

Editorial

Nuclear issue is naturally moral, political

Those who complain that the Catholic Church is still living in the Middle Ages should be pleased with this week's bishop's conference.

The nation's Roman Catholic bishops Monday began a four-day meeting of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops. Their main topic is a 105-page pastoral letter condemning the use of nuclear weapons. The letter is strongly worded and controversial and should eradicate criticism that the Catholic Church is behind the times.

Pastoral letters are meant to help Catholics form their opinions on particular moral questions. If Catholics choose to follow the nuclear war letter then nearly 50 million U.S. citizens (the church's membership) will: 1) condemn "first use" of all nuclear weapons, 2) urge a bilateral freeze on development and deployment of such nuclear weapons and 3) promote skepticism of the deterrence policies of the United States and the Soviet Union.

But the letter discusses more than a moral issue. It outlines a highly volatile political issue.

A leader at the bishop's conference, Archbishop Joseph L. Bernardin of Chicago, said meshing the political and moral aspects of an issue is natural for the Catholic Church.

"Because the nuclear issue is not simply political, but also a profoundly moral and religious question, the church must be a participant in protecting the world and its people from the spectre of nuclear destruction," Bernardin said in a Los Angeles Times' article.

But not all of the bishops agree with Bernardin's stance.

The archbishop of New Orleans, La., Philip Hannon, said the pastoral letter would unnecessarily involve the church in national defense issues and the 1984 presidential campaign.

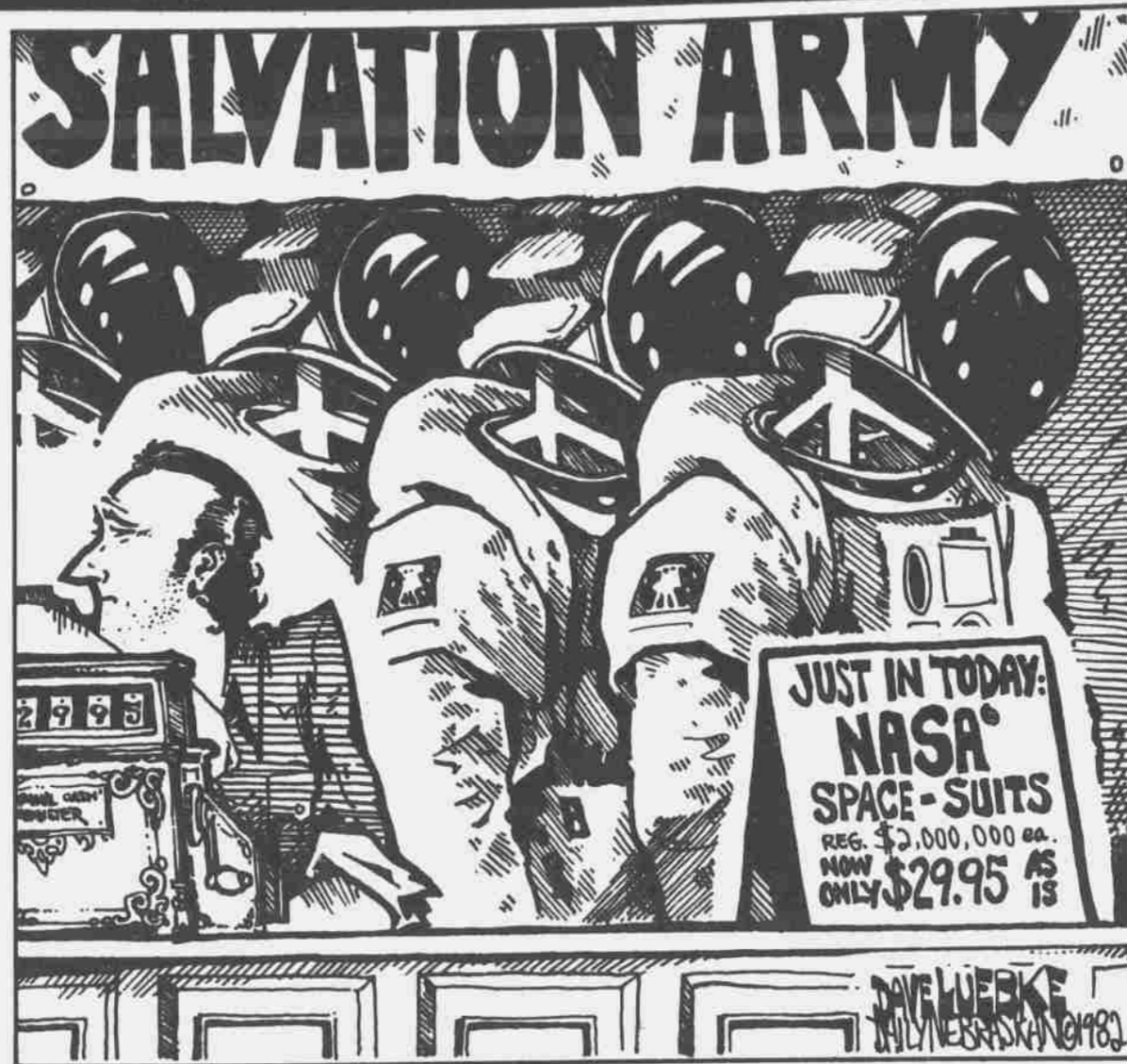
Hannon said the letter does not emphasize the evils of communism and "ignores the need for qualitative equality in weapons and the need for research to protect ourselves and Eastern Europe."

