

LEAGUE MAY SUE YONKERS SCHOOL BOARD

The Catholic League has pledged to sue the Yonkers School Board if it seeks to deny transportation to children attending non-public schools. Initially, the school board voted to withdraw funds for transportation on fiscal grounds, stating that the cutbacks would trim \$970,000 from the budget. But when the Archdiocese of New York and the Catholic League announced that they would fight this decision in court, the school board said it would provide transportation for at least the first few weeks of the school year. Yonkers is a city just north of New York City.

The league cited New York State law, explaining that it explicitly requires that school districts which provide monies for transportation for public school students must do likewise for students who attend private and parochial schools. And it cited a 1986 federal court order that mandated desegregation in Yonkers: that ruling stated that the Yonkers school district must provide transportation for non-public school students.

The furor over this issue erupted in anti-Catholic bigotry when Lorraine Siegel, the PTA Council president, held a sign at a community meeting that read, "Public Schools Bus to Integrate. Catholic Schools Bus to Separate." Dr. Catherine Hickey, a Yonkers resident and the Superintendent of Schools for the Archdiocese of New York, accurately said that it was "a wicked sign, inflammatory and bigoted." Her encounter with Siegel led the PTA leader to retire the sign.

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

"The decision by the Yonkers school board to deny

transportation to students who attend private and parochial schools falls most heavily on Catholic schoolchildren, as they are the principal users of bus transportation to non-public schools. Therefore, the disparate impact that the Yonkers decision creates is suspect, both morally and legally.

“It was settled in 1947 by the U.S. Supreme Court, in *Everson v. Board of Education*, that public monies for bus transportation for children attending parochial schools was constitutional. Moreover, New York State law and a federal court decision in 1986 settle the issue even further by requiring school districts like Yonkers to provide bus transportation for children attending Catholic schools.

“It is estimated that if the Catholic schools closed in Yonkers, it would add approximately \$50 million a year to the school budget. That alone ought to give the school board pause. But more important is the right that parents who send their children to Catholic schools have in being treated equitably.

“The Catholic League is prepared to take legal action to ensure that the rights of parents and children who use Catholic schools are protected. This is not a case the Yonkers school board can win.”

FARRAKHAN'S PASSPORT SHOULD BE REVOKED

The Catholic League was delighted with the decision by the U.S. Treasury Department to deny Louis Farrakhan, the Nation of Islam leader, his request to secure an exemption from U.S. imposed sanctions making it illegal to accept funds from a

terrorist nation. But the Catholic League now wants the State Department to honor the request by Rep. Peter King to deny Farrakhan a passport. It explained its reasoning as follows:

“Last winter the Catholic League requested the Internal Security Section of the Criminal Division of the U.S. Department of Justice to investigate whether Louis Farrakhan had violated federal law by receiving funds from Libyan dictator Moammar Khadafy. The Justice Department responded by saying that it would commence an investigation and promised ‘appropriate action’ if it was determined that laws have been broken. It is good news that the Treasury Department has now denied Farrakhan the opportunity to receive the \$1 billion that Khadafy has pledged. But more needs to be done.

“Farrakhan has met with Khadafy to receive a \$250,000 humanitarian award, a gesture declared illegal by the federal government. Because of Farrakhan’s bigoted attack on Jews and Catholics, it is unconscionable that the authorities have not taken more direct action by revoking Farrakhan’s passport. The Catholic League believes that the Clinton administration must do more if it is to quell opposition from the Jewish and Catholic communities. We look for decisive action immediately.”

RETHINKING CARING AND COMPASSION

Susan Fani, the editor of *Catalyst*, recently told me that in her first week of law school she heard a lot of students talking about how important it was to be caring and compassionate, especially toward the needy. No phony

sentimentalist, Susan was not impressed. Neither was I.

“To feel concern or interest” is how my dictionary defines caring (as in caring about others). Compassion is defined as “sorrow for the sufferings or trouble of another or others, accompanied by an urge to help.” Now notice the one thing that both caring and compassion have in common: neither requires any work. Having the right feelings, or an “urge” to help, is good enough. But is it?

To those in need, results are what count. To be sure, it is preferable that those in need be serviced by those who care, but what matters most is that the needy be helped. Care unaccompanied by action delivers nothing, save the facade of caring, and that can only lead to self-righteousness. Better not to care about the needy and make their life less difficult than to care about them and do nothing. Here’s an example.

