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Neglecting the Ties that Bind

UM Women's Division Prefers Politics

By Diane L. Knippers

"The vitality of democracy is dependent on conditions which democracy itself cannot create," German President Richard von Weizsaecker told graduating students at Johns Hopkins University this spring. He warned that democratic societies must pay more attention to ethics and values.

One might expect a respected political figure to emphasize the importance of elections, separation of powers, or constitutionally protected civil liberties when talking about democracy. And these are important. But there is a revival of concern about non-political factors necessary to build and sustain democracy. Much of this concern focuses on mediating institutions of "civil society" and on the need for a renewed "public morality."

Foremost among the mediating institutions in society is the family. Writing in the April 1993 issue of *The Atlantic*, Barbara Dafoe Whitehead recalled Alexis de Tocqueville's observations about the importance of the family to the larger democratic society:

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The UN Human Rights Commission -- Putting Pressure on Governments to Reform

A major way human rights problems are brought to the attention of the international community is through the annual meeting of the United Nations Human Rights Commission. Nina Shea, President of the Puebla Institute, a lay Catholic human rights organization in Washington, briefed IRD staff members and church representatives last month on her experience as one of President Bill Clinton's appointees to the U.S. delegation at the 1993 Commission's March meetings in Geneva. The following are some of her thoughts on the meetings and the work of the Commission.

How did your experience as a delegate to the UN Human Rights Commission compare with your expectations?

I have participated in the sessions of the UN Human Rights Commission, representing NGOs (non-governmental organizations) many times over the past 12 years, so I already knew what to expect in terms of its limitations and constraints. Observers are often disappointed by the Commission's impotence in terms of practical impact in the real world. The Commission's work has up to now been mostly limited to exposing human rights violations and censuring governments that deny human rights. This is done by government delegations from all regions of the world drafting, debating, and voting on a series of resolutions. As a delegate of the U.S. government for the first time this year, I was able to have a more direct impact on this process. Two observations: First, I came to appreciate the

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East Timor Strife a Sign of Intolerance in Indonesia

By Lonni K. Jackson

In the 18 years since Indonesia invaded and annexed the former Portuguese colony of East Timor, the people of this small island territory are believed to have suffered some of the worst human rights abuses of this century. By some accounts, as many as 200,000 people have been killed as the Indonesian government has forcefully sought to make East Timor its 27th province. A small guerrilla group of East Timorese nationalists has fought the Indonesian military for independence, but with limited success. The group, known as Fretilin, was effectively wiped out in February, when its leader was captured and sentenced to a life term in prison.

Immediately after his unopposed re-election in March, Indonesian President Suharto announced that General Try, the recently retired military commander, would be his Vice President. General Try is popular with the military particularly because of his aggressive public defense of the military after the November 1991 incident in East Timor in which troops gunned down pro-independence demonstrators at a funeral. An official government enquiry found that some of the soldiers and officers were at fault, but none were

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severely disciplined. It is believed that as many as 100 civilians died in the incident.

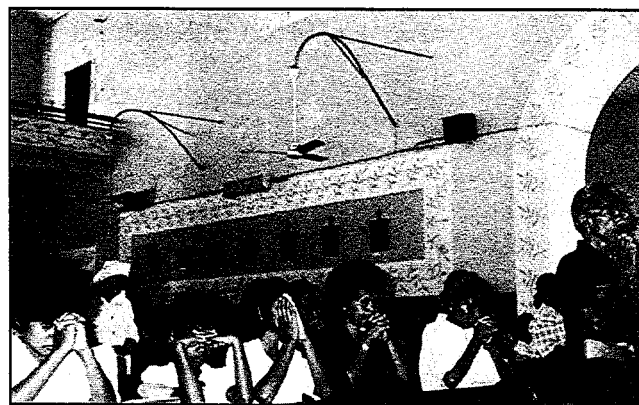
Located just 400 miles north of Australia, East Timor is a predominantly Christian stronghold of 700,000 people. It was ruled by Portugal for nearly three centuries, and during this time Dominican friars brought Christianity to the island. Indonesia, by contrast, is a country of more than 180 million people, the largest predominantly Muslim (85-90 percent) country in the world.

