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FIDES ET LIBERTAS



2005

THE JOURNAL OF
THE INTERNATIONAL
RELIGIOUS LIBERTY
ASSOCIATION

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DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES

We believe that religious liberty is a God-given right.

We believe that legislation and other governmental acts which unite church and state are contrary to the best interest of both institutions and are potentially prejudicial to human rights, and hold that it is best exercised where separation is maintained between church and state.

We believe that government is divinely ordained to support and protect citizens in their enjoyment of natural rights, and to rule in civil affairs; and that in so doing, government warrants respectful obedience and willing support.

We believe in the natural and inalienable right of freedom of conscience—to have or not have a religion; to adopt the religion or belief of one's choice; to change religious belief according to conscience; to manifest one's religion individually or in community with others, in worship, observance, practice, promulgation, and teaching—subject only to respect for the equivalent rights of others.

We believe that religious liberty also includes the freedom to establish and operate appropriate charitable or educational institutions, to solicit or receive voluntary financial contributions, to observe days of rest and celebrate holidays in accordance with the precepts of one's religion, and to maintain communication with fellow believers at national and international levels.

We believe that religious liberty and the elimination of intolerance and discrimination based on religion or belief are essential to promote understanding, peace, and, friendship among peoples.

We believe that citizens should use lawful and honorable means to prevent the reduction of religious liberty.

We believe that the spirit of true religious liberty is epitomized in the Golden Rule: *Do unto others as you would have others do unto you.*

STATEMENT OF PURPOSES

The purposes of the International Religious Liberty Association are universal and nonsectarian. They include:

- 1** Dissemination of the principles of religious liberty throughout the world.
- 2** Defense and safeguard of the civil rights for all people to worship, to adopt a religion or belief of their choice, to manifest their religious convictions in observance, promulgation, and teaching, subject only to the respect for the equivalent rights of others.
- 3** Support for religious organizations to operate freely in every country through the establishment of charitable or educational institutions.
- 4** Organization of local, national, and regional chapters, and seminars, symposia, conferences, and congresses.

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the International Religious Liberty Association is to defend, protect, and promote religious liberty for all people everywhere.



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RELIGIOUS FREEDOM: RAISING THE VISIBILITY

JONATHAN GALLAGHER

Editor

One primary aspect of the IRLA's work is to ensure that religious freedom has the highest possible visibility on the world scene. To that end, we hold world congresses, regional conferences, national symposia, and local meetings—all aimed at making sure issues of religious freedom remain high on society's agenda. For despite the importance of international covenants and national legislation, without public support for religious freedom, any gains remain at the level of theory rather than practice. Upcoming plans for 2006 include an all-Africa conference in Accra, Ghana, regional meetings in Michigan, USA, and Belgrade, Serbia, and festivals of religious freedom in Romania and the Ukraine. In 2007, our world congress will be held in Cape Town, South Africa.

This issue contains several papers from the IRLA regional conference held in Taipei, Taiwan, last August. This highly-successful conference brought together religious leaders, academics, educators, and politicians from many different faith traditions to focus on issues involving freedom and security. Held in a part of the world where ongoing situations well illustrate the vital importance of working for religious freedom, the conference was not only the venue for speeches and presentations, but also a wonderful occasion for meeting and dialogue between individuals and groups who would not normally have such an opportunity.

The IRLA is delighted to facilitate such an ongoing process of both a formal education in freedom of conscience and human rights and also an informal venue for interpersonal contacts and understanding. It is our determined belief that as we share together in the toughest issues, the worst violations of religious freedom and human rights, then we can at least come away with a renewed commitment to the advancement of religious liberty and a personal appreciation of those whose thoughts and practices differ from our own.

This journal is in a more tangible way a reflection of both such meetings and this philosophy. It is my personal hope that those who read will find meaning and purpose in their commitment to the human rights of all people, especially as they express their right to choose their own religion or belief.



SPECIAL MESSAGE FROM

THE HONORABLE PATRICK MANNING

PRIME MINISTER OF TRINIDAD & TOBAGO

Presented at the IRLA Congress, Trinidad and Tobago 2005

There is, recognizably, a common thread that runs through the name of the Conference and that of the two associations that have organized this forum (the International Religious Liberty Conference and the Caribbean Religious Liberty Association).

That thread is “religious liberty,” and in the context of the very plural society that is Trinidad and Tobago, and given the many groups and interests that constitute our nation, it is very important that we recognize the importance, not only of religious liberty, but of the fundamental rights and freedoms that are essential for our individual growth and development and for the peace, harmony, and progress of our nation.

Not surprisingly, all these fundamental rights and freedoms are guaranteed by our constitution. Within this right to religious freedom, the right to freedom of worship, and even the right not to belong to any religion, are all underscored.

On these matters the basis for the development of an ideal society has already been laid.

I am certain, however, that we would agree that in the normal progress and evolution of societies, practice and reality tend to differ significantly from ideals.

There is also the fact that religion *per se* is always a complex and detailed issue, involving much more than concepts related to a worldview and man in his relation to God and nature.

As scholars are given to saying, religion often involves much more than the theological and teleological perspectives concerning life and its meaning.

All religious and faith-based institutions have, for example, social and secular frames of reference. They are also tied to various historical and contemporary issues.

To compound matters, religious-and faith-based institutions are by nature competitive against each other, and for the most part given to proselytization.

I noticed the theme for this Conference, "Building Bridges: The Quest for Freedom and Justice." I am inspired by this in many ways.

First, I am very pleased that the matter is being discussed, and I congratulate the organizers of the Conference for taking the initiative.

There is also a sense of pride that we can discuss these matters with candor and fearlessness in Trinidad and Tobago. That's the way it is, the way it ought to, and will continue to be. This in itself augurs well for religious liberty in Trinidad and Tobago. That we are hosting such a conference in Trinidad and Tobago, speaks to the development and maturity of our faith-based institutions. It also speaks to the growing maturation of our society.

History recalls that there was a time when for any religion and its followers to extend a hand of friendship and love to their fellowmen of a different religious persuasion was unthinkable, tantamount to an act of treason and heresy, and just as well portended unspeakable damnation.

Such is the history of mankind, which is also a history of great religious conflagration and religious-inspired conflict over the meaning and purpose of life.

History has thought also that many a state emerged out of, and in tandem with, the development and evolution of religion. Many were heavily influenced by doctrinal and other expressions of religious influence.

Why do I make this point? In many countries, the state and religion are still partners in the suppression of religious liberty. I am pleased to report that Trinidad and Tobago has no such ailment.

It is therefore to the credit of the people of Trinidad and Tobago that this has not evolved here.

Further, we have, all of us, been able to keep open the gateways of cultural transmission among our varied peoples, very desirable and necessary in a pluralistic society. We have sought to break down barriers and have not been persuaded by bigotry. We remain an open people determined to develop and maintain an open and liberal society.

I remember a number of periods in the history of our society and nation when the religion of the state was a major pillar of oppression; when the religion and forms of worship of the mass of the people were frowned upon.

No one can deny that elements of such prejudice still stalk our land. Just as well, no one can deny that there are those who would use religion as a divisive force among us. That is the way of the world, and it is our common challenge to work to reduce any such tendencies and to mitigate their impact.

It is a tremendous pleasure to see many of our major religious organizations represented here.

Truly it is said that those who see the light would work within its path, directing others along its pathway, and using it for further illumination of the way in any society. By the same token, those who espy the bell of freedom should ring it; those who hear it must respond to the challenge.

Let us recognize ourselves as a unique society in which all the religious faiths have a role to play, and let us each play a role that will bring us closer together.

In my mind, our faith-based institutions are guided by certain common religious principles and core values:

- Reverence for God
- Submission to the Almighty
- Commitment to honesty, truth, and right action
- Love, respect, and compassion for our fellow men
- The prevention of injustice
- The promotion of social, peace, harmony and progress

If this is true, as I submit it is, where does the breakdown in cohesion and unity come from? What is the basis for the cracks and cleavage that divides societies on the basis of religion?

As a rule, it has to do with the fact that people in society and in the world of religion differ not on the ends to which they aspire, but the way in which they perceive and pursue the realization of these ends.

In this context, one of the root causes of division is our preoccupation with our worldview, our intolerance of the views of others, the development of feelings that we possess a monopoly on sacred knowledge, and the incapacity to entertain alternatives.

A fundamental basis for division is also preoccupation with our own and group interests. Representation of one's group or individual interest is not in itself a negative thing. Quite to the contrary, this is critically important.

The danger, however, sets in when we overlook or cannot recognize the interest of the wider society.

Religion can be a powerful force in the liberation of society. But by dialectical reasoning there is also the potential for the blossoming of the antithesis of unity and social progress. For my part, I am sure that we have passed that stage in Trinidad and Tobago.

There is no need to test each other in Trinidad and Tobago by extending the bounds of enmity, merely to determine our capacity to ignite our society into destructive flames. Let us seek to extend the bounds of friendship and

collaboration, to widen and deepen the areas and context in which groups work together.

We shall, all of us, always be better off for proceeding on the basis of the productivity that comes from continuing the pursuit of ecumenism.

Let us also consider that religious and faith-based institutions all over the world have been, from time immemorial and all over the world, that important rallying point for very meaningful social change.

Our own experience in Trinidad and Tobago and the Caribbean has been that religious and faith-based organizations have been at the vanguard of the struggle of the mass of the people. Here, as elsewhere in the world, new formations normally emerge in a context in which there are social and other imbalances.

Religion has always fortified the oppressed in societies with the rectitude of their cause.

From inception, man everywhere has been making leaps and bounds of faith; and faith and belief in the power of God has sustained people through their darkest hours and in their hope for a better world and a brighter tomorrow.

For all this, our religious and faith-based institutions are indispensable to the evolution of a society based on freedom, equality, and justice.

There is but one course to be adopted, and that, for all of us, is to make it possible for our religious institutions to grow. The government of Trinidad and Tobago is committed to this, in a thoroughly practical and pragmatic way.

In recent times, there has been much talk about the separation of Church and State. The government is committed to this.

This in no way means that either the State or the Church should abdicate their right—indeed their responsibility—to comment on developments in the society.

The Church has done so, and the State cannot afford not to do so. Separate and apart from recent matters, let us not lose sight of the fact that not all that people do and practice in the name of religion is legitimate.

Even so, it is also true that enlightened society can significantly shape and condition all that we are, exercising sobering influence on all that will eventually emerge within our society. The enlightenment will come from building bridges that strengthen and consolidate pathways and channels towards freedom, equality, and justice.

Let us build those bridges, and ring loud and clear in our land the bells of freedom.



CHURCH-STATE RELATIONS IN ARGENTINA

JOSÉ CAMILO CARDOSO

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Republic of Argentina*

THE STATE LEGAL SYSTEM OF RELIGIONS IN ARGENTINA

As an introduction to the legal system of religious groups, I think it useful to address, within the framework of relationships between the State and religious groups, the issue of the governmental areas with jurisdiction on religious matters in the Latin American States, noting that they change from country to country, that they have different hierarchical levels, or that sometimes they are non-existent. The State institutions in charge of this matter are: Argentina (Ministry of Foreign Relations, International Trade and Worship), Bolivia (Ministry of Foreign Relations and Worship); Brazil (no governmental area in charge); Chile (Ministry of Justice), Colombia (Ministry of Home Affairs); Cuba (Board of Religious Affairs); Ecuador (State Ministry of Government, Police, Justice, Worship and Municipalities), Mexico (Department of Government); Paraguay (Ministry of Education and Culture); Peru (National Board of Justice, Ministry of Justice); Uruguay (no specified body in charge); and Venezuela (Ministry of Home Affairs and Justice).

In Latin America, the State Ecclesiastical Law, understood as part of the State Law dealing with the religious phenomenon, sometimes shows a similar development due to historical and sociological reasons, despite its distinctive characteristics resulting from the present demographic realities.

The Argentine National Constitution establishes the full exercise of freedom of religion or belief and its manifestation. In this sense, the regulations establish the right of all inhabitants, native or foreign, to exercise freedom of worship (sections 14 and 20).

In 1983, with the restoration of democracy, the Republic of Argentina ratified and accepted the main international legal instruments that were

an important development in the Humanitarian International Law and emphasized the protection of religious freedom.

After the 1994 Constitutional Reform, the international sphere has overtaken the constitutional field with the inclusion of the main international treaties on human rights. The international legal instruments on human rights dealing with religious matters that the 1994 constitutional reform included in the Constitution and that required constitutional hierarchy are: The American Declaration of Human Rights and Duties (section 3); the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (section 18); the American Convention of Human Rights or covenant of San José de Costa Rica (section 12); the International Covenant of Civil and Political Rights (section 18); the International Covenant of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (section 13); and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (section 14). The rights arising from these international legal instruments derived from religious freedom and recognized to persons, are: the right to have a religion or not; to practice or change it; to worship in public or in private, individually or collectively; to manifest and teach it; to worship; to celebrate rites; and to observe religious precepts; to raise children in religion; to practice and spread religious beliefs; and to exercise these freedoms and not be subject to restrictive measures.

There are also other two rights linked to religious freedom that are recognized and protected by constitutional covenants: the right to assemble and the right to demonstrate peacefully. At the same time, everyone recognizes the freedom of association—that is, a voluntary association for a common purpose.

Besides the international legal instruments at a constitutional level mentioned above, we must take into account the Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and Discrimination Based on Religion or Beliefs that was approved by the General Assembly of the United Nations on November 25, 1981, through Resolution N° 36/55.

The Argentine legislation has distinctive features regarding the legal scheme of religions, a field covered by the State Ecclesiastical Law. In the Republic of Argentina, the Catholic Church has constitutional status. In fact, section 2 of the Constitution sets forth: “The Federal Government adopts the Roman Catholic Apostolic Church.” In section 33, the Civil Code recognizes the Catholic Church as a legal person of public law. Based on the same code, it has been interpreted that such status must also reach the dioceses, the parishes, the Episcopal Conference, and the public legal persons that the canon system recognizes as such.

In 1996, the Republic of Argentina, with the Holy See, executed a covenant that Law 17.032 be ratified, solving some pending matters between the church and the state, such as the appointment of bishops, the establishment of new dioceses, and the entry to the country of new religious orders. This legal instrument mentions the 1957 covenant on military jurisdiction between the Argentine Nation and the Holy Site in relation to the Religious Assistance to the Armed Forces.

Law 24.483, enacted and passed in 1995, established a system to recognize the legal status of the Consecrated Life Institutes and Apostolic Life associations belonging to the Catholic Church. The legal canonical status of these institutes enjoys full civil recognition, and the Canon Law exclusively governs their organization and relationship with their members. They only have to be officially recorded and must register their Statutes. Authorities have approximately 400 religious institutions listed today.

In order to obtain the recognition of the National State and the authorization to perform public religious activities, non-Catholic religious institutions must be registered with the National Worship Register established by Law 21.745 in 1978. The religious institutions or associations are considered as legal persons of private law. One of the declared goals of Law 21.745 was to guarantee the jurisdiction and national competence to solve all matters related to non-Catholic religious institutions. Once registered with the National Worship Register, they are entitled to start the necessary proceedings to obtain legal status and to be considered as public welfare entities. At the national level, based on the legal system in force, both proceedings are started at the Ministry of Justice. The application to obtain legal status must be presented at the General Board of Justice and the formal recognition as a public welfare entity must be required at the Organizations National Centre under the National Council for the Coordination of Social Policies. At the provincial level, local bodies are in charge of religious groups in their jurisdiction.

The religious associations applying for registration must previously obtain legal status. In this case, the authorities subscribing to the articles of association will be legally liable, provided the association and appointment of authorities has been formalized through a public deed or a private instrument duly certified by a Notary Public. Otherwise, it will be deemed as a *de facto* association, and all the members will be jointly liable for the association's deeds (section 46, Civil Code).

Since its creation in 1978, 3,500 religious institutions have been registered with the National Worship Registry. At present, 2,750 are still active; the

rest have ceased in their functions either on request or for non-compliance with the legal provisions in force. Religious institutions of different origin are registered. Most of them, approximately 70 percent, belong to the evangelical field. They may be small independent churches or religious institutions from which hundreds of thousands of local branches depend (God Assemblies, Free Brothers, and the Baptist Evangelical Convention). There are also other denominations like the Seventh-day Adventist Church, Latter Day Saints Church, or Jehovah's Witnesses that have many temples, chapels, or small worship places throughout the country. Of the total number of registered institutions, many have been established for a long time, while others have recently arrived in the country (Pentecostal Evangelists, Chinese Buddhists, Hindus, followers of African religions, and spiritualists).

Among other requirements, the applying religious institutions must duly produce the following information:

- Name of the institution and date of establishment or incorporation in the country.
- Headquarters address, and location of chapels and branches.
- Statutes (official name; principles and purpose; object; religious authorities—appointment, ordination, functions, mandate duration, requirements needed to be religious ministers; civil authorities—appointment, functions, mandate duration; way of government; relationship between civil and religious authorities; amendment of the Statute).
- Administrative officials.
- Administrative and religious dependence on other institutions.
- Approximate number of members or followers.
- Educational and training institutions for religious personnel and the pertinent curricula.
- Primary doctrinal grounds.
- Method of appointment of religious authorities.
- Form of government.
- Permanent and regular religious activities.

The main benefits obtained from the official registration are:

- Permission to perform public religious activities.
- National State's recognition of the religious association and its ministers.
- The entry, stay permit extension, or permanent residence of foreign religious ministers.

- Economic benefits such as: (1) exemption from the income tax in relation to monies received from religious activity or worship services; (2) exemption from the minimum presumed income tax; (3) exemption from the stamp tax; (4) exemption from the Value Added Tax; (5) exemption from internal taxes of devotional objects used in worship; (6) exemption or payment reduction of sanitary services for worship sites; and (7) exemption from taxes and rates affecting the real estate or vehicles of religious institutions.
- Ownership, management, and organization of public schools privately managed at all levels, and entitlement to state subsidies and benefits.

Institutions belonging to religions with duly accredited existence in the Republic of Argentina are registered with the National Worship Registry. This is a view of the legal system that has been in force for 25 years for non-Catholic religious institutions that have had a positive relationship with the State and the Catholic Church within the framework of their own particular reality. This regulatory system has been in force for so long and has allowed a harmonic and peaceful co-existence with all religious sectors of the Argentine community. It would be inaccurate and unfair to interpret it otherwise.

State religion in Latin America has been declining in influence over the last two decades. At present, it can be affirmed that only Costa Rica and Bolivia recognize and support the Roman Catholic Church as the state's official religion. Other cases like Argentina, Paraguay, and Peru preserve special mention of the Catholic Church in their constitutions that coincides with their historical, social, and cultural realities, but at the same time guarantees religious freedom for the other existing religions.

