
FAITH & FREEDOM

learning to live & out in public the freedom to believe

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interview

Moving in from the Margins: Religion in Public Life

with Stephen L. Carter

Stephen Carter is professor of law at Yale University, an Episcopalian, and the author of *The Culture of Disbelief: How American Law and Politics Trivialize Religious Devotion* (Basic Books, 1993). Carter and IRD President Diane Knippers recently participated in a debate on religion in public life. Later, we asked him for more of his thoughts.

What has happened to religion in public life?

I think there are three forces at work. The most important is an enormous cultural pressure on religious people to be quiet about their beliefs as though somehow they are going to threaten religious pluralism or the separation of church and state. The second is the Supreme Court's lack of interest in religious freedom. The court simply has stopped working to protect religious freedom, at least for people who are not members of popular religions. These two points are linked. Each represents a judgment that religion is unimportant. If religion doesn't matter, we don't need to discuss it in public and we don't need a strong guardian of religious freedom. The third problem is political preaching. This happens across the political spectrum. A lot of people assume that, whatever their political positions, God is on their side. This is not an effort to discern the will of God. This is an effort to make God the servant of a political cause. It makes religion lose its prophetic power.

What is being done about these problems?

One of the keys to lessening the pressure will be not what the media or politicians do, but what religious people do. Too many people censor themselves. They say, "OK, I don't want to be looked at as a loony. I want to be accepted. So I will not talk about my faith." There is some recent evidence that the Court's attitude is changing. Also, Congress has tried recently to alter some aspects of what the court is doing. Regarding political preaching, I don't see any evidence of change.

What reactions have you received to your book?

What leaps out from letters I've received is a sense of gratitude. People have felt so much pressure to be less than their full selves. They've felt pressure to pretend not to be religious or that their religion doesn't influence them when they make moral and

political choices. Some who wrote said that they're going to stop being secretive about their faith. I think that's marvelous. Politically speaking, I have had some very complimentary things said about me by people from left to right. I've also had some very hard and peculiar shots. Some on the right have questioned whether I am a good Christian because I have some political beliefs they don't share. Some on the left suggested my book is a blueprint for a right-wing take-over or asked why I wasn't more condemnatory to people on the right. What's sad is that there are too many people whose idea of dialogue is to say, "If you don't happen to agree with me you're not genuinely religious."

What can churches do to help this situation?

As Peter Berger said, the first thing the church can do is to preach the word of God. I'm not being flip. Churches in America, particularly Protestant ones, have fallen in the trap of figuring out what the congregation wants to hear and then saying it. What is really important is giving people the sense that they are part of a special community of believers who are struggling together to do God's work on earth. Also, churches should not be afraid to speak up on the issues they care about -- and to encourage their members to do the same, no matter how much flack they get. Christians must bear witness in the world, and not be afraid because somebody is going to call you a name or say, "Oh well, you were just trying to impose religious views on everybody else." Too often in the 1990s we forget the 1960s. The civil rights movement was led by religious people and in particular a charismatic religious leader, Martin Luther King, who publicly proclaimed the gospel.

How should churches decide what's important?

The members of a congregation have to reason together and decide what to do. I don't think clergy should commit their congregations to activities the people aren't comfortable with, though it may be the clergy's job to bring their congregations to a certain comfort level. The most important task of the church is not getting involved in policy. Clearly the most important part of being Christian is living a Christian life and preparing for salvation. But some political activism is an inevitable byproduct of a deeply religious commitment. •

Vaclav Havel, "A Call for Sacrifice: The Co-Responsibility of the West." *Foreign Affairs*. March/April 1994.

Havel, president of the Czech Republic, sympathizes with Western leaders who found that the post-Cold War world "had suddenly become unusually complex and far less intelligible. The old order has collapsed, but no one has yet created a new one." But the reticence he sees in the West to develop a new order could result in something worse than existed before. "Such an outcome would inevitably lead to new conflicts and new suffering.... Not only that, it could ultimately demonstrate that the democratic West has lost its ability realistically to foster and cultivate the values it has always proclaimed and undertaken to safeguard...." Additional sacrifice on behalf of those values may be required. Decay from within may explain the West's failure to defend those values, Havel suggested. "I have in mind ... a willingness to sacrifice for the common interest something of one's own particular interests, including even the quest for larger and larger domestic production and consumption. The pragmatism of politicians ... for whom the highest authority is ... the will and the mood of a rather spoiled consumer society, makes it impossible for them to be aware of the moral, metaphysical and tragic elements of their own program."

Philip Yancey, "The Riddle of Bill Clinton's Faith." *Christianity Today*. April 25, 1994.

Following an interview with President Clinton, Yancey attempted to sketch the roots of Clinton's Christian faith, how it connects with public life, and why he has been reaching out more to evangelicals. "In person, Bill Clinton talks freely and convincingly about his faith. I have not met a single Christian

leader who, after meeting with Clinton, comes away questioning his sincerity," said Yancey. But why is Clinton alienated from his spiritual kin? Two reasons, Clinton told Yancey. "First, over several years the leaders of the evangelical community have gotten more and more identified with the conservative wing of the Republican Party. Second, some of those same people have made abortion and homosexuality the litmus test of whether you're a true Christian." While Clinton claims his moral views are influenced by the Bible, his legal views depend on community consensus, which may change with time. Yancey said this makes him suscept-

IN PRINT



select literature worth exploring

ible to taking clues from the crowd at the expense of his principles.

"Ecumenical Orthodoxy: What is it?" *Touchstone*. Winter 1994.

Touchstone invited several church leaders, writers, and theologians to reflect on the idea of "ecumenical orthodoxy." Editors S.M. Hutchens and Patrick Henry Reardon are included, along with George Austin, Donald G. Bloesch, Carl E. Braaten, Thomas Howard, Richard John Neuhaus, Andrew Walker, and Jack White. According to Hutchens, "We are realists who never have had the intention of reducing Christian belief to the lowest common denominator so as to include as many possible, rejoicing in when we can expand the periphery enough to let another odd duck slip in. We do not require the hope of a better agreement, much less union (on this earth) to keep us going. Rather, we begin with the vision of an already existing family,

divided so far that it has become difficult even to understand each other's speech. Like brothers who have quarreled in our youth ... we are now getting older, finding the world cold, stale, and hostile to the name we share, wondering whether we might now be able to at least sit on the porch and try to talk, our differences notwithstanding."

John G. West, Jr., "Politics from the Shadowlands: C.S. Lewis on Earthly Government." *Policy Review*. Spring 1994.

Though C.S. Lewis sought to avoid partisanship, West, of the Seattle-based Discovery Institute, wrote that Lewis did write about political topics and civic morality. "Of all the political lessons we can learn from Lewis, perhaps the most important is that public morality should be founded squarely upon public principles," said West. "Unlike some Christian conservatives, he did not believe that civic morality ultimately had to be grounded in the Bible to be legitimate. Nor did he believe that arguments about social morality were fundamentally about religion." West said Lewis believed in a natural law that provided common moral ground for citizens to enter politics as equals, though it would not provide "simple-minded solutions to specific political problems." Translating moral principles into policy requires prudence and realism about human nature. Said West, "The more specific the application of a moral principle, the greater the possibility of error ... when fallible humans are involved. Hence, political partisans should be wary of being too dogmatic. Those who proclaim their political program with absolute certainty are flirting with despotism. If ever they ... take their exalted rhetoric seriously, they will be tempted to stop at nothing -- even tyranny..." •



reforming
the church

Evangelicals, Catholics Challenge Church with Ecumenical Spirit

by Kathryn Teapole Proctor

One publication called it a "different kind of harmonic convergence," and another a "statement of mutual admiration." The cause of such rhetoric is the recently released document, "Evangelicals and Catholics Together: The Christian Mission in the Third Millennium."

