

# Future NEWS

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August, 2005

## THE SPECIAL POINT OF CONTROVERSY

**W**hen the Sabbath shall become the special point of controversy throughout Christendom, the persistent refusal of a small minority to yield to the popular demand will make them objects of universal execration. Satan will excite indignation against the humble remnant who conscientiously refuse to accept the customs and traditions of error. Blinded by the prince of darkness, popular religionists will see only as he sees, and feel as he feels. They will determine as he determines, and oppress as he has oppressed. Liberty of conscience, which has cost this nation so great a sacrifice, will no longer be respected. The church and the world will unite, and the world will lend to the church her power to crush out the right of the people to worship God according to His Word.

“It will be urged that the few who stand in opposition to an institution of the church and a law of the state, ought not to be tolerated; that it is better for them to suffer than for whole nations to be thrown into confusion and lawlessness. This argument will appear conclusive; and against those who hallow the Sabbath of the fourth commandment will finally be issued a decree denouncing them as deserving of the severest punishment, and giving the people liberty, after a certain time, to put them to death.

“Romanism in the Old World, and apostate Protestantism in the New, will pursue a similar course toward those who honor all the divine precepts. This is the mystery of iniquity, the devising of satanic agencies, carried into effect by the man of sin.” *Signs of the Times*, February 22, 1910.

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## MISSION STATEMENT

The ministry of *Future for America* is to proclaim the final warning message of Revelation 14 as identified within the prophecies of the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy. The end-time fulfillment of Bible prophecy is no longer future—for it is taking place before our eyes. The historic, prophetic understanding of Seventh-day Adventism is now present truth. We are the final generation. Our emphasis on the prophetic word includes all the counsel of God's Word. To know what lies ahead is useless if we do not possess the experience to stand during these solemn times. Through obedience to God's law, and faith in the promises of God's Word, we are to receive that experience.

Coupled with the prophetic message, *Future for America* emphasizes all aspects of the medical missionary work. The "entering wedge"—medical missionary work—must be practiced by those who are to finish God's work in these final hours.

During this time period, country living becomes more essential with each passing moment. *Future for America* upholds and promotes this end-time truth. God's people must prepare for the coming storm, and that preparation includes the experience of learning how to survive in a simple fashion, away from the great centers of population.

*Future for America* intends to print and distribute truth-filled literature, while helping in parts of the Lord's vineyard where faithful brethren do not have the means to share prophecy and the present truth messages for Seventh-day Adventism today.

*Future for America* is a self-supporting 501-C3 non-profit corporation; funded by readers like you. The cost of this newsletter and audio-tape reaching a home is approximately \$3.50.

This publication is sent out free of charge. Your donations are greatly appreciated.

## Ministry Update

Dear Readers,

Thank you for the continued support and prayers over these busy summer months. Jeff and Kathy are currently on assignment, across the ocean, on the continent of Europe. When they arrive home they will have been away for over forty days. Their trip started in London and from there to Germany then over to Switzerland and finally, they will end in Romania. I'm looking forward to hearing about their experiences and sharing them with you in the upcoming newsletters.

Also, some of your calls and letters have been unanswered. I apologize. We have recently been joined by grandparents from both sides of the family. Between settling everyone in, raising a family, and working with *Future for America* I cannot respond as promptly as needed. Please bear with me. We work as a team at *Future for America* and I can assure you that dad and mom are sorely missed when they travel.

As most of you already noticed, last month's newsletter arrived with an error on page 23 and 24. The text was missing. We are including the missing text as well as the beginning and ending paragraphs. This corrected version will immediately follow our Ministry Update. We are sorry for the inconvenience and confusion this may have caused.

Keeping in mind travelers, family, moving, and mishaps I am reminded that nothing is too small or unimportant to bring to Jesus. He says: Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you. Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist steadfast in the faith,

knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world. But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you. To him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen. 1 Peter 5:6-11.

Bronwyn

## *Future News*, July 2005 issue

Pages 23, 24

Corrected Version

## Readers' Response

In December, 2004 we received this email transmission. Although I am not sure those who have contributed to this information wish that I place it in our newsletter, we have for years promoted John Peters work titled, *The Mystery of the Daily*. In this email transaction he responds to Pfandl's thoughts on the "daily" in the book of Daniel, that Pfandl placed in the fourth quarter *Sabbath School Quarterly* in 2004.

Dear "Insights" Readers,  
Questions have come in regarding "Insights" for Lesson No. 10, "The Sanctuary Cleansed," written by John W. Peters. For your information, we would like to share with you Dr. Peters' response to one serious writer. CAK For "Insights"

From: John W. Peters, December 6, 2004  
Serious questions have been circulated in regard to the brief summary exposition on identification "the Daily" in Daniel 8, published in Sabbath School Insights #10 for the week of Nov. 27-Dec. 3. For students interested in the positions taken on this issue by our Adventist pioneers, voluminous files are available at the White Estate at Andrews University. While it is true that even prior to the reformation, there were expositors who interpreted the sanctuary of Daniel 8:11 as the heavenly sanctuary being cast down,

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nevertheless the Book of Daniel was not unsealed until the Time of End (1798), leading to the correct interpretation of the commencement and termination of the 2300 days of Daniel 8:14. It was Miller and his fellow expositors that God used in unique way to raise up the Advent movement to gather together a worldwide body of people who keep the commandments of God and the Faith of Jesus. And it was Miller who interpreted "the daily" in 8:11 to be paganism that was taken away by the Papacy.

