

**“The question is not whether there will be a New World Order.  
The question is who will control it, and for what ends.”**

# **The Religious Face of the New World Order: From the Vatican to the White House to the United Religions Initiative**

By Lee Penn



The “Green Pope” at the United Nations

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## Introduction

**By Cliff Kincaid**

Despite the Climategate scandal that has thrown the man-made global warming theory into disrepute, Pope Benedict XVI is still a believer in the discredited claims being made about the alleged role of man in creating a hotter planet. He has been labeled the “Green Pope” and some Catholic parishes in the U.S. following his lead are advocating a “carbon fast” for Lent, the period before Easter. Rev. Thomas J. Reese, S.J., a senior fellow at the Woodstock Theological Center at Georgetown University, says Benedict’s views “are motivated by theology not politics.”

However, acting more like a politician than a religious leader, the Pope greeted ambassadors to the Vatican during his new year’s address to the diplomatic corps by complaining about the failure at the 2009 Copenhagen conference to come up with a new treaty to punish Western nations, led by the United States, that have used fossil fuels for industrial development. Referring to “the growing concern caused by economic and political resistance to combating the degradation of the environment,” he said, “This problem was evident even recently, during the XV Session of the Conference of the States Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change held in Copenhagen from 7 to 18 December last. I trust that in the course of this year, first in Bonn and later in Mexico City, it will be possible to reach an agreement for effectively dealing with this question. The issue is all the more important in that the very future of some nations is at stake, particularly some island states.”

Lee Penn, who previously wrote the book, *False Dawn*, about global religion, notes in this report for America’s Survival, Inc. that the Pope’s agenda goes beyond global warming. He writes:

When the Pope agrees with Mikhail Gorbachev, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Henry Kissinger, the new President of the European Union, and other secular leaders on the need for global governance and a new world order, we can know that the world has indeed experienced a “harmonic convergence” and entered a new age.

Penn observes the significance of what is happening:

In the past, the proponents of “global governance” have faced Papal skepticism or opposition. With the publication of *Caritas in Veritate*, Benedict XVI has himself come out strongly for a new world order. He might wish to put a new international system to different uses than those supported by Mikhail Gorbachev, German Chancellor Angela Merkel, Henry Kissinger, or others – but he agrees that a new international system, “a true world political authority,” must come into being.

Penn offers his own provocative theory of what is happening and why:

Atheism (Marxist or otherwise) cannot be the basis of an enduring civilization. All of the regional and continental civilizations that have existed until now have been sustained by religion... Globalists and interfaith activists understand that religion is the basis of an enduring civilization.

On a basic level, this can be viewed as an attempt to bring together the world's Eastern and Western spiritual traditions. It is not clear how Islam will be integrated into this global system but the United Religions Initiative (URI) seems designed to accomplish this goal. As Lee Penn documents, the URI even included practitioners of Wicca (witchcraft) as well as an Islamic cleric convicted of rape.

The Pope has warned against a return to paganism or pantheism. However, this particular form of global religion, as we see it developing, has been tried before. Mark Musser, in the forthcoming book, *Nazi Oaks: The Green Sacrificial Offering of the Judeo-Christian Worldview in the Holocaust*, documents in striking detail how the German green movement culminated in Nazism. Professor James Wanliss, author of the forthcoming book, *The Green Dragon*, argues that the movement undermines and could ultimately destroy the Judeo-Christian foundations of our nation. As such, the emerging New World Order in its religious dimension threatens not only the Western religious tradition but the rights to life, liberty and property which depend on this tradition.

Vaclav Klaus, President of the Czech Republic, who survived the communist system and now leads a country that emerged from the dissolution of the Soviet empire, calls the global warming movement a new form of communism threatening human freedom and progress. However, his book, *Blue Planet in Green Shackles*, quotes the authoritative essay, "Fascist Ideology: The Green Wing of the Nazi Party and Its Historical Antecedents," by Peter Staudenmaier, as providing the backdrop for understanding the totalitarian nature of this movement. Hence, the Green ideology brings together elements of communism and Nazism.

The Pope has embraced other aspects of the global "progressive" agenda, endorsing the holding of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference in New York in May, so that "concrete decisions will be made towards progressive disarmament, with a view to freeing our planet from nuclear arms."

The concept of zero nuclear weapons sounds good in theory. But peace and security clearly depend on a viable and modernized U.S. nuclear deterrent. What's more, the world is confronted by a fanatical regime in Iran determined to acquire nuclear weapons. All that the Pope said about this was, "Concerning Iran, I express my hope that through dialogue and cooperation joint solutions will be found on the national as well as the international level."

**In reality, the Pope's recipe for a nuclear-free world means appeasement of Iran, its acquisition of nuclear weapons, and a more dangerous world with more nuclear weapons.**

Strangely, the Pope called for a new global warming treaty but admitted that centralized planning to "save" the environment hasn't worked on the national level. He said, "Twenty years ago, after the fall of the Berlin wall and the collapse of the materialistic and atheistic regimes which had for several decades dominated a part of this continent, was it not easy to assess the great harm which an economic system lacking any reference to the truth about man had done not only to the dignity and freedom of individuals and peoples, but to nature itself, by polluting soil, water and air?"

**The pope was admitting that a communist-style economic system was not only a threat to man but the environment. Yet, he now wants the United Nations to play a central role in policing a new global agreement on the environment and disarming the nations of the world.**

In his *Caritas in Veritate* (Charity in Truth) encyclical, the subject of much of this report by Lee Penn, the Pope explained that a "World Political Authority" was necessary in order to "manage the global economy; to revive economies hit by the crisis; to avoid any deterioration of the present crisis and the greater imbalances that would result; to bring about integral and timely disarmament, food security and peace; to guarantee the protection of the environment and to regulate migration..."

These statements in favor of what is clearly a world government immediately followed the pope's recommendation that, in the face of the "unrelenting growth of global interdependence," the United Nations must be reformed so that "the concept of the family of nations can acquire real teeth."

Few in the media want to bring up this sensitive subject, and those that do run the risk of being accused of anti-Catholic bias. But it's precisely because the Catholic Church is the largest religious body in America that the statements of its leader deserve media scrutiny.

Before he spoke to the diplomats, on the occasion of the World Day of Peace, the Pope issued a January 1, 2010 statement based on the theme, "If You Want to Cultivate Peace, Protect Creation." The pope said that "the threats arising from the neglect – if not downright misuse – of the earth and the natural goods that God has given us" were as troubling as "wars, international and regional conflicts, acts of terrorism, and violations of human rights."

The Pope reiterated that the campaign to pass a new global warming treaty should be part of a broader effort to remake the global economy. "It should be evident that the ecological crisis cannot be viewed in isolation from other related questions, since it is closely linked to the notion of development itself and our understanding of man in his relationship to others and to the rest of creation," he said. "Prudence would thus dictate

a *profound, long-term review of our model of development*, one which would take into consideration the meaning of the economy and its goals with an eye to correcting its malfunctions and misapplications. The ecological health of the planet calls for this, but it is also demanded by the cultural and moral crisis of humanity whose symptoms have for some time been evident in every part of the world.” (emphasis in the original).

Lee Penn’s report must begin our discussion and debate over what lies ahead. It is imperative because Catholic parishes are now being provided with packets of materials and articles on how to promote the *Charity in Truth* encyclical in their local communities.

### **George Soros and the Catholic Church**

The evidence shows that the largest religious organization in the U.S. with 63 million members (23 percent of the U.S. population) has become a major force for the passage of socialist legislation on health care and climate change in the U.S. Congress. Conservative Catholic Raymond Arroyo, the host of Catholic television network EWTN's "The World Over" program, has stated that half or more of the Catholic Bishops voted for Obama. What’s more, the Vatican has embraced the idea of a world government, and the Vatican newspaper has praised Karl Marx. We have also discovered that several Catholic groups have been directly funded by the Open Society Institute of George Soros, an admitted atheist who operates a secretive financial hedge fund with the ability to break governments and undermine currencies. The Soros role in the U.S. financial collapse that paved the way for Barack Obama’s election to the American presidency is still a matter of controversy. The “Catholic” groups supported by Soros include:

- Catholics in Alliance for the Common Good (\$200,000).
- Catholic Legal Immigration Network (\$530,000).

Soros and the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) share common interests, having both funded “community organizing” groups such as ACORN and the Gamaliel Foundation. The latter sponsored Obama’s work as a Chicago “community organizer.”

In addition, the Open Society Institute in 2009 has provided substantial sums of money to “faith-based” groups such as Faith in Public Life (\$450,000) and the PICO National Network (\$600,000). Both organizations include prominent Catholics. Indeed, PICO founder and former Executive Director John Baumann, a Jesuit Catholic Priest, won an award early in 2009 from the Catholic Campaign for Human Development, the agency of the USCCB which funded ACORN to the tune of \$7.3 million over ten years. An ACORN-style group, PICO specializes in “faith-based community organizing.”

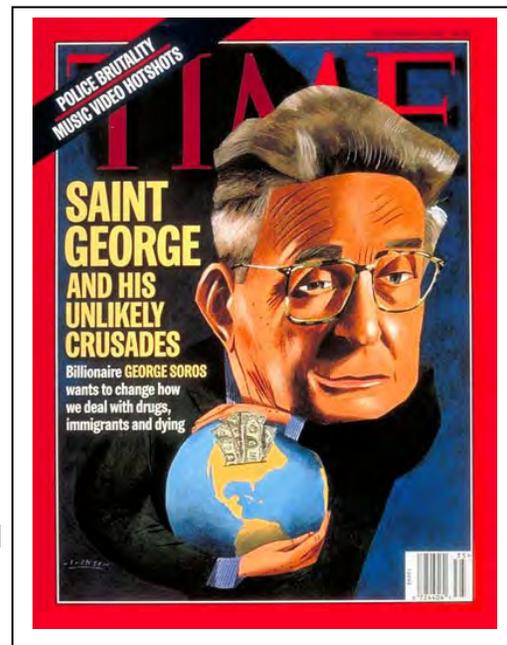
It is clear that the religious left, now with funding from George Soros, has actually supplanted the secular Marxist left in its effectiveness. This is shocking in the case of the Catholic Church because of his support for so many causes perceived to be at variance with the pro-life and pro-family stance of so many Catholics.

Convicted of insider trading in France, Soros is a financial speculator and hedge fund operator who manipulates the currencies of the nations of the world in order to make himself rich. Some of his fortune, estimated at \$7 billion, has been put into causes such as abortion rights, gay rights, drug legalization, voting rights for felons, euthanasia, and rights for immigrants and prostitutes. His Open Society Institute even helped underwrite attorney Lynne Stewart, subsequently convicted of helping terrorists.

During a December 20, 1998, interview with 60 Minutes, Soros acknowledged that as a 14-year-old Jewish boy in Hungary, his identity was protected and that he actually assisted in confiscating property from Jews as they were being shipped off to death camps. Asked by interviewer Steve Kroft if he had any sense of guilt over what he did, Soros replied, "no." In the interview, Soros compared his actions to the operation of economic markets, saying, "...if I weren't there, of course, I wasn't doing it, but somebody else would—would—would be taking it away anyhow." Soros then insisted he was only a "spectator" and had "no role in taking away that property." That is why, he said, "I had no sense of guilt."

Soros has said, in regard to his manipulation of currency markets, "I am basically there to—to make money. I cannot and do not look at the social consequences of—of what I do," and "I don't feel guilty. Because I'm engaged in an amoral activity which is not meant to have anything to do with guilt."

In addition to the role of the U.S. Catholic Bishops in backing national health care Legislation (while opposing abortion funding), the Catholic Bishops are (like the Pope) deeply involved in promoting global warming treaties and legislation that would raise energy costs and taxes on the American people and empower global bureaucracies.



Theodore McCarrick, an American Cardinal of the Roman Catholic Church, is a major player in the health care and "climate change" controversies. In regard to the latter, he said that Catholic bishops "will be promoting a new Climate Covenant" and "take the message on the seriousness of climate change to every Catholic parish in America." There are 19,000 Catholic parishes in the United States.

The Catholic Bishops have declared that the U.S. should adopt "mitigation and adaptation" approaches that mean "shifting behavior now to adjust to the near-term impacts of climate change." The Bishops have explained that "Mitigation means cutting back on the emissions of harmful global warming pollutants and taking action to prevent further harm to the atmosphere." The Bishops have launched a "Climate Change Justice and Health Initiative" that promotes "legislative action," including "the transfer of

such technologies and technical assistance that may be appropriate and helpful to developing countries in meeting the challenges of global climate change."

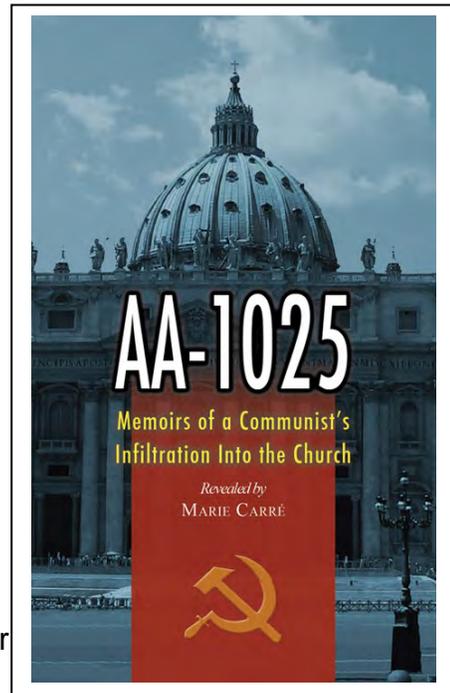
The Catholic Coalition on Climate Change was launched in 2006 as a vehicle of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. This group says that "Because we are not experts on climate change and its consequences, we rely on a scientific consensus (best represented by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) to guide our activities." In addition to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, the Catholic Coalition on Climate Change enjoys the active support of the Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities, Carmelite NGO, Catholic Charities USA, the Catholic Health Association of the United States, Catholic Relief Services, the Conference of Major Superiors of Men, the Franciscan Action Network, the Leadership Conference of Women Religious, the National Catholic Rural Life Conference, and the National Council of Catholic Women.

A related organization, the Catholic Climate Covenant, claims that the poor are suffering because of the "carbon footprints" of people in the U.S. and other "rich" nations.

America Magazine, the national Catholic weekly published by the Jesuits, complained that Congress did not pass legislation on greenhouse gas emissions before the United Nations Copenhagen meeting. "The United States will thus remain the only developed nation with no established target for carbon reduction," it said. The magazine praised the National Religious Partnership for the Environment and the Catholic Campaign on Climate Change for being "vigorous advocates for integrating the world's poor in a climate covenant with funding for both adapting infrastructure to meet the hardships of changing climate and for transferring green technology." It went on, "If the planet is to survive, as Pope Benedict XVI concluded in Caritas in Veritate, all nations must accept binding reductions in carbon emissions and construct an equitable structure for energy consumption and for sharing the development of green technology among rich and poor nation`s--for the sake of this generation and generations to come."

As we shall see in Lee Penn's report, the Pope believes that there is a need for "a worldwide redistribution of energy resources" and that, "The technologically advanced societies can and must lower their domestic energy consumption, either through an evolution in manufacturing methods or through greater ecological sensitivity among their citizens."

We asked Walter Grazer, who served as the Director of the Environmental Justice Program for the United States Catholic Conference of Bishops from 1993 to



2007 and is now interim executive director of the National Religious Partnership for the Environment, for a comment on ClimateGate. He replied, "I am really not up on that issue at all."

**The issue that has to be directly addressed is the infiltration of the church by Marxist elements.**

The controversial book, *AA-1025 – Memoirs of a Communist’s Infiltration into the Church*, is the story of a Communist agent who infiltrated the Catholic Church and wielded power behind the scenes, with the intention of subverting the institution from within. The latest evidence of this is found in *Spies in the Vatican: The Soviet Union’s Cold War Against the Catholic Church*, by John Koehler. The book confirms communist penetration of the Vatican during the Cold War, even during the time when Pope John Paul II was opposing Soviet power. More relevant for our purposes, however, is the earlier work by the late Vatican insider Malachi Martin, *The Jesuits*, and his subsequent, *The Keys of This Blood*, which was published in 1990 and subtitled: “*The Struggle for World Dominion Between Pope John Paul II, Mikhail Gorbachev & The Capitalist West.*”

During an interview I conducted with Malachi Martin in 1990, he said the belief of the Vatican was that both systems, communism and capitalism, would collapse, and that out of the chaos would come the New World Order. One of his main themes was that Mikhail Gorbachev, who presided over the “restructuring” of the old Soviet Union, never gave up on Marxism-Leninism but adopted the viewpoint of the Italian communist Antonio Gramsci that a worldwide communist state could only be achieved gradually. It was to be a “revolution by infiltration.”

**“Liberation Theology was a perfectly faithful exercise of Gramsci’s principles,” Martin wrote. “The most powerful religious orders of the Roman Church – Jesuits, Dominicans, Franciscans, Maryknollers – all committed themselves to Liberation Theology.”**

Robert Chandler, in his America’s Survival, Inc. report, *How Marxism Has Infiltrated the Catholic Church*, noted that, “...Notre Dame has one of the leading Gramsci scholars on its faculty. Joseph A. Buttigieg, a Professor of English at Notre Dame, is the editor and translator of the complete edition of *Antonio Gramsci’s Prison Notebooks*, and was a founding member of the International Gramsci Society, of which he is now president. He spoke at the Brecht Forum, home of the New York Marxist School, in 1994 and was an endorser of the “150th Anniversary of the Communist Manifesto” conference, held October 30 & 31, 1998, at Cooper Union’s Great Hall in New York.

**Eugene Genovese, the Marxist turned Roman Catholic, delivered an essay at Notre Dame Law School on April 17, 1997, in which he said that the Marxist critique of capitalism “had much in common with the critique offered in *Rerum Novarum*,” the Papal encyclical of Pope Leo XIII “on capital and labor.”**

Interestingly, Malachi Martin would note in his book, *The Jesuits*, that it was Cardinal Ratzinger, Prefect of the Vatican Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, who would issue a refutation of Liberation Theology in 1984. Twenty five years later, as Pope Benedict, he would preside over the publication by the Vatican newspaper, *L'Osservatore Romano*, of an October 21, 2009, article by Georg Sans that praised the Marxist theory of alienation under capitalism. Sans teaches the History of Contemporary Philosophy at the Università Gregoriana, the first Jesuit university.

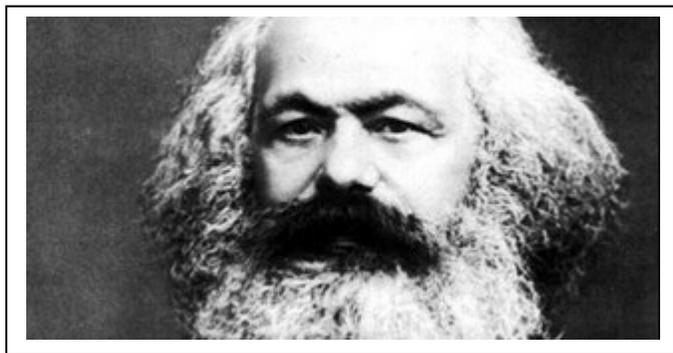
### **Vatican Officially Embraces Marxism**

Lee Penn goes into substantial detail about the Vatican's embrace of Marxism. But it is important to emphasize that the Vatican newspaper article, published in Italian, said that the church "must be grateful" to Marx for explaining the concept of "alienated labor" and "surplus value." Sans also said that "a large part of humanity" remains alienated. The article was reprinted by an Italian communist website, complete with an image of Karl Marx flashing a "V" for victory sign.

So-called "surplus value," which is said to amount to exploitation of workers under capitalism, is one of the major concepts of Marxism. It justifies the hatred of and violence against private property owners-the capitalists. "The doctrine of surplus value is the cornerstone of Marx's economic theory," stated V.I. Lenin.

Surplus value may sound esoteric but the concept is absolutely necessary in understanding the appeal of Marxism and the basis for revolutionary activity. The notion of surplus value is supposed to reflect the amount of output that exceeds the cost of the workers to produce a commodity. By definition under Marxism, this "surplus value," the source of what is commonly called profit, constitutes exploitation of the workers. It is the basis for government control of the economy and elimination of the property owners once the workers supposedly take charge.

The Vatican newspaper article is not a complete embrace of all aspects of Marxism. Sans is critical of Marx's materialism and how Marxism has been applied in practice by Communist parties. He calls this "ideological abuse" and says that an understanding of mankind has to take into account man's spiritual nature. Sans says that, "The history of Marxism has taught us, however, that all attempts to introduce communism by force ended up in an injustice and an even greater misery."



