Discussion with Wim Wenders About the Making of Pope Francis: A Man of His Word

Introduction

On November 7, 2018, acclaimed German filmmaker and photographer Wim Wenders screened his documentary, Pope Francis: A Man of His Word, at the University of Notre Dame. This screening, held at the DeBartolo Performing Arts Center, was the second in a series of signature events for the 2018–2019 Notre Dame Forum.

What follows is a faithful record of the event with two brief introductions: the first by James Collins, Professor and Chair of the Department of Film, Television, and Theatre at Notre Dame, and the second by the University's seventeenth president, Rev. John I. Jenkins, C.S.C. Also included is the panel discussion that occurred after the screening, wherein Wenders discusses the process of taking on the documentary as well as the limitations that accompany such an endeavor. Wenders offers insight into A Man of His Word's aesthetic, specifically what makes this a documentary of »closeness,« and how he was able to achieve that intimacy from behind the lens. Wenders also answers questions on filmmaking in the modern era, the dichotomy of religion and politics, and current challenges regarding the distribution and financing of films.

Image 1: James Collins (center, left) moderates the panel discussion following Wenders' screening of Pope Francis: A Man of His Word as part of the 2018/19 Notre Dame Forum.

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James Collins: Tonight, you will be seeing Pope Francis: A Man of His Word, and the director, Wim Wenders, will be talking with us about this wonderful film. I could wax eloquent about Mr. Wenders's films for hours at a time because he's been my favorite director since I first discovered his work over forty years ago. Fortunately, for your sake, it's my job to introduce Father John Jenkins, who insists on brief introductions. When I asked for help from his staff regarding my introduction, they suggested something like, »I give you Father John Jenkins, seventeenth president of the University of Notre Dame,« and then for me to go sit down. I'll try to abide by that advice, but I insist on making one incredibly important point. This evening's program is a showcase event in this year's Notre Dame Forum, but it is also testimony to Father John's support for the arts at this University. I have been teaching at Notre Dame for over thirty years, and I can say, with absolute certainty, that the arts have never been so central to the mission of this University. We have been able to achieve many great things over the past few years, but none of them would have been possible without Father John's conviction that the arts are a way of knowing about our human experience and spiritual life. These achievements are what makes tonight such a signature event. We have a visionary president and a visionary filmmaker, whose films are eloquent arguments for what the arts can teach us about living a meaningful life. That said, it is my great pleasure to give you Father John Jenkins, seventeenth president of the University of Notre Dame.

John I. Jenkins, C. S. C.: Welcome everyone and I want to thank Jim for that extremely kind introduction. The topic of this year's Notre Dame Forum is a reflection of some of what Jim said about the connection between our Catholic mission and the arts. They are so intimately connected, and that's what we want to explore – how we can find insight through that connection. That is why we are delighted and privileged to welcome Wim Wenders tonight.

Introducing Wim is a challenge because he is more than a renowned filmmaker: he is a great artist who is informed by experience to include family, faith, and an artist's insatiable curiosity for life. He's a true polymath. As a young man, Wim studied medicine in Munich, philosophy in Freiburg, and sociology in Dusseldorf. He is a painter whose movies are influenced by the eighteenth-century landscapes of Caspar David Friedrich and the barren twentieth-century cityscapes of Edward Hopper. One might mistake Wim as an American because of his love for the American songbook, aptly illustrated in his movie The Million-Dollar Hotel. He also directed the music video for U2's cover of Cole Porter's *Night and Day*. Wim won the British Oscar and the Palme d'Or at Cannes for the movie Paris, Texas. He won Best Director at Cannes for Wings of Desire. He was nominated for an Academy Award three times for three documentaries: Buena Vista Social Club, Pina, and The Salt of the Earth, in which he beautifully explored Cuban music, dance, and the life of the Brazilian photographer. He is a photographer himself. He was awarded honorary

doctorates from the Sorbonne in Paris in 1989, the University of Fribourg in Switzerland in 1995, and from the Catholic University of Louvain in Belgium in 2005. Raised a Catholic, Wim has shared that he experienced alienation from the Church in the late 1960s, only to be drawn back to the Christian faith when his father was near death. Wim, in an interview, recalled that »seeing him face death without fear, and actually with some anticipation and joy, was an incredible experience.«

Wim, we cannot thank you enough for making the trip from your home in Germany to be with us. You honor us with your presence.

