

CALIFORNIA COURTHOUSE TRIGGERS BIG CONTROVERSY

The Catholic League weighed in quickly and decisively in a raging controversy over an attempt by the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) to censor a religious message that is posted in the Riverside County courthouse in Riverside, California.

The ADL's Pacific Southwest regional office has sought to get officials of Riverside County to censor a quote by Theodore Roosevelt that reads, "The true Christian is the true citizen." Those words, which are engraved in gold letters on a mahogany wall in the local courthouse, were to be covered while the court was in session; they were to be uncovered during historical tours. The ADL says the quote should be covered because it could be seen as "a specific endorsement of the Christian faith."

There are two issues at work here. One is whether it can reasonably be maintained that the government is establishing a religion simply by posting a religious message offered by a president of the United States. "If this is the test," declared William Donohue, "then we will have to censor the figure of Moses with the two tablets that sits in the U.S. Supreme Court building." Donohue added that "we will also have to censor the engraved quote of Thomas Jefferson, 'The God who gave us life gave us liberty,' that can be found in the very same Riverside County courthouse that features the Roosevelt remark."

The other issue is freedom of speech. How ironic it is that in the 1970s, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that it was freedom of speech for a man standing in line in a California courthouse to wear a jacket with an obscenity printed on it.

Officials at the ADL's Pacific Southwest regional office said

they did not object to the entire statement by Roosevelt (some 80 words); their problem was that the remark in the courthouse is taken out of context. So we decided to call their bluff.

As soon as this case made the news, Donohue immediately wrote to the ADL, courthouse officials and the judge who heard the case proposing an alternative resolution: the Catholic League will pay for a new engraving, one which includes Roosevelt's entire comment. "It's time someone called the hand of those who harbor an animus against Christianity," Donohue said.

Because a lawyer has now sued the ADL, courthouse officials have decided to take no action until it is adjudicated. But our offers still stands.

HIGH COURT PICKS KEY CASES

The U.S. Supreme Court has agreed to accept three important religious-liberty cases. No rulings are expected before next spring.

Two of the cases deal with the constitutionality of posting copies of the Ten Commandments on public property. Those opposed to such displays maintain that it is wrong for the government to sponsor any religious display. Those who favor such displays say it is simply part of our religious heritage and is no more unconstitutional than having "In God We Trust" on our coins.

There are approximately 4,000 Ten Commandment monuments in the United States. Most of them were donated by the Fraternal Order of Eagles in the 1950s and 1960s. At issue is whether the Supreme Court will require such symbols to be surrounded by purely secular symbols, as it does with regard to Nativity

scenes at Christmastime.

The third case involves the right of Wiccans, Satanists and white supremacists to practice their alleged religious practices in prisons without interference by prison officials. Prison wardens say that some inmates have used their religious liberties to subvert the authority of prison guards, hence leading to institutional breakdown.

In another development, the House of Representatives passed legislation that prevents the federal courts from ruling on whether the words “under God” should be deleted from the Pledge of Allegiance. The Senate has not ruled yet on this issue.

All of which proves that when it comes to religious liberty, all eyes are on the courts.

MYTHS ABOUT CHURCH-STATE SEPARATION

William A. Donohue

The issue of separation of church and state proved to be quite alive during this election year, but as the lead story in this issue of *Catalyst* shows, it is not tied exclusively to politics. To say this issue is laden with myths would be an understatement.

The words “separation of church and state” nowhere appear in the U.S. Constitution, though many believe that they are part of the First Amendment. They were penned by Thomas Jefferson in 1802 in a letter he wrote to Baptists in Danbury,

Connecticut. What exactly he meant to convey has been hotly debated ever since.

The most reliable work on Jefferson's famous letter was revealed in 1998 by James H. Hutson, a prominent historian and the chief archivist for the Library of Congress. Using FBI advanced technology, Hutson was able to read through the inked-out lines in Jefferson's letter, thus enabling him to more accurately understand Jefferson's thinking. It sheds light on a fascinating historical background.

