

Cardinal Bevilacqua Scores Philadelphia Inquirer For Church Coverage, Declines Interview

For a planned major article on the first anniversary of some significant structural changes announced by the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, the *Philadelphia Inquirer* requested an interview with Cardinal Anthony Bevilacqua.

Before committing himself to the interview, the Cardinal asked his staff to review the *Inquirer's* coverage of the Church during the past year. As a result of that study, the Cardinal declined the interview request and issued a public letter to William Macklin, of *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, which detailed the reasons for his refusal:

I have declined your request for an interview due to your unfair and unbalanced coverage of the Archdiocese in the last year, in general, and the disproportionately negative coverage of our regional planning process in particular.

This view is based on a review of Inquirer articles from May 1993 to May 1994. This review included 23 articles written about the Catholic Church. Of these 23 articles, eighteen were considered to be unfair and unbalanced. The unfairness and imbalance occurred in five areas including the selection of negative topics, a disregard for positive news, the use of unqualified experts, the use of negative language and a consistent omission of factual information. Some examples of these attributes might include two recently misleading articles on a new evangelization center at Saint Peter Claver, a recent characterization of the Archdiocese as "usually strident" or a description of the Holy Father as

“uncompromising. “

It is particularly frustrating to continue to read negative characterizations of the Roman Catholic Church with no regard for our role as the largest provider of social services in Southeastern Pennsylvania and our role as the most visible religious organization in the poorest areas of our city.

Cardinal Bevilacqua concluded his letter with a statement addressing the original subject of the intended interview: progress on the regional planning process. He pointedly addressed criticisms of the planning process and made clear the Church's commitment to the inner city and to minority populations within the Archdiocese.

The Cardinal's letter was published in the June issue of his newsletter, *The Voice of Your Shepherd*.



The *Philadelphia Inquirer* and political cartoonist Auth have a long history of doing hatchet jobs on the Catholic Church. Little wonder then that this state-of-the-art effort was captioned "Hatchet!" Cardinal Anthony Bevilacqua's criticism of the *Inquirer* (story above) only addressed print articles. It did not even touch on the vicious editorial cartoons, many by Auth, which have attacked the Church.

ADL Attacks “Religious Right”

This past June the Anti-Defamation League released a new publication entitled *The Religious Right: The Assault on*

Tolerance & Pluralism in America. The work sparked controversy, and justly so. It is a highly critical volume, one which takes Christian conservative leaders to task for making extremist remarks. Most of the commentary focuses on fundamentalist and evangelical Christians; there is little said about Catholics.

Supporters of the document took the opportunity to rail against Christian conservatives. Critics, and they included prominent Jews, blasted the ADL for promoting a bit of defamation of its own. Our reading of the publication is one of regret. The ADL has played an important role in combating defamation and discrimination in our society. It is regrettable, therefore, that such a respectable organization would succumb to the politics of the moment and enlist in the war on Christian conservatives. Sure, irresponsible comments have been made by Christians – of every denomination and of every political bent – but to tar with a broad brush all those whose conservative politics is informed by their religious convictions is wrong.

There is much in the report that needs explaining. On the same page as the following comment, “Like anyone else, evangelical Christians have the right to organize, to run for office, to lobby, to boycott, to demonstrate, to attempt to implement their views,” it is said that “The religious right goes wrong, however, because it would respond to the problem of moral authority by asking the state to mandate values – a state upon which it means to impose its own religious identity.” The ADL needs to make up its mind: Which is it? Our reading of this remarkable double-talk is that the ADL thinks it’s fine for Christian conservatives to get involved politically just so long as they don’t win.

We await the ADL’s volume on how the Christian left has managed to practice its politics without imposing its values on the rest of us. It should make for interesting reading, but we won’t hold our breath waiting for its release.

Classy Artwork, Poor History, Mark Viciously Anti-Catholic Publication

The small newspaper arrived in the mail, sent in by a member in southeast Idaho. The title, emblazoned across the front page fairly shouted: *Earths Final Warning*. The picture of a smiling President Clinton with Pope John Paul II in the center of the page seemed in sharp contrast to the title.

On the back page the return address proclaimed the sender's credentials: Heralds of Truth, P.O. Box 800, Puyallup, WA 98371-0072. The "resident" mailing label signaled that this was part of a very large and probably very expensive mass mailing intended to blanket the entire community.