Uruguay, in turn, does not support any religion but recognizes the Catholic Church's ownership of the churches built with the National State's funds with the exception of chapels, orphanages, hospitals, prisons, or public establishments.

Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, and Venezuela make no reference in their constitutions to any religion, presenting a non-religious scheme.

In Argentina, legislative drafts or bills on religious matters that were submitted by governmental bodies, minority religious organizations, or individual undertakings submitted occasionally for discussion from time to time were criticized. It was alleged that legislative amendment was not timely or needed due to the optimal co-existence of the religious groups, apart from the risk that would imply the repeal of the legislation in force, affecting vested rights and canceling the benefits obtained from the official registration.

Through the Worship Secretariat, the present Argentine government has definitely affirmed that it will not promote or foster any legislative bill on freedom of conscience and religion, unless the matter arouses the strong consensus of different sectors of the Argentine religious community, something that up to now has not taken place. Besides, it must be taken into account that at present, no bill on religious matters has been submitted for parliamentary discussion.

It can be emphatically affirmed that the Republic of Argentina does not restrict or limit religious freedom in any way. Furthermore, based on the religious independence in relation to the state, it allows a voluntary inter-religious dialogue that guarantees a peaceful co-existence.



E N D



RELIGIOUS FREEDOM AND BELIEF:

NEW CHALLENGES IN THE 21ST CENTURY—SCHOOL
EDUCATION, CHILDREN'S AND PARENTS' RIGHTS

ROSA MARIA MARTINEZ DE CODES

University Complutense of Madrid, Spain

Presented at the IRLA International Congress, Taiwan 2004

We all know that freedom of religion and belief is a universal human right and a fundamental freedom recognized in international instruments in all democratic, legal orders and in the constitutions of countries with widely-varying cultures.

But we also know that proclaiming a principle does not alone guarantee its continuing force; apart from enforcing laws, a huge collective effort is required so that these principles may be actively exercised in our societies. A true intellectual and moral revolution is necessary!

Following the *1981 UN Declaration on the Elimination on All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion and Belief*, we should like to underline the close relation between freedom of religion and belief and the content of religious education. Article 5, para. 3 from the Declaration states:

“The child shall be protected from any form of discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief. He shall be brought up in the spirit of understanding, tolerance, friendship among peoples, peace and universal brotherhood, respect for freedom of religion or belief of others, and in full consciousness that his energy and talents should be devoted to the service of his fellow men.”

Further, it states that:

“Every child shall enjoy the right to have access to education in the matter of religion or belief in accordance with the wishes of his parents or, as the case may be, legal guardians, and shall not be compelled to receive teaching on religion or belief against the wishes of his parents

or legal guardians, the best interest of the child being the guiding principle.”

According to these two statements, several concerns must be taken into account in defining the content of religious education: the public educational aim of promoting tolerance and mutual understanding, and the rights of the parents to have the final say in the religious and moral education of their children. By examining the experiences of different countries, we can see how dilemmas derived from these competing concerns may be met in ways that can effectively foster tolerance and respect the equal right to freedom of religion of all inhabitants.

Education—particularly education about religion or belief—might help to foster tolerance and mutual understanding across borders of faith and culture in pluralistic societies. But it might also lead to discrimination, intolerance, and human rights’ violations when it is not conducted in an inclusive way.

In 1994, the UN Commission on Human Rights encouraged Special Rapporteur Mr. Abdelfattah Amor to study how education might foster tolerance in a more effective way. He then conducted a survey to explore if and how the curricula on religious education at the primary and secondary school level of different countries contributed to the protection of human rights in general and to the protection of freedom of religion or belief and a climate of tolerance and non-discrimination in particular.

The findings of this survey also provided the basis for planning an International Consultative Conference that was hosted by Spanish authorities and took place in Madrid in November 2001. A main aim was to develop strategies on how religious intolerance and discrimination can be prevented and how freedom of religion or belief can be promoted through education.

The 19 points of agreement of the Madrid Final Document underscore the need to strengthen human rights education and increase the pupils’ knowledge and understanding of religious traditions of others. It is also important to recall the importance of securing the parents’ rights and the right to freedom of religion or belief in relation to school education.

Consider the situations of the three actors of religious freedom, which are—after God—schools, pupils, and parents.

First, the topic “school education in religion” covers more than religious education in schools. It also embraces religion as covered on other parts of the curriculum in subjects such as history, in thematic fields such as citizenship

education and intercultural education, or in outcomes-based approaches to topics such as “life orientation.”

As a matter of fact, various forms of citizenship education or civic education can be used as vehicles to explore issues of religious diversity and religious discrimination. The national curriculum for citizenship in the United Kingdom requires knowledge and understanding of the diversity of national, regional, religious, and ethnic identities and the need for mutual respect and understanding.

As well as dealing with issues of religious diversity in the curriculum, there is a need to consider school policies on religious discrimination and the mechanisms schools might introduce to eliminate it.

It is interesting that the current educational policy of the British Humanist Association includes support for provision by common schools for religious holidays, designated spaces for optional prayer and worship, and optional faith-based teaching by different religious groups. The policy also promotes the idea of more respect for and flexibility on other cultural and religious requirements on matters such as school uniforms and food, as well as inclusive education for all pupils designed to give an understanding of the range of beliefs found in a pluralist society.

Second, we need to think about the *types of schools* that would be dealing with issues of religious tolerance and non-discrimination. Currently some western democratic societies exclude any form of religious education from the curriculum of state schools (e.g., France and USA). Others have some form of multi-faith or integrative religious education in the state school (e.g., England and Wales, Scotland, Norway). Others have various types of faith-based schooling in which religious education is taught from a “confessional” perspective (e.g., Germany, Poland, Latvia, Spain).

Faith-based schools face particular challenges in promoting tolerance and non-discrimination towards those of other faiths, and even sometimes towards some members of their own religion. Little research has been done in Europe on the degree to which faith-based schools deal effectively with religious and cultural diversity. However, the introduction of civic education into the national curriculum for all state-funded secondary schools (including faith-based schools, as was the case of England and Wales in 2002), will help us to explore new formulas of understanding and tolerance of other religions and cultures.

Third, we must consider the importance of the views and responses of children, especially their motivations concerning the study of religions. Today’s educators point to children’s rights as an issue in religious education.

The UN Commission on Human Rights has noted the question of children's rights as one of immediate importance for debates about religious education and about the different ways in which religious education can be institutionalized. Given the growing awareness of the need to respect children's views, educators and politicians should include them in decisions about the preferred model of religious education as well.

Moreover, all the major declarations of international law specify that parents have the right to give their children the type of education and instruction they desire. The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966) is very specific regarding parents' rights when it affirms that:

“The States Parties to the present Covenant undertake to have respect for the liberty of parents and, when applicable, legal guardians to choose for their children schools, other than those established by the public authorities, which conform to such minimum educational standards as may be laid down or approved by the State and to ensure the religious and moral education of their children in conformity with their own convictions” (art. 13, para. 3)

Since we, all parties, whatever our confession, have the unique opportunity here of being gifted by faith or profound belief, we have the duty to transmit this inestimable gift which we have received. The responsibility of parents is essential here.

Before ending we should address the question of religious plurality. Approaches to religion that promote tolerance and non-discrimination with regard to freedom of religion or belief need to take account of the nature of religious plurality in late modern societies. Through exploring religious and cultural plurality, students will be enabled to form their own views on pluralism at both the social level and the level of individual identity.

Traditional plurality is the plurality of overt ethnic and religious diversity in societies. At this point I would like to express my profound satisfaction at the development of religion in Taiwan. Taiwanese people are an example of religious plurality. You have been able to accept foreign religious ideas while honoring traditional beliefs. As a result, Taiwan has welcomed the development of many different religions.

It is remarkable how Christianity, in addition to Taoism, Buddhism, and to the forms of worship of the aborigines, brought to Taiwan in the early 17th

century by Spanish and Dutch missionaries, flourished and built up many churches in the atmosphere of religious freedom that followed the Japanese occupation period.

Coming from Europe where modern plurality accounts for multiple influences on individual identity, the erosion of traditional cultural boundaries and a tendency towards relativity in the sphere of religion, your experience and contribution to the promotion of tolerance and non-discrimination with regard to freedom of religion and belief is important.

Pedagogies and methods of teaching and learning are needed that allow young people to explore their own identities in relation to cultural source material, including information specifically about religions. The goal of dialogue between people of different faiths and between believers and non-believers could be attained in this way.

It was the consensus in the Madrid Conference Final Document, November 2001, that the aim of school education is to train thinking individuals who will be knowledgeable of their roots but also capable of respecting the pluralism of different cultures, beliefs, spiritual values, and religions.

The possibility of education to build a world that is more egalitarian and has less conflict requires political, economic, and financial decision-making on the part of the Member States, plus the effort of all those who are conscious of the importance of education.

I hope that the reflection on these key issues will help us to progress together along the difficult but necessary road to religious freedom and democracy.



E N D



RELIGIOUS FREEDOM AND GLOBAL SECURITY

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Presented at the IRLA International Congress, Taiwan 2004

“RELIGION IS BAD FOR YOU—AND THE WORLD”

“In the name of God, the most merciful, the most compassionate. . . . In the name of God, of myself and of my family . . . I pray to you God to forgive me from all my sins, to allow me to glorify you in every possible way.” Mohammed Atta, September 11 terrorist.

Common to today’s mind is the concept that religion produces hatred and war. For atheists and agnostics, religious belief is seen as threatening and dangerous; while for some theists their beliefs endorse the use of violence against the “enemy.”

“There is no such source and cause of strife, quarrel, fights, malignant opposition, persecution, and war, and all evil in the state, as religion,” concluded the Supreme Court of Wisconsin.¹

“Blind faith can justify anything,” comments Richard Dawkins. “If a man believes in a different god, or even if he uses a different ritual for worshipping the same god, blind faith can decree that he should die—on the cross, at the stake, skewered on a Crusader’s sword, shot in a Beirut street, or blown up in a bar in Belfast.”

Consequently, “the world is in need of less religion and more common sense,” observes British author Llewelyn Powys; while a bumper sticker announces “Warning: Quitting Religion Now Greatly Increases the Chances of World Peace.”

This paper does not address the validity or otherwise of religious belief; rather, the proposition is that *intolerance*—whether against religion or on behalf of religion—is the primary destabilizing factor when it comes to religious matters and is itself more of a threat to peace and security than any religious beliefs themselves. *The primary thesis is that religious freedom is an essential component of global security—indeed, without it there is little prospect for any kind of true security.*

BRIEF HISTORICAL OVERVIEW—AND IMPLICATIONS

Religion as a factor in violence, war, and instability is hardly a modern concept. Depending on definitions, religion is assigned as a major contributory aspect of conflict throughout history—a fact which is perhaps not surprising once the strong motivational and identity aspects of religious beliefs are recognized. That is not to say that the fundamental tenets of any particular religion are necessarily violent and warlike; rather, religion has been identified as a point of difference and contention and even a mechanism to “demonize” the enemy.

“Religious wars” (conflicts in which religious difference can be referenced as a point of dissention) are numerous. While many other factors—politics, economics, culture, ethnicity, nationalism, territorial claims, resources, etc.—may also be part of any conflict, religion can often be the focus or “badge” of such clashes.

It is estimated that some nine million people died as a result of the Crusades, instigated for at least an official “religious” reason (the recapture of the Holy Land for the Christians). Europe of the 16th and 17th centuries saw bloody conflict between religious groups, with a final death toll of more than 14 million. In some parts, there were huge population losses (one estimate for the Thirty Years War in what is now Germany suggests that 40 percent of the total population died, more than those lost by the Black Death—a plague considered one of the worst natural disasters in history). “Internal” wars of religion—as, for example, the crusade against the Albigensians in southern France that caused the death of one million people—also grotesquely illustrate the use of violence based on religious difference. The social instability and violence brought by religiously-motivated witch-hunts resulted in some two million executions. Similarly, the Inquisition and Protestant-inspired persecutions led to the deaths of hundreds of thousands more.

“The sad truth is that religion, as we begin this new millennium, still starts more conflicts than it resolves,” writes Elliott Abrams². That many should conclude that “religion leads to warfare” is not unexpected. A simplistic analysis would conclude that religion is often a primary factor in conflict, and that religion therefore should be eradicated.

This crass conclusion misses the point that multiplied millions have died under overtly atheistic regimes and in non-religious conflicts or in wars that may have far more to do with political or other factors than religion.

But as noted above, this is not the primary subject of this paper. What is at issue concerns how religious issues should be treated by those in charge of security—whether local, national, or global—and how supporting religious freedom can aid in stability and security.

NOT RELIGION BUT INTOLERANCE

“I acknowledge that history is full of religious wars, but we must distinguish: it is not the multiplicity of religions which has produced wars; it is the intolerant spirit animating that which believed itself in the ascendant.”⁷³ Montesquieu’s observation surely deserves considered analysis. The essential factor is not religious convictions but the way they are expressed. As Kofi Annan once remarked, “The problem is usually not with the faith but with the faithful.”⁷⁴ Taking the cue from such concepts as unique truth and exclusive salvation, some believers damn those of other faiths and preach and practice violence against them. This intolerant spirit may well be abhorred by other believers of the same faith, but the extremists are frequently able to portray moderates as apostates from the truth, rather than the other way around.

Tragically, as Blaise Pascal observed, it is true that “Men never do evil so completely and cheerfully as when they do it from religious conviction.”

It is this factor far more than the actual tenets of religions themselves that leads to violations of the rights of others. Consequently, both the intolerant attitude and the response it engenders, not the specific beliefs are the real problems. As has been so frequently observed, the main religions of the world all preach peace and respect for life, so why is there so much interfaith violence? The main issue is in the way religion is used to identify and dehumanize the “enemy,” so that whatever intolerance and persecution that results may be legitimated. In the words of Hillary Rodham Clinton, “*in every religion, there are those who would drape themselves in the mantle of belief and faith only to distort its most sacred teachings—preaching intolerance and resorting to violence.*”

As Federico Mayor, former director-general of UNESCO, observed, “It is intolerable that the world’s religions—founded on the values of love and compassion—should provide a pretext for the expression of hatred and violence.”

Religion is used as a *pretext*, then, and not as a fundamental expression of “God’s will” or mandated “holy war.” Yet whatever the debate over religion’s participatory role, and whether it is a question of religion being hijacked or not, it is undeniably true that the use or abuse of religious concepts has played a considerable role in inflaming tensions and inflicting violence. In

its preamble, the 1981 United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief refers to the issue, particularly the violation of religious belief:

“Considering that the disregard and infringement of human rights and fundamental freedoms, in particular of the right to freedom of thought, conscience, religion, or whatever belief, have brought, directly or indirectly, wars and great suffering to mankind, especially where they serve as a means of foreign interference in the internal affairs of other States and amount to kindling hatred between peoples and nations...”

“Wars and great suffering... kindling hatred...” Such terms reveal the conviction that denial of the right to religious belief and expression can have tragic results, as well as the belief that the wise observance of religion can improve peace and harmony between peoples:

“Convinced that freedom of religion and belief should also contribute to the attainment of the goals of world peace, social justice, and friendship among peoples and to the elimination of ideologies or practices of colonialism and racial discrimination.”

The conclusion as stated in Article Three of the Declaration:

“Discrimination between human beings on the grounds of religion or belief constitutes an affront to human dignity and a disavowal of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, and shall be condemned as a violation of the human rights and fundamental freedoms proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and enunciated in detail in the International Covenants on Human Rights, and as an obstacle to friendly and peaceful relations between nations.”

SOCIETAL BENEFITS OF RELIGIOUS FREEDOM AND PLURALITY

Montesquieu continues, “Besides, as all religions contain some precepts advantageous to society, it is well that they should be zealously observed. Now, could there be a greater incitement to zeal than a multiplicity of religions?” Additionally, he observes that “it has also been remarked that a new sect introduced into a state was always the surest means of correcting the abuses of the old faith. It is sophistry to say that it is against the interest of the prince to tolerate many religions in his kingdom: though all the sects in the world were to gather together into one state, it would not be in the least detrimental to it, because there is no creed which does not ordain obedience and preach submission.”⁵

The social benefit of religion and interfaith harmony is surely self-evident, says Montesquieu. The reverse is dramatically demonstrated through history and into our own day as religion or religious overtones color and distort perceptions and lead to conflict and violence. In the words of John Shattuck, Assistant Secretary of the U.S. State Department for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor (1997), "Ethnic and religious conflict remain the most intractable and dangerous problems in the world today." Similarly, a statement by UNESCO observes, "As shown by the political impact of religious fundamentalism and ethno-religious movements, religious difference is a main factor of contemporary social conflict on local, national, and global levels."⁶

So it is essential to recognize such factors and address them, noting the positive benefits that religious freedom and tolerance bring. They encourage principles of mutual respect and self-fulfillment, and reflect an assurance that the state is supportive of individual and communal aspects of belief insofar as they promote harmonious mutual development. Religious freedom is not only concerned with the rights of one group but with all; it especially encourages the individual to understand that others have the right of belief and practice in accord with their own liberty of conscience.

"Religious freedom also contributes decisively to develop citizens who are genuinely free and helps them fulfill their duties with greater responsibility. The exercise of religious freedom generally cultivates a sense of the other, thereby enabling the individual who professes the faith to live with the neighbor in a right relationship characterized by an objective rather than subjective standard. It is also an important means of strengthening a people's moral integrity. Civil society can count on believers who, because of their deep religious convictions, will not succumb readily to dominating ideologies or trends but will endeavor to act in accordance with their inner aspirations to all that is true and right, an essential condition for securing peace..."⁷

In other words, religious freedom is an essential building block of a stable society without which there is a tendency to intolerance, divisiveness, and tension that may very well erupt in communal violence.

A RIGHT RIGHT

Nor is this only a question of pragmatics, looking only at the state from a perspective of serving its own ends. Ultimately religious freedom is a right because it is right!

Montesquieu again: “In conclusion, even if there were no inhumanity in distressing the consciences of others, even if there did not result from such a course any of the evil effects which do spring from it in thousands, it would still be foolish to advise it. He who would have me change my religion is led to that, without doubt, because he would not change his own although force were employed; and yet he finds it strange that I will not do a thing which he himself would not do, perhaps for the empire of the world.”⁸

Force in religion is counterproductive. State-sanctioned or state-enforced belief is just as counterproductive, for it attempts to command with threats that which can only be freely accepted. As Montesquieu says, why should you try to enforce your particular beliefs on anyone else when you would strongly object to someone doing this to you?

