

Catholics United for the Faith

St. Gregory VII Chapter

March 15, 2011

Most Reverend Jerome E. Listecki
Archbishop of Milwaukee
P.O. Box 070912
Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53207-0912

Your Excellency:

On behalf of St. Gregory VII Chapter, Catholics United for the Faith, this is to request that the Milwaukee Archdiocese discontinue its annual collection supporting the Catholic Campaign for Human Development (CCHD). Further, we ask you to advise individual parishes within the Archdiocese to discontinue contributions to “community organizing” groups such as Voces de la Frontera, SOPHIA, and Common Ground. We base these requests on an in-depth analysis of CCHD’s mission, strategies and actions. Therefore, we believe that CCHD’s mission statement is fundamentally flawed, and as a result, the Catholic Church is making vast financial expenditures which undermine its own teaching regarding moral absolutes.

Objectionable CCHD grants fall into two essential groups: 1) those that support organizations which directly oppose Church teaching concerning the sanctity of life and/or heterosexual marriage, and 2) those that support such organizations more indirectly via political activity or membership in coalitions.

Beyond the problems associated with these organizations, we are appalled by the deceptiveness and lack of transparency which CCHD has demonstrated in responding to the recent criticism concerning the direction of its grants. Let us outline four aspects of this critical issue:

1) CCHD’S MISSION STATEMENT

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops’ website states that the 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.”

Although the website does not specifically identify these “root causes” of poverty, the selection of community-controlled, rather than Church-controlled, organizations as the preferred vehicles for addressing root causes infers that the solution to poverty in America will come from the earthly “community.” We believe that it most assuredly will not.

In fact, as we’re sure you will agree, earthly communities (plural) are made up of individuals who are steeped in original sin. Sin resides in “poor” communities as well as affluent communities. The belief that specific secular communities can solve the problem of poverty is an essentially Marxist notion.

While many CCHD grantees refer to themselves as “faith-based,” their actions are clearly not based on the teachings of the Catholic faith regarding the difference between moral absolutes and prudential political judgments. As we will demonstrate below, much of the behavior which flows from the CCHD mission statement is rooted in class warfare rather than the “solidarity between poor and non-poor” that CCHD identifies as the goal of its strategies. (<http://www.usccb.org/cchd/mission.shtml>)

2) ORGANIZATIONS WHICH DIRECTLY OPPOSE CHURCH TEACHING

During 2009 and early 2010, reform groups identified over a dozen organizations that received national CCHD grants during the years 2008 or 2009 despite clear evidence that they either disobeyed CCHD grantee guidelines or directly and publicly opposed Church teaching concerning the sanctity of life and/or heterosexual marriage. Nearly all of the incriminating evidence concerning these groups came directly from their websites and related websites.

Despite Bishop Morin’s statements that the accusations of the reform groups concerning CCHD funding were “ridiculous” and “outrageous,” it appears that all but two of these groups have been defunded by national CCHD since that time. (<http://www.catholicnews.com/data/stories/cns/0905104.htm>) The two groups that definitely have not been defunded are Southwest Organizing Project (SWOP) and Intercommunity Justice and Peace Center (IJPC).

Southwest Organizing Project is the self-professed “lead agency” in directing implementation of a program called Elev8 at Marquette Elementary in Chicago Lawn. One of the “Health Outcome Objectives” for Elev8 Chicago is as follows: “All graduates will know how to prevent pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases, and have the ability to apply responsible decision-making skills with regard to their personal health.” (Click on “Download a full description of Elev8” at <http://www.lisc-chicago.org/display.aspx?pointer=5318>)

Sorting through the code words in the above statement, we find that SWOP’s “Health Partner” in this project is ACCESS Community Health Center which “acknowledges a woman’s right to choose among a full spectrum of reproductive options” and offers “free birth control” and emergency contraception. (<http://www.accesscommunityhealth.net/familyplanning>)

Concerning Intercommunity Justice and Peace Center, this organization has changed its website to remove incriminating evidence but we can only hope that it will change its behavior. After reform groups revealed IJPC’s website list of “friends and colleagues” including National Organization for Women (CINCINNATI NOW) and Parents, Friends and Families of Lesbians and Gays (P-FLAG), IJPC mysteriously removed the list. The original list is shown at <http://www.all.org/pdf/cchd/IJPC.pdf>. A full treatment of reform group objections to IJPC can be viewed in <http://www.all.org/pdf/fullcchdreportfinal.pdf> pp.21-22.

