



THE STATE OF RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

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We know, of course, that religious intolerance and repression are not limited to the communist totalitarian societies. Iran today, for example, has viciously suppressed religious minorities in a manner far exceeding in brutality any of the previous excesses of the Shah. Members of the Baha'i faith have been killed, imprisoned, and persecuted, in violation not only of the universal principle of freedom to worship, but, ironically, also of the Islamic tradition of religious tolerance. Khomeini's rule is a blight on the history of Islam.

The myth in Khomeini's Iran is different from that of the communists in the Soviet Union, but the result is the same. The state knows the truth, and all who dissent are to be vanquished. The brutalities of Khomeini's regime against the Baha'is show what happens to individual liberty when the state tries to control the thoughts and beliefs of its citizens, when it obliterates the distinction between the secular, political realm and the spiritual realm. We must never forget this important lesson.

In the late eighteenth century, the American founders had a vision: They wanted to create a free society where all men and women could worship as they please, openly, without fear of threats to their lives and livelihoods.

Today, two hundred years later, we, too, have a vision: We want to see the hopes and dreams of those yearning for freedom throughout the world become reality. We must recognize, as the founding fathers did, that a central part of that freedom we seek to promote is freedom of religion. One cannot exist without the other. We must support, in whatever way we can, those around the world who seek only to worship God without fear of persecution, and who struggle against the state's efforts to control their thoughts and beliefs. Whether it is to be the rights of Jews in the Soviet Union to live as Jews, the rights of Baha'is in Iran to live as Baha'is, the rights of Buddhists in Vietnam to live as Buddhists, we must lend our support, moral and otherwise, to this most basic of human needs.

All religions call upon us to recognize and respect the essential dignity, equality, and fraternity of all men and women. We are all equal in God's eyes; therefore, we owe it to ourselves, to the world, and to God to protect and promote religious liberty everywhere.

THE STATE OF RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Remarks by Peter L. Berger

Most well-meaning people are likely to agree that both development and religious liberty are humanly valuable goals. They are also likely to look upon these two goals as having very little to do with each other. What is worse, a disturbing number of people, even some holding office in relig-

ious organizations, seem to feel that development is by far the more important goal and that, by comparison, religious liberty is a sort of luxury, appropriate to affluent societies but more or less irrelevant in the Third World. The latter view borders dangerously on racism. But even the more moderate idea, that development and religious liberty are unconnected, is misleading and indeed harmful to the human purpose of development.

To be sure, if by development one understands *nothing but* economic growth, then indeed it has little to do with religious liberty (or, for that matter, with anything else that human beings value in their real lives). A case can be made that the worst tyrannies of recent times have also done very poorly in terms of economic growth, but, regrettably, it is also true that even some quite odious regimes manage to maintain reasonable growth rates. However, if there is one insight that has emerged forcefully from the debate over development in the last few decades, it is the insight that development is *something more* than the mechanical accretion of per-capita gross national product. Economic growth is the presupposition of development, but it does not exhaust its meaning. Development also means that the largest possible number of people benefit from economic growth, that large masses of people are lifted from degrading poverty to a decent standard of living. Men live by bread, but they do not live by bread alone. They want to eat their bread in dignity, under conditions in which their basic human rights are respected and in which they can express the values which they cherish. This aspiration is not limited to the rich; it is shared by millions of the poorest people in every part of the world. To suggest that poor people care only about the material aspects of life is to deny their humanity. That is morally reprehensible. It is also empirically false.

Development is not what alleged experts in bureaucracies or think tanks decide. It is the process by which ordinary people come to believe that their lives are improving. It has been demonstrated over and over again that when the experts try to impose development plans without reference to the aspirations of the people who are supposed to benefit from these plans, the results are not only felt to be oppressive by the intended beneficiaries but in the end frustrate the strategies of the experts. The grandiose development strategy of the Shah's regime in Iran is an important case in point. Another example may be drawn from the repeated failures of birth-control programs in different Third World countries, where the experts assumed that their own assessment of the costs of having many children tallied with the interests and values of the people who were having all those children. In other words, successful development always relates to the values of the people who are supposed to be doing the developing. But the plain, empirical fact is that for most people, everywhere in the world, the values that are relevant for development are inextricably tied in with religion. In most countries, the one seg-

ment of the population of whom this is *not* true is the intellectuals—from whom, of course, the development experts are drawn. *Their* values, very often, have little if anything to do with religion; thus it is not surprising that they have difficulty understanding people (which is most people) for whom life is meaningless unless it is religiously inspired. Speaking of Iran, I vividly recall a visit there two years before the Islamic revolution, when I spoke with a good many intellectuals (a few supporters, but mostly opponents of the Shah's regime)—not one of them having any inkling of the religious thunderstorm about to engulf the country.

