

Catholic League Subway Ad Explodes in Controversy

By William A. Donohue



It all began on January 19th. That was the day the Catholic League registered its criticisms of the New York City subway ads posted by the Gay Men's Health Crisis, a radical homosexual outfit. The posters included pictures of young people of the same sex kissing each other, complete with photos of condoms and dental dams. The legend "Young! Hot! Safe!" was meant to convey a message that teenagers can have all the sex they want and not worry about a thing, just as long as condoms are used. Karen Lynn Krugh and I challenged the conventional wisdom on radio and TV and gave thought to having our own ad campaign. Now it's almost ready to start and the media are already going ballistic. Here's what happened.

On January 19th, while discussing the gay ad on FOX TV with former New York City Mayor Ed Koch, I rhetorically asked whether the time had come for the Catholic League to sponsor its own ad. My objections centered on the usurpation of parental rights that the gay ads embodied. Was it not the business of Catholic parents – and not gay activists – to decide what, when and how their children learned about sex? Ed Koch replied that yes, the Catholic League should run its own ads, if that is what it wanted. I left the studio still undecided. My indecision, however, didn't last long.

Before the day was over, I had been asked by newsmen whether I was serious about launching our own ad campaign. I said yes, I was giving it very serious consideration. Again that evening, while discussing this issue for two hours on a local radio show, I was asked several times by callers whether the Catholic League would respond in kind to the Gay Men's Health Crisis. All were urging me to post our own ads. By that point I just couldn't say no. There would be a campaign, and it would be an aggressive one, intentionally designed to start a public dialogue on the wonders of condoms.

Our ad has a straightforward message: "Want to Know a Dirty Little Secret? CONDOMS DON'T SAVE LIVES. But Restraint Does. Only fools think condoms are foolproof. Remember, better safe than sorry."

Once the media knew we were going to post our own ad, they wouldn't let go. They knew we were on to something big – that our ad would create quite a stir – and they were right. On April 25th, we formally announced that our ad would begin June 1st. The reaction: we were besieged with calls, both positive and negative. More important, we experienced our biggest media blitz since the MTA's Madonna poster last fall. Radio, television, newspapers, wire services – they called for interviews locally, nationally and internationally (England and Japan). It was clear that our ad had hit home with a lot of people.

The difference between our ad and the one featured by the Gay Men's Health Crisis is striking. We speak to values and they don't. They profess a faith in technology and we ask for changes in human behavior. We admonish restraint and they talk about what's "Hot." Their ads are provocative and offensive. Ours are provocative without being offensive. Our ad is countercultural and their's is, sadly, the voice of the culture. But that's all the more reason to speak up and provide leadership.

I am convinced that most Americans would endorse our ad more than the gay ad. It is high time that we break the monopoly that gay activists, Planned Parenthood and others have had on the issue of sex education. Our ad speaks to more than Catholics, it speaks to Americans of all religions who are tired of the “just give ‘em condoms” approach to sexuality.

Judging from the success of this ad, even before it actually appears, it is plain that it won’t be our last. Our side has been taking it for far too long. We hope to change that, and one way to do it is through the medium of public service messages. And unlike the ads of our critics, our messages truly do provide a public service.

N.Y. Post Editorial Backs League Ads

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The Truth About Condoms

A new AIDS-prevention campaign has drawn the ire of the Gay Men’s Health Crisis, which seems to want to maintain a virtual stranglehold on the dissemination of AIDS-related information.

This development isn’t surprising- the 2,500 public-service ads that will soon be appearing in the city’s subways, courtesy of the Catholic League, are a far cry from GMHC’s dubious “Young! Hot! Safe!” campaign.

The Catholic League ad warns of a “dirty little secret” – that “Condoms don’t save lives. But restraint does.”

For all the insistence that abstinence is integral to their AIDS-prevention efforts, GMHC and its allies pay nothing but lip service to the notion. Suggestions to the contrary are disingenuous.

Indeed, GMHC and other AIDS – awareness groups have distributed graphic explanatory materials about gay sexual practices – some manifestly targeted at young folks – in the guise of health-oriented information.

At times, these organizations appear interested in seizing the moment to increase awareness of gay lifestyles. How else to explain an ad featuring an embracing pair of teen-age girls? Except by way of tortured logic, lesbians are not an especially vulnerable class vis-a-vis AIDS. The girls in the ad are wearing rubber gloves meant for use in a particular lesbian sexual practice.

