



The Rev. Edmund Robb, Jr., IRD's Board Chairman, presents the award to the Rev. Canon Michael Bourdeaux. Photo by Parker Williamson.

IRD Gives Religious Freedom Award to Michael Bourdeaux

Man who spoke for those without a voice

The Rev. Canon Michael Bourdeaux, the Anglican priest who founded Keston College, the world's most prominent resource center on religious oppression in Eastern Europe and the USSR, is the recipient of the Institute on Religion and Democracy's 1991 Religious Freedom Award.

At the October 8 luncheon awards ceremony during IRD's tenth-anniversary conference, IRD President Kent Hill described Bourdeaux as a friend and mentor who had the courage to persevere in telling the truth to the West about persecution in the Soviet Union.

Bourdeaux's remarks after receiving the award used the analogy of an exploding bomb, which, to be detonated, needs a trigger. He told the story of the many triggers that led to the

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IRD revises its manifesto,
Christianity and Democracy
-- page 8

Albania, the most isolated of all the Eastern
Bloc countries, struggles to get on its feet
-- page 2

IRD's Tenth Anniversary

The Challenges Ahead for Freedom and Democracy

Speakers at the Institute on Religion and Democracy's 10th-anniversary conference on October 8 in Washington, D.C., had no trouble listing challenges for the decade ahead in building democracies around the world. Though "it seems that everyone is for democracy," said IRD President Kent R. Hill, one problem is that inadequate understandings of democracy are widespread.

According to Hill, key elements in developing democracy include: majority rule, protecting minority rights, "inalienable" rights, and the separation of powers. He went on to assert that the future of the democratic experiment would depend on not abandoning transcendent moral values, which often are the product of religious faith. Evangelical scholar Os Guinness amplified Hill's concern by charging that America is experiencing an erosion of the philosophical underpinnings of human rights. "While bravely behind the Iron Curtain people have fought out from under the rubble, in much of the West people need to fight out from under the cotton candy of a ... culture where democratic ideals and even faith have the flavor of a Miller Lite commercial."

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Albania in Crisis

Hanging by a thread following Stalinist legacy

By McKendree R. Langley

As Albania moves from its Stalinist past, political upheavals and economic collapse have left the small Balkan nation of 3.3 million in a crisis of major proportions even by East European standards. Events in the coming months may determine whether or not bloodshed and total economic depression can be avoided in the poorest nation in Europe.

Yet there is also a great openness to the West after 46 years of Stalinist isolation. The new coalition government of Premier Ylli Buffi is seeking outside help and has introduced religious and political freedoms. This is the message of three Americans who recently returned after an extensive trip in Albania that included overseeing some relief efforts and meeting with top Albanian officials, including Foreign Minister Mohammed Kaplani.

Unemployment in Albania is between 40 and 60 percent, and the inflation rate is at 500 percent. According to Leon Lonstein, the co-chairman of the New England Albanian Relief Organization (NEARO) and a retired international businessman, "No one we met selling anything would take the worthless Albanian currency but only U.S. dollars."

Albania will need outside help to cope with its economic crisis, Lonstein said. "What the country needs most in this area is job creation and training programs in the construction industry. Even weatherproof warehouses must be build in order to keep the aid that is arriving from being spoiled by leaky roofs," he added.

Lonstein's wife, Mary, who speaks Albanian and is active in NEARO, went to an orphanage in the capital city of Tirana only to find many babies still with a great need for even simple items such as diapers and powdered milk.

"We saw no more medical supplies in health institutions. There is no medical care for the people and no prevention of infection. There is a need for American hospitals to establish ties as 'sister hospitals'

with their Albanian counterparts," Mr. Lonstein said.

NEARO has already delivered \$1.5 million worth of humanitarian aid to Albania in this year including food, powdered milk, medical supplies and clothing.

