

The Monthly Update

December 2006

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

Each December, we make our annual request for contributions. We ask that each of you pray and seek the Lord's leading as to how you might support the ministry of Concerned Methodists. We believe that we make the most efficient use possible of the money you entrust to our work. Since we have no paid employees, we are able to translate the maximum amount of donations into our ministry of informing people about what is happening within our United Methodist Church.

An additional cost-cutting measure that we take is combining the mailing of *The Christian Methodist Newsletter* with that of the "Monthly Update" when both are being mailed at the same time. This combined with regular monitoring of our mailing lists to maximize coverage and minimize costs help us to keep expenses down.

It is especially important for us this year since our mailing list for *The Christian Methodist Newsletter* has expanded considerably. This is a two-edged blessing – while we do reach more people with our information the expense is greater and we often experience a shortfall in our income versus costs. At present we are \$5600 behind on our budget.

We would ask you to come alongside us both prayerfully and financially. We appreciate so much your standing with us in the mission that we believe the Lord has called us to. May we ask for your continued help through your gifts and your prayers?

Please help us close the gap and finish the year in the black.

In the spirit of the Christmas season we would ask that – if you have not already made it a part of your family tradition – you read Luke, chapter 2, verses 1-20 in your Bible. This speaks most eloquently as to what this holiday season is all about.

Finally, from your brothers and sisters here in Concerned Methodists, we wish the very best to you during this Christmas and throughout the coming year.

In His service,

Allen O. Morris,
Executive Director

"Believing in the ministry of Concerned Methodists, I will":

_____ Make a "Faith-Promise" of \$ _____ per month.

_____ Send a one-time contribution of \$ _____.

_____ Promise to pray for the work of Concerned Methodists.

December 2006 Update

Bits and Pieces from across the United Methodist Church

"Beat the Christmas rush, come to church this Sunday!" – Seen on a Church Marquee

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The Good Stuff. Publishing House to republish book for U.S. troops

NASHVILLE, Tenn. - The United Methodist Publishing House will resume its role as the publisher of a 64-year-old book of daily devotions for U.S. military troops. In the days after the 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor, staff members of the Methodist Publishing House discussed ways in which they could serve the thousands of men and women enlisting in the armed services. The Publishing House staff decided to ask church and academic leaders from many denominations to write one-page devotions for each day of the year. Each message would be written for combat troops. The staff titled the book *Strength for Service to God and Country*. The massive publishing project was completed in 1942; by 1944 the book had been given to 800,000 troops, the largest publishing effort by the Nashville-based agency to that date.

The original book was a hard-back pocket book purchased by local churches and individuals to give to troops as they were deployed for Europe and Asia. The book was republished during the Korean conflict, and it was then forgotten by nearly everyone except World War II or Korean War veterans who kept copies of the book as a reminder of their days in the service.

Boy Scout leads republishing effort

One of the veterans who kept a copy of the pocketbook was Eugene Hunsberger, a former Navy officer living in Orange County, Calif. His grandson, Evan, noted how important the book was to his grandfather and Evan asked him if it would be a good idea to republish the book for his Eagle Scout project. "That's not a good idea," said Eugene, "that's a great idea." Eugene Hunsberger did not live to see his grandson's Eagle project completed, but five years later, with help from the churchwide Commission on United Methodist Men, the addition of devotions by contemporary religious leaders and contributions from across the nation, more than 250,000 copies of an updated version of the historic book have been sent to members of the armed forces.

Unlike the first effort in which local churches purchased the book and gave it to service men and women, the men's agency has solicited funds to send the books to chaplains who distribute the books to their troops. The goal of the agency is to give copies of the book to 1 million troops.

Shift in publishers

In November, after publishing 250,000 copies with the Franklin, Tenn.-based Providence House Publishing Company, the Commission on United Methodist Men returned the publishing role to the original developer and copyright holder, the United Methodist Publishing House. "We were pleased with our five-year relationship with Providence House," said the Rev. David Adams, top staff executive of the agency for men's ministry, "but we think there may be people who want to purchase the book for local police, fire fighters or emergency workers, and we felt we could reach new markets through the United Methodist Publishing House with more than 70 Cokesbury stores and outlets."