The Catholic League ads speak to the failure rate of condoms; and condoms, of course, are not foolproof. Indeed, the GMHC crowd has itself begun referring to condom use as “safer” – rather than “safe” – sex.

GMHC’s rage at the Catholic League campaign – while not unexpected – seems altogether unjustifiable. Certainly, condoms are safer than totally unprotected sex. Far safer. But they are not safer than sexual restraint. At the very least, it seems to us, there’s room for this dual message.

The GMHC has long been an extraordinary organization – it arose to fill a need at a desperate moment and its achievements should not be slighted. But recent GMHC forays in the AIDS-education realm seem misguided.

William Andrew, a member of the Board of Education’s AIDS advisory council, who’s especially concerned with ads aimed at black and Latino youth, argues that GMHC “is promoting sex acts that can be suicidally dangerous by misrepresenting them as perfectly harmless.”

To be sure, the Catholic League, like GMHC, also has an agenda. By warning that condoms are not a foolproof means of preventing sexually transmitted diseases, it promotes the church's doctrine against premarital and homosexual sex.

Common sense, however, suggests that there's room – at the very least – for this message, as well as the GMHC's.

COMBATING DISCRIMINATION CATHOLICS

WORKPLACE AGAINST

Workplace discrimination against Catholics is still with us. To be sure, most Catholics do not make an issue of their religion on the job. Nor should they. But that doesn't mean that external manifestations of Catholicism should be hidden from the workplace. Here are two examples: it is customary on Ash Wednesday for Catholics to report to work with ashes on their forehead. Similarly, there is nothing wrong with Catholics displaying a holy picture on their desk. Yet actions were recently taken against employees in Georgia and New York for both "offenses." We got involved in both cases.

Not too long ago, detective Mark Clay of LaGrange, Georgia became a Catholic. On Ash Wednesday he reported to work with ashes on his forehead. He was quickly told to remove them on the grounds that fellow workers were complaining and he was disturbing the workplace. But aside from Clay's supervisor, no one registered any complaint. Clay refused to remove his ashes, citing his First Amendment right to freedom of religion. He was then suspended for a day without pay.

When Mark Clay contacted me about this I wrote to all of those involved in the appeal process: his supervisor, the grievance committee officials, members of the LaGrange City Council and Mayor Woodall. I let them know that unless justice is done, the Catholic League will sue on Mr. Clay's behalf.

The other case is already over. On April 11, David Hubicki, a temporary employee at the Department of Civil Service in Albany, New York, was ordered by his supervisor, Imogene Bessette, to remove a 3x5 picture of the Sacred Heart of Jesus from his desk. When he protested, he was told that there was a department-wide rule barring the display of religious symbols in the workplace. Mr. Hubicki contacted the Catholic League and I immediately called John Sossey, the Director of Personnel at the Department of Civil Service. After explaining what the Catholic League does, I had but one question: I wanted to see a copy of the rule. Mr. Sossey got my point and called a few days later to tell me that a "mistake" had been made and that Mr. Hubicki was free to put the picture back on his desk.

Cases like these are troublesome for several reasons. Here we are in a decade that is renowned for tolerance, compassion, sensitivity, diversity and the like – these are the favorite buzz words of the cultural elite – and yet some Catholics can't wear ashes on their forehead and display holy cards on their desks. The same decade that awards new rights to homosexuals and animals, retreats on old rights granted to Catholics. Something's amiss.

What is even more disturbing is the fact that the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) is presently

considering new ways to punish religious expression in the workplace, all under the guise of "harassment." If the EEOC issues its proposed new guidelines on religious harassment, people like Mark Clay and David Hubicki won't have a chance. Indeed if the new rules are adopted, bigotry will be legalized and religious expression will be criminalized. Yet as Don Barry points out (see insert), the EEOC originally argued that Catholics were deserving of preferential treatment, so pervasive had the degree of discrimination been against them. What's changed is not workplace discrimination against Catholics, what's changed is the disposition of our elites.

LAW OR LAUGHTER?

On January 19, 1973, the U.S. Department of Labor published "Guidelines on Discrimination" in the Federal Register. Part (b) of 60-50.1 recognized that "members of various religious and ethnic groups, such as Jews, Catholics, Italians, Greeks and Slavic groups, continue to be excluded from executive, middle-management and other job levels because of discrimination based upon their religion and/or national origins. These guidelines are intended to remedy such unfair treatment."

