



Dr. Fred Schwarz

The Schwarz Report



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World Opinion and Evil

by Dennis Prager

If you are ever morally confused about a major world issue, here is a rule that is almost never violated: Whenever you hear that "world opinion" holds a view, assume it is morally wrong.

And here is a related rule if your religious or national or ethnic group ever suffers horrific persecution: "World opinion" will never do a thing for you. Never.

"World opinion" has little or nothing to say about the world's greatest evils and regularly condemns those who fight evil.

The history of "world opinion" regarding the greatest mass murders and cruelties on the planet is one of relentless apathy.

Ask the 1.5 million Armenians massacred by the Ottoman Turks; or the 6 million Ukrainians slaughtered by Stalin; or the tens of millions of other Soviet citizens killed by Stalin's Soviet Union; or the 6 million Jews murdered by the Nazis and their helpers throughout Europe; or the 60 million Chinese butchered by Mao; or the 2 million Cambodians murdered by Pol Pot; or the millions killed and enslaved in Sudan; or the Tutsis murdered in Rwanda's genocide; or the millions starved to death and enslaved in North Korea; or the million Tibetans killed by the Chinese; or the million-plus Afghans put to death by Brezhnev's Soviet Union.

Ask any of these poor souls, or the hundreds of millions of others slaughtered, tortured, raped and enslaved in the last 100 years, if "world opinion" did anything for them.

On the other hand, we learn that "world opinion" is quite exercised over Israel's unintentional killing of a few hundred Lebanese civilians behind whom hides Hezbollah—a terror group that intentionally sends missiles at Israeli cities and whose announced goals are the annihilation of Israel and the Islamicization of Lebanon. And, of course, "world opinion" was just livid at American abuses of some Iraqi prisoners at the Abu Ghraib prison in Baghdad. In fact, "world opinion" is constantly upset with America and Israel, two of the most decent countries on earth, yet silent about the world's cruelest countries.

Why is this? Here are four reasons:

First, television news. It is difficult to overstate the damage done to the world by television news. Even when not driven by political bias—an exceedingly rare occurrence globally—television news presents a thoroughly distorted picture of the world. Because it is almost entirely dependent upon pictures, TV news is only capable of showing human suffering in, or caused by, free countries. So even if the BBC or CNN (or CBC in Canada - RJ) were interested in showing the suffering of millions of Sudanese blacks or North Koreans—and they are not interested in so doing—they cannot do it because reporters cannot visit Sudan or North Korea and video freely. Likewise, China's decimation and annexation of Tibet, one of the world's oldest ongoing civilizations, never

And do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but instead expose them. Ephesians 5:11

"Dwell on the past and you'll lose an eye; forget the past and you'll lose both eyes." Old Russian Proverb

made it to television.

Second, “world opinion” is shaped by the same lack of courage that shapes most individual human beings’ behavior. This is another aspect of the problem of the distorted way news is presented. It takes courage to report the evil of evil regimes; it takes no courage to report on the flaws of decent societies. Reporters who went into Afghanistan without the Soviet Union’s permission were killed. Reporters would risk their lives to get critical stories out of Tibet, North Korea and other areas where vicious regimes rule. But to report on America’s bad deeds in Iraq (not to mention at home) or Israel’s is relatively effortless, and you surely won’t get killed. Indeed, you may well win a Pulitzer Prize.

Third, “world opinion” bends toward power. To cite the Israel example, “world opinion” far more fears alienating the largest producers of oil and 1 billion Muslims than it fears alienating tiny Israel and the world’s 13 million Jews. And not only because of oil and numbers. When you offend Muslims,

you risk getting a fatwa, having your editorial offices burned down or receiving death threats. Jews don’t burn down their critics’ offices, issue fatwas or send death threats, let alone act on such threats.

Fourth, those who don’t fight evil condemn those who do. “World opinion” doesn’t confront real evils, but it has a particular animus toward those who do—most notably today America and Israel.

The moment one recognizes “world opinion” for what it is—a statement of moral cowardice, one is no longer enthralled by the term. That “world opinion” at this moment allegedly loathes America and Israel is a badge of honor to be worn proudly by those countries. It is when “world opinion” and its news media start liking you that you should wonder if you’ve lost your way.

