

World Council of Churches declares war on the Renaissance view of man

by Mark Burdman

Just one week after the Schiller Institute held a seminar in Rome May 5-6, to commemorate the 550th anniversary of the Council of Florence and to motivate the revival of the great traditions of the Golden Renaissance that grew out of that gathering, the Russians and their friends in the West convened in Basel, Switzerland, home of the Bank for International Settlements, to declare war on those very traditions.

Ever since the Council of Florence of 1439, which, under the leadership of Nicolaus of Cusa and his friends, temporarily unified the Eastern and Western Churches under the banner of the Renaissance conception of man, the Russian Orthodox Church hierarchy has been seething in anger, seeking allies in the West to subvert that Christian humanist worldview. It has certainly found them now, in the leadership of the World Council of Churches.

Beginning May 15, a week-long European Ecumenical Assembly took place in Basel, Switzerland, sponsored by a World Council of Churches' subsidiary, the Conference of European Churches (CEC). The theme of the conference was "Justice, Peace, and the Integrity of Creation"—an attempt to merge the "ecology" and "peace" movements through the mediation of religions that are subverted by gnosticism. Approximately 1,000 theologians and church officials from many nations gathered for the assembly, representing the Orthodox, Protestant, Anglican, and Roman Catholic churches. Several thousand more participants represented smaller denominational churches and activists from groups like the ecological-fascist Greenpeace. The conference was sponsored by a wide array of business, financial, and civic interests from Basel and nearby.

On every level—historical, theological, epistemological, and political—the assembly was designed as an explicit counter to the Council of Florence. As Italian Senator Carlo Tani had put it succinctly at the Schiller Institute's two-day conference in Rome, the false "ecology" movement is the epitome of everything today that is *against* the Council of Florence. His Eminence Pietro Cardinal Palazzini was one of several contributors to the Schiller commemoration, who centered their messages on sharp criticisms of the Green and "animal rights" movements, as contrary to the Christian view of man at the center of God's creation.

In the official welcoming address to the Basel gathering, Dr. Peter Fackham, president of the government of the Canton of Basel City, stated, "The churches of Basel and the government of Basel City are now hosts to an assembly the like of which has not been seen for over 550 years. It is an historic event." That statement implies that the Council of Florence never took place! An official document entitled "Basel—Its Christian History," states the outright lie that the Council of Basel, which began in 1431, "represented the last attempt up to modern times to achieve a union of partnership with the Greeks."

The historical facts are that Pope Eugene IV *dissolved* the Council of Basel and reconvened it in Italy in 1438 precisely in order to include the Greeks, who did not wish to bring their huge entourage overland to Switzerland. The Council of Basel continued as a "rump" session, even excommunicating the Pope in 1439 and electing an anti-Pope, just one month before the historic union was proclaimed in Florence. It took the German-born Nicolaus of Cusa ten years of preaching and organizing in northern Europe, to bring the German and Swiss princes back into harmony with Rome, and end the Basel schism—a heroic feat for which he was made a Cardinal.

Metropolitan Kirill sounds the charge

In the first significant theological-conceptual speech of the week, on May 16, the Soviets' Metropolitan Kirill of Smolensk, one of the half-dozen most senior officials of the Russian Orthodox Church, sounded the battle cry, with an attack on the Renaissance as the source of the spiritual dilemma facing modern man. Since the Renaissance, he charged, economics, science, and technology have been decoupled from the laws of morality and the fundamentals of Christianity, and have taken on a dynamic of their own. Since the Renaissance, nature is no longer considered the work of God, but is rather an object of human activity, with devastating consequences.

Kirill warned that the values of the Renaissance had, to a dangerous extent, penetrated the East. For the past decades, he said, the East "has remained in the state of rosy-red optimism," believing that "science and technology can save ev-

everything,” and that “doomsday prognoses only counted for the bourgeoisie.” In this context, potential alternatives and the notion of “limits to growth” were defamed as bourgeois propaganda. But more recently, with Mikhail Gorbachov, “the tongue of the Church has been loosened,” and a new view has entered in. Kirill quoted a recent article in the Soviet Communist Party daily *Pravda* by Dmitri Likhachov, head of the Soviet Culture Fund, that there had occurred a “spiritual orphanization of our society, because the current political system has undermined the moral foundations of society.”

