

MONITORING THE CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR

On October 31, the *Christian Science Monitor* featured two responses to Pope Benedict XVI's call for dialogue in his University of Regensburg lecture. One response was from a Christian and the other from a Muslim. There was just one problem: the person who wrote from the Christian perspective is an anti-Catholic bigot.

Dave Hunt provided this insight: "The pope's call for dialogue rings hollow. He mentioned the 16th century Reformation and its motto, 'sola scriptura'—the principle that the Bible is the only, not just primary, spiritual authority. But he failed to admit that his church still opposes this concept as firmly as it did at the Council of Trent (1543-63)." Hunt also wrote that, "The Vatican no longer uses torture or the sword as a threat, but it hasn't rescinded its anathemas, or curses, against Protestants. For all the current talk about dialogue and ecumenism, its earlier decrees declaring that there is no salvation outside submission to the Catholic Church have never been rescinded."

The Catholic League has previously written about Dave Hunt and his anti-Catholic positions. In the October 1996 issue of *Catalyst*, we noted that Hunt wrote of Vatican City that, "a charge of fornication could be leveled" against it.

Bill Donohue wrote to *Christian Science Monitor* editor Richard Bergenheim. Donohue said, "Having Dave Hunt write about dialogue with the pope is akin to commissioning David Duke to espouse his take on race relations. If the *Monitor* wished to present the view of a non-Catholic Christian on the pope's request for inter-faith dialogue, that would be absolutely fine with us. However, was there no one else available besides a man who has revealed his animosity for the Catholic Church

time and time again?" Donohue also wrote that he was astonished that a responsible publication like the *Monitor* would publish Hunt's views.

Mr. Bergenheim replied with a respectful letter, although it did not satisfy us. Bergenheim wrote, "As editors we are fully aware of Mr. Hunt's controversial reputation. As a Christian publication, our motive was to reach out to him—rather than ostracize him.... We worked with him diligently to make sure of the article's accuracy and to tone down his rhetoric. It was a Christian exercise, forgiving his past statements to possibly create a better future for all Christianity."

The Catholic League certainly understands the need for forgiveness. What we do have a problem with is choosing someone who is unapologetic about his anti-Catholic bigotry to write about the church. If the editors of the *Monitor* worked with Hunt "to tone down his rhetoric," we wonder what the article looked like before the toning down.

While we respect the *Christian Science Monitor* and have no reason to doubt its intentions and sincerity, we will be monitoring the newspaper to see how its future articles treat the Catholic faith.