Development, even in its purely economic dimension, presupposes such values as discipline, sacrifice of immediate gratification for long-term gains (often for one's children rather than for oneself), cooperation with others, risk taking, a hopeful attitude toward the future. For most people in the world, these values are implausible unless they are rooted in religious faith. Deny the expression of this faith, and you deny the legitimacy of these values. Example: When Chinese peasants were herded into Maoist communes, their productivity declined catastrophically. There were many reasons for this, and, of course, the entire agrarian strategy of that period was not only humanly brutal but economically irrational. But one, seemingly minor, side effect of the strategy would have seemed eminently rational to many Western development experts: To allow for a more systematic cultivation of fields, graves that were located in the middle of agricultural land were plowed under. Chinese peasants, from times immemorial, had buried their dead in the middle of the fields. This religious practice established the unity of the generations, it linked the ancestors to the present and the future, it gave transcendent meaning to the hard work in the fields. Thus, this little measure of seeming rationalization was not only a violation of religious values, it ended up as a possibly significant contribution to an economic calamity.

Ordinary people are no less rational than university-trained experts when they reflect about their condition and the prospects of improving it. They may know less about the world at large, but they know more than anyone else about their own lives. Being rational, they calculate. By and large, two calculi will be foremost in their minds. The first is the calculus of how to reduce pain and to increase well-being. But there is also a second calculus, a calculus of meaning. When ordinary people figure out the costs of any particular development effort, a high priority will be given to costs in the realm of meaning. Even very poor people know that it is possible to gain materially while losing one's soul. This implies, quite simply, that religious values occupy a central place in the perspective on development of most ordinary people in the Third World. Respect for religious values, therefore, must be an integral part of any development strategy—for moral reasons, but also on very practical grounds.

What I have said so far has concerned the religious motives of individuals. But religious *institutions*, too, have an important relation to development. Whatever else it is, development is linked to the vast transformation process we know as modernization—and successful development means that some of the basic institutions of society, notably the economy and the state, will have become modernized. Obviously, this is not the occasion for a lecture on modernization. But one important point here: A modern society is organized in immense institutions, characterized by a very high degree of abstraction, anonymity, and *ipso facto* remoteness from the life-world of individuals; or, if you prefer that term, a modern society generates a lot of alienation. Democracy and the rule of law mitigate this alienating effect by making the large impersonal institutions more accountable, and by protecting the individual against the arbitrary power of these institutions. But there is alienation even under democratic regimes. One very important countervailing force is the presence in a modern or modernizing society of what some have called intermediate institutions; I prefer the term *mediating structures*. These are the institutions that *stand between* the individual and the vast institutions of a modern society, that mediate between public and private life. DeTocqueville was one of the first to understand the importance of these institutions for the vitality of a democratic society, and a number of social theorists since then have elaborated on this insight.

Now, there are quite different institutions that fulfill this mediating function—the family, voluntary associations of every description, miscellaneous subcultural groupings, even some economic organizations (such as labor unions). Some are traditional, others are new and innovative. But again it is a simple empirical fact that, in most of the world, the most important mediating structures are religious in nature. Local churches, synagogues, mosques, shrine associations play a mediating role. So do larger organizations in which the individual has a sense of participation—such as denominations, caste associations, tribal and ethnic organizations built around religious symbols, and the like. These religious institutions create networks of meaning—one could also call them *communities of meaning*—which are, as it were, double faced: One face is turned toward the life of the individual, giving meaning to his private life and concerns; the other face is turned toward public life, linking the individual to the broad economic and political concerns of the overall society. Once again, these institutions have an important relation to development. They ensure that the development process is not divorced from the deepest aspirations of people, that it is not experienced as an alien imposition from the outside, indeed that it is *meaningful*. To suppress or harass these institutions—that is, to deny the institutional ex-

pression of the religious liberty of individuals—is, therefore, to undermine one of the important social supports of the development process.