The critical issue: the ‘Filioque’

For the morning prayers and ecumenical Mass celebrated during the week, the Conference of European Churches selected the Nicene Creed of the year 381 A.D. as its point of reference. This means the deliberate exclusion of the *Filioque*—the central theological issue over which the churches of East and West have remained divided. The *Filioque* is the concept that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father (God) and from the Son (Jesus Christ). Adopted formally in the late 6th century at the Council of Toledo in Spain, the *Filioque* concept has been an intrinsic part of the doctrine of the Western churches for centuries, and has been a central causal factor in the superior scientific and cultural development of Western nations, because it embodies the belief in man participating actively in the universal creative process, rather than man osmotically absorbing the Logos in some quasi-mystical way. The denial of the *Filioque* in the East has been one of the chief underpinnings for perpetuating political tyranny on the “Byzantine” model.

So hysterical were the conference organizers about this question, that in an official version of the “Prayers and Hymns” book distributed by the CEC in Basel, the German-language versions of the words “and from the Son” (“und dem Sohn”) were crossed out with black ink! The French and English translations of the prayer simply omitted the words “and from the Son” entirely.

Where did the orders for this crude but highly revealing censorship come? One good clue is that the co-president of the assembly was Metropolitan Alexei of Leningrad and Novgorod, one of the top half-dozen hierarchs of the ROC. A large Soviet delegation was in attendance, primarily composed of members of the ROC, but also including Baptists, the Armenian Apostolic Church, the Georgian Orthodox Church, Lutherans, and Methodists. Omitted, however, were representatives of the Ukrainian Catholic Church (Uniates), a church which the Soviet authorities claim does not even exist.

The CEC’s ‘New Age’ philosophy

The Conference of European Churches was formed in the late 1950s, primarily through the impetus of Dutch and West German church leaders. It claimed to be a counter to the Cold War, and was created in parallel to the development of such

East-West private back-channel organizations as the Pugwash Conference of Britain’s Lord Bertrand Russell.

At its last meeting, in Stirling, Scotland in 1986, participants resolved to establish a global “Dostoevskyan” religious-spiritual order, to transform Christianity into the mystical-irrationalist form espoused by the 19th-century Russian writer. Dostoevsky was a Russian blood-and-soil chauvinist and anti-semitic, and a herald of the Satanist “New Age”/“Age of Aquarius” project.

The main difference between that 1986 event and the current one in Basel is a problematic and disturbing one. In Basel, there was *Roman Catholic* participation and involvement on a formal level, while in Stirling, Roman Catholics were there only as observers. In Basel now, this included Roman Catholic participation in masses done according to the original Nicene Creed—a scandalous violation of Catholic doctrine.

Cardinal Carlo Maria Martini of Milan, a factional opponent of Pope John Paul II on many key issues, is, together with Metropolitan Alexei, the co-president of the assembly, on behalf of the Council of European Roman Catholic Bishops’ Conferences. This council is a group with no real power, but has become a vehicle for Martini and others to bring their ideas into the Catholic milieu. Martini is known to frequent Mt. Athos, the unofficial world capital of Orthodox monasticism, because of what he calls the “spiritual exercises” he can engage in there.

In interviews with the Italian dailies *Corriere della Sera* on May 13 and *La Repubblica* on May 14-15, Martini praised the Basel Ecumenical Assembly to the skies, as a true ecumenical conference that would contribute to overcoming the divisions in the churches internationally. To *Corriere*, Martini said that the Assembly was “one of the most important ecumenical developments of history,” as it would help “save peace and the environment.”

Throughout the week, the main focus of presentations was on the “ecology/peace” interaction. One example was a talk called “Ecology in Eastern and Western Europe: Environment Groups Link Up.” Another was, “The Sermon on the Mount, From an Ecological Point of View.” A third was, “Antarctica, What Is Our Concern in the 6th Continent?” given by Greenpeace’s regional Basel group.

There is a bridge between some of the influentials in attendance, and some of the chief malthusian political organizations of the Western world. For example, Portuguese European Parliament member Maria Lourdes de Pintasilgo gave a speech in Basel. She is also a member of the Club of Rome and the Inter-Action Council of Former World Leaders, which is led by former West German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt.

WCC organizing drive

The Basel Assembly is key prong of a World Council of Churches gnostic organizing offensive.

- From May 22-June 1, the WCC is having a large meet-

ing on "Mission and Evangelism" in San Antonio, Texas.

- In July, the WCC Executive meets in Moscow, to plan an international conference next year on "peace and disarmament."

