

RELIGION & DEMOCRACY



The Institute
on Religion &
Democracy

July 1988

"Building A New South Africa"

IRD Launches New Program to Assist South African Blacks

Sanctions, disinvestment, divestment. The debate over what to do about South Africa continues. In the meantime, there are thousands of black South Africans who face very real needs as they attempt to survive under the apartheid system, while working courageously toward its abolition.

The Institute on Religion and Democracy has established a program to assist these South Africans. The program is called "Building a New South Africa" (BANSA). In conjunction with the launching of BANSA, the IRD has published a new book entitled *South Africa: Revolution or Reconciliation?* (see page 2). BANSA was organized because of the IRD's concern that all too often

U.S. church groups ignore the real democrats in South Africa. Instead, some end up giving tacit support to the

government. Others, often in the mainline churches, end up supporting the radicals. For example, the NCC has endorsed the "Lusaka Statement," which calls for support for those "liberation movements" (such as the African National Congress) that accept "the use of force." IRD's BANSA, which supports the pro-democratic "middle-ground," offers an alternative to such misguided church activities. BANSA focuses upon four types of activities:

1) **Black economic empowerment** -- Black South Africans are becoming increasingly involved in entrepreneurial ventures. These programs focus on developing black business ownership and management skills.

Improved education -- Throughout South Africa there is a tremendous need for more and better-qualified teachers. Seminary scholarships are also of particular concern.

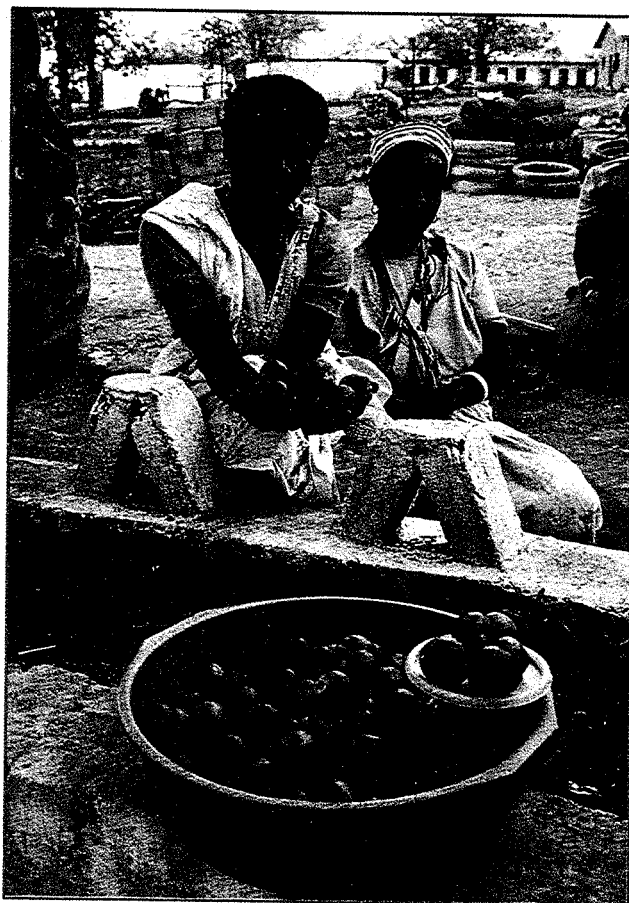
3) **Better health care** -- Upgrading health care facilities and medical training services is a high priority for a new South Africa.

4) **Building democratic institutions** -- South Africa today is evolving into an increasingly polarized society. This polarization is played out at the expense of democracy. There are, however, brave men and women from all racial backgrounds who are willing to oppose the totalitarian Left and authoritarian Right and to work for a truly democratic South Africa. These democrats are actively pursuing projects and policies that will peacefully replace the injustices of apartheid with democratic institutions, ensuring individual liberties and freedoms.

BANSA identifies nine South African non-profit organizations which it is encouraging U.S. churches and

others to support. All have a proven track record in their fields as they work toward a new South Africa that will pursue democratic ideals and free-market policies. The BANSA groups range from a project which loans capital to black sugar cane growers to a relief organization which feeds 1.3 million people every day. The nine groups are the Urban Foundation, the University of Zululand, the Rural Foundation, the National Initiative for Reconciliation, Operation Hunger, Rosebank Bible College, the Small Cane Growers Financial Aid Fund, the New Era School Trust (NEST), and the Black Transport Development Trust.

