

**Ian Traynor in Brussels reports for *The Guardian* (UK). The full story can be found at <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2010/jun/24/belgium-catholic-church-sex-claims>.**

### Catholic headquarters in Belgium focus of police raids in sex abuse cases

Belgian police sources say church has been withholding information from its independent inquiry into sex abuse scandal

The Roman Catholic church was once again at the centre of a child abuse scandal today when police raided the headquarters of the church hierarchy in Belgium. They carried away computers and hundreds of files, amid rumours that church leaders were continuing to cover up abuse cases despite a public plea for forgiveness last month.

Belgian officers today sealed off and searched the headquarters of the church at Mechelen, north of Brussels, where the Belgian bishops' conference was in session, with the papal nuncio taking part. They also searched the home of Cardinal Godfried Danneels, until last year Belgium's most senior prelate, who enjoys a reputation for being a liberal.

In nearby Leuven, east of Brussels, police also searched the premises of the independent church commission investigating hundreds of cases of alleged molestation by clergymen. They took all 475 files belonging to the commission, prompting bewilderment and panic among investigators and victims of sexual abuse.....

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**And the Vatican responds. Rachel Donadio reports from Rome for the *New York Times*. Stephen Castle contributed reporting from Brussels, and Jack Healy from New York.**

### **Vatican Criticizes Raid on Belgian Church Offices**

The Vatican expressed "shock" on Friday at the raid on Thursday by the Belgian police of church offices in their search for hidden evidence of child sex abuse by priests. It also voiced its "indignation" at what it called the "violation" of two cardinals' tombs in the search.

In a bold and provocative assertion of state over church as anger rises in Europe over abuse by priests, the police not only detained the members of the Belgian Bishops' Conference for nine hours on Thursday while searching for documents related to sex abuse cases, they also drilled into the tombs of two cardinals in the Brussels Cathedral.

"It was worthy of 'The Da Vinci Code,' " the archbishop of Belgium, Andre-Joseph Leonard, said at a news conference Friday in Brussels.

“The justice system does its work and it has the right to carry out searches,” the archbishop said. “Nonetheless I find it slightly surprising that it went as far as poking around in tombs.”

The raid, which has few if any recent precedents, was seen as a bold move and a provocation to church authorities, who recently asked a committee to investigate allegations of sex abuse by priests.

In Leuven, Belgium, on Thursday, the police also confiscated all the case files and the computer of Peter Adriaenssens, a well-regarded child psychiatrist who oversees that committee’s investigations.

“This is most unusual,” said Gerald Fogarty, professor of history and religious studies at the University of Virginia. “Even in the United States, with all the anger in Boston, this did not happen.”

The Vatican on Friday issued a formal complaint to Belgium through the Belgian ambassador to the Holy See.

The bishops had gathered at the palace of the archbishop of Mechelen-Brussels for their monthly meeting when the police arrived and detained them from 10 a.m. until 7:30 p.m., church officials said. They also searched nearby church buildings.

“It was not a pleasant experience, but everything was handled very correctly,” the spokesman for the Belgian Bishops’ Conference, Eric de Beukelaer, said in a statement circulated by the Vatican.

On Thursday, the authorities also seized materials from the home of Cardinal Godfried Danneels, Archbishop Leonard’s predecessor, and took all the computers from the church’s finance department, Mr. de Beukelaer said.

In the Cathedral of Mechelen north of Brussels, the police drilled into the tomb of Cardinal Jozef-Ernest Van Roey, and Cardinal Léon-Josef Suenens, two former archbishops of Mechelen-Brussels, and used cameras to look for documents, Mr. de Beukelaer said.

In the statement, the Vatican said its secretary of state “expressed great stupor at the way in which the seizures were conducted yesterday by Belgian authorities and indignation at the fact that two tombs were violated.”

The police did not comment on the allegations of tomb raiding, the Belgian news agency Belga reported Friday.

Caroline Sagesser, a social policy expert at the Université Libre de Bruxelles, said the church had no legal protection from investigations, although sometimes the police will refrain from entering church property out of respect, as in a recent case when asylum seekers took refuge in a church.

