

**THE FUTURE OF THE UNITED NATIONS IN THE  
TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY:**

*A Panel Discussion on Global Affairs*

*Tuesday, October 13, 2009*

*Regent University*

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*Panelists:*

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GILLIAN MARTIN SORENSEN\*

PROCEEDINGS

GILLIAN MARTIN SORENSEN: Thank you for the kind introduction. Good afternoon.

Thank you to Dr. Douglas Walker for inviting me.<sup>1</sup> I am pleased to be here on this beautiful campus.<sup>2</sup> I am not an evangelical Christian, but I am a person of faith. As I read more about Regent University, I know that service is one of

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1. Dr. Douglas Walker is a Professor of Economics at the Robertson School of Government at Regent University. He is responsible for the preparation of short-term forecasts and long-range projections of world economic activity and international trade that appear in the analytical reports and perspective studies issued by the United Nations.

2. Mrs. Sorensen delivered her lecture at the Regent University campus in Virginia Beach, Virginia.

the core tenets of your studies and your life.<sup>3</sup> Service has been a driving force of my own life.

I have spent my entire career working with and for the United Nations.<sup>4</sup> I am keenly aware that, for evangelical Christians, the United Nations has been the target of very sharp criticism.<sup>5</sup> Some fair, some—in my view—unfair and unfounded. I want to share with you a perspective that you may not hear often. I feel we can all learn from this debate in a useful way.

A friend sent me a statement from the National Conference of Evangelicals called “For the Health of the Nation: An Evangelical Call to Civic Responsibility.”<sup>6</sup> The final paragraph of that remarkable statement said, evangelical Christians are “[c]ommitted to renewed political engagement, protection of the vulnerable and the poor, to racial reconciliation and justice, care for the earth and promotion of a just, peaceful, and free world.”<sup>7</sup> Those are words that come directly to my heart. And so in that way, I do feel at home here.

Two weeks ago this year at the opening of the United Nations General Assembly,<sup>8</sup> 180 heads of government—Presidents and Prime Ministers—met in New York to confer, to make their own statements, and to connect.<sup>9</sup> The Secretary General invited the world leaders to come one day early so they could discuss one subject—climate change.<sup>10</sup> The goal was to look again at the evidence that reminds us that climate change is real and urgent.<sup>11</sup> A side goal was to en-

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3. *Id.*

4. Sorenson, *supra* note 0.

5. Joel A. Nichols, *Evangelicals and Human Rights: The Continuing Ambivalence of Evangelical Christians*, 24 J.L. & RELIGION 629, 654 (2008).

6. FOR THE HEALTH OF THE NATION: AN EVANGELICAL CALL TO CIVIC RESPONSIBILITY, NAT'L ASS'N. OF EVANGELICALS (2004), available at [http://www.nae.net/images/content/For\\_The\\_Health\\_Of\\_The\\_Nation.pdf](http://www.nae.net/images/content/For_The_Health_Of_The_Nation.pdf).

7. *Id.* at 12.

8. Mr. Ban Ki-Moon, Sec'y Gen. of the U.N., Opening Statement of the Gen. Debate of the 64th Sess. of the U.N. (Sept. 23, 2009) (transcript available at <http://www.un.org/ga/64/generaldebate/sgopen.shtml>) [hereinafter Opening Statement].

9. *United Nations and G-20 Coverage*, WASH. POST, Sept. 22–25, 2009, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/special/politics/summits/index.html?sid=ST2009092301715>.

10. Opening Statement, *supra* note 8.

11. U.S. Env'tl. Prot. Agency, Basic Information on Climate Change, <http://www.epa.gov/climatechange/basicinfo.html> (last visited Nov. 9, 2009).

courage all countries to come to the world conference in Copenhagen in December 2009 and bring with them a commitment to address the realities of climate change and its consequences.<sup>12</sup> With so many world leaders thinking about this critical issue, it reminds us that the United Nations has a unique convening power when it comes to bringing leaders together to address critical issues facing our world today.

The next day, President Obama spoke to the group and talked about a new era of engagement.<sup>13</sup> He elaborated on the essential role of international cooperation in a world that is now interconnected.<sup>14</sup> Everything crosses borders without passports. Whether you are talking about terrorism, conflict, the traffic in drugs or arms or human beings, or the consequences and degradation of the environment, all of those matters are global and clearly no single country—no matter how strong and powerful—can address them alone.

We need to join forces. We need to pool our knowledge, our information, our motivation, and our visions to make a better world.

In no way does this negate the reality of nation-states. We are proud nationals of our own countries.

I am an American and a patriot. But I do realize from my years of working at the United Nations that, in the simplest terms, we can do more together than we can do alone. Clearly that is true for small countries or poor countries, but it is also true for a superpower. Burden-sharing is a common term at the United Nations.<sup>15</sup> We share the risks and responsibilities of addressing crises and problems that are of keen interest to our national interests but that can only be resolved when we work in concert. That is not always easy to do. The United Nations today has 192 member-states.<sup>16</sup> It

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12. Michael von Bulow, *Failure in Copenhagen is not an Option*, U.N. CLIMATE CHANGE CONF. NEWS, Feb. 2, 2009, <http://en.cop15.dk/news/view+news?newsid=2257>.

13. President Barack Obama, Responsibility of our Common Future, Address to the United Nations General Assembly (Sept. 23, 2009) (transcript available at [http://www.un.org/ga/64/generaldebate/pdf/US\\_en.pdf](http://www.un.org/ga/64/generaldebate/pdf/US_en.pdf)) [hereinafter President Obama's Speech].

14. *Id.* at 4.

15. G.A. Res. 51/75, ¶ 20, U.N. Doc. A/RES/51/75 (Feb. 12, 1997).

16. U.N., Member States of the U.N., <http://www.un.org/en/members/index.shtml> (last visited Feb. 4, 2010).

represents the world as it is. Democracies to be sure—nearly half are democracies—but monarchies and dictatorships and other forms of government are represented as well.<sup>17</sup> Other political systems, races, and nationalities, everyone is there.<sup>18</sup> The United Nations is the place where realism and idealism meet.

