

# Los Angeles Times: SELECTIVE SENSITIVITY

Toward the end of Lent, religious controversy swirled around decisions made by the *Los Angeles Times* about which cartoons it chose to run. The controversy involved the *Times*' publishing on March 28 a cartoon in its "Commentary" section. It showed Bob Dole crucified with the words "Christian Coalition" around his head similar to the crown of thorns. Instead of "INRI" above his unsmiling head, so as to leave no doubts, the sign read "DOLE." This use of Christian symbols during the holiest time of the year was suspect, at the very least, if not outright insulting.

What made this doubly disturbing was that the *Times* refused to publish a cartoon strip called "B.C." by Johnny Hart at the end of Holy Week because of the cartoon's religious message. Entitled "The Suffering Prince," the strip showed a regular character in the series writing a poem about Jesus. Although the newspaper has been a home to the strip since 1968, a spokeswoman said that the cartoon had been featuring "religious overtones" of late. That the strip might be offensive was the reason for its banishment; the offense to Christians that the other cartoon aroused was considered acceptable, however.

On Holy Saturday league advisory board member Kate O'Beirne proclaimed it the "outrage of the week" on CNN's *The Capitol Gang*.

In the end, two of the three "religious" cartoons were published due to a number of calls from the public in protest.