



Church of the Brethren General Board

Infant Formula Concerns

October 1981

To: General Board

From: Infant Formula Task Committee

Jay Gible, staff appointed

Henry Renn, Pastor of the Mingo Church, Atlantic Northeast District, Representative to ICCR

Earl Hess, President of Lancaster Laboratories, Inc., and Moderator of Conestoga Church, Atlantic Northeast District

Background:

The Infant Formula Task Committee which was established very recently, held its first formal meeting on October 2. (The Committee is open to additional persons serving and is eager to receive information from all interested persons.) None of the members of the Task Committee has a long history of having monitored the issue critically. A quick assessment of the situation leads us to believe that the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility (ICCR) is essentially "on track" in its assessment of the situation and its recommendations with respect to the boycott. On the other hand, the most recently written material from Nestlé does, we feel, show a general responsiveness for which the INFACT Newsletter gives very little credit. The Task Committee wishes to do a more in-depth study of the situation during the next year along the following lines before committing itself to a definite position:

1. Monitor closely the work of the Infant Formula Action Coalition (INFACT).
2. Study literature published by Nestlé and other involved manufacturers of Infant Formula.
3. Gather information from sources independent of 1) and 2), such as the American Pediatrics Association, American Public Health Association and from our own denomination (e.g. Bethany Hospital, Castañer various medical mission hospitals).
4. Study carefully the content of the World Health Organization (WHO) Code on Infant Formula.
5. Determine why the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services opposed the WHO Resolution.
6. Determine what legislative efforts (e.g. Harkin) may be worthy of our support.

Recommendations:

At this point the Task Committee makes two recommendations for the General Board's consideration:

- I. The General Board should update the denomination's position on the Infant Formula problem in the following manner:
 - a. It recognizes that the Nestlé Company has not been adequately responsive to our past efforts.
 - b. It calls upon the Nestlé Company and all other distributors of Infant Formula in Third World Countries to voluntarily subscribe to the WHO Code or equivalent, rather than simply to comply with the WHO Code when required to do so by a given nation.
 - c. It urges its members to continue the Nestlé Boycott until such time as a more meaningful response is obtained.
 - d. It commits itself (through the Task Committee) to monitor carefully all sides of the situation and to modify its stance in light of new information.
2. The General Board should recognize that its 1979 document on "Infant Formula" (Study/Action Guide) is one of the best position statements on the issue and should therefore continue to promote its continued use with an insert update (WHO Code and above recommendations).

Executive Committee Minutes, October 9-10, 12, 1981

In February 1979 the General Board adopted a statement on "The Church of the Brethren and Infant Formula Concerns." That statement requested the Executive Committee of the General Board to monitor the results of the action and, in reference to the Nestlé boycott, to recommend continuance or termination by the October 1979 General Board meeting.

In September 1979 the Executive Committee, meeting as a Committee of the Whole, took an action that "infant formula concerns, including the Nestlé boycott, continue to be addressed by the General Board, with a review of the program in the fall of 1980."

The Administrative Council continued to monitor this program and the infant formula concerns were addressed since the fall of 1980 through the corporate responsibility program of the Board.

At this meeting, Jay Gibble, staff for Health and Welfare, presented a statement from an Infant Formula Task Committee: Jay Gibble, Henry Renn (Pastor of the Mingo Church, Atlantic Northeast District, Representative to the Interfaith Center for Corporate Responsibility), and Earl Hess (President of Lancaster Laboratories, Inc. and Moderator of Conestoga Church, Atlantic Northeast District). The statement provided a background for the work of the Task Committee and made recommendations.

General Board Minutes, October 10-13, 1981

For background on this item, refer to the minutes of the Executive Committee of October 1981. Jay Gibble presented the item to the General Board and stated that if the paper as printed and distributed is approved with its recommendations, the Board is recognizing the existence and function of the informal task committee (Jay Gibble, Henry Renn and Earl Hess) and is approving the following recommendations:

- I. The General Board should update the denomination's position on the Infant Formula problem in the following manner:
 - a. It recognizes that the Nestlé Company has not been adequately responsive to our past efforts.
 - b. It calls upon the Nestlé Company and all other distributors of infant formula in Third World Countries to subscribe voluntarily to the WHO Code or equivalent, rather than simply to comply with the WHO Code when required to do so by a given nation.

- c. It urges its members to continue the Nestlé Boycott until such time as a more meaningful response is obtained.
 - d. It commits itself (through the Task Committee) to monitor carefully all sides of the situation and to modify its stance in light of new information.
2. The General Board should recognize that its 1979 document on 'Infant Formula' (Study/Action Guide) is one of the best position statements on the issue and should therefore continue to promote its continued use with an insert update (WHO Code and above recommendations)."

VOTED upon recommendation of the Executive Committee to recognize the existence and function of the informal task committee (Jay Gible, Henry Renn and Earl Hess) and to approve the recommendations as set forth above.