



A WEEKLY COMMENTARY

ON TARGET



- NEWS HIGHLIGHTS
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- COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

The price of Freedom is eternal vigilance –

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THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK: *"My song is love unknown, My Saviour's love to me. Love to the loveless shown, that they might lovely be... Sometimes they strew his way, and his sweet praises sing; resounding all the day hosannas to their king.*

"Then 'crucify' is all their breath and for his death they thirst and cry. Why, what has my Lord done? What makes this rage and spite? He made the lame to run, he gave the blind their sight... Here might I stay and sing, no story so divine; never was love dear King, never was grief like Thine. This is my Friend in whose sweet praise, I all my days could gladly spend."

We trust our readers had time for reflection and meditation and a regeneration of their spiritual energies during Holy Week.

INSURANCE OUT OF REACH OF INCREASING NUMBERS? by Jeremy Lee:

All over Australia local communities are finding it impossible to keep local amenities going because insurance costs have soared following the collapse of HIH..

But its not just the poor and lowly. The legal profession is reeling. Thousands of barristers face life without indemnity insurance after July 1st, although it is illegal to practice without cover. Suncorp Metway has withdrawn from the professional indemnity market. *The Australian Financial Review* (15/3/02) reported: " Sources suggest that Suncorp Metway's withdrawal will cause premiums to skyrocket, possibly even trebling in price....."

Another report in the same issue said: *"Small businesses and community organizations are unable to afford public liability cover, the country's largest medical indemnity company appears on the brink of collapse and nobody seems to want to write builders' warranty"*

"The problems afflicting the insurance sector relate to its efforts to stop bleeding red ink, the growing culture of litigation, increasing court awards for personal injury and the September 11 terrorist attacks – not to mention HIH's demise"

IN THIS ISSUE: • *Thought for the Week* • *Insurance out of Reach of Increasing Numbers?* • *Camp of the Saints?* • *Shift on Middle East Realities* • *Brutal, Destructive Modernism* • *What We Sow is What We Will Reap*

Andrew White, in *The Australian* (15/3/02), gave a few examples: *"In the Snowy Mountains town of Mansfield yesterday, business came to a standstill - tourism operators, cafes, even the local hospital were under threat.*

"The June renewal deadline for public liability insurance is fast approaching and dozens of the town's businesses face closure due to the massive increases in premiums. They can't afford to operate without insurance and they can't afford the premiums either...."

Hundreds of communities Australia-wide have similar stories.

What we want is a company to insure us against high premiums, depressions, headache and "things that go 'bump' in the night!"

CAMP OF THE SAINTS? The boat-people have hit a raw nerve with Australians. But imagine the crisis facing Sicily, where a giant tanker with over 1,000 people on its decks, has arrived and dumped its cargo. Flanked by naval vessels, the ship's crew destroyed the engines and tried to hide themselves.

And there are reports of several similar-sized ships to follow. Sicily has declared a state of emergency. Those who have read Jean Raspail's "Camp of the Saints" will have the picture.

SHIFT ON MIDDLE EAST REALITIES: The nightly scenes on television in which Palestinian suicide bombers destroy themselves against the colossally-armed Israelis, while their homes and means of living are destroyed all around them cannot fail to impress themselves on millions of watchers round the world. The attempts by the Sharon Government to portray itself as the 'goody' against the Palestinian terrorists are proving no more effective than those of President Bush.

There is a shift from the fervent emotion that followed September 11th right round the world. The shift exists in Israel itself, and the first articles in the mainstream media are offering a more balanced picture. An article syndicated from France's *Le Monde*, carried in *The Weekend Australian* (16-17/3/02) was eloquent testimony to this shift. It dealt with the growing revulsion in Israel at the cruelty of Sharon's war against the Palestinians. For example, it gave details of the declaration by 194 army reservists, giving notice that they were not prepared to serve in the Occupied Territories. They made their public declaration despite threats of disciplinary action. It carried news of the declaration by 15 Israeli lawyers demanding action against those who killed Palestinians without justification, or brutalised Palestinian civilians at check-points.

One protester said that he had been called an "anti-semitic Jew" for speaking out; but was now finding even government ministers expressing their unease.