On the other hand, the article still puts the Vatican newspaper on the side of the Marxist philosophy of state control in the name of liberating the workers. "We must be grateful to

the philosopher for the idea that man should be considered in light of the mode of production and form of economic management which predominate in society," he writes.

However, as Thomas Sowell points out in his book, *Marxism*, the Marxist analysis ignores the value produced by the capitalists who exercised private property rights in creating the means of production and employing the workers in the first place. Hence, the Marxist concept of surplus value, Sowell argues, is "Plainly arbitrary and unsupported." It is essential to Marxist theory because the abolition of private property is a major plank in the communist platform.

The Sans article doesn't just embrace the Marxist theory of alienation from the economy. On the matter of the natural environment, Sans expands this dubious theory to include another "aspect of alienation" which he said involves "man against nature." Sans condemned the "overexploitation of natural resources and environmental destruction" that are said to characterize industrial societies.

He explained, "No need to be materialistic to recognize that we must establish a degree of harmony between man and his natural environment. It is not simply to relate to a living space or obtaining food, but take account of the man who shall be a unity of body and spirit." He goes on to condemn the "overexploitation of natural resources and environmental destruction" that are said to result from such alienation.

As noted by the *London Times*, "Professor Sans's article was first published in *La Civiltà Cattolica*, a Jesuit paper, which is vetted in advance by the Vatican Secretariat of State. The decision to republish it in the Vatican newspaper gives it added papal endorsement."

Kevin Clarke wrote a blog posting on the site of America magazine, the national Catholic Jesuit weekly, which declared, somewhat jokingly, "We're all Marxists now!"

We had anticipated this problem when we published Robert Chandler's report, "Marxism in the Catholic Church," after Obama had made a triumphant visit to the University of Notre Dame. After the Vatican endorsed a "World Political Authority" and Pope Benedict had a friendly meeting with president Obama, we published the report by Carl Teichrib, "Sowing the Seeds of Global Government: The Vatican's Quest for a World Political Authority."

Even before this, we had published a story about how representatives of the United Religions Initiative and the World Parliament of Religions were among those included in a controversial Bay Area conference held at the University of San Francisco, a Jesuit Catholic institution with a "global perspective," under the auspices of the Lane Center for Catholic Studies and Social Thought.



**One of the speakers was an avowed witch, "Elder Donald Frew" of the "Wiccan Community." He has represented Covenant of the Goddess at both Parliaments**

**of the World's Religions and has previously served on the Global Council of the U.N.-affiliated United Religions Initiative.**

This "Interfaith Leaders' Luncheon on the Point 7 Now Campaign to End Global Poverty" was held on February 20, 2008, in conjunction with the Catholic Archdiocese of San Francisco and the Episcopal Diocese of California. The "Point 7 Now" refers to a proposed mandate on the federal government to force compliance with the Millennium Development Goals of the United Nations and to devote 0.7 percent of the Gross National Product to foreign aid. The same goal was implied in then-Senator Barack Obama's Global Poverty Act. The estimated cost was \$845 billion.

We obtained a confidential memorandum from a foreign aid lobbyist, Max Lawson of Oxfam, that outlines how, over the next several months, dozens of international non-governmental organizations are working to create a media campaign to pressure governments to adopt a global financial transactions tax. As outlined by Lawson, the idea is to create the appearance of public support for the plan, ultimately enabling G8 leaders meeting in Canada in June 2010 to agree to the global tax and then get acceptance from the G20 leaders meeting afterward.

Congress is moving ahead with the "Let Wall Street Pay for the Restoration of Main Street Act of 2009" (HR 4191), a financial transactions tax introduced by Rep. Peter DeFazio (D-Ore.), a leading member of the Congressional Progressive Caucus. President Obama has himself endorsed a bank tax, supposedly to recoup bailout money.

Lawson's document cites support for the tax from Democratic House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, who endorsed the DeFazio measure during a December 7, 2009, news conference and announced that the bill would have to be made "global" to keep U.S. investors from taking their business overseas and out of taxable reach. Senator Tom Harkin (D-Iowa) is introducing a similar bill, which has the backing of the AFL-CIO, in the Senate.

**Again, there is substantial evidence of Catholic involvement in this campaign.**

In the coalition known as "New Rules for Global Finance," which is working in the U.S. on this campaign, we find the names of Father Andrew Small, associate director of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' Office of National Collections and director of the Collection for the Church in Latin America; and Marie Dennis of the Maryknoll Office of Global Concerns.

In addition to those officially named as members of the "new rules" coalition, we find the following names on an email list of contacts for the author of the memorandum, Max Lawson of Oxfam:

- Chuck Collins, director of the Program on Inequality and the Common Good at the Institute for Policy Studies, and speaker for Catholics in Alliance for the Common Good (CACG).
- Christina Weller, Catholic Agency for Overseas Development (CAFOD).

### **The Soros Connection**

CACG has received \$200,000 from the George Soros-funded Open Society Institute over the last several years. Soros money has also gone into the Catholic Legal Immigration Network (CLINIC), an organization established by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops back in 1988. It has received at least \$530,000 from the Open Society Institute.

The role of Chuck Collins of IPS is extremely revealing because the IPS is a notorious pro-Marxist think tank. It is significant that he is now traveling under the Catholic banner. His book, *The Moral Measure of the Economy*, is co-authored with Mary Wright, whose biography reads as follows:

Mary Wright is a staff member of JustFaith Ministries in Louisville, KY. **For twelve years she was the Education Coordinator at the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' Catholic Campaign for Human Development (CCHD) office in Washington, D.C.** Previously she served for fourteen years as the CCHD Diocesan Director at the Human Rights Office for the Archdiocese of St. Louis.(emphasis added).

The Treasurer-Secretary of Catholics in Alliance for the Common Good is Francis Xavier Doyle, a former top official of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. The Executive director is Victoria Kovari, a former organizer for the Gamaliel Foundation, the same group that helped launch Barack Obama's career as a community organizer in Chicago. The chairman is Alfred M. Rotondaro, a senior fellow at another Soros-funded group, the Center for American Progress.

Catholics in Alliance for the Common Good and NETWORK, a "National Catholic Social Justice Lobby" that claims to have 100,000 members, were behind a July 11-13, 2008, Convention for the Common Good which featured a speech by AFL-CIO President John Sweeney. Sweeney, a Catholic, is a member of the Democratic Socialists of America, a group of long-time backers of Barack Obama.

A release about the event said, "The first-of-its kind gathering featured leading Catholics in public life including Senators Bob Casey Jr. and Arlen Specter of Pennsylvania; Rep. Marcy Kaptur of Ohio; former Rep. Charles Dougherty of Pennsylvania; E.J. Dionne, Jr. of the *Washington Post*; Sister Helen Prejean, author of *Dead Man Walking* and John Sweeney, president of the AFL-CIO."

The complete list of sponsoring organizations included Pax Christi USA; Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns; Center of Concern; Catholics in Alliance for the Common

Good; NETWORK, A National Social Justice Lobby; Sisters of Mercy; National Catholic Rural Life Conference; Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities; Ignatian Solidarity Network; US Catholic Mission Association; Conference of Major Superiors of Men; Oblates of St. Francis De Sales; AFL-CIO; Franciscan Mission Service; Franciscan Action Network; Catholics United; Catholic Scholars for Worker Justice; University of San Francisco, Lane Center for Catholic Social Thought.

Father Charles L. Currie, president of the Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities, is a speaker for the CACG. The association discloses that:

Eight alumni of the 28 Jesuit colleges and universities currently serve in appointed positions to U.S. President Barack Obama's administration and fifty two alumni are current members of the 111th U.S. Congress. Members of the Obama administration from AJCU institutions include Central Intelligence Agency Director Leon E. Panetta (Santa Clara University, 1960, BA) and Department of Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates (Georgetown University, 1974, PhD).

The inclusion of Panetta is very significant because of his documented relationship with communist Hugh DeLacy, who served as a member of the U.S. Congress, and his work when he was a member of Congress opposing President Ronald Reagan's policy of supporting the Nicaraguan freedom fighters known as the Contras. The Contras were fighting a Communist Sandinista government that included Catholic Priests in positions of power. One of them, Father Miguel D'Escoto of the Maryknoll Order, was United Nations General Assembly President during much of 2009. As a Sandinista official, he had received the Lenin Peace Prize from the old Soviet Union.

In his ASI report, "From Henry Wallace to William Ayers-the Communist and 'Progressive' Movements," Herbert Romerstein notes, "Two secret Communist Party members became Democratic members of the United States Congress. They were John Bernard from Minnesota and Hugh DeLacy from Washington State. A 'friend of the Party' was Vito Marcantonio, who was elected to Congress first as a Republican, then as a Democrat, and finally as a candidate of the Communist Party controlled American Labor Party in New York."

### **Barack Obama's Catholic Connection**

Federal funding of ACORN is not just a Democratic Party or Obama Administration problem. As a chart produced by House Republican Leader John Boehner shows, most of the federal money going to the organization was provided under President George W. Bush. This is not something that most Republicans want to talk about, especially now that they can use ACORN funding as a weapon against Obama and the Democrats.

While Obama has strong ties to ACORN, they were originally established through the U.S. Catholic Church, which has also funded ACORN and similar organizations to the tune of \$7.3 million over ten years through the Catholic Campaign for Human

Development (CCHD). This is another taboo topic for most of the media. Even conservative news organizations are afraid of raising the issue, apparently fearing being tagged with the "anti-Catholic" label.

**While the CCHD suspended funding for ACORN, Catholic funds flow to other similar organizations, such as the Gamaliel Foundation.**

The Gamaliel Foundation, which has also received \$300,000 from the Open Society Institute of George Soros, says on its website that "Barack H. Obama, former Gamaliel organizer, is the 44th president of the United States," and that this makes the organizing community proud. It also has a story about Obama friend and White House adviser Valerie Jarrett speaking to a Gamaliel event in Washington, D.C. of 2,500 activists. Jarrett is the official who said that "we" had recruited communist Van Jones to the White House. Another speaker was Melody Barnes, Obama's Director of the Domestic Policy Council.

Before coming to the White House, Barnes was the executive vice president for Policy at the Soros-funded Center for American Progress. Van Jones also worked at CAP before going to the White House. CAP CEO and President John Podesta, who served as President Clinton's chief of staff, is a major "progressive Catholic" and member of the ACORN advisory council, and served as a professor at Georgetown University. Podesta is a graduate of Georgetown University Law Center.

On October 6, 2009, Podesta accepted the "Drinan Award," named for Catholic Priest Robert F. Drinan. Georgetown said that Drinan, a professor at Georgetown Law from 1981 until his death in 2007, was a "leading voice in the human rights movement for more than half a century" and "was affiliated with numerous organizations devoted to the furtherance of human rights." In fact, Drinan was a far-left radical who opposed U.S. efforts to prevent a communist takeover of Vietnam. A Democrat who served in Congress, before he was forced by the Vatican to step down, he opposed the impeachment of President Clinton and served on the national advisory council of the ACLU. He presided over a Mass honoring Speaker-Elect Nancy Pelosi on January 3, 2007.



Interestingly, Tom Chabolla of the SEIU and formerly of the CCHD was on the dinner committee for the 33rd Annual Hubert H. Humphrey Civil Rights Award Dinner, which was held on May 7, 2009 in Washington, D.C. One of the award winners was none other than Van Jones, the communist "Green Jobs" czar ousted from the Obama Administration in scandal.

In a Politico.com story about Barack Obama's friendly meeting with the Pope, reporter Josh Gerstein featured information that made it clear that the President's Catholic connection goes back to his days as a community organizer and that Obama's associates understand and appreciate this fact. Deputy National Security Adviser Denis McDonough was quoted as saying that Obama's work as an organizer on the South Side of Chicago "was funded partly" by the CCHD. McDonough, a former Senior Fellow at the George Soros-funded Center for American Progress, was the moderator of a May 10, 2006, CAP event on "How Catholic Progressives View the Role of Faith in Governance."

The evidence of Catholic collaboration with Marxist and "progressive" networks is substantial. A documentary, "The Democratic Promise: Saul Alinsky and His Legacy," notes that "Alinsky envisioned an 'organization of organizations,' comprised of all sectors of the community-youth committees, small businesses, labor unions, and, most influential of all, the Catholic Church." A website devoted to the documentary cites the Catholic Campaign for Human Development as one of several organizations "actively practicing Alinsky's techniques."

**The Citizen's Handbook to radical organizing notes that "much" of the organizing through Alinsky's Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF) "occurs through Christian churches, particularly the Catholic church." The IAF is another ACORN-style group.**

Obama "worked in several Catholic parishes, supported by the Catholic Campaign for Human Development, helping to address severe joblessness and housing needs in economically disadvantaged neighborhoods of Chicago," noted the group calling itself Catholic Democrats. Another group, Catholics for Obama, says that "President Barack Obama reflects core values of Catholic Social Teaching, which informs how we live our faith in the world." The president of Catholic Democrats, Patrick Whelan, serves on the board of Catholics for Obama and as co-director of Pax Christi in Massachusetts. In the newsletter of Pax Christi Massachusetts, Whelan writes about flying to Chicago in May of this year, "where I attended a reunion of Catholic Priests and community activists who hired a young Barack Obama in 1985."

**Whelan says that Obama, in his book, *Dreams from My Father*, "created a character named Marty Kaufmann, based on two real-life community organizers who attended this gathering on May 16, 2009."**

Whelan also writes about Obama's meeting with the Pope. "Overall," he says, "it was clear that the common ground between the US Government and the Holy See-on poverty, the environment, international armed conflict and peace in the Middle East-far outweighed their differences."

The evidence shows that there is active collaboration between the Obama Administration, the Vatican and the Roman Catholic Church in the United States. Because of the Leon Panetta connection, we believe this has to include the CIA. At the

time Panetta was appointed, observers noted his lack of intelligence experience. His main foreign policy “expertise” was his work as a congressman opposing the Reagan Administration’s attempts to keep communists out of Central America. His Jesuit connection not only helps explain his ideology but why he was appointed to this sensitive national security position in the first place.

We have just come across two important policy papers that further illustrate the deep involvement of the Roman Catholic Church in this movement for global taxes and world government. The first paper, dated 2004, is titled, “Working Towards Progressive Global Governance,” and was produced by CIDSE, an international alliance of Catholic development agencies, and Caritas, a confederation of 162 Catholic relief, development and social service organizations operating in over 200 countries and territories worldwide. The second paper, dated November 2009, is from CIDSE and titled, “International Taxes on Financial Transactions: Responding to Global Challenges – towards a fairer sharing of costs.”

The U.S. affiliates of CARITAS are the CCHD, Catholic Charities, and Catholic Relief Services. The U.S. affiliate of CIDSE is the Center for Concern, a Catholic group that once belonged to the “New Rules” Coalition.

## Biography of Lee Penn

Lee Penn is a health care information systems consultant and a journalist. He received a BA *cum laude* from Harvard in 1976, and received master's degrees in business and in public health from the University of California at Berkeley in 1986. He was elected to Phi Beta Kappa at Harvard, and has been listed in *Who's Who in America* and *Who's Who in the World*. He is a member of the American College of Health Care Executives and the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE). After 12 years as an active Episcopalian, he was received into the Catholic Church in 1995.

As a journalist, he has written about the United Religions Initiative, cults, the New Age movement, and globalism since 1998. His book on these issues, *False Dawn*, was published by Sophia Perennis Press in 2004. In addition, he has had articles published in *The Christian Challenge* (a traditionalist Anglican news magazine), *New Oxford Review* (an orthodox Catholic journal), *HLI Reports* (published by Human Life International, a Catholic pro-life organization), *Touchstone* (a orthodox, ecumenical magazine for traditional Catholics, Protestants, and Eastern Orthodox), and the *Journal of the Spiritual Counterfeits Project* (a front-line Christian ministry whose mission is "confronting the occult, the cults, and the New Age movement.") His web site is [www.leepenn.org](http://www.leepenn.org)

## Executive Summary

When the Pope agrees with Mikhail Gorbachev, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Henry Kissinger, the new President of the European Union, and the German Chancellor on the need for global governance and a new world order, we can know that the world has indeed experienced a “harmonic convergence” and entered a new age. With the publication of *Caritas in Veritate*, the encyclical on Catholic social teaching released in July 2009 by Benedict XVI, this dark convergence has happened.

In his latest encyclical, Pope Benedict XVI favors creating a “true world political authority” that would have the power to redistribute wealth and energy, direct economic development, regulate migration and technology, and set environmental regulations. This regime would be “universally recognized” and would have “the effective power” to carry out its vast mandate. Benedict believes that the United Nations can be reformed to be the basis for a “world political authority.”

Benedict calls for the Church to be politically active to pursue these goals. He also suggests that the new global regime can uphold natural law, subsidiarity, protection of human life from conception through natural death, traditional families, and Catholic social teachings. Benedict thus hopes to create a new “social order that at last conforms to the moral order,” despite the endemic corruption, population control ideology, and leftist, anti-Christian track record of the United Nations and the European Union (the most powerful trans-national institutions in existence thus far). Notwithstanding the example provided by Christ and the saints, Benedict says that “the political path” of charity is “no less excellent and effective than the kind of charity that encounters the neighbor directly.”

*Caritas in Veritate* is a definitive Papal teaching, not an impulsive release of a botched document. Its stand in favor of a New World Order is consistent with Benedict’s statements since he became Pope in 2005 – including a call for a “new world order” in his first Christmas message to the world in December 2005. Benedict has repeated this same message since *Caritas in Veritate* was published in the summer of 2009. The encyclical is binding Church teaching, and – thus far – most Catholics have greeted it with assent or with silence, a far cry from the loud dissent that followed Paul VI’s 1968 encyclical against artificial birth control. Cardinal Francis George of Chicago, an outspoken pro-life conservative, has defended the encyclical; so have the Vatican’s Secretary of State, the Vatican representative to the UN, the Knights of Columbus, former British Prime Minister (and recent Catholic convert) Tony Blair, and the Synod of African Bishops. (Several of the African prelates who attended this October 2009 meeting hailed Obama’s election as a “divine sign” and a “primordial event of contemporary history.” Secular messianism is in the air among Catholic bishops, it seems.)

Along with support for global governance, Benedict’s recent writings contain some fundamental theological oddities: the idea that the “earthly city” prefigures rather than opposes the “city of God,” the suggestion that mankind should enter into a covenant

with the environment (as if nature were a sentient being able to make contracts with us), and his quest for a “new humanistic synthesis” and a “truly universal human community.” In a July 2009 sermon, Benedict had hailed the “great vision” of Teilhard de Chardin, signaling the rehabilitation of the once-banned 20<sup>th</sup> century Jesuit theologian, a leftist whom New Age leaders have claimed as one of their own. In October 2009, two official, Vatican-edited newspapers (*La Civiltà Cattolica* and *L'Osservatore Romano*) published a favorable reappraisal of Karl Marx’s philosophy and economics. This breaks with 150 years of Catholic denunciation of Marxism, but is consistent with Benedict’s turn toward global economic collectivism. When Benedict says that the current world crisis “becomes an opportunity for discernment, in which to shape a new vision for the future,” it seems that the utopian, subversive spirit of Saul Alinsky has taken up residence in the Vatican as well as in the White House.

*Caritas in Veritate* should be seen as what it is: a theological and political earthquake. The Roman Catholic Church, which was once a guardian of tradition worldwide, now wishes to use radical means (a “true world political authority”) for its own socio-political ends. Ordinary prudence should have warned the Vatican against such folly.

**In tandem with efforts to build a New World Order for economics and politics, efforts are underway to establish a New Religious Order. President Obama has continued George W. Bush’s expansion of the American civil religion to include all faiths. In his inaugural address, Obama said that we have a “patchwork heritage” of “Christians and Muslims, Jews and Hindus, and non-believers.” Officially, “Christian America” is no more. Obama has welcomed the UN’s “Alliance of Civilizations,” and uses the White House Office of Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships to promote interfaith service projects.**

Meanwhile, the interfaith movement – which blends religious observance into lowest-common-denominator mush, and which marginalizes orthodox Christians as “fundamentalist” – expands worldwide.

