

Monthly Update

April 2015

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

Merry Christmas! You may be wondering why I am starting this letter with a greeting such as that. Many of you will know the answer to that question. That is the time in which we celebrate one of the two most significant events in the history of the world – the birth of Jesus Christ. Indeed, our calendars are determined by that event, and we date our knowledge of history from that time. The year “2015” means 2015 years after the birth of Christ. In studying ancient history, we learn that things occurred in the year “ ____ B.C.” (“before Christ”). We are living in 2015 A.D., which is Latin for “in the year of our Lord”.

As we also know is that for about 33 years Christ walked on this earth, first as a boy, then as a young carpenter, and then for three years preaching, teaching, and healing.

Then as we know, He was crucified – and the religious rulers thought they had gotten rid of this “trouble maker” who was disrupting their semi-orderly lives. They were very surprised when three days later people started talking about seeing Him and His being raised from the dead. This demonstrated conclusively that He was all that He said He was. One thing often forgotten in history is that it also vindicated what Mary had done in giving birth to Jesus and her purity when she married Joseph. Immorality was a big issue in ancient Jewish society, but unfortunately it is no big thing today. For 33 years she had lived in that community with the whispers and side long glances from her friends and neighbors about what she had “done” and the things she continued to say. Yet she lived with the shame. The Resurrection not only vindicated what Jesus had been saying, it also exonerated her and cleared up her name. She was changed from a woman of “questionable” reputation to one of exalted virtue.

The two holidays are intertwined to make for the two most significant events in the history of the world – and of the universe, for that matter. As I had stated in a previous letter from a few years ago, “Our Christian faith is one that is firmly grounded in the historical reality of the physical universe. Although it has been said, and rightly so, that Jesus does not need lawyers to ‘defend’ Him – He needs witnesses, still this reasoning has led many people to faith in Christ.” Let us keep that in mind as we face almost on a daily basis the touting of another violent religion as being good and beneficent.

Again, I thank the Lord who has called us to “contend for the faith” and for all of you who continue to stand with us in your gifts and your prayers.

In His service,

Allen O. Morris,
Executive Director

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April 2015 Update

Bits and Pieces from across the United Methodist Church

For every minute you are angry you lose sixty seconds of potential happiness.

– Guideposts reader Miriam Herwig, of Randolph, Vermont

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The Good Stuff

+ ***Lay leaders discuss past, shape future.*** Nearly 80 annual conference lay leaders from around The UMC gathered in Baltimore Feb. 19-22, taking the opportunity to learn a little about our church's past while looking at ways to shape the future. Baltimore-Washington Conference Lay Leader Delores Martin welcomed the Association for Annual Conference Lay Leaders at its opening worship service Feb. 19. Bishop Marcus Matthews preached at the worship service. The group, whose purpose is to strengthen lay leadership in the denomination and to enable a mutual ministry between lay and clergy, meets annually and rotates its location throughout the U. S., according to Steve Furr, lay leader of the Alabama-West Florida Conference. Furr has been president of the Association for three years.

At a visit to a snowy Baltimore-Washington Conference Mission Center Feb. 21, Furr said the focus of this year's meeting was conflict resolution. Dr. Jan Love, dean at Emory University in Atlanta, was the facilitator for a daylong session on Feb. 20. Through the Association, annual conference lay leaders are trained for their tasks, Furr said. These leaders then go back to their respective annual conferences and train district lay leaders and those in the local churches. The Association includes people with a “wealth of talent,” said Furr, including attorneys, architects, teachers and business leaders. All of them come together to further the kingdom, he said. Furr said he feels that the church is starting to come back to the awareness that this denomination started as a lay movement in the United States. “We have to have the ordained clergy and paid staff, but the laity are out there sacrificing and giving of themselves, too,” he said.

Simon Mafunda, from the East Zimbabwe Annual Conference, has been its lay leader for seven years. This was his second time attending the Association meeting, and he said he enjoyed most the learning opportunities from talking with other UMs around the global connection. Mafunda is aware that while the church is not growing in terms of membership numbers in the U.S.; in Zimbabwe, the opposite is true. The East Zimbabwe Area shares a partnership ministry with the Baltimore-Washington Conference, one that Mafunda said is critical to continued growth in his country.