It was Miller's understanding of "the Daily" that helped lead him to a correct understanding of the 2300 day prophecy. In Schwarz's *Light Bearers to the Remnant* he identifies James White along with J. Bates, J.N. Andrews, William Miller, U. Smith, S.N. Haskell, G.I. Butler, and George Irwin who espoused the view that "the Daily" represented Roman Paganism. It was their contention that the transfer of power from pagan Rome to Papal Rome was represented by the phrase: "and by him the daily was taken away." Although many support and endorse Miller's view of "the daily" based on Ellen White's statement in *Early Writings*, pp. 74, 75, whose interpretation has been disputed, the author's exposition of "the daily" relies solely on the authority and exegesis of Scripture. (The 120-page exposition is available by contacting 269-473-1888.)

It is also true that ORL Crosier was among those who rightly identified what actually transpired on Oct. 22, 1844 with Christ commencing His Most Holy Place Ministry. Ellen White enthusiastically endorsed his view concerning the nature of the sanctuary to be cleansed, namely the heavenly rather than the earth (as the sanctuary) being cleansed by fire. But it is clear that her endorsement did not explicitly extend to Crosier's view on the identification of "the daily." She herself could not recall any clear light on that issue.

Irrespective of the historical interpretation of "the daily," the question lingers: what is the "correct view" of "the daily? Are we to search the scriptures for truth as for diamonds in the rough? Will a careful exegesis of the passage itself bring illumination to our understanding? It is true that the arguments over the issue of "the daily" brought untenable controversy within the church when Haskell and Daniells and others were feuding over this issue. Ellen White rebuked them saying that "this subject should not be

agitated *at this time* (Letter 250, 1908). At that time the public nature of their argument was distracting others and hindering the gospel work. They needed to get to work and evangelize the large cities where the work had been languishing. However this does NOT preclude an investigation of the issue at a later and more appropriate time. Such has been the case with the extensive work of the Daniel and Revelation Committee's (DARCOM) seven-volume series, which deals extensively with the issue of "the daily." Moreover a Ph.D. Thesis is about to be published from the Seminary at Andrews in the next year dealing with the issue of "the daily," which takes a position contrary to that of the DARCOM Series. This is not a matter of agitation "at this time" which is preventing the "work" from going forward, but it is simply an honest searching for truth.

The sanctuary being cleansed in Daniel 8:14 is the heavenly sanctuary along with the hearts of God people, His body temple. The question asked in 8:13 refers to the length of time that the sanctuary and the host will be trampled underfoot. The Hebrew word for sanctuary is *Kodesh* which may refer to either God's heavenly sanctuary or the earthly sanctuary in Jerusalem. *Kodesh* is always connected with God's holiness. For Daniel at this time the sanctuary lay in ruins and his concern as recorded in Daniel 9 was when that sanctuary would be restored (*sadaq*). The vision of Daniel 8 covers the time from Media-Persia to the "time of end" and the end of all things. Therefore the question in 8:13 concerning the trampling of the sanctuary includes the trampling of both the earthly sanctuary by paganism and also the heavenly sanctuary by Papal Rome. The self-exalting principle of paganism throughout history, but specifically from the time of Media-Persia extending through both phases of Rome to the end of time is responsible for the trampling of both God's people and His sanctuary. The answer in 8:14 refers to the ultimate restoration and cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary at the "time of end."

However the sanctuary mentioned in 8:11 is not the same as the one in 8:13-14. The Hebrew word in 8:11 is *miqdash* which refers to an *earthly* sanctuary which may be connected with either paganism *earthly* sanctuary or with God's *earthly* sanctuary. Since counterfeit terminology is

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employed in 8:1-11 with the ram, goat, and horn, the *miqdash* is almost certainly a counterfeit sanctuary associated with paganism. But this does not negate the fact that the sanctuary spoken of by the angel in 8:13 is principally referring to the heavenly sanctuary.

Yes, the cleansing of the sanctuary began in heaven in 1844 and this exposition simply reinforces this truth by under girding it with Miller's original understanding that "the daily" was connected with paganism. The commencement date of the 2300 days rests squarely on the beginning date of the 70 weeks of Daniel 9 in 457 B.C. However, with the so-called "new view" of "the daily" as the High Priestly ministry of Christ, we are presented with a conundrum, since with this view it must now be the "place of heavenly sanctuary" in 8:11 that is cast down by the Papacy. And this could not have happened any earlier than 200 A.D. which would force the 2300 days to conclude in 2500 A.D. This does not harmonize with the starting date from Daniel 9 and the 70 weeks. We want internal self-consistency which the current exposition offers. This is especially true in view of the fact that "the daily" is now understood to be the "principle of self-exaltation" which has defiled the hearts of God's people as well as the Sanctuary in Heaven, both of which must be cleansed and restored to their intended state of perfection.

