Along Highway and Byway

Catholic Physicians' Guild

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A Pastor of a New England Catholic Church submits to our Catholic physicians the following stimulating questions. It would be very unfair for the Catholic physician not to answer these queries for which some answer must be found. Write your answers to the Editor of the Linacre Quarterly, Fordham University, New York City. The Editor will summarize the replies and perhaps add some ethical considerations. Here is a real chance for the Catholic physician to help form right public opinion. We print the Reverend Pastor's letter in full:

Gentlemen:

I respectfully beg the learned members of your staff to kindly consider the opportunity of answering the following questions in an issue of the Linacre.

"Some Police Departments of our cities are calling in Physicians to inject scopolamine in questionable and unflinching prisoners to induce in them a semi-conscious and talkative state. Many leads, confession of guilt and declaration of compromising facts have thus been obtained."

(1) Now then, may I informally request if it is against a Physician's Professional Ethics to answer effectively such a call?

(2) Is it possible to determine what effect a certain quantitative injection of scopolamine may produce upon one's mind and in his moral conscience?

(3) To what extent may one be held accountable or responsible for a confession or a statement made under the influence of this drug?

(4) Has such a confession any judicial value before a State tribunal?

I am sure that the answer to the above questions will elucidate the moral solutions of arising case problems.
A DEPRESSION PANACEA

Roger Babson, the seer of Wellesley Hills, Mass., noted for his ability to chart economic cycles, is laboring under the delusion that affects so many in these distressful times, that you can cure a man-made economic depression by violating the laws of God and nature. According to the Boston Herald, he said before the Summer Institute for Social Progress at Wellesley, words that would make social progress synonymous with moral decline. "The solution of our problems must come through race betterment," said Babson. "Those who produce more than they consume should be encouraged to breed while those who do not should be taught not to breed. Neither the old deal nor the new deal will get anywhere until we tackle this fundamental need of race betterment... I cannot understand why anyone will permit religious or other prejudices to block the solution."

This effusion brought a quick and an effective answer from the former Socialist candidate for Governor of Massachusetts, Alfred Baker Lewis, in a letter to the Springfield Union:

To the Editor of the Union:

Sir: Among the foolish proposals for ending the depression is Roger Babson's recent advocacy of birth control as the method of luring back prosperity.

He seems to think if we cut down the number of people by birth control so as to meet the reduction in the number of jobs, we can get rid of unemployment. The same erroneous idea of a definite but limited number of jobs is back of the proposal made by one of the Ku Klux Congressmen to deport all aliens so as to cut the population in the same way that jobs have been curtailed.

The fundamental error of both of these schemes is that each person is a consumer as well as a producer. So far as babies are concerned, they are consumers for a good many years before they are producers. If you prevent the birth of babies or deport aliens, you reduce the number of consumers and therefore the number of people who will have jobs producing goods or furnishing services for the requirements of such consumers, in exactly the same proportion that you reduce the number of people seeking jobs.

If every person got wages big enough to buy back the full value of what he produced, it would not make any difference whether we had 200,000 or 200 million people in the United States; everyone would have jobs. And if you give the workers only a part of the value of what they produce, so that we have a constant threat of "over-production," there would be unemployment if we only had one-tenth as large a population as we have today.

Unemployment does not result from the large number of people we have in the country, as the advocates of birth control and the deporting of aliens assume. Unemployment is born from the fact that every man hired under capitalism gets his job only because the capitalist owners of industry think he will produce more than what they pay him in wage or salary. Consequently, he cannot buy back the value of what he produces, so we have "over-production" and unemployment as a result.

Alfred Baker Lewis.

Cambridge, July 18th, 1935.
SLOT MACHINES, PERVERSION, AND SO-CALLED HEALTH

A member of the Manhattan Guild was taking a vacation along the Jersey coast. In the lavatory of a restaurant he found a slot machine selling contraceptives. Of course, such machines are quite common in Europe, which has produced Hitler, Stalin, anti-God campaigns, armaments, which crush the people by taxation, and repudiation of honest debts. A notice was printed on this machine in this wise:

IMPORTANT
Should the presence of this machine offend you, take a look around. Visit our hospitals, asylums, homes for the feeble-minded, you will be astounded. Yet you may well place the blame upon yourself and others who think as you do. This machine is placed here for your protection to better health and hygiene.

To this notice marked IMPORTANT we, at least as far as moral matters are concerned, would like to add that obviously not all feeble-minded persons are in asylums. Some are shrewd enough to play on the emotions of those more feeble-minded than themselves for their own enrichment. We would also like to add this from the Medical Times of March, 1935: “Crude and harmful contraception of the prevailing type seems doomed. We should like nothing better than to see all the wretched junk so employed on the way to a permanent scrap heap.”

