



June 2, 1981

Editor  
NEWSWEEK  
444 Madison Avenue  
New York, New York 10022

Dear Sir:

Your review of the Koop controversy in the section on Medicine in the issue of June 8 must have been a disappointment to many of your readers who would find in it little in the way of news but rather a reiteration of quotations carried many times from coast to coast.

In the interest of accuracy, I would like to point to several comments that are misleading largely because they are taken out of context. To quote a phrase from a book or lecture without the undergirding of the developing thesis could be used to ridicule the considered judgment of any author or lecturer. So it is with your "anti-family trends in our society" and "the beginnings of the political climate that led to Auschwitz, etc." I have absolutely no moral or ethical opposition to contraception that does not destroy life. I do not consider the sperm or the egg to be "life". This is not to say that I do not have grave public health concerns about some contraceptives.

To say that I have no brief for equal opportunity for women is a gross misstatement. My record as an employer, as an administrator, and as a training director of a surgical residency program speaks for itself. In an era when women in surgery were rare, I trained six women to be pediatric surgeons out of a total of thirty pediatric surgical specialists. When a commencement speaker reminds the graduating class of young ladies of their unique femininity and the career options they have which include motherhood, he should not be accused of opposing equal opportunity for women.

Dr. McBeath's reference to "the narrowest form of medical chauvinism" might be turned on his own definition of public health.

Sincerely yours,

C. Everett Koop, M.D.  
Deputy Assistant Secretary for Health