In what co-signers have called an unprecedented declaration, Evangelical Protestant and Roman Catholic leaders have outlined "common convictions about Christian faith and mission," as well as problem areas related to both doctrine and practice. Introducing the document in a press conference on March 29, the Rev. Richard John Neuhaus, editor of *First Things*, IRD board member, and member of the drafting committee, said that not since the 16th century have Protestants and Catholics "joined in a declaration so clear in respect to their common faith and common responsibility."

Signers of the document and those included in the drafting process include Kent Hill, president of Eastern Nazarene College and former president of the IRD; IRD board members Michael Novak of the American Enterprise Institute, John Rodgers of Trinity Episcopal School for Ministry, and George Weigel of the Ethics and Public Policy Center; William Abraham, Perkins School of Theology; Charles Colson, Prison Fellowship; Bill Bright, Campus Crusade for Christ, and John Cardinal O'Connor of the Archdiocese of New York.

The document calls attention to common tenets of the faith held by Evangelicals and Catholics alike, while it also notes that "the one Christ and one mission includes many other Christians, notably the Eastern Orthodox and those Protestants not commonly identified as Evangelicals."

According to Hill, an Evangelical, "We acknowledge and draw strength from our convictions that we are heirs to and the embodiment of historic Christian truths which we share with the Orthodox and the Catholic." Hill also noted that the hypocrisy and disunity of the Church was an early challenge to his own faith. But he learned that for there to be unity, "God himself would have to be involved." There is a biblical mandate, he said, to strive for unity whenever possible.

The section entitled "We Affirm Together" begins with the bold statement: "Jesus Christ is Lord. That is the first and final affirmation that

Christians make about all of reality." The document then outlines the form, revelation, and manifestation of the Lordship of Christ: that we are justified by grace through faith, that we are brothers and sisters in Christ and members of the one true church, that the divinely inspired Scriptures are the infallible Word of God, that the Holy Spirit is a reality in our lives, and that the Apostles Creed can stand as a joint Catholic-Evangelical statement of faith and Scriptural truth.

Drafters also recognized problem areas that short-circuit unity. They note that honest differences and legitimate disagreements "must be tested in disciplined and sustained conversation." They warn, however, that "misunderstandings, misrepresentation, and caricatures of one another are not disagreements." Among the points of difference are the meaning of sacraments, ordinances, and the Lord's supper; devotion to versus remembrance of Mary; apostolic succession versus the priesthood of all believers; and baptism as a sacrament of regeneration versus a testimony to regeneration.

Despite the differences, the document contends "we are bound together by Christ and his cause,... bound together in contending against all that opposes Christ and his cause." This required clarifying issues related to outreach. The document states that "there is a necessary distinction between evangelizing and what is today commonly called proselytizing or 'sheep stealing.'" While it defends a legal right to proselytize, it condemns the recruiting of "people for another community for purposes of denominational or institutional aggrandizement."

On the church's role in society, the document rejects the notion of a partisan "religious agenda" while still attempting to offer directions "oriented to the common good and discussable on the basis of public reason." The document goes on to defend the lives of the unborn, the aged, and the vulnerable; it advocates parental choice in education; stands for public decency and against violence and pornography; supports a market economy; contends for a renewed appreciation for Western culture; and seeks a responsible and realistic understanding of America's role in world affairs.

The document can be obtained from The Institute on Religion and Public Life, 156 Fifth Ave., Suite 400, New York, NY, 10010 (212-627-1985). •

Re-Imagining Controversy Continues

When the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post* and ABC's *Nightline* do major stories on a church conference -- six months after the conference occurred -- that's a sure sign that deep religious waters have been stirred. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has been swamped by the storm following the radical feminist Re-Imagining conference held last November in Minneapolis.

For many Re-Imagining critics, the issue is not just the conference itself, but the refusal of many church leaders to speak against its more heretical elements. Below is a summary of recent events:

- At least two denominational officials have lost or switched jobs: Mary Ann Lundy, a top Presbyterian staff member who played a key role in planning and funding Re-Imagining, and Richard Peck, editor of the United Methodist clergy publication, who wrote an editorial implying that critics of the conference were doing the work of Satan.

- Of 114 "overtures" submitted by local church groups to the June 11-17 General Assembly of the PCUSA, 51 deal with Re-Imagining. The IRD-related Presbyterians for Democracy and Religious Freedom sent taped excerpts of the conference to all 600 commissioners of the General Assembly. Some 400 churches have indicated their intention to withhold funds from the national church in protest. Critics are demanding a repudiation of the conference and an apology for misuse of funds. Estimates of monies withheld range from \$2.3 to \$4 million -- with a final amount possibly totaling \$9 million or more.

- The United Methodist bishops' general meeting May 1-6, voted to conduct a "theological analysis of the concepts of wisdom" ("Sophia," the primary object of worship at the Re-

Imagining conference, is Greek for "wisdom"). But even some bishops



Susan Cyre, consultant to IRD's new Ecumenical Coalition on Women and Society, appears on ABC's Nightline May 23 to denounce the Re-Imagining conference.

blasted the action as inadequate.

- In late April, 11,000 United Methodist women attended an assembly in Cincinnati sponsored by the UM Women's Division, a supporter of the Re-Imagining conference. Some workshop leaders defended the November conference and encouraged the development of feminist liturgies. One sample "Psalm" portrayed menstruating women as an image of Christ and his shed blood.

Religious Groups Link for Environmental Activism

Christian and Jewish leaders, at a press conference last October which included remarks by Vice President Albert Gore, Jr., launched a new environmental action and education campaign entitled the National Religious Partnership for the Environment.

The campaign's sponsors -- the National Council of Churches, the US Catholic Conference, the Evangelical Environmental Network (EEN), and the consultation on the Environment and Jewish Life -- began in a response to the 1990 "Open Letter to the Religious Community" from a group of scientists concerned about the environment. The letter stated: "Mindful of our