George Kerxhalli, a businessman also on the trip, filmed a video of the current crisis while in Albania. Kerxhalli said that there are three major news stories dominating the newly-freed Albanian press and broadcast media. First, the public trial in the northern city of Shkodra of eight soldiers and security agents charged with killing four civilians in anti-communist



George Kerxhalli, Mary Lonstein and Leon Lonstein, who traveled recently to Albania for the New England Albanian Relief Organization. Photo: Worcester Telegram & Gazette.

demonstrations some months ago. "This is the first public, democratic trial conducted in Albania since the introduction of the first multi-party government in June. The big question is: Who gave the orders to kill the demonstrators -- the army or the secret police?" Kerxhalli reported.

Second, the Albanian parliament is in session to prepare for the coming elections and set the nation's course by drafting a new constitution. Kerxhalli said that the democratic parties favor holding elections in December 1991, while communist President Ramiz Alia wants the voting held in May 1992.

Third, the Albanian media continues to unravel the misdeeds and deceptions of the regime of the late "little Stalin" of Albania, Enver Hoxha, who was in power from 1944 to 1985. For example, the press discovered that pictures of Albania's independence celebrations from 1912, featuring Hoxha's older relatives and designed to show his family's long-time patriotism, were retouched. Likewise the press learned that during World War II Hoxha killed other leaders he considered to be potential rivals.

During his visit, Lonstein said that the Leaders' Compound in Tirana was opened to the public for the

first time. The stark contrast between the beautiful gardens, swimming pools and 23-room condos reserved for top leaders and the slums where the people live was a source of popular frustration.

"All such revelations add to the disillusionment [with] what has happened in the past 50 years. The morale is low because all of the sacrifices made in Hoxha's name for a better world were betrayed. The young people don't believe the communists or the democrats. They just want to get out," Kerxhalli said.

The communists in Albania have kept a low profile, with some remaining loyal to Hoxha's widow, Nezhmije Hoxha. She stays in her opulent condo, fearing being murdered if she ventures outside.

"People are waiting for Mrs. Hoxha to fall. They also consider communist President Ramiz Alia to be a lame duck leader," said Kerxhalli.

Mrs. Lonstein reported that freedom for religion has opened up in Albania, with Orthodox, Roman Catholic and Muslim believers visible in public. There are no apparent Jewish gatherings, since most Jews seized the opportunity to emigrate to Israel some months ago. But some of the main Orthodox and Roman Catholic churches as well as mosques are now open in Tirana. "I saw people wearing crosses that formerly were forbidden," she said. Though Mother Teresa presently has two missions in Albania and she herself visited recently, the government will not allow missionaries into the country. "There is a great need for the teaching of conservative religious values. I put Bibles in the aid packages I sent over," Mrs. Lonstein said.

Mr. Lonstein said that he had talks with leaders such as Foreign Minister Kaplani and the head of the opposition Democratic party, Sali Berisha. He also met with ministers of health, economics, trade and labor. At the Ministry of Economics he gave a seminar to 65 staffers on techniques of starting small businesses. "The period of one-party state is over. All the government officials I met were very open to what I had to say. The most critical period is the next four to six months." He said that five or six years of foreign emergency relief and governmental stability should enable Albania to begin to make economic progress.

There are major oil, gas and mineral deposits in Albania; if extracted properly, this source of income could double the Albanian GNP within five years. Already Chevron and Occidental Petroleum have signed agreements with the Tirana government on oil drilling rights, Lonstein added.

What the Lonsteins and Kerxhalli witnessed was the reality of how the communists ripped off the people. Once Albania's former propaganda-generated image of stalwart Marxist-Leninist success was dismantled, the rubble behind it became evident. The communists still in power, because they have made compromises toward reform, do not appear ready to make a last stand like Ceaucescu's former Romania or Castro's current Cuba. Perhaps the best hope is that a path to democracy will emerge like Poland's -- however slow and tenuous this path may be. Minimizing the suffering of the people along the way remains a challenge.