If you were unemployed and were looking for a job, would you prefer to live in a city that had a caring mayor and a disastrously high corporate tax rate—the effect of which would be invite businesses to leave, taking their jobs with them—or would you prefer to live in a city that had an uncaring mayor and an attractive corporate tax policy, one that attracted jobs? Similarly, would you prefer to go under the knife with a competent but uncaring surgeon, or with a caring but incompetent one?

When I was in college, I remember a class discussion that centered on how uncaring the wealthy workers from Westchester were. They were said to be uncaring because they allegedly didn’t look out the window when their train passed by Harlem. Now had they done so, that apparently would have mattered. To whom, I’m not sure, but that’s exactly what they said.

Similarly, when in graduate school, it was not uncommon to hear students complain how nobody cared about the poor. Except them. So one day in class I invited my caring and

compassionate colleagues to volunteer their time on weekends by tutoring the black and Puerto Rican students that I taught during the day in Spanish Harlem. No one spoke.

Bread for the World is an organization that advertises itself as a group that helps the poor. A number of years ago, I heard Father Robert Sirico, the brilliant economist-priest, mention that Bread for the World did nothing but lobby for more money for the poor; according to Father Sirico, the group operated not one soup kitchen in the entire nation. I was astonished when I heard this and felt the

need to verify this charge with one of my fellow faculty members. When I asked him about what Father Sirico said, he grew indignant, saying that Bread for the World was needed because they were a caring and compassionate organization. He then admitted, however begrudgingly, that they did nothing to actually help the poor.

Mitch Synder led the battle for the homeless. But he also left his family on the verge of homelessness by refusing to provide for them. An ex-con, he grubbed money from his wife, lied to the nation about how many homeless persons there were (he admitted lying about the statistics before the Congress) and did little, if anything, about the plight of the homeless. Indeed, he often stood in the way of progress.

The Somocistas were greedy businessmen in Nicaragua who ripped off the poor. They were replaced by the Sandinistas who were greedy socialists who ripped off the poor. The Somocistas wore suits and the Sandinistas wore fatigues (except that their leader sported Gucci glasses). The Somocistas lived in palaces, the very same ones the Sandinistas came to live in. But the Somocistas were seen as bad guys and the Sandinistas were seen as good guys. Why? Because the Sandinistas talked about caring and compassion and the Somocistas did not.

I could go on. For those who are impressed with events like

Holding Hands Across America and singing songs like “We Are the World,” caring and compassion is all that counts. But to those in need, it means not a fig. It is results they want, not rhetoric.

Let’s remember, however, that there are many nuns, priests and brothers who have made good on their caring and compassion, and in the process they have helped many of the needy. The same is true in the lay community, especially among laywomen. They are a model for us all, especially for those who’ve been seduced by empty platitudes about caring and compassion.

A SURVEY OF CHICK PUBLICATIONS

Perhaps the most invidious form of anti-Catholicism is that which emanates from elite circles. When men and women of power and influence engage in Catholic bashing, the effects can be devastating, which is why the Catholic League responds so quickly and decisively. But there is also a brand of anti-Catholicism that comes from less urbane quarters, from places that target the undereducated. And no one is better at doing this than Chick Publications.

Founded by Jack Chick, his company publishes books, magazines, small tracts and comic books, and now releases videos, all of which are designed to convince Protestants that Roman Catholicism is a false religion; Chick also distributes anti-Catholic works published by other sources. Perhaps best known for its release of 3x5 cartoon-like tracts, Chick has operations all over the world. Headquartered in Chino, California, Chick has outlets in Scotland, Germany, Canada,

New Zealand and Australia.

Chick's booklets are available in Afrikaans, Albanian, Bulgarian, Burmese, Cambodian, Chichewa, Chinese, Creole, Croatian, Czech, Danish, Dutch, English, Estonian, Finnish, French, German, Greek, Haitian, Hindi, Hungarian, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Lithuanian, New Guinea, Norwegian, Pidgin, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Russian, Serbian, Slovak, Spanish, Swahili, Swedish, Tagalog, Thai, Turkish, Ukrainian, Vietnamese and Zulu. Priced to sell at just 13 cents each, Chick has done a masterful job marketing its hatred. Titles include "Are Roman Catholics Christians?"; "Why is Mary Crying?"; and "The Death Cookie," which by that is meant the Host.