In fact, religious liberty and security are intertwined and interdependent. They flourish together, for when one is denied, the other suffers. In their review of the guiding principles and recommendations on security and religious freedom, the group of experts of the International Religious Liberty Association comments:

“Religious freedom requires security, just as true security requires religious freedom. The two are interdependent, mutually reinforcing, not exclusive, and do not collide or conflict. Too frequently, responses to religion-based terrorism have involved efforts to enhance security at the expense of religious freedom. These responses have often proved counterproductive and result in violations of international standards of human rights. Such violations, which diminish both security and religious freedom, must be opposed by governments, religious groups, people of faith, and all those who truly value human rights.

“Respecting freedom of religion is more effective in gaining loyalty of citizens and in achieving peace and security than are weapons and coercive measures.”⁹

The argument frequently made by governments and political leaders is that restrictions on religious freedom are essential in some cases to preserve national security. Such an argument is facile at best. Worst case scenarios make this the excuse of totalitarianism, the refuge of dictators and demagogues. For who is to determine the best course in such a situation, and how are any checks to be made? Who is able to argue the case against “presumed necessity”? As onetime British prime minister William Pitt observed in 1783, “Necessity is the plea for every infringement of human freedom. It is the argument of tyrants; it is the creed of slaves.”

For this reason the guarantee of religious freedom in international documents is absolute, while the practice of religious beliefs is only limited

by some very narrow causes. For example, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights does *not* allow the limiting of religious freedom, even in times of emergency. Additionally, General Comment 22 of the UN Human Rights Committee (1993) adds that the right to religious freedom in Article 18 “is to be strictly interpreted: restrictions are not allowed on grounds not specified there, even if they would be allowed as restrictions to other rights protected in the Covenant, such as national security. Limitations may be applied only for those purposes for which they were prescribed and must be directly related and proportionate to the specific need on which they are predicated. Restrictions may not be imposed for discriminatory purposes or applied in a discriminatory manner.”

This is because it is recognized that to violate such rights to religious faith and practice have so frequently proved to be such a potent source of violence, suffering, and death. Whether it is persecution from the state or by other groups, governments need to recognize that religious strife is only compounded by denials of religious freedom. As U.S. president James Madison noted, “Torrents of blood have been spilt in the world in vain attempts of the secular arm to extinguish religious discord, by proscribing all differences in religious opinions.”

“The use of ‘religion’ as an excuse to repress the freedom of expression and to deny human rights is not confined to any country or time,” says famous author Margaret Atwood. Historical precedent should at least be used to good effect through the recognition that civil force and violence cannot solve inter-religious or anti-religious disputes. Also, it is essential to recognize that religion can be used for other purposes, not the least being political supremacy.

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM AND SECURITY TODAY

The current world situation does give cause for alarm. Not only are many civil leaders cloaking their ambitions in religious terms, but the drive to security can lead to the erosion of freedoms, including religious freedom. Extremists on both sides can compromise the hard-won rights and guarantees of religious liberty and freedom of conscience. H. L. Mencken’s cynical but apt comment that “most people want security in this world, not liberty” is perhaps more true now than ever. Yet those who would exploit the “security” argument should be aware of the damage caused by such general appeals, and that, to quote Benjamin Franklin “they that can give up essential liberty to obtain a little temporary safety deserve neither liberty nor safety.”

Similarly, Thomas Jefferson said: “Those who desire to give up freedom in order to gain security will not have, nor do they deserve, either one.”

The “trade-off” between freedom and security is an illusion. It is not a question of opposites, but of safeguarding both. The danger is that citizens, wishing to trust the motives of government, end up being betrayed in both religious freedom and security.

“Because of what appears to be a lawful command on the surface, many Citizens, because of respect for the law, are cunningly coerced into waiving their rights due to ignorance.”¹⁰

In his analysis of the wars between Sparta and Athens, Edward Gibbon noted that the democracy of Athens fell because of the lack of will to pay the cost of freedom. “In the end more than they wanted freedom, they wanted security. When the Athenians finally wanted not to give to society but for society to give to them, when the freedom they wished for was freedom from responsibility, then Athens ceased to be free.”

The responsibility for supporting religious freedom lies with all concerned. It cannot be guaranteed in practice by the internal declarations and covenants, of which there are many. It cannot be defended by unscrupulous methods that do more harm than good. It cannot be protected by governmental decree or legislative order or civil requirement. It can only be supported by those who recognize that the denial of religious freedom to another is a denial of religious freedom to oneself.

In an increasingly uncertain world, torn by factionalism that includes religion as a most potent weapon, the cry for security cannot be at the expense of trading in religious rights. If it is true that, according to Adlai Stevenson, “definition of a free society is a society where it is safe to be unpopular,” then this applies to religious questions too. As John Quincy Adams¹¹ remarked, “civil liberty can be established on no foundation of human reason which will not at the same time demonstrate the right of religious freedom.”

CONCLUSION

“The wholesome implementation of religious freedom can help strengthen international peace and ensure the common good of each nation, of each society. For when individuals know that their fundamental rights are protected, they are better disposed to work for the common welfare...” Not only this, but the hope is that “the international community will continue to safeguard the freedom of individuals and of communities to profess and practice their religion, also as

an essential tool that fosters peaceful human coexistence and enhances social harmony and universal brotherhood among nations and peoples.”¹²

The challenge for all involved, both from the perspective of supporting religious freedom and ensuring national/global security, is that each side does not see the other as an opponent, but as a contributor to a peaceful, harmonious, and stable society. Only when religious freedom and security are not regarded as opposites can there be real and meaningful progress. Only when religious freedom is recognized as a vital aspect of peaceful society that practices mutual respect can there be true security.

Paula J. Dobriansky, U.S. Under-secretary of State for Global Affairs, speaks of “a new global security agenda that must be alert to the evolving threats that our world faces.” This, she says, involves recognizing “several other issues which are coming into focus as security issues, including...religious freedom.” The alternative? “Repression, intolerance, and a contempt for law and order, are the fuel of terrorism.”¹³

It is a bleak contrast that should not be lost on any one of us. U.S. Supreme Court Justice Louis D. Brandeis wrote, “Experience should teach us to be most on our guard to protect liberty when the government’s purposes are beneficial. The greatest dangers to liberty lurk in insidious encroachment by men of zeal, well meaning but without understanding.”

For “there are more instances of the abridgement of the freedom of the people by the gradual and silent encroachment of those in power, than by violent and sudden usurpation,” adds James Madison.

Many actions taken to ensure global security may be well-meaning. Some may be exploitive. Some may be purely and completely wrong. But the danger is in the giving up of liberties for that “little temporary safety,” when we sacrifice what has the most value and meaning and continue to live in a fearful state—which in the end is no security at all.¹⁴ For in the words of former professor of law, Felix Frankfurter, “there can be no security where there is fear.”

Ultimately, according to B. E. Hutchinson, “security is the priceless product of freedom,” and this applies to religious freedom especially. True security is not in protection and hardware but in the mutual recognition of the others’ right to exist—from which come all the other rights. Sadly, the usual reaction to a sense of insecurity is to enforce conformity, to demand compliance, and to pass laws to achieve this.

The end result is often far from what is desired. In the words of Taoist leader, Lao Tzu, “The more laws and order are made prominent, the more thieves and robbers there will be.”

Increased security for its own sake may end up just creating more thieves and robbers. The alternative is for the state to recognize that since “all religions contain some precepts advantageous to society, it is well that they should be zealously observed” by building religious freedom as a real practice in society.

Realizing that, as the Roman poet Horace dryly commented, “your own safety is at stake when your neighbor’s wall is ablaze,” we would do well to safeguard the religious freedom walls of our neighbors—at least as much as we value our own religious freedom and security.



END

1. Weiss vs. District Board on March 18, 1890.
2. Elliot Abrams is currently Deputy National Security Adviser and Special Assistant to the President. He was formerly president of the Ethics and Public Policy Center and a member of the Reagan administration.
3. Montesquieu, *Persian Letters* (1721).
4. Press Release SG/SM/7520, 29 August 2000. <http://www0.un.org/News/Press/docs/2000/20000829.sgsm7520.doc.html>.
5. Montesquieu, *op. cit.*
6. UNESCO: Management of Social Transformations Programme (MOST) Web site.
7. Vatican Address at U.N. on Religious Freedom, November 14, 2003. Statement by Archbishop Celestino Migliore, the Holy See’s permanent observer to the United Nations.
8. Montesquieu, *op. cit.*
9. International Religious Liberty Association Group of Experts, “Guiding Principles and Recommendations on Security and Religious Freedom.” *Leuven, Belgium, June 11, 2003*. <http://www.irla.org/documents/reports/leuvenreport.html>.
10. U.S. v. Minker.
11. John Quincy Adams was the 6th president of the United States of America.
12. Migliore statement, cited above.
13. A New Global Security Agenda. <http://www.state.gov/g/rls/rm/2002/12381.htm>.
14. “A right that can’t be defended is a right that exists only in name,” notes Ilana Mercer.



SECURITY, RELIGIOUS FREEDOM AND INTER- RELIGIOUS DIALOGUE

JOHN GRAZ

Secretary General for the IRLA, U.S.A.

Security has become a quasi-obsession in America. Our days are influenced by the color of the alert—yellow, orange, red. I used to study the relationship between inter-religious dialogues and religious freedom, but since September 11, 2001, I have to include the dimension of security into my thinking.

United Nations Special Rapporteur, Professor Abdelfattah Amor, stated in his 2002 inaugural address of the IRLA World Congress in Manila: “Inter-religious dialogue constitutes a means that can help to contain conflicts and sometimes to solve them by the pedagogy that it can develop. It participates in the prevention of intolerance and discrimination based on religion or belief.”¹

Former United States of America Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom, Robert Seiple, presented a similar message: “We must promote not just tolerance, but respect for other faiths and interfaith dialogue and geopolitical education.”²

The convergence between Amor and Seiple on this issue is worth noting. Having been involved over the past ten years in several official dialogues and many inter-religious meetings, I share Mr. Amor’s convictions. My own conviction was reinforced when I observed what can happen when there is no dialogue.

In November 2003, I went to Ambon in the Moluccas, which is located in the eastern part of Indonesia. Between 1999 and 2004, about 6,000 people were killed during a civil war between Christians and Muslims. I saw the remains of churches, schools, houses, and mosques which had been burned, and I heard many accounts of tragedy. However, I met Muslim and Christian leaders who were trying to build bridges between the two communities. In such an environment, inter-religious dialogue is the most significant step to improving security and protecting religious freedom for all.

I have to recognize that if the association between inter-religious dialogue and security is logical, adding religious freedom may seem to some rather odd. However, I believe that inter-religious dialogue favors peace and security and also religious freedom.

To have the right approach to that issue, I pose the following questions:

1. What is religious freedom?
2. Does religious freedom make inter-religious dialogue more difficult?
3. Does religious freedom open the door to proselytism?
4. Has the need for security threatened inter-religious dialogue?
5. How can inter-religious dialogue be initiated?

WHAT IS RELIGIOUS FREEDOM?

Most of us have no problem with the meaning of dialogue, therefore it is only necessary to ask what religious freedom is. I propose a three-part answer: Religious freedom is (1) an accomplishment of man, (2) a basic human right, and (3) a God-given gift.

a. *An accomplishment of man.* It took centuries and centuries of tensions, wars, and misunderstandings to establish religious freedom. In his comprehensive study on “Discrimination in the Matter of Religious Rights and Practices,”³ Arcot Krishnaswami illustrated the long, patient development of the concept of the right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion. It would be a tragic mistake to take for granted a freedom which was so difficult to obtain and establish.

b. *A basic human right.* In the beginning, the French Revolution, like the American Revolution, was in favor of religious freedom and defined it as a right. By 1948, *The Universal Declaration of Human Rights* had given religious freedom international recognition:

“Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship, and observance.”

Other important documents which also affirm basic human rights need to be mentioned. These include Article 18 of the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* (ICCPR) adopted by the United Nations General Assembly of December 16, 1966, and Article 9 of the *European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms*, signed on November 4, 1950. We should not forget the United Nations *Declaration of the Elimination of*

All Forms of Intolerance and Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief adopted in 1981. Religious freedom is not only a basic human right, but according to the United Nations General Comment on Article 18 of the ICCPR, a fundamental freedom which can not be derogated even in the case of an emergency.⁴

c. *A God-given gift.* According to the Bible, God created man with the freedom to choose (Genesis 2:15-17). The freedom of choice is the essence of religious freedom. The Koran also mentions “. . . no constraint in religion” (S11, *The Bull*). Jesus said, “Do to others what you would like them to do to you.”

Protestants, then the Catholic Church since the Second Vatican Council, and more recently the Orthodox Churches and other religions, have accepted the concept of religious freedom. Direct opposition to the concept of religious freedom is rare.

But in spite of a quasi-universal recognition of this right, religious freedom is still seen as a threat by some religious leaders and governments.

DOES RELIGIOUS FREEDOM MAKE INTER-RELIGIOUS DIALOGUE MORE DIFFICULT?

Some political and religious leaders are very hesitant to participate in dialogue because they see possible negative aspects:

- It may destabilize the current religious equilibrium.
- It may open the door to proselytism and “wild competition.”⁵
- It may produce reactions of intolerance.

The proper use of freedom is to create an open space—a space that allows tension, competition, and reactions. In this environment, adaptation and communication become important factors. The religious organization which feels challenged must communicate with the public, provide an answer to its needs, and express an interest in it. This means it must answer the public’s questions, accept its comments, and take the risk of winning or losing the people’s support. Freedom has its exigencies, its tensions, its advantages, and its disadvantages. It can jeopardize dialogue and peace. But everything depends on the way we conceive and practice it.

Religious freedom may generate tensions and crises. Under the cover of public order or the fight against terrorism, the state may try to protect the traditional churches or religions from competitors. If this is the case, it does not respect the principle of neutrality and the separation of church and state. It creates frustration and division among the citizens—some becoming “second class citizens” because of their beliefs.

DOES RELIGIOUS FREEDOM OPEN THE DOOR TO PROSELYTISM?

Among many religious leaders it is not unusual to hear strong attacks against proselytism. “Religious freedom—Yes! Proselytism—No!”⁶

The problem is that there is a lack of judicial or legal definition for proselytism in order to oppose it on behalf of human rights. Allegations that some methods used by certain religious groups to make new converts border on the unethical may be true (although hard evidence of such practice is hard to find). Coercing people into changing religions by threatening or harming them is a method that is inconsistent with religious freedom. But to remain in a religion or to keep it secret under the threat of arrest, execution, or discrimination is a far more widely-spread practice and is well documented. In addition, providing material inducements to change religion presents an ethical problem (although, the mere provision of education, healthcare, and other benefits to members is hardly problematic). Some forms of proselytism may not be the best way to build peace, but denying people the right to know and receive information and persecuting them are much worse and are clear violations of human rights.

To avoid misunderstandings and unnecessary tensions in inter-religious relations, we should work on a “code of good conduct” which respects freedom of choice and protects individuals against all forms of excessive pressure and intolerance.

To this end, the International Religious Liberty Association convened in Spain in 1999 and 2000, gathering some of the best experts in the field of religious liberty for two meetings on proselytism. They published an international document entitled “Guiding Principles for the Responsible Dissemination of Religion or Belief.”⁷

Principle 1 states: “The right to teach, manifest, and disseminate one’s religion or belief is an established human right. Everyone has the right to attempt to convince others of the truth of one’s belief. Everyone has the right to adopt or change religion or belief without coercion and according to the dictates of conscience.”

Principle 2 encourages dialogue: “Aware of their common responsibilities, religious communities should build relationships through contacts and conversations, manifesting convictions with humility, respect, and honesty.”

Principle 9 states: “No one should knowingly make false statements regarding any aspect of other religions, nor denigrate or ridicule their beliefs, practices, or origins.”

It is essential to remember that human beings are individuals—able to make their own decisions. They are not sheep who mindlessly follow a leader. No organization, including religious organizations, may say, “This demographic/ethnic group belongs to us.” People are not the property of a church or of an organization. They are human beings who deserve the right to decide according to the dictates of their own conscience.

It is a new challenge for all organizations—economical, political, and religious—to maintain their status in this environment. I believe that traditional religious organizations have the capacity to take up the challenge in communicating with the public, answering its needs, and accepting its responses.

HAS THE NEED OF SECURITY THREATENED INTER-RELIGIOUS DIALOGUE? A VERY SERIOUS ISSUE.

After September 11, 2001, security became an issue for many segments of society in America. In spite of that, inter-religious relations and dialogues must be presented as the best way to counter religious extremism. By definition, extremists are usually opposed to any dialogue, recognition, acceptance, or respect of others’ beliefs and, under its violent expression, a threat to security.

The long-term effect of the security emphasis may not help religious dialogue. Religious extremists do not seem to be any less violent. People are becoming more aware of the religious intolerance in some countries towards religious minorities. Speeches made by the extremists in one part of the world are translated in other parts and cause a reaction. Some new regulations and legislation to protect people against extremists directly affect believers.

In a context of religious extremism, it is difficult to promote dialogues unless people of goodwill take the initiative and the lead in every religion. However, we have to admit that without a strong involvement of religious groups in dialogues, the result of the war against terrorism may increase a mutual defiance between religions, and a suspicious attitude from the state towards religious minorities.⁸

Has the need to improve security threatened inter-religious dialogue? The answer is yes! But it has also made inter-religious dialogue an imperative necessity! Imagine what our world would look like if all dialogues and relations between religions stopped instantly? In one way or another, our security would be affected. For example: On Christmas Eve 2002, in Ambon, extremists

wanted to bomb Christian churches. Moderate Muslims stood up in front of the churches to protect Christians, and because of this, the churches were not attacked.

HOW CAN INTER-RELIGIOUS DIALOGUE BE INITIATED?

Religious leaders: There are many ways to initiate inter-religious dialogue. Religious leaders, on behalf of their churches, can initiate such a dialogue. It is already done in many places. Among Christians we promote dialogues. There are also a number of dialogues between other faiths.

Civil authorities: They have many opportunities to meet with leaders of all religious groups in their countries. Religious majorities and minorities should be invited. It has been done in Russia, in Romania, in Hungary, in the U.S. and in many other nations. Civil authorities should include religious leaders when they face special problems like racism and anti-Semitism. Being together, leaders of different churches and religions, including minorities, will learn about each other and become familiar with their differences. They will also discover they are part of the same country, the same people, and have responsibility for their communities.