One of the fastest-growing organizations in the interfaith movement is the United Religions Initiative (URI), begun in 1995 in San Francisco by the Episcopal Church’s Bishop of California, William Swing . (Swing retired from his diocesan post in 2006, but remains the President of the URI.) The URI’s goals include “ending religiously motivated violence and creating cultures of peace, justice and healing for the Earth and all living beings ...The URI, in time, aspires to have the visibility and stature of the United Nations.” Its leaders, from Swing on down, have scorned traditional Christians and orthodox belief. The URI’s donors and allies range from New Age followers of Alice Bailey and Rudolf Steiner to Wiccans to the Rev. Sun Myung Moon’s Unification Church, as well as liberal followers of the mainstream religions.

One of the URI’s leaders in Karachi, Pakistan – Ghulam Rasool Chisthi – served prison time in England in the 1990s for raping eight of his female followers from a mosque in London; URI officials dismiss this conviction as a “collision between his Islamic beliefs

and English law” regarding polygamy. For the URI, cultural and religious relativism is the only absolute value.

The URI has 459 chapters – “cooperation circles” – in 68 countries; its reach has grown steadily over the last 10 years. The majority of chapters are in Third World countries. The URI’s annual funding is in the \$4 million range, and has increased in recent years despite the world recession.

**The URI and the UN have been close allies since the beginning of the URI. Governments around the world (including the European Union, India, Australia, the Philippines, China, Ethiopia, Burundi, and Zambia) have funded the URI, or officially praised its work, or sent their officials to speak at URI events.**

The URI has bipartisan appeal. Since 2001, under the Bush and Obama administrations, the US State Department has cooperated with the URI in Ethiopia, the Philippines, and Argentina; the URI listed the US State Department as a donor in 2008. President Bush had praised Bishop Swing and the URI in the fall of 2001, and George P. Shultz, Secretary of State under Reagan, is now helping the URI in a major fundraising drive. In March 2009, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi appeared at the URI’s “Circles of Light” party, an event which raised \$1 million for the organization despite the world financial crisis. Pelosi had donated to the URI in 2008, and URI Executive Director Charles Gibbs gave the Obama campaign \$500 during the Presidential election. Meanwhile, Bishop Swing has said that he is a Republican, voted for Bush in 2000, and was convinced by Henry Kissinger (among others) to seek election as Bishop of California in 1979.

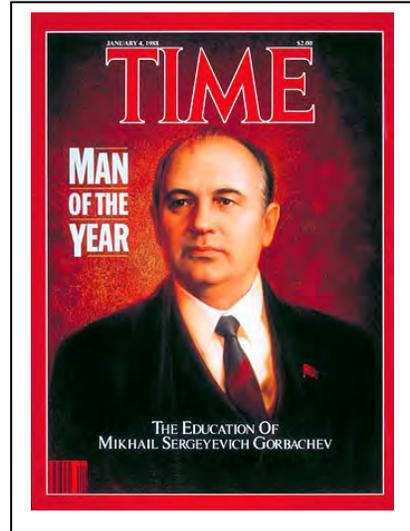
**Support for the URI is widespread in the Episcopal Church, elsewhere in the Anglican Communion, and among mainline (liberal) Protestants. Within the Catholic Church, support for the URI (which until 5 years ago was limited to liberal dissenters) is becoming mainstream. Donors from 2004 onward have included the Archdiocese of Baltimore, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Cardinal Theodore McCarrick (the retired Archbishop of Washington DC), Archbishop George Niederauer, of San Francisco, and Catholic Relief Services. Cardinal William Levada had supported the URI during his years as Archbishop of San Francisco, and Benedict XVI chose Levada to head the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith within a month of his election to the Papacy.**

Executive Director Charles Gibbs told the movement’s Global Council, “In 2009, we are poised to grow into a much more powerful and complex organism and organization.” With a global membership base, prestigious supporters, and a supportive “spirit of the age” that is hostile to orthodox Christianity, the URI is in a position to continue growing until it attains – in its own words – “the visibility and stature of the United Nations.”

**By Lee Penn**

When the Pope agrees with Mikhail Gorbachev, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Henry Kissinger, the new President of the European Union, and other secular leaders on the need for global governance and a new world order, we can know that the world has indeed experienced a “harmonic convergence” and entered a new age.

With the publication of *Caritas in Veritate*, the encyclical on Catholic social teaching released in July 2009 by Benedict XVI, this dark convergence has happened. In addition, new movements – carefully tended by some of the best-connected people on the planet – are mobilizing people at the grass-roots level for a new degree of religious unity. The United Religions Initiative, a fast-growing interfaith organization first announced in 1995 in San Francisco, is an example of this. With leadership from the elite and mobilization of the populace, a new world order is being established now, in plain sight.<sup>1</sup> The only open issues are who will direct this new planetary regime, for which goals, and at what cost to Western liberty and Christian faith.



### **Dark convergence: world leaders call for a new world order**

On the left and on the right, from the former USSR to the USA, world leaders (and those who influence them) increasingly agree on the need for a new world order.

- **Mikhail Gorbachev**, the last ruler of the Soviet Union, continues to call for “global governance” to deal with the world’s economic and environmental crises. In January 2009, he said that the election of Obama might be a catalyst for global change: “We need a new vision of global political leadership, a new willingness to work together in this globalized world. ... Throughout the world, there is a clamor for change. That desire was evident in November, in an event that could become both a symbol of this need for change and a real catalyst for that change. Given the special role the United States continues to play in the world, the election of Barack Obama could have consequences that go far beyond that country. The American people have had their say; now all will depend on whether the new president and his team measure up to the challenge. ... If current ideas for reforming the world's financial and economic institutions are consistently implemented, that would suggest we are finally beginning to understand the importance of global governance. Such governance would render the economy more rational and more humane.”<sup>2</sup>

In June 2009, Gorbachev called for global *perestroika* (restructuring). He denied making “ready-made prescriptions,” but called for a more government-centered economy worldwide. Gorbachev said that the economic “model that emerged during the final decades of the 20th century has turned out to be unsustainable. It was

based on a drive for super-profits and hyper-consumption for a few, on unrestrained exploitation of resources and on social and environmental irresponsibility. ... The current model does not need adjusting; it needs replacing. I have no ready-made prescriptions. But I am convinced that a new model will emerge, one that will emphasize public needs and public goods, such as a cleaner environment, well-functioning infrastructure and public transportation, sound education and health systems and affordable housing. ... We will cope with the new global challenges as well, but only if everyone understands the need for real, cardinal change – for a global perestroika.”<sup>3</sup>

In November 2009, Gorbachev explicitly called for a “new world order” – a goal that he claimed had been shared by Pope John Paul II. The former Soviet premier said, “Only in cooperation with Russia and the United States can Europe play its role in the global process of creating a new world order;” he added that this “had been a dream of his ‘good acquaintance’” John Paul II.<sup>4</sup>

- **Angela Merkel**, the Chancellor of Germany, agreed on the need for “more global order,” “no matter what it costs.” In a speech given on November 9, the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall, she said, “This world will not be a peaceful one if we do not work for more global order and more multilateral cooperation.” When discussing the December 2009 UN climate summit meeting in Copenhagen, Merkel said that nations must be ready to put “the greater good” above their “narrow interests;” she asked, “Are the nation states ready and willing to give competencies over to multilateral organizations, no matter what it costs?”<sup>5</sup>
- **Ban Ki-Moon**, the UN Secretary-General, agrees on the need for “global governance” as a response to climate change. In a *New York Times* essay published in October 2009, the UN leader said that a global deal on climate change “must include an equitable global governance structure. All countries must have a voice in how resources are deployed and managed.”<sup>6</sup>
- **Herman Van Rompuy**, the newly appointed President of the Council of the European Union, Herman Van Rompuy, is a conservative Catholic.<sup>7</sup> Nevertheless, he too is enthusiastic for “the global management of our planet.” In November 2009, when accepting his new post, Van Rompuy said, “We are living through exceptionally difficult times: the financial crisis and its dramatic impact on employment and budgets, the climate crisis which threatens our very survival. ... Yet these problems can be overcome by common efforts in and between our countries. 2009 is also the first year of global governance, with the establishment of the G20 in the middle of the financial crisis. The climate conference in Copenhagen is another step towards the global management of our planet. Our mission is one of hope, supported by acts and action.”<sup>8</sup>
- **Henry Kissinger** agrees with these leaders that the time for a “new international order” is now. In January 2009, just before the inauguration of President Obama, Kissinger said, “The nadir of the existing international financial system coincides with

simultaneous political crises around the globe. Never have so many transformations occurred at the same time in so many different parts of the world and been made globally accessible via instantaneous communication. The alternative to a new international order is chaos. ... The extraordinary impact of the president-elect on the imagination of humanity is an important element in shaping a new world order. But it defines an opportunity, not a policy. The ultimate challenge is to shape the common concern of most countries and all major ones regarding the economic crisis, together with a common fear of jihadist terrorism, into a common strategy reinforced by the realization that the new issues like proliferation, energy and climate change permit no national or regional solution. ... The cooperative mood of the moment needs to be channeled into a grand strategy going beyond the controversies of the recent past. ... An international order can be permanent only if its participants have a share not only in building but also in securing it. In this manner, America and its potential partners have a unique opportunity to transform a moment of crisis into a vision of hope.<sup>9</sup>

In the past, the proponents of “global governance” have faced Papal skepticism or opposition. With the publication of *Caritas in Veritate*, Benedict XVI has himself come out strongly for a new world order. He might wish to put a new international system to different uses than those supported by Gorbachev, Merkel, Kissinger, or others – but he agrees that a new international system, “a true world political authority,” must come into being.

### **Benedict XVI’s encyclical *Caritas in Veritate*: a globalist manifesto**

Based on his writings in the 1980s and 1990s, Ratzinger had built a reputation as an opponent of utopianism and of any plans to build a new world order. However, with *Caritas in Veritate*, he has now revealed his own sweeping plan for “global governance.” Evidence of this is not limited to the much-discussed paragraph of *Caritas in Veritate* that calls for creating a “true world political authority” (§ 67);<sup>10</sup> it is present throughout the whole document.

### **Political power: the basis of the new order**

Benedict’s new “world political authority” would have power, backed by force, over the key sectors of the global economy. Throughout the long, densely written pontifical document, the same theme emerges repeatedly.

- He said, “*Political authority* also involves a *wide range of values*, which must not be overlooked in the process of constructing a new order of economic productivity, socially responsible and human in scale.” (§ 41)<sup>11</sup> Benedict thought that “political authority” could be used safely and effectively for “constructing a new order of economic productivity.” However, post-1789 history is littered with the corpses of those slain in human efforts to construct a “new order” of any kind, however beneficent the original intent may have been.

- As a result of the world economic crisis, Benedict expected (and approved) growth of State power, at the national and international level: “The integrated economy of the present day does not make the role of States redundant, but rather it commits governments to greater collaboration with one another. Both wisdom and prudence suggest not being too precipitous in declaring the demise of the State. In terms of the resolution of the current crisis, the State's role seems destined to grow, as it regains many of its competences. In some nations, moreover, the construction or reconstruction of the State remains a key factor in their development.” (§ 41)<sup>12</sup> His prediction that the current slump will increase government power has already been proven correct – but it is also clear that Benedict *approves* of this development.
- Benedict said, “Alongside economic aid, there needs to be aid directed towards reinforcing the guarantees proper to the *State of law*: a system of public order and effective imprisonment that respects human rights, truly democratic institutions.” (§ 41)<sup>13</sup> Note well: for Benedict, one of the two elements defining the rule of law is “a system of public order and effective imprisonment.” “Respect for human rights” is a very elastic constraint on a prison system and on a government; most governments claim that they do this. For Benedict, prison is integral to the New State that he has proposed. (Nor is Benedict's inquisitorial definition of the “State of law” an artifact of a bad English translation; in the Latin version of the encyclical, the same sentence reads “Praeter auxilia oeconomica adesse debent subsidia, quae proprias cautiones *Status iuris* roborant, systema nempe ordinis publici et efficientis carcerationis, hominum iuribus servatis, quae ad instituta vere democratica spectant.”<sup>14</sup>)
- Benedict proposed to ride the wave of globalization, using its power as a way to carry out “unprecedented ... large-scale redistribution of wealth on a world-wide scale.” He said, “globalization, *a priori*, is neither good nor bad. It will be what people make of it.’ We should not be its victims, but rather its protagonists, acting in the light of reason, guided by charity and truth. Blind opposition would be a mistaken and prejudiced attitude, incapable of recognizing the positive aspects of the process, with the consequent risk of missing the chance to take advantage of its many opportunities for development. The processes of globalization, suitably understood and directed, open up the unprecedented possibility of large-scale redistribution of wealth on a world-wide scale ... The transition inherent in the process of globalization presents great difficulties and dangers that can only be overcome if we are able to appropriate the underlying anthropological and ethical spirit that drives globalization towards the humanizing goal of solidarity. Unfortunately this spirit is often overwhelmed or suppressed by ethical and cultural considerations of an individualistic and utilitarian nature. Globalization is a multifaceted and complex phenomenon which must be grasped in the diversity and unity of all its different dimensions, including the theological dimension. In this way it will be possible to experience and to *steer the globalization of humanity in relational terms, in terms of communion and the sharing of goods.*” (§ 42)<sup>15</sup>

Benedict called his readers to be “protagonists” – leading players and advocates – of globalization. As is usual for collectivists and utopians, Benedict scorned the

“individualistic and utilitarian” opposition to a new economic order. He dismissed resistance to globalization as “blind,” seeming to ignore *clear-sighted* opponents of this trend. His hope for “unprecedented ... large-scale redistribution of wealth on a world-wide scale” should raise alarms for anyone who is familiar with the history of post-1789 radicalism of the left or of the right. Large-scale, rapid wealth redistribution has *always* been accompanied by dictatorship, famine, and violence; there is no reason to expect that the results would be different under any conceivable future globalist regime. If Benedict has discerned an “underlying anthropological and ethical spirit that drives globalization towards the humanizing goal of solidarity,” it makes sense to *question* his discernment in this (and related) matters.

- Benedict explicitly called for redistribution of world energy resources to poor nations. In addition to energy-saving technical change and lower energy consumption by consumers and businesses in developed nations, he said, “What is also needed, though, is a worldwide redistribution of energy resources, so that countries lacking those resources can have access to them. The fate of those countries cannot be left in the hands of whoever is first to claim the spoils, or whoever is able to prevail over the rest.” (§ 49)<sup>16</sup> Benedict repeated this call for redistribution of energy resources in his message for the 2010 Day of Peace.<sup>17</sup>

This might sound reasonable at first, and it is true that energy-poor underdeveloped nations need such assistance. However, there are insurmountable practical questions, especially given the fallen human nature of anyone who will manage such redistribution. Who will take what from whom, under what law, and by what regulatory standard, to give to whom, and with what means of enforcement? Those who would carry out this redistribution will be no wiser, no more peace-loving, no more just, and no more honest than the current crop of world political leaders, bureaucrats, and police.

- Benedict emphasized the necessity for the Church to be active in the political world. He said, “*The Church has a responsibility towards creation and she must assert this responsibility in the public sphere.*” (§ 51)<sup>18</sup>. (In his message for the 2010 World Day of Peace, Benedict said the same.)<sup>19</sup> In his encyclical, Benedict said, “The Christian religion and other religions can offer their contribution to development *only if God has a place in the public realm*, specifically in regard to its cultural, social, economic, and particularly its political dimensions. The Church's social doctrine came into being in order to claim ‘citizenship status’ for the Christian religion.” (§ 56)<sup>20</sup>

However, to say that “the Christian religion” can offer its “contribution to development *only if God has a place in the public realm ... particularly its political dimensions*” casts disrespect on the ministry of Jesus, who said that “my kingship is not of this world” (John 18:36). It also ignores the pre-Constantine Church, which – despite centuries of persecution – managed to overturn the religious order of the world’s greatest empire without wielding any State power whatsoever.

- As the capstone of his analysis, Benedict proposed the erection of a “true world political authority” with “real teeth” and wielding sufficient power to manage economics, food, armaments, environmental protection, and migration for the whole world: “In the face of the unrelenting growth of global interdependence, there is a strongly felt need, even in the midst of a global recession, for a reform of the *United Nations Organization*, and likewise of *economic institutions and international finance*, so that the concept of the family of nations can acquire real teeth.” (§ 67)<sup>21</sup> This new regime would have wide responsibilities: “implementing the principle of the *responsibility to protect*,” to “*give direction to international cooperation for the development of all peoples in solidarity. To manage the global economy ... to bring about integral and timely disarmament, food security and peace; to guarantee the protection of the environment and to regulate migration: for all this, there is urgent need of a true world political authority.*” (§ 67)<sup>22</sup> A global authority with enough power to manage all these “portfolios” would necessarily be despotic.

Benedict imagined that the “world authority” he seeks could be directed by “the values of charity in truth,” so as to create a new “social order that at last conforms to the moral order.” This authority would be “universally recognized” and would have “the effective power” to carry out its vast mandate. He said, “Such an authority would need to be regulated by law, to observe consistently the principles of subsidiarity and solidarity, to seek to establish the common good, and *to make a commitment to securing authentic integral human development inspired by the values of charity in truth.* Furthermore, such an authority would need to be universally recognized and to be vested with the effective power to ensure security for all, regard for justice, and respect for rights. Obviously it would have to have the authority to ensure compliance with its decisions from all parties, and also with the coordinated measures adopted in various international forums. ... The integral development of peoples and international cooperation require the establishment of a greater degree of international ordering, marked by subsidiarity, for the management of globalization. They also require the construction of a social order that at last conforms to the moral order, to the interconnection between moral and social spheres.” (§ 67)<sup>23</sup>

On the basis of Benedict’s manifesto, only an ecclesiastical propagandist could deny that Benedict seeks a powerful world government.

### **The media role: “engineering changes in attitude”**

With a new world order would come the need to propagandize the people. Benedict had this in view, since he assumed that a key role of the mass media is “engineering changes in attitude towards reality and the human person” for their audience. He said, “Given the media’s fundamental importance in engineering changes in attitude towards reality and the human person, we must reflect carefully on their influence, especially in regard to the ethical-cultural dimension of globalization and the development of peoples in solidarity. ... This means that they can have a *civilizing effect* not only when, thanks to technological development, they increase the possibilities of communicating

information, but above all when they are geared towards a vision of the person and the common good that reflects truly universal values. ... To achieve goals of this kind, they need to focus on promoting the dignity of persons and peoples, they need to be clearly inspired by charity and placed at the service of truth, of the good, and of natural and supernatural fraternity.” (§ 73)<sup>24</sup>

The same questions need to be asked here that would be asked of any other would-be social planner who wishes to manage us “for our own good”: who will define the goals that the media are to promote; who will enforce these rules, and by what means? What room will there be for dissenting views? As with all utopias, the question is: who is to engineer whom, and for whose benefit? The notion that writers (or others in the media) should be engineers of their audience is totalitarian in origin and intent. As Stalin told a meeting of writers in October 1932, “You are engineers of human souls.”<sup>25</sup>

### **Dreaming of a new order in the current age, based on “adhering to the values of Christianity”**

Benedict has proposed “building a good society” and “integral human development” based on worldwide adherence to “the values of Christianity,” as defined by the Church.

- Early in the encyclical, Benedict said, “practising charity in truth helps people to understand that adhering to the values of Christianity is not merely useful but essential for building a good society and for true integral human development. ... Without truth, charity is confined to a narrow field devoid of relations. It is excluded from the plans and processes of promoting human development of universal range, in dialogue between knowledge and praxis.” (§4)<sup>26</sup>

He has offered his own vision of total social reform, based on “plans and processes” to promote “human development of universal range.” Until now, preparing plans to direct all aspects of human development has been a hallmark of utopians and socialists. Now, Benedict is – for his own reasons – singing along with that choir.

- Benedict was inclined to view globalization, in its essence, as good: “The truth of globalization as a process and its fundamental ethical criterion are given by the unity of the human family and its development towards what is good.” (§ 42)<sup>27</sup> He said that globalization “has been the principal driving force behind the emergence from underdevelopment of whole regions, and in itself it represents a great opportunity. Nevertheless, without the guidance of charity in truth, this global force could cause unprecedented damage and create new divisions within the human family. Hence charity and truth confront us with an altogether new and creative challenge, one that is certainly vast and complex. It is about *broadening the scope of reason and making it capable of knowing and directing these powerful new forces*, animating them within the perspective of that ‘civilization of love’ whose seed God has planted in every people, in every culture.” (§ 33)<sup>28</sup>

Benedict imagined that somehow, those who exercise “charity in truth” while “adhering to the values of Christianity” (§ 4)<sup>29</sup> will be able to direct globalization in order to build a “civilization of love.” In this vision, Christian leadership, after “*broadening the scope of reason and making it capable of knowing and directing these powerful new forces*” (a formulation that could have come from the French Revolution), will be able to govern globalization – a political and economic force that has thus far proven able to evade restraints from nations and from today’s international organizations. Also, given the anti-Christian and anti-traditional track record of the UN and the European Union, and given the current balance of forces in the world (in which Communists, secularists, Muslims, Hindus, and followers of other faiths outweigh traditional Christians of all denominations together), it is not clear how it will ever be possible to build a “civilization of love” based on “adhering to the values of Christianity.” Does Benedict imagine that somehow, before the Return of Christ, the whole world will accept Christianity – and governance on Christian norms?

