



# *Special Reports*

Winter 2002

Life Decisions International

vol. v • no. 1

## **INTOLERANCE**

**A Commentary by Douglas R. Scott**

If the truth were told, I would have to concede that I am not a particularly good Christian. At least I would not want anyone to judge Christianity by looking at me. I even occasionally hesitate to call myself “Christian” because I fall so far short of the kind of man God calls me to be. Do not take this as some sort of a false modesty thing. It is not. Sometimes I just do not have a clue.

There is something else I am not. I am not Catholic. (No cards, letters or phone calls, please; no time to reply; prayers always welcome.) I must say, however, that I am doing much less “protesting” these days than I used to do. My Catholic friends say that I am more “Catholic” than many Americans who claim to be members of the Church. It is true, I guess. I share almost all of the same beliefs.

While a few of these friends have tried to “convert me,” there is absolutely no way I would do so unless I first believed everything taught by the Catholic Church. I mean is not that part of the problem; people who claim affiliation to a church when they actively or passively do not agree with its teachings?

I have come to admire the Catholic Church in many ways. Most of its leaders are actually willing to stand for something, regardless of how unpopular it may seem to the world. Furthermore, I am stunned by the number of my fellow non-Catholics who are ignorant about the teachings of the Catholic Church.

In my never-humble-enough opinion, the Catholic Church has its share of problems. At the same time, if it were not for the steadfast Catholic Church, the rights of the unborn child may have been forgotten long ago.

All this being said, there is one thing about which I am most upset. It is universally accepted that bigotry is wrong—unless, of course, it is directed at Christians. This is especially true of Catholics, evangelicals and fundamentalists. (Strangely enough, some people in each group are sometimes guilty of prejudice toward each other.) Well, the time has come for bigotry to be challenged when it happens—any time, any place—and all of us need to do the challenging.

### **Bigotry By Abortion Apologists**

Attacks against Christians and Christianity by Planned Parenthood have been horrendous. Roman Catholics have been under siege more than any other group. Bible-believing non-Catholics come in a not-too-distant second place.

A pamphlet called *Facts About Threats to the Supreme Court Decisions on Abortion* devotes the entire text to “attacks” on abortion. “They have the strong backing of the hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church,” the pamphlet reads, “despite polls which show increasing support for legal abortion among the Catholic laity.”<sup>1</sup>

A Planned Parenthood document states that, “Fanatics, stirred into activity by the bombast of ‘churchmen,’ are running about with matches.”<sup>2</sup> A reason is proffered:

Because some people, some religious and semi-religious groups dominated by elderly men, simply cannot deal rationally with sex. They can't talk about it rationally, can't think about it rationally, and above all can't give up the power which controlling other people gives them. They control other people through sex.

What groups? The Roman Catholic Church is pouring millions of dollars into the fight against women's freedom to choose abortion. The Mormon church is pouring money into the defeat of the ERA [Equal Rights Amendment]. The John Birch Society, the Ku Klux Klan, and certain fundamentalist churches are fighting against any form of sex education. All of them oppose contraceptive clinics, and the "Right to Life" group (financed by the Catholic Bishops) has announced its intention of getting all birth control funding withdrawn.

All of these groups control people through controlling their sexual activity. All of these groups are totalitarian groups which offer women no freedom of choice in sexual matters. If they advocated their beliefs for their own members, no one would mind.

But, they want to force their beliefs on you, and they are very likely to succeed...<sup>3</sup>

Later in the document, it is suggested that without abortion and birth control, women will "start dying again..."<sup>4</sup> Consequently, more hysteria regarding birth control and the Roman Catholic Church is raised:

They [women] can start dying again because a tiny, vocal minority of religious fanatics, led and financed by the Roman Catholic Church, has decided that American women are to be deprived of abortion *and* birth control. Yes. That is the publicly announced goal of the "Right to Life" group, to remove all financing for birth control...so that women can start dying again.<sup>5</sup>

Several cartoons are included. One depicts a Catholic bishop. His words are divided into six frames:

- We lost some of our flock over birth control—but we weren't worried...
- The faithful remained.
- We lost some more of them on the subject of homosexuality—but we weren't worried...
- The faithful remained.
- Now we're losing the flock on the subject of abortion—but we're not worried...
- We've got the faithful out burning down the clinics.<sup>6</sup>

Another cartoon depicts a general who, in six frames, makes the following statements:

- It's going to be a fight.
- I can see it coming...
- and we can't do it with no frigg'n volunteer army.
- It will take millions of men—men we don't have...
- We gotta stop this birth control, abortion crap...
- and get those cute little gals busy having babies. Instead of yelling...about equal rights.<sup>7</sup>

A third cartoon depicts a woman. Over eight frames, she makes the following statements:

- The church taught me that birth control was wrong.
- So I had five miscarriages and six pregnancies.
- The church taught me that I would find the strength to go on.
- So I just hit the kids alot [sic] when things got tough.
- The church taught me that abortion was wrong.
- So I had Buddy when I was forty-two. He's retarded.
- Now these tramps are trying to tell me that birth control is OK—that abortion is OK—that sex is OK

- [same woman now angry with a raised fist and a cross around her neck, holding a sign which reads, “Right to Life”]—over my dead body!!<sup>8</sup>

