

RELIGION & DEMOCRACY



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World Council Defenders Face Critics, Facts

By Diane L. Knippers

Continued criticism of the World Council of Churches (WCC) reached a public crescendo in February when the *Reader's Digest* published "The Gospel According to Marx," an article sharply denouncing the theology and politics of the WCC. In particular, the *Digest* charged that the ecumenical council had allowed itself to be used by the Soviet KGB. WCC General Secretary Konrad Raiser jumped to the defense with a letter and a six-page rebuttal of what he called the *Digest's* "extremely distorted and one-sidedly negative view of the World Council."

The *Digest* charges regarding the KGB were similar to those made in the IRD's special report

on the WCC and the KGB (*Religion & Democracy*, December 1992), which concentrated on the infiltration of the WCC by KGB agents and the influence they had on the ecumenical body's ability to speak for the oppressed in the communist world. The IRD concluded that "the

WCC's experience with the Soviet Union offers a case study on how ecumenism's voice was often muted, and rarely, if ever, 'prophetic.'"

In addition to the KGB accusations, the *Digest* article, by Joseph Harriss, criticized examples of "animism, spiritism, and New Age beliefs" during
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The WCC
&
*Reader's
Digest*



Haitians
fleeing their
troubled
homeland.
US Coast
Guard
photo.

Opinion

Sanctions Add to Haiti's Woes

Should churches bless embargoes?

By Alan F. Wisdom

"President Clinton, keep your promises." So implored a full-page ad in the February 10 *Washington Post*. The ad asked Clinton to "intensify direct U.S. pressure to help restore the democratically-elected government of Jean-Bertrand Aristide to Haiti." It requested "tightening of the OAS [Organization of American States] embargo against Haiti," including a total cutoff of oil supplies.

Among the ad's endorsers was a fair sampling of the U.S. religious left: the Rev. Thom White Wolf Fassett, General Secretary of the United Methodist General Board of Church and Society; Sojourners; Clergy and Laity Concerned; Pax Christi-USA; and a profusion of activist Roman Catholic sisters and brothers.

It was striking that so many of these groups have a reputation for their pacifist convictions. And yet they were advocating measures that were hardly non-violent. For -- make no mistake -- an embargo can be considered an act of war. If it works, poor people on the

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worship and among speakers at the 1991 WCC General Assembly. It reported that, since 1970, the WCC's Program to Combat Racism has given grants totalling millions of dollars to radical Marxist groups.

Are the *Reader's Digest's* criticisms of the WCC valid? No one would argue that Harriss offered a comprehensive look at all the WCC does. By emphasizing one sensational revelation -- the KGB infiltration -- the article may have implied that the KGB was responsible for most of the WCC's errors. But this misimpression exaggerates the influence of the KGB -- pernicious as it may have been. Indeed, it is church leaders themselves who must shoulder responsibility for the council's downhill slide. If they endorsed positions parallel to the Soviet line, it was less because they had been hoodwinked than because they were already disposed to

Will the WCC show a new courage in dealing with religious repression in places such as China, North Korea, Vietnam, or the Islamic world?

heed the pro-Soviet arguments. The WCC has shown a persistent, corrupting tendency toward syncretism -- the so-called "enriching" of Christian faith with elements of other ideologies. A few years ago, the romance was with Marxism; now the WCC is more attracted to forms of neo-pagan feminist and environmentalist beliefs. A constant force has been the WCC's antagonism toward market economies, and, at times, even liberal democracy. For this, we cannot blame Soviet agents.

Most leaders associated with the WCC predictably have blasted *Reader's Digest*. United Methodist Bishop Melvin Talbert, a WCC Central Committee member, said the article was "a repeat of half-truths that were made in the 1980s." The Rev. Joan Brown Campbell, General Secretary of the National Council of Churches, issued a statement of support for the WCC and "its visionary goals," calling it a "unique and precious organization."

The WCC defense stated that "no evidence is provided of any specific case in which a WCC statement or action was in fact influenced by Soviet foreign policy." Here's one: Emerson Vermaat's detailed discussion of the way the 1983 WCC General Assembly caved in to Russian Orthodox demands and refused to condemn the U.S.S.R. for its invasion of Afghanistan (*The World Council of Churches and Politics*, Freedom House, 1989).

