

Platforms Compared

Washington (NC) -- The following is the second installment of a four-part comparison of the 1984 Democratic and Republican party platforms and the U.S. Catholic Conference's 1984 recommendations to both parties' platform committees. The USCC is public policy arm of the U.S. bishops. Its recommendations were presented in testimony to the Democratic platform committee by Auxiliary Bishop Eugene A. Marino of Washington and to the Republican Party platform committee by Auxiliary Bishop John E. McCarthy of Galveston-Houston.

Excerpts from the USCC platform testimony and the platforms, listed in alphabetical order as presented in the USCC recommendations, were prepared by Liz S. Armstrong, National Catholic News Service national affairs writer.

CRIME

● U.S. Catholic Conference:

"Crime and violence are major and legitimate concerns for many. We support strong and effective action to control handguns, leading to their eventual elimination from society.

"We oppose the use of capital punishment. A return to the death penalty can only lead to further erosion of respect for life."

● Democratic platform:

"No problem has worried Americans more persistently...than...crime.

"Although the primary responsibility for law enforcement rests at the local level...the federal government can play an important role....

"We believe that victims of crime deserve a workable program of compensation.

"We support tough restraints on the manufacture, transportation and sale of snub-nosed handguns...."

● Republican platform:

"We have advanced such reforms as restitution by convicted criminals to their victims....

"We concur with the American people's approval of capital punishment where appropriate and will ensure that it is carried out humanely.

"Republicans will continue to defend the constitutional right to keep and bear arms.

ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE TO DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

● U.S. Catholic Conference:

"We have called on the Congress and the (Reagan) administration to increase substantially the United States' contribution to (the International Development Agency of the World Bank)....

"We also support emergency food relief to sub-Saharan Africa. While Congress and the administration have responded to this need for emergency food relief, it is likely that further assistance will be essential."

● Democratic platform:

"The Democratic Party will pursue policies for economic development for aid and trade that meet the needs of the people of the developing world and that further our own national interest. The next Democratic president will support development policies that meet the basic needs of the poor for food, water, energy, medical care and shelter....

"Hunger, drought and famine have brought untold suffering to millions in Africa. This human

The Courier-Journal provides this comparison of the platforms of the two major political parties and the positions of the U.S. Catholic Conference on issues of interest to Catholic voters. It is not intended to support any candidate or any political party but merely as helpful background information.

misery...requires a policy of substantial increases in humanitarian assistance."

● Republican platform:

"Our bilateral economic assistance program should be directed at promoting economic growth and prosperity in developing nations.

"We strongly support President Reagan's decision not to increase funding for the International Development Association because of its predilection for nations with state-dominated economic systems.

"We will continue to provide necessary security and economic assistance to African nations with which we maintain good relations to help them develop the infrastructure of democratic capitalism so essential to economic growth and individual accomplishment."

EDUCATION

● U.S. Catholic Conference:

"...We advocate policies to improve the educational opportunities available to economically disadvantaged persons and minorities, including bilingual education....

"We also support...constitutionally acceptable means of providing tax assistance for the education of children in non-public schools, in order to guarantee the free exercise of parental rights in choosing educational opportunities for their children."

● Democratic platform:

"Private schools, particularly parochial schools, are also an important part of our diverse educational system. Consistent with our tradition, the Democratic Party accepts its commitment to constitutionally acceptable methods of supporting the education of all pupils in schools which do not racially discriminate, and excluding so-called segregation academies. The party will continue to support federal education legislation which provides for the equitable participation in federal programs of all low and moderate income pupils."

● Republican platform:

"Mindful of our religious diversity, we reaffirm our commitment to the freedoms of religion and speech guaranteed by the Constitution...and firmly support the rights of students to openly practice the same, including the right to engage in voluntary prayer in schools.

"We are committed to excellence in education for all our children within their own communities and neighborhoods. No child should be assigned to, or barred from, a school because of race.

"In education, as in other activities, competition fosters excellence. We therefore support the president's proposal for tuition tax credits."

EMPLOYMENT AND INCOME

● U.S. Catholic Conference:

"Our nation should provide jobs for those who can work and a decent income for those who cannot. Current policies fall short of these goals.

"Present levels of unemployment, although down from the extreme levels of two years ago, are still too high.

"Full employment should be a basic element of just economic policy; we call for efforts to achieve this essential goal. This will entail a national guarantee that no one seeking work will be denied the opportunity to earn a livelihood.

"We reaffirm our support for the right of workers to join together to bargain collectively with their employers

and ask that protection of this right be extended to those whose rights are currently unprotected, especially farm laborers.

"...We support a comprehensive reform of the welfare system, which will provide an adequate income base for all Americans and replace the present system of fragmented programs. Current federal policy, which permits states to discriminate against married couples with children, is anti-family and should be abandoned.

"...Mandatory workfare programs are an unacceptable alternative to training and real jobs with fair compensation."

● Democratic platform:

"We must have a growing economy if we are to have jobs for all Americans who seek work.

"We must make special efforts to help families in economic transition who are faced with loss of homes, health benefits and pensions.

"Through education, training and retraining, we must reduce these dangerously high levels of unemployment.

"We will seriously examine new approaches to training and retraining programs that could be financed directly by government, by labor and management, or by tax-free contributions.

"This nation established a labor policy...to encourage collective bargaining and the right of workers to organize to obtain this goal. The Democratic Party is committed to extending the benefit of this policy to all workers and to removing the barriers to its administration.

