

# FEDS EYE PRO-LIFERS

Over the summer, it was learned that the Clinton administration has been compiling files on various pro-family and pro-life groups. Included on the list is the National Conference of Catholic Bishops (NCCB).

An activist group, Judicial Watch, obtained documents under the Freedom of Information Act that reveal how federal investigators, including the FBI, are keeping tabs on innocent persons in the pro-life community. The secret program, known as "Violence Against Abortion Providers," documents all sorts of data as far back as the mid-1990s.

What is alarming about this is that the Clinton administration has gone way beyond keeping a eye on those who might be connected with the commission of a crime. It is, in fact, keeping files on persons simply because of their beliefs and expressed opinions. "The investigation of abortion clinic violence was a cover for them to go after pro-life leaders and religious leaders who obviously had no connection to this," said Tom Fitton, president of Judicial Watch.

When asked to comment on this, William Donohue told the press, "The surprise would be if they *didn't* regard such people as the enemy." He maintained that "There's no question that the pro-life community is the enemy as far as the Clinton administration is concerned." Donohue then questioned, "Why would it be such a leap to conclude he [Clinton] wouldn't have people investigating these groups?"

Is anyone surprised?

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# THE ROAD MOST TRAVELED: FROM BOB JONES UNIVERSITY TO THE PLAYBOY MANSION

William A. Donohue

In February we objected to George W. Bush's visit to Bob Jones University. Six months later we objected to Al Gore's refusal to stop a fund-raising event at the Playboy Mansion. Subsequently, Bush made a public statement of regret regarding his handling of the Bob Jones matter and Gore saw to it that the Playboy event was canceled. We are obviously pleased with both outcomes, but there are some lingering concerns.

To be a Protestant is to be part of a community of believers who are defined by what they are not. They are not Roman Catholics. But they are Christians. So they protest. And what they protest is Roman Catholicism.

Not infrequently does this defensive posture show an ugly side to it. When it does, it triggers a response from the Catholic League. We are not here to engage in intramural theological disputes with our Christian brothers, but neither are we here to be their theological punching bag.

Catholics, for the most part, really don't care what Protestants believe. But the contra is not true: there is no end to the books, magazines, pamphlets, tapes and videos that Protestant publishing houses distribute attacking Catholicism. While most of these writers are just plain kooky, there are some (e.g. professors in divinity schools) who present a more polished face. Both groups deserve a response from Catholic quarters.

But how serious is this threat? Not very. Those who demonize the Catholic Church for its beliefs tend to affect

subcultures within the dominant culture. As such, they find it difficult to break into the mainstream, creating, in effect, a self-contained ghetto. It goes without saying that the number one reason why this isn't a serious threat is due to its origins—it is rooted in theology. And on this score, we have a decided advantage.

The road most traveled for the Catholic League is not the one paved with theological challenges, but with cultural ones. And that is why the Playboy Mansion venue is more disconcerting than Bob Jones University. The house that Hefner built symbolizes the dehumanization of men and women; that this quality has been successfully mainstreamed into our culture can be doubted by no one. Hefner's house also symbolizes a philosophy which is deeply subversive of our Judeo-Christian ethos.

It is no secret that a significant portion of our cultural elite thinks the Catholic Church is a repressive institution.

It is also no secret that the Catholic League spends most of its time fighting the captains of our culture.

Count among this gang Hugh Hefner. It was his Playboy Philosophy, with its premium on self-gratification, that played a major role restructuring the cultural landscape of the 1960s. And we have yet to rid our cultural soil of this poison.

Just as sexual license is the defining element of the Playboy Philosophy, sexual restraint is the defining element of Catholic sexual ethics. Not content to let these differences co-exist, Hugh Hefner and associates have long attacked the Catholic Church for its teachings. The usual way it is done is through the advancement of invidious stereotypes about sexually repressed Catholic male and female. Sometimes the stereotypes are found in essays on the history of sexual taboos in America. More recently, Hefner observed that the pop star Madonna was fighting the environment of her roots:

she was in rebellion against her "Catholic home."

Recently, Hefner bragged how he was seeing two "nice, Catholic" twins. Had they been Jews, he would have kept his mouth shut. But his point was

that he was working to rid them of their "conservative" upbringing. How thoughtful. He did not say whether his liberating exercise required him to reach for yet another dose of Viagra.

