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### Mansfield Conference examines religion's role in politics

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**NEWS RELEASE**

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Oct. 15, 1996

**MANSFIELD CONFERENCE EXAMINES RELIGION'S ROLE IN POLITICS**

**MISSOULA --**

On the eve of the 1996 general elections, scholars, politicians and clergy will gather on The University of Montana—Missoula campus to examine the role of religion in the electoral and governing processes.

The 1996 Mansfield Conference, "Religious Values and the Political Process," features three keynote speakers who will explore the relationship between religion and politics in the United States, the Islamic world and China on Sunday and Monday, Oct. 20-21. A free gospel concert Tuesday, Oct. 22, by the Mighty Clouds of Joy will demonstrate how religion -- through the arts -- is part of the American political process, said Phil West, director of UM's Mansfield Center, which organizes the conference.

All conference events are free and open to the public.

"Everyone has religious values, but they mean different things to different people, both here in America and outside of America," West said. "Sound bites and headlines these days lead us to connect religious values with conservative politicians. Our purpose is to try to get beyond the belief that religious values are linked to the political right. We're offering the community an opportunity to examine this in a little bit deeper way than they usually do in watching the evening news."

The Rev. Martin Marty, Lutheran scholar and professor of modern Christianity history at the University of Chicago Divinity School, will facilitate a roundtable discussion and deliver a keynote address Sunday, Oct. 20.

He also will speak at a Lutheran Campus Ministry banquet Saturday, Oct. 19, discussing "American Public Life Today: When the Committed Aren't Civil and the Civil Aren't Committed."

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The banquet will begin at 6:30 p.m. at the Holiday Inn; cost is \$25 per person. Reservations must be made by Wednesday, Oct. 16; call 549-7821.

Sunday's roundtable, "Religion, Politics and Family," will begin at 2 p.m. in the Montana Theatre of UM's Performing Arts and Radio/Television Center. It will feature participants Robert Brown, state senator from Whitefish; former Missoula Mayor Daniel Kemmis, director of UM's Center for the Rocky Mountain West; Jean M. Lown of Utah State University; Carole J. Makela of Colorado State University; and the Rev. Jack C. Oates, pastor of Missoula's First Presbyterian Church.

Marty will examine "Religion and Politics: Through the Thick and Thin, 1996" in a 7:30 p.m. Sunday talk at Christ the King Church, 1400 Gerald Ave.

Other featured speakers for this year's Mansfield Conference are Tu Weiming, Chinese history and philosophy professor at Harvard University, and Carolyn Fluehr-Lobban, anthropology professor at Rhode Island College. Weiming, an internationally known expert on the future of China and the Pacific Rim, will lead an Asian Studies Seminar at 1:10 p.m. Monday in the Mansfield Center Conference Room. He will deliver a 7:30 p.m. keynote address, "Confucian Humanism as a Political Process: Self-Cultivation, Family Values and the Public Sphere," in the Montana Theatre.

On Monday afternoon, Fluehr-Lobban will talk about Islam, the fastest growing religion in the world today, in her 3 p.m. keynote address, "Islamic Humanism: Reform and Resistance in the Middle East," in the Montana Theatre.

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