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The Institute on Religion and Democracy

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Author, Former Missionary in Zaire

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Executive Director, the Land Council

MEMORANDUM

November 1, 1983

TO: IRD Board Members, Advisors and Friends

FROM: Penn Kemble

I'm sending along some things that you may find interesting.

- 1) A page one Wall Street Journal report on the dispute some church leaders are conducting with the AFL-CIO, and a letter on this Ed Robb and I sent to Tom Donahue, the chief AFL-CIO representative in the Religion and Labor Conference. While the sources of this controversy go well beyond the IRD, we seem to have turned up in the center of it.
- 2) A report on an IRD letter to corporate offices which appeared in Religious News Service. Mr. Thorkelson's invocation of South Africa must have given Joe McCarthy a chuckle, wherever he may be. Also enclosed is my letter to Thorkelson, which I hope was appropriate. Richard Neuhaus's article for the U.S. Council for International Business sets forward a perspective on the church - business debate which is very useful for a coalition group such as the IRD.
- 3) Father Theodore Purcell has given me his permission to send you correspondence he had with Timothy Smith of the Inter-faith Center on Corporate Responsibility (please don't publish it). The IRD has never said anything about the ICCR, but Smith's letter, written in a familiarly abusive style, is probably more eloquent than anything we could devise.

(OVER)

(202) 822-8627

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- 4) The November Harper's included the enclosed phillipic against Richard Neuhaus. It seems that every rising star who challenges the left comes in for one of these. It should also be clear why Philip Weiss is the associate editor of a weekly newspaper in Minneapolis.
- 5) Next, an exchange between Ed Robb and William P. Thompson from U.S. News & World Report. Thompson seems to be coming forward as the champion of the church Left - evidence, perhaps, that the NCC's Jim Armstrong doesn't thirst after the job. Ed and Bill Thompson will debate on a Shavano Institute program being broadcast over PBS in January. Those of us who attended the taping expect that it will be an invigorating hour.
- 6) The National Association of Evangelicals carried a discussion article on the NAE-NCC controversy in the Fall issue of their magazine. We are hoping to develop a close working relationship with them in the religious liberty field.
- 7) Finally, a Washington Post article on the event at which Father Bryan Hehir received the Institute for Policy Studies' Letelier-Moffitt Award. This has aroused much discussion, because of Father Hehir's central role in the international affairs section of the United States Catholic Conference. To be sure, Letelier and Moffitt were brutally murdered. But were they really "human rights activists"? Would Father Hehir have accepted the Larry McDonald Award from the John Birch Society?

These are questions that IRD Board Members may or may not discuss at our November 18th meeting in Washington.

Divided Unions

Labor Unity Is Periled As Debate Heightens Over Foreign Policy

Defense Outlays, U.S. Role In El Salvador Are Issues; Church Allies Sever Ties Will Disputes Help Reagan?

By ROBERT S. GREENBERGER

Staff Reporter of THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

WASHINGTON—Growing disputes over AFL-CIO foreign-policy views are threatening to disrupt the labor movement's unity. These disputes faintly echo the Vietnam era, when the labor federation's hawkish stance on the war produced bitter division with its liberal wing.

Consider these signs of discontent:

—Major Protestant church groups, historically important labor allies, have angrily withdrawn from several coalitions with labor in response to an AFL-CIO official's charges that the churches promote left-leaning policies that aid Communist Cuba, Vietnam and the Palestine Liberation Organization.

—Several large unions have issued their own report critical of the El Salvador government because of dissatisfaction over the AFL-CIO's support of certain U.S. policies there. Seven Massachusetts locals also recently demanded a meeting with the federation's president, Lane Kirkland, to protest his presence on President Reagan's commission on Central America.

—Some of the AFL-CIO's biggest unions are expressing unease with the federation's support of huge defense spending. Thus, while the AFL-CIO was lobbying for the MX missile, some unions were working against it.

Political Danger

These squabbles threaten to reopen old wounds that Mr. Kirkland had helped heal—a healing process that had been aided by common adversities, including the economic problems stemming from the severe recession and the perception of an outside enemy—Ronald Reagan—hostile to its interests. Although nobody expects another major split in the labor movement, some liberal leaders worry that the AFL-CIO's efforts to work against President Reagan's widely expected reelection bid will be constrained by the federation's conservative foreign-policy views.

"The practical consequence of all this is that you don't get as much leverage out of it if you don't attack Ronald Reagan on all fronts," says a top official at one liberal AFL-CIO union. "I frankly think you can't attack Reagan on economic policy without going after him on foreign affairs."

The AFL-CIO plays down the simmering disputes, but they are bringing into the open some sharply differing views on foreign-policy issues among the AFL-CIO's officials, member unions and allies.

The AFL-CIO's hardline foreign-policy view partly reflects the influence within its ranks of members of the Social Democrats, U.S.A. This group splintered from the Socialist Party a decade ago because the Social Democrats supported the U.S. involvement in Vietnam. The Social Democrats are philosophically aligned with the AFL-CIO on domestic policy and are staunchly anti-communist. Among the group's members are influential AFL-CIO officials, including two of Mr. Kirkland's top assistants.

A Common Tie

The Social Democrats' foreign-policy views are in line with those of the labor movement, which has had a long history of anti-Communism, stretching from Samuel Gompers, the founder of the American Federation of Labor, to George Meany, the crusty cold-war warrior who was the AFL-CIO's first president. This tradition continues under Mr. Kirkland, a founding board member of the Committee on the Present Danger, a strongly prodefense group whose ranks included Ronald Reagan until his election.

These links among labor, the Social Democrats and the political right are at the heart of labor's current troubles with Protestant churches. Much of the criticism of the churches comes from David Jessup, a special assistant at the AFL-CIO's political arm, the Committee on Political Education, and a member of the Social Democrats, U.S.A.

Several years ago, Mr. Jessup became angered at what he considered "questionable political activities" within his own Methodist church. He says its literature and money were aiding "movements and support groups for the Cuban revolution, the Vietnamese government, the PLO and other pro-totalitarianism groups."

Mr. Jessup became a founding member of the Institute on Religion and Democracy, a small nonprofit group that monitors and is sharply critical of certain church activities. The IRD is financed largely by conservative foundations. From December 1980 to January 1983, it says, it received \$300,000 from the Sarah Scaife Foundation and \$140,000 from the Smith Richardson Foundation.

Other Beneficiaries

These or closely related foundations, in turn, also provide support for many of the domestic conservative groups that Mr. Kirkland and other labor leaders often criticize, including the Heritage Foundation and Mountain States Legal Foundation, whose former president is James Watt, who resigned under fire as Mr. Reagan's interior secretary.

Although the AFL-CIO doesn't fund the IRD, the church groups believe that Mr. Jessup's criticisms are made with labor's blessing. In a statement issued in June, representatives of several church groups, including the Methodists and the United Presbyterian Church USA, decried "the active participation by certain elements and individuals within organized labor, including staff of the AFL-CIO, in this assault on labor's traditional allies in the religious community."

Several church groups also have begun withholding aid from certain union causes, ending a long tradition of working with labor in such major efforts as the battle to unionize J.P. Stevens & Co. Last spring, for example, the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union asked United Church of Christ and Methodist officials to support the International Molders Union's boycott against Magic Chef Co. Such support is important, a Molders official says, because "a boycott with nothing but unions behind it makes the average person uncertain."

Citing Mr. Jessup's criticisms, the churches withheld their aid. "Some of us are trying to point out that to the degree they (unions) are perceived to be in the same camp as Jessup, it's beginning to adversely affect the good working relationships we've enjoyed with labor," says Howard Spragg, executive vice president of the United Church of Christ's Board for Home Ministries.

During the same period, the AFL-CIO's Industrial Union Department asked church groups to cosponsor a conference on plant closings—an area in which church and labor have worked closely. In June, the Interfaith Economic Crisis Organizing Network, a religious coalition group, delayed making a decision on whether to participate in the conference, which has since been postponed.

"We didn't feel that people in labor had really spoken up to defend the churches and call off someone from within their own movement who we think is acting as more than an individual," says Kim Jefferson, executive secretary of the Methodist Church's Office of Urban Ministries.

The AFL-CIO's Mr. Kirkland won't comment on the dispute. But his spokesman, Murray Seeger, says the church groups are "being pigheaded. I think they're making a mistake to make a big issue out of it." And he adds that a labor-church split "would hurt the church groups more than it would hurt us."

OVER →

Dispute Unsettled

In August, Mr. Kirkland wrote to Claire Randall, the general secretary of the National Council of Churches, and stated that the federation wouldn't interfere with Mr. Jessup because he "conducts these activities entirely on his own time and at his own expense." But some church officials were incensed when excerpts of the letter were reprinted in the IRD's newsletter, and the dispute remains unresolved.

The AFL-CIO's foreign-policy views also are producing internal dissension. When the federation's executive council met in Boston in August, top officials of seven locals representing about 30,000 workers asked to meet with Mr. Kirkland to protest his presence on a commission set up by President Reagan to consider long-term policy in Central America. When the group leaked word of the meeting to the press, Mr. Kirkland told them that he wouldn't attend unless the discussion was kept private. When the locals refused, the meeting was canceled.

Cella Weislo, the president of Local 285 of the Service Employees International Union, says her members don't want Mr. Kirkland on the special panel because "it's clearly stacked in favor of Ronald Reagan." She asserts that "shoring up Reagan's military policy at the same time that labor is working to unseat him just doesn't make a whole lot of sense."

Recently, a group representing nearly a dozen AFL-CIO unions visited El Salvador and issued a report blasting the land-reform program that is the cornerstone of the AFL-CIO's efforts in the region. The AFL-CIO has tried to minimize its differences with some of these unions over El Salvador and has stated that Mr. Kirkland, too, is unhappy with the pace of land reform. But the report brands land reform a total failure.

Salvadoran Unions

The group also differs with the AFL-CIO's view of the freedom of trade unions in El Salvador. An AFL-CIO spokesman says, "We take our cue from the (Salvadoran) unions down there, and they say they are free unions." But the group's report concludes that "there is no trade-union freedom in El Salvador, no semblance of the trade-union rights we as North American trade unionists consider fundamental to democracy."

Mr. Kirkland scoffs at the fuss over his presence on the Reagan panel. "I need that commission like I need a case of gonorrhea," he said recently. Mr. Seeger says Mr. Kirkland participates because the administration asked him to and because he believes that labor has a stake in the region.

Union officials acknowledge that, unlike his predecessor, Mr. Meany, Mr. Kirkland encourages debate and tries to resolve differences by forging a consensus. Nevertheless, they say these events illustrate a potentially divisive problem. Says one top union official: "If Central America ever boils over, there is a real potential for vast disagreement within the labor movement."

Tensions between the AFL-CIO's liberal and conservative wings also have surfaced on defense spending. Last winter at an AFL-CIO Executive Council meeting in Florida, the policy-setting council called for defense spending increases of 5% to 7% beyond in-

flation. But the council's resolution was approved only after some big unions insisted on noting in the report that they "expressed a strong opinion that the increase should be held at the lower end of the range or below."

The dissenters included some of the federation's largest unions, such as the United Auto Workers, Machinists, United Food and Commercial Workers and American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees. Some of these unions privately criticized a companion federation proposal to levy a surtax on corporations and wealthy individuals to pay for defense-spending increases. Critics saw the proposal as a politically unrealistic attempt to separate defense spending from the related issue of social-program cuts, which the AFL-CIO opposes.

And last April, when the AFL-CIO wrote members of Congress to reaffirm its support for the MX missile, some of the same unions took the opposite course. The Food and Commercial Workers sent Congress its own board's anti-MX resolution, the Machinists joined an anti-MX rally on Capitol Hill, and AFSCME lobbied against the weapon. And a recent survey by the federation during regional meetings with union members shows that 61% believe that defense spending shouldn't increase.

"Frankly, I think they are out of touch with the membership on this one," a top union official says.

The Institute on Religion and Democracy

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October 25, 1983

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Mr. Thomas Donahue
Secretary-Treasurer
AFL-CIO
815 16th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20036

Dear Mr. Donahue:

We have read in the press (The National Catholic Reporter) that individuals associated with Protestant social action agencies intend to press the AFL-CIO sponsored Religion and Labor Conference to adopt a position critical of the Institute on Religion and Democracy.

We regret very much that this controversy is being forced upon you. (You certainly have other matters on your mind.) For our part, we have never sought the support or involvement of the AFL-CIO in any aspect of our debate with church agencies. As we understand it, our concerns are in harmony with the general concerns of the AFL-CIO in the area of international affairs. But we also believe that our differences with some church bodies are a matter to be debated and decided by the churches themselves. It would be improper for labor, business or a partisan political group to impose its will upon the churches -- or, we might add, to impose its will upon us.

Although the overwhelming majority of our Board and our members are primarily involved in their own denomination's activities, we do, as you know, include among our members, officers and staff, some individuals who now or in the past have had some association with the trade union movement. We make no secret of this. But we have checked carefully and can find no evidence that at any time has any of these individuals portrayed himself as a representative of the labor movement. Nor has the press, even out of carelessness, ever given such an impression. The suggestion that this has occurred comes only from those who are lamenting it.

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We have always understood that union members and staff are free to conduct themselves in religious life according to their own consciences. We were gratified to learn that President Kirkland shares that view -- although we were not surprised, for this is the normal democratic view.

Nor is it true, as some have charged, that ours is a "right-wing" or conservative organization. Our supporters come from a wide range of political and social philosophy: we simply share a commitment to democratic values. Surely the labor movement understands that to be anti-communist is not necessarily to be "right-wing." Our publications and spokesmen have criticized repressive practices in South Africa, El Salvador, Chile and the Philippines -- to name a few examples -- as well as those of Communist countries. We have consistently upheld the value of free trade unions to democratic societies.

If a small group -- a group which in our judgment is neither representative of nor duly constituted by the churches -- insists upon airing its differences with the IRD in the Conference on Religion and Labor, then we must, reluctantly, ask for a fair opportunity to defend ourselves in that forum.

Further, we believe that if the AFL-CIO and its affiliates are going to be asked to make judgments on the propriety of the IRD's role in an intra-church debate, you should also consider the record of those pressing you for such judgments. We have found that, with alarming frequency, church-financed and supported organizations have criticized and opposed AFL-CIO related labor organizations abroad, and at times have been quite harshly critical of the AFL-CIO itself. I have also included here a small sampling of materials which provide evidence.

Sincerely yours,

Penn Kemble
Member,
Executive Committee

Edmund W. Robb, Jr.
Chairman,
Executive Committee

Enclosures

10-18-83

Conservative group tells businessmen that World Council doesn't like them

By Willmar Thorkelson
Religious News Service Correspondent

Leaders of America's business corporations have been told that the World Council of Churches adopted a "radical," anti-business stance at its assembly in Vancouver last summer.

In mailings to business leaders, the Institute on Religion and Democracy, a conservative group based in Washington, particularly criticized the World Council for its position on transnational corporations. As a result of the "turn to the left" evidenced at Vancouver, "the institutions of the world's free economies--business, labor and government--are likely to come under growing pressure from many world church bodies in the next few years," the institute said.

It said the WCC's former "moderate social responsibility" approach to transnational corporations was replaced in Vancouver by adoption of a report which says the world market system and operation of transnationals within it are "incompatible with our vision of a just, participatory and sustainable society."

The institute also cited other resolutions critical of transnationals, including one that blamed world hunger on "large land owners and transnational corporations who exploit the land and who do not allow farmers, peasants, and landless rural workers to participate in making decisions that would benefit them."

Also cited were three speeches given at the Vancouver assembly, including one by West German socialist-feminist Dorothee Soelle, who said that "while Christ came that we might have fullness of life, capitalism came to turn everything into money."

The institute said it would be "unwise" to dismiss the WCC speeches and statements as "mere rhetoric." The World Council, it said, "has built up a powerful, well-financed apparatus for dealing with what it takes to be the problems caused by transnational corporations. This work is often conducted under somewhat misleading auspices.

"The Commission on World Mission and Evangelism, for instance, sounds as if it must be a program for seeking converts to the Christian Gospel. But it actually operates something called 'Urban Rural Mission,' which serves in turn as a center for radical labor and peasant organizations. Or take the WCC's 'Christian Medical Commission.' It would probably surprise many church contributors to learn that this program is as much involved in coordinating political protests against infant formula and pharmaceutical manufacturers as it is in bringing the benefits of modern medicine to the sick and injured of the Third World."

The institute predicted that the WCC and its affiliates "can certainly be expected to expand their activities on economic issues into a wider range of international organizations.

"One arena in which WCC activists plan to increase their influence," the institute said, "is in the labor movement. If the WCC establishes close alliances with the International Trade Secretariats (as the WCC Central Committee proposes), this could help to radicalize these important labor bodies, with significant practical consequences for the international economic environment."

Included in the institute's mailing was a copy of the institute's August/September newsletter, which said "the WCC's antagonism toward the democratic world was made unmistakably clear" in Vancouver. The newsletter reported resolutions which the WCC assembly adopted dealing with Afghanistan, Central America, religious freedom, the Middle East and disarmament.

Conspicuously missing from the survey was any mention of the strong condemnation of apartheid in South Africa by the WCC assembly and the strong appeals for freedom there by two black leaders from South Africa whom many observers thought were the two dominant personalities at the assembly: Dr. Alan Boesak, president of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, and Anglican Bishop Desmond Tutu.

Institute materials critical of the WCC are known to have been distributed by South African government representatives.

Pro and Con

End Support for Controversial Church Councils?

Interview With Rev. Edmund Robb
Chairman, Institute on Religion and Democracy

Q Mr. Robb, why would you advise Americans to halt financial support of the World Council of Churches?

A Contributions should be held in escrow until that council and the National Council of Churches here in the U.S. make reforms that correct their bias toward Marxist causes. I support the traditional ministries and charities of these councils, but I am in strong disagreement with their political stance. Supporters of democracy in America and elsewhere should be very concerned that the World Council uses money from its churches to advocate the "new international economic order," which is a brand of socialism.

Q Does that mean they support Marxism?

A There's no doubt about it. The World Council's general secretary, Philip Potter, has held up the People's Republic of China as a model "effort to promote self-reliance and a participatory economic policy aimed at social justice."

Cuba has never once been criticized by the NCC or the WCC, even though a research organization called Freedom House cites Cuba as one of the worst abusers of human rights.

YES—

"The World Council uses money from its churches to advocate socialism"



In October of 1981, a group of NCC officials went to El Salvador and produced a report saying the FDR—the guerrillas—is the legitimate representative of the Salvadoran people. Now, what poll did they take? What election determined that? In reality, the Salvadoran people want democracy, as they demonstrated when 82 percent participated in the last election, even though the FDR was threatening to kill anyone who voted.

The councils also strongly support Nicaragua's regime—the Sandinistas—which has not had a free election and has taken Arch-

bishop Manuel Obando y Bravo off television. They wanted to edit his radio Easter sermon, but he would not allow it.

Q Are you accusing WCC leaders of being Communists?

A Some of them would confess to Marxist sympathies. Others simply do not see the threat of the Soviet Union and are unwilling to criticize the Soviets or their client states.

For instance, at the WCC Assembly at Vancouver in August, there was absolutely no criticism of Poland, of the suppression of the Solidarity workers' movement. Also, an amendment to the Afghanistan resolution that would have asked for the immediate withdrawal of Soviet troops was defeated. William Thompson, chief executive of the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., opposed that amendment.

One reason for this stance is that the WCC prizes the Russian Orthodox Church as one of its few non-Protestant members. Yet the Russian Orthodox Church, when it speaks on international matters, is an arm of Soviet foreign policy. That church has made a deal with the Kremlin to

Interview With William Thompson
Co Stated Clerk, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

Q Mr. Thompson, why do you feel that Americans should back the World and National councils of churches?

A Because I believe those organizations are the best way to show forth the unity of Christ's church in the world. The purpose of this is not sheer bigness or worldly power, but to present an undivided message so that the world may believe. It's an evangelistic motivation, and we believe the councils of churches are the best expressions of that unity in the world today.

Q But hasn't the credibility of the councils been damaged by charges that they favor Marxist causes?

A I think not. Those charges stem from a misunderstanding of the work of the councils. Neither of these bodies has espoused any political position. They are concerned about the plight of the poor and the oppressed under totalitarian governments of all kinds.

Q What about the World Council of Churches' recent assembly in Vancouver, which objected to a few American advisers in Central America but did not criticize the Soviet Union by name for occupying Afghanistan with 100,000 troops?

A Actually, the resolution on Afghanistan supported the peace efforts of the Secretary-General of the United Nations and did call for withdrawal of Soviet troops as part of an overall settlement. However, I know that WCC actions sometimes appear one-sided to the casual observer.

But one must understand the dynamics that exist within an assembly of the World Council of Churches. This is a voluntary organization whose delegates represent more than 300 churches in over 100 countries, including some with totalitarian governments of the right and of the left. When the council is considering a public statement that involves any of those countries, the representatives from those nations are consulted, and we strive not to adopt a position that would jeopardize those individuals or their churches.

Q Does that mean that Russia's government-supervised churchmen can veto virtually any statement that is too critical of their country?

A They do not have a veto. However, as with delegates from any other country that is being criticized, we consult with them often for hours over the wording of any statement. When delegates from the repressive country say, "This is absolutely the most we can say and still go back to our country to live and work," and advocates on the other side say, "This is the least we can live with," then we have our final draft.

That's true not only of delegates from Communist countries but also of delegates from equally repressive countries on the right, so I don't think this approach shows a bias.

Q Then why is the council so critical of the U.S.?

A The council is free to criticize policies of the U.S. be-

NO—

The World Council doesn't "espouse one political viewpoint over another"



Interview With the Rev. Robb (continued)

support the Soviet line in exchange for permission to exist, and the WCC plays along for fear the government might force the church to withdraw from the council.

I'm not questioning the sincerity of many of the Russian Orthodox leaders, but I'm concerned that people might take seriously the statements they make on behalf of Soviet interests.

Q What do you mean when you say that American church money is being used for objectionable causes?

A The councils have given half a million dollars for Vietnam's so-called new economic zones, which resemble forced labor camps. About 1.5 million dollars went to a Nicaraguan literacy campaign that used Cuban teachers and reading materials full of propaganda glorifying the Sandinista revolution.

But the best-known example is a special fund within the WCC's Program to Combat Racism that has spent more than 5 million dollars over the last 13 years. Much of that money has gone to terrorist groups such as the African National Congress, which last May 24 took responsibility for setting off a car bomb in downtown Pretoria that killed 19 people, all of them innocent civilians.

Q But council officials insist that this special fund receives almost no money from the U.S.—

A Five million dollars is a considerable amount of money where I come from. Moreover, the people in the pews don't designate where that money goes. That's up to church bureaucrats. But you can't measure what the WCC does purely in dollars and cents. You have to measure it by the influence they seek to exert among the people and governments of the world. In this regard, the views of individual church members get very little attention.

Q Aren't the grants you mention overshadowed by the millions of dollars the councils give in humanitarian aid, including help to Poles who resist Communist oppression?

A It's true that the NCC and WCC often meet the physical needs of oppressed people and refugees fleeing Communism. But why do they not speak out about the causes of these peoples' misery? For instance, they have done a noble job sheltering Vietnamese boat people, but they have not said one word about the government abuses that caused the exodus. Also, they send relief to Poles but have not spoken up on behalf of Solidarity.

Q Do religious people have a duty to speak out when moral principles are violated?

A I don't know that the WCC or the NCC should be speaking out on every conceivable question. When did a theological degree give one expertise in economics or statesmanship?

Churches should be educating people, helping them with their material needs and bringing them to a knowledge of Christ, which in itself will be a great inspiration for advancement.

I would also say this: If the WCC believes that socialism is the best expression of the Christian faith, they should openly say so to their constituencies in the West. Then individual church members could decide for themselves if they want to support that kind of program or not. I believe, though, that the vast majority would disagree with a philosophy weighted toward socialism. □

Interview With Mr. Thompson (continued)

cause delegates from the United States have freedom of speech, religion and the press. The fact that we can return to this country without fear of reprisals is a matter on which U.S. citizens should rejoice, because it's an affirmation of our rights under the Constitution.

Q Have WCC officials tried to persuade Soviet churchmen to be more courageous about statements on the Soviet Union?

A I certainly would not attempt to do so. Nor do I believe I should volunteer anyone else to be a martyr.

Q What about charges that the WCC gives money from the collection plates of American churches to guerrilla groups, including the Southwest African People's Organization?

A These charges are simply not true. The fact is that the money for SWAPO comes from an optional fund of the WCC that receives almost no money from the U.S.—an average of less than \$5,000 a year.

Although American denominations contribute to other parts of the Program to Combat Racism, most give nothing at all to this special fund, which is forbidden to tap the routine donations from churches because some of its projects are controversial. All of its money is designated for this fund.

Q But haven't the councils also provided funds for a Nicaraguan literacy program that used Cuban teachers to spread pro-Castro propaganda?

A That couldn't have been too controversial, since the United States government itself supported the very same program.

Q Do the councils spend too much of their time on secular matters as opposed to religious work?

A No. The press has frequently played up the so-called political aspects because it found those to be sensational or controversial. In reality, one of our biggest activities is fighting hunger through gifts of food and by assisting with irrigation, better seeds and farming techniques to avoid the need for feeding programs later on.

Another major program of the National Council of Churches has been to assist in the resettlement of a third of a million refugees in this country. Anyone who thinks the council blinks at the problems of Communism should realize that 90 percent of those refugees have come from countries under Communist domination.

Q Don't some members of the World Council try to fight Third World hunger through politics?

A The World Council works through church members wherever it functions, and frequently churches and church

people in Third World countries are involved in politics. I don't think the World Council should interfere in the political affairs of those countries, and I am not aware that the council, as such, espouses one political viewpoint over another.

Q Why, despite all you've said, are so many churchgoers upset with the policies of the councils?

A Part of the problem is that those of us in the councils somehow have not been able to explain adequately to the people in the pews the true background of our statements and policies—particularly regarding overseas issues. I find that when I visit individual congregations and talk to the people, they usually come to understand our actions better. □





INTERFAITH CENTER ON CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITY

A Sponsored Related Movement of the National Council of Churches
475 Riverside Drive • Room 566 • New York, NY 10115 (212) 870-2936

July 26, 1983

Rev. Theodore Purcell, S.J.
Georgetown University
Washington, D.C. 20057

Dear Father Ted:

I have been planning to write you for several months now to share a deep concern that we have at ICCR and within many of the churches that comprise our ecumenical family.

I remember well the counsel you have given us in person and by letter over the years, as you encouraged us to be pragmatic, and both balanced and specific in the demands we put before corporations. You have urged us to understand the sophisticated decision-making processes within corporations and utilize them as we pressed our positions with top management. You properly urged us to tighten lax language in shareholder resolutions and not simply to make symbolic statements, but to pursue realizable and realistic changes in corporate policy. Throughout you urged us to be fair and balanced.

We have profited from your private advice and your public admonitions through JACIR and the Harvard Business Review. Needless to say, I was profoundly distressed when I saw that you are listed on the Board of the Institute for Religion and Democracy, and have stayed on that Board even while the IRD has led one of the most unbalanced and biased attacks on the social justice programs of the mainstream Protestant churches that we have seen in decades. As Reader's Digest and 60 Minutes repeated the IRD's scandalous accusations I expected to see some word in print from you urging balance and moderation on their part. No such declaration has been observed!

While ICCR has not been directly attacked by the IRD as yet, as you know we feel we are all challenged when the IRD launches a broadside against the NCC. As you also know, the IRD's position is hardly that of an objective, non-partisan organization, but is openly partisan and political, reflecting, many say, the politics of the Social Democrats. Your active involvement in the leadership of IRD leads me to some unhappy conclusions about your own work and that of JACIR. Let me list them and invite your response.

- * Your tradition of encouraging fairness and balance has been sadly betrayed in your IRD involvement and instead a narrow political perspective has emerged
- * JACIR's position within the Jesuits, increasingly under question as an authoritative voice of integrity on shareholder resolutions is now open to further question. Is JACIR really a vehicle through which

you seek to promote a particular narrow brand of social philosophy, questioning the legitimacy of all others?

