An article by Peter Herbeck, Director of Missions

In March of 2009, Pope Benedict XVI wrote a letter to the Bishops of the world in which he made a powerful, prophetic statement about our times: “In vast areas of the world the faith is in danger of dying out like a flame which no longer has fuel…The real problem at this moment of our history is that God is disappearing from the human horizon, and, with the dimming of the light which comes from God, humanity is losing its bearings, with increasingly evident destructive effects.”

In that one paragraph the Pope captures the central drama of our time, the battle that is at the root of nearly all our current social ills. Many people don’t see it, but its effect is pervasive and profound, touching all of our lives. The Holy Father is fulfilling his prophetic office, reading the signs of the times and diagnosing the cause of our most disturbing social maladies and pathologies.

At this moment in history, something monumental is happening. Humanity, blinded by sin and the powers of darkness, is pushing God from its horizon. Vast portions of humanity are freely, consciously, and aggressively rejecting the light which comes from God. The battle between the kingdom of darkness and the kingdom of light is not new, but what is new is that we are living through a period of great upheaval, a time of decline of the Church in the Western world, and great advance for the kingdom of darkness.

The battle is expressed most fully in what are called the “Culture Wars.” Culture refers to the whole way of life of a people or civilization—its laws, social mores, customs, politics, art, entertainment, etc. The Western world, including Europe, Canada and the United States were distinctively Christian cultures, that is, they were profoundly influenced by a Christian worldview and its principles. As the recent Popes have stated, this is no longer the case:

“In the Western world the almost complete identity that once existed between European and American culture and Christian culture is dissolving…” (Cardinal Ratzinger, New Outpourings of the Spirit, Ignatius Press, 2006, p. 115)

“Even in countries evangelized many centuries ago, the reality of a ‘Christian society’ which, amid all the frailties which have always marked human life, measured itself explicitly on Gospel values, is now gone.” (John Paul II, Novo Millennio Ineunte #40)

Case in Point
The recent Democratic Convention

“In the Western world the almost complete identity that once existed between European and American culture and Christian culture is dissolving…” (Cardinal Ratzinger, New Outpourings of the Spirit, Ignatius Press, 2006, p. 115)

“Even in countries evangelized many centuries ago, the reality of a ‘Christian society’ which, amid all the frailties which have always marked human life, measured itself explicitly on Gospel values, is now gone.” (John Paul II, Novo Millennio Ineunte #40)
provided some sobering examples of the dissolution of Christian culture in the United States. For the first time in our history, a major political party incorporated the support for the redefinition of marriage in its official platform. The platform, which articulates a party’s statement of belief and core values, called for the complete repeal of the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA), and in its place the Respect for Marriage Act which would require the federal government to recognize same-sex marriages.

Another “first” came with the elimination of all references to God from the party platform. No one seemed to know who was responsible for the omission or why it happened in the first place. President Obama then directed convention chairman Antonio Villaraigosa to hurriedly propose an amendment to include references to God, but he was met by a clear majority of no’s. Despite the opposition, the chairman stated that the amendment passed and a very awkward moment was over. The platform also included a strong, consistent articulation and celebration of “reproductive rights” for women, free contraception and free abortions without restriction. The platform states:

“The Democratic Party strongly and unequivocally supports Roe v. Wade and a woman’s right to make decisions regarding her pregnancy, including a safe and legal abortion, regardless of ability to pay. We oppose any and all efforts to weaken that right…”

**Humanity is Losing Its Bearings**

My intention here is not to make a political point, but to state the obvious: the attempt to push God from the human horizon is a reality unfolding all around us. The effort to do so is systematic, aggressive and unrelenting. What the convention made clear is that the party has signed on to radically change marriage, the most fundamental institution of society, and to continue to put the full force of law behind unfettered abortion rights and a complete embrace of the logic of the sexual revolution.

