

# RELIGION & DEMOCRACY



June 1992

## Change, Turmoil Persist in Russia

*IRD President Reflects on Six Months in Moscow*

By Kent R. Hill

Russia today is a study in contrasts. The new exists alongside the old. Hope and despair compete for ascendance. Faith in the future contends with a fatalism which threatens to paralyze responsible action. New shoots of religious faith are challenged by the hard soil of atheist habits. The observer is beset by a bewildering variety of experiences, both positive and negative. Below is a brief sampling from my journal of what my family and I are witnessing here in Russia.

### **MIG Fighters and Easter in Nizhny Novgorod**

One of the most bizarre mixtures of old and new happened on April 26 -- Russian Easter. The church holiday coincided with the time when the military facility which builds MIG fighters was celebrating its 50th anniversary in Nizhny Novgorod -- the city where Andrei Sakharov was forced to spend almost seven years of exile in the 1980s.



Kent R. Hill

Startled residents of the formerly closed city of Gorky, as Nizhny was called under the communists, were treated to a MIG fly-by over the local Kremlin in honor of the military plant's birthday. But what was particularly remarkable was that the fly-by took place in the shape of a Russian Orthodox cross!

Another sign of change is the fact that Dr. John Bernbaum of the Christian College Coalition (Washington, D.C.) and his wife, Marge, in May completed a three-month stay as guest professors at Nizhny Novgorod University. John and I participated in an academic colloquium sponsored by the history department on the topic: "Education, Christianity, and Social Change." The dialogue was lively as we argued for full religious freedom with members of the history faculty, some of whom wanted to see Orthodoxy  
→ see *Russia*, page 4

- Bush
- Clinton
- Perot
- Parts of Each
- None of the Above
- Need More Information

## *What Kind of President?*

*If you had the opportunity to sit down and talk with the presidential candidates for this fall's election, what would you ask them? What would you tell them? IRD's Executive Vice President Diane Knippers and three board members, Ervin Duggan, Helen Rhea Stumbo, and Penn Kemble outlined their thoughts on such a session.*

### *Ervin Duggan*

What would I say to the candidates if I could speak directly to them? A great deal; more than I'm allowed here. But I'd start with this observation:

American finds itself today in a moment not unlike the moment of opportunity and danger after World War II. Today the ruins of war that confront us are not physical ruins, but ruined ideas: the rubble of failed tyrannies -- and so the postwar reconstruction that's urgently needed is not so much physical as  
→ see *Candidates*, page 7

Shari'a law is used to punish non-Muslim Pakistanis as well as Muslims, as legal protection for religious minorities continues to erode there.

-- Page 2

Nigerian bishop visits Washington to discuss the plight of believers in the predominantly Muslim north of Nigeria.

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## Shari'a Law Used to Punish Pakistanis

By Wendi Roewer

Some 43 years ago, Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the founder of the state of Pakistan, stood before the first constituent assembly and declared, "You are free; you are free to go to your temples, you are free to go to your mosques or to any other place of worship in this State of Pakistan.... You may belong to any religion or caste or creed -- that has nothing to do with the business of the State."

That's not much comfort to Tahir Iqbal, who was arrested in December 1990, and charged with insulting and defiling the Koran. Iqbal, a paraplegic who converted from Islam to Christianity, has been in prison since his arrest and is awaiting trial. He was denied bail when, during his hearing, Muslim clerics crowded the courtroom and threatened to kill the judge if bail was granted. If found guilty of the charges, Iqbal faces life imprisonment.