And so, the challenge for the United Nations every day is to find that consensus, to seek that common ground,<sup>19</sup> and to build relationships, partnerships, and coalitions with other nations with whom we share a common cause. Sometimes that happens with countries with whom we might have deep political differences.

How do you connect? You look for a common concern that is above politics such as clean water or children's health. If you find an area where you can cooperate and put a face on "the other", then you can open a dialogue, and that is a start.

With other countries more akin to us, we have many areas of cooperation.<sup>20</sup> But, the fundamental notion is burden-sharing,<sup>21</sup> and that is in our interest. We have learned the limits of military action. We know that we need other efforts of all kinds to reach the goals that are so important to us.

Let me go back one moment in history. The United Nations was born out of the ashes of WWII.<sup>22</sup> After World War I, the United States did not join the League of Nations for a host of reasons—primarily political.<sup>23</sup> Woodrow Wilson tried and

17. Eye on the U.N., U.N. Member States—Democratic?, <http://www.eyeontheun.org/facts.asp?1=1&p=16> (last visited Nov. 18, 2009).

18. O.P. DWIVEDI, THE CHALLENGE OF CULTURAL DIVERSITY FOR GOOD GOVERNANCE, U.N. EXPERT GROUP MEETING ON MANAGING DIVERSITY IN THE CIVIL SERVICE 14 (May 2001), <http://unpan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/UN/UNPAN000573.pdf>.

19. Helena Lynch, *Liability for Torts in Violation of International Law: No Hook Under Sosa for Secondary, Complicit Actors*, 50 N.Y.L. SCH. L. REV. 757, 803 (2006).

20. Andreas Michaelis et al., *Europe, the United States, and the Middle East: New Avenues for Cooperation*, CARNEGIE ENDOWMENT FOR INT'L PEACE, Dec. 12, 2008, <http://www.carnegieendowment.org/events/?fa=EventDetail&id=1231>.

21. G.A. Res. 51/75, ¶ 20, U.N. Doc. A/RES/51/75 (Feb. 12, 1997).

22. U.N. DEPT. OF PUBLIC INFO., THE UNITED NATIONS TODAY 3 (2008) [http://unic.un.org/aroundworld/unics/common/documents/publications/untoday/UN\\_TODAY\\_BOOK\\_eng.pdf](http://unic.un.org/aroundworld/unics/common/documents/publications/untoday/UN_TODAY_BOOK_eng.pdf) [hereinafter UNITED NATIONS TODAY].

23. Stephen Skowronek, *The Conservative Insurgency and Presidential Power: A Developmental Perspective on the Unitary Executive*, 122 HARV. L. REV. 2070, 2089 (2009).

failed.<sup>24</sup> Instead, we retreated and turned inward. A period of isolationism followed. In the middle of the Second World War, President Roosevelt was already thinking how, at the end of this terrible war, can we do differently?<sup>25</sup> How can we take action that will prevent the recurrence of another terrible conflict?<sup>26</sup>

Roosevelt died shortly before the Charter Conference for the United Nations.<sup>27</sup> The conference was held in San Francisco and the remarkable document that is the United Nations Charter was drafted.<sup>28</sup> The Charter is still as visionary today as it was in 1945.

The Charter presents a vision of a world where we join together to move forward in the global interest.<sup>29</sup> The frame that they designed more than sixty years ago still holds with the General Assembly and the Security Council; Economic and Social Council, the Trusteeship Council, the World Courts, and the Secretariat, the managerial heart.<sup>30</sup>

That basic structure still holds but, of course, time moved forward and new issues arose. The idea of peace-keeping was born and the need for development over time.<sup>31</sup> Now, it is a much more complex institution but still with the essential core intact.

It is an imperfect but indispensable institution. If we had to create it again, we could not do it. There is no other organization on earth that has universal membership, today 192 Member States.<sup>32</sup> If we want to assemble the world, it meets at United Nations Headquarters in New York.<sup>33</sup>

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24. *Id.*

25. Richard E.D. Schwartz, *Franklin D. Roosevelt's Psychological Contribution to the United Nations*, 33 *Syracuse J. INT'L L. & COM.* 213, 213, 217 (2005).

26. *Id.* at 217.

27. Roosevelt died on April 12, 1945. [Whitehouse.gov](http://www.whitehouse.gov/about/presidents/franklinroosevelt), Franklin D. Roosevelt, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/about/presidents/franklinroosevelt> (last visited Nov. 24, 2009). The Charter Conference for the United Nations was held on April 25, 1945. U.N. Audiovisual Libr. of Int'l Law, Procedural History—Charter of the United Nations, <http://untreaty.un.org/cod/avl/ha/cun/cun.html> (last visited Nov. 24, 2009).

28. UNITED NATIONS TODAY, *supra* note 22.

29. *Id.* at 5.

30. Biography, *supra* note 0.

31. UNITED NATIONS TODAY, *supra* note 22, at 77.

32. *Id.* at 5.

33. *Id.* at 14.

So, time has moved forward. The agenda of the United Nations is very large. Most people have a basic notion of the United Nations, but it is no longer taught in high schools.<sup>34</sup> There is a cohort of young adults for whom the United Nations is essentially a blank slate. They do not know the reason for its creation, its limits, its possibilities, the way it functions, or the number of member states.

Let me just quickly scan the horizons of the agenda of the United Nations. First: Peace Keeping. We have seventeen peace-keeping operations on the front lines now.<sup>35</sup> The United States voted for every one because we are a permanent member of the Security Council with the power of veto.<sup>36</sup> It serves our national interest but also the global interest. United Nations troops are comprised of soldiers from many countries who volunteer for a tour of duty as peacekeepers.<sup>37</sup> They wear their own national uniforms and a blue beret or a blue helmet to indicate they are part of the United Nations.<sup>38</sup> They respond to United Nations commanders but are still attached to their sending government and can be withdrawn should that government deem it appropriate.<sup>39</sup>

The original peacekeepers were primarily Europeans.<sup>40</sup> Today, the majority are Indians, Pakistani, and Bangladeshi.<sup>41</sup> We have peacekeepers from Nigeria, Ghana, from Ireland, Argentina, Uruguay, Australia, and Canada.<sup>42</sup>

Let me move quickly to the second topic: Disarmament. How are we going to reduce the huge stock pile of nuclear arms, many of them ready to fire? The reduction of nuclear,

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34. CHADWICK F. ALGER, *THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM: A REFERENCE HANDBOOK* 57-58 (2006).