"Inasmuch as farmworkers are excluded from coverage under the National Labor Relations Act, the Democratic Party recognizes the heroic efforts of farmworkers to gain contracts and their right under the law to use boycotts as an effective tool to achieve such ends."

● Republican platform:

"Our society provides both a ladder of opportunity on which all can climb to success and a safety net of assistance for those who need it.

"The role of the federal government should be limited.

"Our most important economic goal is to expand and continue the economic recovery and move the nation to full employment without inflation.

"Republicans support comprehensive farm-labor legislation, fair to workers and employers, to protect consumers from work stoppages which disrupt the flow of food.

"Our resurgent economy has created over 6 million new jobs and reduced unemployment by 30 percent.

"We have launched real welfare programs. We have targeted benefits to the needy through tighter eligibility standards, enforced child support laws, and encouraged 'workfare' in the states.

"We reaffirm the right of all individuals freely to form, join, or assist labor organizations to bargain collectively, consistent with state laws and free from unnecessary government involvement.

"We reaffirm our long-standing support for the right of states to enact 'right to work' laws....

"For millions of black Americans, Hispanic Americans, Asian Americans and members of other minority groups, the past four years have seen a dramatic improvement in their ability to secure for themselves and for their children a better tomorrow. That is the American dream. The policies of the Reagan administration have opened literally millions of doors for these Americans, doors which either did not exist or were rapidly being slammed shut by the no-growth policies of the Carter-Mondale administration."

NEXT: Food and agricultural policy to immigration.

and Opinions

Women's Act Praised

EDITOR:

High commendation is due to the Encampment Women for a Future of Peace and Justice, together with other groups in the country who became associated with their effort to refuse to accept President Reagan as a guest at their planned dedication of the Elizabeth Cady Stanton House.

The women said: "We felt outrage at hearing this news and the prospect that he might appropriate women's rights as a concern of his administration, when just the opposite is the case." This occurrence was well described on Page 21 of the July/August Peace and Justice Education Center newsletter. It was appropriate and courageous of the women "to send a clear message to Reagan," regarding his intended coming.

The efforts of the encampment to continue to keep their quarters inhabited during the Winter months should give hope to people

who want continued efforts for peace to be spoken for loudly and to be prayed for and acted upon.

How the women will use their opportunity can be clearly inferred from the explanation given in the PJEC newsletter as objectives of the encampment women. The women are expected to continue to explore "ways to eliminate all forms of oppression from our world, to make international connections, to weave a web of support for life on this planet, and to convert military facilities and industries to peaceful uses."

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Rev. Falwell Praised

EDITORIAL:

Commenting on the Republican convention, a Courier-Journal editorial (Aug. 23) asked: "Shouldn't it bother people to see Rev. Jerry Falwell taking such a prominent position in Republican ranks?" It also went on to call the Moral Majority

an "extreme" religious group.

It isn't Rev. Falwell's position in Republican ranks that bothers me. What bothers me is the fact that the Courier-Journal thinks it should bother me. Rev. Jesse Jackson is playing a prominent role in Democratic ranks. Has the Courier-Journal expressed concern over that?

As a Catholic, I have a lot of respect for Rev. Falwell. He has the courage to speak out on the moral issues of today despite the constant harassment he receives from those who oppose him. Although our theology may differ, I find Rev. Falwell to be a lot closer to traditional Catholic moral teaching than many so-called Catholic theologians. Rev. Falwell combines words and action. He not only speaks out against abortion, for example, but has established a nationwide "Save a Baby" program that helps unwed mothers. It is a highly successful program and one that many more religious organizations should be involved in.

I resent the Courier-Journal labeling the Moral

Majority an "extreme" religious group. If the Moral Majority can be described as "extreme" because of its conservatism then the Catholic organization, Network, is just as extreme because of its liberalism. Yet, I don't recall the Courier-Journal ever applying that label to Network or, for that matter, to any other liberal religious organization.

Instead of alienating our fellow Christians by labeling them "extreme" we should be working together with them on the issues we agree on.

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Abortion Is Liberal

EDITOR:

A recent editorial of yours takes issue with the notion that pro-abortion is a liberal attitude. That is because you are liberal.

For some time, I have wondered about the split personality of the thing. I believe

it is because many liberal prelates and priests have accepted in this case the Vatican precept, although it may go against the grain. Abortion is a liberal program, and it is interesting to find priests and prelates with pronounced liberal leanings who nevertheless oppose abortion. Lie detector tests might be fun.

What do they really believe?

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Editor's Note: The editorial used the literal definition of liberal as being generous. There is nothing generous, or liberal, about killing unborn children. The aim of the pro-life movement should be to forge power through unity. Those who bicker and cast suspicion on the motives of allies do the anti-abortion movement little good.

Disclaimer

EDITOR:

A recent story by the NC News Service reported that I was a speaker at a September

1982 briefing for Catholic legislators sponsored by Rep. Geraldine Ferraro and organized by Catholics for a Free Choice.

The reference was accurate but some readers have drawn from it the inaccurate conclusion that I am a member of or in some other way affiliated with Catholics for a Free Choice. That is not the case.

I was invited to speak on "the state of the movement" when I accepted the invitation. I made it clear that I was not speaking as a partisan and that I would give the same talk I would give to a pro-life group; those involved agreed, making it clear they wanted an objective presentation.

There was no attempt on anyone's part to suggest that either I or Our Sunday Visitor endorsed Catholics for a Free Choice.

Just for the record: I am not now and have never been a member of Catholics for a Free Choice.

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