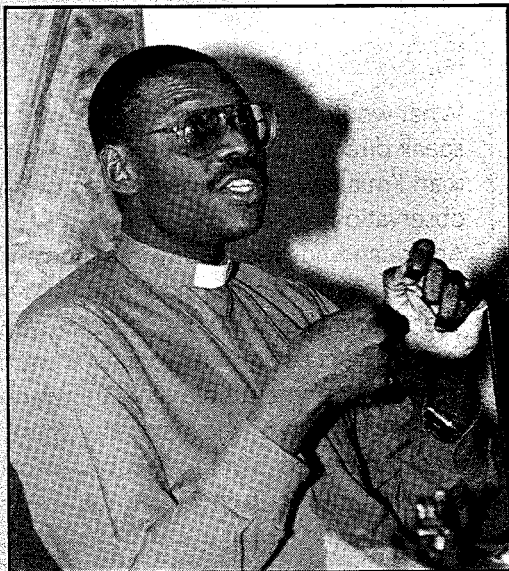
Banto Masih also found that his religion is considered to be very much the business of the State. Masih is a Christian who is accused of insulting the Prophet Muhammad. If convicted, he faces a possible death sentence.

Pakistan is a nation of about 114 million people, 97 percent of which are Muslim. Despite its founder's guarantee of religious freedom, Pakistan in recent years has evolved into an Islamic state, intolerant of Christians and other minorities. Pakistan's 1973 Constitution required that

laws be consistent with Islamic ideology. However, it also promised protection of the rights of non-Muslim minorities.

Islam's legal system, Shari'a law, is based on the teachings of the Koran and Muslim culture. Unlike the United States, where separation of church and state is constitutionally enforced, in Islamic society religion and the state are inextricably linked. While it is important to note that Islamic societies vary a great deal, minorities generally do not fare well. Christians and Jews are considered to be second-class citizens, lacking political rights. Likewise, women are granted few rights. Conversion to another religion from Islam is punishable, sometimes by death. Proselytizing, which is often very broadly defined, is also severely punished. Shari'a law, in its literal interpretation, extends into civil law and financial matters as well. For example, usury, or charging interest on loans, is inconsistent with the Koran, and therefore technically illegal.

In 1979, Pakistan's president, General Zia ul Haq, enacted the Haddood Ordinances, which enforced certain Koranic laws and harsh punishments, including stoning, whipping, and amputation. The following year, he constitutionally established the Shari'a Court to review Pakistan's laws. Those laws that were inconsistent with Islam were to be thrown out; others were to be "Islamicized." The Shari'a Court had limited jurisdiction, however. According to an



Anglican Bishop Josiah Idowu-Fearon speaking with IRD staff members in Washington, D.C. Photo by Lonni Jackson.

## Nigerian Bishop Suffers with Christian Minority

By Stan De Boe

In February, *Religion & Democracy* reported on conflicts between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria. In many places the tensions have continued to grow and erupt into violence. Hundreds of Christians and Muslims have been reported dead. In the city of Kaduna, following rioting, Christian churches have been burned and several Christian pastors have been killed.

A leader in the dialogue between Christians and Muslims in the Sokoto state is Anglican Bishop Josiah Idowu-Fearon. Elected bishop only two years ago, he has emerged as an active and respected leader in seeking solutions to the tensions between the two religious groups. In a May visit to Washington sponsored by IRD's Episcopal Committee on Religion and Freedom, Bishop Josiah shared his concerns and hopes for Nigeria.

To be a Christian in Sokoto in Northern Nigeria is unusual.

→ see Josiah, page 6

amendment that Zia ul Haq added to the constitution, family matters and the country's financial system were exempt from Koranic law until 1990.

