

MILITANT ATHEISM

The media love conflict, so it was no surprise that the Catholic League's response to the American Atheists billboard would generate big news.

What meant a lot to us was the enthusiastic response we received from Protestants: they wrote letters of thanks, sent checks, called to congratulate us, etc. We even heard from Jews who were happy with our riposte.

The militant response this Christmas season on the part of atheists was disturbing: they will stop at nothing in their crusade to eradicate Christmas. But at every juncture, they were met with resistance.

On December 21, Bill Donohue appeared on the Fox News Channel to discuss his response to a study which showed that those who do not celebrate Christmas often suffer emotional harm in the workplace. Donohue told them "to get over it" and stop the whining. Everyone is excluded from some holiday, he said, and if some can't take it, they should seek professional help.

Pope Benedict XVI has spoken eloquently about the twin evils of our time—radical secularism and religious fundamentalism. While religious extremists are a threat to our national security, radical secularists are a threat to our Judeo-Christian culture. Our billboard was designed as an appropriate cultural response to secular militancy.

SECULAR SABOTAGE SCORES

Bill Donohue's *Secular Sabotage* was listed as one of the ten best books of 2010 in two categories: Top Ten Catholic Books (see Catholic Exchange) and Top Ten Conservative Books (see Ronald Reagan Forums). He was #2 on both lists.

ARCHBISHOP DOLAN TO LEAD BISHOPS

At the recent meeting of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), New York Archbishop Timothy Dolan was elected to lead the bishops' conference as president for the next three years.

We called this a splendid choice. Archbishop Dolan possesses all the right skills to lead the USCCB: he is brilliant, courageous and diplomatic. We said he is sure to get the job done and will not disappoint practicing Catholics who are loyal to the Magisterium. In the short time he has been in New York, he has won the support of New Yorkers—now Catholics across the nation are bound to love him as well.

But as one might expect, Archbishop Dolan's election came with its fair share of critics. National Public Radio was worried that Dolan is "overtly conservative," and Tim Rutten of the *Los Angeles Times* fretted about his "confrontational approach." Dissident Catholics were upset as well: New Ways Ministry said the vote "sends an ominous message"; Call to Action also saw the election as "ominous"; Sr. Maureen Fiedler said "we now have our very own Catholic version of the 'Tea Party' movement"; DignityUSA concluded that Dolan's election means the hierarchy is "out of step" with Catholics. Similarly, the Human Rights Campaign, a gay secular group, said the vote meant the hierarchy is "out of step." Not to be outdone, the website of the *Tucson Citizen* accused Dolan of evincing an "arrogant" attitude in winning (it is true that he was caught smiling).

SNAP, the professional victims' group, opined that Dolan's "winning personality obscures his terrible track record on abuse." Marian Ronan of Religion Dispatches said his election was "not a good sign," and her colleague, Sarah Posner, concluded—and this is really ominous—that "the bishops are targeting families with loved ones who are lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender." The Internet site Lez Get Real called Dolan "the Vatican's spin-doctor," and the website of *Time* had a headline that read, "More Bad News for Obama 2012: Catholics Elect Dolan." Edgeboston.com picked up the AP piece,

but chose to give it a new headline: "Catholic Bishops' Vote to Mean Harder Church Stance Against Gay Families." And atheist Susan Jacoby sweated over the fact that Dolan would be treated by the media "as if he is the voice of all American Catholics." She needs to get used to it.

Although it was tempting to conclude that some in the asylum have escaped, it more likely meant that these are not good times for those who have sought—in many cases their entire adult life—to turn the Catholic Church, and America more generally, upside down and inside out. They gave it their best shot, but they lost. Maybe the time has come for them to retire.

OBAMA SPEECHWRITER'S IDEA OF COMEDY

Late last year, Jon Lovett, a White House speechwriter, won the "Funniest Celebrity" competition in Washington, D.C. In a quip he made about the TSA's pat downs, he said, "it's giving a way for, you know, defrocked priests to get their lives back together, giving back to the community, lend a...Well, not lend a hand, but you know."

Had this been some flunky entertainer appearing in an urban comedy club, no one would blink an eye. But it is at least an interesting window into the mind of one of the speechwriters for the president of the United States: Lovett could have chosen a million examples to poke fun at the TSA, so it is revealing that what he settled for was a former priest guilty of sexual molestation.