Warning was an odd-sized piece, almost eleven inches square, printed on newsprint stock. The piece deserved high marks for layout, quality artwork and effective use of basic two color printing. But the good news ends there.

From first to last, *Earths Final Warning* is an anti-Catholic diatribe which would have the reader believe that the United States, the United Nations and the Papacy are embarked on a grand scheme to create a new world order dominated by Rome. And while we're at it, the collapse of the Soviet Union and the Ecumenical Movement are all part of this grand conspiracy which will ultimately destroy human freedom and restore the so-called "dark ages." The publishing organization appears to be a Seventh Day Adventist splinter group associated with last year's anti-pope billboards which were heavily concentrated in the west and northwest. There are references to the Vatican's

Sabbath versus the Biblical Sabbath.

The writers are diabolically clever. They weave together accurate and properly cited quotes with their own bizarre interpretation. Statements made years apart are scrambled to create the illusion of connection and progression. Comments are ripped out of context or else placed side by side to create an artificial and totally unwarranted linkage designed to deceive and confuse the unsophisticated reader.

And the people who will read and believe *Earths Final Warning* are indeed unsophisticated and ill-informed. They will be fooled by the slickness and the artwork and the illusion of truth which this piece so cleverly conveys.

And they will send money. And they will give copies to others like themselves. And the cycle of bigotry and prejudice and anti-Catholicism will go on and on.

-John Pantuso

The Weed of Diversity Bears Bitter Fruit

By Nino Langiulli

From the classrooms of a taxpayer funded college in the state of New Jersey comes a report of a recent parody of the principles of academic integrity, academic freedom, and freedom of speech. We speak of words spoken and actions performed by a faculty member teaching a required course in the core curriculum of William Paterson College. The transmogrification of the first amendment right of freedom of

speech into freedom of expression and the latter to flag burning and pornography does not readily prepare us for its next exquisite metastasis. Nor does exposure to logic textbook exercises in the fallacy of slippery slope arguments. Slippery slopes can and do occur in the moral and political order albeit not in the simplified and controlled world of the logic textbooks. Among the most slippery of slips on the slope has been that of academic freedom into freedom of speech – a slip made by many academicians. From the free speech movement at U. Cal., Berkeley, the slide has reached William Paterson College in Wayne, New Jersey. And the bottom of the hill has not been hit yet. Episodes abound whereby skeptics of the fallacy but not the reality of the slippery slope will even be able to predict, from the ground of their skepticism, what will come next.

With apologies to the citizens of New Jersey, we must wonder whether the soil of the academy there is rancid or not. For in November 1993 at Keane College in Trenton, we had the droppings of the former jailbird, Khalid Mohammed, leaching into the ground of the garden state – such droppings whose substance is anti-Jew, anti-Catholic, and anti-white. Mr. Mohammed, however, was at Keane College merely an invited guest whereas at William Paterson College it was a gen-u-ine Professor who soiled the souls of black and other folk.

At any rate, in that soil the weed of diversity has borne bitter fruit. Dr. William Donohue, who is the President of the Catholic League, informs us at University Centers for Rational Alternatives that a certain Professor McClean is carrying on the noble tradition of the Reverend Louis Farrakhan and his faithful disciple, Khalid Mohammed.

The facts, so far as we have been able to ascertain them are these. On July 5, 1994, Professor Vernon McClean required all the students in his "Racism and Sexism in a Changing America" class to declare their religious affiliation on a piece of paper. Then in the course of his lecture, Dr. McClean alluded

to the Reverend Farrakhan's description of Pope John Paul II as a "racist c_ s_ _ ." Without skipping a beat or blinking an eye (so open and casual has the level of classroom discourse become, thanks to the Free Speech Movement of 1964) Dr. McClean asserted that Farrakhan was right. The multi-pronged insult was aimed at the hearts of Karol Wojtyla, the man, John Paul II, the Pope, the Catholic people, the Catholic Church, and all decent people of good will. The shocking crudity of the remark is heightened by the casual manner in which it was made. Its setting – a college classroom – is no small memento of our public madness. Yet we would be foolish to deny the secret joy it will give to numerous hearts across America especially in such hallowed precincts as faculty rooms, Hollywood studios, and editorial offices. The snickers would be just too hard to smother. Honor and manners are as passe as the study of Greek and Latin.

