

ABC Makes Amends

Last night, ABC's "World News with Charles Gibson" ran a story about the health benefits of being an optimist. At the end of the segment, viewers on the East Coast were presented with a scene from "Monty Python's Life of Brian" in which crucified men (one is the character Brian, mistaken in the plot for the Messiah) sing and whistle the song "Always Look on the Bright Side of Life."

It didn't take ABC long to realize that airing a scene mocking the crucifixion was completely unnecessary and inappropriate. Not wishing to further offend Christians, the network changed the scene for subsequent broadcasts in other time zones and apologized to those viewers who voiced their objections.

We are pleased that officials at ABC acted quickly to correct their actions, and appreciate their willingness to convey their apologies. Their handling of the problem speaks well of the network. We can't help but wish, however, that instead of a trivial and offensive closer to the segment, something with real substance had been chosen.

The audience would have been well served to be reminded that faith in God also is beneficial to your health. A study from the University of Pennsylvania found that people who regularly practice their faith have lower rates of drug and alcohol abuse, depression and other health ailments. Other studies from Duke University Medical Center have found that religious people spend less time in hospitals and recover from illness more quickly than their secular counterparts. Additionally, using data collected over thirty years, scientists at the California Department of Health Services, the Public Health Institute and the University of California, Berkeley, found that those who attend church services weekly tend to live longer than others.

This is the sort of information that would have made a fitting end to ABC's story.