

Editorials

USA Yesterday?

USA TODAY, that Gannett national daily, is in the midst of a wide and deep circulation drive across the country, and particularly at this time in the Rochester area. Its slogan, attributed to Allen H. Neuharth, Gannett chairman of the board, states: "USA TODAY hopes to serve as a forum for better understanding and unity to help make the USA truly one nation."

In the July 5 issue, guest columnist was Albert Shanker, president of the American Federation of Teachers, who is a strident foe of aid to nonpublic schools. He termed the recent Supreme Court ruling on a Minnesota case giving tax breaks to parents of nonpublic school children the worst decision he could imagine.

Fine. Shanker is entitled to his opinion and USA TODAY is within its journalistic parameters in

publishing his thoughts, although it would seem to be more in the Gannett tradition to have him do it in a paid advertisement, one of Shanker's own modus operandi. Still, nothing really out of bounds.

However, an accompanying cartoon by USA TODAY's David Seavey illustrates this column by showing a wizened, leering and hunched over person (the "Supreme Court") hand-distributing from a chalice marked "Tax Break" a host with a dollar sign to an imbecilic and slobbering person with a cross on his chest, a priest's collar and an academic mortarboard marked "Church Schools."

This bit of malice besides being over Shanker's piece is also right next to Neuharth's lofty and obviously platitudinous shibboleth concerning "understanding and unity." USA TODAY must feel that the way to "help make the USA truly one nation" is via divisive and crude insults. Surely a national daily newspaper could afford a cartoonist somewhat sharper than those that work for scurrilous hate sheets.

Hopefully, cartoonist Seavey and his editorial page

overseers are simply ignorant of the fact that Holy Communion is the very heart and soul of Catholicism. Otherwise would they feel free to so insult the sacred beliefs of say Jewry or Islam? Would they demean the Star of David? Would they be so low-class as to depict a black person as a fool? Why has USA TODAY joined the ranks of those who think it safe to disparage the sincere and holy beliefs of Catholics? Surely, the point could have been made in a more intelligent and thus more effective manner.

Obviously, USA TODAY is spending millions of dollars to promote itself on street corners, hamlet crossings, through fliers (sent even to those abodes wherein dwell that increasingly maligned species known as Catholics), full-page ads and shallow mottoes. Why then would such a product, banking so heavily on tomorrow, resort to the tactics of hate that in most levels of American society gratefully belong to the past? Mightn't this risk giving potential readers the notion that the newspaper is misnamed; that perhaps USA YESTERDAY, in name and fact, might be more fitting?

and Opinion

Don't Ignore Mother Angelica

EDITOR:

It has never ceased to amaze me how the Catholic communications arm of the Roman Catholic Church can continue to exclude the holy and dedicated work of the Eternal Word Television Network by the utter lack of cooperation it appears to give to Mother Angelica, its foundress and chairman of the board.

Mother Angelica, a native of Canton, Ohio, and a former employee in the Advertising Department of Timkin Works, who has spent the last 40 years living as a Franciscan Sister and presently is abbess of Our Lady of the Angels Monastery in Birmingham, Ala., should be an integral part of the Catholic communications system and yet, to my knowledge has not been approached nor recognized for her great and varied talents by the bishops of most dioceses, notably our own.

This dedicated woman has written 56 books. Her monastery has a modern television studio and a 30-foot transmitting dish for beaming programs off a satellite to stations around the country who are willing to participate. She proclaims a way of practical holiness to

people in all walks of life. She is recognized as a model of faith and dynamic leadership to millions as recorded in a front page article in the Wall Street Journal in 1981. Most recently, she was honored as a modern day evangelist and proclaimed Doctor of Sacred Theology honoris causa, by the Ohio University of Steubenville on May 7, 1983.

I have tried on numerous occasions to solicit the local cable company to afford subscribers the opportunity to see Mother Angelica's programs which would include many wonderful family and truly Catholic presentations, including Bishop Sheen, Father Micelli, Professor Marra and speakers of the type the secular media would never include.

It is understandable that the cable company was less than enthusiastic since commercially it was not deemed feasible, without the backing of subscribers who would storm the company with requests for inclusion of this truly Catholic network. But I cannot understand why Catholic ordinaries are not exhausting every effort to make this network a part of their communication system. Mother Angelica's Eternal Word Television Network has been offered at the most nominal cost, with every advantage possible, yet not one word is heard of any advancement that may have been made toward this goal. If it is true that the Catholic communications programming has not been successful, and I believe that it has not, then one wonders why the movers and shakers have not called upon this saintly religious woman whose network is crying for the opportunity to reach every Catholic household, and welcome her to the vast audience heretofore unreachable.

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Pro-Lifers Going Strong

EDITOR:

If I were a fairy godmother and I could wave my magic wand, I would wish for all persons who have an interest in life to have been at the National Right to Life convention in Orlando, Fla., July 7-9. To experience such enthusiasm, commitment and dedication would at least give a pro-abortionist or a lukewarm pro-life person cause to think!

Why would more than 2,000 persons gather in a hot city, at personal sacrifice of

time and money, and for what reward? Who will ever give thanks, the child who is never born, the child who is but will never know through whose efforts?

