

# Your Turn Columnist Wrong on Nestle

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It astounds me that the Courier-Journal (4/9/80) would run the Dolores Curran column condemning Nestle for distribution of infant formula in developing countries without making any effort to contact the company to determine its view.

As a result of its pitiful lack of research, the column is factually incorrect in its representation of Nestle's policies, and distorts and misrepresents the nutritional problems involved in the feeding of infants in developing countries.

The 10 million infant figure the column uses is absurd. The originator of that figure, Dr. Derrick Jelliffe, admitted in a Newsweek interview that the figure is a symbolic one.

Furthermore, the column attempts to link "bottle feeding" with infant formula feeding. The two are not the same. For centuries mothers in developing countries have supplemented their breast milk with foods such as starchy gruels, manioc, bush tea and just plain water. Those supplementary foods are given to their babies in bottles. When he examined infant feeding practices in an African village, Dr. Roger Whitehead of Cambridge stated that "the combination of insufficient human milk and nutritionally poor and contaminated weaning foods drastically retards child growth in Gambia and all too frequently results in frank malnutrition. There is no simple solution to the problem: many approaches and improvements are necessary, many types of expertise must be brought together and integrated."

This series will present, at the editor's discretion, the views of widely-known persons on varied issues. The opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the newspaper. Other readers also are invited to submit articles for "Your Turn" and the decision as to whether they are used will be the editor's.

If the author had done any research, the column would have stated that the average Third World mother cannot provide enough breast milk to sustain her infant's normal physical and mental growth after the third month. World Health Organization consultants have published their research which reaches this conclusion. And the World Health Organization has recently published a nine-country survey which supports the fact that a great percentage of mothers in the developing countries do not breastfeed or bottle-feed exclusively — they do both. The practice of mixed feeding — the use of breast milk plus a supplementary food — is the normal feeding pattern in developing countries.

Nestle believes that breastfeeding is best for an infant and stresses the superiority of breastfeeding on all infant formula labels and in all educational efforts. But when supplementation is necessary, infant formula is the most nutritious food available.

The column has also distorted the events which occurred at the World Health Organization meeting last October in Geneva. At that meeting about 150 individuals representing Third World governments, the health professions, industry and consumer organizations met and discussed all the problems involved in the feeding of infants. One result of the October meeting was the development of recommendations for the marketing and

distribution of infant formula products, and I am enclosing a copy for your information.

Immediately following the WHO meeting, those recommendations were sent to Nestle managers throughout the world. Personal briefings were given to all Nestle Third World managers with responsibility for the sale of infant foods. In those briefings it was underscored that all Nestle activities should conform with the WHO/Unicef Statement and Recommendations and with the local laws and codes of each country as well. (You might be interested in the fact that both Malaysia and Singapore have promulgated codes which are currently being enforced.)

At the October meeting the WHO established a process whereby all 150 meeting participants would cooperate in the development of an international marketing code. That process is now ongoing and is scheduled to culminate in the publication of a code in the near future.

With regard to the column's claim about an under-financed INFAC group, she should know that INFAC has mailed fundraising letters to approximately 6 million households nationwide and expects to receive about a quarter of a million dollars in contributions. It would probably surprise the many contributors that not one dime of the money goes to the direct benefit of Third World infants.

Unfortunately, such columns do nothing to further the cooperation which is needed to bring real solutions to the problems of infant feeding in the developing countries. Your article merely served to misinform the public, besmirch the image of Nestle, and harm the process established to help Third World infants.

## Looking Back . . .

From the pages of the Courier-Journal.

75 years ago this week — "Bishop McQuaid, in order to learn the attendance at the Catholic churches of the city at Sunday morning services for the convenience of the directors of the affairs of the church in the city, caused to be made an enumeration on Sunday, April 30th . . ."

So went the front page story. A total of 36,673 was counted, "indicating a total Catholic population of 60,000 in Rochester. The highest total was at the Cathedral (it had to be) with 4,058, followed by Immaculate Conception (3,518), St. Joseph's (3,507) and Holy Family (3,348)."