—*Townhall.com*, August 1, 2006

Castro’s Death Watch

by Francisco Wong-Diaz

Cuban dictator Fidel Castro turns 80 years old on August 13th, and will be hosting the September 15-16 annual conference of the so-called Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) in Havana.

On July 26th, the anniversary of the Moncada barracks attack that launched his revolution, the world will be watching very closely for signs of the dictator’s mortality. Images of Castro collapsing while making a speech in 2003, falling on stage and breaking his left knee and right arm in 2004, or scoffing at reports by the CIA in 2005 that he suffered from Parkinson’s disease, while clearly favoring a limp arm, have been flashing on television screens for several years now.

Friend and foe alike are engaged in a Castro deathwatch, as they speculate about his continued capacity to rule and what will happen to Cuba after his inevitable death or incapacitation. In power for 47 years, he is the longest ruling dictator in Latin American history after the nineteenth-century Brazilian emperor Pedro II, who reigned for 49 years. Three possible post-Castro scenarios currently debated by the experts are: a violent regime change, a transition to democracy, or a dynastic succession.

Regime change is a possibility since Cuba is one of Freedom House’s two not-free countries in the Americas, a State Department country sponsor of terrorism, and in the words of Mexican writer Carlos Fuentes, a “suffocating dictatorship.” But after 47 years of one-man rule, a violent overthrow of the dictatorship is highly unlikely. There is no organized armed op-

position within Cuba and the repressive state machinery operates effectively against real or potential enemies. The Cuban Armed Forces (FAR) remain loyal after having been purged and are tightly controlled by Castro’s brother Raul.

Castro has run terrorist training camps since the 1960s and now has close ties with the Iranian mullahs and Venezuela’s Chavez. He received a promise not to invade the island from President Kennedy as part of the deal with the Soviet Union that ended the Missile Crisis of 1962. Since Robert Kennedy’s “Operation Mongoose,” a failed attempt to eliminate Castro, the U.S. has kept its promise not to invade the island. One main reason is that it has lacked the political will to conduct offensive operations against Cuba despite Castro’s decades long anti-American activities and support for terrorism.

The global war on terror, Iraq, the nuclear proliferation issues raised by Iran and North Korea, and the current terrorist attacks against Israel are the hot foreign policy priorities of the Bush Administration. Some feel, therefore, that the U.S. would need to feel directly threatened before considering the use of force against Cuba. So despite U.S. government rhetoric in the July 5th, 2006 report of the Commission for Assistance to a Free Cuba (CAFC), about liberating Cuba, Castro knows that he will retain power as long as he lives.

A peaceful transition to democracy and a free market economy do not have a tolerable measure of success as long as Fidel is alive. After the disintegration of the Soviet Union,

there was hope that Cuba might undergo something similar to the “color” or “flower revolutions” that transformed many of the former Warsaw Pact countries (velvet in the Czech Republic, rose in Georgia, orange in the Ukraine, tulip in Kyrgyzstan).

Unlike the Europeans, however, Cuba’s Communist party and security services remain loyal and there is no solidarity movement or opposition leader with a credible plan. Cuban civil society is rather weak and dissidents are unable to work openly and in full coordination. More importantly, the main reason why no color, flower, or cedar revolution will ever occur in Cuba is that Castro and his closest lieutenants studied those events very closely, identified and anticipated the relevant contingencies, and learned how to deal with them.

A dynastic succession based on collective leadership is the most likely unfolding Cuban scenario. Castro wants to retain personal power for as long as he can to protect his dominant position and interests. To accomplish this, first, he has sought close commercial and security ties with China, Venezuela, Bolivia, and even the mullahs of Iran. Next, he organized a succession process. Under Cuban law, the first vice-president of the Council of State, Fidel’s brother Raul, assumes the duties of the president. Raul, who turned 75 on June 3, has physical ailments too and there is no clear indication that anyone else has been groomed to replace him.

Recent revelations by *Forbes* magazine estimating Fidel’s personal worth at \$900 million and ranking him as the world’s seventh richest leader, however, have put a dent on his image and raised the stakes for survival.

