

Los Pequeños Pepper

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We are an Archdiocesan-wide Catholic lay organization committed to a charitable defense of the Catholic Faith by means of education, communication, and prayer. We are devoted to the Roman Catholic Magisterium, the Holy Father, and to the bishops and clergy in union with him. Our members believe what the Church believes and we promote what the Church teaches. To this end, we believe that no individual, whether cleric or lay person, has the right to alter the substance of the gospel message or moral truths which have been inerrantly and infallibly held by the Catholic Church since Her founding.

Anti-Catholicism and the *Times*

By Patrick J. Buchanan

“Anti-Catholicism,” said writer Peter Viereck, “is the anti-Semitism of the intellectual.” It is “the deepest-held bias in the history of the American people,” said Arthur Schlesinger Sr.

If there was any doubt that hatred of and hostility toward the Catholic Church persists, it was removed by the mob that has arisen howling “Resign!” at Pope Benedict XVI.

To American Catholics, the story of pedophile priests engaged in criminal abuse of children, of pervert priests seducing boys, is unfortunately all too familiar. That some bishops covered up for pedophiles and seducers and enabled corrupt clergy to continue to prey on boys was equally disgraceful.

But to American Catholics, this is an old story. The priests have been defrocked, some sent to prison, like John Geoghan, who was strangled in his cell. Bishops have been removed. “Zero tolerance” has been policy for a decade.

Pope Benedict came to America to apologize for what these men did. And no one has been more aggressive in rooting out what he calls the “filth” in the church. As the recent scandals have hit Ireland and Germany, why the attack on the pope here in America?

Answer: *The New York Times* is conducting a vendetta against this traditionalist pope in news stories, editorials and columns.

“Vatican Declined to Defrock U.S. Priest Who Abused Boys,” blared the headline over a Laurie Goodstein story that began thus: “Top Vatican officials – including the future Pope Benedict XVI – did not defrock a priest who molested as many as 200 deaf boys ... In 1996, Cardinal Ratzinger failed to respond to two letters about the case from Rembert G. Weakland, Milwaukee’s archbishop at that time.”

The facts:

- That diabolical priest, Lawrence C. Murphy, was assigned to St. John’s School for the Deaf in 1950, before Joseph Ratzinger was even ordained.
- Reports of his abuse of the deaf children surfaced in the 1950s. But, under three archbishops, nothing was done. Police and prosecutors were alerted by parents of the boys. Nothing was done.
- Weakland, who became archbishop in 1977, did not write to Rome until 1996.
- And, as John Allen of *National Catholic Reporter* noted last week, Cardinal Ratzinger “did not have any direct responsibility for managing the overall Vatican response to the crisis until 2001. ... Prior to 2001, Ratzinger had nothing personally to do with the vast majority of sex abuse cases, even the small percentage which wound up in Rome.”
- By the time Cardinal Ratzinger was commissioned by John Paul II to clean out the stable, Murphy had been dead for three years.

Yet here is *Times* columnist Maureen Dowd’s summation of the case: “Now we learn the sickening news that Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, nicknamed ‘God’s Rotweiler,’ when he was the church’s enforcer on matters of faith and sin, ignored repeated warnings and looked away in the case of the Rev. Lawrence C. Murphy, a Wisconsin priest who molested as many as 200 deaf boys.”

In Goodstein’s piece, Weakland is a prelate who acted too slowly. The controversy over his clouded departure from the Milwaukee archdiocese is mentioned and passed over at the bottom of the story. It belonged higher.

For Weakland was a homosexual who confessed in a 1980 letter he was in “deep love” with a male paramour who shook down the archbishop for \$450,000 in church funds as hush money to keep his lover’s mouth shut about their squalid affair.

According to Rod Dreher, Weakland moved Father William Effinger, who would die in prison, from parish to parish, knowing Effinger was a serial pederast. When one of Effinger’s victims sued the archdiocese but lost because of a statute of limitations, Weakland counter-sued and extracted \$4,000 from the victim of his predator priest.

Dreher describes Weakland’s tenure thus: “He directed Catholic schools ... to teach kids how to use condoms as

part of AIDS education and approved a graphic sex-education program for parochial-school kids that taught ‘there is no right and wrong’ on the issues of abortion, contraception and premarital sex. He has advocated for gay rights and women’s ordination, bitterly attacked Pope John Paul II, denounced pro-lifers as ‘fundamentalist’ and declared that one could be both pro-choice and a Catholic in good standing.”

Speaking of sex-abuse victims, in 1988 Weakland was quoted: “Not all adolescent victims are so innocent. Some can be sexually very active and aggressive and often streetwise.” Just the kind of priest the *Times* loves, and just the kind of source on whom the *Times* relies when savaging the pope and bashing the church.

