

Cardinal Newman Society Seeks to Preserve Catholic Higher Education

The Cardinal Newman Society (CNS) was established in 1993 to address the many problems that confront Catholic higher education today. Through educational programs and activities, CNS encourages colleges and universities to renew their devotion to education that is faithful to the Church, as described in Pope John Paul II's apostolic constitution, *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*.

In order to be effective, it is essential that CNS maintain contact with individuals and groups that are in close contact with Catholic colleges or universities in the U.S. CNS is looking for students, parents, alumni, and faculty members who are interested in participating in this effort and perhaps forming local chapters. Contact: Cardinal Newman Society, P.O. Box 75274, Washington, D.C. 20013.

Better Late Than Never

Has anyone out there noticed that Gregorian Chant is suddenly a very hot item in the music industry? We've received several CDs for review and most of them are quite good. Be aware that the quality of the recordings is not uniform because of the mad rush to produce chant albums. If at all possible try to listen to an album before you buy it.

Attack on Church Sparks Strong Responses

On October 21, the *Courier-News* of Bridgewater, New Jersey printed a vicious article against the Catholic Church by Alan Shelton, a writer from Elizabeth, New Jersey. Shelton, a self-confessed Jewish activist, said that he would have led a demonstration against Pope John Paul II if the Holy Father's visit had not been canceled.

In his piece, Shelton wrote that the Pope represented "the most anti-Semitic religious institution in world history." He blamed the Vatican for its role during the Holocaust and stated that this "most chilling indictment" remains "largely unknown." Shelton believes that Pope John Paul II "follows in the tradition of papal Jew-baiting," and thus has earned the title "vicar of anti-Semitism." Shelton also condemned Jewish leaders for not being critical enough of the Pontiff.

Shelton's tirade triggered a response from Beth Gilinsky, president of the Jewish Action Alliance, and William Donohue, president of the Catholic League. Miss Gilinsky and Dr. Donohue have worked together on several issues. The Jewish Action Alliance is a formidable organization of Jewish men and women who work responsibly to combat bigotry.

A Response from the Catholic League

The Courier-News

Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor:

The article by Alan Shelton ("Anti-Semitism: The Church's Chilling Legacy," Oct. 21) is more of a screed than a reasoned argument. Shelton's reading of history is deeply flawed and, given his hatred of the Catholic Church, it seems likely his incompetence is a function of his hatred.

Shelton claims that the Church's role during the Holocaust is "largely unknown." With that we agree, though the evidence is not something that Shelton would like to trumpet. It was Jeno Levai, the foremost scholar of the Holocaust in Hungary, who said that Pope Pius XII "did more than anyone else to halt the dreadful crime [the Holocaust] and alleviate its consequences." And it was the Israeli diplomat and scholar Pinchas Lapide who wrote that "The Catholic Church under the pontificate of Pius XII was instrumental in saving the lives of as many as 860,000 Jews from certain death at Nazi hands." Golda Meir similarly recognized Pius XII's heroics.

Shelton would also have a hard time explaining why the chief rabbi in Rome during the German occupation, Emilio Zolli, would say that "no hero in all of history was more militant, more fought against, none more heroic, than Pius XII." Indeed, Zolli was so moved by Pius XII's work that he became a Catholic after the war and took the Pope's name as his baptismal name.

And then there was the lavish praise of the *New York Times* and Albert Einstein. On Christmas eve of 1941 and 1942, the *Times* praised Pius XII as a "lonely voice crying out of the silence

of a continent.” Einstein noted that while the universities and the newspapers did nothing to prevent the Holocaust, “Only the Church stood squarely across the path of Hitler’s campaign for suppressing truth.”

Now if Shelton wants to avoid grappling with this, let him. But honest men, unmotivated by bigotry, know better.

Sincerely,

William A. Donohue, Ph.D.

A Response from the Jewish Action Alliance

OPINION/LETTERS “Catholic Church Progress More Notable Than History”

The Courier-News (October 25, 1994)

The Jewish people have suffered a great deal from stereotyping, and we’ve been the victims of many such slurs. It is for that reason that we must denounce religious slander when it is done against another faith.