So at age 80, the Cuban dictator’s place in history, for better or for worse, has already been established. For almost 50 years, the Cuban people have suffered political repression and tyranny under his one-man rule.

Castro’s eventual passing, the so-called “biological solution,” would constitute good and transformative news for Cuba if progress is made along a range of issues from development of true and honest representative institutions of governance to improvement of the Cuban people’s quality of life. The overarching American foreign policy objective should be to pressure the succession regime while encouraging a strong bias among Cuban elites for internally generated democratization, the rule of law, and transparency in reciprocity for graduated normalization of relations with the island.

—*FrontPageMagazine.com*, July 25, 2006

The Religious Left Speaks Out

by Mark D. Tooley

The anti-Israel divestment campaign among U.S. churches has been largely defeated. But in the midst of the terrorists’ war on Israel, the Religious Left’s hostility to Israel continues.

Religious Left church officials have responded to the conflict between Israel and Hezbollah with their usual lamentations over “the violence.” But it is “the violence” by Israel that exclusively concerns them. Typical among them has been the reaction of United Church of Christ president John Thomas.

“We watch with horror and outrage as Israel punishes an entire population for the kidnapping of an Israeli soldier in Gaza, and as belligerence escalates with Hizb Allah’s attack on military personnel near Lebanon,” Thomas wrote in a letter to “Palestinian Friends and Partners.” He continued, “While we pray for the Israeli soldiers’ release and safe return to family, we also know that these incidents have become an occasion for the further oppression of the Palestinian community, for the massive destruction of economic infrastructure and for the tragic loss of much innocent life.”

Thomas complained about Israel’s “separation barrier,” whose impact has been “strangulation” of vital Palestinian institutions. “The complicity of our own government in these sanctions is cause for particular grief,” he bewailed. He is very distressed about American behavior, especially the pro-Israel behavior of American Christians.

“Making this situation even more burdensome is the recognition that there are many in the United States, including many Christians, who see only Israel’s need for security, who focus only on a few terrorist acts which you yourselves condemn,” Thomas told his “Palestinian Friends and Partners.” He accused pro-Israel Christians of “largely ignoring the systemic oppression of an entire people in what increasingly amounts to a virtual prison in which almost every aspect of Palestinian life is controlled by Israel.”

Ominously, Thomas observed that “many in our own churches are subject to intense lobbying by Jewish groups demonizing the Palestinian community.” Undoubtedly referring, at least in part, to the recent Presbyterian decision to

The Schwarz Report Bookshelf

To see a complete list of books recommended by the Christian Anti-Communism Crusade, please check out our website at www.schwarzreport.org. This site also has back issues of *The Schwarz Report* as well as other great resources.

rescind its divestment policy aimed at Israel, Thomas lamented: “Even some of our denominational gatherings of ecumenical partners here in the United States sound what may seem to you to be an uncertain voice.”

Thomas promised the continued “solidarity” of the 1.1 million member United Church of Christ and pledged its “readiness to use our church’s economic resources, including the possibility of divestment, to press for an end to the Occupation. Likewise, he promised not to be “silent” about America’s faulty Middle Eastern policies. No doubt!

Trying to sound a little more impartial, United Methodist chief lobbyist Jim Winkler called for “an end to Palestinian and Hezbollah attacks against Israel and for the release of Israeli soldiers” along with an “end to Israeli military incursions and bombings against Gaza and Lebanon and for the release of political prisoners held by Israel.” By Israeli “political prisoners,” Winkler presumably refers to imprisoned terrorists.

Winkler, who is general secretary of the United Methodist Board of Church and Society, demanded that “all outside states and forces must halt sending arms” to the parties in conflict. Acting as a spokesman for the 8 million member denomination, he denounced the Israeli military response to Hamas and Hezbollah as “grossly disproportionate” and causing a “humanitarian crisis.” Predictably, he bemoaned the “cycle of violence” and declared the impossibility of knowing which side had started it. He insisted that a “safe” Israel is only possible with a “safe, secure, viable and contiguous Palestinian state.”

