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The Rising Specter of Anti-Semitism

European countries are experiencing a rise in anti-Semitic acts unlike any seen since World War II. Has the haunted past come knocking on the door again? The number of hate attacks has increased since the latest Mideast "intifada" began in September 2000. Where will it lead and what lies behind such deep-seated anger toward Jews and supporters of the nation of Israel?

by Darris McNeely

"There are Holocaust survivors who are telling their children: 'Look this is exactly how it happened in the 1930s. This is really reminiscent of the worst times of Europe'... It is part of an atmosphere. Not just a few hooligans" (Associated Press, April 23, 2002). World Jewish Congress Secretary-general Avi Bek er said 360 anti-Semitic incidents in France during April heralded worse to come for Jewish communities in Europe.

Violent acts and statements against Jews have escalated in recent weeks since the Israeli army's counterattack against Palestinian forces in Jenin, Ramallah and Bethlehem. Among the acts has been the burning of a synagogue in Marseille in the south of France on March 31. In Lyon another was damaged in a car attack.

Other European countries are experiencing similar attacks. In Brussels and Kiev, synagogues have been attacked. One incident saw a rabbi beaten while a group of youths chanted, "Kill the Jews."

Under the headline "Synagogues Burn as Europeans Rage," a *Washington Times* article added, "In Britain, which takes pride in a 'multicultural' society, police have logged at least 15 anti-Jewish episodes this month, including eight physical assaults, synagogues daubed with racist slogans and hate mail sent to prominent figures among the nation's 300,000 Jews. One was an assault on a

Jewish theological student, David Myers. He was reading a book of Psalms aboard a London bus when he was stabbed 27 times.

"The attacks prompted Jonathan Sacks, Britain's chief rabbi, to say, 'Anti-Semitism is on the rise in Europe as a whole.' He blamed Islamic extremists for 'whipping up' sentiment against Jews in Britain and throughout the Continent" (April 22, 2002).

Europe has a long history of anti-Semitism. Despite more than 50 years of reflection, repentance and restitution, it appears there are strong feelings lurking under a very thin surface. The war did not eliminate anti-Jewish sentiment. Less than a year ago, a survey showed that 24 percent of all Austrians would "prefer" to live in a country without Jews. And even in supposedly neutral Switzerland, a survey reported by the BBC "indicates that 16 percent of Swiss people are fundamentally anti-Semitic, while 60 percent have anti-Semitic views."

In Lithuania, Jewish leaders reported a rise in anti-Semitism that they believe is related to the prospects that property seized from Jews before World War II will be returned to its original owners. Prime Minister Algirdas Brazauskas had asked the international Jewish community "to select representatives to open talks with the government on the issue of prop-

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A Covenant of Life

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Editor: Don Ward

Managing editor: Darris McNeely

Senior editor: Melvin Rhodes

Contributing editor: John Ross Schroeder

Copy editors: Becky Bennett, Doug Johnson, Cecil E. Maranville

Layout/design: Mike Bennett, Peter W. Eddington

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Address changes: POSTMASTER—Send address changes to *World News and Prophecy*, P.O. Box 541027, Cincinnati, OH 45254-1027.

International addresses:

AFRICA (except as listed below): United Church of God, P.O. Box 541027, Cincinnati, OH 45254-1027, U.S.A. E-mail: info@ucg.org

AUSTRALIA: United Church of God—Australia, GPO Box 535, Brisbane, Qld. 4001, Australia. Phone: 0755 202-111 Fax: 0755 202-122

BAHAMAS: United Church of God, P.O. Box N8873, Nassau, Bahamas. Phone: (242) 324-3169 Fax: (242) 364-5566

BRITISH ISLES: P.O. Box 705, Watford, Herts. WD19 6FZ England. Phone: 020-8386-8467 Fax: 01257-453978

CANADA: United Church of God—Canada, P.O. Box 144, Station D, Etobicoke, ON M9A 4X1, Canada Phone: (905) 876-9966, (800) 338-7779 Fax: (905) 876-0569

FII: United Church of God, P.O. Box 10-577, Nadi, Fiji. Phone: 723-678

FRENCH-SPEAKING AREAS: Église de Dieu Unie—France, 127 rue Amelot, 75011 Paris, France

GERMANY: Vereinte Kirche Gottes, Postfach 30 15 09, D-53195 Bonn, Germany. Phone: 0228 - 9454636 Fax: 0228 - 9454637

E-mail: info@gutenachrichten.org

ITALY: La Buona Notizia, Chiesa di Dio Unita, Casella Postale 187, 24100 Bergamo, Italy. Phone/Fax: 0039-035-582140 E-mail: redazione@labuonanotizia.org

MALAWI: United Church of God, P.O. Box 23076, Kitwe, Zambia. E-mail: malawi@ucg.org

MAURITIUS: P.O. Box 53, Quatre Bornes, Mauritius E-mail: mauritiuss@ucg.org

The NETHERLANDS: United Church of God Holland, P.O. Box 93, 2800 AB Gouda, The Netherlands

NEW ZEALAND: United Church of God, P.O. Box 22, Auckland, 1015, New Zealand. Phone: 0508-463-763

PHILIPPINES: United Church of God, P.O. Box 81840, DCCPO, 8000 Davao City, Philippines. Phone: (+63-82) 241-0150

SCANDINAVIA: Guds Forenade Kyrka, Mailbox 144, 111 73 Stockholm, Sweden

SOUTHERN AFRICA: United Church of God, Southern Africa, P.O. Box 2209, Beacon Bay, East London 5205, South Africa Phone/Fax: 043 748-1694

SPANISH-SPEAKING AREAS: Iglesia de Dios Unida, P.O. Box 541027, Cincinnati, OH 45254-1027, U.S.A. Phone: (513) 576-9796

TONGA: United Church of God—Tonga, P.O. Box 127, Nuku'alofa, Tonga

ZAMBIA: United Church of God, P.O. Box 23076, Kitwe, Zambia. E-mail: zambia@ucg.org

ZIMBABWE: United Church of God, Zimbabwe, P.O. Box 3393, Paulington, Mutare, Zimbabwe. E-mail: zimbabw@ucg.org

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There is a rage burning within today's Islamic world. We have already seen its effect in the events of last Sept. 11. It continues on the streets of Jerusalem and in the small villages of the Palestinian territories. It is the rage of a generation that feels helpless and powerless to control its destiny. There is a perceived threat from Israel, which is seen as linked to the United States. The economic, political and military power of the West frustrates those Muslims who feel their religion is superior to any other. They don't know how to deal with the overwhelming economic, military and political superiority of the West.

Their latest response to a bad situation is strapping explosives on their bodies, killing themselves and Israelis. We see this almost daily, and indications are that it will continue, regardless of any negotiated "peace." One of the most poignant scenes was in a recent video showing a Palestinian mother with her son, who was armed and ready to destroy himself in a lone attack on Israelis. She was proud of what her son was about to do. She said that if she had a dozen sons, she would send them out to kill the enemy—meaning Israel. The next day the boy killed himself and others in an attack.

It is a bankrupt culture that proudly sends the flower of its youth to their death, while papering it over with a mask of dignity.

Recent reports tell of three boys—ages 13 to 15—who left farewell letters to their parents and took some makeshift explosives made from firecrackers and knives and headed for the Jewish town of Netzarim, where they were killed by soldiers defending the settlement. One source says Islamic Jihad sent them.

Not all Palestinians agree with those who encourage self-destruction in their decades-old cause. Outraged parents spoke out saying that the young should be taught to grow up and study so they can fill responsible roles in a future society.

The Palestinians suffer from a failed leadership, which for more than 50 years has lacked a vision to craft a society in which the young can grow up with a positive hope. The politics of the Palestinian cause has squandered a generation of opportunity. On the other hand, Israel's response, though intended to protect its citizens, does not contain the seeds of a lasting peace. So the world waits and looks for a new idea with the hope that peace can be achieved.

Some say we are witnessing the clash of civilizations in the Middle East. The reality is an ancient dash between two branches of the family of the biblical patriarch Abraham. If the descendants of Isaac and Ishmael could find their way back to the God of Abraham, they would discover a way of life that would enable them to reconcile the age-long animosity.

In Genesis 17:1-2 God said to Abram, "Walk in My ways and be blameless. I will establish My covenant between Me and you, and I will make you exceedingly numerous" (Jewish Publication Society). This covenant of perfection contains the needed seeds of peace for today's conflict between all nations, not just the Arabs and Israelis. These seeds lead people to commit to life, not death.