35. UNITED NATIONS TODAY, *supra* note 22, at 79.

36. U.N. Sec. Council, Membership in 2009, <http://www.un.org/sc/members.asp> (last visited Nov. 24, 2009).

37. UNITED NATIONS TODAY, *supra* note 22, at 78.

38. *Id.*

39. *Id.*

40. *See generally* U.N., Growth in United Nations Membership, 1945-present (July 3, 2006), <http://www.un.org/en/members/growth.shtml> (last visited Nov. 24, 2009).

41. U.N. DEP'T OF PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS, FACT SHEET, UNITED NATIONS PEACEKEEPING 3 (2009), <http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/documents/factsheet.pdf>.

42. *Id.*

chemical, and biological weapons as well as land mines and small arms is a very important effort and clearly something that has to be done by nations united.<sup>43</sup> Reduction of arms is important and that is a major United Nations objective.<sup>44</sup>

The third agenda goal is: Development. Addressing the condition of the poorest of the poor is a major area of focus for the United Nations. A billion people live in extreme poverty.<sup>45</sup> That means they have essentially nothing. There is no safe shelter, no assurance of a meal tomorrow, no secure work, no healthcare, no education, no mobility, no information, and no capacity to break out of the poverty trap.<sup>46</sup> These people are locked in and vulnerable to abuse and exploitation with no way out.<sup>47</sup> It is a condition that can lead people in desperation to crime, prostitution, and even terrorism.<sup>48</sup> That condition is unacceptable, and we know how to change that if we put our will toward it.

The United Nations has created the Millennium Development Goals to end poverty.<sup>49</sup> All nations have signed on.<sup>50</sup> It lists the eight goals with targets and timetables,<sup>51</sup> including clean water, safe birth, and primary education.<sup>52</sup> The devel-

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43. See generally Opening Statement, *supra* note 8.

44. See generally Opening Statement, *supra* note 8.

45. See THE WORLD BANK, DEVELOPMENT DATA GROUP, POVERTY DATA: A SUPPLEMENT TO WORLD DEVELOPMENT INDICATORS 2008 10 (2008), <http://site.resourc.es.worldbank.org/DATASTATISTICS/Resources/WDI08supplement1216.pdf>.

46. See Xavier Godinot & Quentin Wodon, *Participatory Approaches to attacking Extreme Poverty: Case Studies Led by the International Movement ATD Fourth World* 2–3 (World Bank, Working Paper No. 7, Apr. 2006), available at <http://site.resourc.es.worldbank.org/INTRAD/Resources/ParticipatoryApproachesAttackingPoverty.pdf>.

47. *Id.* at 3.

48. See Glenn Curtis, *Nations Hospitable to Organized Crime and Terrorism*, LIBR. OF CONG., FED. RESEARCH DIV., Oct. 2003, at 2, 4, available at <http://www.fas.org/irp/cia/product/frd1003.pdf>.

49. United Nations Millennium Declaration, G.A. Res. 55/2, U.N. Doc. A/RES/55/2 (Sept. 18, 2000) [hereinafter Millennium Declaration], available at <http://www.un.org/millennium/declaration/ares552e.pdf>.

50. The Secretary-General, *Report of the Secretary-General: Road Map towards the Implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration, delivered to the General Assembly*, U.N. Doc. A/56/326 (Sept. 6, 2001), available at <http://unpan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/UN/UNPAN004152.pdf>.

51. See Millennium Declaration, *supra* note 49, at 1–8.

52. *Id.*

oped or wealthy nations are committed to helping the poorest move forward.<sup>53</sup> That is important and moving space.

Fourth, consider: Humanitarian Relief. The United Nations today is sheltering nearly 20 million refugees.<sup>54</sup> Some as a result of natural disasters,<sup>55</sup> but the majority of refugees arise from war and conflict and the dangers that caused them to flee.<sup>56</sup> Our refugee assistance, with the help of global organizations like Operation Blessing, gives them at least temporary shelter, safety, food, and medical care until conditions allow them to return.<sup>57</sup>

Consider the fifth agenda item: Human Rights. The human rights campaign includes setting norms and standards, defining what they mean, and making it clear that human rights are not just for the privileged few but for everyone, including women and girls.<sup>58</sup>

Sixth: Environmental Action. The UN Scientific Committee on Climate Change provided the irrefutable evidence that climate change is real and urgent and that it has dire consequences that we need to address.<sup>59</sup> This work on climate change has been a priority of the current Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon.<sup>60</sup>

Next: Safe Birth and Reproductive Health. The United Nations Population Foundation made a tremendous effort in

53. Philip Alston, *Ships Passing in the Night: The Current State of the Human Rights and Development Debate Seen Through the Lens of the Millennium Development Goals*, 27 HUM. RTS. Q. 755, 757 (2005).

54. U.N. HIGH COMM'R FOR REFUGEES, FIELD INFO. AND COORDINATION SUPPORT SEC., DIV. OF OPERATIONAL SERVS., 2008 GLOBAL TRENDS: REFUGEES, ASYLUM-SEEKERS, RETURNEES, INTERNALLY DISPLACED AND STATELESS PERSONS 2 (June 16, 2009), <http://www.unhcr.org/4a375c426.pdf> [hereinafter UNHCR].

55. ETHAN GOFFMAN, CSA DISCOVER GUIDES, ENVIRONMENTAL REFUGEES: HOW MANY, HOW BAD? 4 (June 2006), <http://www.csa.com/discoveryguides/refugee/review.pdf>.

56. See UNHCR, *supra* note 54, at 3.

57. *Id.* at 2.