Twenty-one years later, no member of these groups benefits from "affirmative action" targeted goals in hiring or promotion, set-asides, outreach programs, sensitivity training, or mentoring. Why? No U.S. President then or since ever saw fit to sign an Executive Order designating them an EEO status group with concomitant "affirmative action" eligibility.

— Don Barry

No one is suggesting that Catholics wear their religion on their sleeves.

But it is equally important for Catholics not to be defensive about their religion. The First Amendment guarantees freedom of religion and freedom of speech. Equal protection before the law is encoded in the Fourteenth Amendment. That's a lot of ammo. It's time we used it against the bigots wherever they are, including, if necessary, against the EEOC.

A Marriage Made in Heaven

*the Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights & the
Society of Catholic Social Scientists*

By Dr. Joseph A. Varacalli

Former V.P. Dan Quayle calls it the “cultural elite.” Theologian Richard Neuhaus refers to it as a modern day form of “gnosticism.” Sociologist Peter Berger terms it the “new class.” Adapting Berger’s phrase to the radical left wing of the Catholic Church, I coined the phrase, the “new Catholic knowledge class.” To many average Americans, who form the basis of a contemporary “populist” revolt, there is in our society a powerful group of heavy-handed and arrogant snobs.

However named, the underlying reality is the same: there exists a category of secular and progressivist intellectuals, bureaucrats, and social activists who dominate both America’s public square and the infrastructure of America’s mainstream religious denominations. Moreover, this group carries both a worldview and vested ideological interests (in terms of the sociological, trilogy of status, power, and wealth) which are furthered by bashing the Judaic-Christian heritage and excluding the latter from any meaningful participation within the American political system and cultural life of the society.

Given its potential with both a 2,000 year tradition and impressive moral, intellectual, and organizational resources (especially when inspired by such a visionary leader like John Paul II), it becomes clear why the secularist assault is concentrated against the Catholic Church. In short, all roads *do* lead to either Rome or secularism. It is Rome that constitutes the last great obstacle to the modernist onslaught; destroy (or capture) Rome and the game is over. Given this, it is not hard to understand why the Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights was founded by Father

Virgil Blum, S.J. in 1973 and so recently re-energized by William Donohue. If these men and their organization didn't exist, they would have had to be invented.

The defense of the religious and civil rights of Catholics and other orthodox religionists requires, however, more than just the participation of lawyers, politicians, and an organized and educated laity. This is so because much of the philosophical and intellectual underpinnings of the attack on the Judaic-Christian heritage comes from a contemporary social science that 1) for better or worse, is a social fact of life that, subtly or not, influences all aspects of American life and 2) is dependent almost solely on secular assumptions, concepts, and theories about the nature and destiny of, and relationship between, the individual and society.

Consider the following examples. School administrators take-for-granted a Freudian-like assumption of human sexuality and conclude that condom distribution is both a strategic and moral imperative. Many psychologists portray supernaturally-based religion as both an illusion and opiate while seeing their own discipline as an alleged enlightened substitute for it. Many in the marriage counseling profession talk of courtship and marriage exclusively in contractual and emotional terms consisting merely of social, economic, and psychological exchanges. In many sociology classes, the traditional nuclear family is depicted as an abusive prison for, at least, women and children. Many anthropologists see to be unable to condemn such practices as human sacrifice, homosexuality, and children being born out of wedlock, thus promoting, either unconsciously or not, the philosophy of moral relativism. Many political scientists, forged in the Marxist-inspired and anti-American and anti-Western civilization era of the 1960s-1970s, routinely and uncritically consider all American military intervention as a form of economically self-serving imperialism. Afro-American courses tend to assume, *a priori*, that all Caucasians are

racists; the reality of black racism is never broached. Similarly, much feminist scholarship simply defines men as sexist and ignores the injustice done to men in employment through the use of quotas. While racism, sexism, homophobia, and ageism are unquestionably seen as real “social problems,” the deleterious effects of abortion, euthanasia, divorce, day-care centers and, last but not least, religious bigotry are either not addressed or not addressed squarely. Intellectual discourse within the social science departments of America’s colleges and universities – Catholic institutions definitely included – thus take place within the narrow parameters of “politically correct” thought.

Such thought and behavior, again, is anything but absent within important sectors of the Catholic clergy; witness the effects of a “therapeutic mentality” on conceptions of sin and in the implementation of the Sacrament of Reconciliation. To top things off, even many Bishops, when trying to form and implement positions on social issues and pastoral policy, rely heavily on secular social science with, predictably, unsatisfactory results. Put crudely, a secular social science attacks the Church from both without and within.