Good Catholics would be offended to read the newsletter of a local Planned Parenthood group that covered a speech by Daniel C. Maguire, a professor of moral theology at Marquette University:

The battle has been difficult because religion and politics are “inextricably conjoined.” Both are “out to define the ‘good’ life,” and both are “moral authorities that control the thinking, choices, and judgments of people.” When we cling to the words of “a magically interpreted Bible, a magically interpreted Pope, a magically interpreted Constitution,” Professor Maguire maintains, “we are still hankering for that early security” we found in trusting the authority of our parents. Too often this yearning leads to excessive dependence on various authority figures and has led to fanaticism both in religion and in politics.<sup>9</sup>

Maguire, a member of “Catholics” for a Free Choice, could not understand why people oppose Planned Parenthood’s agenda. “Why is it that in our kind of work we run into problems convincing people of what seem obvious goods?” he asked. Birth control and abortion were cited as examples of “obvious goods.” Maguire specifically referred to abortion as a “negative good” which “may often be the most life-affirming decision that a woman has to make.”<sup>10</sup> He also had thoughts regarding unplanned pregnancies:

Behind this woman’s desperate situation, Maguire says, is a sexism that infects us all and contributes to the “hostile inseminator syndrome”—when men consider women inferior and thus make love carelessly. Religion promotes such sexism by supporting and creating male monopolies and hierarchies, at the end of which is a “male” God who gives male supremacy divine sanction.

A second reason behind a woman’s anguish when she seeks an abortion is poverty, caused in the U.S. by massive overspending on our military budget. Little revenue is left to combat the social chaos that produces the interpersonal chaos that leads to unwanted pregnancies and abortions.

A third force driving women to have abortions is ignorance. If better education about sexuality were available, fewer people would have “eruptive,” unplanned sex; fewer would fail to realize *very* early on “that pregnancy...[being] with child...is a twenty-two-year condition”; fewer would be content with the poor quality of the contraceptives now available; and fewer of us would be deluded by romantic notions of love that deny the need for commitment, spirituality, and caring for one another.<sup>11</sup>

Maguire claimed there is “*not* a consensus among Catholic theologians” on abortion. He argued that it should remain legal in the absence of such a consensus because “to crush respectably debated issues in the name of a false and ultimately unenforceable consensus” is to “indulge in the fascist instinct.”<sup>12</sup>

Maguire seemed to want Catholic leaders to base their interpretation of *Scripture* on what is popular. This amounts to “cafeteria catholicism”—take what you want, leave what you do not want, but you can still call yourself “Catholic.” Are you Catholic just because you call yourself one? Maguire seemed to have a basic misunderstanding of Christianity in general and Roman Catholicism in particular. It appeared as though he wanted to call himself “Catholic,” while desiring to change Catholicism to “Maguirism.” Of course, *Scripture* supports none of Maguire’s comments. This assumes, however, that he views the *Holy Bible* with any sense of reverence or authority.

Let me make one point very clear: Being a member of the front organization “Catholics” for a Free Choice is like being a member of “Al Queda Fighters for a Safe Jewish State.” It is like saying, “I’m a Christian, but I just cannot accept that Jesus stuff.” It is inherently impossible to be pro-abortion and Catholic at the same time. One is not genetically born “Catholic.” One is not genetically created “Muslim.” One is not genetically made “Hindu.” We identify with those religions because we believe in their teachings. Those who cannot subscribe to the teachings need to establish their own religion, not attempt to sabotage another.

Planned Parenthood occasionally uses the “automobile sales technique” in its abortion counseling, particularly when a case involves overcoming religious concerns. *Papers 1975*, a Planned Parenthood publication, gives an example of a teenager who wanted an abortion and her “extremely religious” mother who was against it. The parent and her daughter were referred to a psychiatrist who was a Planned Parenthood volunteer.<sup>13</sup> At the time of the incident, parental consent was required for a minor’s abortion:

The mother of a 15 year old girl came into the clinic in great distress. After being seen by the counselor, she was referred to me. Her daughter was pregnant and had decided to have an abortion. The mother, an extremely religious woman, considered abortion against all her principles. Her daughter demanded that her mother sign a consent [form] for her abortion and added that if the mother refused, the daughter would get an illegal abortion. The mother’s conflict was obvious. She was encouraged to express her feelings and at that point I realized that the mother needed the authority of a minister of her faith to bring about the resolution of this conflict. I referred her for further help to a minister, whom we knew to be empathetic and helpful. The end of the story is that the mother signed the consent form.<sup>14</sup>

*Medical History of Contraception*, by Norman Himes, was first printed in 1936. Planned Parenthood reprinted it in 1965 with an introduction by Alan Guttmacher, M.D., then-president of the Planned Parenthood Federation of America. Himes raises a question:

Are Catholic stocks in the United States, taken as a whole, genetically inferior to such non-Catholic libertarian stocks as Unitarians and Universalists, Ethical Culturalists, Freethinkers? Inferior to non-Catholic stocks in general? No one really knows. One is entitled to his hunches, however, and my guess is that the answer will some day be made in the affirmative.<sup>15</sup>

Professor Jacqueline Kasun of Humboldt State University writes that sexuality educators have verbally abused Christians:

Traditional religion is...[a] favorite whipping boy. The typical Christian “cheats on his income tax each year, but donates all the money...to his church.”...Christians are bigoted, ignorant, and even wear funny shoes....The [sexuality education] programs ask children if they would really want to “go to heaven if it meant playing a harp all day.”...and “how many of you would be upset if organized religion disappeared?”...Religion, according to sex educators, is not only absurd but, worse yet, it causes sexual dysfunction...<sup>16</sup>

While president of Planned Parenthood Federation of America, Faye Wattleton managed to do her share of Catholic bashing. In a debate with an advisor to New York’s Catholic Archdiocese, the two were disagreeing over whether 200 million tax dollars were spent on sex education. Wattleton barked at the Catholic gentleman with a heavy dose of sarcasm and insolence: “Who spends that? The Archdiocese to speak about abstinence and ‘just say no’ as an answer to teenage sexuality?” The remark was followed by audience applause.<sup>17</sup>

When not attacking religion or religious people, Planned Parenthood uses both. Its supporters and board members almost always include clergy from pro-abortion denominations. It also has a “Clergy Advisory Board.” One example of Planned Parenthood using religion is a newspaper advertisement:

As clerical leaders of a rich and diverse religious community, we represent a wealth of differing beliefs. But we stand together in our certitude that abortion must remain a personal decision made within a woman’s own moral framework. Churches and synagogues, as well as legislatures, should provide compassion and support—not condemnation and barriers—to any woman faced with an unwanted pregnancy.

We are pro-choice advocates and call upon people of conscience everywhere to recognize that the principles of separation of church and state and the right to privacy protect us all. It’s time to go public for privacy.<sup>18</sup>

The \$2,400 ad listed the names of 117 “Jewish” and “Christian” clergy who support legal abortion.<sup>19</sup> As is often the case, because of its controversial nature and because pro-abortion “religious” people sponsored the ad, a news article was written about it in at least one newspaper. This served to augment the ad’s impact.

Planned Parenthood’s use of religion and religious leaders is not a new practice. A 1955 *Planned Parenthood News* article is entitled, “Family Planning Is Moral Duty, Religious Leaders Say.” The article quotes Bishop G. Bromley Oxnam of the United Methodist Church:

“Procreation is not the only purpose of sex,” he said, “and those who in the name of religion defile a holy and beautiful relationship that has its own intrinsic values do themselves commit sin. *Christian parents are morally obligated to plan for the coming of their children.*”

“The proper spacing of children is an expression of love, and therefore is a religious obligation. Those who condemn such planning as sinful commit sin, and cast reflection upon Christian men and women who in love take those wise steps necessary to the spacing of children and the health and happiness of the home.”<sup>20</sup>

The article also quotes the Clergymen’s Advisory Committee of the Mothers’ Health Centers of New York City. “Every child has a right to come into the world, welcomed and loved,” the statement reads. (This rhetoric mimics that of Planned Parenthood’s founder, Margaret Sanger.) Titled, “The Ethics of Planned Parenthood,” the authors assert that, “It is a child’s right to come into the world as planned for and wanted. Both of these factors will enhance the high and sacred meanings of family life.”<sup>21</sup> The writers go on to endorse Planned Parenthood:

Every married couple should decide in a sense of vocation under God whether they ought at a given time to increase the size of their family. Mothers should be provided with adequate, healthful, and scientific means to help them have their babies at such times and under such circumstances as will ensure that parenthood is indeed a sacred responsibility and privilege. It is every child’s birthright to be reared by parents who feel that parenthood is a voluntary sharing in God’s creativity. It is our strong conviction that the service of Planned Parenthood Mothers’ Health Centers, in making possible the birth of children under such wholesome and desired circumstances, is a service of religion.<sup>22</sup>

According to the newsletter, the Clergymen’s Advisory Committee is composed of “Protestant and Jewish leaders.”<sup>23</sup> This is accurate. They are self-proclaimed “Protestant and Jewish leaders.”

A different Planned Parenthood newsletter drew a distinction between religious faiths opposed to legal abortion and those that support it. According to the newsletter, those that oppose abortion are not representative of “mainstream religions.”<sup>24</sup>

Supporters of the Planned Parenthood agenda often criticize and ridicule religious leaders who oppose them. There is a separation of church and state, they argue, so religious leaders, especially Catholics and fundamentalists, should stay out of the debate. When the militant homosexual group ACT UP demonstrated against a cardinal’s comments on homosexuality, one of the demonstrators said he was there “to say that the cardinal should stay out of politics.”<sup>25</sup> Yet how often are such statements made about men like Jesse Jackson, Al Sharpton, or other so-called ministers who support the Planned Parenthood agenda?

Regardless of what anyone at Planned Parenthood or in the pro-abortion “clergy” may say—no matter how much one may dislike it—all citizens have a right to exercise free speech. The separation of church and state was designed to prohibit the government from instituting a state church and to protect religion from infringement by the state. It was not intended to keep the two completely separate.

Planned Parenthood occasionally refers to religion when urging people to participate in its programs. One Margaret Sanger biographer makes several references to religion. Virginia Coigney, author of *Margaret Sanger*:

*Rebel With a Cause*, wrote, “Birth control is still a controversial subject. Some religious groups still oppose it.”<sup>26</sup> Notice the words “*still* oppose it,” as though they just have not caught up with the times.

