

ANTI-RELIGIOUS BIAS MARKS TWO OBAMA PICKS

In October we drew attention to two of President Barack Obama's nominees who harbor an anti-religious bias.

It is one thing for a professor or pundit to maintain extremist views on constitutional law, but it is quite another to have such a person tenured in a federal legal office. Dawn Johnsen, nominated to head the Office of Legal Counsel, and Chai Feldblum, nominated to join the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, have both exhibited an animus against religious institutions that is striking. Moreover, both are profoundly opposed to religious liberty.

In 1988, Johnsen worked on a case that went before the U.S. Supreme Court seeking to revoke the tax-exempt status of the Catholic Church because of its opposition to abortion. Though she didn't win, we know what her goal is. Johnsen is not merely pro-abortion—she celebrates it. To wit: she testified this February that after a woman has her child aborted, “The experience is no longer traumatic; the response of most women to the experience is relief.”

Feldblum is such a radical activist that she wants to subordinate a constitutional right, namely freedom of religion, to a right that she invented, namely sexual liberty. Moreover, she has lobbied for “a new vision for securing governmental *and private institutional recognition of diverse kinds of partnerships....*” (Our emphasis.) This includes, “Queer couples who decide to jointly create and raise a child with another queer person or couple, in two households.” She also wants “Separation of church and state in all matters, including regulation and recognition of relationships, households and families.” Read: she wants to privatize marriage and provide equal status to every conceivable

“partnership.”

Johnsen and Feldblum are not only out of the mainstream of jurisprudential thought; they are professed enemies of religious liberty.

CROSS BELONGS ON PUBLIC LAND

On October 7, the U.S. Supreme Court heard arguments on the constitutionality of a seven-foot cross placed on public land in the Mojave National Preserve in California. We said that the cross should be allowed on the land.

In 1892, the same court ruled that “this is a Christian nation.” Ever since, radical secularists have tried to stamp out this reality, holding that it excludes non-Christians. It does, and that is because the country’s founding was not the work of non-Christians.

That same day the *New York Times* carped over the cross. Defensively, its editorial began by saying that this case leads to such overheated charges as, “There is a war against Christianity under way; or civil liberties groups are trying to turn this into a secular nation.” Both accusations are accurate. Consider who is bringing the suit against the World War I veterans who first erected the cross in 1934, the ACLU—an organization marked with an anti-Christian animus since its founding in 1920.

One reason the *Times* is wrong is its faulty sense of history: it is simply not true to insist that the founders said “there must be a wall of separation between church and state.” That metaphor was broached by Thomas Jefferson in an 1802 letter to Baptists, and two days later he attended church services in

the Capitol building, thus busting the myth that he wanted a wall between church and state. So if Jefferson thought it okay to have Christian services in a taxpayer-funded building, does the *Times* or the ACLU really think that he, or any of the founding fathers, would object to a cross—privately funded—on public lands honoring veterans, most of whom were Christians?

OBAMA SCHOOL CZAR SAYS “SCREW YOU” TO GOD

Kevin Jennings, the man selected to be the Director of the Office of Safe and Drug Free Schools, has a history of promoting homosexual conferences wherein unsafe sex practices are sold to underage kids. He is also a former drug user. As a counselor, he failed to notify the authorities of a sexual encounter between an adult gay man and a high school kid. And, last but not least, he has a history of bashing Christians.

Jennings, raised a Baptist by his minister father and non-believing, anti-Catholic mother, is known for lecturing the Catholic Church about its teachings on sexuality. He has also railed against the “hard core bigots” whom he says make up the “religious right.”

Jennings’ hatred of religion began at the age of 17, right after he masturbated at the thought of watching two “hot guys” take off their shirts in his home. We know this because this is exactly what he wrote in his book, *Mama’s Boy, Preacher’s Son: A Memoir*.

Following his masturbatory experience, Jennings revealed what happened next: “I developed a new attitude toward God as a result. Before, I was the one who was failing God; now I

decided He was the one who had failed me.” Continuing, he wrote, “I decided I had done nothing wrong: *He* had, by promising to ‘set you free’ and never delivering on His promise. What *had* He done for me, other than make me feel shame and guilt? Squat. Screw you, buddy—I don’t need you around anymore, I decided.” (His italics.) He ends by saying that for many years he “reacted violently to anyone who professed any kind of religion.”

It just doesn’t get any more perverse than this.

“THE INVENTION OF LYING” IS PERNICIOUS

The trailer of the new movie, “The Invention of Lying,” gave no indication of its atheistic-themed plot, but there was enough of a buzz about the agenda of screenwriter and director Ricky Gervais that we decided to check it out. We’re glad we did.

“The Invention of Lying” is not the kind of in-your-face assault that Hollywood often serves up, but therein lies its perniciousness: because this anti-Christian film is laced with some romance and humor, the message it sends is all the more sinister.

