

“60 Minutes” Rigs Show Against Catholic Church

On January 22, the CBS program “60 Minutes” aired a segment on the Catholic dissident group Call to Action. The segment covered a Call to Action conference held in Chicago in November, 1994, treating viewers to comments from the most alienated portions of the Catholic community. In the wake of the show, the headquarters of the Catholic League was deluged with phone calls and letters, all of which asked for League action. When it became apparent that the show was doctored to produce a certain result, the League made a formal organizational response.

At the time of the shooting of the Call to Action conference, “60 Minutes” executive producer Barry Lando was quoted as saying that the segment would provide a look “at the state of the Catholic Church in the U.S. today.” However, the show did nothing of the kind, focusing instead on a very small and unrepresentative portion of the Catholic community. Nowhere in the program was Call for Action depicted as the radical fringe, rather the members were politely, and incorrectly, called “cafeteria Catholics.”

In the beginning of the show, reporter Mike Wallace asserted that “a growing number [of Catholics] have begun to question some of his [the pope’s] teachings,” suggesting that while Call to Action may not be the authentic voice of the Church, it was not a band of aging malcontents either. Yet because 50 percent of the members are over the age of 50, and most are women, the composition of Call to Action hardly mirrors the demographics of the Catholic population. And their extremist positions hardly square with the sentiments of the rank and file, yet none of this merited much attention from Mr. Wallace, a reporter widely acclaimed for his tough style. Indeed, he let the most inane comments go wholly uncontested.

It is significant that the program did not show any element in the Church that could plausibly be branded mainstream. Instead, it featured such bizarre groups as Rent A Priest, outfits that are as unknown to Catholics as non-Catholics. It also showed a few nuns protesting Church teachings in St. Peter's Square. Most telling, however, was the segment where a group of women, some of whom were nuns, were shown saying Mass and distributing Holy Communion.

The show constantly tried to cast the Pope as a stubborn Neanderthal fighting against the forces of enlightenment. Time after time the program referred to *his* teachings (meaning the Holy Father's), and not the *Church's* teachings, the effect of which was to personalize, and therefore delegitimize, the pope's authority. Another effect was to encourage the viewer to believe that one man stands in the way of much desired change, and that the change agents have been victimized by the Vatican.

The lack of balance in the show was intentional. "60 Minutes" had access to a more informed and representative voice, and still decided not to air it. In point of fact, it had on tape an interview with two lay authorities on the Catholic Church (both of whom are members of the Catholic League's board of advisors), interviews that had been commissioned by "60 Minutes" for the express purpose of responding to the Call to Action segment. Harvard Law Professor Mary Ann Glendon and Ethics and Public Policy Center President George Weigel taped an interview with Mike Wallace in New York on December 4, 1994, but within a few days of the taping, Wallace called to tell them that their interview had been dropped because "the chemistry just wasn't right."

The Catholic League sent two letters to executive producer Barry Lando and issued the following press release on January 25:

"The entire Call to Action segment was, from beginning to end,

an exercise in intellectual dishonesty and journalistic malpractice. The decision to give high profile to the Catholic Church's radical fringe was pure politics, and it is nothing short of outrageous that Barry Lando and Mike Wallace solicited, and then rejected, views that would have provided for some semblance of fairness. Allowing extremists an uncontested opportunity to rail against the Catholic Church distorts the sentiments of most Catholics and provides succor for bigots.

"There is a difference between reporting dissent, and promoting it. By refusing to air interviews with Mary Ann Glendon and George Weigel, '60 Minutes' made clear its preference, extending to the disaffected a platform that they have never earned within the Catholic community. It is not hard to orchestrate any result, not when there is a determined effort to manipulate and steer the outcome. This is propaganda at work, not journalism."

In a letter to the Catholic League, "60 Minutes" defended its position by saying that no one from the Catholic hierarchy agreed to be interviewed (for reasons readily understood by everyone but those at "60 Minutes"). However, Bishop John Myers of Peoria, Illinois did agree to go on the show, but only on the condition that he be guaranteed an unedited three to four minutes to reply to the Call to Action piece. He was turned down. Importantly, this was before Wallace asked Glendon and Weigel to appear, making inexcusable the refusal of "60 Minutes" to run their interview.