Wim Wenders: Thank you, Father John. I'm happy to see all of you. I'm happy you're here to see A Man of His Word. I'm also happy that we call the film this. Like many films, you have to call it something while preparing and shooting it with the crew. It was always »the Pope film« until we realized that was not a title! I frantically started to look for a title and found it while I was editing the scene of the film when Pope Francis speaks in front of a joint session of Congress in America – the only scene in English. I had a discussion with my editor about how the Pope has no political nor military power, but that he only has his word. I then said, »Wow, wait a minute. That is the title! A Man of His Word.« I found that in America. I thank you for it, and I thank you for watching the film.

As the film ended, the panel (Notre Dame Undergraduates, Laura Migliore and Will Trapp; Notre Dame Ph.D. candidate, Suzanna Krivulskaya; and Notre Dame Professor, Kathleen Cummings) entered the DeBartolo Performing Arts stage with Wenders, and Professor Collins as moderator.

Kathleen Cummings: Wim, I want to thank you. Many people know about Pope Francis only through sound bites and clips in the media, so I thank you for your more intimate portrait of the Pope and for helping us all get to know him much better. I want to ask you about the decision to weave St. Francis of Assisi into the narrative and if you could talk about that process?

Wenders: The night – or maybe it was the day in America – when lots of us watched on television that there was a new Pope, I was sitting at one of my televisions as well. For once in my life, nine years of Latin paid off because before we ever saw the Pope, there was a deacon saying in Latin that the new Pope had chosen the name of Franciscus. That was before I ever laid eyes on Pope Francis, and I was excited. I thought, »Whoever's going to show up now, he must have guts to call himself Francis in the twenty-first century.« Raised as a Catholic boy, the only saint I knew something about was Saint Francis. I knew everything about him because he was a big hero in my childhood, and I knew that no Pope had ever picked that name. I loved the man before he even showed up. Moreover, I think, as not everybody is raised Catholic, we should know about what that meant, that choice of name.

Laura Migliore: My name is Laura, and I am a film, television, and theatre major here at the University. My question for you, Mr. Wenders, is about the timeliness of your work. You have films like Alice in the City and Paris, Texas that are timeless, and you have Wings of Desire that is very much situated as a review of Germany's past and yet predicted German unification. How do you see this film affecting the past, the present, and the future, and do you feel you have any influence on that as a director?

Wenders: Sometimes it only dawns on you while you are making a film what you are doing. I was excited having a chance to be face-to-face with Pope Francis, but I didn't actively try to make this film. I was asked by the Office of Communication at the Vatican if I'd be willing to discuss a project. They asked me when I went there, of course, but that was quite amazing to get mail from the Vatican. I had it in my hand and asked, »Wow, what did I do wrong?« It was an invitation to discuss the film. I went there, and it turned out that the man in charge of the Office of Communication was a film buff, and he said that the Pope is communicating in different ways, and we thought that maybe the film could be a way for him to communicate. I asked, »Well, to how many people did you send that letter?« He said, »I only sent it to you.« I was a little bit scared then. That's my answer to why we took on the film. I was told that I could have complete artistic freedom and that it would not be financed by the Vatican but independently.

So, I was excited and I started to write. Then it dawned on me while I was writing that this was not so easy. We then shot the film and, while I was editing it, realized this film carried a different kind of responsibility than any other film I'd ever made. I mean, you can make a film about some older men in Havana and you have a certain responsibility for their life; and if they become the Beatles, well, I had something to do with it. But this was very different. I started to have sleepless nights because I couldn't share this responsibility with anybody – nobody else knew about the film in the Vatican except for the Office of Communication. We made the film completely under the radar. I had nobody to turn to, and I realized that this was different from anything I'd ever done before. One night, my wife woke up because she realized I wasn't sleeping, and she asked, »What is it?« I said, »I don't know if I'm doing the right thing. This is not a movie, it is something else.« And she said, »Don't worry. You rehearsed fifty years for this.« That might sound like a way to put me back to sleep, but it was a good answer. Ever since, I think of the film as that. I had rehearsed long enough for it.