– Erik Alsgaard, the Baltimore-Washington Conference, as reported in UMNewScope, Vol. 43, Issue 09 / March 4, 2015.

+ ***Growing strong in Christ.*** Together, we will explore the five keys to growing strong in Christ, wherever you are on your Christian journey — and I'll help you put into practice practical ways to ...

Grow in Knowledge of God

Grow in Fellowship with Others

Grow in Assurance and Faith

Grow in Obedience

Grow in Gratitude ... it's the most neglected key to growing strong in Christ!

– Dr. Robert Jeffress. As heard on a radio broadcast on WRAE, FM 88.7.

+ ***Nazi's Perfect Aryan' Poster Child Was Jewish.*** Hessa Taft recently presented the Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial in Israel with a Nazi magazine featuring her baby photograph on the front cover, and told the story of how she became an unlikely poster child for the Third Reich.

When Hessa Taft was six months old, she was a poster child for the Nazis. Her photograph was chosen as the image of the ideal Aryan baby, and distributed in party propaganda. But what the Nazis didn't know was that

their perfect baby was really Jewish. “I can laugh about it now,” the 80-year-old Professor Taft told Germany’s *Bild* newspaper in an interview. “But if the Nazis had known who I really was, I wouldn’t be alive.”

Professor Taft recently presented the Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial in Israel with a Nazi magazine featuring her baby photograph on the front cover, and told the story of how she became an unlikely poster child for the Third Reich. Her parents, Jacob and Pauline Levinsons, both talented singers, moved to Berlin from Latvia to pursue careers in classical music in 1928, only to find themselves caught up in the Nazis’ rise to power. Her father lost his job at an opera company because he was Jewish, and had to find work as a door-to-door salesman.

In 1935, with the city rife with anti-semitic attacks, Pauline Levinsons took her six-month-old daughter Hessa to a well-known Berlin photographer to have her baby photograph taken. A few months later, she was horrified to find her daughter’s picture on the front cover of *Sonne ins Hause*, a major Nazi family magazine. Terrified, the family would be exposed as Jews, she rushed to the photographer, Hans Ballin. He told her he knew the family was Jewish, and had deliberately submitted the photograph to a contest to find the most beautiful Aryan baby. “I wanted to make the Nazis ridiculous,” the photographer told her. He succeeded: the picture won the contest, and was believed to have been chosen personally by the Nazi propaganda minister Joseph Goebbels.

Frightened she would be recognized on the streets and questions asked about her identity, Prof. Taft’s parents kept her at home. Her photograph appeared on widely available Nazi postcards, where she was recognized by an aunt in distant Memel, now part of Lithuania . But the Nazis never discovered Prof Taft’s true identity. In 1938, her father was arrested by the Gestapo on a trumped up tax charge, but released when his accountant, a Nazi party member, came to his defense.

After that, the family fled Germany. They moved first to Latvia , before settling in Paris only for the city to fall to the Nazis. With the help of the French resistance, they escaped again, this time to Cuba , and in 1949 the family moved to the United States.

Today the Jewish woman who was once a Nazi poster child is a professor of chemistry in New York. “I feel a little revenge,” she said of presenting her photograph to Yad Vashem. “Something like satisfaction.”

– Received from Weeks Parker

Of Interest.

+ ***NCC responds to federal report on Ferguson.*** In a press release, the National Council of Churches (NCC), of which The UMC is a member, thanked U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder and the Justice Department for its report after a thorough investigation of the Ferguson police. We encourage the City of Ferguson to implement the recommendations of the Department of Justice, the group said in a statement.

