# Thoughts on Unification Theology And Democracy

## The Republic of Heaven on Earth?

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True Democracy is the way to win over dictatorship and personality cults. We find in Abraham Lincoln's speech the eternal truth "a government of the people, by the people, and for the people shall not perish from the earth." The democratization of our nation is, therefore, the topmost priority.<sup>1</sup>

There is a need within the Unification movement to articulate the political ramifications of Unification theology so that the movement's efforts in the political realm are securely rooted in its theology.

The articulation of this political vision is also required in order to respond effectively to attacks on the movement asserting that it intends to establish a global political dictatorship. An article in U.S. News and World Report, for instance, asserts that "Moon's bid for political power is disquieting because the church's theology runs counter to America's democratic tradition."2 Michael Warder, a former member, is quoted in the same article as stating: "Within the Moon movement, there is no foundation for the ideas of freedom, the rule of law and the dignity of the individual as they are understood in the West." The article also contains an allegation that the Unification Church is attempting to create "a centralized world theocracy." The movement is regularly accused of using certain of its activities and organizations as stalking horses to involve conservatives and liberals in its allegedly totalitarian plans.

The thoughts on Unificationism and democracy offered here are made in hopes of furthering dialogue on this critical issue. The comments that follow are not intended as a commentary on the question of where on the congregational/hierarchical axis the polity of the Unification Church itself should lie. Rather, it is a comment on the Unificationist perspective of democracy in the larger political society. The scope of the article does not allow for a discussion of the form of relations between church and state in the Unification ideal. Nor does it allow for discussion of the crucial issue of how Unification theology would bring vitality or restoration to democracy by building the holy community and combating immorality, racism, materialism and the atomistic approach to life which are eating at the foundations of democracy.

With the exception of liberation theology, Christians seldom examine the political implications of the eschatalogical hope, since fundamentalists believe the Kingdom will come miraculously and liberals doubt the Kingdom will come in any but a spiritual sense.

Unification theology, however, believes that the Kingdom of Heaven referred to by Jesus is not merely a spiritual kingdom in the hearts of the pious. Nor does it refer only to the abode of the righteous after death. Jesus labored to establish God's realm on earth. Hence the eschatological hope has social, political, economic and natural as well as personal dimensions.

While Unification theology asserts that it has political implications, theologians and sociologists who have studied the Unification movement have indicated that it may be too early to speak of a Unification position on political issues. This is because there is at present an unfolding of the encounter of a general Unification utopian vision with the realities of the political and social world in which the movement finds itself. Until recently many member's conception of the ideal world has consisted largely of fuzzy generalizations about a place where no passports are required, everyone is happy, and the sun always shines.

Aside from its opposition to communism, the Unification focus has not been upon national or international politics. Theologians have noted that for Unificationists the coming Kingdom centers in and emerges from the godly individual and the godly family. Neither church nor state as such are perceived as mediating the coming kingdom. It is dedicated individuals living in intimate communities of faith and love who will fulfill this role. This focus has meant that little attention has been paid to the issue of the political dynamics of the Unification ideal world in general and democracy in particular.

While most members will acknowledge that they have not thought deeply about the issue, conversation with members reveals four impressions of democracy held by Unificationists. There are those who believe that a

Sun M. Moon, "Citizen's Federation for the Unification of the Fatherland: Founder's Address," Today's World, July 1987, p. 8 (reprint of May 15, 1987, speech).

J. Bradis, "Rev. Moon's Rising Political Influence," U.S. News and World Report, March 27, 1989, p. 27.

#### Thoughts on Unification Theology and Democracy

republican democratic form of government is required in God's ideal. There are members who believe that God alone knows what the form of the ultimate political ideal system is, but that democracy is the best way to get there and is certainly the political system God wants at the present. There are also those who assert that a democratic, constitutionally-limited monarchy after the British model is the ideal. Finally, there are those who believe that the ultimate goal is a non-democratic monarchic feudalism patterned after the movement's present internal polity-the "Korean kingdom" approach. Most members holding this view, however, believe that democracy is what God desires at this moment in history, and that the ideal system must freely be chosen by the people. Thus, essentially all Unificationists believe that democracy is the best system of political government at this time.