In effect what we see in Daniel 8 is the playing out of the Great Controversy where two great principles are vying for the mastery: the principle self-exaltation (the Mystery of Iniquity) and the principle of *agape* (the Mystery of Godliness). The latter will gain the supremacy only when the hearts of His people come into harmony with Christ's ministry in the Most Place and we are willing to go the wedding with His Robe.

What about the importance of the issue of "the daily?" Arriving at Truth is always of utmost importance when those who do so do not distract from the work of God. May we all search for truth with our hearts and minds aflame with the love of Christ which compels us.

Notes:

1. For a more complete treatise on this subject, you may peruse the full presentation by Dr. Peters as found on the Words of the Pioneers Second Edition CD from Adventist Pioneer Library. Just open the recent.nfo file, select Table of

Contents on the View menu, and scroll to John W. Peters.

2. Those holding the new view of "the daily" find it virtually impossible to reconcile Daniel 12:11, "And from the time [that] the daily [sacrifice] shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, [there shall be] a thousand two hundred and ninety days." Miller and his colleagues had no difficulty harmonizing this with the taking away of the "principle associated with paganism" in 508 B.C. by Clovis when the Papacy employed him to vanquish the remnants of pagan opposition from Rome at which time the Papacy was able to assume dominant control of the empire using the guiding principle of self-exaltation absorbed from pagan Rome.

**End of Corrected Version**

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“The reasons why we are denominated people of God are to be repeated and repeated.” *Manuscript Releases*, volume 8, 426.

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## Current Events

### THE DRAGON

#### UN's Corrupt Human Rights Commission

To follow up on last week's coverage of Sudan's third-term appointment to the UN "Human Rights" Commission, a question has arisen: How does an ambitious, young genocidist state manage a seat on a human-rights body? Most of the UN's member states, the majority of which are run by thugs, belong to one or more voting blocs: the 53-member African Union, the 56-member Islamic Conference, the 22-member League of Arab States, and the 115-member Non-Aligned Movement. Working together to promote their interests and fight American initiatives, especially for reform, these blocs can control the majority of votes of the 191-member General Assembly and place any thugocracy on the Human Rights Commission. Sudan's partners in the Commission include several other paragons of liberty, three of whom, China, Cuba and Zimbabwe, enjoy veto power this year over which complaints the entire Commission will even hear.

As we've said many times before, we think it's high time the UN be brought down a few pegs. The United States should seriously rethink its membership in—or at least its funding of—this utterly corrupt body. *The Federalist Patriot*, February 25, 2005.

#### Congressional Panel: UN Suffers From Poor Management

A Congressionally mandated panel will report this week that the United Nations suffers from poor management, "dismal" staff morale and lack of accountability and professional ethics but will acknowledge the broad changes proposed for the organization by Secretary General Kofi Annan and urge the United States to support them.

Among its recommendations, the panel says the United Nations should put in place corporate style oversight bodies and personnel standards to improve performance. It also calls on the United Nations to create a rapid

reaction capability from its member states' armed forces to prevent genocide, mass killing and sustained major human rights violations before they occur.

The taskforce was created by Congress in December to suggest measures to make the United Nations more effective and ways in which the United States can spur needed changes. The United States is the biggest donor to the United Nations, contributing 22 percent of the regular operating budget and nearly 27 percent of the peacekeeping budget.

In judging the United Nations and its lapses, the task force said it had focused on the responsibilities of the states making up the institution rather than just the institution itself.

"On stopping genocide," where the report said, "too often 'the United Nations failed' should actually read 'members of the United Nations blocked or undermined action by the United Nations.' "

While the report noted the damage caused by the scandals, it stressed that one of the consequences was that the United Nations' top leadership realized the need to make fundamental changes. "Real change may now be possible without resorting to the stick of US financial withholding," the report said.

In its only reference to Mr. Annan's term in office, it said that a "fundamental criterion" in selecting his successor when his term is completed at the end of 2006 should be "management capability."

The report said that the institution's current problems stemmed from the politicization and bureaucratic unwieldiness of decision-making in the General Assembly and Security Council and "absurd level of member state micromanagement" as much as they do from failures in Mr. Annan's leadership.

While crediting Mr. Annan with proposing changes, the report faulted him for lack of follow-through. "The secretary general has often put forward good-sounding reform proposals then failed to push hard against predictable resistance from staff and member states," it says.

Mr. Annan has proposed a sweeping set of changes and made them the centerpiece of a meeting of more than 170 heads of

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government scheduled to be held at United Nations headquarters this fall that he is touting as the largest gathering of world leaders in history.

The proposals include an expansion of the membership of the Security Council, the creation of a peace-building commission to restore postwar societies, an effort to define terrorism as a crime that cannot be justified as an act of freedom fighting or political resistance and the replacement of the discredited Human Rights Commission with a smaller and more powerful Human Rights Council that would effectively deny membership to notorious rights violators.