58. See U.N. ECON. & SOC. COUNCIL, MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS REPORT 2009 18 (2009), [http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/pdf/MDG\\_Report\\_2009\\_ENG.pdf](http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/pdf/MDG_Report_2009_ENG.pdf).

59. INTERGOVERNMENTAL PANEL ON CLIMATE CHANGE, CLIMATE CHANGE 2007: SYNTHESIS REPORT (Nov. 2007), available at [http://www.ipcc.ch/pdf/assessment-report/ar4/syr/ar4\\_syr.pdf](http://www.ipcc.ch/pdf/assessment-report/ar4/syr/ar4_syr.pdf).

60. Ban Ki-moon, Sec'y-Gen. of the U.N., Summary of The Summit on Climate Change (Sept. 22, 2009), available at [http://www.un.org/wcm/webdav/site/climate\\_change/shared/Documents/Chair\\_summary\\_Final\\_E.pdf](http://www.un.org/wcm/webdav/site/climate_change/shared/Documents/Chair_summary_Final_E.pdf).

training midwives and offering family planning that has been requested by more than eighty countries.<sup>61</sup> We are proud of what the United Nations does in that area.

Eighth and final point: Global Public Health. Think immediately of swine flu, avian flu, AIDS, malaria, and tuberculosis.<sup>62</sup> Those diseases are at the cutting edge of this agenda. The World Health Organization (WHO), part of the UN family,<sup>63</sup> does an extraordinary job of being in touch with health ministries, raising alerts, tracking epidemics as they arise, advising what to do to prevent further transmission and so forth.<sup>64</sup> That affects us whether we are here at home [in the United States] or traveling abroad. The work in global public health is very important.

The United Nations has both a broad reach and an enormous challenge. The United cannot do everything, but it does a huge amount. We must recognize achievements and progresses even as we address the weaknesses or shortcomings.

The United Nations will be approaching seventy years before too long, and it survives; indeed, it thrives.<sup>65</sup> [President Obama's] administration is absolutely committed to its success and to the importance of "international cooperation,"<sup>66</sup> to open a dialogue, and to listen well.<sup>67</sup> I have often noticed the power of personal diplomacy in the United Nations. An ambassador from a very small country—say Singapore or the Netherlands—can become larger than life

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61. U.N. POPULATION FUND, INVESTING IN MIDWIVES AND OTHERS WITH MIDWIFERY SKILLS TO SAVE THE LIVES OF MOTHERS AND NEWBORNS AND IMPROVE THEIR HEALTH 3 (Dec. 2006), [http://www.unfpa.org/upload/lib\\_pub\\_file/757\\_filename\\_investing\\_eng.pdf](http://www.unfpa.org/upload/lib_pub_file/757_filename_investing_eng.pdf) [hereinafter UNFPA MIDWIVES].

62. See G.A. Res. 60/1, paras. 15, 16, U.N. Doc. A/Res/60/1 (Oct. 24, 2005), available at <http://unpan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/UN/UNPAN021752.pdf>.

63. World Health Org. Const. pmbl., available at [http://www.who.int/governance/eb/who\\_constitution\\_en.pdf](http://www.who.int/governance/eb/who_constitution_en.pdf).

64. See WHO, WORKING FOR HEALTH: AN INTRODUCTION TO THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION 4–5 (2007), [http://www.who.int/about/brochure\\_en.pdf](http://www.who.int/about/brochure_en.pdf).

65. The Charter of the United Nations was signed on June 26, 1945 and came into force on Oct. 24, 1945. U.N. Charter, Introductory Note, <http://www.un.org/en/documents/charter/intro.shtml> (last visited Nov. 24, 2009).

66. President Obama's Speech, *supra* note 13, at 4.

67. *Nomination of Susan Rice to be U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations: Hearing Before the S. Foreign Relations Comm.*, 111th Cong. 3 (2009) (statement of Susan E. Rice, U.S. Permanent Rep. Designate), available at <http://www.foreign.senate.gov/testimony/2009/RiceTestimony090115a.pdf>.

because that diplomat is so good at what he or she does,<sup>68</sup> absolutely committed to success, so attentive to other points of view; he or she is open and skillful in engaging the discussion and capable of building that coalition. It is happening not just by statements made at the top, although those are welcome words, but by five specific steps that follow:

First, the United States needs to maintain its dues to the United Nations. Proper fiscal planning and budgeting will prevent accrual of dues, and the United States must lead in this way.

Second, the United States must pay in full our voluntary contribution to peace keeping. If [the United States] votes for peacekeeping operations, it is incumbent upon us to pay our fair share of the resources. You cannot send soldiers out unequipped.

Third, make certain [the United States] is up to date on our voluntary contributions to the United Nations Population Fund<sup>69</sup> for safe birth and family planning. Fourth, stand for election to the new Human Rights Council.<sup>70</sup> [The United States] will be able to speak up loud and clear. We will try to correct what most of us see as an imbalance in [the Council's] focus and intentions and make it more effective, more productive, and more honest.

Fifth, President Obama has appointed Susan Rice as a new ambassador,<sup>71</sup> a very experienced diplomat, and he elevated the United Nations Ambassador to Cabinet status.<sup>72</sup> She has already been hard at work to make a full round of visits.<sup>73</sup>

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68. Howard H. Lentner, *The Diplomacy of the United Nations Secretary General*, 18 W. POL. Q. 531, 533-34 (1965).

69. LUISA BLANCHFIELD, U.N. POPULATION FUND: BACKGROUND AND THE U.S. FUNDING DEBATE 14-15 (Cong. Research Serv., CRS Report for Congress Order Code RL 32703, July 24, 2008), available at <http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/crs/rl32703.pdf>.

70. LUISA BLANCHFIELD, THE UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL: ISSUES FOR CONGRESS 10 (Cong. Research Serv., CRS Report for Congress Order Code RL 33608, June 1, 2009), available at <http://www.fas.org/spp/crs/row/RL33608.pdf>.

