

# People and Events Of the World and Nation

## Church Membership Up but Lagging Behind Population

New York (RNS) — Church membership trends in 1980 may be considered as either encouraging or discouraging depending on one's basis of comparison.

The 1980 figures, the latest available, are reported in the 1982 Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches, published for the National Council of Churches by Abingdon Press.

U.S. church membership increased by a full percentage point in 1980, with the addition of 1,347,253 bringing the cumulative total in the United States to 134,816,943.

The yearbook also reports that the rate did not keep pace with population growth, so that the percentage of the U.S. population recorded on church membership ledgers slipped from 60.5 percent in 1979 to 58.7 percent in 1980.

The Roman Catholic Church, the nation's largest denomination, grew by 1.28 percent to a membership total of 50,449,824.



## Harvard Honor

Mother Teresa, 1979 Nobel Peace Prize laureate and foundress of the Missionaries of Charity, greets Prof. John Kenneth Galbraith, prior to commencement ceremonies June 10 at Harvard University. Mother Teresa was given an honorary degree and, speaking at Class Day observances, called on students to observe chastity before marriage and saying that "if a mistake has been made, to have the courage not to destroy the child." (RNS)

## Pope Affirms Right Of Workers To Form Unions

Geneva, Switzerland (RNS) — Pope John Paul II, speaking here a day after Vatican lay employees called off a threatened strike, said that workers have a fundamental right to form free labor unions.

Addressing the United Nations' International Labor Organization on June 15, the pope said that workers have a right to "freely form or join an association of their own choosing and to run it."

The threatened strike by the 1,678-member Vatican Lay Employees Association would have been embarrassing to the pope had it come off on June 14.

In its dispute over wage hikes and shorter hours, the Vatican association has scored the city-state's administration, headed by American Archbishop Paul C. Marcinkus, for allegedly looking upon the group as merely a "consulting organ" with no authority to represent the "legitimate interests of the workers."

John Paul, in his address to the ILO, condemned efforts to "flout" the right of working people to form and run their own unions. The comment was seen as a thinly veiled reference to the martial law crackdown in his native Poland, where the once independent Solidarity trade union has been suspended.

## Pa. Gov. Signs Law That Will Limit Abortions

Harrisburg, Pa. (RNS) — Gov. Dick Thornburg has signed into law a controversial bill that will restrict abortions in Pennsylvania.

The governor, who last December vetoed an abortion bill because he felt some provisions were unconstitutional, kept a promise he made then to pro-life groups to sign a less restrictive measure.

The law includes provisions that a woman be counseled about abortions at least 24 hours before having one and that anyone under 18 obtain the consent of a parent, guardian or court before doing so.

"I believe that society has an obligation to provide certain basic protection for pregnant women contemplating or confronting the abortion process, particularly juveniles, and for a viable fetus which embodies human life," the governor stated.

## UNICEF Reports 'Misgivings' on Nestle's Adherence

Washington (RNS) — UNICEF has expressed "serious misgivings" about Nestle's compliance with guidelines governing the marketing of breast milk substitutes.

"In view of these misgivings," the executive of the U.N. agency warned Nestle to stop quoting an earlier, positive letter UNICEF wrote to the company.

Nestle, a Swiss-owned firm that is the world's largest manufacturer of infant formula, is the only company to announce that it will comply with a marketing code developed by the World Health Organization.

The reprimand from UNICEF's executive director, James P. Grant, was based on a task force's interpretation of instructions sent by Nestle to its sales force. The letter angered the president of Nestle's Washington office, Rafael D. Pagan Jr. In a response to Grant, Pagan affirmed Nestle's commitment "to respecting the aim and principles of the code and monitoring its application."

## Vatican Owes 2 Million In Back Water Bills; Ignored Rate Hike

Rome (RNS) — Vatican City is more than \$2 million in arrears with the Italian water authority on bills going back eight years, a spokesman for the Italian government department said.

Lucio Borra said that in 1974 the government's Interministerial Price Committee had raised the water rates but the Vatican "has refused to recognize those increases." "As a result," he said, "it has a debt of more than 2.5 billion lire."

He acknowledged that the Vatican is not alone among institutions with extraordinary water bills. State departments, organizations and other ministries top the past due list, he said. He further said that negotiations are under way to reach agreement on water rates.



## Half Million at Rally

Part of an estimated crowd of more than 500,000 attended the World Peace Rally on the Great Lawn of New York's Central Park on June 12. The crowd is listening to one of the many speakers who included Mrs. Martin Luther King Jr.; Msgr. Bruce Kent of the British Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament; Randall Frosberg, National Freeze Campaign; Bella Abzug, former congresswoman; Rev. William Sloane Coffin, actor Orson Welles; Lord Noel Baker, World Disarmament Campaign, and the Most Venerable Nichidatsu Fujii, Japan World Peace Office. Religious groups active in the rally included the American Friends Service Committee, Pax Christi, Clergy and Laity Concerned, Southern Christian Leadership Conference and Ministerial Interfaith Association. The message of bilateral disarmament was conveyed in signs such as "U.S. and U.S.S.R., freeze your arms so you and your children may live." (RNS)

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