When Loretta Sanchez was finally forced to cancel the "Gorgy," Playboy executives went on the warpath. Richard Rosenzweig, executive vice president of Playboy Enterprises, defended the Hefner empire by saying that it was as "American as apple pie." Sadly, this is true, but what he had to say about the Democratic party and Playboy was damning: "I would never have expected this from a party that we have supported financially and editorially through the pages of the magazine for many years."

No one from Bob Jones University would ever claim to have the influence on the Republican party that Playboy executives boast to have on the Democratic party. Gore is no more anti-Catholic than Bush, but unlike Bush, the vice president carries the baggage of the Clinton-Gore-Hollywood years.

Someone needs to throw Gore some rope so he can pull himself out of this Hollywood swamp. If he doesn't get out soon, he may sink.

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# HOW THE CATHOLIC LEAGUE GOT GORE TO CANCEL THE “GORGY”

1. Our first move was the letter Donohue sent to Gore on July 31.
2. Our second move was a news release of August 2 that showed how two-faced Sanchez is: she complained about George W. Bush speaking at Bob Jones University but this didn't stop her from arranging the “Gorgy” on the Feast of the Assumption.
3. Our third move was to issue a news release on August 3 that underscored what was at stake: “Culture War Ignites Over Gore's Playboy Mansion ‘Gorgy.’”
4. Our fourth move was a press conference in front of Playboy Enterprises in New York on August 6. With the huge banner that read, “Cancel the Gorgy,” we drew CBS, the *New York Post*, Catholic News Service and other media.
5. Our fifth move was on August 7. It was on that date that we ran an ad in the Washington D.C. newspaper, *Roll Call*, asking Gore to drop the event (see below).
6. Our sixth move, also on August 7, occurred when we announced a “web war.” We enlisted our friends in the Catholic, Protestant, Jewish, Muslim and Buddhist communities to join with us in the protest. We urged visitors to our website to jam the lines at the White House asking Gore to cancel the “Gorgy” fest.
7. Our seventh move was on August 9 when Donohue wrote to Sen. Joseph Lieberman asking him to use his leverage with Gore in getting the event nixed. We also issued a news release on this subject.
8. Our eighth move was on August 10 when we sent a news

release explaining how the whole event was exploding. We also detailed our complaints with the Hefners, the Playboy Foundation, etc.

9. Our ninth move was our August 11 news release that made our final appeal to Gore: either move the event or fire Sanchez. Donohue went on "Hardball" that evening making the appeal on national TV. Within four hours, Sanchez folded.

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## **"POLITICALLY INCORRECT" IS ANYTHING BUT**

If ever there were a misnomer of TV show, it is "Politically Incorrect." What host Bill Maher does night after night is rip the Catholic Church, which is anything but a politically incorrect thing to do. Indeed, if he were to praise the Church, that would be politically incorrect.

The edition of "Politically Incorrect" that aired August 8 was unusually crude. Maher began his tirade against priests as pedophiles by saying "most priests are very good men"; this was supposed to function as a disclaimer for what followed. "Look, it's just a fact of life," Maher said. "Priests, a lot of times, molest boys, okay? They are celibate and it's a magnet for homosexual pedophiles."

Joining in the Catholic bashing was actor William McNamara. He advised the Church to allow priests to marry and "give the altar boys' rectum a break."

We suggest you write to Christine Hikawa, Vice President Broadcast Standards and Practices, ABC, Inc., 77 West 66th Street, New York, New York 10023-6499. You can call her

at (212) 456-6499; fax her at (212) 456-6084; or e-mail her at hikawac@abc.com.

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## CHANGING THE CULTURE

It was almost a year ago that we protested the vile, obscene and anti-Catholic “Sensation” exhibition at the Brooklyn Museum of Arts. As a result of all the attention, a reporter for the *New York Times*, David Barstow, got curious and started to probe around a bit looking for information how this exhibition came to be. What he found was a tale of lies and corruption.

It so happened that Charles Saatchi, world renowned advertising guru, not only loaned the art to the museum, he also dumped \$160,000 on it for support. The intent, it seems clear, was to hype the art and hype its value.

As a direct result of this fiasco, the American Association of Museums adopted a new set of ethical guidelines on how museums should oversee displays of art borrowed from private collections.

We’re not sure whether the guidelines, which are voluntary, will work. But it is a sure bet that had the Catholic League not objected to the dung-laden portrait of Our Blessed Mother by Chris Ofili, Barstow’s curiosity wouldn’t have been pricked and his findings wouldn’t have led to these guidelines. An interesting case in how cultural change occurs.

