

"Soap", the new ABC show which parodies soap operas, continues to take it on the chin. This in spite of the fact that the so-called situation comedy won't make its debut until Sept. 13.

In the latest chapter of the series' pre-screening saga, seven advertising firms, all purportedly once interested in sponsoring "Soap" have withdrawn commercials. "Soap's" preoccupation with adultery, homosexuality, impotency and similar subjects are at the root.

Kayser-Roth Hosiery, Lever Brothers, Miller Brewing, Pfizer, Nissan Motor Corporation, Revlon and Volkswagen have announced they will not sponsor the show. Warner-Lambert is waiting until November to make a decision and American Home Products will evaluate the episodes on a weekly basis. (ABC says, however, it has no lack of advertising.)

According to the New York Times, Nissan (makes Datsun autos) and Pfizer say they cancelled advertising within the last month. Lever, Volkswagen and Miller Brewing said they had never purchased any advertising and did not plan to do so.

Both Nissan and Pfizer say outside pressures had nothing to do with their cancellation but an eighth unnamed advertiser who had cancelled said "We're under tremendous pressure, not only from the Southern Baptists, but also from the

Judge Gabrielli to Be Homilist at Red Mass

Domenick L. Gabrielli, associate judge of the State Court of Appeals, the highest court in the state, will be the first layman to deliver the homily at the annual Red Mass since its inception in 1945.

Bishop Joseph L. Hogan will celebrate the Mass at 12:15 p.m., Thursday, Sept. 15, at St. Mary's Church, 15 South St., Rochester.

Judge Gabrielli resides in Bath and was elected to the Court of Appeals in 1972 when he received the most votes of the seven candidates for the office.

Joseph G. DeMaria, president of the St. Thomas More Lawyers Guild which is sponsoring the Mass, said the choice of Judge Gabrielli was based not only upon "his outstanding contribution to the highest ideals of the legal

UFW SUPPER

The public is invited to take potluck with the United Farm Workers Rochester Support Committee Sunday evening, Sept. 11, at the Friends Meeting House, 41 Westminster Road. Supper will begin at 6:30.

Catholic League for Civil Rights.

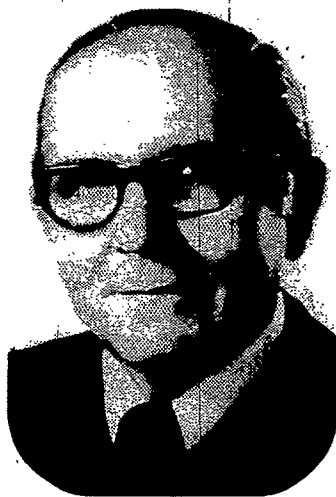
At the same time sponsors were "rethinking" their position on "Soap", the president of the Westinghouse Broadcasting Co. told ABC that after screening the edited and purportedly toned-down versions of the pilot episodes, he found them unacceptable for his company's station in Baltimore, WJZ-TV which happens to be Westinghouse's only ABC affiliate.

In the meantime, officials of three church organizations, including executives of the U. S. Catholic Conference (USCC), continue to find "Soap" objectionable. Representatives of USCC along with people from National Council of Churches (NCC) and Southern Baptist Convention's Christian Life Commission, after attending an advance screening, all denounced ABC's plans to show it during prime time. (It is scheduled for 9:30 Tuesdays). Father Patrick Sullivan of USCC said: "the scheduling of this series at 9:30 in prime time is totally irresponsible on the part of affiliates who will clear it at that time."

A Baptist spokesman added: "It's not that sexuality is treated that is the problem—the problem is the way it is treated—it is sex miseducation."

Dr. William Fore of the NCC, pointing up a problem that parents all over the country are aware of, noted that Nielsen rating indicate that some 18 million children watch television during prime time. "At the very least, he said, "stations ought to program that kind of show much later in the evening, after 11:00."

Local viewers, along with the rest of the country, will be able to make their own evaluations next week when it premieres on Channel 13.



JUDGE GABRIELLI

profession, but also upon his personal commitment and example to the highest traditions and moral values upon which this country was founded"

The Red Mass is an invocation for spiritual guidance for the legal profession, law enforcement, and the judiciary. The public is invited.

MISSION GUILD

The first Fall meeting of the Catholic Mission Guild is scheduled for 1 p.m. Wednesday, Sept. 14, at the Knights of Columbus club on Thurston Road.

Pomo

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limits set in the movie ratings code.

"If a theater fails to carry out the terms of the rating restriction," he said, "future advertising may be refused."

Bp. Kelly:

Grain Reserve Needed

Washington, D.C. (RNS) — An official of the U.S. Catholic Conference, while urging the Carter Administration to proceed cautiously in curtailing wheat production, has called on the government to press negotiations for an international grain reserve and to join with other nations in donating increased supplies of surplus food for the world's needy.

Bishop Thomas C. Kelly, OP, general secretary of the USCC, said in a letter to President Carter that such actions "would go a considerable way toward easing the problems of mounting wheat surpluses and depressed prices."

The letter came in response to reports that the Carter Administration is considering a significant reduction in wheat acreage for the 1978 harvest to deal with the problem of mounting surpluses.

Bishop Kelly said the USCC "appreciates the problems these surpluses are creating for both farmers and the government. Nevertheless, we urge you to proceed cautiously with respect to curtailing wheat production at a time when hundreds of millions of people are suffering from hunger and malnutrition and an adequate world food security system has not yet been established."