"We all stand in the need of prayer," said Neil Alexander, president and publisher of the United Methodist Publishing House. "We all hunger for an encounter with God's word and God's grace. Surely this is even more so in times of great crisis and moral challenge, and in places where we are far from loved ones and surrounded by threats of conflict and violence." He said the Nashville-based Publishing House "is privileged to join with United Methodist Men from all corners of the world to offer holy words of guidance, solace, forgiveness and challenge through this new version of a historic publication."

Appreciation from Iraq

Captain Pete Keough, an Army chaplain stationed in Iraq, recently wrote the commission to thank it for sending *Strength for Service to God and Country* books. "I have been carrying copies with me as I go 'outside the wire' to visit soldiers at the places of duty within the Baghdad region. I have worked it out to where at least one book

goes with every squad. The feedback from the soldiers is unanimous: 'It is the perfect devotional for the warrior/soldier on the go.' I keep mine in my left leg pocket, a perfect fit. Your ministry is a huge blessing. May God richly bless you all!"

The 400-page books are also given to men following their basic training before they are deployed. "Strength for Service speaks right to the heart of a warrior and hits on the topics that are at the forefront of our thoughts," said Marine Lt. Jason Rochester, a chaplain at the Paris Island, S.C., training center. "The size is ideal for carrying in a cargo pocket or in the pouch of a pack."

"I read a passage every night at lights out and it always strengthens me and gives me motivation," said Pvt. Schmidtberger, a recruit at Camp Pendleton, Calif.

Copies were also sent to staff members of the Pentagon, who also suffered an attack on 9/11. Pentagon Chaplain Jim Driscoll said the books have "been much appreciated and used by civilian and military personnel throughout the Pentagon."

The men's commission hopes to provide all U.S. service men and women with a copy of this historic book. The commission is accepting donations by mail to GCUMM, P.O. Box 340006, Nashville, TN 37203-0006. For additional information, contact Larry Coppock at (615) 620-7262 or by e-mail at lcoppock@gcumm.org. Additional information is available at the commission's Web site, www.strengthforservice.org.

- By J. Richard Peck, *United Methodist News Service (UMNS)*; Nov. 14, 2006.

Abortion, Assisted Suicide, Euthanasia & Other Life Issues. Half-fetus, half-child

In one of his few remarks during the two hours of arguments in the Supreme Court today about partial-birth abortion, Justice Scalia responded to Justice Stevens' assertion that we should say "fetus" rather than child.. Justice Scalia said, "half-fetus, half-child."

The point was clear. This is not simply about abortion. This is a hijacking of the delivery process for the purpose of killing the child. This is infanticide. I don't know why Justice Scalia was otherwise so quiet, and Justice Alito completely silent during the arguments, but I know one reason I would be. The barbarity of partial-birth abortion is so self-evidently wrong that it is beyond dispute, beyond discussion, that it should not be legal in our country - or anywhere else, for that matter. Silence in this matter speaks volumes.

In the course of the two hours of oral arguments, the Court considered three key reasons why abortion advocates want the Court to strike down the Federal ban on partial-birth abortion: a) the ban lacks a health exception; b) the ban is too broad, that is, by its wording it actually bans most if not all second and third trimester D&E (dismemberment) abortions rather than just partial-birth abortion, and c) the ban is vague, and because the language is not clear and specific enough, doctors won't know if it really applies to them.

Having listened carefully to the oral arguments and having read all the briefs, I don't think the abortion advocates made their case, and I don't think a majority of the Justices think they did either.

One of the most important admissions made in the arguments by the pro-abortion side was that we really have no measurements about what kind of a health need is met by partial-birth abortion. Their key argument, after all, is that the procedure must be allowed for the sake of women's health. They admitted that the Court could ban this procedure if its health advantages were minimal rather than significant, yet they could not establish, by statistical measurement, the assertion that the health advantages of partial-birth abortion are significant.