The panel took no position on Security Council expansion, but in addition to endorsing Mr. Annan's call for a new Human Rights Council, it said that its members be "ideally composed from democracies."

It also urged the creation of a new position of ambassadorial rank in the United States mission with the responsibility of helping to organize a caucus of democracies within the United Nations and of promoting the extension of democratic rights throughout the member states.

In calling for rapid deployment capability, the panel stressed it was not endorsing a standing United Nations military force. Its proposal, it said, was that "member states must substantially increase the availability of capable, designated forces, properly trained and equipped, for rapid deployment to peace operations on a voluntary basis."

More than 80 governments participate now in a loose standby arrangement where they acknowledge their willingness to contribute to peacekeeping operations, but the task force said most of them are in no position to move quickly enough.

It urged the creation of a United Nations office to monitor potentially genocidal developments and issue warnings to governments involved.

To improve United Nations management, the panel called for a new independent oversight board similar to a corporate audit committee to deter corruption and insure efficient use of resources.

The report also recommended a "far more robust policy" of protecting whistle-blowers, results-based budgeting and a new chief operating officer in the Secretariat who would be in charge of daily operations.

Citing a United Nations-commissioned poll that showed "a high level of discontent, distrust and pessimism among staff concerning the integrity of the organization," it said it had found that "morale is dismal."

It credited the United Nations with stepping up activity to combat the global threat of terror but warned of the consequences of obstructionism or neglect. "If the members fail to work together effectively, the pressures on the United States and other responsible governments to protect themselves by acting independently of the United Nations will become enormous," it said. *nytimes.com*, June 12, 2005.

### **UN action seen likely against Iran - US State Dept source**

The United States considers reports that Iran has restarted nuclear activities 'unfortunate' and would expect Tehran to be called before the United Nations, a State Department official said.

The official, who asked not to be named, made his comments after the vice president of Iran's Atomic Energy Agency announced the resumption of uranium conversion at its Isfahan plant despite warnings by the international community.

'If, in fact, they have just taken measures to restart uranium conversion, ... it would be unfortunate,' the US official said, adding that he expects a board meeting of the UN's International Atomic Energy Agency this week to take 'appropriate action.'

'We've said all along that should Iran break the seals and restart uranium enrichment at Isfahan or anywhere else, we would think an appropriate response would be a referral to the United Nations.' *forbes.com*, August 8, 2005.

### **UN Reform Includes First Political Definition of Terrorism**

A revised blueprint for UN reform for world leaders to consider adopting at an upcoming



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summit includes a political definition of terrorism for the first time, which indicates broad support on a contentious global issue.

If approved by the leaders in September, the definition could break the impasse over a comprehensive treaty against terrorism which has been stalled for years over the question, who is a terrorist? That debate has focused especially on the Arab-Israeli conflict and the issue that one nation's terrorists are another's freedom fighters.

The blueprint issued Friday would commit world leaders to adopting a comprehensive convention against terrorism by September 2006. Negotiations are expected to resume shortly in the UN General Assembly's legal committee, which would have to turn the political definition into legal language.

A comprehensive treaty, first proposed by India, would incorporate key elements from more than a dozen anti-terrorism conventions already on the books. The aim is to raise worldwide standards for fighting terrorism.

The first reform proposal by General Assembly President Jean Ping, released in early June, avoided the contentious issues of defining terrorism, Security Council expansion and guidelines for using force. It called for governments to pay more attention to alleviating poverty and ensuring human rights.

Ping's new blueprint not only gives a political definition of terrorism but spells out how two new UN bodies would be established: a Peacebuilding Commission to ensure that countries emerging from conflict don't start fighting again and a Human Rights Council to replace the discredited Commission on Human Rights.

The Geneva-based commission has been criticized for allowing the worst-offending countries to use their membership to protect each other from condemnation for human rights abuses. The latest draft said members of the new council should be elected on the basis of regional balance and their contribution "to the promotion and protection of human rights."

The new blueprint also outlines a series of UN management reforms - a key US demand - and elaborates on what to do to stop genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. The new draft would

authorize the Security Council to take action to stop such atrocities "should peaceful means prove insufficient and national authorities be unwilling or unable to protect their populations."

The document has also been revised to reflect action taken earlier this month by the Group of Eight major industrialized nations at their summit in Gleneagles, Scotland, to increase resources to support development efforts in poor countries, primarily in Africa. One of the goals of the summit is to agree on ways to meet UN development goals, including cutting extreme poverty by half by 2015.

"This is, of course, work in progress," said the Netherlands' UN Ambassador Dirk Jan van den Berg, who has been helping Ping find agreement among the 191 UN member states on a blueprint. "We think it constitutes an important step forward towards the preparation of the summit. It will not be the last version of the document."

Secretary-General Kofi Annan started the reform effort in March with his own proposals for a sweeping UN overhaul.

On terrorism, Annan said it was time to set aside the debate on so-called "state terrorism" and endorsed the definition of terrorism proposed by a high-level panel that he created. It says any action intended to harm civilians or noncombatants with the purpose of intimidating people, or compelling governments or international organizations to act or abstain from action "constitutes an act of terrorism."