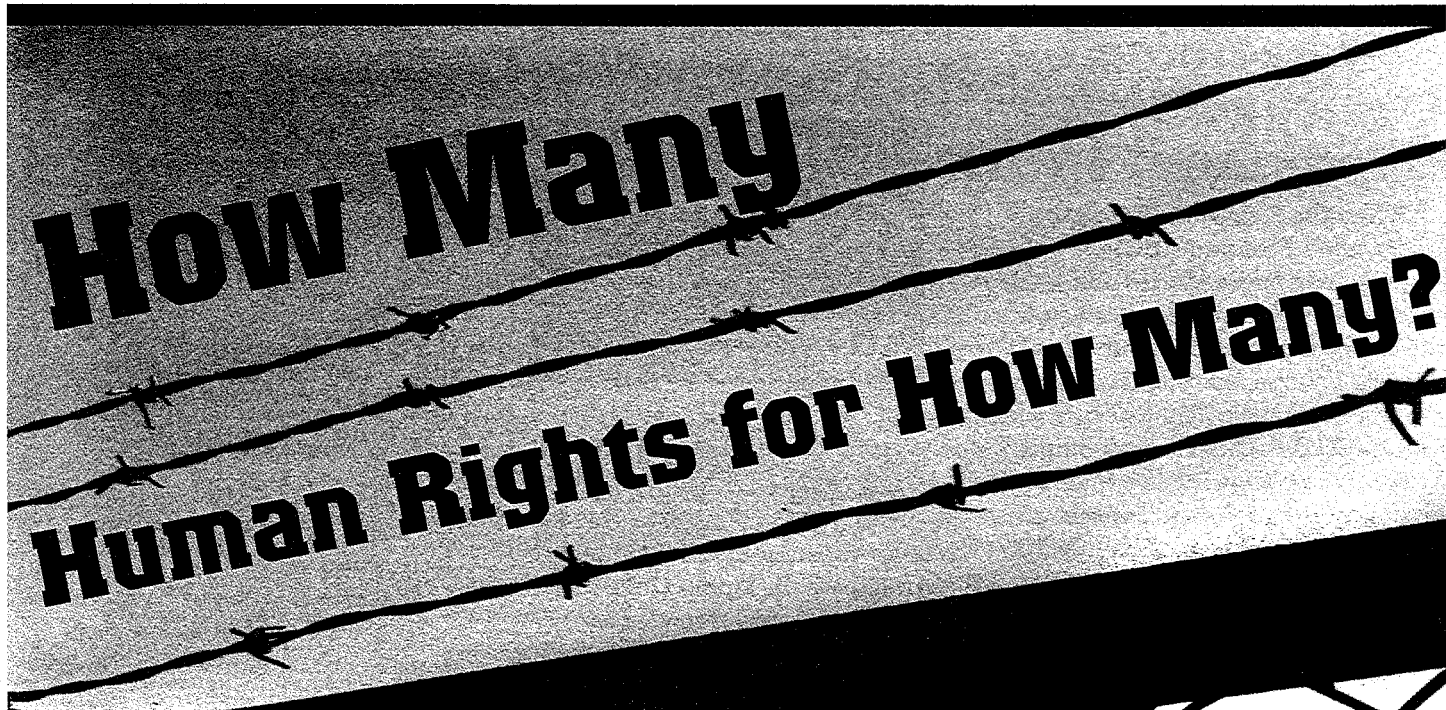
common responsibility, we scientists ... urgently appeal to the world religious community to commit, in word and deed, and as boldly as is required, to preserve the environment of the earth."

A primary goal of the new campaign is a linking of environmental concern with efforts for social justice. Paul Gorman, executive director of the Partnership, restated the commitment to "deal with racism, poverty and the environment together."

In March, the EEN released its own statement, "An Evangelical Declaration on the Care of Creation." It calls for a new-found environmental stewardship: "As followers of Jesus Christ, committed to the full authority of the Scriptures, and aware of the ways we have degraded creation, we believe that biblical faith is essential to the solution of our ecological problems."

Religious News Service (RNS) reported that the statement distances itself from the "pantheistic" and New Age ecological spirituality, affirming instead the world's fallenness and humanity's creatureliness. Nevertheless, Robert Dugan, head of the Washington office of the National Association for Evangelicals, refused to sign the document and resigned from the EEN's advisory council. "I have a concern that this issue is going to balloon into something of greater importance to the churches than it needs to be," Dugan told RNS.

Policy analyst E. Calvin Beisner of Covenant College in Tennessee has warned Evangelicals to stay clear of the EEN, which he considers to be extremist. In contrast, Richard Wright of Gordon College in Massachusetts said he is concerned about an anti-environmental backlash among Evangelicals. Wright said critics of the EEN statement fear that taking the environment seriously necessarily will lead to costly government regulations that will stifle the economy. •



The National Council of Churches wrestles with rights, absolutes, and other ideas with real consequences

by James Finn

June seems to be a month to concentrate the mind on human rights. June 4 of this year marked the fifth anniversary of the China's Tiananmen Square massacre. Last June, President Clinton extended for one year the Most Favored Nation (MFN) trading status to China, declaring that any future extension would depend upon improvements in China's human rights performance. But by this year's June deadline, China was again granted MFN status. And also last June, after a gap of 25 years, the United Nations sponsored a second World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna.

These events -- in which two great countries, China and the United States, are deeply involved -- provide a convenient occasion to review human rights as it functions in political life today. The 1993 Vienna conference got off to a rocky start when China exerted pressure to withdraw an invitation extended to the Dalai Lama, Tibet's spiritual leader in exile, to address non-governmental organizations there. But China's attempt to silence criticism of its own rights record (it rules over Tibet) merely confirmed the truism that countries do not always live up to their commitments. The conference also highlighted a divergence in the many ways different countries regard the "rights" enumerated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Such conflicts have plagued that imperfect document ever since

it was drawn up in 1948.

From Bangkok to Vienna. In preparation for Vienna, China and other Asian countries developed a Bangkok declaration that asserted human rights are universal in nature but that "they must be considered in the context ... of national and cultural backgrounds." This was a clear statement, not for the universality but for the relativity of human rights. At the same time the Bangkok declaration stated that a country's right to development is "universal and inalienable." It condemned "any attempt to use human rights as a conditionality of extending developmental aid" -- a rejection of a major U.S. policy tool for advancing human rights. This amounted to a demand that economically successful, open societies contribute to the governments of less successful, often-closed societies.

In his opening speech at the conference, U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher spiked many of the positions set forth in the Bangkok declaration and subsequently unveiled at Vienna. He rejected a cultural relativism that denies the existence of and international accountability for universally identifiable human rights and democracy. He also stressed the reinforcing ties that exist between human rights and democracy, and asserted that human rights should be a constant consideration in UN development and humanitarian programs.

Are we then forced to choose between absolute (universal) or relative human rights? Must we say that different countries legitimately make different judgments here? As Aquinas said, when you meet a contradiction, make a distinction -- and one is in order here. At Vienna, Wole Soyenkja, a Nobel Prize winner from Nigeria put one half of the argument succinctly: "All prisons are made of bricks

and mortar and iron spikes and very often beatings and electric shocks. I don't think there's any cultural definition in these various means of dehumanizing our fellow beings." People have a right to be free from cruel and unusual punishment. There are universal human rights and no one should deny it. It can be argued that there is a limited list of such rights and most of them, in fact, are enumerated in the U.S. Bill of Rights.

But there are other "rights" listed in the Universal Declaration. Article 24, for example, states that "everyone has the right to rest and leisure, including reasonable limitation of working hours and periodic holidays with pay." Is it possible to consider this seriously in present-day Haiti, Angola, or China? Obviously not. The fulfillment of this "right" is highly conditional and might better be considered a goal or an aspiration. It belongs with other alleged "rights," the noticeable expansion of which in recent years seems to have no natural limit.

But even if we could agree that some rights are universal and others relative, it still leaves us with the relation between them. If they are linked, how are they linked? At Vienna, Jimmy Carter stated that industrial countries, including specifically the United States, would have to recognize that freedom of speech does not interest a family starving to death. This is an undeniably true observation, but it is mischievous in its implication: that the right of free speech can scuttled in the name of development. Many egregious rights violators have used such observations to justify their abandoning of human rights.