At the core of each of these bold assertions by the party is the enormous lie that for me to be free, I must have power to define my own truth, to determine my own reality, to be the master of my own destiny. I have the power to redefine marriage, even in the face of the witness of all of human history, the order of creation itself, the language of my own body, common sense, and the testimony of Scripture and the unequivocal, unchanging teaching of the Church. I have power over life and death; I will determine whether the child in my womb is a person or has a right to live. If you deny me these powers I cannot be free. They are my right, granted to me by the constitution.

The truth is, no one has the right to do wrong. Freedom is not the right simply to do what I want, but it is the right to do what I ought. Our fundamental rights are not given to us by the Constitution, but rather, the Constitution recognizes and protects those rights that precede every form of government, which are mine by virtue of being human, and which are given to me by “nature and nature’s God.”

**Taking Our Stand**

Here is where the Church must take her stand, even in the face of great opposition. Secularizing forces in our culture have sought to intimidate the Church into silence. First, by insisting that all arguments given by people of faith whether lay or clergy, must necessarily be religiously informed arguments. Next, they further insist that all religiously informed arguments must be relegated to the private sphere with no standing in the public arena. For a person of faith to present an argument in the public square is to violate the principle of the separation of church and state. Pope Benedict XVI makes clear what our duty is in the face of such opposition:

“As far as the Catholic Church is concerned, the principal focus of her interventions in the public arena is the protection and promotion of the dignity of the person, and she is thereby consciously drawing particular attention to principles which are not negotiable.
1. Protection of life in all its stages, from the first moment of conception until natural death.

2. Recognition and promotion of the natural structure of the family—as a union between a man and a woman based on marriage—and its defense from attempts to make it juridically equivalent to radically different forms of union which in reality harm it and contribute to its destabilization, obscuring its particular character and its irreplaceable social role.

3. The protection of the right of parents to educate their children.

These principles are not truths of faith, even though they receive further light and confirmation from faith; they are inscribed in human nature itself and therefore they are common to all humanity.” (Address to European People’s Party, 3/30/06)

Forming Conscience

Echoing the words of Pope Benedict XVI, Bishop Robert Morlino, of the Diocese of Madison, made an important distinction between “intrinsic evils” and the broad range of policy issues that call for prudential judgments:

“Some of the most fundamental issues for the formation of a Catholic conscience are as follows: sacredness of human life from conception to natural death, marriage, religious freedom and freedom of conscience, and a right to private property.

Violations of the above involve intrinsic evil — that is, an evil which cannot be justified by any circumstances whatsoever. These evils are examples of direct pollution of the ecology of human nature and can be discerned as such by human reason alone. Thus, all people of good will who wish to follow human reason should deplore any and all violations in the above areas, without exception. The violations would be: abortion, euthanasia and physician-assisted suicide, same-sex marriage, government-coerced secularism, and socialism.

A Catholic conscience can never take exception to the prohibition of actions which are intrinsically evil. Nor may a conscience well-formed by reason or the Catholic faith ever choose to vote for someone who clearly, consistently, persistently promotes that which is intrinsically evil.” (Diocese of Madison, Catholic Herald, 8/16/12)

The silence on these “non-negotiables” was deafening at the Democratic Convention. Where were the courageous prophetic voices speaking out in defense of the truth of the dignity of the human person? Is there anyone in leadership in the party capable of grasping the “grave wound inflicted onto justice itself” by these policies? The Democratic Convention was just one example of the enormous pressure within our culture to silence the voice of conscience, and ultimately, the voice of God.

Religious Freedom

The increased attacks upon religious freedom give a sobering picture of where things are heading. The political and legal system is steadily being manipulated to intimidate the Church into silence. In January of this year a New Jersey judge ruled against a United Methodist retreat house that refused to allow a same-sex civil union ceremony to be conducted on its premises, ruling the Constitution allows “some intrusion into religious freedom to balance other important societal goals.” (Lifesitenews.com, 1/13/12) As one astute friend of mine, a prominent legal scholar said, “Anti-discrimination laws will be the wave of the future.”

