

# LEAGUE PROTEST BRINGS REVISION OF CALENDAR

In a 1996 calendar published by Universal Press Syndicate, religious symbols marked the holy days of Jews and Muslims, but secular symbols were printed on the days of reverence for Christians. The calendar was printed in newspapers across the country.

The Catholic League registered a complaint and was told that in the 1997 calendar, Universal Press Syndicate will restore Christian symbols on Christian holy days.

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# WORKPLACE VIDEO IMPUGNS CATHOLICISM

A video that is making the rounds at various job sites, *Workplace Violence*, promotes a negative stereotype of committed believers, especially Catholics. The video has the commendable goal of advising workers of sources of violence on the job, but in doing so it unfairly impugns Catholicism. For example, in the segment titled "A Strategy for Prevention," the following remark is made: "Many perpetrators are described as being religious or political extremists. This behavior further drives co-workers away." This statement is said while there is a close-up shot of a grotto; the camera focuses on a statue of the Blessed Virgin.

In another part, "Awareness & Prevention," the same statement is made, but this time the camera focuses on a potential perpetrator who is shown eating his lunch with a co-worker,

clearly harassing him while holding a copy of the Bible. The training manual that accompanies the video classifies the “typical perpetrator” being “religious or political extremist.”

Catholic League executive assistant Susan Fani questioned a person associated with the video and was told that the tape could be “tailored” to suit the needs of any company. The league, of course, is not interested in doctoring the video of some people while allowing everyone else to learn of religion’s nefarious role. The very fact that the outlet that produced the tape, Video Training Source, was willing to accommodate the Catholic League suggests that they are not unaware of the tape’s offensive nature.

The league will press its case further and hopes the training video will be appropriately “tailored” for everyone.

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## **DIGITAL REMOVES BIGOTED REMARKS**

When the Catholic League learned that employees at Digital Equipment Corporation in Massachusetts were posting anti-Catholic statements in their computer system, a formal protest was sent to the president and CEO of Digital. The offensive statements included the following remark, made accessible to employees through the “Wommanotes” file:

“Neil, I blame the religious bigots for the problems. Let us face up to the facts that many seriously bigoted people are in positions of authority in many religions. Islam has its frothing at the mouth, murderous Ayatollahs, a Scottish church that excommunicated its most prominent member for

attending the funeral of a colleague and last but not least a rabidly homophobic Pope. These are the people who control the religions and mislead the people. So if it is all one with you I will have no truck with any religion in this life and hopefully in the next one.”

As a result of the Catholic League’s complaint, this message, and others, were removed from the system. But the league has learned that there are other bigoted notes that are still posted, and will therefore continue to press its case.

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## **WHO’S AFRAID OF THE RELIGIOUS RIGHT? by Don Feder**

Reviewed by Susan Fani

In his latest work, conservative columnist Don Feder of the *Boston Herald* examines the role of the so-called “religious right,” in which he claims membership as an Orthodox Jew. In this volume, which is a combination of recent columns and new pertinent essays, Feder makes the case for the importance and legitimacy of religious voices in the national debate of issues.

In examining the religious right, Feder explains the mostly Christian movement and its goals for America, which are nothing but the restoration of old-fashioned values and morality. As a Jewish man who is conservative and in agreement with conservative Christians on morality, he sets out what is wrong with the nation’s institutions and what needs to be done to make things right. In doing so, he explores all the key moral issues of the day: abortion, gay “rights,” the culture war, family values, and the like.

After establishing what the religious right is—moral people who would like to see the triumph of their values—Feder disabuses liberal ideologues of any misconceptions they have about the movement being monolithic. He sarcastically points out, “We’re all white evangelical Protestants like Roy Innis of the Congress for Racial Equality, Olga Gomez, Rabbi Shea Hecht, Howard Hurwitz of the Family Defense Council, and Cardinal John O’Connor, leaders of the successful effort to defeat the Children of the Rainbow Curriculum in New York City.”

He also brings in his religious and cultural heritage to make a point about religion. Contradicting the stereotype that Jews are liberal in light of voting patterns and causes the majority support, Feder explains that his is a conservative religion with Biblical admonitions as to right and wrong. The feel-good philosophy is one that cannot be espoused by a practicing Jew and neither can abortion, cultural decay, and gay rights. He answers his question as to what a Jewish conservative is with the answer, “A Jew who is a conservative in the name of Heaven.”

He details the differences between the sacred and secular viewpoints. Each has an accompanying philosophical system which affects how people live and act. The secular (which he also designates “neopagan”) is built on the premise that God does not exist or that, if He does, He is set apart from His creation. As a result, man is not holy, but another life form, inseparable from the rest of creatures. This makes morality relative; since law and right do not come from God, they are subject to majority rule or transient considerations. This in turn leads to situation ethics, which is usually shaped by “popularity and convenience.” Life is the end and pleasure the goal. Two ideals are set up for the world without God—radical individualism and socialistic collectivism, the latter becoming the new “god.” The religious viewpoint is in direct opposition to this paradigm.

In this collection are essays ranging in topic from school prayer, domestic violence, and gay marriage to Hollywood's outrages, the National Endowment for the Arts, and political correctness. Of special interest to league members are columns on the movie *Priest* which Feder condemns for the bigotry and hate it promotes against Catholicism. Also, he writes about how the media champions dissident Catholics while neglecting the opinions of practicing Catholics, especially when it comes to surveys.

There is a column about the yearly problem of displaying crèches and menorahs on public property. Although the legal obstacles are no longer a problem, secular opposition creates headaches. Further, Feder opines on the Oregon initiative called the "Death with Dignity Act" by supporters; he sees their attacks on Catholicism as part of their strategy to disarm the moral opposition to assisted suicide. "If patriotism is the last refuge of a scoundrel, Catholic-bashing is the first resort of the secular left."

This book contains the brilliance and wit that makes Don Feder a delight to read and a man to ponder. He writes plainly and with much common sense. He is open about his values; he has an agenda which he would like to see become dominant in American life. His embrace of the religious right provides a defense of what he considers to be a prominent, if controversial, movement. By clarifying what the movement really is all about, he has helped to make it that much easier for religious people to take their places in the public square.

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