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The Health Reformer

Here is why one influential Catholic won't eat meat—something to think about!

The following are extracts from an interview with Bruce Friedrich, a very influential Catholic from the Midwest:

Hi, Bruce. Your opinion is that Catholics -- and all other Christians -- should be vegetarians?

Jesus' message is about love and compassion, but there is nothing loving or compassionate at factory farms and slaughterhouses, where billions of animals endure miserable lives and die violent deaths. Jesus mandates kindness and mercy for all God's creatures. He'd be appalled by the suffering that we inflict on animals today to indulge our acquired taste for their flesh.

Catholics, and all Christians, have a choice. When we sit down to eat, we can add to the violence, misery and death in the world, or we can respect God's creatures with a vegetarian diet. I believe we're obligated to make choices that are as merciful as possible, and we can all do that at the dinner table with a vegetarian diet. There won't be any factory farms and slaughterhouses in heaven.

....What about hunting? Working in a slaughterhouse? Should those activities be considered sinful?

I believe we're all challenged to live as mercifully and compassionately as possible. If you choose to support cruelty and violence when you could support kindness and compassion, that's something you should change. Hunters should hunt with a camera.

....You also think eating meat is unhealthy?

Last year, there were 50 million incidences of meat making people sick in the USA, 50 million cases of meat-based pathogens, salmonella and E. coli and campylobacter [a bacteria that causes food poisoning]. And, now, of course, there's also mad cow disease.

*By Hank Pellissier
©2004 SF Gate*

Note: Bruce is an animal rights activist on the governing board of the Catholic Vegetarian Society and the advisory board of the Christian Vegetarian Society. He is also a founding member of the Society of Religious and Ethical Vegetarians, and he's director of vegan campaigns for People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA).

Alcohol plays a key factor in most college student rapes

WASHINGTON - Most college rape victims are too

intoxicated to give consent to sex or fight their attackers, a study...shows.

Women in college are more likely to be raped than other women and alcohol plays a key factor, the study found. One out of 20 college students in the study experienced rape over a seven-month period, the research showed.

"You could predict that 'party schools' have higher rates of rape," said Mary Ross, a professor of public health at the University of Arizona, one of the study's co-authors. "This study points to an urgent need for more alcohol prevention programs on campuses along with sexual assault education."

Three out of four rapes on campus occurred when victims were intoxicated, said the analysis of 119 schools across the nation by researchers at the Harvard School of Public Health, the University of Arizona and St. Joseph's University in Philadelphia. It was based on three surveys of women randomly selected by the Harvard School of Public Health College Alcohol Study and included 8,567 women in 1997, 8,425 in 1999, and 6,988 in 2001.

It found that women at colleges where there is significant binge drinking were more likely to be raped while intoxicated than were students at other schools. Students who are active in fraternities and sororities had a higher incidence of rape.

"These students are more likely to be in sexually aggressive environments because of the drinking levels," Ross said. "I think parents would like to know about this."

Ross said that among all women who have ever attended college, between 20 percent and 25 percent have been raped. This compares to nearly 15 percent of all women, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Justice Department.

Ross said women on college campuses experience a higher incidence of rape than the general population because of excessive drinking and because rape is age-related. Most rapes occur between the ages of 18 and 25....

*By Pamela Brogan
Gannett News Service*

Hollywood is making videos that teens are too young to see at theaters even more tempting by marketing them as "unrated"

....Hollywood is making such movies [R-rated] even more tempting for teenagers by marketing

(Over, please)

them as "unrated," or as the "director's cut." They take teen-oriented, PG-13 or R-rated films, add in a few raunchy scenes, strip the voluntary rating, and slap a big "Unrated" or "Uncensored" label across the cover.

Wham: instant forbidden fruit -- and teens are eating it up.

To see an R-rated movie at the theater, the law requires children younger than 17 be admitted only if accompanied by a parent or guardian. Not so with videos.

Unrated videos are "definitely flying under the radar at the moment," said James Steyer, founder of CommonSense Media, a San Francisco-based advocacy group that monitors media content for children. "I don't think parents are as aware of them as they should be."