One recent response to the present unhappy state of affairs regarding secular social science and the Catholic faith is the formation, in 1992, of the Society of Catholic Social Scientists. The purpose of the S.C.S.S. is basically twofold: 1) to incorporate, where appropriate, Catholic philosophical/theological assumptions, issues, concepts, and modes of interpretation into the social sciences and 2) to bring Catholic social doctrine into the American public square from which social policy is forged. Minimally, at least, the restoration of the “social sciences in Christ” would guarantee the Church a voice in both the intellectual and political marketplace.

More to the point of this essay, it would also help immeasurably the complimentary – albeit more “defensive” –

goals of the Catholic League. Put another way, the best defense is often a good offense; the evangelistic thrust of the S.C.S.S. into the academy, the government, and, indeed, the Church herself should, theoretically, result in a lessening of the bigotry against and ignorance of, the Catholic faith that the Catholic League routinely must confront.

The S.C.S.S. – now with over 200 professional members in social science and social science related disciplines – is off to a good start. One national conference has been held and two more are in the works. Many scholarly papers have been published in the S.C.S.S. organ, the *Social Justice Review*, and others are in press. The Society's first two major intellectual projects on, respectively, "Catholics and Politics" and "Catholics in Defense of the Traditional Family," are nearing completion. Many standing committees and regional chapters are buzzing with activity. The S.C.S.S. has a Bishop's Board which includes, most prominently, Cardinal John O'Connor. Our Advisory Board is replete with the names of outstanding Catholic scholars and includes three Catholic college presidents. Officers of the Society include Stephen Krason of Franciscan University, Robert George of Princeton University, Alberto Piedra of Catholic University, and Gerard Bradley of Notre Dame. A young dynamic priest of the Diocese of Rockville Centre, Reverend Robert Batule, serves as Society Chaplain.

The goals of The Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights and that of the Society of Catholic Social Scientists are distinct yet complimentary. May both continue to work to defend and promote an authentic Catholic presence in the United States and may they cooperate with each other as the situation dictates. Indeed, such organizational cooperation may represent, in this case, a marriage made in heaven.

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founder and Executive Secretary of the Society of Catholic Social Scientists and also is a member of the Board of Directors of The Fellowship of Catholic Scholars.

Happiness is...

Mirror, mirror, on the wall, who is the happiest of them all? Not the intellectuals, that's for sure. Indeed, they're probably the most miserable. But more on that later.

Certainly among the happiest are those who have happy marriages, and there is little doubt that, by and large, the happily married are those who take their religion seriously. Social science data clearly show that there is a strong relationship between adherents of traditional religion and good marriages. Conversely, those who adhere to more "progressive" religions tend to have the worst track record. And for reasons that will be explained, the most well-educated are disproportionately represented among the losers.

Providing the data for such conclusions is a splendid new book by two academics from the City University of New York, Barry A. Kosmin and Seymour P. Lachman. *One Nation Under God* is a book chock-full of interesting data on the status of religion in contemporary society. It is because the Census Bureau does not ask questions about religion that the Kosmin and Lachman study is so valuable: they provide us with data, in this case the results of a representative survey of 113,000 Americans, that are otherwise unavailable.

It is one thing to say that "the family that prays together stays together," quite another to read those words as a conclusion in a national survey. But that is exactly what Kosmin and Lachman found. "Happily married couples," they

write, "are more likely than divorced couples to have had a religious wedding and to attend religious services regularly." As already indicated, they also found that those who prefer their religion lite, or choose abstinence, are the most likely to be single, separated and divorced. It is not for nothing that the highest divorce rate belongs to Unitarians, even outdoing their non-believing cousins. Importantly, Kosmin and Lachman add, "the only significant underrepresentation of divorced people irrespective of gender is among Catholics."

The correlation between religion and marital stability is not hard to understand. Throughout history men and women have traditionally married out of duty, not love. Indeed love as the basis for marriage is one of history's oddities, so rare has it been. Men and women typically married when their fathers, or the eldest male in the kinship network, decreed it. Marriage was never the joining of two individuals, it was the joining together of two families, or two clans. The marriages lasted because they were built on a solid foundation, namely economic self-interest, duty, tradition (read: religion), and the coupling of two collectivities. Today's marriages are not born of such qualities.