- * How is it that JACIR's position is quoted in the Bristol Myers proxy statement opposing a shareholder resolution on baby formula supported by scores of other church investors? Does this use of the JACIR position indicate that the baby formula line of Ernest Lefever and Herman Nickel is the one that you have been privately promoting within the Society of Jesus? If so, it would work to insure that splits within the church community appear to exist, when virtually none are there
- * Likewise, when JACIR under your urging issues critical letters and statements regarding church-sponsored resolutions on South Africa, can this any longer be seen as an objective review of an issue, or is it an instant replay of the IRD philosophy on this topic?

In short, I find your credibility as an objective analyst now open to question as a result of your active involvement in the IRD. There are several things you might consider that would help to reestablish that credibility:

1. Resign from IRD and dissociate yourself from their McCarthyite attacks on national Protestant church bodies
2. Declare yourself in an honest and open way in the style of IRD, arguing your case at JACIR in an above-board fashion as being against the social justice programs of the churches
3. Disqualify yourself from future JACIR activities on the grounds that the Committee deserves balanced reporting which due to your own strong opinions you are unable to give.

You can see from this letter that your leadership in IRD distresses me greatly. I welcome a clarification of the record from you. Until then, unfortunately, I see your role in JACIR as one of blunting social advocacy by church investors and promoting a biased response from the Jesuits to corporate responsibility. Unless I am corrected, this is the position I shall interpret to all our Roman Catholic members in and in particular your Jesuit colleagues who sit on our Board and cooperate in ICCR's work.

Sincerely,

Timothy H. Smith
Executive Director

cc: Gasper LoBiondo, S.J.
Daniel Lewis, S.J.
James Joyce, S.J.
Ms. Suzanne Geaney

JESUIT CENTER FOR SOCIAL STUDIES
GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20057

THEODORE V. PURCELL, S.J.
RESEARCH PROFESSOR

October 14, 1983

(202) 625-4634/4635

Mr. Timothy H. Smith
Executive Director
Interfaith Center on
Corporate Responsibility
475 Riverside Drive (Rm. 566)
New York, NY 10115

Dear Tim:

I was surprised and saddened by your letter of July 26 attacking me personally and the other six members of the National Jesuit Advisory Committee on Investor Responsibility.

You question the good faith of JACIR's Chairman. You demand that he resign from the Institute of Religion and Democracy, or at least castigate it severely. You blame JACIR for Bristol-Myers' 1983 proxy mistake, for which they apologized. You are severely critical of JACIR's position on the infant formula controversy for which the members of JACIR are alleged docilely to follow the "urging" of JACIR's Chairman. You are totally critical of JACIR's positions on South Africa and on other issues as "biased", "blunting social advocacy", no longer "a voice of integrity", "a narrow political perspective", "betrayed"; etc.

I know we are both seeking social justice. Clearly, we differ as to the wisest and most effective ways of achieving that social justice. To speak of "splits within the church community" as though the church must speak with one voice on complex socio-economic, ethical questions is to identify revealed religion with social action - something very dangerous for the churches.

Dialogue can be had only between people of good will. I would find it hard to try to clarify the three issues you raise when, with intemperate language, you question my credibility and the groups with which I am associated. Dialogue is seriously impaired by unfair accusations and guilt by association. These destroy the necessary basis of trust for any reasonable discussion.

Mr. Timothy H. Smith
October 14, 1983
Page Two

As you perhaps know, there is a real difference of opinion among some American Jesuits as to what the Society's role should be in certain aspects of the ethical investor movement. I understand the reason for your personal intrusion. However, your interference does seem unconscionable. I would prefer to work out those differences with my fellow Jesuits - ourselves alone. I shall not discuss them here.

A further comment on intrusion: The activity in the ethical investor movement of major, respected institutional investors, such as TIAA-CREF, Ford Foundation, Stanford, the Jesuit Provinces, etc., gives the movement credibility with management and with the general public. For you deliberately to interfere in the activities of such institutional investors seriously damages your personal credibility. Stanford's CIR, for example, with urging from the Trustees, declared a moratorium in 1981-1982, precisely because they were not at all sure that they were doing the right thing. They had serious differences among themselves. Would you have tried to interfere in their dispute? Or Cornell's? ICCR's credibility would also go.

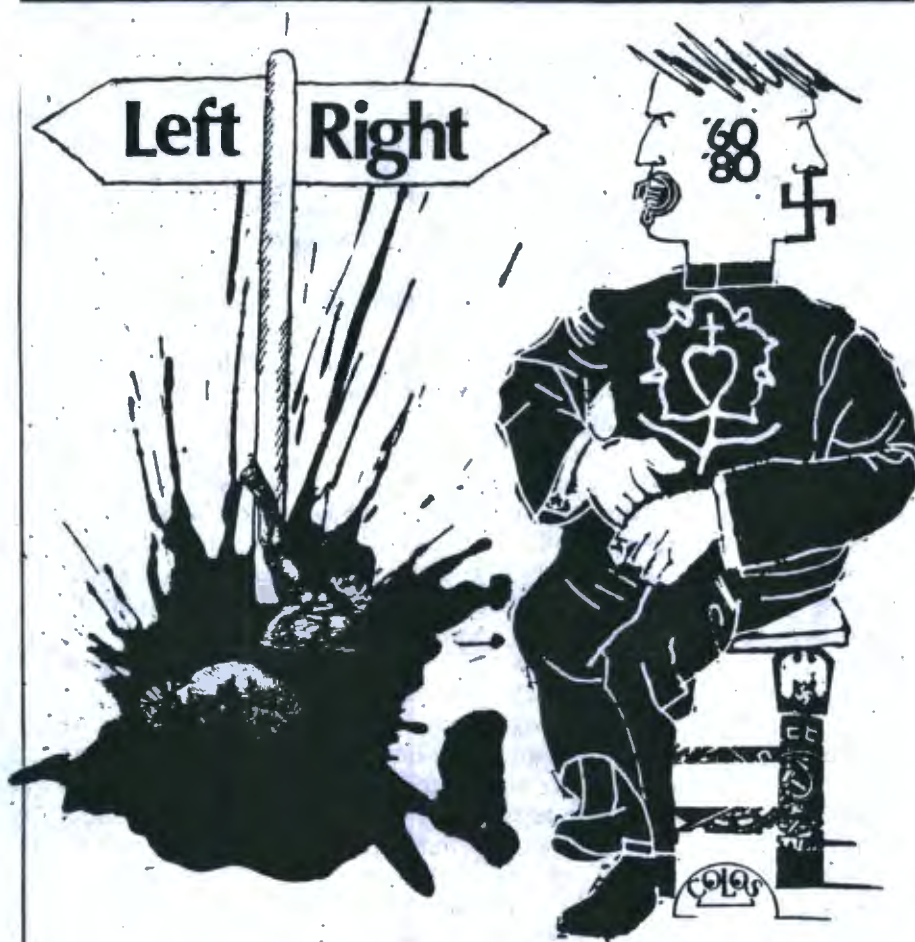
The ethical investor movement is a sophisticated and important movement toward the common good, requiring knowledge, good will and mutual trust. I hope that these qualities can be restored in any dialogue we might have in the future.

Sincerely yours,

Theodore V. Purcell, S.J.
Chairman, JACIR

CC: Gasper LoBiondo, S.J.
Daniel Lewis, S.J.
James Joyce, S.J.
Ms. Suzanne Geaney

P.S. - As to my "credibility", you might consult the recent statements and actions of Loyola University of Chicago and Dartmouth, enclosed.



GOING TO EXTREMES

by Philip Weiss

Pastor Richard Neuhaus converts from Sixties radical to Eighties Reaganite.

RICHARD John Neuhaus, a friend says, is a man of "large statements and strict judgments." A Lutheran pastor who first achieved prominence in the 1960s as an outspoken radical critic of the Vietnam war, Neuhaus sat down last spring in his handsome Manhattan row house to write about another war: "the war of ideas." Certainly there was something about Neuhaus that seemed to respond to war. And on this day—he was composing the *Forum*

Philip Weiss is associate editor of City Pages, a weekly newspaper in Minneapolis.

Letter, a monthly newsletter that goes out to a largely Lutheran readership—his writing came in pained gasps, not so different from the gasps of a dedicated officer who, slumped on the periphery, unwraps and repacks his own wounds before returning to the battle.

The war of ideas, Neuhaus told his readers, was a notion first expressed by "those called neoconservatives," but now picked up by "others." Today this war was threatening "the truth," unnamed institutions, and, perhaps most sadly, friendships. The pastor was referring to a bitter argument he had

been engaged in all winter with friends in liberal church groups over the proper role of the church in third-world "liberation" struggles. He had appeared on CBS's "60 Minutes," castigating the World Council of Churches for consorting with terrorists and then lying about it.

It is not hard to see why "60 Minutes" made such great use of him. At forty-seven, he is of medium height with a striking, bony face: a hard, wide mouth, powerful gray eyes, and a high forehead scored with a mass of lines that seems to be one of the effects of bearing witness.

But then the flap over "60 Minutes" and the World Council of Churches was not the first time that the pastor had suffered the venom of former allies. The previous twelve years had seen Neuhaus's political views move sharply to the right on a variety of issues, and each shift had been marked by outrage from acquaintances on the left. At first Neuhaus had been surprised by the reaction. His new allies, people who had broken with other leftist movements and suffered similar obloquy, had been patronizing—"You naïve little boy," they said. There was a liberal party line, Neuhaus began to understand, and it was treason to violate it.

Neuhaus is not alone in his political odyssey. Whittaker Chambers, who flipped from model communist to model anticommunist in the late 1930s, is the godfather of the phenomenon. Herbert Romerstein, a Communist Party member in the late 1940s, suffered what he calls his Kronshtadt, or awakening, at age seventeen, during the Korean invasion. Today he is a special assistant to the U.S. Information Agency.

Now, in a kind of historical echo, radicals of the 1960s have become the antiradicals of the 1980s. Michael Novak, the round-faced Catholic critic, was once a chorister of the barricades, writing *A Theology for Radical Politics* and campaigning for George S. McGovern. Today he supports Ronald Reagan and has written a theology

for democratic capitalism that explains how corporations offer metaphors for grace. Michael A. Ledeen, a history instructor and activist at Washington University in St. Louis during the Vietnam war years, took a pessimistic view of the youth movement but agreed with the radical students "on the nature of the problem," as a professor who was close to him characterizes it. In recent years Ledeen has been a special adviser to former secretary of state Alexander M. Haig, Jr. and a self-proclaimed expert on terrorism, producing urgent calls on the country to take an activist role in global affairs.

Penn Kemble, an organizer of the labor bloc in the Democratic Party through the Vietnam war years, held the title of national secretary in the Socialist Party, and wrote hopefully of a coalition of blacks, labor, and intellectuals—"a majority party uncompromised by ties to conservative or racist interests."

Today Kemble is a member of the executive committee of the Institute on Religion and Democracy, a somewhat hawkish foundation whose principal achievement is to have been granted the podium by *Reader's Digest* and "60 Minutes" in their pieces suggesting that the World Council of Churches is engaged in Marxist adventurism.

WHAT HAPPENED to these former liberals? They aged, for one thing. All are now in their forties; Novak is fifty. They were, says Kemble, stripped of illusions by the last decade's demonstrations of Soviet aggression and communist brutality in the Third World and by what Ledeen calls the "craziness" of the Left's domestic agenda, from affirmative action to the welfare state.

But they also all claim that they are liberals, and that it is the Left that has gone into "exile," in Neuhaus's words; adopted what in the 1950s was termed conservative isolationism, Ledeen says. "We're really paleoliberals," as Kemble puts

it. "I came up with the term 'neoliberal' in 1977," Novak boasts.

But these explanations alone do not suffice. Not everyone gets more conservative as he gets older. And while Neuhaus and company make an important point about the leftward drift of liberalism in the 1960s, they were not independent of that drift.

Neuhaus and Novak chose to support McGovern against the more traditional liberals. They shared, to varying degrees, the explicit desire for fundamental change in American society. They have renounced that desire. They *have* changed.*

Today they cling to the name of liberalism like a cat too far out on a branch; they are nearly indistinguishable from neoconservatives, and occasionally from out-and-out conservatives. What Peter Steinfels, author of *The Neoconservatives*, has called "the outlook" is the same: loss of faith in change, antipathy to the domestic but not the foreign ambitions of the state, the conviction that stability must precede talk of justice.

They have revised their views on the Vietnam war. They do not like to say so but they think that the Great Society failed. They speak bitingly of a New Class of intellectuals, journalists, foundation staffers, and bureaucrats, all of whom have a vested interest in remaining bleeding hearts. Their differences with the Reagan administration might be calculated on the heads of pins. Ask Ledeen what he doesn't like about the Republicans and he says that they lack a commitment to social justice. And what does that mean? "I can't abide by their hatred of trade unionism," he says.

Richard Neuhaus's transformation has been the most stunning. In 1970 he wrote, "I affirm the right to armed revolution," and he warned that the revolution might re-

* It is worth noting that political activists traveling from the Left to the Right don't see too much traffic going the other way. Perhaps the most prominent exception to the rule is Garry Wills, a former *National Review* staff writer who is now an iconoclastic left-leaning historian.

quire the "effective elimination" of namby-pamby liberals like George McGovern who were not left-wing enough.

In 1981 Neuhaus was chiding liberals for being too left-wing, for not being able to understand the "importance of reading the signs of the times." "Anyway who has elected George McGovern recently?" he scoffed.

"There's nothing lukewarm about Richard Neuhaus," the secretary at the American Lutheran Publicity Bureau says, on an appropriately sweltering summer day. She thumps down a sheaf of *Forum Letters* on the table before me. Over the years in the newsletter Neuhaus has gently attempted to reconcile his friends to his ungentle changes. Sometimes it has been so difficult as to warrant vagueness, and a curious rhetorical device that suggests the ideological contortions: Neuhaus's use of "we" when speaking of a liberal constituency he has long since broken with ("We should learn to take our lumps without whining").

At other times he has been refreshingly open. "What happened to Dick Neuhaus?" a Canadian pastor wrote to Neuhaus in 1981, and Neuhaus reprinted the letter in full. It asked, "What sort of psychological-sociological-ecclesiastical factors have produced this transformation?"

RICHARD John Neuhaus was brought up in Pembroke, Ontario, the sixth son of a Lutheran pastor in an agrarian community. There were eight children in all, and they were "dirt poor" by several accounts, with cows, chickens, and many chores. A horse or bicycle conveyed Pastor Clemens Neuhaus to his flock, and the pastor's family sometimes ate cereal for supper.

Richard's father was a stern, dogmatic man. A brother, also named Clemens, remembers that his father was nicknamed "the Pope": a strict constructionist who would lash out at theological challenges. His father once slapped him, Clemens recalls, for asserting that even though

the Bible did not condemn slavery, that did not make slavery any less than a sin. Richard notes that his father gave him freedom to do as he pleased, but he adds, "You did not directly cross him without direct repercussion."

Five of the boys were to serve in the military—two of them fighting in Vietnam—while Richard went into the ministry. "Had [my father] strongly suggested that Richard enter the ministry, I don't think he would have entered the ministry," says Richard's brother Fred. A former Los Angeles police detective, Fred Neuhaus says that Richard's righteousness about the war stemmed in part from rebelliousness. It is interesting to note that his father died in 1972, about the time of his son's most significant political changes—although Richard says his rebellion ended five or seven years before his father's death and that the two were then reconciled.

In 1961 Neuhaus, then twenty-five, took over the pastorship of St. John the Evangelist on the border of the Bedford-Stuyvesant section of Brooklyn. Ask him what it was like in those days and he emits a deep sigh and softens his voice to tell of the "winds of youth." Back then, young pastors who went into the ghetto to preach were the "glory boys," and certainly there was a heroic quality to Neuhaus's ministry.

Owing to the dwindling of the community of German immigrants there, the church was on the verge of closing when he took it over. He built it back up, with a congregation of Puerto Ricans, blacks, and even some of the original German speakers. The liturgy was sometimes trilingual.

"It was sheer hard work and talent, but he turned it around to become one of the most influential black Lutheran churches in the country," John Heinemeier, a pastor who served under Neuhaus, recalls.

There was more than that to being a glory boy, though: theological and political activities would increasingly consume Neuhaus. In an interview in the mid-Sixties he

spoke of the nation's need for a "virile and vital subculture," and virile and vital characterize the frequent meetings he had with other young pastors to discuss theological issues. Heinemeier remembers it as "one of the most exciting parishes in the country—Richard was the spark." The focus of the talks was Neuhaus's traditional view of worship, a dedication to religious ritual that bordered on fundamentalism. He also edited a journal that emphasized the importance to faith of the sacraments, such as the eucharist and baptism. Neuhaus's were always High Church sentiments.

Neuhaus's political activities drew on his religious fervor. He wrote speeches for the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. and called himself King's liaison with the antiwar movement. By the late 1960s he had become perhaps the most fiery preacher of the movement. A founder of Clergy and Laymen Concerned About Vietnam, he called President Lyndon Johnson a murderer and urged soldiers to disobey their orders to bomb Cambodia. The war was nothing less than evil, and the Cold War was likely a fiction to cover up America's imperialist designs. Neuhaus's opposition to the government was grounded in belief. "We're going to knock out some of the mythology of Romans 13, you know, that they're the powers that be, and then this whole notion that they know more than we do," he said in a 1967 interview. He affirmed the place of religion in politics and spoke of the importance to public policy of a "covenant with the poor." Certainly the political interests of his parishioners—whose black- and brownness was a movement credential of which he frequently boasted—seemed to direct him. In the racially divisive 1968 New York teachers' strike, Neuhaus opposed the largely Jewish teachers union and supported black demands for community control of the schools. He spoke matter-of-factly of "the Negro revolution in America."

"He can speak the truth to every camp, including those who think they have him in their pocket," Pas-

tor Heinemeier says of Neuhaus, and even in the late 1960s there were signs in Neuhaus's High Church attitudes of his independence, particularly in his opposition to abortion. This had already caused murmurs among his movement friends. Neuhaus's attachment to patriotic symbols, his invocations of the flag or the song "God Bless America," also sprang from his religious faith in the role of symbols, and surprised radical colleagues.

But, if only in his frequently repeated citations of the "Movement" with a capital M, and of the name of radicalism, the evidence is that Neuhaus enjoyed his prominence in the Left. He went to jail often. He ran for Congress in 1970 from Brooklyn, losing in a Democratic caucus preceding the primary. In the same year he published a book called *Movement and Revolution* with his friend, sociologist Peter L. Berger, in which he coolly asserted, "whether because the cost is too high or the scene unfashionably dull, one should not expect to meet all his Movement friends at the barricades."

Neuhaus is a master of pulpit rhetoric—the ironic pause, the dropping of the voice—and his part of the book has a chilly tone. The "System Itself must be radically changed," he said. The existing political and economic order could only perpetuate the country's problems, and while it was not clear to him that the conditions for revolution existed in the United States, revolution might very well be justified along the lines of "just" war theory. Sometimes he seemed unconscious of the weight of his words. "A moment's reflection on, for example, the bombing of stores and restaurants crowded with men, women, and children raises questions worthy of thought beforehand," he wrote.

IT WAS over the next five years or so, from 1972 to 1978, that Richard Neuhaus's most profound political changes took place. It was a critical period for many radicals turned conservative. McGovern's

loss in 1972 indicated the depths of popular mistrust of the Left. The end of the arms-linked atmosphere of the war years also tended to reveal political differences that had been submerged before. In his Washington University course on student movements, for instance, Ledeen indirectly cautioned students against going too far, but people remember him in more leftist terms. He wore dark glasses and groovy clothes, his former wife recalls, and could talk the students' language. Until the early Seventies, leftism was the only game in town.

Neuhaus points to a series of troubling events between 1972 and 1978 that he says roused him, convinced him of the failure of his ideals. If one locates in the Left's call for quotas on black admissions and black hiring the "revelation issue" for many Jewish neoconservatives—the issue that as much as any contributed to their apostasy—abortion may have played that role for Richard Neuhaus. The 1973 Supreme Court decision extending the right to abortion stunned him and left him horror-struck.

There were also the unending miseries of southeast Asia. In 1975 he called on the Vietnamese government to account for political prisoners and its human-rights record. Hanoi refused, and Neuhaus was disturbed when only half the 104 leftist leaders whose signatures he recruited for the petition would sign.

The Third World now scared him in a visceral way. Uganda's Idi Amin was feeding chopped-up people to crocodiles and in Chad Christians were being "buried alive in anthills." The crimes of South Africa were not so grave by comparison, he believed.

The refugees from southeast Asia and their stories demolished his hopefulness about the liberators. "By any calculation of pain and suffering," he says today, what followed U.S. withdrawal was worse than what came before. The war, he says, was an aberration in an otherwise good American global strategy.

Neuhaus calls capitalism a more

Christian form of political economy than communism—saying, in fact, that it is "evil" even to promulgate the tenets of Marxism-Leninism. He has become an exponent of the moral distinction that U.N. ambassador Jeane Kirkpatrick (with whom he is friendly) makes between authoritarian and totalitarian oppression. In a statement of purpose he wrote two years ago for the Institute on Religion and Democracy, he argued that Marxist-Leninist states are godless, setting themselves up as "absolute" states with no acknowledgment of transcendent judgment.

Things were not so much better at home. The lack of virility and vitality in American life still bothered Neuhaus. He expressed outrage over the decadence of upper-middle-class "discontents." Abortion, environmentalism, even drug consumption, became linked in his mind. In 1975 he shocked the liberal establishment by signing the "Hartford Appeal," along with seventeen other clergymen. The manifesto called for a strengthening of faith in God and in essence urged the church's withdrawal from political activity. That year he also published a book, *Time Toward Home*, which preached a rediscovery of America's special place in God's plan for the world, a resurgence of "public piety"; and in 1976 he celebrated Jimmy Carter's presidential candidacy, in large part because Carter proclaimed the transcendence of God's judgment.

In recent years Neuhaus has made favorable comments about creationism, and has virtually embraced the Moral Majority, a movement that he said in our interview was "driven into the wilderness in the 1920s with the Scopes monkey trial . . . thoroughly routed from every center of discourse, American journalism, the academy." Writing in *Worldview*, a Carnegie-funded publication, Neuhaus has banged this gong even louder, noting that Jerry Falwell's ascendancy marks the "collapse" of a 200-year "hegemony" of rationalist, Enlightenment thought.

As for the winds of youth, Neu-

haus's sails were now trimmed. He concluded that the antipoverty boards he had sat on, and the millions of dollars in government funds he had helped to dispense, had not really helped. In the black ghettos where he had once taken his stand, the supply-siders' ideas seemed to him to have "wisdom." And in 1978 Pastor Neuhaus—who had once planned not to leave his poor black and Puerto Rican parish so long as the community "put up" with him—did leave St. John's. The group of junior pastors who had done most of the actual ministering, and thus allowed Neuhaus to write and travel, was breaking up. Freedom from pastoral duties, Neuhaus wrote as he moved into Manhattan, was a "liberation."

THE MOST cynical interpretation of Neuhaus's motivations through the 1970s is that he was spurred in his move across the political spectrum by two rather worldly hungers that are themselves key strains of the conservative gospel: the desire to influence policy and the pursuit of material reward.

Neoconservative literature is full of disdain for the ideological Left's failure to try to wield power, and this disdain is evident in Neuhaus's writings, too. It crops up most crudely in the *Forum Letters* of July and August 1981, where Neuhaus reproved liberals for overreacting to Reagan, and in so doing demonstrated a naked awe for the FDR-sized margin of his victory. The old liberal agenda, he said, was "a great philosophy for 'formers.'"

Indeed, the pastor has always grown slightly tremulous among the powerful. Thus his frequent references to his dealings with Martin Luther King, Jr., the offhand noting of his "conversations with [Tanzania's dictator Julius] Nyerere a few years back," and the dropping, lightly, of a flint-edged dinner-table comment by Jeane Kirkpatrick. But Neuhaus has also had more serious flirtations with government. His greatest claim to intellectual distinction is a study done with Peter

Berger on the concept of "mediating structures" in American society. Entitled *To Empower People* and funded by the American Enterprise Institute, the study argued for the limitation of government's role in social policy and the importance of neighborhood, family, church, and voluntary associations in people's lives. Officials in both the Carter and Reagan administrations have warmed to the idea, even chatted the pastor up. Neuhaus hopes that the concept might be the basis for the Reagan administration—perhaps in a second term—to offer an "alternative vision of what is meant by social justice." But he's not counting on it. "I have received quiet assurance of deep interest from politicians," he says with genial self-mockery.

As for what neoconservative writer Norman Podhoretz has called the "dirty secret" of worldly success, there can be little doubt that leaving a vocation of working with the poor in Brooklyn for a vocation of conservatism has been rewarding to Neuhaus. When I interviewed him, for instance, he led me into his study through a well-appointed home—across a living room with a stereo spilling out classical music, past modern art on the walls, a glimpse past French doors into a back garden, and downstairs to a book-lined study with an air conditioner and a word processor (on loan, he said) awaiting the author.

The issue of sponsorship has often been on Neuhaus's mind. Thus in *Movement and Revolution* Neuhaus conceded that the middle class is important, in part for its "financial resources... the airplane tickets, and other expenses required for the innumerable gatherings, programs, and publications of the radical left." That radical book was mapped out during a visit to Ivan Illich's center in palmy Cuernavaca, and in the years since, Neuhaus's valise has acquired a spectacular patina of port-of-call stickers, from Tanzania to Tennessee to Cartigny. Neuhaus has long been supported by the Carnegie Institute and has received grants from the Lillie, Ford, and Exxon foundations. He

notes as a signal aspect of his repudiation by the liberal establishment the fact that he is no longer invited to their conferences. What liberals don't realize, he adds somewhat disdainfully, is that there is "a very big world" of "conferences and committees" beyond their pale.

That world includes many conservative foundations. Later this year, or early next year, Neuhaus is due to take on a full-time job as director of the new Center on Religion and Society in New York, set up largely by the conservative Rockefeller Institute to explore why the "vibrant character and heart of religion has simply faded away, in institutional life and individual life." Neuhaus says he does not believe he has ever tailored his views to a sponsor, but adds, wisely, that only God can know a man's heart. Which seems true enough; and so, lacking God's insight, one might simply observe that, no less than liberalism, neoconservatism has proved to be, as Alfred Kazin has characterized it, an "employment agency for right thinkers."

ULTIMATELY, though, to approach Neuhaus's political conversion psychologically or sociologically evades crucial questions. A serious man with serious thoughts, Neuhaus deserves to be taken at his word. He goes a long way toward completing the story of his transformation when, at the very end of the interview in his house, he speaks of "the hope and the horror." Liberalism, he says, has embraced the hope and ignored the horror. The challenge of neoconservatism, what he calls "the vital center," is to acknowledge the horror without giving up on the hope.

The vision of a world divided harshly between hope and horror is the fundamentalist's vision, and it recalls Neuhaus's radical vision in the 1960s.

The essential difference is that transcendent judgment was then a revolutionary idea for Neuhaus, requiring him to make a covenant with the poor, and to struggle against

the powers that be. His fundamentalism today borders on political quietism. He has written that the church should forget about social or political change and stick with sustaining people in the "everyday struggle for survival, individual dignity, and a touch of grace." His is a narrowing of the political spirit, and when I ask him about it, he responds with a grim sort of paradox: "I do not talk today as expansively or passionately about concern for the poor in the public arena, because it plays into the hands of people who want policies that are bad for the poor."

While Neuhaus now emphasizes the darker side of society, horror has always been the most consistent element of his thinking. The horror of the Vietnam war. The horror of poverty and malnutrition. The horror of abortion. The horror of the Third World. Behind Richard Neuhaus's knotted brow, there has never been much room for hope.

Because horrible events confirmed his understanding of the world, Neuhaus has always sought to be horror's witness. He seemed sometimes to wallow in it. The Vietnam war was a "huge chunk of rancid meat... excrement" that he believed the country had never confronted.

Neuhaus also harbored a sometimes tactile obsession with abortion, offering too regular reminders of how many fetuses are frozen and shipped to scientists for dissection. He displayed a dark streak of religious passivity, pooh-poohing since at least 1967 the threat of nuclear war. While representing an "extraordinary retrogression" for humankind, nuclear war would still be "something" (a revival meeting?) "through which God's purposes continue to be unfolded," Neuhaus said. And always in the background the sound of human bones crunching in the mouths of the crocodiles of the godless.