Suzanna Krivulskaya: My name is Suzanna and I am a Ph.D. candidate in history at Notre Dame. My question is following up on some of what you were just talking about, but it is about access and representation. Can you comment on how unusual this is for a filmmaker to have such unprecedented access to Pope Francis but also the Vatican more generally? Also, what are the limitations a filmmaker might encounter given such intimacy with the subject of the film?

Wenders: Well, the first limitation was in my first concept. I said this is going to be a film not *about* Pope Francis; this should be a film *with* Pope Francis. As he is a man who's trying to tell the world that we could all try to get by with less, I'm not going to make an expensive film. My first concept was then *cinéma pauvre* – a poor film. That was a limitation because that meant, for instance, that I would not go on each of the journeys. There was hundreds of film crews traveling wherever Pope Francis was traveling. I did not want to add another film crew. We said, as far as documentary footage is concerned, that we are going to live with everything that exists. Vatican TV had their own film crew to go wherever he was, and when he was in America it was covered by twenty TV stations. Everywhere there was so much, so part of the concept was to use found footage of his journeys. The other limitation was, well, budget. We tried to make a small film, and I did not want this to be interviews with the Pope.

I had this unbelievable chance to sit face-to-face with Pope Francis. I knew a little about his attitude, about his writings, and his philosophy, so I knew he was a lot about »closeness.« If I was going to be granted that closeness, I figured that was exactly what I would like to pass on to the audience. I did not want the two of us to sit there and have an interview. Him looking into my eyes – I wanted to share that with the audience. That was in a way a limitation, because it meant that I had to give up being opposite him. We started in the end with something as simple as a teleprompter but of course he did not have his lines! What he saw on the teleprompter, though, was my face. It's a system invented by Aaron Morrison, an American documentary maker. It is an adapted teleprompter so the person you're interviewing looks at and sees you on a monitor – a transparent glass – and by looking you in the eye he looks straight into the lens. When Pope Francis first came to the set, he saw that right away and asked, »Wait a minute, where are you sitting?« He realized there was a big camera with something in front of it, and there was his chair. I explained the whole setup to him and he interrupted me: »Where are you sitting?« I showed him behind the camera that there was a whole system in reverse. I was sitting there with the camera in front of me, and the same kind of monitor. He liked the idea. That was a limitation that I had to give up, to be physically face-to-face, although he saw nothing else than my face on his little screen, and I saw nothing else than his face. It was a little limitation because of the personal touch. I had to give that up in order for you to have that.

Will Trapp: My name is Will, and I am a senior at Notre Dame studying international economics and German. One of the things that struck me most about the film was how it portrayed Francis as a figure who is both admired and adored by people from all walks of life, whether they be Catholics or non-believers. My question for you, Mr. Wenders, is how did you approach making a film that would be equally appealing to people on both sides of the aisle, especially given today's increasingly divisive political and social climate? In particular, how did

you approach creating a film that would both acknowledge the controversies surrounding the Church and the papacy, and yet at the same time offer a hopeful portrayal of Francis as the correct leader for the Church in the twenty-first century?

Wenders: I knew when we started the film that in the Catholic Church he was controversial and that he did have enemies. I figured that the fact that we shot the film under the radar had a little bit to do with that. One of the specific questions I asked at that first meeting was »What is it you have in mind? Is it a film for Catholics or for Christians or for everybody?« They said, »Oh please, certainly for everybody. Pope Francis is trying to address people all over the world, so don't feel that you have to make it a Catholic film, so to speak.« I knew that I was free to think of a film that would cover a whole range of subjects. I got involved in his speeches and the themes that are important to him. In the course of the editing, I noted the closeness that he is able to create and how that is part of his message and is part of his unique talent. Many of my friends who I showed the film – because every now and then I ask my friends if they would see my films – were hardcore atheists whose arms I really had to twist to see a film about Pope Francis, and I saw them cry. I realized then we were onto something, and that it does translate past the boundaries of religion, so to speak. That was important for me because it enabled me to show many facets of his character, as well as his entire approach and the freedom he takes. The most important thing I realized while we were talking for eight hours – four, two-hour sessions – was that he was fearless. That was an amazing quality. I had never seen that quality of being completely fearless in a man that I had encountered so closely. I felt that translated in the film, and I think it was important. The film is hopefully for all audiences, although I do think that Catholics are more attracted to see it and that a lot of people have to overcome the hurdle that the film was about the Pope. Many people see that as a drawback. Little do they know!

