

faith & freedom

Reforming the Church's Social and Political Witness

Summer 2009



[EVANGELIST TONY CAMPOLO JOINS RELIGIOUS LIBERALS AND TRANSGENDER ACTIVISTS AT RALLY BY PRO-HOMOSEXUALITY HUMAN RIGHTS CAMPAIGN]

THE EVANGELICAL LEFT COMES OUT

ALSO INSIDE:

- ▶ **UMAction: A Methodist-Teamsters Alliance**
- ▶ **Anglican Action: High Priestess of Abortion**



The Institute on Religion & Democracy

1023 15th Street NW, Suite 601
Washington, DC 20005
Phone: 202.682.4131
Fax: 202.682.4136
Web: www.TheIRD.org
E-mail: info@TheIRD.org

PRESIDENT

Mark D. Tooley

EDITORIAL

Alan F. H. Wisdom
Executive Editor,
Vice President for Research and Programs

Kristen M. Seda
Publications Assistant

STAFF

Faith J. H. McDonnell
Director of Religious Liberty Programs

Lori K. Mashburn
Business Manager

Rebekah M. Sharpe
Administrative Assistant

Jeffrey H. Walton
Communications Manager

Jerald H. Walz
Vice President for Operations

Contents

Feature Article

4 The Evangelical Left Comes Out

by Alan F.H. Wisdom

In late April a spokesman for the Sojourners movement touted an upcoming conference as "the first formal coming out party" for "the Religious Left in the Obama era."



Articles

3 From the President:

Does the Left Inevitably Win? No! Mark D. Tooley

6 **UMAction: A Methodist-Teamsters Alliance.** Mark D. Tooley

7 **Anglican Action: High Priestess of Abortion** Mark D. Tooley

8 **IRD Diary: Clueless in Fairfax County** Faith J.H. McDonnell

COVER: Tony Campolo, flanked by liberal clergy and transgender activists, speaks at a Human Rights Campaign rally to promote a bill that would criminalize anti-homosexuality 'hate speech.' (IRD/Jeff Walton)

NOW AVAILABLE FOR DOWNLOAD!



IRD Expert Alan F.H. Wisdom

Is Marriage Worth Defending?

The second in a series of papers which looks at issues facing our nation and world from the perspective of Christian Scripture and tradition.

www.TheIRD.org

**MOUNT
NEO
PAPERS**

Does the Left Inevitably Win? No!

The political and religious left has always believed that the tides of history were behind it. All defeats were temporary. Victory was always on the horizon, with only a few hard-headed reactionaries standing in the way.

In fact, history is much more exciting and unpredictable. We as Christians know that history ultimately belongs to Providence and that all human events, whatever their original motivations, are mysteriously bent towards God's purposes in the end.

When IRD first began in 1981, we confronted church activists who insisted that Marxism represented the inevitable future, and the church, to remain relevant, must endorse totalitarian revolution. Of course, less than a decade later, the Soviet Union collapsed, along with many of its satellite regimes and subsidized revolutionary movements around the world. Church officials who had invested their prestige in these supposed "liberation" causes were left discredited but not, unfortunately, any the wiser.

In the 1990s, IRD responded to the rise of "Re-Imagining" theology, which advocated worship of feminine deities and "Mother God." Milk and honey rituals were supposed to replace the traditional Eucharist. We were told by many church officials that God the Father was "patriarchal" and passé, and even if traditional believers tried to resist, the radical feminist perspective inevitably would prevail.

Within ten years, the Re-Imagining Community had collapsed. Radical feminist theology still exists in some declining liberal seminaries, but much of the energy behind the "goddess" movement has dissipated. The vast majority of Christians, even in more liberal churches, still worship the divine "Father" to whom Jesus prayed.

More recently, ideologies involving sexual orientation have become fashionable. We are assured that full social acceptance of homosexual practice and alternative understandings of gender is just around the corner. Only bigots are standing in the way. Churches will bless not only same-sex unions, but ultimately, sexual reassignment surgery, fluid gender identities, and polyamory.

Well, that train has not entirely left the station yet. A few declining denominations in North America and Europe have partly rejected traditional Christian teachings about gender and sexual ethics. But growing Christianity around the world is robustly orthodox on those issues. Some liberal evangelicals want their churches to compromise on these issues. But if they succeed, their churches will follow the United Church of Christ and the Episcopal Church into chronic decline.