The preceding observations are especially pertinent to the situations in which the religious values and institutions of the great majority of people are drawn, positively or negatively, into the development process. The question of whether different religious traditions may have a different effect on development cannot be pursued here, but the foregoing considerations apply also to such traditions that may be deemed to be *less* conducive to development than others. In any case, thus far I have referred to majority religion: What about religious liberty for minorities?

Much as one may want to do so, one cannot plausibly argue that the persecution of any and all religious minorities will hinder development (which, needless to say, is *not* an argument for persecuting anyone). It is interesting to observe, however, that very frequently it is religious minorities that are highly productive economically that are singled out for discriminatory treatment if not outright persecution. Resentment, envy, and the desire to expropriate are, alas, powerful human motives. Anti-Semitism is a classical syndrome of these motives in Western civilization. The contemporary Third World, unfortunately, has many parallels—the Chinese in several countries of Southeast Asia, Indians and Pakistanis in East Africa, the Baha'is in Iran, and others. Not all economically productive minorities are religious ones (for example, the Ibos in Nigeria are an ethnic rather than a religious group), but very often they are. In those cases, respect for the religious liberty of minorities is directly relevant to the development process. Let me mention only what is probably the most important case in the world today—the rapid and massive growth of conservative Protestantism in East Asia (with the exception of Japan), in black Africa (where this type of Protestantism is in a neck-to-neck competition with Islam), and, most surprising of all, in much of Latin America (thus, for instance, it is estimated that some twenty percent of the population of Guatemala is now Protestant). There is a growing body of research that strongly suggests that these Protestant minorities (for reasons that would not have surprised Max Weber) are enormously productive economically, to the point where in some countries (such as South Korea) they may constitute a crucially important “engine” of modernization. Here, once again, respect for religious liberty is both morally and pragmatically important.

I am anxious not to be misunderstood on one point: I am *not* arguing that a practical interest in development is the only reason why there should be respect for religious liberty. Of course not! Religious liberty is a good in itself, is a fundamental human right, and it should be respected even if it could be shown that it has no bearing, or even a negative bear-

ing, on development. By analogy, we believe in freedom of speech for its own sake, and not because it may also be conducive to economic progress, or better mental health, or higher IQ ratings among schoolchildren, or any other social *desideratum*. Sometimes, though, virtue has its own rewards. I believe that this is so here. We believe in the inherent right of human beings to worship in the way of their ancestors or of their own choice, and we believe that all political regimes have a moral obligation to respect and safeguard this right. But it is cheering to realize that, in doing so, other *desiderata* are *also* served—especially if they are of as profound human significance as those associated with development.

There has been a lot of romanticism, of self-serving and ideological nonsense attached to the Third World among some people in the West. A natural irritation with all of this should not blind us to the fact that what is happening in the Third World today—or, more precisely, what is happening in parts of it—is a great and stirring human drama: Large masses of people moving from perilous subsistence to a decent material life, seeing most of their children grow into maturity rather than dying prematurely, looking into the future with hope, finding ways to participate in the shaping of that future—and, most stirring of all, people who were voiceless finding a voice to express their beliefs and values. This is the drama intended by that often-debased term “development.” Religion plays an essential part in that drama. Religious liberty is one of the rights vitally related to its success.

Remarks by Firuz Kazemzadeh

I have been asked to give a brief survey of the status of religious freedom in the Moslem world.

The notion of religious freedom as we understand it now is a modern notion that was not present in classical Islam. In fact, the concept that prevailed was that of the legitimacy of only one religion, and of the finality and superiority of Islam to all the other religions. The idea of tolerance was present, but strictly limited. Tolerance was extended to the “people of the Book,” to the members of revealed religions specifically mentioned in the Koran—the Jews and the Christians.

In the early days of Islam, in the Meccan period of Muhammad’s mission, when the exercise of political power was not yet a part of the religious activity of the Muslims, there was a considerable degree of tolerance for non-Muslims. Later in Medina, when Muhammad assumed political power, tolerance began to wane.

The consolidation of Islam throughout its vast empire brought a variety of Muslim responses to religious minorities that came under their sway.