Church property in Belgium is often owned by municipalities and regions, priests are mostly paid by the government and the church is exempt from taxes, Ms. Sagesser added.

The Belgian Bishops' Conference said in a statement that the seizure "went against the right to privacy" of the victims and "seriously harmed the necessary and excellent work of this commission," while the Vatican also expressed "regret" for breaches "of the confidentiality to which victims have a right."

In its statement, the Vatican also said it "reiterated its strong condemnation of every sinful and criminal act of abuse of minors by members of the church" as well as "the necessity to repair and confront such acts in a way that conforms to the exigencies of justice and the teachings of the Gospel."

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**The following meditation on the readings for June 27 is taken from Dignity USA - Breath of the Spirit.**

<http://www.dignityusa.org/breath/june-27-2010-thirteenth-sunday-year>

I often mention in these commentaries that biblical "call narratives" are some of the most important parts of Scripture. The Bible's original readers presumed they also had been called by Yahweh or Jesus, and were personally interested in the implications of responding to such a unique invitation.

Our first and third readings demonstrate the implications aren't always the same for everyone. Elijah permits Elisha to do something Jesus prohibits: kiss his mother and father goodbye. But on the other hand, both convey the same determination in responding to the call. Elisha slaughters his team of oxen and cooks the meat over a fire fueled by his plow. He can never again return to farming. Jesus' followers can't even "pine after the good old days." There's no looking back. Once one responds, life is irrevocably changed.

Our own personal response is the only thing we should worry about. Others' response, or lack of it, shouldn't concern us, as James and John discover in the first part of today's gospel pericope when they plead with Jesus to annihilate the unresponsive Samaritans.

The experience of those called also shows how it affects our relationship with others. That's why it's important to understand Jesus' oft-quoted remark, "Let the dead bury their dead!" The perspective disciple isn't on his way to a funeral home to make burial arrangements for his dead father. The man isn't asking for a three- or four-day reprieve in his discipleship until his father's body is finally put to rest. In that culture, people were usually buried within a few hours of death. The situation here seems to mirror the case of many who wish to become followers of either the historical or risen Jesus, yet hesitate to make such a commitment because one or both parents have a problem with it. The man's request, in this context, could be reworded, "Let me stay with my father until he dies and is buried, then I'll leave home and become your disciple."

Looking at the man's request from that angle, Jesus' response, "Let the dead bury their dead!" is both biting and insightful. He's basically saying, "Haven't you noticed? Your

father's already dead." (Because of his refusal to let you accept my message.) Let someone just as dead as he is bury him." Nothing should stop us - not even respect for, and obligations to our parents - from achieving the life discipleship offers.

Along the same line, nothing infuriates Paul more than Christians who refuse to live out their Christian calling. If he were a school teacher, he's no doubt insist his students underline the words, "Remember that you have been called to live in freedom!" The problem he encounters in Galatia revolves around the choice of some Gentile followers of Jesus to tie themselves down to keeping the 613 laws of Moses - symbolized by having themselves circumcised. (No wonder verse 12 has been omitted from today's liturgical passage. It's not only mean-spirited, it's also "R" rated!)

Of course, keeping the law provides a security which "living in accord with the spirit" can never offer. As Paul emphasizes, following the dictates of the spirit implies we're constantly putting love first in our relations with others. "Serve one another through love," he commands. "For the whole law is fulfilled in one statement, namely, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'"

All biblical calls involve following a person, not a set of rules and regulations. But eventually those calls, as Paul discovers, lead us to respond to other people in a loving way. As I frequently reminded my high school marriage course students, "There's no one action that everywhere, in every circumstance, to every person, always shows love." That means there are as many implications to following Jesus' call of love as there are human beings on earth. At last count, that number was approaching 7 billion!