[Note: This is just one example of how this far-left organization uses money given into the general church fund to support its political pronouncements. This was an issue of local interest to its citizens over enforcement of the law. It would seem that if the NCC and many of our UM denominational agencies focused as much attention on taking the life-saving message of Jesus Christ to a lost world, this in turn would transform people so that they would not be so violent. – AOM]

– UMNS, as reported in the vol. 43, issue 11, edition of UMNewScope, March 17, 2015

+ ***GBPHB Implements Human Rights and Climate Change Investment Guidelines.*** On Jan. 22, the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits (GBPHB) and its Wespath investment management division announced the implementation of two new investment guidelines. These guidelines provide direction for identifying and managing the excessive sustainability risk that could potentially affect the value of assets held on behalf of benefit plans and institutional investment clients. One guideline relates to climate change (focused on the thermal coal sector); the other relates to human rights (focused on companies operating in some of the most challenging countries and conflict-affected regions in the world). Investors increasingly recognize that certain environmental, social and governance (ESG) issues (climate change and human rights among them) can present an excessive degree of sustainability risk to the prudent management of investment funds. Ensuring sustainability—in terms of financial performance and with consideration for the importance of ESG factors—is integral to GBPHB’s

investment philosophy. GBPHB general secretary, Barbara Boige grain, noted, “We firmly believe that our comprehensive sustainable investment strategy will positively impact outcomes for our participants, the environment, society and future generations. The implementation of these guidelines demonstrates our commitment to active ownership as an important element of our investment program.”

As a long-term investor in nearly 5,000 companies, GBPHB’s active ownership strategy focuses on identifying and engaging companies whose securities present a fiduciary risk to plan participants and institutional investors, due to the companies’ unsustainable business practices. GBPHB believes that constructive engagement on ESG issues—taking advantage of its privileged position as a significant global investor—is the most powerful tool for effecting corporate change. The GBPHB board of directors approved the two guidelines for implementation in 2015. GBPHB’s managing director of Sustainable Investment Strategies, Kirsty Jenkinson, commented, “Our climate change guideline focuses on companies operating in the carbon-intensive thermal coal industry, and our human rights guideline focuses on companies operating in high-risk areas—where business activities may contribute to human rights violations. We believe our approach can help us fulfill our fiduciary obligations while also creating positive change for people and the planet.”

Details on GBPHB’s sustainable investment strategies and the implementation of the guidelines for climate change (thermal coal) and human rights can be found on its website.

[Note: This is another example of how UM general boards and agencies use money given into the general church fund to support its political pronouncements. The issue of “climate change” is an outgrowth of the now-discredited belief in “global warming” that was blamed on human beings. I have cited in the past the front cover of one magazine published in the 1970s that touted the “coming ice age” as its headline. I for one believe that God has done a pretty good job of engineering the universe and have complete confidence in His managing of the earth’s weather. – AOM]

– Collette Nies, GBPHB, UMNS, as reported in UMNewscope; Vol. 43, Issue 04 / January 28, 2015.

(UM) Bishops. Plans under way to make Discipline truly global. What are the essentials that bind all UMs and what can be adapted for use outside the U. S.? That is the heart of the debate before an international body of church leaders, who met recently in Maputo, Mozambique. General Conference in 2012 assigned the Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters to assist in developing a truly global Book of Discipline. The hope is that such a book, which will contain the church's teachings and rules of governance, will help the denomination live more fully into its worldwide

nature. Unlike U.S. jurisdictions, central conferences have authority under the denomination's constitution to make “such changes and adaptations” to the Book of Discipline as missional needs and differing legal contexts require. The standing committee, in consultation with the Committee on Faith and Order, must recommend to General Conference what portions of the Book of Discipline are not subject to adaptation. Specifically, the standing committee is to assess the Book of Discipline's part VI, Organization and Administration, which contains the chapters most directly related to organizing ministry in the central conferences.

The Standing Committee gave an update Feb. 9 on their work at a joint meeting with the Connectional Table, which coordinates general church ministry and resources. It was the first time the two bodies had ever met together. Committee members hope the 2020 General Conference will approve what it calls a General Discipline, with a worldwide outlook and possibly fewer paragraphs. First, the committee wants feedback from other UMs—especially the 2016 General Conference—to find out whether it is on the right track. A draft of a proposed, slimmed-down version of part VI will be available for the delegates in Portland, Ore., to review. But committee's only legislative proposal related to the global Book of Discipline for 2016 mainly asks for an extension through 2020 to continue work on the revision.