This article will argue that close examination of fundamental Unification concepts leads inescapably to the conclusion that democracy is mandated by the religious doctrine of the Unification movement. More specifically, those religious tenets support a republican, democratic system modeled after the American constitutional system, with elected representatives and a separation of powers between legislative, executive and judiciary. It is in focusing the political system on higher ideals, developing greater spirituality among the electorate, in creating a greater sense of community, and in combating immorality, materialism, and racism, that Unificationism sees the need for change. In arguing this position the article will attempt to provide a basis for rebutting media criticism and will attempt to demonstrate that the goal of monarchic feudalism is not supported by Unification theology or Rev. Moon's pronouncement on the subject.

The natural rights theories embodied in the writing of seventeenth-century figures such as Thomas Hobbes and John Locke, which provided the philosophical foundation for modern democracy, can be detected in certain fundamental tenants of Unification theology. Two fundamental theological concepts embraced by Unificationists which support a democratic approach in political society are, 1) the free will given to each individual by God in order that the individual might achieve maturity and 2) the unique value of each individual as God's son or daughter.

#### Human Freedom

According to Unification theology, God loves freedom. Indeed God has had to endure the tremendous suffering of Her children because She refused to compromise freedom. God has never intervened to violate human freedom even though, like the father of the prodigal son, He has been more pained by our straying from our relationship with Him than we have ourselves. Unification theology asserts that because love must be given freely, there is no true love without freedom. Human freedom in Unification Theology is seen as mankind's most precious gift. It must always be respected. The basic (although very preliminary) text on Unification theology, the *Divine Principle*, states: "The Principle of creation tells us that man was created to become perfect by carrying out by his free will his own portion of responsibility, in which process even God could not intervene. Therefore, it is man's original nature to pursue freedom."<sup>3</sup>

One aspect of individual maturity is freedom of the mind, which includes freedom to believe and speak. Religion cannot be true if it denies man's freedom and ends up with a Khomeini-like system of oppression. Because of its respect for human freedom, Unificationism necessarily rejects a theocratic political system. Any changes in society must be undertaken by democratic means according to Unification theology. "When the Messiah comes again into the society under the *democratic* government well matured by the Christian spirit, he will be able to set up God's sovereignty on the earth by *the will of the people*, thus restoring the kingdom of Heaven on earth."<sup>4</sup>

Rev. Moon has decried the fact that:

All too frequently governments will persecute people simply because they express different beliefs than the state professes. Unfortunately, anarchists and terrorists recently try to break down democracy through terrible acts of violence....[I]t is important to remember some of the political and social realities of our times that gravely threaten the creative advance of mankind in respect of values, such as justice, freedom and dignity.<sup>5</sup>

The Divine Principle text specifically rejects totalitarianism:

Totalitarianism is a political ideology which denies the dignity of man's individuality and the freedom of speech, publication, meeting and association, together with the basic human rights regarding the state and the parliamentary system—which are the bases of the democratic political ideology of the modern nations and it insists that any individual or group should exist for the benefit and development of the whole nation or state.<sup>6</sup>

Rev. Moon states, "I believe that God's hope is for freedom on the Earth, and the greatest threat to freedom today is totalitarianism, particularly in the form of com-

- Ibid., p. 422 (emphasis added).
- Sun Myung Moon, "The Search for Absolute Values in a Changing World," November 25, 1977 (Founder's address delivered to the Sixth International Conference on the Unity of the Sciences).
- 6. Divine Principle, p. 484.

Divine Principle (New York: Holy Spirit Association for the Unification of World Christianity, 1973), p. 455.

#### CURRENTS

munism, which systematically opposes freedom of religion.'

The basic text setting forth a (preliminary) philosophical application of Unificationist theology, Explaining Unification Thought, criticizes Hitler, Mussolini, and Japanese militarism along with communism and concludes that: "History shows that those who have based their philosophies on force have failed to solve real human problems."8 Rev. Moon states that the Unification movement seeks change "through a process of education" and rejects "military take-over or violence."<sup>9</sup> Unification theology thus rejects, and Unificationists should fight against, the evil of dictatorship and totalitarianism. As noted above, Unification thought also affirms freedom of speech, publication, meeting and association, human rights and representative democracy. Unificationists are obliged to support and fight for these rights.