The streets of Jerusalem and Bethlehem continue to wait for the safety that will allow children and adults to walk and work together. It will take a restoration of the way of God to bring an end to the tense and uncertain climate. The words of Psalm 122 carry a poignant urgency today: "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem."

—Darris McNeely

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“ANTI-SEMITISM,” (Continued from page 1)
erty restitution, Agence France-Presse reported. The extremist Freedom Union party then accused the government of ‘groveling to Jews,’ while another group ripped up an Israeli flag at a protest the following day” (ibid.).

Pressure on Israel

The recent Mideast crisis has highlighted the European tilt toward the Palestinian cause and against the Israeli state. Some debate whether this is due to pressure from large Muslim constituencies. France alone has more than four million Muslims living within its borders. It is estimated that 60 percent of the recent hate attacks in France come from this segment of the population.

But Israel is seeing itself marginalized in world opinion. Just last August in Durban, South Africa, a United Nations sponsored conference on racism sought to equate Zionism with racism and questioned the legitimacy of Israel’s existence.

“Members of the Norwegian Nobel committee have publicly called for the withdrawal of the peace prize from the Israeli foreign minister, Shimon Peres, but not from his co-winner, Yasser Arafat. The European Parliament voted to urge member governments to impose trade sanctions on Israel but urged no action against the Palestinian Authority. Historically, the far right and far left have not agreed on much. These days they seem united in their contempt for the Jewish state” (*International Herald Tribune*, April 21, 2002).

There is no side, Israeli or Palestinian, which is exempt from criticism in the current crisis. The path of violence will not bring a solution or a generational peace. But when rabbis are attacked, when Nazi graffiti is smeared on public walls and when a Protestant minister compares Ariel Sharon’s actions to those of King Herod who slaughtered male children under the age of 2, you have to ask, “Why is this happening?” Britain’s chief rabbi, Jonathan Sacks, said, “If you talk long enough about killing Jews, one day it will happen, God forbid.”

You might also ask, “If you begin to kill Jews, who is next?”

The roots of anti-Semitism

The killing of Jews because of racial

and ethnic intolerance has been going on since the days of the Persian Empire. The biblical book of Esther tells of the plot by Haman to exterminate the Jews in Persia. But for God’s intervention through Esther, it would likely have happened. Since the late first century A.D., anti-Jewish sentiment in the Roman Empire has led to mile and centuries of wandering and persecution. The creation of a modern state of Israel in 1948 opened a new chapter in the plaintive story of the Jewish longing for a secure homeland.

Christians have historically persecuted Jews, as well. What lies behind this incongruous evil? Volumes have been written analyzing this fact. Gruesome stories abound of atrocities perpetrated upon Jews.

In July of 1099 when the Crusaders captured Jerusalem, they slaughtered Arabs and Jews, burning both mosque and synagogue. Even a favorite modern musical, *Fiddler on the Roof*, has the underlying theme of a Russian pogrom built into the story line.

Author Thomas Cahill, in his book *The Gifts of the Jews*, probably comes closest of anyone to uncovering the central problem behind the ancient and modern problem of anti-Semitism. Cahill tells of Israel’s experience with God at Mt. Sinai where the Ten Commandments were given. God is pictured as giving a strict and unyielding moral code out of the thunder and lightning atop the mountain. Cahill shows how this one-dimensional image of God was historically transferred to Jews, depicting them as “stiff-necked,” unyielding and always seeking their “pound of flesh.”

“It is this supposedly ‘Jewish’ quality that will serve as a fundamental justification for the anti-Jewish attitudes that so infected the Middle Ages—right up to the late modern period. . .

“What is ghoulishly fascinating about the history of Christian depictions of Jews. . . is that the people being excoriated are presumed to exhibit the unyielding qualities of God himself—the same God whom Christians claimed to worship and whose sacred scriptures they revered. A good case can be made that medieval anti-Hebraism and its modern offspring anti-Semitism are both forms of God-hatred, masquerading as self-justifying intoler-

ance. The hatred of Christians for Jews may have its ultimate source in hatred of God, a hatred that the hater must carefully keep himself from knowing about. Why would one hate God? To find the answer we probably need look no further than the stark, unyielding Ten” (1998, pp. 152-153).

Cahill’s book reflects a common misunderstanding—that the Jews of today are synonymous with the Israelites of the Exodus. In reality, the ancestors of today’s Jews were but one clan out of 12. Still, his point about God-hating is well-taken.

Could it be that a hatred of God lies at the heart of anti-Semitism? Could it be that a hatred of God and His eternal spiritual law lies at the heart of not just anti-Semitism, but all the unsolvable problems of the human condition?

What does the Bible say?

Man has a long history of hiding from God and turning his back on revealed truth. Adam and Eve set a pattern when they defied God’s instruction and took the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. They were ashamed because of their sin and hid themselves from God’s presence (Genesis 3:8).

All of their descendants ever since have consciously or unconsciously rejected God and His way. Even Israel, the nation chosen for a close, special relationship, after witnessing the display of God’s power and presence on Mt. Sinai, “trembled and stood afar off.” To Moses they said, “You speak with us, and we will hear; but let not God speak with us lest we die” (Exodus 20:18-19). History would prove this distance between God and Israel to be more than symbolic.

The prophet Isaiah said that Israel, typical of all mankind, denied God by their lifestyle, needing to learn from an ox or a donkey, which at least knew the way home to the barn. Israel was a rebellious child who did not know or understand the way to God (Isaiah 1:2-4).

To the Church of God in Rome, Paul summarized the problem of all humanity: God is not in the knowledge base of the world. Notice, “For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness,

(See “ANTI-SEMITISM,” page 15)

Crisis in the Catholic Church

News of the sexual abuse of children by priests can no longer be covered up, and has serious implications for the Catholic Church in the United States and elsewhere.

by Mario Seiglie

Recent revelations have rocked the foundations of the Catholic Church. The news of sexual scandals in the Roman Church has filled the headlines and airwaves around the world. Numerous priests have been indicted for sexually abusing minors and many have ended in jail. These disclosures have weakened the American Catholic Church morally, financially and institutionally.

The U.S. Catholic Church isn't alone in the crisis. Numerous priests in Ireland, Australia, Poland, France and England have also been forced to resign or are facing prison sentences. "Scandals involving priests molesting children," says *The Los Angeles Times*, "have hit parishes across America—and indeed, around the world—in recent decades. Thousands of adults have come forward to say they were abused as children and many priests have been sent to jail" ("Reports of Priest's Abuse Enrage Boston Catholics," Feb. 9, 2002, p. 1).

Just in the United States, between 2,000 and 3,000 priests have been implicated for allegedly abusing children, and as of this writing, 60 clerics have been defrocked. The Catholic Church has reportedly paid more than \$1 billion to the victims.

"The crisis gathers steam day after day," says *Time* magazine, "with perhaps 2,000 priests accused of abuse across the country and hot lines jamming with more victims' calls... Since the first big abuse scandal broke at a Louisiana trial in 1985... an estimated \$1 billion or more [has been paid by the Catholic Church]" ("Can the Church Be Saved?" April 1, 2002, p. 30).

Tom Economus, who heads the organization, "The Linkup—Survivors of Clergy Abuse," himself a victim of priest sexual abuse, puts the figures even higher. He reports, "In the Roman Catholic Church there are over 800 priests [who] have been removed from ministry as a result of allegations against them... One noted expert claims that there are over 5,000

priests with some type of allegation against them. If this is true, then there are at least 1,000,000 direct victims of clergy sexual abuse and between 4-6 million indirect victims in the U.S." ("Catholic Pedophile Priests: The Effects on U.S. Society," TheLinkup.com Web site).

Although sexual abuse of minors is not confined to clerics of the Catholic Church, the sheer numbers of lawsuits against priests and the appalling number of children victimized place this scandal in a category of its own.

The start of the recent scandal

In January 2002, a particularly scandalous case involving a Boston priest who was accused of abusing children over a 30-year span triggered a national outcry. "The scandal erupted in January in Boston," writes *The Los Angeles Times*, "when it was reported that a priest who had allegedly molested more than 140 children had been transferred by superiors from parish to parish" ("Mahony's Accuser Describes History of Mental Problems," April 7, 2002, p. 28). The priest was found guilty, sentenced to nine years in jail, and the Boston archdiocese agreed to pay up to \$30 million to 86 of the victims.

