

EDITOR'S PREFACE

This issue of the *Journal of Law and Religion* is devoted entirely to articles about South Africa. Such narrowness of subject matter focus is something of a departure from usual practice for the *Journal*, which has in the past resisted the impulse to devote issues to such topics as abortion and prayer in the schools. We have by design produced issues of more general and varied nature to emphasize the belief that the intersection of law and religion takes place on numerous planes—historical, theoretical, and practical—and not simply in regard to any particular issue, and further to emphasize that questions of the relationship between law and religion arise not only in the United States or in the West, but must be worked out in a variety of cultural settings.

The situation in South Africa is unique for those interested in such questions. Religious belief and concomitant formal religious structures have been a rich part of South African culture and politics at least since its emergence as a modern state. Its political structures and the “laws” attendant on them, developed and maintained by persons with avowed religious beliefs and sensibilities, are to most observers particularly harsh where the most basic of human rights are concerned. The leaders of South Africa’s movement toward fundamental change, many of whom are represented within these pages, speak from a frankly religious perspective. Throughout these articles, and in the face of the brutality of the present regime, the voice of hope is apparent. The question becomes, what shall be the structures of post-apartheid South Africa? To what extent and how shall its religious tradition inform the emergent political and legal arrangements of the South Africa that is to be?

Most articles included in this issue impliedly or explicitly address those challenging questions. Others, like that of Dean Farisani, raise the prophetic voice to speak more to the present exigencies than to future patternings. The introductory article, by a professor of the Religion Department at Capetown, Charles Villa-Vicencio, isolates within Christian tradition the “alternative” theme of resistance to oppression as a clear counterpoint to the “dominant” theme calling for obedience to political authority, and provides a view of both South African history and Christian theology in which creative political and legal reconstruction is rendered possible. His article provides an apt introduction to the collection which follows, which consists of selec-

tions from a symposium held at Valparaiso University under the leadership of Larry Albrecht, visiting professor at Valparaiso, who has written an introduction to the symposium and its themes. The *Journal's* thanks and appreciation are due to Larry and his editorial assistants for their hours of editorial work on these articles.

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