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President's Page

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The President's Page

Over a period of years the therapeutic-products ind y has done an incredible job. It has contributed greatly to alleviating t nisery of illness and disease and to decreasing their complications. Likew or industry to stay in business and to expand in means providing life-sav neasures it has made increased use of advertising ingenuity. Nothing is g with that, which I pointed out in this journal in 1960,[2] nor is anythin ng with our pharmaceutical industry being the world's largest. Rather, often is wrong is the quality of advertising, the forces of expediency and d on that in the field of health care insensibly exaggerates importance, con alse impression, overstresses supposedly useful benefit, and appeals to na aging processes.

Innumerable laymen are easy prey for the infi of drug advertising in nonprofessional publications; even physicians find it nely difficult to escape almost any therapeutic proposal that is offered assu nd eagerly.

Nevertheless, in medical and legislative circles, than ever before, there has evolved increasing awareness of the need to ex a moral obligation to society: to promote respectable advertising in med and nonmedical communication media, to foster exacting studies of d products, to encourage restraint in interpreting drug tests and to use powerf d costly drugs sparingly and infrequently.

For this reason Dr. James L. Goddard, the new mmissioner of the Food and Drug Administration, in ordering recently the r val from the market of countless ineffective throat lozenges, has acted, when ntary action failed, to try to "hold fast that which is good" for the pocketbo d the health of society.

Four months ago Dr. Bernard L. Kreilkamp, me of the Board of Directors and Chairman of the Committee on Medical A tising of the National Federation of Catholic Physicians' Guilds, in an "o letter" in the January 1966 issue of *The Catholic Journalist,* the official p cation of the Catholic Press Association, urged the "editors of Catholic peri als to reject all advertisements which promise to cure physical defects and diseases or to give relief from them."[1]

Unfortunately, such advertising, in my experience, appears more often in the Catholic press than in first-class non-Catholic newspapers and magazines. Also its effect is three-fold: a financial waste for the consumer of these advertised products and treatment; the potential grave evil of delayed diagnosis and management of illnesses and diseases, as well as of acquiring drug-related conditions, and the equating of substandard advertising with second and third-class publishing policies.

Therefore, I should hope Dr. Kreilkamp's "communique" to the Catholic Press Association is studied well and earnestly considered.

Human beings obviously desire relief from discomfort and ill-feelings. But our concern — the Catholic concern — for man should be pure. It should be honest. There is need to work for effectual Catholic action of this kind, the kind of action individual Guilds and physicians of the National Federation are capable of providing — not by legislation, I should hope — by a moral amalgamation of individual and collective concern for the welfare of human life.

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[1] Kreilkamp, B. T.: An Open Letter to CPA Members. *The Catholic Journalist* 17:5 (Jan.) 1966.

[2] Taylor, F. M.: The Adversary Within. *The Linacre Quart.* 28:18 (May) 1960.