When Jefferson became president in 1801, he broke with the tradition of George Washington and John Adams of issuing a proclamation for days of "fasting and thanksgiving." This did not sit well with his Federalist critics, many of whom had already branded him an atheist during the presidential campaign. So when Jefferson received a congratulatory letter from Danbury Baptists on December 30, 1801, he took the occasion to lay out his thoughts on the proper relationship between government and religion; two days later he finished his letter to them.

We now know that in his first draft, Jefferson wanted to send an unmistakable message to his political foes: he possessed only "temporal powers," he argued, and as such was compelled to respect a "wall of eternal separation" that exists between church and state. But when two of his Cabinet members said the language was too extreme, he agreed and decided to delete the words "temporal powers" and the word "eternal." This was no slight change.

Yet to this day, organizations like Americans United for Separation of Church and State and the ACLU cite Jefferson as giving sustenance to their radical views. But this is mistaken. While it is true that Jefferson did not want church and state to become entangled, it is not true that he was hostile to religion. Indeed, literally two days after he wrote the letter to the Danbury Baptists, he attended church

services in a government building—the Capitol—for the first time as president. This was no accident: he was intentionally making a public statement rebutting the accusation that he was some sort of heretic.

In 1808, Jefferson wrote a letter to a Presbyterian minister and Princeton professor explaining why he resisted the aforementioned tradition of Washington and Adams. He maintained that when he served in state offices—as a Virginia legislator and as governor—he supported state laws allowing for public fasts and thanksgiving. But as president of the United States, he did not think it appropriate to use the powers of the federal government in this manner. In other words, he was expressing his convictions as a Republican president.

All this is to say that it is pure fiction to say that Jefferson was hostile to religion. Indeed, when president he even provided federal funds for the building of a Catholic church for the Kaskaskias Indians! Just to float an idea like this today would result in mayhem.

So where did our current interpretation of church and state come from, if not from Jefferson? It came from Supreme Court Justice Hugo Black in 1947. Prior to that time, it was understood that there should be no national religion and no government favoritism of one religion over another. But Black changed all that by decreeing in the case of *Everson v. Indiana* that there was a “wall” between church and state that was so impregnable that it even barred government from supporting all religions equally.

It is important to note that Black was not motivated by fidelity to the First Amendment. He was motivated by bigotry. To be exact, anti-Catholic bigotry. A former member of the Ku Klux Klan, Black made no secret of his hatred for Catholicism, so when the *Everson* case emerged, he seized the moment. At issue was whether the government could provide funds for

public transportation for parochial school students. The Supreme Court said it could, citing public safety concerns. More important in the long term, however, it also took the occasion to lay down Black's infamous "wall" dictum.

Things have only gotten worse since. Those whose objective it is to stamp out the public expression of religion—if not religion itself—constantly trot out the "wall" argument. Though their intellectual touchstone has dissolved under the weight of evidence, their resolve has not. But unfortunately for them, neither has ours.

POLITICS AND RELIGION: SURVEY DATA REVEAL NEW TRENDS

By William A. Donohue

A national random sample of adult Americans was taken last spring by the Bliss Institute at the University of Akron. The results have been published as the 2004 Fourth National Survey of Religion and Politics, under the tutelage of John C. Green. Some interesting trends are evident, as well as a few surprises.

Data were collected on ten segments of the population: Evangelical Protestants; Mainline Protestants; Latino Protestants; Black Protestants; Catholics; Latino Catholics; Other Christian; Other Faiths; Jewish; and Unaffiliated.

Within the Evangelical Protestant, Mainline Protestant and Catholic categories, each was further subdivided into "Traditionalist," "Centrist," and "Modernist." These subcategories were determined on the basis of the respondent's

orthodoxy of beliefs and level of religious engagement. For example, Traditionalist Protestants were characterized by holding a high view of the authority of the Bible and regular attendance at religious services. Modernists were the opposite and Centrists were in between.

Within the ranks of the Unaffiliated were three groups: Unaffiliated Believers (those who claim no religious affiliation but nonetheless report a high level of religious belief); Seculars (they have no religious affiliation and report only modest religious beliefs or practices); and Atheists and Agnostics (those without any religious beliefs). While 16 percent of the population falls in the Unaffiliated category, only 3.2 percent are without any religion (5.3 percent are Unaffiliated Believers and 7.5 percent are Secularists).