Attempting to wax poetic while echoing Winkler’s points, the National Council of Churches posed these supposedly discerning questions: “When will all Israeli leaders see that aggression only breeds more aggression, and that security cannot be achieved through the oppression and humiliation of others? When will all Palestinian leaders understand that calls for justice demand the doing of justice, and that suffering in-

justice does not confer moral license to respond with violence? When will the United States see that being an honest, effective broker for peace requires fairness in our dealings with both the Israelis and the Palestinians, and now the Lebanese, and that doing nothing to end the violence costs us dearly in spirit, blood, treasure, and moral integrity?”

The NCC’s underlying assumption, of course, is that Israel is the oppressor and aggressor, while the Palestinians are constantly the aggrieved and oppressed party, whose violence is lamentable but not entirely incomprehensible. The United States, in this view, exacerbates the conflict with its Zionist partiality.

Alone among U.S. denominations, the 3 million member Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) had, until last month, been committed to divesting in firms doing business with Israel. But internal and external pressure embarrassed the church into shifting course. Probably still smarting from that retreat, and trying to sound temperate, the church’s Stated Clerk Clift Kirkpatrick denounced the “provocative actions of Hezbollah” and the “disproportionate force being used by the Israeli military against Lebanon [that] has caused the indiscriminate deaths of scores of Lebanese civilians, as well as major damage to Lebanon’s infrastructure.”

It is wonderful, only now that Israel is attacking Hezbollah targets, that these U.S. church prelates are suddenly so very concerned about Lebanon. But they never expressed any interest in Syria’s nearly 30 years of brutal occupation of and manipulation of Lebanon. Nor have they commented on Hezbollah’s vicious, Iranian-backed disruption of Lebanon’s struggling democracy.

The Religious Left will reluctantly acknowledge the crimes of Hezbollah and Hamas, but only to rhetorically facilitate its more heartfelt condemnation of Israel. These prelates may decry “the violence,” but it is chiefly only the violence of one side that concerns them.

—*FrontPageMagazine.com*, July 28, 2006

Hugo Chavez and Ecuador

by C.J. Schexnayder

Rommel Collantes opened a little pizza shop in a tourist-friendly area of Quito a month ago. The Corrido Café has a small but steady stream of business, but Mr. Collantes is counting on the relative economic stability of the past year to continue so he can make the shop a success.

Mr. Collantes, 38, looks forward to the presidential election in October but sees little assurance of an end to the political and economic uncertainty that has racked the tiny Andean country in the past decade.

Alfredo Palacio became Ecuador’s seventh president in eight years when he took office on April 20, 2005, after the ousting of Lucio Gutierrez by a wave of protest against his market-friendly policies.

Opinion polls indicate no clear favorite in the presidential race.

Meanwhile, Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez, a leftist who has been working to build a unified resistance to U.S. influence in the region, has cast his long shadow over the

Ecuadoran elections.

Mr. Chavez has been working with Cuba's communist leader, Fidel Castro, and other leftist allies in Latin America to promote his brand of economics and politics. He has used Venezuela's oil wealth as a lure to win support.

Mr. Chavez has furthered his vision of an alliance among Andean countries through bold political and economic measures. He insists such a union is necessary to resist what he calls the force of U.S. imperialism, which he blames for much of the region's social problems.

In Bolivia, President Evo Morales used indigenous social movements against U.S. influence as a launching pad for his political victory. He has since become a close ally of Mr. Chavez.

When Mr. Chavez visited Ecuador in May, he was greeted by a small group of supporters, including Mr. Collantes.

"Chavez is doing a good thing by bringing together all of Latin America," Mr. Collantes said. "I don't know if I agree with his politics, but I agree with him that we need an extreme change and I hope he can help bring it here."

An opportunity for the Venezuelan leader opened on May 15, when the Ecuadoran government in Quito seized the operations of Los Angeles-based Occidental Petroleum Corp., saying the firm had broken the terms of its contract.

Relations between Occidental and Ecuador had been strained for years, and public sentiment was roundly against the petroleum giant.

