

HUMBLEHEART MINISTRIES |*Humbleheart Journal Fall 2001*[back to journal main page](#)

The Humbleheart Journal

Contending For The Faith



GOD'S WORD IN PERILOUS TIMES

Opening Highlights

As sadness, fear and deep emotions grip our nation and people around the world, we see a tremendous display of unity following the September 11th attack by terrorists on America. Words cannot describe the pain on the faces we have seen on TV and the cries of sorrow that echo in our ears continuously. Our prayers go out to our readers that have lost friends and loved ones in those attacks. They say we are now at war! Truly the world has changed.

America and the Church are in a crisis. Some of us have learned only now that the world was already dangerously unstable. Terror and revenge could lead many closer to the edge of falling down that slippery slope into destruction. Can the war against terrorism be won with military powers, super intelligence networks, money and politics? Who can actually point us in the right direction concerning our future? More importantly in whom can we trust? Millions of people need answers to these questions. We need to ask ourselves, "Is the Church ready to rise to the occasion?"

The entertainment industry and the major television networks appear to be undergoing whirlwind changes at least in recent days. Some are rethinking their program formats. In some ways Hollywood has been tarnished by this event because what we saw on the news are images resembling graphic effects found only in movies they've produced as entertainment. What was planned before Tuesday morning September 11th, 2001, has now been changed. We awoke to find that America's future is unclear.

There has been a barrage of theological questions and answers in the media. Political statements are made every hour over news wires by public officials trying to tone down possible tensions that may arise concerning Islam, Judaism and Christianity. We've been reading more about religions of the world and watching commentaries that describe their culture and beliefs on television. With so many mixed messages and at times half-truths spoken these days there has come a great need for clarification. That is our focus in this edition of the Humbleheart Journal. There is cause for Christians everywhere to pause and see things through a Biblical perspective.

GOD'S WORD IN PERILOUS TIMES

We need to come to grips with our unstable situation in the world by turning our eyes upon Jesus. We need to immerse ourselves in God's Holy Word. Rather than turning our fears into anger that might lead us into sin, let us not forget that God is in control of our future.

"The earth is the LORD'S, and all it contains, the world, and those who dwell in it." (Psalm 24:1)
"Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words shall not pass away."
(Matthew 24:35)

"The world is dangerous, not a Garden of Eden but a place of terrors. But with faith in divine guidance men and women have faced the most fearful perils." (Dr. C. G. Jung)

This portion of a statement made by C. G. Jung in one of his books entitled, *"Psychology of the Unconscious"* ©1919 was taken from the concluding chapter of a textbook on world religions. At first glance we as Christians could say we agree with Dr. Jung that our faith and trust in God through perilous times help us face a crisis. We might even use his statement to pass on for the "Christian" encouragement of others. However, using Jung as a representative for Christian thinking would be a mistake. The rest of his statement quoted by the textbook reveals his theology. It reads, ***"belief in a universe of law, and trust that truth can be found, are basic to both religion and science and can form the ground for a modern mythology."***

Our faith in God's word and the gospel of Jesus Christ is certainly not mythology! In other words Jung's full statement sends the message that "divine guidance" can be found as truth in Islam, Judaism, Buddhism, Hinduism and even Christianity. That would also include a belief in creationism found in the Bible, or evolution found in the scientific minds of rebellious men and women. It's the mentality that as long as you have faith in something, it gets you through hard times. Trusting in what you consider truth found in traditions, folklore and legends serves the purpose of comfort in times of fear as well.

Jungian analysts and C. G. Jung institutes are located across our nation and around the world. I'm not against psychology whether secular or Christian in general. I'm not singling out any particular group either. There are hundreds! Yet we need to beware of the advice and counseling being offered by the media in this time of crisis. Spiritual help brings true hope while spiritual hindrances cause confusion.

It has been difficult to fully answer some of the various questions our ministry has received concerning Islam. As you know our ministry focuses primarily on non-Christian cult research and Christian apologetics. I certainly am not an expert on Islam, Hinduism or Buddhism. Nor would I pretend to be so. However, you cannot study in the field of "cult evangelism" without being somewhat educated in the basic practices, rituals and doctrines of other world religions.