The *Alberto* series of comic books are also quite popular. Aimed primarily at teenagers, this series is based on the work of Alberto Rivera, a man who claims to be an ex-Jesuit from the Diocese of Madrid. Past research by the Catholic League, however, shows no record of Rivera ever being a priest. Vintage Chick in content, the comic books are strewn with vile anti-Catholicism.

Catholicism's Errors

Chick specializes in attempting to debunk Catholic teachings, thereby preparing the confused for eventual conversion to Protestantism. For example, in his book *Answers to My Catholic Friends*, Thomas F. Heinze writes that "There is no real salvation in the Roman Catholic Church." From William C. Standridge in *Born-Again Catholics and the Mass*, we learn that Catholics cannot be "born again." Ralph Edward Woodrow, in his book *Babylon Mystery Religion*, goes further by arguing that Mary is the "goddess of paganism" and that "a mixture of paganism and Christianity produced the Roman Catholic Church."

Understanding Roman Catholicism, by Rick Jones, purports to explain "37 Roman Catholic Doctrines." The reader gets an idea

of the author's explanations by reading the following conclusion: "Catholicism brings people into bondage." For those who prefer a video presentation of so-called Catholic mythology, there is *Catholicism: Crisis of Faith*, by Lumen Productions. The 54 minute video divides Catholic "errors" into four sections: the Mass; Statues; Mary; and Catholic salvation. As expected, the video attacks transubstantiation, misrepresents Catholic teachings on statues and Our Blessed Mother, and contends that faith alone is necessary for salvation.

Some of the assaults on Catholicism chose quite specific topics, such as Charles Chiniquy's *The Priest, the Women and the Confessional*. This book, written by a nineteenth century former priest, has had quite a run, covering the span of a century and a half. Confession, we are told, is the invention of Satan. In practice, "The confessor is the worm which is biting, polluting, and destroying the very roots of civil and religious society, by contaminating, debasing, and enslaving women."

Speaking of wives, Chiniquy writes that "As she becomes an adulteress the day that she gives her body to another man, is she any the less an adulteress the day that she gives her confidence and trusts her soul to a stranger?" Chiniquy writes like a contemporary reporter for *Enquirer* or *The Star* when he says that the "poor confessor" is "surrounded by attractive women and tempting girls, speaking to him from morning to night on things which a man cannot hear without falling." This is because the woman confesses "her constant temptations, her bad thoughts, [and] her most intimate secret desires and sins."

In a recent Chick listing, *Far From Rome: Near to God*, we have the alleged testimony of 50 converted Catholic priests. All have found the "errors in the Church" and have since seen the light. Most of the laments are quite dry, but there is one that deserves a comment.

Leo Lehmann was born in Dublin in 1895, and right from the beginning was saddled with despair. "I have no joyous memories of my boyhood years." None. He attributes his misery to the "fear" he experienced being raised Catholic. The fear he felt had dramatic consequences: "It was principally the fear connected with everything in the Roman Catholic religion that helped me with my decision to become a priest."

The day Lehmann was ordained, he noticed late at night that one of his companions "became affected in his mind, the strain of mechanical routine, innumerable petty restrictions and formulas," a condition Lehmann describes as "a species of religious madness called `scrupulosity.'"

In another incident, Lehmann says he remembers the case of a fourteen year-old girl who suffered from insanity. He blames Catholicism for her insanity, stating that when he met her, she constantly recited the "Hail Mary." Obviously intending to persuade the reader, Lehmann maintains that "Her mind was deranged by the idea that she was obliged to say this prayer a hundred times each day, and in order to make sure of having them said on time, she was over a thousand ahead. Some priest, doubtless, had imposed the saying of these `Hail Mary's' as a penance in confession." Doubtless. Anyway, this was enough to have the fear-ridden Lehmann call it quits.