Collins: Before you came, I asked my colleagues, and other people at the University who I know are Wenders fans, what their favorite Wenders film was. I got a range of answers from Paris, Texas to Wings of Desire to Pina to Salt of the Earth. Then I read in an interview that you were asked what your favorite Wenders film is – you said it was Pope Francis. Could you say a little bit about that? Why is this your favorite film?

Wenders: Luckily, never before have I answered that question saying »my last film.« I have a track record of not saying »my last film,« because otherwise it would have been a little fishy. I spent a long time on it. It became less and less a movie and more and more a part of my life. A film is sort of a job sometimes; this was no longer a job after a while. It was something that was strangely necessary to do and that, as my wife said, I rehearsed long enough for it. I realized slowly that it was a different responsibility and that it was more than a film for

me. Maybe that is why I said this film; I like it more than others because, I don't know, there's more in it than I ever put into a film before.

Collins: That is a wonderful answer. Okay, I think we could open it up to questions from the audience.

Audience Member: I was simply curious about when it comes to making films of a more documentary nature, do you have any practices to prevent any of your own preconceptions or biases from affecting the final product?

Wenders: Preconceptions are extremely dangerous in filmmaking, even if you tell a story and have a script. When I was a younger filmmaker, I needed preconceptions and I did try to imagine the film before, and that became more and more of a dead end. I realized it was better to be more adventurous and see the making of the film like an experience I have to go through myself, and only if I make a new experience for myself then it can be an experience for somebody else. I tried to refrain from preconceptions; but in this case, it was to make a film that does not cost much. I knew I was going to show a little bit of the life of St. Francis and thought I was going to find some footage that showed the life of St. Francis. I looked at all the films that have existed since the silent era but in the end, I could not quote any of them. I realized I had to shoot that myself, so even that was not preconceived; I thought we would find some footage. Then I realized I had shot myself in the foot by saying I wanted to make a film that does not cost any money because St. Francis lived in the thirteenth century, so somehow we had to shoot historical footage without money. The only way to do that was a dirty trick – we shot it with an old hand-cranker from the 1920s on actual film, like Buster Keaton, and that camera makes everything look very old. If you look, if you really look, you see cars in the background and antennas on the houses. The old hand-cranker just makes everything invisible. It feels old. That was not preconceived, and finding out how to talk to Pope Francis was an idea that slowly dawned on me – that I wanted him to look at you, not at me. We found so much footage, we had eight hundred hours to go through, all his journeys and stuff. That took months to watch, subtitle it, and find the essentials. I can say that I did not try to imagine the film before, and I found it as we were shooting and editing it. My good advice to any filmmaker is to stay away from preconceptions.

Audience Member: What are your wishes that you would like for us all to take away from viewing your documentary?

Wenders: My hope is that some of the courage, positive energy, and deep belief of Pope Francis rubs off, and that being eye-to-eye with him somehow gets to you.

Audience Member: Thank you for the screening. I was particularly moved by how you said you want this film to be a film of poverty, too. As an aspiring filmmaker in this world, I am curious about what do you think is the poverty that is needed

to be lived out in the filmmaking industry in this age? You talked a little about how you personally kind of embodied it in the process of making this film, but I'm curious in general, as an industry, what are your comments on it and how do you suggest we address it?

Wenders: Well, you do need money to make a movie. I have been teaching and we actually made movies on iPhones, because we did not have much money in the school. In the course of my own experience I also found that money was not the solution for most of the movies I was involved in, and I've seen it also with friends. If you have too much money, it is a curse. No movie ever made that was any good had all the money it needed. If you do not have enough, that is a blessing because you have to somehow substitute for the lack of financial resources with imagination, and that can only improve the film. I probably talked myself out of my next budget here! But I think a lot of movies being made today cost a scandalous amount of money. Scandalous. Most of them would probably be better if they had less. But that isn't even the question anymore. I think most of it is almost indecent. And I forgot the drift of your question, but did that somewhat meet it?

Audience Member: You address well the financial part of it, but I struggle with somehow especially documentary filmmakers being told so many times that the film is »your« film, and it's »my« film. I want to hear about this kind of poverty of spirit as a filmmaker, as you experience it.