Recently, even liberal-led mainline denominations have once again rejected supposedly inevitable initiatives that would have compromised their teachings about marriage and sexual expression. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), by a majority vote of its

presbyteries, refused to remove its expectation that church officials remain monogamous in marriage or chaste if single. This vote was not that different from a decade ago, when the standard was first ratified into the church's constitution. Liberal caucus groups are not abandoning their push for liberalized sexual standards, of course. But they must be surprised that they have been defeated once again.

In the United Methodist Church, delegates from growing African churches have prevented that denomination from relaxing its sexual standards. One third of that church's members are now outside the U.S., mostly in Africa, and the Africans are overwhelmingly biblical in their beliefs. Liberals shrewdly realized that victory required some separation from the Africans. A "global segregation plan" would have created a new U.S.-only "regional conference" that could make its own decisions.

Last year's United Methodist General Conference approved this segregation plan, but it had to be ratified by two thirds of all the voters in all the local annual conferences this year. So far this plan, despite full-blown support from the bishops and much of the church bureaucracy, is being defeated by a 2 to 1 margin. Liberals portray their cause as inevitable. But to prevail, they had to ostracize the growing churches in Africa and rely on declining churches in the United States. Some confidence in history!

Even in the Episcopal Church, long thought to be a lost cause by many orthodox believers, there is the surprising rejection of Kevin Thew Forrester as the proposed bishop of Michigan's Upper Peninsula. Forrester, who received a Buddhist "lay ordination," openly rearranged Episcopal liturgy so as to accommodate syncretistic worship and minimize teachings such as Christ's atonement. A majority of Episcopal dioceses and bishops seem to have voted against him, making him the first bishop candidate to face rejection over theology in over 100 years. So even the much maligned Episcopal Church still seems to have some standards!

God often has surprises for us, winning battles on unexpected fields. We should never assume that anything is inevitable, unless it conforms to God's will. Everything outside his will is ultimately transient and, however successful to temporal eyes, will fade. Seeing God's purposes in history requires discerning spiritual eyes, faith, and patience. Let's be patient and pray that we persevere! ☞



Mark D. Tooley is the President of the Institute on Religion & Democracy and the Director of UMAction.

Mark Tooley



THE EVANGELICAL LEFT COMES OUT

by Alan F.H. Wisdom

In late April a spokesman for the Sojourners movement touted an upcoming conference as “the first formal coming out party” for “the Religious Left in the Obama era.” Jason Gedeik boasted, “This is the Religious Left filling the hole created by the decline of the Religious Right but now we have the political power and ear of the White House.”

That Sojourners, headed by self-described evangelical Jim Wallis, leans left on virtually every political issue will not be news to IRD readers. What is news is that Sojourners is now openly calling itself “the religious left” and reveling in its alliance with the Obama administration. Wallis and Sojourners had previously rejected such political identifications. “There is a Religious Left in this

country, and I’m not a part of it,” Wallis told *Christianity Today* as recently as 2008. In 2004 he remarked to the *Seattle Times*: “People of faith should not be in any party’s pockets, any candidate’s pockets. The religious right was a political party, not a religious one.

“People of faith should not be in any party’s pockets, any candidate’s pockets,” said Sojourners’ Jim Wallis in 2004. How suddenly the situation has changed with a liberal Democrat in the White House!

There should not now be a religious left.”

How suddenly the situation has changed with a liberal Democrat in the White House! Now Wallis and others on the evangelical left are “coming out” in a big way. They are backing Obama and the Democrats on issues across the board. This support covers not only issues—such as global warming, national health care, and a less assertive U.S. foreign policy—where the evangelical left has long shared the convictions of its secular counterparts. It also includes issues, such as abortion and homosexuality, where evangelical leftists had ostensibly stood apart by upholding traditional Christian teachings.

Jesus Endorses Hate Crimes Bill

On May 4-5 the Human Rights Campaign, the nation’s premier pro-homosexuality lobby, convened a “Clergy Call” rally on Capitol Hill. The purpose was to promote pending “hate crimes” legislation that would criminalize speech or thought allegedly contributing to violence against gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender persons. Assault is, of course, already amply punished under the laws of all 50 states. So the transparent effect of the legislation would be to use the threat of prosecution to “chill” public expressions of disapproval for homosexuality or sex change operations.

Most participants at the Clergy Call were predictable

religious revisionists: Unitarian pastors, Episcopal priests, and transgender United Methodist minister Drew Phoenix (formerly the Rev. Ann Gordon). But amongst this crowd appeared evangelist Tony Campolo, declaring: “Justice is love translated into social policy. This [hate crimes legislation] is a chance to practice that love.” Campolo brushed aside warnings from the U.S. Catholic bishops and the Southern Baptist Convention that the bill might hinder religious free speech. He was sure there would be no threat “as long as [a sermon] does not promote violence.” Campolo insisted, “We evangelicals who have such a high view of scripture should want justice for gays, lesbians and transgendered persons.”

