

Editorials

What If Columbus Discovered the U.N.?

The politics of Christopher Columbus' time were bad enough but if that ancient mariner could have been privy to recent United Nations discussions concerning him, it is probable that his famous line, "Sail on and on," might well have been, "Forget it, guys, let's turn back."

Chris has become an item of controversy at the U.N. General Assembly, as if Lebanon, Afghanistan, the Third World, nuclear disarmament and the rise of terrorism were not enough to occupy U.N. debate teams.

What precipitated this world-shattering controversy? Well, it seems that a bunch of countries (Latin America, the U.S., Canada, Spain and Italy) wanted to start a bit early in commemorating the fifth centennial (1992) of Christopher's trip. So what? Well, they wanted to celebrate "the discovery of America."

This, of course, did not sit well with the Vikings in

the U.N. who do not want Leif Ericson forgotten. But suddenly a new voice was heard from — Ireland. The Emerald Isle debater claimed that neither Chris or Leif "discovered" America but rather the feat was first accomplished by one St. Brendan the Navigator. It could not have been easy for the Irish rep to say this because his tongue must have been firmly tucked in cheek.

Regardless, for then the African bloc heads got into the act. They joined the Ericson camp (honest!) and announced that they would oppose any celebration of Christopher's accomplishment.

And somewhere along the way, even the historical issue tidbit got sidetracked by a new forensic — was Christopher Columbus guilty of causing the colonialism that followed his footsteps into the New World?

At this point, things clouded up a bit and it is unclear whether St. Brendan the Navigator or Eric's son Leif would also be so branded.

The co-sponsors of the resolution then wisely circumnavigated the issue by tabling the proposal, at least for the time being. But, anyway, to use the quote of a former president, if Christopher Columbus (or Leif Ericson or St. Brendan the Navigator) "were alive today he'd probably turn over in his grave."



and Opinions

Kitchen Ministries

Editor:

For some time I have wanted to respond to Bishop Clark's rich and beautiful "The Fire in the Thornbush." It has taken time to pray over it and form my thoughts.

Often I dream of attending a school for Christian writing, of giving my life in service to the poor or handicapped as Mother Teresa or Jean Vanier, of living a life of monastic simplicity and silence as the dear monks at the Genesee Abbey. These are dreams and others' ministries always seem more noble!

Recently my husband and I had the opportunity to visit school friends in Chicago. We listened to so many tales of unhappy marriages, successful careers but unfulfilled lives and of children who are hurt and unsettled, shuffling between divorced or separated parents. Returning home, I was overwhelmed with the realization of the dignity of my calling. It is almost heroic and indeed miraculous to bring whole, healthy and holy children to maturity. It is essential to pass on to them a model that they can give to their families and the Church of love, truth and life! It is a worthy ministry to provide a sanctuary for a husband from the stresses of his work and the world.

Mothers and housewives are sadly unaffirmed in this age. High school and college bulletins extol only the alumnae with secular achievements and higher degrees. A sparse "remnant" of women are left to support each other in child-rearing as neighbors enter the job market.

Mary and Elizabeth, sharing in the wonder and mystery of their lives, are beautiful examples for "kitchen ministries" so needed today. Mothers, in service to each other and in fellowship with one another, are bringing Jesus and the Holy Spirit into each other's lives (Article 2). Mary's life in Nazareth seemed ordinary. Jesus is calling each of us who live ordinary lives to become "extra-ordinary" through His Spirit as was His mother.

It is expedient for the Church to take a greater role in affirming the wife and mother who chooses to stay home with her children (Article 4). In Dorothy Day's meditations she writes:

"A woman can achieve the highest spirituality and union with God through her house and children, and through doing her work, work which leaves no time for thought of self, for consolation, for prayer, for reading, for what she might consider development. She is being led along the path of growth inevitably. But she needs to be

told these things, instructed in these things, for her hope and endurance, so that she may use what prayer she can, to cry out in the darkness of the night."

The world needs women who are simple, brave, pure and holy!

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FDA System Not Safe

Editor:

The system by which the Food and Drug Administration establishes maximum permissible limits of contamination called "tolerances" has obvious defects. Under conditions prevailing it provides mere paper security and promotes a completely unjustified impression that safe limits have been established and are being adhered to. As to the safety of allowing a sprinkling of poisons on our food, many people contend, with highly persuasive reasons, that no poison is safe or desirable on food.

In setting a tolerance level, the FDA reviews tests of the poison on laboratory animals and then establishes a maximum level of contamination that is much less than required to produce symptoms in the test animal. This system ignores a number of important facts.