Besides SWOP and IJPC, the newly released 2010 CCHD Awards list includes at least 4 more groups who directly support positions that are counter to Church teaching. For example, Desis Rising Up and Moving and NYC AIDS Housing Network both endorsed a Transgender Day of Remembrance sponsored by an organization (The Audre Lorde Project) that supports the “life choices” of people who “do not choose monogamy.” (<http://alp.org/whatwedo/statements/marriage>) Also, Philadelphia Unemployment Project and Youth United for Change co- sponsored a voters’ guide that called Roe v. Wade “a framework for access to safe and legal abortion in this country based on protecting women’s health.” (<http://phillyces.org/Documents/gubernatorial%20forum%202010%20-%20voters%27%20guide.pdf> p. 5)

3) ORGANIZATIONS WHICH INDIRECTLY OPPOSE CHURCH TEACHING

During 2009 and 2010, reform groups identified close to 60 CCHD-funded organizations that oppose Church teaching more indirectly through de facto political action and/or membership in coalitions/partnerships with anti-life, anti-marriage agenda. It appears that about half of these groups continue to be funded, and in fact, a number of new groups have been added to the problematic list.

Two aspects of the activities of these “indirect” groups bear examination. First, when reform groups began to publish accusations concerning CCHD funding in 2009, CCHD responded by accusing the reform groups of “McCarthyism,” especially with regard to the utilization of “guilt by association” tactics. Nevertheless, Bishop Zubik’s “Review and Renewal” document, approved in September, 2010 by the USCCB Administrative Committee, rightfully recognized that membership in anti-life, anti-marriage coalitions is indeed a cause for defunding. Quoting from the Zubik document:

“CCHD funds cannot go to groups that knowingly participate in coalitions that have a part of their organizational purpose or coalition agenda, positions or actions that contradict fundamental Catholic moral or social teaching.”

Fully half of the problematic groups revealed in 2009 and 2010 were members of Center for Community Change (CCC) which has a long list of positions and actions opposing Church teaching.

(<http://www.all.org/pdf/fullcchdreportfinal.pdf> pp.31-36) As one example, CCC recently signed a letter to Congress which advocated against HR3 regarding the defunding of Planned Parenthood.

(http://www.congress.org/congressorg/bio/userletter/?letter_id=6422033981)

CCC members that continue to be funded by national CCHD include Brockton Interfaith Community, Merrimack Valley Project, Metropolitan Interfaith Congregations Acting for Hope (MICAH Massachusetts), Pioneer Valley Project, Worcester Interfaith, United Valley Interfaith Project, Queens Congregations United for Action, Northwest Bronx Community and Clergy Coalition, Southwest Organizing Project, Central Illinois Organizing Project, Michigan Interfaith Voice, MOSES Michigan, AMOS Project (Ohio), Intercommunity Justice and Peace Center, Nashville Homeless Power Project, Coalition LA, Idaho Community Action Center, Northern Plains Resource Council, and People Organized for Westside Renewal.

Another group of grantees in this category are members of Mobilize the Immigrant Vote California (MIVC). Like CCC, MIVC has a long list of positions and actions contradicting Church teaching. For example, its 2008 voter guide called for individuals to vote against abortion restrictions and for same-sex marriage. Members of MIVC that continue to be funded by national CCHD are People Organized for Westside Renewal, Coalition LA, and Nuestra Casa.

(http://mivcalifornia.org/docs/November_2008_Voter_Guide)

Also in California, a group of at least three 2010 grantees (Coalition LA, Faith in Community, and POWER-Los Angeles) are members of California Partnership, whose voter guide also called for individuals to vote against abortion restrictions and for same-sex marriage.

(<http://bellarmineveritasministry.files.wordpress.com/2009/11/capprops.jpg>)

Another group of at least two current grantees (Georgia Latino Alliance for Human Rights and Philadelphia Unemployment Project) are members of Health Care for America Now which called for defeat of the Stupak anti-abortion amendment in the national health care legislation.

