



A WEEKLY COMMENTARY

ON TARGET

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The price of Freedom is eternal vigilance –

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THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK: Mr. Bush, You Are A Liar: **Americans must stop electing ruthless criminals to rule this nation.** We must convince fellow citizens that villains like Saddam Hussein are made in the US as rationale for endless corporate war profits. Saddam was placed in power by the CIA. For years US government agencies, under auspices of George Bush Sr., supplied him with chemical and biological weapons. Our national nuclear laboratories, along with Unisys, Dupont and Hewlett-Packard, sold Saddam materials for his nuclear program. Dick Cheney was CEO of Halliburton in the late 90s when its subsidiaries signed \$73 million in new contracts to further supply Saddam. The wicked villain of Iraq was nurtured for decades as a cash-cow by US military-industrial piranhas.

If America truly supports its troops, it must stop sending them into nuclear holocaust for the enrichment of thugs. **Time is running out.** If the DU-maniacs at the Pentagon and their coven of nuclear arms peddlers are not harnessed, **America will have no able-bodied fighting forces left.** All people of the earth will become grossly ill, hideously deformed and short-lived. We must succeed in the critical imperative to face reality and act decisively. Should we fail, there will be no place to hide from Bush-Cheney's merciless nuclear orgies yet to come or from the inevitable nuclear retaliation these orgies will surely breed.

– William Rivers Pitt, "Perspective", 2003

ALMIGHTY GOD, CAESAR AND COMMON LAW by Jeremy Lee:

A basic Common Law right which few have thought about is being hemmed in, and in many cases eliminated – the right of free assembly.

Among the first acts of tyrants are the disarming of the people and the banning of gatherings bigger than a few. In some cases even meetings of friends on street corners are illegal.

In English-speaking countries free assembly has been taken for granted for hundreds of years. In the 12th century world of Chaucer up to 150,000 pilgrims travelled – sometimes for weeks at a time – to Canterbury. Markets, guilds, hunts, churches, political gatherings, all involved the assembling of people as a lawful right unless it was with the expressed intent of violence.

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In Australia the same right has continued. Tens of thousands have assembled to watch Phar Lap win a race, or the Don score a century. They have gathered at agricultural shows, football matches, country race-tracks, camel races, regattas, Sydney-Hobart yacht races, protests, rallies and, of course, church services and public meetings across the land.

All that is under attack. Country race meets by the score have been cancelled; sporting clubs have closed; pony camps and gymkhanas for children are no longer held; community halls lie unused, and agricultural shows which have been held since before Federation cancelled. Without any law specifically banning freedom of assembly, a gauntlet of barriers has been erected and is being tightened to make it impossible in a growing number of cases for people to follow customary pursuits.

The ostensible reason, obviously, is the cost of public liability insurance. But this is simply the end result of a series of attacks on the principles surrounding Common Law.

There is always the risk of personal injury wherever people meet to act – from being crushed in a crowd to falling down a stair. Occasionally the causes are someone else's negligence or malignancy. But a large degree is due to the unexpected or unanticipated, without anyone else being intentionally careless or malign. This area came under the heading "An Act of God" and was duly recognized in law.

But God has disappeared from our legal system. The only authority that is recognized is Caesar. Anything that ever happens is someone else's fault, and is actionable. The laws of Caesar stipulate that any injury must be compensated – even where no culpable person can be found. For this to happen, any form of human activity must now be insured. This is so even where those wishing to assemble don't want insurance and are prepared to take some risk for the benefits of voluntary, free assembly. Insurance is compulsory, and if you can't pay, you can't play.

There were always some provision in the law for negligence. A publican whose beer was toxic could have his licence removed. A racecourse required a barrier between the track and the audience – and usually this was provided without law.

But a large area of injury came within the province of "Acts of God", wherein it was sensibly recognized that not all risks and situations could be anticipated. All humans who enjoy freedoms must also foresee some risks, and bear ultimate responsibility for their actions.

It was also recognized that judges and juries were never infallible, and that there were certain circumstances where fair judgment was beyond human capability, and that many injuries were beyond the apportionment of blame. This large and indefinable area was termed "Acts of God".

All that has gone. Caesar (the State) is now supreme and rampant. The protection it promises to all has no bounds. But for it to be exercised it must be obeyed. Everyone, it says, is entitled to compensation for anything – even when it is the victim's fault. Therefore, any form of activity must pay compulsory insurance. And in this one provision free assembly is put at enormous risk.

There was a time when, if you were hit on the head by a golf ball, or smitten in the crown by a Bradman six, it was just bad luck or an "Act of God" (not quite the same as the "immortal Don"). If you slipped and fell down a stair, or cut yourself breaking into someone else's house it was, as like or not, your own fault.

But now we're all 'victims' and the result is an unhealthy 'compensation-culture' that threatens us all.

Lawyers advertise for customers who might have the slightest claim for a compensation handout. People even think twice about helping someone else in trouble lest they make a mistake that might be actionable. The premiums paid by doctors in insurance for claims that might not arrive for a decade are obscene – and have to be included in their charges, which put the services of private medicine beyond the reach of most.

