exempt status in the first place—servicing the common good—they cannot be singled out among non-profits in such a discriminatory manner. If it were libraries, hospitals, foundations or colleges and universities that were subject to having their tax-exempt status pulled, it would be met with great resistance. One could bet that Catholics, as well as Protestants, Jews and others, would register their outrage.

We know that due to incompetence and cowardice, Republicans and Democrats at all levels of government have created a fiscal nightmare for the American people. To think they can resolve this issue by punishing the faithful is as irresponsible as it is delusional.

We asked our members to contact Kansas House Speaker Mike O'Neal—who is opposed to the bill—to let him know that this legislation must be stopped.

NO PROBE OF USAFA NEEDED

Recently the Catholic League 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.

We objected to Gould's characterization that the placement of the cross was "destructive" and "different than someone writing graffiti on the Cadet Chapel." We followed up by asking for a Congressional probe given past problems with the USAFA and the rights of Catholics on campus.

Following our news release, Bill Donohue spoke to Father Robert Bruno, the Catholic Chaplain at the Air Force Academy. He convinced Donohue that positive steps had 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, we called off our request for a probe and contacted Sen. James Webb, Rep. Susan Davis and other members of the House and Senate Armed Services Committee asking them to discontinue their investigation.

We noted, however, that there are outside influences that are inimical to religious liberty near campus namely Mikey Weinstein, president of the Military Religious Freedom Foundation and graduate of the Academy. Weinstein called the cross at the pagan site tantamount to having a swastika in the Jewish center. With people like this closely tied with the Academy, we are making sure we continue to monitor the situation.

PLANNED PARENTHOOD RIPS CATHOLICISM

We recently commented on a new report by the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) on sex education.

The goal of IPPF is to sexually engineer society, and one way to accomplish this feat is to smear religious conservatives, especially Catholics. This new report not only substantiates this charge, it makes it clear that Planned Parenthood wants to bring its irresponsible ideas to bear on kids.

“IPPF uses the terms young people, youth and adolescents interchangeably to refer to people who are between 10 and 24.” In other words, 5th graders should be treated the same way graduate students are when it comes to their “sexual and reproductive health and rights.”

The entire program is based on a faulty assumption. IPPF says, “The taboo on youth sexuality is one of the key forces driving the AIDS epidemic and high rates of teenage pregnancy and maternal mortality.” Nonsense. In the 1950s, there was no sex education in the schools, the pill was not commercially available and AIDS didn’t exist. Yet the out-of-wedlock birth rate was comparatively miniscule and sexually transmitted diseases were relatively rare. All because of taboos.

According to IPPF, it’s those Catholics—who are indistinguishable from radical Islamists—who are the problem. “Fundamentalist and other religious groups—the Catholic Church and madrasas (Islamic schools) for example—have imposed tremendous barriers that prevent young people, particularly, from obtaining information and services related to sex and reproduction.”

So the kids in Sister Mary’s class who learn about responsible

sex are analogous to Imam Mohammad's kids who are either denied sex education or are told that homosexuality is punishable by death.

Finally, why is it that public school students, who know so much more about sex than those dunces in the parochial schools, are precisely the ones walking around with the highest rates of illegitimacy, abortion and herpes?

HANNITY IS RIGHT: OBAMA IS “THE ANOINTED ONE

On the front page of the “Week in Review” section of the March 14 *New York Times*, there was a piece on health care titled, “Is Failure Forgivable?” Accompanying the article was a photo of President Barack Obama in rolled-up shirt sleeves with his finger pointed upwards. Superimposed in the background was an illustration that showed an illuminated cross; a halo over Obama's head was also depicted. A small picture of the White House was shown at the bottom of the cross.

Catholic League president Bill Donohue commented as follows:

“Sean Hannity refers to President Obama as ‘the anointed one.’ The only difference between Hannity and the *New York Times* is that his characterization is meant as sarcasm. The *Times* actually believes it.”

This is the same newspaper that refused to run the Danish cartoon imagery of Muhammad. Nice to know that it obviously has no problem misappropriating Christian imagery to make a

political point, even during Lent. What a class bunch.

LINDSAY LOHAN POSES AS JESUS

Actress Lindsay Lohan appeared on the cover of the Spring/Summer 2010 edition of the French fashion magazine, *Purple*

, wearing a low-neck white outfit with her hands outstretched and a crown of thorns on her head.

Not only was the pose inappropriate, the timing was offensive: the magazine hit newsstands the week before Lent.

Lohan, an ex-Catholic who is spiritually homeless, recently said, "I'm all about Karma...what goes around comes around." If she believes that, then it should behoove her to apologize to Christians before it's too late.

Tiger Woods is not the only celebrity who would benefit by converting to Christianity these days. Forgiveness occupies a central place in Christianity, but the predicate to forgiveness is repentance.

ELTON JOHN CALLS JESUS GAY

In a recent interview, Elton John told Parade magazine that Jesus was gay. "I think Jesus was a compassionate, super-intelligent gay man who understood human problems."

When we heard about this comment, we wasted no time in firing back at Sir Elton.

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, we said, “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—the ignorance or intolerance of Elton John. In any event, if we thought we could persuade him to issue an apology, we would try. But given his recidivism, we didn’t even bother to ask.

However, one thing is clear: someone needs to straighten John out.

GAY ACTIVIST RIPS POPE ON BEHAR SHOW

On a recent edition of CNNH’s “Joy Behar Show,” homosexual activist Michelangelo Signorile said the following: “You have this pope saying that homosexuality is the end of civilization. That we have to protect the culture from homosexuality the way we have to protect the rainforest from degradation. You know, we’ve got a bishop in Guam who just said that gays are worse than the Islamic fundamentalists.” To which Behar said, “Oh, my God.”

None of what Signorile said is true. Not only has the pope never said that homosexuality is the “end of civilization,” a Lexis-Nexis search shows that he has never even used that term.

Regarding the comment on homosexuality and the rainforest, here is exactly what the pope said in December 2008: “That which has come to be expressed and understood with the term

‘gender’ effectively results in man’s self-emancipation from Creation (nature) and from the Creator. Man wants to do everything by himself and to decide always and exclusively about anything that concerns him personally. But this is to live against truth, to live against the Spirit Creator. The tropical rainforests deserve our protection, yes, but man does not deserve it less as a Creature of the Spirit himself, in whom is inscribed a message that does not mean a contradiction of human freedom but its condition.”

Nowhere is homosexuality mentioned, never mind the spin Signorile put on it.

Last October, Guam Archbishop Anthony Apuron said that “Islamic fundamentalists clearly understand the damage that homosexual behavior inflicts on a culture. That is why they repress such behavior by death.” But he did not sanction such measures. Indeed, he unequivocally condemned them. “Terrorism as a way to oppose the degeneration of the culture is to be rejected completely since such violence is itself another form of degeneracy.” So Signorile again twisted what was actually said.

Common decency suggests that a retraction be made. But Signorile never offered one.

JOE BIDEN RIDICULED FOR WEARING ASHES

On Ash Wednesday, Fox News analyst Bob Beckel criticized Vice President Joe Biden, a Catholic, for wearing ashes on TV.

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...."

Bob Beckel's admonishing remark made us wonder whether it is the public display of ashes he finds risible, or the religion that sports them.

In any event, we could find no instance 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 him. We'd love to know what it is. At the very least, a clarification about what he meant was in order.