As the *Catholic League’s* Bill Donahue relates, 80 percent of the victims of priestly abuse have been males and “most of the molesters [are] gays.”

And as the *Times’* Richard Berke blurted to the *Gay and Lesbian Journalists Association* 10 years ago, often, “three-quarters of the people deciding what’s on the front page are not-so-closeted homosexuals.”

Is there perhaps a conflict of interest at *The New York Times* when covering a traditionalist Catholic pope? ↪

This article is reprinted with permission. It and other articles by Pat Buchanan can be found at www.buchanan.org or buchanan.org/blog/anti-catholicism-and-the-times-3857.

A Tale of Two Catholic Churches

By Matt C. Abbott

As a practicing Catholic, it's getting very, very difficult not to be cynical about what's going on in the Church today. And I'm not just talking about the possible \$3 billion price tag of the clergy sex abuse crisis in the U.S. alone. That's sickening enough, and my regular readers know I've been covering various aspects (some of them quite sordid) of the crisis for several years now.

I'm also referring to politics and the Church. Let's face it: The liberal Democrats control the Catholic Church in the U.S. Except in perhaps a few dioceses, most pro-abortion "Catholic" politicians have nothing to fear from the hierarchy. It's business as usual. Faithful Catholics, on the other hand — those who have to face the anti-life, anti-family regime and secular media, as well as a number of dissident clergy, religious and chancery bureaucrats — are often left spitting in the wind.

Leftist Catholics, when they're not attacking the pope, will often try to portray faithful Catholics as "Republicans in disguise" (yeah, sure...ask Mark Kirk what it means to be a pro-life Republican) because, well, we actually give a damn about the children in the womb. We don't want them to be butchered under the guise of "choice" and "reproductive rights."

So are the bishops, because of their opposition to the abortion funding in ObamaCare, advancing a Republican agenda?

Please.

As Deal Hudson recently wrote:

...During the 2008 election, a number of bishops who questioned the pro-life claims made by President Barack Obama and his Catholic surrogates were accused of being 'partisan' or Republican. Returning to Cardinal George and whether or not the USCCB supports the GOP's agenda on health care: 'I really don't think that's true,' he said. 'The principles are twofold - everybody's taken care of, nobody killed. And I think that moral voice, while it doesn't correspond politically to either party, has been consistent.' True, the principles don't correspond to either political party, but the two principles are not equal in moral weight. The aim of universal health care does carry with it a non-negotiable obligation for Catholics - the protection of innocent life. Both Cardinal George and the USCCB have been pointing to this throughout the health-care debate. But ... the pro-life principle has become so identified with the Republican Party that many people regard the bishops' own pro-life effort as partisan, rather than simply Christian. The sad state of affairs seems to be this: When Catholics object to abortion funding in health-care reform, they are accused of being Republican shills. But when Catholics ignore the presence of abortion funding in health-care reform, they are applauded for their commitment to universal coverage.'

Speaking of Cardinal George, I'm rather disappointed to see that he has accused conservative Catholic commentator Tom Roeser of "hate mongering" for Tom's years of writing about the fact that the emperor has no clothes; that the archdiocese is riddled with "Democrat-first, Catholic-second" clergy, religious and laity.

Yet Father Michael Pfleger - the, as Michelle Malkin puts it, "Hillary Clinton-mimicking, America-bashing, Vanilla Ice-prancing, Jeremiah Wright-impersonating, Louis Farrakhan-embracing cult leader" — is being honored at an event whose "presider" is none other than Cardinal George himself.

Ah yes, and according to archdiocesan official Sister Anita Baird, President Obama isn't pro-abortion; he's "pro-choice." Spoken like a true liberal Democrat.

Alas, I submit there are, in effect, two Catholic churches. There is the Catholic Church — founded by Our Lord on Peter and his successors, infallible and indefectible, "the universal sacrament of salvation" that will last until the end of time — and there is the "catholic" church: founded by dissident clergy and some decadent politicians, tolerates abortion under the guise of social justice, refuses to admit the gay cover-up, engages in liturgical abuses galore, despises the Traditional Mass, and persecutes faithful Catholics...oh, and in the case of at least one U.S. diocese, has reportedly paid for abortions.

In case you're wondering, I'm a member of the Catholic Church.

Okay, rant over. For now. ☺

Hildegard of Bingen and Natural Philosophy: Women's Wisdom

By Marie P. Loehr

We can do wonderful things, for . . . the human species is "completely the image of God."
—Hildegard of Bingen, "Introduction," *The Book of Divine Works*

The 12th century opened an era that is now often called the little, or first, Renaissance. Experimental science was coming into its own in this era. Nature was being experienced as an entity in its own right, as a proper object for study and learning. To study nature was to learn more about God by the works he has made—whether human, animal, vegetable or mineral. To ignore his Creation is to slight God—in any age. To delight in his Creation is to give glory to God—in any age. The 12th century was becoming ever more aware of that.