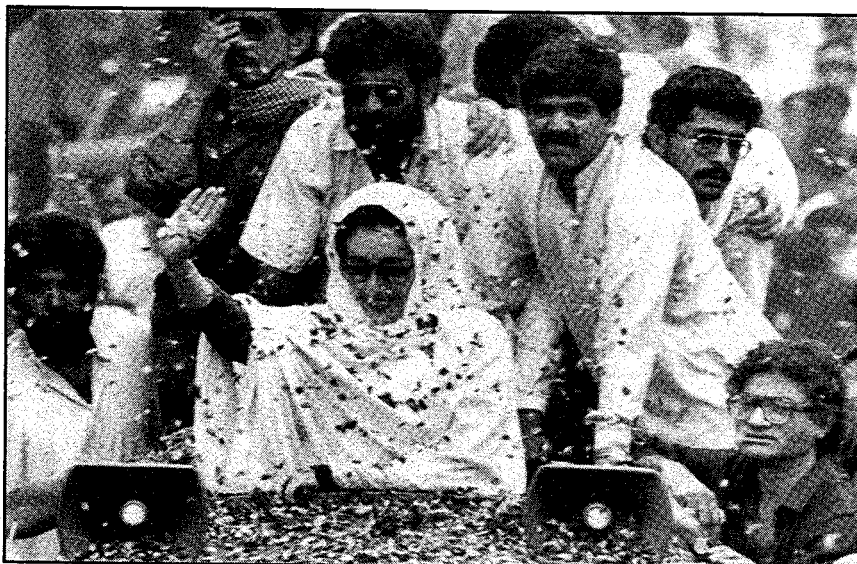
Benazir Bhutto was Pakistan's prime minister in 1990 when General Zia ul Haq's exclusionary amendment expired and the Shari'a Courts were freed to examine laws regarding fiscal and family matters. Bhutto recognized that "a battle is shaping up between the forces of fundamentalism ... and those who articulate a liberal Islam." Bhutto was forced out of office by the military in October 1990, in part because of pressure from Islamic fundamentalists.

In May, 1991, Bhutto's successor, Nawaz Sharif, with the strong encouragement of the fundamentalist Islamic Democratic Alliance, pushed the Shari'a Act through parliament, thus making Pakistan an Islamic state. The text of the Shari'a Act is quite vague and open-ended, due to the fact that Prime Minister Sharif needed to satisfy various Muslim factions. The three million Pakistani Christians, as well as other minorities, fear that such ambiguity leaves them vulnerable to the Muslim clerics and lawmakers who interpret the law. As one minority advocate cited in *Herald* magazine put it, "[T]he statute may become a convenient peg for the mullahs to hang their religious prejudices on."

In theory, the Shari'a Act does not impose Islamic law on non-Muslims. However, the reality of the situation attests otherwise. Christian leaders in Pakistan report that hundreds of Christians are being tried under Shari'a law. Civil cases involving marriage, divorce, and child custody are resolved according to Islamic law. Although Pakistan's Supreme Court remains secular, some Christians are alarmed that lower Shari'a Courts and the political clout of the fundamentalists now influence the Supreme Court. In fact, the Supreme Court has so far effectively avoided overturning decisions of lower Shari'a Courts by simply throwing the cases out rather than openly questioning the authority of Islamic law in Pakistani society.

Recent reports, including those by News Network International (NNI), indicate that Christians are now vulnerable to being victimized by their Muslim neighbors who wish to settle scores that may or may not necessarily concern religion. False charges of insulting Muhammed and defiling the Koran have landed many Christians in prison to await trial. For example, after a minor dispute in October 1991 between two shopkeepers -- a Muslim and a Christian -- the Christian was arrested and charged with insulting Muhammed. Such a charge normally carries the death penalty. Despite the fact that the man's accuser failed to appear in court and that other eyewitnesses attest to his innocence, the Christian remains in jail.

In similar cases, when Christians obviously have been



*Activists from Benazir Bhutto's political party shower her with rose petals shortly after being ousted from power in the fall of 1990. REUTERS.*

falsely accused and are released, Muslim leaders have been known to organize protests and pressure local authorities into following through by arresting and jailing the Christians. Two Christian brothers were arrested earlier this year on charges of insulting Muhammed, then released after a local authority intervened on their behalf. Pressure by Muslim leaders resulted in their being arrested again and jailed to await trial. According to the uncle of the two Christians, "The real matter at the root of it is the sequel to an old political rivalry."

The Christian community in Pakistan is viewed as a threat to Muslims. In accordance with Koranic law, Christians are prohibited from sharing their faith with Muslims. Foreign Christian missionaries are closely monitored by the authorities. Most Muslims harbor severe resentment toward what they believe to be the West's secularism, and they resist its influence in Pakistan, especially as they claim it is perpetrated through Christian missionaries. In June 1990, several Pakistani Christians who were working with an American evangelical team were detained by authorities, interrogated, and beaten. Pakistan's increasingly strict missionary visa requirements have caused many to fear that Christianity could be losing the little space it has to express itself in Pakistan.