This is an administration that has bent over backwards not to offend Muslims. Even in a comedic forum, it would never countenance a joke of this sort that targeted an imam. But for Catholic priests, the White House obviously has a different set of standards.

At the very least, Lovett should never be given an assignment ever again that touches on matters Catholic. And quite

frankly, a statement by President Obama was entirely warranted.

We can't have one standard for Muslims and another for Catholics.

POPE IGNITES DEBATE OVER CONDOMS

A firestorm was triggered when reports surfaced that Pope Benedict XVI suggested that condoms may make sense in preventing the transmission of disease. The accuracy of this interpretation immediately came under scrutiny, as theologians immediately weighed in on the pope's nuanced response. What was not in dispute was this: he never said condoms are an acceptable means of birth control, nor did he say that they are the answer to HIV/AIDS. Indeed, he said he opposed the widespread use of condoms because that "implies the banalization of sexuality." He also criticized the "fixation" on condoms as a means of combating AIDS.

While what the Holy Father said was newsworthy, it was not revolutionary. Even with regards to the birth control pill, the Catholic Church has allowed for exceptions. In his 1968 encyclical, *Humanae Vitae*, Pope Paul VI said, "the Church does not consider at all illicit the use of those therapeutic means necessary to cure bodily diseases, even if a foreseeable impediment to procreation should result there from—provided such impediment is not directly intended for any motive whatsoever." Moreover, the Church accepts the use of hormonal contraception to treat endometriosis.

We have been asked by the media what the Catholic League's position is on this issue. This misunderstands our role: we don't have a position on any Church teaching—we simply accept their wisdom and defend the right of the Church to have its voice heard with respect in the public square. We therefore stand proudly behind the pope's comments on condoms.

PETA EXPLOITS POPE

People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) recently embarked on a campaign encouraging the spaying and neutering of animals. The leaflet that it distributed, "Pope Condom," shows an obviously doctored picture of Pope Benedict XVI throwing a condom to a crowd.

There were two problems with this campaign: the leaflet exploited the pope; and it demonstrates the incredible hypocrisy on the part of PETA.

Regarding the former issue, it is hardly news that PETA likes to hijack Christian figures and symbols to pander its message, but to do this to the pope shows how remarkably unethical this allegedly ethical organization really is.

Regarding the latter, the statement accompanying this campaign says, "It's sinful that millions of dogs and cats are killed every year in animal shelters simply because there aren't enough homes for all of them...." What is truly sinful is how PETA lies. In 2008, it was disclosed by the Center for Consumer Freedom that PETA kills 95 percent of the adoptable pets in its care. Indeed, PETA delivered the death sentence to 21,339 cats and dogs between 1998 and 2008 at its headquarters in Norfolk, Virginia.

There is something perverse about an organization that has to rip off the pope while violating its own mission on a daily basis, just to stay in business.

POPE BLAMES PRO-PEDOPHILIA CROWD

In a high-profile Christmas speech, Pope Benedict XVI chastised priests who have molested minors, saying it had

reached an “unimaginable dimension.” He also tried to put the problem in a broader context, and for this he was condemned. The pope said, “In the 1970s, pedophilia was theorized as something fully in conformity with man and even with children. It was maintained—even within the realm of Catholic theology—that there is no such thing as evil in itself or good in itself.”

Among those condemning the pope was Sinead O'Connor: “Exactly who held the theory that pedophilia was fully in conformity with man and with children? Please give us their names.”

We were more than happy to provide them: Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida, Louis Althusser, Jean-Paul Satre, Simone de Beauvoir, André Glucksmann, Roland Barthes. All of these French intellectuals signed a petition in 1977 demanding that all the laws on sex between adults and minors be stricken. Years earlier, in the U.S., Alfred Kinsey justified pedophilia, claiming that “the current hysteria over sex offenders” was detrimental to child development. So did his colleague, Wardell Pomeroy.

Moreover, many other writers and activists have expressed a tolerance for pederasty that is extremely dangerous. They include Larry Kramer, Camille Paglia, Allen Ginsberg and John Money. And, of course, NAMBLA is expressly organized to further the cause of man-boy sex. So commonplace is this perversion that some scholars use the term “BLs” to refer to “Boy Lovers.”