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# “SOUTH PARK” REACHES A NEW LOW

The Comedy Central show, “South Park,” has a record of Catholic bashing, but no episode was worse than the one that aired on July 19 (it was repeated on July 22). The basic plot of this show centered on a priest who tells children they will burn in hell unless they confess and “eat the crackers” (read: Holy Communion). During the course of the show, the following attacks on Catholicism were presented:

- The priest is caught by the children having sex with a parishioner in the confessional
- The priest tells a nun “the Jews crucified our savior. If you don’t go to hell for that, what the hell do you go to hell for?”
- The nun calls the Vatican to see if the priest is right; the pope appears senile
- Transubstantiation is described as “just plain silly” and the kids wonder whether “Jesus was made of crackers”; they also ask whether “all we have to do is confess our sins and eat crackers” to avoid hell
- The father of the Jewish boy tells his son “Christians use hell to scare people into believing what they want them to believe”

William Donohue contacted the media about this episode and presented the following account:

“Many in the media ask me if I think that those who offend Catholic sensibilities do so intentionally. Most of the time I simply say that we make our decisions not on intent, but on effect. But in the case of this ‘South Park’ episode, only a fool would give its creators, Trey Parker and Matt Stone, a pass.



“I understand the show is in trouble. Perhaps by scraping the bottom of the barrel, Parker and Stone think they can up their ratings. It’s too bad these bums don’t play baseball—then they might find out what stigma and sensitivity training are all about.”

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## **DONOHUE AVOWS NOT TO SEE “AVOW”**

A new Off-Broadway play that insults Catholicism opened to negative reviews this past summer. “Avow” is the work of Bill C. Davis and it centers on a radical priest who refuses to bless a homosexual union; the priest eventually has his celibacy tested when he falls in love with the sister of one of the gay men (she is pregnant out of wedlock).

When the play opened, newspaper reports said that the biggest laugh of the night came when the mother of these two declares, “Here I am with my gay son and my unmarried, pregnant daughter.”

Catholic League president William Donohue was invited to see the play on Tuesday, August 1, at 8:00 pm. Scott Walton, marketing director for the play, extended the offer; he also asked Donohue to join a panel discussion at 10:00 pm. Donohue explained to the press his decision not to accept the invitation:

“It has been almost two decades since Davis wrote his first anti-Catholic play, ‘Mass Appeal.’ In 1984, a few years after the play appeared, he publicly aired his distaste for his Catholic upbringing (e.g., talk about hell was ‘scary’), thus making intelligible his animus. Unfortunately for Davis, the

plays that he has written since that time have all bombed, and this explains why he is going back to the well one more time: it is just possible that his faithful fans in the anti-Catholic community can jump start him one more time. But when even the *New York Times*, which gleefully touts the play for 'ridiculing the attitudes of the Catholic Church toward gays, unwed mothers and priestly celibacy,' concludes that the play 'covers little new ground and offers no insights,' it looks like the well has gone dry.

"Perhaps the bad reviews explain why I have been invited to see the play and participate in a panel discussion. But I avow not to see 'Avow.' Why? Because I do not believe in having a dialogue with those who are hell bent on trashing my religion. This bit about the Church and sex is getting a little old anyway. Why these guys just can't move on and get a life, I do not know. In any event, I have a dentist appointment Tuesday evening, and as much as I hate sitting in a dentist's chair, it's still preferable to sitting through 'Avow.'"

We hope they got the message.

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## ACLU'S PROBLEM WITH GOD

The summer of 2000 was not a good one for the ACLU. On at least three occasions, the ACLU demonstrated once again that it has a problem with God. Consider the following.

When a new law took effect in Virginia on July 1 requiring public schools to begin each day with a minute of silence, the ACLU screamed foul play. Under the new law, student would be allowed to "meditate, pray or engage in other silent activity." The ACLU chapter in Virginia wasted no time suing,

claiming that the law is an unconstitutional violation of separation of church and state.

William Donohue, president of the Catholic League, described the anti-religious bias that colors the ACLU's thinking on this subject:

"Kent Willis, the executive director of the ACLU's office in Virginia, has said that 'A true minute-of-silence law that did not mention prayer and had no religious intent would be constitutional. Every student who has ever attended public schools knows that they can pray to themselves.' Willis suggests that somehow the government, in its benevolence, is allowing students to pray to themselves, when in fact no means has yet been found to monitor private thought. The founder of the ACLU was even more explicit.