The bottom line is this: Call to Action got a free ride, and the Catholic Church got a bum rap. Again.

League Wins Key Religious Freedom Case

In late January, the Catholic League received word that it had won an important religious freedom case. At stake was whether Catholic landlords can exercise their religious beliefs by refusing to rent an apartment to an unwed couple. The Catholic League, which had filed an amicus brief on behalf of the landlords, was delighted with the news. The case began in August 1989 when two brothers, Paul and Ronald Desilets, refused to rent a two-bedroom apartment in Turners Fall, Massachusetts to Cynthia Tarail and Mark Lattanzi. The Desilets said that to yield to the unwed couple's request would violate their religious beliefs, arguing that "living in sin" was not something they wanted to condone. The couple sued the Desilets on the grounds of discrimination and took the case to the Superior Court in Franklin County. The Catholic League entered on the side of the Desilets, urging the court to respect the First Amendment religious freedom rights of the landlords.

In 1992, the League won but the would-be tenants appealed to the state Supreme Judicial Court.

When the case reached the Supreme Judicial Court, it held that the Desilets violated the anti-discrimination laws of Massachusetts by refusing to rent to the unmarried couple, but hastened to add that the landlords' free exercise of religion would be "substantially burdened," and the state would have to show a "compelling interest" if it were to force them to rent to the couple. At issue was the extent to which religious beliefs can run contrary to fair housing laws. The state's highest court then sent the case back to the Superior Court for retrial.

In December, 1994, the Attorney General's office decided not

to retry the case, thus awarding victory to the Catholic League. The Attorney General's office made no public announcement about its decision, and it wasn't until the League's Operation Director, Joe Doyle, called to check on the status of the case that he learned of the outcome. Doyle immediately contacted the press, calling the outcome, "A vindication of the First Amendment and a victory for the rights of conscience of American Catholics."

On the losing side of this case was the Massachusetts Chapter of the ACLU, the American Jewish Congress and the Gay and Lesbian Advocates and Defenders.

Similar cases have occurred elsewhere. The results, thus far, have been uneven.

Distortions and Lies About the Catholic Church

There is a great deal of distortion and outright lying going on about the Catholic Church these days, and the time has come to name names. I'll begin at home base.

Over the past several years, Father Andrew Greeley has made quite a spectacle of himself hawking his sex novels. But usually Father Greeley can be counted on to have command of the teachings of the Church. Not so when I recently debated him on TV. It seems that Father Greeley is so excited about the results of his survey – you know, the one that says Catholics win the gold medal for sex – that he believes that sex is a sacrament in the Catholic Church. He said it over and over so it can't be ruled a slip of the tongue. Funny thing, the last time I checked it was matrimony, not sex, that was a

sacrament.

Much worse is Father David Trosch. He's the one who says shoot all the abortionists, receptionists included. Though he's been suspended from the priesthood and will no doubt exit before too long, he still goes on TV presenting himself as a priest in good standing. He did so with me, all the while distorting the Church's teachings on a host of issues. Never once did he admit to his limbo status, or that he spoke only for himself. I informed the viewers otherwise, and even though Trosch never took issue with me on this, he still caused damage to the Church.

Fortunately, Rabbi Avi Weiss is about as representative of rabbis as Greeley and Trosch are of priests. Weiss is a demagogue. It is not enough for him to gag in public every time he sees a Christian symbol near a World War II death camp site, he tries to make a quick buck exploiting anti-Catholic prejudice. In a recent appeal he made for the Coalition for Jewish Concerns – AMCHA, Rabbi Weiss wrote that the Vatican "is engaged in blatant Holocaust revisionism to obscure its own complicity in the killings." He further noted that the Vatican is systematically working to "obscure the truth of the Holocaust and the Catholic church's [sic] abandonment of the Jews."

I wrote to Weiss quoting all the prominent Jews who after the war praised the Catholic Church's response to the Holocaust. He wrote back saying that he read my letter "with deep pain and disappointment," adding that the Vatican "turned its back on the Jews 50 years ago." I sent him a copy of the Catholic League volume *Pius XII and the Holocaust* and have yet to hear from him again.