Even a viewing of the film *Fort Apache, the Bronx* provoked a dire epiphany from Neuhaus. As he described the movie, "the basic situation is the horror... and the most that can be done, finally the only

thing that need be done, is to be with people in the horror and help them to see through Calvary to Easter, to see that at the heart of the horror there is hope."

In the meantime, although we may struggle with history, the prospect of worldly solutions occupies a "cramped and fetid space." (The words "cramped" and "fetid" hover like two crows over much of Neuhaus's writing.) There is, he blurts, "no end to the ebb and flow of the excrement with which history honors hope."

Remember the case of Whittaker Chambers. Chambers, too, lacked a sense of proportion; to read his autobiography, *Witness*, is to be seized again and again by the lapels and informed in self-dramatizing tones of the latest crisis, so that even Chambers's failure at first to learn the *Time*-magazine style is reckoned a question of life and death. He too railed against the Enlightenment and secularism—and broke with communism, he would have us believe, when he found that the delicate convolutions of his daughter's perfect ear could be explained not rationally, not scientifically, but only by reference to a supernatural design. "My need was to be a practicing Christian in the same sense that I had been a practicing Communist," he wrote. Whittaker Chambers craved blind faith. Richard Neuhaus's vision of the world requires no less.

"I hold no brief for irrationality," Neuhaus wrote ten years ago, "but I am more impressed by the nonrational and even irrational forces within creation at its present preliminary stage of movement toward the kingdom of God." That contempt for rational efforts to make things better has always underpinned Neuhaus's thinking, whether as righteous radical or as stern apologist for conservatism. This does not prove that Neuhaus learned the wrong (or the right) lessons from the experience of the 1970s. What it does is characterize his conversion. Neuhaus's fierce philosophical consistency allowed no place for minor adjustments—in himself or in society. ■

The Battle For Rights

Argentine, American Honored
With Letelier-Moffitt Award

By Carla Hall

The bad news from Argentina is that human rights activist and lawyer Emilio Mignone continues to receive death threats and occasionally comes home to find that someone has painted on the wall of his apartment building in downtown Buenos Aires: "Here lives the terrorists' lawyer."

The good news is that he hasn't been jailed in two years and that human rights work is easier to pursue than in 1979 when he and other lawyers founded the Center for Legal and Social Studies. (CELS is its acronym in Spanish.)

"We have more solidarity from the people," says Mignone. "People have less fear." One reason, he says, is that the military, accused by human rights activists of one of the worst human rights records in the world, has lost much of its prestige and power since Argentina's defeat in the Falkland Islands war.

Mignone, who lives calmly with the bad news and the good news, has devoted the past few years to coping with a painful lack of news in Argentina—the whereabouts of the estimated 6,000 to 15,000 people who disappeared in the 1970s during the Argentine military regime's war against leftist guerrillas and other dissidents. There have been few reported disappearances in the last couple of years, but there is still little new information on most of those who vanished before.

Mignone's daughter, Monica, is one of them.

On behalf of CELS—which is trying to document the cases and circumstances of the disappeared and takes on some legal cases—Mignone has come to town to receive a Letelier-Moffitt Human Rights Memorial Award. It is given in honor of Orlando Letelier, the Chilean ambassador to the United States when Salvador Allende was president of Chile, and Ronni Karpen Moffitt, his colleague. Letelier and Moffitt, who were working at the Institute for Policy Studies, were

killed seven years ago today when the car they were riding in exploded as they rounded Sheridan Circle. The Chilean secret police was implicated in the murders.

The other recipient of the award is Father J. Bryan Hehir, director of the Office on International Justice and Peace of the United States Catholic Conference. He is credited with influencing the bishops' pastoral letter, approved in May, denouncing as immoral the use of nuclear weapons.

"I am honored," Hehir wrote in a letter to Isabel Letelier, the widow of Orlando Letelier and a human rights activist herself. "My respect for the two men [sic] who are commemorated by the awards makes my selection particularly meaningful to me."

The champions of human rights movements have been steadfastly recognized through Letelier-Moffitt award—Jacobco Timerman, the author and former Argentine political prisoner, is a past recipient. So is Socorro Juridico, a legal aid group in El Salvador. Father Hehir is a choice symbolic of a particular need the selection committee (composed of 12 activists from various organizations) feels, according to Marcus Raskin, a member of that committee and one of the founders of the Institute for Policy Studies.

"Modern life is a story of being injured to outrage and losing the capacity for outrage," says Raskin. "When it's the case that we can speak of hundreds of millions of people dying in nuclear war and speak about it in casual terms, you know we're in trouble." Hence, a man who has spoken eloquently against the dangers of nuclear weapons is one of this year's recipients.

This year, as Isabel Letelier attended the annual memorial service for her husband and Moffitt—where people bring roses and carnations and irises as a gentle memorial at the site of a violent event—she could recount a year of bad news and bittersweet good news. On the bad side, she is upset that Michael Townley, convicted of plotting the murder of Orlando Letelier, was not extradited to Argentina to face another murder charge there. In the Letelier case, Townley testified against other defendants and was paroled from prison after serving 62 months of a 10-year sentence. He now will probably go into the federal witness protection plan.



Emilio Mignone and Isabel Letelier; by Douglas Chevalier



Father J. Bryan Hehir; by Harry Naltchayan

On the good side, the Chilean government has agreed to let Isabel Letelier, who is an exile, return to her country. She returned for a visit. "I was happy to see friends, my country, the mountains," she says, "... but I will feel like an exile until this government that put me in exile is gone."



Religion's Animus Toward Business:

*Realignment of Religious
and Cultural Forces
Requires Business
Leaders to Think Anew
about Freedom, Justice,
and the Morality
of the Market*

Richard John Neuhaus

I need not tell you that there is, within some leadership of American religion, a profound bias against the enterprise in which you are engaged—against business as such, and, more emphatically, against transnational business. You encounter this in many different forums, not least of all in stockholder's meetings, where there is a seemingly infinite line-up of challenges, based sometimes upon legitimate protests of business abuse, but based, at least as frequently, upon a deep-seated animus toward the basic notion of business as being, especially in its transnational forms, "exploitative." Business is seen as an adjunct of other oppressive dynamics in the modern world, such as imperialism and militarism. In short, you are the "captains of capitalist oppression."

The expression of this animus takes many forms: in organizations of putative corporate responsibility; more explicitly in documents that you will see issuing from the World Council of Churches and other agencies, which declare, as a matter of almost self-evident truth, that capitalism is incompatible with Christianity. The biblical imperatives of justice, particularly justice for the poor and oppressed, require, it is said, a movement toward socialist or collectivist or "rational" economic planning.

Some of these expressions of animus are advanced by what might be described as hardcore ideologists. While it is a relatively small community that is engaged in an intellectually serious way in Christian-Marxist dialogue and the development of sundry liberation theologies based upon Marxist analysis, it is extraordinarily influential. It would be a serious mistake, however, to believe that this animus in the churches is directed and orchestrated by a self-conscious and ideologically committed conspiracy. It is less a matter of conspiracy than a matter of enculturation—the very air that one breathes in these religious worlds, the taken-for-granted assumptions which are seldom explicated and even more seldom challenged.

These same assumptions have insinuated themselves to a very large degree into our general culture, including the business culture of America. I am surprised, sometimes appalled, at encounters with business leaders who have themselves assimilated the notion that there is something fundamentally illegitimate, from a moral standpoint, in the business enterprise itself. They have been seduced into believing that the biblical imperative is toward a beloved community of cooperation, equality, fraternity, and that, therefore, notions essential to business enterprise, such as competition and reward according to merit, are, if not morally

There is no place in the world where we see democratic governance—and, therefore, human freedom—reasonably assured, where there is not also a largely free market economy.

I am not denying for a moment that there are many reasons why business ought to be supporting various efforts, culturally, in terms of social uplift, and, no doubt, this has a significant public relations return. However, all of these "corporate responsibility" efforts are misguided if they are undertaken in a manner that either skirts or abandons the basic moral defense of the business enterprise itself. At a tactical level, one can understand these attempts to put a human face on capitalism, but at a strategic level, they are self defeating, since they lock the case for capitalism into an inescapably defensive posture.

The animus toward business is hardly universal in the religious community and represents anything but the majority of religious belief, conviction, and sentiment in American life. Indeed, we are witnessing today what an early 20th century Italian social theorist, Vilfredo Pareto, called the "circulation of elites." Pareto's argument is winsomely simple, yet bears up under close examination. It is essentially that, in any society, there are a number of functions that need to be taken care of if the society is going to be viable: military, economic, political, cultural, religious. In any society, these functions attract to themselves a certain sector of the society which, over a period of time, becomes the elite, in charge of that particular function. What one sees over a further period of time is that such elites begin either to take their privileged position for granted or become disillusioned with the very function which they are to be exercising in the society.

Applying Pareto's notion to American religious life, mainline Protestantism has for several centuries been the culturally formative religious elite in American life. This is the Puritan tradition, essentially, and the heirs of that tradition today are what are often viewed as the "brand name" churches: particularly the United Methodist church, the Presbyterians, the United Church of Christ, the Episcopal church. They are the primary institutions in the National Council of Churches and among the most important American participants in the World Council of Churches.

For many years, this sector of American religion undoubtedly had the primary culture-forming influence. There are other sectors of American religion which have not been providing the public face and the public influence of religion and religiously grounded values in American life. These other sectors are, for example, the Roman Catholic church (with 50 million or more members), the Evangelicals (anywhere from 30 to 60 million Americans), and 20 million Americans who call themselves Lutherans. Mainline Protestant religion, in which has been historically centered in this century the deepest and most articulate and organized animus against capitalism, is in decline. It is not the mainline numerically—it is a minority.

The Protestant mainline continues to be a major legitimating sector of American religion. It continues to have very powerful resources, the various symbols of respectability and tradition in American life, and all this, despite the fact that in its controlling themes, in the realm of church and society, it tends to be profoundly alienated from the American experiment. Part of the decline is related to a disillusionment with the American experience itself. Some months ago, a journal called *This World*, with which I am associated, had the Roper Association do a survey of teachers of religion and of ethics in the various seminaries, church schools, and such. In that survey, we put a proposition, and asked for response.

The proposition is a nuanced one: "On balance, and considering the alternatives, American influence is a force for good in the world today." Barely half of the teachers of religion in the seminaries, church schools, and such, agree; a very substantial minority emphatically disagrees; and the rest are uncertain. If one were to take the same proposition to the headquarters of the National Council of Churches and

illegitimate, at least under a very deep shadow. One consequence of this is that the business response to its critics is often one of accepting the basic argument of the opponents of business and then, in a very apologetic and defensive manner, attempting to demonstrate that business is not quite the ogre that it is portrayed.

For example, much of what is called "external relations" or "corporate responsibility" gives the argument away before it begins by saying, yes, we do make a profit, but we also help out this poverty group in Bedford-Stuyvesant, we also give money to the Metropolitan Opera, and myriad other benign enterprises.

of some of its main member churches, the informed guess is that less than 20 or 15 percent would agree with the proposition; a larger group would so qualify the proposition as to disagree with it; and a substantial minority would say that American influence is a force for evil in the world.

No community nor sector in a society will be able to provide cultural and political leadership if that group fundamentally does not believe in the moral legitimacy of the social enterprise itself. Such a loss of faith characterizes most of the church and society leadership in the mainline churches. Some are more profoundly alienated: these are the proponents of various liberation theologies and such. It is a minority phenomenon. Much more pervasive is the general sense of the moral illegitimacy of the Capitalist enterprise and of its correlates in western democracies, and, most particularly, in the influence of the United States of America.

In countering this organized and articulate animus against business, one needs a sense of the role of American influence in the world, "on balance, and considering the alternatives," and of the economic component within that global role of American influence. And here is a cause for hope: in the circulation of elites it is likely that a new configuration, religiously, from the Evangelical, Roman Catholic, Lutheran, Fundamentalist mix, will become increasingly important in American life.

I do not pretend to know what will be the new elite. We have to look at how we make the argument against both the hardcore ideologists and those who are unconsciously accepting their assumptions about the illegitimacy—the moral illegitimacy—of business. I would suggest we make the argument, not by trying to construct a direct moral legitimation—not to say theology—of capitalism, but in a less direct and, therefore, more effective and persuasive manner. In the Institute of Religion and Democracy, for example, the approach follows these lines: the first proposition is a theological and ethical one—there is a necessary connection between Christian faith and human freedom. Then you move to a second proposition: in our world, there appears to be a necessary connection between human freedom and democratic governance. Only then do you move to the third proposition: there appears to be a necessary connection between democratic governance and a free market economy.

The third proposition is not so much a statement of principle as a descriptive statement. There is no place in the world where we see democratic governance—and, therefore, human freedom—reasonably assured, where there is not also a largely free market economy. This is the argument which is capable of enlisting the intelligent support of most Americans.

The argument that needs to be made is one that recaptures the rhetoric and the substance of concern for the poor and the marginal and the oppressed, and from there demonstrates that it is precisely in concern for them that one needs to advance the cause of freedom, including economic freedom. We need to challenge head-on, not the concern for the poor, but rather the opposition's arguments that concern for the poor is best advanced by methods of political and economic collectivization. The choice is not between bread and freedom. To the contrary, the argument can be made that where there is concern for freedom, there will also, as a general proposition—empirically verifiable in the world today—be a greater production and a fairer distribution of bread.

We are essentially engaged in a war of ideas. So long as those who are in principled opposition to this understanding of freedom, democracy, and economics are able to exercise a monopoly upon moral rhetoric, they are going to have a distinct advantage. We need to reconstruct the debate—to advance the internalizing of the critique within the churches. One of the happy signs in recent months has been that, in the mainline churches, church leadership is beginning to demand a higher degree of accountability, so that those who presume to speak for the churches on political and economic issues are in at least closer conversation with the actual constituencies that make up the churches.

While the monitoring of the churches and the critiquing of their errors is important, a more important dimension is that business leaders themselves, who in many cases are leaders within their churches, not only stay in those churches but become much more determined that those churches move toward greater accountability. A new centrist position on these questions can be established. It requires, however, that within the business com-

. . . let the energies and resources of the business community support those . . . forces which are today striving to reconstruct a public philosophy for the American experiment.

munity there be a dramatically different understanding, not only of what is at stake, but of how one advances the future of freedom, democracy, and economics. One hears many business people talk about the importance of educating the general public and, particularly, the churches, to economic realities. That indeed is important. It is at least equally important for business leadership to be educated to the moral and cultural dimensions which finally have the strongest bearing upon the future of economic activity. Sorely lacking in the business community is an appreciation of the fact that politics is essentially a function of culture, and that at the heart of culture is religion.

Religion is the substance of culture; culture, the form of religion. Politics is basically the way in which people respond to or are sold ideas.

Until the business community understands that it is not simply a matter of educating people to the realities of economics, but rather of demonstrating the ways in which market economies, nationally and internationally, advance and secure democratic freedoms (which are legitimated in turn by religion and religiously grounded values), the enemies of democratic freedom (and, not so incidentally, of market economy) are going to have a powerful advantage in being able to manipulate biblical imagery and rhetoric in a way that makes it appear that, at best, capitalism can be practiced with a bad conscience.

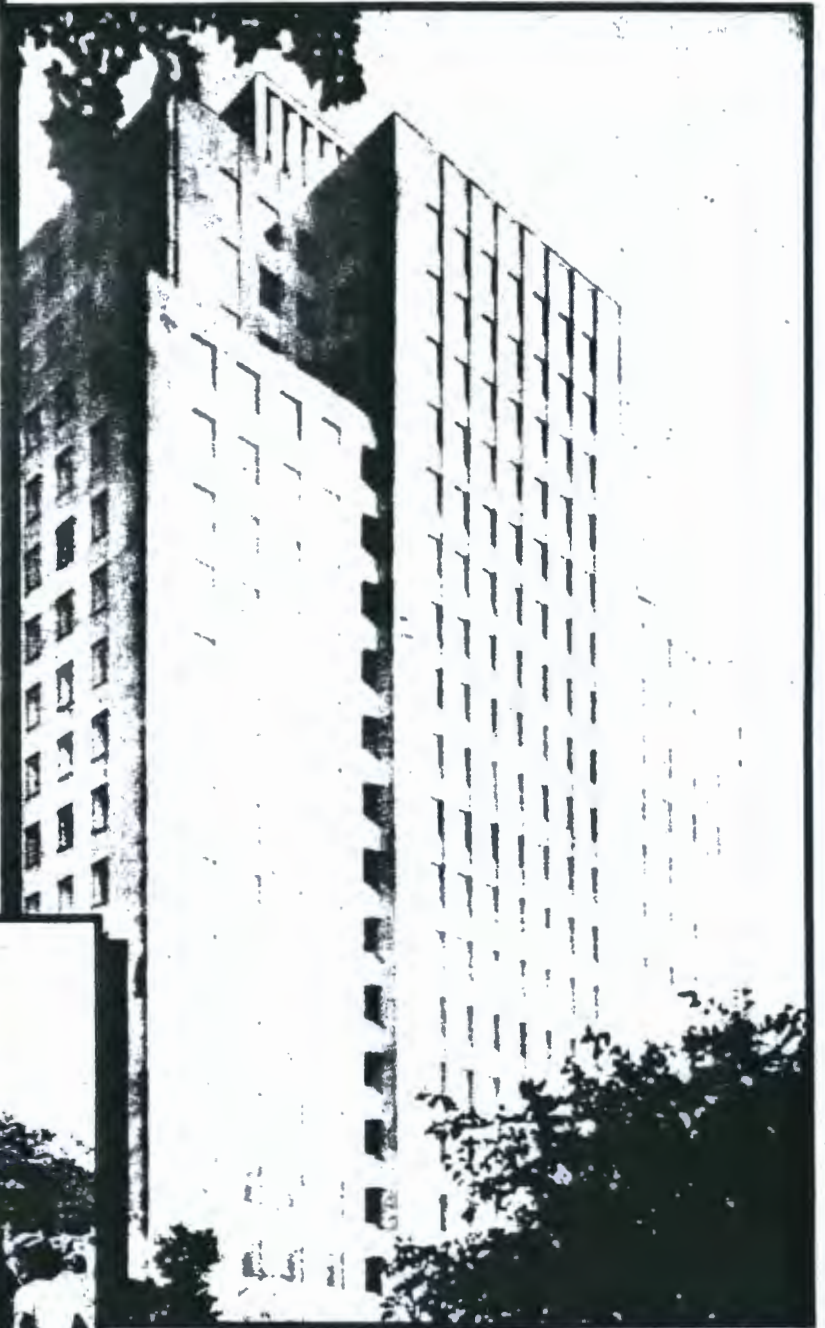
It is not enough to persuade people that capitalism "works" economically, whereas its alternatives with alarming consistency fail. It is also important to demonstrate that the business enterprise is premised upon more than a superficial pragmatism as to what works. It is premised upon ideas about the dignity of the human person, the relationship between personhood and property, the relationship between personhood and property and the securities of democratic polity, and all of this premised in an understanding of human freedom. To sum up:

- You are right to perceive an anti-business animus in the most vocal leadership sectors of the mainline churches, an animus directed with greatest intensity against transnational business.
- It is important, however, to understand that these sectors of religious leadership by no means are the total or even the controlling sectors in American life, that increasingly they are being challenged by a new realignment of religious forces in accord with something like Pareto's understanding of the circulation of elites.
- The concern for economics, if it is to be effectively communicated, must be related to the priority concerns for democratic governance and the religiously imperative concern for human freedom and religious freedom in particular. All of this is premised upon a new understanding of the relationship between culture, politics, and religion.
- The strategy is to stay in the mainline churches if you are there already.
- What is really at stake is the truth or falsehood of the proposition that "on balance, considering the alternatives," American influence is a force for good in the world. If one believes that proposition is true, then let the energies and resources of the business community support those intellectual, academic, cultural forces which are today striving to reconstruct a public philosophy for the American experiment. This will provide a religiously grounded, moral legitimation for the sense of hopefulness. It will once again make America, if not the last best hope on earth, at least a symbol of promise, not only for the successful and the energetic in the world, but for those who have felt that they have been unfairly marginalized.

The hope is that they will see again, in America's exemplary exercise of democratic governance and human freedom, a model which will be for them much more compelling and inspiring than the alternative models proposed by those who either have never known or have become disillusioned with the idea of democracy.

This article is based on a speech given by the author on June 30, 1983, to a joint luncheon meeting of the Council's Task Forces on the Contributions of International Business to Growth and Development and on Health and Safety Initiatives as part of the Council's business-church dialogue efforts. Pastor Richard John Neuhaus is a Lutheran theologian who has for twenty years been active in civil rights, peace, and other aspects of public religion. He has served as Senior Editor of Worldview magazine and as Project Director for the Council on Religion and International Affairs, New York City. He is director-designate of The Center on Religion and Society, New York City, and is the author of nine books on theology and various dimensions of public ethics.

Rocked by controversy over gay church application and alleged leftist sympathies, the National Council of Churches now faces the consequences of an openness reducing doctrinal and moral agreement to the barest minimum.



The "God Box"—housing NCC headquarters in New York City

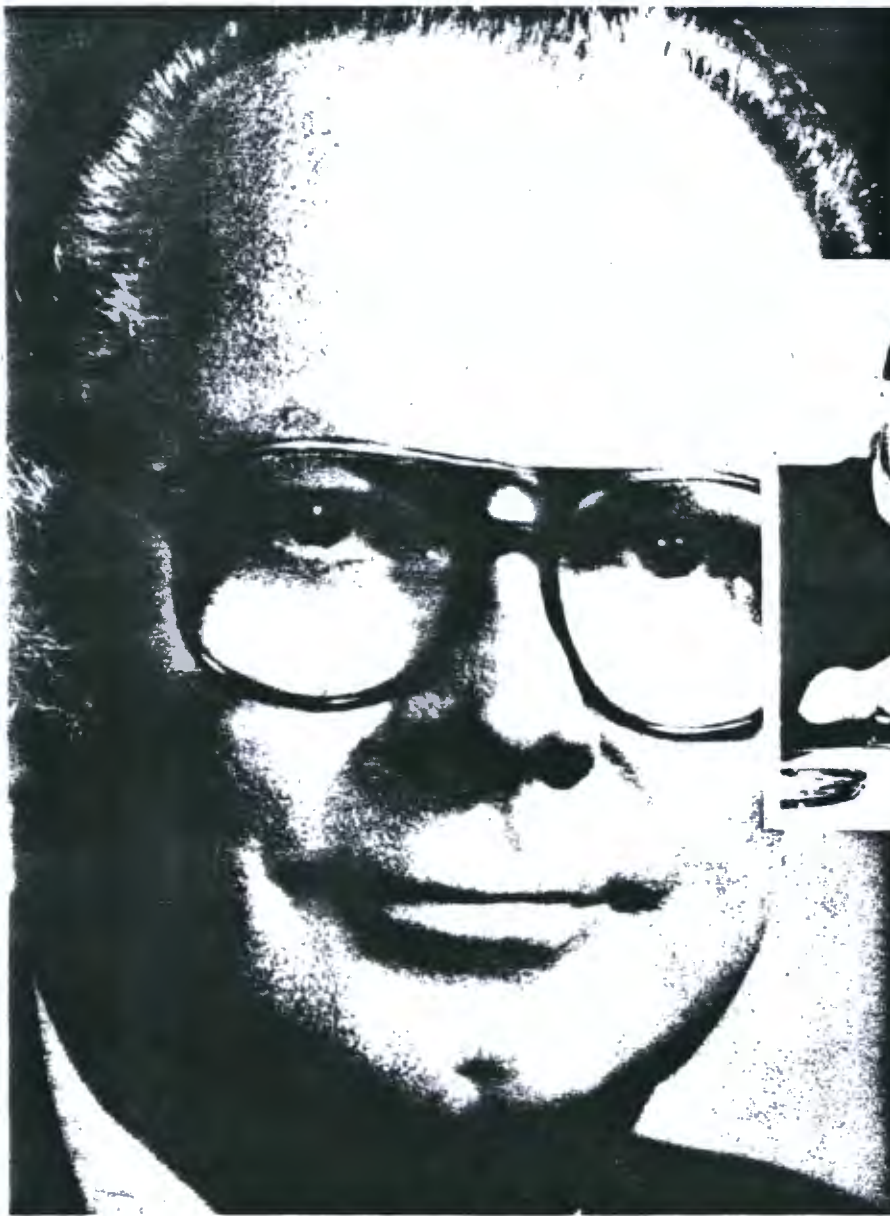


UNITED
EVANGELICAL

ACTION

A CALL TO
ACTION
FROM THE
NATIONAL
ASSOCIATION
OF EVANGELICALS

SEPT.-OCT. 1983



At the very outset of the fight, sides were quickly taken. In one corner was the National Council of Churches, and in the other corner stood the Institute on Religion and Democracy, an organization with an eye on protecting religion and democracy. The IRD came out swinging fast and furious.



Bishop James Armstrong (left photo), IRD spokesman Richard Neuhaus and Edmund Robb, IRD chairman (pictured respectively) answer questions from the press after they appeared on 60 Minutes' broadcast, "The Gospel According to Whom?"

WAGING WORDS

NCC sympathizers bring strong words to bear on questionable council polity

"What worries me most," accused Lutheran minister and IRD spokesman Richard John Neuhaus before the 60 Minutes limelight, "is when the church starts telling lies about countries where people are being imprisoned and tortured and slaughtered, as in Indochina, for example, after the American withdrawal. . . .

"So we have religious leaders," he continued, "who go to countries, which are massively repressive regimes in which Christians are jailed and being tortured . . . , to consort with the persecutors of the church of Christ. This is evil. This is wrong. This discredits the church as social witness."

On the counteroffensive the council has sent out page upon page of response to virtually every minister, church official and religious activist in its constituency. Arguing that the attacks from the media and the IRD were an affront to the ministry and work of these churches within the NCC, the materials have sought to rally grass-roots support against these allegations. And the counterattack might have

worked. But then religious journalists and leaders, generally respected throughout the NCC megastructure, began to confront the situation.

Addressing last April's meeting of the NCC information committee, *Christian Century* editor James Wall advised that the best response the council could make to its critics would be to "clean up their act." While Wall criticized the IRD for using "a hatchet rather than a scalpel" to make its points, he said that church members of NCC denominations were ready for someone to answer their growing concerns about the controversy.

"Average church members," he said, "have been genuinely concerned about the leftist bend of the NCC churches, and were just waiting for someone to articulate their concerns."

Wall further contended that NCC staffers are prone to "romantic, revolutionary rhetoric of the left," and that "there are too many places where staff are able to manipulate resolutions and get them passed."

But undoubtedly the most important internal examination of the criticism against the NCC was a two-part series published in April issues of the *United Methodist Reporter*, called by *Time* magazine the church's most influential newspaper. Describing its research as "the most extensive and intensive investigative efforts in our paper's history," the *Reporter* analyzed five years of NCC statements and publications and "discovered that the NCC has devoted at least four times more effort to addressing abuses by dictatorial rightist regimes [such as South Korea] than those by dictatorial leftist regimes [such as Vietnam]."

"And when the NCC did respond to repression of persons living under governments with Marxist leaders," the *Reporter* continues, "it did so with much less intensity. . . ." Due to the large number of responses for reprints, the study has been reissued as a special six-page supplement.

To further buttress its own claims about NCC policies, the IRD has recently published *A Time for Candor*. In hopes of countering NCC claims that its work on behalf of the oppressed does meet the demands of the Christian gospel, this study seeks to draw a distinction between aid to the needy and financial aid that supports repressive governments. With this distinction in mind, the study documents

various cases where mainline church organizational and financial support have gone to organizations and governments of the totalitarian left. The study has been sent to church leaders throughout the United States.

In view of the continuing barrage of allegations, NCC leadership has begun to

"*Christian Century* editor James Wall advised that the best response the council could make to its critics would be to 'clean up their act. . . . Average church members have been genuinely concerned about the leftist bend of the NCC churches, and were just waiting for someone to articulate their concerns.' "

concede that something must be done. Speaking to reporters for the *United Methodist Reporter*, Bishop James Armstrong, president of the NCC, said that "the NCC must devote far more attention to mistreatment of people by their left-wing governments."