Legal formulation was given to the status of non-Muslims who were given the status of unmistakably second-class citizens, and placed in an inferior position. However, allowance was made for those who were not strictly speaking possessors of the Book, such as the Zoroastrians, but who were tolerated because there were so many of them that it would have been impossible to exterminate them in Iran and at the same time to collect taxes and to rule the country.

The historical record of Islam then is mixed. In periods of ascendancy of Muslim power there was relative tolerance of non-Muslim "possessors of the Book" and sometimes even of Zoroastrians who were neither Jews nor Christians and therefore technically did not have a claim to being tolerated. Non-Muslims could occupy positions of trust and influence, usually close to the person of the ruler. The non-Muslims performed many useful functions, especially economic functions prohibited to Muslims, i.e., lending money and charging interest.

It was usually during periods of decline and stress that Islamic society turned intolerant and used religious minorities as scapegoats to divert the wrath of the population from the mistakes of the ruler. At such times the superiority of Islam was vigorously asserted either by government decree, by force or through obligatory symbolism. For instance, Christian churches were not permitted to ring bells. Non-Muslims could not construct sumptuous, large, beautiful edifices of worship, and in many instances non-Muslims were compelled to wear distinctive clothing which would instantly show the population that they belonged to a second-class group, that they were not the equals of the Muslims.

Of course, one must not be absolutist in history. One must realize that most of the things I have mentioned in connection with Islam were part of other religions as well. I could have been talking about Christian Europe in the Middle Ages. There is nothing specifically Islamic, theologically speaking, to a set of attitudes such as I have tried to describe.

When we move to the more modern period and talk about the modern Middle East, we have to deal with the legacy of the Ottoman Empire. The Ottoman Empire was vast and it was inhabited by millions of non-Muslims. The Christian population of the Ottoman Empire included the Greeks, the South Slavs, the Bulgarians, Christian Arabs, and, at various times, also the Rumanians. In addition, there lived under Ottoman rule large Jewish populations. The Ottomans organized these in semi-autonomous societies, the so-called "millet system" where the religious groups were given a considerable degree of domestic or internal autonomy. In their relations with Muslims, they were governed by Muslim law, but within their own communities they were left more or less alone, which was a form of tolerance indeed.

The decline and subsequent collapse of the Ottoman Empire, and the development of the independent states in the areas inhabited by Muslim populations created some new and strange situations. In the 19th century, as the Ottoman Empire was fading, many of the religious minorities within the Empire came under the protection of Western powers. Western imperialism was now connected in the eyes of the Turks with the protection of religious and ethnic minorities. When there was trouble with the Greeks, British troops were likely to appear at Turkish ports. When there were difficulties with the Arab Christians, the French were likely to step forward as protectors and the Russians, of course, proclaimed themselves the protector of all Ottoman Christians, and especially of the Orthodox. This claim to protect the Christians was embodied in international treaty, the Treaty of Kucuk-Kainarca, 1774, and then repeated in other international treaties. Thereafter, intolerance of religious minorities was, to some extent at least, a reaction to the fear of international intervention and, if you wish, Western imperialism.

Once the various Middle Eastern countries established their independence in the twentieth century, they acted in a variety of ways which are not easily generalized. In Turkey itself, on the eve of the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, some of the worst excesses of intolerance took place. I am referring specifically to the Armenian massacres, the greatest instance of genocide in the twentieth century before the Hitlerian Holocaust of the Second World War. After World War II, the Turks exchanged populations with Greece, reducing Turkey's Christian population even further. In the other successor states of the Ottoman Empire, tolerance did not flourish either. In Syria, for instance, the Jews have not fared well. In Iraq, the Jews have been expelled, and the Baha'is have been suppressed. In Jordan, Christian Arabs on the whole are very well treated. Saudi Arabia is unpolluted by infidels. Lebanon is a very special case, a case of a bloody deadlock, and cannot be treated as other states. In North Africa, we see a mixed situation; the Jews have fled or removed themselves from the Maghreb (Morocco) and other minorities are insecure. In Egypt, the Jewish community has been reduced and others are insecure, including the Copts who constitute perhaps ten percent or more of the total population and who live in constant fear and tension.