Ping's first draft of the final document used similar language - but left out the words "constitutes an act of terrorism."

The new draft would have world leaders affirm "that the targeting and deliberate killing of civilians and non-combatants cannot be justified or legitimized by any cause or grievance."

UN members are still wrangling over reform of the powerful Security Council and several of Annan's proposals have been dropped because of deep differences, including principles for the use of force.

Nonetheless, David Shorr of the Washington-based Stanley Foundation, which organized half-dozen programs on UN reform, said efforts by some countries to weaken the outcome of the summit have failed.

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"Those who want the summit to succeed have protected some of the really important ideas on how the UN can be more effective," he said. "There is now real momentum for the world leaders to be changing the way things are done at the UN and delivering a round of reforms that are more significant than earlier attempts." *The New Anatolian*, July 25, 2005.

## **RADICAL ISLAM**

### **One common enemy: Radical Islam**

After the terrorist attacks in London, the Sun Online in the UK published a special feature of Islamic terrorist attacks that have occurred around the world since 1993.

The newspaper listed the 1993 World Trade Center bombings, the explosion on a Philippines Air jet in 1994 that killed one and injured 10, the Khobar Towers bombing that killed 26 US servicemen in 1996, the East Africa Embassy bombings in 1998, the USS Cole in 2000, September 11, bombings in Bali and Jakarta, recent attacks in Saudi Arabia, the 3/11 Madrid bombings, and several others.

The world map posted by the Sun for this feature showed dots all over the atlas—except one area that is notably dot-free.

If this feature is to be believed, then practically the only place in the world to have been untouched by Islamic terrorism in the past decade is Israel.

Obviously, this was no accidental omission. Europeans, like much of the world, have long believed that the terror faced by the Jewish state is a particularized domestic dispute, or more specifically, a "resistance" to "occupation." Few have linked Palestinian terrorism to the larger, global movement of Islamic terrorism depicted in great detail by the Sun Online.

While the old PLO, led by secular Communists under the banner of Arab nationalism, had no connection to the older European terrorist groups like the Irish Republican Army or the Basque separatists in Spain, brainwashed Palestinian youths blowing themselves up are motivated by the same ideology shared by Islamic terrorists from Indonesia to London.

With Wednesday's announcement by British authorities that the terrorists behind the attacks were suicide bombers, it is becoming increasingly difficult to argue that Israel faces a different enemy than the rest of the West.

As even Tony Blair himself noted, the perpetrators killed in the name of Islam—just as young Palestinian suicide bombers do. It was only after Arafat turned to Islam as his rallying cry that he was able to get young children to strap bombs onto their chest.

Palestinian children are indoctrinated to believe that violence is inherent in Islam, and those die in the course of murdering Jews will be rewarded with eternal paradise. "Martyrdom" is so glorified in Palestinian schools and society at large, in fact, that kids barely into puberty clamor for the "privilege" and "honor" of becoming a "shahid."

The exaltation of terrorism under the guise of Islam helps explain why most of the suicide bombers come from middle- and upper-middle-class families. Early reports indicate that the four suicide bombers in the London attacks also were not from impoverished backgrounds—and all were born and raised in Britain.

But even before the London attacks, abundant evidence demonstrated that the Palestinian terrorist organizations were fellow travelers with the likes of al Qaeda. The views and goals of Hamas and Hezbollah, among other terrorist groups, are, if anything, in sync with those of al Qaeda.

Hamas founder and former "spiritual" leader Sheikh Yassin said repeatedly during his life that the entire world should become Islamic, that there was no legitimate government without Shari'a law—a position indistinguishable from that of Osama bin Laden.

Hezbollah's founding charter calls for the destruction of the United States for its role in preventing the spread of Islam. And long before the start of the current intifada, Hezbollah had killed more Americans before 9/11 than any other terrorist entity on earth.

It's not just the leadership of Palestinian terrorist organizations, however, that are of like mind with Osama bin Laden. Lest we forget the images of thousands of Palestinians

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cheering and gleefully burning American flags on September 11.

Already, many have attempted to claim that the "reason" for the London attacks was Britain's involvement in the war in Iraq. What this ignores, however, is that adherents of al Qaeda don't need a reason to attack other than the existence of freedom—a concept that goes against the core belief in Shari'a law and the necessity of Islamic states.

In the decade before 9/11, many US targets were hit: the World Trade Center in 1993, Khobar Towers in 1996, the East Africa embassies in 1998, and the USS. Cole in 2000. Each time, we did nothing. Yet al Qaeda struck anyway on September 11.

There is a "reason" why four young British men took their own lives in order to murder more than 50. But it's not Iraq. It's not Afghanistan. It's not Israel. It's radical Islam. *townhall.com*, July 25, 2005.

### God Help Us

The relentless attack on public displays of spirituality and religion by progressive secularists has been extremely effective worldwide. Churchgoing in Western Europe, for example, has collapsed in many countries. Harvard professor Niall Ferguson calls the decline of Christianity in Europe "one of the most remarkable phenomena of our times."