McKendree Langley is a free-lance journalist.

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The conference then shifted to a discussion of Islam with U.S. Institute of Peace scholar Dr. David Little's analysis of Islam as a political religion. Despite the legacy of Mohammed's very political rule, the Quran, Little said, makes a distinction between the "inner" and the "outer" life. He said that in the Quran he discovered the surrender to Allah to be a matter between Allah and each person, and something that should not be the subject of coercion. Habib Malik, IRD Middle East Associate, noted, however, that this theme has been suppressed in practice in a "scandalous assault on religious liberty" in Islamic-dominated countries. Islamic scholars, Malik said, have not developed a consensus on how to move beyond mere notions of "tolerance," which reduces other religious groups to second-class status.

Little identified Nigeria, despite its strife over the years, as a potentially promising case for the peaceful coexistence of religious groups. Malik added, though, that "for every Nigeria there is a Sudan, and then there is Saudi Arabia, which is not moving [toward religious freedom] at all." Malik said it was time for the United States and the United Nations "to get tough" with Islamic countries on human rights problems.

In the afternoon, the focus shifted again, this time toward interconfessional conflict among Christians. George Weigel, President of the Ethics and Public Policy Center, predicted that the coming years will witness the decline of political ideologies and a reawakened understanding of key cultural questions, including the culture-forming impact of religion.

Because the ecumenical world failed to tell the truth during the politicized era prior to the fall

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IRD in Washington: 10 Years

Conference probes challenges to faith and freedom, looks ahead to IRD's next decade

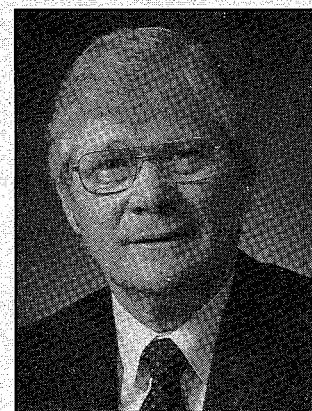


Upper Right: Evangelical scholar Os Guinness, IRD President Kent Hill and Ervin Duggan of Presbyterians for Democracy and Religious Freedom discuss what it takes to preserve democratic societies. **Lower right:** George Weigel, a Roman Catholic, shares in a discussion of interconfessional conflicts with the Very Rev. Dmitry Grigorieff, an Orthodox priest, and the Rev. Peter Kuzmic, chairman of the World Evangelical Fellowship's theological commission (pictured at left). Photos by Lonni Jackson.



Getting IRD Started: People, Concern, Ideas, Action

On October 7 in Washington, many of the people who in different ways helped establish IRD's significance over the years gathered for a celebration dinner. Four people who reminisced before that group acknowledged that in 1981 they had little in common except a sense that the Protestant mainline needed to be challenged and held accountable for what it did in foreign political affairs. These four, among others, helped get IRD started: The Rev. Edmund Robb, Jr., a United Methodist evangelist from Texas, had a history of concern regarding theological slippage in his church; David Jessup of the AFL-CIO and also a United Methodist, had done research on his church's spending patterns after reading his children's seriously unbalanced Sunday school literature; Penn Kemble, with his government experience, had the savvy to challenge irresponsible church attempts to influence the public arena, and the Rev. Richard John Neuhaus knew the mainline churches well and wrote the original IRD manifesto that affirmed a relationship between Christianity and democracy.



Ed Robb



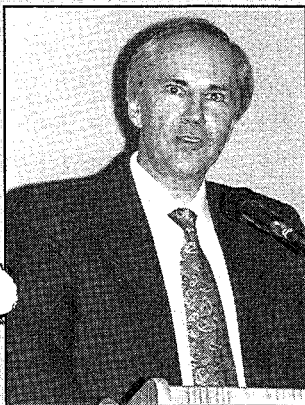
Prospects, from page 3 of totalitarianism, a new ecumenism will be necessary, Weigel said, to prevent parts of the Church from reducing the faith "to the cultic dimensions of ethnicity." The ecumenism formed in the totalitarian prison camps, where "coal was pressed down so hard that diamonds emerged," is one hopeful sign of people within different Christian traditions living together peacefully.

