

WASHINGTON TIMES GIVES SPACE TO BIGOTS

On September 11, an anti-Catholic ad was printed in the Washington Times by the Eternal Gospel church of Layman Seventh Day Adventists (SDA). The ad takes Catholics (and, to a lesser extent, Protestants) to task for observing Sunday as the Sabbath. The Catholic Church is identified as the "WHORE" and the "beast," and the Holy Father is charged with breaking down the walls between church and state.

James Cardinal Hickey, archbishop of Washington, wrote about this matter in last weekend's edition of the archdiocesan newspaper, Catholic Standard. He quite rightfully branded the ad as "an attack on the Pope" and as a "throwback to the bad old days when it was perfectly fine to haul bigoted invective against the Roman Catholic Church and especially the Holy Father."

What makes this so disturbing is that a similar ad was run in the Washington Times on June 27, 1997. At that time, the Catholic League was told that it was not likely that an ad like this would run again.

In a September 14 letter to Michael Mahr, director of advertising at the newspaper, Catholic League president William Donohue said he wanted a firm commitment that such an ad would never run again. In response, Mahr admitted on September 16 that he personally reviews all controversial ads. He then dismissed Donohue's concerns by saying, "I appreciate your sensitivity to the ad and regret it has offended you."

Donohue commented as follows on Mahr's letter:

"It is striking that when I complained to the *Miami Herald* and the *Sun Sentinel* about a similar SDA ad, I received a pledge that such ads would never run again. The *Washington Times*,

however, refuses to do likewise. Fine. Now here's my pledge: we will conduct a publicity campaign against the newspaper that it will surely regret. We'll see who gets the last laugh."

We are pleased to announce that subsequent to our news release the Washington Times pledged never to run these ads again.