The laboratory animal, living under controlled and highly artificial conditions, consuming a given amount of a specific chemical, is very different from a human being whose exposures to pesticides are not only multiple but for the most part unknown, unmeasurable and uncontrollable. Even if seven parts per million of DDT on the lettuce in his lunch salad were "safe," the meal includes other foods, each with allowable "safe" residues, and the pesticides on his food are only part and possible a small part, of his total exposure.

This piling up of chemicals from many different sources creates a total exposure that cannot be measured. So it is meaningless to talk about the "safety" of any specific amount of residue on food.

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Let's Trust President

Editor:

Kathleen Dubel in her letter of Dec. 22 concluded that we are the enemy.

Adolphe and Loe d'Audiffret Jan. 12 advised us not to be taken in by President Reagan's propaganda fairy tales on the state of our defenses.

However, I, for one, believe President Reagan is a far greater (and more intelligent) authority on defense matters than either Kathleen Dubel or the d'Audiffrets.

For example, the Soviet Union has some 600 land-based missiles targeted on Western Europe. There is no comparable missile system in Western Europe that is targeted on the Soviet Union.

But do the peace activists protest the obvious imbalance of the Soviet missiles? No — all they do is protest the future placing of missiles that would defend Western Europe.

And what part does the Soviet Union play in disarming the West?

Quite a substantial part, according to the FBI. The U.S. Peace Council which is affiliated with the Soviet Union-backed World Peace Council was involved in organizing a mass rally in New York City last June.

The Soviet Union also played an important part in the European peace rallies. By coordinating the various Communist fronts and parties in these countries, many sincere individuals are used or duped into thinking that they are really marching for peace.

But true peace, peace with justice, is possible with a strong defense and a determination to use that defense when attacked.

Consequently, we should trust our president and our defense experts more than we trust the pacifists and others who would do nothing to protect our freedom and our lives.

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Why Honor The Queen?

Editor:

President Reagan is diligently preparing an expensive extravaganza to welcome the queen and her royal consort to the territory that Britannia obviously still considers its "colonies." Reagan apparently prefers that the U.S. forget England's long and vile history of anti-American policies as well as the violent oppression of Irish Republicans in North East Ireland. In the British-occupied six counties of North Ireland, the crown forces continue their murderous campaign of firing lethal plastic missiles at innocent Irish children and adults.

Reagan would have Americans forget: England's unpaid WWI and WWII debts; England's supplying North Korea with mortars and other weapons during the Korean Conflict; English violation of the U.S. blockade of Cuba; England's merchant fleet, which was the second largest fleet trading with North Vietnam during the U.S.-Vietnam war; England's disregard of the U.S. boycott of the 1980 Olympics, and England's successful opposition to U.S. attempts of sanctions against the Soviet pipeline.

In my opinion, it is disgraceful that Americans should foot the bill for this royal visit while our nation suffers the pain of the worst economic recession since the Great Depression. To be expected to welcome gladly the crown heads of a country that has proven to be so rapacious and perfidious in its dealings with America is a gross imposition and an insult to our intelligence.

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Should Send Aid to Mali

Editor:

Rochester needs the fine hotel being refurbished by Alcoa on State Street as a convenience to visitors to our new Convention Center being

built nearby. Stouffer as manager has earned a reputation for good food service. The hassle is over Nestle, the parent company, whose baby food products are exported to countries lacking proper water facilities and hygiene.

If people are really and truly concerned about the health of these infants perhaps the answer is not in blocking renovation of a needed Rochester hotel by boycotting it, but opening one's purse and sending through proper channels *mohies* to such countries to help construct and dig more and better wells to give these infants a better chance at life.

Missionaries in Mali, West Africa (our sister city), have sent out appeals for life-saving water for its children, mentioning that two women died at the foot of an old broken-down well pump. A sacrificial gift could help the citizens of this or other countries which lack proper facilities. We are all brothers and sisters and should be willing to assist the less fortunate.

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Guidelines

The Courier-Journal welcomes your opinions. Letters must bear the writer's signature, full address and telephone number. They should be sent to Opinion, Courier-Journal, 114 S. Union St., Rochester, N.Y. 14607.

Opinions should be brief, typed, double-spaced, no longer than 1 1/2 pages.

We routinely condense letters, edit offensive words and libelous statements, and reserve the right to reject letters. Generally speaking, however, only limited grammatical corrections will be made and the letters will reflect the writer's own style.

Because submitted opinions exceed the space for letters, we publish only original letters addressed to us. We will not use poetry, open letters, or copies of letters sent elsewhere. To ensure diversity, we limit each writer to one letter per month.



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