The "Secret Army" of the Jesuits

It will surprise no one to learn that Jack Chick thinks he's a regular guy. In his infamous book, *Smokescreens*, Chick says "There has been a multi-million dollar campaign made through the media to convince people that I am a bigoted, anti-Catholic hate literature publisher." But this is nonsense, as there has been no well-funded campaign of any sort. And to the extent that even a dollar has been spent trying to convince people that Chick is a bigot, it's a waste of money: just reading his hate-filled books is evidence enough.

Just two pages after Chick makes his remarkable protest that he is not an anti-Catholic bigot, he writes of the Eucharist that "I call it the little Jesus cookie." Anticipating criticism, Chick adds, "I know Catholics are going to be offended by this, but I can't help it. The Protestants have to realize where they stand on this thing."

It's a sure bet that most Catholics never knew that "The Jesuits had secretly prepared World War II, and Hitler's war machine was built and financed by the Vatican to conquer the world for Roman Catholicism." And how many knew that "Hitler, Mussolini, and Franco were to be the defenders of the faith"? It gets better: "They were set up to win and conquer the world, and set up a millennium for the pope. Behind the scenes, the Jesuits controlled the Gestapo." Somehow every historian who has written on World War II seems to have missed these "facts" altogether, but not the world-renowned scholar, Jack Chick.

So pro-Nazi was the Catholic Church that Chick regrets that Pope Pius XII wasn't killed. "Pope Pius XII should have stood before the judges in Nuremburg. His war crimes were worthy of death." But if the Catholic Church was fascist, and the fascists fought the communists in World War II, then Mr. Chick needs to explain why he charges the Jesuits with not only running the Gestapo, but with founding the Communist Party as well. He also wants us to believe that the Jesuits aided the John Birch Society, thus adding confusion to confusion. But to Jack Chick, at least, it all makes sense.

Jack really doesn't like the Jesuits. As he sees it, the Society of Jesus managed to come to America just as the second wave of Pilgrims was beginning. Ever sneaky, the Jesuits "used different names with I.D.'s. They were followed years later when the Vatican sent multitudes of Catholic families from England, Ireland and France posing as Protestants, into the colonies. These were plants."

But that was only the beginning. "The next move by the Jesuits," Chick informs, "was to destroy or control all the Christian schools across America." They did this, of course, by "working undercover," infiltrating school boards and the like. This venture would then be followed by taking control of the legislature and judiciary "in order to manipulate the Constitution in their favor until it could be changed." Next was a plot "to capture the political parties." After that, "Then the military and the newspapers." And so on. "It is obvious," Chick states, "that the whore of Revelation is the Roman Catholic Institution, and God **hates** it!"

Michael de Semlyen, author of *All Roads Lead to Rome? The Ecumenical Movement*, is, like Jack Chick, sensitive to charges of bigotry. He says his book

"will be viewed by some as bigoted," never explaining why anyone who has read his volume might think otherwise. But never mind, de Semlyen feels the same way about the Jesuits as Chick does, blaming them for both Hitler and Marxism. The Church, of course, is the "*great whore of Revelation 17*."

Though similar to Chick, de Semlyen has a creative side to him as well. Readers learn, for example, that the "Roman Catholic hierarchy" played a role in the assassination of President Lincoln. Also newsworthy is the charge that the Vatican "has the most efficient and widespread spy network in the whole world" (de Semlyen is kind enough to attribute this finding to yet another careful student of Catholicism, Nino Lo Bello, in his book, *The_Vatican Papers*).

Treating readers to another revelation, de Semlyen tells us that "There is much in Roman Catholic tradition to contribute to New Age thinking"; he fingers Mother Teresa as a primary force for New Ageism. Even more ground-breaking is the news that Vatican opposition to abortion, birth control and homosexuality "has little to do with the sanctity of human life and Biblical ordinance," rather it stems from a need to

add to the "Catholic army" and the financial resources of the Church.

The classic Jesuit-hating book was written by Edmond Paris. *The Secret History of the Jesuits* claims that the Jesuits constitute "a truly secret army" all over the world. According to Paris, the Jesuits have "kept alive" the Catholic Church's "mad aspiration to govern the world." "The public is practically unaware," writes Paris, "of the overwhelming responsibility carried by the Vatican and its Jesuits in the start of the two world wars." Indeed, "Catholics were the masters of Nazi Germany."

