

Threshing Floor: Monday June 4, 2007/19th Day of the 4th Month

Blackwater-Part 2

Show Notes by Randy Maugans

"In April 1976, **Sojourners**, a progressive evangelical magazine, published a report on a series of secret meetings convened by key Christian Right leaders in **1974 and 1975**. Sojourners traced the rise of the **New Christian Right** to the 1974 formation of **Third Century Publishers**, established for the purpose of promoting books and study guides designed to link a comprehensive conservative political agenda with born-again Christianity." A meeting in 1974 convened to solidify the financial base for Third Century Publishers, was convened by Arizona Congressman John Conlan and **Bill Bright, president of Campus Crusade for Christ**, with attendees including 20-25. The initial publications "were directed at manipulating Christians to accept political action as part of Christian thought." In 1975 a meeting was convened by Bright and Conlan to "train regional director in Third Century's strategy to gradually take positions of leadership with the government." Conlan told regional directors that Bill Bright would be working behind the scenes with his Christian business contacts to secure financing. They realized they needed a tax-exempt foundation that could receive donations for the work of the "for-profit" Third Century. "They approached and eventually took over the **Christian Freedom Foundation**, started in the 1950s to promote conservative economics," which was in financial trouble in the 1970's. "Eventually Christian Freedom Foundation hired [**The Council for National Policy's**] **Ed McAteer** as director..." [Spiritual Warfare: The Politics of the Religious Right, p.49-50, Sara Diamond, South End Press, Boston, MA]

The Christian Freedom Foundation backers, "... included [CNP's] **Richard DeVos** (AMWAY Corp), **Art DeMoss** (National Liberty Corp), Arizona Congressman John Conlan, and [CNP's] **Ed McAteer**, CFF's field director at the time, later field director for the Conservative Caucus, and now head of the Religious Roundtable.... Richard DeVos and John Conlan took control of the Christian Freedom Foundation in 1975. Under this leadership, the foundation became the nonprofit, tax-exempt administrative hub of their political efforts to election Christians to politics..." **Art De Moss** admitted publicly that the purpose of CFF was to elect Christian conservatives to Congress in 1976: "The vision is to rebuild the foundations of the Republic as it was when first founded--a 'Christian Republic.' We must return to the faith of our fathers." [Saloma, p. 53-54]

Richard DeVos -Co- Founder of the Amway Corporation in 1959, he has been on the **CNP Executive Committee** (1984-85); **CNP Senior Executive Committee & Past President** (1986-88 &1990-93), and **Board of Governors** for 1996 and 1998. DeVos served as **Chairman's Council of the Conservative Caucus**. Raised in the the Christian Reformed Church, he is a graduate of Grand Rapids Christian High School and attended Calvin College in Grand Rapids. He served in the United States Air Force from 1944 to 1946. He serves as **Chairman of Gospel Films**, is a board member and founding **Chairman** for the

National Organization on Disability, President of the Grand Valley State University Foundation, and a board member of Butterworth Health Corporation.

He is on the **Board of Directors of Robert Schuller Ministries**, **past Co-chairman of Gerald R. Ford Foundation**, served as **Co-chairman of the Mutual Broadcasting Corporation**. He is also helped fund Council of Trustees, Freedom Foundation and is a:

- Fellow, **World Fellowship for the Duke of Edinburgh's Award**. (Prince Phillip of England)
- Member, **Newcomen Society**.
- Past Board Director, Spectrum Health.
- Past Finance Chairman, Republican National Committee.

United Nations Environment Programme Achievement Award, recipient on behalf of Amway - 1989. Amway also sponsored an "Earth Teacher" award that included a free trip to the U.N. to participate in the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) Global Youth Forum. **Amway also was a sponsor of the U.N. Earth Summit--which brought the Earth Charter.**

(That summit was headed by Maurice Strong and Mikhael Gorbeche

In an undated Amway brochure titled **3 Decades of Caring: AMWAY**, Amway announced that it had launched "**a new, five year corporate sponsorship: the Aspen Global Change Institute-which is John Denver's initiative. Amway's partners in the project included the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), the United Nations Environment Programme, and the Windstar (John Denver) Foundation.**"

In the book, *Amway Motivational Organizations: Behind the Smoke and Mirrors*, by Ruth Carter we read of Amway's alliances and lawsuits. "...in the pro-Amway camp are well-known Republican politicians, including **Ronald Reagan, George Bush, George W. Bush, Oliver North, Newt Gingrich, Woody Jenkins** and Sue Myrick. Conservative Christian leaders **James Dobson**, and formerly Jim and Tammi Bakker have been staunchly pro-Amway, and claim friendships with Amway founders and high-level distributors. **Jerry Falwell**, who receives massive donations from Amway distributors...

CFF Has Links To:

Harold Ockenga, -- Fuller Theological Seminary-president, and then as a trustee from 1959-63. He was also **Director of the Christian Freedom Foundation** and a member of **President Truman's Clergymen's Mission to Europe in 1947**. H Mears's Forest Home Christian Conference Center.

