



Bicentennial Field Day

Photos by Susan McKinney

Musket shots punctuated the rumble of cannon fire on the Memorial Art Gallery campus June 6. Robie's Continental Regiment of Foot, the Second Battalion Artillery, the Alexander Millner Fife and Drum Corps and the Wakefield Dancers

were among the performers in the gallery's Bicentennial salute. The center photo shows two members of the audience quizzing Michael Grenier about early American armament. At right, Tom Bohrer, Wakefield director, chooses Joan Shaw as his partner in an 18th Century dance.

Churches Voice Concern over TV Ads

By Religious News Service

Pope Paul in a recent address to European advertising executives, warned against distorting consumer values and creating desires for things consumers could not or should not have.

"The consumer," he told members of the European Association of Advertising Agencies, should not have "his hierarchy of values distorted" by advertising or be "titillated in his baser instincts" or "oriented toward needs that he cannot or should not satisfy."

The papal warning reflects what appears to be a growing concern — laced with some controversy — among church groups in the United States over the influence of advertising, especially through the medium of television, on public attitudes towards drinking of alcoholic beverages, smoking, use of contraceptives, and "the image" of woman.

When the United Presbyterian Church filed a stockholder resolution asking Proctor and Gamble to revise the image of women in its advertising, it attached a statement complaining that "commercial advertising has reflected and reinforced existing stereotypes of women" as "housekeepers, mothers, and sex objects."

The resolution, prepared with the assistance of the Inter-faith Center on Corporate Responsibility, a coalition of 25 Protestant and Roman Catholic groups, was defeated at the company's annual stockholders meeting last October. But, said the Rev. Donald Purkey, chairman of the Church's Committee on Mission Responsibility Through Investment, "I think we were heard. I think we will see some changes in Proctor and Gamble's advertising images."

The issue of advertising contraceptives on TV, which arose early this year, not unexpectedly created a minor storm of controversy.

The Advertising Code Administration of the National Association of Broadcasters (NAB) announced it was "canvassing public opinion" on the subject of relaxing its ban on contraceptive ads. (Not all stations subscribe to the ban. Such ads have appeared on a few TV stations.)

In response to the announcement, Bishop James S.

Rausch, general secretary of the U.S. Catholic Conference (USCC), charged that contraceptive ads on television would be a "gross violation" of parental rights to guide their children's moral and social development.

Emphasizing that the Catholic Church was totally opposed to contraceptive advertising of any kind, Bishop Rausch said that such advertising on television would place an "unrealistic, unfair, and unacceptable" burden on parents who would have to monitor home TV screens for contraceptive commercials.

"There is no acceptable compromise approach to this issue," he added, "— such as, for example, restricting such advertising to late evening hours. Recent studies of viewing habits show that millions of children watch TV after the so-called 'family viewing' period."

Prior to the Catholic spokesman's statement, the Communications Commission of the National Council of Churches (NCC) held a hearing on what its position should be on the matter of TV advertising of non-prescriptive contraceptives.

Nine invited witnesses, from the broadcasting industry, churches, and government, took positions ranging from total opposition to total support.

One witness, Jessma Blockwick, director of the Population Department of the United Methodist Board of Church and Society, said the board had adopted a statement endorsing the "free flow of information on reputable, efficient, and safe non-prescriptive contraceptive techniques through periodicals, radio, television, and other advertising media."

Dr. Louis Hellman, deputy assistant secretary for Population Affairs of the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, advocated an "educational" approach on radio and TV to the matter of contraception, in lieu of commercial advertising of contraceptive products.

Thomas Murphy, president of Capital Cities Communication Corp., argued that the advertising of condoms, vaginal foams and jellies, and the like would cause great controversy and opposition, particularly from Roman Catholics and Orthodox Jews.

On the other hand, American Civil Liberties Union lawyer Harriet Pilpel contended that any ad-

vertising ban infringes on the First Amendment freedoms of speech and press.

A month after the hearing, the National Council of Churches Communications Commission voted unanimously to oppose the broadcast advertising of non-prescriptive contraceptives, at least until further studies of its potential impact is made.

The NCC commission, however, did recommend the development of prime-time TV programs to inform teenagers about venereal diseases and contraception.

Bishop Rausch, in his statement of opposition to TV contraceptive ads, asserted that "the idea of 'educating' children via television advertising on contraception is one which many people, rightly find obnoxious."

"Keeping contraceptive ads off TV is consistent with other desirable and widely-accepted restrictions on television advertising," he continued. "The legitimate concerns of many segments of the viewing public are currently respected in bans on the advertising of cigarettes and hard liquor."