<http://blog.healthcareforamericanow.org/2009/11/07/call-today-to-defeat-the-stupak-anti-abortion-amendment/>

At least nine other current grantees (AMOS Cincinnati, Central Illinois Organizing Project, Fuerza Laboral Power of Workers, Michigan Organizing Project, Northeast Alliance for Hope, Northwest Bronx Community & Clergy Coalition, People United for Sustainable Housing, Teach Our Children, and WIN Action Organizing Project) are members of National People's Action Network which, along with CCC, recently advocated against HR3 regarding the defunding of Planned Parenthood.

(http://www.congress.org/congressorg/bio/userletter/?letter_id=6422033981)

Three more current grantees (Georgia Latino Alliance for Human Rights, VOCAL, and Restaurant Opportunities Center United) are members of the U.S. Human Rights Network which advocates abortion as "an essential component of reproductive rights."

http://lib.ohchr.org/HRBodies/UPR/Documents/session9/US/USHRN_UPR_USA_S09_2010_Annex20_Report%20Reproductive%20Rights%20Joint%20Report%20USA.pdf

Finally concerning coalitions, at least thirteen 2010 grantees (Exhibit 1) are members of Jobs with Justice which advocates abortion and greater access to artificial birth control, and is a member of Health Care America Now and U.S. Human Rights Network. (<http://www.iwj.org/projects/slap/week/2009/grid.html> and <http://www.massiwj.net/node/39075> and

http://curecvsnow.org/fileadmin/templates/ver1/documents/cure-cvs-release_6-18-09_indianapolis.pdf)

To summarize our position regarding these coalitions, we quote Bishop Vasa:

"It is one thing to interact with those who do not share our values, but it is quite another to financially support agencies, individuals, or agendas which are absolutely, diametrically opposed to our principles and values. Unfortunately, there are multi-layered corporations seeking funding that might have 90 percent of their activities perfectly in accord with the teaching of the Church, and they're working in many areas and on issues for which the Church has a passion. Unfortunately, those same corporations may have a spin-off group that they fund which supports, say, population control, artificial contraception, and abortion. This would, in my mind, disqualify them from any support."

The second troublesome aspect of the activities of the "indirectly" problematic grantee group goes straight to the heart of the CCHD mission statement. Again, the CCHD's mission, as rubber-stamped by the Zubik Study, is "to address the root causes of poverty in America through promotion and support of community-controlled, self-help organizations and through transformative education." The CCHD website states that a preferred vehicle for accomplishing that mission is the funding of "community organizing groups." Further, the "project" that is mentioned first on the list of recommended CCHD projects is "voter registration." (<http://www.usccb.org/cchd/grants/index.shtml>) Nothing in the Zubik document suggests that these criteria will change.

It is hard to deny that when community organizing groups in "poor" communities register voters, nearly

all these voters vote for Democrats, and the Democrat Party has taken a clear, anti-Catholic, stand on the cornerstone of Catholic teaching, the sanctity of life.

Leading up to the 2008 election, national CCHD gave \$7.3 million to the supposedly "non-partisan" ACORN, which observers from both major political parties believe played a major role in the 2008 Democrat landslide by registering 1.3 million voters. Whatever else might be said about the politics of community organizing groups, one of their primary effects is to elect pro-abortion Democrats.

We do not question the right of community organizing groups to register voters. We do, however, sadly lament the Church-funding of those groups whose political activity, on a de facto basis, leads to the election of politicians who reject the Church's teaching regarding moral absolutes

While ACORN was eventually defunded by CCHD, supposedly "non-partisan" community organizing groups in the Gamaliel network (including SOPHIA in Milwaukee, MOSES in Michigan, AMOS in Ohio and Wisconsin, ESTHER and JOSHUA in Wisconsin, EZECHIEL in Michigan, and GENESIS in California) continue to receive major national grants, as do groups in Saul Alinsky's Industrial Areas Foundation network (including Common Ground in Milwaukee and 20 other organizations listed in Exhibit 2). We urge you to view minutes 28 and 133 of the following 2008 CCC/Gamaliel C-SPAN video, which includes a not so subtle Obama endorsement by CCHD President Ralph McCloud and a hateful diatribe against the then-outgoing political administration. (<http://www.c-spanvideo.org/program/282685-1>)

