

'The Pill' Losing Ground

New York—(RNS)—As a result of reports that oral contraceptives may cause harmful side effects, 50 per cent of all American women who had previously taken the pill have stopped using it.

Harris

Survey

However, 47 per cent of the general public is opposed to outlawing oral contraceptives, mainly on the grounds that "each should decide for herself." Outlawing the pill was favored by 27 per cent of the general public.

An estimated 56 million women—44 per cent of all women over 16—were using the pill before recent Senate hearings on the possible dangers of oral contraceptives. Since then, the number of users has been reduced to 28 million.

An even higher 60 per cent of all women view the pill as "dangerous," only 17 per cent believe it is "not dangerous," and the remaining 23 per cent are "not sure of its effects."

There are varying patterns of usage and of giving up the pill in key segments of the public. The heaviest drop-off in usage has occurred mainly among groups in which usage was highest—the West, suburban women, those with some college education.

In the West, where 60 per cent of all women had used the pill, 52 per cent reported quitting. Of the 51 per cent of suburban women who used pills, 53 per cent have stopped. Among the college-educated, 56 per cent of users have ceased taking the oral contraceptive — previously, 50 per cent of all college-educated women had taken the pill.

Women under 30 were the notable exceptions. This age group has been one of the highest users of the pill (60 per cent), and it has given it up to a lesser degree (46 per cent) than middle-aged women.

BLACK PRIEST RE-ELECTED

Techny, Illi — (RNS) — Father Joseph Francis, S.V.D., first black priest named provincial of the Western Province of the Divine Word Missionaries, has been re-elected to that post. The province, which he first headed in 1967, covers 10 Western states and includes a high school in Los Angeles, a seminary in Riverside, Calif., and parishes in Los Angeles, Oakland, San Francisco, Portland, Ore., and Denver.

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Unity Talks Scheduled

Possible membership of the Catholic Church in the World Council of Churches (WCC) will be studied by a joint commission of the two bodies at a meeting in Naples May 23-30.

"This is only a preliminary study, a look at the advantages for both sides and the disadvantages," said Father John Long, S.J., an official of the Vatican Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity.

Hungarian Prelate Dies

Archbishop Endre Hamvas of Kolocsa, former chairman of the Hungarian Bench of Bishops, died April 3. He was 80 years old, and had been in retirement since 1967 because of poor health.

Archbishop Hamvas maintained more or less cordial relations with the Communist government and headed the delegation of 11 prelates permitted to attend sessions of the Second Vatican Council.

No Easter Peace in Belfast

Bomb explosions, flying tear gas grenades, riots and threats followed Easter Sunday in religiously divided Northern Ireland.

In Belfast, a spokesman for the Irish Republican Army (IRA), a clandestine organization that seeks the union of Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, said "As from now, our official policy is to hit back against British troops. If necessary we will kidnap a number of them and if any civilians are shot by the British we will do the same."

Envoy To Guatemala Killed

Efforts of the Papal Nuncio to Guatemala, Archbishop Gerolamo Prigione, to save the kidnaped West German Ambassador, Count Karl van Sprei, proved fruitless.

The body of the ambassador was found April 5 by villagers in an abandoned hut on a dusty mountain road. Archbishop Prigione said that two hours before the body was found terrorists had telephoned to tell him that the Count was still alive.

Population Rise Continues

The world population by mid-1970 will reach 3.632 billion and, if the present rate of increase continues, will double in 35 years.

The statistics were contained in the 1970 World Population Data Sheet, released by the Population Reference Bureau, Inc., Washington, D.C. "The human family is presently gaining an average of 1.4 million members a week, 199,014 a day, 8,292 an hour and 138 a minute," the report said. Fastest growing countries are Kuwait with an annual increase of 8.3 per cent and Costa Rica with 3.8 per cent.



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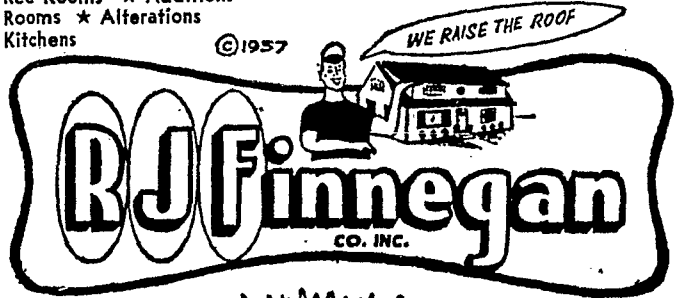


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