Just today as I sat down to write this article, the national agency which grants accreditation to social work courses is questioning Franciscan University of Steubenville over a course which lists homosexuality as a deviant behavior. A group who identifies itself as “Franciscan Gay Alumni & Allies” has demanding publicly that the university “revise its course descriptions, stop contributing to the culture of hate and ignorance and remove any information being taught on this subject that is outdated and not substantiated by sound scientific fact.” (Lifesitenews.com, 9/12/12)

The Health and Human Services Mandate that requires employers to provide for contraceptive coverage, including abortafacients in their health care plans is another significant attack on religious liberty. Cardinal Timothy Dolan recently said, “The threats to freedom are abundant.” [The mandate] is the raw presumption of a bureau of the federal government to define a church’s minister, ministry, message, and meaning...The defense of religious freedom is...the quintessential American cause, the first line in the defense of and protection of human rights.” (National Review, 9/11/12)
The Battle
Cardinal Dolan knows we are in a spiritual battle and he is leading and engaging the fight. St. Paul reminds us, “We are not contending against flesh and blood, but against the principalities and powers, against the world rulers of this present darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.” (Ephesians 6:12) Our enemy is not President Obama, the political parties, the ACLU, gay rights activists, abortionists, hardened secularists, fundamentalists, skin heads or the new atheists. We are all up against the “spiritual hosts of wickedness.”

How to Respond?
First of all, we need to clearly understand the situation. Cardinal George of Chicago, a man not prone to hyperbole, described our current circumstances:

“At the present moment, Catholics in this country are facing challenges to our institutional existence and our mission that we thought would never arise here...The laws that used to protect us are now being used to weaken and destroy us, and this quite deliberately.” (Cardinal’s Network, 2/6/12)

“The long-term effect is that the Catholic Church will be stripped of the institutions that are her instruments for public service. We will lose hospitals, we will lose universities. That’s not the country I was born in...Something monumental is happening here.” (Chicago Tribune, 2/18/12)

“I expect to die in bed, my successor will die in prison and his successor will die a martyr in the public square.” (St. Louis Review, 2/16/12)

The stakes could not be higher. The devil is after eternal souls. Our public scandals, the failure of some leaders, a broad compromise with sin, and conformity to the world among the baptized have left us vulnerable to attack.

I believe the Lord is permitting this trial to come upon the Church to purify us. For the sake of the salvation of souls the Church must be purified, made holy, so we can be an authentic witness, a genuine, shining light in the midst of the darkness. What good is the Church to the Lord and his mission if our light has gone dim and our salt flat?

Second, we need to seek God’s forgiveness at every level of the Church. There is still a great need for our leaders to publicly repent for the failure of leadership we have experienced on many levels over the past forty years. Recently I heard one Cardinal acknowledge the following to a small gathering of leaders: “At this moment when so much is at stake, when so many fundamental issues are in play, I have to admit with embarrassment and some sense of shame that many of our people are not with us on this. It is our own fault. It is the result of forty years of very little evangelization and bad catechesis.”

It’s time to get our own house in order. Bring everything in your life—your time, money, family, business, relationships, sex life, leisure, and entertainment under the Lordship of Jesus. Bring everything into the light of God’s mercy.

Third, we need to decide if we are going to enter the battle. For most of our lives being in the Church has been easy. That is changing. Instead of being at the center of culture and public influence the Church will be marginalized. The Church is standing on the “wrong side of history.” To stand with the Church now will put you at odds with the dominant culture. You will be called a hater, an ignorant bigot. The Catholic Church will not acquiesce to the logic of the sexual revolution or make accommodations with the spirit of the age. She will stand. The question is will you stand with her in this battle?

Fourth, pray, fast, and give alms. Prepare your mind and heart. Pray for courage, for a profound and healthy fear of the Lord to come upon the Church. Frequent the sacraments.

Fifth, do your duty. Live your vocation to the maximum. Vote with an informed conscience and help others do the same. Put your time, talent and treasure into the fight.

Sixth, take your place in the New Evangelization. This time of trial will also become a time of great harvest of souls.

