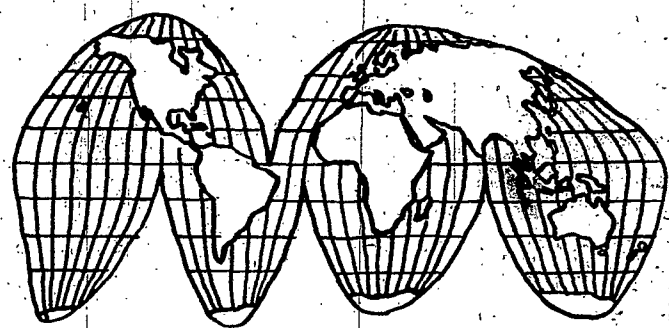


The nation and . . .



... the world

From Courier-Journal Services

Abortion became legal in France on Jan. 18 with a law permitting abortion on demand during the first 10 weeks of pregnancy. . . . In what Religious News Service describes as "an extraordinary display of sectarian unity," some 12,000 Protestants and Catholics marched in Belfast on Jan. 19 in an interdenominational demonstration for peace. The march was organized by the Anglican, Presbyterian, Methodist and Catholic churches of Ireland. At the same time, 15,000 marched in Catholic Dublin in another demonstration for peace. . . . A Nigerian Catholic priest has suggested optional celibacy for priests in Nigeria. Father N.S.S. Iwe, head of the history department at Alvan Ikoku College in Owerri, said optional celibacy would enable the Church to adapt to the "authentic values of Nigerian culture." He explained that "polygamy is one of the holiest institutions of our forefathers."

One of the side-effects of the Supreme Court's liberalized abortion ruling is that its Jan. 22 anniversary provides annual momentum for those fighting the pro-life battle. Among notable quotes was Cardinal Terence Cooke's, "One cannot be insensitive to this terrible destruction of human life. There is no justification for it and the unpleasant fact is that the vast majority of abortions have nothing to do with preserving the life of the mother but are performed for reasons of personal convenience." . . . In New York City, members of a Long Island right-to-life organization have charged Robert Morgerthau, Manhattan district attorney, with "official misconduct" for failing to halt an abortion on a woman whose pregnancy was beyond the 24-week limit for abortions. The charge stemmed from the district attorney's refusal to act on a Jan. 12 abortion performed at Beth Israel Hospital in New York City. The 28-week pregnancy was ended after the hospital sought court permission and then found no opposition from the district attorney. The hospital said the prospective mother was suicidal and in danger of having a defective child.

Bishop Francis J. Mugavero has labeled President Ford's amnesty plan "ineffective" and has called for "non-punitive amnesty" for all those in need of reconciliation with their country. Bishop Mugavero said the program thus far "has not been for reconciliation but continued estrangement." . . . The use of altar girls has stirred some controversy in the Providence, R.I., diocese. Seven parishes have girls regularly serving Mass but the diocesan director of communications says the diocese "has given no permission and we could not give permission" because canon law "expressly prohibits" girls serving at Mass. One pastor disagreed, saying that Church law does not ban altar girls.

Archbishop Makarios, the president of Cyprus, calmed an angry crowd of anti-U.S. demonstrators in Nicosia last week averting major damage to the American Embassy's cultural center. . . . A new anti-abortion women's lib group was formed in England in an attempt to dispel belief that the women's liberation movement and abortion-on-demand are inseparable. . . . And as if there were not enough trouble already in Ireland, steep tax increases on cigarettes and alcoholic beverages were announced in Dublin.

Amnesty TV Spots Spark Controversy

New York [RNS]. — Controversy and general misunderstanding on amnesty or clemency for draft resisters have caused controversy over public service announcements on television.

The CBS-TV network has refused to run "spots" prepared by the Presidential Clemency Board and the National Council of Churches.

Clemency board spots scheduled by NBC-TV for the Jan. 12 Super Bowl were canceled when the American Civil Liberties Union asked that network to run, in addition, National Council messages.

The sets of announcements are not so competitive as different, and the sponsorship of neither is part of the debate. Both deal with the clemency plan for draft resisters and military deserters announced last year by President Ford.

The main issue is whether spots dealing with clemency qualify as "controversial" and thus invoke the "fairness" doctrine, a federal rule requiring equal time on controversial themes.

Although the standards and practices departments of all three major television networks cleared

the National Council of Churches' spots as non-controversial, management at CBS apparently had requests for equal time on amnesty, although not as a response to "spots."