Another example, of course, was the WCC's refusal to denounce the murderous Romanian dictator Nicolae

Ceausescu in July 1989. Later, the WCC passed a resolution regretting its "mistaken judgement" in the matter. Except for this one modest admission of error, the WCC seems bent on defending its record of speaking out for Eastern European dissidents. A detailed history of WCC actions portrays a sorry scenario of minimal and half-hearted responses when public pressure forced the WCC's hand (documented in Kent Hill's *The Soviet Union on the Brink*, Multnomah, 1991, and elsewhere).

The WCC now even claims to have spoken out on behalf of an imprisoned Rev. Gleb Yakunin. After a vigorous public campaign was conducted in Britain challenging the WCC to speak, the WCC released a weak letter which fell far short of defending Yakunin or calling for his immediate release. The letter warned that the "'non-religious' basis" of the trials may not be "easily understood, either within or without the Soviet Union" and that the sentences appeared "disproportionate" to the alleged crimes. That the WCC leadership now has the gall to drag out this tepid letter in its defense only further illustrates the extent to which it has lost its "prophetic" nerve and moral bearing.

Much of the *Reader's Digest* piece concerned WCC involvements outside of Russia and Eastern Europe. The WCC continues to defend grants to radically leftist groups made by the the Program to Combat Racism (PCR) as "given only to organizations whose purpose does not conflict with the general purposes of the WCC." Campbell of the NCC said she was disturbed by "the contempt that the article shows for people of color and for indigenous people." She conveniently ignores the fact that the *Digest* criticizes PCR grants because of the ideology of the recipient groups, not because of race. She ignores the fact that the *Digest* criticized worship and speakers at the 1991 General Assembly, not because of race or ethnic group, but because of faulty theology. The racism charge -- a smear -- is a convenient device to stifle debate about these serious issues.

Is the WCC a hopeless case? In June 1992, then-General Secretary Emilio Castro and Archbishop Aram Keshishian, Moderator of the Central Committee, wrote a letter to the WCC member churches reflecting on the end of the Cold War. At points the letter engages in a tired old moral equivalence between the Soviet bloc and the West -- and clearly exaggerates the WCC's role in supporting believers under communism. But the letter ends with a call for open dialogue. And it raises the right questions: "How closely dare churches identify themselves with the state? When does loyalty to nation become disloyalty to God? To what extent is the WCC, in its policies regarding specific situations, bound by the position of the member churches in that country?"

To these, we might add: Has the WCC learned from its errors and, if so, what? How will the WCC relate to
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Above Ground

Ongoing Struggles in the Ukrainian Church

By Stan De Boe

Not only is Ukraine now free from Soviet central authority, but several of its churches have found freedom after years of existing illegally, underground. The result, as I found on my recent trip to meet with church leaders, is nothing short of a major institutional overhaul of much of the Ukrainian Church. As Ukraine begins to define itself as a nation, so too the churches are beginning to define their roles within the nation.

Of the three largest Christian communities in Ukraine, the Ukrainian Greek Catholics (Eastern Rite, not Roman, but still under Vatican authority) dominate the western areas, the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox dominate the eastern areas. They often were allies against the Russian Orthodox, whose privileged place in the old Soviet Union corresponded with government suppression of these two groups. The Russian Orthodox continue to claim large numbers of followers throughout Ukraine. All

are seeking to capture the soul of the Ukrainian people. A rise in nationalism gives certain advantages to the Ukrainian Catholics and Orthodox, who, to a greater degree than most Protestants and Roman Catholics in Ukraine, tie their church identity to the national identity. But fear of an uncertain future for the independent Ukraine apparently keeps many in the Russian Orthodox Church.

The divisions and disagreements among the three largest groups only add to the problems of the renewal of Christian life in Ukraine. But when I asked Ukrainians what were the greatest needs facing their Christian communities, there seemed to be wide consensus: return of church properties to rightful owners (and depending on who's speaking, the rightful owners may be different), education of the young and training for lay educators and clergy, printing books and journals, restoration of churches, and assistance in setting up social ministries.

