

Catholic Leadership for the 21st Century LEONARD SWIDLER

It was a bad year, 1979. It had started bad - and was ending worse. Three A.M. on December 18, my phone rang insistently, and I eventually answered it groggily. An American theologian/journalist in Rome, Ed Grace, said breathlessly: "The Vatican just condemned Hans Küng!"

Late in 1978 John Paul I had died just a month into his pontificate and Cardinal Karol Wojtyla of Krakow, John Paul II, was elected his successor. Then the headhunters at the Holy Office ("of the Inquisition" had been struck from the title earlier in the century, but apparently not from the reality) were quickly unleashed:

1) Already in the spring of 1979 the French theologian Jacques Pohier was silenced for his book *When I Speak of God*;

2) in July the book on sexuality by a team of four American theologians, including Ronald Modras (an initial ARCC Board member), was condemned;

3) in September the Jesuit General Pedro Arrupe was forced to send a letter to all Jesuits that they could not publicly dissent from any papal position;

4) all fall severe accusations of heresy against Edward Schillebeeckx were recurrently issued in drum-beat fashion;

December 13-15 Schillebeeckx was "interrogated" by the Holy Office in Rome;

5) that same month writings of Brazilian liberation theologian Leonardo Boff were "condemned" (he was later silenced);

6) on December 18 the Holy Office issued a Declaration on Hans Küng saying he "can no longer be considered a Catholic theologian."

A few hours later I was on the phone with Father Charles

Curran, then still at the Catholic University of America, and Father David Tracy of Chicago University. We decided to quickly issue a press statement by U.S. Catholic theologians stating that "Küng was indeed a Catholic theologian." We decided to fight Rome with Roman tactics, and adapted a page from Caesar: "Omnis America divisa est in partes tres." For the next twenty-four hours each of us got on the phone to our third of the nation, collecting signatures. As I spoke with people, time and again the refrain recurred: This can't go on; we have got to organize!

So in the next days I drew up a proposal to organize what would become The Association for the Rights of Catholics

in the Church (ARCC) and sent it to all interested contacts around the country. The response was over-

INVITATION

THE ASSOCIATION FOR THE RIGHTS OF CATHOLICS IN THE CHURCH

Invites you to join us on Friday, April 23, at 7:00 pm
in the Continuing Education room of the Washington
Theological Union, 6896 Laurel Street NW,
Washington, DC, to honor:

SHEILA AND DAN DALEY

and to hear their presentation:

Beyond Institutional Reform: Building Faith Communities

Dan and Sheila, co-founders of CALL TO ACTION,
have dedicated their lives to bringing the Vatican II-
inspired clarion call, "We are the Church," to
thousands upon thousands of American Catholics,
challenging us to heed the signs of the times and give
birth to the REAL church – a church loving, just,
transparent, accountable, and holy.

On the occasion

Dan and Sheila will be honored with ARCC's 2010
Hans Küng Rights of Catholics in the Church Award.

whelmingly positive. Group meetings were held in many cities throughout the U.S., proposals of what needed to be done were drawn up, and delegates were chosen to be sent to the Founding Convention held March 17-20, 1980, in the Alaska Hotel, Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Thirty-two (22 women and 10 men) met and founded ARCC to "bring about substantive change, to institutionalize a collegial and egalitarian understanding of Church in which decision-making is shared and accountability is realized among Catholics of every kind."

Three delegates, Gerard Sloyan, Dolly Pomerleau, and myself, were charged at Milwaukee with coming up with a National Board of ARCC, which we did in the next week, sitting in Gerard's living room in Philadelphia. The first meeting of the Board (consisting of between 15 and 20 members, deliberately geographically, gender, lay/clerical, and otherwise as diverse as possible) met in October, 1980, and every spring and fall since. Presidents of ARCC were: James Finn 1980-83; Margaret Cotroneo 1980-86; Alan Turner 1986-89; Mary Lou Hartman 1989-98; Terry Dosh 1998-2001; Mary Lou Hartman 2001-2004, and Leonard Swidler 2004-2010.

