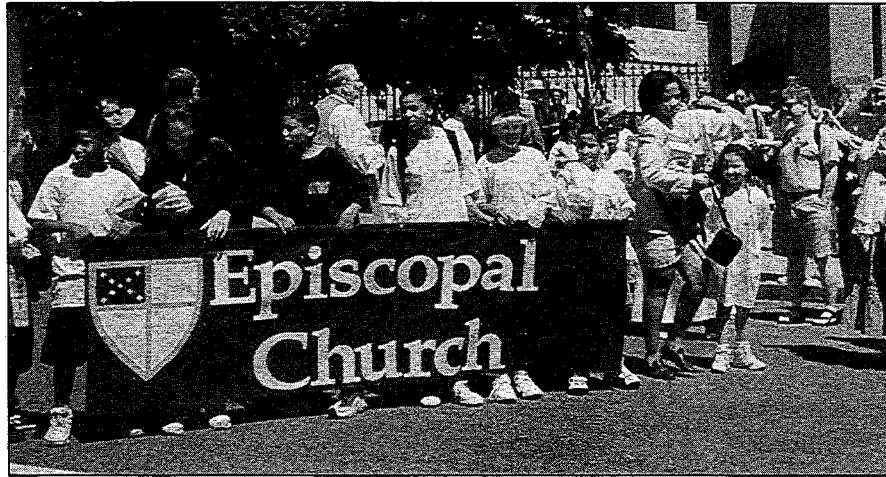


FAITH & FREEDOM

Reforming the Church's Social and Political Witness

Summer 1996

Vol. 16, No. 2



Episcopalians march in Washington's "Stand for Children."

'Stand for Children': An Ideological Crusade

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(plus church news, international briefs, letters and IRD diary)

FAITH & FREEDOM

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and Democracy**

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Phone: 202-986-1440
Fax: 202-986-3159

The IRD is a non-profit organization committed to reforming the Church's social and political witness and to building and strengthening democracy and religious liberty, at home and abroad. IRD committees work for reform in the Episcopal Church, the United Methodist Church, and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). The IRD also sponsors the Ecumenical Coalition on Women and Society.

We are pleased to accept contributions in any amount to support this work.

Diane L. Knippers
President and Editor

Alan F. H. Wisdom
Vice President

Mark D. Tooley
Research Associate

IRD Staff: Jennifer Caterini, Faith J. H. McDonnell, David Sheaffer, Craig Smith, Kendrick Mernitz Smith

Newsletter Design: James S. Robb

IRD Consultants: Patrick Gray, John Stumbo

In this issue

Pushing her 10-month-old daughter in a stroller, Faith McDonnell was one of four IRD staff who attended and covered the "Stand for Children" rally.

No stranger to the plight of the poor, Faith volunteered for 10 years with the Grate Patrol, a church-based feeding ministry for the homeless that she began in downtown Washington, D.C.

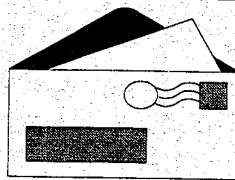
Photos:

Cover, page 2, 6, 7, 9, 15 by IRD staff; page 4 by Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice; page 5 by U.S. Department of Treasury; page 10 by Barbara Baker; page 11 by Lee Ranck, Christian Social Action; page 12 by Rune Hansen/COMPASS DIRECT; page 14 by Rosenberg Communications.

► I read with interest your column in the Spring 1996 issue of *Faith & Freedom* concerning "The Perils of Partisanship in the Church." I disagree with your assertion that the "conservative denominations such as the Southern Baptists, ... are more reluctant to speak politically for their members."

For example, the Florida Baptist

LETTERS



Convention recently sent letters to members of the Florida legislature claiming to speak "on behalf of the over one-million Florida Southern Baptists," on a variety of issues ranging from abortion, children and families, vouchers, religion in the public schools, gambling, etc. I do not object to Florida Baptists speaking out on these issues, but I do object to the Florida Baptist Convention purporting to speak on behalf of all Florida Baptists.

It is highly improper for a Baptist bureaucrat to claim to speak for all Baptists. No one speaks for all Baptists. It flies in the face of a basic Baptist conviction that emphasizes the freedom of individual conscience, the priesthood of every believer, and local church autonomy....

J. Brent Walker
Baptist Joint Committee
Washington, DC

Editor's response:

Clearly, any church official who claims to speak for every member is misrepresenting his or her church—regardless of its polity.... Our article warned that the "religious right, too, can fall prey to the temptations of narrow partisanship."

But our other point was this: Currently, the dangers of unrepresentative partisanship are far more real and urgent among denominations led by liberals than among denominations led by conservatives. *The key word is "more."* The range of topics covered by the more liberal offices is much wider, and the positions taken diverge much more dramatically from the views of church members. All mainline Protestant decision-making structures are ostensibly democratic. (Analyzing the flaws in the practice of this church "democracy" would require a book.) But when confronted with the reality that these structures produce positions far to the left of the church membership, the hierarchies resort to claims of "prophetic" leadership that rival the Catholic magisterium. At the same time, they lack the Catholic bishops' moral authority and influence with their own flocks.

► Just a brief note to tell you how much I enjoyed the most recent issue of *Faith & Freedom*. I especially appreciated your thoughtful response to David Jessup. Keep up the good work!

Dean Curry
Mechanicsburg, PA

► We have only attended Grace UM Church for a few months and had just made the commitment to join by transfer of membership, when your information arrived by mail. It could not have arrived at a better time. We copied and gave it to our pastor... and members of our Sunday School class. It opened up questions in our family and within the church. The discussion confirmed our choice to join and be part of a Bible-based congregation not afraid to fight for what is right....

Judy Anthony
Marion Center, PA



**FROM THE
PRESIDENT**

Acting Locally Matters Too

This summer marks the third anniversary of my election as President of the Institute on Religion and Democracy. These three years have been sometimes anxious, sometimes joyful, but always challenging. My own sense of vocation—of being called to work for the reformation of the Church's public witness—has been confirmed and strengthened.

But my most difficult challenge has not been the struggles of the IRD at the national church level; it has been within my local Episcopal church. You see, for these same three years I've served as a member of the vestry and then as senior warden of my parish.

My parish is large and successful and wealthy. We enjoy glorious worship, sound biblical teaching, and an exemplary mission program.



Jennifer Caterini

The parish is also, alas, comprised of sinners like me. We are sinners who quarrel, who disappoint, who want their own way.

Time and again in my parish, I've argued against disunity, harsh language, lack of loyalty or patience or tolerance.

In short, I've prayed about and stood against many of the characteristics that I'm accused of exhibiting through my work at the IRD.

My serving on vestry the first three years of my IRD presidency frequently overstretched my schedule. Nevertheless, in the providence of God, I recognize it now as exactly the right timing.

I've understood more deeply that a passion for the renewal of the church must include a passion for the unity of the church. I've learned that criticism must be aimed at constructive change, not destructive dissolution. I've learned that the substance and the spirit of an argument matter. I've learned how to love more deeply those with whom I disagree.

I've learned much more about differences between essentials and non-essentials. I've become more determined to defend the former, while I've sought to be more tolerant regarding the latter.

I've seen first-hand how foolish and wrong actions by the national leadership can undercut the local congregation's evangelistic ministry. But I've also learned that the real work of the Church of Jesus Christ goes forward in local congregations, not at the national headquarters.

I've learned that my most faithful service to the church may be time spent weeping on my knees.

Every member of the IRD staff is active in a local church. Alan Wisdom and his wife Esther teach a junior high Sunday school class. Mark Tooley is a member of his pastor-parish relations committee. Our connection to congregational life is essential for our spiritual health. It's necessary for balance, for perspective, for integrity.