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### **Paul Vitello, writing for the *New York Times*, reports on a priest from the Diocese of Brooklyn who is beginning the path to canonization.**

Brooklyn Diocese Seeks Sainthood for Priest Who Fought Bigotry

Brooklyn, the borough of churches and trees, Walt Whitman and Woody Allen, Barbra Streisand and Mike Tyson, has never lacked for people of distinction — except perhaps in one category.

Nobody from Brooklyn has ever been made a saint.

But at a special church service on Thursday night, Bishop Nicholas A. DiMarzio of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Brooklyn opened what is known as a "canonical inquiry" into the cause of sainthood for a Brooklyn priest, Msgr. Bernard J. Quinn.

Monsignor Quinn, who died in 1940 at age 52, championed racial equality at a time when discrimination against blacks was ubiquitous in America, even inside the Catholic Church. In the Depression-era heyday of the anti-Semitic, pro-Fascist radio broadcasts of the Rev. Charles E. Coughlin, Monsignor Quinn encountered sharp resistance from some fellow priests when he proposed ministering to Brooklyn's growing population of blacks, many of them fleeing the Jim Crow South or migrating from the poor Caribbean countries.

When Msgr. John L. Belford, an outspokenly antiblack priest in New York, wrote in 1929 in his church newsletter that "negroes should be excluded from this Roman Catholic church if they become numerous," Monsignor Quinn took pains during the public controversy that followed to state his strong disagreement. "It seems to me that no church can exclude anyone and still keep its Christian ideals," he said, according to his obituary in The New York Times. "The Constitution guarantees the freedom of religion and this, plus the fact that church property is tax exempt, ought to mean that anyone can go anyplace to worship."  
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DALLAS, June 24 /PRNewswire/ -- Next week, "Dan Rather Reports" investigates how the Roman Catholic Church has been hiding and shielding assets from victims of priest abuse. Some say the Church is behaving more like a big corporation than a sacred institution.

From the Vatican on down, the church has vowed to make peace with hundreds of victims of a decades-long epidemic of sex abuse by its priests. But "Dan Rather Reports" found evidence that the church has done just the opposite: Wealthy U.S. Dioceses from California to Delaware have claimed to be broke and have filed for bankruptcy to avoid paying damages; Bishops have exploited arcane corporate laws to shield church assets from liability; and, in San Diego, parish priests have been caught literally hiding money in safes, according to court records.

"If you or I did what the Diocese of San Diego did in that bankruptcy, we'd be charged with bankruptcy fraud, and we'd probably be in prison," said attorney John Manly, who has represented dozens of priest abuse victims in lawsuits across the country.

"Dan Rather Reports" found evidence that some high in the church hierarchy have provided guidance.

"One of the comments that came from one of the bankruptcy attorneys is that, 'These guys make Enron look like altar boys.' Pardon the pun," said Don McLean, who was abused as a 10-year-old altar boy, and sought damages from the San Diego diocese.

"Dan Rather Reports: Spiritually Bankrupt" premieres on HDNet, Tuesday, June 29 at 8:00 p.m. ET with an encore at 11:00 p.m. ET.

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**Michael Sean Winters reports for *America* magazine on the USCCB meeting. The full article is available at [http://www.americamagazine.org/blog/entry.cfm?blog\\_id=2&entry\\_id=3032](http://www.americamagazine.org/blog/entry.cfm?blog_id=2&entry_id=3032)**

## Final Note on the USCCB Meeting

A final note on the controversy surrounding the fabrication of quotes, or the failure to check a quote with the person to whom it was attributed, in any event, the shoddy and irresponsible journalism exhibited by the Catholic News Agency. As important as the issue of journalistic integrity is, it is also necessary to look to the bigger issue that CNA and/or the bishops who leaked to them were trying to affect.