Above: IRD President Kent Hill addresses the conference on the links between Christianity and democracy. **Below:** The Rev. Canon Michael B urdeaux, left, receives applause upon his acceptance of IRD's 1991 Religious Freedom Award. Photos by Lonni Jackson.



Following Weigel was the Very Rev. Dmitry Grigorieff, Dean of St. Nicholas Cathedral and professor emeritus at Georgetown University, who was in Moscow during the August coup. Grigorieff said that the fall of communism would not result in a return to the pre-1917 dominance of the Orthodox over other groups. Nonetheless, recovering Russian culture necessarily will involve revived Orthodox expressions of Christianity. These expressions, he said, in and of themselves, should not be interpreted as a threat to non-Orthodox groups.

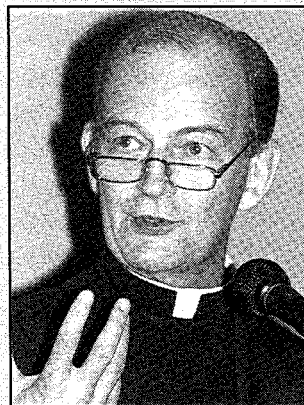
Peter Kuzmic, the Director of the Evangelical Theological Seminary in Osijek, Yugoslavia, emphasized the need for Western mission groups coming into Eastern Europe to recognize the unique circumstances of each country. He criticized seeing the region simply as "a free religious market," especially by those who, pushing their own doctrines and emphases in mission, add to tensions among faith communities.



David Jessup



Penn Kemble

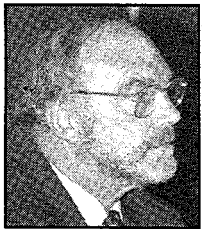


Richard John Neuhaus

Bourdeaux, from page 1

downfall of communism in the Soviet Union. Bourdeaux cited the trial of a Lithuanian Christian who defended his faith while awaiting trial; Father Gleb Yakunin, who was condemned under the law to ten years in prison camps but under *glasnost* helped to rewrite the law; and the attempted destruction of the Ukrainian Catholic Church, which he compared to "burying a time-bomb."

In the Soviet Union, Bourdeaux said, "There has never been a time when the Church was silent, though there were many occasions when the Church had difficulty making its voice heard." Much of the Church around the world refused to speak for these persecuted



The Rev. Canon
Michael Bourdeaux

"There has never a time when the Church was silent, though there were many occasions when the Church had difficulty making its voice heard."

believers, he said, as ecumenical leaders censored calls from Soviet Christians to publish information on their persecution. These leaders, who "didn't want to turn the clock back" regarding world opinion of the Soviet Union, acted as if the Soviet Christians "didn't know what they wanted."

Bourdeaux, however, was an advocate for persecuted believers through Keston College, which he founded in 1969. Now, he said, the world knows "100 percent" that totalitarianism cannot defeat religion. Aspiring totalitarians for a thousand years will not forget this lesson.

Challenges remain. "You can pull down one political system, but that doesn't mean it is adequately replaced with another," Bourdeaux said. Further, the West must not think that its job is to introduce the Christian faith and its values to Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. The faith is already there, he said. What Christians need there is technical help in spreading the faith.

Bourdeaux is the sixth recipient of IRD's prestigious Religious Freedom Award. Previous winners are: Miguel Cardinal Obando y Bravo of Nicaragua, Cuban poet Armando Valladares, Russian Orthodox poet Irina Ratushinskaya, Juan Francisco Cardinal Fresno of Chile, and pastor Nicolae Gheorgita of Romania.