Generally speaking, the more Traditional a Christian is, the more likely he is to be a Republican; conversely, the more Modernist he is, the more likely he is to be a Democrat. The Unaffiliated are mostly Democrats, as are Jews and Black Protestants. Centrists tilt towards the Republicans.

Three of every four Americans agree that organized religious groups should stand up for their beliefs, but the country is almost equally divided on the question of whether organized religious groups should stay out of politics. The public seems to be saying that it is important for religious groups to speak their mind, but they should be careful about becoming too political.

It is when the discussion turns to specific issues that things become quite revealing. On the issue of school vouchers, only 39 percent are supportive; 16 percent have no opinion; and 45 percent are opposed. Of the ten segments of the population, only among Latinos is there a majority in favor of school choice (51 percent of Latino Protestants and 58 percent of Latino Catholics champion vouchers). Among Catholics, the same portion that supports vouchers—42 percent—opposes them (16

percent have no opinion). Traditional Catholics, of course, are more likely than Centrists and Modernists to support vouchers, though even here the figure is only 52 percent.

Abortion-rights gets its greatest support from Jews and the Unaffiliated (especially Atheists and Agnostics), and its least support from Traditionalists in the Evangelical, Mainline Protestant and Catholic categories. It is striking that Latinos (both Protestant and Catholic) and Black Protestants are far less supportive of abortion than white Catholics and Protestants.

The cultural divide between whites and non-whites is most glaring when it comes to the issue of same-sex marriage, with the latter being the most opposed. Respondents were given three choices: support for traditional marriage; support for civil unions; and support for same-sex marriage. Overall, the figures were 55 percent for traditional marriage, 18 percent for civil unions and 27 percent for same-sex marriage.

It may be surprising to learn that less than half of all Catholics (48 percent) support traditional marriage (22 percent want civil unions and 30 percent want two men to be allowed to marry). The biggest support for same-sex marriage comes from the Unaffiliated and Jews; no group is more supportive than Jews.

This issue shows how great the divide is between Traditionalists, Centrists and Modernists within the Evangelical, Mainline Protestant and Catholic communities. Traditionalist Evangelicals are the most supportive of traditional marriage (89 percent), with Traditionalist Mainline Protestants (72 percent) and Traditionalist Catholics (71 percent) as the next most supportive groups. Among Christians, the Modernists are the most supportive of same-sex marriage, with Modernist Catholics being even more liberal than Modernist Protestants.

The figures on Catholics are astounding, especially when one considers that Unaffiliated Believers are more supportive of traditional marriage than are Catholics as a whole (58 percent to 48 percent, respectively). Those who are classified as "Other Christians" support traditional marriage big time—77 percent. So do Black Protestants (72 percent are in favor). To show how Catholics have been leaning toward gay marriage, consider that while 71 percent of Latino Protestants are in favor of traditional marriage, only 52 percent of Latino Catholics are; 20 percent of the former are in favor of same-sex marriage as compared to 34 percent of the latter.

Questions on foreign policy turn up some interesting tidbits. Those surveyed were asked about the following statement: "The U.S. should mind its own business internationally and let other countries get along as best they can on their own." Overall, 37 percent agreed, 15 percent had no opinion and 48 percent disagreed.

Of all the categories, Jews disagreed the most with the idea that the U.S. should mind its own business (76 percent). It was not surprising to learn that Jews, who strongly favor a U.S. role securing a safe Israel, would take this position. Nor is it surprising to learn that Evangelical Protestants, who favor a more literalist interpretation of the Bible, would be the most likely group to agree with Jews on this issue.

What about U.S. support for Israel? Should we support Israel over the Palestinians? The American people are split on this issue with 35 percent agreeing, 38 percent disagreeing and 27 percent without an opinion. As with the previous issue, the biggest support for Israel comes from Jews (75 percent agree that we should support Israel over the Palestinians) and Evangelicals (52 percent agree).

Support for the Palestinians over the Jews was evident among Catholics by a margin of 43 percent to 31 percent. But perhaps the biggest news in this area is the support from the Unaffiliated and those who belong to faiths other than

Christianity or Judaism: 53 percent of the Unaffiliated and 70 percent of the "Other Faiths" category support the Palestinians.