Some people came from as far as England, Hawaii, Colorado, Washington. They came by plane, car, bus, camper and various combinations depending which was most expedient and cheaper. There were families, the children happy in the nursery or busy with little workshops while the parents were busy at their own.

Of the 56 workshops listed, I attended 15. Can you imagine my frustration at so much to hear with only three days to do it all. I never did get to see the films although they were shown continuously. The workshops included such topics as feeding the hungry, legislative mentality, advertising, complications of abortion, handicapped persons -- born and unborn, media bias, population picture, polls -- what they mean, genocide, Planned Parenthood, etc. There were excellent book selections and tapes of all the talks available.

Rep. Chris Smith gave the keynote address. The prayer breakfast was conducted by Dr. Pat Robertson, and a rousing talk given by Rep. Henry Hyde at the Saturday afternoon rally. Sen. Jeremiah Denton spoke at the Saturday night banquet. His talk was especially inspiring, since his perspective came from being a prisoner of war in Vietnam for seven years, four in solitary confinement.

Obviously, I cannot even begin to relate all I heard and saw but I can say that what came across loud and clear was the attitude that though the Hatch Amendment was dead, the pro-life movement was not. The Right to Life people were as dedicated and as vigilant as ever and are prepared to continue their push for the freedom for the unborn and the newborn to have their chance at life.

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Put Religion Before Politics

EDITOR:

The letter from John S. Walker, Office of Black Ministries (CJ 6-22-83), uses the problem of racial prejudice in South Africa to distort the relationship between the U.S. and that country.

While we Catholics must seek improvement in our ability to help South African

victims of apartheid, we must not become embroiled in a political debate that could leave black South Africans without any employment and consequently more dependent wholly upon the white government of South Africa than they are now.

True, there is a need for reform in racial relations throughout the world as a step toward economic justice, but Mr. Walker's letter implies that Catholics must become the cutting edge of an effort to force the South African government's hand.

Unless we are willing to support armed rebellion by blacks and to countenance deaths for the change, we should return to the premise Mr. Walker attempts to advance: "...the Church must assume with other religious and social institutions major responsibility in condemning the ideology of apartheid and begin advocating liberty for the 20 million black people under control of the South African government."

To believe we must denounce apartheid is right but to put politics before religion would be wrong. Unless there is some alternative means of employment for black South Africans that would more easily change in the policy of apartheid, we would be headstrong to think pulling out U.S. investments would change the situation blacks are placed in by apartheid. Let's be prudent.

The problem needs more attention, prayer and understanding. I must question the validity of the proposal because it does not offer hope of change by a peaceful means and therefore would not end the injustices blacks endure there.

A means to produce change needs to be considered however preaching that does not put the problem into a clearer and more personal perspective is vain and futile.

A Black American, Thomas Stowell wrote in Ethnic America (Basic Books, 1981) about Africa: "Narrow coastal plains bounded by cliffs and mountains limited the size of coastal settlements. The net result has been a continent of highly fragmented and isolated peoples -- speaking more than 800 languages and divided into myriad tribes. The political and military vulnerability of people in such conditions provided the opportunity for their mass enslavement by foreigners." (p. 184)

How would Mr. Walker or the Church introduce tolerance into a land so unlike the U.S.?

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"I'M TRYING TO SAVE ENOUGH TO GET STARTED IN AN IRA."

Don't Bury Pro-Lifers

EDITOR:

In light of what happened to our leader, Jesus Christ, on the first Easter Sunday, it is somewhat premature for the secular media, and abortion supporters, to bury the pro-life movement because of the defeat by the U.S. Senate on June 28, 1983, of the Hatch-Eagleton amendment. The Pharisees then, as now, thought they could bury their problem. Surprise! Someone moved the stone.

President Reagan has indicated that he will sign H.R. 618, the Respect Life Act of 1983, introduced by Rep. Henry Hyde of Illinois which, unlike a constitutional amendment, only takes a majority vote in both the House and Senate. A pro-abortion spokesman, shortly after the Hatch-Eagleton vote (49 yeas, 50 nays, 1 present) expressed doubt that pro-abortion forces could beat a pro-life effort to overturn the 1973 Supreme Court decisions by a simple statute approach.

The Respect Life Act has provisions that permanently prohibit federal expenditures for abortion; states that the Supreme Court erred in 1973; establishes that states have a compelling interest to protect unborn children under the U.S. Constitution; puts Congress on record that each human life begins at conception; and withdraws federal money from institutions that do not feed or fail to give

medical treatment to handicapped newborn children.

At present, H.R. 618 lies under buried in seven House subcommittees. However, Hyde, in an effort to resurrect the Respect Life Act and bring it directly to the floor, has filed Discharge Petition No. 3 which needs the signatures of 218 House members. There more than 300 current House members who have signed one or more discharge petitions from 1965 to the present for which there is verifiable record. The American Life Lobby, at PO Box 490, Stafford, Va., 22554, will make this list available to anyone on request. Urge your congressmen to sign Henry Hyde's Discharge Petition No. 3.

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Two Volumes Needed

EDITOR:

The St. Bernard's Institute Archives would like to complete its run of The Official Catholic Directory from 1833 through 1982.

The volumes for 1977 and 1981 are the only ones missing.

Would any of your readers be able to help? Many thanks.

Father Sebastian A. Falcone
President/Dean
St. Bernard's Institute

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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.