Every government should be concerned about the reasonable subsistence of its citizens. Many of us believe that the question of which political/economic system is most likely to provide it has been answered both theoretically and empirically. Open societies that guarantee free speech have done a better job of advancing economic and social conditions than have closed societies. Closed societies that sacrifice free speech in the name of economic betterment have, in fact, inhibited both. Others may wish to continue this debate, to contend for a command economy. But it is highly questionable whether this debate about the economic structuring of a society is best conducted under the rubric of human rights.

Enter the NCC. These are important issues that demand continuing examination from different viewpoints, not least from religious communities. The current reconsideration of human rights to update the policy of the National Council of Churches (NCC) might, therefore, be welcomed. However, the present NCC draft statement raises as many questions as it answers. The inadequacies of the NCC docu-

ment are all the more dismaying in the context of the worrisome international debate.

The brief document, while necessarily abstract, is also quite vague in its abstractions. This allows readings that are at variance with each other. For example, after a section on theological and biblical understanding, the drafters say the Church doesn't claim "to perceive truth more clearly than others." Surely, this is an amazing statement. The readers have just been told that Jesus has shown us "by word and deed how to have life more abundantly," and through his redemptive act "we learn the power of trust, of sacrifice." Are these not truth claims? Should they not illuminate the way Christians understand personhood and the person's relation to community? But possibly the drafters mean only that they have no special grasp of "truths" in the political order, which is an appropriately modest observation.

But even modesty should not prevent the drafters from actually trying to define human rights. The sturdiest foundation for human rights is that each person is created in the image of God. Yet nothing clear emerges in the draft, leaving the term "human rights" to function almost like a catch-all for whatever social concerns the NCC might want to fill in the blank. If truth claims are suspect and human rights left vaguely defined, it only follows that no clear argument for universality can be found either. So on the most pressing question in the international arena, the NCC's voice is mute.

On a different level the drafters state that human rights are incompatible with weapons of mass destruction and that governments should eliminate such weapons. Is this a call for pacifism or an expression of utopian hope? In a clear call for the protection of human life, the draft calls for "the protection, fulfillment and honoring of human life in all its manifestations." And again: "In taking life, we diminish creation, usurping prerogatives of the giver of life." If this is, as it seems, a rejection of abortion, should it not be made explicit?

On questions of poverty and development, the draft seems to suggest that the world's goods, which have, indeed, been developed unequally, should be redistributed in some "equitable" manner. But it refrains from saying how these transfers should be made. The drafters are clear, however, that "prevailing notions of private property" run counter to their theological understanding and to their human intuition. They do not recognize that private property can anchor a powerful stewardship ethic in society. To dismiss it without exploring alternatives is an odd way to provide guidance for future NCC work.

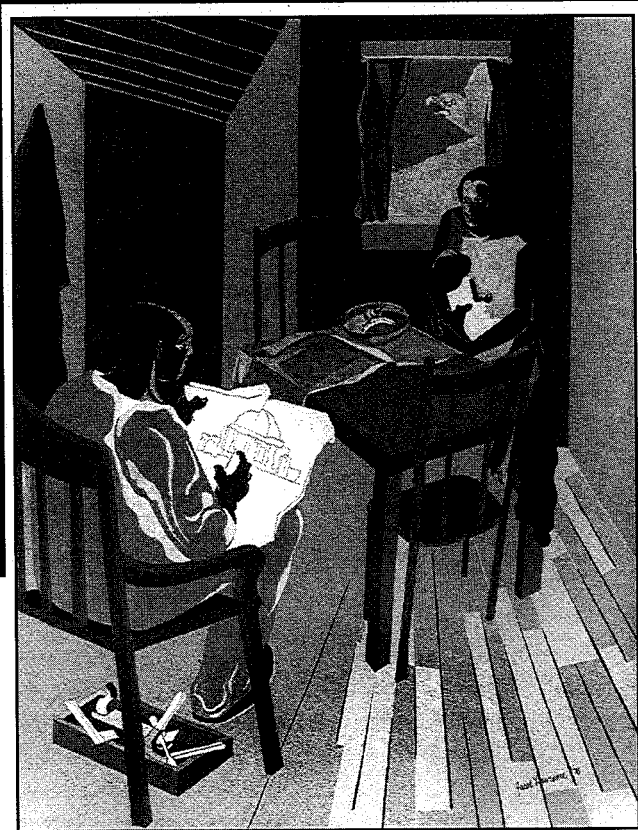
More could be called into question in this draft NCC statement. But as it stands, it is very uneven and has little practical value. The document gives off a wiff of the 60s and 70s, the excesses of which now are evident. The draft does, however, illustrate another truism. In analyzing human rights and their implementation in world affairs, good intentions are no substitute for clear thinking and hard choices. •

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Racism's Ongoing Legacy in America

*And why the WCC's Program
to Combat Racism doesn't
think we can handle it*

by Fredrick P. Jones



"In a Free Government, the Security of Civil Rights Must Be the Same as that for Religious," watercolor and pencil, by Jacob Lawrence, 1976. The National Museum of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

Regardless of how one measures racism, many Americans do perceive that it is on the rise. But not everyone refers to the same thing. Some point to heinous and violent racist acts. Others sense the more pervasive and subtle effects that are the historic legacy of tense and confused race relations in America. To discount such perceptions -- to ignore or dismiss them -- is perilous in an age of multicultural reality.

When the accusation of racism flies, some whites, in particular, point to achievements of the past and wonder why we can't declare the battle over. Some question whether it is healthy for minorities to be cast perpetually in the role of victims, while others simply remain bent on establishing their innocence in the politics of race and in personal relation to minorities.

Most everyone acknowledges that the legacy of American racism is at least a contributing factor to the struggle of minorities among the urban poor. But even some middle-class blacks who have "made it" argue that racism is alive and well. This should be no surprise. For every advance minorities make in society, more and more people are confronted with the reality of racial difference. Everyone, but particularly the white majority, must face the increasing demands of multi-cultural understanding and acceptance.

Despite many social changes that benefit minorities, whites have no right to expect others to be grateful. Nor can they avoid the kind of anger expressed by Malcolm X, "You don't stick a knife in a man's back nine inches and then pull it out six inches and say you're making progress."

There are few places to deal openly with deeper feelings related to race -- of love and hate, of fear and long-

ing, of guilt and redemption. The Church is the one institution that could take us through and beyond these as a consistently prophetic agent of reconciliation.

In response to the persistent problem of racism, the World Council of Churches Program to Combat Racism (PCR), at the behest of the U.S. National Council of Churches, is holding court in seven American cities. But unfortunately, the program's indiscriminate appropriation of the red flag of racism combined with the politically powerful tool of rights advocacy leaves it wide open for social justice advocates to thrust any and every claim before the international community. Such church-supported political activism is not the same as nor is it necessarily supportive of needed efforts toward racial reconciliation.