Paris even blames the death camps on the Catholic Church: "The right the Church arrogates herself to exterminate slowly or speedily those who are in the way was 'put into practice' at Auschwitz, Dachau, Belsen, Buchenwald and other death camps." As always, no documentation is ever presented to substantiate any of these outrageous claims. In conclusion, Paris says that the Jesuits are responsible for spreading "a kind of sclerosis, if not necrosis," through the Church.

Catholic Cabals

Chick Publications loves to publish books that promote devil's theories, but when it comes to conspiracy-minded plots that implicate the Vatican, few can top Avro Manhattan. In his best-selling work, *The Vatican Billions*, Manhattan sets the tone right from the start: "Christ was born, lived and died in poverty. His 'church' is a multi-, multi-billion concern." In fact, the Catholic Church is "the wealthiest institution on earth." But how did it get so rich? My favorite story is the one about the end of the first millennium.

It seems that as the year 1000 grew near, the people of Europe became nervous. Recalling tales about the end of the world, and remembering the Biblical injunction that it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich

man to enter the Kingdom of Heaven, Catholics began unloading their loot. The depository, of course, was the Church.

"When," writes Manhattan, "following the long night of terror of the last day of December 999, the first dawn of the year 1000 lit the Eastern sky without anything happening," many Catholics breathed a sigh of relief. "Those who had given away their property made for the ecclesiastical centers which had accepted their 'offerings,' only to be told that their money, houses, lands, were no longer theirs. It had been the most spectacular give-away in history."

The result was predictable. "Since the Church returned nothing," opines Manhattan, "she embarked upon the second millennium with more wealth than ever, the result being that the monasteries, abbeys and bishoprics, with their inmates and incumbents, became richer, fatter and more corrupt than before."

Kind of reminds me of the Billie Holiday refrain, "Nice Work If You Can Get It."

According to Manhattan, at the end of the Middle Ages, the Vatican resorted to some rather bizarre means to extract money from the peasants. Various bishops, Manhattan contends, were busy excommunicating insects, the result of which was an outpouring of revenue from grateful peasants. To be specific, leeches were excommunicated in 1451, caterpillars in 1480 (and again in 1587), snails got the boot in 1481 (they were dumped again in 1487) and grasshoppers were shown the door in 1516. He says not a word about the praying mantis, but perhaps this was an oversight. Either that or the bishops thought they were too holy to excommunicate.

In the nineteenth century, Manhattan tells us that the dogma of infallibility was struck "to lay the foundations of a novel structure directed at amassing the riches of the world with more efficiency than ever before." In the twentieth century,

the Church "secretly welcomed the Bolshevik Revolution," but then had second thoughts and turned against "Red Russia." Manhattan does not leave us in lurch, explaining this anomaly by stating that "Such double policies, conducted simultaneously at all levels during a period of years, were the result of the two most basic urges which have always bedeviled her [the Church's] conduct throughout her long experience: insatiable greed for ecclesiastical aggrandizement and an equally insatiable appetite for any prospect of potential earthly wealth."

Avro Manhattan's *The Vatican Moscow Washington Alliance* follows the same logic. When fascism emerged in Europe, Pope Pius XI "welcomed" it as a bulwark against communism, calling Mussolini "the man sent by Divine Providence." Not only does Manhattan fail to cite his sources for this charge, he cites not one source in his entire book. Be that as it may, we learn that Pius XI eventually turned against the fascists. That was a mistake: one of Mussolini's physicians gave the pope a lethal injection for doing so. Pius XII was spared such a fate because he "helped Hitler into power."

Manhattan credits Pope John XXIII with beginning the Vatican-Moscow alliance, but awards Paul VI the title of "the father" of this alliance. Essentially, Manhattan says that the Catholic Church was anti-Marxist from World War I to the death of Pius XII in 1958, and then turned left with the formation of the Vatican-Moscow alliance.

John Paul I, we learn, was "liquidated" because he was not anti-Russian; like Pius XI, he was drugged, only this time it was the United States government that did the job. The attempted assassination of John Paul II is credited to the Soviets, this a result of the Pontiff's creation of the Vatican-Washington alliance. If there is a moral here, it is that popes live longer when they don't get involved in alliances.