Ferguson cites a Gallup Poll that shows barely 20% of Western Europeans attend church services at least once a week. The number is 47% and falling in the USA. In Britain, only 10% of those polled said they would be willing to die for their religious beliefs. And guess who loves that statistic? Can you say the Islama-fascists?

The decline of religious influence in the West can be seen in two very important areas. First, how the world is responding to the terrorist jihad. And second, how societies deal with citizens who commit the most dastardly of crimes.

As this column has stated before, if all the world's nations would unite against terrorism, it could not exist. If the fundamental moral tenet of protecting the lives of innocent people superceded all other political concerns, Osama bin-Laden and the boys would be on the gallows

right now. But that is not the case as we all know.

Terrorist acts are routinely justified and accepted by people who feel little for their fellow man. A once-proud country like Spain essentially surrendered to Al Qaeda after those killers bombed a Spanish train. The citizens of Spain had to know that pulling out of Iraq after that bombing gave Al Qaeda a huge victory. But many Spanish citizens simply didn't care. To them Al Qaeda should be someone else's problem.

In America, the anti-religious forces are led by the ACLU and activist liberal judges who are aided by an increasingly secular media. It is no accident that we have thousands of child sex offenders running wild in this country. The crime of child sexual abuse used to be second only to murder. Now the ACLU defends the North American Man-Boy Love Association in court claiming their free speech rights are being violated.

The Founding Fathers knew that religion, if handled correctly, could be a powerful force for good. The moral guidance provided by The Ten Commandments constrains bad behavior, that's why the Commandments appeared in Scripture. But now, the secularists insist there is no place in the public square for the Commandments. There is no place for constraints that may offend.

Think it over. If every human being chose to set up his or her own moral program, there would never be a consensus of what is proper and what is not. There would never be universal outrage over terrorism or terrible crimes.

Moral outrage is the only way to defeat terrible behavior. Today, many of us don't even know what terrible behavior is. Could gangsta rap music have existed 30 years ago? How about partial birth abortion?

Hitler and Tojo were defeated by men and women who were willing to die so those villains could not enslave and kill other human beings. It was moral outrage over Pearl Harbor that led to the demise of the dictators.

We had a semblance of the same moral outrage in America after 9/11 but that is ebbing away. The terrorists and perverts understand that only moral outrage will beat them back. A person or nation with no moral compass will

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never be able to summon up that outrage. A human being that lives in the gray area of right and wrong is likely not to make a stand against evil.

And that's what the evildoers are counting on. *humaneventsonline.com*, August 8, 2005.

## THE BEAST

### Pope Concerned About Islam, Orthodoxy In First 100 Days

Today marks 100 days since the election of Pope Benedict XVI as leader of the world's 1 billion Roman Catholics. Prior to his elevation to Saint Peter's throne, the former Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger had a reputation as a strict doctrinarian with a cool approach concerned more with religious dogma than engaging with the world and its problems. But Benedict has so far surprised on this count. He has proven to be a capable communicator on pressing issues, such as terrorism and tensions with the Islamic world, and improving Catholic ties with the Eastern Orthodox churches.

As head of the Vatican's office on doctrine, the former Cardinal Ratzinger was once a feared figure, winning the nicknames "Enforcer of the Faith" and "God's pitbull."

But since he became Pope Benedict on 20 April, the personal warmth of the German theologian has taken many people by surprise — as has his focus on Islam and his attempt to bridge the 1,000-year gap between Roman Catholicism and the Orthodox faith of the East.

Robert Moynihan is editor-in-chief of "Inside the Vatican," a monthly magazine focused on the Holy See. He says Cardinal Ratzinger's image was once "distant, icy, and Germanic." Now, he says, Pope Benedict comes across as a sort of compassionate grandfather figure, such as when he addressed worshippers at the Vatican shortly after attacks killed 56 people on 7 July in London.

"We pray for the people killed, for those injured and for their loved ones," Moynihan says. "But we even pray for the attackers: Lord, touch their hearts. To those who foment feelings of hate and carry out such revolting terrorist acts, I say: God loves life, which he

created, not death. And I say, stop, in the name of God."

Publicly praying for terrorists is not exactly in vogue these days. But Moynihan says it is certainly in keeping with Benedict's chief concern, Christianity, in which forgiveness and compassion figure prominently. "We are dealing with tormented individuals [the terrorists] and with a tormented social and political world right now. He wants healing. And he wants healing personally and socially and geopolitically."

"We are dealing with tormented individuals [the terrorists] and with a tormented social and political world right now. He wants healing. And he wants healing personally and socially and geopolitically," Moynihan says. "He was quite opposed to the Iraq war. I spoke with him personally in February of 2003, and the war, as you recall, began in March 2003. And I said, 'How about the Iraq war?' And he said, 'It would not be just. It's not a just war.'"

Benedict, meanwhile, has quietly begun waging what he sees as his own "just war." In a Vatican address two days before his election as pope, Ratzinger declared war on "moral relativism" — that is, the widespread view in the West that there is no absolute truth, that morality is subjective.

Moynihan says the pope seeks to restore what he sees as Europe's lost Christian tradition. He says Benedict is expected to address that issue in his first major writing — called an encyclical — likely to be published by yearend.