--Walter Kansteiner



Attractive BANSA brochures, suitable for distribution to leaders and members of your congregation, are available by writing: IRD/BANSA, 729 15th Street, N.W., Suite 900, Washington, D.C. 20005.

South Africa: Revolution or Reconciliation?

South Africa: Revolution or Reconciliation? by Walter Kansteiner (Institute on Religion and Democracy, 1988, 174 pp., \$8.00, or \$7.20 for IRD members). Reviewed by Dr. Dean Curry, Chairman of the History and Political Science Department, Messiah College, Grantham, Pennsylvania, and a member of the IRD Board of Advisors.

Nearly two years after it first voted stiff sanctions against South Africa, the U.S. Congress this summer is considering even more comprehensive economic penalties against the white-ruled government of South Africa. While Congress debates new American sanctions, U.S. policy toward South Africa promises to be a major issue in the fall presidential campaign. In addition, demands for divestment and expressions of solidarity with the African National Congress (ANC) have become a routine part of university and ecclesiastical politics.

This attention directed toward South Africa is understandable given the odious nature of the apartheid system. Indeed, much of the American disdain for South Africa is visceral, rooted in our historical struggles against privilege, racial inequality, and political tyranny. The unfortunate side of this, however, is that emotional revulsion is not, in itself, a sufficient basis for an effective approach to the current South African status quo. It is for this reason that the publication of Walter H. Kansteiner's *South Africa: Revolution or Reconciliation?* is a timely contribution to the American -- and particularly church -- discussion of South Africa.

Kansteiner's book fills a void in the literature on South Africa. To date there have been few books which have systematically and judiciously examined the plethora of actors, issues, and agendas which have created the current South African conundrum. Though brief, the book contains a wealth of insight.

Writing with a keen sensitivity to the ethical demands of the Christian tradition, Kansteiner's guiding focus is the question of whether revolution is likely to bring about a more just and democratic post-apartheid South Africa. Part I of the book, therefore, discusses the revolutionary options in South Africa within the framework of the just-war criteria. Part I also contains a helpful overview of the major actors in South Africa and their goals. These goals and the means to effect them are then juxtaposed against just-war-related issues such as the nature of political legitimacy in South Africa and the likelihood of revolutionary violence succeeding.

Kansteiner shares with the South African revolutionaries an abhorrence of the apartheid system, but

he convincingly demonstrates that revolution cannot succeed, at least in the foreseeable future, against the powerful and determined South African Defense Force. Moreover, Kansteiner's analysis of the South African revolutionary movement, particularly the African National Congress, raises serious questions about the nature of an ANC-dominated South Africa.

Having rejected the political and moral viability of revolutionary change, Kansteiner in Part II examines the alternatives to revolutionary violence, specifically the role of those who represent the "middle ground" on the South African political landscape. Unfortunately, this "middle ground" has been largely ignored in the United States, where there is a tendency to define the South African reality as simply an unambiguous struggle between a white reactionary conservative government and a black progressive revolutionary movement led by the ANC. Kansteiner demonstrates that the South African political landscape is much more complex.

In the heart of this second part of the book, Kansteiner systematically describes the real and potential impact of such "middle ground" factors as black economic empowerment (what Kansteiner calls the "creative erosion" of apartheid), the KwaZulu/Natal Indaba negotiations, and the ministry of Michael Cassidy's National Initiative for Reconciliation. The purpose of this discussion is to demonstrate that time has not run out for peaceful change in South Africa; on the contrary, the "middle ground" arguably still represents the majority of South Africans, white as well as non-white.

In conclusion, Kansteiner suggests specific ways in which Americans -- both government and non-government actors -- can effectively and responsibly support the moderate forces of change in South Africa. "If the real goal (of U.S. policy) is a post-apartheid, non-racial, multi-party democracy that guarantees individual freedoms," Kansteiner writes, "then we . . . must support those in South Africa who are working towards these ends. We need to support the middle ground, the third option, the democrats and liberals who have rejected the authoritarianism of the Right and the totalitarianism of the Left."