Treated as second-class citizens and living in constant fear, Pakistani Christians are increasingly persecuted for their faith. We in the West must not forget them. Those concerned about these circumstances should write the office of the Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs at the Department of State, Washington, D.C. Requests for investigation of these problems also may be made to the Committee on Foreign Affairs in the House of Representatives, and the Committee on Foreign Relations in the U.S. Senate, or by asking your congressman to request an investigation.

### **Russia, from page 1**

returned to its earlier privileged position in the educational system.

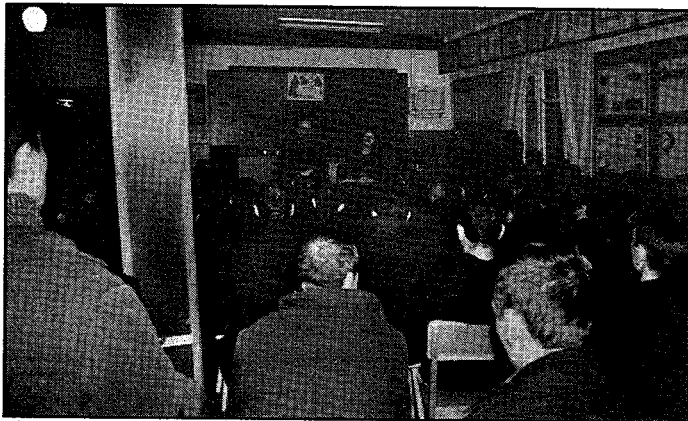
Although I was in Nizhny just a few days, it was easy to see the respect and affection with which the Bernbaums were held by their colleagues and students. No one could have predicted just a decade ago that Christian college professors would be allowed to teach courses on "The Life of Jesus" and "American Democracy and Moral Values." Other colleges in the coalition are working in a number of other Russian cities as well....

### **Political Anguish on Red Square**

May 9 is one of the few holidays which can still be celebrated with honor on Red Square. "Victory in Europe Day" marks the taking of Berlin and the capitulation of the Germans in World War II. But even this event was not without its tensions, for this year the parade of military bands included the U.S. Air Force band, as well as groups from Germany and Italy.

Though a middle-aged woman standing near me welcomed the foreign participation, a veteran was incensed. "The Americans head up the parade, and the Germans are even here. Where are the Russians? This is a disgrace!" Other Russians insisted that the Russians were there as well, but the veteran's anger was not stilled, and he walked furiously away.

Within a couple of minutes, a young man walked up to me and said, "I heard that you were lecturing about Christianity at Moscow State University. I attend a physics



*Joe Holland, left, with a translator, ministers to prisoners last November at Vorkuta, 100 miles north of the Arctic Circle. Holland has distributed more than 10,000 Bibles, New Testaments and other Christian literature within Russian prisons.*

institute, but may I attend your lecture?" I told him when and where my next lecture was. Nearby, a Russian in his late 50s launched into a diatribe against the founder of the Soviet Union. "All the peoples of the USSR were captive," he said in a loud voice, "and Vladimir Lenin was as big a criminal as Joseph Stalin." When the young man who had asked to attend my lecture sought to say something, the man exploded. "Keep quiet! What do you know? All you know

is the garbage that Komsomol youth were taught." And now another person jumped into the fray. "Calm down. You're ruining the holiday."

By this time there was a circle of about 10-15 people listening and participating in this political discussion. I couldn't help but remember that Alexander Solzhenitsyn had spent years in the Gulag for a careless comment in a letter from the front about Stalin. And now, within 50 yards of Lenin's mausoleum, his role in history was being hotly debated....

### **Christian Television and Drama**

On Easter morning, portions of a Russian version of "The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe" by C.S. Lewis were on television. There were also segments from Superbook (animated Bible stories produced by CBN), interspersed with extremely well-done adaptations for children of the Old and New Testament. There was a children's choir and a ballet segment. On May 12, at prime time in the evening, I happened once again to see an example of outstanding Christian television. A Russian woman was in a classroom of fourth-graders telling them about Jesus and the meaning of death. The photography was moving and her presentation was superb.

