"Test-Tube" Baby Number 2

News reports about the second "test-tube" baby, born in Calcutta, note that:
(1) Because of a lack of certain unspecified sophisticated equipment, the fertilized egg was frozen for several weeks before being implanted in the mother's uterus at the appropriate time in her ovulatory cycle.

(2) The implant was not reported prior to the birth because the physicians in charge were concerned that the child may have been abnormal.

The latter point prompts several questions. Have there been experiments which have resulted in deformed or mentally retarded children? Is there any way of controlling the production of "test-tube" babies? Will childless couples increase the demand for this procedure, and will that demand result in a greater probability of physically or mentally impaired children? If the unsuccessful attempts are not reported, the medical community and the public will be deprived of important data for judging the acceptability of the implant procedure. Because this procedure can greatly affect human society, all the relevant facts must be stated accurately and the social, psychological, and moral dimensions publicly discussed. The public acceptance or rejection of this medical technology ultimately will determine whether it will be added to the medical armamentarium.

James "Russ" Butler, director of Development for the Pope John Center and managing editor of the E & M for the last two years, has resigned in order to accept the position of director of the State Department of Consumer Affairs for the State of Missouri. We at the center are grateful for his devoted and untiring service and ask God's blessings for him and his family as he assumes his new responsibilities.

The Pope John XXIII Center is sponsoring a planning consultation at Notre Dame November 28-30, 1978, to examine the center's performance during its four years of operation and to plan its future course in light of the Church's needs. The ability to be constructively self-critical is the mark of a healthy person and equally of a healthy community. The center has invited representatives of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, individual bishops, theologians, ethicists, attorneys, educators, hospital administrators, nurses, physicians, public relations experts, scientists, and financial sages. In order to extract the best ideas and advice from such a heterogenous group, the center has retained the services of a professional facilitator. The Board of Directors of the Pope John Center fully expect that this consultation will assist the Pope John Center in meeting the needs of the Church in the field of health care and in providing a Catholic perspective on moral issues in the health and life sciences.