In regard to safety, one of the key questions from Chief Justice Roberts was that if, as the abortionists claim, partial-birth abortion is safer because it requires fewer insertions of instruments into the woman's body, why would it not then also follow that the safest method is live birth altogether, with the killing of the child outside the womb? The pro-abortion side did not have an answer to that specific question, which proves the point that Congress and the Bush Administration make, namely, that this procedure must be banned so that society has a clear barrier against infanticide.

Isn't it just amazing that in our highest court in this great nation, this debate occurred today about the legality of "dismemberment" and "pulling the arms and legs off" a child. In the end, it's not a matter of which version of killing should be used. It's a matter of stopping the killing altogether.

- Source - Fr. Frank Pavone, *National Director of Priests for Life. Website: www.priestsforlife.org*

Of Interest.

+ Connectional Table affirms four 'provocative proposals'

FORT WORTH, Texas - The Connectional Table, a 60-member group responsible for coordinating the mission, ministries and resources of the United Methodist Church, has proposed four goals for the 10 million-member denomination.

1. Address the leadership crisis in the church in the United States.
2. Create a strategy to develop new congregations.
3. Partner with the poor.
4. Implement a global health initiative.

Covenant for collaboration

The first proposal would ask each of the 13 churchwide agencies to address the leadership crisis in the church in the United States through commitments of time, money and staff. Statistics show that the average United Methodist is 57 years old, and United Methodists under age 18 account for only 4.6 percent of church members. There are 850 ordained and commissioned elders under age 35, and U.S. membership has slipped below 8 million for the first time since the 1930s. In contrast, churches in the central conferences (regions in Africa, Asia and Europe) have seen membership increase.

Developing congregations

The second proposal addresses how the denomination's general agencies, annual (regional) conferences and local churches can rethink the way the church recruits, trains, and supports clergy and lay leaders. The group set a goal of 350 new churches a year in the United States, with 80 percent of those churches averaging 250 people in worship within five years of their launch. If successful, the United Methodist Church would welcome 87,500 new members in five years.

Partnering with the poor

Five action steps were suggested to strengthen ministries with the poor:

Discovery: Each agency would be asked to survey its works with the poor and report on the findings by January.

Review: Each agency would name one executive staff member to review the findings and form a team to plan collaborative initiatives to move forward.

General Conference consideration: The team would create an affirmation of ministry with the poor for consideration by the 2008 General Conference.

Pilot project development: During the 2009-2012 quadrennium, the team would develop six pilot projects for ministry with the poor in collaboration with jurisdictional and central conferences in East Africa, the Philippines, Eastern Europe, Honduras, a U.S. annual conference with a large urban population and an annual conference in Appalachia.

Education for United Methodist action: The team would develop multilingual education resources with emphasis on advocating for public policies that empower the impoverished and alleviate conditions that compromise quality of life.

Global health initiative

An interagency working group on health and wholeness proposed a global health initiative to engage all levels of the church in a campaign to prevent and treat diseases that result from poverty. In December, an informal advisory meeting of key leaders in the church will meet in Washington to consider the most effective methods.

During the meeting, the health task force presented information to the group that health care claims by United Methodist clergy in the United States are 16 percent higher than those of other employers with more than 500 employees across the nation. Barbara Boige grain, chief executive of the United Methodist Board of Pension and Health Benefits, explained that the surveys showed United Methodist clergy are also obese in greater numbers than the national average. Boige grain said the data lead the group to question: "What is going on in the lives of the clergy that is causing them to be heavier, to have higher stress, and to be measurably less healthy than the rest of the population? ...We need to look at the systems of the church." The task force

suggested that annual conferences and agencies provide comparative data and best practices to focus on the systemic issues and prepare recommendations for General Conference.

Proposals to General Conference

Bishop John Hopkins, chairperson of the Connectional Table, said the proposals and reports for General Conference can reinvigorate the church. "Nothing we can do at General Conference, nothing that we can do, will be greater than if every United Methodist wakes up in the morning and says, 'I'm going to live a Wesleyan life today.'"

Dora Washington, a representative from the Southeastern Jurisdiction, said these proposals are "consistent with our mandate to be visionary. This will answer for some what the Connectional Table is doing."

Washington and other members of the table said the group worked to determine its role in three previous meetings. Following the Fort Worth gathering, she said, "We are more and more seeing concrete results of the Connectional Table. It was a new thing, and we had to envision what it's all about. We are becoming clearer on what our charge is."