Rev. Moon's vision is of "a great new surge of revolution coming to America-not by fire, not by bullets.... The answer does not lie there, but in the hearts of men, in the quiet revolution from selfishness to unselfishness."10 Rev. Moon has criticized those who use force as a method of change. In discussing European unity, for instance, Rev. Moon stated: "Napoleon wanted to bring about European unity, but he tried to do it by force and bloodshed. Hitler attempted the same thing. But these two failed because they used force and did not hesitate to shed blood. But by love and centered on love, Europe should come into unity. . . . "<sup>11</sup> Rev. Moon has likewise criticized Mohammed for permitting the use of violence to spread his faith. This rejection of force calls Unificationists to reject, as they do, any use of violence in seeking change in a free society, whether in demonstrations on political issues or in seeking to bring others closer to God. Unificationism asserts that any attempt to establish the ideal not rooted in freedom contains the seeds of its own destruction because it violates God's principle of freedom.

## The Unique Value of the Individual

A second major theological basis in Unificationism for a democratic society is the belief that each individual has unique value in God's sight. Without the full participation of all members of a society in the governmental process the fullness of God's presence and personality will not be seen in that government.

Rev. Moon himself emphasizes this point.

The democratic world, or free world, has developed out of the religious tradition. The modern concept of democracy is set forth in the words of the Bible itself: "and God made man in His own image." That is, the democratic world places value upon the individual person. Because he is a child of God, the greatest care must be taken to assure his liberty and freedom of choice, for without liberty, his actions have no value.

As Rev. Moon has noted, "[t]here are as many different ways of being one with God as there are individual faces of mankind."<sup>13</sup> He believes, "Man is created in the likeness of God. In other words God made himself incarnate in man. Man is the mirror of the living God, and His every virtue, characteristic, and quality is reflected in this mirror."14

Unification Theology clarifies that the ideal system of government must recognize the needs of the individual not merely the needs of the whole society as in a totalitarian or communist state. "There cannot be any purpose of the individual apart from the purpose of the whole, nor any purpose of the whole that does not include the purpose of the individual...."<sup>15</sup>

Unification Theology affirms the value and natural right to dignity and equality of each individual. Since only democracy, as a political system, affords equal political value (voting power) to each person, all other systems must be rejected.

Each and every individual bears the most august, macrocosmic value. Men lost their original value because of the fall. In the present age, however, the democratic ideology has reached its culmination, and men have come to pursue the original value of individuality endowed at the creation. This may be seen in the liberation of slaves, liberation of minority groups and liberation of the minor powers, together with the demand for human dignity, equality between the sexes and equality among all people. This is proof that the Last Days have come and that fallen men are now entering the

- 13. Sun M. Moon, A Prophet Speaks Today (New York: Holy Spirit Association for the Unification of World Christianity, 1975), p. 6
- 14. Christianity in Crisis, p. 10-11.
- 15. Divine Principle, p. 42.

<sup>7.</sup> Testimony of Rev. Sun Myung Moon before Subcommittee on the Constitution, Senate Judiciary Committee, June 26, 1984, p. 151.

<sup>8.</sup> S. Lee, Explaining Unification Thought (New York: Unifica-

Sun Myung Moon, Quoted in F. Sontag, Sun Myung Moon and the Unification Church (Nashville: Abingdon, 1977), p. 141.
Sun Myung Moon, Christianity in Crisis: New Hope (Washington, Church Charles, Sun Myung Moon, Christianity)

<sup>(</sup>Washington, D.C.: Holy Spirit Association for the Unifica-tion of World Christianity, 1974), p. 23.

Sun Myung Moon, "Address to the French Family," Today's World, August 1981, p. 4.