Need help department. News from Holy Rosary parish: "On Arbor Day the children of the school planted a tree and named it 'Berenice' in honor of Rt. Rev. Thomas F. Hickey, coadjutor bishop." Why "Berenice"?

Incidentally, an entertainment following the tree dedication included such songs as "Who Killed Cock Robin?", "Kentucky Babe," "Swanee River," and "Roaming."

50 years ago this week — "Beautiful New Church on Woodward Street Completed and Ready For Use" blared the Page 1 banner. The subhead told it all: "New Mt. Carmel Church Will Be Dedicated Sunday By Bishop of Rochester." The bishop was John Francis O'Hern and the pastor . . . Father Walter A. Foery, later to be bishop of Syracuse.

Also Page 1 news: "Eamon de Valera, the first president of the Irish Republic, returned to New York City on Monday, after a visit with his mother, Mrs. Charles T. Wheelwright of 18 Brighton Street."

25 years ago this week — In 1955, the paper concentrated heavily on news from around the world. For instance, Page 1 of Friday the 13th of May featured such stories as "Peron Police Arrest Catholic Action Leaders," "Missioner, Who Became Chinese Citizen, Ousted by Reds as 'Stateless Person,'" "Anglican Church (in Pakistan) Now Fatima Shrine," "New York, Texas Ban Lewd Comics." In fact, the only local story on Page 1 was only indirectly connected to this area. It was about a talk given in Atlantic City, N.J., on psychiatry by a Canandaigua, Dr. Francis W. Kelly.

10 years ago this week — Lest we forget. "Religious leaders from around the world, including Pope Paul VI, expressed disappointment at the United States decision to send American troops into Cambodia." Thus was the lead of the main story on Page 1, alongside a huge photo of a GI with a peace ring on his finger and an M16 over his shoulder.

And another reminder of those turbulent days on Page 2 — a photo captioned: "Gas-masked Ohio National Guardsmen advance through clouds of tear gas during an anti-war rally on the campus of Kent State University of Ohio on May 4. Shortly after the photo was taken, troops opened fire with their rifles and four students were killed."

And for some surcease: Inside photo. "Father John T. Walsh, founder and pastor of St. Paul's parish, Webster, celebrates first Mass in the crowded new and still un-completed church building on Hard Road."

## Freedom of Expression Doesn't Come Easily

For the past few weeks, at odd moments, I've been trying to formulate my judgment on the "silencing" of a west coast Jesuit, Father Cornelius M. Buckley.

The silencing seems to have been limited to his journalistic comments in a column which was published in a couple of Catholic papers. The troublesome comments involved accusations and criticisms directed against institutions run by his order.

Most of Father Buckley's columns left me cold, but that's one reason why I have felt a need to sort out my reactions. Had he been a progressive columnist, with whom I usually agree, I would probably be protesting about the importance of public opinion in the church, free speech, etc.

My problem: What are the principles involved? To what extent do I claim principles only for those with whom I agree?

First, the silencing did not come from the church authorities which controlled the publications. The publications themselves



Fr. John Reedy

Looking for the Lord

seemed perfectly willing to allow the writer to express his opinions.

The authority came from the religious community, to which the priest had voluntarily offered his obedience, the surrender of his freedom of choice.

Some of the criticisms of Father Buckley's columns claimed that he distorted facts, that he was inaccurate. Certainly his published opinions were contributing to dissension within his religious community. They probably were doing harm to these institutions run by the Jesuits. (He undoubtedly believed that the institutions would be served by a change in the situations he criticized.)

If true, all these matters are legitimate concerns for the provincial. But do they offset the values we associate with

freedom of expression in a society?

Well, freedom of expression is based on the assumption that in the public exchange there is a likelihood that truth will emerge. At times, the system breaks down.

It breaks down when one person's rhetorical skills simply outmatch his critics, regardless of facts . . . or when knowledgeable, competent people are unwilling to engage in unpleasant public exchange with a sharp-tongued adversary . . . or when editors are not sufficiently careful in making sure that facts alleged are facts in reality.