There is a long-standing informal agreement among distillers not to advertise hard liquor on radio and

television, and cigarette advertising on both media is banned by law. But the United Methodist General Conference, at its recent meeting, called for a total ban on the advertising of tobacco products as an effort to "reduce enticement toward use of a proven health hazard."

The conference also asked for a total ban on the advertising of all alcoholic beverages.

The question as to whether the U.S. government itself should restrict alcohol advertising is under serious study by a Senate subcommittee.

Two Christian Science Monitor studies on drinking on TV shows found that all three major networks (NBC, CBS, and ABC) put emphasis on "liquor" to portray humor, sophistication, and tension.

According to the Monitor, liquor was most frequently used for:

- * A Prop. Holding a glass of liquor gives an actor something to do during scenes with little action.
- * Humor. Drunkenness is frequently portrayed as being funny, although studies show it is this country's foremost drug problem.
- * Sophistication. Often the

quickest, easiest way to portray stylish living is with a glass of champagne.

* Tension. The worried parent, the anxious husband, the frustrated executive are shown turning to the bottle for relief.

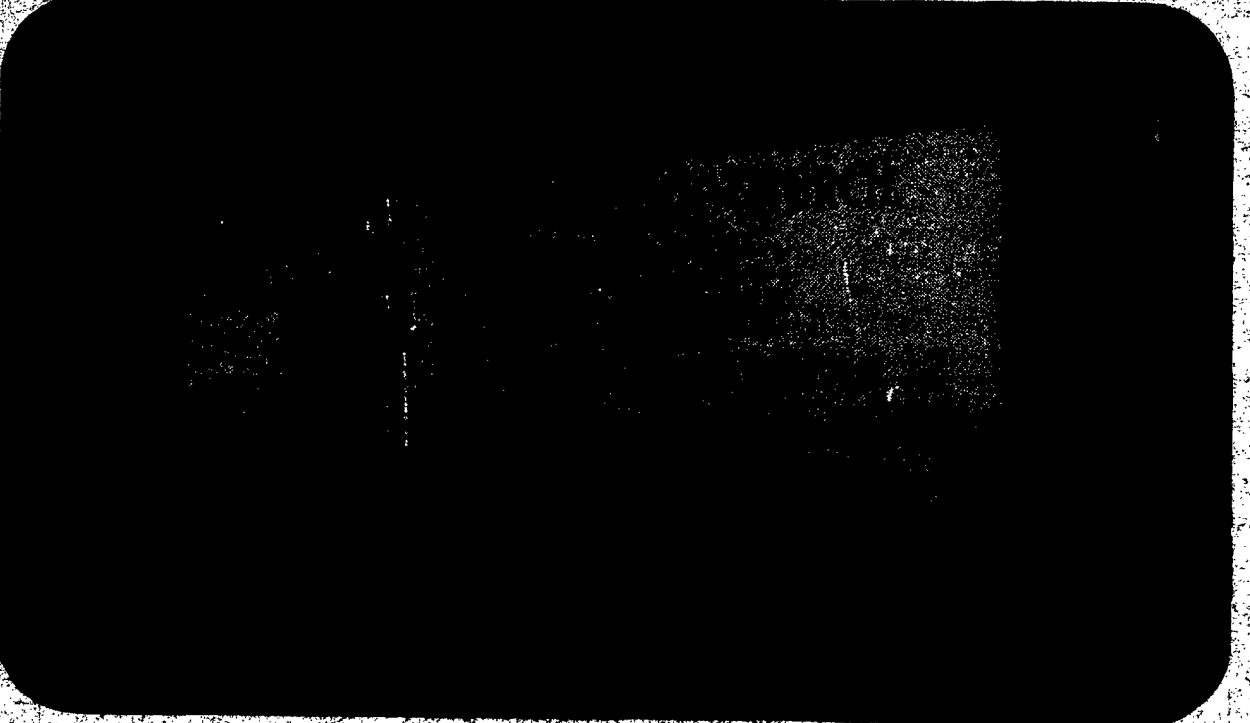
The National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism has protested this emphasis on TV drinking. The medium's portrayal of alcohol is supposed to be governed by "The Television Code" of the National Association of Broadcasters. The code states:

"The use of liquor in program content shall be deemphasized. When shown, (it) should be consistent with plot and character development."

Critics of the TV industry have complained that this provision of deemphasis is more honored in the breach than in the observance.

TV executives maintain, in defense, that television only reflects social practice.

"While this view may be partially true," comments America, the Jesuit weekly magazine, "it ignores the extent to which TV may actually shape social practice. The executives, it seems, do not take TV too seriously as a possible shaper of the public's emotional and psychic landscapes."



The Universal Church

Our summer intern, Mary Ellen Wisniewski, photographed this sign pointing out an Amsterdam Church in the English, French, German and Italian languages, after she had heard the Mass said in Dutch.