

The Truth on Contraceptives

One issue brought up during the August 28 dialogue between Members of the Commission for the Laity of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines, CFC-GK and CFC – FFL, was about GK partnering with and/or accepting donations from pharmaceutical companies manufacturing and/or marketing contraceptives or artificial birth control materials. Bishop Gabriel V. Reyes, D.D., Chairman, CBCP Commission for the Laity, in his September 6 message and clarification about said dialogue, confirmed how in a newspaper article (Inquirer, “Bishops to Discuss Couples for Christ Split”, page A23, Aug. 28, 2007), GK’s Tony Meloto stated that ‘GK is non-partisan. We do not take any side in building a nation in the same manner that we do not pass judgment on any corporation we engage. We do not even ask them what their (corporations) products are as long as they want to help.’”

Very recently, a member of the CFC-GK International Council announced in a gathering on September 12, 2007, at *Los Angeles, California*, USA that:

1. GK has a partnership with only one pharmaceutical company – Pfizer Phils., and
2. Pfizer already dropped Depo Provera (Medroxy-Progesterone Acetate), a contraceptive made in Belgium, and is no longer selling said contraceptive.

CFC-GK’s first claim is directly contradicted by GK’s own press releases proclaiming its partnership with Wyeth Philippines, Inc., a pharmaceutical company selling/marketing Norgestrel/Ethinyl Estradiol or Femenal, an oral contraceptive. Despite the contradiction, CFC-GK has not, to our knowledge, issued any denial or correction.

As regards CFC-GK’s second claim, actual purchases made at a Mercury Drugstore in Manila confirmed that Pfizer HAS NOT DROPPED NOR RECALLED DEPO PROVERA in the market. **DEPO PROVERA, as well as FEMENAL, are still very much available in, and in fact had been bought from, this Drug Store.**

The packaging of DEPO PROVERA’s bears the following information:

Depo- Provera Injectable Hormonal Contraceptive, Manufactured by Pfizer Belgium, **Imported by Pfizer Incorporated, Philippines**, 23/F Ayala Ave., Makati City, Philippines, Under authority of Pfizer Incorporated, New York, USA - bought at Mercury Drug Corporation, Pasig Fun Ranch, Frontera Verde, Pasig City, September 25 , 2007, at 5:14 PM under OR # 043376

Depo-Provera * Registered Trademark of Pharmacia, a Pfizer Company

On the other hand, the manufacturer’s information appearing in the FEMENAL packaging has the following details:

Femenal Oral Contraceptive, Manufactured by Wyeth-Medica, Ireland for **Wyeth Philippines, Inc.**, 2236 Chino Roces Ave., Makati City, Philippines, Under License from Trademark Owner American Home Products Corporation, NJ, USA. - bought at Watson's, SM Supercenter Pasig (Frontera Verde), Sept 25, 2007, at 5:10PM, Inv No. 181398

As pro-life advocates, CFC members must fight for their principles and beliefs as expressed in no. 9.42 of the CFC Statutes, which provides that *”Couples for Christ* will conform to and support the orthodox Church teachings and stand on issues.” Partnering with or **receiving money from contraceptive-producing/marketing companies violates the Church’s pro-life teaching and policy, as explained by**

the Bishops during the August 28 dialogue. The violation may be grave enough to merit punitive actions against CFC-GK, including the withdrawal of its recognition by the Church.

If GK believes in the pro-life teachings of the Church as articulated by the Pontifical Council For The Family, it should immediately stop its self-proclaimed practice of partnering with companies that produce/market contraceptives or artificial birth control materials. Furthermore, It should rescind all existing agreements with these companies, and publicly declare its inability to accept future donations from them. A true Catholic organization can do no less. After all, there are enough companies/individuals that GK can partner with without having to run afoul of its Statutes and the teachings of Mother Church.

This is not about the altruism and philanthropic endeavors of companies like Pfizer and Wyeth, which deserve commendation, but about their production and marketing of contraceptives. It is about the adherence of CFC-GK to the Catholic tenets and its own Statutes.

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