

1978

From 1

and opponents anticipated that the issue would arise again in the new Congress in 1979.

Federal funding of abortions continued to be a focus of controversy. Congress passed several bills which restricted the use of government funds for abortions, and a U.S. District Court in Brooklyn, N.Y., studied briefs which called for a reversal of the ban on Medicaid reimbursements for most abortion procedures. The political aspects of the "right to life" movement were highlighted with the New York State Right to Life Party winning enough votes in November to put it in fourth place on the state's future ballots, and the defeat of several incumbent legislators around the nation who have opposed legal restrictions on abortions.

Some religious groups boycotted products of the J.P. Stevens Company, which has a record of unfair labor practices, and the Nestle Corporation, which has marketed infant formula in Third World countries and drawn fire from critics who charge that breast feeding is healthier.

Another boycott was called off during the year -- the four-year protest against table grapes, iceberg lettuce and Gallo Wine which had been supported by several Churches. That boycott ended after the United Farm Workers Union announced it had signed contracts with 117 growers.

In its historic ruling on the Allan Bakke case, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that race could be taken into account in admissions policies of medical schools, but knocked down rigid quotas. Most Jewish groups favored the ruling, while many Churches and civil rights organizations feared it would hinder further progress in affirmative action programs.

In the same month that the Bakke decision was announced (June), the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormon) lifted its ban against black men holding the priesthood, stating that the decision came as the result of a revelation from God.

The issues of women in the priesthood continued to receive attention in the Anglican Communion and the Roman Catholic Church.

A three-year study commissioned by the Catholic Theological Society concluded that there is no valid reason why women should not be ordained to the priesthood, and the second meeting of the unofficial Roman Catholic Women's Ordination Conference voted to continue seeking



Pope John Paul I gently pats the face of Danielo Bravo, a fifth grade Rome pupil, at what turned out to be the pontiff's last Wednesday audience before his death on Sept. 29.

dialogues on the issue with the Vatican and the U.S. hierarchy.

A long-festering schism in the U.S. Episcopal Church, prompted in part by that denomination's approval of women priests in 1976, was realized in October with the establishment of the Anglican Catholic Church. But the denomination's organizing convention, which approved a draft constitution and sent it to the body's seven dioceses, was marred by procedural squabbling.

At their spring meeting, the U.S. Catholic bishops launched major pastoral plans for family ministry, evangelization, and social action, focusing on the roles of pastors and people on the local level. During their fall gathering, the bishops voiced concern at growing government incursions into the work of the Churches, and sent a delegation to express these views to President Carter.

Roman Catholics and Lutherans issued two major dialogue statements during the past year -- one at the international level on the Eucharist, and a first-of-its-kind statement in the U.S. on papal infallibility.

Pledges of greater cooperation among Protestants and Catholics in Europe were made at an ecumenical conference at Chantilly, France, while in Ghana, the Roman Catholic, Anglican, Methodist, Presbyterian, and Evangelical Presbyterian Churches agreed to recognize the validity of each other's baptisms. A provisional Latin American Council of Churches was organized by 212 delegates from more than 100 Protestant Churches in 20 countries, meeting in Oaxtepec, Mexico.

The labor and business communities expressed interest in the efforts of an ecumenical coalition to reopen a steel mill in

Youngstown, Ohio, under community-worker ownership. The Carter administration promised financial aid for the \$350 million project.

Disarmament was a major concern for the religious community in 1978 in connection with a special session of the United Nations on the subject at which several representatives of religious groups spoke. Besides being alarmed at the technology of death, churches also pondered the implications of the birth of the first so-called "test tube baby" in England. Modern scientific techniques were also used to probe the mysteries of a religious relic -- the Shroud of Turin.

A threatened march by American neo-Nazis in the predominantly Jewish suburb of Skokie, Ill., led to an outpouring of expressions of Christian solidarity with Jews. The U.S. Supreme Court upheld the Constitutional rights of the Nazis to march in Skokie, but they decided to demonstrate in Chicago instead.

Interreligious relations and peace were at stake as three heads of state -- a Christian, a Muslim and a Jew -- announced the signing of a framework for peace in the Middle East. While Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin and Egyptian President Anwar el-Sadat continued to differ about specific provisions as the year ended, they agreed that U.S. President Jimmy Carter had played a major role in helping them to reach the progress they had already made. Messrs. Sadat and Begin shared the Nobel Peace Prize in recognition of their talks during the past year.

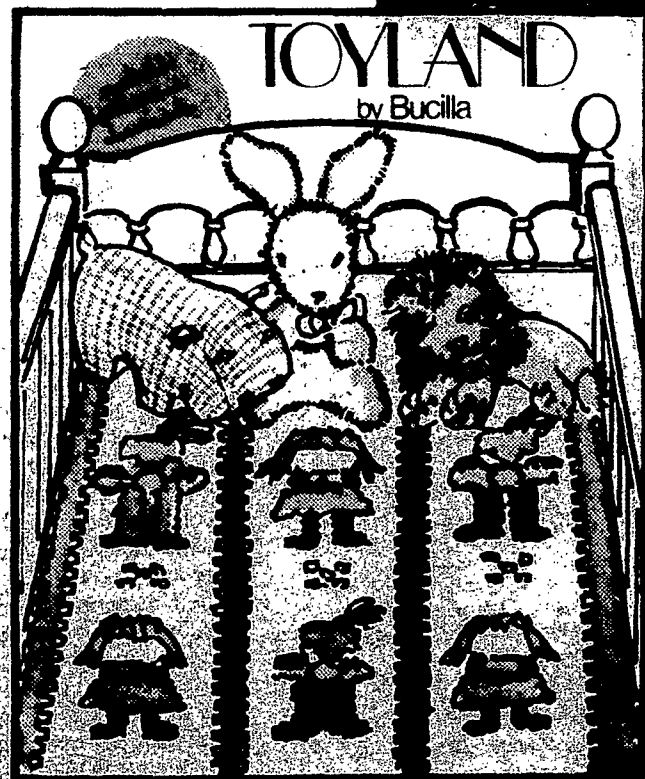
Continuing strife between rival Christian factions in Lebanon was intensified by battles between Syrian "peacekeeping" forces and Maronite Catholics in and around Beirut. Conservative Muslim leaders in Iran were at the forefront of violent protests that shook the Shah's regime.

Refugees continued to pour out of Vietnam and Cambodia, while religious and political leaders around the world accused the latter country of genocide against its own citizens. Christians continued to be active in protests against the repressive government of South Korea.

Terrorism continued to plague the world. Former Italian Premier Aldo Moro, a personal friend of Pope Paul VI, was kidnapped and slain by urban guerrillas. Patriotic Front guerrillas continued to fight the Rhodesian government, despite the "internal settlement" that brought two leading black churchmen into the government led by Ian Smith.

Civil war broke out in Nicaragua, with Roman Catholics among leading opponents of the regime of President Anastasio Somoza. Catholics were also involved in protests against rights violations in El Salvador.

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