

# TED TURNER APOLOGY ACCEPTED; SUSPENSION FROM BASEBALL SOUGHT

On February 16, TV-mogul Ted Turner made offensive anti-Catholic and anti-Polish remarks. The next day, the Catholic League issued a news release criticizing Turner for his comments. Turner apologized to us that same day, and on February 18, we accepted his apology. Presidential hopeful Gary Bauer also criticized Turner.

Turner made his remarks at a meeting of the National Family Planning and Reproductive Health Association. According to news reports, he drew laughter and applause with remarks about sex, the Ten Commandments and Pope John Paul II.

Turner, who has five children, commented that everyone should promise to have no more than one child (his wife Jane Fonda has two of her own, plus one adopted child). At the conference, he dubbed the Ten Commandments "a little out of date," adding that "If you're only going to have 10 rules, I don't know if prohibiting adultery should be one of them." William Donohue's comment on this remark, which was featured in *Newsweek*, was "perhaps someone ought to bring that up with Jane."

Of the pope, Turner showed his idea of ethnic humor by lifting his foot toward the audience saying, "Ever seen a Polish mine detector?" He then said the pope should "get with it. Welcome to the 20<sup>th</sup> century."

The response to the league's news release was unbelievable, leaving Turner with no place to hide. Here is the statement we received from Turner Broadcasting System: "Mr. Turner regrets any offense his comments may have caused while in Washington,

D.C. and extends his heartfelt apologies.” While this ended our feud with Turner, it wasn’t the end of the story.

In 1993, Marge Schott, owner of the Cincinnati Redlegs, was suspended from baseball for one year and fined \$25,000; she was also sent to sensitivity training workshops. The Catholic League thought it only fair, then, that Baseball Commissioner Bud Selig treat Turner the same way, and that is why we called for a one-year suspension. Tom Droleskey of Christ or Chaos had made an earlier plea for justice.

We are opposed to mind-control and therefore rejected the workshops idea. Moreover, we thought it was ludicrous to fine a billionaire \$25,000. But that didn’t stop us from advising that Turner be required to make a contribution to Catholic Charities.