Manhattan is not optimistic. The "Curia-CIA Coalition," started by John Paul II, has already succeeded in doing what it set out to do: "America has willingly surrendered her political seniority as a superpower to that of the Vatican." He The Vatican, Manhattan declares, felt that "the whole of North America should by historical right, be Catholic." This is not a fantasy, he instructs, but the result of "well-calculated plans." The ultimate goal is to establish "the Catholic Church as a global religion."

How could all this come to pass? Manhattan is angry with Protestants for allowing the "Catholicization of America," by which he means the mass migration of Catholics into the U.S.; this is "destroying the traditional Protestant motivated America of the past." Guess it's fair to say that Latinos are not high on Manhattan's list.

The "enfeeblement of the major Protestant bodies," we are told, began with "ecumenism." This is not simply Manhattan's view, it's the position of William Standbridge in *What's Happening in the Roman Church*. Standridge pulls no punches, holding that "the present ecumenical campaign of the Roman church differs little from its purpose during the tortures and massacres of the inquisition: that is, to take control over all who call themselves Christians." In other words, ecumenical dialogue is a manipulative scheme designed to crush unsuspecting Protestants.

Dave Hunt is similarly distressed by ecumenism. In his book, *A Woman Rides the Beast*, Hunt expresses his outrage over the 1994 joint declaration, "Evangelicals and Catholics Together." For Hunt, this attempt at reaching a consensus on non-doctrinal matters, "overturned the Reformation and will unquestionably have far-reaching repercussions throughout the Christian world for years to come." As he sees it, the Evangelical-Catholic accord means that Catholics will be considered Christians. Nothing could be worse: "The millions who were martyred...for rejecting Catholicism as a false gospel

have all died in vain.”

In a section entitled “The Vatican and the New World Order,” Hunt says that “Uncompromising Christians will be put to death for standing in the way of unity and peace.” Our Blessed Mother, he argues, is to blame. “From current trends,” Hunt writes, “it seems inevitable that a *woman* [his emphasis] must ride the beast. And of all the women in history, none rivals Roman Catholicism’s omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent ‘Mary.’”

Much of the same charges hurled by other Catholic bashers are found in Hunt’s books. “The Roman Catholic Church is by far the wealthiest institution on earth.” When the Church asks the faithful for donations, “such pleas are unconscionable ploys.” For those dumb enough to think that Rio de Janeiro, with its seven hills, is the home of “spiritual fornication,” think again. “Against only one other *city* in history could a charge of fornication be leveled. That city is Rome, and more specifically *Vatican City*.”

Hunt goes further with this charge by saying that “The gross immorality of the Roman Catholic clergy is not confined to the past but continues on a grand scale to this day.” To make sure we get his point, Hunt contends that “popes, cardinals, bishops and priests without number have been habitual fornicators, adulterers, homosexuals, and mass-murderers—ruthless and depraved villains who pursued their degenerate lifestyles immune from discipline.” Nothing nuanced about that!

In his book, *A Cup of Trembling: Jerusalem and Bible Prophecy*, Hunt offers the standard line about Hitler and Himmler being good Catholics, and blames the Catholic Church for promoting Nazism. What drove the Church to do this? “The fanaticism that aroused Catholics to murder was often associated with the Eucharist and the wafer (Host).” Not to be outdone, Hunt brands recent statements by the Vatican condemning anti-

Semitism as “hypocritical,” saying they are nothing more than “deceptive declarations.”

What Makes Chick Tick?

No serious student of religion or history would ever believe the absurd charges that Chick Publications specializes in, but that should hardly give us pause. There are millions of people all over the world who want to believe the worst about the Catholic Church, and unsophisticated though they may be, these men, women and children will never dislodge themselves of their hatred for Catholicism as long as they are given a steady supply of Chick fodder. To be sure, the Church will survive this assault, but that doesn't relieve the objections that fair-minded people of every religion should have about Chick.

What makes Chick tick? In one four-letter word, it's called ENVY. Chick writers attribute fantastic powers to the Catholic Church precisely because they see in the Church a strength and resourcefulness that is absent in Protestantism. In the West, in particular, Chick authors believe that Protestantism should have eclipsed Catholicism long ago. But it hasn't, for reasons that reasonable people can debate. What can't be debated is that those driven by envy (with a little madness thrown in) will never cease their offensive against the Church. The one true Church, that is.

