

# FBI WAR ON CATHOLICS HEATS UP; SO DOES OUR RESPONSE

*This is the article that appeared in the September 2023 edition of Catalyst, our monthly journal. The date that prints out reflects the day that it was uploaded to our website. For a more accurate date of when the article was first published, check out the news release, [here](#).*

Three times over the summer Bill Donohue wrote to Rep. Jim Jordan, Chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, imploring him to demand that FBI Director Christopher Wray come clean with the real reason why the agency was investigating Catholics.

For reasons still unexplained, it was revealed earlier in the year that the FBI's Richmond Field Office was investigating "Radical-Traditionalist Catholics," or what they call RTCs. The whistle-blowing article on this subject said the agency distinguished between RTCs and "traditionalist Catholics."

On February 9, Donohue made a public statement, raising questions on whether the FBI would stop at investigating RTCs. "What's next? Will it be a war on Catholics who are orthodox?"

On April 11, Donohue wrote a letter to Wray, copying Jordan, requesting to see the evidence that RTCs are a threat. Then he addressed a new revelation. "Now the FBI has upped the ante," he said, "going after 'mainline' Catholics and dioceses." This is exactly what Donohue predicted.

On July 24, in the first of three letters Donohue sent to Jordan this summer, he wrote about the FBI's new target. "This is totally indefensible. It smacks of religious profiling and opens the FBI door to monitoring traditional Catholics, simply because they are loyal sons and daughters of the Catholic Church."

On July 26, after the FBI finally turned over requested

documents to the House Judiciary Committee, Donohue contacted Jordan asking him to raise several questions with Wray.

*On what basis did the FBI conclude that these [RTCs] Catholics warranted a probe? Do they have a history of violence? If so, where is the evidence? If not, why were they singled out?*

*On what basis did the FBI decide it was necessary to enlist “mainline Catholics” to spy on their fellow parishioners? Where is the evidence that ordinary practicing Catholics pose a security threat to the United States or to other law-abiding Americans? How common is it for FBI agents to infiltrate houses of worship—of any religion—employing “tripwire sources?”*

On August 10, Donohue wrote to Jordan about another revelation. Wray was wrong when he said it was just the Richmond Field Office that was probing Catholics. Now we know that agents in Los Angeles and Portland were also involved. “This calls into question Wray’s forthrightness,” Donohue said, “and it also begs the question: What else does the FBI know about this matter?”

We commended Jordan for his effort, pledging our assistance in any manner he deems necessary.

This has to end. The FBI needs to undergo major reforms and those involved in the war on Catholics need to be punished.

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## **MEDIA IGNORE FBI STORY**

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We made the FBI's probe of Catholics the lead story in this issue not only because it is an outrageous abuse of power, but because it signals something sinister about the way the top brass at the agency views Catholicism.

When the latest chapter in this story broke on August 9, we checked on August 10 to see how the mainstream media covered it. With the exception of Fox News, Newsmax, the *New York Post* and the *Wall Street Journal*, none of the big media touched it. So what did they find worthy of coverage on August 10 that was considered more important?

On the front page of the *New York Times* there was a story titled, "Overrun Miami Suburb to Clip Its Peacocks (Not the Feathers)."

CBS News put this same story on the front page of its website, offering the title, "Miami-Area Village Plans Peacock Vasectomies to Try to Curb Their Population."

The Associated Press featured on its front page a story, "Ailing and Baby Hummingbirds Nursed to Health at Woman's Apartment-Turned-Clinic in Mexico City."

ABC News gave front page coverage to this "breaking news" story: "Dog Hilariously Flies Through the Air Trying to Catch Water from Hose."

NBC's front page story included, "13 Top-Rated Products to Keep Your Dog Cool in Warm Weather."

These stories were all considered more news worthy than the FBI's war on Catholics. The media preferred to highlight throw-away stories on animals.

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# SOCIAL CONSERVATISM IS REBOUNDED

William A. Donohue

*This article originally appeared in The American Spectator on July 3, 2023.*

It was just a matter of time. Decent Americans have had a radical race and LGBT agenda shoved in their face for too long, and now they are fighting back. Too bad not all conservatives are on board.

Former congressman Paul Ryan recently said that he was not a “cultural war guy,” contending that he is more concerned about the debt crisis. This is what we would expect from someone who found his home sitting on the board of directors of Fox News’ parent company, Fox Corporation.