Each of the four major religions of the world has their own sects or false cult groups that try to mimic them. New Age cults like to mix a little doctrine from each of the major religions into their own teachings. The unsuspecting student conducting research on religious cults could quickly become confused. That is why it's not always easy to give a fast accurate answer about the belief system of a particular religious sect or cult. Some people act as though they are at the drive through placing an order at a fast food restaurant. They expect a hot brief detailed answer ready to go like a burger and fries. It's not that simple. Our society seeks fast answers, a quick fix, less labor for more pay, immediate wealth and competition for the best headline stories.

Religious comments involving Islam and Christianity have been flooding the airwaves of radio stations, television networks, the headlines of newspapers and magazines. Unfortunately the news media has put forth some misleading statements about the beliefs of both Christian and Muslim faiths.

Nearly every day since the attack on America in New York and Washington I have heard various news commentators, people they have interviewed, and others who say, "Allah" is just another name for the same God of the Christians, Jews and Muslims. A well-known Muslim cleric interviewed on NBC's Today Show was asked, "Is there any common ground that can be found between Christians, Jews and Muslims?" He replied, "Yes, we believe in the same God, the Bible, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, Mohammad and we accept them all." He also stated that the Koran does not teach violence against Christians, Jews or anyone else." He said, "Islam teaches peace."

It is one thing to come together as nations and communities during a crisis, but quite another to unite centuries-old world religions as one. The Bible tells us to be at peace and to love our neighbors. That does not mean abandon our different faiths in order to obtain that peace. To say that Allah is the same God worshipped by Christians, Jews, and Muslims alike is a blatant example of Biblical illiteracy and the denial of history itself.

I wish the media would take more time to do the research before asking naive questions or presenting misinformation.³

Christianity, Judaism and Islam are three distinct religions separated at the core by one person. His name is Jesus Christ. To the Christian He is the Son of the living God.

"For this cause therefore the Jews were seeking all the more to kill Him, because He not only was breaking the Sabbath, but also was calling God His own Father, making Himself equal with God." (John 5:18)

The Jews reject the deity of Jesus Christ and say He was only a man. Obviously the Jews reject the New Testament of the Bible. It contains the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the fulfillment of several Old Testament prophecies concerning the Messiah (Jesus), the beginning of the Christian Church and the promise of His soon return. Some Jews might say that Jesus of Nazareth was a good teacher of ethics, but still consider Him as a false prophet and a false messiah as well. They certainly do not believe that Christ died for their sins.

The "Koran" is the Bible of Islam that came into existence hundreds of years later by way of the Muslim's prophet named Mohammad. Muslims believe that Jesus Christ was only a man, a prophet equal to Adam, Noah, Abraham and Moses, all of whom are below Mohammad in importance. Muslims teach that Christ did not die for man's sins, in fact Judas, not Jesus, died on the cross. They call both Christians and Jews the "People of the Book" (*The Bible*).

To further demonstrate the essential differences between these three religions and who they believe God is, examine the chart below.

"GOD" ACCORDING TO:

Judaism	Islam	Christianity
<p>"Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one." The Shema <i>Deuteronomy 6:4</i></p>	<p>"There is no God but Allah - the God." <i>-- First of the five pillars of Islam</i></p>	<p>"There is only one God revealed in Scripture as Father, Son and Holy Spirit - the Trinity - three persons co-equally and co-eternally GOD." <i>(Matt. 3:16-17, 28:19, 2 Cor. 13:14, 1 Peter 1:2, 2 Peter 1:2, Acts 5:3-4.)</i></p>

Muslims believe sin is failure to do Allah's will, failure to do one's religious duties as outlined in the "Five Pillars of Islam." Man earns his own salvation and pays for his own sins. What are the Five Pillars of Islam? What are their basic beliefs? I have collected some excerpts from various sources to help us understand a little more about Islamic theology and background.