The "Other Faiths" category represents a small (2.7 percent) but growing segment of the population. It includes Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus, Unitarians and New Age advocates. Only 22 percent of them think the U.S. should support Israel over the Palestinians. Interestingly, among Atheists and Agnostics, only 15 percent side with Israel. Even among Mainline Protestants there is more support for the Palestinians than Israel (37 percent to 33 percent).

This suggests that support for Israel is tenuous, and nowhere is it weaker than among Liberals (e.g., the Unaffiliated). Evangelical Protestants, the most conservative of the groups, are Israel's best friends. This is a fascinating alignment given that most Jews are liberals.

Everyone in the poll was asked to identify himself as either Conservative, Moderate or Liberal. Overall, the numbers were 35 percent, 43 percent and 22 percent, respectively. The most Conservative are Evangelicals; the most Liberal are those who belong to "Other Faiths," Jews and the Unaffiliated (especially Atheists and Agnostics). Latinos who are Protestant are much more likely to be Conservative (37 percent) than are their Catholic brothers and sisters (25 percent).

Perhaps the most interesting finding is among blacks. Seven-in-ten identify themselves as liberal (and only one-in-ten chooses the conservative label), yet on social issues (abortion, stem cell research, gay marriage, etc.) they are among the most conservative in the nation. To make sense of this apparent anomaly, consider the central role that the church plays in African American communities; this is the venue where conservative social values are disseminated. At the same time, however, most blacks are convinced that since

the time of FDR, it is the federal government that has given them the most political rights; this explains their tendency to identify themselves as Liberals.

Finally, each respondent was asked whether his view of God was “Personal” (meaning God is a person) or “Impersonal” (meaning God is a spirit or force) or “Unsure.” The overall breakdown was 40 percent, 41 percent and 19 percent, respectively. This is profound given that more than 80 percent of Americans are Christians. While Traditionalist Catholics and Evangelicals and Mainline Protestants hold to a “Personal” view of God, the Centrists and Modernists within all categories do not (the exception being Centrist Evangelicals).

Perhaps the most significant finding was found among Catholics: only 56 percent of Traditionalists, 34 percent of Centrists and 4 percent of Modernists hold a “Personal” view of God. It seems that New Age-type spirituality has been adopted by most Catholics.

There are many conclusions that can be drawn from the data. But one thing is very clear: we are a nation increasingly split between Traditionalists and Modernists, and between the faithful and the faithless. This is at the heart of the culture war, and which way the culture swings—toward increasing religiosity or increasing secularism—will determine what our society will look like in the future.

REPUBLICANS INDULGE IN FEAR-MONGERING

The Republican National Committee (RNC) said yesterday that it mailed residents in two states literature warning that if the

“liberals” win in November, they will ban the Bible; the mailing also included a statement that if the “liberals” win, they will allow same-sex marriage.

Catholic League president William Donohue criticized the RNC today:

“For the past week, reports have surfaced that the RNC has been behind a mass mailing warning the residents of Arkansas and West Virginia that if the ‘liberals’ win the election, they will ban the Bible. Now the RNC has admitted that it did so; this was its way of appealing to religious voters. But what it did is exploitative. Not only are the Republicans indulging in fear-mongering, they are also playing to the stereotype of Christians from rural communities.

“The role of religion in the public square is something the Catholic League wants discussed by both Republicans and Democrats, and that is why we ran an op-ed page ad in the *New York Times* on September 20 called ‘Censoring Religious Speech.’ But what the RNC did in these two states has nothing to do with the public expression of religion. No more mailings of this sort should be approved.”

KERRY’S STEM CELL POLICY LACKS COHERENCE

Senator John Kerry criticized President George W. Bush yesterday on the subject of embryonic stem cell research. He said the president was “turning his back on science in favor of ideology,” and that his position was emblematic of how he “makes decisions” and how he “sees the world.”

Catholic League president William Donohue addressed Kerry's remarks as follows:

"Senator Kerry is correct to say that President Bush's decision to put limits on federal funding of embryonic stem cell research tells us something about the way he makes decisions and sees the world. It also tells us something about those who want no restrictions whatsoever. This is what Kerry said yesterday: 'I will stop at nothing to get stem cell research moving in this country.' Which means there are no ethical concerns that give this man pause about destroying human embryos. This tells us volumes about the way he sees the world, beginning with nascent human life.