[Note: In all this where is the substantive solution of changing lives through Jesus Christ?]

The Connectional Table's next meeting will be May 21-24 at Simpsonwood Conference Center near Atlanta.

- By Fran Coode Walsh, UMNS #652; Nov 2, 2006

+ **Researchers complete first phase of 'State of Church' report**

FORT WORTH, Texas - "What does it mean to be United Methodist?"

Researchers have asked 300 United Methodist members, lay leaders and pastors how they define the denomination, and their answers are compiled in the qualitative phase of the first "State of the Church" report.

Compiled by the Martec Group and commissioned by the Connectional Table, the research combines information gathered in face-to-face conversations and in-depth phone interviews. The Connectional Table, which met Oct. 22-24, is a 60-member group that coordinates the mission, ministries and resources of the denomination. The Martec Group polled individuals in the United States, Europe, Africa and the Philippines. The goals of the process were to define current realities within the workings of the church; to honor the heritage of the church; and to examine areas for growth.

Connectional Table member Twila Glenn said this is the first time the denomination has attempted to produce a comprehensive overview of the life of the church. The information that surfaced in the early conversations was used to construct an online survey, which was completed by 2,600 people. United Methodist Meera Buck, Martec's principal researcher for the project, organized the findings into six "frames":

Personal identity: Many respondents consider the church as family, and the main reason they belong is they believe in its values. Many are proud of the church's focus and accomplishment.

Connection: The church plays an important role in many respondents' lives and provides a sense of belonging. All those polled agreed it is important to make the church relevant to young people, and many said young people relate better to young pastors. It was noted that in the Philippines and Africa, churches have a much more active youth base.

Balance: Finding a balance between traditional and more contemporary worship styles and music is difficult. Churches in the Philippines and Africa have greater success changing traditional music and worship to livelier forms.

Resources: Budgetary concerns are paramount for leaders. There is a dependency on volunteers and a need to involve more young people in volunteer work.

System: Most respondents said the church was open and welcoming of people with diverse ideas. There were a variety of opinions about the U.S. church's attitude about homosexuality, but the issue was irrelevant to respondents in other countries.

Future: There are different views on how the church should change, but most agree it needs to be more accommodating to young people. There was some resistance to change among longtime members.

These findings constitute the qualitative phase of the report. Glenn noted that the task force will also gather research about the church from other sources such as the Duke Pulpit and Pew Study and material annual conferences can provide.

"The next step is to analyze the quantitative results and put those together with the other kinds of research from other sources. We will begin to fashion those into a report ... in draft form that attempts to say, 'this is not only who we are, but what we are.' And what that means for where we're going ... and for the United Methodist Church and its role in the body of Christ in the world."

The completed State of the Church report is expected to be ready in time for the next meeting of the Connectional Table in May.

- By Fran Coode Walsh, UMNS #653; Nov. 2, 2006.

(UM) Bishops. Council leader challenges bishops to put hope into action

MAPUTO, Mozambique - Now is the time for United Methodist bishops to lead the church in putting hope into action, to address the needs of a world struggling with a "powerful spiritual hunger," the president of the Council of Bishops told her peers. Bishop Janice Huie gave that challenge Nov. 2 in an episcopal address to more than 70 bishops attending their first meeting outside the territorial United States. She focused on hope, leadership, vision and risk-taking in calling her colleagues to act. "We live in a threshold time," said Huie, who leads the denomination's Houston Area. "Globally we face a new context for ministry" that includes the challenges of poverty, disease, hunger, violence, war and genocide, greed, suicide, school shootings and ecological destruction. Despite the despair and chaos, people are seeking God's word, she said. "A deep and powerful spiritual hunger is present all over the globe," she said. It is being satisfied in both constructive and destructive ways, but the common element in that hunger is the "deep human desire for hope," she said.

People hope for peace and a better or transformed world, she said.

She noted that the council expresses hope in its mission statement of leading the church to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world, and she asked how the bishops might more effectively lead United Methodists into "that future of hope." "Leaders shape hope when we offer vision to the church," she said. "We shape hope when we help people dream big enough to be faithful to God and to capture their own imaginations."

