Rarely, however, did these prejudices result in violence; rather, they were reflected in general Protestant-oriented teaching in public schools and in a lack of economic and political opportunity for new Catholic emigrants.

With the election of John F. Kennedy to the presidency and the growing societal power of lay Catholics in all sectors of society, it was thought that some of these prejudices were about to disappear. However, as Jenkins points out, the leading anti-Catholics today in the United States are “anti-Catholic Catholics,” or so-called liberal Catholics who have internalized the world's contempt.

The reaction to Mel Gibson's The Passion of the Christ took place after the publication of the Jenkins book but surely would merit a chapter in a second edition. Ironically, those who used to be the most suspicious and even bigoted, the evangelical Christians, are gradually becoming faithful Catholics' best allies in the cultural wars taking place in the United States.

Now, anti-Catholicism will never disappear, whether in the United States or elsewhere. After all, the faith, like the cross, is a sign of contradiction. The New Anti-Catholicism does an excellent job, however, in showing its roots, history and current state in the United States.

Jenkins and sociologist Rodney Stark of Baylor University (see Acéprensa reviews) are two pre-eminent American researchers on religious themes and are widely recognized as such by the American media.

They show in their many books the beneficial effects of orthodox Christianity on civilization and culture through the centuries while patiently analyzing the many misunderstandings, myths and plain lies its enemies allege against it.

The Church continues to grow, and as such, it will always be subject to attack by those who hate it. It is encouraging to have two such renowned researcher scholars make the case scientifically for the great good the Church has done and continues to do for the human race.

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Christianity Tomorrow
Father John McCloskey

Philip Jenkins is a distinguished professor at Penn State University and perhaps the foremost historian of religious trends today. With one book after another, he has treated with objectivity and unique insights topics as varied as pedophilia and priests, biblical scholarship, child pornography and terrorism.

Although he is a historian, his expertise in the use of statistics also gives him credentials as a sociologist. Consequently, the media often call on him for commentary on controversial subjects.

In the last several years Jenkins has published two notable books, The New Anti-Catholicism: The Last Acceptable Prejudice, in 2003, and The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity, in 2002, both from Oxford University Press.

In the second book he tackles the most intriguing subject of all: Where is Christianity headed in the next 50 years?

He speaks in demographic and geographical terms, although he most certainly takes into account the question of what brand of Christianity will grow. He uses the terms liberal and conservative rather than orthodox and heterodox, but the meaning is clear for the discerning reader. Jenkins, himself a former Catholic turned Episcopalian, does not signal his current religious posture but maintains a cool objectivity as the historian he is. The book won several mentions as one of the top religious books of the year.

Jenkins tells us: "We are currently living through one of the transforming moments in the history of religion worldwide. Over the past five centuries or so, the story of Christianity has been
inextricably bound up with that of Europe and
European-derived civilizations overseas, above all in North America. …

"The stereotype holds that Christians are un-
black, un-poor and un-young. If that is true, then
the growing secularization of the West can only
mean that Christianity is in its dying days. Globally, the faith of the future must be Islam.

Over the past century, however, the center of
gravity in the Christian world has shifted
inexorably southward, to Africa, Asia and Latin
America."

It astonishes how few serious Christians
connect their present efforts of evangelization in
terms of where they would like the faith to be in
the future. Many in the West simply bemoan the
sad decline of religious Catholic practice and
fight a rear guard action to salvage what is left
of Christian culture in their own countries or
continents.

Other faithful living in what are referred to
euphemistically as "developing countries" are
simply content, and rightfully so, to survive the
economic and societal misery in which they live
and look forward more to the rewards in the next
life rather than worrying about Christian growth
or impact in the next several decades. Indeed, in
Asia, Africa or Latin America, many are literally
suffering or dying for their Christian beliefs
while many in the decadent West are lightly
throwing away centuries of their Christian
heritage.

Jenkins goes into great detail explaining that
Christianity of the Southern Hemisphere is
above all traditional, whether it is of the Catholic
or Protestant variety.

He also points out the existence of hundreds
of millions of Pentecostal Christians and
independent churches, of whom he says, "These
new churches preach deep personal faith and
communal orthodoxy, mysticism and
Puritanism, all founded on clear scriptural
authority. …"

To these, he writes, "prophecy is an
everyday reality, while faith healing, exorcism
and dream-visions are all basic components of
religious sensibility. … According to current
projections, the numbers of Pentecostal believers
should surpass the 1 billion mark before 2050."

Both of these developments have enormous
consequences for where the Catholic Church
places its resources for evangelization in the
decades ahead, in terms of new dioceses,
utilization of priests and religious, and the new
ecclesial movements and institutions. Surely it is
not a question of abandoning the declining
continents of Europe and North America. They
can recover even though the demographics argue
against it, particularly in Europe.

The West still maintains great economic and
cultural power in the new world of globalization.
In the waning years of the awe-inspiring
pontificate of Pope John Paul II, we can see
what enormous challenges will face his
immediate successors, who well may come from
the ranks of African or South American
cardinals, in just keeping pace with the growing
number of "Southern" Christians.

Every Christian with apostolic desires and
historical insight who rejoices that indeed the
Gospel is being preached even to the ends of
the earth should read The Next Christendom. At
the same time, every Catholic longs for unity. When
primitive Christianity is so alive, particularly in
Africa, it is time for the hierarchical and
sacramental Church to preach the truth
enthusiastically to those newly evangelized
Pentecostals and independent churches.

In Central and South America, with
centuries of Catholic culture and tradition, the
solution is re-evangelization to win back the
millions who have fallen into Protestant sects,
due, above all, to lack of catechesis and native
clergy. According to Jenkins, Christianity will
continue to be the largest world religion for
decades to come with explosive growth, but we
must ask ourselves, will it be Catholic? The
answer will come from the Holy Spirit and from
those who collaborate with him. Who knows,
perhaps in a century or two or less, we will be
sending missionaries to New York, Los Angeles,
London, Paris and Moscow, or even to Rome!

**The Longest Prejudice**

In *The New Anti-Catholicism*, Jenkins deals
with anti-Catholicism, perhaps the longest
prejudice in the history of the United States,
particularly topical at this moment when a
professed Catholic is running for president while
holding views antithetical to Catholic moral
 teachings on issues regarding marriage, family
and life while his opponent, an evangelical
Christian, holds to Catholic beliefs in these same
areas. Jenkins starts off his book with the
famous quote of a social critic of several
decades ago, Peter Vierick, who said, "Catholic
baiting is the anti-Semitism of the liberals."

Jenkins gives a short history of anti-
Catholicism in the United States. He tells of the
19th-century bigotry stemming from the
overwhelmingly Protestant culture that was
aimed at the millions of emigrant Catholics who
came from Ireland, Italy and southern Germany.

This attitude stemmed from the prejudices
dating from the Protestant Reformation and was
transmitted to the Unites States by earlier
migrations of dissenting English Protestants and
most notably the Scotch-Irish, who were
Calvinists. They perpetuated the famous "black
legends," such as the Crusades, the Inquisition
and the persecution of Jews, brought up to date
in recent days with the controversy regarding
Pope Pius XII's role in the Holocaust.