The state should be the servant of the citizens, not only the servant of one section of the population or one religion. The state should be the promoter of a policy of non-discrimination based on religion or belief. Encouraging and facilitating inter-religious meetings will be a good way to create a climate of peace between religions.

THE DANGER OF INTOLERANCE

History is composed of periods of freedom and tolerance, that alternate with periods of intolerance. Today we have to think carefully about the world we want to build for our children. Do we want to build a world of hatred, suspicion, and insecurity? No! This is why we need to encourage inter-religious dialogues.

Obviously, intolerance is more dangerous than freedom. History shows that intolerance has provoked a lot of destruction. In Europe it incited wars and persecutions. Think for a minute about the Inquisition, the Nazi and Communist persecution, totalitarian discrimination. Is this the best way to have peace and justice? Honest citizens with knowledge and skills had to leave

their countries. What price have we paid for intolerance? Intolerance makes countries poor and oppressors powerful.

Is it possible to force people to believe without their approval? What is the value of a religion or an ideology if people are forced to accept it? What is the value of a religion if it is obliged to use the power of the state to be accepted?¹ For those who are Christians, I ask the question: “Did Jesus use or seek the power of the state to convert people, or did He leave everyone free to accept or refuse His message?” Can there be a productive dialogue between religions where religious freedom is non-existent, where people have no right to make their own choices?

I believe that as freedom favors true dialogue, religious freedom favors a sincere dialogue between religions and contribute to build peaceful relationships. Why? We need freedom of expression to dialogue about our differences. Freedom of expression creates conditions favorable for listening. In most dialogues, religious or not, participants discover more common ground than they expect. In most dialogues in which I have participated, we listed our common beliefs and our differences and then we recognized that we shared essential values. Think about the values that Christians have in common with other religions and people of good will: Love of neighbor, justice, liberty, hope, service of the community and peace.

There is no true inter-religious dialogue without religious freedom. But at the same time, religious freedom offers an exceptional opportunity to dialogue. This is an interaction from one or the other—an indisputable interaction. Civil authorities should encourage inter-religious dialogue and see it as an answer to religious conflicts, real or potential.

Religious dialogue in a context of mutual respect and mutual rights is not only the answer to religious intolerance, it is an important factor of security.



E N D

1. *Fides et Libertas*, 2002, Silver Spring, Maryland, 20904, pp. 18-19.
2. Ambassador Robert Seiple, “The Ambassadorship of All Believers,” *The Brandywine Review of Faith and International Affairs*, vol. 1, Fall 2003, p. 2.
3. Arcot Krishnaswami, “Study of Discrimination in the Matter of Religious Rights and Practices,” U.N. Doc. E/CN.4/Sub.2/2000Rev. 1, U.N. Sales No. 60. XIV. 2, (1960).
4. Sec “Legal Analysis of Limitation Clause of Article ICCPR,” *Fides Et Libertas*, op. cit., 2003, pp 20-21.
5. See John Graz, “Religious Territorialism, the struggle over Proselytism,” *Liberty!*, vol. 100, No. 1, January/February 2005, pp. 20-23.
6. *Ibid.*

7. International Religious Liberty Association: "Guiding Principles for the Responsible Dissemination of Religion or Belief," *Fides et Libertas*, 2000, p. 96-98.
8. *Ibid.* p. 98.



TAKING RELIGION SERIOUSLY WHEN PROMOTING STATE SECURITY

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Although neither terrorism nor religious terrorism is new, the world nevertheless seems to have entered an age where there are daily reminders of politically and religiously connected violence. On the day that this speech was written, for example, the newspapers contained headlines of a standoff at the Imam Ali shrine in Najaf, Iraq, between supporters of Iman Moqtada al-Sadr and American soldiers. In Dhaka, Bangladesh, a bomb exploded, killing seven people and wounding the former Prime Minister. In the Darfur region of Sudan, hundreds of thousands of people were at risk of death due to an Islamist government's complicity in raids against civilian populations. In Katmandu, there was another day of violence prompted by anti-government rebels. The airwaves and newspapers are filled with reports of religious terrorist plots and arrests of suspected terrorists.

Many governments of the world, in response to the wave of terrorism in the 21st century, have introduced and are enforcing new security laws and anti-terrorism measures. Some governments in Central Asia, for example, have used the threat of terrorism as a rationale for widespread arrests of Muslims. In other parts of the world, governments that had been vigorous supporters of human rights have been among the quickest to enact new anti-terrorism laws and to increase military and police efforts.

By reacting to security challenges rather than focusing on underlying issues, governments may in many cases be reducing, rather than enhancing, the security they seek. The problem is that in their haste to respond to terrorism, many people and governments are not making a serious effort to understand why such attacks happen and how such attacks can be prevented in the future. I believe that they often are responding to symptoms—violence being conducted in the name of religion—and are not focusing sufficiently on the underlying causes.

A simply analogy to illustrate: if a pot is filled with boiling soup that is almost spilling over the sides, it may be a good idea to quickly place a lid on the pot. But no matter how tightly the lid is held and no matter for how long, the lid will not solve the problem if the heat of the fire is not reduced. If the lid is held on too long and too tightly without reducing the heat, the problem will only become worse.

I have observed that public and political debates in the U.S. (and other countries with which I am familiar) regarding security measures typically presume that those who commit violence—whether for reasons of religion or politics—do so because they are bad people who have bad motives. They are described in terms that typically place them into either the category of “fanatics” (such as “zealots” and “extremists”) or they are described as “common criminals” (with descriptive terms such as “killers,” “thugs,” and “evil”). I suggest that it is incorrect to assume that terrorists can be best understood as fanatics or criminals (or both), and that such an assumption is seriously flawed in many (perhaps even most) cases. This inaccurate assumption has led to the adoption of inappropriate security measures. Let me return to my metaphor—the boiling soup overflowing the pot. The problem here is not that the *soup* is necessarily bad.

Before I continue—so there is no misunderstanding—I do not like terrorism at all, regardless of whether it is committed by religious fanatics, states, or common criminals. In addition, I also believe that some terrorists acting in the name of religion are indeed fanatics and that others are common criminals. Returning to the analogy again, some ingredients in soup can be poisonous. And boiling soup, whether it contains poisons or not, can scald anyone whom it touches. But there is an important difference between how we ought to respond to the problem of poisons in soup and how we should respond to the problem of boiling soup that is overflowing the pot. I certainly want there to be less terrorism—the question is how to accomplish it intelligently.

To approach this issue, I would like to describe two classic psychological studies that may have some interesting and important lessons to teach us, not only about religious terrorists, but perhaps also about those people who are involved in the fight against terrorism as well.

The first psychological study is Stanley Milgram’s *Obedience to Authority* (1974). During the 1960s, Yale University psychologist Stanley Milgram conducted several experiments designed to test how willing people would be to follow instructions to inflict pain on others. We should remember that this was

following World War II, the Holocaust, and the war crimes trials in Nuremberg and Tokyo—where the accused often defended themselves by saying that they were “only following orders.” Milgram wanted to understand the psychological characteristics of people who would be willing to follow orders to hurt other people—even when the other people had never hurt them.

Although there were several variations in the experiments, most proceeded generally in the following way. Milgram and his assistants placed advertisements in newspapers seeking people to participate in a psychology study to test methods of learning. When people responded positively to the advertisement, they were asked to come to his research office. Upon arriving, the participants were told that they would participate in an experiment designed to study the effect of pain on memory. The person conducting the experiment, who stayed with the participant through the study, wore a white laboratory coat—which gave the impression that the experimenter was an authority figure such as a scientist or a doctor. The participants was then shown an electronic device that was called a “shock generator,” which had 30 small levers, each of which was marked by a voltage amount ranging from a low of 15 volts to a high of 450 volts. In addition, the device also graded the shocks in verbal terms such as “slight shock” to “intense shock,” to “danger: severe shock” and finally to “xxx” for shocks of 435 and 450 volts.

After being shown the electrical equipment, the experimenter in the white coat introduced the participant to another person whom I will call the “student.” The participant then watched as the experimenter placed electrodes on the student’s skin, and was told that whenever the student answered a memory question incorrectly, the participant would be required to flip a switch and thereby give a shock to the student. After each incorrect answer, the level of the shock would be increased to the next highest voltage. In reality—and unknown to the participant—the device did not actually shock the student; the student was only an actor trained to respond as if he sat in front of the electrical device. Whenever the student answered a question incorrectly and the participant flipped the lever to give a shock, the student—that is, the actor—would make noises of complaint from the next room. First there were responses indicating slight pain, then a sharper pain, and then loud protests demanding that the experiment be stopped. And finally—once the voltage level went too high—the student would stop responding completely—as if he were unconscious or perhaps even dead. The test was designed to see how willing participants would be to shock another person after being ordered to do so by the experimenter, as well as to learn what would be the highest voltage

shock they would be willing to deliver. (I repeat, the electrical device was not real and no shocks were actually given—though the participants did believe that the device was real and that people were receiving shocks).

Suppose you were in the situation of the participant in Milgram's experiment, and suppose you, like the real participants, believed that the device was real. How high—to what voltage—would you be have been willing to go in administering shocks to another person if the "student" answered a question incorrectly and if the experimenter ordered you to administer the shock?

Milgram in fact asked this hypothetical question to many people—just as I am asking you. The highest voltage that anyone said to Milgram that he or she would administer was 300 volts—and only a few admitted they would go this high. Every person responding to Milgram's theoretical question said that he or she would have, at some point, refused the experimenter's instructions to continue to administer the shocks, and almost all said that they would refuse to give any shock beyond 150 volts. Milgram also asked people to predict how others would respond to this question. Almost everyone he asked said that only a very small percentage of people—those who were pathological (perhaps no more than two percent of the population) would be willing to deliver the 450-volt maximum shock. In other words, people typically predict about themselves and others that almost all human beings would refuse to obey the instructions to administer lethal shocks to others.

Is this how you would answer?

In fact, in extremely well-documented studies, a clear *majority* of participants ultimately delivered the full, 450-volt shock to the "student." In Milgram's experiments, on average, approximately 65 percent of people who participated in his experiment delivered the full 450-volt shock to others. Think of this: 65 percent of the population would be willing, under certain circumstances, to give a lethal shock to another person if ordered to do so by an authority figure in what appeared to be legitimate scientific experiment. Moreover, this is under circumstances where it would have been quite easy for participants simply to refuse to participate further, to stand up, and to leave. Nothing was stopping them from refusing to participate. Imagine what the compliance rate would be in a much more difficult circumstance, such as if the person were a soldier in a prison being ordered by his commanding officer to administer shocks to any enemy prisoner during a war. What would the compliance rate have been if the people administering the shocks had been employees of the experimenter and needed their jobs in order to provide food and clothing for their families?

Now perhaps some of you might think that a figure this high might be peculiarly true for Americans, but not other nationalities. I hope you don't think so. In fact, the Milgram experiment has been repeated many times and in many places. As I mentioned, on average approximately 65 percent of Milgram's participants in the U.S. gave the highest-voltage shock. Other studies have shown similar results in other countries: Italy (85 percent), South Africa (87.5 percent), Germany (85 percent); Jordan (73 percent and 62.5 percent), and Austria (80 percent).¹ Two other countries where the research design was different had somewhat smaller results: Australia (28 percent) and Spain (50 percent). If we think about it, even these figures are startling. Slightly more than 25 percent of the population of Australia would be willing to give a lethal shock to another human being simply on the orders of a person conducting an experiment.

The second study is the "Stanford Prison Experiment." In 1971, Philip Zimbardo, a psychology professor at Stanford University, designed a study to observe how apparently ordinary people would behave if they were placed in unfamiliar roles. He invited summer school students to participate in a two-week experiment where they would play roles either as "prisoners" or as "prison guards." Before selecting among the many volunteers for the experiment, he gave them some psychological tests in order to determine whether they were normal, average, and healthy. After satisfying the experimenters that they were normal people, the students were assigned, at random, to play either the role of a prison guard or a prisoner. The basement floor of the Stanford psychology department was converted to a mock prison, with rooms serving as prison cells. Neither the guards nor the prisoners were given any detailed instructions on how they should behave, other than the prison guards were told to "maintain law and order" and that they could use their "police clubs" only symbolically and could not actually hit the prisoners. Psychologist Zimbardo, who conducted the experiment, also acted in the experiment as the prison warden.

The study itself began when the students who were designated as "prisoners" were "arrested" by officers of the local police department and taken to the "prison." By the second day of the experiment, serious conflicts had already begun to arise between the prisoners and guards, both groups of whom seemed to take their roles very seriously. Prisoners began to rebel against their treatment, and guards started punishing prisoners by taking away their food, mattresses, and clothing. Almost immediately, the guards—who had been normal students only two days earlier—began to act sadistically towards the

prisoners. They humiliated the prisoners by conducting strip searches and placing them in solitary confinement.

The experiment was photographed and videotaped—and the images from the Stanford Prison experiment can still be seen. Now—in the year 2004—it is shocking to see the similarity in some of the photographs that were taken at Stanford University in 1971 and in the Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq in 2003. In both cases, the guards took sadistic pleasure in stripping the clothes off the prisoners, tying their hands behind their backs, placing hoods over their heads, and then humiliating the prisoners. Zimbardo subsequently admitted, much to his credit, that he too became seduced by his own experiment and began to take upon himself the characteristics of a prison warden. A few days after the experiment began, another professor from a nearby university came to observe the experiment in action and was horrified by what she saw. She told Zimbardo that he must stop the experiment immediately because it was already out of control and that the participants—including Zimbardo himself—were losing perspective on reality. She feared the possibility of serious physical or emotional harm occurring, and ultimately she convinced Zimbardo to terminate the experiment six days after it began.

In the Zimbardo prison experiment, completely normal people began to act sadistically toward others and to behave in ways that we find shocking when we read about it or see the video recordings.

These two experiments of Professors Milgram and Zimbardo give us some very important insights for understanding not only terrorists, but also those who fight against terrorism (whether they be politicians, soldiers, or prison guards). Three observations:

1. First, I believe that it is fair to say, at least in a general way, that the people who volunteered for the Milgram and Zimbardo experiments were not inherently “bad” people or “evil” people. They were probably average people like you and me. And yet these average people, when placed in a somewhat realistic situation and placed under stress, began to act in a way that we find deeply troubling. Although we all find it difficult to imagine that we would have acted in the way that they did, very strong scientific evidence strongly suggests that the vast majority of us would have acted in a similar way.

2. Closely related, it is very common for people who observe the bad behavior of others to assume that the persons who are committing it are inherently bad people. I do not know how politicians and the news media in

Asia describe religious terrorists, but I can imagine that it is similar to the way that they are described by American politicians and the American news media. I mentioned earlier that religious terrorists are typically described as being either in the category of “religious fanatics” or as “common criminals” (or both). Similarly, many American politicians described the abusive prison guards at Abu Ghraib as being perverted and as not representing the vast majority of American soldiers. But the Milgram and Zimbardo experiments suggest exactly the opposite of these explanations. Sadly, most human beings would be willing to commit similar actions if they were placed in similar situations where they believed that such actions were appropriate. So it should not be difficult to understand how real prison guards—such as the soldiers at Abu Ghraib—may have been willing to commit inhumane actions against their fellow human beings.

3. If Milgram and Zimbardo are generally correct—and the evidence surely suggests that they are—governments and society make a serious mistake when they assume that the ultimate solution to the problem of religious terrorism or prison abuse lies in capturing and punishing bad people. (I assume we *all* agree that administering lethal shocks to innocent people and behaving sadistically towards prisoners are bad actions, and that society must take measures to prevent such abuses from occurring. And so there is no misunderstanding—I am sure that *some* terrorists and *some* prison guards are particularly bad and fanatical people.) The problem is that potential terrorists and potentially abusive prison guards can be found all around us—in perfectly normal people who cannot possibly imagine that they would ever commit such abuses themselves. And yet these people who cannot imagine that they would ever do such things, when placed in appropriate situations, are fully capable of doing exactly what they cannot imagine they would ever do.

In conclusion, let us return to my analogy of the boiling soup that is ready to overflow the pot. State security measures that attempt to clamp the lid on the pot may, in some circumstances, be appropriate for a short-term response. But such responses cannot be successful in the long run, because the problem is not that the soup is inherently bad and needs to be suppressed. The problem is that the fire is too hot and is causing perfectly good soup to boil over. If we focus narrowly on the harms of the bubbling soup and forget about the fire, our methods ultimately will not be successful.

Religious terrorists are recruited from the ranks of normal human beings. They typically do not think of themselves as violent, sadistic, or fanatical

people. Indeed, they think of government officials who oppose them as being violent, sadistic, and fanatical people. And the terrorists can find examples of the acts of their opponents that justify their worldview, just as government officials can find examples of terrorists' behavior to justify their own view. Each can correctly point to the other as having killed innocent people and having committed sadistic acts.

Responsible people should not limit themselves to clamping down the lid; they also need to pay attention to the fire and not allow intolerance to fan its flames.



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1. (Thomas Blass, "The Milgram Paradigm After 35 Years," in *Obedience and Authority*, Blass, ed., (2000), p.59).



RELIGIOUS FREEDOM, HUMAN RIGHTS AND SECURITY – THE CHINESE PERSPECTIVE

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INTRODUCTION

Since the 1980s, China has been vigorously pursuing the policies of reform and openness. There have been signs of openness and liberalization in all aspects of Chinese citizens' lives, except in politics and religion. Why does the Chinese authority link religion and politics so closely? Does religious freedom pose a great threat to China's security in the mind of the Chinese government? If so, why?

Before these questions are answered, a brief overview of international and legal provisions for the protection of human rights, particularly of religious freedom, is necessary.

PROTECTION OF RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

International

1. Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)

Art. 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by the United Nations in 1948, provides the basic text on religious freedom. It states, "Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship, and observance."

2. International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which was

adopted by the General Assembly on December 16, 1996, also provides religious freedom.

Paragraph 2 states, “No one shall be subject to coercion which would impair his freedom to have or to adopt a religion or belief of his choice.”

Paragraph 4 sets out the rights of parents to teach religion to their children: “The States’ Parties to the present covenant undertake to have respect for the liberty of parents and, when applicable, legal guardians to ensure the religious and moral education of their children in conformity with their own convictions.”

3. Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief, adopted by the U.N. in 1981.

Article 1

Everyone shall have the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. This right shall include freedom to have a religion or whatever belief of his choice, and freedom, either individually or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in worship, observance, practice and teaching.

No one shall be subject to coercion which would impair his freedom to have a religion or belief of his choice.