"We urge you in particular to take into account the need to set aside adequate domestic wheat reserves for both market stabilization and international emergency purposes," the bishop added.

Noting that U.S. grain stocks in relation to domestic consumption and export demand will be no greater this year than in 1972, he said, "this does not afford adequate protection against serious shortages and spiralling prices in the event of serious crop failures here or abroad next year."

Bishop Kelly called for early negotiation of an internationally coordinated system of nationally held grain reserves to provide for the equitable sharing of the costs involved by both exporters and importers.

SISTERS COUNCIL

The Diocesan Sisters Council will hold its first meeting of the new season on Saturday, Sept. 10, at the Motherhouse of the Sisters of St. Joseph. The council's agenda includes reports from the Peace and Justice Commission, from the sisters' own Social Concerns Committee, and from the diocesan planning office.

PRIESTS COUNCIL

The Priests Council of the Diocese of Rochester met yesterday at St. Bernard's Seminary for the first time this season. A full report of the council's activities will appear in next week's Courier-Journal.

EBLA: Two Scholars Probe Discovery's Meaning

Dahood

Detroit (RNS) — The startling discovery of some 20,000 clay tablets in northwestern Syria will apparently confound biblical scholars for a long time to come.

That assessment emerged in a lecture on "Ebla, Ugarit and the Old Testament" delivered here by Father Mitchel J. Dahood, SJ, during the 40th general meeting of the Catholic Biblical Association of America which recently concluded.

On the one hand, he said, caution needs to be exercised in interpreting what is found in the tablets. On the other, however, biblical scholars "should welcome the opportunity to check our current assumptions," said Father Dahood, of the Pontifical Biblical Institute in Jerusalem.

At any rate, the publication of the tablets is not occurring rapidly enough, the scholar asserted. He alluded to disagreements between the University of

Rome archeologists who began unearthing the tablets two years ago, Paolo Matthiae and Giovanni Pettinato. Professional differences between the two are delaying their publication and Father Dahood said he wished the process could be speeded up.

The tablets have been attributed to the Kingdom of Ebla, a civilization that flourished more than 4,000 years ago.

Tablets published to date have included some names of places and persons in the Bible. One mentions "urusalima," thought to be Jerusalem. It predates any other known reference to that city by some 1,000 years.

Another is "wa-na," thought to be a reference to Jonah, a word "unattested until now outside the bible," said Dahood.

The tablets were unearthed at Tell-Mardikh,

35 miles south of the Syrian town of Aleppo.

The age of the tablets, some of which date to 2400 BC, creates a "chronological chasm" between that date and authorship of Old Testament books, said Father Dahood. Most books in the Old Testament are generally thought to have been authored between 13 and 22 centuries later.

The chasm troubles some scholars but it need not, the priest said. Nor should it encourage "Abraham chasers," he added, referring to those he said go around with a Bible in hand attempting to use the tablets to prove a certain point of view.

The chronological chasm proves that the biblical writers had a rich literary tradition to draw upon and were not "neophytes," he continued.

The Ebla find "increases our esteem for the cultural background of the biblical writers," he added.

Lance

The striking thing about the Ebla discoveries is that they occurred in an area of Syria that had been a blank in the study of archeology, Dr. H. Darrell Lance said last week.

The Professor of Archeology at Colgate Rochester, Bexley Hall, Crozier Theological Seminary, said that regardless of the importance or lack of it in other areas, that fact alone makes the discovery valuable.

He urges caution, however in interpreting the data thus found. "The feeling is (among bible scholars) that anybody who goes out on a limb will get it sawed off."

A reason for the difficulty is that the tablets are written in a language that "is a very early member of the family that Hebrew evolved from," he said.

The writing, he noted, is

Sumerian. But from that period, one would expect the tablets to be written in Akkadian. Also, because they are written in Sumerian, that "makes decipherment somewhat problematic."

He acknowledges that it is a poor analogy, but illustrates the problem thusly:

£2

When one sees the above symbols, meaningful in both English and French, does one translate them "two pounds" or "deux livres?"

In other words, he said, should the tablets be read in Sumerian or in "Eblaite?"

What happens in the tablets, for instance, is that the same character reads EN (Sumerian) or ma-li-kum ("Eblaite"), the latter reading having a direct relation to the Hebrew melech.

But again, the Italian archeologists found

"dictionaries" of words written in parallel columns with Sumerian on one side and "Eblaite" on the other.

The tablets are going to "make it extremely interesting to trace the whole process of how the Mesopotamian tradition was spread around," he said.

Responding to reports of professional friction between the two discoverers of the tablets, and the subsequent delays in publication of the texts of the tablets, Dr. Lance said the situation was an "embarrassment," to the scientific community.

But whatever, and even though the find is very important for the study of the Bible, Dr. Lance cautioned that the tablets themselves are only "elements in a very large pot and not in themselves determinative," of how we should read texts in the Bible.



Churches Help India's Flood Victims

Indian villagers carrying their belongings jam the only passable road as they abandon huts and fields of Hazaf Garh, one of many hamlets on India's flood plain. Churches Auxiliary for Social Action (CASA), an ecumenical agency is providing medical service and feeding about 10,000 marooned villagers a day. (RNS).