Under its founder, Roger Ailes, Fox News Network covered what I call the three “M’s” of conservatism: missiles, markets and morality. But in more recent times, with some notable exceptions, Fox News has been more concerned about the first two “M’s.” Ryan’s influence is obvious. Tucker Carlson’s absence is only one clear example.

As it turns out, Fox News is on the wrong side of history. The country is becoming more socially and culturally conservative. Consider three recent Gallup surveys.

In a Gallup poll released June 8, we learned that “More Americans this year (38%) say they are very conservative or conservative on social issues than said so in 2022 (33%) and 2021 (30%). Those who identify as very liberal or liberal on social issues are in decline.” What makes these figures so impressive is that in the past two years, the increase in conservative identification is found among nearly all

political and demographic subgroups.

The Gallup poll published June 16 found that support for same-sex marriage is declining: it went from 71 percent to 64 percent in the past year, which is dramatic. This helps to explain the increase in social conservatism.

Why this is happening can be gleaned from a Gallup poll released June 9. The title says it all: "Views of State of Moral Values in U.S. at New Low." Public assessments on the state of moral values is the worst since Gallup took these measures 22 years ago. "The 54% of U.S. adults who rate moral values in the country as 'poor' marks a four-percentage-point increase since last year and the first time the reading has reached the majority level."

A third of Americans, 33 percent, say our moral values are "only fair"; 10 percent say they are "good"; and a mere 1 percent rate them as "excellent."

No wonder social conservatism is rebounding—most are convinced we are morally troubled, to say the least. I hasten to add that there are reasons for optimism. Some very good things are happening.

While Covid was a tough time for many Americans, there is one good thing that came of it. Parents, especially moms, found out what some of the schools were doing to their children. Instead of education, there was indoctrination. The content of this proselytization—and that is what it is—is also objectionable: students are being told how racist America is, and that they can switch their sex. Both are invidious lies.

As a result of this kind of activism, we now have Moms for Liberty, and similar other groups. Proof that they are having an effect is the ruling by the far-left Southern Poverty Law Center to name them on its "hate map." That is a badge of honor.

Disney is being beaten up all over the place. It has decided to adopt the radical LGBT agenda, most notably by inviting children to believe that they can change their sex, and that there are many sexes besides male and female. Both are palpable lies.

Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis led the way in taking Disney to task for adopting the woke agenda. The Catholic League documentary, "Walt's Disenchanted Kingdom," added to their problems. The blowback from customers showed up on its bottom line: it has taken quite a hit. We are also happy to note that its summertime film, "Elemental," featuring a "non-binary" character, bombed at the box office.

Bud Light is still reeling from trying to push trans politics down our throats. It now regrets hiring a trans person to market its beer. It should never have done so in the first place. Ditto for the U.S. Navy which hired a drag queen, a man dressed as a woman, to recruit new sailors. It was a monumental flop—recruitment numbers are down.

Target got into the act by selling "tuck-friendly" swimwear—with "extra crotch coverage"—for men trying to pass as a woman. Ever since, they have been feeling the pinch of a boycott.

Muslims run the Michigan town of Hamtramck, and their city council has banned the LGBT pride flag, making the case that only the American flag should be flown.

The pushback against the Dodgers for honoring drag queens who mock Catholicism, which the Catholic League led, made international news. From all accounts, the message has been received.

Moreover, surveys show that most Americans do not believe men should be able to compete in women's sports. They also oppose sex-reassignment surgery performed on children.

These are encouraging developments. The culture war is far from over.

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# HIGHER EDUCATION IS IN DIRE STRAITS; JESUIT-RUN SCHOOLS INCLUDED

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**Bill Donohue**

*As college students head back to school, parents should know more about what they are paying for, including Catholic colleges and universities.*

The public appears to be souring on higher education. The level of confidence that Americans have for colleges and universities today is at its lowest level, as determined by Gallup. It is also true that confidence in 16 other institutions has been waning. But the big drop is scored by higher education.

In 2015, Americans' confidence in higher education was 57 percent; in 2018, it dropped to 48 percent; in 2023, it is at 36 percent. Why this is so varies by political party.

Among Democrats, previous Gallup polls found that concern over exorbitant costs was the big factor. For Republicans, the big concern is over the rampant politicization of education. But since the biggest decline in confidence for higher education,

as recorded by Gallup, was among Republicans—it dropped by 20 points to 19 percent—it would have made more sense to conclude that politics, not rising costs, “likely play a significant role.”

