

COLUMNISTS

Critics intrude in Catholic education

There were murmurs of indignation in some Catholic quarters when a recent survey of U.S. theological faculties disclosed that, while Catholic institutions hire significant numbers of faculty trained in non-Catholic schools, non-Catholic institutions do not reciprocate. Indeed, they hire very few graduates of Catholic universities.

In a story that accompanied the survey results, a few unnamed Catholic and Protestant theologians acknowledged the validity of the survey findings. One Protestant said that it would be "unthinkable" for a major non-Catholic school to hire a graduate of a Catholic program. Another said that Catholics have "nothing to teach us."

A Catholic theologian did concede that Catholic programs have an image problem made worse by the embarrassing publicity about oaths of fidelity and canonical mandates.

While it is surely not true that Catholic doctoral programs in theology are inherently inferior to non-Catholic programs (Notre Dame's theology department is ranked well ahead of most non-Catholic programs), it cannot be denied that Catholic programs are vulnerable to indirect, and sometimes even direct, interference with their work by non-academic, ecclesiastical forces.

Does Yale or Harvard, for example, have an external board of religious leaders, none of whom is involved in theological or biblical scholarship, with the power to remove a theologian from his or her academic post, not for poor schol-



essays in theology

By FATHER RICHARD P. MCBRIEN

arship (that is a judgment only one's scholarly peers can make) but for coming to theological conclusions at variance with their own?

That happened at The Catholic University of America several years ago in the case of Father Charles Curran, now a chaired professor at Southern Methodist University.

Are doctoral students at the University of Chicago or Emory University, for example, discouraged from writing dissertations on issues of sexual morality or ecclesiastical authority, lest they attract the attention of church officials and land the dissertation director in difficulty with his or her religious superiors?

That has been, and may still be, the case in at least one national Catholic institution.

Are there theologians on the faculty of Princeton or the University of Virginia, for example, whose published work has been subject to public discrediting by a tiny committee of non-academic church officials, under pressure

from the Vatican?

That has been the case, even within the highest ranked Catholic theological faculty.

Such developments, however, are blatantly inconsistent with a theological tradition that has always been richly pluralistic.

For centuries Catholicism has not had one official theology, but several schools of theology. Some of the fiercest theological debates, long before Vatican II, have occurred between Jesuits and Dominicans, with the Franciscans poking their noses in at key points.

Moreover, the various theological approaches one finds in the Catholic West have been, almost from the beginning of church history, markedly different from those adopted in the Catholic East.

Catholicism has embraced the theology of Athanasius and Cyril of Jerusalem alike, of Gregory Nazianzus and Augustine, of Thomas Aquinas and Bonaventure, of Robert Bellarmine and Johann Adam Mahler, of Karl Rahner and Hans Urs von Balthasar, yes, even of Hans Kung and Joseph Ratzinger.

It is a spiritual tradition open to *The Cloud of Unknowing* and to the *Introduction to the Devout Life*, to Francis and Clare of Assisi and to Bernard of Clairvaux, to Ignatius of Loyola and to John of the Cross, to Abbot Marmion and to Thomas Merton.

It is also an ecclesiastical tradition broad enough to accommodate popes as diverse as Gregory the Great and Boniface VIII, Pius IX and Leo XIII, Pius X

and Benedict XV, John XXIII and John Paul II.

One would not realize how pluralistic the Catholic tradition has been, if one had only the present ecclesiastical situation by which to judge.

It is as if, today, that rich Catholic pluralism had been swept aside and there were no room any longer for different schools of thought, different theologies, different approaches.

It is as if only one theological approach were possible now, while all others are to be dismissed as dissident, and their proponents punished and degraded.

As the national rankings make clear, there are Catholic universities with doctoral programs in theology far stronger academically than those in many non-Catholic institutions. Some of those non-Catholic schools would do well to hire the young Catholic graduates of our best Catholic universities and theologians.

But that said, we Catholics have no cause to be simply dismissive of the stated skepticism, even the occasional hostility, of many faculty at non-Catholic institutions.

We may be convinced that their blanket criticisms are inaccurate and unfair. But they are surely not inaccurate and unfair in all cases.

That is something we need to work on, not they.

Father McBrien is a professor of theology at the University of Notre Dame.

COURIER CLASSIFIEDS

GENERAL

Announcements

ADOPTIONS The Catholic Courier does not publish adoption advertising. To obtain a list of agencies that serve birth mothers and adoptive parents, call 716-328-4340. Agencies wishing to be included on this list may send information to the Catholic Courier.

PROFESSIONAL COUNSELING FROM a faith perspective. Marriage/Indiv. Martin Lynch 716-232-4675.

Help Wanted

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION DIRECTOR OR COORDINATOR

St. Joseph's Parish in Albion is seeking a leader for their Religious Education Program, which consists of 325 students, to begin this fall. Responsibilities include setting goals & objectives, planning curriculum, recruiting and forming catechists, and administering programs.

Preferred that candidate have or be working toward a degree in Religious Studies or a related field and some experience in the field. Salary and benefits contingent upon qualifications.