The smallest church meeting in a lowly hall once a week is now forced to pay an insurance premium which amounts annually to \$1,000 or more. Those attending then meditate on the "Feeding of the Five Thousand" by our Lord, never asking whether the Pharisees had demanded compulsory insurance for such a gathering, or whether the disciples had a permit and public liability insurance for food distribution!

Did the crowd on Palm Sunday have insurance for a public gathering? Had Pontius Pilate issued a licence for the gathering at Pentecost? And did Jesus carry indemnity for those He healed?

Today's churches seem to have no complaint about rendering to Caesar what really belongs to God before their services

The modern insurance company is having a field day. The people have to pay their insurance tribute whether they like it or not. If they say they prefer to rely on their faith in God, there is no provision for such an attitude in Caesar's mountainous laws.

Politicians wring their hands. They know there is a backlash in the community against the closure of so many functions and events. They wrangle with insurance companies, and try to start government insurance schemes that will mitigate the burden to some degree. But they don't challenge the basic premise under which they are operating – that they have allowed Caesar to intrude into areas that properly belong to God.

The answer is to get back to basic principles. Compulsory insurance is wrong. No matter how well intended, it is an attack on freedom.

Governments should advise and warn. But they should not compel – not in this area, at any rate. And they should move to correct the current distortion in compensation. Not all wrongs can be righted by Caesar without creating more problems than it has solved.

The old adage "The Government big enough to give you everything you want, is also big enough to take everything you've got."

All this is but one more example of the evils of the Welfare State.

AUSTRALIAN CHRISTIAN LOBBY: We now have a body in Australia called the "Australian Christian Lobby". Led by a former Army Brigadier, Jim Wallace, who resigned his commission and his career to head the new lobby, it starts with the healthy recognition that laws from government *are* the concern of Christians and the Church. A process has been established to lobby politicians with the fact there is a legitimate Christian point of view that needs to be taken into account when legislation is contemplated. This point of view is shared with many who are not churchgoers.

On August 8th and 9th the Australian Christian Lobby is holding a conference in Parliament House, Brisbane. The theme is "THE LAW, THE CHURCH, THE STATE". It is a long time since anything so encouraging took place in Australia.

Among others who will be addressing the Conference are three politicians – Mrs. Liz Cunningham,

Independent State Member in Queensland; Mr. Kevin Rudd, Labor Federal spokesman on Foreign Affairs, and De-Anne Kelly, National Party Federal member.

Speakers also include barristers and lawyers, and a number of pastors. It is to be greatly hoped that topics will go past those which have so preoccupied churches in the last 40 years, which have stopped at abortion and family issues. The whole gamut of Common Law, the development of Parliament itself, and, most urgently, Finance, Technology, Full Employment, Usury, the Just Price, Banking and Distribution are essential areas of concern for the Christian church.

We have no idea whether such issues will be discussed. The Australian Christian Lobby has a long way to go. The right of free assembly could with benefit be considered. But it has made a start.

(Address: The Australian Christian Lobby, PO Box 3266, Sunnybank South, Qld., 4109.)

THE IRAQ SAGA GRINDS ON: Latest news is that US troops in Iraq are complaining that they want to go home. Despite the protestations of Donald Rumsfeld, Bush's Secretary of Defence, one military leader on the ground in Iraq is emphatic that what has now developed is classic guerilla war. Against such, American troops have no training and are in an invidious position. There is no way of telling who is friend and foe. There is no way of restricting the number of weapons in circulation. Every attack on American troops feeds the thirst for vengeance of those who suffered the bombing.

On top of this, both Americans and Iraqis are now faced with the effect of the massive use of Depleted Uranium ammunition. This devastated those affected after the first Gulf War. Hideous deformities, cancers and other diseases have struck Gulf War veterans and Iraqi civilians up to 10 years after the war. Enormous efforts have been made to stop the accumulating evidence from becoming public.

Now it transpires as much as ten times Depleted Uranium as in the First Gulf War has been used in the latest bombardment. Some say the implications are 'catastrophic'. The radiation effects are being encountered by US troops on patrol every day, from wrecked tanks and buildings that still litter the area, each oozing deadly radiation in the form of toxic dust.

(See the July issue of *The New Times Survey*, due out shortly, containing two chilling articles on Depleted Uranium – \$5 posted from The Heritage Bookshop, Box 1052, GPO, Melbourne, 3001.)

WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION: "Just before the war, when the WMD issue lost traction, a humanitarian argument was suddenly invoked by those who until then had never shown concern for the welfare of the Iraqi people. WMD have still not been found in Iraq, so the discovery of mass graves is now said to retrospectively legitimate the war. It's a tempting digression, as long as no one asks whether they had been dug when Saddam was an ally of the West in the 1980s. Or how many of those buried there were incited to rebel against Saddam by George Bush's father in 1991, only to be cruelly betrayed by Washington.

Mark Twain identified in 1917 the problem we are now experiencing: "The statesmen will invent cheap lies, putting the blame upon the nation that is attacked, and every man will be glad of those conscience-soothing falsities, and will diligently study them, and refuse to examine any refutations of them; and thus he will by and by convince himself that the war is just, and will thank God for the better sleep he enjoys after this process of grotesque self-deception."

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