

Call for a New World Order

By Jim Lackey

Washington (NC) — Of all the sections of the U.S. bishops' new pastoral letter on war and peace, the most overlooked may be the pastoral's analysis of global interdependence and its call for a new world order.

And yet that section may be the pastoral's "most significant long-term teaching," according to Cardinal Joseph L. Bernardin of Chicago, chairman of the five-bishop committee which wrote the pastoral, "The Challenge of Peace: God's Promise and Our Response."

The section, which comes on the heels of more publicized pronouncements by the bishops on deterrence and arms negotiations, includes a highly philosophical view of world order. It notes that the pursuit of such an order has long been an element of Catholic teaching, and it urges development and support for U.S. policies which recognize the interdependence of the world and the way international economic affairs affect world peace.

"We are living in a global age with problems and conflicts on a global scale," the pastoral remarks. "Either we shall learn to resolve these problems together or we shall destroy one another."

The section also includes the pastoral's analysis of U.S.-Soviet relations. While the Soviet Union's drive for hegemony and its limits on freedom cannot be denied, the bishops say, there remains an "irreducible truth" that "objective mutual interests" — such as the avoidance of nuclear war — exist between the two countries.

Cardinal Bernardin called attention to the world order section in his speech opening the May meeting at which the bishops approved the pastoral. The content of the section "has been virtually ignored," the cardinal said, despite the importance of the political and moral challenge it poses.

That challenge, the pastoral notes, is to build peace by pursuing a more perfect order based on justice.

According to the bishops, the basis for the church's teachings on world order is found both in Scripture and in the writings of St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas. "The popes of the nuclear age, from Pius XII through John Paul II, have affirmed pursuit of international order as the way to banish the scourge of war from human affairs," the pastoral adds.

The fundamental premise behind the teaching is the unity of the human family, the bishops say.

Partly because of that, the pastoral says the existence of sovereign states has a real but only relative moral value. Their value is real because of the role they play in order and authority, but relative because national boundaries "do not dissolve the deeper relationships" in the human community, such as its oneness under the same creator.

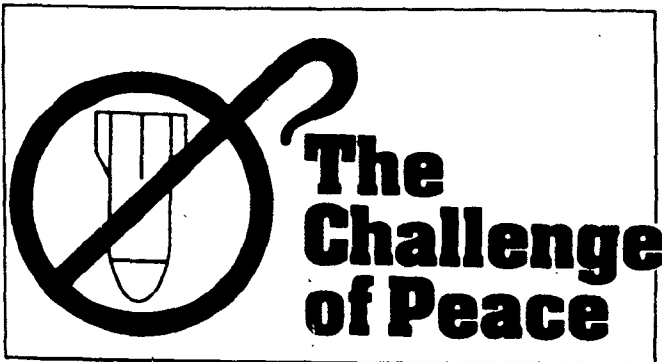
"An important element missing from world order today is a properly constituted political authority with the capacity to shape our material interdependence in the direction of moral interdependence," the pastoral comments.

"Just as the nation-state was a step in the evolution of government at a time when expanding trade and new weapons technologies made the feudal system inadequate...so we are now entering an era of new, global interdependencies requiring global systems of governance," it adds.

The fact of interdependence leads to several policy considerations, according to the bishops. One is stronger U.S. support for the United Nations.

"As one of the founders of and major financial contributors to the United Nations, the United States can and should assume a more positive and creative role in its life today," the pastoral remarks. It also notes that papal teaching of the last four decades has supported not only international institutions in principle but the United Nations specifically.

Another policy issue centers on the impact of the arms race on worldwide economic development.



"We are aware that the precise relationship between disarmament and development is neither easily demonstrated nor easily reoriented," the bishops say. "But the fact of a massive distortion of resources in the face of crying human need creates a moral question..."

"The threats to the security and stability of an interdependent world are not all contained in missiles and bombers."

Still another policy issue centers on what the bishops call the "need to build upon the spirit of generosity present in the U.S. public, directing it toward a more systematic response to the major issues affecting the poor of the world."

"From our perspective and experience as bishops, we believe there is a much greater potential for response to these questions (of world poverty) in the mind and hearts of Americans than has been reflected in U.S. policy," the pastoral comments.

"We must discover how to translate this personal sense of generosity and compassion into support for policies which would respond to papal teaching in international economic issues."