One of my first meetings was with Metropolitan Filaret of the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church (UAOC), about whom I had just written in a *Religion & Democracy* article concerning his ties with the KGB. After arriving in Ukraine, I offered to bow out so as not to jeopardize the appointment for the others with whom I was traveling. Our hosts assured me that there would be no problem, however, because Filaret was not unaccustomed to controversy; moreover, they thought my knowledge of the situation in Ukraine might be beneficial to the meeting. "You've been interested in me," Filaret said to me knowingly but obliquely upon my introduction, when it was mentioned that I was

with the Institute on Religion and Democracy.

Only a few years ago Filaret was an important figure in the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC). Now he claims that the Russian Orthodox are fueling rumors of a revival of the USSR in order to instill fear in the people who might leave the ROC for the UAOC. He said that the ROC, which expelled him last June, is attempting to shift the focus from the real issues to those of his personal integrity. Filaret also claims that the ROC is using violence to intimidate the Ukrainian Orthodox (this could not be verified independently). The Russian Orthodox have countered with their own accusations against the Ukrainian Orthodox.

Filaret, Ukrainian by birth, now claims always to have awaited the day that an independent Ukraine would exist,

and within it, an independent Ukrainian Orthodox Church. Just as the Russians claim that to be Russian is to be Russian Orthodox, Filaret claims that to be Ukrainian is to be Ukrainian Orthodox. Currently, he says that there are now two Orthodox communities flowering and at war in Ukraine, but that there will



St. George's Cathedral (Catholic) in Lviv

one day be only one -- the Ukrainian Orthodox.

Though not at "war" with the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church as he was with the ROC, Filaret pointed out that there are serious problems between the two churches. Chief among them are the properties, mostly in western Ukraine, which both communities claim as rightfully theirs.

According to Myroslav Cardinal Lubachivsky, the Ukrainian Catholic Church is working for greater ecumenical dialogue toward establishing a Christian community that is free from the repression imposed on it by the ROC. He resisted tying the religious identity of his church to the national identity. Despite his church's disputes with the UAOC, Lubachivsky supports its efforts for recognition by Western and Orthodox churches. What Catholics ask, he said, is that the UAOC prove it is interested in "the salvation of souls" and not simply being a national institution.

A sign of inter-church relations came recently during the remodeling of the crypt of the now-Catholic Cathedral of St. George in Lviv to receive the body of Cardinal Josyf Slipyj. The Ukrainian Catholics offered to return to the Orthodox the body of an Orthodox bishop who had been buried there. The Russian Orthodox and the Ukrainian Orthodox refused, both claiming that he was not a bishop of their churches. His body remains in the crypt, unclaimed, a symbol in one way of the continuing division. Yet while resting in the arms of another church the bishop to me is also a promise that one day these Christian churches will see beyond their differences to reconciliation.

July 1
1997

Hong Kong Church Prepares for Chinese Rule

By Deborah A. Brown

Intertia is a major peril to the future well-being of Hong Kong's religious community. Facing China's sovereignty over Hong Kong in 1997 (see page 5), many religious leaders believe that a low profile is in the best interests of religious institutions and the community they serve. So it is not unusual for them to urge patience with Beijing and to seek noncontroversial routes toward peaceful convergence with the mainland.

Typifying this position, Anglican Bishop Peter K.K. Kwong has argued that China's elderly leaders must be allowed to move China toward maturity at their own pace; neither internal demonstrations nor external forces should attempt to speed the process. An overlaying consideration for mainline churches as they face the transition is their administration of hundreds of Hong Kong's schools and social service programs, most of which are to remain heavily government-funded after 1997.

Yet, following the 1989 massacre at Tiananmen Square, disappearances of prisoners of conscience, ongoing harassment of religious believers, continued tolerance of torture, and summary executions in China, have further demonstrated the vast chasm between the Chinese Communist Party's disrespect for the individual and the deferential message preached from the Hong Kong pulpit.

Anglican Bishop J.G.H. Baker argued in the Diocese of Hong Kong and Macao in the 1960s and 70s that the Church morally could not afford simply to reflect the established policies and attitudes of the government. He concluded that the Church was obligated to exercise its freedom -- to persuade, rebuke, or exhort the government on behalf of the people when necessary.