Evangelical ethicist David Gushee and Florida megachurch pastor Joel Hunter provided written statements distributed at the rally. Gushee implied that Christ himself would favor treating anti-homosexuality “hate speech” as a crime: “For me, the case for this bill is settled with these words from Jesus: ‘As you did it to one of the least of these, you did it to me.’” Hunter concurred: “I would think that the followers of Jesus would be first in line to protect any group from hate crimes. He was the one who intervened against religious violence aimed at the woman caught in the act of adultery.” Although Campolo, Gushee, and Hunter all suggested gently that they might not approve of some sexual behaviors, none expressed any disapproval of the event’s pro-homosexuality sponsor.

More recently, former National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) lobbyist Richard Cizik reiterated his support for “civil unions” granting marriage-like benefits to same-sex couples—the same stance that prompted his departure from the NAE post last December.

‘Respect and Appreciation’ for Planned Parenthood

On July 23 Hunter and Wallis appeared with representatives of NARAL Pro-Choice America and Planned Parenthood to endorse a bill that promises “common ground” on abortion. The legislation, introduced by Democratic Reps. Tim

Ryan (Oh.) and Rosa DeLauro (Conn.), focuses on boosting funding for contraceptive distribution and “comprehensive sex education” emphasizing “safe sex” rather than abstinence. The U.S. Catholic bishops and major pro-life groups oppose the bill because of the large amounts it would funnel to Planned Parenthood, the nation’s leading abortion provider, under the guise of promoting contraception.

Nevertheless, Hunter affirmed, “I so much respect and appreciate NARAL and Planned Parenthood for being here” at the press conference. “I’m here not only to endorse this bill, but to challenge all well-meaning pro-life people to support this bill.” The implication was that pro-lifers who opposed the Ryan-DeLauro bill were not “well-meaning.” Other evangelical left endorsers of the bill included Gushee, Cizik, Fuller Seminary ethicist Glen Stassen, Evangelicals for Social Action president Ron Sider, and author Brian McLaren.

In March, roughly the same group signed a letter praising President Obama’s choice of Kathleen Sebelius as Secretary of Health and Human Services, predicting that the strongly pro-abortion rights Kansas governor would help to reduce the number of abortions in America.

Hunter also defended Obama’s decision to fund stem cell research involving the destruction of human embryos. He implied that moral objections to the move were the result of “mischaracterization and false information” from pro-life groups. It “would relieve a great deal of the alarm and suspicion,” Hunter claimed, if friends like himself had received advance notice of the policy shift. He described himself as one among many evangelicals “who think the best of the president.”

The Prophet Throws a Love Feast

Sojourners’ April 26-29 “Mobilization to End Poverty” was a love feast for the Obama administration. The president sent a video-recorded message, which was greeted rapturously by the 1,100 activists gathered at the D.C. Convention Center. Three of his White House aides also spoke in person, as did four other Democratic officeholders. In past years,

there had been a few Republicans on Sojourners’ list of major speakers. This year there were none.

Wallis joked about his group’s close relationship with the new administration. “I was talking with a reporter the other day,” he said, “and he asked me, ‘What’s the difference in this White House and previous White Houses?’ And I said, well, sometimes with the other White Houses they’ve been quite eager to arrest us [when Sojourners demonstrators crossed police lines]. This one puts you on task forces, which sometimes takes more time.”

Wallis confessed that his new political access had caused him to reconsider the biblical prophets with which he identified himself. “When I think about how we relate to power, my models and archetypes were Micah, Amos, Obadiah [who all criticized the Israelite kings],” he said. In contrast, “now we have a president and a Congress who want to seriously confront poverty ... I think we need some theological reflection. We may have to learn from Joseph and Daniel, who had the king’s ear.”

In an earlier interview with the *Washington Post*, Wallis recounted how he “was in tears” when Obama announced his budget proposals. “Some of the things I’ve fought for my entire life are in there,” he said. “I’ve been 40 years in the wilderness, and now it’s time to come out.”