So after my summer "vacation," I'll be discerning what my next parish assignment will be. My professional life—as president of the IRD—depends upon it.

• • •

We have recently welcomed two new members to the IRD staff. Jennifer Boeke Caterini is the new Executive Director of our Ecumenical Coalition on Women and Society. She will be overseeing our work of informing church women about the impact of radical feminism and training them to respond.

A Roman Catholic with strong ecumenical experience, Jennifer comes to the IRD from the staff of Judge Robert Bork at the American Enterprise Institute, where she did research for his forthcoming book, *Slouching toward Gomorrah: Modern Liberalism and American Decline*.

Our second addition is our new administrative assistant, David Sheaffer. David will work in membership development and is likely to answer



IRD's summer intern Megan McLaughlin from University of North Carolina and new IRD staff member David Sheaffer

the phone when you call us. A United Methodist, he just graduated from Messiah College (Grantham, PA), where he studied political science under IRD board member Dean Curry.

• • •

May we be forgiven a bit of boasting? IRD board member George Weigel will be writing a major, authoritative biography of Pope John Paul II, a project which the Holy Father has encouraged and will support. The book will be published in major world languages in late 1999.

It's a wonderful honor and awesome responsibility for George. And as a friend told me, "It will ensure an honest biography of this great Christian leader."

IRD

by Diane Knippers

Promoting Abortion as 'Religious Freedom'

Many churches undertake public policy advocacy by working through coalitions in Washington. One such group is the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice (RCRC), a Washington-based alliance of 40 religious organizations that includes the United Methodist Church, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and the Episcopal Church. This spring, 30 religious leaders signed an RCRC statement congratulating President Clinton for his veto of legislation that would have banned the controversial partial-birth abortion procedure.

"It was not controversial for us," explained Katherine Hancock Ragsdale, an Episcopal priest in Pepperell, Massachusetts, who has been RCRC president since 1992. "There is no such thing as a partial-birth abortion," Ragsdale said about the practice that involves suctioning out the brain of a partially-delivered fetus and then crushing its skull. "They are late-term abortions. The Religious Right has so thoroughly misrepresented it."

Founded in 1973 with money from mainline churches and the Playboy Foundation among others, the RCRC specializes in refuting pro-life Christians. RCRC's \$1.5 million budget, 55 local affiliates, and Washington staff of 12 have ensured that RCRC is a serious partner within the abortion rights movement. RCRC's unique perspective is that abortion is a "religious freedom."

"It can only impose somebody else's religion for the government to say one thing is right and wrong in all situations," says RCRC Executive Director Ann Thompson Cook, a United Methodist laywoman.

Both Cook and Ragsdale portray RCRC as the "reasonable" majority fighting the "intolerant" minority. In an interview with IRD, Ragsdale said, "It's pretty clear that people from across most religious backgrounds tend to be pro-choice." She cited United Methodist, Presbyterian, and Episcopal conventions that have ratified pro-abortion rights stances.

Ragsdale alleged that Bible-quoting anti-abortionists were fostering violence. "To suggest that we [abortion rights proponents] are denying the Bible makes honest disagreement impossible. It has been the first step on the road to the violence that we've seen. Once you've been demonized, it's easier to shoot."

Ragsdale said that RCRC merely supports the *Roe v. Wade* Supreme Court decision of 1973, which legalized abortion but allowed for restrictions on late-term abor-

tions. However, RCRC has never supported any restriction on abortion, even for minors.

"We oppose those things that make it unduly difficult for teenagers to take advantage of this particular health care option," said Ragsdale. RCRC resists parental consent laws unless they allow so many other adults to substitute for the parents that the restriction is meaningless. "Children can't trust their parents with this information," she explained.

Ragsdale said she is troubled by "congregations that fly in the face of their own denomination's [official 'pro-choice'] teachings to oppose abortions." State chapters of RCRC are training clergy to provide "all options counseling," to ensure that abortion is offered as morally acceptable. RCRC's Massachusetts chapter provides financial aid to women who cannot afford abortion.

We must "give up the idea that we can cling to some moral certainty," said

Ragsdale in explaining her personal theology. "We are called to make tricky decisions where we never know if we are right and wrong. Let's relax and know that it's going to be okay."

Ragsdale pledged that the non-partisan RCRC will be present at both political conventions this summer to tout "reproductive health care." They will claim to represent the United Methodist, Presbyterian, Episcopal and other churches. Ragsdale dismissed those denominations' members who disagree with RCRC. "They're not significant in terms of numbers," she said.

Yet even most mainline churchgoers are likely uncomfortable with their church's defense of partial-birth abortions. A recent poll showed that even self-described "moderate-liberal Protestants" supported a ban on partial-birth abortions by 63 percent to 20 percent. Ragsdale's dismissal of "moral certainty" exemplifies the confusion afflicting mainline churches that belong to RCRC. And it ignores RCRC's own certainty that unrestricted abortion is not only a moral absolute, but a "religious freedom."

Ironically, the RCRC's "religious freedom" argument ultimately undercuts any faith-based social or political advocacy. Is adopting church-supported positions on questions ranging from affirmative action to welfare a denial of religious freedom for persons with other views? If so, the Washington lobby office of every U.S. church should be closed.



Katherine Hancock Ragsdale, an Episcopal priest and president of the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice

IRD

by Mark Tooley

Church Arsons Spark Blame Game

Recent arsons of black churches in the South have ignited accusations within the church. Spokespersons associated with the National Council of Churches (NCC) have blamed the arsons on racism fomented by conservative Christians.

"There is a slippery slide, a fine line between conservative politics, conservative Christians and hate groups in America," declared the Rev. C.T. Vivian of the Atlanta-based Center for Democratic Renewal (CDR). "They have created an atmosphere that allows them to think they can destroy black people and that it will only be winked at."

Vivian's CDR is a close NCC partner in focusing attention on the



U.S. Treasury Secretary Robert Rubin (left) and Mac Charles Jones of the NCC staff at a June 10 press conference in Washington, D.C.

church burnings. Another NCC partner is the New York-based Center for Constitutional Rights (CCR), which has provided legal defense for the Baader-Meinhof gang, the Puerto Rican Socialist Party, and ACT-UP.

The Rev. Mac Charles Jones of the NCC blamed the burnings on a "climate of hostility, violence and racism sweeping the country" linked to "homophobic violence, the militias, presidential politics, talk about welfare reform and the crime bill."

A survey by *USA Today* found that since the start of 1995, there have been 64 arsons at black churches and 80 arsons at white churches in the

South. The National Fire Protection Association reports that 600 U.S. churches suffer arson every year, which is down from 15 years ago, when 1,400 churches were burned.

According to the CDR, there is a "strong connection between church attacks and white supremacist groups." However, of 30 persons arrested so far, only two have been linked to an organized racist group. Twenty were white and 10 were black. Fifteen were juveniles. The *USA Today* investigation of the church burnings ruled out "any possibility of a national or even regional conspiracy."

Still, NCC spokesman Jones has called the burnings "not isolated incidents but rather domestic terrorism and intimidation of whole communities." Jones, along with NCC chief Joan Brown Campbell and

representatives from the CDR and CCR, visited Washington, DC, in mid-June to arouse attention.

In spite of the gratuitous scoring of political points, some good may be pulled from the ashes. The NCC is raising millions of dollars to rebuild burnt black churches. Other

fundraisers include conservative groups such as the Christian Coalition, Southern Baptist Convention, and the National Association of Evangelicals. More money will help build needed local churches; less incendiary rhetoric would build the Church.

NCC Reviews Its Poor Image

The May board meeting of the National Council of Churches featured introspection about the NCC's serious image problems that have persisted since the early 1980's,

when *Sixty Minutes* and *Reader's Digest* exposed the council's leftist politics. "The bruises are still felt," reported an NCC consultant, despite the passage of 13 years.