Still, suppression of criticism rarely solves the problem of dissent. The differences of opinion remain, fester, spread poison through the community, particularly if

the exercise of authority is perceived as biased.

My own opinion is that many of our Catholic publications contribute to the problem by reluctance to present criticism in an appropriate way, by insensitivity in seeking out the dissenting opinion which exists, by failure to examine independently the facts which are in dispute.

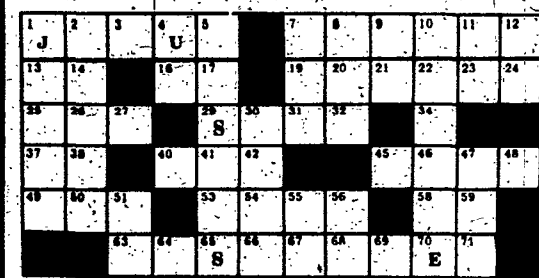
Most of all, they have a responsibility to use the editorial function to sort out the basic issues, cool off the rhetoric, encourage civility in discussion and respect for the honest concerns of various groups.

These comments relate only to the public aspects of this situation. I'm fully aware that behind the public account there is probably a whole history of private issues and communications. Such elements can modify a prudential judgment which seems right in principle.

But, in principle, I believe that more is lost than gained by the silencing of a person, even one whose opinions prove troublesome and embarrassing.

## Sunday Scripture Quiz

I. Gospel Reading: Jn 17:20-26 — The Father gave his son in love for us. Below is a key passage from Sunday's Gospel reading. You can determine what this passage is by finding the answers to the questions below the puzzle and then putting the letters in their appropriate box. The first one is done for you.



- |                   |                       |
|-------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Our savior:    | J E S U S             |
| 2. Our goal:      | 1 7 0 2 0 4 6 5       |
| 3. A noise:       | 1 9 3 2 5 2 2 1 1 4 0 |
| 4. Very neat:     | 7 1 5 3 1 3 5 4 3 2   |
| 5. Slow creature: | 1 6 3 4 8 3 5 9       |
| 6. Jungle animal: | 5 3 6 3 0 6 7 7       |

Based on scripture readings for Sunday, May 18, 1980, C Cycle.

Following are key passages from Sunday's scripture readings. Fill in the missing words.

II. First Reading: Acts 7:55-60 — Stephen loved the Lord even unto death.  
Phrase: As \_\_\_\_\_ was being \_\_\_\_\_ he could be heard \_\_\_\_\_ "Lord \_\_\_\_\_ receive my \_\_\_\_\_ He \_\_\_\_\_ to his \_\_\_\_\_ and cried out in a loud \_\_\_\_\_"

III. Second Reading: Rv. 12:14, 16, 17:20 — Yearn for the coming of the Spirit of Love.  
Phrase: I \_\_\_\_\_ heard a \_\_\_\_\_ saying to \_\_\_\_\_ "Remember, I am coming \_\_\_\_\_ I bring with me the \_\_\_\_\_ that will be given to each \_\_\_\_\_ as his \_\_\_\_\_ deserves I am the \_\_\_\_\_ and the Omega, the First and the \_\_\_\_\_"

### Answers on Page 7

- |                   |                         |
|-------------------|-------------------------|
| 7. City official: | 5 8 4 7 5 6 8 4 8       |
| 8. Human beings:  | 1 4 2 0 3 5 4 5 6 9 2 3 |
| 9. A food:        | 6 8 2 1 3 4 2 4 8       |
| 10. We eat it:    | 4 9 1 7 5 0 2 7         |
| 11. Man's name:   | 3 7 3 1 6 8 1 0         |
| 12. Metal stick:  | 5 1 2 1 1 9             |

Passage I words: Dick, heaven, tidy, mayor, food, snail, pasty, rod, Jesus, sound, people, lion.  
Passage II words: Jesus, praying, fell, Stephen, spirit, voice, knees, stoned.  
Passage III words: Alpha, John, voice, reward, Last, conduct, soon, man, me.