71. See Press Release, Office of the President-elect, Key Members of Obama-Biden National Security Team Announced (Dec. 1, 2008), available at [http://www.change.gov/newsroom/entry/key\\_members\\_of\\_obama\\_biden\\_national\\_security\\_team\\_announced/](http://www.change.gov/newsroom/entry/key_members_of_obama_biden_national_security_team_announced/).

72. *Id.*

73. Ambassador Susan E. Rice, Address at the Conference on the World Financial and Economic Crisis and Its Impact on Development (June 24, 2009)

She is also very supportive and knows that the efforts of the United Nations are, by definition, challenging and difficult. She understands that when the United States is fully engaged, present, and constructive, the chances of success are always greater.

The challenge ahead is tremendous. The United Nations has peacekeeping operations in some of the most hostile areas imaginable.<sup>74</sup> It is making progress in addressing global health, human rights, food supplies, and security.

UN professionals at UNICEF, the United Nations Development Corporation, the United Nations Refugee Commission, and the High Commission on Human Rights are all hard at work. They are dedicated and courageous, and they deserve our respect and our support.

Many call for United Nations “reform,” and, indeed, many things have changed.<sup>75</sup> Kofi Annan was the first to make fundamental changes<sup>76</sup> in the openness, in the flow of communications, and in setting up Cabinet-style leadership that streamlines the United Nations.<sup>77</sup> The United Nations had a long freeze on hiring but now that has opened up again.<sup>78</sup> It is more communicative, more effective, and leaner. Business principles such as accountability and transparency on financial matters as well as in other work are now applied.<sup>79</sup> We

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(transcript available at [http://www.un.org/ga/econcrisissummit/statements/usa\\_en.pdf](http://www.un.org/ga/econcrisissummit/statements/usa_en.pdf)).

74. See Eric G. Berman, *Recent Developments in U.S. Peacekeeping Policy and Assistance to Africa*, 13 AFR. SEC. REV. 133, 135 (2004).

75. See LUISA BLANCHFIELD, UNITED NATIONS REFORM: U.S. POLICY AND INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES 1–3 (Cong. Research Serv., CRS Report for Congress Order Code RL 33848, Jan. 22, 2007), available at <http://fpc.state.gov/documents/organization/81994.pdf>.

76. See The Secretary-General, *Report of the Secretary-General on Renewing the United Nations: A Programme for Reform, delivered to the General Assembly*, U.N. Doc. A/51/950 (July 14, 1997) (outlining Kofi Annan’s first fundamental proposals for reform), available at <http://www.undp.se/assets/Ovriga-publikationer/Renewing-the-United-Nations.pdf>.

77. The Secretary-General, *Report of the Secretary-General: Investing in the United Nations: For a Stronger Organization Worldwide*, 23–25, delivered to the General Assembly, U.N. Doc. A/60/692 (Mar. 7, 2006), available at <http://www.globalpolicy.org/images/pdfs/0303sgreport.pdf>.

78. U.S. GEN. ACCOUNTING OFFICE, UNITED NATIONS: STATUS OF INTERNAL OVERSIGHT SERVICES 11 (1997), <http://www.gao.gov/archive/1998/ns98009.pdf>.

79. Press Release, Secretariat, Ban Signs Performance Pacts With U.N. Chiefs, Boosting Transparency, Accountability (Feb. 12, 2009), available at <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=29884&Cr=ban>.

are asking questions like: What is the result? Is it a sustainable result? Who are the working partners? Are those resources going to the intended target?

It is a continuing and challenging task. UN staff work in circumstances and countries where opportunity, freedom, safety, and security are very limited. In many parts of the world, the United Nations is the embodiment of freedom.<sup>80</sup> We Americans are so blessed and fortunate with democracy, safety, health, and education that we hardly give that a thought. But, in my view, that means we have an opportunity and an obligation to bring skills and intelligence, health, energy, faith, and idealism to these ends.

We do not need to go ten thousand miles away to do it. We know that in [the United States], 30 million people live below the poverty line.<sup>81</sup> There are opportunities in our own communities to practice. Now, I am speaking especially to students: Get a closer idea of what it is to live in real poverty. There are chances here to meet and to know immigrants. We do not need to go ten thousand miles away to experience it. We can begin nearby.

For all of you who have an interest in foreign affairs and for this great university that is developing a wonderful program in international studies and foreign languages, I want to encourage that interest. You might go into the foreign service or into politics, even if you go to medicine, or law, or teaching, or social service, or religious work, or service in some other way, you have the chance to think as a global citizen. Remember that we are all part of the human family.

If that moves and inspires our choices and actions, we have a chance to do what I think the Bible asks us to do, even as the United Nations asks: to be of service and to work in our own ways for a world where peace, freedom, justice, health, hope, and opportunity thrive.

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80. See Gerald B. Helman & Steven R. Ratner, *Saving Failed States*, FOREIGN POL'Y, Winter 1992-93, at 4, 5.

81. ALEMAYEHU BISHAW & TRUDI J. RENWICK, U.S. CENSUS BUREAU, AMER. CMTY. SURVEY REP., POVERTY: 2007 AND 2008 2 (Sept 2009), <http://www.census.gov/prod/2009pubs/acsbr08-1.pdf>.

DR. DAVID MEYER:<sup>82</sup> I would like to thank Mrs. Sorensen for coming. My comments purely reflect my own personal opinion and are not necessarily the opinions of Regent University or its leadership. It seems to me that perhaps the solution to the problem of getting the United States and United Nations to work more closely together would lie in several different areas.

One of these areas is the necessity of fair burden-sharing as well as the need for other reforms.

In the past, the United States has used its contribution, which is by far the largest of any country in the world to the United Nations' budget,<sup>83</sup> as a tool for reform.<sup>84</sup> This action was, in fact, a necessary stimulus to many needed reforms that were subsequently implemented; this is true particularly in light of the scandals that have happened, for example, in the Iraq Oil-for-Food programs.<sup>85</sup> A bit of nudging at the United Nations has often been practiced by the United States. One of the ways to fix the under-resourcing [of the United Nations] is to recognize that China—now the third largest economy in the world, which will probably overtake Japan in the next year or two<sup>86</sup>—makes a smaller contribution to the United Nations than Spain or Canada.<sup>87</sup> These countries have only about 30–31 million people each; China

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82. Dr. David Meyer is an Associate Professor of History in the Regent University School of Undergraduate Studies. He earned his Ph.D. in Political Science at Columbia University.