The Christian/Muslim aspect of the struggle in East Timor is a sign of a larger problem in Indonesia. As Islamic fundamentalism asserts itself in other predominantly Muslim countries, reports coming from Indonesia indicate that religious freedom may now be under attack there too. While Indonesia officially claims to respect religious freedom, it is becoming increasingly evident that the Indonesian government is more tolerant of Muslim fundamentalists and less tolerant of Christians.

Suharto has actively courted radical Muslims in recent years in an effort to shore up his political support. Muslim activists have taken on a more visible role in Indonesian politics with appointed and elected officials being placed in key positions. For example, the Golkar Party wants change in Indonesian law to give weight to Islamic law. This does

not bode well for Christians in East Timor, and elsewhere in Indonesia.

Numerous alarming incidents have shown that the Indonesian government lacks a strong commitment to religious freedom. For example, in November 1992 an evangelist was charged with fomenting civil unrest and insulting the prophet Muhammad because he distributed tracts that extoll the virtues of Christianity over Islam. When a pastor in East Java published an account of the evangelist's case, Muslim leaders accused the pastor of



Dill, East Timor -- East Timorese pray at a church last November, the anniversary of an Indonesian army massacre of up to 100 people in the former Portuguese colony. Moses Manoharan/REUTER.

campaigning against Islam. Shortly thereafter, a crowd of several thousand well-organized Muslims tore down and burned the pastor's church, and destroyed several other churches. Videotapes of Serbian atrocities against Muslims in Bosnia and forged tracts (purported to be Christian-produced) have fueled wild rumors in Indonesia of Christian conspiracies against Muslims, according to the *National and International Religion Report*. At least 30 attacks by Muslims on churches or Christian property were reported in the last three months of 1992.

In another incident in December, the Indonesian government intervened in a leadership struggle of the 1.6 million member Batak Protestant Christian Congregation (HKBP) in North Sumatra, which is the largest Lutheran body in the developing world. In settling the dispute, the government ousted the Presiding Bishop Soritua Nababan — an outspoken critic of the government — and installed an interim leader, S.M. Siahaan. Siahaan, a theology professor, has been convicted of embezzling university funds, and is also accused of embezzling funds from the HKBP's Education Fund. His appointment sparked a wave of protests, which led to the arbitrary detention of dozens of church members. By mid-January, as many as 60 persons were still held without trial. Furthermore, a gag order was placed on the media, and Christian houses were searched without warrants. HKBP church leaders told *The Lutheran* that this incident should not be viewed as a crackdown on
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South Africans Face Abyss

Cassidy analyzes effect of Chris Hani's assassination

- *Though tensions continue to run at an all-time high, the April assassination of key African National Congress (ANC) leader Chris Hani has proven to be a decisive moment in South Africa's transition from apartheid, according to Michael Cassidy, an Anglican evangelist and President of Africa Enterprise (AE). Cassidy offered analysis of South Africa's struggle to form a viable democracy during a May visit with the IRD in Washington.*

Many white South Africans remain plagued by fear, bitterness, and ignorance-based stereotypes of blacks, Cassidy said. There also is a kind of "future shock" -- "the massive anxiety generated when the future comes at you faster than you can imagine it." ANC leaders, formerly branded as the devil-incarnate by whites, appear on television nightly "telling us what to do, and it's more than many can actually handle in such a brief span of transitional time." Further, Cassidy said, some whites still cling to the old apartheid conviction that two major ethnic groups cannot share political power.

At the same time, a spirit of ungovernability is loose in the land in a way it has not been before. Some of this is the fruit of the ANC's campaign to make South Africa ungovernable in order to bring change. But now, "many ungovernable and uncontrollable people are in the ANC ranks and in the ranks of the unemployed and unemployable youths," Cassidy said. Continued poor economic performance likely will be made worse by the ANC's call, following Hani's assassination, for "rolling mass action," which includes strikes. "Some of the ANC leadership obviously feel that they've got to create a channel for these emotions to contain them," said Cassidy. "For all I know, they're right. It's an historical imponderable."