Today’s article (C-N. Oct. 21) by an individual who is well known to our organization unfairly portrays the Catholic Church in a skewed, unfair light. It highlights the church’s anti-Semitic actions of half a century ago while ignoring its commendable work and progress. Most unfortunately, the writer is apparently motivated by purposes that have nothing to do with Catholicism; he has sought – and found – a means of flinging mud at Jewish organizations with which he has had prior disagreements. Our organization has also had policy arguments with the Anti-Defamation League. but we cannot

condone this type of religious slander, no matter what the purpose.

Obviously, we disagree with the Pope's decision to honor Kurt Waldheim, despite his Nazi past, and other interactions with anti-Semitic individuals. Jews have had many disagreements with the Vatican; so have Protestants, Muslims. and occasionally, Catholics. This is no reason to libel the Pontiff or slander an entire group of believers.

We remember the ground-breaking work against anti-Semitism done by Msgr. Oesterreicher and carried on by Sister Rose Thering. Our organization has worked towards goals of mutual concern and understanding with Dr. William A. Donohue of the Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights. who is characterized by his thoughtful and tolerant leadership. We are thankful for a gifted religious leader such as Cardinal O'Connor, who has made religious tolerance a driving force in his work. We recall the Righteous Gentiles, many of them Catholic. who sheltered Jews during the years of Nazi horrors and we have seen. day after day, countless acts of mutual respect and tolerance by Catholic clergy and lay people. This is the actual Catholic Church. not the dark vision seen by the deeply troubling mind of Mr. Shelton.

In closing, we'd like to ask Catholics to examine Mr. Shelton's accusations closely to determine the real target of his frustration. It isn't the Bishop of Rome or his followers; it's his fellow Jews. Mr. Shelton harps again and again at Jewish organizations that have shunned his accusatory philosophy, and makes vile characterizations, such as "the mass gratitude of Jewish leaders desperate for any approval from gentiles, anti-Semites included." Mr. Shelton is aiming at his fellow Jews. and Catholics are the innocent bystanders who got in his way.

Beth Gilinsky,
president of the Jewish Action Alliance in New York City.

Anti-Catholic Bigotry Again Rears Its Head

By Fr. F. L. Lennon, O. P.

Anti-Catholic bigotry in Rhode Island reared its ugly head in a letter to Rep. Jack Reed by a group of 13 Protestant ministers and 6 Jewish rabbis.

They informed the Congressman that they were troubled by the action of the Roman Catholic bishops in encouraging members of the Catholic Church to oppose abortion coverage in a national health care reform bill.

I ask these reverend gentlemen and lady: Would you deny Catholic bishops their civil right to counsel their flock about the heinousness of killing innocent life in the womb and about their duty to oppose it?

The First Amendment of the American Constitution states that Congress shall make no law prohibiting the free exercise of religion.

No issue in our time symbolizes more the intersection of the sacred with the secular than the direct and deliberate destruction of the unborn child. The right to life is not just one tenet in the American creed: it is the primary and predominant right, the *sine qua non* of all other rights.

Perhaps these bewailers of the bishops' exercise of free speech would like to see the Catholic religion relegated to a totally ceremonial function in life, to a purely private affair, deprived of the public vote to influence those moral decisions made through the democratic political process? No

way. The moral tone of society for the next quarter-century is being set largely as a result of certain judicial and legislative decisions, and Catholics, like all concerned citizens, deserve a voice in its formation.

Supporting bills and candidates that held promise of enacting their moral concerns, these zealots used their churches as rallying points and sometimes as places of sanctuary for public-spirited citizens who were trying to overcome racial discrimination and poverty or to redirect foreign policy.

Every civil rights gain since the Civil War has been achieved, at least partially, by strong religious pressure.

To say that those who oppose abortion are free not to engage in it, while those who approve may do so, simply begs the question, since in effect, Catholics are being asked to countenance the massive taking of human life.