A minority of Christian leaders, who include the Rev. Jonathan Chao, Director of the evangelical Chinese Church Research Center; Church of Christ in China minister Kwok Nai-wang, head of the Hong Kong Christian Institute; the Rev. Carver Yu of Hong Kong Baptist College; Fung Chi-wood, Anglican priest and legislator; Rose Wu of the

Church of Christ in China; and the Rev. Louis Ha of the Catholic Diocese of Hong Kong, follow Baker's example, daring to criticize both Britain and China in their determinations on the fate of Hong Kong. To the anger of Beijing, they openly advocate a fully democratic government in the territory, which will care for the livelihood of its citizens and safeguard their basic rights.

Fung, a guest speaker at the January Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Newark, said of the miniconstitution that will come into effect on July 1, 1997,

"The Basic Law does not guarantee fair and democratic elections for future legislatures, and it does not require future executives to be accountable to the legislature. No wonder Hong Kong people have held a series of demonstrations, mass rallies, signature campaigns, and hunger strikes, asking for more democracy." The public analysis and commentary by outspoken clergy on developments in the territory is regarded by their low-profile counterparts as dangerously confrontational and imprudent.

How *should* the Church respond to the pending takeover? The answer emerges from an understanding of China's policy on religion and an examination of its approach toward constitutionalism.

China's Track Record

The Chinese Communist Party issued *The Basic Viewpoint and Policy on the Religious Question During Our Country's Socialist Period* in 1982. While this official policy calls for

a pragmatic united front with believers so that China's modernization can be achieved, it simultaneously insists on the continued promulgation of the atheist Marxist viewpoint, which is to be used to criticize theism and educate the masses. The Party's goal of building a socialist civilization, in

which religion does not exist, stands in stark contrast to the mutual respect and cooperation between church and state that is rooted in British tradition.

China's restrictive policies and practices regarding religion relax and tighten with shifts in political forces. Yet there are leaders in Hong Kong and China who urge the territory's churches not to worry because, in their case, freedoms and rights will be maintained. As assurance, they

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Religious
Liberty
Alert



St. Mary's Church (Anglican), Causeway Bay

Slow Boat to China

On July 1, 1997, Hong Kong will become a Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China. The transfer of sovereignty from Britain to China, without the consent of the territory's people, is contrary to the trend sweeping much of the world, including parts of Asia, toward self-determination and democracy. It is particularly ironic, therefore, that capitalistic Hong Kong, the international financial crossroads of the Pacific Rim, soon will be placed under China's authoritarian rule.

Britain's 99-year lease from China of Hong Kong's New Territories will expire on June 30, 1997. The lease expiration became problematic for the British in the late 1970s. China's vagueness concerning its future relationship to Hong Kong, China's view that the 19th-century treaties granting British sovereignty were invalid, and the inability of the British Hong Kong government to grant New Territories land leases beyond June 30, 1997, were seen as factors that would create a crisis in confidence and deterrent to future investments.

Hong Kong's business community believed that China might permit continued British administration because of its link to Hong Kong's prosperity. Although Britain never implemented democracy in the territory, it ruled the colony with benevolence and through laissez-faire policies toward business. These policies allowed the area to grow from a virtual barren rock in the early 1800s to a leading international financial and manufacturing center by the 1980s. It was argued, therefore, that even if China disallowed continued British governance, it nonetheless would be unlikely to "kill the goose that laid the golden egg." By April 1982, China's leader, Deng Xiaoping, had outlined a plan for Hong Kong people to govern Hong Kong, absent British authority. Further unveiling China's intent, a draft of a new national constitution was promulgated. It said that the state, henceforth, could establish Special Administrative Regions that would stand as exceptions to Chinese national law because of their unique conditions.

By July 1983, because China threatened to make a unilateral decision about taking over Hong Kong unless a settlement soon was reached, the British agreed to explore how the territory would be governed without the British presence. The outcome was a Sino-British Joint Declaration that was initialed by both parties in September 1984, China's ultimate deadline.

Opinion polls clearly indicated that the Hong Kong people's preference was to remain under British administration. No referendum on the agreement was offered to citizens, though they were invited to submit

their views to the Hong Kong government. Beforehand, however, the government cautioned that the only alternative to the Joint Declaration was Chinese control without any agreement. As a result, the government concluded that despite widespread anxieties, "most of the people of Hong Kong found the draft agreement acceptable." The people, obviously, were not given any real choice.