CAN THERE BE “COMMON GROUND”?

In August, Cardinal Bernardin along with eight bishops and 17 other Catholic leaders met to discuss the possibility of reaching common ground between various factions within the Church. On August 12 the *Chicago Sun-Times* published an

exchange between Call to Action president Linda Pleczynski and William Donohue, president of the Catholic League. Here is the full text of Donohue's remarks.

Most observers of the Catholic Church will agree that there is considerable infighting among various factions within the Church. But paralysis? No. What we have is a determined minority of elites who are profoundly alienated from traditional Church teachings pitted against those who, by and large, are relatively content with the Church the way it is.

The elites never tire of citing polls that suggest that most Catholics want a married clergy, women priests and a host of other reforms. What they don't say is that, except for them, most Catholics are infinitely more concerned about the vibrancy of their parish programs, schools and Sunday homilies than they are about the politics of reform.

Just last year, the Catholic League commissioned a survey of American Catholics. The results were startling: among those who profess a belief in reforms, 83 percent of all Catholics and 90 percent of those who regularly attend Mass said that they would be as committed to the Church, if not more so, if the Church *did not* make the changes they wanted. How can this be so?

There is a dramatic difference between preferences and demands. Catholics may prefer the Church to make certain changes, but only a small minority are so intense in their convictions that they demand reforms. Not so for the elites: what motivates them is power and that is why they press so hard for changes. They have a vested interest, then, in seeing all preferences as demands, though the reality is that most Catholics are more troubled by second collections at Mass than they are by the issues that exercise Call to Action.

Infighting is constructive when both sides agree to the central tenets of Church teachings. But when either side takes

it upon itself to rewrite liturgies and openly defy the teachings of the Magisterium, then that kind of infighting is destructive to the mission of the Church. In short, there are some aspects of the Church that are non-negotiable, and the sooner this is acknowledged, the better off everyone will be.

To take a different approach, if a reporter for the *Chicago Sun-Times* were to go on a popular local radio show and start blasting the editorial positions of his newspaper, just how long would he last? Would it make sense to label the newspaper intolerant if he were summarily fired? The point is that there is more tolerance in the Catholic Church for dissent than exists in most institutions in society. Up to a point, that is healthy. But it is downright destructive—not to say foolhardy—if dissent knows no boundaries.

The elites trumpet pluralism as a virtue, but pluralism is predicated on limits, lest it descend to anarchy. The elites who demand reforms seem not to care about this verity, and some have actually said that their agenda is to destroy the Church as we know it. Now it matters not a whit whether this segment of the Church comes from the left or the right, what matters is that they lose.

What is most right about the Catholic Church today is that it holds to moral absolutes in a culture drowning in relativism. To be sure, the role of conscience must be respected, but it must be, as the Church teaches, a well-formed conscience. Jeffrey Dahmer followed his conscience, but precisely because it was a free-floating conscience grounded in nothing but his passions, his actions proved diabolical. Freedom, as the Catholic Church teaches and as Dahmer denied, is the right to do as we ought, not the right to do as we want.

APA OFFERS BIASED LOOK AT CHURCH

The *APA Monitor*, the newsletter of the American Psychological Association, recently offered a biased look at the Catholic Church, necessitating a Catholic League response. The following letter explains the league's position. We are grateful to psychologist Patricia Donoghue for bringing this issue to our attention.

"The August edition of the *APA Monitor* had two articles on sexual abuse among the clergy. Of particular interest to the writer, Tori DeAngelis, is the relationship between the Catholic Church's celibacy requirement and sexual abuse.

"For whatever reason, there is much in the article that DeAngelis did not discuss. It should be known that the most authoritative book on the subject, *Pedophiles and Priests*, by Philip Jenkins (Oxford, 1996), shows that the rate of pedophilia among Catholic priests runs between .7 and 1.2 percent of the clergy. This contrasts with a figure of 2-3 percent in the non-celibate Protestant clergy. It is striking, then, that DeAngelis not only fails to discuss how celibacy could be seen as a causative agent, but, more importantly, that she gives the reader the impression that this problem is somehow more pervasive among the Catholic clergy.