Sun Myung Moon, "Challenges and Opportunities for World Peace," Today's World, July 1987, p. 10 (reprint of 12 Founder's Address to Summit Council for World Peace, June 1, 1987).

new age, in which they will restore God's first blessing to men.<sup>16</sup>

Dr. David S.C. Kim, President of the Unification Theological Seminary, and one of the earliest members of the Unification Church, accepts the idea of democracy as a given. He argues, for instance: "of course, the idea that human fundamental rights are equal and inalienable is the very principle of Democracy."<sup>17</sup> Dr. Kim, however, asserts that while Unificationists affirm democracy, a deeper philosophical explanation of the reason human beings have inalienable and equal rights is necessary. Essentially this more fundamental understanding is that "since the human being is created by God, his character must be respected absolutely."<sup>18</sup> This principle is so fundamental that Dr. Kim states that "even if someone does not recognize God consciously, as long as he respects the spirit of true Democracy and thinks and acts to defend human rights, he will be standing in the camp of theism."<sup>19</sup>

### Democracy as a Providential Necessity and America as the Model of the Ideal

In discussing the history of the evolution of humankind toward a mature political society, the *Divine Principle* text builds on the fundamental Unification concepts of freedom and equality before God and repeatedly indicates that democracy is the ideal form of government—that it is, in fact, divinely ordained.

According to the Divine Principle, "Originally this separation of the three powers [executive, legislative, judicial] was the structure of the ideal society designed by the Heavenly side."<sup>20</sup> The text emphasizes this point: "By establishing the constitutional political system in democracy, they could at least realize the pattern of the system of an ideal society."<sup>21</sup> These and other passages indicate that the constitutional, republican, democratic structure with the separation of executive, legislative, and judicial is the system advocated by Unification theology as the ideal political system for society.

The Divine Principle text indicates that this democratic political structure is not merely an intermediate expedient but is, rather, God's ultimate goal. "Democracy is, ultimately the political principle of God's final

- David S.C. Kim, Victory Over Communism and the Role of Religion (New York: Vantage Press, 1972), p. 125.
- 18. Ibid., p. 128.
- 19. Ibid., p. 129.
- 20. Divine Principle, p. 470.
- 21. Ibid.
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providence to annihilate the dictatorship on Satan's side and to restore, according to the will of the people, the sovereignty of God centering on the Lord of the Second Advent."<sup>22</sup> Indeed the fact that democracy has come to be preeminent is one "proof that the Last Days have come and that fallen men are now entering the new age."<sup>23</sup>

Explaining Unification Thought also asserts that the providence of God has evolved politically toward democracy through four stages, "clan society, feudal society, monarchic society, and democratic-type society."<sup>24</sup>

While criticizing America's materialism, immorality and racism, Rev. Moon has stated that the United States "is already a model of the unified world."<sup>25</sup> Indeed, America seems, despite all of its problems, to most closely approximate the ideal. "It is the *best* nation upon the face of the earth," according to Rev. Moon.<sup>26</sup>

Dr. Bo Hi Pak, one of Rev. Moon's chief disciples, has written: "A serious reading of Divine Principle reveals that Unification Theology sees the American democratic system as the most evolved political form, with its constitutional separation of powers as the structure of the ideal society designed by the heavenly side. . . . God's will can be done through the *will of the people* and America can fulfill her historic responsibility as the leading nation of the free and democratic world. Changing the political or legal system is unnecessary."<sup>27</sup>

Indeed, Unification theology seems to agree to a certain extent with Francis Fukuyama, who has recently created a stir among intellectuals with his thesis that the period of "post-history" has arrived. He argues that, with the decline of fascism and communism, Western liberal democracy has triumphed and mankind has reach its ultimate political form. This will lead to a universal homogenous state with a liberal democratic governmental form.

#### The Republic Of Heaven On Earth?

This article has argued that the republican and constitutional form of democratic government is the form of the Unification ideal. Perhaps the kingdom of Heaven could also be called the Republic of Heaven on Earth. According to the Divine Principle, "Democracy came

- 24. Explaining Unification Thought, p. 315.
- Sun Myung Moon, "America and God's Will," September 18, 1976 (speech delivered to approximately 200,000 persons at the Washington Monument grounds).
- 26. Christianity in Crisis, p. 56 (emphasis added).
- 27. Bo Hi Pak, et al., Our Response, January 15, 1979, pp. 42-43.

<sup>16.</sup> Ibid., p. 121.

<sup>22.</sup> Ibid., p. 422 (emphasis added).