ON BRANDS AND CLAIMS IN THE BIRTH CONTROL FIELD

(From the Medical Times)

The New York City Committee of the New York State Birth Control Federation issues a pamphlet described by one distinguished critic in a private communication to the editor as “compact, clever, astute and misleading.”

The Committee, composed of well known lay citizens advised by a medical board, aims, among other things, to organize centers for birth control advice in settlement and church parish houses, incorporating this service as an integral part of an ostensible health program. It is alleged that in the birth control centers physicians prescribe contraception as a health measure, and that the work of the centers is legal, since the New York State law permits physicians to prescribe contraception for the “prevention of disease.”

At such centers as that in Christ Church House, 344 West 36th Street, a contraceptive method alleged to be non-injurious, practical for tenement mothers, and to a “high” degree reliable is applied by a “gynecologist.” It is stated that this contraceptive method can be “successfully” used by women of low intelligence. While the pamphlet is silent as to the actual degree of success, it is engagingly frank and
exact as to the gynecologist’s salary, which is given as $275 for eleven months’ service. Ten centers are listed, the cost of “medical supplies” running apparently to about $3,500. Nurses, rooms and equipment are supplied by the settlements—and presumably by the parish houses.

Apply to this outfit the principles governing the decisions of the American Medical Association’s Council on drug manufacturers’ claims, and what would the verdict be?

The “false claims” and “misbranding” of the Council can be applied to things other than drugs.

There should be a Council to which Christ Church House could submit its “product” for honest judgment. If such a procedure is necessary in the case of Brown’s Liver Extract it is very much more so in the case of the Christ Church “method.”

THESE OMNISCIENT BIRTH CONTROLLERS

Birth control, if you are not aware of it, is, according to its devotees, a solution of almost all the problems that affect humanity in the individual, economic, and international orders. Is there something wanting in the health of married man or woman, contraception is the solution. Is there a widespread man-made depression, because the arrogant rich deny the laboring poor a fair share of the profits of industry and business and thus destroy the buying power of the masses, birth control is the solution. Thus the New York City committee of the New York State Birth Control Federation issues a neat little brochure with various titles, such as Mother Health Centers under which we read: “The contraceptive method advised is non-injurious, practical for tenement mothers and to a high degree reliable. Our experience proves that the contraceptive method can be successfully used by women of little education and low intelligence.” It would seem that we have here a different kind of class warfare from that expounded by the communists. Those who think themselves superior are zealous for the good of those whom they think inferior. When will the inferiors open their eyes to the implication, and refuse the solicitations of the so-called superiors. Under the heading of “Advantages and Attendance,” we read, “relief statistics show that there are about 220,000 families on relief in New York City indicating the great need for the spread of our work.” In the name of all the laws of logic how does the presence of these families on relief in this country, where there is want in the midst of plenty, indicate any need for the spread of contraceptive work. If it indicates anything, it indicates a need of a fair distribution of wealth, so that those people who have children
may support them, and those rich who have not need of their riches for want of children, may do something for the development of the human race. Under the same head we read: “Patients in our centres are of all races and all creeds. The largest three groups being Protestant, Jewish and Catholic.” Elsewhere we read in this brochure: “Approximately 6,400 have received contraceptive advice from these centres in the last four years.” That makes an average of 1600 per year. A prominent birth controller has recently said that twenty-five per cent of those applying for contraceptive information are Catholics. That makes 400 Catholics per year from among the millions of Catholics in New York and its environment. A pretty poor showing for the attendance of Catholics at birth control clinics.

According to the World-Telegram, Margaret Sanger said recently: “Dictators have no use for birth control because they are near sighted. They fail to realize that constantly increasing populations are potentially the strongest cause of war.” This is the birth control solution for a very complicated international situation in which greed, racial characteristics, economic imperialism, and above all a failure to observe the Christian law of justice and charity are the main ingredients. It is marvelous how birth controllers simplify all this to increasing populations as the cause of war.

In the same interview wherein Mrs. Sanger expressed her opinion on the potentially strongest cause of war, she is quoted as saying: “We are getting ahead fast. In the future and not very far in the future birth control will be effected through immunization. It will run for a half year depending on the dosage just as small pox is staved off. But we still have a long way to go.” So babies are like small pox! A child of God is to be thought of in the same way that we think of a destructive human disease. If this is true, the fulfillment of the sacred obligations of married life are the cause of this so-called disease. Sangerites would pervert the effect and permit the cause. Another type of the kind of logic which is used to support the birth control movement!

