

NEWSPAPERS NIX “MUSLIM” CARTOON

On October 12, we commented on the decision by editors at the *Washington Post* not to run a cartoon that mentioned, but did not depict, Muhammad. We referred to our October 8 release that noted how Universal decided to nix the words, “electric cars are so gay,” from the trailer of “The Dilemma.” We ended that statement by saying, “There are protected demographic groups in society, and people of faith, save for Muslims, are not among them.”

Two days later, the *Washington Post* proved our point: it decided not to publish a totally inoffensive cartoon [left], one that shows kids and animals frolicking about in a park, simply because it asks, “Where’s Muhammad?”

According to the *Post*’s Style editor Ned Martel, the reason for not printing the “Non Sequitur” strip by Wiley Miller was that “it seemed a deliberate provocation without a clear message”; executive editor Marcus Brauchli agreed.

So the problem was that Miller didn’t have a clear message. Maybe Tom Toles, the *Washington Post* cartoonist, should have brought him up to speed. On March 29, the *Post* printed a cartoon [bottom right] by Toles that showed a picture of Jesus with the words, “Let the Little Children Come to Me” and a priest saying, “What a Great Recruitment Poster!” Nothing unclear about that: all priests are child molesters.

We brought this issue to the attention of the executive editors at the nation’s leading newspapers, and to the deans of the nation’s leading schools of journalism. Both the Toles cartoon, and the Miller cartoon, were submitted for their review. We said it was time to have a national discussion on what passes as offensive fare these days. Or, more pointedly,

whose sensibilities are to be protected, and whose are to be assaulted.

The day after we sent the letter to the nation's top newspapers and journalism schools, we found out that many more newspapers refused to publish the inoffensive cartoon.

Thanks to James Rainey at the *Los Angeles Times*, we learned that the cartoon was pulled from his own newspaper, as well as from the *Dallas Morning News*, the *San Francisco Chronicle*, the *Boston Globe* and many other papers.

When presented with this information, Bill Donohue said, "Every time Catholics complain about some Catholic-bashing artwork, movie, television show, play or cartoon, we are told that 'art is in the eye of the beholder'; 'it's open to interpretation'; 'it's done to make people think'; 'it's complex'; and other dodges. But when it comes to Muslim sensibilities, it is sufficient to censor anything that might possibly tick them off, even if every person not housed in the asylum knows the work is innocuous."

Unfortunately, those who are not cowards in dealing with this issue are in the minority. A book can be published about the Danish cartoons, but the cartoons cannot be reproduced in the same volume. Matt Stone and Trey Parker at Comedy Central can mock Jesus on "South Park," but can't joke lightly about Muhammad. And now we have newspapers galore that would rather prostitute everything they stand for before ever making Muslims feel uneasy.

It is obvious that they no longer stand for anything.