According to Cassidy, there has been a regrouping of South Africans politically. There are "reversalists," white and black, who essentially want to "go back and bring something that was there in the past." There are also "revolutionaries" -- blacks reared in the culture of violence, many of whom didn't align with the ANC and stand to gain little from negotiated power-sharing arrangements. Whites in this group include those who want to reassert apartheid or isolate themselves in their own enclave safe from future black rule. Fortunately, Cassidy said, the largest group -- some 80 percent of South Africa -- is "reformist."

The reformist majority, black and white, has recognized a new urgency to settle differences in working toward a new South Africa. Cassidy said: "On the one hand, we looked into the abyss in terms of what could happen if we really lost it and went into full-blown Bosnian-type racial civil war. On the other hand, all South Africans, white South Africans especially, looked at the new South Africa as they looked at the [Hani] funeral. Mandela was spoken of as



Michael Cassidy, President of Africa Enterprise, briefs IRD staff on the situation on South Africa on May 17 in Washington. Photo by Lonni Jackson.

'President Mandela.' ...We saw the black elite community and we saw an orderly funeral. We also saw dignity. We saw graciousness. We heard some pretty rough rhetoric in there too, but basically you saw black people, whom whites would say would not be able to organize anything, organizing something extremely well. I think however distasteful that piece of medicine might have been for many whites, if you looked into the abyss and then you looked at that, you'd say the new South Africa was preferable."

The week of Hani's death, de facto power changed hands in South Africa, according to Cassidy. "All over the country, whites were sort of stepping back and saying, 'Okay, your hour has come. Ours is ending. How can we make the best of the future?'"

Such moments, Cassidy added, are filled with opportunity for the Gospel to convert and reconcile. For more information on AE's work in South Africa to preach Christ, heal broken relations, and encourage democratic development, as well as information on other organizations working for constructive change, write Lonni Jackson at the IRD, 1331 H Street, NW, #900, Washington, DC 20005.

Reversal at UN on Universal Rights?

One disturbing development at the March UN Human Rights Commission meeting was the indication that some countries -- including China, Burma, North Korea, Indonesia, and several other Islamic countries -- want to formally qualify the meaning of human rights. What they argue, and what will be discussed at a UN-sponsored conference in Vienna this month, is that countries

must be allowed to "contextualize" the meaning of rights according to their own cultures. According to Nina Shea of The Puebla Institute, this seriously undermines the international consensus built since 1948 based on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. "These countries use the same old language of 'interference in internal affairs,' and 'the sovereign right of nations' to do whatever they want" to their own citizens. A *Washington Post* editorial on May 18 called any hint of reversal on the

protection of individual rights a "scandal."

Another negative development, according to Shea, was the decision to create a 15-member working group on the "right to development." Such discussions usually result in calls for North-South economic redistribution, which the U.S. and Western allies have long resisted. The working group, unprecedented in size and cost, will be one more burden for a financially strapped UN, according to Shea.

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standing the U.S. has in the eyes of the world as the sole superpower and international leader. The U.S. was freer to raise issues and initiate studies, since the Soviet Union was no longer around to block our every move. Second, there was great weight placed on the U.S. positions. Governments censured by the Commission -- China, Sudan, Cuba, for example -- took it very seriously, and some tried to stave off criticism by making last minute concessions.

For example, both China and Sudan released political and religious prisoners in highly publicized announcements during the Commission's session.

How does religious freedom fit into the range of the rights with which the Commission is concerned?

Religious freedom is one of the main agenda items of the Commission. A Special Rapporteur, that is, someone who reports on violations of religious intolerance as defined in a UN declaration on the issue, makes a presentation at each of the Commission's annual sessions. Therefore, the opportunity to examine countries' practices exists.

Unfortunately, aside from the U.S. and two or three European countries, there seems to be little interest in the subject on the part of the Commission members. I think the fault for this lies with the NGOs. NGO lobbying is essential for getting governments to speak out. Amnesty International, in its ceaseless lobbying on the torture issue, offers a model of how this can be done. It is important that more religious liberty advocates go to the Commission, learn its procedures, and come

armed with the facts on religious persecution.