International Scrutiny. Here's how the WCC/NCC program will work: You live in Birmingham, El Paso, Los Angeles, New York, Oakland, Okmulgee (Oklahoma), Washington, D.C. Coming to town are a group of outsiders -- from India, Cameroon, Fiji, Kenya, Germany, New Zealand, Puerto Rico -- who are holding hearings in search of information on human rights abuses. The premises of the program essentially are: 1) that our understanding of racism must be expanded to cover problems broader

than the violation of "civil rights," and 2) that worsening conditions for minorities signal that American democracy on its own -- and without close international scrutiny -- is unable to deal with racism justly. With regard to the first, incidents of racial hatred are said to be on the rise, and communities of color face increasing injustices related to drugs, unemployment, police brutality, crime, poverty, and lack of access to adequate education and health care. All of these are taken as evidence of rights violations connected to racism. Regarding the second, if Americans are forced to recognize that their social policies and safeguards against racism are beneath international standards -- and if grassroots movements are empowered to shine this light -- then there is hope for justice in our land.

The program's current educational phase leads to site hearings October 7-19. Congregations are being recruited to covenant with the program for study and action, and site committees are being formed to identify priority issues for their regions. Evidence from the hearings, combined with social science data, will be interpreted by the foreign experts and presented by the PCR at the 1995 meeting of United Nations Human Rights Commission. The report may request that a UN Special Rapporteur investigate the United States.

According to Program Coordinator Keith Jennings, the goal is to look at human rights problems broadly and to examine how race is involved -- not in terms of personal intent, but in terms of effect. Where minorities are affected disproportionately, it will be assumed that power has combined with prejudice to form racism. By default, this definition usually identifies the oppressor as the dominant white culture.

For example: Approximately 50 percent of people on death row are black. Racism, perhaps? And when the victim of a murder is white, the convicted murderer is far more likely to be executed. Are white lives valued more highly than African-American lives? Some claim there are more factors than direct racism to explain the anomaly. But according to Jennings, there is no escaping some racist component in the results. And because white people so frequently dismiss such concerns summarily, the PCR concluded that outside pressure must be brought to bear on the United States, just as the United States attempts to pressure rights offenders such as Sudan and China.

Jennings said he sees a gap between legal/political remedies for racism and reality. Just laws are one thing; enforcement is another. Attempts to shift discussion from race to class, say, regarding the well-documented disposal of toxic waste in poorer communities, display a disposition to avoid discussion of race "at all costs." While white people tire of talking about race, Jennings said, the reality of racial injustice persists and must remain in the forefront of public discussion.

Open Questions. This program, like any other conducted under the banner of the church, should be open to question. Here are a few items to consider when as-

sessing its likely contribution to society.

1) *Rights talk.* Rights language has become so morally compelling today that the PCR apparently feels that no definition of rights is needed. It is possible to infer from the program's operative usage that rights can be defined as virtually any "good" which governments may then be required to secure on behalf of their citizens. To what extent can racism be remedied by the U.S. government? The program does not say. One possible result of requiring governments to do more than is -- or should be -- in their power is that even the old-style civil rights may come to be treated merely as goals at which to aim rather than universal and inalienable.

2) *Democracy.* In what ways exactly is American democracy deficient in dealing with human rights? In what ways is our society comparable to South Africa, China, or Sudan? The program does not say. Furthermore, will the program tell the UN Human Rights Commission the ways in which democratic mechanisms allow the United States to face its human rights problems differently than others?

Unfortunately, program advocates display no awareness of the politics of international rights advocacy. There are anti-democratic governments intent on undermining the universal claims about human rights (claims which, ironically, are the foundation of international standards that reject discrimination on the basis of race). These governments will be pleased to help put the United States on the UN agenda -- especially if it helps keep them and their brutal sins against their citizens off.

3) *Education.* Has the program simply decided that a possible international shaming of the United States is the best motivator for change? What insight into the human psyche, theological or otherwise, drives this? Will these hearings help us better understand racism by seeing it as related to, while distinguishable from, other personal and social pathologies?

4) *Grace and forgiveness.* Will those faced with the program's results be allowed to struggle openly with racism and what it says about us as a people and as a Church? Or is the goal to be as strikingly prophetic as possible, leaving whites nowhere -- not even the Church -- as a safe place to struggle with the tragic elements of our lives and our country's history?

Does this program intend to bring grace to all, freeing them to live rightly? The program, thus far, does not speak of grace. Forgiveness does not require forgetting the past or blindness to the present. A responsible Church can empower all toward vigilance on racism without relying on guilt as the sole motivator for change.

5) *Openness.* Can concerns such as these about the PCR program be raised and not dismissed as the "go slow" avoidance that Martin Luther King, Jr., condemned? Hopefully those leading the program will labor to distinguish honest concerns and disagreements from the obstructionism that undermines America's witness to the world for tolerance and justice. •



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Facing and Befriending Skeptics: Bosnians Displaced by War

by Lisa Barnes

Having served for more than six years in state and federal government, I thought I was prepared to lead a discussion on "Pillars of Democracy." Although I noticed that the 20 Bosnian refugees gathered around the table in Ljubljana, Slovenia, wore skeptical faces, I was not ready for their reaction.

Before I could finish a few sentences, I was interrupted forcefully by a well-dressed woman in her mid-50s. "Democracy -- we don't want to hear any more about democracy. Who do you think we are? We formed our country under a referendum. We have been recognized by the international community, yet no one has supported us and our democratically formed government. Democracy was the reason that this war was started in the first place." Said another: "Just let us defend our country. We want to live in peace. We are a multinational, multicultural, and multireligious community. We are a model that Europe should learn from -- but because of our tolerance, because of our diversity, we are being eliminated."

The table then erupted with pent-up anger. I realized it was not directed at me or the topic, but at all I represented: America and its awkward hesitation to become involved in a war that has all but destroyed their country.

Only a month before, I had been asked to participate in a volunteer team formed by the International Republican Institute (IRI). IRI is funded by the National Endowment for Democracy, which supports emerging and established democracies through training and assistance.

The team's purpose was to work with the leaders of the Bosnian refugee community in Slovenia to equip them to return after the war to reconstruct and support a democratic government. The seminar lasted three days. Throughout, we debated the key issues of the war. We role-played the policy positions of the major powers and discussed plans and fears about returning home. By the end, the tensions subsided and friendships were formed. For many of the participants, the seminar was their first opportunity to discuss their experiences and emotions with Westerners.

We all left with a better understanding and a commitment to do what we could to end the suffering.

The Bosnian situation is complicated. Is Bosnia being destroyed in a preplanned war of partition, expulsion, and genocide? Is the fact that the majority of Bosnians are culturally Muslim causing the culturally Christian West to allow the destruction of a nation? Would allowing the Bosnians to better arm themselves only escalate the war? Are the partition plans just another attempt at ethnic division?



A Muslim man gazes at ruins of a Sarajevo mosque.

How can we respond as Christians -- in Bosnia, but in also Somalia, Rwanda, and other countries in which war, famine, or ethnic cleansing devastates the people? Here are some thoughts, from my experience:

1) Seek to understand the situation from different points of view. The American press and our hectic lifestyles have conditioned us to understand the news of the world in soundbites. Few of us are willing to wrestle with complicated foreign policy dilemmas. Perhaps in your own community there are expatriates or refugees from conflict-riven areas who can provide various perspectives.

2) Pray for the country and the situation. Pray for God's guidance for our political and policy leaders. Pray for how God would have you and your church respond.

3) Look for opportunities to act. I never thought I would be given an opportunity to interact with the Bosnian refugees. I went to Slovenia convinced that God had opened the door and that I was to respond in obedience. If you are presented with opportunities to support relief efforts personally, I encourage you to respond.