In his interview with John Allen, Cardinal Francis George made two observations that are critical to understanding this central issue of the Church's role in political life. First, Cardinal George said, "Where someone draws the line on what the bishops ought to say, I think, often depends on where they're coming from politically," and, later, he said, "What worries me more than a difference over empirical content, however, is the claim that the bishops cannot speak to the moral content of the law." The first claim needs an additional qualification: Where one draws the line on what the bishops ought to say also depends on the issue involved. Some Conservatives like to say the bishops should confine their authoritative pronouncements to the five "non-negotiables," but that idea of five non-negotiables is the creation of GOP strategists, and it is unknown in the Catholic moral tradition. Some Liberals wish the bishops would keep quiet about abortion, or at least not talk about it as much as they do, so that they can focus on other social justice issues. Everybody wants the bishops speaking out on their own issues, so the Cardinal is half right.

His second observation is more problematic. I do not know anyone, at least no serious leftie Catholic writer or thinker, who has voiced the "claim that the bishops cannot speak to the moral content of the law." I am sure you can find a press release from Catholics for Choice, a group that does not really qualify as "serious" and, to the point, is hardly the voice of the Catholic Left. The point that has been made, and well made, is this: Bishops are the authoritative teachers of the principles of the Catholic moral tradition but, "[w]hen making applications of these principles, we realize - and we wish readers to recognize - that prudential judgments are involved based on specific circumstances which can change or which can be interpreted differently by people of good will (e.g., the treatment of "no first use"). However, the moral judgments that we make in specific cases, while not binding in conscience, are to be given serious attention and consideration by Catholics as they determine whether their moral judgments are consistent with the Gospel." Those words are taken from the opening paragraphs of the Bishops' document "The Challenge of Peace," issued in 1983 and they seem as apt today as they did then.

I have made this point. I believe that Sr. Carol has made this point. The degree of authority the bishops enjoy, and therefore the degree of acceptance of that authority rightly expected from the laity, is definitive at the level of principle but it diminishes as the principle gets applied as a particular policy. No Catholic can, in good conscience, disagree with a moral principle of the Church such as "abortion is wrong," but trying to decide how, politically and legally, we enmesh that moral principle is an area where the bishops deserve "attention and consideration" but where, as they say, the prudential judgments involved allow for the possibility

that they can be "interpreted differently by people of good will." Cardinal George's concern about the "claims" being made that the bishops have no authority to speak to the moral content of a civil law is, I think, a bit of a red herring. We here at America are not questioning the bishops authority to teach the moral law, nor their competence to address the moral content of civil law, but as Bishop Lynch also told NCR, "I have never before this year heard the theory that we enjoy the same primacy of respect for legislative interpretation as we do for interpretation of the moral law." ...

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**John Chuchman submitted the following Letter to the Editor on June 22.**

### **All about power**

It is understandable that men from Third World countries seek ordination in the Roman Catholic church in the United States; many seek to improve their lot by doing so.

But the real tragedy is that church hierarchs would rather close/cluster churches and ordain foreigners rather than their own married men and women called to priesthood.

It's all about power and control.

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**Thank you to Joe for passing along these articles.**

### **Archbishop tells Pope: there will be no turning back on women priests**

Ruth Gledhill and Richard Owen in Rome

*The Times* (UK)

The Archbishop of Canterbury yesterday made his most outspoken challenge to the Roman Catholic Church since the Pope invited disaffected Anglicans to switch to Rome.

Speaking before he meets Benedict XVI tomorrow, Dr Rowan Williams told a conference in Rome that the Catholic Church's refusal to ordain women was a bar to Christian unity.

"For many Anglicans, not ordaining women has a possible unwelcome implication about the difference between baptised men and baptised women," he said.

The Anglican provinces that ordain women had retained rather than lost their Catholic holiness and sacramentalism, he said.

Addressing an ecumenical conference at the Gregorian Pontifical University, the Archbishop said that the way Anglican leaders dealt with internal arguments offered lessons for senior Catholics.

“Is it nonsense to think that holding on to a limited but real common life might be worth working for within the Anglican family? And if it can be managed within the Anglican family, is this a possible model for the wider ecumenical scene?”

The ordination of women priests — and the prospect of women bishops — is one of the main reasons why disaffected Anglicans may take up the Pope’s offer of a “Church within a Church” that would enable them to retain traditional Anglican practices within the Catholic faith.