"In 1978, I interviewed Roger Baldwin, the founder of the ACLU. I asked him 'Whose rights are being infringed upon if there is a silent prayer voluntarily said by a student?' He said 'they've tried to get around it even further than you by calling it meditation'; to which I replied, 'what's wrong with that?' His answer had an Orwellian ring to it: 'I suppose you can get away with that but it's a subterfuge, because the implication is that you're meditating about *the hereafter or God or something.*' (My emphasis.) I answered, saying 'Well, what's wrong with that? Doesn't a person have the right to do that? Or to meditate about popcorn for that matter?'

"Baldwin was an honest man. His objection to meditation in the schools was based on his deep-seated fear that young boys and girls might actually be meditating about the hereafter or God. And that is the real reason why the ACLU is opposed to the minute of silence law in Virginia: they sincerely believe that a free society is at risk if it allows the prospect of school kids meditating in the classroom. Now if the ACLU knew in advance that the kids were meditating on how best to put condoms on a cucumber in a sex ed class, all their fears would

be allayed.”

Another issue that drove the ACLU crazy was the decision by the Colorado Board of Education that urged schools to post the words, “In God We Trust.” The motto has been on U.S. currency since the 19<sup>th</sup> century, but this means nothing to the ACLU. Sue Armstrong, the executive director of the Colorado chapter of the Union, said she would wait until a school posts the dreaded words before suing.

“Choose Life.” These dreaded words are now allowed to appear on license plates in New Orleans. When the ACLU learned of this constitutional crisis, it veered right off the road. Joe Cook of the Louisiana chapter posted a warning sign, saying, “This license plate entangles the state with religion.” Now had the license plate said what the ACLU stands for, namely “Choose Death,” that would have been just dandy.

The ACLU’s problem is not with the constitution. It’s with God.

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## TELL US MORE, AL

A reporter for the *New York Times* recently joined Al Gore at an informal dinner party in a New York hotel. Unaccompanied by his aides, the vice president opened up a bit, admitting that he has been guilty of pandering to Catholics. Pandering, of course, is hardly a distinguishing characteristic for a politician. But what was revealing about Gore was his favorable comment about Garry Wills, author of a vicious attack on the Catholic Church.

Here is how Melinda Henneberger put it: “He [Gore] expressed interest in Garry Wills’s new book, ‘Papal Sin: Structures of

Deceit,' and because it is critical of the Catholic Church, said, laughing, 'I guess I won't be able to praise his work any more with any degree of political safety.'"

We only wish Al had told us more. For example, what exactly is it about the new book by Wills that Al is so fond of? Could it be the following: "Wills charges that the Catholic Church exists in a system of lies, falsifications, and misrepresentation meant to prop up papal authority." Or maybe it was this: "Wills is accusing the Church of conscious deception in fundamental beliefs. The Church knows these teachings are wrong, Wills charges, but they are taught anyway." These are two conclusions that Bob Lockwood came to when he reviewed *Papal Sins*. It would be instructive to know if this is the kind of stuff that interests Al.

Suspending judgment of Wills' work for minute, it would be fascinating to know whether Al's intrigue with the alleged dark side of Catholic Church extends to other religions as well? Or is it just his interest in books that offer dirt on Catholicism? Tell us more, Al.

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## **ANTI-CATHOLICISM SURFACES IN BATTLE OVER D.C. HEALTH CARE BILL**

On July 11, the Washington, D.C. Council passed a bill mandating health insurance coverage of contraceptives without a provision exempting Catholic hospitals and employers on religious grounds. The bill would mandate that Catholic institutions based in Washington such as the United States Catholic Conference, the Catholic University of America and

Catholic parishes provide contraceptive coverage to employees. If this wasn't bad enough, the debate over the bill witnessed a flurry of anti-Catholic remarks

During debate on the bill, which passed 13-0, council member Jim Graham called the Catholic Church homophobic and urged his colleagues against "deferring to Rome" according to the Washington Post. Auxiliary Bishop William Lori of the Washington Archdiocese was quick to challenge both the substance of the bill and Graham's bigoted remark. So was the Catholic League. The following was our initial statement on this subject as released to the media:

"Auxiliary Bishop William Lori is absolutely right when he says this is 'evidence of anti-Catholic bigotry of the unreconstructed kind.' We are calling on the D.C Council to reconsider the bill. This is a blatant example of the state imposing its will on religion. The American Medical Association recently refused to compel Catholic hospitals to provide certain contraceptive and reproductive procedures. Even the plan covering federal employees contains a 'conscience clause.' We are not interested in imposing Catholic views on public health care. We would appreciate the same consideration. If the council does not reconsider, we will appeal to Congress to exercise its oversight of council action.