The United States quickly criticized the move as "the seizure of assets of a U.S. Company," and cut off negotiations for a free-trade agreement that was nearly complete.

Mr. Chavez moved quickly too, arriving in Quito two weeks later to pen an agreement to refine the Ecuadoran oil.

The agreement will allow Venezuela's state-run petroleum company PdVSA to refine up to 100,000 barrels of the Ecuadoran crude daily and to provide the state-run company, Petroecuador, with technical assistance. Mr. Chavez left open the prospect for more assistance, including helping Ecuador construct its own refinery.

At the signing of the agreement, Mr. Chavez congratulated Mr. Palacio for moving against the U.S. firm and scolded foreign oil interests for "dividing and dominating" Latin American countries in the same tradition as the Spanish conquistadors.

"While this industry is in the hands of the transnationals, it will not be possible for us to develop our petrochemical industries," he said. "We must defend our national interests and turn down petroleum contracts that have no shame."

But Ecuador turned down Mr. Chavez's offer to create an Andean energy alliance that would compete with the U.S.

influence. Officials also distanced themselves from Mr. Chavez's political positions.

"[The agreement] does not imply any political alignment with the positions held by Venezuela," presidential spokesman Enrique Proano said.

"But keeping distance from Mr. Chavez, particularly with an upcoming election, may be impossible," said Michael Shifter of the Washington-based group Inter-American Dialogue.

"It is naïve to believe that these are purely technical arrangements. Chavez has a clear political agenda across South America, and he no doubt sees Ecuador as a target of opportunity to further extend his influence," he said. "Whether he will be able to achieve that aim is another question, but his shrewd use of petrodollars to build wide political support outside of Venezuela is, by now, hardly a secret."

That effect was clear in the Peruvian elections last month. The victor, former President Alan Garcia, capitalized on Mr. Chavez's support of nationalist candidate Ollanta Humala. The Chavez factor became the preeminent issue in the final weeks before the runoff.

"None of the three leading candidates for the October presidential race in Ecuador—Leon Roldos, Alvaro Noboa or Cynthia Viteri—seems particularly sympathetic to Mr. Chavez. However, a significant force behind the country's social movements supports Mr. Chavez's agenda," political analyst Hernan Reyes said.

"You have to remember there are two parallel systems that exist side by side in Ecuador: the formal political system and the social movements," said Mr. Reyes, a professor of sociology at the Simon Bolivar University in Quito. "The president has to negotiate with both in order to maintain his power."

Last year, Mr. Gutierrez was forced out of the presidency after massive street protests led, in part, by indigenous leaders upset that he had undertaken policies friendly to the free market.

When Mr. Chavez visited Quito on May 30, more than 200 supporters, including representatives of several indigenous groups, gathered at the governmental palace.

Shouting slogans such as "Chavez, Yes. Yankees, No," they waited more than 10 hours to see Mr. Chavez.

After a six-hour meeting with Ecuadoran officials, Mr. Chavez emerged and met with the crowd. He shook hands over the edge of the stone balcony and danced and sang with a group of indigenous children who were allowed to greet him before he was whisked away to his next engagement.

"All the people are waiting on a change," said indigenous leader Lourdes Tiban, who was among the crowd. "Chavez is the type of leader that can make that change happen."

—*The Washington Times*, July 18, 2006, p. A14

NCC, CWS and CCC

by John Lomperis

The Religious Left has finally spoken out against the “violation of religious freedom” in Cuba.

No, these church officials were not condemning Fidel Castro’s 47-year war on religion. Instead, they were condemning U.S. regulations on religious groups traveling between Cuba and the United States.

In late May, officials of the National Council of Churches (NCC) and its \$60 million relief arm, Church World Service (CWS), convened a press conference in Washington, D.C., to denounce U.S. travel restrictions on Cuba.

Every year, thousands of American churchgoers raise several million dollars for CWS through its anti-hunger “CROP Walks” across the nation.

In addition to more traditional relief activities, CWS supports an ambitious political “advocacy” program. CWS has lobbied against free trade, the Iraq war, restrictions on aid to the Hamas regime, and increased penalties for illegal immigration into the U.S.