It should be obvious that the social supports that have traditionally provided the adhesiveness to marriage have all but disappeared. To be sure, for many persons religion remains a strong force, and that explains why those who possess it do well in marriage. Religion is the glue that provides the bonding during times of discord. It affirms in many ways – spiritually, psychologically and socially – the commitment between husband and wife, providing a buffer to adversity. Put another way, it congeals. Without it, relationships fray more easily.

High rates of divorce tend to cluster among the well-educated, as well as among non-believers and those who are soft on religion. For example, Unitarians not only top the list among the divorced, they top out as the most well-educated religious

group in the country (almost 50 percent have a college degree as contrasted to 20 percent in the Catholic community). In general, those religions that are the most accepting of the “progressive” trends in our culture, namely the Unitarian, Jewish (save the Orthodox), Episcopalian, Presbyterian, and the “New Age” crowd, have educational achievement rates and divorce rates that well exceed the national average.

The well-educated tend to strike out in marriage more than the rest of us because they are more likely to be drawn to those religions which have struck the greatest degree of accommodation with the culture. Looked at another way, higher education inclines toward a hypercritical perspective of traditional morality, and it is this that accounts for the overrepresentation of the cognoscenti among the ranks of the disaffected. For them, ceremony and tradition are for the unenlightened. What they crave is rationality, not spirituality. That is why their religions, assuming they have any at all, tend to be hollow. In this respect, college faculty are prototypical.

Academicians, and most especially those who teach in the humanities and social sciences, are loaded with agnostics, atheists and adherents to “progressive” religions. These savants have spent a great deal of time thinking in a social vacuum about abstract ideas that bear no relationship to reality. Come to think of it, so too have madmen, which explains why the academy has so much in common with the asylum. But at least the patients have an excuse.

It is skepticism – run rampant – that makes the well-educated so ill-disposed to religion. But there is a price to be paid by turning one’s back on God. Such persons fall victim to themselves, fixing their eyes not on the other-world, or on others, but on themselves. Indeed one of the most pronounced characteristics that historian Paul Johnson found in his study of prominent Western intellectuals was the high degree of self-absorption that they possessed. What is striking is the

extent to which people like Rousseau and Marx have long championed the cause of the dispossessed while simultaneously treating their parents, siblings, spouses, and children like dirt. They can embrace the masses but not their family.

It is possible to love individuals, and to love God, but it is not possible to love mankind or humankind. Sadly, the intellectuals think that they can. That is why they write endlessly about the masses, the proletariat, people of color, the oppressed, the peasants, and the like. But it is impossible to love an abstraction. It is father, mother, husband, wife, son, and daughter who connect us in our happiness, not faceless entities. The happiness that derives from love of God may be abstract, but it is personal nonetheless. There is nothing personal about an aggregate.

It would be wrong to suggest that to be well-educated is to be soft on religion. For starters, just think about Pope John Paul II. And it would be equally wrong to suggest that only the most traditional in their beliefs are capable of having good marriages. But having acknowledged as much, we are still left with the fact that those who ascribe to traditional beliefs and practices are the most likely to find themselves happily married. It is also true that those who have not been seduced by the superstitions of the academy stand a better chance of maintaining a happy marriage. Put it together – the interactions between religion and happiness, and education and religion – and what we have is a powerful commentary on what makes for the good life.

– *William A. Donohue*

Carnegie-Mellon Admits “Mistake” After League Threatens Suit

On April 19th, Pittsburgh's Carnegie-Mellon University admitted that it had made “a mistake” in charging student Patrick Mooney with harassment. The charge was made after Mooney conveyed to a visiting professor his outrage over the posting of a highly offensive portrait of John Cardinal O'Connor by a student organization.

The poster, which featured a picture of John Cardinal O'Connor with the inscription “Know Your Scumbags,” was posted by the gay campus organization, cmuOUT.

Mooney was also charged with the offense of removing one of the unauthorized posters. He did in fact take one down, but only in order to show it to administrators.

Mooney was initially placed on “disciplinary probation.” CMU has now reversed its sentence by downgrading the penalty to a “disciplinary warning” and has promised that upon Mooney's expected graduation this May, it will remove any mention of this from his records.

This was not Mooney's first run-in with gay and lesbian politics on the CMU campus. In 1991, he was victimized for his refusal to wear a pro-lesbian button during the in-service training period for resident assistants. Mooney, a Roman Catholic, cited religious convictions for his refusal to wear the button, but was nevertheless stripped of his resident assistant status resulting in a substantial loss of financial assistance.

The Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights, which had threatened a lawsuit against the university for the current

poster incident, was pleased by the decision. Commenting on this was Catholic League president Dr. William A. Donohue:

"We are pleased that CMU came to its senses and found that Mooney was not guilty of 'harassment' for merely stating his objections to vile and bigoted anti-Catholic propaganda. By bringing charges of harassment against a student for the mere exercise of his constitutional right to freedom of speech, CMU placed itself in very unseemly company. Free speech is central to liberty and no category of speech is deserving of more protection than political discourse. This is especially true of speech that is conveyed in a temperate and respectful fashion, as was the case with Mooney.

"The reduction of charges for removing one of the posters marks progress. However, it is still fair to wonder whether any penalty would have been forthcoming if the vicious poster in question had offended the sensibilities of gays instead of Catholics. The fact that CMU still seeks to muzzle the free speech of Mr. Mooney by denying him the right to discuss this matter indicates that tolerance and free speech are nothing more than empty platitudes at CMU, at least when it comes to Catholics.

"The Catholic League is pleased that it did not have to seek justice in the courts for Mr. Mooney. And it is especially pleased that Mr. Mooney's record will bear no imprint of this affair once he graduates. But the Catholic League will not be satisfied until CMU officials are fully sensitized to the pain that Catholics feel when persons like Cardinal O'Connor are viciously portrayed by unrepentant bigots. The time is ripe for CMU to introduce campus workshops on Catholic-bashing; from the looks of things, they will need a very large conference room to accommodate the overflow crowds that need to attend. The Catholic League will continue to monitor CMU's treatment of Mr. Mooney until he graduates and will not shy away from going to court if further instances of injustice are forthcoming."

“PICKET FENCES” OFFENDS AGAIN

David E. Kelley is the executive producer of the CBS show “Picket Fences.” For whatever reason, he seems obsessed with Catholic-baiting. Last October, an episode of “Picket Fences” bashed the Catholic Church for its stand on contraception and abortion. But the show of April 29th went beyond that, this time portraying a Catholic priest as a deviant who is a shoe fetishist. According to the script writers, the priest violates his vow of celibacy when he has a sexual experience with a woman’s shoe.

It was not just one priest that the show sought to slander, it was the teachings of the Catholic Church. Constant references to the Church’s positions on sexuality were either totally misrepresented or ripped out of context. Ridicule, derision and cruel caricatures dominated the show. It is bad enough to see segments of Catholic-bashing on any program, but it is unusual, indeed unprecedented, to see an entire script built on anti- Catholic propaganda.

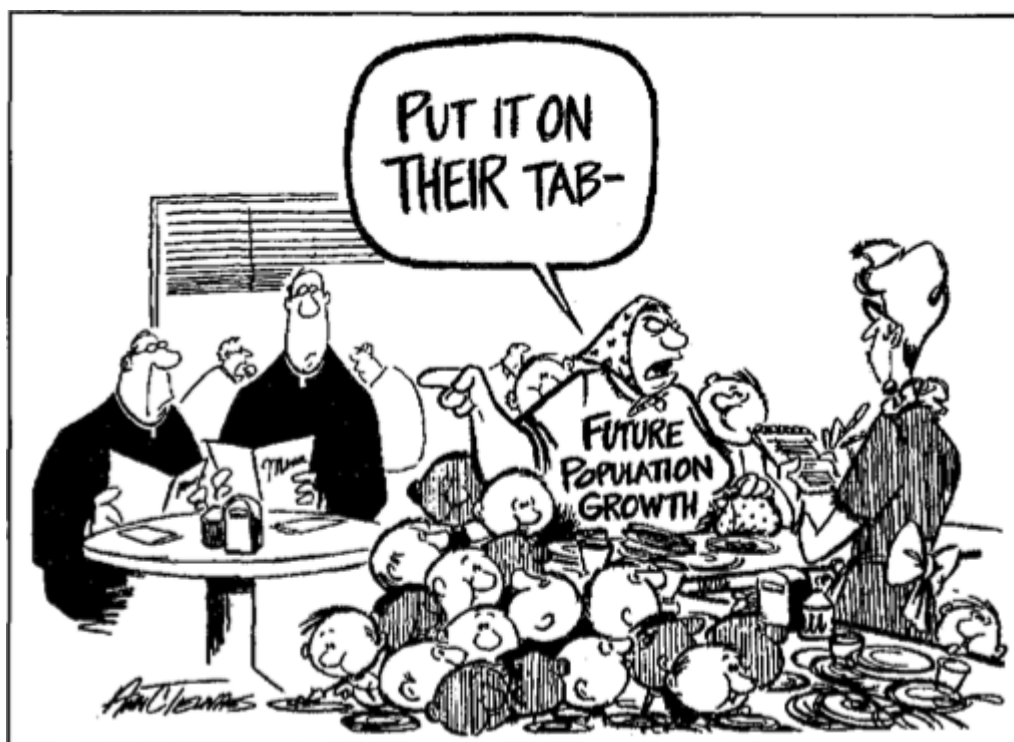
Some of those in the media (e.g. *TV Guide*) like to say that “Picket Fences” is breaking new ground. That it is. Come to think of it, so did “Amos and Andy.” But CBS refuses to show reruns of that show on the grounds that it is offensive to African-Americans. How sensitive it is of them. Perhaps someone from CBS can explain why their sensitivity doesn’t extend to Catholics. More than that, perhaps it can be explained what the source of Mr. Kelley’s bigotry is.