The movie centers on a world where lying doesn’t exist until the lead character realized that he can say something that is not true. After he realizes this new talent, the character spins a tale to his dying mother about a place that resembles heaven, thus saving her from being consigned to an “eternity of nothingness.” He subsequently floats the idea that there is a God-like “Man in the Sky,” a belief accepted by most, though

some cynics wonder why he allows calamities such as AIDS (it's never diabetes that Hollywood flags). In mockery, the lead character later appears looking like a fat, scrubby version of Jesus and an image of him appears on a stained-glass window holding the two tablets (resembling those of Moses) on which he wrote his version of the Ten Commandments, posing as if on a cross. In the end, he and his girl are the only two people who know that "The Man in the Sky" isn't real.

At the Catholic League, we prefer our bigotry straight-up. We don't like bigotry-lite, which this is not. But we also don't like it slipped into our drink. It is not for nothing that the Office for Film & Broadcasting of the bishops' conference slammed this movie as "morally offensive." But we are pleased to note that the atheists still use our religion as the model, and still portray God as male. There is hope for them yet.

IS THE MET'S "TOSCA" SACRILEGIOUS?

When Luc Bondy's version of Puccini's "Tosca," opened in late September at the Metropolitan Opera in New York City, there was a buzz that the show may be sacrilegious.

Bill Donohue went to see the dress rehearsal the week before it opened, to see if reports were true that at the end of Act I there was an obscene sexual act that took place between Scarpia, the bad guy chief of secret police, and a statue of Our Blessed Mother. Alas, there wasn't. Though some liberties were taken opening night.

The *Vancouver Sun* reported that "the evil Scarpia fondles a statue of the Virgin Mary." *Financial Times* said "the

villainous police chief assaults a statue of the holy Virgin in carnal embrace.” The *New York Times* called it a “sacrilegious embrace,” while Bloomberg observed that “Scarpia paws” the statue. What Donohue witnessed was an embrace, but there was nothing carnal about it. Nonetheless, what the *Wall Street Journal* reported was accurate: “Mr. Bondy added a little anticlerical joke in Act I by having the sacristan...fill the holy water stoup and wash Cavaradossi’s brushes using water from the same bucket, and then gobble the painter’s lunch while reciting the Angelus.” Smart alecky, but not egregious.

The *New York Times* was right to say that the church setting as created by Richard Peduzzi had a “disorienting look.” Similarly, the *New Jersey Star Ledger* noted that “the church was cold, unadorned brick,” while the *Washington Post* said the church looked “almost like a postwar reconstruction of an ancient cathedral. AP nailed it best: “The church in Act I is virtually devoid of religious trappings, and its looming arched brick walls make it look more like a prison than a place of worship.”

The best thing to happen opening night was the eruption of boos that greeted Bondy when he appeared on stage following the performance. In the end, “Tosca” is not sacrilegious, but a bore.

MICHAEL MOORE’S RELIGIOUS ODYSSEY

When Michael Moore’s new movie, “Capitalism: A Love Story,” arrived in theaters in late September, we had a few words to

say about it.

If the economic system that Moore has successfully milked is “immoral” and “evil,” then that would suggest that he is an immoral, evil man. But we’ll let someone else make the final decision on that one. What we do know is that he is wearing his religion on his sleeve these days, telling Chris Cuomo how he believes “in the core Christian values.” One wonders why, then, would this Catholic—whose role models are the rogue Berrigan brothers—would give money to an urban terrorist group, Act Up, right after they invaded St. Patrick’s Cathedral during Cardinal O’Connor’s Sunday Mass in 1989; some spat the Host on the floor.

Moore says it is anti-Christian not to divide the pie fairly. In 2002, his charitable donations amounted to \$36,000, which sounds like a lot until we learn that he made eight figures that year. One more thing: he ran his donations through his private foundation, a capitalist-created scheme designed to protect fat cats from paying their fair share of taxes.

The next time a social justice Christian brags about his commitment to the poor, ask him to open his own books. Transparency is so beautiful.

DISHONESTY MARKS HEALTH CARE DEBATE

Sen. Max Baucus, chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, was quoted in the October 1 *New York Times* commenting on allegations that abortion would be covered in the health care bill: “We are not changing current law.” Similarly, Sen. Olympia Snowe was quoted in the same newspaper saying, “We

want to preserve the status quo on abortion.” Interestingly, the *Times* wrote an editorial that same day which called for total funding of abortion for any reason and at any time during pregnancy, but which also disagreed with what Baucus and Snowe said. Indeed, it explicitly said that Baucus achieved a “compromise” between full funding and no funding.

The following is a quote from the editorial: “Health plans could provide abortion coverage provided they used only premium money and co-payments contributed by beneficiaries and kept that money segregated from the subsidy. In every state, there would have to be at least one plan that covers abortions and one that does not.”

Thus, the *New York Times* showed how dishonest Baucus and Snowe were—existing public policy is not anything like that at either the federal or state level. But wait, the *Times* was also dishonest when it maintained that by some magical force monies raised from premiums can be “segregated” from the subsidy: money is fungible and that is why the United States bishops are right to call such schemes fiction.