"God gives us hope. The Holy Spirit gives us courage." [Note: This reflects fuzzy thinking.]

Because making disciples is risky, Huie told the bishops that if they expect United Methodists to take risks for Jesus Christ, then they need to do the same. "Not many people are going to step out into a new future when leaders are focused on the rear-view mirror of institutional survival and self-preservation."

With offices in Washington, the council comprises 69 active bishops and 100 retired bishops; they are the church's top clergy leaders in the United States, Africa, Europe and Asia.

- By Linda Green, UMNS #655; Nov. 3, 2006.

(UM) Stewardship. Wage hike is 'economic, racial justice,' church leaders say

[Note: This is pure political activism and an example of your apportionment money at work. The minimum wage has economic implications that argue for both its passage and for its staying the same. This has little to do with "justice." They give the impression of speaking for all of the members of the United Methodist Church – which they do not.]

Increasing the U.S. federal minimum wage is "a matter of economic and racial justice," according to a letter to Congress signed by 11 Christian leaders. The leaders, representing Churches Uniting in Christ and more than 25 million church members, included the Rev. Larry Pickens, chief executive, United Methodist Commission on Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns. Asking for approval of the wage increase when Congress resumes after the November elections, the Oct. 24 letter pointed out that the current minimum pay scale is a "poverty wage" that has an impact on all segments of society. Church leaders noted the "growing hidden underclass" in the United States and added that "poverty disproportionately affects people of color who, according to a report from the U.S. Census Bureau, experience a higher rate of poverty in this country. Indeed, African Americans and Hispanics are nearly three times as likely to live under the poverty line, and nearly two times as likely to live under twice the official poverty."

- By Linda Bloom, UMNS #654; Nov. 3, 2006.

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"Enthusiasm is that kindling spark which marks the difference between the leaders in every activity

and the laggards who put in just enough to get by." - Author Unknown

Global Outlook

Both optimists and pessimists contribute to our society. The optimist invents the airplane and the pessimist the parachute.

- Gil Stern, as quoted in *Reader's Digest*, November 2006

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The Episcopal Church. Episcopal leaders vote to leave

Leaders of two of Virginia's most historic Episcopal parishes have voted to split from the Episcopal Church and the Diocese of Virginia, a move that could spark a legal battle over millions of dollars' worth of property.

The vestry -- or governing board -- of Truro Episcopal Church, an 18th-century church in downtown Fairfax, voted unanimously

Saturday to depart from the 2.2-million-member Episcopal Church over questions of biblical authority and the 2003 consecration of New Hampshire Bishop V. Gene Robinson, an active homosexual.

Monday night, the vestry of the Falls Church, an equally historic Virginia congregation in the city of Falls Church, voted 15-2, with one abstention, to leave the Episcopal Church, a denomination it has called home for more than 200 years. Its rector, the Rev. John Yates, called the process a series of "terribly hard decisions" in a Nov. 14 letter to church members. His church sits on \$17 million worth of prime real estate; Truro's property is worth about \$10 million.

Tom Wilson, senior warden of the Falls Church's vestry, pointed to a parish meeting this past Sunday as a defining moment. "The message we got from the congregation was that sadly, the theological disconnect between biblical Christianity and the road the [Episcopal] Church had chosen to walk was so profound, the time had come to separate from the denomination," he said.

Jim Oakes, senior warden of Truro's vestry, said the congregation was asked not to applaud when the vestry's vote was announced during Sunday services. "This is not a cause for celebration," he said. "This is a time of sadness and resolve. We're asking the congregation to join with us in affirming the decision, but it's not a time of popping champagne corks."

The vestries' decisions must be ratified by a majority of each parish's members during a congregational vote the second week of December. However, the trend among conservatives in the 90,000-member Diocese of Virginia is not to stay. Last week, the vestry of All Saints' Episcopal Church in Woodbridge recommended their church also leave, and within the past year, three mission churches have split from the diocese.

Mr. Oakes said Truro's vestry informed Virginia Bishop Peter J. Lee of its decision Tuesday afternoon by phone. As for the bishop's reaction, "We had a candid conversation, we'll just leave it at that," the senior warden said.