“In all but official Catholic circles,” Coigney continued, “birth control methods are equally acceptable on moral grounds.” (The implication, of course, is that even Catholics not in “official circles” support birth control.) She claimed that, “A recent publication of Planned Parenthood Federation included statements of support from spokesmen representing fourteen different religious faiths.” Coigney charges that South America is still “held back by the [Catholic] Church.”<sup>27</sup>

The German Planned Parenthood affiliate even took on Mother Teresa of Calcutta, India. “This very successful old and withered person, who doesn’t look in the least like a woman, especially when she raises her clenched fists in prayer, and who, for us, is a very suspect holder of the Nobel Prize, sees her task as that of reducing the pain and suffering of other women, suffering brought about as a result of their having had too many children,” Planned Parenthood argued.<sup>28</sup> The attacks continued in a way reminiscent of Margaret Sanger:

We have praised this woman’s good deeds: We have respected her celibacy and the fact that she never smiles when facing the camera. Now, however, she has become for us the symbol of all that is bad in motherhood and womanhood—an image with which we do not wish to be associated.

This Mother Teresa, this perfect picture of heavenly salvation, works untiringly and unselfishly to alleviate the suffering of the innocent. She cleans away their excrement, slime and snot; then she asks for no reward—other than, of course, to be allowed to sit on God’s righthand side (naturally at his feet). She shows us how women should behave; she ridicules everywhere and openly the sinfulness and arrogance of modern women; she offers for comparison the picture of herself and the sacrifices she makes, that is, when she can find time between her ideological campaigns.

It’s high time we rejected the menial tasks forced upon us by our society in general and by some of the male species in particular; they serve only to create in us a feeling of nausea. We refuse to make any more sacrifices, although even that is difficult to do because our mothers, aunts and nuns have raised us to do just that. We were motivated by the beatings and the false kisses which we received from them. But then, even they were only carrying out orders.

Mother Teresa is the perfect image of a sexless, religious woman. This is, however, not the image of womanhood that we want. Show us instead the mother or daughter who can take delight in the most enjoyable of all worldly pleasures, sexual intimacy.

We want to have the enjoyment of erotic love between men and women. No longer are we going to allow the mothers, aunts and nuns to smack little girls on their knuckles or their bottoms to ensure that they despise their physical attractions instead of being proud of them.<sup>29</sup>

If this does not make Catholics and those who oppose religious bigotry upset (it should), there is much more. However, one could wonder whether the words were inspired by Margaret Sanger or Ebenezer Scrooge:

Mother Teresa, this personification of Christian virtue, wants to show the world the way. And once more, it’s a path which leads through the bodies and wombs of women.

Let the children come! Observe their skeleton-like heads and their greedy emaciated arms which reach out to those who may bring them food.

Is it not a source of great joy and comfort to be able to feed them and clothe their nakedness? Imagine the heavenly hours of pleasure one could spend nourishing them back to health and then filling their minds with rules and regulations and then the satisfaction of watching how well they obey.<sup>30</sup>

There is enough blame to go around:

Oh! You poor little nuns who stand at Mother Teresa's right hand. Let us rid ourselves of these old mothers, aunts and nuns who appropriate for themselves the sorrow and suffering of those stillborn babies conceived but delivered by the beautiful bodies of the white, brown, yellow and black women who have been physically and morally destroyed by the exploitation of macho men. These exploiting males also know no better, having received their teaching from these selfsame mothers, aunts and nuns.

Mother Teresa, you can't really expect us to believe that the suffering of women can be identified at one and the same time with the joys of motherhood. You must know better. Is your merciful ear unaware of the cries of all these mothers when you are before photographers pictured laying your bony hands on the shorn heads of those who have brought about their own deaths by giving birth?

You, you nightmare of women! You unliberated, enslaved wives, mothers, nuns and aunts, what do you want from us, who have finally decided that we are going to take control of our bodies, our children and our destiny into our own hands? Do you not realize that you are all merely puppets of the devil?<sup>31</sup>

Columnist Cal Thomas described an event that included an address by Mother Teresa:

At a National Prayer Breakfast in Washington [D.C.]... Mother Teresa of Calcutta delivered the most startling and bold proclamation of truth to power I have heard in my more than 30 professional years in Washington.

Before an audience of 3,000—that included the President [Bill Clinton] and his wife, the Vice President and his wife and congressional leaders, among others—the 83-year-old nun, who is physically frail but spiritually and rhetorically powerful, delivered an address that cut to the heart of the social ills afflicting America. She said that America, once known for generosity to the world, has become selfish. And she said that the greatest proof of that selfishness is abortion.

Tying abortion to growing violence and murder in the streets, she said, “If we accept that a mother can kill even her own child, how can we tell other people not to kill each other?...Any country that accepts abortion is not teaching its people to love, but to use any violence to get what they want.”

At that line, most of those in attendance erupted in a standing ovation, something that rarely occurs at these sedate events. At that moment, President Clinton quickly reached for his water glass, and Mrs. Clinton and Vice President and Mrs. Gore stared without expression at Mother Teresa. They did not applaud. It was clearly an uncomfortable moment on the dais.