Democrats are more likely to support student loan forgiveness than Republicans, so of course rising costs figure prominently for them. What needs to be addressed is why the issue of the politics, raised by Republicans, played a more prominent role in driving down the overall public confidence in higher education. There are several factors at work.

In the last several years, the decline in free speech on the campuses has worsened. Critical race theory—the lie that all white people are inherently racist and that all existing racial disparities are due solely to racism—has been institutionalized. Gender ideology—the lie that the sexes are interchangeable and that there are dozens of genders—is now almost universally acknowledged.

These three factors alone—censoring speech, critical race theory and gender ideology—will continue to drive down public confidence in higher education unless college administrators buck up. But that is not likely given the fact that administrators tend to be even more left-wing than the faculty.

The left-wing faculty are doing much more harm than this.

Survey data reveal that the most intolerant people in America are unquestionably young liberals. Why this is so needs to be probed, but first the data.

The Foundation for Individual Rights and Expression (FIRE) studies free speech on college campuses, and its 2022-2023 “College Free Speech Rankings” is particularly insightful. In a survey of almost 45,000 college students from 201 schools, the University of Chicago was rated the top spot; Columbia University was rated the least respectful of free speech of

any institution of higher education in the country.

Overall, the degree to which free speech is prized on campus was among its most alarming findings. Liberals, not conservatives, are the problem.

Opposition to allowing controversial conservative speakers on campus ranged from 59 percent to 73 percent, depending on the speaker. However, opposition to controversial liberal speakers on campus ranged from 24 percent to 41 percent, depending on the speaker.

Is it acceptable to shout down a speaker? For liberals it is: 76 percent approve. For conservatives, the figure is 44 percent.

Is it acceptable to block entry to a campus speech? Almost half of liberals (47 percent) agree. Among conservatives, 25 percent agree.

Is it acceptable to use violence to stop a campus speech? A quarter (25 percent) of liberals approve. For conservatives, the figure is 16 percent.

Not surprisingly, liberals are more comfortable expressing themselves on campus than conservatives are. As we might expect, 53 percent of college students describe themselves as “left of center”; only 20 percent identify as “right of center.”

When students were asked which subjects were the most difficult to have a conversation about on campus, they mentioned abortion, racial inequality, Covid mandates and transgender issues as the most difficult. With the exception of Covid restrictions, this reflects the Left’s obsession with sex and race.

A recent survey conducted for Newsweek found that 44 percent of those aged 25-34 want to make “misgendering” a person—using

the “wrong” pronoun to describe a transgender person—a criminal offense. Among those aged 35-44, 38 percent support treating this as a crime. The overall figure for Americans is 19 percent.

Only in times of war has there traditionally been support for muzzling free speech. But we are not at war, so there is no need to balance free speech with national security. What we are witnessing today is unlike anything we’ve seen before.

There has been next to zero media outcry over this condition. Yet the assault on the First Amendment is palpable.

The reason for this situation should be obvious to those not drugged by ideology: it is young liberals, indoctrinated by teachers, especially professors, who are the most intolerant, and those who work in the media are so thoroughly politicized these days as to be unmoved by what is happening.

All this talk about “Christian nationalists” being a threat to free speech is a ruse. The real threat is coming from the Left, the very same persons guilty of blaming their favorite bogeyman—Christians.

Unfortunately, many Catholic colleges and universities are not doing a good job ensuring freedom of speech on campus, either. Especially notorious are Jesuit-run institutions of higher education.

In the 2022-2023 survey by FIRE, Georgetown was rated #200. Only three schools out of a total of 203 were rated worse; Columbia University was dead last. The Catholic school with the best free speech rating was the University of Notre Dame.

Georgetown shows such contempt for free speech that it merited a special section in the study. Three specific cases, all very serious, were cited.

In 2022, Ilya Shapiro was suspended over a tweet thread in

which he criticized President Biden's pledge to nominate a black woman to the Supreme Court. Dean William Treaanor issued a statement denouncing the tweets, insisting that Georgetown is committed to "inclusion, belonging, and respect for diversity." [Note: Treaanor said nothing about Georgetown's commitment to academic freedom.] Shapiro was eventually reinstated, but the damage was done; he subsequently resigned.