See: **The Christian Freedom Foundation** which shows it's history with Bill Bright, Ed McAteer, The Religious Roundtable, Cry for Renewal, Sojourners, and Richard DeVos and so on.

Besides being first President and co-founder of Fuller Theological Seminary, long with J. Edwin Orr, Co-Founder of the **National Association of Evangelicals**, helped found

Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary ><http://www.gcts.edu/>> in 1969 and was President of it and Gordon College from 1969-1985. **"The Conwell School of Theology and Gordon Divinity School merged in 1969 through the efforts of philanthropist**

J. Howard Pew, J. Howard Pew was one of seven who started the Pew Charitable Trusts ><http://www.pewtrusts.com/>, (now.org) "a Philadelphia-based foundation with approximately \$4.9 billion in assets, invested over \$250 million in 206 nonprofit organizations in 1999." [www.pewtrusts.com/Frame.cfm?Framesource=programs/philly.cfm] Effective January 1, 2004, The Pew Charitable Trusts transformed from a foundation into a newly independent non-profit organization. "The Pew Charitable Trusts are a group of seven individual charitable funds established between 1948 and 1979 by two sons and two daughters of **Sun Oil Company founder Joseph N. Pew**

"...**The Religion program at the Trusts** has carved out a unique niche in the world of philanthropy as **the foremost supporter of evangelical and other orthodox Christian scholars and of the study of American evangelicalism...** from the very beginning the Trusts have funded many large, mainstream religious endeavors, and **the Religion program continues to fund a broadly ecumenical range of projects.....**The Religion program is currently exploring **a variety of means to support studies of the impact of different faiths--Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism,** to name only a few--on race relations in America. We propose to **focus primarily on the role of Christianity in black-white relations,** but also to include the comparative dimension of other faiths and ethnic groups....**Serious scholarly consideration of the relations between the three descendants of Abraham--Jews, Christians and Muslims--**could be an important first step in improving interreligious relations in areas of the world where these traditions must learn to coexist...."

Grants-Year 2000:

"The Billy Graham Evangelistic Association

The Catholic University of America

Loyola University of Chicago

New America Foundation

Azusa Pacific University

Jewish Theological Seminary of America

World Vision, Inc.

Harvard University

09/28/1995 - Cambridge, MA

To complete a CD-ROM interactive multimedia reference tool for studying religious pluralism in the U.S. 244,000/1 yr.

Evangelical Association for the Promotion of Education

03/14/1996 - St. Davids, PA

In support of the Philadelphia Project for Youth Ministry.

\$ 458,000/42 mos

Kingdomworks

03/14/1996 - Philadelphia, PA

In support of the Philadelphia Project for Youth Ministry.

\$ 636,000/42 mos.

Evangelicals For Social Action, Inc.

06/13/1996 - Wynnewood, PA

To develop a publication, materials and membership for an organization of evangelical and other Christians concerned with population growth, excessive consumerism and environmental deterioration.

\$ 350,000/2 yrs.

New York City Mission Society

06/13/1996 - New York, NY

In support of the Holistic Ministries Leadership Institute and the center's organizational development efforts.

\$ 200,000/3 yrs.

Brookings Institution

09/25/1997 - Washington, DC

In support of a conference entitled Preserving Sacred Places, Restoring Civil Society that will examine recent research on how faith-based institutions contribute to civil society.

\$ 38,000/1 yr See: [CNP Joint Projects A-D](#)

Princeton Theological Seminary

06/04/1998 - Princeton, NJ

In support of a conference entitled, "**The Church and the World in a New Century: Faith and Responsibility in a Global Future.**"

\$ 50,000/1 yr.

Brookings Institution

09/24/1998 - Washington, DC

For a series of discussions on **church-sponsored social services and potential partnerships with government, over two years.** \$ 250,000/2 yrs. (Faith Based Initiatives via G.W. Bush)



Erik Prince's Catholicism:

Lt. Erik Prince, U.S. Navy SEAL: "**Christian Fatherhood provides men with the basic training they need to complete (their) mission.**" from an Amazon review of "Christian Fatherhood: The Eight Commitments of St. Joseph's Covenant Keepers" (Paperback) by Stephen Wood

The **Rev. Robert Sirico**, a Catholic priest and founder of the Grand Rapids-based **Acton Institute**, a conservative think tank, recalled a dinner meeting with Prince **around 1990**.

At that dinner, **Sirico** met with Dick DeVos, his parents, Rich and Helen DeVos, and Edgar and Elsa Prince. He recalled Prince joined the dinner later, coming in smelling like smoke from fighting a fire.

Sirico called Prince a "family man and a believer" who **converted to Catholicism within about a year of that meeting.**

Since then, Sirico has become a friend to Prince. He baptized four of his children. He also spoke at the funeral of Prince's wife, Joan, who died of cancer in 2003.

Sirico said he and Prince have had many conversations about the free market and faith.

He said they share many views, namely "**that business leaders, in light of their calling from God to be creative, have a sacred obligation to use their creativity for the good, to deal honestly with others.**"

The Acton Institute for the Study of Religion and Liberty

is a right-wing think-tank blending religion and free-enterprise ideology to promote laissez-faire economics. The Institute organizes seminars for religious, academics, and business leaders to link free-market economics and religion and publishes books, journals, and opinion promoting its ideals.