In his introduction to *The Cosmographia* of Bernardus Silvestris, Winthrop Wetherbee notes:

Nature, the protagonist of the cosmic drama, is in many respects the discovery of the 12th century. The scholars with whom we associate the intellectual renaissance of the period seemed to themselves to be asserting new and important truths in claiming that the universe was a subject of study worth considering for its own sake.

We need to remember that these scholars were priests and monastics for the most part. This was not a departure from Catholic truth, but the first attempt to integrate theological truth and natural philosophy, as the study of the cosmos was called in that time.

Bernardus Silvestris, so often cited by C.S. Lewis in his works, used poetry and allegory to explore this material in an attempt to show the relationship between God and his Creation, theology and natural philosophy. This is an era whose saints and humanists were deeply involved in studying the natural world for itself. They also sought to know its created reality as accurately as possible in order to discern its underlying sacramentality and spiritual value for us and for God. Hildegard of Bingen, although a woman and a cloistered religious, is pre-eminent among these scholars.

Many Americans, especially traditionalist Catholics, only know Hildegard through the efforts of Matthew Fox and his spurious, erroneous "Creation Spirituality" with its New Age trappings. But Fox found Hildegard intractable for his purposes, especially the agenda for ordaining women. Fox is no longer a Dominican or a Catholic or in the Church. Hildegard remains very much a true religious, a Catholic, in the Church—a legitimate, canonically recognized saint, much honored in her native Germany.

Fr. Matthew Hauke speaks highly of her in his definitive work, *Women in the Priesthood?*, explicating the Church's inability to ordain women to the ministerial priesthood.

For Hildegard of Bingen the intellect and its use—in curiosity, exploration of the world around her and in her visions was a gift of God. All she observed, recorded, experienced was a way to know God better, therefore to love him better, and in the end to serve him better. To recognize that, and learn it as thoroughly as possible, was the most fitting way to give glory to God, and to work his justice on earth, to "sing his justice to heaven."

Born in 1098, Hildegard lived until 1179. She lived and worked in 12th century Christendom, in what is now Germany. Descended from a noble family, she entered religious life, presented to a local Benedictine convent by her parents, at the age of 8. Although hidden in this obscurity for many years, she was well-educated by the nun in charge. She could read and write. She learned herbs and spices. She used plants for medicinal, healing purposes. She examined her world with an attentive eye and an ordered mind.

For her, such careful observation, experimentation, application was a natural way to use God's gifts to give him glory, especially in helping those around her.

Gifted—or cursed—with frequent visions from an early age, she was meticulous in recording them, using a secretary as recorder and independent witness. She was as precise in her detail and explication of her spiritual visions as she was in her detail and explication of natural history, the physical world around her. She never confused or conflated these two distinct objects of observation and examination.

Neither did she find any conflict between the things of God and the things of his Creation, what we might call today theology and science. For her, as for so many saints and doctors and later scientists—in modern terms—truth cannot contradict Truth. Creation comes from the hand of God for our good, and thus we can find him in it. The more we study his Creation, the more we learn about him. This study must be objective, detailed, and accurate. As Aquinas would say in his era, mistakes about Creation lead to mistakes about God. Hildegard would agree.

Besides her most famous works, those describing and explaining her visions of spiritual reality, history, and salvation, Hildegard's works on natural history are contained in *Nine Books on the Subtleties of Different Kinds of Creatures*, or *The Book of Simple Medicine*. She devotes four books to animals, two to herbs and trees, and three to gems, metals, and "elements."

Her *Causes and Cures* or *Book of Composite Medicine* never received a final form. It contains "systematic material on diseases and their treatment," says Newman, "and a fascinating miscellany of traditions about Adam and Eve, observations on sexuality and even astrological lore." One must understand that "Christian" astrology in Hildegard's time was consonant with astronomy. It was not the occultist practice it is today. It was not predetermined. The planets, for medieval Christians, didn't control your destiny. They did suggest character and personality traits, and provided a system for psychological exploration. Every star and planet was the mansion of its guiding angel. The nature of the angel determined the influences a given star or constellation might have on each person, due to accidents of birth but nothing trumped free will and God's grace, however.

Hildegard's observations, experiments and practices accord well with modern holistic medicine, independent of any New Age context. There are clinics in Europe that use many of her recommendations to support their medical work today. Regine Pernoud's small study, *Hildegard of Bingen*, details some of the saint's medical and herbal recommendations.