Teenagers consistently make up the largest percentage of movie-going audiences, so it's no surprise that Hollywood markets directly to teenagers. A September 2000 Federal Trade Commission study found that of 44 teen-oriented movies rated R for violence, 80 percent were aimed at children under 17. So even though these films were not supposed to be seen by those under 17, that is precisely who the filmmakers were intending to watch them.

Take the movie "American Pie," for example. Originally given an NC-17 rating that wouldn't allow anyone 17 or younger to see the film, even when accompanied by an adult, the movie was cut four times by its directors to achieve an R-rating from the Motion Picture Association of America, Minow said.

But when the film was released on video, Universal Studios marketed not only the R-rated version but also an unrated version featuring the original material. The front cover of the video included the banner "Unrated: The version you couldn't see in theaters."

That means teens who bought the movie were essentially seeing an NC-17 flick -- even if they were only 12 or 13 years old.

"It's a favorite manipulative trick at the moment of Hollywood: Jazz up the video by putting in a couple of raunchy outtakes, and appeal straight to teenagers," said Nell Minow, whose column on Yahoo! Movies provides parents with information about movies. "They don't call it 'Show Morality.' They call it 'Show Business.'"

By Rebecca Mahoney
The Ledger

In the new Iraq, so-called Christians are directly trying to make money in the liquor traffic

....The sale and consumption of alcohol is legal in secular Iraq, even if many Iraqis avoid it for religious reasons. But as many as nine liquor store owners, most of them Christians, have been killed in Basra since the fall of Saddam Hussein in April, according to merchants.

...British officials and Iraqi police say they have no firm figures on the numbers of people killed for selling alcohol, although they acknowledge such killings have occurred.

The officials and those who have been threatened believe extremists from Basra's resurgent Shiite majority are behind the murders.

"There is an element emerging in the Shiite community that does bear arms, that may be violent," coalition spokesman Dominic D'Angelo said. "People are feeling threatened, and not without reason."

However, he cautioned that "there are lots of different groups

emerging right now."

Basra's leading Shiite clerics deny any involvement in the killings. But they do acknowledge that their supporters have been warning people not to buy, drink or sell alcohol, which is banned under Islam.

"These liquor shop owners, we talk to them and tell them that by selling alcohol they are injuring the whole community, bringing shame on all of us," said Sheik Abu Salaam, the Basra representative of hard-line cleric Muqtada al-Sadr.

Under Islamic law, repeat offenders eventually would be put to death, he said.

"But we cannot harm them here ... it is against the law of Iraq," he said.

...Besides the murders, dozens of liquor stores owned by Christians have been torched in recent months....

By MATTHEW ROSENBERG
Associated Press

Here is what a different kind of Christian has to say about this issue:

"From so-called Christian lands the [liquor] curse is carried to the regions of idolatry...

Through their contact with peoples who should have given them a knowledge of God, the heathen are led into vices which are proving the destruction of whole tribes and races. And in the dark places of the earth the men of civilized nations are hated because of this." *The Ministry of Healing, p. 340*

View news about the benefits of chocolate with a critical eye

The rise in dark chocolate sales might be the result of studies attributing health benefits to it, but please take caution:

"....Consumers should be careful to view news about the benefits of chocolate with a critical eye. Much of the research is financed by the chocolate industry, and critics wonder whether that sugar coats the results.

Mars Inc., which sells about \$15 billion worth of chocolate and other candy products each year, is a major source of financing for scientists, pumping more than \$800,000 in research money into UC Davis in the 1990s, records show.

"There's no doubt that when industry funds the research, there is a bias toward an outcome that the industry wants to hear," says Merrill Goozner, a researcher for the Center for Science in the Public Interest. "The idea that chocolate is a health food is absurd."

By Dennis O'Brien
Sun Journal

Note: "In another study of prostate cancer, those who averaged 20 mg or more of theobromine (a caffeine relative that is especially known to be found in chocolate) per day, doubled their risk of prostate cancer. Those with intermediate consumption had an intermediate level of risk. It does not take much chocolate to provide those 20 mg of theobromine.

Chocolate also contains the carcinogen alpha-methylbenzyl alcohol.

By Neil Nedley, M.D., *Proof Positive, p. 31*

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