An NCC communications study showed that the council is widely viewed as a "left-wing version of the Christian Right" minus the influence. According to the report, the NCC "hasn't done a good job expressing itself" and "symbolizes the plight of mainline Protestant denominations with declining memberships."

The report noted that the top ten religion stories of 1995, as determined by national religion reporters, had not included the NCC but did include the evangelical "Promise Keepers" movement for men. NCC consultant Bert Hochman confessed he had never heard of Promise Keepers before. The NCC President-elect, Episcopal Bishop Craig Anderson, responded, "Good for you!" as board members laughed and applauded.

Anderson questioned why the NCC's image was so poor. Tyrone Pitts of the Progressive National Baptist Convention explained, "There is a culture in the U.S. moving toward the right, including the press." Donald Miller of the Church of the Brethren said that in his denomination, "People say we don't believe in Jesus Christ. That we're very left. And that we fund violence. Most of those people aren't well informed."

Hochman observed that columnist Cal Thomas's criticism of the NCC visit with President Clinton last November during the budget crisis had especially "hurt." He lamented that the NCC had been "asleep at the switch." Although not mentioned openly at the board meeting, much of the criticism of the NCC, both in 1983 and today originated with the Institute on Religion and Democracy. "Next time, we'll be ready for you," said NCC Washington office chief Albert Pennybacker to an IRD observer. **IRD**

'Stand For Children'

An Ideological Children's Crusade

They marched across Memorial Bridge into the nation's capital. On their lips was a battle cry, "STAND FOR CHILDREN!" Some marchers carried banners.

Others pushed children in strollers. Many were children themselves—from tiny ones whose T-shirts scraped the ground as they toddled along, to self-conscious teenagers. This was the Stand for Children rally sponsored by the Children's Defense Fund (CDF) on June 1, 1996. The marchers went with the blessing of most of America's old-line Protestant denominations—but not the Roman Catholics or conservative evangelicals.

The media had fondly nicknamed Stand for Children the "children's crusade." Perhaps this was not the wisest choice of metaphors for a rally that had been billed as a non-political show of commitment to children. "Children's crusade" called to mind unfortunate parallels with the original 13th century folly by that name: lofty ideals, passionate intensity, but a tragic lack of moral and practical discernment.

Stand for Children's goal of giving every child "a safe start," "a head start," "a fair start," and "a moral start" seemed an admirable ideal, but how would that goal be achieved? Were our churches endorsing only the ideal, or were they also endorsing a one-sided and possibly misguided vision of how to achieve it?

The ideology behind Stand for Children and its creator, CDF President Marian Wright Edelman, was no secret. An article in *The New Republic* (Feb. 15, 1993) explained that Edelman had founded CDF in 1973 as part of a new strategy to build support for federal social welfare programs. "When you talked about poor people or black people, you faced a shrinking audience," Edelman admitted. Perhaps emphasizing children "might be a very effective way to broaden the base for change."

In her impassioned address at the close of Stand for

Children, Edelman made this broad appeal in the name of children: "While we do not agree on everything, we do agree on one crucial thing: that no one in America should

harm children and that every one of us can do more to ensure our children grow up safe, healthy, and educated in nurturing families and in caring communities."

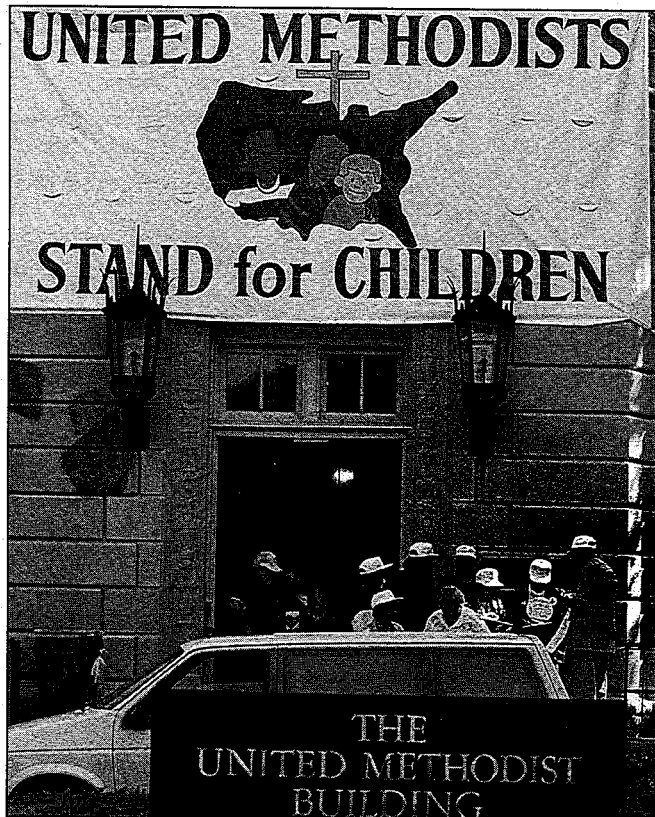
But a partisan edge was palpable just beneath the surface of her speech and many others at the rally. Repeated shots were taken at Republican proposals to cut taxes, stiffen criminal punishments, boost defense spending, and trim the growth of social welfare programs.

Alluding to a phrase from George Bush's inaugural address, Edelman replied fiercely: "We challenge those who claim we have more will than wallet. We have the biggest wallet in the industrialized world but a far smaller will to share it with our children." The implication was that federal spending was the true measure of America's love for its children—more

spending means that we love our children more; less spending means that we love them less.

Edelman denounced "political leaders" who are "destroying our children's health, nutrition, and income safety nets." "Our cup of fairness is exhausted," she said, "by those who say we cannot afford to provide our children health care and their parents a living wage" while they seek "to give tens of billions of new tax breaks for the non-needy and nearly \$7 billion [more] to the Pentagon." Her unstated conclusion: The Republicans in Congress are nasty ogres.

Many churches commended Edelman's march as a modern-day re-enactment of Jesus' blessing upon the children. Among the endorsers of Stand for Children were the National Council of Churches and agencies of the American Baptist Churches, Disciples of Christ, Episcopal Church, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Pres-



United Methodists proclaim solidarity with "Stand for Children" on Capitol Hill.

byterian Church (U.S.A.), Reformed Church in America, United Church of Christ, and United Methodist Church. Other march sponsors ranged from the predictably liberal to the apparently mainstream: Greenpeace, the AFL-CIO, the National Organization for Women, the Gray Panthers, Planned Parenthood, and the Girl Scouts.

More conservative groups were notable by their absence. There were no Catholic bishops who endorsed or appeared at Stand for Children. Nor was there any official representation from the Southern Baptist Convention, the nation's second-largest denomination. Several groups with an obvious interest in children, such as Focus on the Family and the National Fatherhood Initiative, were not invited to participate.

Lack of broad Christian support notwithstanding, Stand for Children "had more of the flavor of a religious revival...than of the typical cause-oriented Washington demonstration," gushed Religion News Service. It had singing; it had prayer; it had preachers. It even had moving testimonies from children whose lives had been changed by someone else caring for them.

But there were some things missing from this revival meeting—which perhaps explain why conservative Christians were so scarce in attendance. For example, the word "sin" was rarely uttered. At a real revival meeting, one expects to be convicted of sin. Not the errors of government policies, but one's own personal sin. There is confession; there is repentance; there is forgiveness. At Stand for Children, however, there was no sense that members of the audience might have sinned against *their own* children. There was not even a mild call for "personal accountability" with regard to scourges such as illegitimacy, divorce, and absence of fathers from the home.

This was "standing for children on the cheap," commented IRD president Diane Knippers. It was asking the government to guarantee the basic needs of children. It did not challenge parents to take responsibility for their own children.