- Benedict seeks a world order based on natural law as interpreted by Christians: “In all cultures there are examples of ethical convergence, some isolated, some interrelated, as an expression of the one human nature, willed by the Creator; the tradition of ethical wisdom knows this as the natural law. This universal moral law provides a sound basis for all cultural, religious and political dialogue, and it ensures that the multi-faceted pluralism of cultural diversity does not detach itself from the common quest for truth, goodness and God. Thus adherence to the law etched on human hearts is the precondition for all constructive social cooperation. ... The Christian faith, by becoming incarnate in cultures and at the same time transcending them, can help them grow in universal brotherhood and solidarity, for the advancement of global and community development.” (§ 59)<sup>30</sup>

However, not all cultures accept the existence of natural law; those who accept natural law as understood by the Christian West do not necessarily agree on its principles. It is utopian to imagine that such fundamental disagreement on the nature of reality and the source of morality will be peacefully overcome in the foreseeable future.

- Benedict placed “charitable” political action on a par with individual charity: “The more we strive to secure a common good corresponding to the real needs of our neighbours, the more effectively we love them. Every Christian is called to practise this charity, in a manner corresponding to his vocation and according to the degree of influence he wields in the *pólis*. This is the institutional path — we might also call it the political path — of charity, no less excellent and effective than the kind of charity which encounters the neighbour directly, outside the institutional mediation of the *pólis*.” (§ 7)<sup>31</sup>

To ensure that no one missed his message, he made it clear in the conclusion of the encyclical that he was addressing those who work “alongside political authorities and those working in the field of economics”: “*God’s love calls us to move beyond the*

*limited and the ephemeral, it gives us the courage to continue seeking and working for the benefit of all, even if this cannot be achieved immediately and if what we are able to achieve, alongside political authorities and those working in the field of economics, is always less than we might wish.” (§ 78)<sup>32</sup>*

When Benedict said that “the political path” is “no less excellent and effective than the kind of charity which encounters the neighbor directly,” he made it seem that Christ, St. Francis of Assisi, St. John Bosco, and Blessed Teresa of Calcutta all missed their targets in directing their charity to their neighbors, rather than agitating for political reform.

- Benedict viewed the “earthly city” as an “anticipation” of the “city of God,” even though these cities represent two spiritual allegiances that Christians have traditionally (at least since the time of St. Augustine) seen as opposing each other. Benedict said, “Man's earthly activity, when inspired and sustained by charity, contributes to the building of the universal *city of God*, which is the goal of the history of the human family. In an increasingly globalized society, the common good and the effort to obtain it cannot fail to assume the dimensions of the whole human family, that is to say, the community of peoples and nations, in such a way as to shape the *earthly city* in unity and peace, rendering it to some degree an anticipation and a prefiguration of the undivided *city of God*.” (§ 7)<sup>33</sup>

If the “earthly city” prefigures the “city of God,” and the unified “earthly city” is to cover “the whole human family,” there would be no reason not to build a new world system that would be like “a tower with its top in the heavens” (Genesis 11:4). However, from Genesis through Daniel to Revelation, Scripture warns against such human hubris.

Several other unusual theological ideas make their appearance in this encyclical:

### **A covenant with the environment?**

As part of his analysis of human dealings with the environment, Benedict proposed “decisions aimed at strengthening that *covenant between human beings and the environment*” (§ 50)<sup>34</sup>. Later in the encyclical, he made another reference to a covenant between man and nature: “*Technology, in this sense, is a response to God's command to till and to keep the land ... that he has entrusted to humanity, and it must serve to reinforce the covenant between human beings and the environment, a covenant that should mirror God's creative love.*” (§ 69)<sup>35</sup>. (Benedict repeated this call for mankind to “renew and strengthen” a “covenant between human beings and the environment” in his message for the 2010 World Day of Peace.)<sup>36</sup>

Although we do have an obligation to God and our fellow man to care well for the Earth, it is strange to posit a *covenant* between man and the environment. Covenants are made between two parties who can enter into a contract – and the Biblical models are the Old and New Covenants between God and man. It seems that Benedict was

granting Nature organic unity, sentient life, and the ability to make binding agreements with mankind.

### **The necessity of using reason to purify faith?**

Benedict said that “*Reason always stands in need of being purified by faith*: this also holds true for political reason, which must not consider itself omnipotent. For its part, *religion always needs to be purified by reason* in order to show its authentically human face.” (§ 56)<sup>37</sup> Later in the encyclical, he said that in the face of ethical challenges posed by biotechnology, “reason and faith can come to each other's assistance. Only together will they save man. *Entranced by an exclusive reliance on technology, reason without faith is doomed to flounder in an illusion of its own omnipotence. Faith without reason risks being cut off from everyday life.*” (§ 74)<sup>38</sup>

It is true that without a living faith in the one true God, application of human reason to politics is likely to produce disaster; in that sense, reason does indeed need to be “purified by faith.” However, it is strange for any Christian to claim that “religion” must always be “purified by reason.” This may be true for man-created religions, or for man-made reconstructions of Christianity. But Christian faith is not one of many man-made or partially true “religions;” it is (or should be) a relationship with Christ, who is uniquely the human face of God. How could *that* faith (and such a relationship between God and man) need purification by reason? The Scriptures do not present Christian faith as something to be deduced or purified by human reason; St. Paul testifies that Christ is folly (not reason) to the Greeks, of that era or of this one: “Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? ... For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles.” (1 Corinthians 1:20-23) In any event, it is not true that “reason and faith” together can “save man;” the only Savior is Christ. How could any Christian – let alone the current occupant of the Chair of Peter – suggest otherwise?

### **Fidelity to man?**

Benedict put “fidelity to man” (rather than fidelity to God) at the center of his social vision, and seemed to view truth as something that is assembled into “a unity” by the Church from “fragments” found in “whichever branch of knowledge”: “Fidelity to man requires *fidelity to the truth*, which alone is the *guarantee of freedom ... and of the possibility of integral human development*. For this reason the Church searches for truth, proclaims it tirelessly and recognizes it wherever it is manifested. This mission of truth is something that the Church can never renounce. Her social doctrine is a particular dimension of this proclamation: it is a service to the truth which sets us free. Open to the truth, from whichever branch of knowledge it comes, the Church's social doctrine receives it, assembles into a unity the fragments in which it is often found, and mediates it within the constantly changing life-patterns of the society of peoples and nations.” (§ 9)<sup>39</sup>

This vision of truth is depersonalized, and is a far cry from the clear testimony of Christ, who told His followers that He is “the way, the truth, and the life” (John 14:6). A truth that is assembled by human reason using fragments that came from diverse branches of knowledge might have its place in a university seminar, but it will not be the same saving truth as “the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints” (Jude 3). At the beginning of this same paragraph, Benedict said that “The Church does not have technical solutions to offer and does not claim ‘to interfere in any way in the politics of States.’”(§ 9)<sup>40</sup> It seems inconsistent for him then to propose that the Church assemble a unified social truth from fragments offered by the world’s branches of knowledge, and then offer this new construct to the “society of peoples and nations.”

A strange faith in man also appeared when Benedict warned against “rejection, not only of the distorted and unjust way in which progress is sometimes directed, but also of scientific discoveries themselves, which, if well used, could serve as an opportunity of growth for all. The idea of a world without development indicates a lack of trust in man and in God. It is therefore a serious mistake to undervalue human capacity to exercise control over the deviations of development or to overlook the fact that man is constitutionally oriented towards ‘being more.’” (§ 14)<sup>41</sup>

Benedict’s justified rejection of back-to-nature primitivism comes with a condemnation of an odd pairing, “lack of trust in man and in God.” But nowhere in Scripture are we called to exercise “trust in man,” let alone to trust man in the way that we are to trust God. Instead, we are told to have faith in God, and to “put not your trust in princes” (Psalm 146:3).

Benedict called on mankind to manage technical progress by using “human capacity to exercise control over the deviations of development,” even though the ongoing pollution of land, air, and water shows how well we exercise this “human capacity” in practice. If Benedict sought to solve environmental crises by establishing new laws and bureaucracies to “exercise control over the deviations of development,” he (and we) face the intractable reality of fallen human nature. No army of saints and angels is available to make and enforce such new controls; the only available people are the same caliber of men who have ravaged the environment and subjugated the people in the East and in the West. Benedict also overlooks the ambiguity in “the fact that man is constitutionally oriented towards ‘being more.’” We are fallen; the line between good and evil is now drawn through each human heart. Our better part seeks “being more” by following God; our evil part seeks to “be more” for ourselves against God, ever again eating illicitly of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, and ever again building new Towers of Babel.

### **The work of the Church: “integral human development”?**

Benedict offered his readers two truths: “The first is that *the whole Church, in all her being and acting — when she proclaims, when she celebrates, when she performs works of charity — is engaged in promoting integral human development.* She has a public role over and above her charitable and educational activities: all the energy she

brings to the advancement of humanity and of universal fraternity is manifested when she is able to operate in a climate of freedom. In not a few cases, that freedom is impeded by prohibitions and persecutions, or it is limited when the Church's public presence is reduced to her charitable activities alone. The second truth is that *authentic human development concerns the whole of the person in every single dimension.*" (§ 11)<sup>42</sup>

There are several oddities here. Benedict said that the aim of the Church "in all her being and acting" – including teaching and worship ("when she proclaims, when she celebrates") – is "promoting integral human development." This is a new doctrine, quite different from Christ's post-Resurrection mandate that the Church is to "make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:19-20). The earthly goals that Benedict stated ("advancement of humanity and of universal fraternity") are good in themselves, as far as they go, but they are *effects* of the Church and her members acting in accord with God's will. As Christ said, "seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be yours as well" (Matthew 6:33). When Benedict says that "*authentic human development concerns the whole of the person in every single dimension,*" he is fostering an ideology that would govern every aspect of human life: a utopian vision in religious garb.

### **Benedict's "new humanistic synthesis"**

Like other utopians – and like Gorbachev, Kissinger, and other leaders who support a new world order – Benedict saw the post-2007 world crisis as an opportune occasion for radical change, a "new humanistic synthesis" and a "new vision for the future" that will affect "nothing less than the destiny of man." He said that "the current crisis ... presents us with choices that cannot be postponed concerning nothing less than the destiny of man, who, moreover, cannot prescind from his nature. ... The different aspects of the crisis, its solutions, and any new development that the future may bring, are increasingly interconnected, they imply one another, they require new efforts of holistic understanding and a *new humanistic synthesis*. ... The current crisis obliges us to re-plan our journey, to set ourselves new rules and to discover new forms of commitment, to build on positive experiences and to reject negative ones. The crisis thus becomes *an opportunity for discernment, in which to shape a new vision for the future.*" (§ 21)<sup>43</sup>

Later in the encyclical, Benedict added, "The significant new elements in the picture of the development of peoples today in many cases demand *new solutions*. These need to be found together, respecting the laws proper to each element and in the light of an integral vision of man ... Remarkable convergences and possible solutions will then come to light." (§ 32)<sup>44</sup>

He also said that "Discernment is needed regarding the contribution of cultures and religions, especially on the part of those who wield political power ... Since the development of persons and peoples is at stake, this discernment will have to take

account of the need for emancipation and inclusivity, in the context of a truly universal human community.” (§ 55)<sup>45</sup>

In this quest for “new efforts of holistic understanding and a new humanistic synthesis,” “a new vision for the future,” “new solutions,” “remarkable convergences,” “emancipation and inclusivity,” and “a truly universal human community,” Benedict seemed to be channeling Teilhard de Chardin and the French Revolution’s Jacobins rather than continuing in the tradition of the foundational social encyclicals of Leo XIII and Pius XI.

When Benedict saw the world crisis as “an opportunity for discernment, in which to shape a new vision for the future,” he was following the logic of American political leaders. In November 2008, Rahm Emanuel, President Obama’s chief of staff, had told a *Wall Street Journal* conference of chief executives, “You never want a serious crisis to go to waste. ... Things that we had postponed for too long, that were long-term, are now immediate and must be dealt with. This crisis provides the opportunity for us to do things that you could not do before.”<sup>46</sup>

### **Benedict’s conservative themes in his radical encyclical**

Along with the just-described statism, utopianism, and man-centered theology, Benedict also offered defenses of traditional beliefs and morality – anodynes that have made the encyclical as a whole palatable to all but the most skeptical conservatives and traditionalists. He rightly condemned the promotion of contraception, abortion, and sterilization, as well as the export of an “anti-birth mentality” from the developed nations to the rest of the world. (§ 28)<sup>47</sup> Benedict added, “*Openness to life is at the centre of true development.*” (§ 28)<sup>48</sup> He also reminded the world that “*God is the guarantor of man’s true development,*” and denounced “the deliberate promotion of religious indifference or practical atheism on the part of many countries.” (§ 29)<sup>49</sup> Opponents of legalized homosexuality, abortion, and euthanasia have found reassurance in Benedict’s denunciation of “alleged rights, arbitrary and non-essential in nature, accompanied by the demand that they be recognized and promoted by public structures.” (§ 43)<sup>50</sup> He upheld the logic of Paul VI’s 1968 encyclical against artificial contraception, denounced neo-Malthusian alarmism about overpopulation, raised an alarm about declining birth rates in “highly affluent societies,” and said that “States are called to *enact policies promoting the centrality and the integrity of the family* founded on marriage between a man and a woman, the primary vital cell of society.” (§ 44)<sup>51</sup> Benedict denounced “religious syncretism,” “religious and cultural traditions” which “ossify society in rigid social groupings,” “religious indifferentism,” and the notion that “all religions are equal.” (§ 55)<sup>52</sup> In the conclusion of his tract, he repeated his condemnation of secular humanism: “*A humanism which excludes God is an inhuman humanism.*” (§ 78)<sup>53</sup>

Benedict warned against several common errors in the human attitude toward nature. He rejected viewing nature “as the result of mere chance or evolutionary determinism.” (§ 48)<sup>54</sup> Benedict warned, “it is contrary to authentic development to view nature as something more important than the human person. This position leads to

attitudes of neo-paganism or a new pantheism — human salvation cannot come from nature alone.” (§ 48)<sup>55</sup> He added that, “it is also necessary to reject the opposite position, which aims at total technical dominion over nature, because the natural environment is more than raw material to be manipulated at our pleasure.” (§ 48)<sup>56</sup>

Benedict restated the traditional view that there are enough resources on Earth for all, and that we have the “grave obligation” to pass on a habitable planet to posterity: “Human beings legitimately exercise a *responsible stewardship over nature*, in order to protect it, to enjoy its fruits and to cultivate it in new ways, with the assistance of advanced technologies, so that it can worthily accommodate and feed the world's population. On this earth there is room for everyone: here the entire human family must find the resources to live with dignity, through the help of nature itself — God's gift to his children — and through hard work and creativity. At the same time we must recognize our grave duty to hand the earth on to future generations in such a condition that they too can worthily inhabit it and continue to cultivate it.” (§ 50)<sup>57</sup>

Benedict linked care for nature to respect for human life and natural law: “If there is a lack of respect for the right to life and to a natural death, if human conception, gestation and birth are made artificial, if human embryos are sacrificed to research, the conscience of society ends up losing the concept of human ecology and, along with it, that of environmental ecology. ... The book of nature is one and indivisible: it takes in not only the environment but also life, sexuality, marriage, the family, social relations: in a word, integral human development.” (§ 51)<sup>58</sup>

### **Benedict’s call for “subsidiarity”: an adequate defense against globalist tyranny?**

Benedict called for “a dispersed political authority, effective on different levels ... The articulation of political authority at the local, national and international levels is one of the best ways of giving direction to the process of economic globalization. It is also the way to ensure that it does not actually undermine the foundations of democracy,” (§ 41)<sup>59</sup> indicating that he did not wish to build a fully centralized global regime. Later in the encyclical, Benedict restated his call for decentralization of political power in the context of global governance: “Subsidiarity is first and foremost a form of assistance to the human person via the autonomy of intermediate bodies. ... Hence the principle of subsidiarity is particularly well-suited to managing globalization and directing it towards authentic human development. In order not to produce a dangerous universal power of a tyrannical nature, *the governance of globalization must be marked by subsidiarity*, articulated into several layers and involving different levels that can work together. Globalization certainly requires authority, insofar as it poses the problem of a global common good that needs to be pursued. This authority, however, must be organized in a subsidiary and stratified way, if it is not to infringe upon freedom and if it is to yield effective results in practice.” (§ 57)<sup>60</sup>

This nod in the direction of decentralized authority has given great reassurance to many American conservative commentators in the encyclical. It makes it seem as if Benedict has signed off on the equivalent of the Tenth Amendment to the US Constitution: “The

powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people.”

However, there is little basis for such reassurance. Benedict himself places an important restriction on the scope of subsidiarity and decentralization in the next paragraph of the encyclical. He says, “*The principle of subsidiarity must remain closely linked to the principle of solidarity and vice versa*, since the former without the latter gives way to social privatism, while the latter without the former gives way to paternalist social assistance that is demeaning to those in need.” (§ 58)<sup>61</sup> This is the same logic that supporters of ever-stronger Federal authority have used since World War I to justify their own centralization of power in the US. There is no realistic reason to believe that the new rulers of a world government will show any more respect for localism and the virtues of decentralization than the US government has done with respect to states, counties, and cities.

In his April 18, 2008 address to the UN General Assembly, Benedict said, “The United Nations embodies the aspiration for a ‘greater degree of international ordering’ ... inspired and governed by the principle of subsidiarity, and therefore capable of responding to the demands of the human family through binding international rules and through structures capable of harmonizing the day-to-day unfolding of the lives of peoples. This is all the more necessary at a time when ... the world’s problems call for interventions in the form of collective action by the international community.”<sup>62</sup>

Benedict thus accepted the UN as an *example* of an authoritative world body “governed by the principle of subsidiarity” and able to establish “binding international rules” that will harmonize “the day-to-day unfolding of the lives of peoples.” In other words, the “world political authority” envisioned by Benedict would – by design – reach out and touch all of us in our daily lives. Furthermore, the concept of “subsidiarity” is built into the treaties that govern the European Union;<sup>63</sup> anyone can see how well *that* is working to defend national sovereignty, traditional values, and Christian faith in Europe.

If the bureaucratic, corrupt, arrogant, tyrant-coddling, pro-socialist, population-controlling United Nations and European Union are examples of the “subsidiarity” that Benedict would rely upon to curb despotism by the “world political authority” that he favors, then we should all re-read Orwell’s *1984* and Solzhenitsyn’s *Gulag Archipelago* for tips on how to survive in the new world order.

### **A once-traditional Church embraces the folly of political globalism**

*Caritas in Veritate* should be seen as what it is: a theological and political earthquake. The Roman Catholic Church, which was once a guardian of tradition worldwide, now wishes to use radical means (a “true world political authority”) for its own ends. It is as if Benedict wishes to mount and ride a wild beast, and imagines that he (and those who believe as he does) will be able to direct that fierce beast’s course. Ordinary prudence – even without reference to the dire symbolism of Revelation 17:3-18 – should have warned the Vatican against such folly. Europeans have already tried using radical

means to support conservative goals; the results of that 20<sup>th</sup> century experiment in Italy, Portugal, Germany, Spain, and Vichy France are written in letters of blood and fire.

Seeking a world government that is governed and limited by natural law and Christian tradition is akin to seeking dry water or square circles. Lord Acton, a Catholic historian in 19<sup>th</sup> Century England, made a warning that the Vatican ought to have heeded: “Power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely. Great men are almost always bad men, even when they exercise influence and not authority: still more when you superadd the tendency or the certainty of corruption by authority.”<sup>64</sup> Humanly speaking, no power could be more absolute than that of “world ruler,” and such is the post which (despite the fig-leaf invocation of “subsidiarity”) Benedict proposes to create.