Freedom to manifest one’s religion or belief may be subject only to such limitations as are prescribed by law and are necessary to protect public safety, order, health, or morals or the fundamental rights and freedom of others.

Article 2

No one shall be subject to discrimination by any state, institution, group of persons, or person on the grounds of religion or other belief.

4. European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms introduced by the Council of Europe in 1950 and entered into force on September 3, 1953.

Article 9

Freedom of thought, conscience, and religion.

Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief, in worship, teaching, practice and observance.

Freedom to manifest one's religion or beliefs shall be subject only to such limitations as are prescribed by law and are necessary in a democratic society in the interest of public safety, for the protection of public order, health or morals, or for the protection of the rights and freedoms of others.

Domestic

1. Constitution of the People's Republic of China

Article 36

Citizens of the PRC enjoy freedom of religious belief.

No organ of the state, mass organization or person is allowed to force any Citizen to believe or not to believe in religion. It is impermissible to discriminate against any citizen who believes or does not believe in religion. The state protects legitimate religious activities. No person is permitted to use religion or conduct counterrevolutionary activities or activities which disrupt social order, harm people's health, or obstruct the education system of the country.

Religion is not subject to the control of foreign countries.

2. New Constitutional Amendment

Adopted by the 10th National People's Congress in March 2004, stipulates that "The State respects and safeguards human rights."

Observers are understandably skeptical about this new provision. After all, the constitution already includes many provisions for the "respect for" and "protection" of various civil liberties and human rights, including religious freedom. Yet these provisions did not prevent the government from violating these Chinese rights from time to time.

But the very fact that the government felt the need to include this commitment in the constitution may indicate at least some interest on the part of the new government to address widespread concerns about its human rights record, and perhaps also on the need to reform, particularly in the legal sector, to eliminate government abuses and violations of human rights.

3. Document 19, "The Basic Viewpoint and Policy on the Religious Question During Our Country's Socialist Period," adopted by the Central Committee of Chinese Communist Party on March 31, 1982.

The basic policy the party has adopted toward the religious question, according to this document, is "that of respect for and protection of the freedom

of religious belief. This is a long-term policy, one which must be continually carried out until that future time when religion will itself disappear.”

And in the process of carrying out this policy, “the religious question will continue to have a definite mass nature, to be entangled in many areas with the ethnic question and to be affected by some class-struggle and complex international factors.” In the final analysis, “the question is this: can we handle this religious question properly as we work toward national stability and ethnic unity, as we develop our international relations while resisting the infiltration of hostile forces from abroad?”

National stability, ethnic unity, resisting the infiltration of hostile forces from abroad are all clearly “security” issues. Thus, in the minds of the Chinese authorities, long before September 11, the religious freedom issue has serious implications and consequences as far as national security is concerned.

Let us now turn to the question of why, from the perspective of the Chinese government, religious freedom constitutes such a major threat to the security of the nation. Answers to this question can be grouped into four categories.

IDEOLOGICAL FACTORS

1. The atheistic nature of communism maintains that communism and religion are diametrically opposed, and that a communist government’s relationship with religious organizations and persons will be antagonistic.

2. Religion is only a historical phenomenon, and it will eventually disappear through “the long-term development of socialism and communism, when all objective requirements are met.” Those who think that “religion will die out within a short period are not being realistic. Those who expect to rely on administrative decrees or other coercive measures to wipe out religious thinking and practices with one blow are even further from the basic viewpoint Marxism takes towards the religious question” (Document 19).

Thus, out of necessity, a policy of granting religious freedom has to be adopted even by the atheistic Communist Party. Further, China’s desire to be an active member of the international community also forces it to be more tolerant of religions and religious freedom.

3. However, the fact that the Communist Party proclaims and implements a policy of religious freedom does not mean that Party members can freely

believe in religion. The policy of religious freedom does not apply to party members. “The party member belongs to a Marxist political party, and there can be no doubt at all that s/he must be an atheist and not a theist... Any member who persists in going against this proscription should be told to leave the party” (Document 19).

4. The party’s continuous hostility toward religion is also reflected in the actual implementation of the policy of religious freedom. For instance, in a document entitled “Fully Implemented the Policy of Religious Freedom,” it was admitted that “some people speak only about the freedom not to believe in religion, but do not speak about, or dare to speak about, the freedom of religious belief... Other people think that freedom of religious belief means freedom to believe in the mind and heart, but that there is neither need nor permission for outward expression of that belief.”

POLITICAL FACTORS

Closely related to ideological factors are some practical factors of significant political consequences.

1. Issue of allegiance. The atheistic nature of the communist government demands sole and unquestionable allegiance from its citizens. Even though the allegiance of religious believers towards their religion is primarily spiritual in nature, it nevertheless poses a threat to a government that is always preoccupied with the question of retaining political power.

2. Issue of mass mobilization. The Chinese Communist Party is known as a “mass” party. Its ability to mobilize the masses, particularly the peasantry, was key to its success in achieving political power. Its ability to maintain power, therefore, must necessarily be based on its capacity to retain sole control of that mobilization mechanism.

In recent years, the growing number of religious believers in China has reached at least 100 million. Their organizational and mobilization capabilities (as noted by Falun Gong practitioners in 1999) worries the communist government. Thus the basic motive behind its religious policy is to control, rather than promote, the development of religions in the country. Further, most religious affairs officers have military backgrounds and are ardent communist ideologues.

HISTORICAL FACTORS

The Chinese government's concern over religious groups' ability to weaken or overthrow the government is substantiated by historical facts.

1. Throughout China's long history, many popular rebellions and insurrections took place in the name of religion, and many of the uprisings of religious groups have caused the weakening and subsequent demise of many dynasties.

- a. Yellow Turbans—took place at the end of the Han dynasty, 184-190 A.D
- b. White Lotus Society—took place at the end of the Yuan dynasty, 1350s.
- c. Taiping Rebellion—took place at the end of the Manchu dynasty, 1850-1864, lasted for more than 15 years, and spread over more than half the country. The Manchu government was able to crush the rebellion only with assistance from foreign countries and because of the internal conflicts within the rebel forces themselves.

These historical lessons are not lost on today's leaders and intellectual minds.

2. Western power's invasion of China in the 18th and 19th century was accompanied by the advancement of the Christian mission. Gun-boat diplomacy and the Christian mission went hand in hand.

The nationalism from which the communist government derived its legitimacy is based on a sense of victimization from exploitation by Western powers. Their actions were, maybe more perceived than real, facilitated at least in part by foreign missionaries.

CONTEMPORARY FACTORS

1. The perceived connection between foreign governments and religious groups in their societies was so strong that the Communist government, as soon as it came into power, established "patriotic" religious organizations for Catholic and Protestant religious groups. Their primary aim was ensuring that Chinese Christian organizations would no longer come under the influence of foreign religious groups.

The collapse of the former Soviet Union and Eastern European countries has also been attributed by the Chinese government to the influence of religious forces such as the Orthodox and Catholic churches in the West. These

developments further re-emphasize the need to resist the infiltration of hostile forces from abroad.

2. Three other major religions in China today have also been viewed as having political agendas and being supported by foreign powers, threatening national stability and ethnic unity.

a. In Tibet, the Dalai Lama is not only the spiritual leader but also the political leader. The Communist government has cracked down harshly against all Tibetan Buddhist monks and nuns who refuse to renounce their allegiance to the Dalai Lama. From the Chinese perspective, the real intention of the Tibetan Buddhists is not to pursue religious freedom but to advocate Tibetan independence from China.

b. In Xinjian, the Uighur Muslims make up the largest ethnic population, among which there is increasing nationalist sentiment. The Chinese government has used its “cooperation” with U.S.-led global anti-terrorism campaign as a justification for intensifying its crackdown against the Uighurs. For the Chinese, the Uighurs are not only using religious freedom to advance their real separatist goal but also resorting to terrorism to achieve it.

c. The Falun Gong folk religion (a combination of Buddhism and Daoism) is considered public enemy number one to the Communist government since its establishment in 1949. It is so considered because of its increasing membership, as well as its surprisingly strong organizational and mobilization capabilities, which (in the mind of Chinese government leaders) threaten the security of the party/state. Falun Gong practitioners who have been arrested are not interrogated by religious affairs officials but by officials who identify themselves as agents of the state security apparatus responsible for the state’s counter-intelligence and counter-espionage efforts. These officials also insist that the Falun Gong organization must have been on the payroll of some foreign spy agencies, such as the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, with the aim of subverting and overthrowing the government.

CONCLUSION

Certainly one can easily argue that many of these factors are more perceived than real. Yet the fact is that perception is often more real than reality. Whether justified or not, we can conclude that since religious freedom in China is perceived as posing such great threats to the security of the nation and the party, it is not likely that the Communist Party State of China will allow real and true religious freedom in the near future.



ACHIEVING PEACE THROUGH RESPECTING FREEDOM

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WHAT KIND OF PEACE?

Most people want peace, or at least they profess to. But what kind of peace do we want? If we think about it for a moment, we must recognize that there are different kinds of peace, indeed, quite different conditions could all be labeled “peace.” Graveyards are peaceful places, but I hope we are not all seeking to find the peace of the grave, at least not yet. If we define peace as the absence of violence, I think we could all agree with that, or would we? One can imagine a police state so powerful that there would be no crime or conflict, a dictatorship so powerful that there could be no opposition. In one sense, such a society might be very peaceful.

IS THAT THE KIND OF PEACE WE SEEK?

There is one kind of peace found in uniformity or conformity, but another kind of peace found in respectful diversity. I think it would be wrong to suppose that the only kind of lasting peace will be when everyone agrees on everything. Some think that there would not be peace until all the world believes as they do. I think they are mistaken. I do not believe that God intends all of His children to think or believe the same. This concept finds support in the Koran, verse 13 of chapter 49:

“We [God] have created you [human beings] into [different] peoples and tribes so that you may [all] get to know [understand and cooperate with] each other . . .”¹ In the Christian tradition there is a similar teaching: “[God] hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed and the bounds of their habitation.”² In other words, if God wanted us all to belong to the same

race, religion, and nation, He would have made the world that way. But He didn't. Why? I think it is because there are essential things that God wants us to experience through learning to love and accept other people who are different from us. It is usually easy to love one's own family, but it is often soul-stretchingly difficult to love those who are very foreign to us. If everyone were the same, I do not think we would have the opportunity to develop into the kind of people God wants us to become: full of charity, love, and compassion.

Peace and security are virtues, but they are not the only virtues. Peace should not be a value obtained at the cost of other important virtues, such as freedom and personal choice, respect for differences, and tolerance.

Thus, the peace that I think we should seek is not the peace of bland uniformity but the peace of a happy and busy marketplace, full of life and diversity and people of all types and backgrounds. A noisy and living peace where there may be strong and fundamental differences between people and groups of people about issues that really matter to them, but in which everyone recognizes the sanctity of life and all such conflicts stay within the bounds of civil order. The peace we seek should include a degree of chaos, in one sense, because human life and society are inherently chaotic, but there are limits: what we cannot accept is violence to innocents, particularly in the name of religion.

This is relevant to the topic of freedom of religion because there is a tendency to see pluralism of religions as inherently unstable and tending to chaos and violence. But in fact, it is just the opposite.

THE LOCKEAN INSIGHT

The tendency to see religious pluralism as a social hazard or the source of conflict rather than as a factor for peace is an old one. "For much of human history, it was assumed that religion was a kind of social glue that held society together. Religious dissent was seen as an initial signal of a process that could, if left unchecked, result in the disintegration of society. The religious wars that followed the Reformation seemed to prove that if religious dissenters were given too much freedom, society would be torn apart."³ The initial solution to the problem of religious warfare was the principle that the king or ruler should determine the religion of his realm and if you did not agree, you should simply leave.⁴

The difficulty, however, was that matters of conscience do not conveniently track national boundaries or the will of the local prince. "Dissent continued to arise and inevitably resulted in conflicts with the prevailing

religion supported by the local sovereign.”⁵ What English philosopher John Locke saw was that it is not the religious dissent that causes eruptions of violence, but rather, the *persecution* of that dissent. In a key passage in his *Letter Concerning Toleration*, Locke wrote:

Now if that church, which agrees in religion with the prince, be esteemed the chief support of any civil government, and that for no other reason . . . than because the prince is kind and the laws are favorable to it; how much greater will be the security of government, where all good subjects, of whatsoever church they be, without any distinction upon account of religion, enjoying the same favor of the prince, and the same benefit of the laws, shall become the common support and guard of it; and where none will have any occasion to fear the severity of the laws, but those that do injuries to their neighbors, and offend against the civil peace!⁶

Locke’s insight was that instead of destabilizing a regime, religious toleration and respect for minority views could have the opposite effect. If the government respects and legally protects the rights of those holding minority beliefs, those groups will tend to strongly support that government. If the government only protects the rights of a single majority religion, any with differing religious beliefs are immediately put into conflict with the state. But if the rights of all religions are protected, it is much more likely that all religions will support the government. Peace is attained through respecting and even protecting diversity.

Locke’s insight has been called a “Revolution in Religious Liberty . . . [that] constituted a kind of Copernican Revolution in political theory.”⁷ This insight played a significant role in the establishment of the religious-liberty provisions in the Constitution of the United States and in the key international human rights instruments.⁸

THE REALITY OF RELIGIOUS VIOLENCE

The Lockean insight is being challenged today by a very real rise in religious-based violence. Religion’s power, both for tremendous good and for tremendous evil, has been described as the “ambivalence of the sacred.”⁹ Religions of all types draw on transcendental beliefs that are more important than life, and thus, at times, have led some to believe that they are justified in the taking of human life. Religions also draw on symbolism of a “Cosmic

War” between good and evil, that can be used as a justification for terrorism or violence against the religion’s enemies, real or perceived.¹⁰ These beliefs are found universally, but most religions have highly-structured understandings of the extreme circumstances that justify violence.

Historically, many thought that peace would be enhanced by separating religion from the state and by creating a purely secular state. Separating religion from government was thought to mean that religions would no longer have access to the power to precipitate violence. Ironically, this increase in secularism is one of the current causes of religious extremism and violence. Religious-motivated violence often begins “with the perception that the public world has gone awry, and the suspicion that behind the social confusion lies a great spiritual and moral conflict, a cosmic battle between the forces of order and chaos, good and evil.”¹¹ Individuals feel powerless. “The government—already delegitimized—is perceived to be in league with the forces of chaos and evil.”¹²

What are we to do? When religions are given too much power, too much influence over nations, we have seen the serious damage that can occur. For example, Europe is still scarred by the religious wars of the past. Yet when religions are marginalized and stripped of political power and influence, that tends to breed extremism and religious terrorism because the religions feel marginalized and threatened. It seems obvious that there needs to be a balance. Religions need to feel that they have the right to exist and to have influence within society, and yet when religions assume direct or exercise control over the powers of civil government, human history has taught us that it is usually dangerous, not only for the state, but for the religion itself. When this relationship gets out of balance—either way—with religion having too little freedom or too much secular power, there is a historical and current tendency towards religious-based violence.

It is important to recognize that religion is certainly not the only source of war—too often religion has been the convenient scapegoat, or category, for racial, national, or other divisions. Nationalism, communism, racism, fascism, and colonialism were responsible for much of the instability, war, and mass murder in the 20th century. So it is not fair to single out religion. Terrorism has arisen in many contexts. Professor Mark Juergensmeyer, in *Terror in the Mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence*, observes:

[T]he term “terrorism” has [most] frequently been associated with violence committed by disenfranchised groups desperately attempting

to gain a shred of power or influence. Although these groups cannot kill on the scale that governments, with all their military power, can, their sheer numbers, their intense dedication, and their dangerous unpredictability have given them influence vastly out of proportion with their meager military resources. Some of these groups have been inspired by purely secular causes. They have been motivated by leftist ideologies, as in the case of the Shining Path and Tupac Amaru in Peru, and the Red Army in Japan; and they have been propelled by a desire for ethnic or regional separatism, as in the cases of Basque militants in Spain and the Kurdish nationalists in the Middle East. But more often it has been religion—sometimes in combination with these other factors, sometimes as the primary motivation—that has incited terrorist acts.¹³

Religious-based terrorism is certainly not a new phenomenon, but it is certainly becoming more widespread.¹⁴ Many observers, most famously Samuel Huntington, have noted that there is a trend towards religious divides as a source of conflict.¹⁵ Whereas many conflicts of the past could be attributed to disputes over territory, resources, or national interests, increasingly, ethno-religious concerns drive many, if not most, of the modern conflicts. It may be that modern internationalism has made any purely territorial war unjustifiable. Looking back at the conflicts of the 1990s, one scholar observed:

[T]hey have not been the kind of classic interstate conflicts over causes such as boundaries, territory, hostile regimes, or resources. Only the [first] Gulf War between Iraq and Kuwait involved interstate aggression¹⁶

Today, it is hard to imagine a country simply invading a neighbor in an effort to permanently expand its legal territory. Increasingly, wars are intrastate affairs—think of the various cases of so-called ethnic cleansing. And the new type of war, terrorism, that is not sponsored by any state, but by transnational organizations outside of the control of traditional states—be it in Ireland, Japan, the United States, or Israel—certainly has religion as an undeniable element.