"We are also calling for the censure and resignation of councilman Jim Graham. A public office holder cannot betray the public trust. The language he used out-Joneses Bob Jones University. To those in Washington outraged about Bob Jones, we await your furor in this matter. Councilman Graham crossed from speech into action. This should concern all members of Congress."

We were pleased that our involvement jarred some members of the D.C. Council by forcing them to reconsider the wisdom of the bill. We were even happier to learn that Rep. Ernest

Istook, who chairs the D.C. Appropriations subcommittee, quickly tackled this issue by pledging to block the bill unless a “conscience clause” was included that protected Catholic institutions. As for Graham, he responded to the league’s initiative by writing directly to William Donohue.

Graham asked Donohue to “share my concern about the disparaging remarks made by the Pope” during the recent World Gay Pride event in Rome. Though he was not specific, in an op-ed article in the Washington Post, Graham wrote, “the pope attacked gays as ‘disordered,’ saying that homosexual acts are ‘contrary to natural law.’”

Not satisfied to leave it at that, Graham then baited Donohue by saying, “as an organization committed to ‘civil rights,’ I hope the Catholic League cares at least to some extent about the rights and welfare of gay people...” He then said of the pope’s remarks, “I shudder to think of the number of gay people worldwide who will be injured and discriminated against due to these comments.”

Donohue’s rejoinder was shared with the press:

“Jim Graham keeps digging himself in deeper. First he shows utter contempt for diversity by backing an attempt to ram a health care plan down the throats of Catholics, then he whips up classic anti-Catholic fears by urging his colleagues in the D.C. Council not to ‘[defer] to Rome,’ and now he intentionally misrepresents what the pope has said so he can bait the Catholic League into joining him in his Catholic-bashing campaign.”

Graham never did tell the truth about what the pope actually said. So in response, Donohue offered: “At the close of the typically vulgar gay pride parade in Rome, the pope simply quoted from the Catholic Catechism what has been a long standing teaching of the Church regarding homosexuality. The pope did not attack gays as ‘disordered,’ rather he said the

homosexual 'inclination' is disordered, a position that is consistent with the teaching that homosexual acts are 'contrary to the natural law.' The pope then said that homosexuals 'must be accepted with respect, compassion and sensitivity.'

Donohue then concluded his statement by saying, "One more thing: if Graham is really concerned about injury to gays, he ought to admonish them to practice sexual restraint. It saves lives better than any condom ever will." After we faxed this to Graham's office, a staffer in his office said Graham would be responding to Donohue's remarks. He never did.

As things evolved, Washington Mayor Anthony Williams said he would refuse to sign a bill that would penalize Catholic institutions. However, Rep. Istook wasn't going to take any chances: he said that a veto wouldn't be necessary because House members would never allow such a bill to become law in the first place. As it turned out, the D.C. Council, fearing that the House would hold up the district's budget, agreed to revisit the legislation in September.

Just when everyone thought that there would be no more to say about this bill until the fall, Congressman James P. Moran of Virginia jumped on the anti-Catholic bandwagon himself.

On July 26, Moran lashed out at the Catholic Church for its position on homosexuality. Moran was angry that House Republicans placed an attachment to the District budget bill that would nullify the controversial health care bill. In offering support for councilman Graham's objections to the Republican initiative, Moran spoke of his "disappointment, and the intolerance, and yes, the hypocrisy of the Catholic church as an institution towards homosexuality..."

To make matters worse, an aide to Rep. Moran deleted the anti-Catholic words of his boss in the Congressional Record. Moran was told to restore the original language and was informed by



Rep. Bill Thomas, chairman of the Committee on House Administration, that he had violated ethics rules, which prohibit such alterations.

In a statement to the media, Donohue commented that "The fact that a bill which the Catholic Church objects to cannot be debated without resorting to anti-Catholicism is indicative of the depth of this invidious form of bigotry." Donohue called on colleagues of Moran and Graham to go on record denouncing their bigotry. Also registering objections to Moran's remarks were Bishop Paul S. Loverde of Arlington and Auxiliary Bishop Lori.

Finally, Donohue had it out with Frances Kissling in the pages of the Washington Times over this issue. Graham had leaned on a dubious report by Catholics for a Free Choice to justify his position and Donohue snapped back arguing that the organization was "one of the nation's most notoriously anti-Catholic organizations." Kissling defended herself in her usual enfeebled way.

The issue not only shows the prevalence of anti-Catholicism in government, it shows what can be done to defeat bigoted legislation if Catholics stand up to the bigots.