The Acton Institute has been particularly aggressive in attacking social justice activists that use religion as an organizing tool, with the Acton Institute attacking campaigners against poverty and against hunger. The Acton Institute has also been quite active in challenging global warming and has worked to minimize religious concern over the issue.

Local Funding

The Acton Institute receives funding from a variety of West Michigan area foundations including the **Richard and Helen DeVos Foundation**, the **Edgar and Elsa Prince Foundation**, the **Dick and Betsy DeVos Foundation**, and the **Jay and Betty Van Andel Foundation**.

Funding from Corporations

The Acton Institute has received \$215,000 from ExxonMobil since 1998.

In 1990, **Father Sirico** founded Grand Rapids, Michigan-based Acton Institute (<http://www.acton.org/>). Named for historian and social philosopher Baron John Emerich Edward Dalberg-Acton, known as **Lord Acton**. The Institute's mission is to "promote a free and virtuous society, characterized by individual liberty and sustained by religious principles." <http://www.workingforchange.com/printitem.cfm?itemid=11196>

Lord Acton's Dictum

...over the promulgation by Pope Pius IX of the dogma of **papal infallibility**. Lord Acton, who was in complete sympathy on this subject with Döllinger, went to Rome in order to throw all his influence against it, but the step he so much dreaded was not to be averted. The Old Catholic separation followed, but Acton did not personally join the seceders, and the authorities prudently refrained from forcing the hands of so competent and influential an English layman. It was in this context that in a letter dated April, 1887, to Bishop Mandell Creighton, **Acton made his most famous pronouncement:**

Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely.

This is commonly referred to as Lord Acton's dictum. But it is the third phrase in this quote that might be the most important, if little-known:

Great men are almost always bad men.

From: **The Catholic power broker**
Bill Berkowitz – WORKING FOR CHANGE

Welcome to WorkingForChange

Last spring, in time for Earth Day, the Acton Institute helped launch the Interfaith Council for Environmental Stewardship (ICES), an organization aiming to inject conservative religious tenets into the environmental debate. Father Sirico believes that "environmental ideology is increasingly being used, not to preserve nature's beauty, but to restrict human enterprise that is essential to a more humane existence for people."

The Cornwall Declaration on Environmental Stewardship, the organization's founding document, was the first major pronouncement on environmental issues by a coalition of ultraconservative religious groups. The Declaration prioritizes the needs of humans over nature, advocates the unleashing of free-market forces to resolve environmental problems and denounces the environmental movement for embracing faulty science and a gloom-and-doom approach.

Signers of the Declaration includes such right-wing ringleaders as Focus on the Family president Dr. James Dobson, Campus Crusade for Christ founder Bill Bright, Prison Fellowship Ministries' head Charles Colson, the Rev. Donald Wildmon, president of the American Family Association, Rabbi Daniel Lapin, head of Toward Tradition and Father Sirico. ICES' advisory committee contains Dr. D. James Kennedy of the Ft. Lauderdale, Florida-based Coral Ridge Ministries, a controversial anti-gay leader and an outspoken denier of separation of church and state. Kennedy said that "if ever an issue needed sound Biblical Doctrine brought to bear upon it, it's the environment, and...[ICES] accomplishes this." President Bush's "compassionate conservatism" guru Dr. Marvin Olasky, professor of journalism and history at the University of Texas, Austin, is also on board.

ICES's web site (<http://www.stewards.net/About.htm>), maintains that its "network of religious, academic and community leaders" will provide a "**credible alternative to liberal environmental advocacy for people in congregations, schools, government, and the religious and secular** media."

In late November 2000, Father Sirico added **globalization** to his portfolio. Acton, along with the Pontifical Council for the Family, sponsored a Vatican City conference examining "the impact of globalization on the family." The conference was also an important development in the ongoing conversation between evangelical Protestants and conservative Catholics, as major players like Father Richard John Neuhaus, Dr. Dobson, Charles Colson, Rep. Chris Smith, (R-N.J.), and Catholic scholar Michael Novak were in attendance. At his late-December meeting with Bush, Father Sirico remarked that "tackling the problem of poverty will require that persons of different religions, races, backgrounds, and political persuasions, come together around a common agenda." Father Sirico's agenda mirrors the Heritage Foundation's Robert Rector, who, in the chapter on Welfare in Heritage's "Issues 2000: The Candidates Briefing Book" emphasizes "marriage and responsible fatherhood," "educational choice" including charter schools, vouchers, and tuition tax credits, and "empowering faith-based private charities through charitable tax credits and other reforms."

Father Robert Sirico's work at the Acton Institute covers a broad spectrum of hot button

issues, from reinterpreting Catholic social doctrine and the creation of a right-wing religious-based environmental organization, to advocacy for charitable choice and a reduction in government programs. Given his recent op-ed in The New York Times, his face-to-face with President Bush, and his work with the Vatican, Father Sirico's star is on the rise.

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