Wenders: The second half of the question is the crucial one. How do you make it »yours«? Especially if you don't have any means, when is it »yours« and how is it »yours«? There is something essential about the act of making a film: putting up the camera, filming something, deciding on the angle, deciding where to cut, deciding where to shoot it, and deciding the whole soul of the film. Somehow, you have an idea in the very beginning, and that makes you want to make the film. Often, a film is something that gets lost in the process because you have this flame at the beginning burning in you, and then it goes through so many hands that you have to fight so much for it and before you know, that candle is out and that is a disaster and very painful. The art of the whole thing is that you can keep it burning even if it is a little flame, and that you know throughout the process it is yours. You have to be in touch with that initial reason and that initial seed that was born at some time, and you have to know from the beginning that it is going to carry you. Then nothing can happen to it, even if you do not have enough means and even if you have to make compromises. None of that matters if you know that it is what you wanted in the beginning. If you know that nobody else could have done it except you, that is easy to say, and maybe not so easy to live. You can live it if you stick to it and with each decision hang on to your own flame. It is, unfortunately, true that a lot of films being made today could be made by somebody else. You have to make sure that nobody else could have made it.

Audience Member: Thank you.

Wenders: Thanks.

Audience Member: For me, personally, a couple of powerful moments in the film involve children. There was the two girls who asked the question, why did [Francis] want to become Pope? The other one was where I thought the little boy turned the page back in that book so that his picture could be acknowledged properly by the Pope.

Wenders: Yeah, he saw the Pope leaf over it ...

Audience Member: So as a storyteller I imagine that you recognized those as powerful, symbolic moments with an emotional impact that are worth thinking about strategically where you place them in the film. I imagine, not being a filmmaker myself, but I imagine that you thought carefully about where you should put these moments with the children, because they say so much about Pope Francis and about St. Francis. How did you decide where to put them in the film?

Wenders: That process is called editing, and that is a stupid answer, but it is just to begin that you have to make choices. I have fifty-five questions that Pope Francis answered; already, that was too much. We had eight hours of film of that, him looking into the camera, and the film is ninety minutes. Half of it is our interviews. That is 10 or 15% of the actual amount of time we shot. We had 800 hours of the footage from all over the world and three or four hours of the story of St. Francis. There were good moments in all of it, especially in the documentary footage because that was a gift, I mean, I didn't shoot any of it, and saw all of this. The children are certainly a great gift that I recognized when I saw it for the first time. I said, »Oh wow, look at that!« The whole thing about editing is that the film can completely fail if you put everything in it that you like. If you put everything in it that you like, it might not be emotional for anybody else. Those moments with the children were precious, and some of the things that Pope Francis said were precious. Some of the simple things he said were more precious than some of the heavy-duty things he said. For instance, he would get sidetracked because he answered some of the questions at length and all of a sudden, he was talking about the time when he was taking confession. I was getting a little desperate because I wanted to get to my next question. Then he started talking about a young couple when they would come in, and he would ask them questions. I didn't think it had anything to do with the film. Then he said that he asked these people, a mother and father, a question: »do you play with your children?« I didn't believe my ears, because then I felt the whole film I was making in a nutshell. That little, innocent question was more about our times and the history of where we stand today than a lot of the big social subjects. The question, »do you play with your children?« is more the crux of humanity today than almost anything else. All of a sudden, something that was apparently very

small became giant and big, and the same with the moments with the kids. In editing, the biggest rule is that you have to kill your darlings. There are other moments with kids that were not in the film that wake me up at night and make me say, »Why didn't you use this?« That's what editing is for: to kill some of your darlings so that the other ones can shine.

Audience Member: Your film deserves to be seen by lots of people. What are your plans for distribution of the film and how are you going to get it out to the people?

