

Catholic press directors adopt statement against censorship

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (CNS) — The board of directors of the Catholic Press Association April 17 warned against "official censorship" of Catholic newspapers, declaring that it "damages not only the integrity of our publications but also the integrity and credibility of the institutional church."

"We believe that openness is preferable to secrecy, that accountability is required at all levels of the church, and that members of the church have a right to information regarding the activities of the church," the statement said.

The board statement did not refer to any specific instances of censorship. But board member Christopher Gunty, editor of *The Catholic Sun* in Phoenix, said the statement was developed as a result of concerns expressed at a meeting of members in the

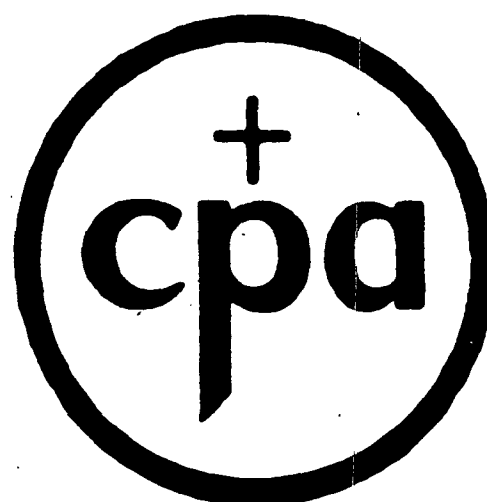
CPA's Western region.

The statement called "honest reporting of dissent or controversy" a "necessary sign of a healthy and credible institution."

The board approved the statement unanimously during its meeting in Nashville before the general CPA convention April 18-21, said board member Joe Michael Feist, editor and associate publisher of *The Texas Catholic* in Dallas and chief author of the statement.

The board's action was announced during the CPA business meeting April 19. When the statement was read aloud, it was greeted with a motion to make it a statement of the whole membership.

An objection to voting on a statement on the basis of an oral reading, without written copies in the hands of members, led to a decision to table general membership action until the next session of the business



meeting April 21.

The April 21 session did not have the quorum needed for formal action on a resolution, but members present asked the board to pursue development of the statement, including the possibility of conducting a confidential survey of editors to learn how many feel they are subject to censorship or exercise self-censorship.

Bishop bars ads

BOISE, Idaho (CNS) — To avoid compromising Catholic teaching on abortion, Bishop Tod D. Brown of Boise has barred *The Idaho Register* from accepting any political advertising for the 1990 elections.

Bishop Brown, publisher of the diocesan newspaper, said he took the step even though it also would bar advertisements from pro-life candidates and would cost the paper a minimum of \$12,000 in advertising revenue.

Noting that non-profit publications cannot legally discriminate among politicians based on their agreement or disagreement with the publications' editorial positions, the bishop said that if the *Register* were to publish ads for pro-life candidates, it also would have to accept ads from candidates with opposing points of view.

"We all know that when we have to stand up and be counted when it comes to our value system," he said, "there is often a price to pay, and that can take many forms, including monetary."

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