The penetration of this evidence to the local church level provoked the Council of Bishops of the United Methodist Church to establish a special committee to look into the charges. And in like manner, the reunited Presbyterian Church (USA) voted in June to establish a panel of seven, who represent the diversity of views found in that denomination, to investigate the causes of the controversy. As the two most powerful denominations within the NCC, the results of their investigations cannot but influence other mainline churches and the ecumenical movement as a whole.—*By Kerry Ptacek, research director for the Institute on Religion and Democracy, a Washington, D.C.-based foundation sponsoring various educational projects in support of democratic values and institutions*

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September 9, 1983

MEMO

TO: IRD Board and Special Friends

FROM: Penn Kemble

We have all heard the argument that to encourage democracy on the international scene is really just another way of imposing our values on other peoples.

I thought Peter Berger's discussion of this subject was most thoughtful, and I've sent it along in the hope that you too may find it useful.

(202) 822-8627

*The members of this board serve as individuals active in their own denominations, not as representatives of the institutions with which they are identified.

Democracy for Everyone?

Peter L. Berger

ON June 8, 1982, in a speech to the British Parliament, President Reagan called for a "global campaign for democracy." In a key passage he said: "The objective I propose is quite simple to state: to foster the infrastructure of democracy—the system of a free press, unions, political parties, universities—which allows a people to choose their own way, to develop their own culture, to reconcile their own differences through peaceful means."

This presidential initiative both legitimated earlier efforts to use American government resources for the promotion of democracy abroad and launched a new effort directed at the same end. The most important such effort has been the project to create a National Endowment for Democracy, a new institution that would draw on the two major political parties as well as on organized labor, the business community, and possibly other private institutions. Bearing some resemblance to the political *Stiftungen* of West Germany, the Endowment would give assistance and advice to democratic parties and movements abroad, and especially in the Third World. At the same time, the United States Information Agency (USIA) has been directed by the administration to intensify its presentation of democratic ideas and realities.

The issue of the advocacy of democracy has thus acquired a new timeliness. That issue has a number of political and ideological aspects. It is clearly related to the concern, shared by many people at different points along the political spectrum, that this country needs a new sense of itself and its mission in the world. There is also the conviction that despite (or because of) recent tensions, the countries of the Western Alliance need a rallying point for their common democratic values, which, after all, constitute the only durable foundation of the Alliance. Then there is the need to define a Western stance in the face of the Soviet Union and its use of Marxist ideology in the service of its imperial purposes.

In addition to each of these facets, there is the North/South dimension of the issue. Specifically,

there is the question of the manner in which democracy can or should be advocated to non-Western societies—precisely those societies, notably in Asia and Africa, where one cannot readily presuppose a commonality of values of the kind the United States shares with Europe and (at least in the educated classes) with Latin America. Is democracy so closely intertwined with specifically Western values that to advocate it in non-Western societies is futile, or undesirable, or both?

President Reagan addressed himself to this question in his speech. Immediately after stating the objective quoted above, he went on:

This is not cultural imperialism; it is providing the means for genuine self-determination and protection for diversity. Democracy already flourishes in countries with very different cultures and historical experiences. It would be cultural condescension, or worse, to say that any people prefer dictatorship to democracy.

In view of the history of this century, both in the West and elsewhere, the President's final sentence may be somewhat over-optimistic; after all, there is indeed the phenomenon that Erich Fromm (referring primarily to Nazism) called "the escape from freedom," and that Jean-François Revel (referring to the apparently ineradicable sympathy of Western intellectuals for dictatorships of the Left) has described as "the totalitarian temptation." Be that particular point as it may, however, the assertion that to champion the spread of democracy does not constitute cultural imperialism requires further elaboration.

On the face of it, there is a certain resemblance here to the debate over human rights during the Carter administration. There is a similar concern for the American self-image, for the ideological underpinnings of the Western Alliance, and for the proper definition of the contest with the Soviet Union; and there are similar questions about cultural relativity and ethnocentrism.* But it is important to stress that the issue of democracy, or of political rights altogether, is not the same as the issue of human rights. For there are fundamental human rights that are not in themselves political—

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* See my article, "Are Human Rights Universal?" *COMMENTARY*, September 1977.

such as, for instance, the right to the free exercise of religion. Although in practice a very high correlation exists between human rights and democracy (a point I will return to below), in principle they are discrete phenomena. For this reason, we must be clear what we mean by the term "democracy."

In defining democracy, American political scientists have tended to emphasize the institutional as against the ideological aspect. They see democracy as a specific set of institutions and processes rather than as a set of ideas. This is useful, since it limits discussion to the political sphere proper, leaving aside the questions (interesting though they may be) of "democratization" in other spheres (the family, work, education, and so forth). It also leaves aside the subject of democracy as an ideological creed or philosophy. The political scientist Myron Weiner probably expresses a wide consensus among his professional colleagues when he says that the following four characteristics are essential to democracy as a political process: governments are chosen in competitive elections in which there are opposition parties; parties, including those in opposition, have the right openly to seek public support, a right that must include access to the press, freedom of speech and assembly, and protection against arbitrary arrest; electorally defeated governments step down and the losers are not punished unless they have violated laws, in which case they are protected by due process; and elected governments really govern and are not figureheads for non-elected elites.

One might add to or subtract from this list, but it clearly points to the essentials of democracy as a political process. Nor is it an oversimplification to say that all these characteristics express an all-important principle—namely, the institutionalized limitation of the power of government. Democracy seeks to insure that the rascals are periodically kicked out and that, while they are in, there are certain things they may not do.

Now, not even the most enthusiastic proponent of the universality of democracy can deny that this particular "package" of institutional arrangements has highly specific roots in Western history and is linked to specific Western social developments (such as Roman law, medieval guilds, Protestant churches) as well as to specific Western values (the ethics of Judaism and Christianity, the Enlightenment, the ethos of entrepreneurship, and so on). The question may then be put quite simply: how does this "package" apply to societies rooted in very different social developments and animated by very different values? Can democracy plausibly be advocated in such societies? Should it be? And if so, in what terms?

THESE questions are not new. In the current debate one may distinguish two viewpoints, both originating in earlier periods of American history and both legitimated in the name of American political ideals.

There is, first, the view that the values of democracy are universal, deriving from human nature itself, and therefore that the United States should support and advocate these values everywhere, as well as the institutions founded on them. Interestingly, this view may be found both on the Right and on the Left within the American political spectrum.

Then there is the contrary view, again found on both Right and Left. According to it, American democracy is contingent upon specific values that are *not* universal, and the United States cannot and indeed should not try to propagate democracy indiscriminately in all places. Cannot, because the project is unrealistic; should not, because to do so is ethnocentric arrogance.

Curiously, both viewpoints are grounded in affirmations of the "American Creed"—the former in its emphatic universalism (the Declaration of Independence speaks of "all men"), the latter in its tradition of respect for human differences (American pluralism). The two viewpoints appear frequently in somewhat crude forms—in the one case, manifesting what could be called a "vulgar" Wilsonianism; in the other case, manifesting a masochistic denigration of one's own culture. These have well-known antecedents in American history. The vulgar Wilsonian who insists that the whole world is destined to become democratic in the Western sense is a secularized reincarnation of all those missionaries who draped Mother Hubbards over the bosoms of Polynesian maidens newly won to Methodism or Congregationalism. The denigrator of American values stands in apostolic succession to a long line of pilgrims, expatriates, and tourists-gone-native.

These are extreme types, easily caricatured. But this does not mean that they do not walk around in the flesh. They do; the Christian churches of America, which used to produce the missionaries, now produce a lot of the masochists, and they deserve every possible caricature. Nevertheless, some of the ideas underlying the two opposing viewpoints cannot be dismissed out of hand. The first view embodies the correct insight that the most deeply held values always imply universality: I cannot claim inalienable rights as a human being without thereby implying that the same rights belong to every other human being. The second view also embodies a correct insight—that human cultures do in fact differ in their values, even very basic ones, and that Western democracy has grown out of a highly distinctive cultural history: I cannot assume that my own values are shared by people of other cultures, or that the "American Creed" will be as self-evident in Ibadan as it is in Indianapolis.

Cultural relativity, in other words, is an undeniable empirical fact. One of the main effects of modern social science, indeed, has been to make this fact widely known, certainly here and in Europe. Pascal's dictum, that what is truth on one

side of the Pyrenees is error on the other, was revolutionary when he uttered it in the 17th century; today it has become a staple of popular consciousness. No viable approach to the problem of democracy in the contemporary world can bypass this widespread knowledge of relativity.

Yet if the "vulgar Wilsonian" position underestimates cultural relativity, the anti-Wilsonian position overestimates it. The aim should be to formulate a more nuanced middle-ground position, one that is intellectually defensible and politically practical. This is by no means an impossible agenda.

PRECISELY which Western values are basic to democracy? Inevitably the focus falls on the set of values loosely called "individualism," however vague and even slightly pejorative the term may sound. Western democracy has been founded on a specific understanding of the individual as an autonomous being. This understanding means that the individual has a capacity for freedom, for realizing himself in the course of his actions, and that he has inherent rights over and against the demands (or, for that matter, the rights) of any community to which he may belong.

It is not very difficult to trace the source of these notions in the convergence of two cultural streams: the first originating in biblical religion, with Protestantism playing a decisive role in its application to political democracy; the second rooted in the Hellenic view of man, transmitted to modernity via the Renaissance and the Enlightenment and applied to the invention of democratic institutions by the French Revolution and its successors. Obviously, these cultural streams have failed to affect non-Western societies in the same way; indeed, in most of the latter they have begun to have an impact only rather recently, and as a result of Western expansion.

But just as democracy is an idea that manifests itself in concrete institutions and social processes, so the autonomous individual is not only an idea but a lived experience. Actual human beings must feel themselves to be autonomous, to be free or aspiring to freedom, to have inherent rights. For such experience to be possible, specific processes of socialization must take place, beginning in early childhood. These processes too require an institutional framework; the "bourgeois family" of the modern West was a key institution in forming the sort of individuals for whom democracy could be a plausible project.

Thus it is not just a matter of Asians or Africans not holding certain ideas. More importantly, it is a matter of their not having had the experiences through which these ideas become plausible or "real" in actual life. In this sense, Western individualism is a deviation from the "common human pattern" (to use a concept coined by Jan Romein). It is so perceived by many non-Westerners. (The fact that Western individualism

has also been challenged from within Western culture, notably by Marxism and other collectivist ideologies, further complicates the situation.)

The unusual assumptions of Western individualism become sharply evident as soon as one compares them with what is taken for granted in the great majority of non-Western cultures, in all parts of the world, and indeed in the traditional substrata of Western societies as well, such as in the remaining peasant cultures of Southern Europe. In Latin America, Western individualism frequently amounts to a thin veneer over totally different Indo-American or Afro-American cultures with a deeply communal, non-individualistic character. In Africa, the veneer is even thinner, due to the briefer and more superficial experience with the West. But it is in Asia, with its ancient and highly sophisticated civilizations, that the alien quality of Western individualism is most clearly evident.

ASIA is the most important testing ground for many assumptions about modernity. It can be argued that there is in Asia a "second case" of modernity in the making, one which is not a simple extension of the Western case. Its clear center is Japan, though it now also includes the newly industrialized countries of the "Asian Rim" (South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Singapore) and is radiating further (especially into the ASEAN countries of Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Thailand). These societies lack the Western history of individualism. Yet some of them have developed democratic institutions. Japan and India are the most important cases, and they can serve to test many assumptions about an allegedly necessary connection among modernization, democracy, and the values of Western individualism.

Now, modernization changes *all* cultures, and individualism has indeed been one of the more successful cultural exports of the West. It would be foolish to expect all Asians to be guided by traditional communal values. In Japan, for example, there is much evidence of the inroads of individualistic values (a fact that may have far-reaching social consequences in the future). Also, the West itself has been changing. Strong anti-individualistic tendencies are at work there, and not only of the political sort; witness the counterculture and the rise of charismatic religious movements. But the point is that in most if not all non-Western societies, there is an "audience" for Western individualistic values. To this "audience," democracy can be advocated in exactly the same terms that one would employ in America or Europe. By and large, this audience is made up of those who have undergone a modern education on the secondary or university levels.

Yet even in these strata there have been neo-traditionalist movements, some of them rejecting modernity outright, most of them advocating

modifications of modernity in line with indigenous values, as expressed in the slogan, "modernization without Westernization." These movements are particularly powerful in the Islamic world, but they exist elsewhere as well. There is a Shinto revival in Japan, there are strong neotraditional movements in Hinduism, and there is a rapid growth of indigenous Christian churches in Africa. Thus there exist not only continuing, and in some places vast, traditional sectors of society that have been relatively untouched by Western values. There also exist significant groups that have turned away from the Western values once espoused by themselves or their parents.

Does this then mean that in non-Western countries democracy can plausibly be advocated only to "converts" to Western values? Or can it also be advocated to those who either continue to live by traditional values or have newly returned to such values? I believe the answers to these two questions are, respectively, no and yes.

QUITE apart from its relation to positive values or ideals, democracy is, under modern conditions, the only practical alternative to unrestrained tyranny. There is scarcely a human society that would defend the absence of *any* restraints on the actions of rulers. "Tyranny" is a universal pejorative. The issue is how tyranny is to be prevented.

In traditional societies, there are various countervailing forces to tyranny, sometimes institutionalized. For example, in old China there were the Imperial Censors—Confucian officials whose job it was to monitor and if necessary reprimand the authorities, including the emperor himself, in the name of the accepted norms of political conduct. The Brahmins, the priestly caste of India, played a somewhat comparable role in that society. In other cases the function was fulfilled in a more informal manner, through non-governmental institutions such as kinship, tribe, priesthood, and the like, which imposed limits on what rulers could do.

But in pre-modern times the most important constraint on government was the sheer inefficiency of its reach. Even the most despotic empire of earlier times simply lacked the means to extend its power uniformly and steadily throughout the area supposedly under its sway. Away from the capital city and a few other political centers, many people lived their lives untouched by government, and perhaps ignorant of its existence.

By contrast, even "soft states" today, because of modern technology, have a vastly augmented power to project themselves into every nook and cranny of society. At the same time, modernization tends to weaken the traditional institutions that used to counterbalance government. The social functions of kinship shrink and extended kinship ties weaken; tribal allegiances become less compelling; priesthoods are undermined by seculariza-

tion; and so on. All this greatly increases the chances for tyranny—not because rulers have become more wicked, but because, if they are wicked, they are in a much better position to carry out their nefarious designs.

What sort of institutional arrangements can one imagine that would reimpose constraints on the immensely powerful entity known as the modern state? What would be the "fundamental equivalents" of Imperial Censors? The answer is: arrangements similar to those embodied in Western democracy—institutionalized restraints on the powers of government, provisions for orderly succession, guarantees for critics of government actions, independent custodians of law and morality, and so on.

Put differently, *if democracy did not exist, one would have to invent it.* Or, in the language of advocacy: say all you want about your unwillingness to accept Western values, about your desire to pursue independent and indigenous paths of development—unless you want untrammelled tyranny, there is no alternative to democracy.

It is here that the correlation between democracy and human rights becomes particularly relevant. Leaving aside political rights (like the right to vote or to speak freely) that may be deemed culturally relative, there are fundamental human rights that all or nearly all human societies recognize: the right of an individual not to be subjected to arbitrary and cruel punishment by his own rulers in the absence of any crime; the right of parents to keep their children; the right of people to go on living in the place of their birth; and so on. If one traces offenses against these rights on a map of the world, the democracies will show very few entries. Governments that arbitrarily imprison, torture, or kill their own people, that separate parents from their children, and that engage in massive involuntary "transfers of population," are very rarely democracies. It is not hard to see why. Although in theory it is possible to imagine benevolent despots, respectful of human rights and devoted to the welfare of their subjects, in practice despotism is rarely or only intermittently benevolent, at least under modern conditions. If one is concerned with human rights, under any conceivably credible definition of that term, the only reliable guarantee lies in the institutions of democracy.

It may be argued that the requirements of economic development make the necessity of democracy less compelling. At least in the short run, there have been non-democratic regimes with impressive records of economic development, such as in the countries of the Asian Rim. Yet the evidence does not allow anyone to assert that "development dictatorships" are a necessary or invariable condition of economic progress. The record of most such regimes is quite depressing—in the case of the socialist ones, it is uniformly dismal. By contrast, there are democracies with impressive

economic records (Sri Lanka has been a good example).

An argument can be made, in fact, that if economic development is successful, pressures toward democracy begin to build up (South Korea). Not that democracy is to be advocated merely as a means to the end of economic development; both democracy and development are human desiderata, each on its own. To defend either it is not necessary to argue that one leads inevitably to the other. Democracy is a good in and of itself.

Moreover, the desirability of democracy cannot be weakened by saying that it is of little interest to the poor. For one thing, every contemporary democracy was once poor. For another, it is precisely the poor in every country who have the greatest stake in protections against tyranny. Democracy is not a "luxury of the rich," as has been argued; the rich, with or without democracy, usually manage to take care of themselves.

IF DEMOCRACY is indeed a political structure to safeguard the rights and liberties of the individual, it also happens to offer the most plausible structure for the protection of traditional values.

The state is not the only threat to traditional values. Other modern institutions and processes—the forces of the market and of technology, modern urban life, mass communications—create their own threats. But the state is the most potent threat.

Take the case of education, virtually everywhere today a state monopoly, pressed on everyone despite frequent resistance. Ivan Illich has proposed that the school is the church of modernity, and in most countries today it is an "established" church, controlled by government and imposed on people by the police powers of government if necessary. Let it be quickly stipulated that government education is not necessarily bad, and that both democracy and economic development require an educational infrastructure. Nevertheless, those with allegiance to traditional values correctly perceive the state educational system as a major threat to these values. How can they minimize it? Once more, the most effective brake on the untrammelled power of educators to impose their own values on everyone lies in the institutions of democracy.

The most practical way to protect tradition is to limit the powers of the state. In non-democratic regimes, traditional groups are "obstacles to progress," to be manipulated or coerced as policy requires; in a democracy, they are members of an electorate. Democracy as an institutional mechanism, especially if it is limited to the political sphere, is not in itself inimical to traditional values. On the contrary, a democratic polity allows "breathing space" to traditional values and institutions. One need only compare the benign fate of tradition in the democracies of India and

Japan with the ruthless suppression it undergoes in China or even in some of the milder authoritarian regimes of Asia.

Thus, in many situations, protecting the rights of individuals against the state is tantamount also to protecting the rights of tradition—more precisely, of those individuals who desire to continue living in traditional ways. Democracy fosters pluralism and coexistence, including coexistence between modernized and more traditional sectors of society.

IN ADDITION to all this, democracy is the most practical method for safeguarding those "mediating structures" that are, themselves, the matrix of democracy.

By mediating structures I mean institutions that both give shape to people's private identities and also help them relate to the large structures of a modern society. These institutions exist both in highly modern and in less developed societies, and they are very important in both. Some of them continue to be traditional in character or (especially in the West) have undergone modernizing modifications. The most important of these are the family, organized religion, and the structures of local community. Others are such innovations as cooperatives, labor unions, and other associations to protect or promote particular interests. Virtually everywhere in the world, people have a strong interest in these institutions, because their most precious values and self-identifications are closely bound to them.

Whether one speaks of more or of less modernized populations, the protection of mediating structures is an urgent popular concern. Here too the major threat comes from the state, and here too democratic limitations of state power are a beneficial answer.

Development strategies that run roughshod over these institutions are likely to founder and/or become increasingly tyrannical. A major cause of the downfall of the Shah of Iran, Grace Goodell has argued, was the repressive manner in which his regime, in the name of development and modernization, dealt with the "natural" mediating structures of Iranian society. By contrast, the success of Japan may have much to do with the creative manner in which intermediate institutions were preserved in the course of modernization.

Mediating structures prevent individuals from falling into the *anomie* or "alienation" that is one of the high costs of modernization, and also insure that government retains a connection with the values by which ordinary people live. For this reason, they are crucial to the legitimacy of all large political structures and especially of government. Mediating structures are also the sociological soil from which political democracy, if absent today, may grow tomorrow. And here, on this point, the distinction between authoritarian and totalitarian regimes is highly relevant.

Totalitarian states, by their very nature, cannot tolerate even the relative independence of such institutions. They must be leveled, controlled, and integrated into the all-embracing polity. Authoritarian regimes usually do not operate under this compulsion. Once they are in a position to control political opposition, they frequently permit various mediating structures—family, religion, local community, even cooperatives and other economic interest groupings—to function relatively autonomously. In this way, even unintentionally, they permit institutions to exist that form a potential matrix for a future democracy.

It is in itself good if the state does not seek to interfere in the family or religious life of its people, or if it allows them to band together for the pursuit of economic interests. But beyond this immediate good, there is also the strong possibility that this kind of participation will eventually lead to pressures for political participation—and, just as important, will accustom people to social practices that are indispensable to the workings of democracy.

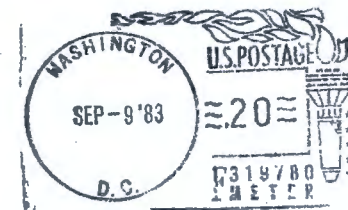
THE day when Westerners could go to Asia or Africa and, missionary-like, proclaim the supremacy

of Western culture with unabashed self-assurance is well past. The last major nation of Western provenance that still practices "cultural imperialism" of the 19th-century type is the Soviet Union, and its successes, such as they are, may be credited to fear of Soviet power rather than to the persuasive force of Soviet values. Those who represent Western democracy have, by contrast, every reason to be interested in the great dialogue among cultures that is as yet only a promise, but an enormously exciting and challenging promise, of the modern age.

If the day of the missionary is past, one is less certain that the day of the self-denigrating pilgrim is also past; but it should be. Those who come into dialogue with non-Western cultures in a stance of uncritical admiration for what they find there, and of masochistic disavowal of their own cultural heritage, are unlikely to obtain a serious hearing and deserve none. A reasoned stand for the human achievements of Western civilization, including the monumental achievements of political democracy, is long overdue. Just possibly the current discussion may contribute to a wider reaffirmation of Western values.

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PRESS RELEASE

November 18, 1983

Contact: 202/822-8627

The Board of Directors of the Institute on Religion and Democracy is saddened by the resignation of the Rev. A. James Armstrong from the Presidency of the National Council of Churches and the United Methodist Episcopacy of Indiana. James Armstrong is a man of many strengths and talents, and it is our hope that they will soon again be put to the service of the Christian faith he has so long, so lovingly and so ably served.

It is our understanding that the Rev. Mr. Armstrong's decision to resign his leadership positions was based upon personal considerations. His forthright action commands our respect and our compassion. We extend to him our love and our continuing prayers.

(202) 822-8627

*The members of this board serve as individuals active in their own denominations, not as representatives of the institutions with which they are identified.

Leading Churchman Resigns, Citing Emotional Fatigue

By Marjorie Hyer

Washington Post Staff Writer

One of the nation's leading churchmen, Bishop A. James Armstrong, has resigned his dual posts as president of the National Council of Churches and as United Methodist Bishop of Indiana, saying he was "physically and emotionally depleted."

In a move that shocked church leaders throughout the country, Armstrong, 59, religious leader of some 30 million Protestant and Orthodox Christians, announced his decision late Wednesday.

In addition to filling the two positions, Armstrong has spent much of the past year on a heavy nationwide speaking schedule, defending the religious bodies he represents against conservatives' criticism.

A United Methodist bishop since 1968, he began a three-year term as president of the interdenominational council in January, 1982. In Indiana he was the administrator for 1,500 churches and 3,000 ministers.

The Rev. Clark Lobenstein, director of the Interfaith Conference here, said he was "amazed" by Armstrong's resignation. Though the bishop had talked about his busy schedule when they met recently, Lobenstein said, there was no hint that he was considering resignation.

Armstrong, a longtime church activist, said in a resignation statement released simultaneously in Indianapolis and in San Francisco where the United Methodist Council of Bishops is meeting, that he had submitted himself to "an exhausting and inhuman work schedule" and as a result, "failed my family and other loved ones . . . and myself." Aides said Armstrong has entered the Menninger Clinic in Topeka, Kan.

Just last week, Armstrong presided over the semiannual meeting of the National Council of Churches' governing board in Hartford. Although he appeared tired from sessions that lasted into the night, he presided skillfully during often tense and emotional debates over such controversial matters as a homosexual church's application for council membership and resolutions critical of American foreign policy.

Soon after Armstrong became NCC president, the council came under widely publicized charges that it deviated from Christian principles and supported Marxist causes. He began criss-crossing the country, speaking to church groups to counter the attacks, which he said were "based upon untruths, distorted information, innuendo and transparent political bias"

Earlier this month, he went to Egypt at the direction of the council to try to persuade President Honsi Mubarak to release the leader of Coptic Christians, Pope Shenouda, from house arrest in a desert monastery.

At the same time, conservative elements within the United Methodist Church, who criticized Armstrong's activism, have stepped up their charges that the nation's second largest Protestant denomination has forsaken evangelism for popular social and political causes.

Armstrong's nonsalaried NCC post will be filled by Bishop Phillip R. Cousin of the African Methodist Episcopal Church in Birmingham, Ala., the NCC first vice president.

Retired Bishop Ralph T. Alton will take over Armstrong's United Methodist post until a permanent replacement is named.

Religion & Democracy

A Newsletter of the Institute on Religion and Democracy

August/Sept. 1983

file

World Church Assembly Proves Bias

To those who believe that charges of extremist bias in many church agencies were the product of malicious "innuendo," the Sixth Assembly of the World Council of Churches may have been a revelation. The American press, to its credit, carried candid reports on the debates and resolutions of the Vancouver Assembly, which ended on August 10. The WCC's antagonism toward the democratic world was made unmistakably clear.

Whatever benefit such a demonstration may provide, it was nevertheless also a cause for considerable disappointment. A distinguished commission of Christian leaders from a broad range of denominations had achieved remarkable success in drafting a WCC statement on "Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry" which could contribute greatly to rebuilding unity in a theologically and sacramentally divided faith. By the end of the WCC Assembly this valuable ecumenical undertaking was all but swamped by the blizzard of one-sided, divisive political resolutions which swept off the Assembly floor.

Afghanistan

The most startling of these was the statement on Afghanistan, which aroused intense debate even within the WCC. The draft resolution neglected to condemn the Soviet invasion, and seemed to condone a continuing Soviet military presence in Afghanistan until whatever time an "overall political settlement" might be arranged. By contrast, the draft demanded an immediate cut-off of outside aid from non-Communists to Afghanistan's determined resistance movement.

Bishop Alexander Malik from Pakistan proposed that the resolution be amended to call for "unconditional withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghani-

stan," arguing that "if this was a Western country involved, the World Council would have denounced it in the strongest possible language in the dictionary." Bishop Gunnar Liserud of the Church of Norway sought to delete the demand for a cut-off of aid to the Afghan liberation movement, on the grounds that this, too, was one-sided. Even Bishop James Armstrong, President of our NCC, challenged the resolution, with the pointed argument that "we vote in this body not as an extension of the U.N., but as members of the World Council whose Lord is Jesus Christ."

But the draft resolution was adamantly defended by a curious succession of speakers -- William P. Thompson, Co-Stated Clerk of the Presbyterian Church, USA, and seven delegates from the Soviet bloc. While Thompson argued that the draft resolution was a "compromise," the Soviet bloc delegates made it clear that for them it was an all-or-nothing proposition. Any amendment to the resolution would be "a challenge to our loyalty to the ecumenical movement," Archbishop Kirill of Leningrad declared. The amendments were defeated by the unusually close vote of 306 to 278.

Central America

There was not even a gesture toward balance in the WCC's resolution on Central America -- a point that was widely noted in press commentary. No explicit demands were made upon Nicaragua, Cuba or the Soviet Union to withhold their contributions to the bloodshed. Revolutionary leaders in Managua may be surprised to learn that they were even congratulated for making "significant progress in constitutional development preparatory to holding elections in 1985." As the Sandinistas were being offered this bouquet, it was reported in the Wall Street Journal



WCC photo

General Secretary Philip Potter hoists a totem pole at the opening of the 6th Assembly of the World Council of Churches. A WCC leaflet distributed during the ceremony said that totem poles "were not pagan gods or demons as is commonly supposed." WCC Assemblies are held every six to seven years.