I am grateful for the profound impact that the Bosnians had on my life. My hope and prayer is that they will be able to return and rebuild a multiethnic, multicultural, and multireligious community in a free and democratic Bosnia-Herzegovina. Above all, I hope that in some way my presence among those Muslim people showed them that Christ indeed cares for them and their home. •

A Tale of Two Africas: South Africa, Rwanda

Africa has proven once again to be an enigmatic continent. Within the span of just a few weeks, one country showcased the very brightest and inspiring human achievements Africa has to offer, while the other reminded the world of the most horrific aspects of ethnic conflict.

Ironically, it was South Africa that basked in the light of international admiration, as its citizens voted in the first truly democratic election and then inaugurated Nelson Mandela as its first black president on May 10. To be sure, the election process was not without mishaps. Even a week before voting started, political and ethnic violence escalated with no end in sight. But in a dramatic move that occurred only after Western negotiators had given up and gone home, Inkatha (the last major political party still boycotting the elections) suddenly agreed to participate.

The breakthrough happened, in part, because of the tireless efforts of South African Christian leaders, including Michael Cassidy of Africa Enterprise, who arranged for Washington Okumu, a Christian statesman from Kenya, to come to South Africa and negotiate an accord between the African National Congress, Inkatha, and the government. Soon after the accord was announced, political violence dropped dramatically, and the four-day voting process went on without further incident. "We felt God's hand was in it the whole way," Cassidy told News Network International. Christian intervention to bring parties together "is an example of what the church can do," Cassidy said.

Perhaps most encouraging was the fact that South Africa made this unprecedented move to democracy largely on its own. No United

Nations peacekeeping forces were asked for or needed, no international arbitrator was brought in to negotiate a constitution, and both out-going and in-coming presidents pledged to work together for a new South Africa of which everyone could be proud.

This hope-filled example of democratic transition contrasts sharply with the utter horror and destruction through tribal violence that the central African country of Rwanda has been experiencing. Well more than 200,000 people have died in ethnic cleansing campaigns.

The conflict started when Rwanda's president, an ethnic Hutu, was killed in a suspicious plane crash on April 6. Government officials claimed the plane was shot down by rebels of the minority Tutsi tribe, and almost immediately the ethnic slaughter began.

Cuban Prisoner Denounces U.S. Pastors

A Cuban political prisoner has denounced the efforts of some U.S. religious activists to bolster the weakened dictatorship of Fidel Castro. In a letter smuggled out of a Cuban prison, Joel Duenas Martinez of the Solidarity for Peace Pacifist Movement harshly criticized the Rev. Lucius Walker, a Brooklyn Baptist minister and former National Council of Churches (NCC) official who now heads a group called Pastors for Peace.

Duenas is serving a four-year sentence for "enemy propaganda." Meanwhile, Walker's Pastors for Peace group has been working to end the U.S. embargo against Cuba. It has deliberately broken the embargo by organizing caravans of humanitarian aid for Cuba without the requisite export license. (Aid to private persons in Cuba is permitted with a license. Some church agencies -- including

the NCC -- have acquired the necessary licenses and sent millions of dollars in medicines and similar items into Cuba legally.)

Though Walker and his network of pastors have been allowed to pass into Mexico, they have used their temporary stoppage by Mexican authorities to highlight their civil disobedience and gain publicity.

Upon arriving in Cuba by ship, they have been greeted warmly by none less than Fidel Castro. Using humanitarian aid to declare political solidarity recalls previous Pastors for Peace caravans designed to boost other troubled leftist movements: the Sandinistas in Nicaragua and the FMLN guerrillas in El Salvador.

In his March letter, Duenas took sharp exception to Walker's methods. He asked, "How can a man who calls himself a believer support the Mecca of atheism? In this country, religious people have been isolated, humiliated, turned into second-class citizens, expelled from universities, hunted down, and even imprisoned.... In short, being a religious person in this country means shouldering a cross permanently."

Duenas challenged Walker: "While you people exercise your right to dissent, our government represses us for expressing ourselves peacefully. That's what happened when we gathered outside Villa Marista [the State Security headquarters] to demand freedom for political prisoners. And when our wives, mothers, and sisters prayed for us at Mercedes Church in Havana, they were brutally assaulted as they left."

Duenas invited Walker to his cell: "I invite you to ask the Cuban government for permission to visit us. We offer you our small quarters -- a six-by-nine-foot cell for three men -- our brackish drinking water, our hunger, and our pain."

Duenas added a final exhortation: "Will you persist in defending Fidel Castro after going through our hell? I believe that you won't..." •



religious
freedom

Sudan's Long War: Counting the Cost in Children

by Faith J. H. McDonnell

For over ten years savage civil war has inflicted starvation, disease, and death on Sudan, the largest nation in Africa. The U.S. Committee of Refugees estimates that over 1.3 million southern Sudanese have been killed by either government or rebel forces, and five million have been displaced -- four million into the desert, and another one million into neighboring states. Compounding the misery, Christians and other non-Islamic Sudanese are also victims of what is, in the opinion of David Aikman of *Time* magazine, the worst religious persecution in the world. Sudan's radical

Islamic regime is attempting to bring all of Sudan, including the 19 percent of the population that is Christian, under Islamic domination. Neither famine, war, nor genocidal persecution in Sudan have garnered the international attention received by Somalia, Bosnia, or even the Ethiopia of ten years ago.

According to reports from News Network International (NNI) and many human rights organizations, genocide has come in the form of crucifixions of entire villages, torture and murder of both Protestants and Roman Catholics, and deliberate starvation of hundreds of thousands who are denied food unless they accept Islam. In spite of these horrors, the Church in Sudan continues to grow. In January, NNI reported the baptism of 32,000 people in the southern Sudan region of Bor during the two weeks following the murder by government troops of the Rev. Paul Kon Agilti at the Makuac Episcopal Church in Bor.

Since it has failed to force many adult Christians to convert to Islam, the government has turned its attention to the children. According to the United Nations Special Rapporteur for Sudan, Gaspar Biro, officials round up the children of refugees who have fled from southern Sudan and the Nuba mountains, force them into vehicles, and, without explanation, take them to so-called "vocational training camps." The camps enforce harsh discipline, even on the smallest child.

Sudanese authorities told Biro that only



Two Sudanese boys

vagrant and orphaned children, who have no other home or whose parents are willing to give them up, are taken to the camps -- and only after a court decision has been reached. But Biro said he found no evidence of court involvement, and the children he spoke with in the camps *did* have living parents. Biro added that it is highly suspicious that among such a family-oriented people, parents would voluntarily renounce their children.

Southerners from religious minorities (such as Christian and animist) make up the vast majority of the camps' population. The Abu Dom boys' camp visited by Biro had 431 boys between the ages of five and 13. Officials told Biro that only Muslim boys were there, but of the ten boys with whom he was permitted to speak, six said they were Christians.

Camp officials regard these boys as Muslim because they were sent there for Islamization. They are given new names and are trained to fight in the Islamic holy war against their own people. Non-governmental sources told the U.N. investigator that children receive only a few months of military training and then boys as young as eleven years old are sent to the front of the offensive.