South Africa: Revolution or Reconciliation? represents an important contribution to our understanding of South African realities. This book should be required reading for the next President of the United States, for American church leaders, and for everyone who is committed to a democratic post-apartheid South Africa.

-- Dean Curry

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Denominational Update

Is the United Methodist Church Poised for Reform?

That the United Methodist Church needs renewal is incontestable. Roy Beck's *On Thin Ice* (see *Religion and Democracy*, May 1988) documents a pattern of deception, ideological pandering, and loss of integrity at the upper reaches of the church. The national church agencies, out of step with the people in the pews on a host of issues, continue to pour hundreds of thousands of dollars into radical Left causes. (Just this spring, the UM mission and social action boards sponsored a nationwide tour by George Baldwin, a Methodist minister turned Sandinista apologist, who told church audiences that Nicaragua has "no political prisoners" and enjoys "open political dialogue." He said, according to Religious News Service, that "such church leaders as Cardinal Miguel Obando y Bravo often support oppression against the peasants.") But the statistical evidence of the United Methodist Church's decline may be the most compelling: a continuing hemorrhage of members, nearly 1.3 million since 1968.

Some steps are being taken to staunch the flow. This spring, Peggy Billings, the head of the UM international missions arm, was relieved of her post. The author of controversial NCC mission studies on human rights and on Korea, Billings has exhibited leanings toward liberation theology which have caused unease in the church.

The quadrennial UM General Conference, meeting in St. Louis from April 26 to May 6, acted favorably on the platform of a group of dissident -- and moderate -- pastors and laity. Their "Houston Declaration" garnered over 51,000 signatures of support from across the church. Responding to the three points of the Houston Declaration, the General Conference:

- * Adopted a new theological statement which affirmed the primacy of Scripture. (In the conference's opening episcopal address, Bishop Jack Tuell signaled the bishops' desire for change when he said: "The time has come to say the last rites over the notion that the defining characteristic of United Methodist theology is pluralism.... There is no evangelistic appeal to join a group whose principal identifying mark is that everyone disagrees with everyone else.")
- * Reinforced the liturgical use of the classic Trinitarian formulation "Father, Son, and Holy Spirit."
- * Continued the prohibition on the ordination of "self-avowed practicing homosexuals."

However, these gains for mainstream Methodists were not extended to the public policy and international affairs statements of the General Conference. By and large, that arena remains the province of the radical Left. There are indications, however, that moderates and conservatives, building on indispensable theological victories, may now begin more seriously to confront the Left on political

issues. What follows is a summary of General Conference action on international issues (for background see *Religion and Democracy*, April 1988).

Religious Liberty: Conference Raises the Ideals, but Balks at "Preaching" Specifics

A new statement on international religious liberty was approved, to replace a earlier resolution which had been prepared by the Institute on Religion and Democracy and adopted by the church in 1984. IRD supporters at the 1988 General Conference strengthened the new statement by successful amendments which (1) affirmed the explicit "rights of parents to provide religious training for their children," (2) supported the right to propagate one's faith "through evangelistic outreach," (3) offered the church's support to the UN Special Rapporteur on Religious Intolerance. An especially significant amendment charged United Methodists with "a special responsibility to work on behalf of 'unregistered,' in addition to governmentally sanctioned, religious institutions."

Another amendment met with less success. The proposed language, which would have acknowledged the importance of democratic political systems in guaranteeing religious liberty, read: "While no society is free of church/state conflict, we observe that democratic systems of government best protect religious freedom." Opponents of this amendment objected to "code words" and statements which "would play into the hands of those who have too narrow a definition of democracy."

During the UM General Conference, Soviet General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev had an historic meeting with hierarchs of the Russian Orthodox Church. Responding to

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Photo by John C. Goodwin

Delegates gathered at the 1988 General Conference of the United Methodist Church, the second largest Protestant denomination in the United States.

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this new potential opening for Soviet believers, General Conference delegate Helen Rhea Coppedge introduced an amendment to a resolution on US/USSR exchanges which: (1) extended greetings to Soviet Christians upon the celebration of the millennial anniversary of their church, (2) "noted with gladness" the General Secretary's promise of a more tolerant attitude toward religion, (3) and urged upon the Soviet government further "acts of reconciliation." These latter included eleven specific points, such as allowing the unlimited importation of Bibles, releasing remaining prisoners of conscience, ending state limitations on seminary enrollment, and ensuring special relief for Christians in Latvia, Lithuania, and the Ukraine.