In 2021, Sandra Sellers was fired over a viral video in which she was unknowingly recorded talking to her colleague, David Batson, about the relatively poor performance of black students in her class. Dean Treaanor condemned the two of them, pledging commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion. Batson later resigned following the backlash.

In 2021, Timothy Wickham-Crowley made jokes in class that evoked racial stereotypes and for dropping the n-word when reading aloud from a course textbook. He was investigated by the Office of Institutional Diversity, Equity, and Affirmative Action. While it was determined that his conduct was not "severe or pervasive," he was no longer asked to teach again.

These incidents say nothing about the way students, especially conservative students, feel about freely expressing their thoughts on campus. But Georgetown didn't earn a lousy rating on the basis of muzzling the free speech of faculty alone.

It should be pointed out that Georgetown's fidelity to Catholic teachings has long been questioned. It has two pro-abortion clubs on campus: H\*YAS for Choice for undergraduates, and Georgetown Law Students for Reproductive Justice. It has no racist clubs on campus—nor should it—but it has no problem allowing pro-abortion clubs. For liberals, racism is clearly more offensive than child abuse in the womb.

The FIRE survey taken in 2021, which included over 37,000 students at over 150 colleges and universities, found that among Catholic institutions, none were in the top twenty. In

fact, none were in the top one hundred. But there were three among the worst: Fordham was tenth from the bottom (#145); Boston College was fourth from the bottom (#151) and Marquette was second to last (#153). All three are Jesuit-run institutions.

While Fordham is a disgrace, it is clear from reading the report that Boston College and Marquette are much worse. Free speech is so under fire at Marquette that the FIRE survey gave it special mention.

“For two years running—in 2015 and 2016 (for the years 2014 and 2015)—FIRE named Marquette one of the ten worst colleges for free speech because of its attempts to revoke the tenure of Professor John McAdams and then terminate him. It took more than three years, but McAdams ultimately won his lawsuit against the university and was reinstated to his faculty position in the fall of 2018.”

What did McAdams do that made a faculty panel recommend sanctions against him? He complained when a graduate instructor tried to muzzle the free speech of a conservative student. In November 2014, McAdams criticized Cheryl Abbate for telling a student she would no longer tolerate his position objecting to gay marriage in her ethics class. McAdams was subsequently fired. He sued.

In July 2018, Marquette said it would comply with a court order from the Wisconsin Supreme Court to reinstate McAdams. Abbate was not just a graduate student—she was paid as an instructor by the university.

It was the free speech of McAdams that was endangered, not Abbate’s. Indeed, she was the one who was guilty of stifling free speech, and by a student who defended the Church’s teachings on marriage at a supposedly Catholic university!

Previously, in 2014, the Catholic League criticized Marquette for telling employees at an “anti-harassment” training

presentation that merely voicing objections to gay marriage may be considered discriminatory; they were urged to report such offenses. At that time, I raised the following question. "Would they bring the pope up on charges following a speech on marriage?"

What's going on at these Jesuit schools? Why are they breeding such intolerance? All four of them are known for their progressive policies, yet when it comes to free speech they are among the most regressive in the nation.

Just as with secular colleges, these Jesuit schools appear to get exercised over the free speech of its conservative students. What makes this so perverse is that typically these students hold to orthodox Catholic teachings on abortion, marriage, the family, and sexuality. Yet it seems that dissident students are more protected discussing their views than are conservative students.

I know from my 20 years teaching in Catholic schools the great good that many loyal faculty members have done. But I also know from first-hand experience that many administrators and faculty—not just a few—have no interest in furthering Catholic objectives and are indeed intolerant of them. They operate as termites within these schools, undermining the mission of Catholic education.

The time has come for those who run Georgetown, Fordham, Boston College and Marquette to have a campus-wide forum on the root causes of Jesuit intolerance for freedom of speech. Ditto for all those non-Jesuit schools that are more respectful of dissident voices on campus than they are in protecting the free speech rights of orthodox Catholic students and faculty.

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# CLERGY                      SEXUAL                      ABUSE DISAPPEARING

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The clergy sexual abuse scandal in the Catholic Church has long been over and now it is practically non-existent. To be sure, there continues to be a tiny fraction of the clergy who are offenders, but it has long since been of the magnitude of a scandal. But don't look to the media to tell you this. And don't take our word for it—just consult the data.