The case of Iran is the most dramatic. Over the centuries the Zoroastrians had achieved limited toleration but always remained second class citizens, their position improving only in the twentieth century when modern nationalism awakened a romantic attachment to Iran's pre-Islamic past. In other words, the improvement of the position of the Zoroastrians was related to the decline of Islam, to the growth of nationalism and secularism. Recently, during the Islamic revolution the

Baha'is became the principal victims of Islamic fundamentalist reaction.

The Baha'is are not acceptable to the Islamic establishment because according to its interpretation, Muhammad was the "seal of the prophets," the last one. Therefore, there can be no valid religion after Islam and the Baha'is deserve death as renegades from Islam. Now, if the official position of religious leaders is that anyone who left one religion for another must be put to death, there obviously is no religious liberty or religious toleration. I don't think that I need to go through the Islamic world country by country. The picture on the whole is quite bleak. Much depends on the personality of the ruler or the party in power and, I am afraid, the less religious the party in power, the more indifferent to religious values, the more materialistic, the better it is for the minorities, the less they suffer persecution at the hand of the established authorities.

Islamic fundamentalism, of course, is a complex phenomenon not to be explained in simple terms. One must not forget, for instance, that the Islamic establishment today is the equivalent of the Christian establishment of the thirteenth or fourteenth century. The Muslim world has not gone through the scientific revolution of the seventeenth century, it has not gone through the Enlightenment; it has not developed any of the attitudes that formed the minds of the founding fathers of this country, including deism and a measure of skepticism in matters of religion which permitted the kind of tolerance which we all seek today.

I am afraid that it would be unrealistic to expect much change within the Muslim world as long as the recent resurgence of Islam is guided by the fundamentalist religious establishment. It seems that in the world of Islam tolerance, the idea of religious freedom is a marginal value which is the possession of small marginal groups or of the equally small secularizing intellectual elites.

Remarks by Michael Bourdeaux

This morning I would like to begin with a brief historical survey of the situation in the Soviet Union and then draw out from that some case studies.

Ever since the earliest days of Soviet power, the state has used a combination of harsh legislation and of force, going well beyond the bounds of legality in its struggle against religion. And there's no reason to expect that Mikhail Gorbachev will implement these policies less severely than his predecessors. While the basic mores of the Soviet Union have not changed much over the years, intense persecution has broken over the religious communities in waves at varying intervals. Religious persecution is one of the most distinctive features of Soviet communism, a

feature which has been, with greater or less success, exported to virtually every other communist country. Yet the Christian church worldwide, in contradistinction to the Jewish community, has not yet begun to come to grips with this problem and what the response to it should be. I hope this conference will take that discussion further.

As an illustration of the restrictions the Soviet government places on religious liberty, let me state the number of permitted buildings of worship in the Soviet Union which we at Keston College have estimated to be something like 14,600, covering all religious denominations and serving a total Christian population of perhaps 58 million, something like one fifth of the total Soviet population. That is one church to every 4,000 believers. In 1917, before the Bolshevik takeover, the Orthodox Church alone had 54,000 churches, three times the present total number for all denominations. The United States, a country with a smaller population than the Soviet Union, has something like, we believe, 385,000 churches, one for every 500 plus of the total population of this country. The contrast is unbelievable and amazing.

The situation of the reduction of buildings for worship in the Soviet Union goes right back to the original Soviet legislation. Lenin, in 1918, passed a law confiscating church property and removing all rights from the church to instruct those under the age of eighteen in the faith, even where parents should specifically request it. In 1929, additional legislation restricting the number of churches to those that the state was willing to register and banning any religious activity whatsoever outside the premises, the four walls of those churches or mosques or synagogues, established the core of the system which has remained in force ever since.

Tens of thousands of church leaders, local and national, were arrested and imprisoned as early as the 1920s. Under Stalin, churches were closed down in the tens of thousands by being denied registration. During the purges of the 1930s, scarcely a priest or a pastor remained actively at his post in an open church. Indeed, most of the clergy and bishops were imprisoned. The Russian Orthodox Church virtually ceased to exist as an institution, though evidence of its vigor underground is still coming to light. Strangely, for a decade or so, there was relative leniency towards the small Protestant denominations, but then the state began, after about 1927, to treat them in the same way as it did the Russian Orthodox Church.