From the Atlantic Ocean across North Africa, the Middle East, and Southern and Central Asia to the Pacific Ocean, the world's predominantly Muslim nations form a long, continuous band. (Muslims are those who practice the religion of Islam.) Within this band lie the countries of Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, Sudan, Turkey, Syria, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Iran, the Persian Gulf states, Oman, Yemen, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Bangladesh, Malaysia, and Indonesia. The largest minority populations of Muslims are found in India and in Nigeria. Altogether there are about 1 billion Muslims around the world, though there are no precise statistics.

The word Islam means "surrender" or "submission," submission to the will of Allah, the one God. Muslims are those who have submitted themselves. The basic creed of Islam is brief: There is no God but Allah, and Muhammad is the Prophet of Allah.

One night in the year 610, the first of many revelations came to Muhammad from God by way of the angel Gabriel. The message Muhammad received told him that there was but one God, not many gods, as most Arabs believed. This God was creator of the world, and He would one day judge mankind. This was no novel message: Judaism and Christianity were already spreading the idea of one God. Muhammad saw his task, therefore, not as something new, but as a continuation and conclusion. He was the last in a succession of prophets stretching from Adam, Abraham, Moses, and Elijah, to Jesus who proclaimed the oneness of God, or Allah.

But Islam was never incorporated into either Judaism or Christianity. It became a new religion and, soon, a new empire and a new civilization as well. The revelations that Muhammad received were collected into a new book, the Koran (also spelled Quran), directing his followers what to believe and how to live.

Because Muslims believed that everything Muhammad said and did was inspired by Allah, many

reports of his sayings and deeds were collected into what is called the "Hadith" (Collected Traditions). At first these were just remembered and spread by word of mouth. Later they were captured in writing, to serve as an additional guide for believers, along with the Koran.

The Koran contains 114 revelations, each composing one "sura" (chapter). Koran is the Arabic word for "the recitation."

Islam teaches that there is one God, the creator and sustainer of the universe. This God, Allah, is compassionate and just. Because He is compassionate, He calls all people to believe in Him and worship Him. Because He is also just, on the Last Day He will judge every person according to his deeds. On the Last Day, all the dead will be resurrected and either rewarded with heaven or punished with hell.

Mankind is regarded as the crown of creation, entrusted by God with management of the whole created order. Yet humanity is also seen as weak and prone to disbelief in God and to disobedience to His will. Humanity's weakness is pride: It does not realize its limitations and views itself as self-sufficient.

To compensate for this frailty, God has sent prophets to communicate His will. These prophets, all mortal men, were elected messengers to whom God spoke through an angel or by inspiration. Unfortunately for mankind, most of the prophets have been ignored. People, deluded by Satan, or the Devil, continued to disbelieve in Allah. In spite of this, God is always ready to pardon the individual and restore him to the sinless state in which he started life.

The life of each Muslim is always within the community of the faithful: All are declared to be "brothers to each other," with the mission to "enjoin good and forbid evil." Within the community, Muslims are expected to establish social and economic justice. They are also expected to carry their message out to the rest of the world.

In the early Islamic community, this meant the use of force in the form of jihad, or holy war. The intent was not to force conversion on anyone -- this was forbidden by the Koran. The object of jihad was to gain political control over societies and run them in accordance with the principles of Islam.

During the decades following the death of Muhammad certain essential principles were singled out from his teachings to serve as anchoring points for the Islamic community. These have come to be called the "five pillars of Islam." Some early, and more fanatical believers added jihad as a sixth pillar, but it was never accepted by the whole community.

The **first** pillar is profession of faith. "There is no God but Allah, and Muhammad is the prophet of Allah" is the core assertion upon which membership in the community depends.

Second is prayer. Islam recognizes two forms of prayer. One is the personal, devotional, and spontaneous type, not bound by any rituals or formulas. The other is ritual, often congregational, prayer, with specific words and postures, to be offered five times a day: at sunrise, midday, mid-afternoon, sunset, and before going to bed.

Before prayer, ablutions are performed by washing the hands, feet, and face. A person called the muezzin calls for prayer and chants from a raised platform or minaret tower at the mosque (the house of communal worship). Congregational prayer is started with the imam, the prayer leader, standing at the front of the mosque facing Mecca, the holy city of Islam. The congregation is lined up in rows behind him. (There are no seats in a mosque.) Each prayer consists of several units, during which the individual is either standing, kneeling, or prostrate. At every change in posture, "God is great" is recited.