<sup>23.</sup> Ibid., p. 121.

about in order to replace the political dictatorship of monarchism and to win the sovereignty back to the hands of the people."<sup>28</sup>

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Some Unificationists have commented that a constitutional monarchy such as the present day British or Japanese monarchies is the best way to balance the need for democracy and the need for an ideal "Kingdom." The Kingdom on earth, however, need not be a political monarchy even if democratically limited. The Kingdom in the heart of each believer and in the spiritual world, reflected fully in God's ideal in political society does not require an official institutionalized system to cement the role of a preeminent spiritual or moral leader. A "first family," a private family, with guiding or advisory power would seem to be the most natural format for the influence of the spiritual leader of the society. Ghandi, Martin Luther King Jr., and Lech Walesa, for instance, were not given official institutional positions in their governments, yet their moral power was enough to make them the central figures in their nations.

Unificationism rejects the cult of personality, including "Moonism" by emphasizing the messiahship of all believers. The spiritual, symbolic and modeling function of Rev. Moon's family would not seem to require that they be the official political head of a government. Rev. Moon has, in fact, rejected a political position for himself. "I do not think in terms of taking over the power or government of a nation. I am not ambitious to become a senator or the head of state of this or any other country. But as a messenger of God my responsibility is to relay the message of God to the people who actually run the country and society...."<sup>29</sup>

In speaking of the possibility of God's Kingdom coming to earth at the time of Jesus life on earth, Rev. Moon talks of a constitutional system. 'Jesus Christ would have set up a heavenly sovereignty centered upon the nation of Israel. The constitution of the Kingdom of God would have been promulgated in his time.'<sup>30</sup> In his speeches to members, Rev. Moon repeatedly refers to the ideal world as having a constitution.

A democratic, republican, constitutional form of government would seem the best vehicle for the ideals articulated by Unification theology and seems to have more support in the basic theological writings of the movement.

Those arguing for monarchial feudalism cite a few passages in the *Divine Principle* text which seem to indicate that democracy is merely a transitory development.

- Sun Myung Moon, quoted in Sun Myung Moon and the Unification Church, p. 141.
- Sun Myung Moon, The New Future of Christianity (Washington, D.C.: Unification Church International, 1974), p. 107.

The strongest of these is the following: "The reason that the age of monarchism came was to erect the Kingdom capable of receiving the Messiah as King. However, this age having failed to accomplish such a mission, God destroyed this society in order to work a new providence for the reconstruction of the Messianic Kingdom."<sup>31</sup>

This "Messianic Kingdom" is defined, however, in only the vaguest of generalities: "there will come a political society in which all mankind, having been unified into the heart and bosom of God through the religion based on the truth, will realize the ideal of creation on the economic foundation centered on God's ideal. This is the true Messianic Kingdom based on the principles of co-existence, co-prosperity and common-cause."<sup>32</sup> Furthermore, there simply were no democracies in the medieval period referred to in this passage. If the messiah came as the King he could have led the society of that period into a democratic form. Unification theology does embrace progressive revelation and God would no doubt have revealed the need for the evolution of the political system into a democratic form. As Explaining Unification Thought states, God's providence requires a political evolution beyond "monarchic society" to "democratic-type society."33

Rev. Moon regularly rejects the need for democracy in the Unification Church, arguing that there is a need for God's revelation to guide the Church. He occasionally critiques democracy in American society on a number of grounds including its inadequacy without God's spirit and a higher purpose. He also has indicated that while America has a democratic form it actually has certain tendencies toward oligarchy. Rev. Moon's criticism of American democracy is in the spirit of H. L. Mencken's reference to democracy as the "dictatorship of the booboisie." Indeed, as Spinoza noted, men may become enslaved by their ignorance. Rev. Moon's critical comments concerning democracy generally center on the lack of an informed electorate. They focus on the content of democracies not on the democratic form.

The view that democratic government is providentially necessary in the ideal society has been criticized by some members as lacking balance and as being barely supportable in the *Divine Principle*. The passages quoted above, however, make it clear that the argument is not only supportable in the *Divine Principle* but is its dominant theme.

Those members who criticize this view believe that the success of the Unification movement will lead to a type of monarchic feudalism. For the reasons outlined above, it seems that the view that the eschatological hope is for a "Korean kingdom" is a misreading of Unification

33. Explaining Unification Thought, p. 315.

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<sup>28.</sup> Divine Principle, p. 445.

<sup>31.</sup> Divine Principle, p. 441.