The British and Chinese attempted to assuage fears through the specific terms of the Joint Declaration. The current freedoms, rights, lifestyle, and significant policies and practices of the British-run territory ostensibly are to continue until 2047. However, the Chinese government remains vehemently opposed to efforts either to dilute central administrative authority or make it more accountable to the people. Upon the signing of the Joint Declaration, China quickly appointed a committee to draft a miniconstitution for the territory. The resulting Basic Law, replete with loopholes and ambiguities, jeopardizes not only Hong Kong's future autonomy but also the concept of Hong Kong people governing Hong Kong. The Chief Executive will be appointed by Beijing, and the number of directly-elected members of the legislature will be insufficient to resist or overcome a united front among appointed and indirectly elected members and the Chief Executive. China's interpretation of the Basic Law, article 82, concerning the Court of Final Appeal, points to control of the judiciary by Beijing as well. The Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, China's parliament, has the exclusive right to interpret the Basic Law.

Beijing was clearly miffed in October 1992, when the territory's new British-appointed Governor, Christopher Patten, proposed reforms for greater democracy before 1997. The plan would let Hong Kong's people directly and indirectly elect the majority of their Legislative Council. China, which says the proposals violate the Basic Law, is determined to make Patten back down. It does not want Hong Kong to establish a democratic system to which mainland Chinese might aspire. The attacks by China against Patten and his proposals have unnerved and further divided Hong Kong. Some conservative business leaders and others who prefer the authoritarian status quo, argue that territorial stability must be maintained by placating Beijing. Pro-democracy activists, though, see a closing window of opportunity to implement systems of government accountability and to safeguard people's rights before China assumes control in 1997.

— Deborah A. Brown

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point to the transfer agreement, the Sino-British Joint Declaration, which mentions that the rights and freedoms of religious belief will be protected by law -- and then to the Basic Law as the definitive source of that protection.

But as James V. Feinerman at the Woodrow Wilson Center points out, China does not approach constitutionalism from deeply rooted cultural conceptions of justice and legality. In China, the rights a constitution proclaims are not regarded as inalienable, but instead are granted by state authority and remain subject to it. Thus, the exercise of religious freedom rests on the fluctuating will of China's paramount leader and the Chinese Communist Party.

The people of Hong Kong expect the Basic Law, which will go into effect July 1, 1997, to be a permanent document that enshrines freedom of religion and other rights and principles by which the people will live and be governed. However, China does not view constitutions as inviolable, lasting documents. Between 1949 and 1982, the Communists adopted the Common Program, then four subsequent constitutions. Since the 14th Party Congress in October 1992, there has been discussion of changing the constitution again to reflect the new direction of national economic policy. The inconsequentiality of China's constitutions is best illustrated by the state's egregious transgressions against the 17-principle miniconstitution, promulgated in 1951 in Beijing for Tibet. Not only does this miniconstitution grant Tibetans the right to exercise national regional autonomy, but also it confers on them freedom of religious belief. But China's persecution of Tibetan Buddhists is notorious. An estimated 1.2 million Tibetans have been killed in the central government's ongoing attempt to subjugate the region.

Hong Kong's Basic Law

Although the integration of Hong Kong into China is to be governed by the principle of "one country, two systems," it is yet to be determined how conflicts between regional freedoms and rights will be handled in regard to patriotic duties and matters of national unity and security. There is no assurance in Hong Kong's Basic Law that abuse of power can be checked by public opinion freely expressed. Although freedom of religion and speech are granted, article 23 of the Basic Law requires the government of Hong Kong to enact laws that "prohibit any act of treason, secession, sedition, [or] subversion against the Central People's Government...." International human rights groups continually confront China's practice of denouncing persons as subversives and counterrevolutionaries who criticize the government or refuse to let their consciences be dictated by the state. The subversive label already has been applied to Martin C.M. Lee, the prominent Hong Kong legislator, Roman Catholic, and leading prodemocracy activist, and his legislative colleague Szeto Wah.

The Basic Law explicitly prohibits restrictions on religious freedom or interference with religious organizations or activities. This sounds highly permissive, but it comes with very important qualifying phrases: such as "in accordance with law" or "which do not contravene the laws of the Region." These virtually negate the stated protections for religious freedom. It is uncertain what the nature of laws in Hong Kong, China, will be. If the Beijing-appointed Chief Executive cannot agree with the Legislative Council on legislation, he may dissolve the Council. More ominously, at its discretion, the Standing Committee of China's National People's Congress will be able to declare a state of emergency in Hong Kong and order application of China's national laws to the region.