The chief day of communal worship is Friday. Believers gather at the mosque to pray, listen to portions of the Koran, and hear a sermon based on the text. The sermon may have moral, social, or political content. It should be noted that Islam has no ordained clergy such as exists in the Christian churches, but there are men specially trained in religion, tradition, and law. Theoretically, anyone considered competent can be called upon to deliver the Friday sermon.

Third: The hajj, "pilgrimage," is an annual Muslim rite that every believer is expected to take part in at least once in his lifetime. From the seventh to the tenth day in Dhu al-Hijjah, the last month of the Islamic calendar, thousands of Muslims converge on the city of Mecca in Saudi Arabia to visit the holy shrine of the Kaaba in the Great Mosque. Tradition has it that the shrine was built by Abraham, considered by Islam, Judaism, and Christianity to be a prophet and the founder of the faith. The pilgrimage is intended to reenact the hegira, the flight of Muhammad from Mecca to Medina in 622. Hence most travelers will visit both cities, in addition to performing a number of other ritual observances. The pilgrimage culminates with the feast of sacrifice, one of the two major festivals that are celebrated during the Islamic year.

For centuries, the pilgrimage has brought together thousands of Muslims from many countries and has provided a valuable link between the centers of Islam. It also gives the believers a sense of belonging to a vast world community. In the 20th century all Muslim countries send official delegations to the hajj, providing for an interchange of ideas on all socio-political issues facing the Arab peoples.

Fourth is fasting. In the second chapter of the Koran is the statement "Fasting is decreed for you as it was decreed for those before you." Because the Koran was first revealed to Muhammad in the month of Ramadan, the whole month was set aside as a period of fasting.

During each day, from first light to darkness, all eating, drinking, and smoking are forbidden. Those who are ill or on a journey may postpone the fast until a "similar number of days later on," according to the Koran. The second major festival of the Islamic year begins at the termination of the fast and lasts several days.

Fifth is the Zakat. The last pillar is an obligatory tax called the zakat, a contribution made by Muslims to the state or to the community. In the modern period, the zakat has become a voluntary charitable contribution. Some Middle Eastern countries still collect it, but on a voluntary basis, not as a tax levy.

(World, Columbia, Compton's Encyclopedia's and "World Religions" Hamlyn Pub.)

Schools of Islam

Hank Hanegraaff of the Christian Research Institute gives a brief overview of the different sects or schools of thought among Muslims worldwide.

Out of the almost one billion Muslims worldwide, by far the greatest number are members of the Sunnite school. They accept the first four caliphs (deputies) in direct succession from Muhammad and no others. The Sunnis practice a moderate form of Islamic literary interpretation. Ninety percent of the Muslims in the Middle East are Sunnis (e.g., 90 percent of the Egyptian Muslims, 90 percent of the Jordanian Muslims, 90 percent of the Saudi Arabian Muslims, and 98 percent of the Libyan Muslims).

The second largest school of Islam is the Shi'ite school. Although much smaller than the Sunnite school, the Shi'ite school is much more literal in its interpretation and application of the Quran and is much more militant than the Sunnite. Ninety-five percent of Iran's Muslims are Shi'ites, and today Iran is a Shi'ite Islamic republic. Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Iraq, and Yemen also have large numbers of Shi'ites. The name Shi'ite is a corruption of *Shi'at Ali* ("partisans of Ali") and refers to the fact that they rejected all subsequent caliphs who were not descendants of Ali. For the Twelver Shi'ites, there followed a line of twelve *Imams*, or spiritual heads (in Sunni Islam "imam" refers only to a leader of a congregation), who claimed Ali as an ancestor. Most of them were killed, and the twelfth and final Imam, Muhammad, disappeared as a child in A.D. 878; it is believed that eventually he will miraculously return to his people (as the *Mahdi*) in a manner not altogether unlike the Judeo-Christian Messiah. He is the hidden Imam who will bring about a golden age before the end of the world, and only he has the right to declare *ghihad*. Shi'ites are especially strong in Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan, and Pakistan. The Ishmailites, or Sevener Shi'ites, hold that Ismail was the final Imam. The billionaire Aga Khan is the current leader of the Ishmailites; and the Zaidites or Zaydis of Yemen hold that all war is *ghihad*.

