

ARTISTIC ELITE CUT JEWS AND MUSLIMS A BREAK

It's a familiar complaint we have—Catholics being treated unfairly by the cultural elites. But lately it's gotten so out of hand that we had to make a public statement. Here's what Bill Donohue had to say about this subject:

“An Off-Broadway play that was scheduled to open last night [March 22] was nixed because Jews who were polled about the theme found it to be offensive. The person who censored the play is the same artistic director who criticized his theater in 1998 for not supporting an anti-Catholic play.

“A movie whose title might have offended Muslims was dropped by a major Hollywood studio. The same studio is now associated with a film that one of the co-producers has labeled ‘conservatively anti-Catholic.’

“But none of those responsible for these decisions has been the target of the vitriol that the Catholic League has been subjected to for merely asking Ron Howard to put a disclaimer in ‘The Da Vinci Code.’

“The play that never opened is ‘My Name is Rachel Corrie.’ It is based on the real-life story of a young American woman who was killed in 2003 when she threw herself in front of an Israeli bulldozer to protest the destruction of a Palestinian home. The man who made the decision to kill the play after he polled local Jews is Jim Nicola of the New York Theater Workshop. He is the same person who slammed his theater for withdrawing its support of ‘Corpus Christi,’ the play that depicted Jesus having sex with his disciples.

“The movie that might have offended Muslims is the Albert Brooks satire, ‘Looking for Comedy in the Muslim World.’ The ever-sensitive studio that dropped the movie because it

objected to the film's title is Sony, the same company that is releasing 'The Da Vinci Code.'

"Get it? The artistic elite are careful not to offend Jews or Muslims, but they don't give a hoot about offending Christians, especially Catholics. In other words, the cultural elite can be cowardly or combative—it just depends on who the target group is. And they wonder why so many Christians loathe them."

FIVE-YEAR-OLDS TO LEARN ABOUT AIDS

New York City's Department of Education has mandated that all five-year-olds must learn about AIDS and HIV in their kindergarten classes. The new curriculum began in late March.

Our response was appropriately strong and led to several interviews with Bill Donohue:

"New York City is home to some of the most reckless homosexual behavior in the United States, and that is why new strains of HIV have been detected here in the last few years and why reports of serious drug abuse—principally crystal meth—have exploded in the gay community. And what has been the response from the New York City government? Last month it announced that it would market its own official condom, as if the more than 1 million condoms that it already distributes free of charge isn't enough.

"Now it has decided to teach little kids—still on their tricycles—about AIDS. It matters not a whit that those pushing this program say that the kids won't learn how HIV is

transmitted until the fourth grade (as if nine-year-olds are ready to learn about the wonders of anal sex); what matters is that this represents a coordinated effort on the part of city officials to sexually engineer our children. If they were truly interested in protecting kids from diseases, they would start by teaching them about such things as food poisoning.

“New York City is also telling parents that they may remove their children from these classes, but only if they agree to teach their kids at home. This is the time for Catholic parents who send their kids to the public schools to put their foot down: pull their kids from these classes, refuse to teach them about AIDS and then inform their principal of their refusal to cooperate.”

PENN JILLETTE ATTACKS MOTHER TERESA (AGAIN)

On his April 5 CBS radio show, Penn Jillette commented on the rumor that Paris Hilton may play Mother Teresa in a movie. He said Mother Teresa “had this weird kink that I think was sexual” about seeing people suffer and die. He also said that “Paris Hilton is so far above Mother Teresa on the moral scale, she should not lower herself” to playing the saintly nun.

After comparing Mother Teresa to Charles Manson, Jillette again said she “got her [sexual] kicks watching people suffer and die.” He concluded by saying, “Paris Hilton. You’re so much better than that. Don’t take the gig. Keep making good wholesome porno films. Just do that. Do what you’re cut out for. Don’t lower yourself to playing Mother Teresa.”

Subsequent to Jillette's remarks, John London, a radio talk-show host on KIFR/San Francisco (a CBS station that carries Jillette's show), said that he would offer "\$5,000 to the person that kills Jillette" for his attack on Mother Teresa. He added that if Jillette "suffers, I'll make it \$7,000." London, and his producer, Dennis Cruz, were then fired by the CBS management in New York.