The Communist Party's reasons for this hostile policy, which it was going to pursue unbroken over the next seventy years, were primarily ideological. According to Marx, religion has always been an agent of reaction, an opium, giving people promises of a future life, while opposing change in this life. Atheism is a necessary part of scientific communism, just as religion is unscientific in itself. Religion was considered to be

dangerous to the party's survival, and it was going to wither away when confronted by scientific education and when it was deprived of state support. But if it did not, as indeed, of course, it has not, it would have to be eradicated by other means, and a program would have to be developed for that eradication, which is what has happened in the Soviet Union.

However, as the Soviet authorities realized over the years, whenever pressures on the churches relax—for example, during the war or after Stalin's death—the number of churches and the number of believers immediately increases, or at least clandestine movements come out into the open and the church appears to increase. Religion is at the moment significantly on the upturn, not only in the Soviet Union, but throughout the communist countries, including China.

By a curious irony of history, it was the Second World War, following the Nazi invasion of June 1941, which led to a dramatic improvement in the fortunes of the church. Stalin was caught totally unprepared for the war, and he needed to muster help from whatever source possible. And he discovered that the Russian Orthodox Church could become an ally in developing the patriotism of the country in opposition in the war. Some of these improvements after the war became institutionalized. The state permitted for the first time since 1917 a central church administration, the Moscow Patriarchate, which could publish a small journal. Theological education had been discontinued for thirty years, and now it was revived, albeit in restricted form.

Up to this time, the Roman Catholic Church had been only a small minority in the Soviet Union, but owing to the Soviet acquisition by conquest of lands to the west, including the Baltic states, it became an important presence in all those border areas of the Soviet Union, its vigor being that much greater because it had not experienced the liquidation of its leadership under Stalin's purges. During these immediate postwar years, the attention of the state was being paid to the rebuilding of the economy, and the fight against religion was not, therefore, considered to have the highest priority.

However, in the western Ukraine, where the Eastern Rite Catholic Church was so strong, there was a very significant antireligious purge even in these years immediately after the war. The Uniate Church was either liquidated or forced to join up with the Russian Orthodox Church, and since that day, the Eastern Rite Catholics have been the largest single banned denomination in the Soviet Union, probably in the whole communist world, at about four million believers.

Locked in a struggle for succession after the death of Stalin in 1953, again the Kremlin leadership allowed the church a few relatively beneficial years. But this picture was rapidly to change as soon as Nikita

Khrushchev established himself firmly in office. The knowledge of the devastation of church life resulting from Khrushchev's policies of the early 1960s is essential to any understanding of the overall religious picture in the Soviet Union today. The decline in the churches' fortunes twenty years ago evened out after the fall of Khrushchev, and official policies varied very little for the next fifteen years up to 1979. During those years, the state kept a tight rein on church appointments in all denominations, so that there was a good cadre of church leaders developed which could speak for Soviet policies in whatever context in the world, especially receiving and participating in international delegations.

From 1961 when the Russian Orthodox Church was permitted to join the World Council of Churches, these church leaders became engaged in an elaborate pattern of worldwide diplomacy which provided, at least in theory, a certain safeguard against the excesses of persecution at home. But at the same time, the state was able to make considerable political capital out of the church public pronouncements which constantly justified Soviet international policies, even over such explosive issues as the invasion of Afghanistan in 1979.

There was one major change which the state could not, and certainly did not, control up to this point in 1979. This was the emergence, for the first time, of a truly independent movement within virtually every denomination of the Soviet Union. The "Church of Silence," as it had been called, suddenly found its voice. This was, I emphasize, in no way—in *no* way—due to any liberalization on the part of the authorities. Rather, it was a reaction to Khrushchev's persecution and the realization that the concessions of the postwar years were in immediate danger of disappearing altogether. These movements gained ground rapidly among Protestants and Catholics, though very much more slowly among the Orthodox, before a determined attempt to stamp them out was inaugurated by the Soviet regime in 1979. Under the impact of this new campaign, the number of Christian prisoners in the Soviet Union has risen sharply, and in order to continue at all, much of the activity of these independent groups has had to go underground again.

These new repressions began during Brezhnev's declining years and could even have been due to a grip already being exerted by his successor, Yuri Andropov, who had extensive experience of the effects of religious and dissident activity during his long years as head of the KGB. During his single year as party leader, he initiated legislation which was either potentially or actually devastating to religious believers. Breaking of camp discipline could now lead to the resentencing of prisoners, without their release at the end of their sentences, and performance of religious acts, even saying private prayers in prison, has come under this rubric.