Alexander Sanger, president and CEO of Planned Parenthood, has lots of money but no guts. He spent \$60,000 smearing Cardinal O'Connor and Cardinal Law in a *New York Times* ad, has attacked the Catholic League in public, but won't debate me on radio or

TV If I were pro-abortion, I'd be ashamed to have a coward like him at the helm.

Christopher Hitchens is a veteran writer for the left-wing's favorite journal, the *Nation*. To the unacquainted, Hitchens' fondness for Catholics is on a par with his fondness for Jews, which is to say that he isn't very fond of either. A bitter atheist, Hitchens is unique: he is the only person I have ever heard of who hates Mother Teresa.

It was in 1992 that Hitchens first expressed his hatred of Mother Teresa, doing so in the *Nation*. A socialist who is not ashamed to accept unearned income, Hitchens recycled his *Nation* piece in the February 1995 edition of *Vanity Fair*. This article comes on the heels of a British TV documentary, *Hell's Angel*, a show that tries hard to discredit Mother Teresa.

So what's Hitchens' beef? He questions Mother Teresa's virginity ("how do we know for sure?" is the full extent of his charge); he doesn't like the fact that her ministry takes her to dictatorships (this is an odd criticism, given Hitchens' affection for left-wing dictatorships); and he complains that she takes money from rich people (precisely whom she should take money from in order to service the poor he does not say).

I wrote a letter to *Vanity Fair* registering my thoughts on Hitchens' article and, lo and behold, guess who calls me? Hitchens told me that he never defended any left-wing dictatorship and that I should "put up or shut up," inviting me to either produce the evidence or stop with the accusation. I gladly accepted the bid.

That evening I went to a local college library and randomly chose copies of the *Nation* from 1983. The next day I mailed Hitchens a letter citing my sources. For Hitchens, the despotic regime of Salvador Allende in Chile was "a democracy" and the repression of the Sandinistas in Nicaragua was nothing

more than “a problem” for the left, one that he clearly was prepared to live with.

Perhaps most telling was my discovery that in 1983 a *Nation* reader and fellow leftist wrote that “Hitchens’s straightforward hatred of Catholics is offensive and ugly prejudice.” I passed on the good news to Mr. Hitchens and trust that since I put up, he will now shut up.

Finally, there is the matter of “60 Minutes.” Mike Wallace interviews two of the nation’s leading Catholic scholars for two straight hours and can’t find two minutes worth airing. But he has plenty of time for the crackpots at Call to Action. And he has plenty of time to show four nuns protesting at St. Peter’s Square, raising the question just how few protesting nuns would it take for “60 Minutes” not to put them on the air?

In a letter Wallace told reporters that he wrote to the Catholic League on January 27, he explains that he didn’t put Mary Ann Glendon and George Weigel on the air because “the interview we did with them just didn’t work out.” There are a few problems with this account.

First of all, Wallace lied when he told reporters that he sent us a letter. We never got one until we called five days later to find out why we hadn’t received it. When Catholic League employee Cynthia Jessup called Wallace on February 1 inquiring about the status of the letter, he admitted that he never sent it. Cynthia then asked Wallace to send us a copy and he said that he would. A few minutes later the letter was faxed to us. But there was one problem: it wasn’t addressed to us. It was addressed “Dear Sirs,” and though it was clearly a response to our news release, the letter was strewn with cross-outs, suggesting that this sloppy draft was about as far as Wallace was about to go.

There is another problem. When Wallace says that the interview

with Glendon and Weigel “just didn’t work out,” what he really means is that their reasoned responses didn’t fit his agenda. Did he really expect that two first-class intellectuals would mimic the antics of the buffoons from Call to Action by jumping up and down on the set? Glendon and Weigel thought that they were appearing on a serious program, not the “Gong Show.”

One last comment. Was it a matter of coincidence that the Call to Action piece aired on January 22, the anniversary of *Roe v. Wade*, a day when many Americans focus on the social teachings of the Catholic Church? And is it just a fluke that virtually every show that “60 Minutes” does on Catholicism puts the Church in a bad light? Answer “yes” and I’ll sell you the Brooklyn Bridge.

Clinton’s Catholic Problem

By William A. Donohue

This article first appeared in the January 1995 issue of *Crisis* magazine.

It is reprinted here with permission.