As a result of this case, many other victims of clerical abuse began talking to the civil authorities or the press. Just in the Boston area, Catholic officials were forced to turn in the names of another 88 priests who were accused of sexual misconduct with minors over the last 20 or more years. Now, an additional 400 complaints of sexual abuse in the area have turned up. Thomas Groome, a Boston College professor and a prominent Catholic, said, "This is our September 11."

Pressure from insurance companies

Recently, the Boston archdiocese said it had settled so many child sexual abuse claims against it that a multimillion-dollar insurance

Just in the United States, between 2,000 and 3,000 priests have been implicated for allegedly abusing children. The Catholic Church has reportedly paid more than \$1 billion to the victims.

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fund was running dry. Insurance companies have threatened to cancel their coverage for such cases and this has prompted the Catholic leadership to step up its efforts to stem the tide of lawsuits.

In Ireland, the Catholic Church has sought an agreement with the government in an attempt to mitigate the legal damages, a somewhat similar situation to what tobacco companies have tried to do to protect themselves from lawsuits in the United States.

“In hopes of deterring class-action lawsuits,” reports *The Los Angeles Times*, “the church in January [2002] negotiated a compensation deal with the [Irish] government. Under the deal, thousands of people who were abused in church-run schools and orphanages from the 1950s onward would be eligible for hefty payments, but only if they dropped their own lawsuits. The church pledged to contribute about \$110 million, mostly in property, to a government-run compensation board. The total payout is projected to run four times that” (“Irish Lawyer to Investigate Alleged Sex Abuse by Catholic Clergy,” April 5, 2002, p. 25).

An unintentional result of the current scandal has been to reveal the vast wealth of the Catholic Church, since it has been paying huge sums of money to the victims for decades, even though many of the funds are tied to confidentiality clauses.

“The fierce scrutiny that is piercing the Church’s veil of secrecy over sex is also beginning to reveal the largely hidden state of its finances. As the institution’s legal and moral crisis builds, so too do the threats to its economic foundation—a foundation already under enormous strain. Cases filed to date ‘are just the tip of the iceberg, and it will be a multibillion-dollar problem before it ends,’ says Roderick MacLeish Jr., a Boston attorney who has represented more than 100 victims in the past decade” (“The Economic Strain on the Church,” *Business Week*, April 15, 2002, p. 5).

The problem of celibacy

At the heart of the problem is the age-old issue of priestly celibacy, a mandatory practice of abstaining from marriage for all Catholic clerics that was adopted in A.D. 1139 at the Second Lateran Council. Although Catholic Church leaders



Reuters/Pool/Michael Dwyer

Cardinal Bernard Law, pictured April 21 after mass, is the head of the Boston archdiocese where the scandal erupted in January

deny there is a direct connection between celibacy and priest sexual abuse of minors, serious studies done by priests or former priests claim there is a direct correlation.

Richard Sipe, a psychotherapist and a retired Benedictine monk who later married, conducted a 25-year study on the celibate practice of priests. He concluded back in 1995, “The Roman Catholic priesthood is in crisis. It is obvious that the crisis is sexual... The situation is far deeper and broader than most believers would like to admit, but a surprising number of church officials are aware of its true scope” (*Sex, Priests, and Power*, 1995, p. 6).

How profound is the sexual crisis in the Roman Church? “In 1976,” adds Richard Sipe, “I was convinced that I had enough data to estimate that at any one time 6% of Catholic priests in the United States were having sex with minors. Since 1985 I have reviewed an additional 1,800 accusations by adults who claim that as children they were sexually abused by priests. I also have seen the histories of nearly 500 priests who are known to have abused. This further study convinces me that the celibate/sexual system as it exists fosters and produces, and will continue to produce, at a rela-

tively stable rate, priests who sexually abuse minors...” (ibid., p. 27).

Although the news of child molestation by priests takes the headlines, the sexual problems among the Catholic clergy are far more rampant. “The sexual abuse of minors is only part of the problem” notes Sipe. “Four times as many priests involve themselves sexually with adult women, and twice the number of priests involve themselves with adult men” (ibid., p. 45).

Other experts who have studied the problem feel that Sipe’s figures may be conservative and that the problem is not limited to the American priesthood. Gary Wills, a Pulitzer Prize winning author, writes, “The Jesuit sociologist Joseph Ficher credited an account of over 30% of German priests having affairs with women. Andrew Greeley says that 25% of priests under 35 are gay, half of them sexually active. Jason Berry reports seminarians telling him Greeley’s numbers should be doubled [up to 50 percent]” (*Papal Sin, Structures of Deceit*, 2000, p. 186).

Increasing number of homosexual priests

These figures highlight a growing trend as more homosexuals join the

ranks of the Catholic priesthood.

"In some cases," Gary Wills notes, "there have been reports of predominantly gay seminaries and homosexual climates within them that became so pronounced that heterosexual seminarians felt uncomfortable and ultimately left. Gays themselves register the change. In a survey of 101 gay priests, those ordained before 1960 remember their seminary as having been 51% gay. Those ordained after 1981 say their seminaries were 70% gay. The existence of such surveys is itself a sign of the altered condition of gays in the priesthood. Greater tolerance has made it possible to learn more about the existence and attitudes of gay priests, whose internal network was almost invisible to outsiders until recent decades..."

"In fact, the admission of married men and women to the priesthood—

tures the 'priest's woman' and even married bishops seem to be taken for granted" (ibid., p. 72).

"The whole world has a problem," according to Notre Dame Professor Robert Pelton, "but it gets brought into sharper perspective in the so-called First World. In Latin America, it's more difficult to challenge the Catholic Church, and so many people will say they're more worried about their next meal and these types of concerns" ("U.S. View of Scandal Not Shared by World," *The Boston Globe*, April 8, 2002, p. 1).

The Boston Globe article goes on to say, "A Providence College psychology professor, the Rev. Joseph J. Guido, conducted a survey of superiors of an unspecified Catholic religious order and found that 83 percent of the North Americans were aware of an accusation of abuse against one of their priests,

down, winning rewards for bureaucratic skills and strict orthodoxy... If allegations came to diocese attention, the bishop, a power unto himself who often operated as if ordination gave him a share of the Pope's infallibility, acted as prosecutor, judge, sentencer. Desperate to retain even sinful men, as the number of priests shrank alarmingly, and ever putting the image of the Church first, bishops refined the system. Convince the family that publicity would harm the faith. Don't report to the police; don't warn the parish... And if a victim finally sued, the strategy was to admit nothing, buy silence, settle out of court and seal the deal with a confidentiality contract" ("Can the Church Be Saved?" April 1, 2002, p. 31).

Presently, the four-month-long sexual scandal has been so serious that the pope ordered all U.S. cardinals to appear before him in an attempt to stem the swelling tide of bad publicity. In a follow-up statement to the meetings, the pontiff said, "The abuse of the young is a grave symptom of a crisis affecting not only the Church but society as a whole. It is a deep-seated crisis of sexual morality, even of human relationships, and its prime victims are the family and the young. In addressing the problem of abuse with clarity and determination, the Church will help society to understand and deal with the crisis in its midst."

"The church stopped short of developing a 'zero tolerance' policy for priests accused of sexual transgressions. The American church leaders said they would recommend a special process to defrock any priest who has become 'notorious and is guilty of the serial, predatory sexual abuse of minors.' In cases that are 'not notorious' they would leave it up to the local bishop to decide if such a priest is a threat to children and should be defrocked" (Associated Press, April 24, 2002).

At the very least, this crisis will force the American segment of the Catholic Church to take stricter measures with errant priests and provide better, more open, cooperation with authorities to deal with violations of civil law. Both will be significant changes in the heretofore cloistered world of the Catholic hierarchy. ❖

At the very least, this crisis will force the American segment of the Catholic Church to take stricter measures with errant priests and provide better, more open, cooperation with civil authorities.

which is bound to come anyway—may well come for the wrong reason, not because women and the community deserve this, but because of panic at the perception that the priesthood is becoming predominantly gay" (ibid., pp. 194-195).

Wills adds, "Almost all the priests who left in the massive hemorrhage of the 1970s and 1980s left to marry. The homosexual priests stayed, which meant that their proportion of the whole went up even when their absolute numbers stayed the same. And now even that absolute number is rising. Many observers suspect that John Paul's real legacy to his church is a gay priesthood" (ibid., p. 290).

Barriers that inhibit reporting

Why have reports of scandals been largely confined to the English-speaking world?