So, many Christian prisoners are serving prolonged sentences with no definite prospects of release. It is also now technically illegal to pass to foreigners any information not officially available, so those expressing this new voice of the churches are at great risk in this, though the full effects of this 1984 law are still to be felt.

The late Konstantin Chernenko was also a moving force in the anti-religious campaign. In June 1983, when in charge of ideology before he became party leader, he attacked the growing influence of religion on the young, and especially their links with the world outside. This was the first time in many, many years that a top Kremlin leader has spoken out on this subject. Perhaps it was this sole decisive act of his recent years which earned him his final resting place in the Kremlin Wall. At an earlier stage in his career, while learning his political craft in Moldavia in the 1950s, Chernenko had almost certainly been involved in the war of attrition against the Orthodox Church in an area where religion was at its strongest, this republic of Moldavia having been annexed from Romania after the Second World War.

Chernenko's appointment was yet another stage in the deterioration of the situation of the church since 1979. From the last days of Brezhnev to the accession of Gorbachev, the number of Christians in prison for breaking the anti-religious laws, according to the certain facts that we have—and these may be only fragmentary—the number has gone up from about a hundred to around four hundred, and possibly many more. Religion for the Soviet state is a problem, like corruption, like bad harvests, like drunkenness; a problem to be tackled and, if possible, eliminated. Well we know the success, or the lack of it, that they have had in that list of vices which I have just delineated, and the problem of religion is one that is not going away either. But, if Mr. Gorbachev proves to be an efficient executive of the dogma, this can be only bad news for the church. And many so-called improvements—and I use the word with due irony—in the situation of recent years, which are so eagerly reported on by privileged foreign guests in the Soviet Union, have been in the realm of propaganda rather than facts. But nevertheless, despite these hardships, a growth of religious faith has occurred within almost all major denominations—and indeed all religions—in the Soviet Union in recent years, affecting the Jewish and Islamic communities as well as the Christian population. One or two exceptions like the Lutherans in Latvia and Estonia do not affect this overall generalization.

I would like to end—because there will not be time for other examples—with some more details of a case study of the Russian Orthodox Church. It is impossible to precisely estimate the number of Russian Orthodox believers in the Soviet Union today. Church sources have often given

varying figures, between thirty and fifty million. The Keston College estimate is approximately one-seventh of the population, thirty-five to forty million. It seems that the number of young or middle-age people coming into the church at least equals the number of old who are dying. And here is the most important single reason for the continuation of persecution of religion in the Soviet Union today, the fact that the authorities clearly are not winning the battle for the minds of the young. There are no reliable figures for the number of Orthodox churches open after the Second World War, but the figure of 20,000 is that most often quoted. About half of these, probably more, closed during the Khrushchev period, and the decline continued, though less dramatically afterwards. The 1974 figures compiled secretly by the government's Council on Religious Affairs, which later leaked out, indicated 7,500 churches, but of these about 1,000 formally listed were for some reason apparently not in use. Since then, a few churches have indeed opened here or there, but there have been equally documented instances of closures of churches as well.

According to the law, any group of twenty believers is sufficient to petition the government for the right to open a church. But there are many instances of not just villages but even cities where there are no churches open at all, and in countless places, groups have been trying in vain to utilize the legal machinery for many, many years. So the current Soviet claim that believers divide into those who are registered and legal and "good boys" and those who are illegal, unwilling to register and are therefore guilty of anti-state activities, remains firmly in the realm of propaganda. This has been successfully put across as fact to millions of people worldwide and, therefore, forms a major success of Soviet propaganda in recent years. The reality is very, very different. There are literally millions—tens of millions I would suspect—of believers in the Soviet Union today who want to be loyal Soviet citizens, who want to register their churches, who do not want conflict, but who are prevented from living without these pressures by current state policy.

There are many institutions of the churches in the Soviet Union today which have been devastated by the current policies, for example, monasticism. In the Russian Orthodox Church, *six* monasteries, *ten* convents are the only ones remaining from the already inadequate number of sixty-nine open before Khrushchev's purge of the 1960s. Not one single monastery exists east of Moscow, throughout the millions of square miles of the Soviet East. And on Russian soil—as opposed to the non-Russian republics—there are only two monasteries altogether, Zagorsk and Pskov. The other fourteen are in the non-Russian republics. The Council on Religious Affairs gave a figure of 1,273 religious for 1970 of

whom three-quarters were nuns, but the position of every single one of these institutions and individuals is vulnerable because they have no guaranteed existence whatsoever under Soviet law.