The American Birth Control League has issued a folder called, “Birth Control, an Outline for Group Study.” Among the books of advised reading are: “The Problem of Population,” by Harold Cox (out of print); “New Decalogue of Science,” by A. E. Wiggam; “A Preface to Morals,” by Walter Lippmann; “Malthus’ Essay on Population.” Enough said. The joke about Malthus’ essay is that modern means of production are a convincing refutation of it. In readings advised for the defense of the morality of birth control, two books on the safe period by Catholics are cited, the implication being, that if the use of the safe period is moral, so also is positive contraception. Another example of the lack of logic so often found in propagandists for contraception.
GOVERNOR GRAVES SPEAKS HIS MIND

After an executive hearing, Governor Graves of Alabama vetoed the Alabama Sterilization Bill on June 25, 1935. We quote the following from his message:

"After the public hearing in the Governor's office on Monday I am convinced that the social benefits expected to result from this Bill are dependent largely upon theories, upon theories on which experts are far from agreement. The hoped-for good results are not sure enough or great enough to compensate for the hazard to personal rights that would be involved in the execution of the provisions of the Bill. As to females, it entails a major operation and I am informed that experience shows that in all major operations there is an appreciable percentage of fatalities.

"The machinery which in the opinion of the Court would be necessary to secure due process of law will entail expenses that will make this process practically unavailable to a large portion of those who would be subjected to the provisions of the bill.

"There is no provision made for the hospitalization and medical expenses attendant on the administration of the operation required. And taking it all in all, I am convinced that until the scientists themselves reach further agreement and until we are in a position to supply to all concerned such legal and medical and court expenses as would be necessary for the protection of their individual rights, this is not a wise policy for Alabama to adopt.

"I therefore veto this bill and send it to you for such action as you see fit to take under our Constitution."

THIS MISLEADING PRESS

Dr. Richard Dresser of Boston gave an address recently in connection with the opening of a new department of radiography and radiotherapy, at Misericordia Hospital, New York. He said that it was possible to give life-saving treatment to young women by driving high voltage X-rays through the pelvis.

The World-Telegram told the story and cited these words of Dr. Dresser in quotations: "We've seen that, in almost thirty per cent of the cases, the reaction has been sterilization and a cessation of the wild cancerous growth elsewhere in the body."

Nowhere, according to the article, does Dr. Dresser say that the cure of the cancer comes from sterilization. The possibility of sterilization by high-voltage rays has been known for years. It is quite possible that the effect of these rays is twofold: one the cure of the cancer, and the other, sterilization. And this twofold effect is exactly what Dr. Dresser stated. Yet here is the prominent caption under which the article was presented in the World-Telegram article,
“STERILIZATION SAVES WOMEN FROM CANCER”

This is, to say the least, misleading, and it is in this way that the press can form opinion. It would be interesting to know whether the writer of this headline is in favor of sterilization or just simply failed to understand exactly what Dr. Dresser said. In any case the fact remains that the press by innuendo, by over-emphasis, by suppression, by its editorial columns and by its cartoons can and does influence public opinion, even in moral matters. It is also a fact that the press needs to be watched when it steps beyond its sphere as a purveyor of news. This writer would say that the greatest enemy to the freedom of the press is the press itself.

MEDICINE AND MORALS
(An address delivered at a meeting of the St. Luke’s Guild of Boston)

By FRANCIS J. DORE, S.J., M.D.
(Continued from September Issue)

From a biological viewpoint, the two main instincts in man are self-preservation and race preservation, i.e., the chief ends of existence are to live and to transmit life. Man, therefore, goes against his nature by using the sex act merely as a means of sex pleasure, whereas the pleasure attached is simply to ensure the end of the function, which is not selfish. In animals, the sex instinct can be aroused only at appropriate seasons; in man, it may be excited at any time he wishes, and therefore he has been endowed with reason for his guidance, and with free will for the control of the sex inclination. Performing this act, and using contrivances which will frustrate the end of the act, is like using language to conceal the truth, and a lie is never justified, even by birth-controlers. It is analogous to the horrible practices of the pagan Romans, who had vomitoria built adjacent to their dining rooms, so that when they had eaten and drunk to repletion, they could go outside and take an emetic, and then return to further engorgement with food and drink. It is a known fact that passion uncontrolled by nature produces lack of respect and finally the loss of conjugal esteem. History clearly shows us that those who seek happiness just for itself never find it, and repeated failures simply add to their sense of frustration and defeat.

If birth control is moral, then masturbation, or any other sex perversion is moral. Even such a person as George Bernard Shaw calls birth control “mutual masturbation.” A common argument used is that we interfere with nature in many legitimate ways; e.g., we cut our hair, shave, wash our faces, cook food, wear false teeth and clothes, etc. Why should this matter alone be sacred? The answer is, of