Continued on page 2

Continued from page 1

(the only major eastern paper to carry the story) that the home of Violeta Chamorro — publisher of La Prensa, Nicaragua's only remaining independent news medium — was attacked by a violent mob.

Religious Freedom

The WCC again refused to make any public statement on behalf of the millions of persecuted Christians living under the Soviet empire. Appeals by imprisoned believers were spiked on the grounds that they did not come from member churches of the WCC — churches which, everyone knows, are under crushing pressure from their governments.

But there is at least a deep uneasiness within the WCC about permitting an atheistic despotism to exercise this veto right over Christian witness. David Russell, a British Baptist, declared from the floor in this debate, "The subject of freedom is conspicuous by its absence from this Assembly." To judge from the way Russell's protest echoed on the Assembly floor and among observers, this matter is probably the WCC's gravest weakness.

The Middle East

The only specific mention of religious oppression anywhere in the world referred to "the plight of indigenous Muslim and Christian communities suffering from the repressive actions of the occupying power in East Jerusalem...." Evidently, in the WCC's assessment, Christians, Jews and Muslim minorities are treated quite liberally throughout the Arab world. When pushed by the press to explain this curious imbalance, WCC General Secretary Philip Potter raised some eyebrows. He explained that the WCC need not speak out against the persecution of Jews in Arab countries or in the Soviet Union because "they (the Jews) have a massive world organization."

Disarmament

The usual: the WCC tortures the conscience of the democracies about nuclear weapons, while ignoring the Soviet threat. Not content to be out-bid by the American Catholics, the WCC adopted some propositions the Catholic Bishops had voted down: the Assembly rejected any justification for nuclear deterrence, described the mere possession of nuclear weapons as "a crime against humanity," and urged individual Christians to refuse to work in anything related to nuclear defense. Bishop James Crumley of the Lutheran Church in America, Bishop David Preuss of the American Lutheran Church, and

Archbishop John Habgood of the Church of England offered some dissent from the disarmament statement. Archbishop Habgood characterized the statement as an "incitement to civil disobedience" which fails to recognize the political realities of the need for compromise.

Though its policy stands are regrettable, the WCC did provide a valuable service to the U.S. Christian community. In response to the criticisms of the past year, the NCC and its member denominations have been burning up their budgets to convince members and contributors that charges of radical bias in the international programs of the mainline churches are poppycock. After Vancouver, that will be harder to sell.

"The atrocities committed by Soviet troops in Afghanistan are never mentioned. Are the Afghans not human...or is it because they are non-Christian?... How would delegates feel if America had sent troops to Canada?"

Bishop Alexander J. Malik, Church of Pakistan

But some people are still willing to buy. The extremism at Vancouver has even spawned a new — one could say, "dialectical" — justification for the politics of the WCC. It has already appeared this month in a number of prestigious publications. As one usually sensible editorialist put it, "What appears to be a one-sided critique of American society is actually a profound, though unstated, affirmation of the freedoms of speech and religion in our country."

Well, Christians may ultimately be called upon to forgive those who abuse them. But those who treat such abuse as a form of love are generally described as masochists. Besides, the WCC clearly does not consider the democracies superior to the "socialist" societies — its resolutions on nuclear arms, for example, treat both as equally amoral super-powers. (The West is even portrayed as the more dangerously provocative.) WCC resolutions on international economics and development treat us as the world's exploiters.

Even if the WCC were trying to pay the world's democracies a compliment, would this cryptic method really be the way to do it? And what is the WCC doing to prevent its criticisms from being exploited by those who evidently mean to weaken the democracies, militarily and economically? To argue that the WCC is really trying to tell us the opposite of what it is actually saying....well, we can't help but remember what George Orwell once said:

"You have to belong to the intelligentsia to believe things like that; no ordinary man could be such a fool."

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"So Persecuted They the Prophets"

Armando Valladares (here with his wife Marta) was the recipient of the Institute on Religion and Democracy's 1983 Religious Freedom Award. Mr. Valladares was released last October after 22 years in Castro's prisons. The IRD honored Mr. Valladares as "Christian, poet, Cuban patriot, and prisoner of conscience who symbolizes all the persecuted Christians and prisoners of conscience whose faith has never wavered." We reprint here his moving acceptance speech:

...I was unjustly imprisoned when I was 23 years old, accused of crimes that I never committed. At that time my religious convictions were genuine, but probably superficial. My religious beliefs had been learned at home and at school, in the way a child learns good manners or the alphabet. Nevertheless, that minimal religious conviction singled me out as an enemy of the Cuban communist revolution, and somehow helped convince my judges and accusers that I was a potentially dangerous adversary.

However, as soon as I was in prison, I began to feel a substantial change in my religious beliefs. In the first place, I embraced God, perhaps for fear of losing my life, since I was in danger of being executed.

Today, twenty-two years after those nights of horror and fear, that way of approaching Christ seems to me human but incomplete. Later I had another Christian experience: grieved with pain, I saw many young people — most of them farmers and students — die, shouting "Long Live Christ the King!" I realized then that Christ could be of help. Not merely by saving my life, but also giving my life and my death, if that was the case, an ethical sense that would dignify them.

I believe that it was at that particular moment, and not before, when Christianity, besides being a religious faith, became a way of life that in my own circumstances resulted in resistance. Resisting torture, resisting confinement, resisting hunger, and even resisting the constant temptation to join the political rehabilitation and indoctrination programs that would end my predicament.

But, resistance as a Christian could not become a blind form of temerity, nor of personal courage, but a thoughtful and calm stance in defense of my democratic beliefs; a firm commitment to maintaining my dignity and self-respect, even in the bottom of a cell, naked and being turned into human refuse.

To be Christian under those circumstances meant that I could not hate my tormentors; it meant to maintain the belief the suffering was meaningful because if man gives up his moral and religious values, or if he allows himself to be carried by a desire to hate or for revenge, his existence loses all meaning.



Photos by Rebecca Hammel

I should add that this experience has not been mine only — I saw dozens of Christians suffering and dying — committed like myself, to maintaining their dignity and their richness of spirit beyond misery and pain.

Today, I remember with emotion Gerardo Gonzalez, a Protestant preacher, who knew by heart whole Biblical passages and who would copy them by hand to share with his brothers in belief. I cannot forget this man who all of us called "Brother in Faith." He interposed himself before a burst of machine-gun fire to save other prisoners who were beaten in what is known now as the massacre of Boniato prison. Gerardo repeated, before dying, the words said by Christ on the cross: "Forgive them, Father, for they know not what they do." And all of us, when the blood had dried, struggled with our consciences to attain something so difficult yet so beautiful: the ability to forgive our enemies.

For God, there are no impossibles. Nor are there impossibilities for those who love and seek God. ~~The more ferocious the hate of my jailers,~~ the more my heart would fill with love and a faith that gave me strength to support everything; but not with the conformist or masochistic attitude; rather, full of joy, internal peace and freedom because Christ walked with me in my cell.

...The honor which you bestow upon me today will have special significance for Cuba's political prisoners. I'd like to tell you why. During those years, with the purpose of forcing us to abandon our religious beliefs and to demoralize us, the Cuban communist indoctrinators repeatedly used the statements of support for Castro's revolution made by some representatives of American Christian churches. Everytime that a pamphlet was published in the United States, everytime a clergyman would write an article in support of Fidel Castro's dictatorship, a translation would

Continued on page 4

Continued from page 3

reach us and that was worse for the Christian political prisoners than the beatings or the hunger.

While we waited for the solidarity embrace from our brothers in Christ, incomprehensively to us, those who were embraced were our tormentors.

Castro's political police have used these statements of support for Castro with such skill and for such a long time to confuse the prisoners and population in general, that today the Christians in Cuba's prisons suffer not only the pain of torture and isolation but also the conviction that they have been deserted by their brothers in faith.

It is for this reason, dear friends, that I said that this distinction you give me will be very important for all Cuban prisoners. When it is known in Castro's political prisons, and it will be known, they will all be filled with joy. They will feel they are no longer alone; that they have not been forgotten; that their brothers in Christ support them from afar. Also the insidious pamphlets the political commissars read to them containing articles signed by American religious leaders, do not represent the opinion of American believers -- but the point of view of a small group. We also have to forgive this small group, because they probably also "...know not what they do."

The lack of religious freedom in Cuba is not fully known. Freedom is an all-encompassing concept; either there is freedom or there is no freedom at all.

I can tell you that there is no religious freedom in Cuba today. Some Protestant churches have been closed. With my own eyes I saw a church on the Isle of Pines turned into a warehouse for fertilizer. The same thing happened to the Catholic churches of Villanueva and San Francisco....

The celebration of Christmas was banned by Castro and the Christmas tree is also banned, being considered a religious and counter-revolutionary symbol.

If a student is known to attend church, he is expelled from the University.

If a young child talks about God or Christ with his classmates, his parents are called to school where it is explained that those ideas are unscientific and remnants of an obscurantist past.

If the parents insist, they can be accused of the crime of ideological deviationism according to the revolutionary code.

The very few children who attend catechism classes are warned by the priests themselves that what they talk about in church is a very intimate and personal matter and that under no circumstances should they talk about it with friends. This is done to protect the children.

I want to ask you to remember my brothers, my fellow prisoners in your prayers, especially the Protestant pastor, Humberto Noble Alexander. They suffer because of their ideas and beliefs and the only way to help them is to announce to the world that they exist and are humiliated, punished and tortured. To remain silent will never bring them out of prison. Only a campaign to make the public aware and to apply public pressure can set them free. My own case demonstrates as much.

To finish, I'd like to read from another much more successful writer than I, who also knew of persecutions, St. Matthew:

"Blessed are you when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad; for great is your reward in heaven; for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you."
-- Matthew 5:11,12



Armando Valladares (left) is congratulated by Representative Dante Fascell (D-Fla), chairman of the U.S. Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe. Right, Jeane Kirkpatrick (Permanent U.S. Representative to the United Nations) talks with IRD Advisory Board members Richard John Neuhaus (center) and George Weigel at a reception honoring Mr. Valladares.



Delegates Captive to Staff-Controlled Process at Assembly

An observer at the WCC Assembly finds as little regard for democracy in the Assembly's processes as there is in its proclamations. I found that with the exception of the last few days, when the spirit of authentic participation fitfully broke through, the meeting seemed more like a "People's Congress."

Almost a third of the WCC's member churches pay nothing into the treasury, yet they -- and their leaders -- receive many benefits. The inescapable tendency for this to lead toward a patron-client relationship is made more pernicious by the resolutely pro-Third World ideology of many Western church bureaucrats, who are often far more pro-Third World than the Third World itself. If a leader of a Third World church dissents, he not only endangers his benefits, he also risks a challenge to his identity. Thus, it is remarkable when some do speak out.

All delegates to the WCC Assembly get intensive orientation in pre-Assembly meetings, which begin more than a year in advance of the event. "Issue papers" are provided in advance -- but the actual language of resolutions the delegates will be asked to vote on is not given them until very late in the Assembly. The most intense mental and psychological preparation of delegates comes, however, during the first week of the Assembly itself.

During the entire first week of the Vancouver meeting, the delegates were transformed into an audience for staff-managed orientation programs: lectures, symposia, slide shows, mime shows. After this, it was promised, would come hearings on the WCC's three program units. The hearing I attended, "Justice and Service," proved to be less than might have been expected. For 40 minutes, one group of bureaucrats asked another group of bureaucrats prepared ques-

tions, and were read prepared answers in response.

When it came to statements from the floor it turned out that much of the available time had been allocated in advance for still another round of prepared statements. In the brief period allowed for questions it became clear that controversy was bad manners. If a delegate could summon the energy to ask a difficult or critical question, the staff felt no obligation to provide an answer. A note might be made, or the questioner might be thanked politely for his concern and -- next question. This was indeed a hearing -- and the delegates were mere listeners.

The delegates were also funneled into eight issue groups. One had the impression that these groups might develop -- or

Socialism a la the World Council

The WCC has moved even farther from traditional Christian concerns for corporate social responsibility toward attacks upon the free economy itself.

The WCC Program on the Churches and the Transnational Corporations adopted by its Central Committee gives this assessment:

Although strategies for setting constraints on the behavior of the TNCs (transnational corporations) may be important in the short term, they are not sufficient to overcome the structure of injustice. Such strategies and the TNCs themselves must be analyzed in the context of the world market system as a whole. This system and TNC operations in it are incompatible with our vision for a JPSS (Just, Participatory and Sustainable Society).

At the recent Assembly, Dr. Dorothee Soelle, a West German

at least review -- the key policy statements and resolutions which would come before the Assembly. Not so.

When the delegates went to cast their votes during the last frantic days of the Assembly, they were presented with policy resolutions which they had never seen, even though the meeting was by now in its third week.

And who had written the resolutions? You guessed it: the staff.
-- Kerry Ptacek

"(I do not) delude myself that there is much likelihood that my letter will be read out loud at one of the Assembly's sessions. It is very difficult for us to reach you, much more difficult than to reach God. Still, I dare not remain silent."

Vladimir Rusak, a deacon of the Russian Orthodox Church

socialist, delivered an address on economics at the plenary session entitled "Life in its Fullness", and summed up the topic this way:

While Christ came that we might have fullness of life, capitalism came to turn everything into money....

The following session was addressed by Jan Pronk, Deputy Director of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, and an advisor to the WCC. He explained the WCC's alternative to the sinful economic arrangements of the present: the New International Economic Order. The NIEO, as Pronk explained it, is just another way of describing "international democratic socialism." He asked why people object to enforcing policies internationally that are now acceptable in many Western European countries.

Pronk was not clear about how an economic order run by the U.N., most of whose member countries are led by generals, autocrats, or Communists, could properly be called "democratic socialism." It occurred to some observers that a more apt term might be "international fascism."

Activists Press Labor on Jessup Role

If other methods of persuasion don't work, try to threaten a guy through his employer.

This was the not-so-subtle tactic adopted last June by eight church officials and activists who issued a statement urging "our friends in the labor movement to work to end labor's participation in the attack upon religious organizations." Their target is IRD founder David Jessup, a UM layman who works for the Committee on Political Education of the AFL-CIO.

The church officials did not argue that the IRD's pro-democracy stance is incompatible with the foreign policy positions adopted at AFL-CIO conventions or council meetings. In fact, some left-leaning church leaders may be exploiting this incident to try to pressure labor to adopt their foreign policy views. UM Newscope reported that Peggy Billings, one of the signers of the letter, complained in an interview that "labor organizations do not support the church when it addresses suffering in Third World nations or peace and disarmament negotiations." Billings told Newscope, "The issue is much larger than David Jessup."

The attack on Jessup has provoked other church leaders to

defend his right to participate freely in his church. According to Robert L. Wilson, Duke Divinity School, a group of nine United Methodists — including two bishops and three seminary professors — have signed a letter to AFL-CIO President Lane Kirkland, noting that "Ours is a strong denomination, born of dissent....We find it extraordinarily inappropriate that an attempt is being made to dissuade someone (David Jessup) from exercising his rights as a church member by trying to pressure his employer." At least one other bishop wrote Kirkland independently, also defending Jessup's right to function in his church without interference from his employer.

Mr. Kirkland responded to the fuss by writing to Claire Randall, General Secretary of the NCC:

...We would not consider it appropriate to intervene in the internal policy-making process of church organizations or of any other private organizations outside of the trade union movement, just as we would not welcome such intervention in our own policy-making process by groups outside of our movement. The AFL-CIO

considers it especially inappropriate to attempt to instruct or discipline our members or employees with regard to matters of religious worship or participation in church affairs.

What is not clear to me is what those who have criticized Mr. Jessup's IRD activities would have the AFL-CIO do. Would they have us fire or muzzle him for exercising his rights as a member of the Methodist Church? Would they have us publicly denounce the IRD — that is, to take a position on the issues now being debated within the churches? Is it seriously proposed that the AFL-CIO should review the international funding activities of the NCC and pass judgment on them — or that we should investigate the political character of the IRD, which has neither requested nor received support from the AFL-CIO?...

We also believe that employees of the Federation have a civil libertarian right, on their own time, to pursue their own outside interests without fear of reprisals aimed at their livelihood....

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MEMO

TO: IRD Board of Advisors and Friends

FROM: Penn Kemble

RE: Press coverage of the WCC Assembly

DATE: August 25, 1983

I think that, if you have a moment to look over this sampling of press clips, you may be willing to forgive me for loading them on your desk.

I was, frankly, surprised by the candor of the press reports on the WCC's political stands. I also think that the IRD and friends can take some credit for it. The debate we have been pressing has helped brief the press for these events, and they know there is an audience for solid information on church debates about these matters.

I think you will also detect a change in tone on the reports of Ed Robb's debate with Bishop Armstrong before the Vancouver meeting of the Religious Newswriters Association. No longer are we the dubious, "right-wing" upstart that we used to be--Ed is treated as the Bishop's equal. No doubt this is in great part a result of Ed's talent. But it also shows that we are establishing our position.

I do have some regrets about the National Journal piece. I suspect the reporter had a slot all prepared for me--and for the IRD--before he got here.

I hope you have had a invigorating summer.

(202) 822-8627

*The members of this board serve as individuals active in their own denominations, not as representatives of the institutions with which they are identified

PRESS CLIPPINGS



Evangelist charges

Church councils show anti-U.S. bias

HOUSTON POST
(8/7/83, pg. 24-A)
Houston, TX

By JIM ASKER
Post Reporter

VANCOUVER, British Columbia — "Radical leftists" give the National and World Councils of Churches "an anti-American bias," a Texas evangelist charged in a rare debate with the president of the national body here Saturday.

The Rev. Edmund W. Robb of Marshall predicted blistering criticism of U.S. policy in Central America but little criticism of the Soviets and their allies will emerge before the World Council's Sixth Assembly concludes next week.

DURING THE LAST four years, the inter-church group has complained publicly about right-wing regimes four times as often as about left-wing governments, said Robb, a leader of the Institute on Religion and Democracy, a Washington group critical of many politically liberal religionists.

"And usually when there's criticism of the left it's stated very generally," he said.

"What about the last two years?" shot back Bishop James Armstrong, who was elected president of the National Council in 1981.

"It's improved since you've been in," Robb conceded. "I'm glad to see we've done some good."

THE TWO — BOTH United Methodists — squared off before the Religion News-writers Association, which is holding its annual meeting in a downtown hotel.

They agreed on at least one point: that spreading Christianity and promoting church unity should be the work of the two affiliated councils. But Armstrong cited such advances, while Robb said not enough is being done.

And Robb seemed to agree with Armstrong's assertion that "it is not the function of the church of Jesus Christ to be a mouthpiece for any government or economic system."

"Our organization is convinced there is a link between democracy and Christianity," Robb added, however. And he said "Marxist-Leninism" is a threat to the religion because it is atheistic and materialistic and promotes class hatred and change through violence.

ARMSTRONG OF INDIANAPOLIS said critics such as Robb often overlook the fact that the World Council has members of different political views and that some, such as himself, defend American society in its meetings and literature.

But he said his first concern is "helping to create an atmosphere of trust and respect" within the forum representing

300 denominations with more than 400 million members.

"I'm not overly concerned with presenting an American stance," Armstrong added. "We're all members of the church of Jesus Christ."

He also accused Western news media of distorting and sensationalizing the politics of the World Council.

THE SALVATION ARMY withdrew from the council in 1981 after protesting its support of African guerrilla groups and drew wide media attention, but reporters ignored the joining of two new African churches and the council's efforts to promote a negotiated settlement in Rhodesia, now Zimbabwe, Armstrong complained.

While Armstrong ticked off a list of council criticisms of left-wing regimes, Robb asked why it has never spoken out against Cuba, which he said has been called "one of the worst" violators of religious freedom by Amnesty International.

Armstrong explained that the council must often use quiet diplomacy with communist countries to avoid endangering believers there.

"**THERE IS A** tendency for Christians to speak with moral arrogance," Robb said. "History demonstrates Christians have no special ability to analyze problems."

Several statements on foreign affairs will be considered by the 900 council delegates next week.

One proposed on Central America "vigorously opposes any type of military intervention by the United States, covert or overt, or by any other government." It never mentions Cuba or the Soviet Union.

A proposed half-page statement calls for "withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan in the context of an overall political settlement" and mentions tensions between Russia and the United States.

Meanwhile, at a news conference at the council's meeting on a university campus, a South African called for economic and political pressure on his government to end apartheid.

There was doubt here earlier that Bishop Desmond Tutu, head of the All-Africa Council of Churches, would be allowed to attend the meeting, but finally he arrived Friday.

"I wish I knew why I was allowed out when I was. Maybe it's an example of public relations," Tutu said.

He also criticized President Reagan for not doing more to put pressure on South Africa to change its racial policies.

Church councils are called leftist

By JIM JONES
Star-Telegram Writer

VANCOUVER, British Columbia — The World Council of Churches and the National Council of Churches show a definite bias toward Marxism-Leninism, a Texas clergyman charged Saturday.

Edmund Robb of Marshall, chairman of the executive committee of the Institute of Religion and Democracy, made the accusations during a heated debate with United Methodist Bishop James Armstrong of Indiana, president of the National Council of Churches.

The debate took place at the sixth assembly of the World Council of Churches, which ends Wednesday.

Armstrong labeled the charges as "simply poppycock," and said Robb and his organization are trying to undermine the ecumenical movement.

"The conciliar movement is far from perfect, but to suggest it is Marxism-Leninism and part of a vile revolution and a world conspiracy is simply poppycock," he said. "The people that are on the governing boards are faithful Christians who volunteer their time and energy to serve as well as they know how."

The bishop said their jobs are being made much more difficult because of the efforts of Robb and others, who he said sow the seeds of distrust.

Robb pointed to the ecumenical agencies' support of the Marxist-style government of Nicaragua as an example of the alleged bias.

"I'm not trying to destroy the ecumenical movement at all," Robb said. "I think it needs reform. Its staff should be changed."

Robb was often quoted in articles critical of the NCC that appeared last year in *Reader's Digest* and the television news program *60 Minutes*.

Robb praised the leadership of Armstrong and did not accuse him personally of having a bias toward Marxism-Leninism.

Armstrong charged that Robb had chosen to ignore many incidents when the World Council of Churches and the National Council of Churches criticized Marxist-style governments for human rights violations. He noted that the World Council had condemned the invasion of Afghanistan by Soviet troops.

Robb said leaders of the ecumenical agencies had traveled frequently to Marxist countries such as Cuba and had praised the governments.

"The Central American policies of the WCC are tragic," Robb said. "Nicaragua hasn't had free elections or a free press. Nicaragua oppresses the Mesquito Indians. Nicaragua has become a Marxist-Leninist government. Yet it still has the support of the ecumenical movement."

Robb also charged during the World Council of Churches meeting that the leaders of the council have been silent on abuses of religious freedom by the Soviet Union. He said the World Council of Churches has applied a "double standard" in citing human rights violations.

He noted that a study by the *National Christian Reporter*, a Dallas-based United Methodist publication, stated that the National Council of Churches had criticized left-wing governments more than right-wing governments by a 4-1 ratio.

He also charged the ecumenical agencies with being "anti-American."

Armstrong said the United States has been guilty of abuses of its power and that the ecumenical groups are a religious reality.

Texan's criticisms of church council called 'poppycock'

By Helen Parmley

Religion Writer of The News

VANCOUVER, British Columbia — Methodist Bishop James Armstrong, president of the National Council of Churches, called a conservative Texan's charges against the NCC "poppycock" during a debate in Vancouver Saturday.

The debate between Armstrong and Edmund Robb of Marshall, Texas, founder and president of the Institute on Religion and Democracy, was sponsored by the Religion Newswriters Association, which is meeting in conjunction with the Sixth Assembly of the World Council of Churches.

Robb drew national publicity recently with his criticism of the National and World councils of churches in an article in *Readers Digest* and on a segment of the CBS program *Sixty Minutes*.

In his opening remarks in the debate, Robb charged the councils with a lack of accountability, using "McCarthyism" tactics against their critics and having an "obvious" Marxist-Leninist bias.

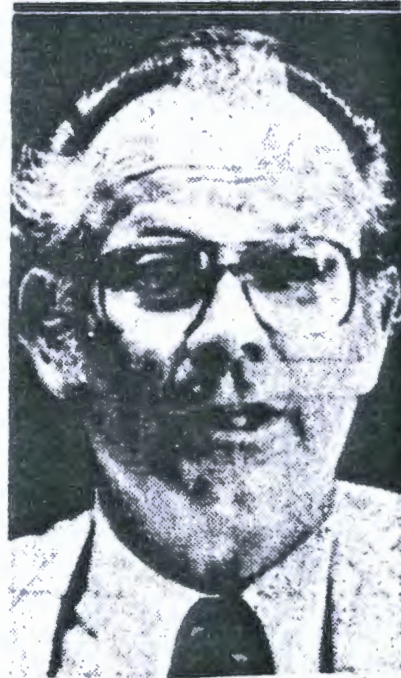
"The conciliatory (religious) movement is far from perfect," Armstrong responded. "But to suggest the NCC is Marxist-Leninist, is part of a violent revolution or is part of a world conspiracy is simply poppycock."

Robb charged that the WCC and NCC are quick to criticize the United States and other Western countries for violations of human rights and freedom but consistently fail to speak out on specific violations of religious freedom in Communist countries.

"None of the eight issue papers presented to the delegates at the WCC Assembly discusses religious persecution in the Communist world," Robb said.

Robb said he is not trying to destroy the image of the ecumenical religious councils but favors new leadership.

"I'm not talking about the presi-



"To suggest the NCC is Marxist-Leninist, is part of a violent revolution or is part of a world conspiracy is simply poppycock."

— James Armstrong,
National Council
of Churches president

dency," he said. "But there are many on the staff who are ideologically committed, rather than committed to the Lord Jesus Christ.

"There is a double standard in human rights and an anti-free enterprise bias — not from the (council's) board, but from its commissions. The NCC should not be fighting free enterprise."

Armstrong said an NCC panel is "working zealously to deal with the council's accountability, governments and its public image and relationship of faith and life."

The Sunday Statesman

(Front Page, 8/7/83, Salem, OR)

Church unity – pro, con

Policy questions; 13A.

By LEWIS H. ARENDS JR.
Of the Statesman-Journal

VANCOUVER, British Columbia — The pros and cons of the modern ecumenical movement were debated by two leading U.S. religious figures here Saturday during the Sixth Assembly of the World Council of Churches.

Bishop James Armstrong, president of the National Council of Churches, said ecumenical organizations and their members must build bridges spanning differences to bring health to a sick world.

The Rev. Edmynd Robb, head of the Institute on Religion and Democracy, said the national and world church councils have taken a Marxist-Leninist slant in attempting to build those bridges.

Armstrong, elected to the NCC post last year, is United Methodist bishop of Indiana. Robb, a conservative United Methodist evangelist from Marshall, Texas, has been a leading spokesman in opposition to certain policies and statements of the two ecumenical bodies.

They spoke at a Religion Newswriters Association gathering of about 50 people representing secular and religious publications in the United States and other nations.

"Creative tension, I believe, can be healthy," Robb said of his criticism. "We want reform. We want accountability" by ecumenical groups. He said his institute has about 3,000 members of various religious persuasions.

Armstrong said Robb and others in the institute were

"frightfully selective" in quoting material from the two councils as part of their attacks. They are attempting to undermine the cause of ecumenism and exploit fears, Armstrong said.

Robb said a study of policy statements revealed a 4-1 ratio of bias against rightwing governments. But in the past two years, under Armstrong's administration, he said, the number of pro-leftwing statements by the NCC had been cut in half.

While commending Armstrong for his "devotion to the Gospel of Christ," Robb said left-leaning and anti-free enterprise staff members should be replaced.

He was critical of the two church organizations for not speaking out more strongly about the repression and lack of religious freedom in Communist countries.

Robb also challenged Armstrong to join him in getting their respective organizations to support free elections in El Salvador and Nicaragua.

He said the elections could be supervised by the Organization of American States, without involvement of the United States or other countries.

Armstrong suggested the two men talk about the idea.

As an example of bridge-building by the ecumenical groups, Armstrong noted participation of a number of delegates from the Soviet Union. An audience member said those delegates are afraid to speak out at the assembly because of fear of their government.