Another Muslim school of note is the Ahmadiyan school, which was founded in the 1800s by Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (1839-1908) of Punjab, India. He claimed to be the Messiah and the very image of Muhammad. He taught that Christ fainted and was revived by medication (an ointment called Marham Esau -- "Jesus salve") and traveled to India, where he died in Kashmir. This small group has produced the bulk of Islamic apologetics against Christianity and Judaism over the last forty years. The Ahmadiyans are highly visible on American campuses and practice strong proselytizing techniques on American students.

The Sufi "school" is the mystical school of Islam. Sufis are rejected by many conservative Muslims. Some Sufi writings seem to reject the strict unitarian monotheism of traditional Islam for a form of "immanent pantheism."

It is also important to note a few observations Hank points out concerning the Koran. We should read the following in light of earlier comments I mention about the media excerpting things like "The Koran or Mohammad never taught violence."

Apparently when Muhammad started his new movement, he encouraged nonbelievers to freely consider Islam: Sura 2:256 says, "Let there be no compulsion in religion." Later, however, he seemed to have developed a much harsher attitude: Sura 9:5 says, "Fight and slay the idolaters wherever you find them, and seize them, and besiege them, and lie in wait for them." What may be considered crimes against the state and crimes against God are dealt with in Sura 5:33, "The punishment of those who wage war against God and His Apostle, and strive with might and main for mischief through the land is: execution, or crucifixion, or the cutting off of hands and feet from opposite sides, or exile from the land." Jews and Christians are "People of the Book" (Sura 5:5; 5:19), but that does not mean that Muhammad had the highest regard for them; in Sura 5:41 Jews are called people "who will listen to any lie" and Christians are enemies (Sura 5:14), and Muslims were not to have Christians and Jews as friends (Sura 5:51).

I hope this information has helped answer some of the theological and spiritual questions you may have had concerning Islam. Every major world religion has its share of diversity and movements from within. The wide variety of denominations found in Christianity has shown many of our diversities in a positive light. As long as a Church does not deviate from the foundational doctrines of the Christian faith, we remain brothers

and sisters in Christ. We can respect the people of Islam who also have diversities in their schools of thought, yet hold to their foundational beliefs and remain fellow Muslims.

Our religions may divide us spiritually with a line drawn between two different faiths, but Muslims and Christians can still live peacefully together in the civilized world. We can respect one another's faith and function as friends and neighbors, especially here in the United States of America. Fanatical extremists often want to attach themselves to a particular religion as an attempt to justify their political, militant or rebellious cause. Obviously the terrorists and those who assisted in the attack on our country September 11th would like us to believe they represent the Muslim faith. They don't represent Islam anymore than the terrorists involved in the Oklahoma bombing would have represented Christianity. The K.K.K. has always tried to link itself to Christianity as well. Instead, it is purely hateful, evil and heartless human beings trying to glorify themselves by killing and terrorizing the innocent. These things the Lord hates!

"There are six things which the LORD hates, Yes, seven which are an abomination to Him: Haughty eyes, a lying tongue, And hands that shed innocent blood, A heart that devises wicked plans, Feet that run rapidly to evil, A false witness who utters lies, And one who spreads strife among brothers." (Proverbs 6:16-19)

Several years ago I heard Billy Graham make a comment while being interviewed on a morning talk show (I believe it was Good Morning America) and I'll never forget what he said. He was asked an unusual question that went something like, "Rev. Graham, if you had a kind of magic wand you could wave over the world to change or make one thing go away, what would that one thing be?" I remember at that time the media was filled with religious headlines concerning abortion, homosexuality, exposing phony televangelists, gays in the military etc. I thought for sure he was going to mention at least one of those topics. Instead Billy Graham answered, "Racism!" He then went on to say he had been to many places throughout the world and has seen the hate and destruction caused by racism. He said, "God can take away such evil, but in order for people to change they need a change of heart. Christ will change your heart!"

