

ADWEEK PROFILES ATTACK ON CHURCH

In a report this past summer, the New England edition of *Adweek* profiled the complaints of two Catholic ad agency directors, Ernie Schenck and Jamie Mambro. Judy Warner's story, which appeared July 29, discussed the reasons why Schenck and Mambro developed ads that attack the Church for allegedly doing nothing about those priests who have sexually abused children.

The ads are unusually vicious in their attack. Here's a sample: a) "Get caught by the cops molesting children and you could get sent to prison. Get caught by your bishop and you could get sent to another parish." b) "100,000 victims of sexual abuse and some church officials are telling us to go to hell. With all due respect, we've already been there." c) "Thousands of kids molested by priests and some Catholics refuse to deal with it. (Apparently, there's still a need for someone who can make the blind see.)" d) "After 37 years in the priesthood, he knows it's a mortal sin to have sex with another man's wife. It's another man's son we're worried about."

Schenck and Mambro are both senior vice presidents and creative directors at Hill, Holiday. They offered to create the ads and posters for the Survivors Network of Those Abused by Priests (SNAP).

In a letter to *Adweek*, Catholic League president William Donohue sought to set the record straight:

"For the record, the percentage of priests involved in such incidents [sexual abuse of youngsters] ranges between .7 and 1.2 percent. While even one priest is too many, the 'crisis' that Schenck and Mambro would have us believe exists is pure

fabrication.

“It is scurrilous to say that the Catholic Church has ‘shown no sign of responding’ to this problem. In the past few years, the National Catholic Conference of Bishops (NCCB) has held hearings and issued strict guidelines on this matter, the result of which has been a fast, thorough and responsible response to any wrongdoing. Indeed, the group that Schenck and Mambro repaired to for consultation, namely Survivors Network of Those Abused by Priests (SNAP), was actually summoned by the NCCB in 1993 to discuss this issue, making charges of foot-dragging in 1996 not only ludicrous, but downright dishonest.

“Those who have real complaints about the Catholic Church ought to come foreword. But those who maintain a grudge out of animus are not deserving of our time.”

The league is grateful to Dale O’Leary for bringing this matter to its attention.