

Newspaper Bans Ad Over Offensive 'Christian' Word

The owners of a Christian bookstore in Knoxville, Tennessee were dumbfounded after the News Sentinel rejected their ad because it included an offensive word: Christian.

Lois McGinnis and her family own Cedar Springs Christian Store. They recently decided to close a second location of the store so they decided to place an ad in the classified section of the newspaper, which is owned by Gannett.

The advertisement read: "Store closing sale – Cedar Springs Christian Store – Clinton Highway location – All merchandise, fixtures, slat walls must go. Sale through August 13, phone ."

Mrs. McGinnis placed the ad on July 26. It was supposed to run on July 28. But when she opened up the newspaper, the ad was nowhere to be found.

So Mrs. McGinnis phoned the newspaper and spoke with a classified ad employee.

"She said our ad did not run because it contained an offensive word," she told me. "I asked what that offensive word was and she said the offensive word was 'Christian.'"

She said the News Sentinel did not notify her in advance the ad had been rejected nor did they call to say they were refunding her money.

"We had no way of knowing they considered the word 'Christian' offensive until we tried to place this ad," she told me.

"As Christians, this was a slap in the face to us," she added.

So the bookstore decided to tell their customers what happened in a very clever Facebook posting. It was simply titled, "Do

you find the word 'Christian' offensive?"

Let's just say the good, church-going folks of East Tennessee lit up the telephones and it wasn't too much long afterwards that the Knoxville News Sentinel addressed the issue.

They offered up one heaping helping of an apology "for any misunderstanding about the News Sentinel stance on Christianity."

"We had a system failure, which resulted in a classified ad for Cedar Springs getting hung up in our front end system," they wrote in a statement posted online.

A front end problem, eh?

"We corrected the technology issue in our system and the ad is now running for an extended period at no extra charge," they added.

And for the record: The newspaper does not have a problem with Jesus.

"The News Sentinel does not have a bias against Christianity or any other religion," publisher Patrick Birmingham wrote in response to online critics.

However, the newspaper's explanation doesn't seem to be placating its readers.

"Considering how liberal this paper is ... I take the apology with a grain of salt," one reader wrote on Facebook.

Another wrote, "Don't be offended Cedar Springs Christian Stores ... Nobody has read the Knoxville News Sentinel in over a decade anyway. Spend your advertising dollars elsewhere."

"I cannot believe they are doing this now. I am so glad I do not subscribe to them or give them my business. To not sell an ad because the store's name has the word Christian in it is

absolutely wrong. I guess if the store was called Cedar Springs Muslim store it would be published. I hate to tell them, but the majority of the people who live here proclaim to be Christian," another irate reader added.

Well, let's hope the News Sentinel has fixed their front end problem—lest their readers give them a back end problem.