On p. 41 of the recently released *2022 Annual Report on the Implementation of the "Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People,"* it lists data on credible allegations against the clergy made between 2004 and 2022:

- 2 percent occurred or began in the 2000s
- 1 percent occurred or began in the 2010s
- Less than 1 percent occurred or began between 2020 and 2022

In short, contemporary news reports about priestly sexual abuse are almost always about alleged offenses that took place decades ago (the 1970s was the worst decade). Quite frankly, as we have known, and as this report makes plain, almost all the abusers are either dead or have been thrown out of ministry.

The 2022 Annual Report considers allegations made between July 1, 2021 and June 30, 2022. It found that there were 16 allegations made by minors during that time, seven of which were substantiated. That means that of the 52,387 members of the clergy (34,344 priests and 18,043 deacons), .013 percent of them had a substantiated allegation made against him.

Importantly, in the first half of 2022, the number of *allegations*—(*not allegations that have been substantiated*)—was zero. This should have been highlighted by the authors of the report.

There is no organization in the nation, where adults regularly interact with minors, which has a better record than this. This includes religious as well as secular institutions.

The audit fielded allegations extending back to the 1930s. Almost all the victims were male (82 percent of diocesan/eparchy priests, and 83 percent of religious order priests). Moreover, the majority of the victims were postpubescent (10 years of age and over).

The conclusion should be obvious to those not living in a state of denial: most of the molestation was committed by homosexuals, not pedophiles. When adult males have sex with postpubescent males, that is called homosexuality. The offending priest may consider himself not to be a homosexual, but that subjective opinion does not change the truth. He may consider himself to be a woman, but that has no bearing on reality.

In the period under review, most of the 16 allegations were made by females. This indicates that the crackdown on homosexuals in the priesthood has been successful. The heyday of the scandal was between the mid-1960s and the mid-1980s; this was also the period when the Church dropped its guard and allowed homosexuals to thrive in some seminaries and in the priesthood.

Credit must be given to Pope Benedict XVI who instituted a policy that discouraged men with “deep-seated homosexual tendencies” from seeking entry into the priesthood. Fortunately, Pope Francis has continued this commonsensical policy. Together with the reforms established by the bishops in the United States, this explains why cases of molestation

have crashed.

This is good news. But for many reasons, those in and out of the Catholic Church, are reluctant to flag it. That's too bad. We will.

To learn how the scandal unfolded, see Bill Donohue's book, *The Truth about Clergy Sexual Abuse: Clarifying the Facts and the Causes*; it is available on Amazon.

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## SICK CRITICS OF "SOUND OF FREEDOM"

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The biggest box office surprise of the summer was "Sound of Freedom," starring Jim Caviezel. In this movie, he portrays a real life Department of Homeland Security agent who quit his job hunting pedophiles to rescue children from sex traffickers in Colombia. The movie has won the applause of Christians, in particular, both for its content and its inspiring message.

Every time a film appears that is welcomed by traditional people of faith, the secular militants on the other side seek to find fault with it. This time was no different, though it turns out that some of the loudest critics were seriously compromised individuals.

Noah Berlatsky is a left-wing activist and former spokesman for ProStasia, a radical foundation. The goal of this entity is to lessen the stigma attached to pedophiles. He hates the

movie.

Berlatsky believes we should not call a pedophile a child abuser; he prefers the sanitized term “minor-attracted person,” known as M.A.P.

He objects that by stigmatizing these men, we are casting them as deviants, which, of course, is true.

This champion of “minor-attracted persons” also wrote an article about the autonomy of child sex workers. That’s right. He argues that most children who are forced into being sex slaves are not really coerced into it. Most of them, he says, become prostitutes to survive, which, even if true, does not make those who exploit them any less guilty.

It makes sense that those who want to legalize child prostitution and lessen the stigma attached to it would recoil at a Christian-inspired movie that shines a bright light on this despicable practice. We just didn’t think they would be so bold as to say so publicly.

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## **CATHOLIC THEOLOGIANS HONOR DISHONORED MAN**

If you asked 100 Catholics who Roger Haight is, less than one percent would know. That’s the way it should be. Truth to tell, the man is one of the most dishonored Catholic theologians in American history. That’s why he was the recent recipient of the most prestigious award given annually by the Catholic Theological Society of America (CTSA).

CTSA is to Catholic doctrine what the Flat Earth Society is to

geography. More about them in a moment.

