

CALIFORNIA PAPER MALIGNS POPE

A common criticism is that the Catholic Church's teachings on contraception and abortion are somehow responsible for Third World poverty. In a Stockton, California newspaper, *The Record*, columnist Joseph Guzzardi II wrote a particularly unfair piece maligning the Holy Father. League president William Donohue fired back with the following response.

"In his tirade against the Catholic Church ('If the pope were more moderate in his rhetoric'), Joseph Guzzardi slams the Pope for not caring about Third World poverty. He then pleads with the Pope to allow women to have an abortion and asks him to condemn those who have killed abortionists.

"To begin with, the Pope has openly denounced those who take the life of abortionists. In addition, the Pope has often addressed the subject of poverty and has implored affluent individuals and nations to do more to alleviate the suffering of the needy. But he does not believe that the way to stop poverty is to start by killing the poor. Abortion kills and there is no way to deny it.

"Third World nations that practice socialism, as in Africa, breed poverty, while once poor nations that adopt market economies, as in Southeast Asia, breed wealth. So if Guzzardi is really concerned about the plight of the needy, it is entirely possible for him to at once reject both socialism and abortion. The Pope does, and that is why Catholics turn to him as a moral resource, and not to those bent on distorting his record."

ADWEEK PROFILES ATTACK ON CHURCH

In a report this past summer, the New England edition of *Adweek* profiled the complaints of two Catholic ad agency directors, Ernie Schenck and Jamie Mambro. Judy Warner's story, which appeared July 29, discussed the reasons why Schenck and Mambro developed ads that attack the Church for allegedly doing nothing about those priests who have sexually abused children.

The ads are unusually vicious in their attack. Here's a sample: a) "Get caught by the cops molesting children and you could get sent to prison. Get caught by your bishop and you could get sent to another parish." b) "100,000 victims of sexual abuse and some church officials are telling us to go to hell. With all due respect, we've already been there." c) "Thousands of kids molested by priests and some Catholics refuse to deal with it. (Apparently, there's still a need for someone who can make the blind see.)" d) "After 37 years in the priesthood, he knows it's a mortal sin to have sex with another man's wife. It's another man's son we're worried about."

Schenck and Mambro are both senior vice presidents and creative directors at Hill, Holiday. They offered to create the ads and posters for the Survivors Network of Those Abused by Priests (SNAP).

In a letter to *Adweek*, Catholic League president William Donohue sought to set the record straight:

"For the record, the percentage of priests involved in such incidents [sexual abuse of youngsters] ranges between .7 and 1.2 percent. While even one priest is too many, the 'crisis' that Schenck and Mambro would have us believe exists is pure

fabrication.

“It is scurrilous to say that the Catholic Church has ‘shown no sign of responding’ to this problem. In the past few years, the National Catholic Conference of Bishops (NCCB) has held hearings and issued strict guidelines on this matter, the result of which has been a fast, thorough and responsible response to any wrongdoing. Indeed, the group that Schenck and Mambro repaired to for consultation, namely Survivors Network of Those Abused by Priests (SNAP), was actually summoned by the NCCB in 1993 to discuss this issue, making charges of foot-dragging in 1996 not only ludicrous, but downright dishonest.

“Those who have real complaints about the Catholic Church ought to come foreword. But those who maintain a grudge out of animus are not deserving of our time.”

The league is grateful to Dale O’Leary for bringing this matter to its attention.

APOLOGY FROM ALBERMARLE

In a recent edition of *Albermarle*, a magazine of Central Virginia, there was a piece by a contributing writer, Rita Mae Brown, entitled “Communion Causes Cancer.” Obtusely written, it failed at humor but succeeded in offending. We are told that communion wafers can cause cancer, learn of a pastor who distributes water crackers (someone stole the communion wafers) and read that a cat is running around with communion wafers in his mouth.

In response, the league told the editors of the publication that *Albermarle* had now succeeded in stooping to the level of

cheap tabloids and Chick Publications. We are happy to report that an apology was quickly forthcoming from *Albermarle* editor Jamie Miller.

FALSE ALARM

We have received several complaints about a prospective film entitled "The Sexual Life of Jesus Christ," produced by Modern People News. The movie, which supposedly presents Jesus as a homosexual, and features a notorious French prostitute in the role of Mary Magdalene, is being advertised abroad, as well as in the U.S. But repeated attempts by the Catholic League to contact Modern People News have failed. Mail is returned and there is no phone listing for the Franklin Park, Illinois company.

This is not the first time that someone has used Modern People News as a source for anti-Catholic propaganda. But the good news is that apparently there is no such outlet.

CATHOLIC WOMEN AND ABORTION

In a study by the Alan Guttmacher Institute, it was reported that Catholic women have an abortion rate 29 percent higher than Protestants. The study also concluded that about half of American women will have an abortion at some point in their lives. The gist of the findings is that a) the Catholic Church's teachings on abortion are falling on deaf ears and b) abortion is becoming a common procedure among women. But there

is more to this than what the public has been left to believe.

To begin with, in virtually every newspaper account on this story, there was no mention of the fact that the Alan Guttmacher Institute is the research arm of Planned Parenthood, the nation's leading abortion rights organization that receives tens of millions each year from the federal government to service its mission. This is not to say that the Guttmacher researchers "cooked" the data, but it is to say that readers should be as suspect of their work as they would if the Pentagon had a research arm that produced studies indicating the need for an arms buildup.