Much has to do with the more closed societies of the developing nations. Reporting such sexual abuse there is far more difficult than in the United States or Europe. "I should note here that in African, Latin, and South American cul-

ture compared with 43 percent in Central America and the Caribbean and one-third in Africa, Asia, Europe, and South America.

"Research suggests... that the sexual abuse of children is a problem for the church everywhere," Guido wrote in the current issue of *America* magazine, a Jesuit weekly. "However," he wrote, "outside North America the religious order superiors were more likely to be aware of sexual misconduct by priests with adults, rather than children. In several parts of the English-speaking world, clergy sexual abuse scandals have erupted over the last two decades, costing the church hundreds of millions of dollars and immeasurable goodwill."

Problem can no longer be covered up

Why did it take so long to uncover what was going on?

"The Roman Catholic Church," explains *Time* magazine, "is a stern hierarchy that has always kept its deliberations secret, policed itself and issued orders from the top. An obedient priest moves up in power by keeping his head

Britain—A Fresh Look at the Lack of Biblical Values

Material wealth often masks spiritual and moral poverty, and not just in the United States. Our correspondent in Britain sees evidence all around.

by John Ross Schroeder

Traditional British cultural values are fast disappearing—steadily undermined by the forces of secularism and a growing ignorance of the Bible. The state of British society is generally judged almost solely by the standard of material prosperity.

Britons today take previously undreamed of holidays abroad. Florida and the Costa del Sol in Spain are particular favorites. The years of sacrificial rationing, particularly after World War II, have given way to a plethora of brand-new motor cars and all the many multifaceted modern conveniences that our Western technology can provide.

Economically, few want to return to yesterday. But we must ask the question: Can this material prosperity continue to defy the uncivilized face of a culture in deep crisis, where traditional family values are increasingly found meaningless? In the long run, can the marketplace prosper without moral values being practiced by the citizenry?

There is no question that there are very big holes in Britain's national fabric. Relationships are fragile. The land is full of broken marriages, lonely people, confused and uncared for children, rising violence, plus a marked decline in courtesy, civility and good manners. Even the standard of driving has suffered in recent years.

This general decline is not without its causes. And ignorance of biblical standards constitutes a major one.

The virtual disappearance of real religious influence

As British author Leo McKinstry observed: "Children growing up today know nothing of the central tenets of Christianity: the Ten Commandments, the four gospels, the Sermon on the Mount... We are living in a religiously illiterate society, where young people are not even given the opportunity to decide for themselves whether they believe in God or not because they are so ill-informed about the religion which built our civilisation [British spelling

in all quotes]" (*Turning the Tide*, 1997, p. 6).

Is this overstating the case? If so, it is only an error of small degree. Jonathan Sacks, the chief rabbi of London, adds: "We have become less religious, and religion was the classic source of our belief in a revealed morality, commandments engraved on tablets of stone. We have become more culturally diverse, and we now know that what seems wrong to one group may be permissible in a second, and even admirable in a third" (*Faith in the Future*, 1995, p. 17).

Spiritually speaking, what is being taught in the educational system is not helping our young people. Wrote one Oxford professor: "Some people think that the Ten Commandments are a set of universal moral rules, which everybody should obey. *But they are not.* They are addressed to the Jews... Again these are not universal moral rules for the whole world" (Keith Ward, *God: A Guide for the Perplexed*, 2002, p. 73, emphasis added).

The observing of biblical standards is definitely on the wane in the British Isles and elsewhere in the Western world. Confusion reigns as to what is right or wrong, good or bad, truth or error. The Hebrew prophet Isaiah looked at his own age, and what he saw certainly applies to ours. He wrote: "Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; who put darkness for light, and light for darkness; who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!" (Isaiah 5:20).

All these woes are with us today. We spend many millions annually trying to cope with crime, single mothers, renegade fathers, AIDS and the HIV virus, abortion—the list is virtually endless. And yet our society is chock-full of moral relativists whose unofficial creed proclaims a message of situation ethics, "play it by ear," with no universally right or wrong assessments of any given problem.

In answer, the intriguing book, *Relativism: Feet Firmly Planted in Mid-Air* poses this declaration: "In the end, we must accept one of two alternatives. Either relativism is true or

There is no question that there are very big holes in Britain's national fabric. This general decline is not without its causes. And ignorance of biblical standards constitutes a major one.

morality is true. Either we live in a universe in which morality is a meaningless concept and thus we are forever condemned to silence regarding any moral issue, or moral rules exist and we are beholden to a moral God who holds us accountable to his law. There are no other choices” (Francis J. Beckham and Gregory Kouki, 1998).

The changing face of Britain

Britain has not always been this way. World famous British novelist, the late George Orwell, wrote of his countrymen in 1941: “Their extreme gentleness, their deeply moral attitude to life...the gentleness of English civilisation is perhaps its most marked characteristic. You notice it the instant you set foot on English soil. It is a land where bus conductors are good-tempered and the policemen carry no revolvers” (*The Lion and the Unicorn*, 1941).

Writing 14 years later in 1955, American anthropologist Geoffrey Gorer echoed Orwell’s words and more: “The English are certainly among the most peaceful, gentle, courteous and orderly population that the civilised world has ever seen. The control of aggression has gone to such remarkable lengths that you hardly ever see a fight in a bar [pub] and football crowds are as orderly as church meetings” (quoted in Norman Dennis’ *Rising Crime and the Dismembered Family*, London, 1993).

No author in his right mind could conscientiously write such glowing words today. What we now see about us has happened in one or two generations. The behavioral changes within one century are truly astonishing.

Over time, the neglect of spiritual absolutes regarding how a society should govern itself brings with it the acute dangers of social disintegration and moral decay, so evident in present-day Britain.

A cause for every effect

Clearly the fact that our culture is in crisis testifies to the existence of a moral universe ruled by basic spiritual principles. There is a cause for every effect. “The curse causeless shall not come” (Proverbs 26:2, KJV).

Our general way of living is producing lots and lots of undesirable, but pre-

dictable, effects. For instance, the mental junk food we absorb daily from our television sets is a big factor in the spiritual pollution currently dogging our permissive society. More and more “trash TV” is becoming available, and even worse, is increasingly acceptable to unsuspecting viewers (Romans 1:32). Truly our moral compass is gradually being broken and fragmented. As a nation we are losing our moorings.

We have the public testimony of Britain’s mainstream spiritual leaders. In 1996, the archbishop of Canterbury, George Carey, stated: “We live in a society which is losing touch with its spiritual and moral roots. It is confused and struggles to make sense of what it believes. Individualism and relativism have seeped deep into our culture” (*The Times*, June 3, 1996). And the late Cardinal Basil Hume spoke of British society as living off “a dwindling supply of spiritual and moral capital” (*The Times*, May 29, 1998).

There are plenty of specifics available for public scrutiny. To name one, consider the wholesale breaking of the Seventh Commandment. Helen Weathers, *Daily Mail* writer, wrote: “Britain has become a nation of adulterers. When academics studied the sexual habits of men and women in 40 counties they discovered the British are more likely than any other nationality to cheat on their partners. Not only this, but a third of all men are in relationships with women they ‘stole’ from marriages or other long-term relationships, while 28 per cent of women have ‘stolen’ their other halves. Two in five marriages now end in divorce—the highest rate in Europe—and adultery is cited in around 30 per cent of those cases. In France the rate is one-third lower, and Italy is one-fifth that of Britain...” (Dec. 8, 2001).

Finally, hear the high-ranking Jewish rabbi, Jonathan Sacks: “In teaching our children moral relativism we have placed them in a world without a moral compass, even hinting that there is no such thing. In the name of tolerance we have taught that every alternative lifestyle is legitimate and that moral judgement is taboo, even ‘judgmental.’ ... A political order based on liberty and tolerance has yielded a Britain significantly less tolerant and more violent, harsh and abrasive than the one many

grandparents knew” (*Faith in the Future*, 1995, pp. 14-15).

A call to repentance

What is the purpose of this article? To defame Britain and unfairly put the microscope on her many moral problems? No, an integral part of the true gospel message involves a call to genuine repentance—a change of heart and a turning to an altogether different direction—one of obedience to God’s basic spiritual law, the Ten Commandments.

What Isaiah wrote so many, many centuries ago applies equally well today: “Cry aloud, spare not; lift up your voice like a trumpet; tell My people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins” (Isaiah 58:1). For what purpose? So that as many individuals as possible (if not the whole nation) may repent and turn to God, thereby receiving His abundant mercy.