Armstrong responded that other nations should "demonstrate freedom" by their forthright comments.

Armstrong said the ecumenical group should not "echo a party line" of any particular form of government but should be a Christian witness to the world.

He said the world church group has 300 member denominations or churches representing 400 million churchgoers around the world. The group represents "the richness in religious life," he said.

The assembly, which began July 24, will conclude Wednesday. Such gatherings are held every six to eight years.

Richmond Times-Dispatch
Pg A-2, 8/7/83, Richmond, VA

Clergymen spar on support for Marxists

By Ed Briggs
Times-Dispatch religion writer

VANCOUVER, British Columbia — The two leading figures in the debate over charges that the National and World councils of churches support Marxist groups accused each other yesterday of attempting to damage the future of ecumenical relations in the world.

The Rev. James Robb, chairman of the board of the Institute on Religion and Democracy, and Bishop James Armstrong, president of the National Council of Churches, traded the barbs before the annual meeting of the Religion Newswriters Association.

The association is an organization of religion specialists on U.S. and Canadian secular newspapers, wire services and news magazines.

Mr. Robb, a United Methodist evangelist, accused the U.S. and world ecumenical bodies of supporting a bias toward left-wing governments.

Mr. Robb asserted that in recent years the National Council of Churches has issued a ratio of four statements critical of "rightist" nations, including the United States, to each one critical of leftist regimes.

That was challenged by Bishop Armstrong, who is also a United Methodist. The prelate said, and Mr. Robb acknowledged, that the ratio of critical statements has in the past two years decreased to 2-to-1.

Bishop Armstrong insisted that the two ecumenical bodies approach in-

justices in the world "without respect to political boundaries."

But Mr. Robb insisted that while the councils may have addressed human and religious rights violations in totalitarian regimes, they are more strident in criticisms of the United States.

Bishop Armstrong said Mr. Robb and the Institute on Religion and Democracy "have looked at things selectively. The critics have been frighteningly selective to damn some of us."

Bishop Armstrong told Mr. Robb, "The saddest thing is that you have put yourself in a position to under-

mine . . . the entire ecumenical movement, which is as variegated as it can be.

"It's sad to see a highly financed voice exploiting fears and suspicions of authority among fundamentalist institutions. To say the National Council of Churches is Marxist-Leninist is pure poppycock."

Mr. Robb told the bishop, "Too many in the national council view the world from an ideological view rather than religious concern for Jesus Christ."

He claimed that the two councils have been silent on religious rights

violations in the communist bloc nations while being critical of the United States.

"The National Council of Churches and World Council of Churches money has been going to help destroy the greatest society ever to have existed in the world."

He challenged Bishop Armstrong to join him in calling for elections protected by the military in Nicaragua and El Salvador "with no United States involvement."

"Could you support that?" he asked the prelate.

Bishop Armstrong responded, "I'll think about it."

Pittsburgh Post Gazette
(pg. 3, 8/8/83, Pittsburgh, PA)

Council of Churches denies leftist 'tilt'

By Bohdan Hodiak
Post-Gazette Staff Writer

VANCOUVER, B.C. — Charges that the National Council of Churches is soft on Communist governments have not reduced its finances or its support, the council president said over the weekend here.

Bishop James Armstrong made the statement after debating the council's chief critic, the Rev. Edmund W. Robb, of the Institute on Religion and Democracy. Both men are United Methodists.

The men spoke in this Canadian city, where about 900 delegates representing 400 million Christians from more than 100 countries are taking part in the World Council of Churches assembly.

Similar charges have been made against the World Council as reported on CBS' "60 Minutes" program and in Readers Digest magazine.

Armstrong talked about building bridges between antagonists, about conciliation and about how the World Council "raises its voice on behalf of the poor, the powerless and the voiceless — the so-called marginal people of the world."

But Robb charged that the World Council tiptoes around communist governments.

"Scarcely a word will be said in the course of this assembly on behalf of Baptists who have been transported to the deadly wastes of Siberia, about priests in Lithuania 'accidentally' run over by trucks,

for Orthodox believers locked in Soviet psychiatric wards, or in defense of young Lutheran peace demonstrators [arrested] in East Germany," he said.

In 1948 at the first World assembly, there were declarations for religious freedom, Robb said, "but now there is silence."

Robb quoted from an article Armstrong wrote in 1977: "There is a significant difference between situations where people are imprisoned for opposing regimes designed to perpetuate inequities [as in Chile and Brazil] and where people are imprisoned for opposing regimes designed to remove inequities [as in Cuba]."

In defense, Armstrong read off seven examples of NCC criticism of the Soviet Union. "The Soviet Union is guilty, too ... there is the cruel denial of human rights behind the Iron Curtain," he said.

Armstrong also pointed out that under his presidency the NCC has been more balanced in its criticism of leftist and rightist regimes.

Earlier in the week, Metropolitan Kirill, the orthodox archbishop of Leningrad, surprised many of the assembly by saying the future of Afghanistan should be decided by the Afghans themselves, without outside influence.

While Robb said "Marxism and Christian faith are incompatible," both he and Armstrong agreed that the Christian faith transcends all political systems.

THE SUN, Monday, August 8, 1983

Church council seeks 'balance' in criticizing rights violators

By Frank P. L. Somerville
Religion Editor of The Sun

Vancouver, British Columbia — A Canadian Anglican archbishop who is moderator of the World Council of Churches said yesterday he hopes the ecumenical organization will achieve

more "balance" in its condemnation of alleged human rights violations by the United States and the Soviet Union.

But the archbishop, the Right Rev. Edward Scott, also contended that "it is a myth of Western culture that you can be totally objective."

Acknowledging "a lot" of East-West and conservative-liberal tension at the assembly here of the international Christian body, he added, "I don't think that is bad." Conflict, he said, can be "creative tension."

Archbishop Scott's remarks followed widespread criticism among Western members and observers of the World Council's draft statement on human rights, which comes down much heavier on U.S. involvement in Central America than the Soviet incursion into Afghanistan.

The Rev. Edmund W. Robb, who heads the Washington-based Institute on Religion and Democracy, went further than most of the critics of the World Council, characterizing its leadership and staff as blatantly anti-American.

Some observers here have expressed surprise, however, that the World Council criticized Soviet policy at all because of the sensitive position of the Russian Orthodox delegates in their communist homeland.

As drafted and made public Friday, the statement calls on the

U.S. to stop supporting repressive military regimes in Central America. It calls on the Soviet Union to withdraw from Afghanistan.

The draft devotes three and one-half pages to its criticism of the United States while giving Afghanistan and the Soviet only half a page.

"The current United States administration, acting on its perception of the nation's security," the statement says, "has adopted a policy of military, economic, financial and political initiatives designed to destabilize the Nicaraguan government, redeem the international image of Guatemala's violent dictatorship, resist the forces of historic change in El Salvador and militarize Honduras in order to insure a base from which to contain the aspirations of the Central American peoples."

The document says that the Soviet presence in Afghanistan has "led to considerable suffering for vast sections of the population." Noting that there are three million refugees in Pakistan and India, the World Council asked for a negotiated peace and for a Russian withdrawal in the context of a political settlement.

The draft statement also refers to "U.S.-based and financed" evangelical Protestant churches that "appear to be used for political purposes in legitimizing policies of repression" in Central America.

St. Petersburg Times

(Pg. 11A, 8/7/83, St. Petersburg, FL)

Church group called tool of communism

By JEANNE PUGH
St. Petersburg Times Staff Writer

VANCOUVER, British Columbia — A critic of the World Council of Churches (WCC) renewed charges Saturday that the council, because it has not openly condemned the Soviet Union, has become a tool of communism and part of a worldwide conspiracy to embarrass the United States.

"That's poppycock," responded United Methodist Bishop James Armstrong.

"It is not the function of the church of Jesus Christ to be the mouthpiece for any government, or any economic system, or any particular political process," Armstrong said during a debate with Rev. Edmund W. Robb, chairman of the executive committee of the Institute on Religion and Democracy.

THE INSTITUTE has become the most highly vocal critic of both the WCC and the National Council of Churches (NCC).

Armstrong, president of the NCC, is in Vancouver as a delegate to the WCC's sixth international assembly, which today enters the last week of its once-a-decade meeting.

Also on Saturday, about 3,500 delegates and visitors celebrated an Eastern Orthodox worship service that culminated an all-night prayer vigil on the 38th anniversary of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima, Japan.

The confrontation between Robb and Armstrong was arranged by the Religion Newswriters Association as a highlight of its annual convention being held here in conjunction with the council's three-week assembly.

Robb accused the NCC and WCC of engaging in "McCarthyism" to fight off criticism of policies that he said have turned the ecumenical movement into "a secularized expression of the gospel."

He reiterated charges that he and his organization repeatedly have made: That the WCC and NCC have been

"soft" on communistic, totalitarian regimes at the same time that they have leveled harsh criticism at the United States for its interference in the political affairs of other, especially Third World, nations.

Armstrong denied the charges, saying that Robb and other critics of the WCC have failed to recognize the basic character and purpose of the world organization that was founded 35 years ago.

Said Armstrong: "The World Council is a church coming together in its myriad, variegated, colorful expression . . . All one needs to do is walk across the campus of the University of British Columbia (the site of the meeting) to experience the global dimensions of this body."

After repeating several statements by WCC leaders about the theological basis for the organization, Armstrong acknowledged that "it may sound dull to the world, but it is the essential stuff of the ecumenical movement . . . to ignore that fact is to ignore the foundations of the WCC."

The 900-plus voting delegates, meeting in small groups and committee sessions for the last two weeks, are expected to present their final recommendations on WCC policies to the entire body this week. The assembly represents 300 denominations totaling about 500-million Christians around the world.

Among the most controversial recommendations may be a strong statement denouncing U.S. involvement in the affairs of Central American countries. A milder statement decries the condition of refugees in Afghanistan.

While the United States is identified as the culprit in a preliminary copy of the Central American report, no specific mention of the Soviet Union is made in the report on Afghanistan.

In another development at the assembly Saturday, South Africa's outspoken Bishop Desmond Tutu thanked western churches for their opposition to apartheid, but criticized them for faltering in their support of black African liberation struggles.

"I have always been puzzled by why the church in the west has been supportive of the underground struggles in Europe (during World War II), but as soon as you deal with black liberation, you . . . wake up all of a sudden pacifist." crisis.

REVIEW & OUTLOOK

Down From the Mount

The World Council of Churches has just descended from a mountain in Vancouver with a stone tablet saying that the focus of evil in the world today is the United States.

The U.S. is trying to "contain the aspirations of Central American people," the council said at its just-completed Sixth Assembly. It accused the Reagan administration of trying to "destabilize the Nicaraguan government, renew international support for Guatemala's violent military regimes, resist the forces of historic change in El Salvador and militarize Honduras."

The assembly opposed "any type of military intervention by the United States, covert or overt, or by any other government." It didn't see fit, however, to name any other names.

Indeed, the assembly rejected a proposal calling for an immediate Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan, in favor of a resolution allowing Russian troops to remain in Afghanistan until an "overall political settlement" is reached, i.e., when the freedom fighters are crushed. Just to make sure, American delegates at the assembly voted with their Soviet and East bloc counterparts for a call for a cutoff of arms supplies to Afghan freedom fighters.

Moreover, the council refused to hear two appeals from Christians in Russia begging for a "helping hand to the persecuted faithful." One letter was circulated from the Christian Committee for the Defense of Believers' Rights in the U.S.S.R. accusing Soviet authorities of "implementing a policy of genocide against believers." It said that 33 Christian believers are currently in prison, labor camps or special psychiatric institutions and that 20,000 others are seeking to emigrate so they can practice their faith. The letter also charged authorities with harsh discrimination in jobs, education and housing.

Deacon Vladimir Rusak of Moscow also wrote to the council asking for help against religious persecution. He said he has been prevented from writing a history of the Russian Orthodox

Church after the 1917 revolution by the church's own hierarchy and the KGB, which confiscated his archives in January. "I believe in the Lord, I love my church, feel concern for her future and wish to serve her—but not by a compromise of conscience, that price which is exacted from our church leadership and which I am being urged to pay," he said.

The council didn't take up the appeals because that would have intervened in the "internal situation" of a member of the WCC, of which the Russian church is a part, said WCC executive Ninan Koshy. The appeals recall a similar letter sent to the previous WCC assembly, in 1975 in Nairobi, by Father Gleb Yakunin of the Russian Orthodox Church, who accused Moscow of persecuting Christians. After sending the letter, Father Yakunin was convicted of "anti-state activities" and is now serving a five-year sentence in a Soviet labor camp.

All of this may come as a surprise to many of the approximately 500 million members of the more than 300 Protestant, Orthodox, Anglican and independent churches represented at the World Council. But it shouldn't. The council has long supported many of the same leftist revolutionary causes aided and abetted by the Kremlin and its proxies. There have even been charges that offerings from collection plates have been handed over by the council to guerrillas, possibly for arms purchases. An expose on the WCC and the U.S. National Council of Churches earlier this year by CBS's "60 Minutes" concluded that "whether it is by design or mischance or deliberate manipulation from outside the churches, church money and the churches themselves are found to be supporting highly political movements."

The World Council is supported by the mainline U.S. Protestant denominations. After its Vancouver revelations, it would seem to us, its supporters have some explaining to do. A good time to start would be with Sunday's sermons.

- Religion -

The Curious Politics of Ecumenism*To the World Council of Churches, the Soviets are sinless*

To many conservative Christians in Western Europe and the U.S., the World Council of Churches, an umbrella organization for 301 Protestant and Orthodox denominations with more than 400 million members, appears to be an ecclesiastical clone of the United Nations. Responsive to the growing influence of churches in the Third World, the council has seemingly evolved into a forum for relentless denunciations of the sins of American policy and capitalism. Meanwhile, the W.C.C. has what some critics call a see-no-evil policy toward Communist regimes. At the U.N., there is at least a Jeane Kirkpatrick on hand to answer the charges; at World Council meetings, Western church delegates generally remain mute, or cheer on the earnest moral pronouncements.

The W.C.C.'s sixth assembly at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, which was attended by 838 delegates from 100 countries as well as thousands of visitors, did nothing to dispel the suspicions of anti-Western bias. For example, a committee headed by William P. Thompson, one of the two top leaders of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.), was responsible for drafting last week's formal statement on Afghanistan. Working closely with delegates from Soviet churches, the committee produced a muted document that asked for withdrawal of Soviet troops as part of an overall political settlement; that was one of the few times the U.S.S.R. has been named specifically in a political declaration by the W.C.C. But the statement also said in effect that Soviet troops should be allowed to stay in Afghanistan until such a settlement is reached, and recommended that aid to the anti-Communist Afghan rebels be cut off. Thompson's committee also produced a harshly worded attack on U.S. Central American policy. The document praised "the life-affirming achievements" of the Nicaraguan government; Cuba was mentioned not at all.

Bishop Alexander Malik of the Church of Pakistan, a union of Anglican and Protestant bodies, demanded that the Afghanistan statement be sent back to committee for a suitable injection of candor: "If any Western nation were involved, I am sure we would have jumped on it with the strongest language available in the dictionary. The U.S.S.R. has committed a great aggression upon a neighbor, and it must be condemned." Malik's recommendation was rejected after Russian Orthodox Archbishop Kirill warned that any stronger statement would present "terrible difficulties" for his church and would be a "challenge to

our loyalty to the ecumenical movement."

This was vintage W.C.C. politics. The council is willing to risk further damage to its image, not only because many Western church leaders agree with the attacks on the policies of the U.S. and its allies, but also because silence is supposedly the price that must be paid to keep Soviet bloc churches in the council. This pragmatic—some would say shortsighted—approach



Potter during a session of W.C.C. assembly

Suspensions of anti-American bias remain.

also prevents the W.C.C. from addressing the plight of religious believers in the Soviet Union. The most dramatic event of the last assembly, in Nairobi eight years ago, was the publication of an open letter from two Soviet dissidents, Father Gleb Yakunin and Lev Regelson, claiming that the council had been silent when "the Russian Orthodox Church was half destroyed" in the early 1960s, and pleading for action against Soviet persecution.

Despite veiled threats of a Soviet pull-out, the Nairobi assembly voted to step up its scrutiny of religious liberty, but without mentioning the U.S.S.R. by name. Since then, the W.C.C. has sponsored a low-key human rights program, cooperating with Soviet churches' requests for discretion and contending that behind-the-scenes diplomacy works better than open confrontation.

At Vancouver, W.C.C. General Secre-

tary Philip Potter received two more dissident appeals, one from a human rights committee founded by Yakunin (who is now in a prison camp in the Urals) and the other from Russian Orthodox Deacon Vladimir Rusak. The council delegates were told little about the appeals, and W.C.C. spokesmen blandly explained that any action by the assembly would have amounted to intervention in the "internal affairs" of a member church.

Another favorite Third World cause, the W.C.C. Program to Combat Racism, provoked a fire storm of Western protest in 1978, when it gave modest grants to guerrilla groups that later toppled the white-run government of Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe). The W.C.C. is now funding the SWAPO guerrillas, who want to end South African rule over Namibia, and the African National Congress, which is fighting to end Pretoria's apartheid rule. The W.C.C. notes that its no-strings grants are intended for nonmilitary purposes and come from designated gifts rather than general church revenues. Still, some Western churchgoers feel that even token funding of revolution, with its implied moral approval of political violence, is not a suitable goal for world ecumenism. W.C.C. supporters dismiss such criticism as motivated by hypocrisy if not white racism, and at Vancouver scarcely a whisper of protest was heard about the SWAPO and ANC grants.

There was a flurry of excitement at the assembly involving a nonpolitical document titled "Witnessing in a Divided World." Bishop Per Lonning of the Church of Norway (Lutheran) called it a "dangerous setback," because it showed a "lack of missionary urgency" and did not emphasize the uniqueness of Christianity. Agreeing, the delegates voted nearly unanimously for a revision, but in dealing with a bushel of political statements on everything from nuclear arms (yes to a freeze) to Palestinian rights (an emphatic endorsement), they never had a chance to act on the rewritten statement. Nonetheless, the delegates were enthusiastic about the increased emphasis on prayer and multicultural worship at the assembly. They were also hopeful that a joint statement produced last year by the council's theology commission might provide the eventual basis for intercommunion.

Vancouver was the last assembly run by Potter, 62, a Methodist minister from Dominica whose special concern is poverty and oppression in the Third World. He is expected to retire in 1985, after 13 years in office. His replacement will be chosen by the 145-member central committee elected last week, with the Rev. Heinz Joachim Held of West Germany, 55, as its new presiding officer. For Held and Potter's successor, the council's delicate balancing act will undoubtedly continue without letup.

—By Richard N. Ostling

Preview of Sixth Meeting of World Council of Churches

By David E. Anderson
United Press International

VANCOUVER, British Columbia—Elders from Indian tribes along Canada's west coast will light a ceremonial fire early tomorrow morning to mark the beginning of the Sixth Assembly of the World Council of Churches, one of the largest gatherings of Christian bodies ever held.

The fire, to burn throughout the July 24—Aug. 12 assembly, also will provide light for the candles for other more traditional forms of Christian celebration that will punctuate the debate as the council wrestles with its theme, "Jesus Christ, the Life of the World."

While much of the attention on the council is likely to be focused on the social and political pronouncements made by the 900 delegates, the real work of the 18-day assembly and its ultimate significance will be in the theological and spiritual message the delegates take back to their 303 member churches.

"Worship is the underlying flow" of the assembly, according to council officials, and there will be three worship services each day, including noon services featuring "great preachers of the world."

Equally important, the assembly, the first in North America since its second meeting was held in Evanston, Ill., in 1954, will be a gauge of the degree of unity the world's Orthodox, Anglican and Protestant churches have achieved since the fifth assembly in Nairobi in 1975.

A year ago in Lima, Peru, the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council—the group responsible for exploring the theological issues that divide the churches—issued historic consensus statements on baptism, the eucharist and ministry.

Although the statements have yet to be acted on by the council's member churches, they challenge in a quiet way the assumption of critics that the council has forsaken the quest for doctrinal unity in favor of social and political activism.

The Vancouver assembly also will be a dramatic demonstration of the changed nature of the world Christian movement since the council's first assembly in Amsterdam in 1948, a gathering that was dominated by white males from the churches of Europe and the United States.

While the United States still will have the largest number of delegates, the rapid growth and independence of the one-time missionary churches of the Third World has greatly increased the number of delegates and participants from Africa, Asia and Latin America.

Women, too, are participating in greater numbers, growing from 6 percent at Amsterdam to almost 30 percent for the Vancouver meeting.

That changing constituency, however, also has been the source of some of the criticism that the council has placed too much emphasis on justice issues for minorities and women and not enough on its original purpose of seeking Christian unity.

That criticism comes not only from those outside the council, such as the recent attacks in Reader's Digest and on CBS' "60 Minutes," but from some influential segments within the council: the Orthodox and some European Lutherans. One group, the Salvation Army, has withdrawn from the international body because of its perceived involvement in left-wing political activities.

The thorn in the side of the critics is "liberation theology," a view that has emerged primarily from Third World churches in Latin America and Africa. Those who subscribe to liberation theology filter their understanding of Christian doctrine through the idea that God has performed liberating acts for the people of Israel.

This has led churches to talk of God's bias for the poor and the oppressed and in many instances for both clergy and laity to identify with liberation movements—sometimes revolutionary—in a number of Third World countries.

At the same time, the critics charge the World Council has been too often silent on human rights abuses in Communist-dominated countries.

Council supporters countered that the delicate nature of church-state relations in those countries demands a different, more behind-the-scenes approach. And they point to quiet interventions on the part of the Russian Orthodox Church and the World Council's Commission of the Churches on International Affairs on behalf of the "Siberian Seven," the group of Soviet Pentacostals who lived in the U.S. Embassy for five years in an attempt to win the right to immigrate to Israel.

Despite the criticisms, however, there is no indication the council's membership is ready to abandon its concern for peace and justice issues and the Vancouver assembly will have a heavy focus on both.

Even that could cause some internal problems in the council, according to some observers, as Third World delegates consider the nuclear war issue to be primarily a concern of the white Western churches of Europe and North America, taking precedence over the justice issues that dominate Africa and Asia.

As always, words, written and spoken, are one of the chief products of such gatherings and Vancouver will be no exception.

The 900 delegates and 1,000 visitors will hear a host of not only Christian leaders but Jews, Moslems, Buddhists and Hindus, as well as representatives of Christian groups that do not belong to the council, such as the Roman Catholic Church.

Meeting in a host of smaller groups, the delegates also will explore four subthemes of the assembly's overall theme of "Jesus Christ—the Life of the World": "Life, a Gift of God"; "Life, Confronting and Overcoming Death"; "Life in its Fullness"; and "Life in Unity."

Woven through the words and commitments meetings will be many other events: a film festival, concerts, art exhibitions, as well as public forums that will feature such speakers as Coretta Scott King and Nobel Peace Prize winner Adolfo Perez Esquivel.

But as the assembly ends and the 4,000 delegates, consultants, ecumenical visitors and guests disperse to their homes around the globe, the agenda of the World Council of Churches—still the most representative gathering of Christians in history—will have created an agenda that will affect the religious life of many of the 370 million people in churches affiliated with the council.

Church Group Calls for Freeze on Nuclear Arms Production

By Marjorie Hyer
Washington Post Staff Writer

Delegates to the sixth assembly of the World Council of Churches yesterday condemned the production and deployment of nuclear weapons, by Eastern or Western bloc nations, as a "crime against humanity."

But a statement on the conflict in Afghanistan gave the Soviet Union little more than a slap on the wrist, despite efforts of Pakistani, West European and U.S. delegates to strengthen the document, news services reported from Vancouver, Canada.

The Afghanistan resolution passed after an emotional debate simply endorsed efforts by the United Nations to settle the conflict there, called for Soviet troop withdrawal "in

the context of an overall settlement" and called for "an end to the supply of arms to opposition groups from outside," a reference to reported U.S. aid to Afghan resistance fighters.

In the most dramatic and divisive debate of the 18-day assembly, which concluded yesterday, Bishop Gunnar Lislerud of Norway led efforts to amend the resolution and condemn the Soviet role in Afghanistan. Lislerud called the Afghan guerrillas "a liberation movement" and said the council must "be in solidarity with suffering and oppressed people."

Anglican Bishop Alexander Malik of Pakistan also assailed the statement as weak and unbalanced, particularly in light of a pending

statement on Central America that offered sharp criticism of U.S. policy and actions.

"Are the Afghans not human," Malik challenged, "or is it because they are not Christians?"

An amendment calling for immediate Soviet withdrawal was defeated by a vote of 306-278, after an hour of debate that included threats from a Russian Orthodox representative that his delegation would have to withdraw from the council if the amendment critical of Soviet policy was passed. The final resolution was adopted 479-121, with 140 abstentions reflecting the uncertainty many delegates felt on the issue.

The action is expected to provide fuel for critics of the World Council of Churches,

who charge that it follows a double standard, turning a blind eye to human rights violations by the Soviet Union while sharply criticizing the West. Council officials counter that criticism of the Soviet Union would bring reprisals against the Russian Orthodox Church, while churches in democratic nations face no such hazards.

"The bottom line, is, who has the most to lose," explained council staffer John Bluck, "and that is the Russians."

In the nuclear statement, the 835 delegates urged the 300 member churches to oppose U.S. deployment of cruise and Pershing II missiles in Western Europe later this year, but also called for "major reductions" of Soviet intermediate-range missiles.

The statement supported a mutual and verifiable freeze on nuclear weapons testing, development and deployment; completion of a comprehensive test-ban treaty, and completion of the Geneva nuclear arms reduction negotiations.

A statement on South Africa condemned the system of racial separation known as apartheid as "heretical" and called for worldwide and obligatory sanctions and a "real oil embargo" against the South African government.

On the Middle East, the assembly asked member churches to encourage talks between Israelis and Palestinians and called for greater awareness of the "urgent and just" Palestinian cause.

TUESDAY, AUGUST 9, 1983

A3

2 Letters to Church Parley Assail Soviet

By KENNETH A. BRIGGS

Special to The New York Times

VANCOUVER, British Columbia, Aug. 8 — Two letters from dissidents accusing Soviet leaders of violating religious rights were made available today at the Sixth Assembly of the World Council of Churches.

The letters, sent to the Council's general secretary, Dr. Philip Potter, and several other Council officials, called on the assembly to speak out in protest against Soviet repression and those who suffer because of it. A spokesman for the Council said the matter would not be taken up in the assembly.

The sources of the letters were identified in the texts as Vladimir Rusak, a deacon of the Russian Orthodox Church, and a dissident group called the Christian Committee for the Defense of Believers in the U.S.S.R.

Copies of the letters were made available by people who said they wanted to focus public attention on the matter.

Will Respond Privately

Ninan Koshy, director of international affairs for the Council, said that Dr. Potter would respond privately to the letters in "due course" but added that the matter would not be addressed in the current meetings because "it is not part of the assembly business."

Mr. Koshy said the letters were included in a large volume of appeals sent to the assembly from various individuals and groups. He said Dr. Potter would respond to all such pleas, adding that "the action and policy of the Council in regard to the issues" raised in the letters.

The letters revived a debate over human rights that has involved the Council in recent years. Some critics charge that the Council is quick to condemn certain Governments, like South Africa's, for abusing human and religious rights but takes a much softer line toward violations in Communist countries.

Council officials have often explained the difference in terms of a need for a variety of approaches suited to particular conditions. In the case of the Soviet Union, the officials argue, the most effective method is to work quietly behind the scenes through the Russian Orthodox Church, which belongs to the Council. They also say outspoken attacks on the Soviet Union would worsen the situation of religious followers in the Soviet Union.

Orthodox Leadership Criticized

The dissidents' letters address those issues, accusing the Russian Orthodox leadership of failing to speak out on behalf of Christians and charging that the Russian delegation to the 18-day assembly is being used for propaganda purposes by the Soviet Government.

Both letters charged the Soviet Government with harassing religious believers and trying to crush all religious activity not explicitly sanctioned by the Government. The committee letter specified several abuses and accused Soviet authorities of "implementing a policy of genocide" against believers.

The Soviet committee was founded in 1976 by Gleb Yakunin, a priest who sent a similar appeal to the last World Council assembly in 1975 in Nairobi. That letter was used as evidence at a trial in 1979 at which he was sentenced to five years in a labor camp.