Even the billionaire leftist utopian George Soros recognized that full-scale global government would be a threat to freedom. In August 2006, he said, “I’m against global government. Now [laughing] if you don’t like a national government, you can move someplace else. A global government would probably interfere with our freedom more than national governments.”<sup>65</sup> Several months later, Soros added, “A global government could not avoid being repressive even if it were built on liberal principles. A global open society could not even be as closely integrated as the European Union because the affinity among the member states would be less pronounced.”<sup>66</sup> When an avowedly globalist “change agent” has a more sober perspective on global government than the Pope, it’s a sign that things have gone badly wrong in the Vatican.

In September 2009, a columnist for the *London Telegraph* provided a realistic view of global governance: “The idea of global governance is meaningless without mechanisms to enforce it, so what are we talking about here? World government? A system of laws and policing which would be beyond the reach of the electorates of individual countries, and therefore have no direct democratic accountability to the peoples of those nations? Even assuming that such institutions did not take on a self-justifying life of their own – which history teaches us is almost inevitable – and that they remained fastidiously responsive to the heads of national governments, they would still be, by definition, supranational. In other words, their function would be precisely to ignore those needs and interests of individual countries which might endanger the welfare of the larger entity. And the welfare of that larger entity would be judged by – what? ... It is hard enough for a leader to remain in touch with the consciousness of his own people: playing to a global electorate puts almost any politician out of his depth. Not that we are talking about electorates any longer. Voters are way, way down on the list of considerations in this new ball game. But perhaps you find yourself convinced, in the present economic circumstances, that there are no national crises any more, only global ones – and that the governing of all nations must now be subsumed under some overarching international framework of law and supervision, to be monitored and policed by suitably empowered agencies. Maybe you think that is an acceptable price to be paid for stability at home and security abroad. But consider this: what if the new dispensation, once installed, fails to produce that stability and security, or delivers it only to certain nations (not yours), or does so only by limiting freedoms that you consider

precious? What recourse will you have then to remove it peaceably from power, as you do your national government?"<sup>67</sup>

### **Benedict's globalism – before and after *Caritas in Veritate***

Some Catholic apologists have sought to dismiss *Caritas in Veritate* as a passing fancy, a one-time deviation from the conservative, orthodox pattern that they see in Benedict's teaching. Neoconservative Catholic commentator George Weigel urged his readers to parse the encyclical carefully, dividing the "duck-billed platypus" between the conservative passages that Benedict presumably wrote himself, and the leftist passages that were presumably insisted upon by conniving Vatican bureaucrats associated with the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace.<sup>68</sup>

This defense of Benedict – that he did not really mean what was published under his name – fails on two counts.

**First**, Benedict has full responsibility for his encyclical, no matter who initially drafted parts of the document. As Catholic journalist Phil Lawler said, "Whether or not he drafted every sentence himself (and clearly he did not), Pope Benedict signed his name to the encyclical, and gave it the authority of his teaching office. We know that the Holy Father did not [do] this lightly. He rejected earlier drafts of the document. He allowed the project to slip behind schedule, even to the point of embarrassment. He was evidently determined to wait until he had a document that satisfied him. *Caritas in Veritate* satisfied him."<sup>69</sup>

**Second**, it is clear from Benedict's works – before and after the encyclical – that he means what he says, and says what he means. *Caritas in Veritate* is **not** a fluke. Benedict's prior speeches and writings are consistent with his recent encyclical, and confirm that *Caritas in Veritate* was issued with deliberation and forethought. Stratford Caldecott, a Catholic research fellow at Oxford University, said that "this encyclical is closely connected to the Pope's two previous encyclicals – on love and on hope – and forms with them a triptych on the Christian faith, in both its theoretical and its practical dimensions, namely, love and hope grounded in truth."<sup>70</sup> For good or for ill, Caldecott is right. *Caritas in Veritate* is within the mainstream of Benedict's teaching since 2005.

### **Before June 2009: Anticipating the themes of *Caritas in Veritate***

Benedict's 2005 Christmas message called for a "new world order" and a "united humanity," directly foreshadowing his encyclical's call for a "global political authority." Before giving his mid-day blessing on December 25, 2005, Benedict said that the life-giving power of Christ's light "is an incentive for building a new world order based on just ethical and economic relationships. May his love guide every people on earth and strengthen their common consciousness of being a 'family' called to foster relationships of trust and mutual support. A united humanity will be able to confront the many troubling problems of the present time: from the menace of terrorism to the humiliating poverty in which millions of human beings live, from the proliferation of weapons to the

pandemics and the environmental destruction which threatens the future of our planet.”<sup>71</sup>

Since taking office, Benedict has emphasized the need for Church political involvement, and the applicability of her social teachings to all mankind, regardless of their current beliefs.

- In his first encyclical, *Deus Caritas Est*, released on December 25, 2005, Benedict had said, “In today's complex situation, not least because of the growth of a globalized economy, the Church's social doctrine has become a set of fundamental guidelines offering approaches that are valid even beyond the confines of the Church: in the face of ongoing development these guidelines need to be addressed in the context of dialogue with all those seriously concerned for humanity and for the world in which we live.”<sup>72</sup>

Then, as in the summer of 2009, Benedict proposed the social teaching of the Church as a guideline for global policy – a notion that requires a leap of faith, since only one-sixth of mankind is Catholic.

- In his April 2008 address to the UN General Assembly, Benedict stated – as he would repeat in his recent encyclical – that it is essential for the Church to be free to act in the political realm. He said, “The full guarantee of religious liberty cannot be limited to the free exercise of worship, but has to give due consideration to the public dimension of religion, and hence to the possibility of believers playing their part in building the social order.”<sup>73</sup> Likewise, when Benedict addressed the Catholics gathered for Mass at Yankee Stadium on April 20, 2008, he said, “Praying fervently for the coming of the Kingdom ... means overcoming every separation between faith and life, and countering false gospels of freedom and happiness. It also means rejecting a false dichotomy between faith and political life.”<sup>74</sup>

**Since 2005, Benedict has supported the United Nations; his calls for renewal of that organization are consistent with his support for global governance.**

- In his December 2005 address, written for the January 1, 2006 World Day of Peace, Benedict called for a renewed, more efficient United Nations: “The Catholic Church, while confirming her confidence in this international body, calls for the institutional and operative renewal which would enable it to respond to the changed needs of the present time, characterized by the vast phenomenon of globalization. The United Nations Organization must become a more efficient instrument for promoting the values of justice, solidarity and peace in the world.”<sup>75</sup>

His call for UN reform was – and remains – consistent with Benedict’s desire for a stronger international authority.

- Benedict concluded his April 2008 address to the UN General Assembly with ringing praise of the UN: “the Church is happy to be associated with the activity of this

distinguished Organization, charged with the responsibility of promoting peace and good will throughout the earth.”<sup>76</sup>

Surprisingly for a Pope, Benedict shifted the responsibility for bringing about global “peace and good will” from the Prince of Peace to the United Nations.

- In April 2008, Benedict also stated his support for UN-based interreligious dialogue. He told the General Assembly that the UN is called to support interreligious dialogue, “just as it supports dialogue in other areas of human activity. Dialogue should be recognized as the means by which the various components of society can articulate their point of view and build consensus around the truth concerning particular values or goals.”<sup>77</sup> Benedict added that “the United Nations can count on the results of dialogue between religions, and can draw fruit from the willingness of believers to place their experiences at the service of the common good.”<sup>78</sup>

In other words, as a result of interreligious dialogue, truth can arise out of interfaith consensus – and this consensus would be oriented toward a worldly goal, “the common good,” and not toward serving God in spirit and in truth. Could it be that Benedict is – contrary to his staunchly orthodox reputation – ready for the United Religions Initiative (or a similar movement) to emerge as a spiritual counterpart to the UN?

The environmental activism expressed by Benedict in *Caritas in Veritate* reflects his long-standing beliefs. In his April 19, 2008 address at St. Joseph Seminary in New York, Benedict had said, “new injustices have arisen: some are complex and stem from the exploitation of the heart and manipulation of the mind; even our common habitat, the earth itself, groans under the weight of consumerist greed and irresponsible exploitation. We must listen deeply. We must respond with a renewed social action that stems from the universal love that knows no bounds.”<sup>79</sup>

### **After June 2009: Caritas in Veritate is Benedict’s story, and he is sticking to it**

Since the July release of *Caritas in Veritate*, Benedict has restated its main themes.

In October 2009, he urged mankind to move from individualism and nationalism to a global view of the common good. He told the new US Ambassador to the Vatican, “The cultivation of the values of ‘life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness’ can no longer be seen in predominantly individualistic or even national terms, but must rather be viewed from the higher perspective of the common good of the whole human family. The continuing international economic crisis clearly calls for a revision of present political, economic and financial structures in the light of the ethical imperative of ensuring the integral development of all people. ... Multilateralism, for its part, should not be restricted to purely economic and political questions; rather, it should find expression in a resolve to address the whole spectrum of issues linked to the future of humanity and the promotion of human dignity, including secure access to food and water, basic health care, just policies governing commerce and immigration, particularly where families are

concerned, climate control and care for the environment, and the elimination of the scourge of nuclear weapons.”<sup>80</sup>

In the same speech, Benedict praised the US government for supporting interreligious dialogue: “the religions, precisely because they deal with the ultimate destiny of every man and woman, are called to be a prophetic force for human liberation and development throughout the world, particularly in areas torn by hostility and conflict. In my recent visit to the Holy Land I stressed the value of understanding and cooperation among the followers of the various religions in the service of peace, and so I note with appreciation your government’s desire to promote such cooperation as part of a broader dialogue between cultures and peoples.”<sup>81</sup>

In a September 24, 2009 statement for a UN meeting on climate change, Benedict called for the “current model of global development” to be “transformed,” and reiterated the themes of *Caritas in Veritate*: “I ... wish to offer my support to leaders of governments and international agencies who soon will meet at the United Nations to discuss the urgent issue of climate change. ... The protection of the environment, and the safeguarding of resources and of the climate, oblige all leaders to act jointly, respecting the law and promoting solidarity with the weakest regions of the world. ... Together we can build an integral human development beneficial for all peoples, present and future, a development inspired by the values of charity in truth. For this to happen it is essential that the current model of global development be transformed through a greater, and shared, acceptance of responsibility for creation.”<sup>82</sup> In this message, he repeated his call for mankind to “develop ‘that covenant between human beings and the environment, which should mirror the creative love of God.’”<sup>83</sup> In early December 2009, Benedict stated his hope that the Copenhagen conference on climate change would “contribute to identifying procedures that respect creation and encourage development and solidarity, founded on the dignity of the human person and oriented to the common good. Safeguarding creation postulates the adoption of moderate and responsible lifestyles, especially for the poor and the generations to come. In this perspective, to guarantee the Conference’s full success, I invite all people of good will to respect the laws God has made inherent in nature, and to rediscover the moral dimension of human life.”<sup>84</sup>

Benedict had a well-defined message for the world in *Caritas in Veritate*, and he is continuing to offer the same message now.

### **Caritas in Veritate is authoritative teaching for the Catholic Church**

One fact is inescapable: *Caritas in Veritate*, as a whole, is part of the authoritative teaching of the Roman Catholic Church.

- Benedict himself linked the encyclical to the teaching of the apostles and the Church Fathers, and to the Papal authority to guide the Church: “The Church’s social doctrine illuminates with an unchanging light the new problems that are constantly emerging. This safeguards the permanent and historical character of the doctrinal

'patrimony' which, with its specific characteristics, is part and parcel of the Church's ever-living Tradition. Social doctrine is built on the foundation handed on by the Apostles to the Fathers of the Church, and then received and further explored by the great Christian doctors. ... It is an expression of the prophetic task of the Supreme Pontiffs to give apostolic guidance to the Church of Christ and to discern the new demands of evangelization." (§ 12)<sup>85</sup> He added, "The Church's social doctrine proclaims and bears witness to faith. It is an instrument and an indispensable setting for formation in faith." (§ 15)<sup>86</sup>

- In a July 28 address to the Italian Senate, Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone (the Vatican's Secretary of State) described *Caritas in Veritate* as a "document of the ecclesial Magisterium," reinforcing its status as binding teaching for Catholics.<sup>87</sup>

Bertone was offering a specific application of a teaching that is well established within the Catholic Church. The Second Vatican Council ruled in 1964 that Papal teaching, even when not stated as "infallible," calls for "religious submission of mind and will": "In matters of faith and morals, the bishops speak in the name of Christ and the faithful are to accept their teaching and adhere to it with a religious assent. This religious submission of mind and will must be shown in a special way to the authentic magisterium of the Roman Pontiff, even when he is not speaking *ex cathedra*; that is, it must be shown in such a way that his supreme magisterium is acknowledged with reverence, the judgments made by him are sincerely adhered to, according to his manifest mind and will."<sup>88</sup>

**Catholics United for the Faith, a conservative Catholic apologetics organization, set out the sweeping implications of this rule: "When the Pope speaks on matters concerning faith and morals, or even Church discipline, the faithful are bound by divine obligation to obey. As faithful Catholics, we must embrace his pronouncements with docility. ... Obedience to Christ demands obedience to the Pope. There is no authority on earth who can legitimately amend decrees or judgments of the Pope. Other than God Himself, there is no authority above the Pope."<sup>89</sup>**

Catholics who accept this view of Papal authority are likely to react to Papal initiatives with uncritical enthusiasm. When Benedict visited the United States in April 2008, tens of thousands of Catholics competed, schemed, and scalped for tickets to the papal services. As one enthusiastic New Yorker told *The Wall Street Journal*, "I don't care what it costs ... To a real Catholic, it's the closest thing to God you're going to get."<sup>90</sup> Those who think in this way will, it seems, be easily drawn into a movement for global governance, if Benedict and his allies play their audience correctly.

### **Drinking the Kool-Aid: from bishops to bankers, most accept the encyclical**

When the Pope speaks, people listen. Benedict's new encyclical has been accepted by prominent churchmen, Catholic lay activists, politicians, and bankers. There is no

evidence of a groundswell of opposition to *Caritas in Veritate*, similar to the widespread liberal dissent that greeted Paul VI's 1968 encyclical denouncing artificial birth control.

When *Caritas in Veritate* was released on July 7, Cardinal Francis George of Chicago, president of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, said that the document "provides helpful guidance for finding answers to the social, economic and moral questions of the contemporary world in a search for truth."<sup>91</sup> In September 2009, Archbishop Celestino Migliore, the Vatican's ambassador at the UN, used the encyclical's call for a world political authority to urge a strengthened and reformed UN. As the Church-affiliated news agency Zenit reported, "He explained that the encyclical calls for the United Nations as a public authority capable of guaranteeing a social order at the world level. The Pope's document 'put emphasis on the need for this social order to also recognize and respect a precise ethical and moral order,' Archbishop Migliore added. 'This is indispensable if we want the U.N. to maintain relevance and effectiveness.'"<sup>92</sup>

In October 2009, the Synod of Catholic bishops in Africa met in Rome, and supported Benedict's call for a new world order. The bishops' October 24 statement, issued at the close of the Synod, condemned the "unjust structures" that lead to war and poverty in Africa, and stated that the recent "turmoil in the financial world shows the need for a radical change of rules."<sup>93</sup> They continued, "Humanity has a lot to gain, if it listens to the wise counsel of our Holy Father, Pope Benedict XVI in *Caritas in Veritate*. A new and just world order is not only possible but necessary for the good of all humanity."<sup>94</sup> Africa's bishops have aligned themselves, en masse and without visible dissent, with Benedict's globalist vision.

In a strange coincidence, some of the African bishops attending the Synod hailed the election of President Obama, despite Obama's pro-abortion record.<sup>95</sup> The archbishop of Kinshasa, Congo, Monsignor Laurent Monsengwo Pasinya, told the synod, "If the election of a black as head of the United States of America was a divine sign and a sign from the Holy Spirit for the reconciliation of races and ethnic groups for peaceful relations ... this synod and the universal church would gain from not ignoring this primordial event of contemporary history." Archbishop Palmer-Buckle and Cardinal Turkson (both from Ghana) and Archbishop Onaiyekan, from Nigeria, likewise saw a "divine plan" behind Obama's election.

As the bishops have led, the Catholic laity have followed.

The Knights of Columbus, a 1.7 million member Catholic fraternal organization, passed a resolution on August 6 at their 2009 general convention expressing "deep appreciation to the Holy Father for the timely publication of the encyclical *Caritas in Veritate*."<sup>96</sup>

Vatican apologist Robert Moynihan, founder and editor of *Inside the Vatican* magazine, a staunchly conservative publication, stood with the African bishops in their acceptance of Benedict's version of global governance, and dismissed critics as "doing the work of

the devil.” On October 24, he said, “the Africans are supporting a more just ‘world order,’ something which the Pope also called for in his recent encyclical, not because they want a ‘one world government’ which might be a prelude to a type of ‘anti-Christian’ rule (the rule of anti-Christ), but precisely because there is already a ‘world mis-government’ which allows enormous injustices to be perpetrated with impunity. This leads to another thought: those who would encourage simple, good Catholics, and others, to fear that the Pope is calling for a dangerous, anti-Christian ‘new world order’ are being duped. The Pope knows that there already is a dangerous ‘world government’ (or ‘mis-government’) which is ... allowing the rape of Africa, and even encouraging it. So, those who are fanning the passions of the simple against any calls for a government which could restrain these excesses, are playing the devil's game. The type of ‘world governance’ the Pope was calling for is the same type these bishops are calling for: a reasonable government, with reasonable laws, able and willing to impede and prosecute these crimes against humanity. Until such a government is formed, to reign [sic] in the excesses already occurring, ‘anti-Christian’ forces will continue to have their day, and simple people will continue to suffer.”<sup>97</sup> Such is the counterattack that Church apologists are likely to make against traditional Christians who reject Benedict's embrace of political globalism.

**Other conservative Churchmen have likewise fallen into line with Benedict. John-Henry Westen, the news editor of a widely circulated pro-life news service, said that Benedict “actually speaks directly against a one-world government, and, as would be expected from those who have read his previous writings, calls for massive reform of the United Nations.”<sup>98</sup> Michael D. O'Brien, a Catholic artist and author of a 1990s series of Catholic novels that opposed the New World Order, has praised the encyclical and emphasized its importance: “Pope Benedict's stunning new encyclical cuts across all ideological lines, calling all mankind to an examination of conscience regarding our fundamental approach to the meaning of the human person. ... *Caritas in Veritate* is lucid, anointed, prophetic. It is a sign of contradiction, a challenge to every system of government and economics. It is a call to truth and charity for all human beings. Minimizing the real import of this encyclical is symptomatic of perceptual as well as intellectual difficulties.”<sup>99</sup>**

Tony Blair, who converted to Catholicism in late 2007 after completing his ten-year term as Prime Minister of the UK, praised *Caritas in Veritate* in an August 27, 2009 speech to an annual assembly of members of Communion and Liberation, a Catholic “new ecclesial movement.”<sup>100</sup> Blair, like Benedict, believes that the Church should have a strong voice in politics and global governance. More than 10,000 members of the movement, which has a reputation for orthodoxy and loyalty to the Vatican, gave Blair two standing ovations. Blair (who has been a public supporter of “the right to choose”) said, “The danger is clear: that pursuit of pleasure becomes an end in itself. It is here that Faith can step in, can show us a proper sense of duty to others, responsibility for the world around us, can lead us to, as the Holy Father calls it, “*Caritas in Veritate*.” ... The recent Papal Encyclical is a remarkable document in many respects. It repays reading and re-reading. But one strand throughout it, is a strong rejoinder to the notion of relativism. ... a global community, just like a country, if it is not to

be dominated merely by the most powerful or driven by the short-term, needs a strong sense of shared purpose, a countervailing force generated by the pursuit of the Common Good. ... It is into this space that the world of Faith and of course the Catholic Church, the universal Church – itself the model of a global institution – must step. Political leaders on their own – I tell you very frankly – cannot do this. ... In seeking this path of Truth, lit by God’s Love and paved by God’s Grace, the Church can be the insistent spiritual voice that makes globalisation our servant not our master. ... Faith and Reason are in alliance, not opposition. ... They are not in a struggle for supremacy. Together they are supreme. That is why the voice of the Church should be heard. That is why it should speak confidently, clearly and openly.”<sup>101</sup>



Thomas Woods, a traditionalist Catholic, summarized the reaction of mainstream Catholic conservatives to Benedict’s encyclical: “The response to the encyclical throughout the right-of-center Catholic world was drearily predictable: with few exceptions, it was a performance worthy of the Soviet Politburo, with unrestrained huzzahs everywhere. It is one thing to receive a statement from the Pope with the respect that is due to the man and his office. It is quite another to treat his every missive as ipso facto brilliant, as if the Catholic faith depended on it. If his supporters are trying to live down to the Left’s portrayal of Catholicism as a billion-person cult, they could hardly do a better job.”<sup>102</sup>

Bankers have followed the lead of churchmen, and have praised *Caritas in Veritate* – while defending their own wealth and privilege.