The prophet Isaiah also spoke of this precious reconciliation process. “‘Come now, and let us reason together’ says the LORD, ‘though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be white as snow. Though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool. If you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land’” (Isaiah 1:18-19).

The publisher of *World News and Prophecy* is fully committed to spreading this message of repentance as far and wide as God makes possible—to the British Isles, as well as the rest of the world. Luke’s version of this great commission emphasizes repentance in particular. “And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem” (Luke 24:47).

We also publish a booklet about the Ten Commandments, showing how each and every one is as powerful, active and unchanging as the scientific law of gravity. This basic spiritual law is the very summation of God’s absolute standard for the conduct of all people. You cannot afford to be without this publication. It’s free for the asking; it’s titled simply, *The Ten Commandments*.

Ideally every British and American home should have a copy of this booklet—and every reader of *World News and Prophecy* in particular. Don’t neglect writing for your free copy today. ❖

Mass Culture's Horrendous Consequences

The 21st century sees the entertainment-centered culture of the Western world spread around the globe through movies, television, music and the Internet. Rather than genuinely "entertaining" in a wholesome sense, the effect appears to encourage self-indulgence of the crudest and rawest elements of human nature.

by Cecil E. Maranville

Entertainment is both pleasurable and necessary for establishing and maintaining good health. By "entertainment," I mean the type of activity that uplifts, inspires or relaxes the human spirit. The biblical "There Is a Season" poem acknowledges this truth with its declaration that there is "a time to laugh...and a time to dance" (Ecclesiastes 3:4).

One of the saddest realities of the present culture of the Western world is that it broadcasts a type of "entertainment" that pulls one down much more than it uplifts. The themes marketed as entertainment typically focus on self-destructive behaviors that would ruin the life of any individual who practiced them. Further, the pursuit of the way of life shown on the big screen, the television screen or "screamed" from musical presentations would also corrupt the broader community.

The fabulous wealth and influence of the West have enabled it to spread this poisonous product worldwide. Millions of people living in the West would immediately protest, saying their personal values are in no way reflected by the entertainment industry. Nonetheless, the all-pervasive Western entertainment is a prime illustration used by radical religious extremists to recruit terrorists to destroy "the corrupt West."

In the wake of the recent terrorist attacks, many Americans asked: "Why do so many people in other countries hate us?" "Part of any honest response involves the movies, TV shows and popular music we export around the globe" (Michael Medved, "Can Hollywood Change Its Ugly Version of USA?" Oct. 18, 2001). Many Americans may look at their beautiful homes, pleasant neighborhoods, fabulously-equipped schools or at the freedoms they enjoy and think, "This is America!" If they spent a day watching the latest Hollywood releases, the latest television programs and listening to the most popular music—without looking at any other aspect of America, they would realize in horror, "This is the America that the rest of the world sees."

Medved noted in the above piece that a Pakistani theater had been destroyed recently by anti-American rioters when showing the R-rated film *Desperado*. Americans know that Hollywood productions are more fantasy than fact, but people in other parts of the world may not know that. "If you live in Indonesia or Nigeria...you'll get little chance to balance the negative impressions you draw from *The X-Files*, *Hannibal* or *Natural Born Killers*... No wonder so many Islamic extremists (and so many others) now look upon the USA as a cruel, godless, brutal and vulgar society—a 'Great Satan,' indeed."

Americans say, "Don't portray us this way!"

In spite of the fact that survey after survey shows that the American public prefers the type of entertainment material that portrays and encourages the values of family, faith and flag, nearly 65 percent of all movie releases in the United States are R-rated, according to Medved.

He made the claim that R-rated movies are the least profitable nearly 10 years ago in his book, *Hollywood vs. America* (1992). Several years later, a professor of economics at the University of California, Irvine, conducted a major scientific study on this claim. Arthur DeVany's sophisticated study proved that Medved was correct. R-rated films fared more poorly than "G, PG, and PG13 in all three dimensions of revenues, costs, return on production cost, and profits" (Medved, "Politics, Hollywood Heavies: They Can't Both Be Right About Public Preferences," Feb. 23, 2001).

TV writers, programmers, performers and executives were called the "vulgarians at the gate" by the late Steve Allen in his book by that title. Consider the following statistics: 77 percent of people polled by *Family Circle* magazine (reported in its May 15, 2001 issue) have a problem with the sexual content of television; 61 percent won't watch some shows because of

In spite of the fact that surveys show that the American public prefers the type of entertainment material that portrays and encourages the values of family, faith and flag, nearly 65 percent of all movie releases are R-rated.

the sexual content; 84 percent won't allow their children to watch some shows for the same reason; 93 percent changed the channel or turned off the television entirely, because of sexual content of a program (Cal Thomas, "Must-Sleaze TV?" 2001 *LA Times* Syndicate).

Thomas also cited a *Newsweek* survey from 2000, which showed that over 90 percent of parents of children ages 5 to 17 said that limiting the amount of violence children are exposed to in the media is an important factor in reducing crime.

Why "entertainment" is low quality

Why would the entertainment industry continue to generate a classless and crude product, if people do not want it? There are three fundamental answers to that question. First, they market their product to a small niche of the population—young people who have the money and the inclination to indulge themselves in what Hollywood has to offer. Medved calls them "a relative handful of drooling, subliterate, hormone addled adolescent males" (Medved, Feb. 23, 2001). (I don't believe he meant to imply that all teens are of this caliber!) Cal Thomas referred to a Federal Trade Commission report of 2000, which found that the entertainment industry is targeting violent films, music and video games to young people (Thomas, Aug. 9, 2001).

Parents may not be happy with television programming, but they're allowing their children to watch it in record amounts—probably due in part to not knowing how to say "no" to the demands that their children make. According to a Nielsen Media Research report of 1993, children spend nearly as much time learning about life through media as in formal schooling. The average child spends approximately 28 hours a week watching television, not including movies and/or Internet games.

The Parents Music Resource Center reports that American teenagers listen to an estimated 10,500 hours of rock music between the seventh and 12th grades alone—which is more than 95 percent of the time they spend in school over 12 years (Entertainment Monitor, December 1995)!

Second, some producers of Western entertainment are more interested in the

respect and accolades that they receive from their peers than they are in turning a profit at the box office. They are independently wealthy enough that they can afford to be so incredibly self-absorbed.

Citing Martin Scorsese as an example of a director with a string of financial failures, Michael Medved wrote: "The horrific, chillingly rendered violence, the loveless sex and gutter language that characterize most of his films may help to alienate millions of moviegoers but they only add to the luster of his industry reputation as a cutting edge artist, worthy of support... Peer respect matters more than box office success to many industry insiders... Instead [of pursuing quality programming that emphasizes wholesome values] industry veterans passionately pursue good reviews, respectability, and serious esteem-providing reassurance to the nagging insecurity that often accompanies the artistic temperament" (Medved, Feb. 23, 2001).

The third reason that Hollywood can afford to continue to produce and market its corrupt form of entertainment brings us back to the sober reality of how Western culture has impacted the world. That is, Hollywood now receives a majority of its income from foreign audiences. As recently as 20 years ago, foreign revenue accounted for only approximately a third of Hollywood's income, "but in the year 2000, these foreign audiences generate[d] more than 60% of Tinseltown's cash flow" (ibid, emphasis added).

Consider the irony: Many Americans decry Western "entertainment," and many foreigners are aghast at the America they see portrayed in the electronic media. At the same time, millions, both in America and in other countries, have an increasing appetite for this type of trash. And they are willing to pay for it. The result: there will continue to be more of the same.

Evil vs. good

At the root of this battle is a spiritual struggle of evil vs. good. It's not, as many tend to portray it, "good vs. evil," because good doesn't struggle against evil—good is inherently better. Nor is this a new struggle, in spite of the fact that human pride causes some to point back a few decades to a time when some godly values were more widely accepted than they are today.

The truth is, whenever men give in to their basest impulses, evil prevails. It's been so since the beginning.

One of the oldest texts in the Bible is Job. He lamented in his day about an over-indulged generation of children, which did nothing more than pursue entertainment. "They spend their time singing and dancing. They are wealthy and need deny themselves nothing; they are prosperous to the end" (Job 21:12-13, The Living Bible). Because their lives were so prosperous, the youths saw no practical need for God and subsequently had no respect for what He had to say.

And so it will be until the end of the age of mankind. Warning of the end-time world conditions, Jesus said, "But take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that Day [of My return to the earth] come on you unexpectedly" (Luke 21:34).