Recently, when someone from the White House called to defend the Clinton administration on the charge of anti-Catholicism, I waited to hear something persuasive. But as I will reveal, nothing he said proved very convincing. There were a few comments that sounded convincing, which I recount here.

President Clinton is responsible for recapturing the Reagan Democrats, a goodly number of whom are Catholic, and he is the first president ever to have graduated from a Catholic college. One of his primary themes has been the role of

religion – not only in his life but in the life of the nation – and he is an avid reader of the Bible. His prayer breakfasts have been many and his support for the Religious Freedom Restoration Act is well-known. He has met with the pope and shared programs with Mother Teresa. Fond of quoting from Stephen Carter's book, *The Culture of Disbelief*, President Clinton has frequently objected to the strict separationist positions favored by extreme civil libertarians. Indeed, he has charged that "The fact that we have freedom of religion doesn't mean we need to have to try to have freedom from religion." So with all this going for him, why does the president still have a problem with Catholics?

Bill Clinton's problem with Catholics began exactly two days after his inauguration: January 22, 1993 marked the 20th anniversary of *Roe v. Wade*. It was also the day that President Clinton signed executive orders reversing the following policies: (a) regulations that prohibited abortion counseling in federally funded family planning clinics; (b) a ban on fetal research; (c) restrictions on access to abortion in U.S. military hospitals overseas; and (d) the "Mexico City Policy" which denied U.S. foreign aid programs overseas that promoted abortion. Now it was one thing for President Clinton not to address the March for Life on January 22, quite another to issue executive orders expanding abortion rights the same day. This act was seen by pro-lifers, and the millions of Catholics who dominate their ranks, as an "in your face" kind of move – the type of statement that speaks volumes about one's priorities; it certainly sent an unmistakable message to Catholics. Not only did Clinton sign these executive orders, he ordered a study of the French abortion pill RU-486, stating that his goal was to make abortion "safe and legal, but rare." He did not explain how his executive orders, or RU-486, could in any way be interpreted as making abortion more rare, but that didn't seem to matter. It took the Vatican newspaper, *L'Osservatore Romano*, less than 24 hours to charge that the Clinton administration had started down "the pathway of death

and violence.”

Catholics also felt a little salt in the wounds when the Clintons decided to enroll their daughter, Chelsea, in a private school. They could tolerate a Jimmy Carter who opposed vouchers because, at least, the Carters did not put their daughter in a private school. They could accept the decision of the Reagans and the Bushs to send their children to private schools because they both supported vouchers. But the situation with the Clintons was different.

For Hillary and Bill to oppose vouchers was one thing, but for them to send their child to a wealthy private school – without ever previewing a single public school in the District of Columbia – and at the same time to deny to those less fortunate than themselves the chance to send their children to a non-public school, this was not something that sat well with many Catholics. Catholics, after all, have led the fight for vouchers. The Clintons made it clear from the start, however, that what they meant by pro-choice was not what Catholics understood by the term.

Clinton’s early decision to lift the ban on gays in the military got him into trouble with Archbishop Joseph T. Dimino, head of the Archdiocese for the Military Services U.S.A. Archbishop Dimino warned the president that such a policy might signal acceptance of the homosexual lifestyle and would therefore have “disastrous consequences for all concerned.” And “all concerned” surely meant Catholics, as Catholics constitute over half of all the men and women in the armed forces. It is a safe bet, too, that virtually none of the Reagan Democrats voted for Clinton because they wanted gays in the military.

Part of Clinton’s problem with Catholics can be explained by the relatively few Catholics he has working for him. Reagan employed 7 Catholics in his Cabinet while Bush had 8 – Clinton has 3. And even though Catholics have been targeted since 1973

as a category that qualifies for affirmative action in the federal government, and even though Clinton defends affirmative action, his administration has not shown much interest in seeing to it that Catholics are accorded proportionate representation. When pressed, Clinton can always cite Donna Shalala, a Catholic whose values are about as representative of the Catholic community as that of Anna Quindlen's or Phil Donahue's. But it was the appointment of Dr. Joycelyn Elders that told Catholics where they really stood with the president. Her recent firing, coupled with Clinton's scrapping of NIH embryo research, suggests the president is beginning to recognize his problem.