As the Standing Committee has been working on part VI, the General Board of Church and Society (GBCS) has been holding consultations around the world on the Social Principles, which are not church law but the church's “prayerful and thoughtful effort . . . to speak to the human issues in the contemporary world.” The consultations are the first step in developing a less U.S.-centric, more global Social Principles, a process that will also last through at least

2020. The Rev. Kimberly D. Reisman, a standing committee member, said that, for now, the committee is concentrating on building trust. “If we try to do too much, too soon, then we will undermine the trust that is needed to move forward,” she said. “Our actions may open up the conversation [about what the changes mean for U.S. UMs] . . . but if we move too quickly, then the conversation will come to a complete halt.”

[Note: I would be wary of this. It reminds me of the amendments that were passed at the 2008 General Conference in Ft. Worth, Texas that would have reorganized the worldwide structure of the Methodist Church – and would have set up the structure that would have laid the basis for normalizing homosexual practice in our denomination. Under no circumstances should we jeopardize our connection to the worldwide church. – AOM]

– Heather Hahn, UMNS, as reported in UMNewscope; Vol. 43, Issue 08 / February 25, 2015.

(UM) General Board of Church and Society. *Dream Big to End AIDS Crisis*

[Note: In all of this information and activism, one can only ask the questions, “What about abstinence? Where is that mentioned? This would be by far the most effective way of slowing the spread of this dread disease and reducing the numbers of cases. It is not about “dreaming”; it is about self-discipline, morality, and quarantine. – AOM]

Those gathered at the Dec. 1 World AIDS Day observance in the UM Building on Capitol Hill (Washington, D.C.) were urged to dream big and make a difference in the lives of those who are affected and infected. On World AIDS Day, while thousands of people gathered around the globe to “focus, partner, and achieve,” 4,100 people died of AIDS, just as they had the day before and the day after. Stating this fact, Susan Greer Burton, director of Women’s and Children’s Advocacy for the General Board of Church and Society (GBCS), called upon those gathered at a special observance to address the HIV/AIDS crisis with “an imagination of the heart,” to dream big, and to make a difference in the lives of those who are affected and infected.

“What’s most important is not what we say today, but what we do today,” Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton (D, District of Columbia) told those at the observance. Norton was instrumental in getting removed from a bill a legislative rider that would prohibit the city of Washington from paying for needle exchange programs. The needle exchanges ended up saving countless lives, she said, and reversed the spread of HIV/AIDS in D.C., which had the highest rates of this disease in the nation, rivaling Sub-Saharan Africa. In 2012, just two years after a 21-year ban on federal funding was lifted, Congress again voted to deny this source of funding for programs that provide sterile syringes to injection-drug users. The ban, GBCS leaders say, runs contrary to scientific and economic evidence. According to the Centers for Disease Control, the annual average cost of HIV care per person in the United States is between \$15,747 and \$40,678. The cost per needle at the average exchange program is approximately 97 cents. In 2012, The UMC adopted a resolution that calls on its members to advocate for the implementation and expansion of needle exchange programs in order to reduce the spread of HIV.

“Locally and across the globe, this is an area of ministry with which our churches need to be involved,” said Bishop Marcus Matthews of the Baltimore-Washington Conference. Since the epidemic hit in 1981, “the church has done much in AIDS ministry to be proud of, including the creation of the Global AIDS Fund. But while statistics around AIDS in Washington, Maryland, the nation and the world are improving, the toll HIV/AIDS is inflicting is still too high,” he said.

GBCS offered other statistics on HIV/AIDS: At the end of 2011, approximately 34.2 million people were living with HIV/AIDS. More than 30 million people around the world have died of AIDS-related diseases. In 2011, an estimated 2.4 million people became newly infected with HIV/AIDS, including 300,000 children. Every hour, 50 young women are newly infected. The rate of new infections among black women is 15 times that among white women. It is estimated that 16 million children have been orphaned by HIV/AIDS. People who inject drugs are 22 times more likely to contract HIV/AIDS. Norton said, “We will not be satisfied until, worldwide, we have eliminated the AIDS virus. We want, and can get, an HIV/AIDS-free world.”

– Melissa Lauber, Baltimore-Washington Conference, as reported in UMNewscope; Vol. 42, Issue 49 / December 10, 2014.

