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## Politics

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of the Christian religion" and a "satanic ... ecclesiastic tyranny over the souls of men ... the old harlot of the Book of the Revelation, the Mother of Harlots." (For the record, Bob Jones apparently isn't a big fan of mamme Protestantism, Mormonism and ecumenism as well.)

And if that doesn't make Catholics a bit wary of attending Bob Jones, they might note that other material on the university's Web site, incidentally, paints the Irish-Catholic fraternal organization the Ancient Order of the Hibernians as a "society constituted largely of heavy-drinking 'professional Irish."

Bush did not address the school's racism and anti-Catholicism during his speech, but neither have virtually all the previous Republican presidential candidates who have spoken at the university during primary seasons — including former President Ronald Reagan, a school supporter. However, Bush is apparently the first Republican to catch major flack for not criticizing Bob Jones. And both his opponents, Sen. John McCain of Arizona and Alan Keyes, a former U.S. diplomat during the Reagan administration, have used the university incident to score political points.

The incident came on top of another incident in January when the U.S. House of Representatives' Republican leadership bypassed a bipartisan committee's recommendation that a Catholic priest be named House chaplain, and chose a Presbyterian minister instead. The selection process led to charges of anti-Catholicism against the House's Republican leadership. Leaders have denied the charges, although at least one representative admitted some discomfort with having a Catholic clergyman as his chaplain. No Catholic has ever served as House chaplain.

Keyes — who is both African-American

and Catholic — said after a Feb. 21 speech at St. John Fisher College in Rochester that he didn't know whether there's anti-Catholic sentiment or racism in his party, although he wondered aloud if either phenomenon had anything to do with his lack of support. Keyes also spoke at Bob Jones, but, unlike Bush, directly challenged the school's racism and religious prejudice.

"It is for us, as Christian people, to reject religious bigotry, to reject racial bigotry ...," he told the Bob Jones audience Feb. 14. He added that he was proud to be a Catholic Christian.

At Fisher, Keyes also said the mistake Bush made was not to realize that a presidential candidate must appeal to all the citizenry, and should publicly condemn any form of racism or religious intolerance.

Bob Jones officials, however, pointed out in a press statement that Keyes also spoke at the university during the 1996 campaign and never criticized the school.

The school's statement bitterly attacked Keyes' remarks, saying they were evidence of "hypocrisy and insincerity."

McCain had first attacked Bush for not speaking out against racism and religious bigotry at Bob Jones, and McCain supporters tried to use the controversy to their advantage in the Michigan primary when they called Catholic voters and urged them to support McCain against Bush. McCain campaign officials at first denied, then admitted orchestrating the phone campaign.

As late as March 2, McCain and Bush were still sparring over the issue publicly, with Bush complaining that McCain has tried to smear him as "anti-Catholic" and with McCain saying he simply pointed out the facts. Bush supporters have also attacked McCain's integrity on the issue, pointing out that McCain's operative in South Carolina, U.S. Rep. Lindsey Graham, has received an honorary degree from Bob Jones.

Bush — whose brother and sister-in-law are both Catholic — has publicly apologized for not speaking out against racism and anti-Catholicism at Bob Jones, both in a letter to Cardinal John O'Connor, archbishop of New York City, and in a Feb. 28 press statement.

"I should have said that racial segregation is harmful in both our laws and in our lives ...," Bush wrote. "I should have said that anti-Catholic bigotry is destructive, intolerant nonsense." He added that Kennedy's 1960 election meant a truce of tolerance had been declared in the country, and that "religion would no longer be injected into presidential campaigns in ugly and divisive ways."

"Forty years later," Bush wrote, "that truce has been broken."

### Big deal?

A truce may have been broken, but is there really a war about to be fought again? Not according to several observers of religion and politics, who say the Bob Jones fiasco and the House chaplaincy flap won't amount to much, come the November elections. Those observers include Mark Rozell, a professor of politics at Catholic University of America, and author of a soon-to-be-published book titled *Prayer in the Precincts: The Christian Right in the 1998 Elections*.

"I think John McCain has overplayed his hand on the issue," Rozell said in a phone interview, adding that he believes most Catholics will be satisfied with Bush's apology and leave it at that.

That's a view echoed by the Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights, based in New York City. The lay organization — which is not affiliated with the official church — accepted Bush's apology and criticized McCain for beating the drum on the issue. It doesn't believe Bush is anti-Catholic, according to Patrick Scully, the league's director of communications. The league also had severely criticized House Republican leaders for how they handled the chaplain selection.

In a phone interview, Scully pointed

out that the league has also criticized House Democrats as hypocritical because they have introduced a resolution condemning bigotry at Bob Jones. In a statement, the league noted that the Democrats supported both Dr. Jocelyn Elders, former surgeon general under President Bill Clinton, and James Hormel, ambassador to Luxembourg. Elders attacked the Catholic Church as a "celibate, male-dominated" institution that opposes abortion, and Hormel refused to explain why he "laughed approvingly" at an anti-Catholic performance troupe during the 1996 Gay Pride Parade in San Francisco.

"But now the same gang that gave us Jocelyn Elders and James Hormel say they've discovered anti-Catholicism because of the Bob Jones fiasco," the league stated in a March 1 press release. "They must all be wearing deep boots these days."

Beyond the headlines, the current controversy over anti-Catholicism points out just how much both parties value the Catholic vote, according to Robert P. Lockwood, former editor of the national Catholic paper *Our Sunday Visitor*, and editor of *The Last Bastion of Bigotry: Anti-Catholicism in American Culture*, a collection of essays on anti-Catholicism.

Until about 1970, Catholics generally voted Democratic, Lockwood noted, but have since become almost evenly divided in allegiance to both parties. Indeed, Catholics played a crucial role as swing voters in both the Reagan and Clinton elections, according to a number of surveys.

Republicans, in particular, Lockwood said, think they can grab Catholic voters this year with their pro-life stands and their support for publicly funded school vouchers for non-public school parents. He added that most Democrats no longer cater directly to Catholics, and show their disregard for Catholic voters by supporting legalized abortion and opposing school vouchers.

Interestingly, though, while politicians generally don't directly attack the church anymore, Lockwood said that arguments for abortion and legalized euthanasia as well as arguments against school vouchers have roots in the country's anti-Catholicism. Pro-choice, pro-euthanasia and anti-voucher activists will often make the argument that nobody should impose their religious beliefs on others, a thinly veiled reference to the church's social stands, he noted. Yet, at the same time, Catholics who ally themselves with religious conservatives who share their views on these issues may be unaware that their allies sometimes

"still harbor unconscious or consciously held anti-Catholic sentiments," a fact highlighted by the Bob Jones incident.

Despite the divisiveness spawned by the Bob Jones flap, the incident has shown that Catholics are a group to which politicians must pay attention, Scully said.

"I think it's a good thing for Catholics in this country that you suffer at the ballot box if you're not sensitive to Catholic voters," he said.

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