"Kerry says that to put limits on embryonic stem cell research is to 'sacrifice science for extreme, right-wing ideology.' But Kerry knows full well that right-wing ideology has no more to do with this issue than left-wing ideology—the issue is one of biology, pure and simple. Either one believes that life begins at conception, or one does not. If life begins at conception—and the scientific evidence is overwhelming that it does—then there is only one defensible moral position to take: embryos must be protected. And since embryonic stem cell research cannot take place without destroying embryos, logic dictates that we should pursue adult stem cell research and not toy with embryos.

"Kerry has boxed himself in. On the one hand, he says he is a 'practicing and believing Catholic' who believes that 'life begins at conception.' But on the other hand, he says he will stop at nothing to allow the killing of human embryos for the purpose of research. This is not just another flip-flop—it's a morally incoherent position about the most salient of issues."

MoveOn.org CHRISTIANS

SLANDERS

MoveOn.org has a full-page ad in today's *New York Times* that caught the attention of Catholic League president William Donohue:

"In today's *New York Times*, MoveOn.org attacks the methodology of the Gallup organization; it argues that a recent Gallup poll showing President Bush with a 14-point lead is exaggerated because it is predicated on more Republicans turning out to vote on election day than Democrats. The ad contends that Gallup has given Bush an inflated lead over John Kerry, thus affecting news coverage in a way that favors Bush.

"If this were all there were to the issue, it would be of no interest to the Catholic League. But we could not resist commenting on the way MoveOn.org blames the alleged bias of George Gallup Jr. on his Christian faith. At the end of the ad, it says, 'Gallup, who is a devout evangelical Christian, has been quoted as calling his polling 'a kind of ministry.' The next line reads, 'And a few months ago, he said, 'the most profound purpose of polls is to see how people are responding to God.'

"Those guilty-as-charged lines were read by Gallup at a commencement address he gave at a theological seminary. No matter, George Soros, the billionaire left-wing Bush-hater who funds the website (MoveOn.org has compared Bush to Hitler), has discovered the real reason why Gallup is manipulating the public: Christian bias is at work. In doing so, Soros has impugned the integrity of all Christians. Only secularists, apparently, are capable of rendering an objective survey.

"For the record, in the final poll before the 2000 election, the predictions of Gallup and Zogby proved to be the most

accurate. So what should we make of those who did the polling for USA Today/CNN, ABC news, CBS news, and all the other survey houses who offered the most faulty predictions? According to Soros's logic, it must be that they have more of those biased Christians working for them than Gallup.

"Finally, George Gallup Jr. retired on May 31 and hasn't conducted a poll since. So much for MoveOn.org's accuracy."

KERRY MISLEADS NATION ON CATHOLICISM

Catholic League president William Donohue sought to correct the record today about a remark that Senator Kerry made last night in the debate:

"When asked about his support for abortion rights, Senator Kerry said, 'I believe that I can't legislate or transfer to another American citizen my article of faith. What is an article of faith for me is not something that I can legislate on somebody who doesn't share that article of faith.' In making this argument, Kerry erroneously equates the Catholic Church's opposition to abortion with the Church's dogmatic teachings on such subjects as the Trinity, Incarnation and Immaculate Conception.

"There is a fundamental difference between a human rights issue like abortion, and the Church's teachings on the Trinity. Were Catholic bishops to advise Catholic legislators to pass laws demanding that all public school students be instructed in the wisdom of the Trinity, they would be crossing the line between church and state. But when the bishops exhort Catholic lawmakers to pass laws aimed at

curbing child abuse—whether committed in the womb or after birth—they are exercising their episcopal authority in a responsible way. To suggest otherwise is to cast the bishops as authoritarians who seek to impose their religion on the rest of society, thus fanning, however unwittingly, the flames of anti-Catholicism.