'Dare Not Remain Silent'

Noting the case of Mr. Yakunin, Mr. Rusak said he did not "delude myself that there is much likelihood that my letter will be read out loud at one of the assembly's sessions."

"It is very difficult for us to reach you," he added, "much more difficult than to reach God. Still, I dare not remain silent."

Mr. Rusak, a church historian with considerable theological training, said the Soviet delegation to the assembly did not truly represent the Russian Or-

thodox Church. "The aim of the Soviet authorities in using the church is purely propagandistic," he said.

The letter detailed five types of repressive tactics that it says the Soviet authorities have used against believ-

ers. They include the refusal to allow 20,000 Pentecostals to leave the country in order to practice their religion freely and the recent arrest of three Jews for holding a prayer service outside an approved area.

(Pg. A6)

World Churches Back U.N. Afghanistan Plan

By KENNETH A. BRIGGS

Special to The New York Times

VANCOUVER, British Columbia, Aug. 10 — The Sixth Assembly of the World Council of Churches ended today by addressing several global issues and vowing to maintain its activist stance.

In separate actions, the 900 delegates condemned nuclear weapons, as well as their possession, and called for a Middle East settlement that pays heed to the plight of the Palestinians.

At the close of Tuesday's session, the assembly voted on a resolution that supports a proposal for an end to the conflict in Afghanistan put forward by the Secretary General of the United

Nations. Among other things, the proposal calls for the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan within the terms of an overall political settlement.

The vote in favor of the resolution followed heated debate in which several delegates spoke in favor of a stronger statement. Some speakers called for an immediate withdrawal of Soviet troops and warned the assembly against backing away from harsher criticism of the Soviet Union.

In light of the council's sharp attacks on United States policy in Central America, these speakers said, the council would appear to have a double

standard if it failed to denounce the Soviet intervention.

Soviet delegates fought vigorously against a stronger resolution on Afghanistan, issuing veiled threats that such action could lead to a disruption of relations between the council and the Russian Orthodox Church.

Many delegates regarded the vote as a barometer of the council's unwillingness to indict the Soviet Union publicly. A resolution calling for the council to accuse the Russians of denying religious rights to its citizens was defeated at the last assembly, in 1975.

Council officials have often defended their actions by contending that open attacks on the Soviet Union would result in additional suffering for Russian believers. They have preferred to work quietly with the leadership of the Russian Orthodox Church, though some within the assembly believe the leadership has largely become a captive of Soviet authorities.

The resolution on the Middle East follows the general direction of the council's past actions by siding to a great extent with the cause of the Palestinians.

'De Facto Annexation'

"Recent developments in the region have further pushed back prospects for peace," the statement says. While recognizing the right of Israel and Arab countries to have secure boundaries, the resolution insists on the withdrawal

of Israeli troops from the West Bank and declares that Israel's West Bank settlement policy is "de facto annexation."

The statement further calls for a negotiated settlement that includes the Palestine Liberation Organization and urges churches that are council members to apprise their constituents "about the urgency and justice of the Palestinian cause."

In addition, the resolution warns "Christians in the Western world to recognize that their guilt over the fate of Jews in their countries may have influenced their views of the conflict in the Middle East and has often led to uncritical support of the policies of the state of Israel, therefore ignoring the policies of the Palestinian people and their right."

CHICAGO TRIBUNE 8/13/83 sect. 1 pg 6

Religion mixes with politics at world church council assembly



**Bruce
Buursma**
Religion writer

VANCOUVER, Canada—The World Council of Churches' sixth assembly adjourned this week after 18 days of prayer and political maneuvering, worship and wrangling.

The deliberations and actions of the assembly provided succor for both the partisans and the critics of the organization.

There emerged during the meeting here a sense of renewed allegiance to the Bible and to a deeper understanding of the task of the Christian church in a confusing age.

But the longstanding complaint that the council lacks balance in its moral analysis of the world's competing political and economic systems was far from quelled.

THAT ALLEGED BIAS was most strikingly noted here in the council's documents on the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the United States foreign policies in Central America.

The 825 delegates to the international religious meeting approved a politely worded rebuke of the Soviet Union for its incursion into a neighboring country. And in the final hour of the meeting, the delegates also issued a statement that sharply criticizes Reagan Administration actions in Central America.

One Pakistani representative at the meeting, noting the apparent disparity, asserted that if a Western country had invaded a neighboring nation as had the Soviets, the council's outcry surely would have been more vigorous.

The council, founded by Protestant and Orthodox leaders in 1948 with the chief aim of healing historic divisions in world Christianity, now embraces 300 church bodies with a combined membership of 400 million.

A GROWING NUMBER of the council's member churches are based in Africa and

Asia, and the once-unsurpassed power of Western churches in the international body has now slipped away.

Most of the U.S. denominations that belong to the New York-based National Council of Churches also belong to the World Council of Churches. But, as in the U.S., there are few aggressively evangelical Protestant church bodies in the World Council.

None, of course, is the Roman Catholic Church a member, although the Vatican sent a delegation of 20 observers to the Vancouver assembly.

Ecumenical officers in the Catholic Church have been assuming an ever larger role in the work of the world council since the Second Vatican Council two decades ago, but there appears to be little chance that the world's largest Christian denomination will formally join the council soon.

THE COUNCIL'S deputy general secretary, German Lutheran scholar Konrad Raiser, acknowledged that it is "unrealistic" to expect the Catholic Church to petition the council for membership. There remain, he said, a number of "structural dissimilarities and theological and political questions" that separate the Church of Rome from some other Christian denominations.

"I believe that success [in the rapprochement] will be much slower than many expect," Raiser said. "But it is irreversible."

Chicago Tribune 8/4/83 pg 5

U.S. churches shun antiracism program

VANCOUVER, Canada (AP)—U.S. Christian denominations for two years have mostly withheld support from a World Council of Churches program criticized as aiding Marxist guerrillas in Africa, church officials say.

The comments came Tuesday at the World Council of Churches Assembly in response to recent press reports and allegations by conservative groups that collection plate money coming from the U.S. for the council's humanitarian program against racism goes to "liberation" armies fighting white minority regimes in Africa.

Rev. Anwar Barkat of the Church of Pakistan, the Switzerland-based director of the antiracism program, said U.S. denominations have not supported the grants for at least two years.

About half of the council's antiracism grants come from West European governments, while most of the rest comes from European denominations and American and European clergy and lay groups, he said.

UNDER PROGRAM rules, only specifically designated contributions can be used for grants to projects opposing racism, which have included guerrilla armies fighting white-minority regimes in Africa. The grants are supposed to be used

only for humanitarian purposes.

Allegations that U.S. church offerings were going toward the grants have been made in recent reports on the CBS-TV program "60 Minutes" and in a Reader's Digest article.

The grants, averaging \$500,000 annually in recent years, are a tiny fraction of the council's annual distributions, including \$80 million for relief and refugee aid.

"In the beginning, [U.S. denominations] gave significant amounts to the program," Barkat said, referring to the early years of the program.

"BUT NOTHING has come from the central budgets of U.S. denominations since I've been director," Barkat, who has held the post for two years, said.

While that remark rankled some U.S. church leaders, several confirmed that their denominations have not contributed to the grants in recent years.

William P. Thompson, co-administrator of the Presbyterian Church [U.S.A.] said his denomination has made no budgetary allocations for the grants recently. "But it's not because of cold feet," Thompson said. His church simply felt it should give to general council work because other groups were sufficiently funding the grants.

8 Part I-A/Saturday, August 13, 1983

World Council Puts Emphasis on Unity

Despite Differences, Leaders See Evidence That Assembly Achieved East-West Accord

By RUSSELL CHANDLER, *Times Religion Writer*

VANCOUVER, Canada—Three weeks ago, the Sixth Assembly of the World Council of Churches opened here with a worship service of beating drums, song and fire as 835 delegates plus another 3,000 official observers and visitors gathered in a huge gold-and-white tent with a cross atop it on the University of British Columbia campus.

The assembly closed 18 days later with another service of worship in the tent. The liturgies, languages and theologies of the council's 302 member bodies representing about 450 million Christians from around the world resounded and blended as the participants expressed their commitment to the assembly's

*The unifying factor
was viewed as the
colorful worship.*

theme, "Jesus Christ—Life of the World."

The assembly was described as the most widely representative gathering of Christians ever held, and its purpose was to review the council's work since it last met in Nairobi, Kenya, in 1975, and to look ahead to its unfinished tasks of promoting unity, justice, peace and coherent theology.

The unifying factor, the delegates seemed to agree, was the colorful worship that spanned creed, color and culture and bracketed an in-

tense 18 days of deliberations on social, economic, political and theological issues—issues that often divided the delegates sharply and were a major testing of the Christian unity movement.

Evidence of Agreement

The most important thing to transpire here, summed up Phillip Potter, the 62-year-old Jamaica-born Methodist who is the council's general secretary, was "the immense agreement between East and West." The responses in worship, he added, were "an extraordinary thing. . . . There was all kinds of theological agreement between us."

Bishop Jack Tuell, a United Methodist delegate from Pasadena, agreed.

"The whole worship-life and experience of the community is the most powerful dimension of our time together and demonstrates that our unity in spiritual commitment is very strong," Tuell said. "To me, this is what holds us together."

The cohesive power of worship and the adoption of a statement of doctrinal agreement that leaders here called "historic" and said would "set the tone" for continuing ties not only between Protestant, Eastern and Russian Orthodox, Anglican, Pentecostal and other denominations within the World Council, but also between the council and the Roman Catholic Church, were indeed evidences of a unity that observers said had not before been present among delegates of

long-separated traditions.

But always lurking just below the surface were the still-present divisions, particularly between leaders of member churches from the East and the West. There were 143 Soviet bloc delegates, many from the Russian Orthodox Church, and the delicate church-state detente between these ecclesiastical leaders and their governments—as well as between them and the religious and political leaders of the West—permeated both the floor debates and the resolutions adopted here.

"The Orthodox question is the question for all of us," Potter said at a press conference on the assembly's last day. "We used to be throwing missiles at each other. . . . Now we are in close combat in the best sense of the term. What is significant is that we used to remain silent. The marvelous thing is that we can say things to one another openly and directly."

But not all delegates and observers were convinced that council leaders didn't pull their punches in favor of being much more condemnatory of U.S. policies than of acts of repression and the violation of human rights by Soviet bloc nations.

For instance, the delegates by a slim margin refused to accept an amendment to the council's statement on Afghanistan that would have called for the immediate withdrawal of Soviet troops from that country. The statement, in a softer form, did call for an end of arms sales to all parties and urged the Soviet pullout "in the context of an overall political settlement."

Despite almost unanimous back-

— Continued
on back . . .

- Continued...

ing of the tougher stance by the American delegates, William P. Thompson, a U.S. delegate and high Presbyterian Church official who chaired the drafting committee, said that the resolution—which merely commended the nonaligned nations for their peace efforts and endorsed the U.N. secretary general's plan for peace—was agreed to by the affected nations only after intense behind-the-scenes negotiations.

"We could not do anything different than we have done," Thompson firmly told the assembly.

But Bishop James Armstrong of Indiana, a United Methodist bishop and the president of the National

obvious kind of freedom of expression" others do "and who must answer for statements they are associated with," Potter replied obliquely.

The debate and close vote on the Afghanistan issue (278 to 306 for a stronger criticism of the Soviet Union) were the most dramatic and divisive of the assembly—and they underscored the fragile nature of the worldwide church unity movement.

Of course there were others—both inside and outside the World Council's membership constituency—who faulted it for its liberal stance on social issues. Handfuls of

seives wanted a council statement on "Witnessing to a Divided World" to more clearly spell out the uniqueness of Jesus.

The section "suggests a kind of universalism," complained the Rev. David Russell of the Baptist Union of Great Britain and Ireland. He pleaded for the words "the only Savior" to be inserted after the reference to Christ. The drafting committee ignored the request, however, and the report was referred to the council's Central Committee and thus was never voted on by the assembly itself.

At the closing press conference, a reporter commented to Potter that the council seemed eager to express its mind on such things as calling for an end to the arms race and the production of all nuclear weapons, urging "a new economic order in which power is shared, not grasped," asking its member churches to boycott transnational businesses trading in South Africa, and attacking "arrogant militarism" and "policies of repression" in Guatemala.

Why, the reporter asked, did the World Council seem to bypass dealing with such issues as human sexuality, gay life styles, marriage and the family, alcohol and drug abuse and—above all—abortion?

"If there is one thing the WCC will never do," Potter insisted, "it is to try to dodge issues." Those issues "are part of our agenda," the general secretary continued. But, he added, with some issues, like abortion, "there is a clear division of opinion. . . . If we'd brought it in to the assembly, it would have served no purpose."

The debate and vote on the Afghanistan issue were the most dramatic and divisive events.

Council of Churches, drew heavy applause when he criticized the adopted statement for merely reiterating the United Nations language: "I believe we should vote in this assembly not as an extension of the U.N. but as member bodies whose Lord and Savior is Jesus Christ," he said.

Later, Potter was asked if he thought the Soviet delegation would walk out of the assembly if the U.S. view prevailed, particularly in light of Russian Orthodox Archbishop Kirill's warning that stronger language in the statement would mark "a turning point in our joint ecumenical life."

"We have to realize the sensitivities of people who do not enjoy the

militant fundamentalists picketed and protested, and three evangelical visitors to the assembly published a report that criticized the World Council for "claiming to be a prophetic voice decrying the oppression of human rights" while failing to speak out in the same way about the denial of those rights in the Marxist regimes.

The report also attacked the emphasis of the ecumenical movement: "The good intentions and human efforts . . . toward peace and justice and nuclear disarmament and unity exclude the central gospel truth and create a false salvation for the world," the evangelicals said.

Several official delegates them-

Churches Call for End to Arms Race

World Council Deplores Nuclear Deterrence as 'Morally Unacceptable'

By RUSSELL CHANDLER, Times Religion Writer

VANCOUVER, Canada—The World Council of Churches' Sixth Assembly condemned the production and deployment of nuclear weapons "as a crime against humanity" on Wednesday and said that the concept of nuclear deterrence must be rejected as "morally unacceptable" and unworkable.

"We believe that the time has come when the churches must unequivocally declare that the production and deployment as well as the use of nuclear weapons . . . must be condemned on ethical and theological grounds," the assembly's statement said. It added that there should therefore be "a complete halt in the production of nuclear weapons, weapons research and development in all nations."

The council's statement on peace and justice represents the official position of the largest interfaith religious group in the world. It is being viewed as the strongest yet taken by church forces against nuclear war and the arms race.

Racism Criticized

Nearing the close of its 18 days of deliberations here, the church council also adopted a statement critical of "institutionalized racism" in South Africa and one sympathetic to "the urgency and justice of the Palestinian cause" in the Middle East. It was scheduled to approve one on Central America that assails U.S. policy in that region and commends the Nicaraguan government's efforts to achieve reconciliation there.

The seven-page document on peace and justice was devoted largely to the nuclear arms race and was approved by a nearly unanimous show of hands among the 835 assembly delegates, who represent the council's 450 million constituents in 302 member churches.

In a reference that was spelled

out specifically in another paper approved for study by the council's member bodies, the peace and justice statement put the council officially in opposition to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's scheduled deployment, beginning in December, of U.S.-made Pershing-2 and cruise nuclear missiles in Western Europe.

"We call upon the churches, especially those in Europe, both east and west, and in North America, to redouble their efforts to convince their governments to reach a negotiated settlement and to turn away now—before it is too late—from plans to deploy additional or new nuclear weapons in Europe, and to begin immediately to reduce and then eliminate them altogether," the statement says.

The paper also says that "ran-

Concern expressed about commitment to the struggles of the poor.

part militarism" in the world has diverted attention from the "fundamental rights and need of poor nations and of the poor within the rich nations." A revision of an earlier draft, the statement attempts to balance the issues of peace and economic justice—key concerns of the assembly and the focus of considerable division within the makeup of the council delegation itself.

Some church leaders from the Third World nations, who had assumed a growing leadership role in the 35-year-old council, warned the body during debate on the paper that a growing obsession with the

East-West confrontation and the threat of nuclear war was undermining church commitment to the economic struggles of the poor.

"For many millions," the statement says, "the most immediate threat to survival is not posed by nuclear weapons. . . . The intersection of East-West and North-South conflicts results in massive injustice, systematic violations of human rights, oppression, homelessness, starvation and death for masses of people. Millions have been rendered stateless, expelled from their homes as refugees or exiles."

The council statement is much shorter than the pastoral letter issued in May by the U.S. Roman Catholic bishops, and it is much less specific in its criticisms of U.S. nuclear policies.

But the council statement is stronger in its condemnation of all nuclear powers for their policies of deterrence, arguing that because such a policy's credibility depends on the possible use of nuclear weapons, it is morally unacceptable. The Catholic document stopped short of completely renouncing deterrence as an interim peace-keeping measure.

The council paper also is implicitly more pacifist than the bishops' statement. It says Christians should not "participate in any conflict involving weapons of mass destruction or indiscriminate effect" and supports the refusal of Christians to work for companies producing nuclear weapons.

Saying that "all means leading to disarmament" should be welcomed, the paper urges "multilateral conferences," "bilateral negotiations" and "unilateral initiatives leading to the relaxation of tensions and building of mutual confidence among nations and peoples."

The statement on Central America that the delegates were scheduled to vote on late Wednesday expresses concern that "mainly U.S.-based and financed religious groups . . . appear . . . to be used for political purposes in legitimizing policies of repression."

The council, through the Central America statement, also "vigorously opposes any type of military intervention by the United States, covert or overt, or by any other government, in the Central American region."

Church council weighs

Nuclear arms, apartheid on agenda for Protestant, Orthodox meeting

divisive issues

By ADON TAFT
Herald Religion Writer

VANCOUVER, British Columbia — Like a freighter being loaded with explosive cargo, the sixth assembly of the World Council of Churches has spent a week taking on sensitive issues that could shatter the ecumenical organization.

During the next week, the 4,000 representatives of 400 million Christians in 305 Protestant and Orthodox denominations in more than 100 countries will confront such issues as a nuclear-arms freeze, apartheid, native and land rights, and ~~control of resources by transnational corporations.~~

Such observers as Dr. Edmund Robb, a Methodist evangelist who is chairman of the executive committee of the Institute on Religion and Democracy, say they have noticed an ideological listing to the left.

Robb noted that those at the helm of the WCC already have fired critical salvos at the capitalist economic system, U.S. involvement in Central America and nuclear weapons testing in the Pacific by the United States and France.

Similar blasts are expected to follow from the full assembly before the close of its meeting next Wednesday.

Storm clouds

The solidarity of the 35-year-old ecumenical agency and its multicultural crew may be tested before the 930 voting delegates get out of this lovely port city, which seems to be a symbolic setting for the assembly meeting held every seventh year. The representatives are meeting on the campus of the University of British Columbia, many of them wearing the colorful garb of their native countries.

Storm clouds often gather over the energetic metropolis of 1.5 million spread along the rocky shore of an inlet of the Pacific Ocean. Vancouver, however, usually is spared from rough weather by warming trade winds that seem to huddle it against rough, snow-capped mountains.

Similarly, controversy frequently hangs over the WCC, but the bluster over its action and policies traditionally calms before any severe damage is done.

Two of the eight major issues that began getting serious study Tuesday from the delegates are expected to produce sparks but no major explosions.

Dr. Jose Miguez-Bonino, a Methodist theology professor from Argentina who is one of the six presidents of the WCC, predicted that "a number of statements on peace and justice and the relation between them — that will not fully satisfy anyone — will be adopted."

Peace through efforts to halt the nuclear arms race is the major concern of the churches in the United States, Canada and Western Europe, Miguez-Bonino said.

Nicaraguan statement

On the other hand, justice — racial and economic — is uppermost in the minds of delegates from the Third World, who comprise about one-third of the assembly. Some 143 are from black Africa, for example, compared with 121 from the United States.

Two Third World churches — the Baptist Convention of Nicaragua and the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of South Africa — are expected to be accepted in the membership of the WCC next week.

The president of Nicaragua's Baptist Convention, Tomas Tellez, said that his country's churches are enjoying the freedom to participate in the formation and carrying out of public social policy for the first time in Nicaragua's history as a result of the Sandinista revolution.

"Before the revolution, we had freedom of worship as long as we did not say anything against the Somoza regime by speaking out on social injustice," Tellez, a 33-year-old delegate to the WCC assembly, said in an interview.

He is the administrator of his denomination's Primary Health Care Program, which serves 30,000 poor people. It trains local representatives to carry on the education and treatment activities.

Tellez said he had friends — some of them pastors — who were jailed, tortured and even killed by the National Guard under Somoza. He said, however, there has been "full participation of Christians in

the revolution. Before, during and after the revolution many clergymen and active laymen participated with the Sandinistas."

Tellez said that he has no fear that the churches of Nicaragua will be betrayed by the revolution as were those of Cuba.

U.S. criticized

Miguez-Bonino said that westerners in the WCC, for the most part, are understanding and sympathetic to the concerns of the Third World, which philosophically includes Latin America.

So, Miguez-Bonino expects guidelines combining the goals of peace and justice to be adopted for the next seven years of work by the council.

Meanwhile, speeches, dramas, and literature distributed in the early session of the assembly and a variety of rump meetings have been critical of U.S. policies in Central America and of the capitalistic economic system.

The Rt. Rev. Ted Scott, primate of the Anglican Church of Canada and moderator of the WCC, and Dr. Philip Potter, a Methodist from the Caribbean island of Dominica who is the general secretary of the council, sent a message to the United Nations expressing "deep concern about the escalation of threats to use massive armed force against Nicaragua."

They asked United Nations Secretary General Javier Pérez de Cuellar to "bring about the withdrawal of foreign military forces from the region and to ensure the sovereignty of Nicaragua and the inviolability of its national borders."

A group of Central American delegates has been meeting to draft a similar statement to be presented to the entire assembly.

Dr. Jan Pronk, a Dutch economist with the U.N., blamed Western political leaders for producing "a global feudal society controlled by an industrial elite which did not share the resources, work and bread with the have-nots."

He called for a new ecumenical order of "international democratic socialism."

(P. 9A/8/11/83)

MIAMI HERALD

Churches ask Israeli pullout but pass over Afghanistan

By ADON TAFT
Herald Religion Writer

VANCOUVER, British Columbia — The World Council of Churches on Wednesday adopted a statement on the Middle East urging Israel to withdraw its troops from all territory occupied in 1967.

The statement, passed overwhelmingly by the delegates from some 300 Protestant and Orthodox churches in more than 100 countries, recognizes Israel's right to exist with secure borders and the right of the Palestinians to establish their own state.

The Israeli government was urged to open negotiations that would include representatives of the Palestine Liberation Organization as well as those of neighboring Arab states.

In other actions on international affairs, the WCC, whose member churches represent 500 million Christians worldwide:

- Refused to censure the Soviet Union for its military presence in Afghanistan, on grounds that the WCC has no churches in that country and could not bring pressure to bear there.

- Urged an end to racial apartheid in South Africa.

- Condemned modern warfare, and urged member churches to adopt pacifist stands.

On the Middle East, the delegates called for negotiations among Jews, Moslems and Christians to seek a political agreement for sharing the city of Jerusalem as a holy place for all the faiths.

The assembly's statement condemns "the repressive actions of the occupying power in East Jerusalem," which has created "serious difficulties" for Arab Moslems and Christians despite Israeli law guaranteeing free access for various religious groups.

No Soviet censure

Restoration of the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Lebanon was labeled "a key to peace and justice in the region," according to the statement, which asked for withdrawal of all armed forces from that country.

An effort to censure the Soviet Union for its role in Afghanistan was beaten back late Tuesday by the WCC leadership. After impassioned debate, delegates accepted a mildly worded statement backing the peace-seeking efforts of the United Nations.

An attempt to strengthen the statement failed by a 306-278 vote with 35 abstentions after Archbishop Kirill, of the Russian Orthodox Church, warned that the vote could mark "a turning point in [the WCC's] life."

William Thompson, the American Presbyterian lawyer who chaired the committee that drafted the resolution, resisted efforts to change the wording. Delegates objected that the language was much different from that in statements proposed for Central America and other political and military trouble spots.

Among the most outspoken objectors was the Right Rev. Alexander Malik of Pakistan.

Noting that he was "neither an American nor a Westerner," Malik said: "If any Western country sins, the World Council of Churches would jump on it with the strongest language in the dictionary...."

"The Soviet Union has committed a hard aggression on a neighboring country and should be condemned," Malik said to applause from delegates.

A matter of influence

The proposed statement on Central America, which criticizes the United States and praises the Sandinista government in Nicaragua, has yet to be considered by the assembly.

In a press conference Wednesday, WCC General Secretary Phillip Potter, a Methodist from the Caribbean island of Dominica, insisted that the Afghanistan and Central American situations are entirely different.

He noted that the WCC had protested the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan as "an element in the threat to peace." But since the ecumenical agency has no member churches in Afghanistan, where he said factions have been warring internally for years, it has no choice but to support the U.N.'s efforts.

In Central America, however, some churches have influence, he said. Besides, Potter declared, the people there were "expressing their will to self-determination."

The assembly Wednesday also adopted broad statements on human rights and on peace and justice, which are sharply critical of apartheid in South Africa, the denial of land rights to Indians in North America and other minorities elsewhere, and the escalation of the arms race.

Council tensions point to 'ecumenical turning point'

Religion

By ADON TAFT
Herald Religion Writer

VANCOUVER, British Columbia — It was as a veiled threat that Russian Orthodox Archbishop Kirill told the sixth septennial assembly of the World Council of Churches that it faced "a turning point in ecumenical life."

The Soviet prelate was seeking this week, successfully, to block efforts to strengthen a mild criticism of the Russian invasion of Afghanistan by implying his church might withdraw from the WCC, whose member churches represent 500 million Christians worldwide.

But in a wider sense, the three-week meeting of nearly 900 delegates from some 300 Protestant and Orthodox denominations in more than 100 countries was a turning point for the 35-year-old ecumenical organization.

It became evident that the tensions between Orthodox and evangelical theological views, between the social concerns of the northern and southern hemispheres, and between the economic systems of the industrial and third worlds no longer are a danger to the unity of the delegates' faith, as expressed in worship.

A huge orange-striped tent in a parking lot of the University of British Columbia became the symbol of that unity. There, dressed in the colorful garb of their countries, 35,000 men, women, and children of every hue and varied tone gathered daily to celebrate together by singing different melodies and rhythms, by reading the Scriptures in many languages, and by receiving the Eucharist (communion).

They used the Lima liturgy, based on an inter-denominational study of baptism, the eucharist and ministry which the Right Rev. Robert Runcie, the Archbishop of Canterbury, described as "a pointer to the future far wider than mere theological debate."

Participants acknowledged that the WCC's effects on styles of observance would take from seven to eight years to trickle through mem-

ber denominations to the churches.

But WCC General Secretary Dr. Philip Potter, the Methodist theologian from the Caribbean island of Dominica, expressed a widespread conviction when he described the emphasis on worship and its effect as the assembly's high point.

Among those who joined in the celebration were 20 official observers from the Roman Catholic Church, which is not a member of the WCC. Some of them had taken part in the study in Lima, Peru, in 1981 that produced the ecumenical liturgy.

The WCC's instrumental role in encouraging dialogue between Christian denominations — Catholics and Anglicans, Catholics and Lutherans, Anglicans and British Methodists — is likely, if anything, to be expanded in the assembly's aftermath.

Similarly, the WCC's vast commitment to relief, refugee aid and assistance to Third World education has emerged unshaken by the turbulence of the assembly.

But it was the controversy over social and political issues that drew the greatest public attention, and will likely subject the WCC to further criticism, particularly from conservative churches in the West.

The WCC's international staff and leadership were clearly in control of the agenda and of the wording of statements issued in the name of the delegates from member churches. In addition, the veto power of the Russian and other Orthodox churches and the growing influence of the Third World churches were quite evident.

Examples:

- The Business Committee barred from the assembly floor a plea from dissident Russian churchmen asking the WCC to speak out against religious persecution in the Soviet Union. Similarly, efforts to condemn the Russian invasion of Afghanistan were beaten down by the leadership.