She then delivered the knockout punch: “Many people are very, very concerned with children in India, with the children of Africa where quite a few die of hunger, and so on. Many people are also concerned about all the violence in this great country of the United States. These concerns are very good. But often these same people are not concerned with the millions who are being killed by the deliberate decision of their own mothers. And this is what is the greatest destroyer of peace today—abortion, which brings people to such blindness.”

What? Abortion destroys peace and causes blindness toward the sick, the hungry and the naked? Abortion leads to wars between nations? Of course it does, if life is regarded so lightly and its disposal becomes so trivial, so clinical and so easy. Why should people or nations regard human life as noble or dignified if abortion flourishes? Why agonize about indiscriminate death in Bosnia when babies are being killed far more efficiently and out of the sight of television cameras?

Mother Teresa delivered her address without rhetorical flourishes. She never raised her voice or pounded the lectern. Her power was in her words and the selfless life she has led. Even President Clinton, in his remarks that followed, acknowledged she was beyond criticism because of the life she has lived in service to others.

At the end, she pleaded for pregnant women who don't want their children to give them to her: “I am willing to accept any child who would be aborted and to give that child to a married couple who will love the child and be loved by the child.” She said she has placed over 3,000 children in adoptive homes from her Calcutta

headquarters alone. She has answered the question, “Who will care for all of these babies if abortion is again outlawed?” Now the question is whether a woman contemplating abortion wishes to be selfish or selfless, to take life or to give life.<sup>32</sup>

Mother Teresa assailed abortion in many public statements. Her choice of words were moving and challenging—to those with open hearts and minds:

By abortion, the mother does not learn to love but kills even her own child to solve her problems. And by abortion, the father is told that he does not have to take any responsibility at all for the child he has brought into the world...

Any country that accepts abortion is not teaching its people to love but to use any violence to get what they want. This is why the greatest destroyer of love and peace is abortion.<sup>33</sup>

Consider a news report that covered a papal speech on the subject:

Pope John Paul...launched an emotional attack on abortion, condemning what he called “the culture of death.”

“We cannot go forward only with death as the foundation of our civilisation—we must do so with the culture of love, which welcomes life.”

Speaking to some 50,000 people...the Pope frequently raised his voice as he spoke in passionate defence of the rights of the family.

“We cannot accept the systematic death of the unborn,” he said. “Every family must know how to resist the false sirens of the culture of death.”

It was his second such attack in two days, following a statement on abortion and euthanasia...in which he said democratically-elected parliaments were usurping their powers to determine who had the right to live...

The Pope said...1994, the U.N. [United Nations] -designated year of the family, was threatening to have precisely the opposite of its intended effect.

“It could easily become a year against the family...,”

He said he had written to “every president in the world” including presidents of bodies such as episcopal conferences, to reflect on the issue and defend the rights of the family.<sup>34</sup>

Is it any wonder why apologists for the abortion industry hated Mother Teresa and continue to express their disdain for Pope John Paul II? Mother Teresa and the Pope serve their god. Those who abhor the author of life are serving theirs. It should not surprise us. After all, Jesus said those who serve Him would face persecution and ridicule. What *should* surprise us is when Christians act like those who do not know God.

Planned Parenthood officials accept religion and religious people so long as they do not believe strongly enough to act accordingly. If you call yourself a Christian and support legal abortion, you are acceptable to Planned Parenthood. In fact, your Christianity will be flaunted. If you call yourself a Christian and oppose abortion, but you are willing to fight efforts to “impose this morality on others,” you are acceptable. However, if you want to see abortion outlawed because you are “so Christian” that you act upon your beliefs, you are unacceptable, close-minded, bigoted minority, or worse. Planned Parenthood’s message to Christians can be summed up this way: Call yourself a Christian if you must, just do not act like one.

As noted, Planned Parenthood routinely attacks religions that oppose its goals, including personal attacks on religious leaders and followers. Yet Planned Parenthood is not against all religion. After all, as Planned Parenthood's Arlene Rosenberg once said, "birth control is a religion."<sup>35</sup>

## Bigotry By The Media

While it did not originate with Planned Parenthood, a cartoon created by a supporter of the organization, which appeared in the *Dallas Observer*, also refers to Catholics:

Myth: If you're very careful about rhythm, it always works.

Fact: Tell that to a Catholic mother of ten kids.<sup>36</sup>

Consider a *Newsweek* article, which notes that *Humanae Vitae* ("Of Human Life"), the encyclical of Pope Paul VI, "reaffirmed the papal principle that every act of sexual intercourse must be 'open to the transmission of life.'" What does the author of the article then write? "Since then, most married Catholics and theologians alike have taken a different view: that contraception is a moral and practical necessity if spouses are to express their love and regulate the size of families."<sup>37</sup>

The article goes on to quote Ann Marie Kamensky, who claims to be Catholic but opposes the Church's stand on abortion, premarital sex and the ordination of women. "I think faith is about trust," she said, "and I don't trust my church." The article author also notes that the Catholic Church has an "attitude problem" with regard to the ordination of women to the priesthood.<sup>38</sup>

The article includes some rational thought: "Indeed, in their passion not to appear authoritarian, many priests have failed to pass on the core of the church's message on human sexuality."<sup>39</sup> This is unfortunately true. However, the article also includes opinion polls of people who call themselves "Catholic." Needless-to-say, most of those polled probably do not know what the inside of their parish looks like—and are more than likely uninterested in finding out.