Playing with the devil

Satan is a real being to most people of the world, apart from the West. But evil spirits are relegated to horrifying super-criminals or slow-minded buffoons in much Western entertainment.

Witchblade is a movie cum television series in which a female police officer is both master and servant to a mysterious supernatural weapon. This weapon was supposedly wielded by Joan of Arc and many other "warrior women" down through history in times of great crisis.

Dark Angel is another supernatural show about a genetically-enhanced human prototype who battles evil in a run-down world. The main character is also a woman, which is part of a trend to portray women as dominant heroines in a modern world.

People the world around are familiar with the movie *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*, based upon the first of J.K. Rowling's series of novels about a young boy in a school for witchcraft and wizardry. With each new novel, the boy grows a year older and a year further educated in the "art of wizardry."

Charmed is a show about three sultry sisters, who are witches. *Buffy, the Vampire Slayer* and *Angel* are similar programs, which mix the typical immorality of Hollywood with the Western proclivity to

(See "MASS CULTURE," page 13)

The Queen Mother, the Mideast and the War on Terror

These news items may not seem to fit together; but by reflecting on the life and death of Queen Elizabeth's beloved mother, we can see important interconnections.

by Melvin Rhodes

I first heard the news of the death of the queen mother while sitting in a hotel room in Kumasi, Ghana. I was watching CNN International, a member of the CNN family of television stations that is broadcast by satellite from London and is seen all over Europe and Africa. The other main item of news that dominated the screen that Saturday evening was the continuing conflict in the Middle East. The continuing War on Terror also received a few minutes here and there.

These news items may seem disengaged, but they are very much connected. And the queen mother, aged 101 when she died, would have been one of the first to realize that fact.

Stressing the ties, even in death

In death, the queen mother, queen consort of a constitutional monarch proscribed from taking an active part in politics, made a profound political statement, unrealized by most observers. By requesting dominion troops at her funeral, the queen mother was remembering the vital role the nations of the British Commonwealth and Empire played in the two world wars that threatened Britain's very existence and the freedoms on which the Western world is built. She herself had played an important role in the second of those conflicts, a supportive role in the first.

Ironically, at the time of her death, troops of the nations that are still officially dominions, though the term is rarely used now, were fighting alongside British and American troops in Afghanistan, as part of the War on Terror.

One of the world's truly great women

Born Elizabeth Bowes-Lyon on Aug. 4, 1900, the lady who would become the first commoner in over two centuries to marry a future king, would live during the reigns of six monarchs and see the world change dramatically.

At the time of her birth, Queen Victoria was queen-empress, the head of state of Britain itself, of the British dominions around the world and of

dozens of Britain's colonies, as well as empress of India, itself the second most populous nation on earth. Additionally, she was known affectionately as the grand-mama of Europe, her children having married into many of Europe's royal houses, adding to the power, influence and prestige of Britain herself. Britain was at the height of her power at this time, the Pax Britannica having given the world almost a century of relative peace. Victoria's son Edward VII was to be the last monarch to bask in all the glory and stability that was the British Empire.

On Elizabeth's 14th birthday, the Empire went to war. The war to end all wars, they called it. A war between all the major powers of Europe, it became known as the Great War until a later conflict when it became a number, World War I or the First World War. For numbers of military casualties, it was the worst war in history. Elizabeth's childhood home, Glamis Castle in Scotland, was turned into a convalescent home for troops from the dominions, the self-governing nations of the British Empire that did so much to aid Britain in this conflict. Australians, New Zealanders, Canadians and South Africans became friends. Elizabeth's devotion to the dominions no doubt began in these turbulent and formative years. After the Great War, she continued to write some of the soldiers whom she had helped nurse.

Also after the war she met the duke of York, second son of King George V, a nervous young man who was soon attracted to her. She turned down his first two proposals of marriage, as she did not want to be in the limelight as a member of the royal family. One consolation was that her "Bertie" would not be king, since his eldest brother, David, was first in line.

They married in 1923, Elizabeth becoming the duchess of York.

Their first child, Elizabeth, was born April 21, 1926. A second daughter, Margaret Rose, was born four years later. Although these events brought a great deal of press coverage, David

By requesting dominion troops at her funeral, the queen mother was remembering the vital role the nations of the British Commonwealth and Empire played in the two world wars that threatened Britain's very existence and the freedoms on which the Western world is built.

was still the center of attention, “the most eligible bachelor in the world.” On his frequent tours of Britain and the Empire, David, the prince of Wales, became a very popular figure and was constantly watched to see whom he might marry.

Soon after the death of his father, King George V, in January 1936, rumors began circulating about David’s relationship with a married American divorcée, Wallis Simpson. Mrs. Simpson was estranged from her second husband and would soon be divorced from him. By this time, David was no longer prince of Wales. He was now King Edward VIII. But 1936 was to become the first year since 1483 that England had three monarchs, a sure sign of political instability.

The world’s most important office

It is difficult for people today to appreciate the seriousness of the events that were to follow or the potential catastrophic consequences of one man’s single-minded pursuit of the woman he loved. Over 75 percent of the British people today do not remember any monarch before the present queen, Elizabeth II. Only a handful will remember the Abdication Crisis of December 1936. Fewer still will be aware that this was very much an international crisis.

To understand why, we need to realize that in 1936, the British monarch held the most important office on earth. Today, that position is held by the president of the United States, the world’s only superpower at this time. But in 1936 the British Empire was the world’s only superpower—and the Empire was held together by a shared loyalty and devotion to the crown.

Everybody in the Empire in 1936 would have known the name of the king-emperor and would have recognized his face, on all the coins, banknotes and stamps that one third of all the peoples of the world used. But few would have been able to name the British prime minister or the prime ministers of the dominions or the viceroy of India. British power held sway over one quarter of the globe. It is misleading to say that the monarch was “only” a constitutional monarch. The monarch was the unifying symbol of the Empire and an essential part of the British concept of liberty and of parliamentary

democracy that had spread to the four corners of the earth.

When it became clear that the new king wanted to marry Mrs. Simpson, there was division throughout the Empire and Commonwealth. Edward (David) was extremely popular, particularly with the working classes. But the king was also head of the Church of England and the state church did not permit divorce and remarriage. Some of the dominions were also dead set against having a king who was married to a divorcée. Eventually Edward VIII abdicated the throne in favor of his brother George.

Neither George (Bertie) nor his wife, Elizabeth, wanted the awesome responsibility. Later, the queen mother was to feel that it shortened her husband’s life considerably. He died after only 15 years as king, guiding his nation and the Empire through the dark days of World War II and the severe austerity that followed it. He was also to witness the beginning of the dismantling of the Empire. George VI and Elizabeth, his queen consort, were to be the last emperor and empress of India.

The new king and queen had experienced firsthand the loyalty and affection of the Empire when they had visited Canada immediately prior to World War II. Wherever they went, they were warmly greeted by millions of their Canadian subjects. They followed their visit to Canada with a state visit to the United States, where they were also warmly received, George VI being the first reigning British monarch to visit the American republic. This visit was to turn out to be very important, in light of subsequent events, helping to lay the foundation of a close alliance that continues to this day.

After the Abdication Crisis, it was World War II that restored the fortunes of the monarchy and Elizabeth herself was mostly responsible. Winston Churchill, wartime prime minister, had urged the king and queen to depart for Canada. He was not solely concerned about their safety and the well-being of the two princesses. He was also aware that Britain could lose its war with Hitler’s Germany. The king and queen could then lead a government in exile which would rally the forces of the Empire to free Britain itself from despotism. Other European royal houses were already fulfilling similar roles in exile.

The queen refused to leave the British people. Instead, the king and queen remained in London during the blitz, the intense nightly bombing of the city by the German Luftwaffe. The royal couple was often seen visiting bomb sites, encouraging the civilian victims of this new type of warfare. When Buckingham Palace itself was bombed, the queen said: “Good. Now I can look the East End in the eye,” a reference to the area of London that had suffered the most.

The importance of Commonwealth and American ties

During the war, Winston Churchill became a close confidante and friend. Following the prime minister’s customary weekly visit to Buckingham Palace to keep the king informed of political and military developments, Churchill was often asked to stay for dinner. During these evenings he would frequently share his passion for history with the king and his family.