83. U.N. Secretariat, *Assessment of the Member States' Contributions to the United Nations' Regular Budget for the Year 2009*, 8–12, U.N. Doc. ST/ADM/SER.B/755 (2008), available at [http://www0.un.org/chinese/members/contribution\\_2008.pdf](http://www0.un.org/chinese/members/contribution_2008.pdf) [hereinafter *Assessment*]. The United States has been the largest contributor to the U.N. budget, providing more than twenty-two percent of the U.N.'s total budget for the 2009 fiscal year. *Id.* at 12.

84. Nile Gardiner & James Philips, *Investigate the United Nations Oil-for-Food Fraud*, THE HERITAGE FOUNDATION BACKGROUNDER, Apr. 21, 2004, at 6, available at <http://www.heritage.org/Research/Reports/2004/04/Investigate-the-United-Nations-Oil-for-Food-Fraud>.

85. JEFFREY A. MEYER & MARK G. CALIFANO, *GOOD INTENTIONS CORRUPTED* xxxv–xxxvi (2006).

86. CIA World Factbook, Country Comparison: National Product, <http://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/rankorder/2001rank.html?countryName=China&countryCode=ch&regionCode=ea&rank=3#ch> (last visited Jan. 23, 2010).

87. *Assessment*, *supra* note 83, at 3, 7.

has 1.3 billion and, soon to be, the second largest economy.<sup>88</sup> Perhaps the United States' and the United Nations' cooperation could be furthered if some of the other major players, such as China, were to step up to the plate and embrace their fair share of the burden as well.

Secondly, to create the type of trust that is necessary for the United Nations and the United States to cooperate more fully, one of the needed reforms is the cessation on the part of many member nations to blame a large part of the world's problems solely on Israel and to pass resolutions condemning it.<sup>89</sup> One thinks, most recently, of the attempts to put members of the former Israeli government on trial as a result of the recommendations of the Goldstone Commission, whereas no attempt has been made to put the leadership of the Hamas on trial.<sup>90</sup> Now, this has taken on an added importance for the United States in that some countries, such as Belgium, have previously claimed universal jurisdiction in their laws.<sup>91</sup> There have been many left-wing and Muslim groups in Europe, for example, that have openly discussed with glee how they would dearly love putting on trial a large number of American government officials.<sup>92</sup>

It seems that any type of cooperation between the United States and the International Court of Justice or the International Criminal Court would rightly be seen with a great deal of skepticism—perhaps a very healthy skepticism. Particularly so, as many Americans hope that their own Constitution would continue to rule in criminal cases against their elected

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88. CIA World Factbook, Country Comparison: Population, <http://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/rankorder/2119rank.html?countryName=China&countryCode=ch&regionCode=eas&rank=1#ch> (last visited January 23, 2010).

89. U.N. Human Rights Council, Council Concludes Special Session After Adopting a Resolution Calling for the Implementation of the Recommendations in the Goldstone Report (Oct. 16, 2009), <http://unispal.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF/5ba47a5c6cef541b802563e00493b8c/e9ffaa1272479e6d852576510054bb81?OpenDocument> (last visited Jan. 23, 2010).

90. *Id.*

91. Human Rights Watch, Belgium: Universal Jurisdiction Repealed, Aug. 1, 2003, <http://www.hrw.org/en/news/2003/08/01/belgium-universal-jurisdiction-law-repealed> (last visited Jan. 23, 2010).

92. Helene Zuber, *Spain's 'World Court' May Be Restricted*, SPIEGEL ONLINE INT'L, May 2, 2009, <http://www.spiegel.de/international/world/0,1518,628112,00.html>.

government officials. The orientation of bodies, such as the ones formerly known as the Human Rights Commission and now the Human Rights Council, staffed with members such as Sudan, China, Libya, and so forth, was hypocritical and propagandistic against countries like the United States and Israel.<sup>93</sup> I would certainly agree that the United States should be an active partner to the United Nations. But, often times that participation is not channeled toward meeting the many wonderful humanitarian goals that Mrs. Sorensen laid out. Instead, that participation is necessarily diverted to blocking the attempts of dictatorial regimes, who are themselves gross human rights violators, from using the Human Rights Commission as simply a kangaroo court to convict democracies such as Israel. Many of us would look forward to a future in which the United States does not have to divert so much of its attention and energies to keeping the foxes from guarding the hen house—from using the Human Rights Council for ends that are actually quite in contradiction to its stated goals.

I certainly would agree that the United Nations has done a lot of wonderful things in helping refugees and helping fight diseases. And I think that many of us here definitely support the continuation of that work and, with the hopeful change of behavior of many prominent United Nations member countries, would facilitate further United States cooperation in the future.

DR. LAWRENCE ADAMS:<sup>94</sup> Thank you again for coming and presenting a vigorous defense of the United Nations Organization.

My focus of interests in the study of international relations is more generally structural and historical, and in looking at patterns of international organization, rather than any expertise in the specific functional areas that you mentioned. I appreciate the way that you have elaborated for us the role

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93. U.N. Human Rights Council, Membership by Regional Groups from 19 June 2006–18 June 2007, <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/groups.htm> (last visited Jan. 23, 2010). Libya and Sudan are not current members of the Human Rights Council. *See id.*

94. Dr. Adams serves as an Associate Professor of Government in the Robertson School of Government at Regent University. He earned his Master's and Ph.D from the University of Virginia and serves as a faculty member there as well.

that the United Nations Organization plays alongside other groups in addressing specific functional concerns. I also appreciate your courage in coming into this place and in making reference to some of the things that you alluded to. There may be some in this room who believe, although I do not share this view, that the United Nations is the center of a global conspiracy. A global conspiracy that works to take our property and our rights and organize us into a large, single-mass, globalized order that will change everything we have known.<sup>95</sup> I take a much more benign and passive view of the United Nations.