But yesterday the Archbishop made clear that there would be no turning back the clock on women priests in order to appease critics. He dismissed the Pope’s offer to disaffected Anglicans as barely more than a “pastoral response”, which broke little new ground in relations between the two Churches.

Dr Williams said: “It does not build in any formal recognition of existing ministries or methods of independent decision-making, but remains at the level of spiritual and liturgical culture.

“As such, it is an imaginative pastoral response to the needs of some; but it does not break any fresh ecclesiological ground,” he told the meeting of senior priests, bishops and cardinals.

Dr Williams put the row over the apostolic constitution, as the Pope’s plan is known, into the context of a centuries-old debate about reuniting the Christian Churches. He questioned whether unity talks should even continue if disagreements over issues such as papal primacy had no hope ever of being resolved.

“I want to propose that we now need urgent clarification of whether these continuing points of tension imply in any way that the substantive theological convergence is less solid than it appears, so that we must still hold back from fuller levels of recognition of ministries or fuller sacramental fellowship,” he said.

But he went on to argue that if there was hope that such issues could be resolved, the Churches could begin to talk about converging their structures of administration and governance, and seeking “sacramental” fellowship.

The speech laid the ground for a frank encounter behind closed doors with the Pope, the highlight of Dr Williams’s Rome trip.

With tensions surfacing behind the scenes at the Holy See, Dr Williams is expected to discuss the Pope’s visit to Britain next autumn, including whether it should be accorded the status of a pastoral or State visit. If it were the latter, it would be the first state visit by a Pope to Britain and he would be the guest of the Queen, who is Supreme Governor of the Church of England.

The Archbishop's private audience today will be preceded by meetings with the senior Vatican officials Cardinal Walter Kasper, head of the Pontifical Council for Christian Unity, and Cardinal Jean-Louis Tauran, head of the Pontifical Council for Inter-Religious Dialogue. He will also attend a dinner in his honour given by Francis Campbell, the British Ambassador to the Holy See.

Dr Williams will preside at vespers this evening at the Oratory of St Frances Xavier, known as the Caravita church, in the centre of Rome.

Cardinal Kasper was not involved in the formulation of the Pope's opening to disaffected Anglicans, which was drawn up by the more hardline Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, and some of his staff have been dismayed by its impact on ecumenical dialogue.

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## **Border States Are Safe Today and Only Getting Safer**

By Ann Garcia

### **Center for American Progress**

June 14, 2010

Arizona Governor, Jan Brewer, believes there to be high levels of "murder, terror, and mayhem" in Arizona; however, evidence actually points to declining levels of crime in Arizona and other border states.

Officeholders and candidates in Arizona who support the state's draconian new immigration law have justified it with hyperbole, exaggeration, and falsehoods about Arizona's crime rate. Gov. Jan Brewer has colored recent speeches with images of "murder, terror, and mayhem" and "drop houses, kidnappings, and violence," which are all supposedly common in the lives of the terrified Arizona populace. According to State Sen. Russell Pearce, who sponsored the law-it mandates that police interrogate people they have "reasonable suspicion" are illegal immigrants and demand production of documentation-cities like Phoenix will become places with "less crime" and "safer neighborhoods." Pearce claims Phoenix is "second in the world in kidnappings and third in the United States for violence."

With all the hype around a purported crime epidemic caused by undocumented immigrants, it's ironic that newly released statistics from Arizona's Department of Public Safety and the FBI show that violent crime rates in the state and along the southwest border region have been declining. In fact, it's fair to say the border region has become safer over the last few years, and that Arizona's new law actually undermines community safety.

Let's take a closer look.

### **The facts on crime in Arizona**

Violent crimes in Arizona are down by 15 percent since 2006: The FBI's preliminary Uniform Crime Report, or UCR, for 2009 shows that violent crime — murder, forcible rape, robbery, and aggravated assault — is down in Arizona for the third year in a row. The absolute number of violent crimes in 2006 was 30,916 in Arizona. By 2009 it had dropped by 15 percent to 26,094.