Roger Haight, like too many Jesuits, has a problem with fidelity. He was censured by the Vatican in 2004 for failing to adhere to the teachings of the Catholic Church.

Sandro Magister, the renowned Italian journalist who has covered the Catholic Church for decades, succinctly explained why Haight was censured. It was due to "the loss of substance of key truths of the Christian faith like the preexistence of the Word, the divinity of Jesus, the Trinity, the salvific value of the death of Jesus, the unicity and universality of the salvific mediation of Jesus and the Church, the resurrection of Jesus."

Looks like Haight left nothing on the table. Had he worked at the *New York Times* and took a pro-life position, he would have been fired. But lucky for him he was just told to stop teaching theology.

Left-wing Catholics are very good at giving each other awards. In fact, they are masters of nepotism. So it was hardly surprising that CTSA would give its top award to Haight; he is a former president of the dissident organization. This kind of political stunt has a long history.

In 1969, CTSA elected Charles Curran president. Like Haight, his heretical views got him in big trouble. In 1997, the organization endorsed women priests. Some critics of CTSA, such as Catholic historian James Hitchcock, blame it for punishing orthodox Catholic faculty members.

Worse still is CTSA's role in promoting the clergy sexual abuse scandal.

In the 1970s, it commissioned a book by Father Anthony Kosnik, *Human Sexuality: New Directions in American Catholic Thought*, that was used in seminaries across the nation. Kosnik taught that homosexual acts were not intrinsically evil, arguing

instead that they need “to be evaluated in terms of their relational significance.” In doing so, he rejected Catholic sexual ethics as it had been understood throughout the ages.

Kosnik even went so far as to question the validity of condemning bestiality, never mind homosexuality. Human sexuality, he said, should be “self-liberating” and “joyous.” He was as blunt as anything found in *Playboy*. “The importance of the erotic element, that is, instinctual desire for pleasure and gratification, deserves to be affirmed and encouraged.”

The book won first prize by the Catholic Press Association.

As Bill Donohue argued in *The Truth about Clergy Sexual Abuse*, a normal seminarian who read this stuff would not be enticed to molest a minor. But an abnormal one—and the seminaries were loaded with disordered men in the 1970s—would likely interpret what Kosnik said as a green light.

It was not priests who were sexually uptight who preyed on adolescents—it was priests who followed their libido, not their vows. CTSA should own up to its destructive role. Ditto for the *National Catholic Reporter*, which to this day praises guys like Kosnik and Haight.

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## MUSLIMS HOLD THE LINE ON LGBT AGENDA

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Several hundred American Muslim scholars and preachers have signed a statement affirming Islamic opposition to the radical LGBT agenda. Most of what the statement says could be accepted by orthodox Catholics, Protestants and Jews.

“Today, Islamic sexual and gender ethics are at odds with certain recently popular societal views, causing tension for Muslims between their religious beliefs and societal expectations. At the same time, public disapproval of LGBTQ practices, beliefs, and advocacy is increasingly met with charges of intolerance and unwarranted accusations of bigotry. More troubling still, there is an increasing push to promote LGBTQ-centric values among children through legislation and regulations, disregarding parental consent and denying both parents and children the opportunity to express conscientious objection.”

The statement is peppered with quotes from the Quran restating God’s definition of humanity as consisting of male and female. Old Testament verses found in Genesis say the same.

There is nothing incendiary or irresponsible about the statement. The signatories simply wanted to go on record respectfully disagreeing with transgenderism, the ideology that falsely claims the sexes are interchangeable. They are not, and every honest person knows that sex is binary—we are either male or female.

What is particularly impressive about this document is that it is not at all defensive. People of faith, in this instance Muslims, who refuse to bow to elitist conceptions of sexuality should rightly object to accusations of bigotry made against them. They are merely being faithful to the tenets of their creed, and to common sense, as well.

We need to have more interaction between the leaders of the Abrahamic religions—Christianity, Islam and Judaism—on these current moral issues. If we stand together, we can defeat the

zealots who want to push their radical agenda on us.

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# THE WAR AGAINST MOMS FOR LIBERTY

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As the fight for parental rights continues to gain momentum, and more importantly scores crucial wins, those in the forefront of this movement have received increased hostility. The most prominent of these groups is Moms for Liberty: left-wing activists have declared war on these moms.