Seventh, remember the words of Jesus: “Blessed are you when men revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so men persecuted the prophets before you.” (Matthew 5:11–12)

“In the world you have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.” (John 16:33)
Mission to Tanzania
By Tom Edwards

Our nine member mission team this year was diverse, multi-talented, and well prepared. Several of our members came with a good deal of teaching experience and a history of theological formation. We arrived in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania on Monday in the late afternoon and our faithful Tanzanian friends and co-workers were on hand to welcome us. We departed at 6:30 the next morning, making the fifteen hour trek to Rombo in the northeastern sector of the country. Our destination and home for the next few days was a small Lutheran hostel. Rombo is one of six districts of the Kilimanjaro region and is part of the Catholic Diocese of Moshi. Although our team has worked in the Moshi diocese on several occasions, this was our first visit to this area known as the Mengwe Manda Ward. The entire Rombo area has a populace of approximately 250,000 with a high number of Roman Catholics.

On the first full day in Mengwe we made our way by bus to the afternoon rally which had begun several days earlier. As we approached a clearing, we caught sight of the platform and approximately 12,000 rejoicing people on hand to greet us. For our first-time team members, this was a moment which rendered them nearly speechless. The tone was set for five days of very intense ministry in Rombo. Each morning from 10:00–12:00 four workshops were scheduled: Healing & Deliverance, Pro-Life & Family, Youth, and Children. Participants numbered in the hundreds for each workshop. Our team and translators were stretched to the limit as they took on the challenge of teaching in the wide open spaces abundant with wind and dust as well as one morning which brought a chilling rain. (All the participants stayed, even though many had inadequate clothing and were shivering).

On Sunday, Bishop Isaac Amani arrived at our rally field. The closing of our crusade was coordinated with the Confirmation of 700 young people. The five hour service was a joyful occasion held under a blistering sun. It was amazing to observe the bishop as he questioned and instructed the confirmands for two solid hours. Each one had a bible in their Swahili language and they skillfully turned to each scripture reference while others were called forward to read aloud. The bishop spoke on a wide variety of topics including the power of the Holy Spirit and the dangers of living together out of wedlock. Monday our team had the opportunity to meet with Bishop Amani at his house in Moshi. He expressed sincere appreciation that Renewal Ministries had returned to his diocese. Our team members had many experiences and observations to share.

Jean Marie Thompson wrote: “Tanzania has always been considered a country that values children and family. These past three years we have continued workshops that include Natural Family Planning, Theology of the Body, development of the baby in the womb, contraceptives, and abortions. We’ve seen a growing need for healing and forgiveness prayer at each workshop as people admit to using contraceptives and having abortions. As they received the truth, we could visibly see them strengthened in their

continued on pg 6
In Rombo, hundreds including children came forward for prayer as they felt our Lord calling them to Pro-Life ministry. In Same, a man who was in our workshop last year told me he had stopped talking people into sterilization and had begun teaching Pro-Life classes. The Sisters have been using the unborn models we gave them to teach the development in the womb to students. The Agape Community in Dar es Salaam has begun teaching young couples Natural Family Planning. Regina, a young translator who is also a counselor, is making plans to teach the youth and college students the things she learned in the workshop. The bishops of Moshi and Same spoke to us of their gratitude and the urgency of getting the information out. Bishop Amami of told us they are now teaching these things in the seminary. Bishop Rogatus of Same shared with us that the people are not having babies and they are closing primary schools because there are not enough children. Both bishops are very concerned as their country moves towards legalizing abortions.