At the NCC/CWS press conference, the NCC’s Brenda Girton-Mitchell and Martin Shupack of CWS were particularly incensed about new, tighter regulations on fraternal exchanges between mainline denominational agencies and the Cuban Council of Churches (CCC).

The CCC, like many official church groups trying to survive under totalitarian regimes, avoids criticism of Castro’s government. In 2000, the CCC joined with the NCC to urge the return of little Elian Gonzalez to Cuba, with the NCC funding the related legal expenses.

Also present at the press conference were representatives from the left-leaning Latin American Working Group and Washington Office of Latin America, both of which have long opposed the U.S. embargo of Cuba. Through the 1980s, these groups were supportive of Marxist guerrilla movements in Latin America. Over the years, both have enjoyed financial and institutional support from mainline and other church agencies, including the NCC and CWS.

With few exceptions these groups have long ignored religious persecution and other human rights violations in Cuba. NCC and CWS are disturbed by U.S. restrictions on their own travel to Cuba and on the travel of a few officials from the Cuban Council of Churches into the United States. (Girton-Mitchell noted that the State Department considers the latter “agents of the Cuban government,” a charge she disputed.) According to Girton-Mitchell, such interference in the relationship between the Cuban Council of Churches and U.S. mainline agencies amounts to “a gross violation of religious

freedom and a remarkably aggressive interference in religious matters for which the U.S. government has neither the right nor the competence.” In a distributed statement, CWS official Rick Augsburger charged that these U.S. policies “strike at the heart of our religious identity and freedom.” But the mainline officials are unconcerned that few grassroots Cubans have the freedom to leave their country. Nor do the NCC and CWS appear concerned that Cuban churches are frequently subjected to monitoring, infiltration, harassment, and stifling regulation from the communist authorities.

Last fall, the Castro regime decreed that burgeoning house churches must register with the government and submit to onerous regulations or shut down. Even churches who seek to comply with the rules run the risk of their application for registration being denied.

But aside from passing mention of wanting “reform and the opening of society” in Cuba, none of the speakers at the NCC/CWS press conference directly acknowledged any restriction of freedom, religious or otherwise, by the Cuban government.

The mainline church record on Cuba is a sorry one. In 1983, renowned Cuban Catholic poet Armando Valladares, who had languished for two decades as a political prisoner, described the impact of church apologists for Castro by mainline denominational officials in the U.S. He testified that “[e]very time that a pamphlet was published in the United States, every time a clergyman would write an article in support of Fidel Castro’s dictatorship, a translation would reach us *and that was worse for the Christian political prisoners than the beatings or the hunger.*” With extreme sadness, Valladares recalled how “[w]hile we waited for the solidarity embrace from our brothers in Christ, incomprehensively to us, those who were embraced [by our U.S. co-religionists] were our tormentors.”

Little appears to have changed. Many Religious Left officials still perform PR work for the Castro regime. Last year, the New York-based United Methodist Women’s Division endorsed Castro’s book, *War, Racism, and Economic Injustice: The Global Ravages of Capitalism*. Frank Griswold, Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church traveled to Cuba in February, forcefully denouncing the “inhuman” policy of the United States towards Cuba. On a trip to Havana in April, Rick Ufford-Chase, the Moderator of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), strongly defended the communist government’s record on religious freedom.

In their countless political pronouncements, officials from the NCC, CWS, and their affiliated mainline Protestant denominations very rarely, if ever, seek to respectfully take into account the informed consciences of the majority of the

grassroots church members whose offering plate money they rely on and whom they purport to represent. So it should not be surprising that they would show a similar disregard for the concerns of their oppressed fellow Christians in Cuba.

Revealingly, the NCC/CWS press conference was

sparsely attended. Informed journalists understand that the NCC and CWS, when they speak politically, represent very few within their own claimed constituencies.

—*FrontPageMagazine.com*, July 6, 2006

First United Methodist Church of Tacoma

by Mark D. Tooley

U.S. Army Lieutenant Ehren Watada has become a *cause celebre* in West Coast left-wing circles for denouncing the Iraq War at a series of antiwar rallies and ultimately announcing that he will refuse his ordered deployment to Iraq.