Churchill, the great Empire loyalist, stressed the importance of the Empire and Commonwealth to Britain’s security and independence and to the freedoms of the world. The son of a British aristocrat and an American socialite, he also emphasized the growing importance of ties between the Commonwealth and the United States. Later, Churchill was to write his monumental *History of the English Speaking Peoples*, still one of the few historical works to look at British, imperial and American history as one.

After the war, the king and queen took their daughters on a tour of southern Africa, wanting to thank the peoples of the Empire for their support during the six-year conflict. On this visit, their eldest daughter, now the heir to the throne, the future Elizabeth II, dedicated her life to “the service of the great imperial family to which we all belong.” This speech was recorded on her 21st birthday. Less than four months later the new Labour [British spelling] government in London began dismantling the Empire which had been the free world’s first line of defense going right back to the time of the first Queen Elizabeth in the late 16th century.

A later tour of other parts of the Empire was to be arranged to thank those countries, too, for their contribution to the imperial war effort. Sadly, the king’s

health would not permit future trips. He died of lung cancer on Feb. 6, 1952, aged 56. His wife was to live on for another 50 years.

On her 100th birthday she expressed the desire to see her daughter's Golden Jubilee, an accomplishment made by no previous queen mother. She was to live long enough to see the actual day (Feb. 6), but not long enough for the celebrations scheduled for June. Sadly, she also lived long enough to attend the funeral of her other daughter, Margaret, who died exactly seven weeks before her mother. Elizabeth was buried alongside her husband in St. George's Chapel, Windsor. In the same crypt are the ashes of Princess Margaret Rose.

British-American ties no accident

Addressing European criticism that the Bush administration's foreign policy is simplistic, Canadian Mark Steyn, now a resident of New Hampshire and a fervent supporter of the Bush administration's War on Terror, wrote the following in the British magazine *The Spectator*: "At decisive moments in human history, someone has to be simple, someone has to be primal. For two crucial years in the mid-20th century, the British Empire played that role alone, and in so doing saved the world."

Continuing from the same article: "Of the 20th century's three global conflicts—the First, Second and Cold Wars—who was on the right side each time? Germany: one out of three. Italy: two out of three. For a perfect triple, there's [sic] only Britain, America, Canada, Australia, New Zealand. Even now, with their military capabilities shriveled to almost nothing the only guys actually on the ground in any combat role with the Americans are the British, Aussie and Kiwi SAS boys and Canada's JTF2" ("On the Right Side of History," Feb. 23, 2002).

Regular readers of this newsletter will know that such was prophesied to happen. The British Empire and the United States of America were part of the prophesied blessing to the children of ancient Israel. The two sons of Israel's favorite son Joseph were to "become a multitude of nations" (the British Empire and Commonwealth) and a "great" single nation, the United States of America (Genesis 48:19). "In the last days" (Genesis 49:1) these two brothers were to bring great prosperity to the world and be leaders in the constant struggle for freedom (verses 22-24).

I don't know if the queen mother ever read James Truslow Adams' *History of the British Empire 1784-1939*. The

American historian wrote his historical account in 1940, at a time when the British Empire was fighting for its very existence against Nazi Germany and while America remained neutral. Adams ended his book with the following prophetic passage: "Different peoples may have different ideals of government but for those who have been accustomed to freedom of person and of spirit, the possible overthrow of the British Empire would be a catastrophe scarcely thinkable. Not only would it leave a vacuum over a quarter of the globe into which all the wild winds of anarchy, despotism and spiritual oppression could rush, but the strongest bulwark outside ourselves for our own safety and freedom would have been destroyed."

Included in those "wild winds of anarchy, despotism and spiritual oppression" that have succeeded the queen mother's beloved Empire and Commonwealth are the never-ending conflicts in the Middle East that threaten the very peace of the planet and the rising tide of Islamic fundamentalism which struck so suddenly on Sept. 11.

The death of the queen mother reminds us of what the world has lost. The conflict in the Middle East and the War on Terror are two of the awful consequences of that loss. ❖

"MASS CULTURE," (Continued from page 10) make demons into dancers. A more childish version of the same trope is *Sabrina, the Teenage Witch*—a "comedy" about a bumbling girl with supernatural powers.

Of course, producing programs about demons and other evil, whether in a comedic or horror setting, isn't new to Hollywood. But now the Hollywood image of "spiritism" has a worldwide audience. How must these programs and movies like *The Mummy*, *Pet Cemetery*, *Nightmare Before Christmas*, etc., come across to the world?

Producers of movies, television or music do not shun evil spirits; they use them as bit players in an entertainment-addicted world. The devil's power isn't a laughing matter. He has godlike power over this present world and is committed to using his formidable resources to prevent its citizens from enjoying what is truly good (2 Corinthians 4:4).

Study after study shows that children exposed to violent themes in entertainment are seriously damaged. Sadly, these facts are quickly swept aside in the rush to the ticket counter, the TV remote or the music store. An eye-opening study—for those with eyes to see—has been conducted in various countries to measure the increase of murder after the introduction of television. The shocking truth: Homicide rates *doubled within 10 to 15 years*. TV was introduced at different times in the countries studied, but the results were the same (B.S. Centerwall, Comstock G. [ed.], "Exposure to Television as a Cause of Violence," *Public Education as Behavior*; 1989, 2:1-58).

Crimes of a sexual nature are part of the results, too. "Did we really think that there would be no consequences—no hell to pay—as we slowly repealed personal and corporate codes of conduct? Images and music say to young boys that women

are nothing but sex objects. Why are we surprised when they learn and act out that lesson? Their cultural and political icons speak as if sex is a personal entitlement and that women are as disposable as rags" (Cal Thomas, "The Abusive Date. Why Are We Surprised?" 2001, *LATimes* Syndicate).

The Old Testament concludes with an encouraging promise from God, coupled with a truly sobering warning. The good news is that He has promised to do a work at the end of the age of mankind, which would turn the hearts of fathers back to the children and the hearts of children back to their fathers—restoring the family. The sobering news is, were it not for this work of God, the human family would become so corrupt that even God could not save the resultant world (Malachi 4:4-6).

The heritage of Western culture is *that* evil—the family is *that* important—the work of the Church of God is *that* vital. ❖

“NO ROAD,” (Continued from page 16)

but his inquiry would be the beginning step towards President George H.W. Bush’s famous “line in the sand.” Later Powell would comment, “I guess some people suggested that it was not the correct thing to ask, but I asked it anyway.”

Author Harari reminds us that Powell was living out a pledge that he and other junior officers had forged by experience, “that someday, when they were in charge, they would not make the same mistakes.” Building roads where there are none is not for the faint of heart. People, whether in governments, families, companies or congregations, will come down ever so hard to maintain the status quo of comfort—

closest to the problems. Therefore, that is where the real wisdom is.” He practiced this during Desert Storm by asking young men and women how they would win the war.

Harari captures the essence of Powell’s “search for a road” by relating how he would engage a young captain, asking him to “talk to me, son, tell me what you have got.” And then I would let him argue with me as if he were arguing with an equal. After all, he knew more about the subject than I did. I also knew that he would tell his friends that he had argued with the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Word would spread and people would come to understand that when they came to my office I really wanted to hear what they thought.”

Powell understands that we must get away from our desks and our “made-from-far solutions” to engage those who are involved in the process. That means listening to the troops, whoever and wherever they may be. With this background in mind, is it any wonder that Powell listened to both sides of the Middle East equation? The shortest distance between two points is a straight line, but you have to be willing to touch the other point, and gain its input.

3. “Share the power”

Harari quotes Powell: “Plans don’t accomplish work. It is people who get things done.” Here Powell adheres to two basic premises—people are competent and every job is important. Powell feels it is his job to convey to every person, through every layer of the organization, the valuable role he performs.

The flip side of Powell’s approach is that while recognition is offered from above, accountability is expected from below. This comes from his personal experience when he was promoted to lieutenant general and stationed in Germany. Powell received a letter

from his superior officer stating, “If you have not heard from me offering you a second position or promoting you to four stars, I expect you to have your resignation on my desk.” Harari aptly notes, “Two years later four-star general Powell was in the White House as National Security Advisor.”

Before we think Powell’s superior was too tough, let’s consider how Jesus Christ set a marvelous example in empowering His followers and allowing them to flourish in their newfound roles. In carefully reading Luke 9:1-10, we find He didn’t write a textbook manual on cooperative ventures, but He had a simple four-point plan of involving others towards a common goal. In verse 1, we note that He gives them ample power and authority to do the job. In verses 3 to 5, He gives them specific instructions about how to travel. He tells them in verse 5 how to deal with the job at hand when adversity sets in. In verse 10, just like Powell’s superior in Europe, He gently lets the disciples know that He does expect results and will be waiting for an accounting. The concept of “we” is truly a remarkable tool for team building if we can



Reuters/Harakuk Levison

Colin Powell with Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon April 14

even when the outcome bears no conceivable yield. The subtle yet powerful signals of “not rocking the boat” are a pervasive insecurity that only puts off the inevitable.