You are undoubtedly aware that Gamaliel is the parent organization (through Wisdom) of SOPHIA, a local grantee of the Milwaukee Archdiocese. You may not be aware that SOPHIA contributes \$30,000/year for membership in the Wisdom/Gamaliel network! (<http://sites.google.com/site/sophiawaukesha/executive-board>)

Another Milwaukee community organizing group, Voces de la Frontera, has been defunded by national CCHD but continues to be supported by a number of Archdiocesan parishes. Perhaps this organization was defunded by national CCHD because it is a CCC partner, or perhaps it was defunded because it accepted a thinly disguised "advertorial" promoting *gayneighbor.org*. (<http://www.vdlf.org/userimages/pdfs/2009-10-newspaper.pdf> page 9) We don't know, but we do know that Voces de la Frontera fields an aggressive voter registration program, and that alone should eliminate the group from Catholic funding at any level. (<http://www.expressmilwaukee.com/article-3172-wisconsinrss-latinos-could-decide-the-election.html>)

4) CCHD'S DECEPTION AND LACK OF TRANSPARENCY

It gives us great pain to say this, but the USCCB/CCHD reaction to accusations concerning CCHD grants has been appallingly deceptive, even arrogant.

First, CCHD was caught coordinating web site obfuscation with the Center for Community Change when that group's pro-death agenda was revealed. (<http://www.all.org/article/index/id/NTI0MQ/>)

In addition to his expression of outrage, Bishop Morin's initial reaction to the charges against CCHD was: "Personally I think (the claims) are totally ridiculous." If the claims were so ridiculous, why was so much

time and effort wasted on the Zubik Study, and why have roughly half of the offending groups been defunded in the last year?

Concerning the Zubik Study, the following passage is illustrative of the above-mentioned arrogance:

"From its first days, there have been some criticisms about CCHD's goals, guidelines and grantees. This criticism has become more visible with the wider use of internet communication and as polarization has increased in society and in the Church. CCHD takes any alleged violation of Catholic principles and CCHD policies very seriously. CCHD deeply regrets that in this past year five groups (out of 270) violated CCHD requirements and lost all CCHD funding because they acted in conflict with Catholic teaching. We apologize for the violations of CCHD policies by these groups and for the damage and confusion they have caused. This Review and Renewal is putting in place stronger policies and clearer mechanisms to screen and monitor grants and groups to ensure that these past violations, though very limited, are not repeated." (emphasis added)

Tellingly, this statement first downplays the scandal by blaming the internet and polarization. Then it suggests that because only 5 out of 270 groups were defunded (up to that time), only 5 groups were problematic. As indicated earlier, the number was close to 70.

Also concerning the Zubik Study, we must mention that it cited as a shining example an organization, Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW), which violates the study's own directives concerning coalitions. For example, CIW is listed as a member of the Grassroots Global Justice Alliance which, in a 2005 briefing document, clearly opposes (as "right-wing") Church teaching concerning homosexuality and "women's rights." (Follow GGJBriefingPaperFall05.doc link, p. 8, at <http://www.ggjalliance.org/node/134>)

As another example of CCHD's deceptiveness and arrogance, USCCB removed the list of 2009 CCHD grants from its website and it didn't publish a list of 2010 grants until February 11, 2011.

Sadly, USCCB proceeded with the November, 2010 CCHD collection despite its unwillingness to reveal the list of 2010 grantees. As mentioned above, we now know that about half of the problematic groups continue to be funded on a national basis, more problematic groups have been added, and it appears that local diocese CCHD grants to problematic groups continue largely unabated. In Chicago, for example, an Archdiocese CCHD director who was attempting to make reforms was "let go" amid pressure from anti-reform priests. According to Father Larry Dowling, the leader of the anti-reform group: "It has been an insult to many (grantees) to be asked 'Does your organization support abortion or same-sex marriage?'" (<http://www.lifesitenews.com/news/archive/ldn/2010/nov/10111201>) Meanwhile, Chicago CCHD grants continue to go to organizations such as Chicago Workers Collaborative, which has links to numerous socialist organizations and is headed by a former propagandist for the Communist Sandinistas in Nicaragua. (<http://www.newsbusters.org/blogs/tim-graham/2010/04/30/again-n-y-times-highlights-dozens-arizona-protesters-chicago> and <http://www.all.org/pdf/fullcchdreportfinal.pdf> p.4)