One key part of that papal teaching, the pastoral notes, was Pope John Paul II's homily at Yankee Stadium during his U.S. pilgrimage in 1979. In it the pope said the poor of the United States and the world "are your brothers and sisters in Christ," and remarked that reforms of attitudes and structures may prove necessary to give the poor "a fresh chance in the hard struggle of life."

On U.S.-Soviet competition the bishops say the two superpowers' relationship "dramatically demonstrates the fragile nature of order in international affairs today."

The fact of a Soviet threat "cannot be denied," the bishops say. But the bishops also note that "sensible and successful diplomacy" demands avoiding "the trap of a form of anti-Sovietism which...fails to recognize the common interest both states have in never using nuclear weapons."

The pastoral adds, "To believe we are condemned in the future only to what has been the past of U.S.-Soviet relations is to underestimate both our human potential for creative diplomacy and God's action in our midst, which can open the way to changes we could barely imagine."

The pastoral's section on world order also cites the importance of human rights considerations in the execution of foreign policy.

The denial of human rights by totalitarian and tyrannical regimes "makes the promotion of human rights in our foreign policy, as well as our domestic policy, all the more important. It is the acid test of our commitment to our democratic values."

And, notes the pastoral, "if the protection of human rights and the promotion of human needs are left as orphans in the diplomatic arena," then world stability "will eventually be threatened by rights denied and needs unmet in vast sectors of the globe."

NEXT: The pastoral challenge and response.

Salvadoran Admits Evasion

New York (NC) — A former Salvadoran National Guard sergeant has testified that he withheld evidence in the 1980 murders of four U.S. women missionaries because he thought it would damage the Guard's reputation, according to an Associated Press report.

The report identified the

ex-sergeant as Dagoberto Martinez and cited U.S. officials as saying that he was living illegally in Los Angeles. Martinez made his statement in sworn court testimony that AP said was made available to a group of reporters Aug. 4 by an anonymous source close to the case.

Vatican Meet Set

San Francisco (NC) — The three-bishop commission on religious orders in the United States, formed in June by Pope John Paul II and headed by Archbishop John R. Quinn of San Francisco, plans to meet with Vatican

officials at the end of August and beginning of September.

Archbishop Quinn, Archbishop Thomas Kelly of Louisville, Ky., and Bishop Raymond Lessard of Savannah, Ga., will meet in Rome.

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NCCB Releases Draft of Letter on Hispanics

By Liz Schevtchuk

Washington (NC) — The National Conference of Catholic Bishops Ad Hoc Committee for Hispanic Affairs has prepared the first draft of a new pastoral letter on Hispanic ministry within the U.S. Church.

Noting that "we have been slow to read the signs of the times," the document says the challenges facing the Church in Hispanic ministry are great and might be more easily addressed in the present if the Church had paid more attention to the issues in the past.

Called "The Hispanic Presence: Challenge and Commitment," the 7,500-word document was prepared by a Hispanic Affairs subcommittee, chaired by Bishop Ricardo Ramirez of Las Cruces, N.M. The U.S. bishops called for the draft at their general meeting in Washington in November 1982. A second draft, based on the reaction to the first draft, is expected to be considered by the bishops at their

Nov. 14-17 general meeting.

"We commit ourselves to engage in a thorough, conscientious and long-standing pastoral effort to enhance the catholicity of the Church and the dignity of all its members," the bishops said in the document.

Among actions they suggest are "greater study of Hispanic prayer forms and greater use of Spanish in the liturgy"; Spanish language classes for priests; Spanish catechesis programs; Bible study for Hispanics; more work by parishes and dioceses to assist migrant workers and others; better pastoral outreach to Hispanic families; attention to the comunidades eclesiales de base (basic ecclesial communities); and integration of Hispanic ministry efforts with social justice programs.

The document also cites certain problems affecting ministry to Hispanics, including anti-Catholic proselytizing among Hispanics by Protestant fundamentalist-type sects and inadequate service to Hispanics by

religious press and broadcasting. The document also calls for marshalling of finances and suggests a possible special collection to help meet expenses of Hispanic ministry.

The document states that "Hispanics are challenging all of us to be more fully 'catholic'" and to be "a truly universal Church, a Church with open arms which welcomes different expressions of our 'one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all.'"

"We urge all U.S. Catholics to explore creative possibilities in responding innovatively, flexibly and immediately to the Hispanic presence," the bishops wrote. "Hispanics and non-Hispanics should work together, teach and learn from one another, and together evangelize in the fullest and broadest sense of the word."

It calls on priests, religious and lay leaders to consider "creative opportunities" in several areas. Excerpts include these:

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