- That same committee kept rescheduling consideration of harsh statements on U.S. involvement in Central America and South Africa's apartheid policies until it was too late for floor debate. Delegates insisted on at least a brief look at the pronouncements before leaving

them in the hands of the Central Committee. So they called for a short business session after the scheduled closing of the three-week-meeting.

- Suggested changes in statements on evangelism that were approved in floor debate never appeared in the final draft. These changes would have strengthened the affirmation of the belief that Jesus is the only savior of the world and would have softened criticism of traditional missionary activities.

Despite such manipulations, the majority of delegates obviously approved the liberal tilt of the assembly, which also:

- Took stands against the nuclear arms race, for which most of the blame was placed upon the U.S. and its decision to deploy Pershing and Cruise missiles in Western Europe. It urged a pacifist position on member churches, even if it meant civil disobedience.

- Called for Israel to give up territories occupied in 1967, urged that the Palestine Liberation Organization be included in peace negotiations, and suggested interfaith talks over Jerusalem's status as Holy City to Christians and Muslims as well as Jews.

- Demanded an end to discrimination on the basis of race, sex, class, age, education, religion or physical or mental handicaps. That demand did not extend to the ordination of women or the inclusion of homosexuals in the ministry.

- Lashed out at both capitalism and communism, but trained its heaviest guns on transnational corporations, described as tools of economic oppression linked to militarism and enforced poverty.

- Urged the development of a new, socialistic economic order that would assure equality of wealth and sharing of resources.

The WCC's left-leaning actions, however, seem unlikely to pull it apart.

Carol M. Ostrom
Times religion reporter

VANCOUVER, B.C. — They call it a "family" meeting — a far-flung, contentious and diverse family, to be sure.



Delegates from more than 300 Christian churches have converged from all over the world in this cosmopolitan city for an 18-day, once-a-decade reunion of the World Council of Churches.

The point of this assembly, as for the four others held since 1948, is world community. The WCC is holding fast to its vision of unity among churches — also known as ecumenicity or, in this decade's jargon, "convergence."

That's not an easy task given the issues at hand, which range from the theological and specific (whether to baptize infants or adults, for example) to broad-ranging, volatile social issues such as the churches' responsibility in revolution-torn countries like Nicaragua and El Salvador.

As if it weren't difficult enough to meld the cultural and theological viewpoints of churches as different as, say, the Serbian Orthodox and the United Methodist, the council faces even stronger challenges in Vancouver.

The WCC — undoubtedly the most influential Christian body outside the Catholic Church, and a persistent voice for social justice — always has faced outside criticism.

But this year, as the assembly meets for the first time in North America since 1964, the critics seem more focused and more vigorous.

"The World Council is a disabulous organization that is going to be spearheaded by the Anti-Christ," says Rev. Gordon Hagen, who has organized a protest gathering in Vancouver.

The council "is revolutionary, and it tears down all the foundations on which I build my life and we build society. I want free enterprise, they want socialism . . . their gospel is to feed the hungry physically. Our gospel is to see a sinner come to Christ for salvation . . . to walk with Him in the newness of life."

Fundamentalist preacher Bob Jones, chancellor of Bob Jones University in North Carolina, and the Rev. Ian Paisley, Northern Ireland's fiery "Protestant pope" are scheduled to speak at the gathering.

Meanwhile, a Zurich-based organization called Christian Solidarity International has set up a tent in Vancouver and is holding its own conference. It charges that the WCC has ignored the persecution of Christians in Communist, Islamic and authoritarian nations.

Some of the criticism has been simmering since earlier this year, when CBS's "60 Minutes" and the Reader's Digest leveled big guns at the behemoth church body.

Their charges — that the WCC has aided guerrillas and supports Marxist revolutions — precipitated debate both inside member churches

and among non-church-going citizens. Where, they wondered, is the line drawn between helping victims of political upheavals and becoming a partisan participant in national struggles?

WCC's answers ranged from the theological — solidarity with the weak, the poor and the outcast was an important part of Jesus' ministry, said WCC General Secretary Phillip Potter — to the pragmatic.

Simply shaking hands with a South American native — implying that he is an equal — becomes a political act, say those who believe that their religious commitment mandates supporting the poor.

But for some critics, the biblical interpretations that the WCC uses in working for social justice don't justify the organization's activities.

"I do not understand the Bible that way," says the Rev. Murray Marshall of Seattle's First Presbyterian Church. A self-described conservative evangelical, Murray will be attending part of the assembly as an accredited visitor.

To him, the message of the Bible is a call to convert individuals to Christianity — "one by one."

"To miscast the gospel in terms of restructuring society I think distorts the whole thing," says Marshall. "I'm not fighting a straw man here. This is a very real division."

Others cast their criticism in political terms.

"People on a grass-roots level need to know in simple terms, not in these high-faluted theological terms, answers to a couple of questions," says Steve Lawson, communications director for Christian Solidarity. "First of all: Is the WCC Marxist or not? We need a yes or no answer . . . They also need to know if they're supporting guerrilla movements or not."

The criticism has, if nothing else, drawn attention to a world body that has received little scrutiny in recent years.

Since it began in 1948, the World Council has been a moving force for ecumenism as well as social justice. Growing rapidly, it has become the voice of more than 300 Protestant, Anglican and Orthodox church bodies in about 100 countries, including Communist countries, and represents a constituency of more than 400 million.

Now sustained by an often-criticized bureaucracy, the council has a payroll of about 275 workers

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Convergence?

World community is the goal, disunity is the reality as Christian delegates face social, religious issues

and controls an annual budget of about \$75 million.

Despite its year for unity, the council does not include as members the world's non-Christian majority. Nor does it include the Roman Catholic Church, except as an observer and sometime participant, or many of the rapidly growing, evangelistic churches.

But even with so many exclusions, the council has from the start struggled with issues that its member churches simply cannot agree on.

This year, vigorous debates on a number of questions are expected to boil to the surface during the assembly, the theme of which is "Jesus Christ: The Life of the World."

For example:

- The role of women, inside and outside church. The ordination of women, already begun in some Protestant denominations, doesn't set well with the Orthodox participants, or with some of those who have a more literal interpretation of the Bible.

Undoubtedly, participating in assembly activities with ordained women will "challenge" the assumptions of individual orthodox Christians, said Rev. Theodore Stylianopoulos, a Greek Orthodox priest who will give part of the assembly opening address.

- Peace, the arms race, and nuclear weapons, including a forum on the concerns of Pacific Islanders, are expected to play an important part in the assembly.

A vigorous debate between peace movements of the North Atlantic region and the liberation movements of Africa, Asia and Latin America may well erupt at the assembly, according to Michael Kinnamon, executive secretary of the WCC's Faith and Order Commission.

- Issue of doctrine — baptism, eucharist, and ministry — which have been the subject of a 50-year debate, will be on the agenda. This time however, the Faith and Order Commission of the council has something new to report: The Catholic, Protestant and Orthodox theologians wrestling with these issues have finally subdued them. The committee's paper, announcing theological convergence on these divisive issues, will be presented at the assembly for discussion, after which it will go to member churches for approval.

The assembly's discussions will be the raw material from which the council staff will create policy statements urging member churches to take specific action. But the statements — as clearly as the assembly itself — have no real hold on member churches, which are free to reject or ignore the council's work.

To those who have kept the ecumenical faith, the WCC's insistence on unity has great significance. What divides our churches divides our communities, they believe.

Other than the United Nations, says the Rev. William Cate, director of the Church Council of Greater Seattle, the WCC assembly is the only real forum for people of different beliefs and traditions to speak with one another.

"Any opportunity for that to happen, whether it's in the U.N. or in the churches, is a step to a real world community — and the world is dying because of a lack of it."

And if the divisions separating the churches can be healed, supporters believe, anything — including world peace — is possible.

That's the long-range vision, however. In the meantime, a few details need settling.

Some observers of religion believe that the current clash on political and theological issues is fueled by a new sort of "old boys" versus "young radicals" struggle. This time around, the evangelists' version goes, the "old fogeys" are left-over liberals, while the young "upstarts" are straight-laced, Bible-toting evangelicals.

"There are times," observed the WCC's Kinnamon, writing in a pre-assembly publication, "when I long to encounter a strong voice defending free enterprise, traditional classroom education or military buildup for national security because such voices do exist in the Church (in great numbers) and are therefore necessary if we are to have full, ecumenical discussion of the issues . . ."

With any luck, his wish will come true — and then some — in Vancouver.

(Front page)

Monday, August 8, 1983

THE CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR

World church leaders debate how to promote peace

As civil wars disturb the third world (right and below) and the influence of 'war toys' is again discussed (lower right), the case for Gandhian nonviolence is considered by 800 church leaders.

By Curtis J. Sitomer

Staff correspondent of The Christian Science Monitor

Vancouver

Calls for peace, freedom, and justice ring across this idyllic Pacific-shore campus of the University of British Columbia, as more than 800 delegates and 3,000 observers to the World Council of Churches assembly (WCC) this week wind up 17 days of discussions, seminars, and worship services.

There is little or no disagreement that peace, freedom, and justice are noble aims. But participants from around the globe strongly differ on how they are to be achieved, what priorities should be set, and what the tradeoffs should be.

Varying points of view are best spotlighted in debate over a statement on peace and justice that is likely to be ratified in some form by this assembly before it adjourns on Wednesday. WCC leaders hope these results will be a guideline for Christians and others throughout the world.

Western delegates particularly emphasize the importance of peace and nonviolence under virtually any circumstances. Coretta Scott King, widow of The Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., said that nonviolence "must apply to all social struggles." Pointing to the pacifist work of Mohandas K. Gandhi in India, as well as her husband in the United States, she added that this approach can become a powerful force for social change that can be applied to both national and international disputes.

Many third-world delegates, on the other hand, insist that there can be no peace without justice. They say the issues of racism, government oppression, hunger, and poverty are paramount in their struggle. South African theologian Allan Boesak, who is of mixed race, points out that there is great concern by Christians in the third world that the "issue of peace will be separated from the issue of justice — making 'peace' primarily a North Atlantic concern," while justice and deprivations are ignored.

A related clash of views exists over nuclear disarmament. Delegates will likely modify a draft statement that now asks churches to declare unequivocally that "the production and deployment as well as the use of nuclear weapons are a crime against humanity and must be condemned on ethical and theological grounds."

English Anglican Bishop John Habgood — who moderated the 1981 WCC nuclear disarmament hearings in Amsterdam — calls upon church officials here to take a more "nuanced and balanced" position. Bishop Habgood says the council should take into consideration and be more respectful of "various conditions in various countries and various churches." This stance is supported by US Lutheran Bishop David Preus, who reads the draft as a call for "unilateral disarmament" and says many religious leaders don't see it as "a constructive move toward peace."

Others here want what they call a more "urgent" statement on peace and justice that would also embody a clear repudiation of the use of nuclear weapons and unabashedly demand unilateral disarmament.

"Peace and injustice cannot coexist," says Kenyan Anglican Bishop Henry Okullu. "There will be no peace in the whole of Africa with the increasing militarization of the area by the Soviet Union and the United States." Bishop Okullu attributes many of the world's current injustices to racism and calls upon the WCC to give top priority to wiping it out.

Russian Orthodox Archbishop Kirill holds that churches must "proclaim the link between peace and justice" and should develop a "clear and theologically credible position of security and peace."

WCC, along with its US counterpart, the National Council of Churches (NCC), continues to be criticized for allegedly leaning towards the ideological left and sometimes fanning the flames of revolution. These attacks have spilled over into this convocation, as two New Right spokesman from the US, Rev. Carl McIntyre, head of the International Council of Christian Churches, and Bob Jones, president of Bob Jones University, joined a picket line in Vancouver. Signs suggested that NCC was Marxist-inspired and Soviet-dominated.

Critics pointed to reports in Reader's Digest and by CBS's Television's "60 Minutes" that WCC funds, particularly NCC monies gathered from unsuspecting parishioners, are sometimes channeled into worldwide revolutionary coffers. WCC leaders deny that their efforts to feed and clothe the hungry and have-nots in the third world are politically inspired.

At the same time, those on the left, particularly the vast majority of members who come from non-Western nations, often score WCC for appeasing the US and other Western nations and ignoring the larger struggle for freedom elsewhere. They want a specific commitment from church officials here to help wipe out oppression and bondage.

Also, some here say that WCC lacks a coherent spiritual direction and is preoccupied with political and social agenda. However, some delegates point out that the real value of a meeting, such as this one, is informal fellowship that grows among them and tends to heighten individual faith in God and foster a stronger love for one's fellow man.

NEWSDAY Garden
City, NY / Aug. 11, '83
P. 5

Church Council Assails West Bank Occupation

By Joseph Berger
Newsday Religion Writer

Vancouver, British Columbia — The World Council of Churches yesterday condemned Israel for its "repressive" occupation of the West Bank and called on churches to build greater awareness about the "urgency and justice of the Palestinian cause."

A statement approved with near-unanimity by delegates here urged that churches "remind Christians in the Western world to recognize that their guilt over the fate of Jews in their countries may have influenced their views of the conflict in the Middle East and has often led to uncritical support of the policies of the state of Israel, thereby ignoring the Palestinian people and their rights."

After the vote, Phillip Potter, general secretary of the council, was asked by a reporter why the council had made no statements on Jews in the Soviet Union. "The Jews have been able to look after themselves," he said. "We have to help those who do not have people to look after them."

The council's delegates represent 300 Protestant and Orthodox churches worldwide with 400 million members. Critics have accused it of supporting revolutionary movements and of unfairly attacking Western policies while closing its eyes to Communist bloc actions worthy of criticism. The council responds that it can say only what its member churches permit it to say; American churches can afford to be critical of their country while Soviet churches cannot.

As it concluded its 18-day assembly — an event held every seven years — the council overwhelmingly passed a sweeping denunciation of U.S. policy in Central America. It condemned the United States for "initiatives designed to destabilize the Nicaraguan government, redeem the international image of Guatemala's violent dictatorship, resist the forces of historic

change in El Salvador and militarize Honduras in order to assure a base from which to contain the aspirations of the Central American peoples." It praised the Marxist government of Nicaragua for its "life-affirming achievements."

In a statement on the nuclear arms race, the council called for a complete halt to the production and deployment of nuclear weapons and urged the nuclear powers to renounce policies of deterrence, first use of nuclear weapons and the contemplation of limited nuclear war.

The thrust of the Mideast statement, which had the overwhelming support of the American church delegation, was unsympathetic to Israel. It said the Israeli creation of Jewish settlements on the West Bank "has resulted in de facto annexation giving final touches to a discriminatory policy of development of peoples that flagrantly violates the basic rights of the Palestinian peoples."

The statement supported the rights of "all states, including Israel and Arab states, to live in peace with secure and recognized boundaries," but it balanced that with sections advocating the Palestinians' right to a sovereign state — language stronger than other international forums that have called for Palestinian autonomy. The statement urged the withdrawal of Israeli troops from "all" territories occupied during the 1967 Mideast War and implicitly challenged Israel's claim to East Jerusalem by calling it an "occupying power" in that area.

The strength of the council's feelings on the Mideast was evident in the handing of one of the amendments. A section on Jerusalem called attention to the "plight of indigenous Muslim and Christian communities suffering from the repressive actions of the occupying power in East Jerusalem and other occupied territories." One Greek Orthodox delegate moved to strike the language about repressive actions and occupying powers and substitute more general language about people suffering from the "prevailing tensions." That amendment was defeated.

In a telephone interview from his New York office, Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum, who had attended much of the council meeting as a Jewish observer, said the statements represent an attempt by Arab-Christians to blame Israel for the current Mideast turmoil.

"It is clear that this is another illustration of the ongoing, continuous and systematic exploitation of the World Council of Churches by pro-PLO agencies who use their Christianity as a mask by which to manipulate the conscience of the world Protestant and Eastern Orthodox community in support of the extremism of the PLO and its supporters," he said.

Official explains why churches council hasn't supported Soviet Jews

By JIM ASKER
Post Reporter

VANCOUVER, British Columbia — The World Council of Churches has never spoken out for Soviet Jews, because "the Jews have been fully able to look after themselves," the top official of the Christian group said Wednesday.

"We have to help those who do not have people to look after them," General Secretary Philip Potter told a small group of reporters following an afternoon news conference.

Meanwhile, as expected, the council voted to condemn U.S. policy in Central America, defeating two efforts by U.S. delegates to add references to Soviet involvement in the troubled region.

Asked later by The Houston Post to explain his remark concerning the Jews, Potter said, "They (Jews) have a massive world organization."

However, Potter, a Methodist clergyman from the Caribbean nation Dominica first elected to his post in 1972, said the council "follows (the plight of Soviet Jews) through direct contact with the churches."

The resolution on Central America "vigorously opposes any type of military intervention by the United States, covert or overt, or by any other government."

It never mentions Cuba or the Soviet Union, however, and praises the leftist Nicaraguan government.

The assembly also urged its member churches to end any involvement with "institutions economically involved" in South Africa because of institutionalized racism practiced there.

The council concluded its 18-day Sixth General Assembly, opposing plans to put new nuclear weapons in Europe and reaffirming its support of "a sovereign Palestinian state."

The three-page statement on the Middle East endorsed "secure and recog-

nized borders (for) Israel and Arab states" and urged "withdrawal of Israeli troops from all territories occupied in 1967."

Bishop John Habgood of the Church of England told delegates the statement is "almost totally slanted toward the Palestinian cause." But the assembly rejected several efforts to change it.

A seven-page statement on "peace and justice" labeled production, deployment and use of nuclear weapons "a crime against humanity."

At the behest of Third World delegates, it also noted that "injustice, systematic violations of human rights, oppression, homelessness (and) starvation" are a more immediate threat to many.

The 35-year-old council, whose 300 Protestant and Orthodox denominations have more than 400 million members, promotes Christian unity and the spread of the gospel. In addition, it makes frequent public statements on human rights and actively helps a variety of refugee groups.

Critics charge it is biased against the West, because its criticisms of the United States and its allies have been more frequent and harsher than those of the Soviet Union and its allies or the Third World.

"If there's one thing the World Council will never do, it's try to dodge issues," Potter said. But he added, "There are many times we have to work quietly in various situations around the world."

Tuesday, delegates rejected a bid for stronger criticism of Soviet troops in Afghanistan after Russian Orthodox Archbishop Kirill of Leningrad told the assembly it would present "a challenge to our loyalty to the ecumenical movement."

Asked if Kirill's statement was a threat to pull out of the council, Potter said, "What they mean is . . . it places them in a very difficult position."

WCC Urges Halt To Afghan Rebel Arms

VANCOUVER, B.C. (AP) — The World Council of Churches assembly passed a resolution Tuesday calling for a cutoff of arms to resistance fighters in Afghanistan after defeating a call for an immediate Soviet withdrawal.

As passed, the resolution calls for the "withdrawal of Soviet troops in the context of an overall political settlement, including agreement between Afghanistan and the USSR."

Lutheran Bishop Gunnar Listerud of the Church of Norway pushed amendments to eliminate the call for a halt to arms to resistance fighters and to demand immediate withdrawal of Soviet troops.

But the proposals brought a torrent of opposition from Soviet delegates, who implied the changes could wreck East-West church relationships, and were defeated 278-306.

Anglican Bishop Alexander Malik of Pakistan assailed the tempered statement, declaring, "There is only one solution — the unconditional withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan."

"The atrocities of the Soviet troops are not even mentioned," he declared.

"We are living through a turning point in ecumenical life," Russian Orthodox Archbishop Kirill of Leningrad said.

He said the proposed change would be "interpreted politically and used for propagandistic purposes — another propaganda clap of hands." But he said it would not help the people of Afghanistan or change the situation.

The original document, passed 479-142, "seeks to change the situation," he said.

William Thompson, a U.S. Presbyterian leader and head of a drafting committee, backed the original compromise, saying it was worked out in difficult negotiations with church leaders on all sides of the issue.

He said it supported steps advocated by the United Nations secretary general for resolution of the Afghanistan conflict.

Council of Churches leaders pledge discussion of Soviet curbs on religion

By George W. Cornell
Associated Press

VANCOUVER, British Columbia — Officials of the World Council of Churches have assured groups seeking council action against Soviet restrictions on religion that the issue will reach the floor of the assembly.

Leaders of the council also maintained this week, contrary to what some critics contend, that the global interchurch body has been pressing steadily for fuller religious rights in Communist and other totalitarian countries.

"We have not been silent," the Rev. Phillip Potter, chief administrator of the council, said at a news conference.

Soviet curbs on religious freedom have been at issue at this international Christian gathering since it convened July 24. Several outside groups have pressed for action.

About 4,000 church people are participating in the assembly, which will run through Aug. 10.

Participants include 900 official delegates of 300 Protestant, Eastern Orthodox, Anglican, national Catholic and Pentecostal denominations totaling about 500 million members in 300 countries.

"Beware!" proclaimed a flier from a group

founded in West Germany, charging that Soviet church representatives, under pressure from KGB agents, plotted to "subvert Western Christianity" through the assembly.

Other, more moderate groups, such as the Switzerland-based Christian Solidarity International, have petitioned the assembly to deal openly with all religious oppression — in the Soviet Union and elsewhere.

Council officers met with leaders of the group and pledged open procedures for bringing such matters to the floor.

One of eight issue categories before the assembly, "justice and human dignity," involves religious rights and is being considered in a sequence of group meetings and hearings before being brought to the floor.

Potter said religion is "clearly limited in an atheist, materialistic state" where the churches are able to function "but they are not allowed to do some kinds of things (that are) normal in democratic countries."

He said the council is in "constant touch with churches" in the Soviet Union and that it contacts government authorities, "making whatever appeals we can" to further religious rights.

"We played a not-insignificant role in the re-

cent case of the Pentecostals," he said, referring to the "Siberian Seven" in refuge in the U.S. Embassy in Moscow for four years. The Pentecostals recently were allowed to leave the Soviet Union.

Potter repudiated claims that Soviet churches are not genuinely "confessing churches," saying that they "are growing and increasing participation" of people, holding worship, preaching and doing "all they are able to do."

Baptist Georgi Vins, once imprisoned in the Soviet Union but allowed to immigrate to the United States in 1979, credited the council for helping in his cause, but questioned whether it is doing enough for others still in prison in the Soviet Union.

The Research Center for Religion and Human Rights in Closed Societies, based in New York, also has urged dealing with the religious rights issue, particularly concerning imprisoned Russian Orthodox priest Gleb Yakunin.

Archbishop Edward Scott, primate of the Anglican Church of Canada and the assembly moderator, said the council has been in contact with Soviet churches about Yakunin.

"They have visited him in prison, brought him Holy Communion and been in constant touch with him," Scott said.

Dallas Morning News

F-Saturday, July 30, 1983

-pg. 48A -
(AP Service)

San Jose Mercury, p. 9A, 8/8/83

Church council begins debate on human rights stand

By Grant Harden
Religion Writer

VANCOUVER, British Columbia — Leaders of the world's Protestant, Orthodox and Anglican churches begin three days of debate today over such issues as halting the threat of nuclear war and improving human rights.

The 850 delegates attending the Sixth Assembly of the World Council of Churches must decide by Wednesday — the last day of the 18-day conference — how strong a statement to make on eight major issues on the agenda.

Delegates represent a worldwide constituency of 400 to 500 million people, including members of the Orthodox Church in the Soviet Union.

Considerable argument is expected

over a draft statement on human rights, which devotes 19 paragraphs to the turmoil in Central America, castigating the Reagan administration for its policies there.

The statement, by contrast, devotes six paragraphs to criticism of the Soviet Union and its incursion into Afghanistan.

Conservative critics of the World Council contend that such imbalance reflects a leftist bias, as evidenced by the council's silence over violations of religious freedom in Soviet-bloc countries.

The charge is not lost on the council's leaders, including Archbishop Edward W. Scott, primate of the Anglican Church of Canada, who conceded Sun-

day that the current statement on human rights calls into question the council's credibility.

"Let's face facts," Scott said. "It is easier to criticize the United States than some groups among our membership. The U.S. can accommodate criticism better."

Scott is serving as a delegate and moderator of the council's central committee, the administrative arm of the global church body.

"We at the WCC recognize the way people live, not the way we would like them to live. It would be easy enough to get a strident statement on Afghanistan,

but it would not help much in the long run."

Delegates from less-developed nations have said they fear that a preoccupation among European and North American churches with the problem of nuclear war will detract from the churches' longstanding commitment to seek justice for the poor and those who lack full political rights.

"The next three days promise to be the liveliest and in some ways the most difficult part of the session," Scott said. "Considering the different cultures, the different perspectives that our people have, the outcome can never satisfy everybody."

SAN JOSE
MERCURY
8/8/83

Church confab debates stand on Afghanistan

By WES FRENCH

Rocky Mountain News Religion Editor

VANCOUVER, B.C. — Assertions that a resolution backing efforts of the United Nations to settle the conflict in Afghanistan was too easy on the Soviet Union sparked a heated debate at the World Council of Churches assembly here Tuesday.

The resolution passed by a vote of 479-20, but there were 142 abstentions as many delegates remained dissatisfied.

IN THE MOST emotional debate of the 2½-week session, several delegates claimed the resolution, which barely mentions Russian presence in the war-torn country, was unbalanced compared with a denunciation of United States involvement in Central America.

The Central America section of the report on human rights has yet to be debated.

A delegate from a church in Pakistan called the Afghanistan resolution too weak and said if it involved a Western country "it would be jumped on and denounced in the strongest language." The Afghanistan resolution, he said, "only regrets the fighting" in that country and ignores "Soviet aggression, atrocities and use of chemicals."

He asked if the reason was because the Afghan people are Moslems and therefore "are thought not moved by any of this."

Speakers denouncing the resolution as too weak were applauded loudly.

COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN William Thompson of the Presbyterian Church in the United States explained that the Afghanistan section of the report was a resolution calling for a short, focused statement on an immediate situation, while the Central America portion was a much longer and detailed statement expressing Council policy on human rights.

The Central America section is 3½ pages, three paragraphs of which criticize United States military presence or intervention in that region.

The statement "vigorously opposes" overt or covert intervention by the United States and asks churches in the United States to protest and press for "a radical change of U.S. policy in that region."

It also urges churches in other countries to ask their governments to put pressure on the United States to "reverse its military policies."

Delegates from the Russian Orthodox Church spoke against attempts to get the Afghanistan resolution redrafted and said a stronger statement would be used by other countries "for propaganda."

Arizona Republic
8/10/83

p. 15

World churches urge end of arms to Afghan rebels

By Richard Lessner
Republic Religion Writer

VANCOUVER, British Columbia — The World Council of Churches assembly passed a resolution Tuesday calling for a cutoff of arms to resistance fighters in Afghanistan after defeating a call for an immediate Soviet withdrawal.

The resolution calls for the "withdrawal of Soviet troops in the context of an overall political settlement, including agreement between Afghanistan and the U.S.S.R."

A vigorous 90-minute floor debate was waged by members of the Norwegian, French, West German and U.S. delegations against the Soviet delegation to either strengthen the mild six-paragraph resolution or to send it back to a committee to be rewritten.

Proposed changes would have eliminated the call for a halt to arms to resistance fighters and demanded "immediate withdrawal" of Soviet troops.

The proposed changes, however, were opposed by two high-ranking Russian Orthodox prelates as well as William Thompson of the Presbyterian Church in the United States.

A motion to send the resolution back to the drafting committee was

defeated 306-278, with 35 abstaining, and the resolution passed 479-142.

Thompson, who was chairman of the committee, said in an interview it got as many concessions as possible from the Soviet delegation in drafting the resolution.

Archbishop Kirill of Leningrad, speaking in Russian, told the 835 delegates that the vote "is a critical moment in our ecumenical life" and that any attempt to strengthen the language of the resolution "is a challenge to our loyalty to the ecumenical movement."

He said the proposed changes could be "interpreted politically and used for propagandistic purposes — another propaganda clap of hands."

Thompson said that Kirill's comments were not a threat by the Russian Orthodox Church to withdraw from the 301-church council but that attempts to strengthen the resolution could have made the Russians' "life difficult" in the Soviet Union.

Anglican Bishop Alexander Malik of the Church of Pakistan criticized the tempered statement, saying, "If this were a Western country involved, the World Council would have denounced it in the strongest possible language."