It has always been there in my lifetime, in a sense hovering in the background, neither benign nor malevolent. The image that comes to my mind is a tired cliché: We all have these aunts and uncles who are there at family gatherings in the back of the room. They have done something in the past, but we are not quite sure what. We have some hope that in the future they will do something good for us, like remember us in their wills. They are part of our lives, but we are not quite sure why.

I use that image, though commonplace, because I do have a question to pose. The title of this presentation, the United Nations in the 21st Century, begs the question of whether there is a future for the United Nations.

It seems to me that the United Nations might or might not be a thing of the future. It certainly is a thing of the past. Now, to be a thing of the past does not necessarily mean that it is not a thing of the future. All of us understand that the Church is a thing of the past, but it has a future promised for it.<sup>96</sup> We hope our own nation also has a future. But, I want to emphasize that the United Nations definitely is a thing of the past because it continues to represent and embody certain responses or answers to global problems that may have passed their sell-by date.<sup>97</sup>

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95. PAT ROBERTSON, *THE NEW WORLD ORDER* 6-7 (1991).

96. See *Hebrews* 12:27-28.

97. See INIS L. CLAUDE, JR., *SWORDS INTO PLOW SHARES: THE PROBLEMS AND PROGRESS OF INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION* 65-66 (4th ed. 1971). Dr. Adams alludes to the failure of the League of Nations and the United Nations' response to the problems that undermined the League. *Id.*

Mrs. Sorenson has mentioned reform. It does seem that on many levels the United Nations is impervious to reform and change.<sup>98</sup> I hope this is not the case, but it certainly seems that way. It is locked into an organizational structure that is dependent on the five permanent members, the victors in the Second World War. Nearly seventy years ago, these five policemen were the great powers, but some of them no longer have that status.<sup>99</sup> So, reform of the Security Council is one issue.

But going deeper than that, the United Nations is locked into its Charter and basic constitutional understanding of an absolute commitment to state sovereignty. The membership is made up of sovereign states and the legal recognition of state sovereignty is essential to the legitimacy of the United Nations.<sup>100</sup> This is something that has always been a problem for the United Nations—to uphold state sovereignty but bring about cooperation at the same time.<sup>101</sup> I mention that because theoretically and practically we are in a day when that older understanding of state sovereignty is being attacked on all fronts.<sup>102</sup> Today, sovereignty is being shared in many parts of the world, as in Europe for example.<sup>103</sup> Many even question whether that understanding of the organization of international global society as a system of sovereign

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98. U.N. Charter art. 23, para. 3, art. 27, para. 3. The United Nations Charter establishes five permanent members of the Security Council, each of which must vote in the affirmative to adopt any given measure. *Id.* Since the permanent members are unwilling to relinquish this privilege, substantial change is unlikely.

99. U.N. Charter art. 23, para. 1. The five permanent members of the Security Council are The Republic of China, France, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the United States of America. *Id.* The Soviet Union no longer exists, China's influence has grown, and Great Britain and France are no longer the military superpowers they once were. *Id.*

100. U.N. Charter art. 2, para. 1.

101. See Simon Tisdall, *Six-month Delay for UN Darfur Force*, GUARDIAN.CO.UK, May 11, 2006, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/2006/may/11/internationalaidanddevelopment.sudan>.

102. See PIERRE MANENT, *DEMOCRACY WITHOUT NATIONS? THE FATE OF SELF-GOVERNMENT IN EUROPE* 16 (Paul Seaton trans., ISI Books) (2007).

103. Stephen D. Krasner, *The Case for Shared Sovereignty*, 16 J. OF DEMOCRACY 69, 76 (Jan. 2005). The European Union demonstrates the characteristics that Krasner identifies as components of shared sovereignty—sovereign powers voluntarily sign a legal compact without asking for an outside power to contribute resources. *Id.*

states has a future. The United Nations represents and maintains that older understanding of state sovereignty.

Another reason that the United Nations seems a thing of the past, and that many other approaches to international problems have emerged, is the structural complexity and immobility of the United Nations.<sup>104</sup> Regional organizations have developed apart from the United Nations system.<sup>105</sup> Non-state actors are now taking on international problems.<sup>106</sup> Nongovernmental organizations, also known as NGOs, are proliferating and being much more effective.<sup>107</sup> The United Nations still is burdened with that old vision coming out of the Second World War, which was a very modern vision at the time, was it not? It really represented modern, liberal, optimistic thinking in a time when the way to deal with social problems was through the construction of a modern, complex, bureaucratic, hierarchical organization. If nothing else, the United Nations is certainly that. There is an office for everything, a committee for everything, a report for everything.

It continues to approach the problems of the world through this modern, twentieth century vision. I'm obviously reflecting the possibility that we are now in "post-modern" circumstances. We have perhaps moved beyond that bureaucratic approach as the solution of all problems and towards the fluid and flexible approach of shared responsibilities by which politics now functions. That old thinking believed in the necessity of overcoming "anarchy"—resolving and managing its conflicts—through complex solutions. We used to deal in the categories of international anarchy versus international society in the study and operation of international

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104. U.N. Charter art. 23, para. 1 (outlining the Security Council's structure and the requirement of the approval of all the permanent members that limits its ability to act quickly).

105. Examples include the European Union and the African Union. See The Treaty on European Union, July 29, 1992, available at [http://eur-lex.europa.eu/en/treaties/dat/12002M/pdf/12002M\\_EN.pdf](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/en/treaties/dat/12002M/pdf/12002M_EN.pdf); see also The Constitutive Act, July 11, 2000, available at [http://www.au2002.gov.za/docs/key\\_oau/au\\_act.pdf](http://www.au2002.gov.za/docs/key_oau/au_act.pdf).

106. JACK DONNELLY, INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS: DILEMMAS IN WORLD POLITICS 10 (3d ed. 2007).