Hill on Bourdeaux

The following is an excerpt from IRD President Kent Hill's introduction of the Rev. Canon Michael Bourdeaux at the presentation of IRD's 1991 Religious Freedom Award

... we now know that in the very year Michael went to Moscow as an exchange student, Nikita Khrushchev unleashed an anti-religious campaign that lasted right up until his ouster from power in 1964. Thousands of churches were closed. Ironically, at the very moment the suffering of Christians was intensifying, in the early 1960s, the Russian Orthodox and Russian Protestants were joining the World Council of Churches. Sadly, rather than providing an opportunity to defend fellow believers, the world ecumenical organization more often than not was silent, either out of fear that speaking out would hurt the Church or because it actually believed that things were not as bad as they were sometimes reported to be. The registered Soviet church leaders who travelled abroad ... faithfully parroted the official Kremlin position that all was well, or almost well, with respect to believers.

It is hard for us to imagine what it was like back then to get accurate information in the West about what was happening to Christians and other religious groups in the USSR. There were not then the several groups that would one day come into existence to monitor and report on the situation. Indeed, in the early 1960s, Michael Bourdeaux's first book on religion was rejected 12 different times before he found a publisher who was willing to consider it seriously. How many of us would have persevered in the wake of such a response?...

Michael has had at times to pay a heavy price for his commitments to religious liberty. Though he wished to enlist the support of the ecumenical world, he all too often earned instead their derision and opposition.... But the *glasnost* era has wonderfully confirmed the accuracy of what Keston faithfully described for so many years. Communist publications and figures themselves now concede that the situation for believers was much, much worse than ... had been reported by many Western church organizations.

Briefs

Disciples Report Brands Renewal Organization

Leaders often have to face conflict. So, in response to criticisms from various groups in the church, the Council of Ministers of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) developed a special report based on the authorization of the Council and the General Board in July 1990. The objective was "to give attention to a unified strategy of practical theological response to such persons and groups whose actions attempt to undermine the integrity of the church and its leadership and may result in distrust, division and separation."

Last summer, the completed report took Disciple Renewal, a reform group in the church, by surprise.

The report charges that there's a conspiracy afoot among Disciples to keep funds from flowing to the national church's Basic Mission Finance. The alleged perpetrators of the plot are being charged, essentially, with disloyalty.

The bigger issue is whether the charges made by the church's critics can be construed as constructive for the church, or whether they are only destructive. The report says that the denomination is on record as urging "ongoing dialogue and searching that we may grow in our understanding of the Lordship of Jesus Christ and in our freedom to embrace all who name Jesus Christ as Savior." This willingness to dialogue evidently cannot be extended to Disciple Renewal because it has confronted church leaders with its concerns.

If the Disciples leaders are concerned that Disciple Renewal has been in any way unfair in its criticism, they ought to talk with the group. Instead, no one from Disciple Renewal was contacted in the preparation of the report. Such a discussion may have seemed unnecessary to the report's anonymous authors, who dismissed quickly the criticisms and instead thought they could assert the illegitimacy of Disciple Renewal by falsely labeling it a front group of IRD. IRD does sponsor two groups, for Presbyterians and Episcopalians; it does so publically -- no "fronts" necessary.

The alleged conspiracy gets bigger still. The report makes a claim -- "not stated lightly" -- that the IRD is a front group for the White House. These efforts to link the IRD, and, hence, Disciple Renewal, to some sinister government conspiracy to undermine the church are on one level silly. On another they are a tragedy for Disciples who have real concerns about their church but probably cannot expect to find much of a dialogue partner in their church leadership.

Methodists Prepare for 1992 Conference

At their fall meetings, general agencies of the United Methodist Church (UM) approved legislation for consideration by the denomination's quadrennial General Conference in May 1992.

