

RIISING POWER OF THE PAPACY

A Catholic peace initiative started in the mid-1980's by the "Community of Sant'Egidio" at the suggestion of Pope John Paul II. This group, with little press in English speaking countries, calls annually a meeting dubbed the International Conference of Religions (ICR). Select national leaders meet with representatives of world religions to deal with "religious conflict." Each meeting is held in various European cities at a major Catholic center.

These conferences proceed under the guidance of what Pope John Paul II gave in "Novo Millenio invente" – "We face the challenge of interreligious dialogue, to which we will be committed in the new century ... Dialogue must go on." The United Nations is integrally involved with these discussions. What is being accomplished?

1. The consistent social policies and world views of the papacy is honored.
2. They serve as a springboard for the pope to visit different countries.
3. They put the papacy at the center of all international religious dialogue and unity movements.
4. It helps give legitimacy to any peace and military declarations from the Vatican.

One recent dramatic example of this came on September 10 when Vatican Archbishop Jean-Louis Tauran, Secretary for Relations with States, announced *de novo* that the United States must abide by "Conditions Governing Military Intervention in Iraq!"

Tauran noted: "The Pope said to the international community last Jan. 10: 'To kill in the name of God is a blasphemy and perversion of religion, and I repeat this morning what I said in my message of Jan. 1: "It is a profanation of religion to proclaim oneself a terrorist in the name of God, to do violence to man in his name. Terrorist violence is contrary to faith in God the Creator of man; in God who cares for him and loves him."'"

But the archbishop warned: "Obviously, evil cannot be combated with another evil, adding evil to evil." He then took a position in direct opposition to President Bush and the United States:

"If the international community, inspired by international law and by the resolutions of the United Nations Security Council, considers recourse to force opportune and proportionate, this should take place with a decision in the framework of the United Nations, after having studied the consequences for the Iraqi civilian population, as well as the repercussions that it might have on the countries of the region and on world stability.

"Otherwise, only the law of the most powerful would prevail. It is possible to question legitimately if the type of operation being contemplated is an adequate means to make authentic peace flourish."

Again, without directly mentioning the United States, Archbishop Tauran testily said:

"We must pay attention not to confuse justice with vengeance and must avoid ... [any action where] whole populations pay for the cruelties of those responsible for the attack..."^[1]

A concept that the *International Conference of Religions* adopted was proposed by a renegade German Swiss Catholic Theologian Hans Kung:

- “1. No peace between nations until there is peace between religions.
2. No peace between religions until there is dialogue between religions.
3. No dialogue between religions until there is a recognition of the fundamental essential truths they share in common.”

Kung was the priest that developed for the United Nations the “Global Ethic,” a set of *doctrines* that all world religions could be “comfortable in following.” Can you see where this is going? All faiths must rally around *common truths*. Those opposing this “do not want international peace.”

The Vatican has vast resources and contacts with world religions and governments through the IRCR. It also uses a United Nations organization for close working relations with religious leaders from the major world faiths: *The World Conference on Religion and Peace*. That agency has great interest in working together in areas of *common belief*. The Vatican is the organizational power behind this, creating close working ties with Anglican, Buddhist, Islamic, Greek Orthodox, Jewish and select Protestant faiths plus with World Vision under the cost and auspices of the United Nations.

The Vatican has almost “mystical” ways of assuming leadership roles in these organizations. To keep peace, they deal with cultish “powers” they honor. Recently (July and August 2002), David Silk, Anglican Bishop of Ballarat summed up the relational dialogue:

“Dialogue is the place where relations between faith traditions begin. Dialogue begins when people, not ideologies, meet each other ... “Above all, *dialogue must include sharing in the worship and prayer of the other*. In all faiths, dogma and worship are closely bound together, and woven into disciplines which form a religion, a pattern and rule of living. A sign of this is the *respect accorded to sacred books in the worship of many faiths....* In worship we may sense a profound convergence, a common experience of God and humanity. In worship we may draw, by different yet adjacent wells, from a *single water table of spirituality*.”

For two decades the Vatican has taken center stage in world religion unity movements. Their position is now strong enough that it commands great authority even from the Islamic world. With great sympathy, the papacy can speak out forcefully against the United States and advise against an Iraqi attack. With great force they draw the faiths of the world to their doorstep.

Though the organizations noted get virtually no media attention, the voice in opposition to military action was heard by all. That is a power-base of unprecedented magnitude, and it comes from a country of only 108.5 acres.

“The Scriptures teach that popery is to regain its lost supremacy.”^[2]

We must not underestimate the rising power that is occurring now, right under our eyes. A giant spring is being set. When released, conformity to standards will be demanded. All these plans are well underway as you read this article.

References: (emphasis supplied unless otherwise noted):

- [1] Zenit.org, Vatican City, Sept. 10, 2002.
- [2] White, E. G.; *Maranatha*, p. 194.