Wenders: Well, it is theoretically shown all over the world. It was distributed in the U.S. from late May for two months. I don't know whether it ever came here, but it was seen by a large audience in America. I was very, very, very disappointed not so long ago when I found out that the distributor was not making an effort to show it in South America. I couldn't believe it. Then they explained to me the situation with theaters and documentaries; it's just that they couldn't do it. I was extremely sad about this because in my mind that's where the film should have been shown first, but it wasn't shown there. It's not shown in Africa; it's shown all over Europe. So what do you do? I cannot travel myself all over the world, so I tried my best – we tried our best – to make the distributors believe in the fact that it was a film that concerned a lot of people and that the feedback every now and then is everybody should see it. I know that, but try to explain that to a distributor that everyone should see it and they laugh at you. This is not Star Wars; then again, it is! The rules of cinema, commercial cinema, today are cruel. A lot of films don't get the attention they should. A lot of films are gone before you know it and it's a lot of competition for attention. I'm happy the film is at least shown all over Europe and America, with mixed results. In some countries it does work and in some other countries only a very few people come to see it. It is really a film that I hope will stay for a while, even when you can buy it on DVD or when it's on video on demand, so that other people who missed it, or who missed when it was shown theatrically, can have a chance to see it. I think it, more than others, depends a little bit on word of mouth from people telling each other about it. But it's out there, and that is a commercial interest, theatrical distribution and DVDs and streaming; it's all part of a world that doesn't think in terms of what the film is about but strictly in terms of revenues. We tried our best, and I think that the people who see it are happy that it exists. A lot of people think, »Why should I watch a movie with the Pope?« At least some of my best friends did. When I asked if they will see a movie about the Pope, they would say there's other things to do in life! So, you have to overcome a certain hurdle, but maybe not here at Notre Dame.

Audience Member: Pope Francis has talked about change and how it's required for us to grow. In your experience with doing this particular film versus the other films that you have done, how do you think that this has changed you or made you grow as a filmmaker, a Christian, or as a person?

Wenders: You cannot spend four years on a project like this and two years being face-to-face with this man in the editing room – I know everything he says in the film by heart strictly because I've heard it so often, several hundred times I think – and not help but let it get to you. I read his encyclicals, and I saw a lot of footage on television, so I had a feeling I knew him before I ever met him. Then I was completely overwhelmed by that capacity to create closeness and to communicate that sheer endless positive energy and fearlessness. It does rub off on you, and you realize, »Wow, what am I afraid of?« You do not have to be afraid of anything. He is a great example for that. Thank you.

Audience Member: First of all, I want to say thank you very much, Mr. Wenders, for being here. It was an incredible film. My problem is I did not have this question thought about before watching the film, but it made me so passionate I had to type it. I want to live in a world that Pope Francis talks about. As a Catholic, I am torn as I align with what Pope Francis says but not what Catholics I know and live around believe. Why, in your opinion, is there a disconnect between what Pope Francis says and how a majority of American Catholics act? An election just happened in 2016, for example, and a majority of Catholics, 52%, voted for Trump and 45% voted for Clinton, according to PEW research. Why do Catholics vote to put people in power who abuse the earth, deny there is a problem, hate on immigrants and migrants, and want to build walls, which is not what Pope Francis talks about in this movie? In your opinion why is there a disconnect?

Wenders: That is a damned good question. If I knew, I would put it in action. I very much hope that 52% will not vote for him again because I think in the first two years that they should have learned that this is not at all Christian what he is representing, in no way. That is the opposite in many ways. I don't want this to be too political, but politics are a very treacherous ground because the lack of morality is scary. The lack of morality not just here, but in Europe, in China, in Russia. The way politics are happening is as if morality had never been a topic of mankind. Politics today are deeply amoral, scarily amoral, and that's why I was happy to be making this film the last four years because there was a counter-model. There was a person with a moral compass. Then you go out in the world and that compass is lost, it is completely gone. I don't know why Catholics, or I don't know why anybody, would vote for that kind of politics that is so clearly not for the best of humanity. I'm happy that Pope Francis so often speaks about the common good, and I was happy to edit the scene in front of the two houses of Congress. It was happy that he said all of us are basically immigrants, which we are. I mean, look around. Everybody I met today was second-generation from somewhere else, or first. I think it's scary, and in Europe it's the same phenomenon. Trump is not alone. In Europe, most leaders today gain majorities because they say, »Close the bloody border. Don't let them in. They are the enemy. They want to invade us.« My country was a huge example, or a huge exception of

the rule, and let in a million-and-a-half immigrants a couple of years ago. Mrs. Merkel is falling over this. That was something she did from the heart, and I was very, very proud of my country for once in my life. We are the European country with more borders than anybody else. We have nine borders with nine countries, seven of which are now nationalist. America only has two borders. Still, it's scary if you realize – I don't know what people are thinking. I don't know why they vote for those who are not acting on their behalf. I don't know. It escapes me. Thank you for your question, but if I knew a better answer, boy would we do something!