“The same analogy works with other religions. It is one thing for a Jewish senator to push for legislation requiring a reading from the Torah before the start of senatorial committees, quite another to promote hate crimes legislation. Similarly, it is one thing for a Muslim congressman to mandate that all Americans adopt the sexual practices that Muslims observe during Ramadan, quite another to push for laws banning racial profiling. So for Senator Kerry to suggest that he cannot make a civil rights argument protecting the unborn—one which has everything to do with biology, not theology—is pure nonsense.

“If Kerry wants to defend abortion-on-demand, he can do so. But he has no right to position himself as the grand sage who stands up against those bullying bishops.”

ACLU ON A TEAR

It's been a busy year for the religious censors, especially the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU). Indeed, they've been on a tear, and with Christmas coming soon, look for things to get really mad.

This country was founded on Judeo-Christian principles, and nothing symbolizes this more than the Ten Commandments. That is why lawsuits aimed at banning displays of the Ten Commandments on public property go right to the cultural heart

of America: they are designed to undo our religious heritage. So far the censors have been winning in places like Alabama, Nebraska and Ohio. But this fight is not over, if for no other reason than the fact that the U.S. Supreme Court has just decided to accept two Ten Commandments cases.

City seals that bear religious messages are another source of angst for the ACLU. This past summer, the city council of Oceanside, California, unanimously adopted a resolution making "In God We Trust" a part of its official seal (the words appear below the city's logo; "Liberty" is written on top). Right away the ACLU raised red flags, but it eventually backed off. It did so by noting that "In God We Trust," which is our nation's motto, has withstood previous legal challenges; its nonsectarian character also makes it difficult for the censors to prevail.

Quick Question:

When the ACLU was founded in 1920, which First Amendment right was not cited as one of its first ten goals: freedom of speech, freedom of religion, freedom of the press or freedom of assembly?
You guessed it!

Just when the ACLU thought it had won a big victory by getting Los Angeles officials to remove a cross from its county seal, opponents of the decision struck back. On September 14, after four months of haggling, the Los Angeles Board of Supervisors voted 3-2 to strip a small cross from the county seal; this was their way of fending off an ACLU lawsuit. Two weeks later, on September 29, the three supervisors who caved in got sued by locals unhappy with their "leadership." The lawsuit said

the supervisors' action was hostile toward religion and a waste of taxpayers' money.

There are more headaches for the ACLU in California, this time courtesy of the Thomas More Law Center. For the past 15 years, the Mt. Soledad Memorial Association has been fighting with the ACLU over attempts by the civil libertarians to remove a giant cross atop Mt. Soledad in San Diego; the mountaintop cross has been there for a half century. No sooner had the ACLU won in a settlement to get the cross removed when a former Navy fighter pilot objected. In September, the Thomas More Law Center filed suit in federal court on behalf of John F. Steel and other veterans fed up with the ACLU's politics of intimidation.

The religious censors never leave the schools alone. It has been a long-standing tradition for the school board of Sussex County, Delaware, to open its meetings with a prayer. No one ever complained until this year. The complainant, Mona Dobrich, a local Jewish woman, took her beef to the ACLU, which, of course, jumped to her side. No word yet on whether this case has been finally resolved.

The ACLU took it on the chin when a federal appeals court recently ruled that a school district in northwest Ohio was within its rights to put fliers about religious events in students' mailboxes. Had school officials put fliers about the events of NAMBLA—the pro-child rape homosexual organization—in students' mailboxes, it's a sure bet the ACLU would have heralded it as an exercise in free speech.

Another loss for the ACLU occurred recently when it sought to censor a gospel concert sponsored by the Franklin County Children Services agency in Ohio. The government body was attempting to reach out to religious communities when the ACLU went nuts. A federal judge ruled that the concert could proceed because the event's main purpose—helping foster children—was not religious.

But score one for the ACLU: it succeeded in frightening the U.S. Post Offices in Kentucky from forever selling teddy bears with religious messages. Banned are the God Bless America Bear, the God Bless Our Postal Workers Bear and the God Bless Our Troops Bear. All it took was for one Louisville resident to complain about the products of HolyBears Inc., and the ACLU came immediately to the rescue.

So this is what ACLU lawyers like to do—sue over teddy bears with the dreaded “G” word on them being sold in post offices. And they actually think they’re making a contribution to liberty.

VIDEO USA BANS “THE PASSION”