According to the UM News Service, proposed resolutions from the General Board of Church and Society will address genetic

science, the environment, racism, hunger, the U.S.-Mexico border, human rights, the United Nations, peace with justice, and United Methodism in the "new house" of Europe. The latter statement notes "with deep gratitude" the efforts of Mikhail Gorbachev and other "position developments," but cautions that "enormous challenges lie ahead" before a Europe at peace and with justice is achieved.

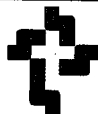
The General Board of Global Ministries adopted resolutions dealing with the WCC's Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation emphasis (see *Religion and Democracy*, July 1990, January, April and May, 1991) world hunger and poverty, and justice and peace in Central America and in the Middle East. A proposed resolution on "The Web of Apartheid: South Africa and the Destabilization of Its Neighbors" continues to call for "economic pressures" against South Africa until there is a "transfer of power from the hands of those who traditionally have supported Apartheid." A resolution about the 500th anniversary of Columbus's historic 1492 voyage, named "Toward a New Beginning Beyond 1992," calls for programs on the local and national level on behalf of oppressed peoples.

The real controversy at the mission board meeting was over how to respond to a special task force recommendation to move the board out of New York City. Estimates for the initial cost of the move vary from \$9.5 to \$15 million. The board defeated a proposal to establish its own study, apparently swayed by directors who argued that their own study would "reflect the arrogant attitude for which they are criticized."

Oldline Keeps Losing the Numbers

Good news: Figures for 1989 church membership show an overall increase of 1.5 percent in U.S. congregations from the previous year. Bad news: all major oldline denominations experienced further losses. The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), losing 1.94 percent, and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), losing 1.47 percent, did the worst, according to the *1991 Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches*, published by Abingdon Press for the National Council of Churches.

Many denominations experienced gains in total giving. For example, the United Methodist Church lost .84 percent of its members, but gained 4.8 percent in giving in 1989. But church members are giving less of their disposable income to the church. In 1968, members gave 3.05 percent of their per-capita disposable income; by 1989, the figure declined to 2.64 percent. The per-capita income giving figures were derived from the 1991 Yearbook data, according to Religious News Service.



Religion & Democracy

monthly publication of the
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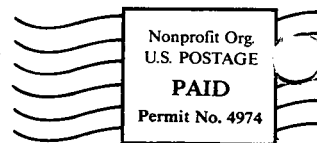
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IRD Revises Manifesto

Ten years after it was initially released, a revised form of the the Institute on Religion and Democracy's founding statement was approved by the Board of Directors. The revisions of *Christianity and Democracy* reflect the significance of recent changes that have taken place in the world.

At their semi-annual meeting October 7 in Washington, D.C., board members discussed and accepted changes authored by George Weigel, a board member and the President of the Ethics and Public Policy Center. Much of the original manifesto, written by the Rev. Richard John Neuhaus, needed no revision, according to IRD President Kent R. Hill. "The work we started a decade ago is not done -- not in the churches and not in the world at large, where potent threats to freedom remain," Hill said.

The revised manifesto mixes celebration with caution: "Thanks be to God that Marxism-Leninism ... is dramatically on the wane as a political force at the end of this century. But Marxist-Leninist states continue to exist and continue to embody the totalitarian intention.... In these circumstances, we cannot forget that we are living in the greatest century of persecution in the history of the Church."

The original and revised documents emphasize the nature of the Church's political role and the importance of democracy. The Church, it says, makes its most important political contribution by remaining obedient to its biblical mandate. In doing so the Church "witnesses to the limits of the national and ideological loyalties that divide mankind. Communal allegiance to Christ and his Kingdom is the indispensable check upon the pretensions of the modern state. Because Christ is Lord, Caesar is not Lord. By humbling all secular claims to sovereignty, the Church makes its most important political contribution by being, fully and unapologetically, the Church."

The revised manifesto suggested areas of renewed emphasis for IRD: nurturing democracy in formerly communist lands, helping authoritarian regimes make the transition to democracy in Africa, Asia and Latin America, and encouraging democracy and religious freedom in Islamic countries.