If the Guttmacher Institute were truly interested in assessing the relationship between religion and abortion, it would have asked the women who listed a Catholic affiliation whether they were regular Church-goers. But they didn't. Nor did they ask those women whether they agreed with the Church's teachings on abortion. It is not unreasonable to assume that had such questions been asked, the results would not have been quite so dramatic.

It is well-known that non-white minority women have pressures on them that make comparisons with white women somewhat difficult. The report is not entirely useless in this regard, though more data would allow for a more complete conclusion. Now consider the following.

The report says that although black women are 14 percent of the age-bearing class between the ages of 15-44, they make up 31 percent of all the abortions. Hispanics are 11 percent of the age-bearing segment yet they account for 20 percent of all the abortions. This is important because fully 20 percent of Catholics belong to minority groups: 14 percent of Catholics are Hispanic and 5 percent are black. As John Leo of *U.S. News and World Report* discovered after he examined this data, when black and Hispanic women are factored out, "Catholic women have an abortion rate 37 percent lower than average."

It must also be said that the 1 percent abortion rate among Jewish women is suspect. The majority of Jews profess no religion, and therefore it is entirely likely that when Jewish women were asked to choose which religion they belonged to, the majority checked off "None" as opposed to "Jewish," thereby underreporting their actual abortion rate.

The study does show that although only 6 percent of non-believers are between the ages 15-44, they account for 24 percent of all the abortions. Now if the researchers, as well as the media were fair, they would have highlighted this finding: women who have no religious affiliation are four times more likely than other women to have an abortion. But owing to bias, this was not done.

Finally, the data show that the abortion rate is not only declining, it is at the lowest rate since 1979 (the highest rates were born between 1983-1985). The present rate, 27.5 percent (and dropping), makes nonsensical the Guttmacher conclusion that half of all American women will have an abortion sometime in their life.

What this tells us is that if you start with a politicized agenda, you get a politicized outcome. In the end, there is no substitute for independently checking the findings of any research report, especially those that are produced by highly politicized organizations that have a vested financial interest in the conclusions.

LEAGUE BACKS RELIGIOUS RIGHTS

ABROAD

At the behest of retired Captain Timothy Hunter, Catholic League president William Donohue wrote a letter to Congressman Frank Wolf regarding the status of religious rights for uniformed personnel overseas; Rep. Wolf is Chairman of the Foreign Operations Subcommittee of the U.S. House of Representatives Appropriations Committee. At issue is the apparent negligence of the U.S. State Department to protect the religious rights of G.I.'s serving overseas, particularly in places like Saudi Arabia. Donohue asked Rep. Wolf to "take whatever measures might be necessary to ensure that the religious rights of American men and women in uniform overseas are respected."

CASUAL LIVING FAILS AT HUMOR

The Catholic League has protested a *Casual Living* catalog entry on prayer candles. Here is the catalog description of the candles: "HELP IS ON THE WAY. Clever, satirical prayer candles by Everyday Icons help protect a woman from everyday stress. 'Powerful Protection from PMS Prayer,' 'Our Lady of Abundant Chocolate' and 'Prayer for Menopause Relief.' Light the candle, say the appropriate words three times as instructed, wait and see! Fun gifts."

The league has requested to see a sample of candles that offend Jews and Native Americans. What is perhaps most interesting about *Casual Living* is that no one who works there feels comfortable letting us know the name of the president.

POTTERY BARN STOOPS LOW

The August catalog of Pottery Barn depicts a nude woman styled in a Christ-like crucified position hanging above a bed. The league sent a letter expressing its concerns to the publication, saying that it was “unnecessarily inflammatory, as it disparages an important Christian symbol.” We are awaiting a response.

ASIA SOCIETY’S IDEA OF “ART”

From October 4 through January 5, New York’s Asia Society will feature an exhibition entitled “Contemporary Art in Asia: Traditions/Tensions.” One of the displays, *House of Sin*, depicts a drunken Catholic cleric holding a chalice (a dead boy appears next to him). The exhibition received funding from the National Endowment for the Arts and was given prominent advertisement by Asia Society in its September-October newsletter.

In a letter to Asia Society president Ambassador Nicholas Platt, Catholic League president William Donohue made the following comment:

“Why this piece of work in being shown—indeed highlighted—by the Asia Society, I do not know. But I seriously doubt that a display that offended Asians would be accepted, much less advertised, by Asia Society.”

Donohue has asked Platt to respond to his query.

NARAL'S ROOTS ANTI-CATHOLIC

In his new book, *The Hand of God*, Dr. Bernard Nathanson explains his migration from a Jewish abortionist to a Catholic pro-lifer. He also cites the anti-Catholic roots of NARAL (known as the National Association for Repeal of Abortion Laws at its inception, later as the National Abortion Rights Action League, and now the National Abortion and Reproductive Rights Action League). According to Dr. Nathanson, it was through the work of Lawrence Lader, an admirer of the eugenicist-racist Margaret Sanger of Planned Parenthood fame, that NARAL set its guns on the Catholic Church. "Our favorite tack," Nathanson writes, "was to blame the church for the death of every woman from a botched abortion." Saying that "we attacked at every opportunity," Nathanson makes it clear that NARAL's ambition was to discredit the Catholic Church and thereby accelerate its agenda of abortion-on-demand.

Dr. Nathanson has done a public service by exposing NARAL's roots (he has done this more authoritatively in earlier works). We welcome him into the Catholic Church. As for NARAL, it may keep changing its name, but it can't change its stripes.