

Endorses Boycott

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products in Third World countries."

In addition, Bishop Clark has sent a letter to Pierre Liotard-Vogt, of the Nestle Alimentana Nestle S.A. in Switzerland, informing him of his decision and saying, "Our endorsement of this boycott represents our conviction that human rights of the people of developing nations must be respected by the institutions of the developed world."

"We would strongly encourage Nestle to adhere to the suggested code of the World Health Organization and cease all promotion of Infant Formula in Third World countries. I look forward to hearing from you regarding forthcoming changes in Nestle's formula promotion policies."

According to International Justice and Peace Commission (IJPC) literature, the concern over the use of infant formula products in developing nations first arose in the early 70s.

The concern centered on the decline in breast-feeding and the promotional practices of manufacturers of infant formula.

Throughout the decade concern mounted and by the middle 70s, lawsuits had been filed in several areas.

In 1977, INFACT (Infant Formula Action Coalition) was organized and subsequently called for a boycott of Nestle products in an effort to stop all promotion of Nestle artificial formula; stop mass media advertising of formula; stop distribution of free samples to hospitals, clinics and homes of the newborn; discontinue Nestle's milk

nurses campaign; stop promotion through the medical profession; prevention of formula from being used by persons without the means or facilities to use it properly.

Within a year, INFACT claimed a network of 250 chapters in the U.S., Japan, Canada, West Germany, Norway and England.

Catholic groups in the U.S. who have endorsed the boycott include the Archdiocese of St. Paul/Minneapolis, the Archdiocese of New Orleans, Social Apostolate Office; The Archdiocese of Denver, Justice and Peace Commission; Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers; Sisters of St. Joseph and Peace, National Association of Women Religious, and the Diocese of Albany.

In 1979, the World Health Organization and UNICEF convened a meeting on Infant and Young Child Feeding. The result was a series of recommendations to curb practices of aggressive promotion of powdered baby milks by the infant food industry. Representatives of the infant food industry participated in the meeting and agreed to abide by the conclusions while WHO and UNICEF continued work on an international code of marketing to further protect infant health.

However, disregard of the WHO-UNICEF recommendations by the formula industry has been widely observed and testified to.

It is expected that the next area for action in the matter will be the World Health Assembly this month.

Bishop's Nestle Statement

Last January I visited our diocesan missionaries in Chile, Bolivia, and Brazil. All asked me to become more aware of the responsibilities multinational corporations bear in marketing their products in Third World countries. After carefully considering the issue of Infant Formula promotion, I have decided to support the boycott of all Nestle's products endorsed by our Diocesan International Justice and Peace Commission. I invite Catholic institutions (such as hospitals, colleges, schools), individual parishes and people of conscience to study this matter carefully and to join me in this effort by not purchasing Nestle's products; by writing, as individuals and groups, to the Nestle Company informing them of your decision; and by praying for a corporate change of heart which would place a higher priority on the children of the very poor than on aggressive marketing.

Companies from developed Western nations have a moral responsibility to examine the basic results of the use of their product in regard to consumer health.

My hope and prayer is that we, as part of the Church of the wealthiest nation in the world, can by our actions demonstrate effective care and concern for the people of all nations with whom we share life on this earth.

Matthew H. Clark

Most Reverend Matthew H. Clark, DD
Bishop of Rochester

A Letter to Nestle

Mr. Pierre Liotard-Vogt
Nestle Alimentana Nestle S.A.
Avenue Vaud 1800 Vevey, Switzerland

Dear Mr. Liotard-Vogt:

Enclosed please find a copy of my statement on support of the consumer boycott of Nestle products. Our endorsement of this boycott represents our conviction that the human rights of the people of developing nations must be respected by the institutions of the developed world. This conviction is shared by numerous other Roman Catholic groups who express their support of the Nestle boycott, and by several of my brother Bishops.

We would strongly encourage Nestle to adhere to the suggested code of the World Health Organization and cease all promotion of Infant Formula in Third World Countries. I look forward to hearing from you regarding forthcoming changes in Nestle's formula promotion policies. I have asked Ms. Lourdes Perez-Albuerno of our Diocesan International Justice and Peace Commission to serve as my contact with you regarding this issue. She stands ready to enter into dialogue if you so wish. I have indicated below where and how you can contact her.

Sincerely yours,
Most Reverend Matthew H. Clark, D.D.
Bishop of Rochester



Why Nestle?