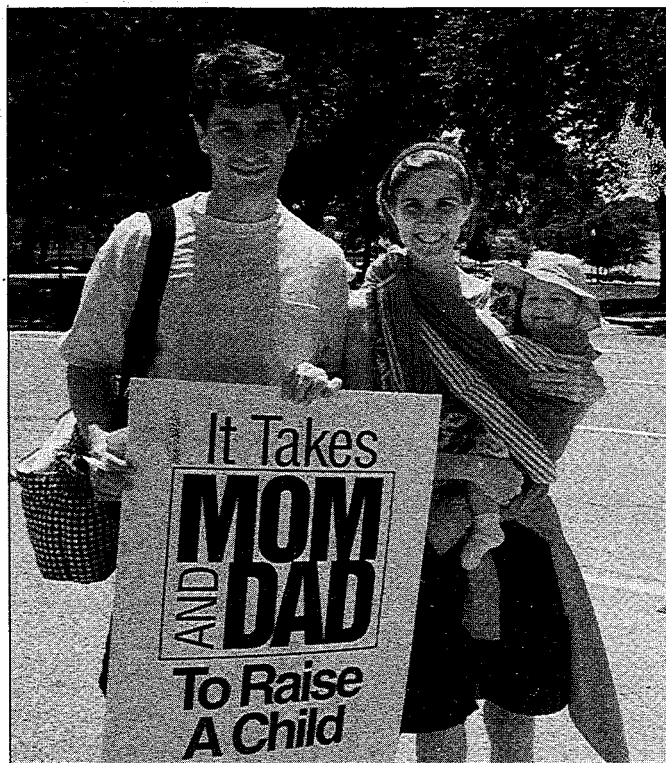
Another ideological blind spot had to do with *which* children the marchers were defending. Edelman recited a litany of statistics on child suffering—infant mortality, child abuse, and deaths by gunfire. She asked, "What has happened to us that the killing of children has become routine and is increasing?" Yet she never connected this concern to the problem of abortion.

Sadly, the church portion of the rally was not much different. The United Methodist Church, the Episcopal Church, and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) each offered a worship service on the morning of June 1. Church leaders, who are swift to make moral judgments about Congress, held their tongues about parents' actions that harm their own children. An opportunity was missed to declare the transforming power of Jesus Christ to bind up our broken families—a power that neither government programs nor volunteer efforts can match.

Instead, the church leaders joined CDF's ideological crusade. In the Presbyterian service, Eileen Lindner of the NCC staff spoke harshly of those who criticized the CDF and its favored federal programs: "There is a meanness in our land, born of fear, ... a self-centered narrowness."

But is this the meanness that harms children? Jonetta Rose Barras, a columnist in *The Washington Times* (May 31, 1996), didn't think so. "The evil visited upon most of America's children isn't borne by the policies or programs of the federal government," Barras wrote. "The government didn't drive Susan Smith's children into the water.... The government didn't stuff the mouth of 23-month old Bridgette Davis with a sock, seal it with tape and store her in a closet, where she later died.... No, Bridgette's dad and his girlfriend did that." Such evil finds its annihilation only in the Cross.

Christians may disagree about which government pro-



A handful of counter-demonstrators highlighted a different kind of "stand for children."

grams are most effective in helping children. But we must not forget a truth expressed by child psychologist Urie Bronfenbrenner: What children need most—more than government programs—is the "irrational emotional attachment" of parents who love them fiercely. It is the same irrational emotional attachment that Christians find in the God who loves us fiercely and wants to change our hearts. That love—not any ideological crusade of left or right—is the Church's truest message.

IRD

by Faith J. H. McDonnell

More World Than Church?

Can Christians practice animal sacrifice and ancestor worship while remaining faithful to their Lord? This question was debated at the annual gathering of the World Council of Churches' (WCC) U.S. Conference, held May 29-30 in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. Over 150 leaders of U.S. denominations that belong to the controversial WCC met to discuss the latest trends within the liberal ecumenical movement.

One seminar at the meeting included a WCC film called "Diverse Cultures, One Gospel." In it, Filipino villagers sacrifice a pig so that the tribal priestess can examine its entrails and determine the will of deceased ancestors. "We cannot just throw away our culture," explains the priestess about her nominally Catholic people.

The villagers celebrate a "people's mass," in which they hear a "political and economic message" that will inspire their "struggle for liberation" against Taiwanese developers.

As if replying to objections to this admixture of paganism and politics into the Gospel, the narrator asks provocatively, "Can we speak of a *pure* Gospel?" In a later scene, a Russian priest supplies the answer: "People who insist on a pure Gospel have hang-ups. But others are prepared for unity."

In a group discussion after the film among the 30 viewers, a Hispanic pastor implied that he was troubled that the animal sacrifice was portrayed as acceptable for Christians. Several participants protested his negative reaction. "How do you know if it's pagan or not?" asked Nancy Ferriani, an Episcopal priest and a director of the WCC's U.S. Conference.

"I do not say it is pagan," the pastor replied. "But the pig doesn't create for me any religious feelings." WCC staffer Penelope Caytap, a member of the same Filipino tribe seen in the film, defended the animal sacrifice and ancestor worship: "We practice that because it's part of our culture. The priest looks at the innards of the pig to check if it's healthy. The ancestors require a perfect pig."

"All Gospel is shaped by culture," agreed Michael Bos, a Reformed Church pastor in Texas. "We can only discover the Gospel by dialogue about our experiences." Throughout the discussion, no one dared to argue for the exclusive truth claims of Christianity.

Critics of the WCC have long complained that the ecumenical council of 330 denominations has rejected Christian evangelism in favor of interfaith dialogue and religious pluralism. This particular meeting of the WCC's U.S. Conference, whose theme was "One Gospel, Many Cultures," reinforced those perceptions. But WCC General Secretary Konrad Raiser denied the charge.

"Our attitude is one of mutual respect between people of different faith convictions," said Raiser in an interview with an IRD representative. "We need to be able to affirm our religious convictions, which could include calling others into discipleship. This is true for all religious faiths. None of the communities would see dialogue precluding outreach beyond our own community."

But Jesus Christ was never portrayed at the WCC meeting as uniquely Lord. Referring to the Bible's use of boats to represent God's grace, Raiser remarked: "God is not only in the ship. He is also in the sea. It is a false dichotomy that the sea is evil and that we must rescue people from the sea. How else

can we understand salvation?"

WCC Deputy General Secretary Wesley Ariarajah elaborated: "Christian theology has always been approached as if there is only one God. This is now a problem." Advocating "mutual enrichment" among different faiths, he added, "There is so much good in other religious traditions."

Donald Miller, of the Church of the Brethren, admitted that there is a "huge controversy" in his denomination about interfaith dialogue. "Faiths must encounter one another. But it's not the way people [in our churches] are thinking." Another participant remarked that "conservatives get upset about dialogue with witches and Zoroastrians."

"It's so wonderful," said United Methodist Harvard professor Diane Eck about the World Parliament of Religions held several years ago. She regretted that many mainline churches "shrunk" from participating. "I guess they didn't want to appear next to pagans and wiccans." Eck commended a partnership between a mosque and a United Methodist congregation to construct a worship center in California, as an example of "good news."

The Swiss-based WCC desperately needs more sup-

1994 Contributions to the World Council of Churches	
Disciples of Christ	\$501,854
Episcopal Church	\$265,561
Evangelical Lutheran	\$278,932
Presbyterian Church	\$1,797,118
United Church of Christ	\$321,373
United Methodist	\$1,151,026

porters at the local church level. It expects its income to fall \$7.5 million next year, for an annual budget in 1997 of \$78.3 million. The Swiss currency's inflated value was blamed, but member denominations have not moved to rescue the WCC from its dire financial straits. Raiser said that the staff level, which currently stands at 270 in Geneva, has fallen 30 percent since 1991.