What are your expectations for the new Special Rapporteur that would distinguish him from the retiring Rapporteur?

The first Rapporteur, an elderly jurist from Portugal who served in this post since the mid-1980s, resigned due to poor health that prevented him from conducting fact-finding missions. The newly appointed Rapporteur is a Tunisian university professor, Abdel Fattah. Two well-qualified experts on religious intolerance issues -- one from Ireland

and the other from Italy -- were rejected for the post because it was said that too many rapporteurships were being filled by white European men. I am concerned that a Muslim might risk his life if he is critical of some of the fundamentalist Islamic regimes that deny religious freedom, such as Iran. A lot will depend also on the information he receives from NGOs. It is important that churches and other groups send evidence on religious persecution to the new Rapporteur.

What bearing do you think the Commission has on how governments treat their citizens? Are there new mechanisms for monitoring rights being developed?

It is hard to judge what the relationship is between the Commission's work and a government's human rights performance. Usually no direct or immediate link is discernable. But like all human rights work, where there are few quick fixes, I believe that the Commission contributes to the cumulative effort of exposing gross human rights violations, and thus bringing pressure for eventual reform.



Nina Shea

"It is important that more groups go to the Commission, learn its procedures, and come armed with facts on religious persecution."

The U.S. and other democracies have been developing mechanisms to strengthen human rights observance through the Commission over the past year. For example, for the first time the Commission was called into emergency session in 1992 (by the U.S.) to appoint a Special Rapporteur to monitor human rights atrocities in Bosnia. Prior to this, the Commission kept on a rigid schedule of meeting only once annually for a six-week period. It could conceivably have taken almost a year for the Commission to consider a human rights incident, if it occurred soon after the Commission adjourned. Other improvements adopted at the 1993 Commission were a decision requesting special rapporteurs on particular country situations (new ones were appointed to monitor Cambodia and Somalia) to share information with thematic rapporteurs (such as the one appointed on opinion and expression); a decision dispatching human rights monitors to observe and by their presence create a deterrence to human rights abuses in Iraq, Cambodia, and the former Yugoslavia; and an emphasis on strengthening the capability of the UN Human Rights Center (the administrative entity for the Commission) to provide advisory services to countries that request help in stopping torture, reforming the judiciary, and the like.

What parts of the world, and what countries specifically, received the most attention at the recent Geneva meeting?

Aside from Israel and South Africa, which always receive the most attention at UN human rights forums (this session adopted no less than seven resolutions denouncing Israel over the Occupied Territories), other countries targeted in Commission resolutions this year were Sudan, Iran, Iraq, the former Yugoslavia, Cuba, Haiti, Guatemala, Burma, Indonesia, Cambodia, Somalia, Equatorial Guinea, Togo, and Zaire. Though a China resolution was ultimately defeated, China received stiff criticism in speeches by the U.S. delegation. For the most part, the targeted governments undertook a diplomatic offensive during the negotiation and drafting processes, and reacted quite angrily in their replies after the resolutions were adopted. Sudan, for example, sent its justice minister to meet with the U.S. delegation (the U.S. authored the resolution concerning Sudan) and make a special appeal to the Commission promising reforms. This makes me believe that the governments take Commission criticisms seriously.

Some U.S. church leaders have criticized the U.S. for arguing that civil and political rights are prior to economic and social rights. What do you think of this debate?

I am hearing the argument that economic, social, and cultural rights should take precedence over civil and political rights by some of the world's greatest abusers of human rights -- Iran, China, Cuba, Indonesia, in particular. This is a way to deflect attention from themselves. Every government can and should immediately implement civil

and political rights, regardless of their level of development or culture. Civil and political rights are those that can be honored simply by a government refraining from certain actions. They are on the order of "Thou shalt not...." Thou shalt not torture, summarily execute, suppress religious and press freedoms, etc. Economic rights are more difficult to achieve, and are affected by matters over which governments have far less control. The standards for evaluating them are less concrete and harder to define, especially since by the treaty's own stipulation they are to be achieved "progressively." For these reasons, I think it is unfair for some U.S. church leaders to criticize the U.S. for placing more emphasis on the more defined and immediately obtainable civil and political rights.