On October 21, 2009, Archbishop Vincent Nichols of Westminster organized a private seminar at which chairmen and CEOs from banks and other financial institutions met to study *Caritas in Veritate*.<sup>103</sup> (The financiers in attendance included Schroders chief executive Michael Dobson, Schroders president George Mallinckrodt, vice chairman of Goldman Sachs International Lord Brian Griffiths, Rothschild’s director Anthony Salz, Barclays Bank chairman Marcus Agius and former Chief of the Defense Staff Field Marshal Lord Peter Inge.)<sup>104</sup> On October 6, the Vatican’s secretary of state, Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone, had sent a message to these financiers,<sup>105</sup> saying that Benedict “is gratified to learn that leading figures in the world of finance are responding to the challenge to explore ways of building 'authentically human social relationships of friendship, solidarity and reciprocity' within economic activity.”<sup>106</sup>

Earlier this year, Griffiths – a member of the House of Lords, a “devout Evangelical Christian,” and a former economic adviser to Margaret Thatcher<sup>107</sup> – had praised Benedict’s encyclical as “without doubt the most articulate, comprehensive and

thoughtful response to the financial crisis that has yet appeared. It should strike a chord with all who wish to see modern capitalism serving broader human ends. ... Pope Benedict's words are not just platitudes. They affect every person at work every day."<sup>108</sup> Nevertheless, on October 20, Griffiths defended bankers' high pay in a speech at St. Paul's Cathedral in London. He said, "The injunction of Jesus to love others as ourselves is a recognition of self-interest. ... We have to tolerate the inequality as a way to achieving greater prosperity and opportunity for all."<sup>109</sup> This is one way to fulfill Christ's prophecy that "you always have the poor with you" (Matthew 26:11), while ignoring his warning that "You cannot serve God and mammon" (Matthew 6:24).

### **Twisting theology: Vatican signals rehabilitation of Teilhard de Chardin and Karl Marx**

In conjunction with Benedict's endorsement of global governance, he has shown some strange – and critical – twists in his theology.

In a July 24, 2009 Vespers sermon, Benedict made an inadvertent admission of the failure of his Church's efforts at making God's presence known and real to mankind: "In my recent Encyclical, I have tried to show the prime importance of God both in one's private life and in the life of society, of the world, of history. ... If the fundamental relationship – that with God – is not living, is not lived, then no other relationship can find its right form. But this is also true for society, for humanity as such. Here, too, if God is missing, if God is discounted, if he is absent, then the compass is lacking which would show the way forward, the direction to follow in relationships as a whole."<sup>110</sup> The religious leader of one-sixth of mankind is saying that "for humanity as such," God is "missing," "discounted," or "absent." If this is so, what has the Church been doing with its members, its wealth, and its influence for the last two millennia?

Benedict went on to signal the rehabilitation of Fr. Teilhard de Chardin, a Jesuit priest whose heterodoxy had aroused Rome's suspicion from the 1920s onward, to the extent that Teilhard was forbidden to publish his theological work during his lifetime.<sup>111</sup> Benedict told his audience, "The role of the priesthood is to consecrate the world so that it may become a living host, a liturgy: so that the liturgy may not be something alongside the reality of the world, but that the world itself shall become a living host, a liturgy. This is also the great vision of Teilhard de Chardin: in the end we shall achieve a true cosmic liturgy, where the cosmos becomes a living host."<sup>112</sup> Two problems arise here. One issue is Papal praise for the "great vision" of a New Age theologian whose work was justly suppressed by Church authorities from the 1920s through the 1950s. Another issue is the concept of the "world itself" becoming a "living host." For Catholics, the consecrated host is the Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Christ; as such, Catholics are called upon to worship the Host as they do Christ Himself. If Benedict envisions the "world itself" becoming a "living host," he is pointing toward worship of the world, in the way that Catholics worship the Body and Blood of Christ. Worshiping the creation rather than (or in addition to) the Creator is a grievous spiritual error.

**With *Caritas in Veritate*, it is clear that the Vatican now supports global economic management and political redistribution of wealth and resources – an inherently political, centralized, statist process. As an additional sign of the collectivist turn in Vatican thinking, and in contrast to prior Papal teaching, two official Vatican newspapers recently printed a favorable reappraisal of Karl Marx’s philosophy.**

In their October 17 issue, the official Jesuit paper *La Civiltà Cattolica* published “What Remains Of Marx After The Fall Of The Berlin Wall,” by Georg Sans, S.J.<sup>113</sup> On October 21, this article was reprinted by the Vatican newspaper, *L’Osservatore Romano*. Both papers are reviewed before publication by the Vatican’s Secretariat of State,<sup>114</sup> so the repeated publication of Sans’ work is a sign of higher-up approval of his writing. (In October 2006, Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone, the Vatican’s secretary of state, had reiterated the paper’s official status. He said that *L’Osservatore Romano* is “an instrument for spreading the teachings of the successor of Peter and for information about church events,” as well as for “presenting the genuine face of the church and the ideals of freedom.”)<sup>115</sup>

Sans, a professor of the history of contemporary philosophy at the pontifical Gregorian University, wrote that “Marx’s early critiques of capitalism had highlighted the ‘social alienation’ felt by the ‘large part of humanity’ that remained excluded, even now, from economic and political decision-making.”<sup>116</sup> Sans added that “Marx’s work remained especially relevant today as mankind was seeking ‘a new harmony’ between its needs and the natural environment. He also said that Marx’s theories may help to explain the enduring issue of income inequality within capitalist societies. ‘We have to ask ourselves, with Marx, whether the forms of alienation of which he spoke have their origin in the capitalist system. ... If money as such does not multiply on its own, how are we to explain the accumulation of wealth in the hands of the few?’”<sup>117</sup>

The official article summary from *La Civiltà Cattolica* said, “it seems necessary to distinguish between the philosophical thought of Marx and the political ideology that is derived from it. ... his early writings dealing with political economics bring to light his original philosophical reflections before its application to the proletariat revolution. If the image of Marx as a revolutionary is no more, today one recognizes the still valid part of his philosophical thought – particularly, the principle that economic problems have to be connected to social and anthropologic ones. On the other hand, the question of the economic surplus has not lost any of its legitimacy.”<sup>118</sup>

Sans held that Marx’s intellectual legacy was “marred by the misappropriation of his work by the communist regimes of the 20th century. ‘It is no exaggeration to say that nothing has damaged the interests of Marx the philosopher more than Marxism’.”<sup>119</sup> He said that “Marx’s ‘materialist’ view of history had wrongly reduced man to no more than a product of his material, economic and physical circumstances,” and “that after the fall of communism in 1989, few believed any more that private property was in itself wrong or unjust, and ‘given the experience of the past half century’ no one believed that collectivisation of property was the answer.”<sup>120</sup> Despite Sans’ critiques, an Italian

communist web site found his article congenial enough to post it all (in Italian), along with a drawing of a jovial Marx flashing a V-for-victory sign.<sup>121</sup>

### **Sans' article goes against 150 years of Catholic rejection of Marxism.**

Benedict had continued in this tradition. In May 2007, he had told a conference of Latin American bishops, that “Marxist and capitalist systems” both “falsify the notion of reality by detaching it from the foundational and decisive reality which is God. Anyone who excludes God from his horizons falsifies the notion of ‘reality’ and, in consequence, can only end up in blind alleys or with recipes for destruction. ... The Marxist system, where it found its way into government, not only left a sad heritage of economic and ecological destruction, but also a painful oppression of souls.”<sup>122</sup> In his November 2007 encyclical *Spe Salvi*, Benedict had made a comprehensive condemnation of Marx’s work: “He forgot man and he forgot man's freedom. He forgot that freedom always remains also freedom for evil. He thought that once the economy had been put right, everything would automatically be put right. His real error is materialism: man, in fact, is not merely the product of economic conditions, and it is not possible to redeem him purely from the outside by creating a favourable economic environment.”<sup>123</sup> In his 2005 encyclical *Deus Caritas Est*, Benedict had denounced revolutionary Marxism as an “inhuman philosophy”: “Part of Marxist strategy is the theory of impoverishment: in a situation of unjust power, it is claimed, anyone who engages in charitable initiatives is actually serving that unjust system, making it appear at least to some extent tolerable. This in turn slows down a potential revolution and thus blocks the struggle for a better world. Seen in this way, charity is rejected and attacked as a means of preserving the status quo. What we have here, though, is really an inhuman philosophy. People of the present are sacrificed to the *moloch* of the future—a future whose effective realization is at best doubtful.”<sup>124</sup>

With these anti-Marxist teachings, Benedict had been within the Papal tradition laid out since the 1840s.

- In an 1846 encyclical – before the 1848 publication of the *Communist Manifesto*, the 1871 Paris Commune, and the 1917 Soviet revolution – Pope Pius IX had denounced Communism as an “unspeakable doctrine ... most opposed to the very natural law. For if this doctrine were accepted, the complete destruction of everyone's laws, government, property, and even of human society itself would follow.”<sup>125</sup>
- In his 1931 encyclical on Catholic social teaching, Pius XI warned that socialism (including the non-Communist part of this movement) erroneously “affirms that human association has been instituted for the sake of material advantage alone,” and that “Religious socialism, Christian socialism, are contradictory terms; no one can be at the same time a good Catholic and a true socialist.”<sup>126</sup>
- In his 1937 encyclical on Communism, Pius XI had denounced Marxism as the parent of Communism: “The doctrine of modern Communism ... is in substance

based on the principles of dialectical and historical materialism previously advocated by Marx ... According to this doctrine there is in the world only one reality, matter, the blind forces of which evolve into plant, animal and man. Even human society is nothing but a phenomenon and form of matter, evolving in the same way. By a law of inexorable necessity and through a perpetual conflict of forces, matter moves towards the final synthesis of a classless society. In such a doctrine, as is evident, there is no room for the idea of God; there is no difference between matter and spirit, between soul and body; there is neither survival of the soul after death nor any hope in a future life. Insisting on the dialectical aspect of their materialism, the Communists claim that the conflict which carries the world towards its final synthesis can be accelerated by man. Hence they endeavor to sharpen the antagonisms which arise between the various classes of society. Thus the class struggle with its consequent violent hate and destruction takes on the aspects of a crusade for the progress of humanity."<sup>127</sup>

The Vatican's recent indication that it is looking for a brighter side of Marxism indicates a new and perverse twist in its world view.

In any case, the positive aspects of Marxism that Fr. Sans believed he found are illusory.

- Given the environmental devastation prevalent in current and former Marxist states (the former Soviet republics, the Warsaw Pact nations, and the People's Republic of China), it is bizarre to use Marxist philosophy to point toward a "new harmony" between the needs of mankind and of the environment.
- Sans sees in Marxism an answer to capitalistic "accumulation of wealth in the hands of the few," but the political platform set forth in Marx's 1848 *Communist Manifesto* would concentrate wealth and power even further. When the Marxist states of the 20<sup>th</sup> century expropriated private wealth and set up centralized command economies, they were carrying out Marx's own agenda; in 1848 he had called for "Abolition of property in land ... Abolition of all rights of inheritance. ... Centralisation of credit in the hands of the state, by means of a national bank with State capital and an exclusive monopoly. ... Centralisation of the means of communication and transport in the hands of the State. ... Extension of factories and instruments of production owned by the State ... Establishment of industrial armies, especially for agriculture."<sup>128</sup>

It is likewise vain to seek, as Sans does, a humanistic and philosophical Marx in his early writings.

- In his 1844 essay, *The Jewish Question*, Marx wrote, "Let us not look for the secret of the Jew in his religion, but let us look for the secret of his religion in the real Jew. What is the secular basis of Judaism? Practical need, self-interest. What is the worldly religion of the Jew? Huckstering. What is his worldly God? Money. Very well then! Emancipation from huckstering and money, consequently from practical, real

Judaism, would be the self-emancipation of our time. An organization of society which would abolish the preconditions for huckstering, and therefore the possibility of huckstering, would make the Jew impossible. His religious consciousness would be dissipated like a thin haze in the real, vital air of society. ... We recognize in Judaism, therefore, a general anti-social element of the present time, an element which through historical development – to which in this harmful respect the Jews have zealously contributed – has been brought to its present high level, at which it must necessarily begin to disintegrate. In the final analysis, the emancipation of the Jews is the emancipation of mankind from Judaism.”<sup>129</sup> When Stalin embraced anti-Semitism during the final years of his regime, he was being faithful to Marx.

- Furthermore, the early, “philosophical” Marx was devoutly atheistic. In his 1844 *Contribution to the Critique of Hegel’s Philosophy of Right*, Marx wrote, “Man makes religion, religion does not make man. Religion is, indeed, the self-consciousness and self-esteem of man who has either not yet won through to himself, or has already lost himself again. ... The struggle against religion is, therefore, indirectly the struggle against that world whose spiritual aroma is religion. Religious suffering is, at one and the same time, the expression of real suffering and a protest against real suffering. Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, and the soul of soulless conditions. It is the opium of the people. The abolition of religion as the illusory happiness of the people is the demand for their real happiness. To call on them to give up their illusions about their condition is to call on them to give up a condition that requires illusions. ... The criticism of religion disillusions man, so that he will think, act, and fashion his reality like a man who has discarded his illusions and regained his senses, so that he will move around himself as his own true Sun.”<sup>130</sup>

### **The need for a New Religion if there is to be a New World Order**

In any event, atheism (Marxist or otherwise) cannot be the basis of an enduring civilization. All of the regional and continental civilizations that have existed until now have been sustained by religion; the longest-lived exception (the atheist “civilization” of the Communist bloc in Europe) proved the rule by dissolving in 1989, only 72 years after it began with the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution. In like manner, in 1794, Robespierre installed his short-lived cult of the “Supreme Being” in France after finding that two years of militant atheism and de-Christianization had led to social chaos.<sup>131</sup>

Globalists and interfaith activists understand that religion is the basis of an enduring civilization. As the Catholic historian Christopher Dawson stated, “It is the religious impulse which supplies the cohesive force which unifies a society and a culture. The great civilizations of the world do not produce the great religions as a kind of cultural by-product; in a very real sense, the great religions are the foundations on which the great civilizations rest.”<sup>132</sup> Lally Lucretia Warren, a leader of the 2004 Parliament of World Religions from Botswana, reiterated this insight: “Religion is the chief instrument through which order is established in the world.”<sup>133</sup>

Thus, a stable “new world order” must be built upon a new global religion. Sir Francis Younghusband, who founded the World Congress of Faiths in 1936, wrote during World War II that “A new world order is now the dream of men, but for this a new spirit will be needed.”<sup>134</sup> Regarding a “Congress on Science and Religion,” Teilhard de Chardin said in 1941, “The purpose of the New York meetings, if I understand it aright, is not merely to seek a superficial reconciliation between the diverse forms of Faith which divide the human spirit and make it at odds with itself, but to find what they have fundamentally in common. We seek a new spirit for a new order.”<sup>135</sup> At a 1993 interfaith conference in India, the Executive Secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha’is in India said, “The new world order, as one can perceive, will need a world religion. It will seek a new orientation, a new conception of morals, applicable not only to the individual, but also to society as a whole.”<sup>136</sup>

Patricia Mische, of Global Education Associates, set out the linkage between religion and a new world order in detail: “In his explorations of the rise and fall of great civilizations, the historian Arnold Toynbee found that spirituality and religion played a significant role in bridging the time/space between the fall of one civilization and the rise of another. The ‘creative minorities’ that helped build new civilizations from the ashes of the old were often motivated by a strong spiritual vision. In contrast, civilizations that lost their spiritual core were not long sustained. If we accept Toynbee’s conclusions about the importance of spirituality and religion in the rise and fall of civilizations, then we are led to certain conclusions about the importance of spirituality in the development of any truly new world order or global civilization of our time. Inner spiritual growth and transformation may be as, or even more, important than external political changes in global systems. Put another way, inner, spiritual growth, and the development of more democratic, effective, and humane global systems, may be inseparable parts of a holistic world order.”<sup>137</sup>

Creation of a New World Religion for a New World Order has to begin with the simplest tasks – including redefining American civil culture so that it is not professedly (and exclusively) Christian, and making interfaith dialogue and worship seem to be a required activity for any religious body that does not want to risk being labeled “fundamentalist.” These efforts are well underway now.

### **The new interfaith civil religion in the US – under Bush and Obama alike**

American civil religion is now interfaith, a strategic requirement of the “War on Terror.” This up-to-date political faith prevails under Obama, just as it did under George W. Bush. It invokes a diverse “God” to serve worldly ends, promoting religious unity as a way to keep the peace.

President Bush established this new trend in American politics. In his 2005 inauguration speech, President Bush had said that the “edifice of character” in America “is built in families, supported by communities with standards, and sustained in our national life by the truths of Sinai, the Sermon on the Mount, the words of the Koran and the varied faiths of our people.”<sup>138</sup> In an October 4, 2007, interview with *Al Arabiya*, Bush had

said, "I believe in an almighty God, and I believe that all the world, whether they be Muslim, Christian, or any other religion, prays to the same God."<sup>139</sup>

As George W. Bush did, Obama continues. In his January 2009 inaugural address, Obama said, "we know that our patchwork heritage is a strength, not a weakness. We are a nation of Christians and Muslims, Jews and Hindus, and non-believers."<sup>140</sup> In his June 2009 speech to Islamic leaders in Cairo, President Obama sounded the notes of interfaith cooperation.<sup>141</sup> He said, "Islam has always been a part of America's story. ... human history has often been a record of nations and tribes – and, yes, religions – subjugating one another in pursuit of their own interests. Yet in this new age, such attitudes are self-defeating. Given our interdependence, any world order that elevates one nation or group of people over another will inevitably fail. So whatever we think of the past, we must not be prisoners to it. Our problems must be dealt with through partnership; our progress must be shared. ... In fact, faith should bring us together. And that's why we're forging service projects in America to bring together Christians, Muslims, and Jews. That's why we welcome efforts like Saudi Arabian King Abdullah's interfaith dialogue and Turkey's leadership in the Alliance of Civilizations. Around the world, we can turn dialogue into interfaith service, so bridges between peoples lead to action -- whether it is combating malaria in Africa, or providing relief after a natural disaster." Obama concluded on an optimistic note, saying "We have the power to make the world we seek, but only if we have the courage to make a new beginning, keeping in mind what has been written" about peacemaking in "the Holy Koran," "the Talmud," and "the Holy Bible."

When Obama accepted the Nobel Peace Prize in October 2009, he said, "I know that throughout history, the Nobel Peace Prize has ... been used as a means to give momentum to a set of causes. And that is why I will accept this award as a call to action – a call for all nations to confront the common challenges of the 21st century."<sup>142</sup> One of the causes he plans to promote is interfaith harmony: "We can't allow the differences between peoples to define the way that we see one another, and that's why we must pursue a new beginning among people of different faiths and races and religions; one based upon mutual interest and mutual respect."<sup>143</sup>

His Administration has moved from plans to programs. On February 5, Obama established the White House Office of Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships, with a 25-member, multi-faith President's Advisory Council on Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships.<sup>144</sup> Obama's "United We Serve" initiative designated August 31-September 6 as "Interfaith Service Week;" the activities highlighted in the Administration press release included projects aimed at energy conservation, environmental protection, and assistance to the poor.<sup>145</sup>

Interfaith work as envisioned by the Obama administration requires a grassroots interfaith movement to carry the new worldview to the general public, and to mobilize them for action. One such organization, the United Religions Initiative (URI), is prepared to carry out this task worldwide.

## **Religious Globalism in Action: the United Religions Initiative**

The United Religions Initiative (URI), launched in San Francisco in 1995 by the Rt. Rev. William Swing (Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of California from 1979 until he retired in 2006), has put down roots in the Global South and around the world. Its membership has more than doubled since the end of 2002.<sup>146</sup> The movement's supporters range from the US Department of State to the European Union, as well as prominent bishops within the Catholic Church.