(UM) General Board of Global Ministries. GBGM Interested in Improving U.S.-Cuba Relations

[Note: Once again, a general church board is involved in political activism. What about their concern for this being a brutal dictatorship? Where is the voice for changing the human rights abuses in this country? It is sadly absent. – AOM]

The moves toward more open doors between the U.S. and Cuba, including relaxed rules on visits, are in keeping with UM positions. While they will no doubt improve interaction between US and Cuban Christians in the future, they are not likely to immediately change The UMC's current relations or activities in Cuba. "We welcome the steps that may normalize U.S.-Cuba relations, and are glad that we already have strong ties with our Methodist brothers and sisters in Cuba," said Thomas Kemper, chief executive of the General Board of Global Ministries (GBGM). "This includes a regular program of volunteer in mission (VIM) journeys in partnership with the Methodist Church in Cuba." Positive but cautious analyses were also offered by Aldo Gonzalez, the coordinator of the CUBA VIM program, and Icel Rodriguez, director of global missions for the Florida Annual Conference, which has a longstanding covenant with Cuban Methodists. The covenant includes stipulated visits between the two church entities.

The UMC has long advocated the normalization of relations between Cuba and the U.S., including termination of the U.S. embargo of Cuba enacted more than a half century ago. Agreements between President Barack Obama and Cuban President Raul Castro last December strengthened a process that may lead to mutual diplomatic relations and more person-to-person visits. Only the U.S. Congress can end the embargo. "Religious activities" are among the 12 categories of "legal travel" with the general license for U.S. travel to Cuba under the proposed rules. Prior policy in both countries has permitted visits for religious purposes; but, according to Gonzalez, this history has been one of "ups and downs."

On Jan. 28, a bipartisan group of U.S. senators announced plans to introduce and hold hearings on legislation that would lift restrictions on U.S. citizen travel to Cuba. The fate of the proposal is uncertain, as is its convergence with the earlier Obama initiatives. "A process is just beginning and we will use every new opportunity to its fullest to strengthen our joint mission and ministry with the Methodist Church in Cuba," said Kemper, who also noted collaboration between his agency's relief agency and the Cuban church in the wake of Super Storm Sandy in 2013. The UM Committee on Relief (UMCOR) in August 2013 allocated \$500,000 to rebuild homes destroyed by the storm when it hit Cuba at hurricane force. Currently, according to Gonzalez, Cuba allows two monthly U.S. UM mission volunteer teams of no more than 12 each. Those teams primarily work on church and personage reconstruction; they were instrumental in building Camp Canaan, a Cuban Methodist facility, and the Methodist Theological Seminary in Havana. The program has been in effect for some 20 years. Gonzalez says that the present level of visits is in keeping with the capacity of the Cuban church as host. The Methodist Church in Cuba has more than 40,000 members and a worshipping community of 50,000, according to the latest available figures.

The Florida Conference's 17-year-old covenant with the Cuban Methodists incorporates person-to-person visits for spiritual enrichment. Florida can send 24 persons per district to Cuba each year and there are nine districts in the conference, according to Rodriguez. A limited number of Cuban pastors can visit Florida churches each year. The relationship is of great value to congregations and church members in both countries, she added.

– Elliott Wright, GBGM, as reported in UMNewscope; Vol. 43, Issue 06 / February 11, 2015.

Illegal Immigration Issues. "Courageous" Women Honored at Scarritt Bennett Center. Bishop Minerva Carcaño (California-Pacific Conference) received the Ann L. Reskovac Courage Award from Scarritt Bennett Center on Dec. 6 in recognition for her work as an "immigration activist". Carcaño has been an outspoken advocate for "comprehensive immigration reform" for more than 10 years. She has promoted...dialogue including a bilateral ministry

between the United States and Mexico. [She] has brought her message...to President...Obama and members of Congress including two arrests for acts of civil disobedience to draw the nation's attention to caring for the

millions of undocumented people in the U.S.[Note: An award received for breaking the law. –AOM] – As reported in UMNewscope.

Islam.

