

mies or cultures that build on the mutual support and cooperation [of] extended families—that the reverse can be true. . . . We urge, therefore, that the Draft Program look for ways to affirm and support the economic vitality of families in cultures where increasing the number of children may add to family wealth and strength, and to avoid rigid assumptions about connections between population and poverty and between fertility control and economic prosperity.

The Role of Religion. We note with real disappointment that the Draft Program nowhere recognizes the vital impact that religious faith and moral instruction does and should have on family life. . . . [H]uman population is much more a matter of spirituality, morality, and human relationships than it is a matter of reproductive technology. Accordingly, we urge that the Draft Program seek ways to affirm the vital role of religion in family and economic life, and to support the work of religious communities to resist morally destructive influences and to promote moral, social, and economic health.

Interview: Dr. Richard D. Land

Dr. Land, executive director of the Christian Life Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention, and a co-author of the statement, was interviewed on Aug. 9 by Nina Ogden.

EIR: Can we discuss the plans of the Christian Life Commission in the period after the Cairo conference, especially since the U.N. is already planning follow-up conferences including the one on “women’s reproductive freedom” in China?

Land: China?! That’s Kafkaesque! . . . Actually all the arguments raised in the Cairo document are Kafkaesque.

The Christian Life Commission is the organization for the moral and social concerns of Southern Baptists. We are opposed to abortion and opposed most of all to the view that human babies are a threat to the well-being of any society. We see babies, born and unborn, as the greatest resource a society can have, not as a burden and hindrance to the future.

We will do everything to change the reprehensible policy of the administration, which sees abortion as birth control, whose anti-population-growth policy seems to be the ethos of the Cairo conference.

EIR: In President Clinton’s discussions with the pope, in Rome and in the pope’s phone call to him—

Land: Clinton stressed “safe, legal, and rare.”

EIR: He seemed to stress that he was backing away from coerced “family planning policies.”

Land: Really?

EIR: We are hoping that the opposition to the Cairo conference will create a paradigm shift.

Land: I certainly hope and pray, every day, that our methods will be used to create a paradigm shift in favor of life. We must watch what the administration does, not just what it says. For instance, the cable that was sent to the State Department offices was terrible.

EIR: In your paper, you have a section called “Poverty and Population.”

Land: We dispute the assumption that economic development is tied to the availability of family planning services and that economic prosperity can be assured by promoting strategies to separate sexual intercourse from conception. Obviously—look at Japan—it is one of the most densely populated countries, and one of the most developed. Look at the population density of Europe. It is clear that there is no direct correlation. These examples would be a counterbalance. Another argument is, that if you look at the countries that have most dramatically raised their living standards—like South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore, and Malaysia—these examples would say that economic development is more predicated upon the economic theories embraced by the governments of these countries than by anything connected to the idea of overpopulation.

Interview: Daniel R. Heimbach

On Aug. 5, Nina Ogden interviewed Daniel R. Heimbach, Associate Professor of Christian Ethics, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, the principal author of the document excerpted above. His co-authors were Richard D. Land (see interview) and C. Ben Mitchell, Director of Biomedical and Life Issues, Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission.

EIR: You attended the World Conference on Religion and Peace meeting in Geneva on July 26-29. Can you tell us what happened there?

Heimbach: The conference was billed as a multi-religious consultation on issues of population and development. People were sent from the major religious communities to share moral concerns with the draft program as put together by the Cairo conference and then compare these concerns, and to see how much commonality there would be. On the basis of that, they would prepare a statement that would be part of the official program presented at the Cairo conference within the NGO [non-governmental organization] forum. Also, the material would be given to every national delegate there and is voting on the Cairo program.

I came back from Switzerland very encouraged, actually. It was pulled together by a U.N. affiliate called the World Conference on Religion and Peace, which has NGO status in the U.N. complex in New York. Various major world religious bodies were asked to send someone who was able to