This effort to test *glasnost* turned out to be a test of the United Methodists -- one which they failed. In the end, the committee which dealt with the resolution kept only the brief greetings regarding the millennium, but deleted anything which smacked of criticism of the Soviets -- even the mention of human rights abuses which Gorbachev himself is now willing to concede. Opponents to the amendment said it would "mess up a simple petition," that its detailed demands would not be helpful to "delicate negotiations," and that its tone was "imperialistic" and even "preachy" (heaven forbid that a church would adopt such a tone!). One wag suggested to me that "our task is to move the General Conference as far to the Right as Gorbachev." On this one, we failed.

Supporting "Non-Intervention" -- and Radical Isolationism

One of the most astonishing decisions of the UM General Conference was the adoption of the resolution "In Support of Self-Determination and Non-Intervention." The resolution offers a sweeping definition of intervention: "The knowing and willful intrusion by one nation into the affairs of another country with the purpose of changing its policies or its culture. It includes *any activity, military, economic, political, social, cultural; covert or overt; designed to stabilize or de-stabilize an existing government*" (emphasis added). The only exceptions (or contradictions) to this radically isolationist posture are allowed in support of United Nations actions, such as those "designed to isolate or quarantine any nation which consistently denies fundamental human rights." (Although the resolution pledges that the Methodists' "activities for self-determination" will be guided by their "Biblical faith," it is clear that the United Nations is given primacy as moral arbiter.)

An effort to allow some kinds of intervention, under strict limitations, was defeated. Thus the United Methodist Church has adopted standards which would prevent, for example, U.S. assistance to the Afghan rebels, or even bilateral economic aid to the Aquino government in the Philippines.

Having decided that the United States and other nations lack the moral authority to intervene in other nations, the Methodists then set about urging interventions around the globe.



Photo by Donna Kay Campbell

Helen Rhea Coppedge, a United Methodist laywoman from Georgia, led an effort to move the denomination toward a stronger stance on religious liberty.

A Tale of Two Resolutions, Or What a Little Organizing Can Accomplish

Efforts to amend the resolutions on Korea and the Philippines met with dramatically different results. The resolution on the Philippines was virtually unchanged. In spite of its expressed support for Corazon Aquino, the resolution calls for an end to U.S. military aid to the Philippines, an action which could only serve to undermine the fledgling democratic government. The Filipino military and "civilian death squads" are criticized, but not a word of alarm is raised about the communist New People's Army. A variety of types of U.S. involvement, both governmental and non-governmental, in the Philippines are sharply criticized. An effort was made on the final Friday night of the conference to remove some of the criticisms of the United States. A Filipino Methodist delegate even offered a defense of the U.S. military presence: "The present administration of the Aquino government is under consistent pressure and therefore the presence of the American bases in the Philippines is urgent and necessary." But no attempt to moderate the Philippines resolution succeeded.

American Methodists of Korean origin met with greater success in modifying the resolution on Korea. Members of the UM Korean caucus were incensed when they were not consulted by the UM General Board of Global Ministries on the proposed resolution on "Peace, Justice, and Reunification of Korea." The caucus established a sub-committee, under the leadership of delegate Peter Sun, to work to amend the resolution. The successful amendments include a forthright statement that in North Korea the "people's struggle for human rights and political freedom is completely repressed." The resolution acknowledges continuing elements of political repression in South Korea, but it also notes that the "political situation is much improved with the constitutional change and the direct presidential election." The resolution no longer

places a unilateral responsibility on the U.S. to "extricate" itself from South Korea, but acknowledges the roles played by China and the Soviet Union by calling for their involvement in negotiations. The revised resolution calls for a U.S. military pullout *after* a peace treaty is signed between North and South Korea.