Those of us who are active believers in a religious tradition have to admit and accept that the same religious impulse that gives us meaning, purpose, and joy in life, somehow leads others, who share at least the trappings of our same

belief systems, to commit atrocities. Terror groups have arisen from practically all religious traditions, including Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Hindu, Sikh, and Buddhist.¹⁷

In his excellent book, *Sacred Fury: Understanding Religious Violence*, Charles Selengut makes a comprehensive survey of contemporary incidents of religious violence and attempts to answer the question as to whether the conflicts are at base religious or whether they merely use religious themes to cover for other causes:

A critical question, however, is just how *religious* are many of these religious conflicts and outbreaks of religious violence. Are they truly examples of religious violence, or, as some have argued, merely attempts to use religion as a vehicle to justify secular political or nationalist goals, seek economic improvement, or express ethnic resentment over mistreatment or minority status? . . . Leaders of national, ethnic, and linguistic movements are aware of the ability of religious belief to motivate collective action, and they often seek to use religious language and symbols to foster and justify continuing ethnic conflict even in situations where religion was not initially an element in the conflict. . . . The bulk of cases involving religious violence are, however, motivated by religious doctrine, faith, and sacred fury. Fury to champion God's will, to oppose one's religious enemies, and to insist upon the imposition of God's law for humanity is the key motivation underlying religious violence.¹⁸

Some people admit the existence of religious-based violence but argue that only certain religions reflect this tendency. However, an honest assessment leads to the conclusion that that religious violence is not limited to only certain religions. Professor Selengut again:

Some commentators have claimed that there are peaceful religions and "warrior" religions and that violence is not a problem of religion per se but only of particular religions which are historically and theologically drawn to violence. Islam is sometimes so described in Western writings, while Christianity and some other religions are presented as essentially nonviolent. This is an inaccurate generalization, for . . . all religions have themes both of forgiveness and peacemaking as well as demands for retribution and violence against their enemies. Violence in language and deed is an element in every religious

worldview.... Christianity, as well as Hinduism and Buddhism, two Eastern religions ostensibly opposed to violence, have histories of involvement with violence, and there are continuing killings and rampages in contemporary Hinduism and Buddhism.¹⁹

In spite of the historical and current support for the existence of religion-based violence, it seems to be politically correct in many contexts to contend that the conflicts are not really based on religion, but instead are merely using religious rhetoric for what are truly conflicts driven by poverty, politics, economics or other secular causes:

Jack Hawley of Columbia University has called attention to another misconception in dealing with contemporary religious violence which we want to avoid. It is the refusal, particularly on the part of Western-educated and secular elites, to acknowledge the essentially religious nature of much global conflict. As a consequence of their view of worldwide secularization and their incorrect belief that religious faith is waning, diplomats and academics “want to separate religions from economics or politics and blame everything on poverty or politics, but violence is part of religion and economic conditions and politics draws them out.” As Hawley and others have shown, it is religious history, religious sensibilities, and religious passion which drive religious conflict and turn other disagreements into violent confrontations.²⁰

In sum, a first step in addressing honestly the issue of religious violence is to admit that although certainly not the only source of violence, deeply-held religious beliefs are in many cases at the foundation of current conflicts and violence. It is not honest or helpful for those of us who are fundamentally religious and involved in religious communities to attempt to minimize or deny this reality.

If religion is the cause, then religion needs to be at least part of the solution.²¹ Because religious-based terrorists find support for their violence within their particular religious traditions, only those who have a deep understanding of that religious tradition will fully understand the terrorist. Those who simply label terrorists as evil and refuse to attempt to understand the phenomena are merely mimicking the mindset of the terrorist, who has at a very deep level come to feel that his or her victims are evil and deserve their fate. Mutual demonization seldom leads to any reduction in conflict or injury to innocents.

Understanding does not mean condoning or accepting. Understanding in this context means understanding where the terrorists have gone wrong. Instead of simply labeling a terrorist movement as evil, religionists have the power to reach into the religious tradition of the terrorist and bear meaningful and powerful testimony within the religious tradition as to why the terrorist is wrong. As Professor Cynthia Sampson has observed:

Religious traditions establish ethical visions that can summon those who believe in them to powerful forms of committed action. Many religions provide moral warrants for resistance against unjust conditions, including those that give rise to conflict, and thus provide an impetus for adherents to take responsibility for preventing, ameliorating, or resolving conflicts nonviolently. . . . In societies in which the government is widely viewed as illegitimate, or centralized authority has broken down altogether, organized religion may be the only institution retaining some measure of credibility, trust, and moral authority among the population at large. Perhaps most significant to peacebuilding, religious actors who are indigenous to conflict situations are long-term players who come from and work with the peoples and groups in the conflict throughout its life cycle.²²

I am not suggesting negotiation with terrorists exactly. One cannot imagine that sitting down with Osama Bin Laden and having a heart-to-heart talk with him about alternative peacemaking traditions in Islam would accomplish much. Once a person has crossed the line of inflicting intentional harm on innocent human beings, he or she may be beyond persuasion of any kind, religious-based or otherwise. And there is a proper place for societies and states to act, and sadly but necessarily at times, violently in self defense. Thus, I am not naïve in suggesting that religious conflicts in the immediate sense can be solved by merely fostering a new interpretation of scripture to those committing the atrocities.

However, in the broader sense, I do believe in persuasion and instruction that can prevent impressionable people from following that path to violence, that tendencies toward alienation and violence can be diffused and peace in the long run can be made. What I am saying is that in the case of terrorism, whether solely using religion as a cover or being legitimately religiously motivated, religion must play an important role in dealing with and eventually solving the problem. If terrorists are indeed using religion as a smokescreen

for other aims, who better than recognized believers of that religion to call the terrorists out and condemn them for attempting to hijack their religion? And if terrorists are genuinely motivated by religious fervor, again, who is better qualified than believers in that same religious tradition to attempt to address the problem in a meaningful way?

Most of secular society does not recognize even the existence of a real being known as Satan.

The International Religious Liberty Association's Group of Experts convened on November 14-17, 2002, to address religious liberty concerns that arose in connection with the terrorist acts of September 11, 2001, and the response to that tragic event. Among the conclusions this group reached are the following:

The war on terrorism must confront the root causes of terrorist activity, and not just its violent symptoms. Moreover, there can be no doubt that many recent incidents of terrorism are predicated on interpretations of religious beliefs. Failure to grasp the role that religious beliefs are playing in motivating terrorist activities will result in reduced security. Disrespect of religious freedom triggers responses that jeopardize security interests. . . . Respecting freedom of religion is often a more effective tool in winning loyalty of citizens and in achieving peace than weapons and coercive measures.²³

I might go even further and state that any purported solution to religious violence that does not respect freedom of religion and does not involve religious values in the solution, but instead attempts to resolve the problem only by force or by political or secular means only, is doomed to failure and is likely to make the problem worse.

CONCLUSION

In response to religious conflict and unrest, the tendency of some governments is to restrict religious freedom. Nothing could be more counterproductive and wrong. In the first place, restrictions to religious freedom often lead to religious conflict. Further tightening of religious liberty will only pour gasoline on the flames. But more importantly, and yet perhaps not as obviously, if the disputes and conflicts are indeed religious-based, the ultimate solutions must be religious-based as well. In response to religious

conflict or violence, religious actors should be encouraged more than ever to be active in the reconciliation process. According to Professor Selengut:

[U]nderstanding the complex nature of religious violence can help sensitize the religious protagonists to seek alternative means to resolve religious tension and conflict. Religious scholars, activists, and social scientists studying religious wars and civilization clashes have, in recent years, developed a series of highly creative strategies and techniques for mediating religious conflict and violence. Some of these strategies have worked well . . .²⁴

Some of these strategies include identifying and empowering those groups legitimately within the religious tradition that espouse peacemaking and reconciliation; a recognition and empowerment of religious communities, particularly unpopular ones, so that they do not have to struggle for recognition and respect from governmental institutions (the Lockean insight again); increased understanding of and sensitivity to the symbols of religions; increased cooperation between secular and religious communities and an acceptance by policy makers, that political or economic solutions alone to what are at root religious problems will not provide lasting solutions.²⁵

Thus, in the face of religious conflict there needs to be more religious freedom, not less. Religion needs to have more influence in society, not less. Those peacemaking traditions in each religion should be empowered and respected. This is the best hope for a solution to religion-based violence.



E N D

* Portions of this paper rely, with her permission, on an unpublished paper, on file with the author, by Professor Elizabeth Sewell, associate director of the International Center for Law and Religion Studies at Brigham Young University, given at a Conference in Kyrgyz in 2004. Another influence on this paper, particularly the material on the "Lockean Insight," comes from Professor W. Cole Durham, Jr.'s "Religious Pluralism as a Factor in Peace," *infra* note 3.

- 1 Akmed An Na'im, "The Reformation of Islam," *New Perspectives Quarterly* 6 (Fall 1987) 51, quoted in R. Scott Appleby, *The Ambivalence of the Sacred*, (New York: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2000), 257.
- 2 Acts 17:26, King James Version (KJV).
- 3 See W. Cole Durham, Jr., "Religious Pluralism as a Factor in Peace," *Fides et Libertas* 2003, p. 43-57.
- 4 *Id.*
- 5 *Id.*
- 6 John Locke, *A Letter Concerning Toleration* (first published in 1689; cited edition: Buffalo, New York: The Library of the Liberal Arts, 1990, pp. 68-69); quoted in W. Cole Durham, Jr., "Religious Pluralism as a Factor in Peace" *Fides et Libertas* 2003, p. 45.
- 7 W. Cole Durham, Jr., "Perspectives on Religious Liberty: A Comparative Framework," *Religious Human Rights in Perspective, Legal Perspectives*. Eds. Johan van der Vyver and John Witte, Jr. (The Hague: Martin Nijhoff, 1996), pp. 1-44, at 7-8.
- 8 *Id.*
- 9 Appleby, *supra*, note 1.

- 10 See Mark Juergensmeyer, *Terror in the Mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence* (University of California Press, 2003).
- 11 *Id.*, at 228.
- 12 *Id.*
- 13 *Id.*, p. 5-6.
- 14 *Id.*
- 15 Samuel Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996).
- 16 I. William Zartman and J. Lewis Rasmussen eds., *Peacemaking in International Conflict: Methods and Techniques* (United States Institute of Peace Press, 1997) p. 5.
- 17 Juergensmeyer, *supra* note 10, at 221.
- 18 Charles Selengut, *Sacred Fury: Understanding Religious Violence* (Altamira Press, 2003), 223-224.
- 19 *Id.* p. 13.
- 20 *Id.*, quoting Jack Hawley, "Pakistan's Longer Border," paper presented at the conference, *Understanding Religious Violence* (St. Bartholomew's Church, New York: February 2002).
- 21 Cynthia Sampson, "Religion and Peacebuilding," *Peacemaking in International Conflict: Methods and Techniques* I. William Zartman and J. Lewis Rasmussen, eds. (Washington D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1997), p. 273.
- 22 *Id.* p. 275.
- 23 International Religious Liberty Association Group of Experts, *Preliminary Guiding Principles and Recommendations on Security and Religious Freedom*, p. 1 (November 2002), copy in author's possession.
- 24 Selengut, *supra* note 18, at 232.
- 25 *Id.* p. 323-238.



REALIST RELIGIOUS FREEDOM:

AN UZBEK VIEW

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INTRODUCTION

Engaging the world as it is can sometimes be a difficult thing. In the advocacy of religious freedom, there is always the potential danger of engagement without understanding; or worse, the danger of mirror-imaging, seeing others as ourselves. In order to avoid this phenomenon, it is important for the parties involved to demonstrate respect and appreciation for the other, expecting the same in return. This article begins to reveal the geopsychological perspective of an Uzbek worldview; that is, how the earth, traditions, religion, culture, and historic political paradigm literally and figuratively shape an Uzbek's understanding of events. This article presents how he might legitimately perceive U.S. engagement in Uzbekistan; Uzbekistan's own situation and conditions; and religious freedom. It concludes with five lessons for engagement, to include promoting religious freedom.

AMERICAN ENGAGEMENT: THE NECESSARY MONOLITH

To the Uzbek mind, the United States has engaged Central Asia since its 1991 independence with a series of comfortable monoliths that had little understanding of history, let alone on-the-ground reality. The first monolith was a *Russia First* mentality. Natural enough after seventy years of the Soviet Union, this monolith did not have time for the nuance of particular regions as American policy makers essentially assumed that working with Moscow was the same as engaging such former Soviet regions as the South Caucasus or Central Asia. Excusable, perhaps, as America focused on "loose nukes," the approach did not encourage respect for various regions, or mature bilateral relations. (The U.S., for example, did not establish its embassy in Tashkent until 1993).

Through the mid- and late-1990s this paradigm morphed into another form as U.S. agencies moved Central Asia from the category of *Former Soviet Union* to the more nuanced *Newly Independent States*. Today the region is incorporated in the “Europe & Eurasia” category for most U.S. agencies. No matter the grouping, Central Asia remained in an East-West context, understood through the lens of 20th century geography.

The cartographic camouflage of the 20th century prohibited U.S. policy makers from seeing Central Asia in a North-South context; that is, as frontline states smack in the middle of the north-south flows of extremists and narcotics. No U.S. agency saw the geographic reality for what it was until 9/11. The notable exception to this understanding was the Department of Defense. In 1998, Central Command requested that Central Asia come under its purview as it was already addressing similar security issues from the Horn of Africa through the Middle East to Afghanistan. This geographic grouping remains the exception in U.S. agencies today.

The next monolith to come into vogue was the regional monolith. Once the former Soviet Union mindset was sufficiently beaten down, this new paradigm claimed nuance by addressing the region itself as a unique entity. A step forward, this mindset nonetheless viewed the entire region as the same, an entity to be addressed as a whole instead of as the different countries, ethnic groups, and trend lines that made up this diverse region. It is difficult, for example, to find a detailed chapter on any of the Central Asian countries in the academic literature of the 1990s. To be fair, there was not enough interest for publishers to call for that detail; neither, however, were there enough experts who could provide that detail.

The next convenient and overlapping mindset that the Americans used—and continue to use—is the authoritarian monolith. This paradigm paints everyone who works in a Central Asian government as a stooge of a dictator who knows only absolute control. This simplistic mindset does not allow for the *domestic politics* of these regimes. In the case of Uzbekistan, it was not until just a couple of years ago that analysts began to accept the notion that President Karimov must balance various patronage networks (the so-called “clans”) against each other in order to maintain power.

This mindset has great trouble acknowledging that if there are domestic politics, then in fact, there might be positive elements within the Uzbek government that wish to see their country join the international community as a responsible member. Being painted into any one of these monoliths is irksome, to say the least, to those Uzbek leaders who work within the system—

if only because they have no choice—as they fight a slow and patient battle that will take a generation, or more, to win.

AMERICAN CIVIL SOCIETY AND UZBEK CULTURE

This lack of nuance takes exacerbated form in the American inability to understand Uzbek culture. Beginning in the 1990s, and with the best of intentions, the U.S. has sought to export a *civil society* that would promote democracy in Uzbekistan and throughout the former Soviet Union. Rarely defined in rigorous fashion, this alleged engagement strategy continues to operate under a simple formula: more NGOs means more democracy. Unfortunately, the NGO programs, in general, did not seek to acknowledge—let alone act in a manner consistent with—the culture of the *pre-existing* civil society.

The most important characteristic of Uzbek civil society is a strong notion of respect (ironically, a founding principle of western civil society). This principle begins with the hydro-culture that has existed in Uzbekistan since time immemorial. A dry and vast region of deserts and mountains, Central Asian civilization has always depended on the spring-fed oases for life itself. The result has been a society of both horizontal and vertical respect.

First, in order to harness the water for irrigation purposes, the people of the oases recognized that it was imperative to work together. This urgency produced a collective submission to, and respect for, vertical authority. Without strong leadership the people could not be organized to systematically harness the water that would enable all to survive. Over time, these deep roots have taken societal form in regional elites that rule a local people made up of tight-knit neighborhoods (the *mahalla*). Without a fundamental understanding of these dynamics, it is simply impossible to engage Uzbekistan in any meaningful, not least sustainable, manner.

This deep respect was reinforced by the arrival of a tolerant Islam in the 8th century. Since then, Islam has produced political leaders like Ulug Beg and Muhammad Shaybani Khan as models to be emulated. And it was in Bukhara that the world famous Nasqbandi Order of Sufism was established in 1384. Sufism emphasizes a personal, even mystical, relationship with God. Today, this tolerant Islam serves as a rich and unifying presence in a culture that often proclaims: “To be Uzbek is to be Muslim.”

Yet, American policy and civil society programs did not seek out these pre-existing cultural traits of Uzbek civil society. We did not do so because we did not know any better; or it was because we consciously chose to ignore these

characteristics, determining them to be of the past, and therefore part of the problem. As a result, today it remains difficult to point to any tangible effect of Western civil society programs; in part because it remains difficult to identify civil society programs that consciously sought to engage, and be congruent with, the cultural forms of tolerance and respect, elites and the *mahalla*, and, the unifying factor, Islam. (For an excellent discussion of this issue, please see Daniel John Stevens' 2004 Ph.D. thesis, *Conceptual Travels Along the Silk Road: On Civil Society Aid in Uzbekistan*, from the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London).

Finally, adding insult to the injuries of monolith engagement and poor cultural understanding, it was difficult for the Uzbek mind to grasp why the United States did not grasp the geostrategic importance of his country and region. Where was the comprehensive policy? Certainly there were policy objectives such as the promotion of democracy, a market economy and political stability. But there was never a comprehensive and actionable strategy that actively recognized, at least, the security threat of extremism and narcotics. This changed with 9/11 as U.S. forces used an Uzbek base to support stabilization operations in Afghanistan. The U.S. officially recognized Uzbekistan's geostrategic importance when it signed a security agreement with Uzbekistan on March 12, 2002 (making Uzbekistan the only country from the former Soviet space to achieve such a goal).

KARIMOV'S BALANCING ACT

President Karimov has ruled Uzbekistan since 1991. It is a process of balancing the local neighborhood in the region and the patronage networks within Uzbekistan. The neighborhood has been a difficult one, witnessing a civil war in Tajikistan that claimed 50,000 lives and the rise of the Taliban (which threatened Uzbekistan, resulting in Uzbekistan's ready willingness to negotiate with them in the fall of 2000 when it appeared that the Taliban would conquer all of Afghanistan). He has done this while adroitly handling Russia and China, the two powers Uzbeks fear most. For the majority of his rule, President Karimov has been legitimately popular because of the stability he has provided in the context of the neighborhood.

More importantly, Karimov—as Central Asian leaders have for millennia—has had to balance the regional elites of Samarkand, Tashkent, Bukhara, and the Fergana Valley. The interactions and implications of these elites remain a dark glass through which most Westerners cannot see. Still, it is clear enough that

these internal factors largely drive external action; action whose sole purpose is the maintenance of their most cherished possession: power.

In this sense, Karimov and his *authoritarian* government of competing elites are not against religion, NGOs, economic reform, etc. They are simply against anything that threatens their control. Consider Uzbekistan's (non-existent) economic policies. After witnessing the Asian financial crisis in 1997 and the Russian crisis in 1998, for example, the elites drew the logical conclusion that economic reform had the singular effect of ushering instability in from the outside. Or consider why it took so long to float the Uzbek currency, the *som*. The elites were making too much money off the official exchange mechanism while controlling the black market exchanges as well.

They were also making too much money off of cotton. Uzbekistan is the 4th largest producer in the world. It can produce one ton of cotton for approximately ten dollars and then sell it for \$1,500. The proceeds are distributed among elites as cotton serfs—i.e., Uzbek citizens working on state farms—remain essentially indentured. In short, the elites want to preserve the status quo and they'll work with anyone to do so, even if it means driving their country into the ground.