A wide variety of documents were developed and issued by ARCC, such as on dissent, parish rights, the internal forum....(see: <http://www.arcc-catholic-rights.net>), but the two most important ones were the Charter of Catholic Rights and A Proposed Catholic Constitution. Patrick Connor and I were the Co-chairs for the Charter Committee, and editors of the 1988 Sheed & Ward book: *A Catholic Bill of Rights*, and the 1990 Kösel Verlag book: *Alle Christen haben das Recht*.... The Charter was first issued October 25, 1983. At the spring 1990 Board meeting I first proposed the idea for a Constitution, and in 1994, James Biechler and I were asked by the ARCC Board to begin the process of drawing up a Proposed Catholic Constitution. It went through many versions resulting from world-wide consultation and intense work by an ARCC Constitution Committee (Leonard Swidler, Chair, William Leahy, David Efrogmson, Carol Efrogmson, and Pamela Monaco), and a committee of European Catholic reform organizations. The "current" version was approved by ARCC and the European Catholic reform organizations on September 19, 1998.

In 2002, the sexual abuse scandal broke in Boston and Voice of the Faithful (VOTF) was born, and quickly became numerically the largest of the Catholic reform groups. ARCC immediately offered collaboration and VOTF's initiator, Nobel Laureate Dr. James E. Muller, responded enthusiastically, and even publicly spoke of launching a "Constitutional Convention" in Philadelphia! However, many others involved in the early VOTF leadership wished to emphasize working with the bishops; unfortunately the bishops were not interested. Hence, shortly after I became President of ARCC in 2004, I began to promote the idea that

ARCC and the other American Catholic reform organizations join hands to promote an American Catholic Council called by the laity to focus on the Governance of the Catholic Church.

The various reform groups each had worthy goals – ordination of women, rights of gay Catholics, protection of children, renewal of the liturgy, elimination of racism, alleviation of poverty, . . . – but each of them could have their gains obliterated by an authoritarian pastor, bishop, or pope. Conversely, a church governance structure that was participatory, transparent, accountable, due-process-of-law oriented – in a word, was "democratic," would not only allow, but ensure, those values, once gained. I sought out and spoke with both Dan Bartley and John Hushon while they were general members on the national board of VOTF about an American Catholic Council; they said that they were keen on the idea, but had to wait until they attained leadership in VOTF. Then, when Bartley became President of VOTF, he commissioned Hushon and Janet Hauter to take the lead to launch precisely such an effort, which has led to the establishing of the American Catholic Council (ACC - see: <http://americancatholiccouncil.org>). Five Board Members of ARCC are actively involved in the planning of the ACC "American Catholic Council" to be held in Detroit, Pentecost, June 9-11, 2011. I urge all Catholics (including the 30 million [!] former American Catholics) to join in the work of not only ARCC, but also of ACC.

ARCC has recently gained the vigorous membership of several new Board Members, and will be launching new initiatives which will address the current tsunamic global crisis engulfing the Catholic leadership. Watch for their unfolding and join in. You cannot affect the reform of the Church from the outside!

A PILGRIM IN A PILGRIM CHURCH: MEMOIRS OF A CATHOLIC ARCHBISHOP BY REMBERT G. WEAKLAND, OSB (GRAND RAPIDS, MI & CAMBRIDGE U.K., 2009)

The memoirs of Archbishop Rembert Weakland is certainly one of the most interesting and courageous books written by a Catholic hierarch in the past few years, perhaps second only to Bishop Geoffrey Robinson's 2007 blockbuster *Confronting Power and Sex in the Catholic Church*.

Weakland is often characterized as arrogant. If that is true overall, which is questionable, it is definitely not true of this book. What could be more humble, even humiliating, than making as a stated goal of one's memoirs figuring out why one never grew up sexually? The very title of this memoir is an expression of humility, of a lack of hierarchical triumphalism – a pilgrim in a pilgrim church. This is rather an honest and detailed account of Weakland's several avocations – musician, monk, abbot, teacher, scholar, Abbot Primate of the Benedictine Order, Vice

President of the Union of Superiors General, and Archbishop of Milwaukee for 25 years.

Given Weakland's excellent memory and the notes (or diary) he kept all his life, his recounting of these years and the people, problems and issues that arose, make a fascinating narrative from an insider with a unique formation and point of view: that of an American Benedictine living on the cusp of a new religious age. Weakland's clear and flowing writing style make his memoirs eminently readable: the reader almost feels the archbishop is telling the story aloud. One becomes engaged in the story, situations, problems and debates, making it difficult to put down – not exactly what one expects in a book by an archbishop! Weakland knew and worked or dealt with many of the most influential figures of the post-Vatican II church, starting with Cardinal Montini who became Pope Paul VI. The vignettes and insights into the minds and roles of these churchmen are among the most interesting parts of Weakland's memoirs.