The WCC's political stances, as much as its theology, may have contributed to its funding problems. The WCC's support during the 1970's and 1980's for Marxist "liberation" movements was a special flashpoint. But Raiser said the WCC had no apologies.

"Both councils [the WCC and the U.S. National Council of Churches] engaged in programs committed to social change and were accused of being fellow travelers [of communists]," Raiser told a luncheon audience. "Our critics are defenders of the status quo that we seek to change. Of course you expose yourself to criticism when you work for change. The criticism is correct. We shouldn't be ashamed of the criticism." The conference's 150 attendees applauded enthusiastically.

Raiser said the WCC has no public relations strategy to improve its image, but he added, "Maybe it should have." Raiser expects the member denominations to defend the WCC: "If the WCC is attacked, then implicitly the member churches are being attacked. They have primary responsibility."

The WCC's often uncritical stance towards communism during the Cold War entailed virtual silence about persecuted Christians under Marxist regimes. It was in a similarly cautious vein that Raiser described the current situation for Christians in communist China.

"I am not aware of any generalized persecution of Christians in China, but there are severe limitations," said Raiser. He blamed those limitations mostly on local officials rather than national leaders.

The WCC general secretary also downplayed Chinese repression of Bible smugglers. He rebuked the smugglers for "conscious violation of existing regulations" and said their imprisonment had been "blown up as evidence of persecution."

Raiser defended the WCC's dialogue with Islamist extremists who have persecuted Christian minorities. "The Western perception of Islamic fundamentalists is lacking in discrimination," said Raiser, who described a "broad spectrum of nuances" among Muslims who want to enforce *Sharia* (Islamic Law) on their nations.

The WCC is not attempting to criticize militant Islam, Raiser pledged, but to "understand" it. (Here Raiser misunderstands the objections of groups like the IRD, who are much more offended by the WCC's fawning dialogue with extremist regimes in Sudan, Libya, and Iran than we would be by conversations with more moderate Muslim authorities in Turkey or Pakistan.)

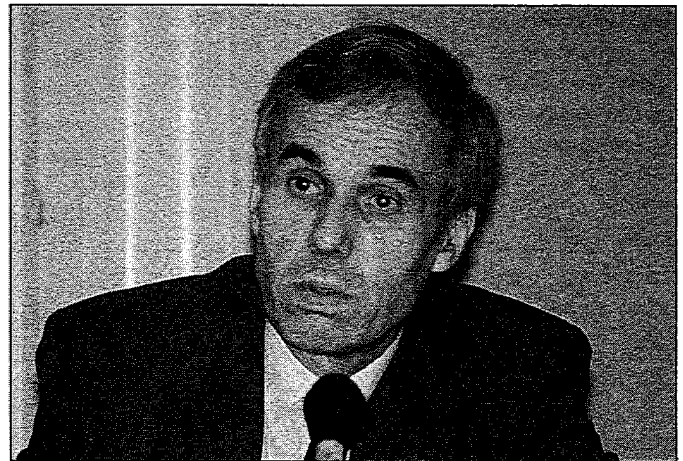
WCC Deputy General Secretary Mary Ann Lundy, the former senior Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) official who was forced to resign after her involvement in the 1993 Re-Imagining Conference, spoke about "violence against women" at the conference. Her subsequent quick employment by the WCC prompted fears that the council would champion goddess theology.

In 1994 Raiser himself had commended the Re-Imagining Conference, calling it one of the "most ecumenical meetings held in this country in a long while." He also insisted that it contained "nothing outrageous." In Winston-Salem, he defended the WCC's promotion of radical feminist theology as merely an effort to "strengthen the role and voice of women in church and society."

Although the WCC is comprised primarily of mainline and Orthodox denominations, Raiser promised outreach to evangelical churches. But he regretted that "many [of them] share a fundamentalist understanding of the relativist stances of the WCC."

Those so-called "fundamentalist" movements are growing explosively in the Third World. Meanwhile, the historic Protestant churches of Europe and North America that have comprised the core of the WCC are suffering severe membership hemorrhages.

Raiser dismissed membership drops as "not an ecumenical issue"—an astonishing claim given the fact that modern ecumenism was rooted in an evangelistic missions



Konrad Raiser, WCC General Secretary, has no apologies for WCC's support of Marxist "liberation" movements.

movement. But as the WCC churches form an increasingly smaller portion of the world's Christians, church members should examine why the WCC is in such a slump. A return to classical Christian beliefs upon which the ecumenical movement was founded is more likely to revive the flagging WCC than any number of pig sacrifices or prayers to deceased ancestors.

IRD

by Mark Tooley



Christians Persecuted in Turkey

I'll admit it. My husband and I decided to vacation in Turkey because it was cheaper than Italy or Greece. What we didn't know was that we would get a stunning introduction to the precarious position of the early Christian Church—and discover the sobering parallel to the church in Turkey today. It was a reminder that even a vacation becomes an opportunity to act as a "global Christian."

Turkey is filled with contrasts. It is part European and part Asian. It is a secular democracy, but human rights, including religious freedom, are all-too-often abused. Once the center of Christendom, its population is now over 99 percent Muslim and the newly elected government is Islamist.

Christians number some 100,000 in all of Turkey, about 90 percent of whom are Orthodox. Most of the remaining are Catholic, and only a few hundred are Protestant.

Evangelical Protestants suffered a crackdown in 1988, when some 80 believers were arrested or investigated. In the end, the episode may have been a blessing in disguise. There were four formal trials against Turkish and expatriate believers. All were acquitted, with some of the cases winning strongly worded verdicts that further reinforced constitutional civil rights for Turkish religious minorities. Today, the main shopping district of Istanbul boasts an open Christian bookstore.

But in spite of their legal rights, Christians are monitored and sometimes harassed. For example, an expatriate Korean Christian was arrested in April for distributing Bibles at the Istanbul airport.

The situation of the Orthodox Christians is particularly poignant. Istanbul was once the capital of the Byzantine empire, boasting some of the most wondrous Christian art and architecture in the world. These churches, where they still exist, are now largely "museums."

The Greek Orthodox patriarch in Istanbul is recognized by Orthodox world-wide as the Ecumenical Patriarch,

the "first see" of Eastern Orthodoxy. The Turkish government, however, recognizes the Patriarch's authority only over the relatively small Greek Orthodox Christian community within Turkey. The disagreement leads to perennial conflicts over property, international diplomacy, and even procedures for electing the patriarch.

Even finding the Ecumenical Patriarchate was a challenge. Consulting guidebooks didn't work; at last a journalist friend led us there, allowing us to attend the Sunday service and visit with officials. Our discussion with Orthodox leaders ranged from Christian-Muslim relations to Orthodox discomfort over the theology expressed at the last assembly of the World Council of Churches.

A priority concern for the Orthodox is the need for theological education. The major Orthodox seminary, Halki Theological School, was founded in 1844 under the Muslim

Ottoman empire and is located on Heybeli Island just an hour's ferry ride from Istanbul. It was closed by the Turkish government in 1971 by national legislation and a constitutional court decision that closed down all private institutions of higher education. Since then, other private institutions have been allowed to operate, but the government continues to delay action on the Orthodox seminary.

The most spectacular site we visited in Turkey was the ruin of ancient Ephesus, today the third largest Roman ruin in the world. We explored the remains of buildings, and climbed the 20,000-seat stadium. Everywhere were signs of the pagan religious commitments of the Ephesians—from the statue of Sophia at the library to the remains of the enormous Temple to Artemis, one of the seven wonders of the ancient world.

The early Christians at Ephesus were sometimes tolerated, sometimes violently abused, always vulnerable in their precarious political and cultural environment. Visiting Turkey today, one is haunted by the parallel plight of contemporary Turkish Christians.