Biro's sources also gave him evidence that Christian and other non-Muslim children are being sold into slavery. Tens of thousands of boys from the Dinka tribe have been taken for the slave market as they wander through the desert of southern Sudan in search of food. Over 25,000 boys and girls from the Nuba Mountains have been sold as slaves to Arabs from northern Sudan and Libya, as well. Since supply is so large, the going rate for these children on the slave market is virtually pennies.

UNICEF psychologist Magne Raundalen spent five months in the camps with refugees from southern Sudan and the Nuba Mountains. He said the children there were the most traumatized children he had ever seen. Whether used as cannon fodder in war or being sold for pennies on the slave market, these children are suffering for their faith and the faith of their parents.

Although most of the churches have been closed, and many of the pastors have been killed or forced to flee, the radical Islamic government of Sudan still sees the Church as such a formidable force that it seeks to destroy even its youngest members. •

From the IRD

Partnership Briefing

A quarterly publication filled with information and ideas on how to reflect and act in the face of major challenges confronting Christians in the culture and in the church. Special action briefings are available for Episcopalians, United Methodists, and Presbyterians. Free to IRD partner/donors.

Prophets and Politics: A Handbook on the Washington Offices of U.S. Churches. By Roy Howard Beck. \$8.95.

Why do denominations have offices in Washington and what do they do? Beck, a veteran Washington journalist, answers these and other questions in a reference tool for clergy, laypersons, church leaders, and reporters. The handbook includes listings of priority issues handled by each office, as well as background on how each church sets its agenda for its public witness.

Information Packet: Re-Imagining Conference

A recently updated set of articles on the controversial women's conference that has led many church members to question what their churches really believe. Free.

Information Packet: Human Rights

Background articles on the international debate about human rights and the National Council of Church's draft of a new policy statement on human rights. Free.

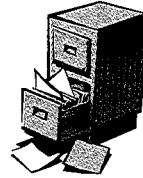
The Institute on Religion and Democracy

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Trinity Forum Leadership Curriculum. 5210 Lyngate Court, Suite B, Burke, VA 22015.

The Trinity Forum is a Christ-centered "academy without walls" created to help people in positions of leadership engage the leading issues of their personal and public lives of faith. The three-part series includes executive summaries of Western literature classics that serve as a starting point for personal reflection and group discussion. Part 1: Foundations for Leadership; Part 2: The Character Dimension of Leadership; Part 3: Moral Compasses for Modern Leaders. Each part sells for \$30. Also, recently published by the

RESOURCES



forum's Hourglass Books collection, are: *Fit Bodies, Fat Minds: Why Evangelicals Don't Think*, by Os Guinness (available in August, \$6.99), and *Restoring the Good Society*, by Don E. Eberly, \$5.99.

A New Vision for Welfare Reform: An Essay in Draft, published by the Welfare Responsibility Project of the Center for Public Justice. P.O. Box 48368, Washington, DC 20002.

The essay, along with 22 papers published for a May conference on welfare reform, "explore the moral and religious roots of the welfare policy dilemmas" sketch out a public philosophy "able to address the subject at its deepest level."

The Index of Leading Cultural Indicators. By William J. Bennett. Published jointly by The Heritage Foundation and Empower America. The Heritage Foundation, 214 Massachusetts Ave., NE, Washington, DC 20002. \$3.

Get the statistics on crime, poverty, birth (abortion, teenage pregnancy, infant-mortality), family

(child abuse, single-parent families, marriage, and divorce), education, drugs, and television viewing.

1994 World Refugee Survey. The U.S. Committee for Refugees. 1717 Massachusetts Ave., NW, Washington, DC 20036.

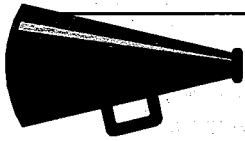
The survey addresses key issues related to refugee movements, human rights for refugees, and asylum, as well as conditions for refugees around the world. As part of its mandate, the committee works on behalf of all uprooted victims of human conflict, who, regardless of whether they cross a border, have a right to decent, humane treatment, as well as adequate protection and assistance.

Context: A commentary on the interaction of religion and culture. Published 22 times yearly by Claretian Publications, 205 West Monroe Street, Chicago, IL 60606. \$29.95.

In this newsletter, Editor Martin Marty includes thought-provoking snippets from a wide variety of sources including our own *Faith & Freedom, America, the Economist, the Times Literary Supplement, the Nation*, and many others, and on topics as diverse as women's rights, goddess worship, church decline and renewal, the media, literature, and politics.

"Sovereignty at the Crossroads? International Morality and the Search for a New World Order." Conference, September 30-October 1, 1994, Calvin Center for Christian Scholarship, Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 49546.

The conference will explore certain moral issues in international politics that have come into clearer focus since the end of the Cold War, especially those that relate to the nature and limits of state sovereignty. The keynote speaker will be George Weigel, president of the Ethics and Public Policy Center and author of *Idealism without Illusions, U.S. Foreign Policy in the 1990s* (Eerdmans, EPPS). •



A Congregation Weighs Its Response to Re-Imagining

by David G. Peterson

from the pews

David Peterson is the Clerk of Session at National Presbyterian Church in Washington, D.C. "From the Pews" is a regular feature providing examples of how Christians work out their relationship to the institutional church. Here, Peterson discusses his church's reaction to Re-Imagining, a national women's conference held last November and funded in part by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

At National Presbyterian Church, we strive to define ourselves at the center -- that is, our focus and orientation are on the person of Jesus Christ. Doing so allows us to accommodate without threat many issues of concern in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). The Re-Imagining Conference that took place in November 1993 appeared to challenge our center.

As a church, we first became aware of the conference through the denominational connections of our senior pastor, Dr. M. Craig Barnes, and, concurrently, through the Leadership Alert that *The Presbyterian Layman* issued in early January. Of primary concern was the apparent challenge to Reformed theology represented in the conference.

We use an Executive Committee consisting of leaders of three church boards as a sounding board for the senior pastor. The committee recommended we wait for next meeting of the national church's General Assembly Council (which governs the church between annual assemblies) and any forthcoming response to Re-Imagining before deciding what action we would take, if any.

The GAC did nothing significant concerning Re-Imagining. So the session (the congregation's leadership body) of National used its next meeting to listen to the views of our members as part of our deliberation on what we should do. At the meeting elders expressed their concern about the apparent inability or unwillingness of the denominational leadership to take a firm stand for Reformed theology. In particular, elders were dismayed by the renunciation of a triune God -- Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and a salvation offered to us through the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the Cross.

The session then authorized a letter to GAC executive director James Brown. It expressed our great disappointment that the GAC

failed to admit that many aspects of the conference had challenged core doctrines of faith. We said it was wrong for official denominational representatives to have participated in the planning and leadership of the conference and for the church's Bicentennial Funds to have been used in its support. Further, our letter expressed concern that an analysis by Presbyterian theologians met with criticism at the GAC meeting, but the participation in the conference by church staffer Mary Ann Lundy did not (Lundy since has been relieved of her duties).

The Re-Imagining Conference that took place in November 1993 appeared to challenge our center.

We said that we could not trust the church's management of the Bicentennial Fund. What we needed to hear was simply, "We're sorry. It won't happen again." We also expressed our concern over the lack of clear leadership from the council. "One of the greatest examples of biblical leadership is

repentance. As one of your congregations, we need you to lead us through confession, telling the hard truth about the mistaken paths we have taken as a church. It is only then that we will be able to hear the truth about God's hope for our future."

