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Fr. Hesburgh Took Notre Dame Off Course

No one did more to open the door to abortion being tolerated at Notre Dame than he. In addition, he has long made his commitment to world government and the termination of U.S. independence completely obvious. It is no surprise that Hesburgh (now in his 90s) supported Jenkins' decision to invite Obama and defended Father Jenkins for issuing it.



Born in 1917 to staunchly Catholic parents in Syracuse, New York, Hesburgh yearned to be a priest from an early age. During his years as a Notre Dame student (1934-1937), he received seminary training along with customary academic courses. Off to Rome to earn a philosophy degree, he received ordination in 1943 as a member of the Holy Cross Fathers, the religious order whose pride and joy has always been Notre Dame. Sent then to Catholic University for a doctoral degree, he returned to Notre Dame in 1945 and has been there ever since. In 1948, he was named chairman of the religion department. One year later, he became the university's executive vice-president and, in 1952 at the relatively tender age of 35, Theodore Hesburgh was named Notre Dame's president.

Likewise, he quickly ascended within America's leftist and internationalist establishment. His ascendancy likely began with his participation in a project begun by the leftist Ford Foundation in 1950. Once secure in his post as Notre Dame's president, he earned applause from America's religious and secular progressives by promoting academic freedom, a policy permitted within Catholicism until the church renders its official decision that terminates freethinking about a topic. Abortion has always been condemned. In 1961, Hesburgh accepted appointment to the board of directors of the Rockefeller Foundation, a prominent grantor to abortion-providing and population-control organizations whose work has always been roundly opposed by the Catholic Church. A leading promoter of eugenics (selective breeding) as well as abortion and contraception, the Rockefeller Foundation supports numerous causes that have been opposed to Catholic beliefs.

Hesburgh soon rose to become chairman of the foundation named after the Rockefeller family and then arranged a private meeting with Pope Paul VI at which John D. Rockefeller was afforded an opportunity to request the pope to relax the church's stand on contraception. In 1968, immediately after Pope Paul



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VI condemned the practice in his *Humanae Vitae* encyclical, Notre Dame's leader publicly supported an outspoken member of his faculty who had defiantly challenged the pope's carefully written restatement of this traditional Catholic view.

Prior to siding with opponents of that important papal pronouncement, Hesburgh joined with presidents of several other Catholic colleges and universities, many from the Jesuit order, at a remarkably un-Catholic July 1967 convocation. This gathering, held at the Notre Dame retreat center in Land O' Lakes, Wisconsin, produced a strategy that would minimize or even eliminate church influence at their schools. It created a document declaring that "the catholic university must have true autonomy and academic freedom in the face of authority of whatever kind, lay or clerical." In other words, only the kind of Catholicism we proclaim will tell us how to operate our schools.

In his *Culture Wars* magazine for March 2000, publisher E. Michael Jones explained what this remarkably defiant document accomplished:

This landmark meeting produced a manifesto proclaiming virtual secession from all external Church authority while at the same time claiming to be conducive to the maintenance of Jesuit or Catholic character. How Catholicism would fit into their futuristic plans was expressed in language of platitudinous equivocation. There would be theological studies, diversity in worship, a distinctive life style, and efforts to make Catholicism "perceptively present and effectively active."

Jones noted that the manifesto produced by the Land O' Lakes participants amounted to "virtual secession from all external Church authority." But its participants nevertheless insisted that they had remained faithful to traditional Catholic and Jesuit history. Not so, wrote Jones, who concluded that as a result of the gathering, "Catholic institutions would embody Catholicism roughly as [much as could be found at] state universities." The fruits of this gathering are many, certainly including the invitation to a determined pro-abortionist to speak at Notre Dame.

President Obama has a long history of supporting abortion on demand, even the grisly practice known as partial-birth abortion. He has backed embryonic stem-cell research, and in one of his first acts as the nation's chief executive, he canceled the already established prohibition against taxpayer funding of abortion in other nations. There can be no doubt where he stands on this fundamental issue. Therefore, many Notre Dame alumni and friends were rightfully angered when Father Jenkins invited the president to speak at the university.