IRD President Diane Knippers meets with the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I, left, and Armenian Patriarch Karekin II, center, at a Lenten reception hosted by the Armenian patriarchate in Istanbul.

IRD
by Diane Knippers

Churches Help Ship Computers To Cuba

A hunger strike by pro-Castro clergy has yielded a shipment of computers to Cuba. The standoff between Pastors for Peace and the U.S. Treasury Department ended May 24 when various oldline church agencies volunteered to ship the computers legally on behalf of Pastors for Peace.

Humanitarian aid for non-government groups in Cuba is legal with a Treasury Department permit. But Pastors for Peace deliberately violated the law by refusing to apply for a permit and by trying to send the computers to the Cuban government's Health Ministry. This disobedience was a protest against U.S. sanctions against Castro's communist regime.

On January 31, Pastors for Peace leader Lucius Walker and 100 other religious activists arrived at the U.S.-Mexico border with the 300 contra-band computers. Scuffles broke out



Joan Brown Campbell and Thom White Wolf Fassett offer support at pro-Cuban press conference.

when the activists tried to race across the border with the equipment. Federal agents arrested them and confiscated the computers. After his release, Walker and several other activists began a 3 month hunger strike. They camped in the United Methodist Building on Capitol Hill.

On May 2, congressional and church supporters spoke at a Washington press conference to back their cause. "Our government has pursued a

policy of death toward Cuba for half of my lifetime," said Walker. National Council of Churches General Secretary Joan Brown Campbell termed the embargo on Cuba an "inhuman blockage" imposed for domestic political reasons. She asked President Clinton to move the nation "beyond retribution" by following the guidance of Jesus Christ. United Methodist, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and Episcopal



INTERNATIONAL BRIEFS

spokesmen offered support for Walker.

At a May 10 press conference, Walker contrasted "Cuba's example of good will to its own people" to the "outpouring of hatred, abuse and violence by our own government against us." He claimed that federal agents had spent over \$1 million to employ 1,000 personnel to "break the back" of Pastors for Peace.

"The U.S. is committed not to democracy but to the destruction of democracy," said Walker. He blasted "right-wing Cubans" who left their homeland to live in Cuba's enemy (the United States). Unlike exiled Cubans, Walker said he would remain in his native country, despite the "hegemony and abuse of power" by the U.S. government.

On May 24, the Treasury Department agreed to release the computers to United Methodist official Thom White Wolf Fassett, who is working to send the computers to Cuban clinics.

Holy Land Fence Denounced

Earlier this year, after three car bombs from Hamas terrorists killed nearly 50 Israelis within a week, Israel announced plans to build a security fence to separate Israel from West Bank Palestinian communities. Church officials soon condemned the fence.

In a letter to President Clinton, Joe Hale, general secretary of the World Methodist Council, expressed his distress that innocent people "who have nothing to do with the terrorist acts committed by the radical few are suffering collective punishment at the hands of the Israeli government."

Hale cited reports that a \$100 million U.S. grant to assist Israel will be used to build a fence in the Holy Land. "Having just returned from South Africa, where apartheid is being dismantled, such divisions in the Holy Land, in my judgment, spell disaster for peace. Could our government consider a similar grant to help care for the 50,000 Palestinian men now kept away from their jobs in the West Bank?" he wrote.

Joan Brown Campbell, NCC general secretary, also expressed concern about the effects of Israel's fence on the Palestinians, which she called an act of "indiscriminate violence." She wrote, "The silence of the U.S. administration in the face of the suffering of the Palestinian populace is both regrettable and puzzling."

Campbell was troubled by U.S. financial and technical support for the fence to protect Israeli civilians. "In an era when we celebrate the dismantling of walls, it seems both anachronistic and short-sighted, not to mention contrary to agreements that have been signed, for our government to participate in such a venture," she said. Neither Campbell nor Hale suggested alternative ways for Israel to guard against terrorist attacks.



RELIGIOUS
FREEDOM

U.S. Pleads Limited Influence in Kuwait

'Apostate' Driven into Hiding

When President George Bush sent U.S. troops to Kuwait nearly six years ago after the Iraqi invasion, he described the battle as one of "human dignity and freedom versus tyranny and oppression." Today, many observers say the fight for those ideals continues—but now, within Kuwaiti society itself.

Hussein Qambar Ali has been on the front lines of the battle. On May 29, an Islamic court in Kuwait City convicted Hussein of apostasy because of his conversion from Islam to Christianity.

Because this is the first apostasy conviction in modern Kuwait, it is unclear what punishment Hussein might face. In fact, apostasy is not even an explicit crime under Kuwait's legal system, although the constitution stipulates that *Sharia* (Islamic law) is the basis for all Kuwaiti laws. Some Islamic societies, including Iran and Saudi Arabia, interpret *Sharia* to mandate the death penalty for apostates.

According to local press reports, the religious court recommended that Hussein, who uses the Christian name Robert, be killed for abandoning Islam. Hussein says he fears individuals will take this as official permission to murder him. He has received several death threats and remains in hiding. On September 15, he faces a hearing to appeal his case.

Hussein made his conversion public last December during a custody dispute with his estranged wife. He told Kuwaiti newspapers that she was refusing to let him visit his two children because he had embraced Christianity. After the interviews were published, three lawyers filed a private suit charging Hussein with apostasy.

In the West, Hussein's case has been followed with varying degrees of interest. There has been some media coverage, and several religious liberty advocates have taken up Hussein's cause. In a letter to U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher, the Charlottesville-based Rutherford Institute urged "immediate intervention" on Hussein's behalf. "The time for rhetoric is now over, this is literally a matter of life and death," said Rutherford President John Whitehead.

Several members of Congress have also written let-

ters to Kuwaiti officials urging that Hussein's personal safety and human rights be guaranteed. In a June 14 letter to Shaikh Saad Al-Sabah, Kuwait's Crown Prince and Prime Minister, 48 members of Congress expressed "surprise and disappointment" over the apostasy verdict.

"Many Americans who enthusiastically supported the liberation of Kuwait are puzzled and outraged at this infringement of a Kuwaiti citizen's constitutional rights," the letter stated. The letter urged Kuwait to issue a public statement affirming Hussein's constitutional right to practice "the religion of his choice." A diverse coalition from liberal Patrick Kennedy (D-R.I.) to conservative Robert Dornan (R-Calif.) signed the letter.

To date, mainline church leaders have been less visible. United Methodist, Episcopal and Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) officials contacted by IRD said they were either unfamiliar with the case or unable to provide any comment at this time.

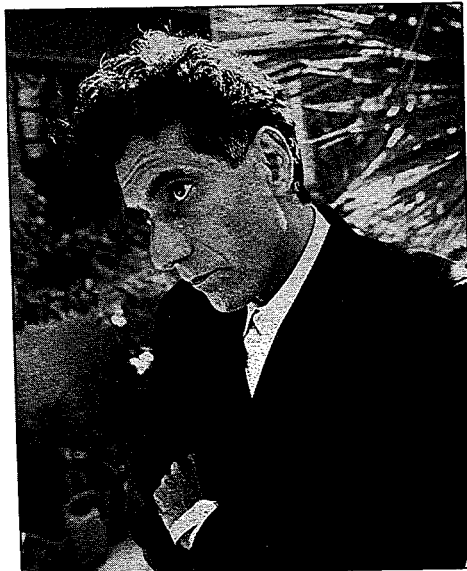
The U.S. State Department says

it has been monitoring the case and will raise the issue during ongoing human rights talks with Kuwait. However, in a press statement, a State Department official added that there was only so much the United States could do, because Hussein is not a U.S. citizen.