The now openly “religious left” activists seemed confident about their prospects in the promised land of the Obama administration. After all, they knew they had Jesus on their side. Dr. Frederick Haynes, II, pastor of Friendship-West Baptist Church in Dallas, asserted that if Christ were on Earth today, “He’d be attending this conference, ‘cause we’re dealing with his agenda. Others [Republicans, presumably] are making policies that contradict the policies of our Savior.” ☞



Alan F. H. Wisdom is the Vice President for Research and Programs at the Institute on Religion & Democracy.

A Methodist-Teamsters Alliance

by Mark D. Tooley

The Teamsters Union is not typically renowned for its piety. But a Methodist bishop still traveled to Washington, D.C., to address a Teamsters rally during the Lenten season—to proclaim that “the very purpose of Jesus’ coming” was to establish economic justice on earth.

“I welcome the opportunity to tell the truth about justice anywhere, anytime,” United Methodist Bishop Mary Ann Swenson of Pasadena, California, enthusiastically declared to hundreds of Teamster protesters. The placard-waving demonstrators from the 1.4-million-member International Brotherhood of Teamsters were snarling traffic outside the National Restaurant Association to protest the association’s “anti-worker and anti-union lobbying activity.” They were particularly targeting the restaurateurs for opposing increases in the minimum wage.

Earlier this year, Swenson participated in a stacked “blue ribbon commission” to investigate Federal Express’ alleged hostility to unionization. The Teamsters hope to unionize FedEx, as they have UPS. Not surprisingly, the commission accused FedEx of denying the human rights of its employees. It insisted Congress “must pass” the Employee Free Choice Act, which would allow a union to be recognized without a secret ballot among the workers.

Bishop Swenson told her fellow United Methodists of southern California that after she had addressed a labor rally in Los Angeles at Christmas time, she was invited to the Teamsters jamboree in Washington, D.C., during the Easter season. Since she was going to be in the nation’s capital “for another meeting anyway,” she eagerly adapted her Advent remarks to the Lenten season, she explained. Evidently the Teamster cause fits comfortably into any liturgical calendar.

According to the liberal *American Prospect* website, the Teamsters rallying in Washington blocked traffic for three hours. Photos from the well-choreographed event show protesters wav-

ing professionally printed signs accusing the restaurateurs of “serving up misery.” Bishop Swenson is not mentioned in the official Teamsters news release, but no doubt she bestirred working people with her claim to represent all the United Methodist churches of southern California, Hawaii, Guam, and Saipan, “every one of them an outpost of support for the rights of workers to organize.”

Bishop Swenson did not mention that United Methodism in her area has lost half its membership even amid surging population growth, thanks partly to church officials like herself who are more interested

A Methodist bishop addressed a Teamsters rally during the Lenten season—to proclaim that “the very purpose of Jesus’ coming” was to establish economic justice on earth.

in leftist political causes than in strengthening the church with traditional Gospel teaching. “It has been my privilege to speak on behalf of striking hotel workers in L.A., of FedEx employees bargaining for just wages, and for Teamsters and dockworkers at the U.S. Port of Long Beach,” she boasted at the Teamsters rally.

Admitting that union advocacy is difficult in a global economic downturn, Bishop Swenson insisted that “justice knows no season.” Noting the pre-Easter season of Lent, the bishop asserted that “this is the very best time to speak truth to power, for that is central to the Easter story.”

Swenson then treated the Teamster demonstrators to a short recitation of the Easter story, or at least her politically correct version of it, where Christ confronts “Wall Street” in the Temple of Jerusalem and drives out the money changers. “Moral authority displaces economic authority, the object of faith is restored, and justice is served, for that is the

very purpose of Jesus’ coming, not just into the city, but into our lives,” Bishop Swenson intoned. She never told the Teamsters the part of the story where Jesus is crucified and rises from the dead.

Claiming to speak for “all faith traditions,” Bishop Swenson implored: “It is out of this tradition, in this season, at this time, that I offer you the full support and encouragement of all people of faith for your effort to seek justice, to achieve just and right working conditions and wages.” She concluded: “Those of you who are workers and those who are managers are first of all people, ideally people of faith, who can and should see one another as brothers and sisters, working in common purpose for a world that supports and strengthens every person in their labors.”

It’s nice that Bishop Swenson included “managers” as “brothers and sisters,” too, though there probably were not too many managers among the Teamsters crowd blocking traffic. Union officials were blunter. “We’re here to tell management ... that we aren’t letting them hide behind the National Restaurant Association’s skirt anymore,” exclaimed Jeff Farmer, Teamsters Organizing Director. “This association’s lobbyists help to carry out schemes that hurt workers and their families, dirty the environment, and compromise political ideals. This must stop now.”