*The New Our Bodies, Ourselves*, a book Planned Parenthood recommends to teenagers, includes a comment regarding Catholicism:

The day I left the Church was the day I had an argument in the confessional with the priest about whether having intercourse with my fiancé was a sin. I maintained it wasn't; he said I would never be a faithful wife if I had intercourse before marriage. He refused me absolution and I never went back.<sup>40</sup>

In a special election for the state legislature in California, the Democratic candidate was Lucy Killea, who claimed to be a "pro-choice Catholic." It was believed the pro-life Republican candidate would win easily in the conservative district. However, prior to the election, the archbishop of San Diego, Leo T. Maher, barred Killea from receiving the Eucharist because she was making her support of legal abortion the keynote of her campaign—apparently in an attempt to force the hand of her bishop.

The media painted the Bishop's move as a punishment.<sup>41</sup> One campaign sign for Killea read, "Keep the Bishop of San Diego Out of the Senate Race."<sup>42</sup>

The only hope Killea had of winning the election was to get Bishop Maher to act so she could make that action the centerpiece of her campaign. The issue was no longer abortion or anything else. The issue was the Bishop of San Diego and what he had done. This resort to anti-Catholic sentiment was successful. The Democrat won the election. How low can a person get? Regardless of its impact on the election, however, the Bishop did his duty—and more should follow suit.

Naturally, these are but a few examples of anti-Christian bias by the media. Listing them all would require a book longer than *War and Peace*.

### **Bigotry By The Entertainment Industry**

Network and cable television are notorious for their anti-Christian bigotry. A woman who portrays a nun on the Home Box Office program “OZ” was challenged on her position on the death penalty. She had taken the position that one convict deserved to die. What was her response to the challenge? The “nun” made it clear that there are many issues on which she does not agree with her church.

Most Americans will remember the short-lived ABC television program called “Nothing Sacred,” in which a liberal Catholic priest regularly resisted Church teaching. There were more bigoted comments and actions in this one-hour of television than in virtually all other shows combined.

No one will forget when singer Sinead O’Connor ripped up a photograph of the Pope on “Saturday Night Live.” O’Connor said, “Nobody has the right to tell anyone else what to believe. Especially the Catholic Church with the amount of murdering and pillaging it has done...”<sup>43</sup>

O’Connor had more to say on the subject of religion:

I think organized religion is a crutch. 'Cause it's controlling. Organized religion tells you what to believe, tells you who to be...It's an abuse to tell a child that God sees everything and knows what you think and that you are going to be burnt in hell. It's a huge abuse to teach children that God is not within themselves...that God is bigger than them. That God is outside them. That is a lie. That's what causes the emptiness of children.<sup>44</sup>

Singer and songwriter Madonna claims to be Catholic, and she says her children are being raised “Catholic.” Yet she opposes most teachings of the Catholic Church. (Madonna has also claimed that she mixes theologies from various faiths, many of which are not Christian at all.)

Actor Corbin Bernsen has made strong anti-Catholic and anti-religion remarks. “Religion has become an outdated mode, an outdated answer to some of our problems...Religion is the only reason women don't have control over their bodies,”<sup>45</sup> Bernsen said.

A MTV program featured “Joe,” a Catholic priest who said “there probably is no real absolute” with regard to sex and marriage.<sup>46</sup> Unfortunately, there are too many clergy who hold to this position. As Patricia Pitkus Bainbridge once said, “There is nothing worse or more dangerous than a bad priest. And there is nothing better than a good priest.”

In an episode of “Law and Order: Criminal Intent,” a priest was murdered by a drug abuser who worked at the parish. Another priest, who was embezzling church funds, killed the addict. The priest told police that the addict was his lover. Later it is discovered that the priest was lying and the drug addict was actually the priest's son. The real motive for killing the junkie was to protect the young boy's mother—the woman the killer priest had an affair with 20 years earlier.<sup>47</sup>

During a WRQX-FM (Washington, D.C.) morning radio program, a joke was told regarding Catholics. When a Catholic called to object, the morning hosts claimed they “do not have an agenda” and implied that the woman who complained should lighten up and get a sense of humor. The hosts went on to note that virtually all of the people who work on “The Jack Diamond Morning Show” are Jewish. Would they have made the same comments regarding a radio personality who made jokes about Jews? Not if they truly believe in their religion.

A German rock group called B.O.N. released a music video featuring a nude young man in bed with a girl in a Catholic school or convent. When caught by a nun, the boy runs naked throughout the school. All of the girls stare lustfully at the young man. Even the nuns look at the man in the same sinful way and it is implied that he has sex with at least one of them.

The angels of “Touched By An Angel” have made their position on abortion clear—they support “choice.” With the addition of Valerie Bertinelli to the cast, this is true in real life, too. Bertinelli is actively pro-Planned Parenthood. (Corbin Bernsen and other anti-religion actors have appeared as guests on the program.)

