

Finn Leader Praises Pope's Peace Efforts

Vatican City — (RNS) — President Urho Kekkonen of Finland, in his first official visit to the Vatican, stressed during an audience with Pope Paul VI the significance of a "rapprochement" between the Roman Catholic Church and the Lutheran Church.

President Kekkonen also drew attention to what he called the similarities in "foreign policy" between Finland and the Vatican.

"Like the Vatican," he said, "Finland seeks to keep outside international conflicts of interest and, in the matter of peace, is not neutral, but for peace and against war."

The Finnish president noted the Pope's efforts to strengthen peace and human dignity throughout the world.

President Kekkonen said he hoped that diplomatic relations between Finland and the Vatican would be further strengthened, so that there would be a proportionate strengthening of a "dialogue for peace."

Pope Paul, in reply, expressed the "profound esteem" of the Holy See for the "spiritual and cultural values of the Finnish people."

Recalling that the Finnish nation developed at the same time as Christianity, the Pope noted that many Finnish Christians were "separated" from the Catholic Church.

"This, however," said the pontiff, "did not mean that they are any less our brothers, and we hope that one day we shall all share a full ecclesial communion."

Bishops Name Delegate for Poland Talks

Warsaw — (RNS) — Poland's Roman Catholic bishops have appointed a representative to conduct talks with government officials aimed at establishing normal church-state relations.

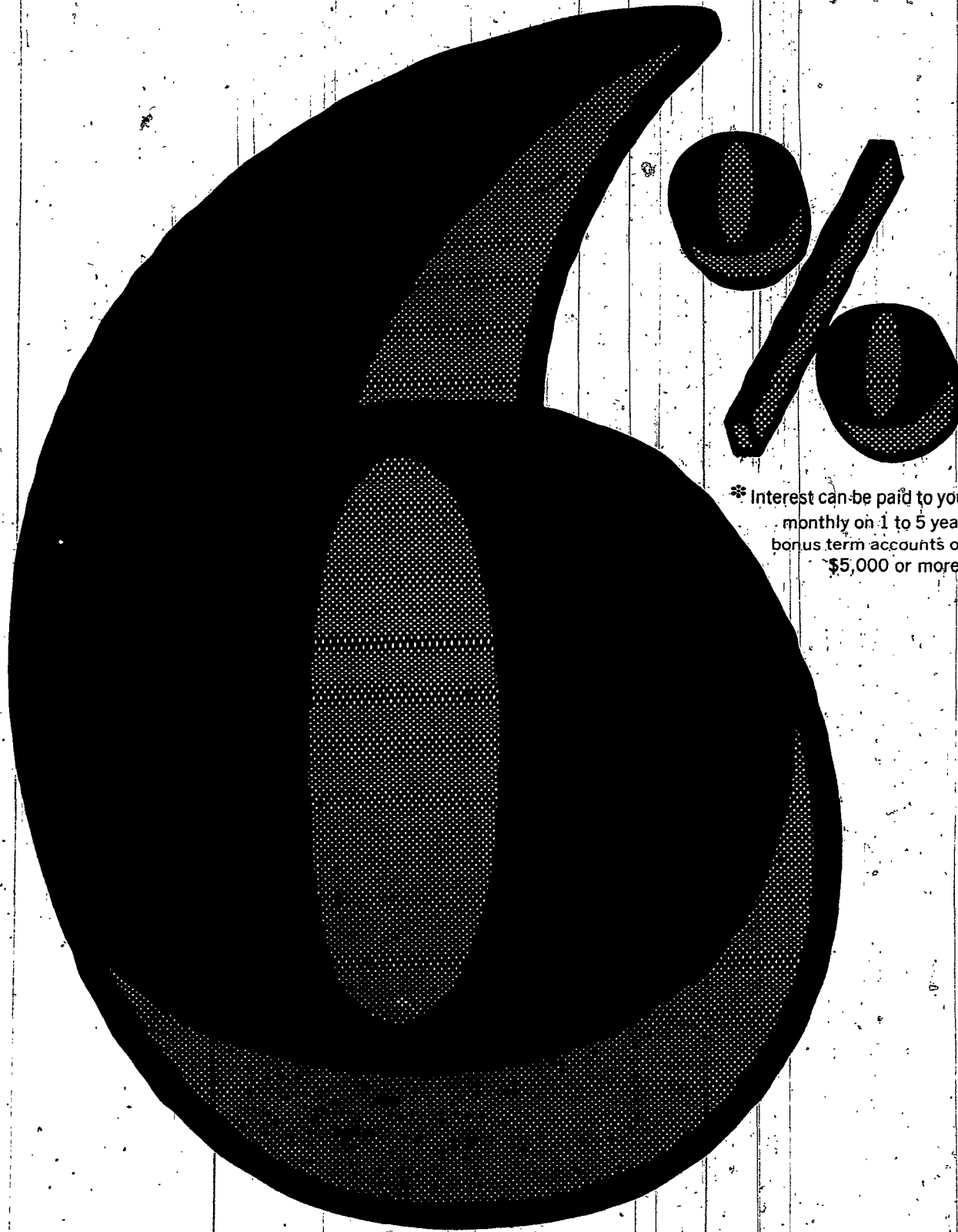
Bishop Bronislaw Dobrowski, auxiliary bishop of Warsaw, was appointed to carry out discussions with "appropriate state authorities" concerning "the extent and form" of a recent government decision to turn former German church property over to the Polish Church.

"This decision," the statement said, "is seen as indicating further acts seeking to establish normal relations between the Church and the state."

The statement also called on Catholics "to fulfill their duty toward the Church in such a way as to help the fatherland in its difficult conditions."

The allusion apparently was to the efforts by the country's new Communist leadership to establish confidence and a measure of economic well-being in the wake of the anti-government riots last December that erupted after food and fuel prices were suddenly increased.

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