We are not born racists. It is something we have been taught. This is also true with the terrorists. The most compelling thoughts I have had concerning the "war" against terrorism and the statement from our leaders as it being the first war of the twenty-first century, is the fact that such a war can only be won ultimately by the change of the terrorist's hearts. Only Jesus can turn them around or rip terrorism as well as racism permanently from the world. Intelligence, military force, destruction of their financial structures and increased security measures seem temporal, because such a war will never be won completely until the return of Jesus Christ.

As a country our president has asked us to pray and we should. It is a spiritual battle along with the things we can see and hear. I believe our current president and the staff that surrounds him did not fall into place by coincidence or random chance. In this hour of testing for America we need morality, integrity, wisdom, experience and self-control in our leadership. Romans chapter 13 tells us, *"Let every person be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God."*

I believe our current crisis and war against terrorism should be viewed in a similar manner as demonstrated in the following letter I received.

From: Dr. Tony Kern, Lt Col, USAF (Ret)

Recently, I was asked to look at the recent events through the lens of military history. I have joined the cast of thousands who have written an "open letter to Americans."

Dear friends and fellow Americans

14 September, 2001

Like everyone else in this great country, I am reeling from last week's attack on our sovereignty. But unlike some, I am not reeling from surprise. As a career soldier and a student and teacher of military history, I have a different perspective and I think you should hear it. This war will be won or lost by the American citizens, not diplomats, politicians or soldiers. Let me briefly explain.

In spite of what the media, and even our own government is telling us, this act was not committed by a group of mentally deranged fanatics. To dismiss them as such would be among the gravest of mistakes. This attack was committed by a ferocious, intelligent and

dedicated adversary. Don't take this the wrong way. I don't admire these men and I deplore their tactics, but I respect their capabilities. The many parallels that have been made with the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor are apropos. Not only because it was a brilliant sneak attack against a complacent America, but also because we may well be pulling our new adversaries out of caves 30 years after we think this war is over, just like my father's generation had to do with the formidable Japanese in the years following WW II.

These men hate the United States with all of their being, and we must not underestimate the power of their moral commitment. Napoleon, perhaps the world's greatest combination of soldier and statesman, stated "the moral is to the physical as three is to one." Patton thought the Frenchman underestimated its importance and said moral conviction was five times more important in battle than physical strength. Our enemies are willing - better said anxious -- to give their lives for their cause.

How committed are we America? And for how long?

In addition to demonstrating great moral conviction, the recent attack demonstrated a mastery of some of the basic fundamentals of warfare taught to most military officers worldwide, namely simplicity, security and surprise. When I first heard rumors that some of these men may have been trained at our own Air War College, it made perfect sense to me. This was not a random act of violence, and we can expect the same sort of military competence to be displayed in the battle to come. This war will escalate, with a good portion of it happening right here in the good ol' U.S. of A.

These men will not go easily into the night. They do not fear us. We must not fear them. In spite of our overwhelming conventional strength as the world's only "superpower" (a truly silly term), we are the underdog in this fight. As you listen to the carefully scripted rhetoric designed to prepare us for the march for war, please realize that America is not equipped or seriously trained for the battle ahead. To be certain, our soldiers are much better than the enemy, and we have some excellent "counter-terrorist" organizations, but they are mostly trained for hostage rescues, airfield seizures, or the occasional "body snatch," (which may come in handy). We will be fighting a war of annihilation, because if their early efforts are any indication, our enemy is ready and willing to die to the last man. Eradicating the enemy will be costly and time consuming. They have already deployed their forces in as many as 20 countries, and are likely living the lives of everyday citizens. Simply put, our soldiers will be tasked with a search and destroy mission on multiple foreign landscapes, and the public must be patient and supportive until the strategy and tactics can be worked out.