The Holy Father was not wrong about some Catholic theological circles getting caught up in this insanity. In the 1970s—the pope was right about the decade—under the auspices of the Catholic Theological Society, Anthony Kosnick’s book *Human Sexuality* was published. Adopted by some seminaries at the time, it sought increased tolerance for every conceivable sexual deviancy. In other words, the pope got it right.

“THE VIEW” GIRLS GET ANGRY

Right before Christmas, the gals on “The View” took to criticizing the Catholic Church about abortion. Bill Donohue set sail a news release, asking our e-mail list to e-mail the show’s executive producer. And boy, did they. The next day, December 23, the panelists went ballistic.

Joy Behar, Whoopi Goldberg and Elisabeth Hasselbeck have been bashing the Catholic Church relentlessly over the past several years, all with the blessings of Barbara Walters, the show’s co-producer. This time they did it with help from Sherri Shepherd, their new convert.

Their lid came off as one after another took to bashing Donohue. Whoopi pleaded that she had made peace with God for her abortions (she has had at least six). To which Donohue said, “I hope she was telling the truth.”

Behar tried to convince the audience that somehow she might still be a Catholic; she likes to say she was “raised” Catholic, and we all know what that means. Shepherd was incoherent, and Hasselbeck, who switched to Protestantism, showed her true colors by telling Donohue to “Go to Hell” on the air. Such a sweet Christian girl.

We have news for these women: every time they start rapping the Church, we will push back. They are barking up the wrong tree if they think they can intimidate us. Indeed, it just gets our back up. 2011 should prove to be quite interesting.

CATHOLICS, JEWS, BLACKS AND MUSLIMS

We recently commented on the latest evidence of duplicity on the part of the media and civil libertarians.

We noted the story of a nun who was accused of embezzling \$1.2 million from Iona College, a Catholic institution outside New York City. There was also a story about a rabbinical court in

Brooklyn that ordered its members not to report crimes to the police. Two New York stories: one about Sister Marie Thornton, the alleged thief; the other about the Beth Din of Crown Heights. Which one gained the interest of the media?

The story on the nun was carried on the front page of Google's "New York" section, and was picked up by Yahoo!, the AP, UPI, the *Wall Street Journal*, the *New York Daily News*, the *New York Post*, *USA Today*, Huffington Post, and dozens of other media outlets. The story on the rabbinical court was picked up by the *New York Daily News* and Gomathist.com. That's it. At the time we reported on the duplicity, the story about the Jewish court was a week old; the one on the nun broke that day.

In an edict to its 10,000 members, the Beth Din of Crown Heights warned against creating bad relations with the police. Fine. But it also said that "No one shall bring to any media outlet, information about any resident that could, if publicized, lead to an investigation or intensified prosecution by any law-enforcement agency." In other words, if a rabbi rapes a kid, no one is to report it to the cops.

Moreover, since it is okay during election years for African-American ministers to endorse politicians in their churches, and it is okay to spend public funds for prayer rugs and foot baths for Muslims, the time has come for Catholic bishops to a) order their priests not to report crimes to the police b) endorse politicians at Mass and c) demand public monies for kneelers and holy water receptacles.

Bill Donohue wrote to Brooklyn D.A. Charles Hynes asking him if he would have any objections if the Diocese of Brooklyn adopted the same policy. Hynes was quick to respond with an honest e-mail.

He said, in part, "Nothing can interfere with my authority to investigate and prosecute any allegation of crime in my County." His e-mail was reassuring and we made it clear that D.A. Hynes had the support of the Catholic League.

APPLE DISSES CHRISTIANS

A decision by Apple Inc. to remove an iPhone app called the Manhattan Declaration was the subject of intense debate in December.

The Manhattan Declaration is an authoritative statement initially signed by 148 signatories, all of them prominent Orthodox Christian, Catholic and Protestant religious leaders, affirming the sanctity of life, religious liberty and marriage (Bill Donohue was one of them). Released on November 20, 2009, it has since garnered upwards of a half-million signatories. Recently, Apple approved the Manhattan Declaration app, rating it 4+ (free from objectionable material). But then a petition drive by Change.org members resulted in Apple's decision to remove the app; the complainants charged that it was "anti-gay" and "anti-choice."

There is nothing anti-gay about affirming the traditional understanding of marriage. Moreover, while anyone is free to disagree with these positions, to slap the label of bigotry on this statement is as absurd as it is offensive. Indeed, it is an insult to millions of Americans who share its sentiments.