And a third archbishop, John Roach of St. Paul-Minneapolis, made the obvious connection between the church's stand on abortion and nuclear weapons.

"Concern for human life is the nexus between our positions on these two large issues," he said.

We tend to agree with Bernardin and Roach. The church has long associated itself with protection of human rights. Consistency alone mandates a firm "anti-nuke" stand on the nuclear weapons issue.

If pastoral letters are to be a meaningful guide for Catholics and other Christians, they must deal with issues that are at times both moral and political.



Letters

Mormonism explained

The recent focus of attention of Mormonism has been instructive on the difficulty of obtaining an accurate understanding of the faith and beliefs of others. The letter titled "Let the reader decide" quoted from a non-Mormon source concerning Mormon teachings. The problem with this is the (probably unintentional) distortion of the facts.

For example, the statement that Mormons believe Christ was born through sexual relations with God and Mary is untrue. It is true that a few Mormon individuals have expressed this opinion. But mainstream Mormons and official Mormon doctrine do not go beyond the teachings of the Bible. Simply put, we don't know any more about how this event occurred than anyone else.

Another error concerns faith and good works. True, there is an emphasis on these teachings within the Mormon church, but *salvation* comes through the grace of Christ (Book of Mormon & Bible teachings).

The grossest error was the paragraph concerning the covenants of the temple. The covenants obligate the individual to: be charitable, benevolent, tolerant and pure; devote both talent and material means to the spread of truth; maintain devotion to the cause of truth; and seek in every way to prepare the earth to receive her King — the Lord Jesus Christ.

These covenants are sacred to Mormons. On a personal level, a covenant (or promise) is sacred when an individual

feels within his heart that he would rather die than break the covenant. Have not all true Christians felt they would rather die than deny Christ? Thus it is with the temple covenants. The individual feels that devotion to the truth is more important than life itself.

The letter's author asked some fundamentally important questions: "You say you believe in God, but who is it?", "What think ye of Christ?" and "What is your interpretation of the Bible?". According to Mormons, the answers to these questions form the issues that divide the "universal Christian church" into several hundred diverse fragments.

Such a comparative study of specific doctrinal differences among Christians is worthy of a special issue of the Daily Nebraskan. Less space could not do the subject justice. Might I recommend that only authorized sources from each religion studied be used as sources? There is really no such thing as complete objectivity on matters of religion.

Bronson Gardner
graduate, agricultural meteorology

Letters policy

The Daily Nebraskan encourages brief letters to the editor from all readers and interested others.

Letters will be selected for publication on the basis of clarity, originality, timeliness and space available in the newspaper.

Submit all material to the Daily Nebraskan, Room 34, Nebraska Union, 1400 R St., Lincoln, Neb. 68588.