- In August, the "Faith and Order Commission" of the WCC meets in Hungary, with the explicit purpose of making unilateral concessions to the Russian Orthodox Church on the matter of the *Filioque*. According to a high WCC official, the consensus on the Western (Protestant, Anglican) side will be to maintain the *Filioque* purely as a formal doctrine for *internal* Western church purposes, but to agree to drop it in an *ecumenical, global* context. Doctrinally, he said, this would mean transforming, in effect, the understanding of the *Filioque* from the concept that "the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and from the Son," to "the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and is associated to (or connected to, or related to) the Son."

With this complex of events, the WCC is effectively targeting the entire Christian world, but that does not leave other religions out of the target sights. As for Judaism, on May 22, a WCC consultant, Dr. Martin Palmer, who heads the ICOREC group in Manchester, England, will be speaking at a press conference at the United Nations together with Rabbi Arthur Hertzberg of New York-New Jersey, a vice-president of the World Jewish Congress. Palmer is also an official consultant to the Worldwide Fund for Nature (formerly the World Wildlife Fund) and to the Fund's president, Prince Philip of Great Britain. Prince Philip will be the official patron of the event, together with Rabbi Hertzberg's boss at the World Jewish Congress, Edgar Bronfman.

The occasion will be the official launching of a new British-based group, the Sacred Literature Trust, the aim of which is to publish texts which demonstrate the coherence of religious belief with conservationist and environmentalist perspectives. The Edgar Bronfman Foundation will sponsor the publication of Jewish texts that supposedly show this coherence.

The idea, in significant part, was born out of the 25th anniversary conference of the World Wildlife Fund in Assisi, Italy, in 1986, at which representatives of Christianity, Judaism, Hinduism, Islam, Buddhism, and other faiths spoke. Judaism, so-called, was represented at that event by Rabbi Hertzberg, who made a short statement citing the mystical Cabbala to prove the coherence of Judaism and the "conservationist" worldview. This is an act of treason against a religion, the moral purpose of which is founded on the Book of Genesis and the laws of Moses, especially given that the Cabbala has served as the in-house "secret doctrine" of the various gnostic, pagan, and satanic sects that are known today under the overall characterization, "New Age." Not surprisingly, Rabbi Hertzberg's and other contributions made at the 1986 Assisi event are contained in a document circulated by the London branch of the Lucis Trust, the umbrella organization of New Age pagans and luciferians.

Brazilian deputies demand fair trial for LaRouche

Brazilian congressman continue to press the U.S. government on the rights of Lyndon LaRouche to receive a fair trial.

On May 8, Rep. Virgildasio da Senna of the Social Democratic Party asserted from the floor of the Chamber of Deputies that "a 65-year-old man cannot be sentenced without recourse to 15 years for a crime which, it seems to me, is essentially one of opinion. I differ with his opinion, but I defend his right to hold his own opinions."

Da Senna was one of 71 Brazilian congressmen who received a nasty letter from the press attaché of the U.S. Embassy, William Barr, after they signed an open letter to U.S. Supreme Court Chief Justice William Rehnquist requesting a fair trial for LaRouche.

Da Senna noted that Barr had written that "in his opinion LaRouche's imprisonment is just. I want to say that I do not share his ideas, nor do I defend them, because I consider them erroneous; but Mr. LaRouche has the right to a fair trial. It is not irresponsible of me to put my signature on a document which merely asked for a fair trial. I know, Mr. President, we are all tired of hearing that in the Soviet Union dissidents were put into insane asylums. I know how dissidents are treated everywhere; how Sacco and Vanzetti were treated in the United States. I know the Rosenberg case of modern times. In our youth, we all followed . . . the Dreyfus case. I know judicial mistakes are quite possible.

"What we want, Mr. President, is for this dissident to be treated justly. I don't understand how Mr. Oliver North, who lied to the U.S. Senate and Congress and was the instrument of war against Latin American youth in Nicaragua and Honduras, could be sentenced to 10 years, with right to appeal in freedom, while 65-year-old Mr. LaRouche was sentenced to 15 years in prison, without right to conditional freedom and without right to post the bond set by law so that he could appeal in freedom, on the pretext he made fraudulent requests for loans and did not file his income tax return," he concluded.

On May 18, Deputy Luiz Salomão also objected to the attitude of the embassy. Salomão sent a letter to the U.S. chargé d'affaires in Brazil, James Ferrer, Jr., reiterating his request that the U.S. answer the congressmen's concerns on the LaRouche case. "I am perplexed at the quality of the information transmitted by Mr. Barr, which concretely constitutes a second trial of Mr. LaRouche, almost lamenting that he 'could have received a sentence of up to 65 years for the crimes for which he was found guilty' and not merely the 15 years set by U.S. courts," Salomão wrote.