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Christian churches by an Islamic state. Nevertheless, Asia Watch, an international human rights organization, noted that the government's decision to appoint a leader against the church's wishes "was in violation of the internationally recognized right to freedom of religion and association." Furthermore, "the arrest of peaceful protestors was a violation of their right to freedom of expression." The Lutheran World Federation called the ouster "a violation of the integrity of the church and the internationally accepted guarantees of freedom of religion."

The human rights violations perpetrated by the Indonesian government are beginning to attract the scrutiny of the international community. At the March 1993 meeting of the United Nations Human Rights Commission in Geneva (see page 1), a resolution was adopted which expresses "deep concern at the reports of continuing human rights violations in East Timor." The resolution calls on the government to allow human rights organizations unhindered access to East Timor. Until now, the Indonesian government has carefully screened all outsiders who sought access to the island. Recently, it has allowed a few human rights observers access, but only under careful supervision.

Furthermore, the Congressional Human Rights Caucus of the U.S. House of Representatives raised a number of religious freedom issues in a letter to the Indonesian Ambassador to the U.S., dated February 17, 1993. The letter detailed concern over the incidents described above, as well as concern over restrictions on religious activity by Catholics in East Timor.

The focus of international attention on human rights abuses is an embarrassment to the Indonesian government. At a time when the Indonesian government is striving to project itself as an emerging economic powerhouse in Asia, continued scrutiny by international observers and concerned Christians around the world may be the best way for human rights and religious freedom to be protected in Indonesia.

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An individualistic society depends on a communitarian institution like the family for its continued existence. The family cannot be constituted like the liberal state, nor can it be governed entirely by that state's principles. Yet the family serves as the seedbed for the virtues required by a liberal state. The family is responsible for teaching lessons of independence, self-restraint, responsibility, and right conduct, which are essential to a free, democratic society. If the family fails in these tasks, then the entire experiment in democratic self-rule is jeopardized.

Whitehead's massive *Atlantic* essay, provocatively titled "Dan Quayle was Right," conclusively cites evidence from the social sciences to show that "the dissolution of intact two-parent families is harmful to large numbers of children." She demonstrates that children from single-parent homes are more likely to be poor, suffer emotional and behavioral problems, drop out of school, abuse drugs, become pregnant in their teens, get in trouble with the law, and be physically or sexually abused. Even more is at stake than the mounting personal tragedies. The disintegrative trend in American family life, "does not strengthen the social fabric but, rather, dramatically weakens and undermines society," Whitehead argues.

Other observers agree that American democracy faces debilitation from within. "Over the last three decades we have experienced substantial social regression," claims William Bennett in his March 1993 release of *The Index of Leading Cultural Indicators*. Some examples: "there has been a 560 percent increase in violent crime; more than a 400 percent increase in illegitimate births; a quadrupling in divorce rates; a tripling of the percentage of children living in single-parent homes...."

Whitehead suggests that there is danger in an excessive emphasis on personal rights, without a concomitant concern for social responsibility. She notes, "Increasingly, political principles of individual rights and choice shape our understanding of family commitment and solidarity. Family relationships are viewed not as permanent or binding but as voluntary and easily terminable."

One might reasonably expect all of the U.S. churches to lead the way in strengthening the family ties that are so essential. Alas, the church response is sometimes disappointing. The problem is illustrated by the United Methodist Church's Women's Division, which considers its major ministry focus to be women, children, and youth. The clout of the Division, long a bellwether of the religious Left, may be measured by its financial strength (1992 income of close to \$38 million) and membership (over a million members in some 26,000 local churches across the country). The United Methodist Church has been and continues to be a major influence on the moral and social

RENEW: A Women's Division Alternative



Faye Short, left, director of RENEW, an evangelical coalition of United Methodist women, and Beverly Richardson examine a missions map at a RENEW-sponsored conference in April. RENEW was founded in 1989 to empower, educate, and equip United Methodist women who felt unsupported by and unrepresented in Women's Division programs and policies. RENEW's goal is to be a network of women representing an evangelical perspective. RENEW offers program resources addressing current issues, as well as reviews of Women's Division resources and activities. For further information, contact: Faye Short, Route 2, Box 490, 587 Raford Wilson Road, Commerce, GA 30529; phone: (706) 367-2212.

philosophy of First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton.