When the mother of one of the students in the class learned about the episode, she wrote a letter of complaint to the President of the College, Arnold Speert. In a moment of enlightened governance which we have come to expect from college and university administrators, President Speert sent a copy of the parent's letter to Dr. McClean. The free-speaking Professor then engaged in some free-wheeling action. He copied the parent's letter complete with her home address and distributed it to *his* students. So far as we know, no action has been taken either against Dr. McClean or President Speert. A statement released by Speert on July 27, "because of widespread publicity accompanying the complaint," declared that an investigation was completed and that "the College is satisfied that the matter has been resolved fully and completely." President Speert added that "the investigation itself was confidential, and no further specific information concerning the proceedings will be released." No mention is made about the other egregious aspects of the episode.

The statement has the appearance of administrative sophistry and a hasty dismissal of the serious nature of the events. With Dr. Donohue receiving several telephone calls from students, alumni, and even faculty members (*mirabile dictu*) on the extent of the bigotry and abuse of academic freedom at William Paterson College, the statement by the President does not appear to have resolved the matter "fully and completely."

If Dr. McClean is a tenured member of the faculty, then the other tenured members of the faculty should take the initiative and bring charges of professional misconduct against him. He acted improperly on at least three counts: he demanded a declaration of religious affiliation from the students; an act which is illegal even for the United States Census Bureau; he publicly insulted in a scurrilous manner the chief representative of the Catholic Church thereby abusing the principle of academic freedom (calling the Pope a c_-s__ hardly seems protected by academic freedom even in a racism and sexism course); he distributed to his class a private letter of complaint written to the President of the College by a parent of one of his students with a home address on it, making the parent vulnerable to attacks by mail and telephone.

If he is not tenured, he should be dismissed either at the end of the course or immediately. If he is an adjunct member of the faculty, he should be dismissed immediately. President Speert should be investigated by the Chancellor of Education of the State of New Jersey and, if found also to have acted unprofessionally, then he too should be relieved of his duties.

A significant feature of this exercise in multicultural education is that the course is part of the core curriculum of William Paterson College and is, therefore, required for all students. It has often been said that courses such as these are in the interests of bringing harmony between the races and sexes. The objections of skeptical but prudent critics of these courses or orientations, foundations, politicians, and

even corporate business executives (the purported tough-minded experts on the “real” world). These proponents maintain that the institutions of higher education must be the instruments of social transformation and the training grounds for currently fashionable skills rather than the institutions for the study of the arts, the sciences, and the humanities. Ideological courses in racism and sexism are what we get. If the diverse multiculturalists say that the situation at William Paterson College is “anecdotal” or “idiosyncratic,” they are lying in the way proponents of such courses have learned to engage in subterfuge for several years now. If they say that courses such as these are not becoming the focus of the core curriculum, they lie again, counting on their successful past deceptions as well as the academy’s penchant for smug self-deception.

It is time once again to give a wake-up call to honest members of the academy and interested citizens. How long are we going to let the educational predators have their way? Indeed if honest citizens inside and outside the academy do not act soon, it will become ever more evident that the sign hanging over the door – the sign from which we shield our eyes – says: “*Lasciate ogni speranza, voi ch’ entrate!*” (Abandon all hope you who enter here).

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Dr. Donohue to Address Philadelphia Dinner

Catholic League president William A. Donohue will be the featured speaker at this year's Philadelphia chapter dinner on December 9, 1994. Former chapter president James J. Jandrisitz, who also served on the League's national board of directors, will be honored as Person of the Year. Molly Kelly, a previous honoree will serve as M.C. For information call the chapter office at (215) 342-1590.

Philadelphia Chapter Plays Big Roll in Hyde Honor

On June 16, 1994, Philadelphia's Holy Family College presented its "President's Award for Distinguished Political Leadership by a Catholic" to Illinois Congressman Henry Hyde. The Catholic League's Greater Philadelphia-South Jersey Chapter played a major roll in the success of the awards dinner, accounting for 55 of the 180 seats. The chapter leadership felt honored by the invitation to take part in recognizing an outstanding Catholic.

L.I. Chapter to honor Dr. Viscardi

The Catholic League's Long Island Chapter will host a cocktail reception at the Nassau Bar Association on Friday, October 21. The League will present an award to Dr. Henry Viscardi. Catholic League president William A. Donohue will be the featured speaker.