In Uzbekistan today, unemployment is close to 30 percent. It will only get worse as 60 percent of Uzbekistan's 26 million people are less than 25. (The growth rate is approximately 400,000/year). Meanwhile 60 percent of the people are engaged in agriculture despite the fact that only 15 percent of the land is arable. Something has to give; for these people, there is nowhere to turn.

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

By the end of the 1980s, Central Asia was awash with Muslim missionaries preaching a puritanical form of Islam practiced in, and funded by, Saudi Arabia. Emboldened by the Muslim (Mujahadin) defeat of a great power in Afghanistan, these missionaries soon permeated Soviet Central Asia, providing meaning and a moral anchor to people who had new questions as the old order passed away. In Uzbekistan, for example, the number of mosques increased from eighty in 1991 (the year of independence) to between four and five thousand mosques in 1992. As a senior Uzbek official said to me once, "After seventy years in the desert of atheism, our people were ready to drink even muddy water." Without seminaries in place to train the imams, most mosques were soon led by people without training; many influenced by the Saudi-funded missionaries.

This was especially true in Northeast Uzbekistan's Fergana Valley; where, in 1991, President Karimov was publicly confronted and humiliated by two young Muslim men who wanted to establish, through violence if necessary, an Islamic republic in Uzbekistan (they later went on to found the terrorist organization, the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan). After this traumatic moment, President Karimov made the decision to take on this aberrant form of Islam with a two-pronged attack.

First, he decided to crackdown on Muslims who appeared *too pious*—for example, those who wore beards or who prayed five times a day—as these characteristics, according to the secret police, profiled current or future terrorists. In crude and continuous fashion, this crackdown has become the defining trait of the Karimov regime. During his tenure there have been as many as 8,500 people in jail, essentially for being Muslim. Torture is *systemic* in the Uzbek penal system, as reported by the United Nations.

While the extremist threat is real, the government has overplayed it in order to maintain the status quo inside the country. The repressive atmosphere, however, ironically aids the alien ideology of the extremist groups. Absent from other mechanisms for political grievance, the public increasingly views the extremist groups as legitimate because they are the only ones *standing up* to an unjust and corrupt regime. Most Uzbeks know someone who has been illegally detained, increasing the anger with the government and even sympathy for extremists groups.

Paradoxically, however, the second prong of Karimov's fight against extremism has been education. To his credit, Karimov recognized from the beginning that this was a *war of ideas* and that only good ones could overcome bad ones. Unfortunately, as the government has overhauled the spiritual and secular education, the means has tainted the ends.

Regarding theological matters, the government of Uzbekistan uses a religious board to approve the placement of imams throughout the country, as well as the sermons they give on Fridays. (Uzbeks are used to some kind of government control as this board that has existed in the region, in one form or another, since 1789). President Karimov also established the Islamic State University in Tashkent. This school teaches English, Arabic, theology, and other disciplines.

Bridging the gap between spiritual and secular education, the government completely redesigned its public education of Islam. It developed a five-year plan to comparatively review programs and textbooks from the former Soviet Union, the Middle East, and from around the world. It then developed and

implemented a curriculum for the elementary, secondary, university, and graduate levels to teach Islam in public schools; to include a training program for specialists who would teach this curriculum.

The Uzbek government also established the “Umid” (which means “hope” in Uzbek) Foundation to send young Uzbeks abroad for undergraduate and graduate education. This program sent 3,000 Uzbeks abroad and asked that they come back and help build their country. Unfortunately, it became too expensive as some Uzbeks did not return. The government then established, in conjunction with the Great Britain’s Westminster University, the Westminster International University of Tashkent (WIUT). WIUT conducts all of its courses in English and is designed to prepare students to compete and contribute in a globalized world.

While the efforts at secular education will no doubt have long-lasting effect, the efforts regarding Islam lose credibility because it is so obvious that the government controls the clergy and the message of public Islam. In other words, because the government seemingly believes that one cannot be fundamentally devout and a good citizen who disavows terrorism, the efforts to re-educate Uzbeks about Islam are often seen as one more component of a regime that seeks to control everything.

Still, as most Uzbek officials will tell you, consider the results. Whether you like this two-pronged attack or not, Uzbekistan has not become a haven for terrorists. To their mind, it is precisely because of the preemptive security and educational measures taken that they did not become a breeding ground for the next Taliban. This logic is accentuated by the fact that the U.S. ignored Uzbek warnings about extremism in the 1990s as America focused on exporting a *civil society* ideology that was irrelevant to Uzbek culture.

Additionally, to the Uzbek official’s mind, his government has sought to address the human rights concerns that America has raised. For example, since the March 12, 2002 security agreement between Uzbekistan and the United States—an agreement where the Uzbeks insisted that human rights be included—the Uzbek government:

- Released 460 political prisoners in December 2001.
- Provided access to the U.N. Rapporteur on Torture—the only Central Asian country to do so—whose report concluded that torture was *systemic* in Uzbek jails.
- Released 930 political prisoners in December 2002.
- Released 705 political prisoners in December 2003.

- Placed secret police on trial for human rights violations (the first time in Uzbekistan’s history).
- Developed a four month survey of extremists in twenty-one prisons (April-August 2003) to better understand the movement.
- Did not conduct the usual “sweep” after the 2004 and 2005 terrorist bombings rounding up random innocent people (as they did in Namangan in December 1997 when a police official was assassinated).
- Brought back the former head Mufti, Mohammed Yusef (an independent voice who has criticized the regime) back to help with Islamic education.
- Participated in a conference on religion and the state in Washington, D.C.
- Sustained a downward trend in arrests.
- Lowered the number of political prisoners, by all accounts, from approximately 8,500 to 4,500-5,500.

The question for us in the West is this: Were these token measures or were they as fast as the more progressive elements in the Uzbek government could move?

We won’t know this answer for some time because of May 13, 2005. At Andijan, an armed rebellion—on behalf of pious Muslim businessmen illegally jailed—took place. The insurgents killed innocent people and used human beings as shields against the government. The government overreacted and killed several hundred of its own citizens. In one fell swoop, the government of Uzbekistan alienated itself, perhaps finally, from its citizens; encouraged extremist legitimacy and therefore recruiting; and forced its main ally, the United States, into an either/or position. It is the worst of all worlds for all parties, but here we are.

CONCLUSION: FIVE LESSONS FOR REALIST RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

This article is not an apology for the Karimov regime, or the events of May 13, 2005, in Andijan. But it does seek to understand an Uzbek worldview, and in doing so, challenge our own to be better. In this context, five lessons for engagement are offered for those who seek practical effect in the cause of religious freedom around the world, and in Uzbekistan:

Lesson #1: The ordinary Uzbek today cares about two things: jobs and justice (not religious freedom); if religious freedom is not practical on a daily basis, it will not be relevant.

Lesson #2: It is impossible to separate religious freedom from its cultural and political context. If you are serious about religious freedom in Uzbekistan, then you had better be serious about practical efforts in: implementing agricultural and economic reform, creating native Masters in Business Administration (MBA) programs, developing a rule of law center that enables World Trade Organization (WTO) ascension, and creating a sustained dialogue on religious freedom and stability.

Lesson #3: For now, Andijan, America and the West will have little to no impact on events in Uzbekistan, especially human rights. This may be a good thing as Uzbeks themselves are forced to come up with their own solutions to these problems.

Lesson #4: Religious freedom is a coin with two sides: tolerance and terrorism; too much of the former leads to the latter (as the Tony Blair government is now discovering). If there were a western sense of religious freedom available in Uzbekistan, we might see an environment develop similar to the one in Pakistan that enabled the Taliban in the early 1990s. If an Uzbek form of religious freedom could be developed, rooted in the rich history of the land, extremist groups would be laughed out of the country.

Lesson #5: For the West, the soft power of the single-issue advocate (human rights) and hard power of the single-minded realist (realpolitik), alone, are irrelevant in places like Uzbekistan. Each needs the other, whether they like it or not. Soft issues, in particular, need to become more “pointy.”



END

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ROLE MODELS OF PEACE-MAKERS

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INTRODUCTION

In human history, many people have contributed to world peace. However, most of their contributions have been limited to a time, a place, or a special event. Hardly anyone has exerted a persistent influence on world peace...those who continued their influence after death are even fewer. Among these few people, most of them are religious. I believe there are many leaders of other religions who endeavor to make world peace a reality. They are worthy of being cited as model peace-makers. There are three I would like to mention: Jesus Christ, Saint Francis of Assisi, and Mother Teresa of Calcutta. They are role models in the Catholic world who have exerted permanent influences on world peace.

JESUS CHRIST THE LORD

In order to understand the role played by Jesus Christ and His contributions to world peace, it is necessary to review human history in falling, rebellion, and separation. According to Genesis of the Old Testament, God created a man and a woman in His image after He had created the universe and all the animals and plants on earth. And God gave them His blessing and said to them, "Be fertile and increase, and make the earth full and be masters of it; be rulers over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing moving on the earth" (Genesis 1:27-28).

The few words written in Genesis as quoted above refer to human dignity, the origin of human rights, and the meaning and mission of humanity's existence. The metaphysical basis of human dignity and the origin of human rights is that "God made man in his image." God is an infinite divine being, with boundless and perfect reason and free will. Human beings are creatures who have certain metaphysical limits; however, within these limits, their soul, reason, and free will are the miniatures of God's divine nature, reason, and free

will. The meaning and mission of humanity's existence is to "be fertile and increase, and make the earth full and be masters of it." "To be fertile" is to participate in missions bestowed to humans by God in creating humanity. "To be masters of the earth" is to participate in missions bestowed upon humanity by God in creating and beautifying the earth, delineating every person to live happily and peacefully, and spend the lives congruent to human dignity. In the above-mentioned words from Genesis, it depicts the close relationship between human and the Creator, between humans and humans and all things in the universe.

God does not want man, created in His own image, to live according to instincts like animals. He does not want people to live like mechanically-controlled robots. He expects humans to employ their own wisdom and free to determine their actions and lives, living with dignity. The reasons for humanity's falling, conflict, division, violence, war, and crimes originate from humanity's misuse of their own selfish wisdom and freedom to satisfy their own greed, arrogance, vanity, and power. The ancestors of humanity—Adam and Eve—disobeyed God's order just to satisfy their own greed, committing original sin. Their sin influenced their eldest son, Cain, who killed their second son Abel. Human beings have continued to fall since then. And crimes such as selfishness, jealousy, hate, robbery, murder, inequality, unfaithfulness, violence, and war happen to us carelessly. Most recent wars in this century have been cruel, grand-scale world wars and countless civil and regional wars. The death total numbered about 100 million.

The Second person of the Holy Trinity—God the Son—did not want to see people continue to fall and to twist and smash God's image. When the time arrived, He was born to the earth as a human, named as Jesus Christ, who was God as well as a perfect man. He repaired God's image that was twisted and damaged because of human's selfishness and sins. Furthermore, He also restored the perfect and harmonious relationship between humanity and Heaven, between human beings themselves and between humanity and all things in the universe.

Humans disobeyed Heaven's rule, breaking the natural law, harming others to benefit themselves, cheating, stealing, murdering, robbing, launching wars, and committing many other crimes. All these crimes originated from the selfish thoughts in their hearts. If we want to create peace, we have to cleanse our souls. When Jesus began to preach, He said, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel" (Mark 1:15). "You have to repent" means to "cleanse your heart" and to "change

oneself totally.” “You should believe in the gospel!” is to live in accordance to the Gospel spirit.

“God’s Kingdom” is the kingdom of truth, justice, love, forgiveness, and peace. The virtues of truth, justice, love, forgiveness, and peace are closely knitted together. It is impossible to maintain permanent peace if any one of them is lacking.

Jesus Christ did not only preach these virtues that could create permanent peace; He also lived up to His words. In the end, His death on the cross actualized all these virtues, reaching the sublime apex. He sacrificed Himself on the cross as salvation for all humanity and restored the broken human-heaven relationship, serving as witness to the gospel He preached and repaying the sins of humanity’s selfishness and rebellion against God’s will. He brought people eternal salvation and established the model of forgiveness, demonstrating His boundless love to human beings and laying the foundation for the union of humanity and Heaven, and the whole humanity as a family. Furthermore, He sketched the blueprints for people’s peaceful relationship with each other. Eventually, He pointed out the way to permanent peace.

After Jesus Christ’s resurrection and ascension, thousands of His disciples and followers in latter times endeavored to preach Christ’s Gospel at every corner of the world to evangelize the message of creating peace and saving people. We can be certain that Christ’s influence in world peace will continue to work until the end of the world.

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI (1181-1226)

Born in 1181 at Assisi in central Italy, St. Francis had lived a prolific life since childhood. He was handsome and generous, always ready to give, becoming a leader among the local young people. When he grew older, he assisted his father in business. He also briefly joined the military. Moreover, he got lost for quite some time living a frivolous life. Once in church, he heard the words spoken by Jesus to a rich youth: “If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven, and come and follow me” (Matthew 19:21). These words moved him deeply. Likewise, he gave away many things from his family to the poor. Meanwhile, he imitated Jesus’ simple and impoverished life. After his father returned from his trading trip and saw that Francis had over-donated, he broke his relationship with him. Furthermore, he expelled Francis from his home. After that, Francis enjoyed more freedom, joined like-minded friends,

and established the Franciscan Order, advocating poverty and simplicity while helping poor people.

In the 13th century, many Italian cities and states attempted to occupy other cities or states and to win their own independence; therefore, wars between them were frequent. Christians also organized the Crusades, trying to get back the Holy Land occupied by Muslims. Since Francis had become a pious Christian, he always negotiated between cities or states for peace, regarding the mission for peace as his own duty. Furthermore, he also preached in Egypt, persuading the Egyptian king to be at peace with the Christians. He loved all people and all creatures. He regarded animals as his brothers and sisters. He even talked and preached to the birds and fishes, calling the sun his brother, the moon his sister. In addition, he composed a canticle for them. He composed a prayer, known as the "Peace Prayer of Saint Francis," which has been widely known among peoples, regardless of their race and religion. Everyone loves to sing it:

Peace Prayer of Saint Francis

O Lord, make me an instrument of Thy Peace!

Where there is hatred, let me sow love;

Where there is injury, pardon;

Where there is discord, harmony;

Where there is doubt, faith;

Where there is despair, hope;

Where there is darkness, light, and

Where there is sorrow, joy.

Oh Divine Master, grant that I may not
so much seek to be consoled as to console;

To be understood as to understand;

To be loved as to love;

For it is in giving that we receive;

It is in pardoning that we are pardoned;

And it is in dying that we are born to Eternal Life."

St. Francis' lived during the Crusades when the kings in Western Europe competed with each other. They attempted to use armed force to seize the Holy Land. However, after 200 years and 8 huge crusades, they still could not recover the Holy Land, and they lost countless soldiers in the process. St. Francis' followers did not have any soldiers. They used love to regain the Holy

Land gradually. St. Francis and his followers were the real instruments for creating peace.

MOTHER TERESA OF CALCUTTA (1910-1997)

I heard about Mother Teresa's love and her care given to the "poorest of the poor" a long time ago, but the first time I talked to her was in 1985. On the night of January 17 that year, I listened to her speech, "How to Care, Love, and Look after the Poorest of the Poor" at Zhongshan Hall, Taipei. She left a very deep impression on me. Her speech allowed me to understand it was a broad way leading to permanent world peace.

In 1979, Mother Teresa was awarded the Nobel Prize for Peace. Some people were suspicious concerning the reason the Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to Mother Teresa. She did not negotiate between any conflicts, nor did she weave among the nations to engage in diplomacy, endeavoring peace between warring countries. Indeed, she just dedicated all she could to serve the "poorest of the poor," offering her greatest love. She used substantial acts to contribute all she had in helping the people who urgently longed for help. She never thought of getting the Nobel Peace Prize. However, she created a smooth path to world peace unexpectedly.

In the past century, science, technology, and material culture have progressed considerably. Some people believe that the progress has already surpassed all of humanity's accomplishments in the past hundreds of thousands of years. However, the progress in science, technology, and material culture did not facilitate people's growth spiritually. On the contrary, it nurtured and promoted selfishness, greed, sensual gratification, coldness, deprivation, and cruelty, sowing malignant seeds. It widened the gaps and built up high walls between the rich and the poor, destroying human dignity and basic human rights. It filled this world with war and violence.

With Christ's selfless love, Mother Teresa contributed her love silently to serve "the poorest of the poor," allowing them to feel their own dignity and people's love and concern. Even with those who were seriously ill and abandoned, Mother Teresa enabled them to die with a smile because of her care and love.

Mother Teresa did not use profound philosophy, only simple love and sincerity to offer substantial help to "the poorest of the poor" to cure the most serious modern sicknesses: selfishness, voracity, sensual gratification, coldness, deprivation, violence, and war. Likewise, she opened up a smooth path, which everyone can follow, to create world peace.

CONCLUSION

The world's permanent peace is built on truth, forgiveness, reconciliation, and concrete actions of love and compassion, not on violence and war. Because of His immense love of God the Father and human beings, Jesus Christ offered His life on the cross as a sacrifice for reconciliation between God and man, for peace between human beings, and for harmony between man and other creatures. The apostles and believers of Jesus Christ following His footsteps and with their own ways have tried and will continue to promote world peace. St. Francis of Assisi and Mother Teresa are but two role models of peacemakers in the Christian world.



END



U.S. EFFORTS TO ENCOURAGE RELIGIOUS FREEDOM IN CENTRAL ASIA

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Almost fifteen years after independence, the five countries of Central Asia are struggling in varying degrees with their transition from Soviet authoritarian rule to democratic societies that fully respect human rights and uphold their freely undertaken Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) commitments and other international obligations. Despite the lack of progress, religious freedom issues are most certainly at the forefront of contemporary political discussions in Central Asia today.

During this same period, the United States has become increasingly engaged with these countries politically, economically, and militarily. Considering the religious nature of the region and the threat of Islamist extremism, it is critical that the United States energetically engage these countries on religious freedom. Diplomatic tools are available to promote democracy and respect for religious freedom, such as the International Religious Freedom Act. This article will discuss the importance of religion to the region, mechanisms for the U.S. to promote religious freedom and the nexus of the two.

RELIGION IN CENTRAL ASIA

The ancient civilizations surrounding the Silk Road hosted a vibrant Muslim society before Soviet domination.¹ Since the opening of the region in the early 1990's, Islam again has flourished.² However, Muslim missionaries brought new Islamic sects, some very conservative, others violent.³ Generally, governments have responded with a heavy hand to the appearance of independent Islam, most grossly demonstrated by the May 13 mass killings by government forces in the southern Uzbek town of Andijan.⁴

The end of Soviet rule of Central Asia ushered in a revival of Islamic activity not seen in a generation. While most Uzbeks, Kazakhs, Kyrgyz, Tajiks, and Turkmen always viewed themselves as Muslim despite the atheistic policies of the USSR, knowledge of Islam was thin. The opening of the region allowed a variety of missionaries from various faiths to spread their beliefs, including proselytizing Muslim groups.