Send letter of resume by July 24, to St. Joseph's Search Committee, 106 Main St. Albion, NY 14411.

GENERAL

Business Opportunities

NEW TO AREA Established linen party plan looking for experienced demonstrators/managers. Aggressive compensation. No delivery/collection. Free catalogs/supplies. Monthly cash bonus. Mary 800-536-2457.

Miscellaneous

DJ MUSIC FOR parties, weddings, anniversaries, birthdays. Call Joe at DJ James Tunes. 716-473-5411.

EMPLOYMENT

Help Wanted

ELEMENTARY PRINCIPAL

SS. Peter & Paul Parish Community, Hamburg, NY, invites applications for the position of Catholic elementary school principal Pre-K-8. Practicing Catholic, Master's Degree. Have or be working toward NYS Certification in School Administration. Elementary school experience. Spiritual, educational, managerial skills and commitment to Catholic school leadership necessary. Salary negotiable. Send letter of interest/resume and reference from pastor by July 15, 1997, to:

Search Committee
SS. Peter & Paul School
68 East Main St.
Hamburg, NY 14075

EMPLOYMENT

Help Wanted

GROUNDS KEEPER: TRIMMING, mowing, weeding. 40 hours, 3 months. \$6/hr. Experience preferred. Pittsford area. Call 716-586-1000, ext. 212.

MERCHANDISE

Clothing

CHRISTENING GOWNS WITH hat. Handmade, crocheted, ribbon embroidery, etc. Call Debora 716-323-1790.

Wanted to Buy

Furniture, Trunks, Clocks, Sterling and China, Linens. Wanted: complete estates and households. Sell to me for cash or I will conduct a sale for you.
Marilyn's Antiques
716-647-2480

Apartments Unfurnished

MIDTOWN MANOR APARTMENTS FOR AGE 50 AND OLDER. Convenient Downtown Location. Walk to shopping. On a direct busline. Studios \$299; One bedroom \$359. All utilities included. Section 8 accepted. Monthly Maintenance Services.
475 East Broad St. • 716-546-3650

CEILING REPAIR

TEXTURED/SWIRLED CEILINGS 9' x 12' ceiling only \$59. Water Damage, drywall, plaster repairs. Quality work; reasonable prices. 716-392-5076.

Call 716-328-4340 to advertise in the Courier classifieds

SERVICES

Electricians

NE NOLAN ELECTRIC
FOR ALL YOUR ELECTRICAL NEEDS
Serving Rochester & Surrounding Areas
Licensed & Fully Insured
716-436-8290

VAEGER ELECTRIC
Residential • Commercial • Industrial
Licensed Master Electricians
Trouble Shooting • Service Upgrade
Control Wiring • Commercial Maintenance
(716)265-1888 • 147 Route 104, Ontario

Heating & Air Conditioning

Hicks Home Heating
Call us for Summer Comfort!
Heat & Air Conditioning Specialists
• Sales • Service • Installation
Family Owned & Operated
424-4848

Home Improvement

MASONRY REPAIR: brick steps, basements, patchwork. Reasonable. 35 yrs. exp. 716-323-1007. Al Meyvis, Sr.

House Cleaning

\$10 OFF WINDOWS, lawns, houses! Mickey's Cleaning Service. 716-527-9051 or page 239-5607.

Instruction & Schools

SUMMER TUTORING: CERTIFIED Elementary/special education teacher available for reading/math. 716-442-0024.

MAINTENANCE

Masonry

AMERICAN MASONRY & CHIMNEY
CHIMNEY SERVICE
ALL MASONRY WORK
865-1170 663-7360

Moving & Hauling

K-D Moving & Storage, Inc.
Experience in office, household moving and deliveries.
Big or Small, We do them All!
473-6610/473-4357
25 Arlington St. Rochester NY 14607
NYDOT#657

Painting & Wallcovering

BURG-MASTER PAINTING/PAPERHANGING, texture ceilings, walls, ceilings repaired, rugs shampooed. Insured, powerwashing. Dan Burgmaster, 716-683-0827.

PAINTING: NEAT, RELIABLE, experienced, quality work, many satisfied customers. Call John 716-544-0593.

REPAIRS

Painting & Wallcovering

SPECIALIZING IN REPAIRS OF OLDER HOMES
Basement walls repaired, painted & waterproofed. Interior/exterior painting, garages, porches, etc.
Homes power washed, gutter cleaning, driveway sealing. Small jobs welcome.
Senior Discount • Free Estimates. Certified • 20 Years Experience
AL MEYVIS, JR.
323-2876 • 392-4435

Roofing Siding & Gutters

BOWMAN ROOFING & SIDING CO.
Established 1912
George R. Bowman, Sr.
• Roof Repairs • Siding • Replacement Windows • Seamless Aluminum Gutters • Gutter Cleaning • Ice Problems.
671-3270
671-2912

Ad _____
Name _____
Address _____
City/State/Zip _____
Phone _____
Start Date _____
When we receive your ad, we will call with a price quote.