

Questions and Answers to Panel 2

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QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS TO PANEL 2

QUESTION: Professor Hauerwas, it seems to me you can take that document you appealed to, or you can take the “Declaration of Religious Freedom” and Vatican II, but you cannot take them both. But there is something odd here. It is that Pius XI was not a pacifist and he was willing to, if I may use the metaphor of the sword, he was willing to use the sword, the power of the sword in the state, to force that. Now, you are willing to use the spiritual sword to excommunicate that. What is appealing about this, what gives it its edge, is the proclamation of Christ as King of rulers, and that rulers are to obey that. But that is within those other assumptions. And that scares the other people who see the theocratic implications of that. Therefore they look at that and they say, “Ah, good thing we’ve got the ‘Declaration of Religious Freedom.’” Now, my inquiry is, do these comments serve to take the edge off that very passionate, prophetic appeal for you?

STANLEY HAUERWAS: I used Pius XI, one, because I just happened to find it and I liked it; but obviously, I do not believe in text having inherent meaning. And so, it is a little like when the state asks you to pray the Lord’s Prayer, it is no longer the Lord’s Prayer. When Ronald Reagan says that Jesus Christ is Lord, it is a lie and you ought not to believe it. It is a completely different discourse when that happens. Now, when I use Pius XI and reframe it within a pacifist context, it is no longer Christ the King as Pius XI thought of it. And so I am obviously trying to make the Catholics live with my interpretation. Because I think that there are many more radical presuppositions in the establishment of the Feast of Christ the King than there are in the documents on religious liberty. And so I prefer it in that way. I do not pretend I am being fair to Pius XI; but I do not care about being fair to anyone. I would not know what a fair reading is. Hopefully, when Pius and I get to talk about this in the future, he will accept my reading as more appropriate to what Catholics should be about.

QUESTION: I am in a community of believers in Burlington, Vermont. I heard what you said about the problem of: What is the

Christian church? What kind of disciples are we putting out? What are we really saying to the world in our demonstration of the life of Christ? The problem that we have to address first is the problem of the church in the world, before we can address the problem of the church and the state. And the problem that I see, that I want to present to you, is: If the church in its present state in Christianity continues to not be able to do anything about its own inherent divisions among itself on a denominational scale, on a worldwide scale, then how can we say that we are going to be effective in demonstrating in our local communities the life of Christ to the world in a way that will ever have an effect upon them? And I want to say as somebody who is in a community; who has stood against the state; who is endeavoring to obey the teachings of Christ to the degree our life would be a threat in the sense of the secular world and where it is going; who has risked his children and family; and who understands what Professor Gedicks said about minorities needing to be protected by the freedom of religion — as someone who is in that position, I want to say that we have had a positive effect upon government by standing and demonstrating a life of unity and of true love, and showing people around us in the communities that we live in. We have shown them what Christ taught by how we treat one another and how we relate to the society that we live in around us. And in that context, we have been able to have an effect on legislation without having to be in the world, of the world, participating in all of the world's systems, and at the same time trying to intellectualize all of the problems and come up with a solution. So my question is: How can we ever get past the question of coming out of the world and being distinctly separate as communities as we live in cities and villages and wherever we are? How are we ever going to address these questions in anything other than intellectual exercise?

STANLEY HAUERWAS: Well, I appreciate your witness and I applaud it. First of all, you have helped me because I forgot to address this issue: Am I calling us away from political participation? No, I just want us to be there as Christians. I do not see any reason why this cannot be. I am deeply involved in trying to keep the historic Durham Athletic Park in Durham. I mean, that is real politics. I care a great deal about whether we ought to merge the school systems. I do. But let me respond to the most important issue that you raised, namely: How can we act as a witness in the world given our disunity as Christians? And of course, I assume you are not

referring to anything silly like Methodists and Presbyterians since unity there would mean the merging of bureaucratic institutions where no one loses his job. I have a poster on my door that says: "A modest proposal for peace — let the Christians of the world resolve not to kill one another." I have people bursting in all the time and saying, "That's the worst thing I have ever seen. Why should Christians just not kill other Christians? They shouldn't kill anyone." And I always say, "You must start somewhere." And I think that that is a good place to begin. That has a lot to do with unity. Clearly the reason why the world does not believe in the God that we Christians believe has captured us is because Christians get up from the table of the Lord and kill one another in the name of nation-states that offer them freedom. I just do not think that is going to work. Thank you very much.