A CBS vice president told a reporter that the network "determined" that spot announcements were the wrong forum for the amnesty issue and we felt we could handle the subject more completely in our news programs. ABC and NBC, except for the Super Bowl, are carrying both clemency board and National Council of Churches' announcements.

Dr. Everett C. Parker, director of the Office of Communications of the United Church of Christ contends that the CBS decision is "the height of elitism."

"According to its view," he said, "nobody has a right to say anything about amnesty except members of the CBS news staff."

While relatively "understanding" of the CBS decision in the light of requests for equal time, a staff member of the National Council's Broadcasting and Film Commission said that while the topic is controversial the NCC spots are not.



Tension and Prayers in Ireland

With the end of the Irish Republican Army Provisionals cease-fire, tensions returned to the streets of Belfast and other cities in Northern Ireland. At left, a soldier keeps his finger on the trigger while another soldier checks a van for explosives or firearms at a vehicle checkpoint. At right, people stand in silent prayer during a peace rally at Belfast's City Hall. About 12,000 people turned out for the interdenominational rally, marching through heavy rain. Leading Protestant and Roman Catholic clergymen conducted a brief prayer service. (RNS)

Buckley, Hatfield Address Pro-Life Breakfast

Washington, D.C. [RNS]. — Representatives of major faith groups, senators and congressmen participated in an hour-long "Prayer Breakfast For Life" here on the second anniversary of the Supreme Court decision covering abortion, but the focus was not limited to abortion.

The breakfast, attracting an estimated 350 persons from many states on the morning of the second annual "March for Life" at the Capitol, was described as a "worship service" and included three "meditations" by Protestant and Roman Catholic clergymen and a rabbi.

The theme was "For All God's Children" and Thomas Mooney, executive director of American Citizens Concerned For Life, the chief sponsor of the breakfast, announced that enough money had been collected in a "Food for Life" campaign since Jan. 1 to purchase 10,000 pounds of rice, to be given through CARE to the hungry in the sub-Sahara nations.

In addition, a number of persons attending the breakfast brought bags of rice, dry-packaged and canned foodstuffs to the offices of their senators and congressmen to "show that the Pro-Life Movement is not only concerned with protecting the life of the unborn," said Mooney, a 30-year-old Catholic furniture dealer from suburban Silver Spring, Md.

Sen. Mark Hatfield (R-Ore.) announced at the breakfast that Sen. James Buckley (R-Cons.-N.Y.), he and five other co-sponsors were planning to introduce in the Senate on Jan. 23 a resolution extending the "right to life" to all human beings including their unborn offspring at every stage of their biological development irrespective of age, health, function or condition of dependency" except if a pregnancy will cause the death of the mother.

The measure, with Sen. Buckley as chief sponsor, is

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identical to the one he introduced with six co-sponsors in May 1973, which was not reported out of committee to the Senate floor.

(Sen. Jesse Helms (R-N.C.) introduced a resolution Jan. 17 specifying that "every human being . . . shall be deemed, from the moment of fertilization, to be a person and entitled to the right to life." This resolution differs from one Sen. Helms introduced in the last Congress, which included the words "from the moment of conception" and references to "due process of law" and euthanasia.)

The breakfast opened with welcoming remarks by Mrs. Marjory Mecklenburg, the United Methodist president of American Citizens Concerned For Life.

The "call to worship" was made by the Rev. Albert Kovacs, a United Church of Christ pastor from Bangor, Pa.

David Kucharsky, managing editor of Christianity Today, in the invocation, noted that the "inherent dignity and profound worth of the unborn" was of special concern, but the "young and old as well, the suffering, oppressed, neglected and unwanted."

Father William Hunt, director
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of the Minneapolis-St. Paul archdiocesan Newman Center, led a responsive prayer "for God's handicapped children" — physically, emotionally, mentally or spiritually, "aged children," and those "handicapped because of discrimination."

Bishop James Rausch, general secretary of the U.S. Catholic Conference, in his meditation "for God's handicapped children," said the handicapped in society "offer those of us who are not so disadvantaged, a special opportunity to love them as God loves us . . . and reaffirm the value of each human being."

Rabbi David Novak of Beth Tfiloh Congregation, Baltimore, in the third meditation, "For God's Hungry Children," said that those favoring abortion "say they are concerned for the quality of life, but there can be no concern for the quality of life without a prior concern and respect for life itself."

COURIER DEADLINE

The Courier-Journal deadline is noon Thursday for articles intended for the following Wednesday edition.

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