What is perhaps the most interesting aspect of this book is the glimpse it gives into the inner workings of the institutions and groups in which Weakland functioned in his long career. For example, I have always had a particular fondness for the Benedictines, their scholarship and especially their liturgy. Weakland gives rare and valuable insights into the organization and functioning of the Benedictine order as a whole and of particular abbeys that are not to be found elsewhere. His recounting of his years as Abbot Primate also provides opportunities for the telling of some amusing, and occasionally self-deprecating, stories. One meeting in 1976 brought together all the Abbesses in Italy for a week-long meeting at Sant'Anselmo. Weakland writes: "They faced the rigors of living at Sant'Anselmo with good will and playfulness, although the buildings had been constructed for student living, with bathrooms at the ends of halls . . . The showers were centralized in a separate building. The planning committee of nuns asked me to buy ninety-five bidets, one for each room, and I did!" (p.194) To those who call Weakland proud and arrogant, I offer the following story from chapter 8 of his memoirs: after consecrating a church in India, there was a celebratory banquet. "The monks brought in a giant fish baked in banana leaves . . . and, on a separate platter, presented me with the eyes, the part they considered the most delicious. . . . I swallowed the eyes whole with a slug of whiskey that the monks had gotten from the U.S. army. The meal did nothing to make my diarrhea any better. (It was one of the first instances of a problem I faced during almost every trip; I often said that I held the Guinness record of having had diarrhea in thirty-seven different countries!)(p. 164)

One of the most striking aspects of "A Pilgrim in a Pilgrim Church" is Weakland's honesty, his lifelong search

for the best solution to every question or problem, his honest admission of his (or the Church's) human fallibility and bad choices. His criticisms are always measured, well thought out and charitable but firm. He also does not duck the difficult questions and episodes in his own life, including his affair with and subsequent hush money payment to Paul Marcoux. He accepts responsibility for his actions and his pain is quite evident.

I think Catholics in this country owe Weakland a debt of gratitude for the long and candid account he gives of his years as Archbishop of Milwaukee. It could not have been easy for him to engage in the reliving of events one must go through to write it. Interestingly, Weakland was very hesitant to accept that post because he feared a loss of his intellectual freedom and integrity. Would that more bishops and archbishops were aware of that danger! He sought the counsel of some trusted advisors and finally accepted, largely due to his great fondness for Paul VI, who wanted him in that chair, and due to his desire to serve. But, he took the see of Milwaukee in 1977, and Paul VI died in 1978. Weakland outlines John Paul II and his Curia's turn away from the spirit of Vatican II and Paul VI's attempted decentralization of power in the Church year by year, measure by measure. Not surprisingly, Weakland's openness – on the possible ordination of women, reconciliation with and archdiocesan employment of former priests and a host of other non-doctrinal issues – soon raised the hackles of conservative hierarchy and laity in the US and in Rome. After years of this, then-Cardinal Ratzinger admitted to Weakland during an *ad limina* visit to Rome that the major complaint against Weakland was his "lack of docility." Surprise, surprise.

Weakland's memoirs are interesting and valuable. They deserve to be read and reread, even when they make one want to weep for the People of God and the Church we and Weakland so love.

Christine M. Roussel

AN ONLINE DISCUSSION ON MARRIAGE

This February a fascinating thread on marriage developed on our *Katholica* mailing list. I am sharing part of it with *ARCC Light* readers. Ihs

2/4/2010 2:31 PM

My thinking on the marriage issue is that the civil courts ought to get out of the marrying business. Civil courts ought to award contracts to two people who choose to enter into a binding agreement between them, whether male/female or male/male, female/female. All who enter such contracts ought to receive equal treatment under the law. Then churches, synagogues, mosques, etc. could make their own

rules and regulations about what kind of religious ceremonies they wish to offer people. The Catholic Church can continue to offer the sacrament of matrimony and decide who are eligible to enter into this sacrament and under what guidelines. Fr. Louis Arceneaux

2/5/2010 11:30 AM

The problem still rests in the tendency toward legalism. This is not confined to the RCC but due to the more rigid standards vis-a-vis divorce, it is more likely there. The idea that one should stay in a marriage "no matter what" is archaic and based on an unrealistic theology. When people only lived until their 40s, it was much more doable but now... I think the desire to have people remain married for life is an ideal worth seeking but it is still an ideal and places an undue burden on many. If we had a less punitive approach to marriage, then we could have reasonable efforts toward facilitating the healing process following a broken relationship (which is what is really needed, instead of another legal process.) Patrick B. Edgar

2/5/2010 7:49 PM

Marriage has always been first of all a secular reality. Historically families or tribal leaders arranged the union...or people did it themselves. There is a very long history of do-it-self-"marriage" especially at the level of "common" people who usually don't appear in the history books.