Since the 1960s, there have been various attempts to bring these restrictions on general religious activity and the many violations of the liberty of individuals and congregations out into the open through publicizing their cases. And now, these cases are being presented to the court of world public opinion. There is no time here to do more than to touch on the outlines of what has been happening, but I must name the campaign inaugurated in 1965 by Frs. Nikolai Eshliman and Gleb Yakunin, the latter of whom is still a key activist and is now in the middle of serving a ten-year prison sentence. Even Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn claimed that their careful documentation of illegal state measures against the church influenced him, Solzhenitsyn, in his own fight to win the right to publish his works. After ten years of silence decreed by the Patriarch of Moscow, under pressure from the secular authorities, and during which time many others took up their pens to write a spate of documents, Fr. Gleb Yakunin again began to be active. In 1976, he presented his great document to the World Council of Churches, asking for total and worldwide Christian involvement in the cause of defending religious liberty in the Soviet Union, a cry which was heard and reflected at the Nairobi assembly of the World Council of Churches but which has not been followed up since and which leaves Fr. Yakunin isolated on a limb without the kind of support that he believed he was already getting. Since then, of course, he has personally been the subject of a disinformation campaign which has found its way into many places, not least publications within the ecumenical movement.

Meanwhile, however, a new generation of young people is coming into the Orthodox Church and this changes the position to some extent. They have strongly expressed the lack of teaching and the feeling of Christian community within the confines of church activity permitted by law. But when these young people tried to enlarge their means of expression, they came face to face with the full force of the law. As Aleksandr Ogorodnikov, the founder of the Christian Seminar in Moscow, wrote—and these are some of the most significant words on the situation of the Orthodox Church that I have ever come across:

In the Russian Church, the parish is not like a brotherly community, where Christian love of one's neighbor becomes a reality. The state persecutes every manifestation of church life, except for the performance of the religious cult. Our thirst for spiritual communion, for religious education, and for missionary service runs up against all the might of the state's repressive machinery.

Ogorodnikov was arrested in 1979 and sentenced to eleven years of imprisonment, a fate which itself seems to sum up current Soviet policy. But despite these persecutions, the 6,500 or so churches of the Orthodox Church are full to overflowing and at times such as Easter, full beyond that point. But there are at the same time thousands of faithful priests, even within the registered churches, who carry out their duty before God in the most difficult conditions imaginable, not enjoying even one percent of the religious liberty which we consider our birthright. They are nevertheless able to carry out some kind of work on behalf of the Kingdom of God and the dedication with which they do it is remarkable.

If you look today at the Russian Baptist community, you will find something similar going on, with also a very great and even more concerted attempt to categorize the restrictions on religious liberty and bring those to the world as something which merits international attention.

The Catholic community in the Soviet Union, which now numbers probably about ten million people altogether—scattered Poles in many areas about whom we are beginning to hear much more, the suppressed Eastern Rite Catholics about whom I spoke briefly a moment ago, and the Roman Catholics in Lithuania—all these together present probably the most revitalized Christian community in the whole Soviet Union. They are the ones who are most on the offensive at the moment in trying to present their case worldwide, and in coming together for the first time to solidify the base of their situation and to attempt to receive more support for their position. And this, of course, has all happened under the impetus of the election of a Polish Pope in Rome. This one event has done more than anything else in recent history to change the psychology, not only of Catholics in the Soviet Union but probably of Christians in general—and this conference is another stage in that process—who now know more than they have in the past, that there are a considerable number of people, Christians and non-Christians, in the worldwide community who are prepared to speak out unambiguously for religious liberty.

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM IN THE THIRD WORLD

Remarks by Richard John Neuhaus

It's a pleasure to be here to participate in deliberations about a question so great that it is hard to imagine, in terms of the integrity of the church and the well-being of millions of people throughout the world. It is obvious that the community of Biblical faith, particularly the community of the covenant, Jewish and Christian, has lived and can live under many different kinds of regimes—for two thousand years for us Christians, for