



A WEEKLY COMMENTARY

ON TARGET



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The price of Freedom is eternal vigilance –

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THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK – A MESSAGE OF HOPE IN A DARKENED WORLD by Bill Daly, New Zealand:

The following is taken from a report by Mr. Bill Daly, the National Director of New Zealand's League of Rights:

"Over the weekend of last September 4th-5th, 2004, and the following five days, I attended the annual Conference of the Pilgrims of St. Michael, based at Rougemont, Quebec, Canada. Rougemont is a small town surrounded by apple orchards and corn-fields about an hour's drive from Montreal, the predominately French-Catholic city on the edge of the massive Saint Lawrence River.

The Pilgrims of St. Michael are a lay Catholic apostolate founded by the late Mr Louis Even – a remarkable man – and the largest Social Credit organisation. A highly skilled administrator and teacher, Louis Even, at age 50, was introduced to the works of C.H. Douglas' critical analysis of the debt money system and the Social Credit proposals for correcting its faults.

Down the decades the movement has had varying relationships with the Provincial Quebec Government and the Church hierarchy; from open friendship to occasional hostility, but normally a guarded tolerance. A misguided adventure into party politics in the 1960s by some who had a limited appreciation of the nature of social freedom and what ought to be the proper relationship between people and their political representatives saw the numbers of supporters seriously decline at that time.

The Pilgrims see Church worship and reception of the sacraments (while also considered necessary for personal sanctification), not as ends in themselves, but as the starting point and source of strength and endurance for the work begun by Christ and well-described in the words of the Lord's Prayer; "let it be done on earth as it is in heaven". In true Social Credit fashion, this is accepted as including practical implications for the here-and-now. There is no time for the dissected view of God and of man which insists that the physical and spiritual domains should almost be treated as separate disconnected entities.

For me there were two main themes to emerge from the Conference: The need for basic tuition on Social Credit philosophy and policy back in our respective countries; and the future possibilities for limited, local experiments in the proper use of a society's credit.

There are three potential benefits in such scheme:

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- Immediate relief to impoverished people.
- The experiments would be educational.
- And would be tiny examples of what an entire nation could achieve.

Efforts for such development in no way detract from the larger campaign to have proper credit reform at national levels.

There have, of course, been many alternative money and credit schemes and so often they have proved too heavy a burden for the usually too few people managing them. What was evident at Rougemont was the new possibility of such developments emerging within, but not exclusively, the third world.

More than one Bishop was present from Mexico and the Philippines and there were a number of priests and lay professional people, some associated with universities. The western intelligentsia, including predominantly the hierarchy of all the churches, seem still too engrossed in the imagery and idolatries of orthodox financial wizardry to be able to consider more clear-headed solutions to the crippling debt-financial system.

'Free Market' Capitalism and Socialism are destructive of people and societies: But this may not be the case among many of the intellectuals and natural leaders of the third world who already know that the corrupted western ideologues and their ideologies of socialism and 'free-market, debt-built, monopoly capitalism' are completely destructive of people and societies.

Certainly those attending from Poland, Mexico, Ecuador, Benin and the Philippines only demonstrated great enthusiasm and hope for genuine credit reform in their diocese, parishes, towns and countries. These were men and women with high standing in their own countries, some in positions of considerable authority. Their humility was inspiring.

Third world Bishops don't control large property and financial portfolios like many of their Western counterparts. They stare at abject poverty and hopelessness every day; but many of them live in societies where they do command great moral authority. I learned that some dioceses in Mexico, for example, can number several million people.

There was no hint of any exclusiveness at any time. There was applause when I suggested in my own main talk concerning the philosophy of freedom that under-girds the Social Credit proposals, and the importance of every individual, that we must also, where possible, make common ground with those Moslems making a stand against the monopoly debt system."

"LEADERS" OR REPRESENTATIVES? by Roy Gustard:

The impression that a strong democracy requires strong leadership is a myth created by the media and the political party system. In their wisdom, the drafters of our Commonwealth Constitution, who were all political leaders from colonial parliaments, made no mention of the party system or the need for 'leadership'. They wrote of the *representation* of the people.

In most democracies, the on-going problem of how the elected members may interpret what their constituents want, is an unsolved issue. Perhaps the Swiss system of cantons reflects the most effective method of contact between the people and their representative. With the mechanism of the electors' Right of Recall, if the electorate considered the member ineffective, or legislation required repeal, a decision would be determined by referendum.

The Australian League of Rights looked at this issue many years ago, and suggested to supporters that for democracy to work effectively, an obligation existed with electors to establish contact with their

elected representatives. For democracy to be effective, responsibility resided with the voter, as much as with their parliamentary representative.

In South Australia, the Rann State government wants Local Government to consult more with the community. But surely the same principles apply for State government and Federal government as well as Local Government? Lip service is not enough!