Marriage for Christians was deemed sacred because Christian life is sacred: we are temples of the Holy Spirit and where "two or three are gathered" there the Lord is present. You don't need a priest or some ceremony to make it all of a sudden a sacred reality. That's why when (after the eleventh century) the church began to develop a sense of the sacrament of matrimony the "ministers" of the sacrament were considered the man and woman making the covenant...and today they still are considered the "ministers" of the sacrament. The priest is official witness. He can preside at prayers, etc. but his presence and his actions DO NOT make marriage a sacrament.

Today of course our understanding of marriage as a sacramental reality, as a valid or invalid sacramental reality gets caught up in a lot of ecclesiastical red tape. It is really a mess. The ordained minister now becomes not only the witness of the sacramental reality but he becomes the secular minister of marriage as well. In our legal system (I speak now of the USA) his presence and actions make it a civil bond.

Personally I like the practice in my part of Europe. The church stays out of the marriage business. Marriages happen at the city hall. If a couple wants to publicly make a sacramental marriage commitment they THEN go to church for a celebration of the sacrament of matrimony. At church

they must first of all, and publicly, present their marriage certificate to the ordained minister and witnesses, then they can have the sacramental celebration.

I find this European practice (again in my part of Europe thanks to Napoleon) clean cut and it solves some problems. If a young couple really has little interest in the church celebration, they don't have to do it. Why go through the motions of a sacramental celebration when that has little meaning....

Yes in the eyes of the church they have not celebrated the sacrament of matrimony but they are still married.....(frankly I would say they have probably celebrated the sacrament as well but that is another discussion and our theology and church discipline don't have a place to fit that right now).

I remember chatting about this with Cardinal Danneels some years ago.....He chuckled and said "it makes it easier for us." If a young Catholic couple gets married ONLY civilly and then that marriage falls apart, they can get a civil divorce and then marry again civilly AND in the church without any problem, because the first marriage was not a sacramental marriage in the eyes of the church..... What he said is true of course but it is still playing around with church discipline and secular and church legalities, I think..... John A. Dick

2/6/2010 8:34 AM

Here's a question arising out of your last point: What is the substantial difference between a non-sacramental marriage and a sacramental marriage?

I would look at the question this way: any marriage anywhere is a binding covenant. If this were not the case, sleeping with a civilly married woman is not adultery. But of course, it is.

A marriage in church is a sacrament on top of the binding covenant, one that delivers God's grace to the couple, blesses their union, and gives them the spiritual fortitude to make the marriage fruitful and loving. But "below" the sacrament the marriage is still a covenant.

If marriage is always a covenant, how can the church accept a civil divorce when divorce is forbidden by the church?

To look at it another way, if the church can accept a civil "divorce" following a civil marriage, then surely it must be saying that the civil marriage is not a marriage. Philip Mathias

2/6/2010 12:05 PM

The real fact of the matter is that both the state and the church cooperated in the sale of women to their husbands' families. The "bride" rarely had a voice in who might be her husband but was sold for either cold cash, a pig, a cow, or a kingdom.

So perhaps it's time to throw away a "tradition" of marriage which rarely worked in favor of one half of the "covenanters." The "traditional" understanding of marriage is one of the reasons why marriage doesn't "work" more than one half of the time. Eileen McCafferty DiFranco

2/6/2010 1:08 PM

I got into this marriage discussion because I think there are several issues involved. I tried to address one and perhaps not very clearly. Having taught a course in marriage to seminarians, I am aware of the history that Jack pointed out. IF marriage were still considered a secular reality in the USA and by the hierarchy of the Catholic Church, I would have no complaint. However, too many people, hierarchs and lay, see marriage as a religious reality and then proceed to want to legislate who can experience this reality, with many wanting to exclude homosexuals. That was my reason for wanting to separate the secular reality from the institutional religious reality by focusing on the secular reality as a contract. Then the religious reality could be the focus of the different religions.

I do not see this causing women, at least in the USA, problems. I think women have enough sense to know what kind of contracts they wish to enter and which they don't.

While we may consider the couples as the ministers of the sacrament of matrimony in the Catholic Church, secular society at least in the USA demands that some approved legal official witness and sign the official document for the legality of the contract/marriage.