“I am whole-heartedly opposed to the continued war in Iraq, the deception used to wage this war, and the lawlessness that has pervaded every aspect of our civilian leadership,” Watada announced to the public. On June 22, he became the first U.S. military officer to refuse deployment to Iraq.

In evident full agreement with Watada has been the First United Methodist Church of Tacoma, which has officially declared itself a “sanctuary” for the lieutenant and any other military personnel who want to avoid service in Iraq or Afghanistan. The church is even distributing flyers at nearby military bases, offering its services to any antiwar soldier. Naturally, First Church’s stance has earned it rich publicity.

“This is the best way for us to support our troops,” explained the Rev. Monty Smith, the church’s pastor. The church has opened up a “care center” to give military personnel “counseling, emotional support, and time for reflection on their options.”

Rev. Smith told the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* that “any war, particularly this one, is inconsistent with Christian teachings.”

Tacoma First United Methodist Church is not your typical Christian congregation, of course. Its website has helpful links to MoveOn.org, Jim Wallis’s Sojourners, Michael Lerner’s Tikkun, and the Rainbow Center, which resources the “Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, Questioning and Allies (LGBTIQA).” First Church is a “reconciling congregation” in opposition to United Methodism’s stance that marriage is for man and woman.

It’s not just the United States that First Church denounces; it also maligns the Bible. Its website declares: “We acknowledge our Holy Scriptures contain texts that affirm slavery, child abuse, woman abuse, abstention from sexual activity of any kind, and that presume an earth-centered universe.” Instead, the church devotes itself to “social justice.”

“It’s important that we provide space where people can find their moral compass,” the congregation’s lay leader told the United Methodist News Service, as she was explaining their creation of “sanctuary” for dissident U.S. military personnel.

The church has offered to temporarily house dissident soldiers, but has pledged not to violate the law. “If we’re informed by military or civilian authorities that we have someone in our building that they have a warrant for, we’re bound to comply with the warrant,” Rev. Smith explained.

On June 28, Rev. Smith appeared on Fox News’ “Hannity and Colmes” and was grilled by guest host and *National Review* editor Rich Lowry. The pastor insisted that encouraging troops not to deploy to combat was a way to “dignify the uniform” and that “it’s real clear that war is simply a violation of the teachings of Christ.”

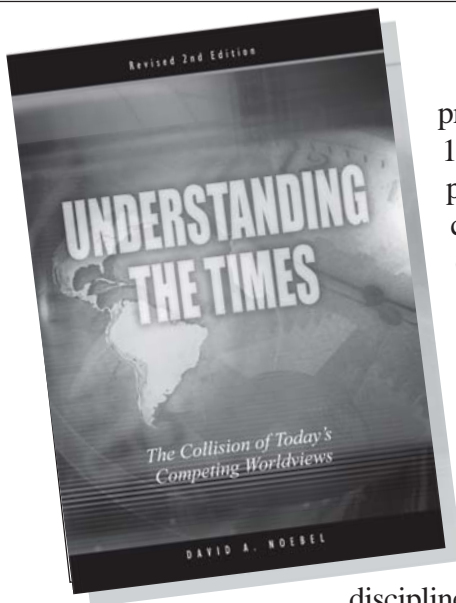
Lowry asked Smith if Saddam Hussein had presided over a “just order” in Iraq. After prevaricating, Smith finally acknowledged that Saddam’s regime was not just. Lowry then asked that of the three forces in Iraq—al-Qaeda, the former Ba-athists, and the U.S. military—which is most “allied with justice and Christian principles?”

Again, Smith was flummoxed and insisted his only concern was “pastoral care.” The pastor insisted that his United Methodist denomination teaches that “war is a violation of the teachings of Christ.” Lowry pointed out that Smith was in fact ignoring his denomination’s official teachings, which “recognize that Christians can support war in cases of aggression, tyranny and genocide. And we were dealing with an aggressive tyrant in Iraq. It’s almost a three-fer.”

But Rev. Smith, like the left-wing leadership of his denomination, prefers to ignore their church’s official stances on war and the historic just war teaching of Wesleyan Christianity. Smith’s local district superintendent hailed First Church’s “sanctuary” concept.