Dr. Elders made headlines even before she became Surgeon General. She is a long-time advocate of condom distribution in the schools, notwithstanding the fact that under her leadership as director of the Arkansas Health Department, the teen pregnancy rate increased; it had actually decreased in the period prior to her tenure. However, it is her cavalier attitude toward condoms that is most interesting. "I tell every girl that when she goes out on a date," says Dr. Elders, "put a condom in her purse." The woman who sports a "condom plant" on her desk also had this to say: "We have had driver's ed for kids. We've taught them what to do in the front seat of the car, but not what to do in the back seat of the car."

It was on the subject of abortion that Dr. Elders got into big trouble, especially with Catholics. She sees those who oppose abortion as "non-Christians with slave-master mentalities," and believes that those who are pro-life "love little babies so long as they are in someone else's uterus." In fact, she says that pro-lifers should get over their "love affair with the fetus."

The antipathy that Dr. Elders has for the Catholic Church has been well-recorded. She has made public statements charging the Catholic Church for being "silent" and doing "nothing" about the Holocaust, a lie so bald that no one but a bigot or

a fool would make it. The Catholic Church has also been blamed by Dr. Elders for slavery, the condition of the Native American and the disenfranchisement of women, making inexplicable her reluctance to blame water pollution on Catholics as well. That no other religious group seems to incur her wrath is a fact not lost on millions of Catholics.

Dr. Elders chooses to label the Catholic Church a "celibate, male-dominated" institution, and expects not to be chided for doing so. Yet if someone were to call the National Organization for Women a "lesbian dominated" institution, no one would be convinced that this was just a descriptive tag. But to the Clintonites, all this is just talk and can be explained away as overheated rhetoric. That is why Clinton pursued her nomination even though everything just mentioned about her was said before she became Surgeon General and after the *Washington Post* agreed with the Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights that Dr. Elders was an anti-Catholic bigot.

Dr. Elders has since managed to draw the enmity of Cardinal James Hickey for her defense of homosexuality, which extends to gay and lesbian adoption, and has survived a "modified woodshed" beating by White House Chief of Staff Leon Panetta for her statements regarding the Catholic Church.

The U.N. International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo brought to a head a strain between Clinton and Catholics that had long been brewing. Much of the strain revolved around the subject of abortion. Even before Cairo, the Clinton administration was busy tampering with the Hyde Amendment's ban on federal funding for abortion, promoting funding for fetal tissue research, pushing for embryo research and endorsing the Freedom of Choice Act, a law that would deny to the states the right to place limits on abortion.

The Cairo conference definitely put the lie to the assertion

that the Clinton administration wanted to make abortion "rare." From the beginning, it was evident that the expansion of abortion rights all over the globe was the number one priority of the Clintonites. Oh, yes, terms like "reproductive rights" and "fertility regulation" were commonly invoked, but, as any honest observer will admit, these terms are nothing but code for abortion-on-demand. In the end, however, the president pulled a Clinton and backed off, thus adding to the list of equivocations that has become the signature of his administration. The damage, of course, was done, and no group felt more abused than Catholics.

Toying with the definition of the family also got the Clinton administration into trouble in Cairo. Clintonites were active in the move to change the wording of a draft document that called the family *the* basic unit of society to one that downgraded it to *a* basic unit. This led to another battle with the Holy See and another loss for the Clinton administration – the original wording of the document was restored.

Anti-Catholicism was evident at both the Cairo conference and the Preparatory Session that preceded it at the U.N. Since nearly all of the Catholic-bashing came from the non-governmental organizations (NGO's), and since the Clinton administration worked closely with the offending NGO's, it is fair to say that the Clintonites shared responsibility for what happened. From the hoots and howls that greeted representatives of the Holy See, to the anti-Catholic buttons and literature that were distributed at the conferences, it was obvious that Catholics were not welcome. Indeed, well-funded letterhead front groups like Catholics for a Free Choice were accorded more respect by the Clintonites than delegates from the Vatican.