Team member Miriam Wright returned to our team for the second year to lead the Healing and Deliverance workshops and teach the principles of the “Unbound” method of prayer. Miriam observed: “In Africa, many attend Mass but appeal to witch doctors for help. Goats and chickens are sacrificed to witches or ancestors, while children go hungry. Although cultures and rituals of false worship differ throughout the world, hearts are being touched powerfully by God’s love wherever the truth is being proclaimed! Fatima, a young Muslim woman came to our healing and deliverance workshop because she struggled with manifestations of evil spirits. She had allowed witch doctors to perform rituals over her and her relationship with her mother was strained. We led her through the five keys of Unbound prayer, beginning with a prayer to accept Jesus Christ as her Lord and Savior. Fatima chose to forgive her mother and others. In the name of Jesus, she renounced witchcraft and took back authority over her life. She also renounced fear, doubt, and other things. With the Father’s blessing, Fatima received peace and joy. The change was obvious in her smile. She attended the remaining workshops and participated wholeheartedly in the group ministry times. She experienced significant freedom in Christ even before becoming a Christian! She now plans to pursue initiation into the Church to continue her faith journey.

A devout father brought his 11 year old daughter to the rally site for prayer. Despite a lame leg, he walked a great distance with much difficulty. During the past year, Rosemary repeatedly fell down, manifesting evil spirits. Her grades in school dropped dramatically. About a year ago Rosemary’s mother brought her to several witch doctors. Her mother now lives many hours away. We prayed with Rosemary and her father and we encouraged her father to continue praying for Rosemary, and to bless her frequently. As we returned to the Same diocese this year we witnessed some fruit from last year’s mission. It was a delight to see Pauline, who I had prayed with last year. Her parents were both witch doctors and she had been subjected to horrendous rituals for many years. Prior to the Unbound prayer she had endured nightly terrors and evil torments. Filled with fear, confusion and doubt, Pauline had undergone several abortions. Although she was baptized Catholic, she had no peace or joy; she was unable to pray. In the days immediately following the prayer ministry session last year, Pauline was able to sleep without fear or torment. This year I learned that she had

Seven hundred young people, each with a bible in hand, were questioned and instructed by the bishop for two hours at the closing Mass of the rally before receiving the sacrament of Confirmation.
continued from her journey, growing in faith. She was no longer bound by a culture of death, but walked free with new life, her unborn child within her almost full term!

On the last day of the workshops we began with a prayer of deeper surrender to the Lord, followed by prayers of forgiveness and renunciation. We then laid hands on each person as we continued to pray in the Spirit for their needs. A woman who had felt heavily burdened felt ‘much lighter,’ expressing new freedom. A man felt tension and pain in his chest. As we prayed, the pain increased as it moved to a central area of his chest, then it left him completely! Another man struggled with severe back problems. During prayer, he saw colors dancing before his eyes and he experienced tremendous relief from the pain. A woman burdened by stomach problems for years declared that her stomach felt better and expressed confidence that she had been fully healed!

In Rambo the youth workshop numbered several hundred each day. In Same the boys from the high school made their way to the rally field the moment they were dismissed from school in the afternoons. On Saturday morning, we announced a special workshop just for them and they were there en masse. Dalton Hall, a theology student at Franciscan University of Steubenville shared some of his thoughts: “I was amazed by the fervent prayer of the people of Tanzania. They desired God’s word more than anybody I’d ever seen and when we preached to them you could see the change in their hearts. There were some miraculous things that happened in Rambo. We began to pray over a young woman who was shaking uncontrollably as if she was having a seizure. We prayed for evil spirits to come out of her and I prayed especially that this young woman would find peace. Several seconds later as if a switch had been flipped, she lay completely still on the ground with a great calm about her. At another point in the rally witch doctors came up to the platform and surrendered their witchcraft paraphernalia. It was an incredible sight to see these objects burned up, just like the early church burned the pagan items of new followers.’

At one point in the rally, various paraphernalia used by witch doctors was gathered and torched.

Sr. Regina Marie. Their skills and enthusiasm for evangelization seemed to know no boundaries. Mother Lucy, making her first mission to Africa, was especially engaged in a discernment process regarding the possibility of establishing a permanent presence in Tanzania. She shared some reflections: “Thank you for allowing me to be a part of the Pro-Life and Healing and Deliverance tracts. God willing, we will have a house in Africa some day. There were many ways in which I was blessed. When I saw the crowds I was moved to tears. People came out of the thick of the jungle or the outback, walking for miles to hear the Word of God. They all praised the Lord effortlessly, even the children. A highlight was praying with both the youth and the children for the Baptism in the Spirit. They were genuinely sincere in receiving more of the Holy Spirit and there was a holy and reverent moment with them as the Holy Spirit fell upon them.”