Arab-Israeli Crisis: U.S. Asked to Stop Security Assistance to Israel

Another lengthy UM resolution focused on the current Israeli-Palestinian confrontations in the West Bank and Gaza areas. The resolution calls for the U.S. government "to stop military and security assistance to Israel until Israel ceases the repression of Palestinians in the occupied territories." Sharply critical of the Israeli "iron-fist policy," it urges Israel and the United States to enter into negotiations with the Palestine Liberation Organization. The resolution, which does call upon the PLO to recognize the state of Israel, nevertheless assumes the PLO's authority to speak as *the* legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.

Calling the resolution "very unbalanced," Rabbi James A. Rudin, Interreligious Affairs Director of the American Jewish Committee, has offered widely reported criticism of the resolution. He asked why the Methodist resolution didn't call for U.S. pressure on Jordan, Tunisia, and other Arab nations that support the PLO. The resolution "places extraordinary demands on Israel and less on the Palestinian leadership," he said. "It's a setback to the peace process," he told the IRD.

Central America: Bringing in the Kingdom by Pulling out the United States

With no debate, the UM General Conference adopted a resolution on Central America which:

- * Expressed appreciation to members of the U.S. Congress who oppose giving even food and clothing (humanitarian aid) to the Nicaraguan resistance.
- * Urged the United States to lift its economic embargo against Nicaragua.
- * Called for a halt to U.S. military assistance to the Christian Democratic government of El Salvador.
- * Continued enthusiastic support of the Sanctuary movement.
- * Asked United Methodists to endorse the Pledge of Resistance. (This involves a commitment to engage in civil disobedience should radical Pledge leaders call for protests against some new measure of U.S. involvement in Central America.)
- * Supported Witness for Peace delegations to Nicaragua (delegations which uniformly denounce contra human rights violations, but rarely, if ever, speak a word against Sandinista repression).

The resolution even gave a slap to the UM Council of Bishops. In 1985 -- when the Sandinistas abrogated civil liberties and detained and mistreated several Protestant leaders -- the bishops went so far as to express their concern about such abuses. But UM missionaries serving

with CEPAD, a Nicaraguan Protestant relief group which cooperates closely with the government, took offense and shot off a letter of protest deploring the bishops' view of the situation as "simply not true." (The missionaries parroted the Sandinista line that the arrested pastors were linked to the Institute on Religion and Democracy, and hence to the CIA, a clever argument which lacked only the benefit of being true.) Apparently the General Conference didn't want to see the bishops step out of line again. The resolution "requests the Council of Bishops to consult with the United Methodist missionaries in Nicaragua and with CEPAD ... in developing further statements regarding that country."

No criticism was made of the Sandinista government. There were no calls for it to take explicit steps toward democratization, such as releasing political prisoners, halting harassment of opposition leaders, guaranteeing freedom of expression, separating the armed forces and the schools from Sandinista ideological control, and allowing independent religious groups to operate unhindered.

Southern Africa: UMs Tacitly Support the ANC and Push for Radical Economic Sanctions

While the United Methodist Church opposes economic sanctions against Nicaragua and Panama, sanctions appear to be the major tool it formally endorses in opposing South African apartheid. The only debate regarding economic tactics was over whether UM agencies should fully divest of stocks in companies operating in South Africa or retain some stock to enable shareholder resolutions which would advocate corporate disengagement. A final amendment to the South African resolution added a loophole which would allow both strategies, neither of which concedes the possibility of multinational corporations being a positive influence in South Africa.

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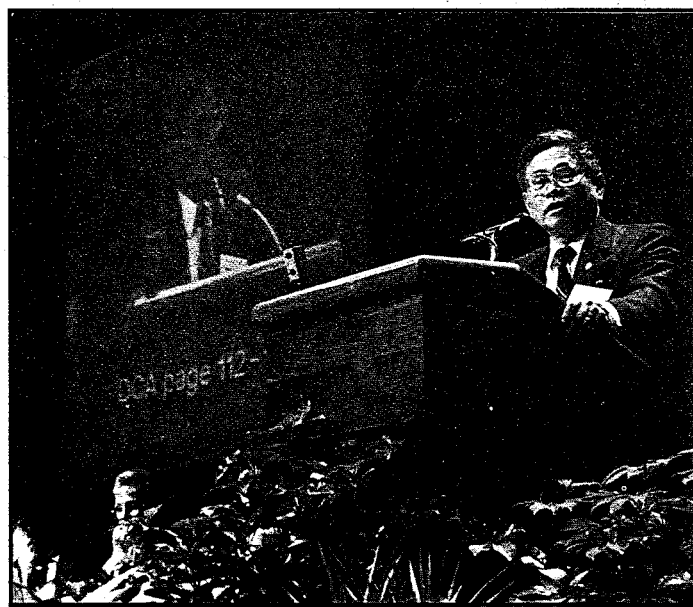


Photo by Ralph E. Baker

Above, Bishop Emerito Nacpil, of the Philippines, addresses the General Conference.