One of my favorite television programs is “The West Wing.” Martin Sheen, who is reportedly opposed to abortion and a Catholic who takes his faith seriously, portrays a fictional president of the United States. While it should be possible to separate an acting gig from reality, Sheen’s character is pro-abortion and “Catholic.” (One episode mentioned the “president’s” support for RU-486. In another program, the “president” curses at God for quite some time.) Therefore, Sheen is contributing to the perpetuation of the dangerous myth that one can be Catholic and ignore the teachings of his church. It similarly serves to give credence to former President Bill Clinton who claimed to be Southern Baptist but who does not hold to its teachings.

One of the best portrayals of a Christian on television that I have ever seen was on the WB’s “Maybe It’s Me.” Patrick Levis portrays a Christian high school student, “Grant Stage,” whose desire is to be in a Christian band. Levis is a primary cast member. In one episode, Grant’s sister, “Molly” (portrayed by Meagan Dale Neis), said she admired him. Grant explained that it was his relationship with Jesus Christ that makes him that way and she could have it, too. The point was also made that the character is far from perfect and does not feel he is better than those who do not know God. While “Maybe It’s Me” is not perfect itself, this one scene was remarkable. It was superbly and respectfully done.

Maybe the fact that Levis is a committed Christian in real life played a part in the portrayal of Christianity in the best light. “I wasn’t worried about playing a character that gets made fun of but I was worried about Christianity, Jesus Christ, God and just Christians in general being put down,” Levis told Zap2it.com. “I didn’t want that to be the message of the character. When I read the character I was excited. My first response was really just excitement because I was like, ‘Wow, they’re actually writing a born-again Christian into a TV show on The WB.’ What a great opportunity for people to see that Christians are not these too out-there weirdoes,” Levis said.<sup>48</sup>

As with the media, the unfortunate truth is that there are so many examples of bigotry in the entertainment industry, it would be impossible to even list one percent of them. The problem is that most of it goes unchallenged unless caring people are first prodded, embarrassed, forced, or cajoled into doing so.

### **Bigotry By Others**

Those who have been victims of bigotry often demonstrate it toward Christians. A friend of mine is a pro-life man who works for an environmental organization in Washington, D.C. He claims that anti-Christian (especially anti-Catholic) jokes and comments are made on a regular basis—even by those who claim to belong to the faith.

While a teacher at Seattle’s Villa Academy, which touts itself as a “Catholic school,” the principal told me that I had an “extreme view on abortion.” My view was identical to that held by the Catholic Church and it was being appropriately taught to the students. But this was done with opposition from the administration and several of my fellow teachers.

Many homosexuals seem to think that perceived or experienced bigotry against them justifies theirs toward others. One homosexual’s website includes the picture of a church signpost. The message on the sign is: “The

best place for a Christian is on his knees.” Naturally, the church was referring to prayer. The homosexual was mocking Christianity by using the message to refer to a sexual position.

A group of homosexuals who dress up as nuns is called The Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence. “In an effort to expiate stigmatic guilt and spread universal joy across the globe, the Sisters have multiplied like crabs in a cheap mattress!”<sup>49</sup> reads their website. The website of a “Sisters” affiliate offers more information:

We are an order of 21st Century Nuns dedicated to the promulgation of universal joy and the expiation of stigmatic guilt. We work to raise money for AIDS charities, fight for Queer rights and visibility, do safer sex outreach, and to strive diligently to keep our sense of humor and to never take ourselves so seriously that we forget to have fun. We gladly welcome all races, creeds, gender, and sexual orientations.

We are often asked, “Why are you mocking nuns?” We answer “WE ARE NUNS!”. We do all that traditional nuns have done for centuries. We Have Raised Hundreds of thousands of dollars for AIDS and other social causes. We visit the sick, feed the hungry, and generally service the community. We are 21st Century Nuns.<sup>50</sup>

In reality, we are talking about an anti-Catholic group. The “Sisters” mock the Catholic Church in some of the most vulgar and horrible ways possible.

Many homosexuals consistently make jokes that suggest virtually all Protestant and Catholic clergy sexually abuse children and steal funds. They suggest that all are phonies to one degree or another. All of this is because their lifestyle does not have Church approval. This is as horrible as Christians who suggest that all homosexuals sexually abuse children.

### **The Best Defense Is A Good Offense**

There is one step that can be taken that will help the Pro-Life Movement more than most others: Protestants must be willing to stand up for Catholics when religious bigotry is demonstrated, such as in the German Planned Parenthood publication. Catholics must be willing to stand up for Protestants when religious bigotry is demonstrated. Moreover, Catholics and non-Catholics need to have enough knowledge and confidence in their own beliefs to offer some self-defense!

In 1991, Catholic leaders had come under attack for urging lawmakers who claim to be Catholic, but who support legal abortion, to act appropriately. This most often meant asking the offending lawmaker to refrain from participation in Catholic Sacraments.

Catholic leaders would be right to act against those who claim to be Catholic but who do not act accordingly. Yet Molly Yard, then-president of the National Organization for Women, criticized the Catholic Church. But why should any Catholic listen to the objections of Molly Yard—an enemy of the Church? She had no problem defending religious leaders who spoke in support of abortion. The problem was *what* the Catholic leaders were saying, not that they were exercising the right to free speech.

Yard’s criticism was simply annoying. This is an internal Catholic matter and Yard, the media, and even Protestants have no business interfering, particularly if they are anti-Catholic in the first place.