On another occasion I watched an excellent production by the Orthodox where a woman eloquently told the story of the Gospel and the beliefs of the Orthodox Church against the backdrop of beautiful cathedrals and splendid music. There can be no doubt that such Christian programming makes a powerful impression on a television audience.

On May 11, the Biblical Children's Theater premiered in Moscow in a Pioneer Palace. The project was first envisioned by Russian emigré Michael Morgulis of the organization Christian Bridge, and Edward Butenko was responsible for a first-rate professional performance of "Bethlehem Star." One could not help but be moved to see talented Russian teenagers in a theater which had previously been used for anti-religious dramas now perform a musical about Jesus of Nazareth....

### **Butyrky Prison**

Christians are not just involved in proclaiming the Good News, but also in responsible ministry to people in need. For example, on April 25, a delegation headed by H.T. Maclin from the independent Mission Society for United Methodists visited the biggest prison in Russia -- Butyrky. The visit was arranged by the Institute on Religion and Democracy and the Faith, Hope, and Love Foundation, directed by the Orthodox lawyer Natalya Vysotakaya, with whom IRD has worked closely in the past.

Butyrky is not just the biggest prison in Russia (4,500 inmates), but one of the oldest. Built in the late 18th century under Catherine the Great, there was an Orthodox Church in the central courtyard of the prison which the

## The Gospel of Hope

*The following is an excerpt from a sermon given by Kent Hill at the Anglo-American Church in Moscow on May 17, 1992:*

"Let us consider more precisely what the Gospel has to offer people in Moscow, Russia.

"For five and a half months I have listened to hundreds of Russians describe their feelings about the present and their fears about the future. Their message is often one of despair. Things are bad and getting worse. There is very little anybody can do about it. The future is controlled by individuals or forces over which they have no control. People feel powerless and hopeless. Any who have ever worked with the inner-city poor will recognize these sentiments, because these are the attitudes of those who have lost any hope that they can positively effect their future.

"It is in the midst of this spiritual crisis that many of us are called to minister. And the message ought not to be that Christianity will bring a quick end to all of this society's woes. We cannot deliver on that promise and we should not even hint at it.

"The legacy of 70-plus debilitating years of communism cannot be easily swept aside. An alcoholic can quit drinking, but he will still have to deal with the impact of decades of drinking on his liver....

"We have to live with the past. There are no quick fixes. No simple solutions. Democracy and a prosperous economy cannot be created overnight, or maybe not even in a generation. But those who turn to Christianity now ought to do so because it is TRUE, and not for some ulterior motive....

"And we must never forget that God's love to his children is almost always communicated by one child of God to another. God's grace and his love, his message and his hope, must be reflected in how we live and minister to others. It is a frightening and staggering truth, but God's love and his hope, his divine antidote to the despair of those around us, he has chosen to primarily deliver through human vessels."

communist authorities transformed into a hospital by knocking off the cupola. Plans are now underway to restore the church as a worship facility for prisoners of all faiths.

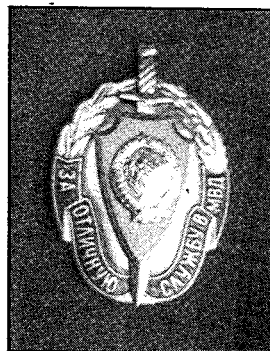
We met with the warden, Gennady Oreshkin, a wiry, small man with black hair. After discussing the specific needs of the prison, the Mission Society donated funds to help indigent prisoners supplement their rations. We then were ushered into a number of cells, including those of prisoners awaiting execution. We distributed religious literature. It was a sobering experience, but the openness of the prison authorities to cooperate with Christians was most

encouraging. Indeed, a few days later I visited the prison again -- this time with Rev. Tom Nees of Compassionate Ministries of the Church of the Nazarene and with David Hajjar of Prison Fellowship International....