Several responses are being considered. For the record, the sponsors of this latest broadcast were: CBS, Alpha, Miracle Ear, Lens Crafters, Hot Pockets, Burlington Coat Factory, Orion, Dexatrim, Mrs. Doubtfire (video sales), Caruso Curls,

A-1, True Value, Scott's Liquid Gold, HIP (Health Insurance Plan of Greater New York), America's Dairy Farms, Eagle (Jeep), Moore Paints, Savoy Pictures, Audi, and AT&T.

Catholic Bashing at the United Nations

We received copies of this gem from members across the country.



The recently concluded three week Preparatory Committee meeting of the International Conference on Population and Development was marred by several incidents of Catholic-bashing. In a statement, Dr. William A. Donohue, president of the Catholic League, detailed his objections:

"The Preparatory Committee meeting of the International Conference on Population and Development was designed to

facilitate the serious work that will take place at the U.N. Population Conference this fall in Cairo. While serious work was indeed done, the Conference suffered from an environment that was poisoned with the toxin of anti-Catholicism.

"It is not Catholic-bashing to vigorously disagree with the positions of the Holy See. But when anti-Catholic stickers are conspicuously displayed by representatives of non-government organizations, and anti-Catholic literature is widely distributed in the halls, it cannot be said that the atmosphere allows for serious dialogue. The sticker in question, a rendering of the 'Ghostbusters' symbol of a circle and diagonal bar superimposed over the words 'Papal Control,' was worn on the lapels of dozens of observers. This kind of Catholic-baiting is done expressly to delegitimatize the standing of the Holy See. The literature, much of it found in the text and the cartoons of the publication *Earth Times*, is also an appeal to demagoguery.

"The 'Letter To The Delegates At Prep Com III' a document signed by the various Planned Parenthood and population control organizations around the world went beyond atmospherics: it directly challenged the right of the Holy See to speak on the issue of population growth. 'To impose one religious perspective on a whole continent or worldwide is imperious and unacceptable,' the letter said. (Emphasis in original.) The Holy See, of course, can only do what all other representatives of the U.N. can do, and that is exercise the art of persuasion. It has neither the desire nor the ability to impose anything on any continent, never mind worldwide. What the Letter is all about is nothing less than an attempt to silence the Holy See. Others, like Francis Kissling of the anti-Catholic front group Catholics for Free Choice, went even further by urging delegates to challenge the right of the Holy See to a seat in the U.N.

"It is, of course, perfectly legitimate for those who disagree with the Holy See's positions to lobby U.N. delegates and

exercise their freedom of speech. What is unacceptable, however, is to impugn the right of U.N. representatives to disseminate their views. There is a line between dissent and disparagement and it was regrettably crossed by some at the Preparatory Committee.”

In a letter to President Clinton, Pope John Paul II called the U.N. draft document a “disturbing surprise,” because it violates several consensus positions developed in past conferences.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights called the traditional family “the natural and fundamental group unit of society.” The population draft emphasizes individuals’ rights in choosing parenthood, seeming to promote child bearing outside of marriage. In 1984, the U.N. Conference on Population in Mexico City agreed that “in no case should abortion be promoted as a method of family planning,” but the language of the new draft implies that abortion is bad only when it is unsafe or unwanted.