In March the UM Women's Division adopted a new policy statement entitled "Ministries with Women and Ministries with Children and Youth: A Gift for the Whole Church." This sweeping policy initiative, which replaces a 1976 statement and which will undergird United Methodist mission programs at home and abroad into the next century, is both revealing and disturbing.

The 19-page policy statement identifies the problems facing women and children almost exclusively as political and economic. These include: "economic crisis, war and political exclusion" and "the combined barriers of racism, sexism, and class divisions." The Division makes these concerns its "priority because the larger church and the society are reluctant to take the lead."

While the policy document celebrates "tremendous gains made by women in recent decades," it claims that "global economic crisis and political and ideological 'backlash' against women mean that the quality of life" for many women has deteriorated. The "free market" is the chief villain: "The global trend in the eighties was toward 'free

market' policies that are based 'profoundly on the exploitation of women's time, energy, health and sexuality.'¹ Later, the statement continues: "This is today's reality: an economics whose cornerstone is that the young are expendable. Their future is expendable. Profit lies in their expendability. This is an economics that we can only consider to be heretical."²

The document leans on discredited conspiratorial theories when it identifies "low-intensity conflict, where the United States and allied nations support 'small' wars against movements for independence and justice..." as the "warfare of expendable youth."

Women and children (and even men) around the globe do face deprivation, and death, and despair. It is right for the church to challenge evil, to seek *effective* solutions to problems, and to offer assistance. But broadsides against "the market economy" or U.S.-inspired "low intensity conflict" are hardly helpful. Anyone who grasps the historic global transformations of the last several years understands this: the free market is the economic system under which civil and political liberty is sustained. It is the system which in fact offers more opportunity to empower the poor. Furthermore, a cursory glance at the newspaper will reveal that the wars that are killing women and children today are in Sudan, Angola, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Cambodia, and Nagorno-Karabakh. Rather than fueling these conflicts, the United States is among the nations working for peace.

The solutions that the Division identifies for problems facing women and children are also predominantly political and economic. Over the last ten years the Division has promoted the Equal Rights Amendment, developed a Women in Politics program, and supported a variety of public policy initiatives. "We have brought a gender analysis to tough economic issues such as the global debt crisis and trade," the paper boasts. Indeed, the concerns of women and children are defined so expansively as to include almost any economic or political issue.

The Division's vision for the future is to "transform the role of women in society" and "bridge gaps among women," including, among others: "church women and the women's movement in society," "lesbian women and heterosexual women," and "the struggle of women and other freedom struggles." The vision is also to "bridge the gap between women and men" by "challenging patriarchy." The full liberation of women will mean the liberation of men as well: "As long as the church is still in captivity to male values, structures, and practices it will be unable to be the locus of genuine community."

The policy statement is replete with feminist diatribes against the patriarchy. It promises programs to "raise the consciousness of women," to deal with "the dynamics of women's oppression" and "women's exclusion within a patriarchal system," to "resist the backlash against women's

advancement," and "to move beyond tokenism to a real sharing of power."

In short, this document teaches that the way to help women and children is to empower women economically and politically -- to give them "autonomy." The document identifies all sorts of problems facing children, from the destruction of the ozone layer to HIV/AIDS, but nowhere does the document deal with the growing crisis of the family itself. *Astonishingly, the document does not mention fathers at all.* What about the notion that children, in Asia or Africa or America, are best served when mutually interdependent and committed men and women -- mothers and fathers -- are present in their lives? Perhaps that sounds old-fashioned and small potatoes to those committed to "confronting a global economic and political system."