### The Ministry of Internal Affairs

In the former Soviet Union, the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MVD) has an ominous ring to it. Often in charge of political repression and prisons, the MVD has been no friend to believers. And yet, on April 29, 1992, 55-year-old General E. Trofimov called Joe Holland, a United Methodist layman from Carrollton, Texas, into his office and gave him a medal and citation: "For outstanding service to the MVD."

What did Joe Holland do gain such recognition? Since



The medal presented by the Ministry of Internal Affairs to Joe Holland, a United Methodist from Texas, for his ministry among prisoners in a remote part of Russia.

May 1991 he has made five trips to the autonomous republic of Komi in the extreme north of Russia. He and two or three companions have made 20 visits to six different prisons in Ukhta, Syktyvkar, and the infamous Vorkuta. He has founded two Methodist Societies in two different prisons and has distributed more than 10,000 pieces of literature. In addition to preaching to the prisoners, he meets separately with the MVD and prison staffs in each prison. This April, Joe had the privilege of baptizing 16 of his prison converts in Ukhta.

Joe's citation sums up the MVD's view of his missionary activities:

Your preaching is aimed at reviving good human qualities in the criminals, helps them believe in God, and for love of God learn to love and respect people, understand the true meaning of life, and make atonement for their lawbreaking.

The MVD really does seem to value Joe's initiative and courage in going to this extremely remote part of the former Soviet Union. They now want him to write a regular column for their newspaper which goes to all prisoners in the Komi Republic.

Of all the unusual and remarkable occurrences in the former Soviet Union, few will likely top the way that God has used this visionary lay preacher from Texas and his organization, United Methodists in Mission to the Russian Republic. As Joe put it, this is probably the first time that the MVD has accorded such a high honor to a foreigner who was not a spy....

***Josiah, from page 2***

Of the more than 8 million people living there, less than 1 percent are Christians representing several denominations. The Anglicans number 4,500, with nine priests to serve them. Muslims firmly control the state government, which is backed by a constitutionally permitted Shari'a law.

Bishop Josiah is a descendent of American slaves who returned to Africa, yet he remains a second-class citizen because of his Christian faith. "To be Christian you have no home, no family, you are nobody." In response, the bishop is studying Islam, learning the Koran in Arabic, and fostering relationships with Muslim leaders to build mutual respect and cooperation. He said he hopes this will lead to peaceful coexistence and a free and tolerant Nigeria.

Christians must have special permission to build houses and church buildings. The bishop lives in an unfinished house (he is not permitted to complete the roof). Local officials give few permits to build new Christian churches. Of the two built in Sokoto for indigenous converts to

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*The bishop is a descendent of American slaves who returned to Africa, yet he remains a second-class citizen because of his Christian faith.*

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Christianity, the local Muslim Imir would not give permission for worship in the buildings once they were completed. Bishop Josiah sought and received permission to conduct services under the trees near the church, but the permission was later taken away. Other churches, some built during the British colonial period, have been closed and sealed. In some places, churches have been razed.

Religious education in the schools is limited to teaching Islam, from which Christian children are not exempt. Christians are not permitted to conduct classes in the schools. Some are pressured to become Muslims in order to continue their education. A young man whom Bishop Josiah is caring for applied for high school and was denied entrance because he was a Christian, but was told he would be accepted if he converted to Islam. Some Christians secretly practice their faith while openly professing Islam in order to avoid this problem. Bishop Josiah's own young children must attend school nine hours away from home so that they can receive a Christian education.

Bishop Josiah said that it saddens him that Christians have resorted to violence in reaction to their oppression. As a committed pacifist, the bishop questions those who take up arms and fight back. He said that those who participate

in the violence justify it as a way to defend themselves and gain revenge on those who oppress them. The bishop instead responds by offering his Christian love to those who are the oppressors.

Indeed, he told a group of black elementary school children here in Washington just days after the Los Angeles riots that "where might is right, there is no room for love." As long as there is conflict and violence Christians and Muslims will always see each other as enemies. According to Bishop Josiah, Christians and Muslims must seek ways of cooperating by studying each other's traditions and participating in open and respectful dialogue. He reminded the students that their greatest weapons in fighting oppression and persecution were their Christian values and their education. But more than teach and admonish, Bishop Josiah actively lives these teachings.