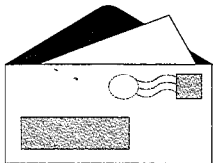
The session announced its actions to the congregation through the Order of Worship and made copies of the letter available to all who asked. The reaction was overwhelmingly positive and supportive. At our next session meeting in April, we had the opportunity to explain personally to representatives of our Presbytery's General Council the thinking behind our response. These representatives listened carefully and appreciated the opportunity to hear our concerns in person.

Throughout the process, the session of National Presbyterian Church has sought to affirm our faith in a crucified, risen Christ come to take our punishment as sinners and offer us salvation through an undeserved Grace. We will continue to work through our connections to call the Church to this central tenet of faith and hold our representatives accountable for defending it. •

I read Kathryn Teapole Proctor's [the denominational editor of *Faith & Freedom*] article in the Winter/Spring 1994 issue of *Challenge to Evangelism Today* on the Re-Imagining conference held in November 1993. I was sickened about the tone of outright idolatry described in the article but was not at all surprised as I attended a similar event in New Jersey several years ago.

Patricia L. Miske
Chiloquin, Ohio

LETTERS



After reading the Spring issue of *Faith & Freedom* on the Re-Imagining conference, I was shocked to discover that American Baptists had contributed \$1,000 towards this heathen event. My second church is an ABC church in Bottineau, some 20 miles away. Our folks there were equally disturbed.

This past Sunday our congregation voted to suspend all funding for our national office for a period of one year. We are currently in touch with our local representative in Bismark to see what else we might do to voice our condemnation of this involvement in squandering our money on such foolishness and blasphemy.

Thank you for alerting us to this event and our unwitting involvement in it.

The Rev. David Hayes
Dunseith, North Dakota

We are impressed with *Faith & Freedom*, and like the new format. The quality of material, writing, and presentation is superb. ...The issues facing our denomina-

tion are so compelling that the need for Presbyterians for Democracy and Religious Freedom has never been greater.

We all knew that it was a matter of time before another issue of magnitude shocked the membership and starkly illustrated how completely out of touch Presbyterian leadership is with those it is supposed to represent and lead.

It was been suggested that, with our electoral process, the possibility of reform could be enhanced by electing the "right" (PC) candidates. If that is true, please do all that is possible to work ... to find electable candidates who can save the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

Bruce and Lorraine Walker
Wheaton, Illinois

It was with genuine relief and more that I read in your March letter that the IRD is setting up its Ecumenical Coalition on Women and Society in order to counter the obvious insidious push toward very radical matters in the PCUSA and the United Methodist Church, among several other church bodies....

James H. Lemly
Madeira Beach, Florida

The Sophia bit is just a weathervane. Our seminaries have so set the atmosphere of over-intellectualizing the Gospel that "pluralism" is portrayed as the norm for United Methodists when our Discipline states clearly what our theological position is. We are not Unitarian or "religious humanist." The Sophia crowd is perhaps organizationally Methodist, but they are not theologically Methodist.

Larry Eisenberg
Tulsa, Oklahoma

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The IRD is a non-profit organization committed to building and strengthening a democratic future and reforming the institutional Church's social and political witness. We sponsor three committees that work for reform and renewal in the U.S. and ecumenical church community: Presbyterians for Democracy and Religious Freedom, The Episcopal Committee on Religion and Freedom; and United Methodists for Faith & Freedom

We are pleased to accept contributions to support this work.

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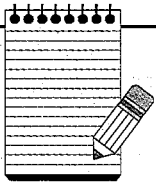
IN THIS ISSUE

James Finn
is Senior Editor of *Freedom Review*, published by the New York-based Freedom House, and a member of the IRD's advisory board.

Lisa Barnes
directs Neighbors Who Care, a subsidiary of Prison Fellowship (Reston, Virginia) offering support to victims of crime.

PHOTOS AND ART

Cover, page 12: U.S. Committee for Refugees
Page 2: Michael Marsland, Yale University Office of Public Affairs
Page 5: Lonni Jackson
Page 6: Fredrick P. Jones
Page 8: National Museum of American Art, Smithsonian Institution. © Jacob Lawrence.
Page 10: Corrine Dufka, RNS Photo/Reuters
Page 16: Ankers, Anderson & Kutts



IRD
diary

Thanks to Prize-Winning Michael Novak ...

by Stephen M. Smith

Stephen M. Smith, professor of theology and ethics at Trinity Episcopal School for Ministry and a leader of the IRD's Episcopal Committee on Religion and Freedom, composed a letter to IRD board member Michael Novak in honor of his reception of the prestigious Templeton Prize for Progress in Religion.

Dear Michael,
You don't know me, but I feel that I know you. In fact, you are part of my teaching and family through your writing.

Let me describe two incidents. The first began during a Christmas break between semesters when I first encountered your *Spirit of Democratic Capitalism*. That fall I had started teaching "something" about wealth and poverty in my Church and Society class. I remember scrambling around for something intelligent and helpful to say without much success. Then I happened on Robert Benne's book, *The Ethic of Democratic Capitalism*, which presented a case for a market economy. I didn't know such books existed -- especially written by one who was theologically informed. I shared my findings the next day with the class. Their interest was quite overt and I knew I was on to something.

Enter *Spirit*. That Christmas break I happened upon your book and I couldn't put it down. As I reflect back on that experience, I realize what was happening. I had been an economics major at Stanford (a bit before your time there) but never knew what to do with my education, especially after my conversion and later call into teaching theology. Well, that night while reading your book, my past in economics was creatively joining my present in theology and ethics. The energy of it all was unforgettable. I was coming together!

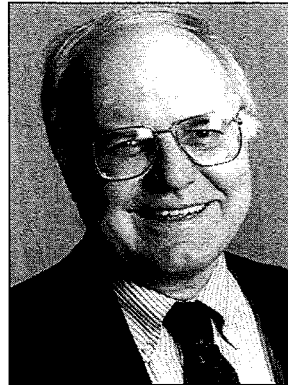
As you may guess, I became an advocate -- an intense advocate -- for the virtues of the free market and what I dubbed "the Novak triangle." I tried to visualize your ideas by drawing a triangle with the form of an upside down pyramid. The moral/cultural part was on the bottom, to bubble up values into the economic and governmental sectors. I would draw it to show that the moral/cultural sector was a full-blown player in the democratic experiment. Churches belong! But I also wanted to show your insight that there was tension between these sectors. Finally I concluded that I needed to put a circle in the center of the triangle representing the family, thus showing its centrality to this entire process.

I've taught this a lot in churches. You would be surprised at how well it is received. Marginalized Christians begin to believe they have a place in our system!

The second incident concerns my son, who was about six or seven years old when I discovered your thought and visualized it as "the Novak triangle." I remember during one of our many "heavy" discussions getting out a pad of paper and drawing the triangle for him and then helping him think about our village and how it manifests the components of the triangle. Perhaps he was just getting high on "Dad's thing," but I believe he was profoundly delighted with a way of understanding his world that made him feel like a citizen. To this day he is very much a fan of yours.

For all this and ever so much more I give you thanks. I am delighted that you received the Templeton Prize. May it help to increase your influence.

Sincerely,
Stephen M. Smith



Michael Novak



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