“This action is consistent with our tradition as a church to seek peaceful alternatives to war and support conscientious objection to military service,” claimed Rev. Elaine Stanovsky, the superintendent of the Seattle-Tacoma United Methodist District and spokesperson for the Pacific Northwest United Methodist Conference.

“We provide chaplains in a variety of settings, including in the military, but the church also maintains a critical distance



The long-awaited revised edition of *Understanding The Times* has been finally printed and is available from the Christian Anti-Communism Crusade, P. O. Box 129, Manitou Springs, Colorado 80829. The cost is \$21.95 plus \$4.95 for shipping and is available on our website at www.summit.org. The 528 page book contains the six worldviews vying for the hearts and minds of the whole world (Christianity, Islam, Secular Humanism, Marxism-Leninism, Cosmic Humanism and Postmodernism). Each worldview is broken down into the following ten categories or disciplines: theology, philosophy, ethics, biology, psychology, sociology, law, politics, economics and history.

If you are interested in understanding what Marxists, for example, believe about philosophy, there is an entire chapter dedicated to that subject. If you would like to know what Postmodernists or Muslims believe about biology or economics, there are chapters stating their positions in clear and understandable language. The basic argument of the book is that these six worldviews and ten disciplines are the worldviews and ideas enveloping and influencing the whole world. Certainly every Christian should be eager to learn all six worldviews and the ideas they represent. Not only do ideas rule the world, but ideas have consequences and bad ideas have bad consequences. In fact, why not purchase one copy for yourself and one for your pastor? Any help making this work known will also be appreciated.

—David A. Noebel and Michael Bauman, editors of *The Schwarz Report*.

from military and government policies,” Stanovsky told United Methodist News Service. “So we support our churches as they counsel and encourage individuals making conscientious decisions either to serve or to resist military service.”

Also in full agreement with First Church Tacoma was the United Methodist Church’s official lobbyist in Washington, D.C. “The church building or place of worship as a sanctuary for war resisters or those escaping persecution has a long history, and what First Church in Tacoma has done is in that tradition,” said Jim Winkler, who heads the United Methodist Board of Church and Society. “I don’t know whether or not this is part of a trend, but as the invasion of Iraq grinds on year after year, ever more people are unhappy about the situation,” he added. “The length of the war is but a part of the problem. The larger concern is that the people of the United States were led into war on false grounds by their elected leaders. It is impossible to fight a successful war under these circumstances.”

The Church Council of Greater Seattle also offered support for First Church and for Lieutenant Watada. “The Church Council appreciates the difficulty for Lt. Watada in making

such an important decision, given his military service, and the potential consequences that he likely will face, including a court-martial. Our support and prayers go to Lt. Watada at this time. We continue to pray and call for an expedited end to the war in Iraq and for the preservation of all lives in the areas of conflict.”

It is no surprise that United Methodism and the other leftist mainline Protestantism that comprise the old ecumenical movement are in steep decline across the United States, but especially on the West Coast. For them, leftist politics are the Gospel.

Meanwhile, June 27 was a “National Day of Action to Stand Up with Lt. Watada.” Supposedly, more than one thousand supporters in over 30 jurisdictions stood up. Two hundred rallied outside the gates of Fort Lewis, Washington, where Lt. Watada is being held pending trial. “Should we force the U.S. military to participate in these crimes?” Watada asks in a video message to his supporters. By providing sanctuary to fleeing soldiers, this left-wing church is flirting with participating in a crime of another sort.

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Founded in 1953, the Christian Anti-Communism Crusade, under the leadership of Dr. Fred C. Schwarz, has been publishing a monthly newsletter since 1960. *The Schwarz Report* is edited by Dr. David A. Noebel and Dr. Michael Bauman. The Crusade’s address is PO Box 129, Manitou Springs, CO 80829. Our telephone number is (719) 685-9043. All correspondence and tax-deductible gifts (the Crusade is a 501(c)3 tax-exempt organization) may be sent to this address. Permission to reproduce materials from this *Report* is granted provided our name and address are given.