But basic human rights have no borders. That's exactly why there are international standards guaranteeing universal human rights, including the right to practice religion. The Kuwaiti Constitution itself recognizes that "freedom of belief is absolute."

Nearly six years ago, Americans sent their sons and daughters to Kuwait in the name of defending freedom and democracy. We not only have a stake in ensuring that people like Robert Hussein have the freedom to practice their religion in Kuwait—we've earned the right to say something when that right is not enforced.

The IRD is encouraging churches and individuals to call or write their members of Congress and urge the U.S. government to take a stand forcefully on this. We need to let Kuwait—and indeed all nations—know that the United States cares about religious liberty, not just for Americans, but for all people.



Robert Hussein, 44, was declared "apostate" after his public conversion from Islam to Christianity.

IRD



Over the Multicultural Rainbow

The theme of a major National Council of Churches' study this year is "Living in a Multicultural Society." The study includes two books and related leaders' guides and videos. We asked Robert Royal, the vice president of the Ethics and Public Policy Center, to review these materials.

The movement known as multiculturalism has lost a bit of steam in the secular world, but it seems to be finding a belated audience in our churches. For those not already familiar with the term, it is important to understand what multiculturalism is not. Though some people use it to mean something like an updated version of the American pluralism, for many more it is a radical effort to redefine the very notion of an American nation. The old pluralism emphasized that we were *E pluribus unum*, one nation forged out of many. The new multiculturalist creed was expressed a few years ago by Vice President Gore who mistranslated the American motto as "Out of one, many." For an America already suffering from a badly worn social fabric, such movements toward separation and fragmentation can only divide us even further.

These two workbooks, published by Friendship Press, demonstrate the heart of the problem. In *All Quite Beautiful*, a workbook for children by N. Lynne Westfield, a great deal of emphasis is placed on the fact that "The world's people come in different races, sexes, cultures, and religions." Children read stories intended to encourage them to accept people with different names, to make efforts to understand people with difficult accents, to recognize the various religious festivals celebrated by the major religions. There are even recipes—for everything from tea parties and cornbread to red beans and rice—that make dealing with diversity into fun activities. All of this is quite useful, particularly in settings where kids from widely divergent backgrounds find themselves together in one classroom. Children should not only be taught tolerance toward another, but fundamental appreciation and respect.

The problem, however, is not what is included, but what is left out. If this workbook were merely aimed at children in a public school, it would convey the kind of welcome that a pluralistic society like America extends to all who arrive here legally. But coming from an explicitly Christian organization, the implicit message that all religions are merely different ways of worshipping the same God is both a neglect of Christian witness and subtle patronizing of other faiths. Christianity, in this presentation, is merely another story alongside many

others. Other cultures, too, present no problems such as caste systems, the subordination of women, or dubious religious beliefs. Instead, everyone is pictured as part of a harmonious and colorful mosaic—something not even true of our own country let alone the wide variety of nations around the world.

The picture, alas, is not much better when we turn to the adult workbook, *First We Must Listen: Living in a Multicultural Society*, edited by Anne Leo Ellis. Ellis notes that there are increasing numbers of Hispanics and Asians in modern American society, but her belief that this must force us to recognize multiculturalism is premature. Most of the immigrants, like those from previous waves, are trying and succeeding in entering mainstream American society. By contrast, the path advocated here sees that result as undesirable. The "dominant European majority" is vilified, as if European culture were not the reason we are tolerant of various ethnic groups and religions. African Americans, Native Americans, and even Pacific Islanders are encouraged to become distinct sub-cultures. Nor does it stop there: we are told we have to recognize that "within each of these groups there are further national/tribal/ethnic allegiances."

The vision presented here, for all its claims at inclusiveness, is of an endless fragmenting of our culture along the same tribal divisions (but now also including gender) that have been one of the principal sources of war and human mistreatment of other human beings throughout the ages.

"Exclusion" seems to be the principal sin among Christians in these books. But while a Christian must welcome the foreigner, it is not clear that the best way to do so is by keeping him as different and marginal as possible. The advocates of multiculturalism rightly point to the need to help the newcomer; they do not recognize the danger that encouraging ethnic particularisms poses to the very people they are trying to help.

The very language of this book is telling. America is described as still "dominated by European culture" as if this were an obvious imposture soon to be corrected.

If these two volumes were merely a plea for churches to be more understanding and welcoming of people of different backgrounds, that would be fine. But what they are really mostly about is using difference to extort power. Christians dealing with such materials should be careful to first arm themselves with the ancient Christian tool: the discernment of spirits. **IRD**

by Robert Royal



Where Have All the Fathers Gone?

An Interview with Wade F. Horn

INTERVIEW

Wade F. Horn, is the Director of the National Fatherhood Initiative, 600 Eden Road, Bldg. E, Lancaster, PA 17601 (phone: 717-581-8860). IRD President Diane Knippers addressed the NFI's Interfaith Summit on Fatherhood this spring, and later conducted this interview with Dr. Horn.

Q Why a National *Fatherhood* Initiative?

A The most disturbing trend of our time is the dramatic increase in the number of children living in father-absent families. In 1960, the number of children living in father-absent families was 8 million. Today, that number stands at over *23 million*.

The consequences of father absence are profound. Children growing up without fathers are significantly more likely to be suspended or expelled from school, to be treated for an emotional or behavioral problem, commit suicide as adolescents, and be victims of child abuse and neglect. These data indicate that if we are ever going to improve the well-being of children, we will have to ensure that more children grow up with an involved and responsible father.

Q But isn't it enough for a child to have a good mother? What difference do fathers make?

A Mothers and fathers tend to parent differently. Mothers tend to be more verbal with their children, whereas fathers are more physical. Mothers also tend to encourage caution, whereas fathers are more challenging of achievement and independence. And mothers tend to be more powerful nurturant figures and fathers stronger disciplinarians. It is not that one parenting style is better than the other, but that for optimal development children need both.

Q What kinds of things does NFI do to try to reverse this trend?

A We have a three-part strategy. First, we are highlighting the importance of fathers through public education campaigns. For example, we have recently released a series of television, radio, and print ads to heighten the public's awareness of the unique and irreplaceable contributions fathers make to the well-being of their children, and the need to do more to encourage and support men to be good and responsible fathers.

Second, we are organizing coalitions of national and local leaders committed to creating a culture that supports responsible fatherhood. In October of 1994, we convened the first-ever National Summit of Fatherhood

at which several hundred of our nation's civic, business, and philanthropic leaders gathered to begin building a national consensus that something must be done quickly to reduce father absence. We are now working with such national civic organizations as United Way of America and the Boys and Girls Clubs of America to utilize their existing networks to stimulate local voluntary efforts to make our communities more father friendly.

Finally, we have developed resource materials to help men become better fathers, encourage employers to institute workplace practices that allow their employees time to be better fathers, and assist local communities in developing father friendly neighborhoods.

Q What is the role of the religious community in countering this problem?

A Each week, millions of men, women, and children participate in organized religious activities. This contact offers the church exciting opportunities to promote the importance of fatherhood, establish outreach efforts to help men understand what it means to be a good father, and provide male role models to children growing up in fatherless households.

Q You are a member of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). What response do you get from your church or other mainline churches?

A Noted religious scholar Don Browning of the University of Chicago recently observed, "In my circles, this problem isn't understood or talked about at all. It's not that we are afraid to talk about sex. We talk about abortion and homosexuality, and these are important. But we don't talk much about fathers or mothers or children, outside of discussion of welfare."

He's correct. Many mainline churches neglect the subject of fatherhood, except perhaps for one Sunday in June. Few mainline churches have incorporated into their central mission aggressive outreach to fathers. It is our hope that we can help stimulate discussion within the mainline churches about how they can be more supportive and encouraging of responsible fatherhood.