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One of the most vigorous, and highly emotional, debates at the conference was over the proposed boycott of the U.S. Shell Oil Company. The purpose of the boycott is to induce U.S. Shell's sister company, Royal Dutch/Shell, to withdraw from South Africa. In introducing the resolution, delegate James Lawson called the boycott a "Macedonian appeal from the mine workers of South Africa." Delegate Joe Agne recited a litany of horrors regarding South African involvement in Namibia,

Although the United Methodists want to avoid "preaching" to the Soviets . . . such niceties are disdained when it comes to addressing the South African government.

such as the allegation that "over one-half of the women who are pregnant in Namibia were impregnated by South Africa soldiers, soldiers who travel about in vehicles fueled by Shell Oil."

Other speakers countered with examples of Royal Dutch/Shell's opposition to apartheid, including its exemplary work in providing housing and education for black workers and their families. Delegate Ben Chamness pointed out that Shell's leaving South Africa would in fact allow the South African government to take over the oil business and "further provide opportunities for promoting apartheid."

Although the boycott was approved by a vote of 475-418, the measure was subsequently referred to the UM Judicial Council to determine whether or not the boycott was in compliance with existing church guidelines for boycotts. The Judicial Council directed the conference to suspend the boycott until the council had sufficient information to make a ruling.

The argument was made in supporting economic sanctions against South Africa that such sanctions represent a last resort, short of violence. Yet UM commitment to non-violence in southern Africa is, at best, a sometime thing. The General Conference reiterated its 1984 call for Methodists in the United States and in southern Africa to dialogue with guerrilla groups -- the African National Congress (ANC) and the Southwest Africa People's Organization (SWAPO) -- but suggested *no* other groups of South African blacks with whom dialogue might take place. The dialogue is to "focus on Apartheid as the source of violence in Southern Africa" and on "South Africa's use of 'anti-communism' as a way to divert global attention away from the racism and brutality of Apartheid." UM local churches were also encouraged to consider financial support of the World Council of Churches' "Special Fund to Combat Racism," which annually contributes approximately \$100,000 each to the ANC and SWAPO.

Although the United Methodists want to avoid "preaching" to the Soviets regarding religious repression of their ethnic minorities, such niceties are disdained when it comes to addressing the South African government.

Economics: Venting Frustrations, but Proposing No Solutions

Both the resolutions on economic justice and the global debt crisis (see *Religion and Democracy*, April 1988) were adopted, after one of the few plenary debates on a foreign policy question. Several speakers raised questions about "generalities," "falsehoods," and inaccuracies contained in the resolution. Thomas Kim, President of the United Methodist McMurry College and an economist, told his fellow delegates: "There are in this particular document such sweeping generalizations and simplistic statements" that would cause the public to look at the "United Methodist Church as having simply vented its frustrations," but "not made a real contribution to the solution."

Joe Agne then shifted the debate to what one reporter called "argument-by-anecdote." Complaining about the "philosophical" tone of the debate thus far, he related his experience of visiting Brazil and talking to people who must pick through garbage to live. He urged the passage of the resolution, without amendment, as a way of taking "into consideration the experience of our sisters and brothers around the world." Kim's plea that the *content* of the resolution be considered -- would it really help? -- was thus rejected.

A minority report on the Economic Justice resolution, presented by Joe Kilpatrick, would have replaced the lengthy resolution with an open-ended church-wide study of the issue. Kilpatrick asked that such a study address the production of wealth, not just its distribution. He further urged that the church study the relative strengths and weaknesses of existing economic systems, rather than pinning unrealistic hopes on developing "new, alternative systems of economic order." Kilpatrick argued that his proposed study, which would include a broader range of views in the church, would link "compassion" to "wisdom." His substitute minority study was nevertheless defeated in favor of the Economic Justice resolution.