It was left to State Department spokeswoman Faith Mitchell to deliver the most telling low-blow. She charged that the Vatican's disagreement over the Cairo conference "has more to do with the fact that the conference is really calling for a

new role for women, calling for girls' education and improving the status of women." The statement so outraged Harvard Law Professor Mary Ann Glendon that she wrote an open letter to the president registering her concerns; it was signed by the leaders of organizations representing hundreds of thousands of Catholic women and was published in the *New York Times* under the sponsorship of the Catholic League. Damage control expert Leon Panetta admitted that White House discipline was required to deal with the level of Catholic-bashing that had surfaced in Cairo.

About a month after the Cairo conference ended, I received a call from Jim Castelli of the Office of Public Liaison in the White House. He was disturbed to see that the Catholic League journal, *Catalyst*, featured a story entitled "League Assails Clinton Administration for Bigotry." This, coming on the heels of the *New York Times* open letter, was found to be troubling. Castelli began by stating that he could "cite chapter and verse" why the Clinton administration was not anti-Catholic. I accepted the challenge and began by first listing my reasons why I think Clinton has a problem with Catholics.

The conversation, though cordial, was strange. It was strange because I am not accustomed to talking to people who are self-identified "fellow travelers in Catholic circles." I've met lots of self-confessed "lapsed Catholics," but never before had I run across someone who was a "fellow traveler in Catholic circles." Perhaps that's what happens to Catholics when they write for the *National Catholic Reporter*, as Castelli did. In any event, Castelli just doesn't get it. Even the Clinton administration's own Ambassador to the Vatican, Ray Flynn, has blasted the administration for anti-Catholic bigotry. In a letter to President Clinton dated July 6, 1994, Flynn wrote that he was "embarrassed" about the "ugly anti-Catholic bias that is shown by prominent members of Congress and the administration." Flynn told me personally that he stands by the statement.

It is not likely that Clinton's Catholic problem will disappear as long as he surrounds himself with people like Castelli. It was in the Office of Public Liaison, after all, that the Clinton administration hosted the infamous meeting of dissident Catholic groups in July 1993. When the likes of CORPUS, a group of resigned married priests, the Women's Ordination Conference, Catholics for a Free Choice and Catholics Speak Out are invited to impart their words of wisdom, that explains why executive agencies like the Equal Opportunity Commission can develop guidelines that trample on religious freedom and receive no resistance from Catholics in the administration. Quite simply, this is an administration that listens to the fringe more than it does the middle.

In addition to firing Elders, there are some signs that Clinton may be trying to appease Catholics. The president has intervened to reverse a decision that would have committed the administration to challenge a child pornography conviction; he has told the Justice Department to withdraw a brief that would have put the administration on the side of those who would seize funds donated to an Evangelical church by a couple filing for bankruptcy; and he has succeeded in reversing a decision by the Postal Service banning the popular Madonna and Child stamp series. His flip-flop on the school prayer amendment, however, suggests that he is still capable of waffling.

Over the second half of his term, President Clinton will surely be keeping a close watch on the Catholic community. And with good reason: in 1996, most Protestants will vote Republican and most Jews will vote Democratic, just as they always do. But what about Catholics? In 1988, Bush won the Catholic vote 52-47 over Dukakis, only to lose it to Clinton 44-36 (Perot got 20 percent). Which way the Catholic vote goes in 1996 will decide which way the country goes. Whether the next two years proves to be a gold mine or a mine field with Catholics will be determined by Clinton. The ball's in his

court.

The Case of the Vanishing Crucifix Earns League Letter

Dr. Ron Collins

Vice President of Academic Affairs and Provost

Eastern Michigan University

Room 106, Welch Hall

Ypsilanti, MI 48197

Dear Dr. Collins:

It has come to my attention that Professor Joanna Scott, Chairperson of the Department of Political Science, has removed a crucifix that was affixed to the wall above the desk of graduate assistant Thomas C. Skrobola. Mr. Skrobola found the crucifix in his desk with a note that said that it had been removed "since it is a personal statement and not an expression of university policy (i.e. 1st Amendment)." (Italics in. the original.)

As the president of the nation's largest Catholic civil rights organization., and as the author of several books and articles on the First Amendment, I would be most interested in seeing a copy of the university policy that Professor Scott was referencing.

Thank you for your consideration..

Sincerely,

William A. Donohue, Ph.D.