The Teamster official seemed not to have caught the Easter spirit. But Bishop Swenson is likely still ready to flock to the next Teamster rally, in time for the next holiday season. ☐

This article originally appeared on the website: FrontPageMagazine.com.



Mark D. Tooley is the President of the Institute on Religion & Democracy and the Director of UMAction.

High Priestess of Abortion

by Mark D. Tooley

On July 1, the Rev. Katherine Ragsdale became the first female president of Episcopal Divinity School (EDS) in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Openly lesbian, former head of a liberal think tank, and best known for her pro-abortion advocacy through the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice, Ragsdale may be the perfect icon for untrammelled liberal Episcopalianism.

But a widely publicized two-year-old sermon by Ragsdale has overshadowed her recent appointment. "Abortion is a blessing and our work is not done!" she repeatedly exclaimed at a 2007 rally at an abortion clinic in Birmingham, Alabama. Abortion is never a "tragedy," she insisted, but always a "blessing." The Episcopal priest called the procedure a blessing in cases of rape, fetal anomalies, or insufficient resources to care for a child.

Ragsdale went even further: "And when a woman becomes pregnant within a loving, supportive, respectful relationship; has every option open to her; decides she does not wish to bear a child; and has access to a safe, affordable abortion—there is not a tragedy in sight—only blessing. The ability to enjoy God's good gift of sexuality without compromising one's education, life's work, or ability to put to use God's gifts and call is simply blessing."

Ragsdale chastised medical personnel who declined to perform abortions, comparing them to pacifists in the military. Pro-life doctors and nurses should find another profession, she suggested. The priest concluded her sermon: "I want to thank all of you who protect this blessing [of abortion] — who do this work every day: the health care providers, doctors, nurses, technicians, receptionists, who put your lives on the line to care for others (you are heroes — in my eyes, you are saints) . . . all of you. You're engaged in holy work."

When Ragsdale and EDS took criticism over this sermon, she did not back down. On her blog she compared abortion

to heart surgery: "messy, uncomfortable, scary," but "blessing" all the same. "I suppose it's possible for an intelligent, faithful person to still believe that there's no moral difference between a zygote [newly conceived child] and a baby," Ragsdale told the *Boston Phoenix*. "But there's no reason for most of us to believe that. I don't."

Reflecting on the May 31 murder of Wich-



BLESSING? According to the Rev. Katherine Ragsdale, what goes on inside this abortion clinic is "holy work" and those who carry it out are "saints." (IRD)

ita abortion doctor George Tiller, Ragsdale recalled: "He was an extraordinary man, deeply spiritual, who put his life on the line every day because this [late-term abortions] is what he felt called by God to do. Women needed him; there were so few places for them to get the necessary care."

In 2004 Ragsdale testified before the U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee against the Child Custody Protection Act, which would have prohibited transporting minors across state lines for abortion without parental consent. She boasted of chauffeuring a 15-year-old girl to get an abortion without her parents' knowledge. She promised to do so again, no matter the law, because her Episcopal ordination vows supposedly require it.

Episcopal Divinity School does not appear to be deterred by the controversy surrounding its new president. The school's trustees elected her unanimously. Even

though her resume shows a strikingly thin scholarly record, trustees chair Brett Donham declared, "Katherine's gifts, skills, and experience are an excellent match . . . both in terms of the current challenges and opportunities at EDS, and the personal attributes we are looking for in a new leader."

Regarding those concerned about Ragsdale's extreme views, Donham told the *Phoenix*: "We don't pay a lot of attention, because it's a few people, and they're so off point as to where the Episcopal Church is headed." He added, "The Episcopal Church and Episcopal Divinity School have a mission of justice, compassion, and reconciliation. The ability to walk with different groups, talk with them, live with them—even though we have some disagreements—is central to what the Episcopal Church is about." Donham dismissed Ragsdale's critics as "the rabid right [that] simply isn't interested in engaging in conversation. So we don't [engage them in conversation]."

However provocative Ragsdale's pronouncements often are, she is in demeanor calm and polished. Perhaps she can exploit her rising name recognition to help EDS reverse its declining fortunes. With fewer than 100 students, the seminary last year sold off 7 of the 20 buildings on its bucolic Cambridge campus to Leslie University for over \$33 million. The sale was necessary to "secure the financial future of the school," according to its then president. What kind of spiritual future the school will have is another question. ☒

A version of this article originally appeared on the American Spectator website (Spectator.org).



Mark D. Tooley is the President of the Institute on Religion & Democracy and the Director of UMAction.