The diocese released a short statement yesterday.

"We are very, very sad that the vestries are going to recommend to the congregations that they sever ties to the Episcopal Church," Bishop Lee said. But when asked during a 2004 press conference how he'd respond to an exodus of some of the most valuable and historic properties in his diocese, he referred to a private letter he once wrote on the matter. "I said that I believe that I had a responsibility to the Episcopalians of the past," he said, "who built the church, and to the Episcopalians of the future, who will use the church, not to stand by and let a current generation walk away with their property." Representatives from both parishes and the diocese have had secret negotiations for the past year over how to conduct an amicable split. Although Mr. Yates' letter said a protocol had been agreed to by both sides, the diocese said yesterday no such agreement had been reached.

Truro and the Falls Church both intend to retain their property. The vestries have proposed joining the Anglican District of Virginia, a newly formed group of churches culled from the Episcopal Diocese of Virginia. It will be led by the Rt. Rev. Martyn Minns, the rector of Truro who was consecrated Aug. 20 in Abuja, Nigeria, as a bishop with the Anglican Province of Nigeria. Currently, he leads a new group set up by the Nigerian province called the Convocation for Anglicans in North America (CANA). The Anglican District of Virginia will be part of CANA. The group's offices are across the street from Truro and its Web site,

www.canaconvocation.org, already has application forms for parishes to join up.
By Julia Duin; THE WASHINGTON TIMES; Published November 16, 2006.

- Received by e-mail.

Islam. *The God vacuum: America and the barbarian hordes*, By David Kupelian

[Note: Given the extreme importance of the situation in which we find ourselves here in the United States we have included this article sounding a warning of the threat from Islam. The war against terror is truly World War III.]

In the Old Testament of the Bible, God is shown time after time chastising the House of Israel, His chosen but often disobedient people, by allowing barbarians to invade and plunder their cities and put many of them to the sword. That is what the Western World, including America, is starting to experience today, having likewise turned away from God. This raging conflict between Islam and the West, this "clash of civilizations" that many are calling World War III, is at root a spiritual war.

It's been said that it takes a religion to fight a religion. More precisely, it takes true faith to defeat a false one. And by true faith I don't mean a set of rules, rituals and doctrine in a book, any book. I mean a genuine personal relationship with the one true God, and a nation of such people who follow the laws of conscience that same God planted in each of their hearts.

What is the answer to the burgeoning threat of Islamic jihad? The simple and terrifying bottom-line answer is that there is no answer unless America finally awakens and gives up its insane rebellion against its own founding faith and values. We're fond of praising our World War II-era forbearers who won that terrible conflict with another form of demon-possessed, expansionist fascism.

But the "Greatest Generation" was different from this generation. It believed in God.

Come again? You say we also believe in God today? No, we don't – not as a nation.

The World War II generation believed in God. They believed that this God was the God of the Ten Commandments and the Sermon on the Mount. They believed He created us in His image and that human life was therefore sacred, which meant we don't slaughter our offspring in the womb nor kill off our parents when they get old and sick. They believed in biblical morality when it comes to sex, which meant homosexuality, adultery and "shacking up" were sinful and wrong.

And they also believed God had uniquely blessed the United States of America, something Alexis de Tocqueville called "American Exceptionalism" – the conviction that America's enlightened Constitution, industrial and military might, unprecedented standard of living, and most of all its legendary liberty were the direct result of the Almighty's blessing on this special nation. Implicit in that belief was the understanding that, just as with ancient Israel, this divine spigot flowing with undeserved blessings could and would be turned off if we turned away from God.

Thus it was the "Greatest Generation's" national unity, based on its widespread cultural and religious fidelity to those core truths – what we call "Judeo-Christian values" – that gave them the confidence to fight and persevere and win the world war that confronted them, whatever sacrifices that effort required.

Today, America and Europe are being transformed by Islam because there is a spiritual vacuum in these once-Christian lands. Especially in Britain and Europe, where the Islamic invasion is already well advanced, analysts concede it's simply a matter of time before some of these nations have Muslim majorities. Then comes Shariah law and the total transformation of these formerly Christian countries into repressive Islamic states.