President

Justice Department Exceeds Its Reach

On January 20, the *Boston Globe* reported that Attorney General Janet Reno announced that the Justice Department “will be monitoring antiabortion rhetoric.” The Catholic League sought verification of this report and found that it was accurate. On January 17, the Justice Department released a statement that opens with the following sentence: “The Justice Department is reviewing statements and writings which seem to condone or encourage violence against clinics and providers of reproductive health services.”

The Catholic League issued the following press release on this matter:

“The real story behind Janet Reno’s remarkable statement is that most of those in the media, and virtually all civil liberties organizations, felt that it did not warrant their attention. In the past, when the government has monitored the speech of black militants or antiwar activists, we have heard cries of outrage. Now we hear nothing, even though the targets of surveillance include writers who ‘seem to condone’ violence.

“As a general rule, an element of imminence must prevail before speech promoting violence can trigger a response from the authorities. But that rule is not satisfactory to the Justice Department. Yet surely there is a difference between someone who, however wrongheaded, writes an article that says killing abortionists is justified on the grounds of ‘an eye for an eye,’ and someone who stands across the street from an abortion clinic urging a frenzied crowd to charge the clinic.

It is the difference between advocacy and incitement.

“Will Janet Reno authorize the Justice Department to monitor the speech of the Nation of Islam? What about Hollywood? Or how about radio talk show hosts? Or will she instead confine herself to those activists who oppose the Clinton administration’s policies?

“So as not to be misunderstood, the Catholic League approves of law enforcement agencies doing everything it can *within* the parameters of the law to stop violence against abortion providers. Not within those parameters is the January 17 directive of Janet Reno. The Catholic League is requesting that the Justice Department make public all of its communications on this subject so that it can be determined whether a suit should be filed against it.”

The League sent a letter to Attorney General Janet Reno on January 31 requesting that it turn over all material related to this case. At press time, it was awaiting a reply.

Demagoguery Marks Planned Parenthood

In an advertisement in the *New York Times* of January 5, Planned Parenthood blamed Cardinal O’Connor and Cardinal Law for the killings by John Salvi of two receptionists at an abortion clinic in Brookline, Massachusetts on December 30.

The ad labeled Cardinal O’Connor’s statement that “you cannot prevent killing by killing” as “a backhanded apology for the attackers.” It further noted that Cardinal O’Connor “seems to justify Friday’s murders by blaming women who seek to end

their unwanted pregnancies with abortion and blaming clinics that help them.” Similarly, Cardinal Law’s call for a temporary moratorium on anti-abortion protests was met with disdain, questioning “How many more murders will it take before we see a permanent national moratorium?” The ad continued by saying that “The leaders of the extreme religious right whose rhetoric destabilizes their followers have the lives of these innocent victims of violence on their consciences.”

The Catholic League responded with a press release on the subject:

“Planned Parenthood’s inflammatory ad makes it clear that it cannot distinguish between John Cardinal O’Connor and John Salvi. By doing so, it indicates who the real extremist really is.

“Cardinal O’Connor has a legal right and a moral obligation to say that ‘you cannot prevent killing by killing.’ As Planned Parenthood well knows, Cardinal O’Connor has repeatedly condemned the killing of abortionists, even going so far as to say that would-be killers of abortionists should kill him instead. To tie Cardinal O’Connor to the immorality of John Salvi is a demagogic outrage that demands an immediate apology.

“True to form, Planned Parenthood threw Cardinal Law’s good will gesture back in his face. Not satisfied with Cardinal Law’s offer, Planned Parenthood seeks to up the ante by calling for a permanent national moratorium on the First Amendment right of Americans to protest abortion. This is not good will at work, rather it is a pernicious call to silence debate and stifle a central constitutional right.

“Just as Martin Luther King was not responsible for the behavior of the Black Panthers, Cardinal O’Connor and Cardinal Law are not responsible for the behavior of the John Salvis of

this world. Accordingly, Planned Parenthood should immediately desist in its McCarthyite attempt to discredit responsible voices in the Catholic community.”

On January 9, the president of the Massachusetts chapter of Planned Parenthood, Nikki Nichols-Gamble, added fuel to the fire by lambasting Cardinal O’Connor for not following the lead of Cardinal Law by requesting a moratorium on peaceful prayer vigils outside abortion clinics. This is what she said: “I think Cardinal Law is talking to the kind of God that I know and it seems to me that Cardinal O’Connor hasn’t gotten in touch with the right God.”