Bill Donohue's response was as follows:

"Last year, Penn Jillette referred to Mother Teresa on his Showtime TV show as 'Mother F-ing Teresa.' After I registered a complaint with Sumner Redstone, chairman of Viacom (which owns Showtime, as well as CBS), I was told about the merits of 'artistic freedom' and 'tolerance.' After Jillette's latest attack, it is clear that such excuses are wholly unacceptable." Donohue then called upon CBS Radio to fire him. He warned that CBS had its reputation to protect and had better take at least some disciplinary measures.

After Donohue's comments were released to the press, he had a frank exchange with CBS officials, the specifics of which must remain confidential. But this much can be revealed: While it cannot be said with 100 percent certainty that we will never have to revisit this problem, it is highly unlikely.

MICHAEL SAVAGE(S) CATHOLICISM

Here is what radio talk-show host Michael Savage had to say on March 28 about the Catholic Church's response to the immigration issue:

It is a pig story! It's Animal Farm all over again. And also make no bones about it, it's the greedy Catholic Church that

was behind it because the people of America walked away from the molesters' dens and they need to bring in people from the Third World who are still gullible enough to sit there and listen to the molesters...the Roman Catholic Church was behind this, the Roman Catholic Church started this a year ago. The Roman Catholic Church flooded the streets because they cannot get parishioners anymore amongst educated white people who have caught onto the racket and instead they need to import dummies to sit in the church pews. That's the story and it is not difficult for you to understand—I'm telling you the truth. It's all about greed. It's greed at the top of the Catholic Church.

Make no mistake about why this is happening. This has nothing to do with compassion for Mexican workers. This has nothing to do with fairness for Mexican workers—it has to do with the greed... That's all there is to it. And that includes the Catholic Church pigs. And if you don't like it, don't listen to the show—I really don't care anymore. I'm not going to be duped by this sanctimonious garbage that all churches are good and that the institution itself is good. Bah humbug. The institution is rotten from the top to the bottom.

Bill Donohue responded as follows:

"I was scheduled to be on with Mike Savage the day he savaged the Catholic Church and made bigoted comments about Latinos. But in the pre-interview—which occurred just a half hour before Savage went ballistic—I let a producer know that I did not share the host's position; after he checked with Savage, I was told they would not have me on the show. That was fine, but what is not fine is Savage's diatribe about the 'greedy pigs' in the Catholic Church and how 'the institution is rotten from the top to the bottom.' He owes all Catholics an apology."

The next day, Mike spent the better part of an hour discussing Donohue's comments. We think the message has been delivered

that he was way out of bounds.

ERRATUM

In the April *Catalyst* we incorrectly wrote that we had had problems with Colin McNickle of the Pittsburgh *Tribune Review* before. We regret the mistake—this was our first clash.

EASTER GIFTS, COURTESY OF THE MEDIA

The following is a list of shows and articles that have questioned the divinity of Jesus over the last decade, or at the very least offered a negative commentary. No other religion is subjected to the same type of critical analysis as Christianity is, and the presents always arrive at Easter time.

2006

- On April 2, NBC's "Dateline" discussed The Jesus Papers, the new book by Michael Baigent, coauthor of *Holy Blood, Holy Grail*. Baigent contends that Jesus wasn't divine, wasn't born of a virgin birth, married Mary Magdalene and sired a child.

When Baigent was recently asked where he got the proof that Jesus was alive in A.D. 45, he said he got it from reports

about a book he cannot find (we're not making this up!). When asked how he knows the tomb was empty because Jesus needed some R&R, he said, "Unfortunately, in this case, there are no facts." Put differently, the guy is a crook and "Dateline" has been had.

2005

- In 2005, Easter was on March 27. Pope John Paul II was dying at the time and so the ABC special "The Resurrection: Searching for Answers," didn't air until May 20. Hosted by Elizabeth Vargas, it reported: "Nearly every single detail of the Easter story remains a question of debate. Among them: Was the tomb really empty? And even more basic: Was Jesus ever buried in the first place?"

- On March 28 (Easter Monday), *Newsweek* ran a lengthy piece by Jon Meacham called "From Jesus to Christ" that was quite good. But even in this article, the reader is asked to ponder, "How much of this is remembered history, and how much heartfelt but unhistorical theology? It is impossible to say."