There are other nations besides U.S.

A friend of mine says most people in the United States don't care about what happens in other countries. I have to agree with her.

Of course, she happens to be an Australian foreign exchange law student, so she is somewhat biased. But then again, who isn't.

Ann (her real name) said many of the Americans she has spoken to have little or no idea about what is going on in other countries, and don't really care.



Most of the press coverage of foreign events is set in this context too. I tried to reinforce this notion by watching television coverage of Soviet President Brezhnev's death and the selection of his successor, the former CIA (oops, I mean KGB) director Yuri Andropov. NBC had a half-hour program on this topic Monday night, but unfortunately for my theory, they talked about how the change could affect Russia's economy and how people in Western Europe and Israel felt about the change.

But on the whole, I still think most of us believe that an event in a foreign country isn't important unless it affects the United States.

This could have a lot to do with our proximity to other countries. European countries, on the other hand, are so close to one another that the people in those countries seem to have a greater stake in what goes on a few hundred miles away.

That would be a good excuse for us not being up on events, but we're right north of Mexico, which has all sorts of trouble. And we're not too far from El Salvador or Nicaragua, which aren't exactly boring places to be right now. Nevertheless, there is that sense of physical separation between South America and North America (Australia has an even stronger argument on this point, but Ann said she thought the average Australian was more aware of world events than the average American. So figure that one out.)

You can always say, though, that simple knowledge of something without a resultant action isn't exceedingly valuable, but I don't want to get into that. I've never even taken a philosophy course.

Anyway, UNL offers a lot of solutions to the problem of world ignorance. There are classes in Asian Studies, African Studies, Ethnic Studies, International Studies, Modern Languages, Western European Studies and various courses throughout the schools and colleges that address issues in those countries.

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Parents wait for daughter who didn't come home

It must be the most numbing, grief-bringing feeling in the world. You raise a child from the time she is a baby. You provide for her, teach her about life, worry about her at night, try to steer her in the right direction. She becomes a part of you.

One morning she walks out the door as usual.
You never see her again.



Bob Greene

It happened to William and Elsie Habinyak of Park Ridge, Ill. Their daughter Elza, 21, lived at home with them, she was a student at the New-Way Barber College in Chicago. This fit in with a family plan; the Habinyaks operate a barber shop and a beauty salon located side by side in Morton Grove, Ill., and when Elza finished school, she was going to join them in the business.

On April 13, 1981, Elza had breakfast at home, said

goodbye to her parents and went to the barber college. She attended classes all day. She left the barber college late that afternoon; that much is known. She did not return to her parents' house, that night or any other night. In the more than a year that has passed, they have not seen her.

"All I can think is that someone took her from the barber college," said her father. He was born in Yugoslavia, and still carries a thick accent. "I was at the school, and nobody knows nothing. But somebody has to know something."

Habinyak and his wife have virtually given up their lives since the day Elza disappeared. They spend all of their free time trying to find their daughter. Habinyak has contacted all local police agencies and has spent \$6,000 on private detectives. He has come up with nothing.

"She never said anything about leaving," Habinyak said. "That morning she said goodbye to us like she did every day. We said 'Be careful' like we said every day. She said 'Yes, I know.' She walked out. We never saw her again."

"She didn't take any money with her. She didn't

take any clothes, other than what she was wearing. She had a checking account, and no checks were written after that morning. She had a savings account, and no money was taken out of it after that morning. She just vanished from our lives."

After questioning various street sources police investigators and private detectives theorize that she left home voluntarily, with a man — a man involved with drugs and petty crime. They do not believe Elza is dead. They believe she is still on the streets — at this point whether voluntarily or not, they cannot say.

"It appears to be definitely voluntary, at least initially," said Elroy Bernet, a police officer who is working on the case on his own time. "She has been seen alive. Whether she has been given narcotics at some time, and what has happened after that, we don't know."

"The mother and father are very emotionally upset, as you can imagine. They can't understand why the police can't find their daughter. They're from the old country, and they imagine the police stopping everyone of the street and saying 'Where are your papers?' or going house to house looking for Elza."

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