"He'll talk [in the encyclical] about the church and its sacramental life, in the sense of bringing the transcendent down and incarnating through the sacraments in daily human life, in things like baptism and the Eucharist," Moynihan says. "And he'll use that as a springboard to talk about the necessity of human beings having that transcendent dimension in their cultural and political life, and if they don't have it, he will argue that they're missing something so profound that they lose their way — they lose their identity."

But Benedict's war won't simply be a philosophical battle. John Allen is the author of an acclaimed biography of Ratzinger as well as a new book, "The Rise of Benedict XVI."

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"We have already seen some political translations of that idea [the war on moral relativism]," Allen tells RFE/RL from Rome. "The pope, for example, very enthusiastically backed the Italian bishops in their campaign to defeat an Italian referendum on in vitro fertilization. The church actually won that battle. He also very wholeheartedly backed the Spanish bishops in their attempt to block a gay marriage law in Spain, which of course the church lost. And I think what this indicates is that this is not just a philosophical exercise for Pope Benedict XVI, but it's also a very practical political issue. I think it means this is going to be a very engaged pontificate, above all in what we in the West call the 'cultural issues.'"

In waging his war on relativism, Benedict appears to be looking to the Orthodox churches as an ally. His predecessor, John Paul II, made great efforts to reunite the main branches of Christianity, which split in 1054. But few expected Benedict to follow him so strongly, as Allen points out.

"This is a man who in his 24 years as head of the doctrinal office in the Vatican was always very concerned about reinforcing Catholic identity and Catholic distinctiveness, and therefore was never seen as a particularly ecumenical figure," Allen says. "And yet, he has made it abundantly clear that he sees this as a top priority of his pontificate and, above all, he wants to improve relations with the Orthodox Church, trying to heal this millennium-old split."

Ironically, the pope also has another ally in his battle against secularism: Islam. But Allen says that for Benedict, as a cardinal who has expressed opposition to Muslim Turkey joining the European Union, relations with Islam are a balancing act.

"You know the old political adage, 'The enemy of my enemy is my friend.' And in that sense, I think Ratzinger perceives a friend in Islam in the struggle against secularism," Allen says. "On the other hand, he also does not want Europe to become an outpost of Islamic culture. So he's going to try to walk this fine line between the sort of philosophical and theological common cause with Islam, while at the same time try to some extent to hold

Islam at arm's length in his own backyard, which is Europe."

Benedict will take his message to Europe at large in August, when he makes his first papal trip outside Italy. Hundreds of thousands of faithful are expected to greet him in Cologne, Germany for World Youth Day commemorations on 16-21 August.

That yearly event was always a major fixture on the schedule of the media-savvy John Paul. This year, it looks set to be the first major test of Benedict's appeal to Europeans to return to their Christian roots. *rferl.org*, July 27, 2005.

## THE FALSE PROPHET

### The name game: Churches seek broader appeal by switching names, places

Keeping the beat amid staccato flourishes, the praise-band drummer in Spring Creek Church's sanctuary was a metaphor in motion last Sunday as hundreds of worshippers followed lyrics on large, wall-mounted video screens.

Miles from its geographic roots, the Pewaukee, Wisconsin, church has evolved far beyond pump-organ hymns and strait-laced formalities. But its Bible-based beliefs have remained as steady as a metronome since it was founded in 1881 as Garfield Avenue Baptist Church in Milwaukee.

The church's name has changed along the way—part of a continuing national trend in which denominational identities are eliminated or downplayed to create broader appeal in an era in which people church shop.

Decades of steady growth have gotten an extra boost in recent years from expanded activities and a \$4.2 million sanctuary with state-of-the-art sound, video projection and theater-style lighting.

Average attendance on Sundays—including 1,150 people in the two morning worship services and more than 200 young children in Sunday school classes who do not attend the services—hit a new high in July.

"Baptist" is gone, but Spring Creek still has "church" in its name.

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The latest trend among churches trying to draw people who want something different or who have never attended church is to adopt a catchy, nonchurch name. As of May 1, for example, the First Assembly of God in the San Francisco Bay area became simply Harbor Light.

Emerging churches—more intimate faith communities reaching out beyond baby boomers to those of Generation X and Y—are using names such as Three Nails in Pittsburgh and Landing Place in Columbus, Ohio, said Eddie Gibbs, professor of church growth at Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, Calif.

“I think what we are seeing is the detribalizing of Protestantism, in that if you have a large external constituency, which would identify culturally or historically with a particular denomination, then obviously it’s a plus factor to have that identification,” Gibbs said. “But (that changes) when the community becomes increasingly diversified.”

“Probably after Vietnam and Watergate there was an increasing distrust of institutions, so that Jesus was still in, but the institutional church was no longer an attraction. So, I think that the dropping of the denominational label is to become more generic, less of a threat, less of a reminder of negative stereotypes if you’ve walked away from church.”

The trend accelerated when large numbers of baby boomers who had left churches began returning in the 1980s, but the process continues today, said Gibbs, who is co-author of a book on emerging churches to be published later this year.