2004

- The April 12 (Easter Monday) issue of Time magazine featured a major cover story called "Why Did Jesus Die?" It presented both liberal and orthodox Christian beliefs on the meaning of Jesus' resurrection.

- On April 5 (during Holy Week), ABC had a Peter Jennings special report, "Jesus and Paul, the Word and the Witness." Lasting three hours, it included the Doubting Thomas' from the so-called Jesus Seminar. Viewers were treated to the work of Robert Funk and John Dominic Crossan, skeptics who believe that Jesus' body was eaten by wild dogs. The documentary clearly did not take the New Testament seriously.

2003

- On April 20 (Easter Sunday), the Discovery Channel showed a documentary called "James: Brother of Jesus." It was based on a book which claimed that James was Jesus' brother and that he was the true leader of the early Church.

2002

- On March 19 (Easter was March 31st), NPR's "Talk of the Nation" ran a segment on "Biblical archaeology" wherein the host said, "Two central holidays for Jews and Christians are right around the corner, Passover and Easter. Both are based on those religions' holiest book, the Bible. For Jews, the story is the exodus from slavery in Egypt; for Christians, the story is the crucifixion of Jesus and his return from the dead on the third day. But what if those stories were not literally true? What if the ancestors of the Jews were never slaves? What if Jesus did not rise from the dead? What would happen to Judaism and Christianity?"

2001

- On April 15 (Easter Sunday), the Discovery Channel aired a three-hour documentary called "Jesus: The Complete Story." According to the *Houston Chronicle*, the film was about scientists, archaeologists, theologians and historians whose "mission is to confirm or deny the facts of Jesus' life and death as written in the Gospels, that billions of Christians around today's world accept as gospel truth." The documentary suggested that perhaps Jesus and Judas planned for Judas to hand Jesus over ahead of time.

- On April 13 (Good Friday), ABC's 20/20 had a segment called "Modern Archaeologists, Theologians and Scholars Develop New Theory About Death of Jesus, and Who Was Responsible." Barbara Walters announced, "Tonight, with the help of leading religious experts, we bring you startling revelations about the life and death of Jesus. In the nearly 2,000 years since his crucifixion, countless acts of love and terrible acts of

hate have been carried out in his name. But even as the story endures, it continues to change. Tonight, Bob Brown takes you back to Jerusalem in search of the real Easter story." A Catholic priest, Fr. Jerome Murphy-O'Connor discussed how the seven last words of Jesus should not be taken historically and said of the words in Matthew "His blood be upon us and our children": "This was the root of anti-Semitism in Christianity. This was the root of the Holocaust."

2000

- The April 24 (Easter Monday) issue of *U.S. News and World Report* had a cover story called "Why Did He Die?" Jeffery L. Sheler's piece stated: "But while the Gospel story has inspired piety and devotion through the centuries, it also has spawned darker passions. From the rise of the Holy Roman Empire to the fall of the Third Reich and even today, purveyors of anti-Semitism have sought to justify their prejudices by appealing to the Gospels' depiction of Jews as jealous villains who plotted against Christianity's founder."

1999

- The April 5 (Easter Monday) issue of *U.S. News & World Report* featured a 2317 word article called "Reassessing an Apostle: The Quest for the Historical St. Paul Yields Some Surprising New Theories."

The article by Jeffery L. Sheler reports that scholars suggest that as St. Paul believed the Second Coming was imminent, "he did not intend his sometimes stern judgments on doctrinal matters and on issues of gender and sexuality to become church dogma applied, as it has been, for nearly 2,000 years." It also reports that many say he didn't write many of the letters in the Bible attributed to him.

1998

- On April 9 (Holy Thursday), NPR's "Talk of the Nation" with

Lynn Neary did a segment called "The Historical Jesus" with John Dominic Crossan (ex-priest and former co-director of the Jesus Seminar) as a guest. It was all about the Jesus Seminar theories. While Lynn Neary simply interviewed Crossan about his beliefs on the resurrection, it did give him quite a platform.

1997

- On March 28 (Good Friday) PBS's "News Hour" with Jim Lehrer presented a piece called "Considering Jesus" by Richard Ostling of *Time* magazine. The piece was all about the Jesus Seminar and asked the question, "Should New Testament accounts of his [Jesus'] life be taken literally or figuratively?"