"Then we read statements like 'The fact that the Catholic church has done a poor job educating seminarians about how to cope with sexual feelings....' We also read conclusions about 'the church's propensity to avoid sexual matters.' Such comments demand evidence. It is one thing for tabloids to make these charges, quite another when a serious newsletter entertains them. If the point is that Catholic sexual ethics differs markedly from the prevailing ethos,

then that's fine: it does. But if the point is to indict, then that's another matter altogether.

"It is also remarkable that in a discussion of preventative programs in the ranks of the clergy, nothing is said about the efforts that have been made—especially in the 1990s—in the Catholic community.

"All totaled, DeAngelis offers a picture that is neither accurate nor fair."

ELITE TASTES

Stephen E. Lewis is darling of the Georgetown circuit, if for no other reason than the fact that few places in the District of Columbia welcome his "art." Lewis, a 30 year old artist, gives high marks to Michael Clark in Georgetown for showing his stuff. And what is his stuff? Described in the *Washington Post* for featuring art that is replete with "graphic nudity, violence and explicit sexuality," the newspaper printed a picture of the Lewis contribution, "Every Dog Has Its Day." The painting is a rendering of the Crucifixion, with a large dog as Christ and dogs as Roman soldiers. Fortunately, there is no Metro stop in Georgetown, meaning that only the elites are likely to stumble on Lewis's masterpieces.

OFFENSIVE AD WITHDRAWN

In the July-August *Catalyst* we reported that the *Columbus Dispatch* apologized for an by WBNS TV that offended Catholics. We also said that we had not heard from WBNS. Well, now we have, and we are delighted with the response.

The ad featured a picture of a woman with her hands folded in a prayer-like fashion, draped over rosary beads. Surrounding the picture was a statement that charged the Catholic Church with discriminating against women. Paul Dughi, the New Manager at WBNS, had the courage to admit that the ad “crossed the line.” More important, he said that the ad has been discontinued.

PAROCHIAL SCHOOL PREVAILS IN COURT

In an important decision, a federal appeals court has ruled that a public school district must pay for a mentally retarded student to attend a parochial school. Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, all disabled students are entitled to special education at state expense. But until now it wasn't clear whether the state was required to pay for the services of a disabled student to attend a parochial school. State School Boards Associations were quick to denounce the court's affirmation of school choice and said they may appeal the decision.

ATLANTA CHAPTER SCORES HOUSE OF BLUES

The following letter, written by Atlanta chapter president Richard O. Perry, was published in the Georgia Bulletin, the newspaper of the Catholic Archdiocese of Atlanta. Perry took issue with the House of Blues logo.

To the Editor:

Among the novelties brought to Atlanta by the Olympics is the "House of Blues," a nightclub and restaurant chain. What brings the House of Blues to our attention as Catholics is its logo, which can be seen in advertisements in the Atlanta Journal and Constitution.

The logo is a desecration of the symbol of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

So egregious is the affront that the U.S. Patent Office refused its registration, on the grounds that it "may disparage or bring into contempt or disrepute persons of the Roman Catholic faith."

The organizing theme of the chain is the celebration of the history of blues music, and the African-American contribution to it. The disgraceful logo has no apparent connection to that theme. The very gratuitousness of the desecration strongly suggests that it is intentional.

The House of Blues was founded in 1992 by Isaac Tigrett, the man who reportedly dreamed up the Hard Rock Cafe. Tigrett has clubs in Cambridge, Mass., Los Angeles, and New Orleans. Atlanta is the newest edition, but others are scheduled to

open in Chicago and in New York.

According to the Constitution, House of Blues is here largely because Mayor Bill Campbell led to a delegation to Los Angeles to court Tigrett in August of 1994. Tigrett's initial objective was limited: to be on the scene for the Olympics. He has since signed a lease extension for four months, and civic leaders are negotiating to make Atlanta attractive on a permanent basis, as part of a project to revitalize downtown Atlanta.

The indifference of Atlanta's civic leaders to the offensiveness of the House of Blue's logo to Catholics is astounding. Surely they would not approve the desecration of the cherished symbols of other religious or ethnic groups.

The Atlanta chapter of the Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights has protested to the mayor and to other civic leaders the double standard with respect to the Catholic Church that is apparent in the courting of Isaac Tigrett. We urge Catholics to do the same. The issue is not whether the House of Blues stays or goes. The issue is that if it stays, its logo must go.