According to the Winter 1981 issue of INFACT Newsletter, "The aim of the Nestle Boycott is to force this giant Swiss food company to stop its unethical promotion of infant formulas in developing countries. Where clean water is inaccessible and poverty is the norm, bottle feeding is called 'the baby killer.' Bottle contamination and formula dilution lead to diarrhea, malnutrition and ultimately death. Throughout

the Third World, millions of babies suffer from this 'bottle baby disease.'

"Nestle controls about half the infant formula sales in the Third World. The company's promotion helps convince mothers to abandon breast feeding in favor of the more 'modern' Western bottle; and it convinces doctors and hospitals to start bottle feeding right at birth."

Why There Is Concern

According to materials supplied by the diocesan International Justice and Peace Commission, "Health workers in developing countries have called attention to an alarming fact: they are seeing infants die from severe malnutrition and dehydration in non-famine areas. These babies often have one thing in common: their mothers have been bottle-feeding them with American and European made infant formulas.

"American and European based multinational corporations are promoting bottle-feeding in developing countries in order to maintain profits from their infant formula divisions, following the decline of birth rates in the industrialized world.

"The proper use of infant formula requires sterilization of the water, bottle and nipple. If the bottle or the water is contaminated it may result in a severe bacterial infection of the intestine, leading to malabsorption, dehydration and death. Among poor people who do not have pure drinking water, refrigeration or even adequate fuel for boiling water, sterile technique necessary for safe bottle-feeding is next to impossible.

"Mother's milk can provide the baby with a readily available source of nourishment for four to six months without supplement. It is convenient, nutritious, economical and safe.

"Multinational companies use a wide variety of advertising and promotional techniques to lead mothers to believe that infant formula is best for their babies. Direct advertising programs suggest to mothers that their own milk may be inadequate or insufficient to nourish their babies. A mother may receive free samples of formula in the maternity hospital that may last until her own milk has largely dried up, and so she becomes dependent on formula immediately. Or the mother may learn through

advertising, company hired nurses, or the doctor that expensive formula is the best supplement for her baby when most studies indicate that native weaning foods are far less expensive and less susceptible to contamination.

"Using artificial infant formula is a luxury many Third World families can ill afford. For an average Third World worker, purchasing for one baby would consume 40 to 60 percent or more of the family's budget. Commonly, formula is overdiluted to ensure the powder lasts until more can be obtained.

"Contamination of the formula is also common. Without refrigeration, prepared formula is a breeding ground for bacteria. Water sources are often unsanitary, and without sufficient fuel, sterilization is impossible. Instructions for use of formula may be unclear, complicated or in a foreign tongue. Many mothers cannot read even their native language.

"Breast feeding is especially appropriate because it is nutritionally superior, it is available in a sterile, easily digested form, and it contains immunological protection against infectious diseases. It is inexpensive. It provides a measure of natural contraception."

Nestle Boycott Resources

The following persons have been named as resource persons for those wishing further information on either the bishop's action in regard to the Nestle boycott, or on the boycott itself:

Lourdes Perez-Albuerno
International Justice
and Peace Commission
150 W. Main St.

Rochester, N.Y. 15611
(716) 328-6400

Giovina Carosco
Department of
Justice and Peace
Southern Tier
Social Ministries
160 High St.
Elmira, N.Y. 14901
(607) 734-9784

Products List

According to information supplied by the diocesan International Justice and Peace Commission, the following are Nestle products:

Chocolates — Nestle's CRUNCH; Toll House Chips.

Coffees and Teas — Taster's Choice; Nescafe; Nestea; Decaf; Sunrise; Pero; Cains Coffee; Manhattan Coffee Co.

Wines — Beringer Brothers; Los Hermanos; Crosse and Blackwell.

Cheeses — Swiss Knight; Wispride; Gerber Cheeses; Old Fort; Provalone Lacatelli; Cherry Hill; Roger's.

Packaged Fruits, Soups, Etc. — Libby's; Stouffer Frozen foods; Souptime; Maggi Soups; Crosse and Blackwell; Beech Nut Baby Foods.

Hotels and Restaurants — Stouffer; Rusty Scupper.

Miscellaneous — L'Oreal Cosmetics; Nestle Cookie Mixes; Kavli Crispbread; McVities; Keiller; James Jeller & Son Ltd.; Contique by Alcon; Ionax by Owen Labs; Lancome; Pine Hill Crustal Water; Deer Park Mountain Spring Water; New Cookery.

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