Consider what happened in July at the Moms for Liberty “Joyful Warriors” Summit in Philadelphia. In the weeks leading up to the event, the Philadelphia chapter of ACT UP, a gay activist group with a history of violence, led several protests outside the Marriott demanding that the hotel cancel the event. Protesters “gave speeches, waved trans pride flags, and explained why it was so important to deny Moms for Liberty a space to tout their dangerously homophobic, transphobic rhetoric.”

During the event, protesters held up signs that insulted the group. One referred to them as the “nastiest skank b\*tch[es] I’ve ever met.” Another called the group “fascist.” A couple blocks from the convention center, vandals spray painted graffiti on a crosswalk that read “F\*ck off Nazi Moms!”

In large part, this vitriol is a direct result of a campaign to tarnish Moms for Liberty by secular progressive activists.

This past June, the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC), a radical left-wing organization, added Moms for Liberty to the group's "hate map." SPLC's hate map includes many prominent conservative groups and equates them to the Ku Klux Klan. Additionally, GLAAD, a radical LGBT group, issued a warning that Moms for Liberty's "advocacy has included calls for book bans, classroom censorship, and bans on teaching about slavery, race, racism and LGBTQ people and history."

While leftist radicals portray Moms for Liberty as a scourge, the reality of the group is much different from the narratives concocted by their foes.

On January 1, 2021, Moms for Liberty, a 501(c)(4) nonprofit organization, was founded by two former and one current Florida school board officials who were all mothers concerned about what their children were learning in schools.

Presently, Moms for Liberty has 285 chapters in 45 states and approximately 120,000 members. While the group does not have a demographic profile of its members, it mainly draws support from parents that are concerned about the state of education in their communities.

Initially, Moms for Liberty focused on the Covid-19 pandemic, particularly the closing of schools, facemask requirements, and vaccine mandates. More recently, members of the organization have taken leading roles in fighting Critical Race Theory and the radical LGBT agenda in the classroom.

As a 501(c)(4), Moms for Liberty is actively supporting candidates in school board races across the country. In 2022, Moms for Liberty chapters endorsed 500 school board candidates. The organization has a 50 percent win ratio nationwide. In its base of Florida, Moms for Liberty has an 80 percent win ratio.

The successful efforts of Moms for Liberty has made them into a powerful organization. For instance, nearly every Republican

candidate for the White House has praised these moms, and the candidates have put aside their differences to rally to the group's aid.

During the "Joyful Warriors" Summit, Former President Donald Trump praised the group claiming it is the best thing "that's ever happened to America." He went on to say that "Moms for Liberty is no hate group. You are joyful warriors, you are fierce, fierce patriots."

At the same event, Florida Governor Ron DeSantis spoke in defense of the group saying, "I see that Moms for Liberty is coming under attack by the left, attack by the corporate media, protests out here in the streets...But I want to congratulate you for that because that is a sign we are winning this fight."

But even with powerful allies, the enemies of parental rights in education continue to bash Moms for Liberty. Unsurprisingly, one of the favored lines of attacks on these moms is they are "Christian Nationalists."

Consider that in the spring of 2022, a group called Defense of Democracy was founded with the sole purpose of counteracting Moms for Liberty. One of the founders said the goal of the organization was "to fight back against Christian nationalism."

Similarly, McMaster University Public Intellectuals Project lamented that the Moms for Liberty advocates "for a White Christian nationalist view of the United States." Likewise, Americans United for the Separation of Church and State ran a hit piece on Moms for Liberty titled "Mad Moms: A New Christian Nationalist Front Group Claims To Champion Parental Involvement In Public Education" decrying the group's activities. Meanwhile, op-eds and articles have appeared across the nation lambasting these moms and their supposed ties to "Christian Nationalism."

This effort to defame proponents of traditional Judeo-Christian values reveals a deep seated animus against people of faith taking an active role in society. Unfortunately, Moms for Liberty has become a target of this line of attack.

Ultimately, the same people seeking to indoctrinate children into supporting leftist causes are openly hostile to people of faith. They seek to eliminate not only parents having a say in their children's education but people of faith taking part in public life. Fortunately, patriots and people of faith, like Moms for Liberty, are fighting back and winning.