Per-capita violent crime rate dropped by 22 percent: Factoring in the change in Arizona's population, the rate of violent crime per 100,000 persons in 2009 was 390.5, which is a 22 percent decrease from 501.4 per 100,000 in 2006. For comparison's sake, the violent crime rate in nonborder states such as Georgia and Florida was 410.6 and 604.9 respectively in 2009.

Arizona's violent and property crime rate drop was twice the national average: Nationally, violent and property crimes were down between 2008 and 2009, but Arizona saw rates of decline more than double that. The nation as a whole saw a -5.5 percent change in violent crime and a -4.9 percent change in property crime from 2008 to 2009, but Arizona experienced a percent change of -11.1 in the former and -12 in the latter in this same time period.

Kidnappings are tied to Mexico's organized crime syndicate, not innocent Americans: It's clear that Arizona has an organized crime problem, with 267 kidnappings in 2009 in Phoenix alone. But the kidnappings most often occur when human smugglers—who are usually part of Mexican drug cartels — demand more money for their services. As Phoenix police Sgt. Tommy Thompson said, "We're talking about the kidnapping of smugglers and associates. I have no fear that my kids or grandkids will be victims." This means that our efforts must be directed toward two fronts: fixing our broken immigration system so that people can immigrate legally with visas and not illegally with smugglers, and helping to resolve the deadly war on drugs in Mexico.

### **A safer southwest border**

Border cities are among the nation's safest: Phoenix and other large border (and near-border) cities have some of the nation's lowest crime rates, including San Diego, El Paso, and Austin.

Border counties have low violent crime rates: Counties along the southwest border have some of the lowest rates of violent crime per capita in the nation. Their rates have dropped by more than 30 percent since the 1990s.

There's no evidence of "spillover" of violence from Mexico: El Paso, Texas has three bridges leading directly into Ciudad Juarez, Mexico, where the number of killings has approached 23,000 since 2006. El Paso experienced only 12 murders in 2009, which was actually down from 17 in 2008. San Diego, California saw 41 murders in 2009, down from 55 in 2008, and Tucson, Arizona experienced 35 in 2009, a significant decrease from the 65 murders committed in 2008. Claims of spillover violence are clearly overblown.

High-immigrant cities are safer: Christopher Dickey, Paris bureau chief and Middle East regional editor for Newsweek, points out that, "San Antonio saw

violent crime drop from 9,699 incidents to 7,844; murders from 116 to 99. Compare that with a city like Detroit, which is a little bigger than El Paso and much smaller than San Antonio-and not exactly a magnet for job-seeking immigrants. Its murder rate went up from 323 in 2008 to 361 in 2009." This recent pattern falls right in line with the calculations of Tim Wadsworth, sociologist from the University of Colorado at Boulder. In Wadsworth's recent study he concludes that "cities with the largest increases in immigration between 1990 and 2000 experienced the largest decreases in homicide and robbery during the same time period."

### **Arizona law undermines community safety**

Civilian cooperation will decrease: A delegation of police chiefs from major cities in Arizona and across the country met on May 26 with Attorney General Eric Holder to make clear they opposed the Arizona law because it would hurt local law enforcement efforts. As Los Angeles Police Chief Charlie Beck said following the meeting, "This is not a law that increases public safety. This is a bill that makes it much harder for us to do our jobs ... crime will go up if this becomes law in Arizona or in any other state." That's because police need full cooperation from residents-legal and otherwise — in order to solve and prevent crime.

Immigrant communities will be marginalized: Arizona's new law will "drive a wedge between some communities and law enforcement" instead of reducing crime, argues Rob Davis, police chief of San Jose, California. It will erode the mutual trust and cooperation that police have worked to develop and maintain with immigrant communities throughout the years and instead alienate these communities.

Resources will be diverted from fighting serious crime: Police resources in Arizona will be taken away from serious crime investigations and redirected to questioning the legal status of otherwise lawful individuals. That's why the Arizona Association of Chiefs of Police opposes S.B. 1070. "We are stretched very thin right now. We don't have enough resources to continue to do this and to take on another responsibility," said Josh Harris, head of the association.