It is ironic that those who accuse the Catholic Church of seeking to impose its morality on the nation never balance that charge with the fact that the Protestant, Jewish, and non-religious anti-life groups which approve abortion are doing the same thing. Indeed, a greater threat would seem to emanate from organizations like the Religious Coalition for Abortion Rights which lobbies in Washington and claims to represent 23 Protestant and Jewish factions.

If the pro-abortion clerics had attacked Catholic bishops with the humanitarian intent of dialoging about the abortion issue, one could praise their altruism. But to discuss the morality of abortion is the last thing pro-abortionists want to do.

"Why are we horrified," asks New York's Cardinal O'Connor, "when discarded fetuses are found in the trash? Is it not because we are profoundly convinced that the unborn child is human?" If the fetus lacks the credentials for belonging to the human race, then one doesn't have to confute the argument that the right to life is the foremost of all human rights.

In faulting the Catholic episcopate, the anti-life ministers and rabbis state apodictically that opposition to abortion "does not represent the vast majority of American citizens." On the contrary, no poll exists that shows Americans favor unlimited abortion throughout the gestation period.

How, then, account for the hateful animus of the pro-abortion camp toward those who uphold the inviolability of life from the womb to the tomb? In mean-spirited fashion, pro-life promoters are portrayed as vicious fanatics, political troglodytes and enemies of sexual fulfillment. Abortion thereby becomes elevated, in this transvaluation of values from the status of an odious crime to the height of almost a virtue.

Abortion is not a Catholic issue. Every American who values his or her humanity, regardless of religious beliefs, should take pride in being champions of the innocent, helpless, defenseless, voiceless unborn.

Presently our nation is in the throes of a crisis which is, at bottom, spiritual. Starting with the abortion issue, it is metastasizing swiftly into many areas of morality where Christian values are being jettisoned. Many citizens see abortion as the single over-riding moral question of the day. Vatican Council II stands foursquare against the killing of the growing baby in the womb, calling it an "unspeakable crime" and declaring that "no Christian can ever conform to a law that makes abortion legal."

Anti-Catholic sentiment has undoubtedly surfaced because of the abortion controversy, or perhaps it is more accurate to say that abortion has provided a rationale for feelings already there. Roman Catholics are the major minority group against whom it is still respectable to express prejudice and contempt. Apparently, anti-Catholicism – the dirty little secret of our society – is still alive and thriving. The refusal of the small band of non-Catholic Rhode Island clerics

to recognize the right of Catholic bishops to speak out on the social issue of abortion lends credence to the existence of what historian Arthur Schlesinger Sr. labeled the “most deeply rooted of American prejudices.”

Fr. Lennon is retired vice-president of Providence College. This commentary appeared in The Providence Visitor, September 29, 1994. It is reprinted here – edited for space – with permission.

THE COMMONWEAL CONFERENCE

By Cynthia Jessup

Are the media anti-religious? Do the media engage in Catholic bashing, Muslim stereotyping, the mockery or dismissal of traditional morality? If so, who is responsible and what can be done about it?

The possible responses to these questions and the issues that surround them were discussed at the last of three symposiums on Media and Religion sponsored by *Commonweal* magazine. The first two were held at Loyola University in Chicago and Georgetown University in Washington, D. C. This third and final one was held at Fordham University School of Law in New York City on October 25.

Peter Steinfels, senior religion correspondent of the *New York Times*, was the keynote speaker. Judith H. Banki of the Rabbi Tannenbaum Foundation was the moderator for the panel discussion, which included William F. Baker, CEO of WNET TV, Randall Balmer, Professor of Religion at Columbia University, John Leo of *U.S. News & World Report*, and Mary Alice Williams, former religion correspondent for NBC and CNN.

The symposium was aptly titled "War of the World Views? Religion and the Media." I say 'aptly' because it became clear during the opening speech and particularly during the panel discussion that there were two worldviews prompting opinions. These viewpoints, while not necessarily at war, were in profound disagreement.