For the most part, our military is still in the process of redefining itself and presided over by men and women who grew up with - and were promoted because they excelled in - Cold War doctrine, strategy and tactics. This will not be linear warfare, there will be no clear "centers of gravity" to strike with high technology weapons. Our vast technological edge will certainly be helpful, but it will not be decisive. Perhaps the perfect metaphor for the coming battle was introduced by the terrorists themselves aboard the hijacked aircraft - this will be a knife fight, and it will be won or lost by the ingenuity and will of citizens and soldiers, not by software or smart bombs. We must also be patient with our military leaders.

Unlike Americans who are eager to put this messy time behind us, our adversaries have time on their side, and they will use it. They plan to fight a battle of attrition, hoping to drag the battle out until the American public loses its will to fight. This might be difficult to believe in this euphoric time of flag waving and patriotism, but it is generally acknowledged that America lacks the stomach for a long fight. We need only look as far back as Vietnam, when North Vietnamese General Vo Nguyen Giap (also a military history teacher) defeated the United States of America without ever winning a major tactical battle.

American soldiers who marched to war cheered on by flag waving Americans in 1965 were reviled and spat upon less than three years later when they returned. Although we hope that Osama Bin Laden is no Giap, he is certain to understand and employ the concept. We can expect not only large doses of pain like the recent attacks, but! also less audacious "sand in the gears" tactics, ranging from livestock infestations to attacks at water supplies and power distribution facilities.

These attacks are designed to hit us in our "comfort zone" forcing the average American to "pay more and play less" and eventually eroding our resolve. But it can only work if we let it. It is clear to me that the will of the American citizenry - you and I - is the

center of gravity the enemy has targeted. It will be the fulcrum upon which victory or defeat will turn. He believes us to be soft, impatient, and self-centered. He may be right, but if so, we must change. The Prussian general Carl von Clausewitz, (the most often quoted and least read military theorist in history), says that there is a "remarkable trinity of war" that is composed of the (1) will of the people, (2) the political leadership of the government, and (3) the chance and probability that plays out on the field of battle, in that order. Every American citizen was in the crosshairs of last Tuesday's attack, not just those that were unfortunate enough to be in the World Trade Center or Pentagon. The will of the American people will decide this war. If we are to win, it will be because we have what it takes to persevere through a few more hits, learn from our mistakes, improvise, and adapt. If we can do that, we will eventually prevail.

Everyone I've talked to in the past few days has shared a common frustration, saying in one form or another "I just wish I could do something!" You are already doing it. Just keep faith in America, and continue to support your President and military, and the outcome is certain. If we fail to do so, the outcome is equally certain.

God Bless America
Dr. Tony Kern, Lt Col, USAF (Ret)
Former Director of Military History, United States Air Force Academy

As Christians what ought our attitudes, prayers and conduct be in these times of trouble? The apostle Paul gave us some insight for our current situation. It gives us a Biblical perspective concerning the spiritual, social and political state of the world's history, our present day, and what to expect for the future.

"And the Lord's bond-servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged, with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth, and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will."

"But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God; holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power; and avoid such men as these. For among them are those who enter into households and captivate weak women weighed down with sins, led on by various impulses, always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth." (2 Timothy 2:24-26, 3:1-7)

The Bible is filled with examples of man's rebellion against God and evil toward one another. Yet the Bible also contains the love, grace and promises our Lord has made. The Bible is God's Word and the truth. Only a fool would say that the Bible is irrelevant for our time. As we struggle with terrorism on our own soil don't let this new move of evil in the world cause you to lose focus on God's promises and the things we have been warned about concerning our future. It is easy to get side tracked in the midst of sorrow, uncertainty and fear.

Israel is a living testimony of God's grace and fulfillment of many prophecies found in Scripture. To be encouraged during these times, watch Israel! I recommend that you order a video entitled, "The Middle East Crisis In Biblical Perspective," produced by Dr. David Reagan and Lamb & Lion Ministries. It will help you understand more about what the Bible teaches concerning Israel, the Arabs and our hope for the future as Christians.

Call or write to Lamb & Lion Ministries, P.O. Box 919, McKinney, TX 75070 - (972) 736-3567. You will want this video in your library and will be eager to share it with family and friends.