+ ***Duke Chapel Flap Occurs in Context of Openness.*** Restrooms in Syracuse University's Hendricks Chapel got an overhaul last year, including improved and expanded wudu stations. Muslim students use those for ritual washing before praying in the chapel. "We're very proud of our wudus," said the Rev. Tiffany Steinwert, a UM elder and Hendricks Chapel dean. While Hendricks' restroom rehab caused no stir, Duke University found considerable controversy last month after announcing Muslim students would offer the adhan, the Islamic call to prayer, from Duke Chapel's bell tower. Before that actually happened, the university in Durham, N.C., reversed the decision, prompting more news coverage and counter-protests. "The recent actions opened up a conversation, both within and outside the university, about plurality, interfaith engagement and theology, and also about the role of religion in the university and the centrality and nature of the Duke Chapel as a symbol of the university," said Michael Schoenfeld, Duke's vice president for public affairs and government relations.

University chapels can be a battleground, as Duke discovered. But the clear, longstanding trend among schools with historic UM ties—including Duke and Syracuse—is for supporting non-Christian groups, including use of chapel space. That's certainly the case at Emory University in Atlanta, said the Rev. Bridgette Young Ross, dean of Emory's Cannon Chapel and a UM elder. "Every religious tradition that's recognized on this campus is part of the community," Young Ross said. "It's important to be sure that all members of the community get equal access and equal respect." While Cannon has not been used for the adhan, Emory lets Muslim students offer it on Fridays during Ramadan from the school's clock tower.

Boston University's Marsh Chapel is home to an 11 a.m. Sunday interdenominational Protestant service heard across New England via public radio. But Marsh is for all religious groups, said the Rev. Robert Allan Hill, a UM elder and the chapel's dean. "It's very much open to them," Hill said. "We have had Muslim prayers in our lower chapel and on the plaza in front of the chapel." Southern Methodist University's Perkins School of Theology includes Perkins Chapel, a church-like space used regularly for Protestant and Catholic worship. The chapel also has been used for interfaith services, led in part by non-Christian clergy. SMU has in recent years designated space for Muslim prayer in the student center. Claremont School of Theology—along with Perkins, Duke Divinity, Candler at Emory, and Boston School of Theology—is one of 13 UM seminaries. Claremont is in the deeply multicultural area of greater Los Angeles, and the school's students include Jews and Muslims. Both use the school's Kresge Chapel, said the Rev. Kah-Jin Jeffrey Kuan, Claremont's president and a UM elder.

Chapel leaders at other UM-related schools wouldn't comment on Duke's controversy. But they agreed that's in the spirit of John Wesley, Methodism's founder, to show respect for and generosity toward other religious traditions.

[Note: This is happening in schools founded by a Christian denomination. The final comment about John Wesley is very definitely in error. Wesley showed very little tolerance for any deviation from the evangelical faith. One example is in his writing of "The Character of a Methodist" he referred to various teachings from the "Romish" church referring to the Roman Catholic Church. Assuredly, Wesley would have not sanctioned any of these accommodations. – AOM]

– Sam Hodges, UMNS, as reported in UMNewscope; Vol. 43, Issue 06 / February 11, 2015.

+ ***That young woman killed by ISIS could be an American Christian martyr, killed for her faith in Christ.*** "The United States confirmed on Tuesday that 26-year-old American aid worker Kayla Mueller has been killed at the hands of terror group ISIS. President Barack Obama said that Mueller represented what is 'best about America,' while her family revealed that she drew comfort from her 'deep Christian faith' while in captivity," reports The Christian Post. "Our hearts are breaking for our only daughter, but we will continue on in peace, dignity, and love for her," said Mueller's parents, Carl and Marsha Mueller, and her brother, Eric. Kayla said that her deep Christian faith gave her comfort during her captivity: "I remember mom always telling me that all in all in the end the only one you really have is God. I have come to a place in experience where, in every sense of the

word, I have surrendered myself to our creator b/c literally there was no else ... + by God + by your prayers I have felt tenderly cradled in freefall."

Obama vowed to bring those responsible for Mueller's death to justice.

[Dr. Chaps' comment: I pray Kayla Mueller's faith inspires many young people to serve those who hate us, even Muslim extremists, with great caution yet tenderly loving our enemies, even those who hate Christ.]

– Chaplain Gordon James Klingenschmitt, PhD. The Pray In Jesus Name Project, PO Box 77077, Colorado Springs, CO

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When you subsidize poverty and failure, you get more of both.