* * * * *

On Saturday morning, May 7, as I packed my bags to fly home, I wearily wondered if there was any topic under the sun on which the United Methodists had not spoken. The conference had adopted resolutions on toxic waste, pay equity, the Middle East, genetic engineering, Mozambique, nuclear safety, the Central America peace process, alcohol and drug abuse, Korea, new issues in human rights Was anything missing?

At the airport, having felt cut off from the world news for almost a week, I picked up a copy of the *New York Times*. There I read a summary of the dramatic events in Poland that very week: the strikes by workers demanding recognition of the Solidarity union and the ensuing government repression. I read about the government forces smashing an altar at which mass had been celebrated for the workers. And then it hit me -- there are indeed things about which UM General Conferences don't speak after all.

-- Diane L. Knippers

Religious Liberty Alert

Human Rights Violations in Cuba

Sharon Georgianna, a sociologist at Seattle Pacific University, recently visited Cuba with a delegation studying possibilities for "normalization" of relations between Cuba and the United States. The delegation, funded in part by the Cuban government, saw selected social institutions: a prison, a hospital, the Chamber of Commerce, and schools on the Isle of Youth. Dr. Georgianna insisted on digging deeper. Here is her disturbing report:

In the evening of our first day in Cuba, we had dinner with the Rev. Raul Suarez, the President of the Ecumenical Council of Cuba. As a sociologist of religion, I was eager to talk with him about how the churches were faring. He told us that there were 54 Protestant denominations in Cuba, 1,000 Protestant churches and 1,200 Catholic churches. Mr. Suarez blamed the lack of believers on the church itself, explaining that it was not the imposition of Marxist-Leninist theory that has caused the church to suffer:

There was an exodus of Christians and pastors in 1958. Ninety percent of the Methodist pastors left, seventy percent of the Baptist pastors left, and the percentages were similar for other denominations.

Suarez did not address the question as to why so many church leaders fled Cuba after Castro came to power.

On Sunday, instead of going to the revolutionary museum or the beach, as we were encouraged to do, I found a Baptist church in town. The Baptist pastor asserted that he knew of no human rights abuses in Cuba. I responded that Castro himself had admitted to numerous human rights violations, and asked if it bothered him that he did not know of any problems in this area. He repeated that he did not. At this, I began to wonder if he had reason not to talk openly with strangers. I asked where I could find a Pentecostal church. The interpreter scribbled down an address and I boarded a bus and headed there.

Entering the Pentecostal Church, I met a 25-year-old seminarian who took me downstairs to meet the pastor. When I first asked about religious persecution, the pastor seemed to hesitate and grapple for words. Thinking they, too, were afraid to talk to me, I told them that my father and mother were Assemblies of God ministers and that I had attended an Assemblies of God college myself.

The ice was broken. The pastor led me through the church and up a narrow flight of stairs. We sat in a tiny room in the attic, and now the conversation flowed. He said that other pastors (such as the Baptist one I had just spoken with) would not feel free to talk to me because they had everything to lose and nothing to gain. This pastor told me of jailings for preaching about healings, miracles, and Christ's power (the only one allowed to have power was Castro). At times officials take down church members' names and threaten them with loss of jobs if they continue to go to church. He told us of an incident the previous month when the government planned a party

in the street in front of a church to keep people from going to special services:

They sold liquor (which is usually expensive) very cheaply, had dances in the street, and offered free food to people. Within three hours the inside of the church was desecrated with feces and urine. Liquor was poured all over the pictures in the sanctuary and banners with Scripture verses on them. Our people called the police five times, but they wouldn't come.

In another of our churches, plainclothes policemen broke in, beat the people with sticks, broke the microphones, piano, guitars, accordion, and ripped the curtains....

The pastor repeated that persecution was very real and extremely intense.

Later in the trip, I insisted on meeting with Ricardo Bofill, the noted human rights activist. Bofill told me that Cuba has no *glasnost* or *perestroika*, but "harsh old Stalinism." He said that freedom of religion did not exist in Cuba. There was no conscientious objection status available to Cubans; if believers did not join the military, they were jailed.