Like many countries restricting religious freedom, China considers foreign infiltration into its churches a threat to national unity and security. Hong Kong's Basic Law on this matter contains a gross contradiction. On one hand, it says that religious organizations "may maintain and develop relations with their counterparts in foreign countries and regions and with relevant international organizations." On the other hand, the Basic Law stipulates that the Hong Kong government must "enact laws ... to prohibit foreign political organizations or bodies from conducting political activities in the Region, and to prohibit political organizations or bodies of the Region from establishing ties with foreign political organizations or bodies." Since foreign missionaries, religious groups, and the Vatican historically have been regarded as imperialistic political forces, it is reasonable to be apprehensive about these legal provisions.

Anglican Bishop Kwong, who helped draft the Basic Law, maintains that since the Basic Law has been adopted by the National People's Congress, its provisions will be upheld *in toto*. He argues that unless one places faith in Beijing's intent to respect the Basic Law, there can be no basis for ongoing dialogue and, therefore, little hope to develop mutual understanding. But others argue that this passive attitude is suppressing critical debate within the religious community and urging unwarranted faith in the central government and its Basic Law. They argue that it diverts the Church from its responsibility to speak out for the people who cannot speak out for themselves.

A battle now is being waged for expanded democracy in Hong Kong. What is at stake are not only security for the freedoms and rights of the people -- but also assurance that the government will have reverence for the human person. History teaches that institutional silence on such issues belies the hope for justice.

Dr. Deborah A. Brown is the author of a forthcoming book on the Anglican Church in Hong Kong from Mellan University Press. Her research will be highlighted in the next issue of IRD's Anglican Opinion, which also will include information for advocacy on behalf of Christians in Hong Kong.

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margins of the economy will lose their jobs, they will not be able to pay rising food prices, and they will starve.

That is what is happening in Haiti today. Bishop Gerald Bates of the Free Methodist Church of North America relays the message from churchpeople in Haiti: "They report widespread hunger and malnutrition. They say there are more older children going completely naked.... Their impressions are that the embargo is principally harming the peasants and the poor while the rich and the politicians find ways to circumvent its effects."

Why do so many leaders of the religious left want to "intensify" this



Haitian refugees move into temporary housing at the U.S. naval base at Guantanamo Bay. Win McNamee / REUTER photo.

suffering? Ostensibly, they have a good cause. President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, elected with 67 percent of the vote in December 1990, was ousted by a military coup in September 1991. Friends of democracy in this hemisphere wish to show that such military usurpations will not go unpunished. And an embargo seems like a low-cost, low-risk way to take a stand against the Haitian generals.

But after 1-1/2 years have passed without any clear movement toward restoring Aristide, the human costs of the embargo are escalating. Haiti's poor are becoming desperate. Concerned Christians must begin to ask whether we can justify continuing
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Briefs

Pontiff Confronts Sudan over Religious Persecution

General Omar Bashir, ruler of Sudan's Islamic government, said that Pope John Paul II would find on his February 10 visit a "multireligious, multiracial and multicultural society" that has devised the means by which "all can enjoy life and live in harmony, fraternity, and tranquility."

Critics of the Pope's stop in war-torn Sudan feared that the result could have been a public relations coup for Bashir, who has been isolated by much of the international community because of human rights abuses (see the February issue of *Religion & Democracy*). But the Pope knew fully the problems facing Christians, especially regarding the imposition of the Islamic *Shari'a* law on non-Muslims, and he spoke boldly about them. With Bashir listening, the Pope asked for religious freedom and access to humanitarian assistance: "The immense suffering of millions of innocent victims impels me to voice my solidarity with the weak and the defenseless who cry out to God for help, for justice, for respect of their God-given dignity as human beings, for their basic human rights, for the freedom to believe and practice their faith without fear or discrimination."

The Pope directly addressed the *jihad*, or holy war, declared by the government in order to drum up public support for the battle with insurgents from the Christian and animist southern part of Sudan. "The only struggle which religious motives can justify ... is against every kind of selfishness, against attempts to oppress others, against every type of hatred and violence," said John Paul II. According to *The Washington Post*, the Pope also urged Bashir to find a "constitutional formula" that would end the civil war while respecting "the specific characteristics of each community."