Elmbrook Church—a nondenominational megachurch in the town of Brookfield, Wisconsin, that draws more than 6,000 adults to Sunday services and has planted eight sister churches in the Milwaukee area—was started in 1958 as an independent Baptist congregation and adopted the Elmbrook name about a decade later to reflect the fact that most of its members then were coming from nearby Elm Grove and Brookfield, said Dick Robinson, senior associate pastor at Elmbrook.

Spring Creek Church first dropped “Avenue” from its name when it moved to a new location in 1964, becoming Garfield Baptist Church. When inadequate parking and cramped

quarters prompted another move in 1997, “Baptist” and “Garfield” were dropped.

“The primary reason for the name change was we relocated to a new place, and Garfield does not relate in any way, shape or form to this community,” said Senior Pastor Chip Bernhard, who has a master of divinity degree from Grand Rapids Baptist Seminary.

“Spring Creek is our northern boundary. It is a little creek, but it’s on the map. Our second reason was we no longer wanted to be a church where only Baptists could come. We like to say we are a church that anyone can attend that teaches and follows the Bible. We take the Bible seriously here,” he said.

That attracted Rani Hershberger, 43, a mother of three, who began attending a women’s Bible study group at the church nearly five years ago. Hershberger, who has a nondenominational background, was new to the area at the time.

Asked why she and her family joined, she said, “The friendly people, and that they really stick to what the Bible says.”

Eric Debelack, 46, and his wife, Lisa, 42, gave a similar response. Then practicing Catholics, they attended a Spring Creek service at the invitation of a friend five years ago and stayed. They and others used terms such as warmth, love, Bible-based truths, Bible-study groups, life-skills classes, and a variety of other faith-based educational, recreational and cultural activities.

“As soon as you came in, you heard the message,” Eric Debelack said. “You knew that the pastor was speaking to you directly. His message was powerful. The music was inspirational.”

Bernhard said the church is attracting a lot of young couples, but it’s also drawing senior citizens. The church could have grown faster by targeting only the young, but it chose to gradually become more contemporary without abandoning seniors, he said. One traditional hymn is sung at every service. There are classes and special programs for older members.

“One of the things that makes us special is the blending of the generations,” he said.

Even in its early years, the church was an independent Baptist congregation. Its Baptist

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origins are reflected today in historic displays at the church and in the teaching of historic Baptist beliefs that include such things as Biblical authority, creationism rather than evolution, baptism by immersion, and a responsibility to reach out to people who do not attend church.

Church members don't identify themselves as evangelicals. But the church's teachings are in line with general evangelical characteristics, and the church could be considered evangelical, Bernhard said.

The church's contemporary music and audio-visual equipment are a far cry from what lifelong member Stacey Gresbach, 31, grew up with at the church's second site in Wauwatosa, Wis.

"The biblical principles are the same," she said. "Our church doctrine is the same. The preaching is the same. It's from the word of God. Really, all that has changed, I guess, has been the presentation." *gazettetimes.com*, August 6, 2005.

### **A Signpost Turned Around**

"The Lord has clearly defined the road to the city of God; but the great apostate has changed the signpost, setting up a false one—a spurious sabbath. He says: 'I will work at cross-purposes with God. I will empower my delegate, the man of sin, to take down God's memorial, the seventh-day Sabbath. Thus will I show the world that the day sanctified and blessed by God has been changed. That day shall not live in the minds of the people. I will obliterate the memory of it. I will place in its stead a day bearing not the credentials of heaven, a day that cannot be a sign between God and His people. I will lead the people who accept this day, to place upon it the sanctity that God placed upon the seventh day. Through my vicegerent I will exalt myself. The first day shall be extolled, and the Protestant world shall receive this spurious sabbath as genuine. Through the non-observance of the Sabbath God instituted, I will bring His law into contempt. The words, 'A sign between me and you throughout your generations,'

I will make to serve on the side of my sabbath. Thus the world will become mine. I will be ruler of the earth, prince of the world. I will so control the minds under my power that God's Sabbath shall be an object of contempt. A sign? I will make the observance of the seventh day a sign of disloyalty to the authorities of earth. Human laws shall be made so stringent that men and women will not dare to observe the seventh-day Sabbath. For fear of wanting food and clothing, they will join with the world in transgressing God's law; and the earth will be wholly under my dominion.'

"The man of sin has instituted a false sabbath, and the professed Christian world has adopted this child of the papacy, refusing to obey God. Thus Satan leads men and women in a direction opposite to the city of refuge; and by the multitudes who follow him, it is demonstrated that Adam and Eve are not the only ones who have accepted the words of the wily foe.

"The enemy of all good has turned the signpost round, so that it points to the path of disobedience as the path of happiness. He has insulted Jehovah by refusing to obey a 'Thus saith the Lord.' He has thought to change times and laws." *Review and Herald*, April 17, 1900.

"There is not a single instance in history in which civil liberty was lost, and religious liberty preserved entire. If therefore we yield up our temporal property, we at the same time deliver the conscience into bondage."

John Witherspoon

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