The day before these stories appeared in the *Times*, Sen. Orrin Hatch introduced an amendment that essentially codified the status quo, namely it would ensure that the Hyde Amendment restrictions on federal funds for most abortions remained undisturbed in the proposed health care legislation. And who voted against the status quo? Baucus and Snowe. Consistent in their dishonesty, Baucus and Snowe also voted to kill conscience rights protections for health care workers, all the while maintaining that what they were doing was preserving the status quo. What they were really doing was preserving their place in the Abortion Hall of Shame.

DEMS ON COLLISION COURSE WITH CATHOLICS

Following the defeat of Sen. Orrin Hatch's amendments that would have banned funding of abortion in the health care bill and ensured conscience rights protections for health care workers, we noted that the Democrats were on a collision course with Catholics.

The Democrats cannot expect Catholics to pay for child abuse in the womb without reprisal. Nor can they expect Catholics to sit back and watch while Catholic doctors and nurses are punished for failing to cooperate in evil.

More than any group in America, Catholic bishops have been at the forefront of the movement for universal health care. But they never signed on to a health care reform package that made them violate their professed beliefs. Nor will they.

President Barack Obama has stated that he would not support a bill that provides funding for abortion or one that denies conscience rights for health care employees. But he made no public comment condemning the votes against these provisions, further fueling the concern of the nation's Catholics that they have been lied to.

One thing we know for sure: If all along Obama had shown a fraction of the interest that he showed about winning over the Olympic Committee in bringing the games to Chicago, the Hatch amendments would have passed.

CATHOLIC MEDICAL ASSOCIATION DELIVERS

On September 21, the Catholic Medical Association (CMA) released an “Open Letter to Catholics and Catholic Organizations,” regarding health care reform; we fully supported the statement calling it “a model of Catholic thought and insight.”

The letter urged reform, but did so cautiously: it explicitly recognized a “real *danger* that misguided legislation could make our current problems even worse.” (Its italics.) Furthermore, the CMA warned that a “government-controlled approach is flawed in principle and ineffective, if not dangerous, in practice.” It also noted the government’s “poor track record of managing large programs in a cost-effective manner.”

Central to CMA’s concerns is the lack of respect the Obama administration has shown for respecting “the dignity of human life.” It concluded by calling upon “all Catholics and Catholic organizations to reaffirm their support for the foundational ethical and social teachings of the Church which provide a framework for authentic health care reform, and to unite as one in an uncompromising commitment to defend the sanctity of life and the conscience rights of all providers as essential parts of health-care reform.”

It is impossible to quarrel with this formulation from a Catholic perspective, and that is why the Catholic League stands behind it without reservation.

NOTE TO MEMBERS: FOLLOW THE CATHOLIC LEAGUE ONLINE

The Catholic League would like to announce two new ways for our supporters to follow us on the Internet. We have established pages on the social networking sites Facebook and Twitter in addition to the Feedback section on the Catholic League homepage.

These new pages will allow Catholic League followers to get the latest updates on news releases, chatterbox stories, videos, pictures and media appearances by Bill Donohue. These sites will also expand the league's reach to a broader audience, including young people who regularly use these social networking sites.

Your continued help, by following us online, can provide us with information that will help the Catholic League stamp out anti-Catholicism and win the fight against those who seek to offend us.

Twitter

The Catholic League's Twitter page will allow us to post short messages, no longer than 140 characters, to inform followers of the league's activities. These messages, also known as "tweets," will often link to full-length pieces from the Catholic League, op-ed articles by Donohue or other interesting articles that we would like our fans to be aware of.

Twitter will also allow us to post real time messages of breaking news from the Catholic League, upcoming media engagements by Donohue and events within the Catholic community. Joining Twitter is free. To sign up and become a follower of the Catholic League, please go to www.twitter.com/CatholicLeague.

Facebook

The league's Facebook page is another way that we can keep in touch with our fans. The Catholic League's page will allow fans to post messages on our wall, view Catholic League videos, pictures, news releases and links to articles that the Catholic League finds interesting and informative. Our Facebook page will also allow fans to view the league's favorite websites and blogs.

Facebook is also a free service, but in order to view the league's page one must have a Facebook account. To view the league's Facebook page, Facebook members should search for the Catholic League in the Facebook search engine.

Feedback

The league would also like to remind our members that we can still be contacted through the Feedback section located on the front page of our website, www.catholicleague.org. The Feedback section has been one of the major sources for member-provided information. In the past we have received numerous valuable leads from our members through the Feedback section and we hope that you will continue to provide us with those leads.

Please remember when using the Feedback section details are very important. If you are registering a complaint about a television show, radio program, offensive newspaper or magazine article, please provide as much information as you can remember. The date, the time, what channel you were watching or what section of the newspaper in which you saw the offensive item are all very important. The more details, the better. This will allow Catholic League staff members to find and verify the offensive material more quickly and allow us to confront the offender in a timely manner. No item is too small or too local to report to us, especially during the upcoming Christmas season, when secular attacks on our religion seem to increase tenfold.