Crisis of the Church

In our previous Humbleheart Journal I printed a portion of a Barna research report for 2000 concerning the current state of many Christian churches. In light of all we've discussed so far, we again ask the question is the Church ready to rise to the occasion? If you will recall some of Barna's findings the answer would be no, or at least doubtful. That is a spiritual crisis we face and there has to be some changes. I have put together a few responses to Barna's comments and some Scripture references to encourage believers to be ready and able to make an impact even in perilous times. I call it the (7 Cs).

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Commitment: (obligation, promise) **Barna's statement: "A lot of people attend church services, but relatively few have a deep commitment to their church, to personal ministry and to spiritual maturity."**

"Commit your way to the LORD, Trust also in Him, and He will do it." (Psalm 37:5) "But He (Jesus) answered and said to them, 'My mother and My brothers are these who hear the word of God and do it.'" (Luke 8:21) "Nevertheless what you have, hold fast until I come." (Revelation 2:25) "But you, be sober in all things, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry." (2 Timothy 4:5)

Comprehension: (grasp, understand) **Barna's statement: "People hear a lot of religious teaching and buy millions of religious books, but there is as much theological confusion as understanding."**

"For God is not a God of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints". (1 Corinthians 14:33) "All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work." (2 Timothy 3:16-17). "And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it." (John 1:5) "For the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say." (Luke 12:12) "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways," declares the LORD. "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts." (Isaiah 55:8-9)

Communication: (interact, announce) **Barna's statement: "Better communication is necessary not only to teach people more effectively, but to build more meaningful and lasting relationships and to help people stay focused on the things in life that really matter. (Like Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior)**

"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." (Matthew 28:19-20) "And the word of God kept on spreading; and the number of the disciples continued to increase greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were becoming obedient to the faith." (Acts 6:7) "let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save his soul from death, and will cover a multitude of sins." (James 5:20)

Caring: (Compassion) **Barna's statement: "Compassion is a term that most believers endorse but surprisingly few practice."**

"If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, and one of you says to them, 'Go in peace, be warmed and be filled,' and yet you do not give them what is necessary for their body, what use is that?" (James 2:15-16) "And have mercy on some, who are doubting; save others, snatching them out of the fire; and on some have mercy with fear, hating even the garment polluted by the flesh." (Jude 1:22-23)

Contend: (Run, challenge, maintain.) *"Beloved, while I was making every effort to write you about our common salvation, I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints." (Jude 1:3)*

Cultivate: (Plant, nurture, encourage, support.) *"Trust in the LORD, and do good; Dwell in*

the land and cultivate faithfulness. Delight yourself in the LORD; And He will give you the desires of your heart." (Psalm 37:3-4) "Therefore encourage one another, and build up one another, just as you also are doing." (1 Thessalonians 5:11) "In pointing out these things to the brethren, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, constantly nourished on the words of the faith and of the sound doctrine which you have been following." (1 Timothy 4:6)

Consistency: (Stability) **Barna suggested that America is now entering a period that historians will someday regard as the beginning of the era of moral anarchy (disorder, chaos, rebellion, unstable). The difficulties facing the Church are symptomatic of such an era. The next ten years will be crucial toward determining the capacity of the American Church to be a serious influence on the culture."**

"But let all things be done properly and in an orderly manner."
(1 Corinthians 14:40) "For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing." (2 Timothy 4:6-8)

Anxiety, stress, and a sense of weariness has become more evident with a lot of people. I'm sure many of you have noticed the same thing since the threat of terrorism entered our region of the world September 11th. We struggle for the right words to say to the people who surround us while trying to maintain the proper attitude as Christians. I admit the terrorists succeeded in terrorizing me for the first few days after. It was the fellowship with my Christian brothers and sisters at Church and Bible studies that helped take away any anxiety I might have been experiencing. We need each other now more than ever. We need to pray, sing, worship the Lord and encourage one another to be strong in our faith. Whatever it is that is keeping us from doing our best to accomplish those "7 Cs" needs our attention. The Lord will lead us in the days to come no matter what evil tries to sway us. Jesus Christ will be glorified, truth will prevail and many lost sinners will believe that Biblical Christianity worships the one true God. May the church be ready with open arms!

MARANATHA!

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