<sup>32.</sup> Ibid., p. 446.

theology. Since there is little in either the basic texts of the church or in Rev. Moon's talks to support their view, those who hold to this view apparently find their main support in their perception that Rev. Moon runs the church like the Kings of the Yi dynasty ran Korea (but with a healthy dose of Christian love). The "Korean kingdom" view confuses the present internal dynamics of the Unification Church with the ideal of a political society.

Those members holding the "Korean kingdom" view perhaps have such an intense spiritual relationship with Rev. Moon that they project this internal relationship and the centrality of their relationship with Rev. Moon into the political realm without examining the issue in terms of Unification theology. Perhaps members sharing this view should listen more carefully to Rev. Moon's teachings and repeated public statements in support of democracy, rather than to their hearts alone. The asserted need for non-democratic monarchic feudalism to withers when held up to the light of Unification theology.

The fact that a church has a hierarchical structure does not mean that church is anti-democratic in the political realm. The hierarchical nature of the Roman Catholic, Episcopal, or Mormon churches, does not mean, for instance, that they and their members do not support democracy in the larger political society.

The fear of "Romanism" that was rampant in nineteenth-century America, a fear that the papacy sought to establish a dictatorship in America, was only put to rest with the election of John Kennedy. (It is interesting to note that this fear was fueled by statements at the time from Catholic Church leaders in the Vatican who believed that the pope should rule America.) Americans now understand that Roman Catholics are able to fully participate in democratic society and may run for political office even though they are members of a hierarchical church. The present paranoia about the Unification Church will, like that affecting the Roman Catholic church a century ago, likewise prove unfounded.

Membership in the political community, unlike the church community, is not voluntary and therefore, the respect for human freedom espoused by Unification theology requires a democratic political system even though it does not require a democratic polity within the church itself where membership is voluntary.

### **Final Thoughts**

According to the Divine Principle, "Legislative, executive and judiciary of the ideal society. . . must be able to have a relationship of give and take action in the Principle according to the commands of God which are transmitted through the saints centering on Christ, There will be several political parties in the ideal according to the *Divine Principle*. "Today's democratic government is divided into three powers and produces many political parties, thus making itself finally resemble the structure of the ideal."<sup>35</sup>

If a separate political party was to emerge from the Unification movement such a party would honor traditional democratic standards. In this sense such a party might resemble the Christian Democrats or Germany's Green Party which seek to integrate a religious or quasireligious perspective with political administration.

Since the beginning of this century it has been clear that there simply are no longer principled opponents to democracy. To reject democratic government as a fundamental political principle is to be excluded from participation in the mainstream of those societies that do. Even if the Unification movement was not as philosophically committed to democracy as it is, it would have little choice but to support democracy if the movement is to participate in the political life of democratic societies.

Unification theory boldly asserts that bureaucracy, that supreme feature of modern societies, can be familiarized in an unoppressive way, that an ethic of love can function at a societal level. Of course, the human body or the family possess both democratic and nondemocratic characteristics. The analogy here being stressed it seems is to the ideal state of harmony of the cells of a body or members of a family. The need in a democracy for a system of checks and balances can

- 34. Divine Principle, p. 469-70.
- 35. Ibid., p. 471.
- 36. A Prophet Speaks, p. 12.

#### Thoughts on Unification Theology and Democracy

likewise be analogized to the system of checks and balances in the human body.

Another analogy Rev. Moon has used for the government, and one that perhaps should be used and emphasized more, is that of the servant: "The people of the country are first of all the children of God. These children of God choose and elect the government to serve them. That is, the government is the servant of the people."<sup>37</sup>

Finally, in recognizing the providential significance of democracy it is important for Unificationists to also recognize that Communism, while the most significant, is not the only anti-democratic force or political system in this world. Likewise anti-Communism must not be confused with support for democracy. It is this false conservative dualism which has often factored in the rejection of America and democracy in the third world. Because of the movement's support of democracy and recognition of its providential necessity, the movement must be careful to align itself with pro-democracy forces, whether in China, the Soviet Union, in Central and South America, in South Africa, or wherever men and women seek the freedom which is their heritage as children of a loving and liberating God.

 Sun Myung Moon, Testimony before Subcommittee on the Constitution, Senate Judiciary Committee, June 26, 1984, p. 154. Bruce J. Casino is former Executive Vice-President of the National Council for the Church and Social Action.