She is insistent on a healthy, balanced diet. Her specifics sound as if they came straight from a nutritionist in a cardiac rehab facility! She promotes a diet that includes some favorites of the cardiovascular health community, including legumes, lean meats as fresh as possible, light pastilles of herbs and spices that promote soothing influences, each herb or spice for each specific mood or ailment. She believed certain fragrances useful in both physiological and psychological therapy—although she would not have used those terms.

Part of her scientific observations led her to insist on the biological and spiritual complementarity of masculine and feminine to one another. She speaks out against the possibility of ordaining women to the liturgical priesthood based on those distinctions, differences and complementarities. She also anticipates NFP, natural family planning, observing and carefully recording the shifts in woman's biological cycle and their conjunction with the phases of the moon—using this knowledge to help laywomen to manage the optimum possibilities for conception, following her recommendations.

She was also a composer of liturgical music for her nuns and Church feasts, especially feasts of Our Lady. Her chant is timeless. To hear her work performed with that of Guillaume de Machaut [14th cent.], and Olivier Messiaen [mid-20th cent.] is to hear a seamless continuity of transcendent liturgical music. Her empiric understanding of the acoustics of the church building, plus a similar exploration of the range of the human larynx, finds its maximum potential for astonishing expression in the human voice.

In short, Hildegard practiced the basic tenets of scientific method as we know it today, before we recognized or codified such method! So much for the Dark Ages!

Hildegard gives the lie to that canard. She knew her Church and her God and His Creation well. She studied them carefully in depth and breadth. She found no conflict between science and religion. Her faith informed her empirical scientific observations, and those in turn informed her religious faith. The applications resulting from her studies bore rich fruit in her hands, for the good of man and the glory of God. Astute, meticulous, curious, delighting in God and all his works, she is a model of the so-called "Renaissance man" as well as a model empirical scientist—a fine example for any believer in any age. ↵

Mopping Up

While some in the Church hierarchy are backing away from scandal-ridden Catholic Campaign for Human Development, others insist on defending it, regardless of facts.

By Stephanie Block

Victims of clerical pedophilia will tell you that as horrific as the initial violation was, it was often aggravated by the mad scramble of Church officials to bury offenses in secrecy and prevarication. Further, some bishops went so far as to deny any problem whatsoever – despite increasingly demonstrable evidence – and further compounded damage to the Church by generating a general mistrust among the laity.

Blessedly, when it's come to misappropriation of Catholic money into left-wing causes, including pro-abortion activism, several bishops are taking forthright measures. Bishops John O. Barres of Allentown, Pennsylvania, Fabian Bruskewitz of Lincoln, Nebraska, Robert C. Morlino of Madison, Wisconsin, Edward J. Slattery of Tulsa, Oklahoma, Victor Galeone of St. Augustine, Florida, and Robert J. Baker of Birmingham, Alabama have either suspended the scandal-ridden *Catholic Campaign for Human Development* (CCHD) collection in their dioceses or deflected funds to worthier causes. Their actions were supported by the premier pro-life organizations in the United States, *Human Life International* and the *American Life League*.

Other bishops, however, have reverted to the dysfunctional behaviors they honed during the pedophilia crisis, pretending there is no elephant in the living room. "I reiterate," writes an ostensibly irate Archbishop Michael J. Sheehan of the Archdiocese of Santa Fe using bold typeface for this sentence in a longer article, "CCHD does not fund organizations that promote issues contrary to Church teaching." [Sheehan, "The Catholic Campaign for Human Development: A Commitment to Life and Dignity of the Human Person," *People of God*, monthly newspaper for the Archdiocese of Santa Fe, April 2010]

One wonders if Archbishop Sheehan has read the same reports as the other bishops. If he hasn't, he certainly *could*. The most damning of them appear at the *Reform CCHD Now* website: reformcchdnow.com and they contain facts that are easily verified.

Singling out Archbishop Sheehan is a bit unfair. His defensive instincts are shared by others in the American Catholic hierarchy but it is he who has written a column articulating the positions of CCHD apologists and is therefore the one whose arguments must be examined. Let's consider seven of the Archbishop's assertions, buried in the text of his April column:

Archbishop Sheehan: "CCHD's mission is to address the root causes of poverty in America through promotion of community-controlled self-help organizations."

Response: This sentence echoes CCHD's description of itself. Unfortunately, the terms are so vague they could describe an *Alcoholics Anonymous* meeting – which has never yet received a penny of CCHD money. Nor is the term "root cause" defined. Catholic teaching would describe the ultimate root cause as human sin but there is nothing in CCHD grants to help people gain greater access to the Confessional.