In general, the two views could be sketched out as one that took religion seriously, and one that did not. The first understood religion to be a major force – morally, rationally, and politically – among the American people. The second seemed to see it as a second rate issue, one that had to be dealt with but wasn't quite the central concern for truly rational people. As John Leo put it, the elite press corps saw religion as a hangover from the Middle Ages that must be indulged. This attitude, he noted, was fundamentally derived from the Enlightenment. Religious believers were relegated to the sidelines as irrational and overreactive. For example, Mr. Steinfelds made the observation that "religion and media is a hot topic these days – surrounded by hypersensitivity and paranoia."

The primary opinion of the modernist camp was that anti-religion bias and stereotyping was due to ignorance. Doubtless these stereotypes do, in many cases, spring from ignorance. As Father Richard John Neuhaus, editor of *First Things*, noted in the October issue, most national media reporters live in areas where secular life is the norm and where they aren't likely to have the chance to observe a religious tradition or come to know it in a sympathetic setting. Hence this religious ignorance often blossoms into malicious reporting and/or anti-religion coverage when it confronts a stance that is profoundly opposed to their secular worldview. Ms. Ranki commented on the extreme likelihood for people's convictions to affect their writing while they themselves are unconscious of it. The result is that what should be an ordinary news story becomes an anti-religious piece plugging a secularist

worldview – sometimes blatantly but more often in a subtle manner, by making the opposing tradition, generally symbolized by the Catholic Church and the papacy, appear out-of-step, irrational, and harmful to the greater good. Mr. Steinfelds responded to this kind of reporting in his speech by labeling it a sort of misperception on the part of the audience. Religious readers, after seeing an editorial in which definite anti-Catholic or liberal opinions are expressed, go on to read the news articles and expect it to carry the same ideological slant. This is inappropriate, he said, because while editorials are meant to express an opinion, reporting is meant to be objective and factual, and readers should make that distinction.

It was also said that reporting on religion suffered from a dearth of reporters educated about the subject that they write about. Time and space constraints were cited as well. All these problems, it was maintained, make it difficult to deal with religion in an appropriate manner, but were ostensibly not based on genuine malice or enmity towards religious people or institutions. Yet, as Ms. Williams noted, reporting for most subjects covered regularly in the news is done by reporters who hold degrees in a pertinent subject area. Political reporters have degrees in political science; medical issues are covered by medical doctors. Why religion isn't covered by religiously devout and informed people was never explained. Perhaps it is because those in the news are so biased in their ignorance that they consider religion too trivial or too subjective to merit an informed perspective.

Regarding the constraints of every media effort, the papers and television media regularly deal with subject matter that requires greater amounts of time and background than the average news item. The immediate example is science. In this case, they generally have an entire section, or segment of a broadcast, that deals only with that issue, and it is written by experts in the field. Why religion should be accorded dif-

ferent treatment, particularly when many Americans classify themselves as “religiously conservative,” went without adequate explanation.

Supreme Court to Review Rosenberger

In a welcome move, the United States Supreme Court has agreed to review a federal appeals court decision supporting a university’s decision to deny funding to a Christian journal published by students even though the university regularly grants money to other student organizations.

The plaintiff in the case, *Rosenberger v. Rector and Visitors of the University of Virginia*, was a student at the University of Virginia when he founded a nonprofit journal called *Wide Awake: A Christian Perspective at the University of Virginia*. The journal was created to address a wide range of social, philosophical and school-related issues from a Christian point of view. Mr. Rosenberger sought money to help defray publication costs from the university’s Student Activities Fund (SAF), which is funded by mandatory student activities fees collected by the university each semester. Citing a provision of the SAF guidelines excluding “religious activities,” the university denied Rosenberger’s request, even though more than 100 student organizations and a dozen publications receive subsidies from SAF. Mr. Rosenberger then sued the university challenging the constitutionality of the “religious activities” exclusion.

A federal district court upheld the university’s decision, as did the United States Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit.

The appeals court ruled that while discriminating among publications based on their content would ordinarily be barred by the Free Speech clause of the First Amendment, the university's action was justified in this case because it demonstrated a compelling state interest in maintaining the separation of church and state. Funding *Wide Awake* would violate the Establishment Clause the court said, and would "send an unmistakably clear signal that the University of Virginia supports Christian values and wishes to promote the wide promulgation of those values."