In writing to President Clinton, the pope is clearly acknowledging the key role played by the United States in the creation of the U.N.’s population policies. The Catholic-bashing atmosphere of the recent meeting gives clear indication of polarization and further confrontation to come.

Judge Blasts ‘Loss of Moral Values,’ Reinstates Principal

Who Allowed Prayer

A high school principal in Jackson, Mississippi, fired because he allowed a student to read a prayer over the school's intercom system, has been reinstated by a judge who spoke in his decision of the "loss of moral values in public education" which has occurred since the Supreme Court's 1962 decision barring prayer in public schools.

By all accounts, students at Winfield high school had been caught in the same web of violence that has wreaked havoc with the lives of so many of the country's young people. So, in an effort to bring some order out of chaos, the students at Winfield elected to have daily prayer. The school's principal, Bishop Knox, agreed with the students that prayer was a good idea and gave his permission for a short non-denominational prayer to be read over the school's loud speaker system.

The school board, maintaining that the students' prayer was prohibited by the Constitution, dismissed Bishop Knox, an act that set off a firestorm of protest around the state. Subsequently, the Mississippi state legislature passed a law permitting student initiated prayer in the state's schools and Governor Kirk Fordice endorsed the notion of prayer in the schools. Faced with the uproar caused by its decision to fire Knox, the school board reversed itself and imposed a less severe penalty on Knox, voting to suspend him without pay until July 1.

In reinstating Knox, Judge Chet Dillard noted the general decline in the moral fiber of America and he warned against a faulty interpretation of the Constitution which diminished the protections afforded by the Free Exercise Clause. Portions of the judge's opinion are excerpted below:

This case involves our most treasured freedoms – concerning our schoolchildren, our Constitution, and our religion.

Therefore, a short reference to constitutional history is appropriate.

“‘The sacred rights of mankind are not to be rummaged for among parchment, or musty records. They are written, as with a sun beam in the whole volume of human nature, by the hand of the divinity itself, and can never be erased or obscured by mortal power.’ In the beginning, Alexander Hamilton so expressed his views on the value of constitutional rights.

“We have completely missed the main objective of the founding Fathers of our country when we reach the point where we construe our Constitution to allow students to have abortions yet forbid them to pray in our schools...

“The Constitution was designed to preserve a wholesome, regulated, orderly, moral way of life. It was not to destroy the very way of life our forefathers loved, enjoyed, and wanted to guarantee for future generations when it was adopted...In just a relatively few years, beginning in the '60s it has become a constitutional right to have an abortion, avoid the death penalty for at least 10 years, but unconstitutional to pray in school except under very limited circumstances.

“There is a valid argument being made that the attempt to prevent the freedom to offer prayer in school has led to the loss of moral values in public education...All citizens of this country should be concerned enough to help prevent what happened to religion in the Soviet Union. This was brought about by the courts' interpretation of their constitution. That is the reason we must give as much weight to the Free Exercise Clause as we do the Establishment Clause. They must balance.”

Lawyers for the school board have announced they will appeal Judge Dillard's decision to the State Supreme Court.

Only Pro-Choice Catholics Need Apply?

According to news reports, senior officials in the New York Republican party have determined that the Republican party gubernatorial nominee must fit a certain demographic mold. The candidate must be Catholic, pro-choice and fiscally conservative. The plain effect of this test is to exclude people like Herb London, who is both Jewish and pro-life, from consideration for public office. Responding to these reports, William A. Donohue, president of the Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights stated:

“The Catholic League is appalled that any religious test would even be considered, never mind seriously so, by high-ranking operatives in either the Republican or Democratic parties. That a Catholic would be the beneficiary of this GOP calculation makes it no less acceptable. The Catholic League condemns all religious litmus tests as unconstitutional.

“Just as disturbing is the audacity of Republican power-brokers to assign a pro-choice status to their hand-picked ‘Catholic’ representative. Anyone is free to dissent from Catholic teaching on abortion, but no one has the right to falsely appropriate the Catholic label just to score quick political points. Moreover, abortion is the exercise of one person’s choice at the expense of an innocent person’s life, and that is not the kind of ‘choice’ that the Catholic Church recognizes as legitimate.

“Whether Herb London deserves the nomination of the Republican party should turn on a host of criteria, among them being his position on abortion. But under no circumstances should his

candidacy be determined by his religious and ethnic identity.”