While Ostling did not take any positions, the entire piece was about the Jesus Seminar, and how they say much of what is in the Bible didn't happen. Professor Marcus Borg (Oregon State University) was one of these men who says the resurrection was only symbolic. He was given a lot more time than N.T. Wright, a scholar (Dean of Lichfield Cathedral) who said the resurrection literally happened.

1996

- The April 8 (Easter Monday) issue of *Time* magazine featured a big story called "The Gospel Truth?" The subtitle accurately conveyed the gist of the story: "The Iconoclastic and Provocative Jesus Seminar Argues that Not Much of the New Testament Can Be Trusted. If So, What are Christians to Believe?"

- The April 8 issue of *Newsweek* ran a lengthy article called "Rethinking the Resurrection" by Kenneth Woodward. The piece was fairly written, though much space was given to those like John Dominic Crossan, the Jesus Seminar writer who likes to try to debunk the story of the resurrection.

GAY ADOPTION

On April 4, National Public Radio (NPR) asked Bill Donohue what the league's position was on gay adoption. These are his remarks:

"Every child who ever lived came into the world the product of a union between a man and a woman, and every child has a right to be raised by his or her father and mother. If this is not possible, and adoption is the logical alternative, then every effort should be made to place the child with a married couple. Cohabiting and heterosexual couples, same sex couples and single persons may be able to provide the prospective adopted child with love, but that is not sufficient. To be specific, cohabitating couples lack the permanence that most married couples provide, and society has a vested interest in providing children with a stable and patterned environment. Same sex couples, as well as single persons, lack the requisites provided by nature that would allow them to be a father and a mother, thus rendering them a poor substitute and inadequate role model for parenting. In short, society should socially ratify the cues provided by nature. Ergo, gay adoption is not a wise policy decision."

The prime reason why gay activists will reject the league's position has to do with our decision to acknowledge nature's limits.

HILLARY DEMAGOGUES SCHOOL VOUCHERS

Opponents of school vouchers should not have their integrity impugned by pro-voucher activists, and vice versa, but when the opponents resort to fear-mongering to get their message out, it is entirely legitimate to raise the character issue. Enter Senator Hillary Clinton.

New York Senator Clinton recently told Bronx activists that she was opposed to school vouchers because it may lead to parents wanting to send their children to the “Church of the White Supremacist” or the “School of the Jihad.”

As we said to the press, “According to Senator Clinton’s logic, if school vouchers are given to parents who want to send their kids to Catholic schools (or Jewish yeshivas), the next thing you know the racists and terrorists will want to build a school so they can cash in as well.” No wonder news reports described Senator Clinton’s audience as “somewhat puzzled.” Too bad they didn’t denounce her on the spot for fear mongering, hypocrisy and bigotry.

“If Clinton had any courage,” we continued, “she would tell Catholics to their face that she will never do anything to help them send their kids to parochial schools. Ditto for poor African-American parents, most of whom are Protestant: she should tell them to their face that she will never assist them in their quest to escape urban public schools, even though she never once considered sending her daughter Chelsea to a public school in Washington, D.C.”

Ironically, Senator Clinton supports tuition tax credits to help make college tuition more affordable. She also supports Pell Grants which allow needy students to pick the college of their choice. We couldn’t help but ask, “So where is WSU–White

Supremacist University? And where is JU—Jihad University?”

The reason why Clinton supports public monies being spent for higher education and not at the elementary and secondary levels is obvious: Catholic schools may have a more dramatic effect molding kids than colleges would, and that’s not something this “pro-choice” abortion-rights enthusiast can stomach.

We concluded our remarks by saying, “Clinton doesn’t have the courage to say that school vouchers may help schools run by the Nation of Islam—that might offend blacks. How much safer it is to concoct a story about white racists. Interestingly, she doesn’t mind feeding the fear that Abdul may want to set up a School of Jihad. Hope Muslims take note.”

We might add that the private high school that Chelsea Clinton attended, Sidwell Friends, was recently allowed to borrow \$30 million through tax-exempt bonds. In other words, the foregone taxes on that interest will be paid by you, and all other taxpayers. How cute.

SCHOOL VOUCHER MINEFIELD

If school voucher programs were judged by their record, we’d have more of them, not fewer. But politics always seems to get in the way.