The Sudanese government has promised to rewrite its restrictive legislation that affects religion and to draft a separate penal code for non-Muslims, according to the *Post* report. The report also said that the government had been expected, as a goodwill gesture, to release the Rev. David Tombe, who has been jailed without charge. The government did not.

IRD to Publish Book on Freedom, Morality

This summer, IRD and Progress Publishers in Moscow will publish jointly, *Religion and Democracy: On the Road to Freedom*, edited by Sergei Filatov and former IRD President Kent Hill. This essay collection examines the Christian moral basis for democracy and freedom, and offers basic resources for building democratic society and government in Russia. The book also examines the possibility of religious tolerance in the aftermath of totalitarianism. Selections will be available in English from IRD.

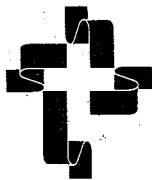
The book includes two essays by Hill, one on Orthodoxy, the other on democracy and human rights. Most of the essays are written by Russians, including Orthodox, Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish perspectives on religious pluralism. The Russian editor, Filatov, works at the Russian Academy of Sciences, and has published widely on the role of religion in social and political life in the West and in Russia.

As Russia continues its transition to democratic ways, the editors expect this book to be widely read by specialists and officials, and that it will contribute significantly toward establishment of openness in the face of pressures to return to authoritarianism. The Parliament is currently considering new constitutional articles on religious practice, some drafts of which are inadequate. The possibility of restrictions on free exercise by all groups, as well as continued preferential treatment for Orthodoxy, still remains.

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churches and believers in unfree areas in the future? An important test already exists. The WCC recently welcomed as a new member the China Christian Council, which is sanctioned (and almost certainly infiltrated) by the communist government in Beijing. Will these official Chinese delegates be able to veto WCC actions on behalf of human rights in their homeland, as did the KGB-infiltrated Russian Orthodox in earlier years? Or will the WCC show a new courage in dealing with religious repression in places like China, North Korea, Vietnam, or the Islamic world?

In 1990, the WCC Central Committee admitted "mistaken judgment" in its response to Romania, but decisively defeated a proposed statement in which committee members would "confess our shortcomings to our Romanian sisters and brothers, repent of our failure to speak out forthrightly, and seek their forgiveness for our omission." Perhaps confession and repentance might be a very good place for the WCC to begin.

**Religion & Democracy**

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harsh sanctions of this sort.

Leaders of the religious left, such as those who signed the *Washington Post* ad, have not been consistent on the matter of embargoes. On the one hand, they have pushed for severe economic sanctions against right-wing governments in Haiti and South Africa. Yet on the other hand, many of the same leaders have vociferously objected to U.S. embargoes levied against Sandinista-controlled Nicaragua in the 1980s, and against Castro's Cuba until today. It seems that the main factor determining their position on sanctions is the ideology of the government that is targeted.

But we must judge all sanctions with a strict and single standard. Because an embargo is a form of low-intensity warfare, we ought to ask the same tough questions that Christian theologians have formulated to evaluate "just wars." How serious is the act of aggression or crime against humanity that concerns us? Do we have proper authority to intervene in the situation? Is an embargo really our last resort (short of full-scale war)? Are our objectives just and proportionate? Will an embargo achieve them? And will it discriminate between the guilty government and the innocent civilians?

Most embargoes fail several of these "just war" tests. Almost without exception, they fail to discriminate adequately. In fact, comprehensive economic sanctions usually strike hardest at the poor, who have the least influence on their government's policies. And if the Haitian government, for example, is truly monstrous, then it does not care for the poor anyway.

Not only is an embargo rarely a "smart" weapon, it is also rarely an effective weapon. When our objective is to force a change in government, we may be expecting too much from such limited means. Merely economic pressures are not likely to induce the Haitian military to commit political suicide.

If we desire to take a moral stand against an offending government, then we might make a gesture by cutting off supplies of weapons or luxury goods or official government-to-government aid. This gesture would at least show some discrimination, even if it did not change the situation. Or if we are indeed determined to remove a government like Haiti's, and if we are prepared to use violence, then we should send in the Marines. Otherwise, it may be wiser to do nothing than to do so much harm to so many innocent people to no effect.