Why should Senator Ted Kennedy or any other person who calls himself “Catholic” be allowed to participate in the Sacraments? They do not believe what the church teaches! Are there no standards?

Back in 1991, concern had also been expressed about the consequences of taking action against Catholics (other than politicians) who support legal abortion. According to some, taking action would cause people to leave the Catholic Church. It seems to me that if decisions of Catholic leaders led to fewer parishioners, this may be for

the best in the long run. Church leaders need to preach God's truth, not adjust their actions and teachings in an effort to be popular or appease critics.

The same holds true for Protestant churches. If people do not believe what the Church teaches, when it coincides with what the *Bible* teaches, the problem is with the people, not the Church. Catholic leaders should decide on a course of action and apply it uniformly—irrespective of a person's status or position and regardless of who may or may not like it.

Despite the differences between Catholics and Protestants, speaking against religious bigotry will serve not only the Pro-Life Movement, it will do wonders for the protection of religious liberty. These issues are critically important to both groups.

All of this requires that individual Christians examine their hearts and weed out bigotry. Bigotry *by* us is at least as bad as bigotry *toward* us. But at the same time we must hold and act upon our strongly held convictions. Requiring persons who claim to belong to our church to hold to certain beliefs and act accordingly is critically important, even when it means exclusion to one degree or another (up to and including excommunication when necessary). After all, one must protect the integrity of the assemblage and *Scripture* itself. This is not bigotry. It becomes bigotry when we begin to think we are better than those who are different or who hold to other opinions—no matter how incorrect. (How often do pro-life people think they are “better” than those who commit abortions?)

Ah, the sin of pride—the “root of all evil”? This sin in Christians is what offers an excuse to many people to reject the *Gospel* outright—without a fair shake. “I am saved, so God likes me better than He likes you.” These words are never spoken, but they are often implied or even acted upon. My life was turned around when people who love God loved me. It made me want to listen to them. If we fail to convince people that we truly care for them as individuals, we fail to open ourselves up to doing His work. Moreover, if we do not deeply believe what we claim to, we will see no reason to share our beliefs with others. It is a matter of faith and obedience. Sometimes we need to stop asking God to “use us” and ask Him to make us “useable” by checking our attitudes and increasing our faith.

Let's admit the truth. Non-Christians do bad things because they have no faith in God. Similarly, all wrongs done by Christians are primarily due to a lack of faith. After all, if we really, truly believed God is watching us at every moment and we will be held accountable, the number of sins committed in a day would drop dramatically.

### **Suggestions From A Caring Ally**

It seems that there are several things that the Catholic Church could do to strengthen its position in the world. I offer some suggestions as the most pro-Catholic a person can be without actually being Catholic.

The Catholic Church needs to implement a far-reaching, extensive educational program for its own parishioners. It amazes me how many Catholics have no idea what the Church really teaches and, moreover, why the Church holds the views it does. Many people who call themselves “catholic” believe they have the moral authority to disagree with their Church because they do not realize that the Church holds to such positions for good reason—certainly not because it is seeking to win a popularity contest. Let's face it; if the Church takes a stand, someone is not going to like it. In addition, Catholics who know, understand and truly have faith are more likely to share it with others.

The Catholic Church needs to remove from leadership positions those persons who do not hold to its teachings. This is especially true of clergy, but also applies to teachers and key administrators in Catholic educational institutions.

The Catholic Church needs to continue addressing controversial issues, even if it “offends” people. If a pastor offends no one, he must be forgetting to talk about and challenge sin. If a pastor fails to talk about and challenge sin, he is not doing his job. It is important to remember that the Kingdom of God is not a democracy—and I truly thank God for it. (We would surely mess things up.)

Catholics and other Christians have got to stop falling victim to fear and intimidation. While attending a press conference held by the We Are Church Coalition (a consortium of groups that oppose the teaching of the Catholic Church, yet whose members still call themselves “Catholic”), I realized that with the exception of members of the press, I was one of two non-Catholic Christians in the audience. The press conference was to announce a petition drive to force the Vatican to change its positions on abortion, the ordination of women and practicing homosexuals, and so forth. (The petition drive was a big flop.) Who were the two people to challenge the Coalition’s speakers? The two non-Catholic Christians! None of the Catholics present would speak up. This was shameful.

It is simply time that Catholics and other Christians stop moving to the back of the societal bus—often willingly—while the enemies of God drive. It is time for all Christians to come together to do God’s work.

While I sometimes do not have a clue about how to be a good Christian, there is one thing I know for sure. It is time for all of God’s children to remember that He is our only true hope. It is He who must one day implement His perfect justice. For without God, life is just a waste of time.

*Douglas R. Scott is president of Life Decisions International. He was once vice president for public policy of the largest Protestant pro-life organization in the United States.*

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*Special Reports*, an official periodical of Life Decisions International (LDI), is published quarterly. A minimum donation of \$38 (US) or \$94 (CAN) per year is requested. Send changes of address to LDI at P.O. Box 75161, Washington, DC 20013-0161. Comments made herein do not necessarily reflect the views of every member of LDI's Board of Directors, Board of Advisors, or staff. This publication may be printed so long as it is done in full. It may be quoted so long as proper citation is provided with the quotation.