He does this to preserve his nation and to gain greater rights for the Christian community. "We are not seeking a special place but only to be given the basic rights that the Muslims now enjoy." The government, as it moves towards a democratically elected civilian government, needs to promote and protect the rights of all citizens. One step it made in doing this was setting up an inter-religious commission to study the roots of the conflicts and make recommendations to the government. The upcoming elections will provide an opportunity to put people into office who will work for justice and reconciliation. Bishop Josiah is asking his people to vote not with regard to religion, but for the person who takes his or her religion seriously, whether Christian or Muslim, without the fanaticism that leads to a denial of rights to others.

During his visit, the bishop briefed staff members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on the situation in Nigeria. He also gave them a report prepared for the Nigerian government by leaders of the inter-religious commission that makes recommendations for religious peace and security. Little action has been taken by the Nigerian government since the report was completed in October 1991. The bishop said he hopes that the United States will be more active in promoting human rights and religious liberty in Nigeria, and that the report would be of assistance to those making U.S. foreign policy. Tensions between Christians and Muslims in Northern Nigeria are marked by violence and death, but there are voices of reason and peace emerging from both sides. The willingness of Christian leaders like Bishop Josiah to suffer and at the same time love those who persecute them helps build up the Christian community and the nation as a whole. When asked what he would like to take back with him from the United States to Nigeria, he responded, "I would want for my people what you have -- the ability to freely worship God as we choose, to learn about Him and to speak about Him. This is real freedom. I would like to take back this freedom."

**Candidates, from page 1**

reconstruction that's urgently needed not so much physical as moral and constitutional. And surely the world's need for vision and leadership is as great today as the need that challenged the great institution builders after World War II whom we still remember with honor: Truman, Acheson, Marshall, and McCloy.

However great the material needs of the formerly communist nations may be, their moral needs are greater. We need to propagate, institutionalize and secure, in those lands, the rights that we in America enjoy -- most importantly, the rights guaranteed in our First Amendment: freedom of religious belief and expression, freedom of speech and thought, the right to petition and assemble for redress.

Why concentrate here? Because religious liberty and freedom of thought and speech are the most fundamental freedoms: the liberties that define "private life," and indeed make life worth living. Unless our response to events in the East includes a major effort to plant and nourish these liberties, no shiploads of wheat and medicine, no armies of technocrats and economists will be enough.

We need a massive exchange of people and ideas to effect a moral Marshall Plan. And, sadly, although many churches and private groups are doing what they can, our government isn't leading. The next administration needs not only to get America moving again, but to get human liberty moving again, into the lives of people who have been denied its blessings. Doing that will be good for those people, good for the world -- and good for us.

*Ervin Duggan is a Commissioner on the Federal Communications Commission.*

*Diane Knippers*

lections try one's faith in democracy. This year, I keep reminding myself that democracy is the best system, not because it's so great, but because it's

better than the alternatives.

Here's what I want to say to the presidential candidates:

1. Be honest, especially about the deficit and the tough financial choices we need to face as a nation. Tell us bluntly that we need to increase taxes or cut spending. Don't pander to our "have our cake and eat it too" fantasies.
2. Emphasize the responsibilities that undergird rights. Refugees and immigrants from around the world flock to America because of our freedoms and the relative prosperity those freedoms have brought. But many citizens have forgotten, or never learned, that a core of personal and civic virtues -- self-discipline, delayed gratification, sacrifice, tolerance, respect for others -- are necessary to sustain our system. Presidential candidates should preach it.
3. Sustain a vision for American purpose in the world. Yes, we've got serious problems at home and those need to be squarely addressed by private groups and at all levels of government. But there is one person who has the constitutional responsibility to represent our nation to the rest of the world -- the President. And that world is filled with horrors -- poverty, terror, brutality, and destruction -- which make our problems seem manageable indeed. At the same time, we are at a historic crossroads, with unprecedented opportunities to pursue justice, freedom, and peace internationally. I want a president who sees this as a high calling for America. I want a president who knows that "to whom much is given, of him will much be required," and who knows that even nations are judged.