Sr. Regina Marie wrote: “I saw such a genuine hunger and openness to the work of the Holy Spirit, as I have never seen before. The youth and children were prepared to receive from the Lord and hungry to learn. Many took notes during talks about the God’s love, the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, and the gift of tongues. After the youth had received the gift of tongues, they began to minister to the younger children using their new gift. 400-500 youth gathered around the crowd of 700 children, and prayed over them in tongues while we walked through the group and laid hands on each of the children. It was a powerful demonstration of the move of the Holy Spirit.”

‘...At another point in the rally witch doctors came up to the platform and surrendered their witchcraft paraphernalia. It was an incredible sight to see these objects burned up, just like the early church burned the pagan items of new followers.’
On the Road

“We have been called to heal wounds, to unite what has fallen apart, and to bring home those who have lost their way. Many who may seem to us to be children of the Devil will still become Christ’s disciples.”
St. Francis of Assisi

Please Pray...

+ for courage and wisdom for the Church and all religious institutions as they face increasing attacks upon religious freedom.
+ for deeper conversion and a zeal for the salvation of souls as we engage in this Year of Faith.
+ for the prayer intentions of all our supporters and their family members, especially as they face the challenges of illness and economic uncertainty.

Thank you for your continued support through prayer as we labor together for the Gospel and the renewal of the Church.

November 2012

Ann Arbor, MI
id916 Young Adult Monthly Meeting
Thursday, November 1, 6:15–9 pm
Sr. Ann Shields
Contact: intentionaldisciples916@gmail.com or pburak10@yahoo.com

Round Rock, Texas
St. William’s Parish Mission
November 4–5
Ralph Martin
Contact: www.saintwilliams.org or agonzalez@saintwilliams.org

*Ottawa, Canada, Priests’ Retreat
November 5–7
Peter Herbeck

Warren, MI, St. Mark Parish
Tuesday, November 6
Ralph Martin
Contact: plipard@aol.com

*Teaneck, NJ
Archdiocese of Newark Annual Dinner
Wednesday, November 7
Ralph Martin

Mission to Croatia
November 7–11
Deacon Zoltán Kunszabó and Team

Metuchen, NJ
Diocesan Faith Formation Conference
November 10
Ralph Martin
Contact: jdangiolillo@diometuchen.org

Racine, WI, Magnificat Women’s Event
November 10
Debbie Herbeck
Contact: judy@banenelson.com

Mission to Mexico
November 11–17
Jim Murphy and Team
Contact Kathleen at: kkittle@renewalministries.net or 734-662-1730 x132

*Pittsburgh, PA, Legatus Chapter Meeting
November 15
Debbie Herbeck

Colorado Springs, CO, Laity Engaging Laity
November 17
Ralph Martin
Contact: Bjk15483@gmail.com

*Ann Arbor, MI, Legatus Chapter Meeting
November 21
St. Ann Shields, SGL

*Corpus Christi, TX, Retreat Society of Our Lady of the Trinity (SOLT)
November 26–29
Ralph Martin

December 2012

*Worcester, MA
Diocese of Worcester Annual Dinner
December 1
Ralph Martin

*Toronto, Ontario
Renewal Ministries of Canada Board Meeting
December 2–3
Ralph Martin, Peter Herbeck, Sr. Ann Shields, Gary Seromik

Pinckney, MI
St. Mary’s Advent by Candlelight
Monday, December 3 at 7 pm
Debbie Herbeck
Contact number: 734-878-3161

*Events not open to the public

Renewal Ministries is a Catholic ministry committed to renewal and evangelization in the Church. It seeks to proclaim Jesus Christ through its TV and radio outreaches, as well as through books, tapes, conferences, retreats and other international evangelistic events.

Editor
Debra Herbeck

Design
Anne Martin

© 2012 by Renewal Ministries