The Rann government has the ball in its court. Through the initiatives of Peter Lewis MP, the door was opened for South Australians to have Citizens' Initiative working within the state system. The Constitutional Convention exercise showed once and for all, the first thing the people wanted was Citizens' Initiative Referendum. They wanted to have the chance to have a say on the policies the parties push and the legislation they enact.

There is just one problem, Mike Rann and his party have stalemated any further moves. So much for their commitment to participatory democracy. Not to be forgotten at the next state election.

THE SCENT OF FEAR: American newspapers are now publishing articles questioning the wisdom of the war of aggression against Iraq and weighing up what are the real costs for them all. The following story suggests the Bush regime, in its desperation, could attempt to lift the two-year ceiling for active duty call-ups. No American government was game enough to do this during the Vietnam War.

One correspondent observed: "If it happens, it would make the National Guard and Army Reserves the indentured servants of Donald Rumsfeld – indefinitely. Real revolutions have started over less!"

New York Times, January 10th, 2005, by Bob Herbert: "The assembly line of carnage in George W. Bush's war in Iraq continues unabated. Nightmares don't last this long, so the death and destruction must be real. You know you're in serious trouble when the politicians and the military brass don't even bother suggesting that there's light at the end of the tunnel. The only thing ahead is a deep and murderous darkness.

With the insurgency becoming both stronger and bolder, and the chances of conducting a legitimate election growing grimmer by the day, a genuine sense of alarm can actually be detected in the reality-resistant hierarchy of the Bush administration.

The unthinkable is getting a tentative purchase in the minds of the staunchest supporters of the war: that under the current circumstances, and given existing troop strengths, the US and its Iraqi allies may not be able to prevail.

Military officials are routinely talking about a major US presence in Iraq that will last, at a minimum, into the next decade. That is not what most Americans believed when the Bush crowd so enthusiastically sold this war as a noble adventure that would be short and sweet, and would end with Iraqis tossing garlands of flowers at American troops.

The reality, of course, is that this war is like all wars – fearsomely brutal and tragic. The administration was jolted into the realization of just how badly the war was going by the brazen suicide bombing just a few days before Christmas inside a mess tent of a large and supposedly heavily fortified military base in Mosul. Fourteen American soldiers and four American contractors were among the dead.

Brig. Gen. David Rodriguez told reporters at the Pentagon on Friday of an ominous new development in Iraq. "We've noticed in the recent couple of weeks," he said, "that the IED's [improvised explosive

devices] are all being built more powerfully, with more explosive effort in a smaller number of IED's."

Mr. Bush's so-called pre-emptive war, which has already cost so many lives, is being enveloped by the foul and unmistakable odour of failure. That's why the Pentagon is dispatching a retired four-star general, Gary Luck, to Iraq to assess the entire wretched operation. The hope in Washington is that he will pull a rabbit out of a hat. His mission is to review the military's entire Iraq policy, and do it quickly.

I hope, as he is touring the regions in which the US is still using conventional tactics against a guerrilla foe, that he keeps in mind how difficult it is to defeat local insurgencies, and other indigenous forces, as exemplified by such widely varying historical examples as the French experiences in Indochina and Algeria, the American experience in Vietnam, the Israeli experience in Lebanon, and so on.

But even the fortuitously named General Luck will be helpless to straighten anything out in time for the Iraqi elections. The commander of American ground forces in Iraq, Lt. Gen. Thomas Metz, made it clear last week that significant areas of four major provinces, which together contain nearly half the population of the entire country, are not safe enough for people to vote. "Today I would not be in much shape to hold elections in those provinces," said General Metz.

With the war draining the military of the troops needed for commitments worldwide, the Pentagon is being forced to take extraordinary steps to maintain adequate troop strength. A temporary increase of 30,000 soldiers for the Army, already approved by Congress, will most likely be made permanent. The Pentagon is also considering plans to further change the rules about mobilizing members of the National Guard and Reserve. Right now they cannot be called up for more than 24 months of active service. That limit would be scrapped, which would permit the Army to call them up as frequently as required.

A brutal 'in-your-face' draft: That's not a back-door draft. It's a brutal, in-your-face draft that's unfairly limited to a small segment of the population. It would make a mockery of the idea of an all-volunteer Army.

Something's got to give. The nation's locked in a war that's going badly. The military is strained to the breaking point. And it's looking more and more like the amateur hour in the places that are supposed to provide leadership in perilous times – the Pentagon and the White House.

Comment: When the war of aggression was first launched against Iraq, veteran observer of world politics and events, Eric D. Butler, said the war could yet prove to be 'another Vietnam' for the Americans.

At the start of the American bombardment, when the Iraqi army faded into the background in Baghdad, putting up limited resistance to the invasion forces, I thought then of the words of one old-timer: "The Arabs don't fight the way western armies do... they fight with guile and cunning."

Looking back, we can now ask: Who in their right mind would stand before the awesome firepower of the Americans and be blown to pieces – and for what?

Better to make a hasty retreat and live to fight another day... And that is just what the Iraqis did and are doing!

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