Clueless in Fairfax County

by Faith J.H. McDonnell

In my work at IRD, I defend persecuted Christians around the world. Their persecutors in many cases are governments and movements that claim to be implementing Islamic law (*shari'a*). Increasingly, I find myself unable to leave the struggle behind when I go home from the IRD office. We have encounters with radical Islam even in suburban Fairfax County, Virginia.

Earlier this spring, I had occasion to testify before the Fairfax County Planning Commission. The Islamic Saudi Academy (ISA), a private K-12 school founded and financed by the government of Saudi Arabia, had asked for an exemption to increase the student population and add new facilities. The school occupies land zoned as "low occupancy" and "residential-conservation." The hearing focused on land use, but some of us who testified believe that there is more to land use than storm water runoff and septic systems.

Well-organized phalanxes of school supporters filled the county government center. They had obviously been given enough advance notice to prepare hundreds of badges declaring "I Support ISA." The badges were decorated with the crossed swords of the Saudi emblem. There was little room for those who opposed the school's expansion. The Planning Commission chairman bellowed for the fire marshal to clear the exits.

A handful of neighborhood residents, with little advance notice, came to testify against the ISA expansion. Several focused on traffic problems. Others spoke of ecological concerns.

In my testimony, I told the Planning Commission that ISA's use of official Saudi textbooks is far more dangerous than environmental damage or traffic accidents. The Center for Religious Freedom and the Institute for Gulf Affairs found that these

textbooks, disseminated to U.S. mosques and schools, sanction the murder of converts from Islam, Jews, adulterers, polytheists, and homosexuals. They reject the sovereignty of the U.S. government. Even when a host country has granted Muslims the ability to purchase land, live in freedom and peace, and enjoy the benefits of democracy, these Saudi textbooks teach that *shari'a* must take precedence.

What is the fruit of this teaching? Former ISA valedictorian Ahmed Omar Abu Ali was convicted in 2005 of providing material support to al-Qaeda and plotting to assassinate President Bush. Two other former students, Mohammed Osman Idris and Mohammed el-Yacoubi, were linked to a planned suicide bombing in Israel.

After the hearing, Fairfax County posted on its website the names and addresses of the dozen or so who testified against the ISA zoning exemption. This exposure wasn't *such* a big deal to most of us. But it may be dangerous for the last witness. This young man testified that although he had many Muslim friends at ISA, he had to acknowledge that the school's teachings encouraged acts of violence against non-Muslims. One commissioner jokingly asked if the young man was afraid to drive home alone. "Absolutely" was his sober reply. The young man requested an escort to the parking lot, revealing that his car had been keyed and sugar put in his gas tank in retaliation for his testimony.

After having seen so many Christians elsewhere in the world who live in fear of Islamic militants, it was breathtaking to feel intimidated in my own county government center. Planning commissioners were slow to cut off hisses, boos, and jeers from ISA supporters. Some commissioners rolled their eyes, smirked, glared, and sometimes verbally attacked witnesses

who criticized radical Islam.

On the other hand, commissioners beamed at Muslims who testified. They nodded approvingly when ISA witnesses said the school taught "good values." They laughed when ISA witnesses mocked their opponents. One witness suggested that I should be deported from the United States because of my disrespect for Islam.

In spite of all the concerns raised about the Saudi academy, the Fairfax County Planning Commission recommended approval of the academy's request, on June 11, 2009. It did not appear to recognize any problems regarding traffic, the environment, or Islamic extremism. Now the county Board of Supervisors either must act on the commissioners' advice or overrule them.

Paralyzing political correctness and lack of awareness of radical Islam are not accidental. The Muslim Brotherhood has said it will Islamize America by "eliminating and destroying the Western civilization from within and 'sabotaging' its miserable house by their hands and the hands of the believers so ... God's religion is made victorious over all religions."

We are being sabotaged by our own hands! Islamists do not need to use violence in America. We are not resisting. We are acquiescing because of our absolute dread of being called politically incorrect, impolite, intolerant, and, worst of all, Islamophobic. We are totally clueless. I saw this up close and personal at the hearing for the Islamic Saudi Academy. ❏



Faith J. H. McDonnell
is the Director of Religious Liberty Programs at the Institute on Religion & Democracy.



The Institute on Religion & Democracy

The IRD is an ecumenical alliance of U.S. Christians working to reform their churches' social witness, in accord with biblical and historic Christian teachings, and to contribute to the renewal of democratic society at home and abroad.

Support the IRD by donating today!

www.TheIRD.org