However, CCHD grants have nothing at all to do with "root causes of poverty" as Catholics understand them – broken homes and fractured lives – and everything to do with supporting political public policies that may or may not "help" the poor. CCHD apologists know this very well: see point #3 (below).

Archbishop Sheehan: "CCHD also provides educational opportunities for Catholics to learn about poverty, to interact and build solidarity with those affected by it, and reflect on a faith response to poverty."

Response: The educational opportunities provided by CCHD for Catholics to "learn about poverty" are not Catholic but liberationist and, therefore, are as likely to produce a flawed "faith response" to poverty as an authentic response. The *Catholic Media Coalition* website [www.catholicmediacoalition.org/USCCB.htm] carries an extensive dossier on liberationist materials, with a section examining, in some detail, educational materials produced by the CCHD.

Three out of many published over the past 40 years are:

- The *Sourcebook on Poverty, Development and Justice* is a collection of five essays produced by the CHD (before 1997, there was no "Catholic" in CHD's name) in the 1970s. One essay "acknowledges" that its thinking comes from the theology of liberation as it has "issued from the

leaders of the Latin American Church.” Using a liberationist lens, “the whole struggle of Jesus, who came to set at liberty those who are oppressed, was *with His own people* who had made the law of Israel and the land of Israel too narrow and exclusive.” Other essays dismiss the ravages of personal sin and are concerned only about structural sins, scriptural stories are twisted for political ends, and there is a demand for “liberating education,” as distinct from traditional western education.

- *People Like Us* is a CHD promotional booklet produced in the 1990s and reprinted several times, as recently as 2005. It begins with a “dedication” to Democrat Socialist Michael Harrington, including a quote by him: “At precisely that moment in history where for the first time a people have the material ability to *end poverty*, they lack the will to do so.” (emphasis added)
- *Poverty and Faithjustice* is CCHD-prepared material intended for use by small groups “in a context of faith and prayer” and remains in current use. It is a guide for six facilitated sessions structured according to a modified see-judge-act pedagogy. Participants “see,” based on personal experience and the facts provided by the booklet. They “judge,” based on scripture or social justice text selections provided by the booklet. “Action” is suggested, namely that participants engage in political activism that supports CCHD-identified issues and to support CCHD-funded projects in the local community.

The opening statement of the CCHD-prepared booklet acknowledges its intention to conscientize, “to raise the consciousness of parishioners.” Its facilitators are to encourage participation “from personal experience and conviction rather than from abstract theories or ideologies” – which means that the “judgment” component of these materials isn’t based on Catholic teaching but on what individual participants “feel” about given issues.

CCHD has worked with other Catholic agencies on equally questionable educational materials. *A Catholic Call to Justice: Activity Book for Raising Social Justice Awareness* was a consciousness-raising lesson plan jointly produced with Catholic Relief Services in 1998. Young people are “asked to play the role of refugees” and develop some understanding of “the difficulties of being poor and on the move.” However, the program is guided to interpret the problems of refugees in strictly class and economic terms. The perspective isn’t Catholic – it’s liberationist.

These “educational opportunities for Catholics to learn about poverty, to interact and build solidarity with those affected by it, and reflect on a faith response to poverty” are not *Catholic* educational opportunities. They don’t provide a Catholic perspective to poverty. While it is absolutely proper to have sympathy for the poor, the Church also teaches that liberationist politics ultimately do more harm than good.

Archbishop Sheehan: “The [CCHD-funded] organizations do this by giving poor people a chance to improve their lives and neighborhoods by advocating for more just policies (like affordable housing, preserving the acequia way of life in New Mexico, comprehensive immigration reform, getting basic services like water/sewer services, access to jobs, and just wages), or by starting small businesses and creating jobs that would provide some stable income.” AND “Partisan activity is strictly prohibited.”

Response: Ah... we find that, after all, the CCHD “mission” isn’t quite as vague as first presented. There is an agenda and it involves a lot of government intervention. That’s a *political* “solution” to poverty, not a *moral* solution...and political solutions are, by their very nature, negotiable. While good men will agree there is a moral obligation on the part of the more fortunate to help those who are in trouble, there is a legitimate range of differences about how this help should be accomplished. Robbing a bank (or the public treasury) in order to “give away” money is quite a different “solution” than “starting small businesses and creating jobs that would provide some stable income.”

Would that CCHD funded more of the latter (which accounts for about a third of its grants) and less of the former (which accounts for the rest).

Archbishop Sheehan: “Last year, two national organizations funded by CCHD were found to be involved with work that was contrary to Catholic teaching...”

Response: Now here’s a sentence that belies the emphatic statement, “CCHD does not fund organizations that promote issues contrary to Church teaching.” Clearly, it has.