**You can download the complete report:**

**[http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2010/06/pdf/border\\_crime.pdf](http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2010/06/pdf/border_crime.pdf)**

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**Kathleen sent me the following editorial written by a white, associate professor of history at Macon State College in Georgia. It appeared in the *Macon Telegraph*.**

### **When Are WE Going to Get Over It?**

Andrew M. Manis

For much of the last forty years, ever since America "fixed" its race problem in the Civil Rights and Voting Rights Acts, we white people have been impatient with African

Americans who continued to blame race for their difficulties. Often we have heard whites ask, "When are African Americans finally going to get over it?"

**Now I want to ask:** "When are we White Americans going to get over our ridiculous obsession with skin color?"

Recent reports that "Election Spurs Hundreds' of Race Threats, Crimes" should frighten and infuriate every one of us. Having grown up in "Bombingham," Alabama in the 1960s, I remember overhearing an avalanche of comments about what many white classmates and their parents wanted to do to John and Bobby Kennedy and Martin Luther King. Eventually, as you may recall, in all three cases, someone decided to do more than "**talk the talk.**"

Since our recent presidential election, to our eternal shame we are once again hearing the same reprehensible talk I remember from my boyhood.

We white people have controlled political life in the disunited colonies and United States for some 400 years on this continent.

**Conservative** whites have been in power 28 of the last 40 years. Even during the eight Clinton years, conservatives in Congress blocked most of his agenda and pulled him to the right. Yet never in that period did I read any headlines suggesting that anyone was calling for the assassinations of presidents Nixon, Ford, Reagan, or either of the Bushes. Criticize them, yes. Call for their impeachment, perhaps. But there were no bounties on their heads. And even when someone did try to kill Ronald Reagan, the perpetrator was non-political mental case who wanted merely to impress Jody Foster.

But elect a liberal who happens to be **Black** and we're back in the sixties again. At this point in our history, we should be proud that we've proven what conservatives are always saying -- that in America anything is possible, **EVEN** electing a black man as president.

But instead we now hear that school children from Maine to California are talking about wanting to "**assassinate Obama.**"

Fighting the urge to throw up, I can only ask, "**How long?**"

How long before we white people realize we can't make our nation, much less the whole world, look like us?

How long until we white people can - once and for all - get over this hell-conceived preoccupation with skin color?

How long until we white people get over the demonic conviction that white skin makes us superior?

How long before we white people get over our bitter resentments about being demoted to the status of equality with non-whites?

How long before we get over our expectations that we should be at the head of the line merely because of our white skin?

How long until we white people end our silence and call out our peers when they share the latest racist jokes in the privacy of our white-only conversations?

I believe in free speech, but how long until we white people start making racist loudmouths as socially uncomfortable as we do flag burners?

How long until we white people will stop insisting that blacks exercise personal responsibility, build strong families, educate themselves enough to edit the Harvard Law Review, and work hard enough to become President of the United States, only to threaten to assassinate them when they do?

How long before we start "living out the true meaning" of our creeds, both civil and religious, that all men and women are created equal and that "**red and yellow, black and white**" all are precious in God's sight?

Until this past **November 4**, I didn't believe this country would ever elect an African American to the presidency. I still don't believe I'll live long enough to see us white people get over our racism problem.

But here's my **three-point plan**:

**First**, everyday that **Barack Obama** lives in the **White House** that Black Slaves Built, I'm going to pray that God (and the **Secret Service**) will protect him and his family from us white people.

**Second**, I'm going to report to the **FBI** any **white person** I overhear saying, in seriousness or in jest, anything of a threatening nature about President Obama.

**Third**, I'm going to pray to live long enough to see America surprise the world once again, when white people can "**in spirit and in truth**" sing of our damnable color prejudice, "**We HAVE overcome.**"

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Please send your comments and any articles you would like to share to [tony@tonyercolano.com](mailto:tony@tonyercolano.com)