The most well-known group to emerge is *Hizb ut-Tahrir*, the Party of Islamic Liberation. Publicly disavowing violence, its stated goals are to establish the Islamic caliphate governed by Shari'ah law.⁵ Originally founded in Jordan in the 1950's and initially affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood, it has since set its own course and spread throughout the world through cell groups and clandestine operations.⁶ *Hizb ut-Tahrir's* greatest success has been in Central Asia, where its adherents are believed to number in the thousands. Its ideology has led to it being banned in all five countries, and while present in throughout Western Europe, it has even fallen out of favor with a few of these more liberal governments.⁷ To date, it has not been linked with violent actions, like the 2004 bombings in Tashkent, but its ideology is viewed as moving individuals towards radical and violent activity.

Unfortunately, all Central Asian governments have responded to the rebirth of Islam with great suspicion, mistrusting anything they cannot control. All five governments are concerned by the spread of *Hizb ut-Tahrir* and are acutely aware of the threat of Islamist militants—the rise of the Taliban in Afghanistan, the civil war in Tajikistan between Islamist and secular forces, and the attacks by the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan into southern Uzbekistan all demonstrated the dangers represented by extremist groups. However, governments have exploited this real threat by clamping down on religious communities and civil society and excessively limiting human rights and religious freedoms. While the threat is real, governments have often used it to justify policies focusing on regime survival.

It is undisputed that independent Muslims have suffered the most under governmental efforts to defeat political Islam. In addition, through outright manipulation and through the presence of Muslim boards, a relic of the Soviet past, Central Asian governments exercise *de facto* and *de jure* control over the free practice of Islam for all Muslims.⁸ At the same time, other non-Muslims religions, such as evangelical Christian groups, experience serious limitations to their rights via the same laws that limit the free practice of Islam. Registration schemes with numerical requirements and burdensome stipulations limit, rather than facilitate, the free practice of religion for non-Muslim groups.⁹

UNITED STATES FOREIGN POLICY

After the fall of communism and the emergence of these countries from the Soviet Union, U.S. foreign policy concentrated on promoting democracy, respect for human rights and economic liberalization. The events of September 11 serve as a dividing point of U.S. policy towards the region, as Central Asia found itself on the front lines in the war against terrorism.

Relevant in previously unknown ways, the contiguous countries neighboring Afghanistan became critical for overflight and staging areas for U.S. military operations in Afghanistan during Operation Enduring Freedom. Military planners viewed the U.S. bases in southern Uzbekistan and in Bishkek as valuable geo-strategic assets, despite the change of government in Afghanistan, the introduction of NATO forces, and their provisional reconstruction teams. The decision by Uzbekistan to end its base agreements with the United States and the statement by the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, calling for the withdrawal of all U.S. forces from the region, has changed the dynamic.¹⁰

The post September 11, 2001, phase of the relationship has closed and a new chapter is opening. Perhaps this began with Andijan, but perhaps even earlier by President Bush in his second inaugural address, when he declared it is “the policy of the United States to seek and support the growth of democratic movements and institutions in every nation and culture, with the ultimate goal of ending tyranny in our world.”¹¹ How this will impact U.S. foreign policy in Central Asia after Andijan is a highly debated question. Even without President Bush’s new policy, the Tulip Revolution in Kyrgyzstan and the recent violence in Andijan demonstrate the status quo will not hold, be that for better or for worse. U.S. foreign policy will be forced to accept and engage this new reality.

PROTECTION AND PROMOTION OF RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Of the various human rights issues, religious freedom is uniquely important to the United States. This is apparent through the passage of the 1998 International Religious Freedom Act, by which Congress mandated the inclusion of religious freedom in all bilateral discussions.¹² The Act accomplished this in several ways, first by creating in the State Department the Office of International Religious Freedom headed by an Ambassador-at-Large.¹³ In addition, the Act established an independent watchdog commission, called the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom.¹⁴

The Act also created the possibility of sanctions for “particularly severe violations of religious freedom.” The law defined “particularly severe” as “egregious, systematic and ongoing,” which can include torture, prolonged detention, and disappearances because of an individual’s religious beliefs.¹⁵ If a country is determined to be involved in such violations, they can be designated a Country of Particular Concern or CPC.¹⁶

Determinations are made every year. The process begins with the Commission on International Religious Freedom nominating countries for CPC designation, which most recently happened on May 11.¹⁷ The Secretary of State is not obligated to designate these countries as Countries of Particular Concern; it is merely an advisory opinion. In fact, the Secretary of State can designate countries not nominated by the Commission at any time.¹⁸

Country of Particular Concern status is both a carrot and stick, as governments are encouraged to take concrete steps to avoid designation, but consequences will come if violations continue. Once designation occurs, the Act provides the State Department a menu of options, from a demarche to full economic sanctions.¹⁹ In addition, the State Department has 90 days after designation to negotiate with the offending government a set of actions that will forestall the creation of a sanctions regime.²⁰

Current CPC countries are Burma, China, Eritrea, Iran, North Korea, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, and Vietnam.²¹ The State Department recently concluded an agreement with Vietnam that will protect and preserve religious liberties, demonstrating how CPC designation can move countries to act.²² However, there has been frustratingly little progress with the other CPC countries, especially Saudi Arabia.

U.S. FOREIGN POLICY REGARDING RELIGIOUS FREEDOM IN CENTRAL ASIA

Bringing these discussions together, the State Department and Congress have been active on the issue of religious freedom with the five Central Asian countries. Through the venue of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the United States has repeatedly and publicly urged these governments to improve religious freedom conditions.²³ Members of Congress frequently write heads of state and ambassadors on religious freedom concerns, as well.²⁴

Regarding actions stemming from the International Religious Freedom Act, in April Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan were nominated by the Commission on International Religious Freedom for Country of Particular

Concern status. This was the third year in a row the Commission listed Turkmenistan, but the first instance for Uzbekistan.²⁵ The United States, pushing aggressively for improvements in respect for religious freedom, would improve conditions in these countries to some extent, while also putting other governments in the region on notice that the U.S. is serious about ensuring respect for this right.

The threat of CPC designation and sanctions has played a significant role in moving the Turkmen Government to take concrete actions. Seemingly oblivious to human rights concerns on so many issues, over the past two years tangible progress has been made on respect for religious freedom. The government amended the religion law, lowering the registration threshold from 500 individuals per locality to five nationally, as well as registering several religious groups.²⁶ There has been a cessation in the destruction of mosques, the release of conscientious objectors and Christian groups allowed to meet openly.²⁷ The question is whether these paper promises will translate into the sustained enjoyment of religious freedoms. Registered religious groups continue to experience harassment by authorities, unregistered religious activity remains illegal, and the former grand mufti of Turkmenistan remains jailed on bogus charges of treason.²⁸

For Uzbekistan, reportedly 5,500 individuals, mainly Muslim, remain jailed on behalf of their religious affiliation or belief.²⁹ Non-Muslim groups continue to report their coreligionists being detained by police and charged with administrative and criminal penalties for merely meeting together for worship.³⁰ Considering the willingness displayed by authorities in Andijan to preserve the government of President Karimov at all costs, it is doubted that the Country of Particular Concern threat will energize the Uzbeks in the same way as Turkmenistan. Also, Chinese efforts to pull Uzbekistan further into its sphere of influence without any concerns of human rights and religious freedoms will likely lessen the influence of the United States and European Union (EU) countries.

CONCLUSION

The crisis in Andijan should serve as a warning, first to the regime of President Islam Karimov and other Central Asian leaders to reform, but also to the international community to act, as these basic fundamental freedoms must be respected or this volatile region will destabilize further. Members of Congress and the European Parliament have decried the killings in Andijan.³¹

The State Department has issued several strongly worded statements, as have EU foreign ministers at the External Relations Council and the chairwoman of the Central Asia Delegation.³² As the events in southern Uzbekistan show, violence will result if serious steps are not taken to move these governments away from despotic authoritarian actions, towards reform, democratization, and respect for human rights and religious freedom.



END

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NATIONALISM AS A CHALLENGE FOR RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

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(Abstracted from a larger document)

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM, NATIONALISM, SECURITY: SOME STRATEGIES

In my opinion, nationalism as a challenge to religious freedom is connected to the idea of lost purity. I am very well aware of the dangers of this concept, not so much in daily life as in the crucial fields of religious freedom, an absolute cornerstone of Western democracies. Consequently, any form of relativism with regard to religious freedom as such should be countered with energy. We cannot accept the idea that religious freedom is sometimes perceived as not very important. It is certainly not an approach characterized by relativism that I aim at when advocating the idea of lost purity. Rather, I want to interpret certain notions less rigidly, to take away some tension and also to identify and describe some myths. By being less on the principle side with regard to notions, including the very notion of religious freedom, we can better work with elusive, definitely irrational terms such as nationalism and its confrontation with religious freedom.

It is perhaps at this stage that the key problem can be situated, a problem I already mentioned above. Generally speaking, religious freedom is perceived as a very rational notion and thus it is left to lawyers and other systematic thinkers. Yet, the content of religion, including its possible links with nationalism, are seen as free from rational control, as potentially irrational. Consequently, the field of religion is left to highly inspired people who could or should not be confronted with rational requirements. My point is that this position is too easy. Moreover, it makes impossible any fruitful dialogue between the rational and the irrational side. Yet, in reality, religious freedom is less rational, and religion is more rational than it appears at first glance. As a consequence of this idea, common points can be identified and bridges can be built.

The three remedies I am proposing here should be seen in that perspective.

a. The first remedy deals with how religion is dealt with. Once religious freedom is duly recognized, it seems that nothing more can be added. People should refrain from comments (so goes the implicit reasoning), as religion can never be subject to a rational analysis. All religious thinking and analysis is left to religious professionals. At the same time, politicians and secular authorities would not think of formulating any value judgment on religious creed. Clearly, this reluctant behavior is not a linear result of their deeply rooted respect for religious freedom. Indeed, a similar phenomenon of caution and noninvolvement can be identified with regard to culture in general. Some think all expression of culture should be intrinsically equivalent. For instance, there can be no intrinsic difference in quality between German philosophy and African philosophy.¹ Of course, the context of the systems involved is not the same, nor is its impact on the universal level. Yet in the meantime, any value judgment concerning the quality of ideas is felt as being inappropriate.

The question rises whether respect and tolerance—so necessary for the implementation of religious freedom—really do prohibit any value judgment related to the ideas concerned. For instance, does true acceptance of religious freedom imply the idea that all churches and religious groups enjoying this religious freedom are free from any possible official criticism with regard to their creed and the concrete action connected with it? To put it another way: Is the acceptance of religious freedom the end of any public debate concerning religious ideas?

Very often, the answer is yes. But then again, why should formal freedom lead to an absence of any material debate? One can even argue that the opposite should be true: The guarantee of freedom should stimulate (instead of hinder) the debate on ideas. In that regard, the government should encourage theological studies, as well as the education of people being able to bridge authentic theology and the pillars of democratic society. Theological thinking should not be abandoned to masters of elusiveness. Accepting religious freedom should more than guarantee an open space for theological analysis. Certainly, the mere existence of the open space merits the most careful protection. But then again, within this open space everything but a lack of discussion deserves to be stimulated.

Eventually, the state can go further than just stimulating theological studies. Indeed, why should secular politicians and leaders hide their religious

preferences and options, as long as religious freedom remains fully protected? There is a striking difference between religious freedom on one hand and absolute neutrality with regard to any possible religious question on the other hand.

b. The second remedy focuses on religious freedom. At this level, also, the paradigm of lost purity can be surprisingly useful. Among the possible measures to be taken, one can highlight the following strategies.

1. Religious freedom as a fundamental right should continue to be considered as inalienable. Consequently, penal norms which only deal with religious crimes are highly questionable. This does not mean that one should insist on the rational structure of religious freedom. It is clear that historical factors also played a part with regard to the development of the notion, and so did cultural and sociological conditions. Just one example: the right to change religion is probably not a logically inextricable part of the notion of religious freedom. Yet this logical inevitability is not necessary. It is sufficient to say that for various reasons that can be rationally, ethically, or historically underpinned, the right to change religion is an integral part of religious freedom. In other words: on a strictly logical basis, one could imagine the right to change religion not being part of religious freedom. Yet a combination of the same logical thinking and other more elusive arguments makes the right to change religion an absolute. One thing is clear: broken rationality does not lead to the absence of any rational thinking, nor does it entail a weaker protection of religious freedom.

2. Why should a religious policy conducted by the state be unacceptable *per se*? Of course such a policy depends on the legal system of the country concerned. For instance, given the constitutional context in the United States, the room for such a state-oriented religious policy is extremely limited. Then again, in countries in which cooperation between the state and certain religious groups is part of the national tradition, this level can offer unexpected possibilities. Certain forms of religious behavior can be stimulated by developing further cooperation. Such a positive approach differs considerably from its negative counterpart, which sanctions undesirable behavior through limiting, for instance for security reasons, certain aspects of religious freedom. Particularly in countries where nationalism is strong (which tends to happen rather often in orthodox countries), the possibility of establishing a religious

policy can be highly useful. Just one example to illustrate this idea.

Let us imagine a traditionally orthodox country, characterized by a considerable entanglement between the state and the dominate religion. What could be done in order to improve the quality of religious freedom?

The first option consists in striving for equality among all religious groups. On a completely equal footing, they should enjoy the same degree of religious freedom, including the right to obtain legal personality, the right to acquire goods and to construct religious buildings, and so on. Privileges, however, so typical for certain Orthodox countries, should be banned. Frankly, I wonder whether this option would work. Imposing full equality on the dominate religion can lead to feelings of revenge on the lower level of administrative policy. That revenge could lead to limitations of religious freedom for minority religions.

The second option comes closer to the lost purity paradigm and accepts an active religious policy. In that case, the dominating church which has nationalist connections receives some advantages or privileges, for instance on a ceremonial or financial level. One can hope that the national church will not feel frustrated in cases where it is considered as more than just one religion among others. A national church which is able to keep its entire dignity will probably be less tempted to deny basic religious freedom to minority religions. In other words, the lost purity paradigm connected with a preferential treatment of one church could strengthen the basic religious freedom and its protection for all religious groups.

3. Another strategy consists of stimulating true cooperation between the state and religious groups. Here the focus is not a one-way state religious policy, but an authentic contractual system. The state finances certain useful activities organized by churches—such as education or charity—with the understanding that (1) the quality of the services offered meets with state-defined minimum standards, and (2) the religious group involved accepts the basic democratic values, including the catalog of fundamental rights, in which religious freedom holds a prominent position.

Again, such a strategy is not possible in all countries. A non-establishment tradition does not seem to allow such an approach. Yet this could be a road for the future. Perhaps such a cooperation model will characterize future relationships between the European Union and religious groups. Certainly the main Christian churches have other European preferences and ambitions. They foster a structured dialogue between the EU

and the main churches.² And yet, as useful as a dialogue between Cardinals and European commissioners might be, such a proposal fit better in a 19th century framework when the official position of religious groups was more important than the intrinsic value of religiously supported initiatives.³

Today, however, it might very well be that contractual cooperation in the field slowly eclipses structured dialogue among leaders. Both forms of discussion have their value. I am certainly not advocating against any form of structured dialogue. Yet contractual cooperation, working on concrete projects with tangible results for real people, could foster a form of dialogue that slows down dangerous entanglements between nationalism and a mythic, yet not very concrete or practical form of religious expression.

The lost purity paradigm influences many aspects of religious freedom. It de-dramatizes its theoretical status by accepting the idea of broken rationality. Lost purity focuses also on the content by no longer overruling the idea of a religious policy and of cooperation between church and state.

c. A third remedy could be found in combining the first and second ones. In summary, the first remedy concerns an increased public participation in the theological debate. Rational argumentation is strengthened in the religious domain. The emotional monopoly is questioned; and it is precisely that emotional monopoly within religion that makes cross-connections with an equally irrational nationalism very plausible. Religion should not remain or become an island of elusive emotions. Of course emotions are present, but rational discussions respecting these emotions are no longer anxiously avoided.

The second remedy deals with a demystification of extreme rationality as a key characteristic of religious freedom. Although religious freedom can be rationally argued, it is not a fruit of rationality. Under certain conditions a state religious policy and new models of cooperation can be helpful in strengthening the protection of religious freedom, be it in an overall atmosphere of lost purity.

Religion on the one hand and religious freedom on the other will come closer to each other and no longer live in carefully-separated worlds. In my opinion, that is a good evolution. The gap between the framework of religious freedom and the way concrete religious groups function within that framework should not become too cluttered. And here is my third remedy. A gap should remain, be it a small one. The creating of closer ties is positive. Clearly a small gap is better than a big gap, as a small gap makes real dialogue not just possible but also plausible. By a small gap I mean the fulfillment of

certain basic requirements. Essential democratic values should be shared, the emotional aspects of a rather rational religious freedom framework ought to be recognized, and the rational argument with regard to an always partly elusive theological thinking merits full attention. Nationalist adventures will have fewer chances in a framework of identifying more accurately the (differently expressed and balanced) rational and less rational elements of both religion and religious freedom. The small gap is an adequate solution.

Yet, the evolution is not endless. We do not go from a big gap over a small gap to complete entanglement, as entanglement would mean a religiously colored notion of religious freedom, and a religion colored by merciless logic and a general feeling of inevitability. In such an atmosphere of entanglement, true religious freedom is impossible, as religious freedom becomes a religious notion. Only the small gap is a reliable guarantee for authentic religious freedom.

Ultimately, what is worse—the big gap or the entanglement? They might be closer to each other than one would think at first glance. Strange connections exist. Maybe the current regime in Iraq stands for the big gap? Religion is used for power reasons. It helps legitimize an alternative culture. History gives a future to people without a future. And perhaps Saudi Arabia offers an example of entanglement, including fluid notions and concepts, as well as intangible discussions when it comes to the notion of freedom. What is better? What is worse? Possibly the positive aspect of the big gap is that one can more easily define one's enemies. It is not certain that the most dangerous enemies are those who can be identified with a minimal effort.

In any case, the third remedy is a synthesis of the two previous ones. The paradigm of lost purity leads to the idea of the small gap between the framework of religious freedom and religious content. The small gap is probably the best guarantee against a dangerous and impalpable alliance between emotional religion and extreme nationalism.



END

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