The Archbishop's point, of course, is that since CCHD has defunded these two, the collection has demonstrated its commitment to Church teaching. One might just as easily argue, however, that defunding two out of the mass of other offenders (read the reports!) is a cynical attempt to save the majority of grantees by sacrificing two that are no more or less egregious than in those still funded – all being servants of progressive, culture-of-death politics.

Archbishop Sheehan: "...many allegations [against CCHD] are simply untrue."

Response: However, not one is named in this article and this author has yet to see any "untrue allegation" named by any bishop in the United States. The researchers behind the CCHD reports have done such a meticulous job of presenting the evidence that it is highly unlikely a bishop would be so imprudent as to attempt a positive defense of these funding choices.

Archbishop Sheehan: "Within our diocese, I review all CCHD grant applications and approve proposals only after careful screening."

Response: In 1997, every bishop in the US overseeing a diocese was sent a 4-inch binder containing a Commentary and extensive, supportive evidence about CHD grants – including an entire section describing serious problems, among them the pro-abortion affiliations of its leadership, of ACORN. Archbishop Michael Sheehan was among the bishops who received this binder.

It caused a good bit of stir. The name of CHD had "Catholic" added to it and CCHD improved its guidelines to read that no group with programs violating Church teaching would be funded.

Unfortunately, these reforms weren't enough. In the years after 1997, the Archdiocese of Santa Fe, together with many other US dioceses, gave ACORN millions of dollars (specifically, the Archdiocese of Santa Fe gave ACORN no less than \$177,500).

Whatever oversight was given to local CCHD grantees, it did not take into account the voluminous information concerning this blighted group, which is only one among many others that have been demonstrated to hold such affiliations.

Archbishop Sheehan: "I am, however, asking CCHD leadership to adjust their funding requirements to allow Catholic groups such as our immigrant program at Catholic Charities to be funded."

Response: This statement exposes two problems. Overtly Catholic groups were, at one point, expressly exempted from applying for C/CHD money according to C/CHD guidelines. If Archbishop Sheehan must ask "CCHD leadership to adjust their funding requirements to allow Catholic groups" to apply for grants, it suggests the requirement banning Catholic groups remains, if not expressly at least functionally. That's scandalous enough and Catholics have been complaining about it since C/CHD's inception.

The other scandal is that, because the CCHD is not really a Catholic charity in the sense that Catholic money is used according to Catholic understanding of charity or social justice, entire areas of public policy, in which the dignity of human persons is grossly offended, are also exempt from CCHD grants. Specifically, any organization that ministers to unwed mothers or advocates for life issues is exempt from CCHD grants. This fact alone makes it difficult for CCHD to deny its patently progressive political bias, replete with all the pro-death public policies that bias holds.

Look, the history – written by the folks who support CCHD – is there for anyone to read. CHD was *designed* to fund Alinskyian community organizing. These organizations are engaged in progressive political activism that directly and/or indirectly includes pro-abortion advocacy. For the past 40 years CCHD funding has done exactly what it was created to do. All the denials in the world won't change those sorry facts – any more than they made the pedophile problem go away.

Reform CCHD Now. ❧

***JustFaith* Is a Big Part of the Problem**

The CCHD education component – including Jack Jezreel’s JustFaith – is all about progressive politics.

By Stephanie Block

Michael J. Sheehan, Ordinary for the Archdiocese of Santa Fe, devoted his column in the archdiocese’s April 2010 issue of its monthly newspaper, *People of God*, to a spirited defense of the justifiably beleaguered *Catholic Campaign for Human Development* (CCHD).

The article, “The Catholic Campaign for Human Development: A Commitment to Life and Dignity of the Human Person,” proudly points to CCHD’s educational efforts as part of that defense. Archbishop Sheehan writes: “CCHD also provides educational opportunities for Catholics to learn about poverty, to interact and build solidarity with those affected by it, and reflect on a faith response to poverty.”

Of all the unhappy points to make, CCHD’s history of un-Catholic “educational materials” is one of the most wretched aspects about the program...and not well known. A short discussion about this history can be found at Spero News [“Mopping Up CCHD,” www.speroforum.com/site/print.asp?idarticle=30866]; a more extensive presentation is available at the *Catholic Media Coalition* website [www.catholicmediacoalition.org/USCCB.htm], included in an extensive dossier on liberationist materials.

One educational program not mentioned in either of these two critiques is Jack Jezreel’s *JustFaith*, a 30-week “intensive opportunity to explore the Biblical tradition, the historic witness of the Church, Catholic social teaching, and the relationship between spirituality and justice.” (Press Release, uscgb.org/cchd/JFPartnershipPR.htm)

In 2005, CCHD, *Catholic Charities USA*, and *Catholic Relief Services* announced “a new partnership” with the *JustFaith* program to expand “parish and church commitment to social ministry and the role that formation in the justice tradition plays.”