Statements from the Pentecostal pastor and Ricardo Bofill contrasted greatly with those of Mr. Suarez and Jose Felipe Carneado, a member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party and head of the Council for Religious Affairs. Mr. Carneado said that there was no incompatibility between religious faith and social projects. He claimed the government did indeed allow conscientious objection. This statement was totally inconsistent with what the Pentecostal pastor, Ricardo Bofill, Msgr. Carlos Manuel de Cespedes (Secretary of the Cuban Catholic Bishops Conference), and others told us. Mr. Carneado

(Cuba, continued on page 8)



The Archbishop of New York, John Cardinal O'Connor (right) is greeted by Cuban dictator Fidel Castro during a recent visit. The event marked the first time a cardinal has come to communist Cuba since Castro came to power in 1959.

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went on to blame the persecution of Christians on the "lower levels of government."

In the top leadership of the communist party there are no problems....In none of his speeches did Fidel speak against the church. Christ was the son of a carpenter. He was poor for the poor. A consistent Christian chooses to support the revolutionary process....From a strictly political point of view, you can be Marxist and Christian. The Sermon on the Mount can be signed by Karl Marx. This is our position. We can and should work together. The discussion of the existence of heaven we can put aside while we make efforts to build paradise on earth too.

Mr. Carneado portrayed all religious persecution to be the result of mere "misunderstandings" due to the church's inability to truly understand what Marxism was all about. His logic might even appear to be attractive to those enamored by the merger of Christian and Marxist ideas.

But for those who have eyes to see, a very different reality emerges. Religion has been and is severely re-

stricted in Cuba. There is clear evidence that when Marxist regimes appear to be more accommodating to the church, it is often in an attempt to co-opt the church by supporting those more radical elements willing to cooperate with the state. The result: the Christians who wish to remain neutral or even criticize the state can be dismissed as both anti-Marxist and anti-Christian.

-- Sharon Georgianna

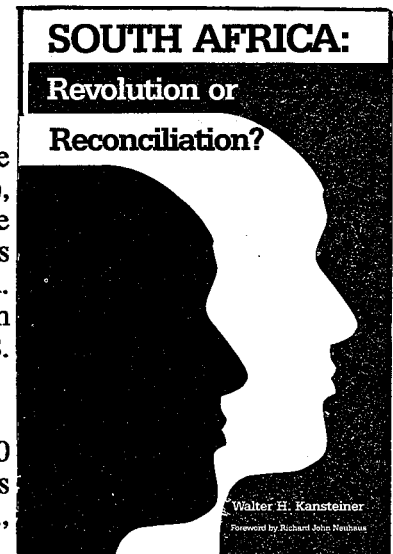
On an April trip to Cuba, John Cardinal O'Connor, Archbishop of New York, extracted from Cuban President Fidel Castro a promise to release 385 of the 429 prisoners of conscience whom Castro admitted are in Cuban prisons. Reliable sources estimate that there are at least twice as many political prisoners in Cuba, some of whom are incarcerated only for their faith. You may write and call for the release of all those unjustly imprisoned. Please write to: His Excellency, Commander in Chief, Fidel Castro Ruz, President of the Republic, Havana, Cuba.

A New Book from the Institute on Religion and Democracy ...

SOUTH AFRICA: Revolution or Reconciliation?

Is South Africa ripe for revolution? Many think so, and some even welcome the prospect. In *SOUTH AFRICA: Revolution or Reconciliation?* (see review on page 2), Walter Kansteiner takes a hard look at the question. He applies standards from the "just-war" tradition to evaluate the claims of those -- South Africans as well as Americans -- who would promote revolution as the cure for the injustices of apartheid. Concluding that South Africa does have an alternative to bloody confrontation between the Marxist Left and the reactionary Right, Kansteiner suggests ways in which U.S. institutions might foster a process of "democratic enhancement."

Copies of *SOUTH AFRICA: Revolution or Reconciliation?* are available for \$8.00 (\$6.00 for sponsors & assoc. patrons; \$7.20 for IRD members). Please make checks payable to the Institute on Religion and Democracy and mail to 729 15th Street, N.W., Suite 900, Washington, D.C. 20005 (postage included if payment accompanies order).



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