The Catholic League released the following statement on this matter:

“Planned Parenthood has once again gone beyond legitimate dialogue and has entered the arena of gutter politics. It wasn’t bad enough that it blamed Cardinal O’Connor and Cardinal Law for the killings in an abortion clinic in Brookline,

Massachusetts, or that it called for a permanent national moratorium on the First Amendment right of Americans to protest abortion. Now it calls into question Cardinal O’Connor’s life of prayer and his contact with God.

“Planned Parenthood isn’t engaged in business as usual. It has embarked on a kind of verbal search and destroy mission, the likes of which are normally associated with the politics of fascism. Bigotry, invective, demagoguery, lies-nothing is off-limits with the moguls of the abortion industry. If there is any good to come out of this, it is that the mask of reason has been fully pulled from the face of Planned Parenthood. With this remark, Planned Parenthood stands in the public square for all to see, and what it shows is not a pretty sight.

“The Catholic League explicitly does not ask for an apology.

To do so would be to suggest that what was said was inadvertent, and this is surely not the case: what was said was meant and there is no getting around it. But we do call on Americans of all faiths to join with us in denouncing this incredible statement and ask that the federal government reconsider its lavish funding of this bigoted enterprise.”

New Address for Philadelphia Chapter

The Greater Philadelphia – South Jersey Chapter may be contacted at (215) 673-7388. Their fax number is 673-4733. The new chapter president is Arthur J. Delaney. He is ably assisted by Executive Director Michael Curry and Communications Director Gerard St. John. Mail should go to the chapter at **P.O. Box 14573, Philadelphia, PA 19115.**

The League's New York Times Ad

The Catholic League's "Open Letter" (click [here](#)) published in the *New York Times*, January 20, 1995. The ad was made possible by the generosity of our members. (The ad is shown reduced in size to fit this page.)

Progress Made at Colorado High School

In the November issue of *Catalyst*, we notified League members of the disturbing situation in a school district in southern Colorado. Gary Benson, in his Cultural Geography class at Centauri High School, had been engaged in the propagation of misinformation about the Catholic Church to his students. He was quoting material directly from a William C. Brown textbook, *World History: Book I*. What's worse, despite the fact that the administration was supposed to be reviewing all classroom materials and subject matter, and that all lessons plans were supposed to be submitted for review, Mr. Benson had been misleading his students for at least ten years without the knowledge of anyone in the school or board administration.

The initial response from administrators to Mike Cyrus, who initially raised the concerns, included the excuses that Benson was a tenured instructor, that this class had originated before their appointment, and that he was the head of a department. However, upon receipt of a letter of complaint from the League, as well as a detailed account of classroom teachings prepared by Mr. Cyrus, a La Jara resident whose daughter is in Benson's class at Centauri, Superintendent Kurt Cary assured us that they "take matters of this nature very seriously and will investigate the matter to the fullest extent possible."

On December 15, Mr. Cyrus received a letter from Gary Shawcroft, Assistant Superintendent, to notify him that the book Mr. Benson had been using would be removed from classroom use during the investigation. "Concomitant with academic freedom is responsibility, accountability and, very simply,

good judgment," Mr. Shawcroft wrote. At that time the board of education expressed concern for further review of the book as instructional material and said "until such time as further study can be made to determine the appropriateness, relevance, value, student maturity level and other related concerns, the book will not be used."

On January 25, Mr. Cyrus received a letter from Mr. Cary, Superintendent of North Conejos County Schools, informing him that further review had been made of the book in question. Mr. Cary determined that due to the age of the students, and because the materials present information "about the development of particular religions in a manner that unnecessarily create(s) discomfort for some students," the book should not be used in the future in North Conejos County schools.

Superintendent Cary also addressed Mr. Cyrus' other concerns, namely a) the competency of Mr. Benson, b) the academic liberties taken with classroom instructional materials and activities, and c) the lack of enforcement of administration policies. Cary assured Cyrus that "appropriate steps are being pursued to address the issues you have brought to our attention. "

While other matters still remain, the League is pleased to note that progress is being made. We salute Superintendent Cary for acting responsibly .