

May 2004

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## Mayday for America

*Say to the righteous that it shall be well with them, For they shall eat the fruit of their doings.*  
--Isaiah 3:10

Americans were sickened this week by graphic photos suggesting physical and psychological abuse of Iraqi prisoners by U.S. soldiers in Abu Ghraib prison near Baghdad. If there is shock, it is certainly at the image of Pfc. Lynndie R. England with a cigarette in her mouth, standing over a naked prisoner on the floor and holding a leash around his neck. Obviously, Lynndie is not the typical girl next door.

The scandal is serious. Pictures of naked Arab men, some with panties on their heads and others huddled on the floor in sexually suggestive positions, can only make the mission in Iraq much more complicated. But so does U.S. policy that fails to fully consider the religion and religious fervor in the Middle East. Under the tenets of Islam, what pray tell, could inflame the passions of fundamentalists more than an enemy who sends women to fight them?

Although the prison scandal has been under investigation by the Army since January, the media is in a feeding frenzy due to pictures just surfacing. Liberal Democrats have jumped in and are calling for [Republican] heads to roll. Sen. John Kerry insists that culpability for the Iraqi prison scandal goes all the way to the oval office. Kerry and fellow senators Edward Kennedy and Robert Byrd are suggesting command cover-up. During an interview yesterday with a Phoenix television station, Kerry said "There's a lot of work to be done to make this up, and I think it's going to take a new president."

Also yesterday, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld appeared before a Senate panel amid partisan demands that he resign from his post at once. Rumsfeld apologized to Iraqi prisoners abused in U.S. custody and to the American people for not informing them sooner as to the seriousness of the situation, but declined to offer his resignation. In defending the Pentagon's response, Rumsfeld emphasized the six court martials related to the investigation are among 3,000 currently underway.

Save for Sen. Joe Lieberman, Democrats on the panel lectured Rumsfeld on the etiquettes of war with a "piety" reminiscent of the Viet Nam era. This writer could only listen briefly before turning away—thoroughly sickened at heart.

The media is more than eager to link Iraq to Viet Nam. The lead story in *The Olympian* (5/8) said, "Not since the Vietnam War, in 1968 and again in 1972, has American wartime policy been under such intense scrutiny in the heat of a presidential election. The symbolic connections between that difficult period and the current one have increased with every fresh revelation out of Iraq..."

I was in uniform in the mid 1960's, and was persuaded for a time that Americans were supportive of their troops at war. Even so, the media was inured by draft-card-burning celebrities, pot-smoking college professors, and "useful idiots" like Jane Fonda who

traveled to North Vietnam to rail against the President and our military. Although it was aiding and comforting our enemy, many of Fonda's peers in Hollywood loved her for it. But not all.

On occasion there were rallies and even black tie affairs to demonstrate support for servicemen. I vividly remember a special invitation to represent more than two thousand sailors on my ship, the U.S.S. Yorktown, at an Armed-Forces appreciation dinner at the Beverly Wilshire Hotel in Beverly Hills. It was heady to mingle with a bevy of supportive actors, pop singers, elected officials, and top military brass.

It was a moment of refuge. It was uplifting.

But time, momentum, and mounting battlefield casualties, favored the dissenters as they spilled forth from college campuses on to the streets and into the cities. Soldiers and sailors were scorned and ridiculed by various cult heroes like Jerry Brown, Joan Biaz, the Beatles, Timothy Leary, Tom Hayden, the Chicago Seven, the SLA, and even Cassius Clay.

Gradually, radical protestors gained the support of Robert Kennedy, Eugene McCarthy, George McGovern and others with political clout who elevated the anti-war rhetoric to higher levels. Their combined efforts were sufficient to undermine public confidence in the justness of our cause in Viet Nam and dissuade a first-term president from seeking a second term in office.

But there was something else going on.

Even as the boomers seemed to be spinning out of control in an orgy of sex, drugs, and rock n' roll, a wind was blowing across the land. It touched down at the University of Notre Dame—a college campus of all places! Then it blew here and then it blew there. An Episcopal priest in Southern California; a Catholic priest at Blessed Sacrament in Seattle; a tiny A/G church on Pear Street in Olympia. It touched long-haired hippies in robes and sandals, and Wall Street brokers in three-piece suits. And it blew through the doors of countless churches all across the country. A revival was breaking forth that would bring millions of us to our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

There were many new babes on milk between the 1968 and 1972 presidential campaigns. But by 1976, politicians were well aware of the “born-again” who were buying Christian books, starting Christian television stations, building new churches like crazy, and were beginning to pay close attention to social issues. Jimmy Carter made it a point to let voters know he was “born-again.”

Christians are part of the largest and fastest growing organization (organism) on the planet. The Church in America may have been blind-sided in the 60's, but this time, there is a core that is armed and already engaged in battle. God is raising up an army of intercessors that are thoroughly persuaded that *with God, all things are possible*. And because they are privy to “insider” information, they tend to be Christians with an “attitude!”

Several days ago, I talked to Pastor Ken Hutcherson who was one of the primes behind the recent *Mayday for Marriage Rally* at Safeco Field. Now there is a man with an attitude! For a few minutes we reminisced about the Rally and discussed some of the challenges that are immediately before us. As we were concluding our phone conversation, I could hear the resolve, if not the grin in Hutch's voice with his parting comment; “Bring ‘em on brother. Bring ‘em on!”

*Rick Forcier*

Executive Director