At a meeting in Tel Aviv to denounce Israeli war-crimes, Reserve General Dov Tamari was on the platform. On January 28th the Speaker of the Knesset, Avraham Borg, declared "The occupation corrupts: more precisely, it has corrupted us. Discrimination has become our standard and insensitivity a way of being."

Significantly, many Israelis now believe, rightly or wrongly, that the current war is a defence of the hundreds of Jewish settlements built in the Occupied Territories. Judge Michael Ben-Yair, former legal adviser to the Rabin government, has said: "Israel will be judged by history and perhaps before then by the Hague". He was referring to the International Court of Justice.

Such a statement must send a chill down the spine of Ariel Sharon, who has already been indicted by a Belgian Court for the war crimes committed at Sabra and Shatila during the war against Lebanon.

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BRUTAL, DESTRUCTIVE MODERNISM: *"In education the same doctrinal brutality reigns supreme resulting in a wasteland of moral relativism and the deliberate destruction of an approach that has always ensured the transmission from one generation to another a shared body of knowledge of a cultural, historical and moral heritage.*

"What has been the result of all this brutal vandalism? A profound malaise, a deep disease, a disintegration and disfunctioning of the natural harmony in the human existence. Modern ideology demands that history and tradition be pulled up by the roots... We must work in harmony with nature once again and reconnect man with the organic roots of his being, with the healing timelessness of living tradition... To treat the whole individual, not one part, to integrate the best of modern medicine with the best of ancient therapeutic wisdoms, to reconnect young people with literary and historical roots. We have disintegrated to many of the possibilities of life – a deadly demolition job which was carried out by modernism. It has pulled up the roots of our tradition ..." – Prince Charles, 2001

WHAT WE SOW IS WHAT WE WILL REAP by Betty Luks:

The western-world leaders seem to think they can continue to impose their unrealistic ideology on the crumbling foundational structures around them; building their 'new world order', and incredibly, think

they can do so with impunity. Their 'new world order' is a world of glaring injustice, widespread poverty, fragmentation and disintegration; with the world's poor consigned to a life of disease and suffering and despair, all in the interests of a narrow sector of privilege and power. It won't last.

What is the difference between what is happening in the world of today and what happened in the world of the Roman Empire? (Which, we should remember, collapsed from within.)

William Barclay, Professor of Divinity at the University of Glasgow, wrote of those times. "There is a sin which the Greeks called *hubris*. *Hubris* is that arrogance born of wealth and prosperity and success, which comes to feel that it has no need of God."

He tells us descriptions of the wantonness, gluttony and wastefulness of the privileged few in the crumbling Roman society can be found in the work of Seutonius and Tacitus. Both were Romans citizens who were appalled by the things they were writing about.

In the first century AD, the world was pouring its riches and treasures into the lap of Rome. The long peace, the safety of the seas, the freedom of trade (and the policies of the moneylenders), had made Rome the entrepot for the peculiar products and delicacies of every land from the British Channel to the Ganges. It would seem to those who did not know any difference, the whole world's reason for existence was to supply the real wealth and work for the sake of, for the indulgence and the comfort of, the ruling elite in Rome. They ruled and controlled through the social instruments, such as the financial, commercial and military institutions, etc. – just as happens today.

"With what measure you measure, it will be measured to you." In the Sermon on the Mount we are warned of the law. If our actions have involved the cruel, arrogant treatment of our fellowmen, we will come up against the law, the same measure will be measured to us – we will reap the fruits, the results of the treatment we have meted out. By our actions, our behaviour, whether that of a man or a nation, we are working out our own judgement. The judgement may not come in a way we expect, but come it will – unless...

G.K.Chesterton put it another way to help us understand: "The plight of the world is the hope of the world." That is, we can change the direction in which we are headed, change our behaviour and right the wrongs we have committed – if we want to have peace and harmony within ourselves and within and among the nation/s.

The push by the centralist Howard government to restrict our freedoms by the proposed anti-terrorism legislation can be better understood in the light of their earlier acts of hubris. They think they can avoid 'the same measure being meted out to them' by legislating for further oppressive powers to protect themselves.

What makes these people think governments are not subject to the same moral laws as the rest of us – we mere mortals?

The history of the British peoples can only be understood in terms of their constant striving to limit, divide and balance power and make accountable all those who wield it. "He who would be greatest must be the servant of all." Another absolute.