It would be more accurate to say that *JustFaith* is expanding commitment within parishes to progressive social solutions and political networking. Jezreel is a popular speaker in progressive venues, such as the dissident-Catholic organization, *Call to Action* (CTA) and one of its affiliate members, *Pax Christi*.

Lest anyone imagine his appearances with these organizations were ignorant, one-time only occurrences, it must be pointed out that there are *several* instances of Jezreel speaking before these groups over a number of years. He has spoken at the:

- 1996 *Call to Action* national conference,
- 1997 *Call to Action* national conference: “Spirituality of Commitment Making Promises, Friends and Justice”;
- August 11-13, 2000 fourth West Coast *Call to Action* Conference, at San Jose State University: “Transformed People, Transformed Parish, Transformed World”
- 2007 keynote at *Call to Action* -affiliated *Pax Christi* National Conference

That’s a problem, because *Call to Action* disseminates a liberationist – not a Catholic – perspective about social justice. For CTA to invite Jezreel to speak the first time could have been a mistake (“Golly, we thought the man had these cool, progressive political ideas but he’s just another orthodox toady, after all. Our bad.”), but to invite him *back* to speak requires some significant appreciation for what the man had to say. That doesn’t speak well of Jezreel, any more than collaboration with a fellow who has been the keynote speaker for the Ku Klux Klan would speak well of someone appointed to a Commission on Racial Reconciliation.

And Jezreel’s *JustFaith* program lives up to expectation. Its reading list, filled with dissenting writers, its distortions of Scripture and Catholic teaching to “reveal” class antagonisms and a “need” to restructure society along Marxist lines, are simply inappropriate “educational materials” for training Catholics. [See “*JustFaith* vs the Catholic Faith,” www.catholicmediacoalition.org/just_faith.htm]

The bottom line, however, is how hapless Catholics, exposed to *JustFaith* materials, understand what they have experienced. In one Catholic Forum discussion, a participant writes:

I dropped out of JustFaith due to the curriculum opposing the basic tenets of the faith, like: Contemplation subordinate to action, sin not being emphasized as the problem but systems like corporations, systems, and even the hierarchy of the Church as opposed to ecclesial based communities as needed for

improvement of the world. Jesus as a radical opposing the political powers of the day was the way they presented our Lord.

It smacked of temporal salvation by the correct “use” of divine revelation. Absolutely no Church- based books like the “Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church” or encyclicals, just what other people say about official Church documents. One book offered, The Powers That Be, A Theology for a New Millennium by Jesus Seminar member Walter Wink, intimated at the Church “making” Jesus divine in opposition to His actual Divinity. Wink never says that Jesus isn’t Divine but one can well deduce his meaning. Gnostic texts are used in place of the Gospel of John due to the spiritual nature of the official Gospel. The historical Jesus is emphasized and sin is de-emphasized.

The reason for a 30 week, multi-hour classes and “immersion” weekends is to re-educate Catholics in a different Christian ethic in order to fit the “humanistic” ideals of the JustFaith program. This is not a problem for Protestant groups as they have such a varied theology that this is just another view added to their personal interpretations anyway. Official Catholic Magisterial teaching is oriented to sin and to our nature based on original sin with salvation through Grace. This JustFaith program is in no way faithful to that. [Earnest Bunbury, Re: JustFaith Program (discussion thread), October 29, 2008.]

Rich Leonardi, who writes the Cincinnati-based blog, “Ten Reasons,” also had an insightful post:

A friend from another diocese with extensive experience in adult faith formation participated in one of Mr. Jezreel’s workshops and has allowed me to share some of his observations and concerns:

- 1) **The apparent total rejection of personal salvation and sin** – which seriously distorts Church teaching, undermines evangelization, and could actually endanger people’s salvation. This often accompanies “Reign of God” theology in my experience.*
- 2) **Collapsing Revelation, authentic interpretation and the interpretation of an individual theologian** so that average Catholics going through would not know that there was a difference and that one obliges and the other is just an opinion. The distinction between revelation and the application in a specific situation is not maintained. Much that is really prudential is dealt with as though it is obligatory.*
- 3) **Reducing everything in relationship to God, conversion, and discipleship, to a very narrow set of economic and political concerns.** ... I can’t imagine anyone who buys into the JustFaith world view ever voting for a Republican, for instance, because everything is to be judged by a very specific economic agenda.*
- 4) **A serious misreading and dismissal of the meaning and impact of the ordained role of Teaching, Governing, Sanctifying.** Jack actually didn’t say so, but I can’t help but wonder if he believes that only the lay/baptismal office really exists or matters and the ordained office is just a power-play.*
- 5) **A focus so narrowly political that the work and vocations of lay Catholics are not relevant***