For 16 years, Milwaukee has been providing school vouchers for low-income families so that their children can attend private schools. But despite all the data that show how meritorious the Parental Choice Program is, it’s been an uphill battle to expand the program: for all these years, only 15,000 public school students have been eligible for vouchers. Finally,

Wisconsin Governor Jim Doyle did the right thing and agreed to a compromise proposal that would increase the number of eligible students by 50 percent, to 22,500.

In two independent studies, Harvard scholars Caroline Hoxby and Rajashri Chakrabarti have been able to demonstrate that the Milwaukee experiment has succeeded in improving the test scores at the public schools most threatened by the program. Competition, which explains the success of the American economy vis-à-vis other nations, also explains why public schools do better when faced with stiff competition from the private sector. And yet the teachers unions resist.

The same phenomenon is being observed in Pennsylvania. Four years ago, the state took over Philadelphia schools, turning the worst 45 of them over to private operators. The effect on the remaining 200 public schools was remarkable: they improved twice as fast as any other schools in the nation's 10 largest cities. Once again, competition made all schools better.

Despite these successes, school choice programs in New York State are going nowhere. Because of strong opposition to vouchers, proponents of school choice turned to tuition tax credits as a remedy. Governor George Pataki, who has done nothing in all his years in office to help these programs, finally decided to propose a workable tuition tax credit program. But then he ran up against New York Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver, and everything fell apart. Silver wanted assurances that if some funds were made available, private schools would not raise their tuition.

In short, the road to school vouchers is a political minefield.

CATHOLIC DEMS CAN'T SHAKE ABORTION ALBATROSS

A “Statement of Principles” was recently released by 55 Catholic Democrats in the U.S. House of Representatives. It was an attempt to say that one can be a good Catholic and an abortion-rights enthusiast at the same time. It failed miserably.

These House Catholic Democrats say they agree with the Church about the “undesirability of abortion,” adding that “we do not celebrate its practice.” What gives them pause is not explained, but one thing is certain: there is not a word in the statement that commits these Catholics to work towards a change in the Democratic Party’s Platform on abortion. Thus, even the barbaric practice of partial-birth abortion is not so undesirable that it must be opposed.

Even before the statement was released to the public, it was greeted with joy by liberal Catholic columnist E.J. Dionne, Jr.; his Democratic friends obviously leaked him a copy. Dionne heralded it as “a remarkable document,” one that represented “an unprecedented attempt by a large number of elected officials to explain the relationship between their religious faith and their public commitments.”

Well, tell that to the bishops. They weren’t fooled by this lame attempt to justify a pro-abortion position in Catholic dress. Cardinal William Keeler, Cardinal Theodore McCarrick and Bishop Nicholas DiMarzio diplomatically welcomed the statement and then unloaded by reminding these Catholics of “the Catholic Church’s constant teaching that abortion is a grave violation of the most fundamental human right—the right to life that is inherent in all human beings, and that grounds every other right we possess.” In other words, the right of unborn babies to be born is more important than the minimum

wage. Startling news for some, no doubt.

The Catholic League response, naturally, pulled no punches. "The statement," we told the media, "is driven by fear." We were referring to the fear that an Abortion Albatross is literally strangling these House Catholic Democrats from getting their message out.

Recall that in 2004, 48 Catholic members of Congress—all Democrats—signed a letter to Cardinal Theodore McCarrick of Washington warning him that if some bishops were to deny Communion to abortion-rights advocates it would "revive latent anti-Catholic prejudice, which so many of us have worked so hard to overcome."

Funny thing is, we never recall one of them joining with the Catholic League to denounce the incestuous relationship that existed for years between the Democratic National Committee (DNC) and Catholics for a Free Choice, the notoriously anti-Catholic front group: a link with the bigoted group was posted on the DNC's website for years.

Perhaps the most convincing evidence that this statement is a sham is the fact that Rep. Rosa DeLauro is the point person for this effort. There has never been an abortion she couldn't justify, including the killing of an innocent child who is 80 percent born. Indeed, she previously served as the executive director of EMILY's List, the richest pro-abortion organization in the country.

So with DeLauro at the helm, we said in our news release, "the 'Statement of Principle' is nothing more than a 'Statement of Politics.'" Thus, the Abortion Albatross remains securely in place.