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## DISNEY STILL REELING FROM BLOWBACK

*This is the article that appeared in the September 2023 edition of Catalyst, our monthly journal. The date that prints out reflects the day that it was uploaded to our website. For a more accurate date of when the article was first published, check out the news release, [here](#).*

Bob Iger has been hanging around Disney seemingly forever, and every time he quits, he re-retires (he's done so at least three times).

When he left as CEO in 2021, he managed to become executive chairman, keeping an eye on his successor, Bob Chapek. Last November, Chapek was shown the door, and Iger jumped back in the saddle as CEO again. He was supposed to retire at the end of 2024, but now that date has been extended to December 31, 2026. He definitely has a grip on the Disney board.

In 2021, Iger's total compensation was \$46 million, more than double what he earned the previous year. His new contract includes an annual bonus equal to 500 percent of his annual

salary. Disney chairman Mark Parker says he's worth every penny of it. But is he?

Iger has been busy cutting costs: 7,000 employees lost their jobs, saving Disney \$5.5 billion. The bread and butter of Disney has long been TV (which includes ESPN), but its earnings have taken a major hit. Iger is banking on revenue from streaming services, but that isn't working out too well: it is losing subscribers, and the streaming division has lost more than \$10 billion since it launched its flagship service Disney+ in late 2019.

Disney movies are tanking at the box office. "Elemental," the Pixar film with a "non-binary" character, posted a budget of \$200 million *before* publicity costs; the only question left is how big a hit it will take. Its first weekend box office receipts of \$29.5 million was Disney's worst-ever opening weekend tally. What saved it from being a disaster were the box office receipts from overseas.

Hopes were high at Disney for "The Little Mermaid" and "Indiana Jones and the Dial of Destiny," but no longer. In both cases, some trendy elements were added, but the public didn't bite. By contrast, consider how well some other Disney movies have done.

"Raiders of the Lost Ark"

Budget \$18 million

Box Office \$390 million

"Temple of Doom"

Budget \$28 million

Box Office \$333 million

"The Last Crusade"

Budget \$48 million

Box Office \$474 million

"Kingdom of the Crystal Skull"

Budget \$185 million

Box Office \$790 million

Grand Total:

Budget \$279 million

Box Office \$1.987 billion

Even the famous Disney parks are not lighting up the sky; traffic is way down. Hollywood Studios had the third-slowest day on July 4 in the past year, not exactly a good omen moving forward. The Magic Kingdom park, famous for its long lines, is now a short wait. One reason for this is the ever-increasing cost of tickets. Families are fed up.

Shareholders are also not happy with Disney's performance. Its share price is trading at around \$90 or less, the worst outcome in a decade. Two years ago shares were \$190. Since Iger's return, Disney's stock is down 2 percent. Worse, Disney is sky-high in debt, owing \$45 billion. This is not sustainable.

It is more than increasing costs that are plaguing Disney: a series of bad decisions, offending Americans who hold to the traditional moral values that Walt Disney represented, are to blame. By pushing the gay and trans agenda, it has turned off parents across the country.

At work is more than venality—stupidity reigns supreme.

The Christian-inspired movie, "Sound of Freedom," is such a hit that it took in north of \$200 million. Considering that it cost a mere \$15 million to make, any company would be happy to own it. Amazingly, Disney did.

The movie was completed in 2018 and was then bought by 20th Century Fox for distribution. In 2019, Disney acquired 20th Century Fox and all of its entertainment assets, including "Sound of Freedom." And what did it do with it? Nothing. For five years it refused to release it to theaters or make it available for streaming services. After years of haggling,

Disney sold it to Angel Studios for a song.

Disney apparently wanted nothing to do with a movie that appealed to religious folks. It is much more at home appealing to radical gay and transgender people, even when its receipts are going south. This shows a supreme stupidity, to say nothing of morally corrupt values.

The Catholic League's award-winning documentary, "Walt's Disenchanted Kingdom," debuted in January and has been seen by millions of viewers; it is available on several platforms, including Amazon Prime. It details how the once family-friendly giant turned against its base by getting in bed with left-wing activists and educators.

Bill Donohue has been clashing with Iger for decades, extending back to the mid-1990s when Disney bought out ABC; he was the head honcho. He presided over a whole lot of anti-Catholic fare. Nowadays, he is presiding over entertainment that is junk food for the mind.

Iger is partly to blame for this sorry outcome. It remains to be seen if Disney will shed its woke brand of politics and get back to normal. If it doesn't, it will get what it deserves.