107. *Id.*

relations.<sup>108</sup> That was the old, realist perspective: Anarchy overcome by organization.<sup>109</sup> That is the name of the United Nations, by the way, United Nations Organization. But the older idea of bureaucratic organization represents some thinking that may have passed.

Many other challenges and cultural clashes emerge in the United Nations context that the organization seems incapable of addressing. Even its understanding of human rights, for example, has been challenged not only by the West but also by non-secular responses such as the Islamic resistance to a highly-individualistic Westernized view of human rights.<sup>110</sup> There is also the “Asian values” movement that resists the prevailing concept of human rights.<sup>111</sup> These value conflicts raise questions as to whether this Western-style organization can really run the world.

What future does the U.N. have? If it has any, perhaps it does have a role to play in providing a stage or platform for discourse and dialogue. We certainly learned in our country that politics is in great part “discourse.” It is persuasion; it is rhetoric. We give prizes for hopeful rhetoric now.<sup>112</sup> The United Nations certainly provides a platform for international actors who might not otherwise get a platform in the United States or elsewhere. Where else would Muammar al Qaddafi be able to appear in his latest costume and speak at length on an international stage?<sup>113</sup> I put that cynically, but within our understanding of what politics now is, the signifi-

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108. HEDLEY BULL, *HEDLEY BULL ON INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY* 79 (Kai Alderson & Andrew Hurrell eds., 2000).

109. *Id.* at 82–83.

110. See The Cairo Declaration on Human Rights in Islam, Dec. 28, 1989, available at <http://www.religlaw.org/interdocs/docs/cairohrislam1990.htm>.

111. See The Bangkok Declaration, Apr. 2, 1993, available at <http://law.hku.hk/lawgovtsociety/Bangkok%20Declaration.htm>.

112. President Barack Obama, Address to the Nobel Committee (Oct. 9, 2009) (transcript available at <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/10/09/us/politics/09obamataxt.html>). President Barack Obama received the Nobel Peace Prize on October 9, 2009, acknowledging that he did not regard the prize “as a recognition of [his] own accomplishments.” *Id.*

113. Libyan Arab Jamahiriya H.E. Colonel Muammar Al-Qaddafi, Leader of the Revolution, Gen. Debate of the 64th Sess. of the U.N., (Sept. 23, 2009) (transcript available at <http://www.un.org/ga/64/generaldebate/LY.shtml>). Muammar al-Qaddafi addressed the United Nations General Assembly for ninety-six minutes on September 23, 2009. *Id.*

cance of an intentional public square in which discourse can take place has importance. That is an intangible and immeasurable purpose, but it is significant now in the way that political life is carried out. So, perhaps as a platform or stage, the United Nations has that role.

Another thing that I am very interested in, but do not have more time to elaborate on, is the organization of international relations by law and by values as opposed to structure, organization, and bureaucracy.

I would like to end with a quote. Mrs. Sorensen began by referring to Christian leaders who recently expressed values very much in keeping with those of the United Nations. I would like to read from a recent statement by a major Christian leader who has some very critical things to say about the United Nations and calls for significant reform:

In the face of the unrelenting growth of global interdependence, there is a strongly felt need, even in the midst of a global recession, for a reform of the United Nations Organization, and likewise of economic institutions and international finance, so that the concept of the family of nations can acquire real teeth. One also senses the urgent need to find innovative ways of implementing the principle of the responsibility to protect and of giving poorer nations an effective voice in shared decision-making. This seems necessary in order to arrive at a political, juridical and economic order which can increase and give direction to international cooperation for the development of all peoples in solidarity.<sup>114</sup>

This Christian leader goes on to say that “there is urgent need of a true world political authority” that needs to be addressed.<sup>115</sup> You may already know that I am quoting from Pope Benedict XVI.

When this recent statement was issued, there was concern in some quarters that he was aligning himself with a call for world government, which he isn't.<sup>116</sup> He is arguing for au-

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114. Pope Benedict XVI, *Caritas in Veritate*, para. 67, June 29, 2009, available at [http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/benedict\\_xvi/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_ben-xvi\\_enc\\_20090629\\_caritas-in-veritate\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/encyclicals/documents/hf_ben-xvi_enc_20090629_caritas-in-veritate_en.html) (citations omitted) [hereinafter Pope Benedict].

115. *Id.*

116. Rachel Donadio and Laurie Goodstein, *Pope Urges Forming New World Economic Order to Work for the “Common Good”*, N.Y. TIMES, July 7, 2009, <http://>

thoritative means of addressing world problems through a foundation of morality and law and through implementation of what Catholic social teaching calls *subsidiarity*—the flexible recognition of different levels of authority and competence to achieve social goods.<sup>117</sup> This encyclical is actually very critical of the system of international organization as it currently exists. The Pope calls for something else. He says that love and truth are the only basis for international cooperation, which must give attention to true morality and true values.<sup>118</sup> International cooperation must give preeminence to human dignity and to the right to life. The Pope thus is very critical of the secular values that seem to inform the United Nations Organization and calls for a re-structuring of international values.<sup>119</sup> This seems to me something the current structure is incapable of achieving but upon which we must insist.

The Pope ends his paragraph this way:

Without this, despite the great progress accomplished in various sectors, international law would risk being conditioned by the balance of power among the strongest nations. The integral development of peoples and international cooperation require the establishment of a greater degree of international ordering, marked by subsidiarity, for the management of globalization. They also require the construction of a social order that at last conforms to the moral order, to the interconnection between moral and social spheres, and to the link between politics and the economic and civil spheres, as envisaged by the Charter of the United Nations.<sup>120</sup>

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[www.nytimes.com/2009/07/08/world/europe/08pope.html?scp=1&sq=pope%20benedict%20xvi%20encyclical&st=cse](http://www.nytimes.com/2009/07/08/world/europe/08pope.html?scp=1&sq=pope%20benedict%20xvi%20encyclical&st=cse).

117. Pope Benedict, *supra* note 114, para. 57 (citations omitted).

118. *Id.* para. 52 (citations omitted).

119. *Id.* paras. 67, 78 (citations omitted).

120. *Id.* para. 67 (citations omitted).