*Diane Knippers is IRD's Executive Vice President.*

*Helen Rhea Stumbo*

While the candidates are debating issues such as health care, domestic policy, economic policy, etc., I would like to raise a concern which transcends party labels, and which

ultimately has more to do with our survival as a democracy than any of the issues which typically get attention during campaigns. Regardless of which economic, domestic, or foreign policy prevails, the critical issue in our society today is the loss of consensus around the traditional religious and moral values which were the very foundations of our country. Even more important than party platforms are the values which hold people together -- values such as honesty, fidelity, compassion for the weak and powerless, integrity, willingness to sacrifice for the common good and for the future. These are the things which ultimately determine the future of our country.

So please, Mr. Candidates, let me see in your own lives (and the lives of those who surround you) a clear and unwavering commitment to those values which are really important. Maybe then I'll have more optimism about the country my son will grow to manhood in.

And maybe then the United States truly will be a model for those in our world who are newly experimenting with democracy. If all we can give them is the verbiage of democracy, there is little hope that they will succeed in their fledgling efforts. Those democratic institutions which are our great heritage are inextricably linked to the character of those who people them. We cannot be an example for the rest of the world if we are hypocrites at home. So please, Mr. Candidates, call us to a renewed commitment to those values which made us great.

*Helen Rhea Stumbo is a business-woman in Fort Valley, Georgia.*

*Penn Kemble*

Sorry, but I cannot remember an election in which I had less interest in saying things to candidates.

This is not cute. Nor is it an expression of disdain for the men who  
→ see *Candidates, page 8*

## **Good Results Flow from May United Methodist Conference Work**

- The IRD sponsored three well-attended issue forums, which delegates called "informative," "insightful," and "the best thing I've attended at the conference."
- The IRD worked to stop some really foolish actions. For example, we helped delegates to derail resolutions calling for amnesty for Puerto Ricans who are in federal prisons for engaging in "the armed struggle," and a very unbalanced resolution on the Middle East.
- The IRD worked pro-actively, especially regarding human rights within Islamic-dominated areas. One successful amendment we helped draft calls on church agencies to "develop advocacy programs on behalf of religious freedom and minority rights, particularly regarding nations which are experiencing crisis in Christian/Muslim conflicts and in nations in which religious minorities are harassed and persecuted."

For more information on the UM General Conference, write the IRD.



### **Religion & Democracy**

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### **Candidates, from page 7**

are running: they may not be exciting, but they are really not so contemptible, either. The country is just not ready for this election, and whichever of them wins will find himself adrift. The future course of American politics is not going to be set by who comes out ahead in November, but by a much more mysterious procedure in which our culture responds to the ending of the Cold War and the challenges of reconstruction at home.

It is rare for American presidential candidates to be the kinds of figures who set our moral and cultural tone. That, for better or worse, comes from others. We are now in the situation where a community of people with common values and ideas about what needs to be done can, by pulling together, exert enormous influence. The time is ripe for some kind of social movement. That, at least, is what I want to talk about. Such a movement has to rebuild on the values that were broken down in the 1960s and its aftermath. This is not the grasping and bitterness we see in some on the right, or the irresponsibility and enviousness that has spread through the left. This has to find ways involve Americans in helping sustain the remarkable worldwide revolution for democracy.

Go ahead and sneer at such innocence. See where it gets you.

*Penn Kemble is a Senior Associate at Freedom House in Washington, D.C.*

### **IRD Resources**

## **Two New Publications Supporting Worldwide Democratic Development**

*Building a New South Africa*, an IRD Mission Reference Catalogue. Provides perspective and information on indigenous South African organizations working for economic empowerment, education, reconciliation and the construction of democratic institutions in South Africa. Free upon request.

*Policy Studies Network*. A quarterly newsletter sharing resources, ideas, and events related to democratic and economic development for practitioners, policymakers, teachers and leaders. Free upon request.