The problem isn't just that the Women's Division's political and economic analysis is selective and flawed. Its statement is, in essence, a profoundly secular document. Nowhere does it suggest that the first gap that must be bridged is that between human beings and their Creator. Evil is structural, never personal, never requiring a personal remedy. Sin, repentance, forgiveness, and reconciliation with God are absent. Indeed, God seems largely absent.

The policy statement does identify "spiritual and theological formation" as a type of ministry offered by the Division. This is virtually the only hint that the problems which face women and children today may encompass more than politics and economics to include moral and spiritual matters. But the "spiritual and theological formation" the Division promises children and youth lacks the vigor and substance of biblical faith. It would place spiritual needs in the context of the global crises youth face; provide guidance in sorting out the simplistic and exclusive nature of some fundamentalist youth movements; affirm cultural identity and self-worth; and give youth strength, faith and wholeness for confronting the challenges of the future.

The Division commits itself to finding "new forms of expressing women's spirituality," but the older, proven forms -- repentance, holiness, sacrifice, faithfulness, love -- are absent. Empowerment and liberation are noble ministries. But care must be taken to avoid the vicious snares of anger, envy, greed, and impotent and perpetual victimization. The Women's Division has lost a vision of the liberation which comes when women are invited to follow the One who "did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped."

* * * *

Religious faith is the primary source of the virtues and values necessary to sustain democratic governance. This is not to reduce religion to a merely utilitarian role. Faith serves this social role precisely because it appeals to a
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Women's Division, from page 7 transcendent moral authority beyond society. A society is in trouble when major religious institutions abandon their uniquely religious role to duplicate what any number of secular and political institutions do -- and do better.

The good news is that there are other churches and religious groups working here and abroad to nurture responsible citizens.

The bad news is: that isn't enough.

It isn't enough to watch the once influential denominations such as the United Methodist Church quietly dwindle and decline into pockets of irresponsible, and at times irrelevant and ineffectual, social advocacy. These churches must regain their moral authority, not simply for their own members' sake, but for the nation and the world.

Notes:

1. Quoted section from Pamela Sparr, "How We Got Into This Mess and Ways To Get Out," *Ms. Magazine*, May 1992.
2. This quote first appeared in "The No-Future Generation?" Peter Brock, *The Ecumenical Review*, April 1992, World Council of Churches.



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IRD Projects in the Works

The purpose of the Institute on Religion and Democracy is to support and encourage democracy, and especially religious liberty, particularly by critiquing and strengthening the social witness of the Church in the United States and around the world. Here is a brief report on projects underway this summer:

- *Religion and Democracy: On the Road to Freedom*, a book being jointly published by IRD and the Moscow-based Progress Publishers will be available in the Russian edition in July. Some two dozen scholars and religious leaders have contributed essays to the volume in five broad categories: Religion and Society Today, Orthodoxy in the Twentieth Century, Russian Orthodox Church Today, Ethnic Problems in the Orthodox Church, and Non-Orthodox Christian Confessions in Russia.
- Lawrence Adams is writing a book, *Green Religion or Stewardship?*, an investigation of religious environmentalism which is replacing liberation theology as the paradigm for liberal Christian social action. He warns against elements of the movement which would replace revelation and orthodoxy with syncretism and even idolatry and calls for a renewal of biblical principles of stewardship.
- Fredrick Jones is coordinating research and writing on the IRD's first "Religious Liberty Annual," a handbook surveying religious liberty trends around the world and offering suggestions for advocacy.
- IRD's denominational work continues as our Presbyterian and Episcopal groups support efforts to restructure their denominations in ways that will give greater voice to laity and to local churches and will lead to a more balanced and responsible social witness.
- A special fall issue of *Religion & Democracy* will explore the role of mass communication and popular culture in spreading and/or undermining democracy at home and abroad.
- This fall, the IRD's new handbook on the Washington offices of U.S. churches (evangelical, oldline, and Catholic) will be available. Written by Roy Beck, the handbook looks at each office's history, staff, financial strength, issue priorities, lines of accountability, and how strategies and priorities are changing in response to the Clinton administration.