But where were these outraged defenders of Notre Dame and traditional Catholic views when President Hesburgh was serving the Rockefeller Foundation as its chairman of the board (1977 to 1982), supporting defiance of a papal encyclical, and so much more. No noteworthy uproar occurred when he shocked even some of his most ardent defenders by permitting Notre Dame to host an annual convention of Planned Parenthood. He allowed our nation's most prolific abortion provider to use campus facilities several times. Then, in a 1974 speech to a Catholic press association, he labeled opponents of abortion "mindless and crude zealots."

In 1969, Hesburgh added his name and that of Notre Dame to an advertisement appearing in the *New York Times* saluting the work of the Sex Information and Education Council of the United States (SIECUS). The ad claimed that "enlightened Americans support the concepts of SIECUS: that sex education [is] essential to self-awareness and human development." Distraught parents from coast to coast had already been protesting the astonishingly prurient materials forced down the consciousness of grade and high school children by SIECUS. But the endorsement of such teaching by such a



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prominent Catholic clergyman helped to keep the practice alive.

While serving as the highly visible president of Notre Dame, Hesburgh issued a book calling for making the world “somewhat divine” and labeling his goal “Christian Humanism.” In his work entitled *Humane Imperative*, he declared, “Redemption embraces the totality of creation, and those working for a new man and a new earth are very much creating and redeeming the times as well.” Many non-Catholics are as determinedly opposed to such New Age pantheism as any caring Catholic surely is.

Not only has Hesburgh orchestrated an attack on much of Catholicism’s beliefs, he has proudly and emphatically lent his name and the prestige of his office to organizations and movements determined to destroy our nation’s sovereignty. Named a member of the board of the Chase Manhattan Bank by David Rockefeller in 1972, he immediately accepted membership in the world government-promoting Council on Foreign Relations chaired by Rockefeller. One year later in a speech at Harvard University, he called for an international agency to be created to grant people “world citizenship.” He suggested this as a way to break down “the one great remaining divider of human kind ... national sovereignty.” He would later affiliate with the United World Federalists and its call for world law to be “enforceable directly on individuals.” In 1977, *People* magazine told readers about his private breakfast meeting with President Carter and the top administration officials he casually referred to as “Zbig, Cy, Linowitz and Bunker.” Each a CFR member committed to terminating U.S. sovereignty, they are Zbigniew Brzezinski, Cyrus Vance, Sol Linowitz and Ellsworth Bunker, the very men who succeeded in turning over the American Canal in Panama to that country’s Marxist dictator.

As a member of the advisory board of the group known as Planetary Citizens, Hesburgh subscribed to its *Human Manifesto* which seeks a “United Nations capable of governing our planet.” In 1991, he told a convocation at Notre Dame that he wanted a “new world order” that would include strengthening the United Nations, awarding it a permanent military arm, and removing the veto power over Security Council resolutions possessed by our nation and several others. In 2000, fellow CFR member Bill Clinton presented Notre Dame’s then-retired leader with the nation’s highest civilian honor, the Congressional Gold Medal. As the two swapped laudatory remarks, Clinton termed his friend “a child of God, a genuine American patriot, and a citizen of the world.”

The path for Father Jenkins to welcome and honor President Obama had been well paved by Theodore Hesburgh. The current Notre Dame leader was merely following in his famous predecessor’s footsteps. Hesburgh had to be overjoyed when Jenkins, thousands of graduates, faculty, and others listened politely as the unapologetic promoter of abortion actually lectured the Catholic Church about the need for tolerance in the abortion debate. Not backing down a single inch, Obama said that all should discuss the abortion topic “with open hearts, open minds and fair-minded words” in pursuit of “a common ground.” Even after admitting that the pro- and anti-abortion positions are “irreconcilable,” he had the unmitigated gall to tell the throng at Notre Dame, “We must find a way to live together as one human family.”

The “human family” referred to by the U.S. president is fewer by millions of human beings whose lives were snuffed out by abortion. Shame on Notre Dame! Shame on Father Jenkins! And shame on anyone who applauded the president’s remarks! But never forget the role played by Theodore Hesburgh in initiating the outrage recently perpetrated at this once staunchly Catholic university.

Photo of Fr. Hesburgh: AP Images



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