The URI vision is globalist and utopian. In its charter, the URI describes itself as “a growing global community dedicated to promoting enduring, daily interfaith cooperation, ending religiously motivated violence and creating cultures of peace, justice and healing for the Earth and all living beings ...The URI, in time, aspires to have the visibility and stature of the United Nations.”<sup>147</sup> In August 2004, founder Bishop Swing said that he hopes for the interfaith movement to form a “united front so that some day there will be a veritable United Religions, not just URI blown large, but something that will be created by the Holy Spirit that’s way beyond our imaginations right now.”<sup>148</sup> In his “State of the URI Report,” Executive Director Charles Gibbs said, “In 2008, we have taken major strides toward realizing URI’s potential to change human history.”<sup>149</sup>

The URI intends to bring together on a regular basis representatives of all “religions, spiritual expressions, and indigenous traditions”<sup>150</sup> to help resolve global conflicts and injustices. Most URI members are liberal members of mainstream religions: Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, and the like. However, New Age, occult, and Neopagan movements had formative influence on the URI, especially in its early years.<sup>151</sup>

### **URI leaders’ hostility to traditional Christianity**

URI leaders – including Bishop Swing – have been open in their scorn for traditional Christian faith and practice. Therefore, it is possible that the interfaith initiative could lead to a one-world religious system hostile to orthodox Christianity.

In his 1998 book *The Coming United Religions*, Bishop Swing said that if the First Commandment – “Thou shalt have no other gods but me” – leads “billions of people from exclusive religions” (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam) to “oppose the godly claims of other exclusive religions, what hope is there for peace among religions?” Swing concluded that “In order for a United Religions to come about and for religions to pursue peace among each other, there will have to be a godly cease-fire, a temporary truce where the absolute exclusive claims of each will be honored but an agreed-upon neutrality will be exercised in terms of proselytizing, condemning, murdering, or dominating. These will not be tolerated in the United Religions zone”<sup>152</sup> – which, potentially, is the whole world. Note that Bishop Swing



**As Bishop Swing explicitly did before 2005, other URI leaders have likewise spoken against traditional Christian faith.**

At a February 1997 URI forum at Grace Cathedral, Paul Chaffee (a minister in the United Church of Christ who was then URI Board Secretary, and who is now the Executive Director of the Interfaith Center at the Presidio, a founding Cooperation Circle of the URI) said, “We can’t afford fundamentalists in a world this small.”<sup>157</sup> Twelve years later, Chaffee still shows his incomprehension of traditional faith. In his September 25, 2009 address to a URI-sponsored UN forum<sup>158</sup> in the San Francisco Bay area, Chaffee said, “I’m content to say that religion, like every other social construct, comes with both light and shadow.”<sup>159</sup> To describe all religions as “social constructs” denies the Divine inspiration of his own religion, and insults those of other faiths who believe that their own religion is a Divine revelation. He also said that “vital interfaith relationships and communities help free religions from their worst propensities – such as declaring absolute truth claims, requiring blind obedience, or justifying any means for your ‘sacred’ end.”<sup>160</sup> Just as Swing did in 1998, Chaffee does now; the liberal minister equates making “absolute truth claims” to religion-inspired abuse.

Other URI leaders have said the same. At the February 1997 URI forum, Rita Semel (who was then URI board Chair, and who held that post until 2005) said that fundamentalism “comes out of fear and ignorance. So many things are out of our control now that were much simpler when I was growing up.”<sup>161</sup> At a URI forum held at Grace Cathedral in April 1997, Sri Ravi Peruman (who was on the URI board from 1997 through 2002) said that religions have “invaded and crusaded,” “subverted and converted.”<sup>162</sup> As *Pacific Church News* reported, “Calling statements about ‘authentic religious freedom’ for everyone, ‘the freedom to proselytize,’ Peruman said that there should be a universal *Declaration of Rights* not to be converted to another religion.”<sup>163</sup>

In these statements, URI leaders have shown a form of religious tone-deafness. With their sweeping condemnation of “fundamentalism,” “proselytizing,” and “absolute truth claims,” they have failed to make a critical distinction between fanaticism and orthodoxy/traditionalism. Fanatics (whether they are leftist or rightist) will deceive, manipulate, steal, or kill for their “holy” cause; traditionalists and orthodox believers will (unless they are fanatics themselves) merely ask to be left free to believe and worship as they have always done, and to evangelize others about their own faith. If URI leaders are often unable to tell the difference between fanaticism and orthodoxy, what other essential spiritual issues do they fail to understand?

Nevertheless, Donald Frew – a Wiccan elder and a former member of the URI Global Council – does not see the URI as a threat to traditional Christianity. He said, “If the URI intended to threaten religious freedom in the way that you fear, I would have nothing to do with the movement.”<sup>164</sup> He added that Paul Chaffee is “free to believe whatever he wants and to express those beliefs. He does not speak for the URI. He is not a Trustee. He is not on the Staff. I understand and agree with your objections, and I have expressed them to Paul, but that doesn’t mean that he will follow my advice. ... Sooner or later – sooner, I hope – they will realize that the beliefs of others are not at

issue, it's what people DO based on those beliefs that matter. As you said, they need to distinguish between 'Absolute truth claims' and the violence that SOME in religions with such claims perpetrate."<sup>165</sup>

Frew has observed that "When Buddhists, Hindus, and Wiccans participate in interfaith activities, they *never* respond by incorporating symbols and practices from Christianity into their own religion. Liberal Christians, *uniquely* among those who are in the interfaith movement, do add practices from other religions into their own worship. Why is this?"<sup>166</sup> He added that we may be seeing "the emergence of a new kind of liberal Christianity, which combines Christian beliefs with the sacred feminine and the sacred earth."

### **URI "going gangbusters" worldwide**

The URI is active worldwide. Globally, the URI has 459 chapters (which it calls Cooperation Circles) in 68 countries as of December 2009.<sup>167</sup> Notably, 76 percent of URI Cooperation Circles are where one would least expect them – in Asia, Africa, Latin America, the Middle East, and the non-English-speaking nations of the Pacific Rim. Christian churches in these regions are, in most cases, theologically conservative – but this is the part of the world where the URI is growing fastest. Ten countries – Malawi, Mozambique, Uganda, India, South Korea, Pakistan, Israel, Jordan, the Philippines, and Brazil – contain a majority (251 out of 459) of the URI chapters. The URI headquarters does not maintain a count of individual membership, but its 2008 Annual Report says that "Today URI touches more than 1.5 million people each year."<sup>168</sup>

The URI cooperates with most other interfaith organizations, including the Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions, the World Conference on Religion and Peace, the Temple of Understanding, and the North American Interfaith Network. Nevertheless, the URI's base has expanded well beyond Western liberals, who have been the usual backers of the interfaith movement since its beginning at the 1893 Parliament of World Religions.

Sixteen of the 29 members of the URI Global Council, its permanent officers and the board of directors elected in 2008, are from the Third World.<sup>169</sup> The 2008 board contained 1 Baha'i, 1 Buddhist, 12 Christians, 2 Hindus, 2 practitioners of indigenous religions, 1 adherent of "Interfaith," 3 Jews, 5 Muslims, 1 Sikh, and 1 Sufi.<sup>170</sup> (Among the 12 Christian members of the current URI board are 2 Roman Catholics, 4 Episcopalians, 1 Presbyterian, 1 Lutheran, and 4 other Protestants.) In the description of trustee elections in the 2007 annual report, the URI said, "Through URI's lengthy election process, we strengthen our ability to pioneer effective global governance and to contribute to a bold new model of global participation and leadership."<sup>171</sup> The URI has 32 support staff for its San Francisco headquarters and its regional offices worldwide.<sup>172</sup>

As the URI has grown, its funding has increased. In 2007, the URI received \$3.6 million in donations to its San Francisco headquarters; in 2008, income was \$2.8 million. Thus, despite the world recession, the URI headquarters has experienced a 2-year upsurge from the \$1.7 million income average for 2000-2006.<sup>173</sup>

In addition, Cooperation Circles raise additional money for their own work. Donald Frew said in October 2009 that the Cooperation Circles worldwide are “going gangbusters” and are successfully funding themselves.<sup>174</sup> In 2003, when the URI was about half its current size, local chapters reported raising over \$900,000 worldwide.<sup>175</sup> The URI does not keep a centralized tally of Cooperation Circle fundraising, but Frew believes that chapter fundraising is growing in proportion to the increasing number of chapters.<sup>176</sup> Therefore, there may be another \$1.5 million-\$2 million in funding now available annually to the movement. Bishop Swing is leading a “big-picture” fundraising drive to raise \$25 million by 2012. Frew said in October 2009 that this effort by the President’s Council is “chugging along, and is not raising money as fast as had been planned.”<sup>177</sup>

### **URI activity: from works of mercy to building a temple for “Universal Worships”**

URI Cooperation Circles are active in lobbying national and international agencies for policy changes, conducting interfaith ceremonies and dialogues, environmental activism, education, and relief projects to assist the poor, the elderly, and the sick. As a rule, their activities are consistent with the goals of American and West European liberals and leftists. Nevertheless, Third World URI chapters tend to emphasize traditional works of mercy.

URI chapters in the West are more likely to show the “fringe” aspect of the movement. One of the oddest of the Cooperation Circles is the Unitheum, in Germany. They wish to promote peace by “erecting a sacred building and organizing and celebrating Universal Worships in it, in which the utmost ideal of each special religion will be adored.”<sup>178</sup> Unitheum has been seeking donations for the project for several years, and has endorsements from the Dalai Lama, Vaclav Havel, and Brother David Steindl-Rast, as well as from various Hindu, Sufi, Sikh, Unitarian, Zoroastrian, and other religious leaders.<sup>179</sup> The “Women and Spirituality Cooperation Circle,” which spans multiple regions and nations, describes itself as “a forum for sharing the spiritual issues of women in a male-dominated paradigm and seek to express our authentic spiritual selves through rediscovering models – both ancient and contemporary – for empowering the voice of the feminine.”<sup>180</sup> The contact people for this chapter are Yoland Trevino, the Chair of the URI’s Global Council, and Betsy Stang, a long-time URI activist who founded the Wittenberg Center for Alternative Resources, a New Age seminary.<sup>181</sup>

### **Gender equity vs. cultural relativism: URI is home to a convicted rapist and terror suspect**

In its Charter, the URI commits itself to “actions to develop cultures in which all people can live without fear of violence” and says that “We practice equitable participation of women and men in all aspects of the URI.”<sup>182</sup> Despite this commitment to nonviolence and gender equity, the URI has long accepted a convicted rapist (who was also an al-Qaida suspect) as one of its leading activists in Pakistan. The URI defense of Chisthi’s participation is self-justifying spin.

Ghulam Rasool Chisthi<sup>183</sup> has been active in the Karachi Cooperation Circle of the URI since 1999, and presided over its first meeting;<sup>184</sup> current URI directories list him as the chapter contact person.<sup>185</sup> Additionally, Chisthi has been an individual affiliate member of the URI since 2002,<sup>186</sup> as the chairman of the Universal Interfaith Peace Mission.<sup>187</sup>

Despite his decade-long record of interfaith activism, Chisthi has a violence-tainted record.

Chisthi, a Muslim cleric from Islamabad, Pakistan, attended the URI/USA summit conference in Salt Lake City from May 31 to June 4 at the invitation of the URI. At the end of the meeting, as he was preparing to return to Pakistan, Chisthi was arrested and jailed on Federal felony charges that he lied on his visa application for entry into the US.<sup>188</sup> In August 2001, Chisthi pleaded guilty to misdemeanor charges of unlawfully entering the US; he agreed to accept deportation and to never return to the US.<sup>189</sup> After the 9/11 attack, Chisthi was kept in jail for further questioning by Federal authorities;<sup>190</sup> he was deported from the US to Pakistan in January 2002.<sup>191</sup>

According to the *Salt Lake Tribune*, Chisthi's visa application had concealed the fact that "in 1991, a London jury found Chisthi guilty of raping eight female followers. He was sentenced to 11 years in prison for the rapes and three counts of indecent assault. He served 6 years."<sup>192</sup> Chisthi's victims included "young female worshippers at the Jamia Mosque in the Southall section of London. Prosecutors said Chisthi offered spiritual guidance but instead sexually assaulted several teenage girls."<sup>193</sup>

The *Salt Lake Tribune* reported the details of Chisthi's 1991 trial and conviction: "Syed Ali, director of the West London branch of the Islamic Mission, recalled ... how Chisthi played the role of a religious benefactor to emotionally troubled women. 'He was a no-good fellow who preyed on illiterate people to get them to do what he wanted,' Ali said. 'He was a trickster.' Ali said Chisthi was never affiliated with any mosque, but used the facade of a religious leader to victimize members of the Islamic community in Southall. Chisthi was exposed when the 15-year-old girl, fearing that Chisthi had impregnated her, reported the abuse to a school counselor. British police arrested Chisthi after a search of his home yielded homemade porn films of him and his victims. Convicted in England's largest criminal court of eight rapes and three counts of indecent assault, Chisthi was sentenced to 11 years in prison and served about half the time. ... At sentencing, British Judge Robert Lyubery scolded Chisthi, saying he 'took advantage of [your victims'] implicit faith and through your trickery, deceit and power had your own way with them for your own gratification.' Crown Prosecutor Victor Temple chided: 'Such a man commands virtual complete obedience and respect by those who follow him.' Chisthi pleaded innocent, claiming he had consensual sex with only two women, but was found guilty by a jury."<sup>194</sup>

David Randle, who was then head of the URI in Salt Lake City, said that "one of Chisthi's wives – an underage teen and a British citizen – leveled an accusation of statutory rape against him in the early 1990s."<sup>195</sup> Randle added that Chisthi "once had

multiple wives, but now says he has learned his lesson.”<sup>196</sup> (If this is the case, how did Chisthi dispose of his “multiple wives”?)

The 2001 URI assembly in Salt Lake City was held at University of Utah dormitories that were later used as the “Olympic Village” for the February 2002 Games.<sup>197</sup> The Pakistani URI delegate had aroused Federal security agents’ suspicion by asking about living arrangements for Olympic athletes, security plans for President Bush’s planned visit to the Winter Olympics, and which venues would draw the largest crowds during the Games.<sup>198</sup> Investigation of these suspicions, however, did not lead to charges against Chisthi.

In July 2002, the Milanese newspaper *Corriere della Sera* published allegations from classified Italian police documents that Chisthi had been “part of the Salafi Group for Call and Combat, an Italian cell of al-Qaida operatives that plotted a ‘spectacular terrorist attack’ against the Vatican, designed as a ‘massacre having a great number of casualties.’”<sup>199</sup> (The assault, allegedly planned for 2001, was called off by Osama bin Laden. It appears that he did not wish to put the world on alert prior to the September 11, 2001 attacks.)<sup>200</sup> Chisthi had been “briefly detained” in Italy in May 2001, but “weeks later arrived in Utah” for the URI conference.<sup>201</sup> While Chisthi was in jail in the US, between June 2001 and January 2002, US and Italian agents questioned him about the Vatican al-Qaida plot allegations, but did not file charges.<sup>202</sup>

Chisthi has firmly denied that he is a terrorist, or sympathetic to terrorism. A week after the September 11, 2001 attack, Chisthi told reporters, “I am not a terrorist. ... I have nothing to do with Osama bin Laden.”<sup>203</sup> In 2002, after publication of allegations of his involvement in an al-Qaida plan to bomb the Vatican, Chisthi wrote an e-mail from Pakistan to URI activist David Randle saying, “If I be found guilty of the crime of terrorism then they should shoot me dead, because I prefer to be dead than to be called a terrorist. ... So far as the allegation against me of being a terrorist, I would say that this is absolutely baseless.”<sup>204</sup>

In August 2001, as the first reports on Chisthi’s arrest went to press, URI Executive Director Charles Gibbs stated what has remained the URI position on this case since then; he said that Chisthi’s conviction in Britain “appears to have been a collision between his Islamic beliefs and English law.”<sup>205</sup>

Pro-URI sources continue to downplay the significance of Chisthi’s crimes. In November 2009, former URI board member Donald Frew said, “The position of the Asian URI organizers is that the ‘sex offender’ charges were based on him being in the UK with multiple wives, some of whom were underage by UK standards. However, the Pakistanis did not see anything wrong in what he did. I am not defending him, merely reporting the way people in his own culture understand the situation.”<sup>206</sup> In like manner, in early 2002, the Vatican stated that pederasty (a “sin against the Sixth Commandment committed between a minor younger than 18 years, and a priest”) is a “crime against customs.”<sup>207</sup> (So much for Ratzinger’s condemnation of the emerging “dictatorship of relativism that does not recognize anything as definitive”<sup>208!</sup>)

Frew stated that Chisthi does not have “a position of trust” within the URI; he is not a chapter leader, or a staff member, or an elected official of the URI. He said that Chisthi is “the contact person for a local interfaith group in a city in Pakistan. They made the decision to have him be the contact, not us.”<sup>209</sup> Each local URI group chooses its own representation, and Frew said that the global organization “has no basis to say otherwise unless the people directly affected – i.e. those in Karachi – complain to us that this contact person has acted against our Preamble, Purpose, and/or Principles. To date and to my knowledge, no one in Karachi (or anyone else who knows or who works with him) has made such a complaint. When they do, the URI will act on it. And, we do not run ‘background checks’ per se. When a group applies to be a member CC, we interview 1) the group, 2) those with whom they interact in the community where they operate, and 3) other URI members who have had interactions with them in the past. In the case of the Karachi group, no one who had had direct contact with them voiced any complaint.”<sup>210</sup>

Regarding Chisthi’s history as a terror suspect, Frew said, “While he was a ‘terror suspect’, he was released without charge because the authorities could find nothing substantive linking him to any terror activities or groups. Being a ‘suspect’ shouldn’t condemn anyone.”<sup>211</sup>

Notwithstanding its open-minded personnel policies, the URI has many friends in high places.

### **The URI and the UN: close allies**

The URI and the United Nations are close allies, and have been so from the beginning of the URI.<sup>212</sup> Bishop Swing conceived the idea of the URI in February 1993, after Gillian Sorenson, then the deputy secretary of the UN, asked him to sponsor an interfaith service at Grace Cathedral in June 1995 to celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the signing of the UN Charter. This service occurred as planned, and was the occasion for Swing to publicly announce his quest for a United Religions.

**Robert Muller, a former Assistant Secretary-General of the UN and former Chancellor of the UN University for Peace in Costa Rica,<sup>213</sup> had proposed creation of a United Religions organization in the 1970s and 1980s.<sup>214</sup> He spoke on behalf of Swing’s organization as soon as the URI was made public in 1995.<sup>215</sup> Muller also provided editorial assistance for a workbook used in URI planning meetings in 1996 and 1997,<sup>216</sup> and attended the first URI summit meeting, held in 1996.<sup>217</sup> In January 2001, Muller wrote to Swing, “God bless URI. ... It will go very, very far, even beyond the United Nations.”<sup>218</sup>**

The working relationship between the URI and the UN goes far beyond prayer services and good wishes from former UN officials. In December 1999, the URI signed an “international partnership” agreement with UNESCO, and in August 2000 the URI assisted in planning the World Millennium Peace Summit of Religious and Spiritual

Leaders at the UN. The URI has a Cooperation Circle at the UN, and seeks “to bring the principles and visions of the URI Charter into the work of the UN, and to integrate the voices of the world’s faith communities into the arena of governance.”<sup>219</sup> Since 2001, it has been recognized as a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) affiliated with the UN Department of Public Information. The URI also achieved official NGO status with the UN’s Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) in 2007, giving the movement “consultative status”<sup>220</sup> at the UN. In turn, the URI promotes the UN’s Millennium Development Goals,<sup>221</sup> and the Executive Director of the URI reported in 2005 that “many URI CCs around the world have partnerships with local UN groups.”<sup>222</sup> The URI has worked with the United Nations Environmental Program (UNEP) since 2002, and has accepted the theory of man-caused global warming. (For example, in 2007, the URI co-sponsored an interfaith workshop on “The Ethical and Spiritual Response to Climate Change” at the annual UN DPI/NGO Conference.<sup>223</sup>)

### **Governments approve of the URI**

Additionally, the URI has gained acceptance by government officials and agencies in various countries around the world. In November 2007, Shri M. Hamid Ansari, Vice-President of **India**, gave the keynote address to the URI Asia Assembly.<sup>224</sup> In the fall of 2007, the Embassy of **Australia** was one of the supporters of a URI seminar on interreligious dialogue for Catholic priests and Muslim imams in the Philippines.<sup>225</sup> The Armed Forces of the **Philippines** honored a URI Cooperation Circle in Mindanao as “the best non-government organization in the Philippines for the year 2007.”<sup>226</sup> In June 2008, a high-level representative of **China’s** embassy to Pakistan gave an award to URI activist Fr. James Channing for his interfaith activities; a week later, a high-level staffer from the **United States** embassy presented Channing a gold medal given by Sawan International to honor his efforts to promote peace among religions.<sup>227</sup> In May 2008, a URI Cooperation Circle in Southern **California** received a Community Leader Award from the Orange County Human Relations Commission.<sup>228</sup> In July 2008, the Executive Director of the URI traveled to Ethiopia to give the URI’s first Environmental Protection Award to **Ethiopia’s** President Girma Wolde Giorgis, “to honor Ethiopia’s extraordinary commitment of planting 760,000,000 trees as the country’s contribution to the UN’s Billion Tree Campaign,” an effort led by the United Nations Environmental Program (UNEP).<sup>229</sup> In addition, “the Presidents of **Burundi**, Ethiopia, and the first President of **Zambia** have expressed their appreciation and encouragement for URI’s continued work in Africa and beyond.”<sup>230</sup> A 2008 report to the Global Council also listed URI partnerships with the **African Union**, the American Embassy and USAID in Ethiopia, the American Embassy in Manila (Philippines), and the American Embassy in Buenos Aires (Argentina).<sup>231</sup> Multiple partnerships between the US State Department and the URI occurred in 2007-2008 – before the beginning of the Obama Administration. In its 2008 Annual Report, the URI lists the US Department of State as a donor.<sup>232</sup>

The U.S. government supported URI projects under George W. Bush, and this continues under Obama. The US Embassy in Argentina has been funding “Bridge Builders,” an interfaith community organizing and interreligious dialogue project in Buenos Aires, through the URI. In May 2009, Ambassador Earl Anthony Wayne (who

had been chosen for the post by George W. Bush in November 2006, and served until Obama selected a replacement in June 2009) said, “The U.S. Embassy is proud to support this inspiring program. ... I believe that this effort supports a key component of President Obama’s focus on dialogue, tolerance and understanding. These values are shared broadly by the American people.”<sup>233</sup>

Mainstream Christian churches are marching in step with the UN and national governments, and are – with few exceptions – supportive of the URI.