I think another complicating factor is the way religious organizations, Catholic and other, deal with the religious reality. As a Catholic priest, I dealt with this reality many times. I also think I did a very good job of helping couples make intelligent decisions about whether they wanted to accept the Catholic Church's understanding and obligations of the sacrament of matrimony. I don't think all Catholic priests are good at this and I don't think all deacons, married or single, are good at this. I think it takes pastoral skills to facilitate a couple's decision-making in a prayerful context; some people have it and others don't.

I also think it is helpful for couples to get some pastoral guidance before entering into such an important decision about their lives. A fascinating thread. Fr. Louis

2/6/2010 3:00 PM

My point is that any discussion about the alleged sacramental nature of marriage needs to recognize the fact that until the 20th century the vast majority of so-called sacramental marriages would today be declared invalid. There was no such thing as a covenant between equals. There is no such thing as a covenant today in vast areas of the world. And in the US, there is a documented

phenomenon called "the second shift," where wives come home after work and spend hours doing housework and childcare. Many women who said "I Do" with love and devotion often learn to their dismay that the covenant into which they entered is unequal and unjust.

So let the church stop pontificating about the sanctity and sacramental nature of marriage. They have blessed the enforced servitude of women for millennia. They have blessed legalized rape. They willingly married off children. They have blessed spousal abuse.

Perhaps if we begin the discussion with the reality of what matrimony has meant for vast numbers of women, then perhaps we could arrive at a solution. Eileen

MINUTES OF THE ARCC BOARD MEETING

November 7, 2009 by Phone Conference

Robert Schutzzius, Secretary

Present: Sandy Bellon, Richard Lebrun, Earlene Mara, Charles McMahon, Sonya Quitslund, Robert Schutzzius, Ingrid Shafer, Leonard Swidler.

Not Participating: Jack Dick, Patrick Edgar, Caridad Inda, Gerard Sloyan.

Friday Morning 10:00 am (EST) - The meeting began with a prayer by Bob S.

An announcement was made that the American Catholic Council will be held in Detroit June 9-11, 2011.

Nominations of new board members were discussed and both Raymond Temmerman and Lena Woltering were elected unanimously.

A COR report was made by Richard L.

The American Catholic Council (ACC) was then discussed. An ACC newsletter was circulated by Ingrid that outlined the goals of ACC. The focus seems to have shifted from governance in the Church to Vatican II reforms; this was a concern. It was clarified that grass roots concerns were more on Vatican II reforms and that governance issues were not eliminated, but will be addressed from a different approach that includes Vatican II issues and the formation of individual conscience. Len, Charles, Richard, Caridad, and Ingrid serve on the ACC planning committee for ARCC and will be joined by Ray.

Arrangements for the April 2010 board meeting were discussed. Bob will send our reservations for accommodations at WTU in Tacoma MD and also reserve the large hall there for the presentation of the HK Award to Dan and Sheila Daley. Ingrid, Earlene, Charles, and Bob will work on publicity. Ingrid will prepare a flyer to be sent by Bob to 165 Catholic groups in the DC area.

This Conference meeting was deemed a success and face-to-face board meetings might be once a year. More

conference meetings like this one could be had throughout the year.

Report on the Appeal Letter was made by Bob. 304 letters were sent out Oct 25, 2009 with a self-addressed return envelope included to our *ARCC Light* mailing list. As of this date 35 responses/contributions with \$2055.00 have been received.

A report on *ARCC Light* was made by Ingrid. Chris Roussel has resigned as co-editor (with Ingrid), due to an extended illness. Ingrid indicated that the electronic edition will reduce the number of hard copies we send out. Notice and URL for AL will be sent to the *katholica* list and Charles will seek VOTF help.

Election of the ARCC Executive Committee (Pres., VP., Treas., & Sec.) will take place at the April 2010 meeting. Sonya volunteered to serve as Chair of the nominating committee.

Nomination to the board was next on the agenda.

DVDs of Bishop Robinson's presentation are available for distribution. Charles is the contact person. He indicated that ARCC's help is key to getting the word out. These are free for the shipping and handling costs. Charles will provide us with the ad to distribute.

A letter of gratitude to Chris Roussel for her tireless work on *ARCC Light* over these many years will be composed by Len.

The meeting ended at 11:35 am (EST).

ARCC Light is published by the Association for the Rights of Catholics in the Church. For membership information, contact ARCC, 3150 Newgate Drive, Florissant, MO 63033, send email to ARCC@ARCCsites.org, or visit our website, <http://ARCCsites.org/>. Suggested donations are \$25.00 per year. Editor: Ingrid H. Shafer, PhD (ihs@ionet.net)