Think I'm exaggerating? The Netherlands' justice minister, Piet Hein Donner, recently announced he would let Shariah law take over his European nation – already rapidly filling up with Muslims – if the majority votes for it. Just as in other Arab-Muslim countries currently under this strict Islamic legal system, European nations under Shariah might well see amputations – as prescribed in the Quran – as punishment for certain crimes; women publicly flogged and sometimes hanged or stoned to death for adultery or other so-called "crimes against chastity"; and death sentences for leaving the Muslim religion, or even for preaching Christianity, as occurs in Pakistan under its notorious "blasphemy laws."

All the vain, prideful fantasies of the post-Christian, secular, multiculturalism-worshipping Europeans are crashing down around them. The French are so terrified of the Muslims that comprise 10 percent of their population that Parisian police won't even venture into Muslim communities on the outskirts of the capital city.

Having traded the Christian faith of their fathers for the smug, self-righteous ecstasy of the socialist welfare state, they have no spiritual strength left with which to fight back the invading hordes.

What about America? Though the percentage of Muslims in this huge nation is much lower than in Europe, radical Islam already has a powerful foothold in many parts of American society. Beyond the obvious signs – like the rapid proliferation within the U.S. of Saudi-funded mosques, Islamic centers and schools teaching discontent and even hatred for America – consider just one of the many less-than-obvious "growth areas": our prison system.

"Muslim chaplains have established an Islamic radical regime over Muslim convicts in the American prisons," writes Stephen Schwartz in "Islam in the Big House." "Radical Muslim chaplains, trained in a foreign ideology, certified in foreign-financed schools, and acting in coordination to impose an extremist agenda have gained a monopoly over Islamic religious activities in American state, federal and city prisons and jails." He adds, chillingly, "Imagine each prison Islamic community as a little Saudi kingdom behind prison walls, without the amenities. They have effectively induced American authorities to establish a form of 'state Islam' or 'government-certified Islam' in correctional systems."

Will this nightmare ever end? It will only end, like all nightmares end, when we wake up.

We need to wake up and remember who we really are. We need to realize the bottom-line reality that man is a spiritual creature, and that he will have faith, one way or the other. If he doesn't embrace true faith, he will embrace false faith. It's not only automatic – it's God-ordained.

The most poignant scene in the film "United 93" – chronicling the events leading up to the Sept. 11, 2001, crash of the ill-fated jetliner into a Pennsylvania field – came toward the end when both passengers and terrorists were depicted as praying. It was just before the courageous group of passengers launched their revolt against the hijackers, and several were seen quietly, fervently reciting the Lord's Prayer, as though they were asking God for the superhuman strength and focus they would need to overpower the terrorists while facing almost-certain death. At the same time, the terrorist pilot, having been warned that a passenger rebellion was imminent, was also praying to his god, begging Allah for help and strength to prevail against great odds. The image of these two mortal enemies, each praying to his god for victory, was electrifying – a perfect distillation of the conflict into which we have been plunged.

We can't – and won't – win this war without God. He knows when and where the next big terror attack is being planned against America. He knows where bin Laden is hiding. Only He can give us the unearthly wisdom and strength required to be longsuffering and merciful when restraint is called for – and to be merciless when outright, heart-stopping, shock-and-awe devastation is called for to defeat the enemy. Most of all, only genuine fidelity to God will give us the gift of true righteousness – an otherworldly quality that terrifies the wicked, inspires the decent and mysteriously delivers victory into the hands of His people.

When God withheld His protection from ancient Israel because of the disobedience and faithlessness of His people, there was only one possible solution: They had to repent of their pride and folly and come back to Him.

Do we somehow expect the Almighty to grant a different remedy to us?

- Received by e-mail. David Kupelian is vice president and managing editor of WorldNetDaily.com

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We shall go forward together. The road upward is strong. There are upon our journey, dark and dangerous valleys through which we have to make and fight our way.

But it is sure and certain that if we persevere, and we shall persevere, we shall come through dark and dangerous valleys into sunlight broader and more genial and more lasting than mankind has ever known.

– Winston Churchill