– James Dale Davidson, National Taxpayers Union

Global Outlook

Real heroes don't save the world, they serve the world. – Guideposts reader Linda Bird of Anderson Island, Washington

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Israel. Bibi Grand: Netanyahu Hits the Right Note on Iran

"America and Israel share a common destiny." And it is that destiny that drove Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to the lectern of a joint session of Congress in what history may describe as one of the most important speeches of a generation. It took a foreign leader, standing in the halls of American power, to remind us who we are and where our nation's roots reside: in the biblical faith of his ancient land. From his first mention of Esther to the closing message from Moses, our Judeo-Christian heritage was more prominent today than it has been in the last six years.

"Tomorrow night, on the Jewish holiday of Purim, we'll read the Book of Esther," the Prime Minister said. "We'll read of a powerful Persian viceroy named Haman, who plotted to destroy the Jewish people some 2,500 years ago. But a courageous Jewish woman, Queen Esther, exposed the plot and gave for the Jewish people the right to defend themselves against their enemies." While the President tries to erase our identity as a Christian nation, the Jewish people look to their rich history as a source of meaning and guidance. Israel was under attack then, as it is now.

Under this administration, the two nations have a common enemy but not a mutual solution. In the face of the greatest nuclear threat in the Middle East...[some in positions of power] choose to trust Iran -- instead of challenge it. On the eve of a deal that would lift sanctions on Hassan Rouhani's country, Netanyahu came to the United States -- not for political purposes, but survival purposes.

While Iran and ISIS "compete for the crown of radical Islam," the worst thing the West could do is leave Iran's vast nuclear program intact. After freezing more than \$7 billion of Iran's assets, the U.N. Security Council (with President Obama's support) has offered to lift those restrictions in exchange for Rouhani's word that the country would cut back on its nuclear program.

Two years ago, the world found out how misguided its trust in Iran was. "We were told to give President Rouhani and Foreign Minister Zarif a chance to bring change and moderation to Iran. Some change! Some moderation! "Rouhani's government hangs gays, persecutes Christians, jails journalists and executes even more prisoners than before." As Netanyahu warned, it is a risky deal in which Iran has much to gain -- and the international community everything to lose.

"At a time when many hope Iran will join the community of nations, Iran is busy gobbling up the community of nations... In this deadly game of thrones, there's no place for America or for Israel, no peace for Christians, Jews or Muslims who don't share the Islamist medieval creed, no rights for women, no freedom for anyone. So when it comes to Iran and ISIS, the enemy of your enemy is your enemy. The difference is that ISIS is armed with butcher knives, captured weapons and YouTube, whereas Iran could soon be armed with intercontinental ballistic missiles and nuclear bombs. We must always remember -- I'll say it one more time -- the greatest danger facing our world is the marriage of militant Islam with nuclear weapons."

I had the honor of sitting in the congressional chamber as the Prime Minister spoke about the risks to all of mankind under a nuclear-armed Iran. "Would Iran be less aggressive when sanctions are removed and its economy is stronger? ...Would Iran fund less terrorism when it has mountains of cash with which to fund more terrorism?" While 50 members of the President's party sat out the speech, the Prime Minister called America to sit out something far more important: a deal of international appeasement.

"Standing up to Iran isn't easy," he said soberly. "Standing up to dark murderous regimes never is." Unfortunately for America...[some in positions of power] are more comfortable ignoring evil than confronting it. "Even if Israel has to stand alone, Israel will stand," the Prime Minister vowed. We pray, along with millions of Christians and Jews around the world, that America will stand with them.

– Tony Perkins, President of the Family Research Council

[Note: As we know from information received, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu own a resounding re-election against tremendous odds. It has come to our understanding that sources from “other nations” outside Israel had funded and helped his opponents in an effort to unseat him. This is difficult to understand, given Israel’s fight for survival. – AOM]

– E-mail received from the Family Research Council, 801 G Street N.W. Washington, D.C. 20001. frc.org.
3/03/2015

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Being loved and loving is much more important than being right.

– Jane Nelsen, from her book Serenity: Simple Steps for Recovering Peace of Mind, Real Happiness, and Great Relationships