Yet, those SOS (“same old stuff”) signals that every new generation gets numbed into accepting are very strong. Nathan the prophet was willing to tell King David something he did not want to hear. “You are the man!” (2 Samuel 12:7.) Do you really think that Nathan was the only one who knew what was going on? What we surely do know is that he was willing to be “a skunk,” if that’s what it took to fulfill God’s purpose for him.

Let’s face it—any real solutions lie on the other side of the all-too-real panic that we might feel. But it is only here that any meaningful road between two distant points can begin. Everything else is simply what I call “believable make-believe.”

2. “To get the real dirt—head for the trenches”

Another Powell principle is, “The people in the field are

only purposefully step over the stumbling block of “me.”

4. “Know when to ignore your advisors”

Harari poignantly describes how Powell sees experts, advisors and consultants as getting you only so far. The final decision comes from a leader’s hard-won experience. You might call it their “gut instinct” wrapped in their “heart of hearts.”

Powell concludes that at times the experts possess more data than judgment. He states that elites can become so inbred that they produce hemophiliacs that bleed to death the first time they are nicked by the real world.

Again, his conclusions come from his Vietnam experience. Harari shares how “Powell asked a Vietnamese army officer, why had an outpost been put in such a vulnerable spot?” The officer explained, “Some military experts wanted it there to supply a nearby airfield.” So then Powell asked, “Why was the airfield there?” The officer answered, “To resupply the outpost.” Obviously, we see in this comically sad scenario that the dots simply were not connecting.

We are told that thousands of years ago, another general named Alexander the Great came up against the great Gordian knot tied by Gordius, king of Phrygia. Legend had it that the man who undid the knot would become the ruler of Asia.

Everybody had an idea, many had calculations, lots of people had opinions and more than a few had tugged, pried and pulled, but all to no avail. Alexander the Great took all the advice and pushed it aside. He simply took out his sword and sliced right through the problematic knot. Everybody had been so focused on the details of every little twist and turn of cord that they had overlooked the obvious.

Of course, the rest is history. Slicing through our problems means we must maintain a wider focus rather than be weighed down with never-ending details.

“I am the path”

Now that we understand the inner chemistry of this man, is it any wonder that the secretary of state was willing to go to the Middle East in search of

some solution? Oh yes, the secretary has taken a lot of heat from around the world. The media offers headlines like “failed mission,” “no peace at hand,” “peace mission torpedoed,” “Powell returns empty-handed,” etc. It is so easy to write headlines rather than make them, whether we succeed or fail.

Nearly 2,000 years ago, a bunch of fishermen laughed at a guy who thought for a moment that he could get out of a boat and walk on water. There was no road to walk on. Only water. But for the moment, he dared to dream and he dared to believe as he willingly stepped out. One of the greatest lessons we can learn from Peter’s exploit (Matthew 14:28-30) moves beyond the immediate lesson that he took his eyes off Christ and focused on the storm. At least he got out of the boat while everyone else watched. I’m sure Peter and Colin Powell would have some fun sharing notes.

There’s one more story, one from Africa. A hunter who was out on expedition got lost in the jungle with nothing but bush and a few cleared spaces. He found a native’s hut and asked the native if he could lead him out. The native said he could. “All right,” said the hunter, “show me the way.” So they walked and hacked their way through unmarked jungle for more than an hour. The hunter got worried. “Are you quite sure this is the way? Where is the path?” The native turned around and knowingly smiled, “In this place there is no path. I am the path.”

It is in that phrase, “I am the path,” that David Livingston would have found his kind of man. A man who wasn’t simply looking for “the road less traveled,” but one who dared to break new ground where no road existed.

It is in this man’s reply, “I am the path,” that the millennial refrain of “this is the way” found in Isaiah 30:21 comes to full life.

I think that Colin Powell might be somewhere on that same jungle trail-in-the-making. Although Bible prophecy indicates that the problems of the Mideast will not be finally resolved until Jesus Christ returns to personally intervene, I salute Secretary Powell for his courage. ❖

“ANTI-SEMITISM,” (Continued from page 3)

because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened” (Romans 1:18-21).

Paul is clearly saying that the true knowledge of the Creator was available to generations past and was rejected, “suppressed,” through unrighteous conduct. God made Himself known, not just to Israel, but also to other nations in unmistakable ways. Because true knowledge of God was not accepted, “... God gave them over to a debased mind to do those things which are not fitting” (verse 28).

Man has not wanted God, His laws or His ways to be the governing rule of life. Historically, this hatred has been laid upon the Jews, a remnant of ancient Israel that has retained its ethnic identity. The Bible is clear in showing this rebellion will continue until the end of the age when Christ will intervene with the dramatic scenes foretold in Revelation.

Sadly, the prophecies show that the age-long hatred of God will not easily be reversed. To turn people from their sins, symbolic bowls of God’s wrath will be poured out on the earth, including intense heat from the sun, which will scorch men with fire. “And men were scorched with great heat, and they blasphemed the name of God who has power over these plagues; and they did not repent and give Him glory” (Revelation 16:9). Even after additional plagues, men will “not repent of their deeds” (verse 11).

It will take the final appearance of Jesus Christ to break the pride of human will and bring human beings to their knees in repentance and acknowledgment of their Creator.

Behind the dark shadow of anti-Semitism in Europe lies a fundamental hatred of God and His way. Those who seek to keep “the commandments of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ” (Revelation 12:17) should watch and take heed. That which happens to the Jew first can happen to others. ❖



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This is the Way

ISAIAH 30:21

by Robin Webber

When There Is No Road

Nearly 150 years ago, the missionary David Livingstone was one of the most famous men on earth. He lived in a world apart from the mainstream of civilization. A mission board wrote to him asking, “Have you found a good road to where you are in Africa? If so we want to know so we can send some good men to join you.” Livingstone responded, “If you have only men that will come when there is a good road, I do not want them. I want men who will come if there is no road at all!”

Livingstone’s powerful reply has been resonating in my mind ever since the recent peace-keeping trip of U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell to the Middle East. Talk about a dead-end job with no good political road maps to show the way. His April trip to Jerusalem seemed doomed to be a “non-starter” from the beginning.

Nonetheless, responding to the frustrations of an exasperated world community, Colin Powell proceeded into treacherous waters. He managed to frustrate people on both sides of this expanding debacle. What road was he traveling down? If no road, then what internal compass was at his disposal? What makes him tick? And why should we care? If we can be honest, we have our own personal Ramallah blockades and Bethlehem standoffs that seem to lack viable solutions. Yes, those scenarios in our own lives have squeezed us into desperate situations where there is no way out. What can we learn from a retired four-star general who has become an ambassador for peace?

Colin Powell’s internal compass

Recently, a fascinating article entitled “Open Doors—Colin Powell’s Seven Laws of Power” appeared in the

January/February edition of *Modern Maturity* magazine. It was written by Oren Harari who has authored *The Leadership Skills of Colin Powell* (McGraw-Hill, 2002). Mr. Harari offers seven valuable clues to understanding the mind-set of those who strive to be problem solvers. Following are the four most significant points that allow me to better understand what might be called “the Powell way.”

1. “Dare to be a skunk”

Harari states that Powell feels that every organization should tolerate individuals who tell the emperor he has no clothes. Harari poignantly adds, “And this emperor [Powell] expects to be told when he is naked.”

Much of this thinking comes from Powell’s earlier experiences as a junior officer during the “Vietnam Conflict.” Powell is quoted as saying, “We accepted that we had been sent to pursue a bankrupt policy. The top leadership never went to the Secretary of Defense or the President and said, ‘This war is unwinnable the way we are fighting’—they bowed to group-think pressures and kept up pretenses.”

Harari picks up the story years later when a newly appointed chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff named Colin Powell was asked his opinion on what to do with the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. The group-think notion at the time was to protect Saudi Arabia from possible invasion. It was Powell who asked the big question: “But what about pushing the Iraqis out of Kuwait?” He felt the displeasure of many on the senior staff for even suggesting that notion,

(See “NO ROAD,” page 14)