This is the only religion case on the court's docket so far this term and will give the court an opportunity to reconsider the current precedent now used to decide Establishment Clause cases. The test, from a 1971 case *Lemon v. Kurtzman*, has proved difficult for the justices to apply and has led to great confusion in the court's religion clause jurisprudence.

The League joined the Christian Legal Society and others in filing a friend of the court brief urging the court to hear this case; now that review has been granted, the League plans to file a friend of the court brief urging the court to overturn the erroneous court of appeals decision which sanctioned discrimination against religion.

The *Lemon* Test

In *Lemon v. Kurtzman* (1971) the Supreme Court enunciated a three part test (the Lemon test) for determining whether government action violates the Establishment Clause of the Constitution. Under *Lemon*, a governmental action does not offend the Establishment Clause if: (1) it has a secular purpose; (2) its principal effect neither advances nor inhibits religion; and (3) it does not foster excessive entanglement of government with religion.

Did the Children Cry? Hitler's War Against Jewish and Polish Children, 1939-45

Did the Children Cry?

Hitler's War Against Jewish and Polish Children, 1939-45

Richard C. Lukas

Hippocrene Books, 1994

In this, Lukas' seventh book, he traces the devastating effects of the Nazi regime on Polish and Jewish children during the years 1939 to 1945. Creating a time-line of military tactics, he outlines seven categories, detailing the losses and effects of each. They are Invasion, Deportation, Concentration Camps, Germanization, Resistance, Hiding, and the War and Child Survivors. In each, we meet rescuers and informants, heroes and criminals, survivors and victims.

Of perhaps greatest interest to Catholic readers is the chapter on hiding in which Lukas emphasizes the role played by clergy, religious and the laity. In it he writes, "The Catholic Church played a critical role in aiding unfortunate people, including Jews, during the war." Lukas related several instances where priests, monks and nuns hid children in the robes of their cassocks and habits to aid in their escape. Baptism and the hiding of children in convents and churches were also mentioned as methods of protection. Also noted are the tremendous losses suffered by clergy and religious, 50 percent in some places, 20 percent in others.

Those orders of women religious singled out for their heroic efforts include the Sisters of Charity (Grey Sisters), the

Felician Sisters, the Ursulines, Little Servant Sisters of the Immaculate Conception, Franciscan Sisters of the Family of Mary and the Order of St. Elizabeth. Lukas quotes a distinguished Jewish historian, Szymon Datner, on the efforts of Polish Catholic nuns, as such: "In my research I have found only one case of help being refused. No other sector was so ready to help those persecuted by the Germans, including the Jews...this attitude, unanimous and general, deserves recognition and respect."

Not to be forgotten were the efforts of individuals, no doubt with the support of many behind them. Ranking Polish clergymen, such as Archbishop Adam Sapieha of Krakow, Bishop Karol Niemira and canon Roman Archutowski, led the way by urging clergy to help the Jews. Others followed their lead, including Fr. Maximilian Kolbe, future Pope John Paul II, Karol Wojtyla, the Home of Father Boduen, and many other individuals and groups too numerous to name here but which are included in Lukas' account.

Trying to document how many children lost their lives has proven to be a very difficult task, and while no book will ever be able to tell the complete story, Lukas does a credible job. He intersperses the endless numbers, dates, locations and losses with personal accounts of tragedy and triumph. A well-researched book, Lukas carefully cites every name, number, organization and individual. His sources range from news accounts of the day to contemporary studies and research efforts, both in Polish and English.

Lukas does not overdramatize the situation as reality was tragic enough. He alternates between the head counts and personal accounts, between figures and faces. In his chapter, "The War and Child Survivors," and in the Epilogue, Lukas relates stories from some of the young survivors of the war. The lifelong effect is evident in one child who, after the war ended, was quoted as saying, "I would be able to see the whole world die and would go on playing."

-Karen Lynn Krugh