### **The URI’s allies in the Protestant churches**

In the Anglican communion, support for the URI is widespread, and public opposition is rare.

Aside from Bishop Swing, 22 active and retired Anglican prelates have supported the URI.<sup>234</sup> The most prominent of these are Frank Griswold, the former Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church; Los Angeles Bishop J. J. Bruno; Bishop C. Christopher Epting, the Presiding Bishop’s Deputy for Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations; Celso Franco de Oliveira, Bishop of the Anglican Diocese of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; Michael Ingham, Bishop of the Diocese of New Westminster, Canada; and Desmond Tutu, Nobel laureate and retired Archbishop of Cape Town, South Africa. The Episcopal Church’s headquarters lists the URI among the interfaith organizations that it works with “to cooperate on areas of common interest.”<sup>235</sup> In 2005, the Diocese of Blackburn in the Church of England gave £9,000 (about \$14,000) to the URI in the United Kingdom.<sup>236</sup>

Most of the pro-URI Anglican bishops in the US and Canada have taken the liberal position in the ongoing Anglican battle over homosexuality.<sup>237</sup> At the 2003 Episcopal General Convention, the five pro-URI Diocesan bishops then serving in the US (Bruno of Los Angeles, Grew of Ohio, Presiding Bishop Griswold, Ladehoff of Oregon, and Swing) voted to confirm the openly gay cleric Gene Robinson as Bishop of New Hampshire. Griswold was Robinson’s chief consecrator in November 2003, and Bishop Ingham traveled from Canada to the U.S. to participate in the ceremony.

Several ultra-trendy Episcopal priests have donated to the URI in recent years.<sup>238</sup> James Parks Morton, the former dean of the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York City (2003-2008); Lauren Artress, who took the modern-day labyrinth fad worldwide from its beginnings at Grace Cathedral in San Francisco (2004-2005); and Richard Fabian (2007-2008) and Donald Schell (2006), the co-rectors of the parish of St. Gregory of Nyssa in San Francisco. (This congregation is known for liturgical dance, “icons” of Charles Darwin, Rumi, and Malcolm X, and hosting a well-publicized union in April 2004 between Otis Charles, the retired Bishop of Utah, and his male partner.)<sup>239</sup>

Some Ugandan hierarchs are following the pro-URI lead of their US brethren. The Rt. Rev. Jackson Matovu, Bishop of the Anglican diocese of Central Buganda, in Uganda, is the contact person for a URI Cooperation Circle in his region.<sup>240</sup> A retired Anglican bishop in Uganda, the Rt. Rev. Senabulya, is the contact person for another URI

Cooperation Circle in that country.<sup>241</sup> So much for the idea that the Global South will save the Anglican Communion from the Western liberals!

The Mar Thoma Church in India, which broke away from Oriental Orthodoxy in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century and is now in communion with Canterbury, has supported the URI from the beginning.<sup>242</sup>

Only two Anglican bishops recognized by Canterbury have spoken publicly against the URI, and both are now retired: Archbishop Harry Goodhew of Australia, and Bishop FitzSimons Alison of South Carolina.<sup>243</sup> The current and former Archbishops of Canterbury have not spoken publicly about the movement since its founding in 1995, and the Episcopal Church's General Conventions from 1997 through 2009 have likewise refrained from either praising or criticizing the URI.

The Presbyterian Church USA donated to the URI in 2005, and the Pacific School of Religion (a seminary for liberal mainline Protestant churches in the US) donated to the URI in 2007. Scotty McLennan, a Unitarian minister who is one of the Deans of Religious Life at Stanford University, gave to the URI in 2001 and in 2004. McLennan was the real-life inspiration for Scot Sloan, the "fighting young priest" who was a long-time character in Gary Trudeau's *Doonesbury* comic strip.

### **Evangelical and Eastern Christians: the anti-URI dam starts to break**

Until recently, the Eastern Orthodox hierarchy and the Evangelical Protestant churches have never supported the URI. However, both of these dams are beginning to break.

- The Evangelical Covenant Church (ECC), a mainstream Evangelical Protestant denomination with 750 congregations worldwide, congratulated Sarah Carlson, a student at their denominational seminary, for being awarded an internship to work at the URI in 2008.<sup>244</sup>
- In Ethiopia in 2008, leaders from the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, the Islamic Supreme Council, the Roman Catholic Church, "the Evangelical Mekane Yesus Church, and the Bahá'í Faith" have formed a National Interfaith Peace Council, and this council's work will be coordinated by the "Interfaith Peace-Building Initiative" (IPI), a URI Cooperation Circle.<sup>245</sup>

There has been a working relationship between the URI and the Ethiopian Orthodox Church since 2001, beginning with a meeting between URI leaders and Patriarch Abune Paulos, the head of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church.<sup>246</sup> Paulos has held his office since 1992, and since 2006, he has been one of the Presidents of the World Council of Churches.<sup>247</sup> He also has participated in the elite World Economic Forum and the "World Summit of Religious and Spiritual Leaders" held in 2000 at the UN.<sup>248</sup> As such, Paulos could be expected to be open to interfaith alliances – and so he has proven to be.

On October 6, Paulos addressed a meeting of the Synod of Africa's Roman Catholic bishops in Rome. During that speech, he said, "I am especially grateful to His Holiness, Pope Benedict XVI, who wanted me among you today and who personally witnessed to me his love for Africa and his respect for the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church. ... The Ark of the Covenant is in Ethiopia, in the city of Axum. ... Let us speak of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the heart of the Africans and Jesus will return to Africa, as he did when he was a child together with the Virgin Mary."<sup>249</sup>

### **Roman Catholic support for URI goes mainstream**

Roman Catholic support for the URI, previously concentrated among dissidents (such as theologian Hans Küng, retired auxiliary Bishop of Detroit Thomas Gumbleton, and liberal orders of nuns), is now mainstream.<sup>250</sup> In recent years, the URI has received donations from the Archdiocese of Baltimore (2005), the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (2004), Cardinal Theodore McCarrick, the retired Archbishop of Washington DC (2005),<sup>251</sup> and Archbishop George Niederauer, of the Archdiocese of San Francisco (2008).<sup>252</sup> Fr. James Channan, who served on the URI Global Council from 2002 to 2008, received an award from the Vatican in December 2005 as a "Pioneer of Christian Muslim Dialogue in Pakistan," indicating Rome's approval of his interfaith work.<sup>253</sup> This award was granted during the reign of the current pope, Benedict XVI. As of the spring of 2009, Catholic Relief Services was the main funding source for the Interfaith Peace-Building Initiative, a leading URI Cooperation Circle in Ethiopia.<sup>254</sup>

During his tenure as Archbishop of San Francisco, William Levada had backed the URI.<sup>255</sup> Within a few weeks of the election of Benedict XVI, the new Pope selected Levada to head the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, the body that guards against heresy in the Church. Levada became the highest ranked American prelate in Catholic history, and is now a member of the College of Cardinals – with a vote in the next Papal Conclave. Levada invited a group of URI leaders to accompany him to Rome for his March 2006 installation, and the URI delegation said that they were the first interfaith delegation ever to attend a consistory of Cardinals.<sup>256</sup>

The meaning of all this is clear: the top leaders of the Catholic Church now tolerate or favor this movement, and *will not* act to disassociate the Church from it.

### **Growing secular support for the URI**

Since 2004, the URI has gained additional, prominent, secular supporters.

Among them is the European Union (EU). In 2005, the European Commission (EC) had funded a meeting of URI-Europe in Brussels to discuss "overcoming irritations and prejudices between people of different cultures, religions and convictions in the EU enlargement process." The EC thought so highly of the URI event that in 2007, they gave the URI a "Golden Star Award," honoring the meeting as one of the ten best projects funded by the Active European Citizenship program of the European Union.<sup>257</sup> In 2006, the EU funded "a year-long program of networking and leadership development

for young adults of different faiths” representing URI chapters in the Middle East, North Africa and Eastern Europe.<sup>258</sup>

The roster of recent years’ donors in URI annual reports shows that the URI appeals to Muslim lobbyists, advocates of globalism, and establishment American institutions alike. Noteworthy donors have included: the Council on American-Islamic Relations (2004 and 2007), the Islamic Society of North America (2005), United Muslims of America (2005-2007), Dee Hock, the founder of VISA International (2003), Dr. Steven C. Rockefeller (2005; he had assisted in drafting the Earth Charter), George P. Shultz (2007; he was Secretary of State during the Reagan administration, and had been Secretary of Labor and Secretary of the Treasury under Nixon), the Turner Foundation (2006), Bank of America (2004), Stanford University Medical Center (2007), United Way of the Bay Area (2006), World Vision (2005),<sup>259</sup> and the Stephen Bechtel Fund (2008).<sup>260</sup> The Bank of the West was a corporate sponsor of the successful March 2009 “Circles of Light Gala” fundraiser.<sup>261</sup>

### **High-level Democrats and Republicans support the URI**

The URI has also drawn support from prominent Republicans and from prominent Democrats alike.

Republican support extended to the White House. In a November 6, 2001 letter, President Bush praised Bishop Swing and the URI for receiving the 2001 Citizen Diplomacy Award from the International Diplomacy Council (IDC), a private group that works with high-level State Department officials to assist overseas dignitaries who visit the U.S.<sup>262</sup> At that time, George P. Shultz was one of the advisers for the IDC. In 2002, the federally funded United States Institute of Peace (USIP) made a \$30,000 training grant to the URI, and followed with another grant in 2003.<sup>263</sup> In 2001 and 2002, USIP also published articles favorable to the URI. Shultz – a prominent Republican – and his wife serve as “honorary chairs” of the URI President’s Council; the Council’s task is to assist in large-scale fundraising. The URI says that the Shultzes “were early supporters of the United Religions Initiative, lending counsel and hospitality to our formative gatherings.”<sup>264</sup>

Even though President Obama has not publicly endorsed the URI, the movement has friends in high places on the Democratic side of the aisle. In November 2001, Grey Davis (then Governor of California, until his recall in 2003) joined President Bush in praising Swing and the URI.<sup>265</sup> In September 2005, at the invitation of former President Clinton, Charles Gibbs (the executive director of the URI) attended the meeting of the Clinton Global Initiative in New York. Gibbs, who was among 1,000 invited “world leaders,”<sup>266</sup> was asked to propose a project that would be funded and completed within a year. Gibbs proposed to expand the URI in India, and sought \$152,000 to do so.<sup>267</sup> His project succeeded; there were 59 URI Cooperation Circles in India at the end of 2005, 68 as of March 2007, and 99 chapters as of October 2009.<sup>268</sup> On March 7, 2009, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi made a “surprise” appearance at the URI’s high-society annual fundraising party, the “Circles of Light.”<sup>269</sup> This event met its goal, raising \$1

million despite the world financial crisis. Pelosi also donated to the URI during their 2008 fiscal year.<sup>270</sup>

In turn, URI Executive Director Charles Gibbs had donated \$500 to the Obama general election campaign between August and October 2008.<sup>271</sup> Meanwhile, other URI activists have adorned President Obama with an aura of New Age hope. Sarah Hart, the founder of a URI Cooperation Circle in Southern California, said in the spring of 2009, “Our initiative is in direct alignment with a movement of our society that is clearly gaining ground at not just the grassroots level, but also with our government’s leadership. With the cabinet appointment of Joshua DuBois to head the White House’s Office of Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships, we are reminded of the consideration to focus on interfaith reconciliation. This creates an organic, authentic and swift growth of the interfaith movement when it’s coupled with activating us all into service – real ‘harmonic convergence’.”<sup>272</sup>

### **URI founder Bishop Swing avows his Republicanism**

Bishop Swing, meanwhile, has avowed his Republicanism and has claimed to be conservative. In August 2004, he told the *Episcopal News Service*, “I’m a conservative person. I’m a Republican. I voted for George W. Bush. Yet I am seen as a raving liberal throughout the church. I’m very conservative about marriage. I’m very conservative about hard work. I’m very conservative that you celebrate the sacraments; if you’re going to preach, you say your prayers, and you read the Bible and you do your homework. Inside myself, I have an awful lot of conservative tendencies.”<sup>273</sup> Before Swing’s election as Bishop of California in 1979, he had been a parish priest for 10 years in Washington DC. An official Diocesan biography of Swing says that he had been “not at first enthusiastic about his California candidacy, but ex-Secretary of State Henry Kissinger was, surprisingly, among those who persuaded him otherwise.”<sup>274</sup> With good friends like Henry Kissinger and George Shultz, Swing is comfortably ensconced in the Establishment reaches of the Republican Party.

### **The elite consensus: URI and interfaith activism are normal**

Two instances show the bipartisan agreement by the American elite that interfaith movements (including the URI) are not radical or “fringe”; they are “standard operating procedure.”

- On June 23, 2009, the Rev. Joshua Dubois, President Obama’s Director of the White House Office of Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships, gave the keynote address for the Faith & Neighborhood Partnerships Day event, part of a conference on volunteerism convened by the Corporation for National and Community Service and the Points of Light Institute.<sup>275</sup> Aside from Dubois, other speakers included Neil Bush, Chairman of Points of Light (and son of former President George H.W. Bush); and Mark Herbert, from Speaker Nancy Pelosi’s office.<sup>276</sup> The day’s events began with interfaith prayer, organized by 2 URI

cooperation circles: the San Francisco Interfaith Council and the Interfaith Center of the Presidio.

- Eboo Patel was one of 25 people selected in March 2009 for one-year terms on the President’s Advisory Council on Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships.<sup>277</sup> Patel is founder and executive director of the Interfaith Youth Corps (IFYC), which is an ally of the URI.<sup>278</sup> Patel holds a doctorate in the sociology of religion from Oxford University, where he studied as a Rhodes Scholar. He serves on the Religious Advisory Committee of the Council on Foreign Relations, and was recently selected to join the Young Global Leaders network of the World Economic Forum.<sup>279</sup> In April 2009, Patel’s IFYC worked jointly with Tony Blair’s Faith Foundation to select 12 young adults to lead interfaith efforts to achieve the UN’s Millennium Development Goals.<sup>280</sup> It would be difficult for anyone to improve upon this “harmonic convergence” of globalist, elite credentials and connections – and the URI is part of this web of alliances.

### **New Age support for the URI**

Before 2003, several Theosophical groups had donated to the URI, including the Lucis Trust World Service Fund and the Rudolf Steiner Foundation.<sup>281</sup> New Age groups and New Age authors have continued this support since then. They include Avon Mattison (2004-2006, 2008) and her Pathways to Peace organization (2005-2006), the Fetzer Institute (2004-2006), Charlene Spretnak (2008), and Gordon Davidson and Corinne McLaughlin (the authors of *Spiritual Politics*, a popularization of the Theosophical teachings of Alice Bailey; they donated in 2005-2008). Two clergy (Betsy Stang and Jim Davis), from the Wittenberg Center for Alternative Resources, a New Age seminary, donated to the URI in 2005, and are among the leaders of a URI Cooperation Circle in the Hudson Valley.<sup>282</sup> Monica Willard, a URI staffer designated as the “United Nations NGO Representative,”<sup>283</sup> is a member of the Board of Directors of the Wittenberg Center.<sup>284</sup>

New Age futurist Barbara Marx Hubbard participated in the drafting of the URI Charter in 1998, and endorsed the movement in her 1998 book *Conscious Evolution*.<sup>285</sup> Neale Donald Walsch, the author of the best-selling New Age-lite *Conversations with God* books, participated in URI planning meetings in 1997-1998, and praised the URI in books, articles, and interviews between 1997 and 2004.<sup>286</sup> These and other New Age stars were more prominent within the URI in the late 1990s than they have been in recent years.



**Moon**

Donald Frew explains that “the URI is focusing on grass-roots interfaith work, and the local Cooperation Circles are not places where New Age ‘stars’ can shine.”<sup>287</sup>

The Rev. Sun Myung Moon’s Unification Church maintains its long-standing friendship with the URI.<sup>288</sup> Members of his church attended the URI global summit meeting in

1997, and the URI co-sponsored interfaith events with Unificationists (and others) from 1997 onward in India and Ethiopia. In 2002, the World Association of Non-Governmental Organizations (WANGO), a Moon-led group, gave Swing and the URI its “Interreligious Cooperation Award,” and Swing listed this among his other honors in his 2004 summary of his career as Bishop of California.<sup>289</sup> In March 2009, Moon’s Inter-Religious Federation for World Peace (IRFWP) posted a URI newsletter on its web site, and labeled the page “News & Events from Our Friends.”<sup>290</sup>

### **Gay activism – missing in action from the URI**

For the most part, the URI toes the Western “politically correct” line on such issues as feminism, multiculturalism, global governance, the environment, and the like. There is one exception: gay activism. Unlike the mainline churches in the West, the URI does not have a “gay caucus” akin to Integrity (in The Episcopal Church) or Dignity (in the Roman Catholic Church). The gay issue has not been discussed in URI documents or in reports of their global meetings since 1998. In the official URI directory published in 2008, only one of the 390 Cooperation Circles mentioned any work on gay rights.<sup>291</sup> The URI’s *Annual Report* lists donors to the organization’s headquarters, and same-sex couples are very rarely seen on this roster of URI supporters.

Former URI board member Donald Frew responded that gay rights “has been a non-issue since we discussed it and argued about it in the late 1990s. The folks who couldn’t stand working with gays and lesbians left and the gays and lesbians stayed. There are many gays and lesbians in prominent roles in the URI. A Cooperation Circle focused on gay and lesbian rights would be welcome, so long as it met the requirements for all Cooperation Circles. In the 6 years that I was on the Global Council, no such group applied.”<sup>292</sup> Frew explained the absence of any URI public statement on the gay issue: “as a grass-roots, bottom-up organization, the URI AS A WHOLE can very rarely take a stand on anything. ... This problem plagues most interfaith groups. If you are really trying to get everyone together, believing that communication is the key to building understanding and peace, then it’s VERY hard to take a position of ‘you can believe anything you like, but you must agree with THIS political position.’”<sup>293</sup>

### **URI’s bright prospects**

Executive Director Charles Gibbs told the movement’s Global Council, “In 2009, we are poised to grow into a much more powerful and complex organism and organization.”<sup>294</sup> With a global membership base, prestigious supporters, and a supportive “spirit of the age” in the West that is hostile to orthodox Christianity, the URI is in a position to continue growing until it attains – in its own words – “the visibility and stature of the United Nations.”

## Endnotes

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- <sup>294</sup> United Religions Initiative, "Executive Director's State of the URI Report," 2008, p. 3, <http://www.uri.org/community/files/documents/GC%20Meeting%20Papers%2011.11.08.doc.pdf>, viewed 10/24/09.