Additional concerns raised by blogger Leonardi’s friend were that the workshop presents:

- *Vatican I and II ... as in opposition [to one another]. ...*
- *Salvation “is not individual but collective.”*
- *The “old” (pre-Vat II) understanding of sin talked of grave matter/full knowledge/full consent – and “individual act of malice.” This is to be contrasted with “prophetic” understanding of sin – which is always social and never individual. The issue is not individual malice but social “blindness” that an entire community can participate in.*

Leonardi concludes: “My friend’s bottom-line assessment: “Based upon my experience, I couldn’t recommend it as a intro to Catholic Social Teaching or any other aspect of lay formation. I was disappointed because I keep hoping to find something I can recommend.” [Rich Lombardi, “Couldn’t recommend it,” Ten Reasons Blog, May 06, 2007]

As an example of CCHD’s miserable “educational opportunity,” *JustFaith* makes the point about CCHD’s deeply flawed nature even better than its critics’ reports.

Reform CCHD Now! ↵

Last Word...

By Alan Peter

Having received a few letters from Archbishop Sheehan, I was fascinated by His Excellency's article in the April 2010 Archdiocesan newspaper, entitled "The Catholic Campaign for Human Development: A Commitment to Life and Dignity of the Human Person."

Fascinated because although it presents his general position - *never question anything the Church hierarchy does; it's all good* - it did not all seem to be his words. A quick Internet search led to the US Conference of Catholic Bishops website, [<http://www.usccb.org/cchd/acorn-faq.shtml>] where I learned that "[t]he Catholic Campaign for Human Development (CCHD) is the anti-poverty effort of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. CCHD's mission is to address the root causes of poverty in America through promotion and support of community-controlled self-help organizations, and through transformative education." Hmm ... first paragraph of the Archbishops' column. A few more clicks to [www.usccb.org/cchd/morin_report_2009.shtml] and the November 2009 Bishop Morin CCHD report: "One case is one too many, and we continue to strengthen CCHD's review and monitoring processes." Archbishop, paragraph three. Further in the same report we read about *Rooting, Renewing, and Recommitting*. Second-to-last paragraph, Archbishop's article.

News flash !! Sometimes the Archbishop copies from the USCCB website !!

More troubling, though, is what the USCCB claims is our Catholic faith-in-action, to be lived by the faithful. From the USCCB Internet link, above:

What is community organizing?

Community organizing is the bringing together of people and often churches and other groups in a geographic area to address concerns affecting the common good, such as safe and affordable housing, access to services and businesses, educational systems, access to jobs with living wages, and other issues of economic development and justice.

Why is the Catholic Church supportive of community organizing efforts?

Community organizing is one way Catholics can exercise their moral responsibility to participate in public life. "It is necessary that all participate, each according to his position and role, in promoting the common good. This obligation is inherent in the dignity of the human person" (Catechism of the Catholic Church, #1913). Addressing systemic injustice in society can be achieved by voting, legislative advocacy, and public witness. Community organizing can include these methods, as well as other activities that address injustice and poverty.

Additionally, community organizing puts Catholic social teaching principles into action. It brings together people of varied socio-economic, ethnic, and religious backgrounds to work together in solidarity for the common good. Community organizing allows people who are poor and people who are not poor to work together to solve problems. When people who are poor take leadership and work to address their own situations, their human dignity is affirmed.

Since when is "the Catholic Church supportive of community organizing efforts?" Maybe the USCCB *is* supportive, but *not* the Catholic Church founded on Tradition, Teachings of the Magisterium, and Scripture. Perhaps the USCCB should re-read Pope Leo XIII (especially, but not only, his encyclical *Rerum Novarum*), who states the object to which Catholic Action should be particularly devoted is "the practical solution of the social question *according to Christian principles*" (emphasis added). Or, maybe, Pope Pius X's encyclical *Il Fermo Proposito*. Even the Bible: "But seek first the Kingdom of God and his justice [Matt 6:33]."

If the Bishops are successors to the Apostles, shouldn't they be *apostolic*? Does Our Lord, the Good Shepherd, lead His flock to "safe and affordable housing, access to services and businesses, educational systems, and access to jobs with living wages?" Will our souls be content with some godless, man-made utopia? Or, is Saint Augustine correct when he writes, "You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our heart is restless until it rests in you." Must Catholics in the Archdiocese of Santa Fe support, with their treasure, CCHD-funded groups who are opposed to the Social Kingship of Jesus Christ? f