This raises one final issue concerning the future of CCHD. It is apparent that the USCCB has become a harbor and training ground for liberal political operatives. John Carr and Tom Chabolla, for example, both served on the board of Center for Community Change while holding high-ranking positions in CCHD. <http://www.speroforum.com/a/26607/The-Scandal-of-John-Carr-at-the-USCCB> Mr. Chabolla went on to work for the Obama presidential campaign. Mr. Carr remains at CCHD, preaching the "religion" of global

warming and carbon taxes in the U.S. Senate.

(<http://www.nccbuscc.org/sdwp/ejp/climate/June07FinalTestimony.pdf>) More recently, it was revealed that Ralph McCloud (current head of CCHD) served as treasurer for the political campaign of a radically pro-abortion Congressional candidate while heading CCHD.

(<http://www.creativeminorityreport.com/2011/01/head-of-cchd-worked-for-pro-choice.html>) Finally, at least four leaders of the pseudo-Catholic pressure group, Catholics in Alliance for the Common Good, were formerly associated with USCCB. (http://www.pewsetter.com/view_news_id_17572.php)

Summary

Upwards of five dozen of the 217 national CCHD grants for 2010 remain problematic, even by the standards of the Zubik study. Recent “reform” has been half-hearted at best. Moreover, the deceptive behavior and the left-leaning ideologies of CCHD’s current leaders give us little hope that reform has been embraced by USCCB.

We recognize that you have little direct influence over the infrastructure of USCCB. However, you do have it in your power to “send a message” to USCCB by joining the dozen or so other bishops (including Bishop Morlino) who have publicly recognized the misguided nature of CCHD programs. We prayerfully await your reply to this letter.

United in Christ,

Dr. A.P. Szews, President
St. Gregory VII Chapter
Catholics United for the Faith, Inc.

cc:

Most Rev. Timothy M. Dolan, President
United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

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Exhibit 1

Jobs with Justice Coalition – 2010 National CCHD Grantee Members

Fuerza Laboral (<http://rijwj.net/members>)

VOZ (<http://www.jwjpx.org/jwj-member-organizations/member-organizations>)

Latino Union (<http://www.chicagojwj.org/structure>)

Food and Medicine (<http://www.jwj.org/coalitions/index.html>)

Georgia Latino Alliance for Human Rights (<http://www.atljwj.org/links.html>)

United Congregations of Metro East (<http://www.kcjwj.org/MemberOrganizations.html>)

Northeast Ohio Alliance for Hope (<http://www.clevelandjwj.org/aboutus.html>)

Pioneer Valley Project (<http://wmjwj.org/western-mass-coalition>)

Tomkins County Workers Center (<http://www.jwj.org/coalitions/index.html>)

Massachusetts Senior Action Council (<http://www.massjwj.net/content/member-organizations>)

Boston Workers Alliance (<http://www.massjwj.net/content/member-organizations>)

Brazilian Women's Group (<http://www.massjwj.net/content/member-organizations>)

Chelsea Collaborative (<http://www.massjwj.net/content/member-organizations>)

Exhibit 2

Industrial Areas Foundation -- 2010 National CCHD Grantee Members

Common Ground (Milwaukee)

Greater Boston Interfaith Organization

People Acting Together in Howard (MD)

Washington Interfaith Network (DC)

Triangle CAN (NC)

Albuquerque Interfaith

Austin Interfaith

The Border Organization (TX)

Dallas Area Interfaith

El Paso Interreligious Sponsoring Organization

Southern California Education Fund

Omaha Together One Community

Pima County Interfaith (AZ)

Sacramento County Organizing Committee

Valley Interfaith (TX)

Valley Interfaith (AZ)

West Texas Organizing Strategy

Oklahoma City Sponsoring Committee

Baton Rouge Sponsoring Committee

Jackson Metro Sponsoring Committee (MS)

West Valley Sponsoring Committee (AZ)