To that end, we recently hosted an Interfaith Summit on Fatherhood, the purpose of which was to heighten further the awareness of the growing problem of father absence, discuss what can be done by churches and other religious institutions to strengthen fathers and families, and work towards an ecumenical public effort to promote responsible fatherhood.

IRD



FROM THE PEWS

Why We Stay United Methodist

Why do we stay in the United Methodist Church? How often we have asked that question! Over 2,500,000 of our members, sad and disillusioned, have already left the UM Church in less than 30 years. It's easy to list reasons to join this exodus:

- ◆ The UM Church is deeply divided. United Methodists are now two churches within the shell of one denomination, separated by a chasm of conscience.
- ◆ During the recent UM General Conference in Denver, 15 of our bishops publicly approved of homosexual behavior and rejected Christian sexual morality.
- ◆ The UM General Board of Church and Society (GBCS) uses the church to promote its far-left political bias. One example: The board's general secretary recently defended "partial-birth abortions," a euphemism for infanticide.
- ◆ The UM Women's Division promoted the 1993 "Re-Imagining (goddess worship) Conference" that repeatedly trashed Christian beliefs. In spite of protests by faithful United Methodist Women, the UM Women's Division still refuses to apologize.
- ◆ Most UM seminaries are infected with neo-paganism, absolute relativism, sexual permissiveness, political correctness, class-warfare analysis, and deconstruction of the Bible.

Our denomination is gravely ill. Then why don't we leave?

First, we have no right to abandon the church we love (Dave's lifelong church home, and Jean's for 48 years) unless God gives us a clear signal. Several times we have returned home from UM conferences discouraged. But we believe God is leading us to stay and work for UM reform. We see real reasons for hope:

"God is the ruler yet." If God has a future use for the UM Church, He will find ways to renew it. The Holy Spirit is alive, well, and working.

Millions of United Methodists remain faithful Christians who serve God. They ignore UM officials' attempt to conform the faith to the culture. Thousands of local UM churches are making disciples. They preach the Gospel and stand firmly for personal and social holiness.

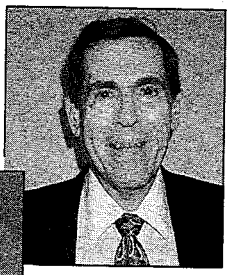
Exciting, effective Christian ministries are spreading across the UM Church—for example, Disciple Bible Study, Volunteers in Mission, Walk to Emmaus, Marriage Encounter, the Foundation for Evangelism (providing professors of evangelism for UM seminaries), and Promise Keepers. Asbury Theological Seminary, an independent Wesleyan school, produces more UM pastors than any UM seminary.

The UM Church reform and renewal movement is growing. The Confessing Movement, Good News, Re-

new (Evangelical Coalition for United Methodist Women), Transforming Congregations, LifeWatch, Mission Society for United Methodists, UMAction (the UM section of IRD) and others are bringing hope.

There is growing enthusiasm for UMAction's Reform Agenda for United Methodists: to require all UM agencies and seminaries to affirm classical Christianity; firmly support Christian sexual morality; adopt term limits for bishops; abolish apportionments on local churches; give laity two-thirds of the votes in church decision-making bodies; stop the use of UM agencies for partisan politics and reduce the church bureaucracy.

The General Conference strongly reaffirmed the UM stand that homosexual practice is "incompatible with Christian teaching." Meanwhile, the growing UM Transforming Congregations movement offers love, hope, and healing to homosexuals through the transforming power of Christ.



David and Jean Leu Stanley chair the IRD's UMAction committee

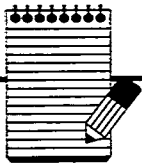
The reform movement has an ultimate weapon that we are reluctant to use but may be unavoidably necessary. An organized, church-wide withholding campaign is becoming a live possibility. More United Methodists are saying we must prayerfully consider this action; withholding money may be the way to make the bureaucracy listen.

Because we don't know how this struggle will end, we need to remain—and ask all faithful United Methodists to stick together within our troubled denomination—so God will have the largest possible group of faithful UM reformers to use as He chooses. We respect our many friends who have left the UM Church. But each who leaves will reduce by one person the strength of the UM reform movement.

We do offer these questions: Can God still use us for His purposes within the UMC? Do we need to pray for patience? Shouldn't we stay and work with evangelicals in our church, rather than abandon them? This struggle won't be easy. But our Lord never promised that His way would be. He did tell us Who wins in the end. For that reason, above all, we have hope and we are staying in the United Methodist Church.

IRD

by David M. and Jean Leu Stanley



IRD DIARY

In Church, Too, Personnel is Policy

The Rev. Dr. John Rodgers, former dean of Trinity Episcopal School for Ministry, is a member of the Board of Directors of the Institute on Religion and Democracy. He and IRD president Diane Knippers have also both recently been elected to the board of the American Anglican Council—a new umbrella organization for renewal in the Episcopal Church.

A year from this July, the Episcopal Church will choose a new presiding bishop for the next 9 years. Other denominations and local churches, likewise, are filling crucial offices all the time. How shall we then choose?

The Thesis

Sometimes people act as if all they need is a *capable* candidate for church office. They speak as if the *character and convictions* of a person are a matter of little consequence. All of the evidence stands against such naiveté.

No person is without his or her world-view: an understanding of what is real, how the world works, what is right and good, etc. One's deepest convictions and presuppositions will greatly influence how one goes about one's work, how one treats one's colleagues, and the direction of one's leadership.

Confirmation

I recently was talking with a consultant who advises large corporations about filling various positions. He said that there is a pattern of performance in a person, shaped by her or his passions, desires and assumptions. No matter what the job description calls for, the person will do the job in accord with his or her past performance pattern and will adjust the job description to fit the pattern, often unconsciously.

Thus, it is important to determine the convictions, qualities, and skills which would be important in a leader. Then it is necessary to see if the candidates have

demonstrated those characteristics in their own performance patterns.

Christian Leadership

The above is also true of Christian leadership – lay and clergy. Each position of leadership in the Body of Christ has its own profile of required characteristics. But, I believe that there are certain convictions and qualities which are important in *all* leadership positions in the Church.

We live in a secular culture with little place for God, prayer, supernatural surprises, or revealed truth. While there is plenty of room for Christians to discuss how the truths of the Christian faith can be stated and applied in the contemporary scene, the basic affirmations of the faith are clear. *A crucial conviction for Christian leadership is that God's truth is*

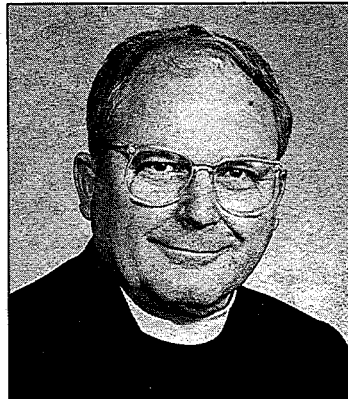
available and matters—and that we are to test our understandings of the truth in prayer and together in the light of the Holy Scriptures.

A leader who shares this conviction will lead in a different direction than someone who finds in Jesus merely an example of important values, but who does not believe in the truth and authority of the Holy Scripture. We need leaders who live in and under the word of God Incarnate and Written.

A crucial quality for Christian leadership is servanthood. "The Son of man came not to be served but to serve and to give His life a ransom for many." Here is a humility and passion which stands at the heart of all true and effective Christian leadership. We need leaders with such a passionate humility—to share the love of God in Christ by meeting earthly needs and by the sharing of the Gospel. They cannot lead us where they themselves have not gone before. You cannot separate person and leadership. In the end, "personnel is policy."

IRD

by John Rodgers



John Rodgers



The Institute on Religion and Democracy

1521 16th Street., N.W., #300
Washington, DC 20036

