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# STRAIGHT TALK

*"Those who do not learn from history are doomed to repeat it"*

—George Santayana

## CRUSADERS – THEN AND NOW

### **NOTHING NEW UNDER THE SUN**

A friend recently commented to me that the outrageous things being said against the Muslims today remind him of the things that were said in the 40's & 50's about the Germans and the Japanese. He and I are both old enough to remember.

I also remember how the Vietnamese were demonized during the in 60's & 70's.

War propaganda is never true. It wasn't true about the Germans, it wasn't true about the Japanese. It wasn't true about the Vietnamese. It isn't true about the Muslims (Arabs and Persians). Nonetheless, modern crusaders in churches, news rooms, and election campaigns spread hate and hysteria ... and American patriots accept it with no more thought than it takes to scratch themselves. Leaders of crusades are liars and manipulators, probably psychopaths, who herd simpleminded people. Historically it has happened all too often.

One of the best proofs of this truism is in the fact that most people continue to vote in elections. Every four years Americans turn out enthusiastically for the pageant of national campaigns. They donate money, they argue and fight, they send hundreds of emails. And they make complete fools of themselves to support their favorite liars.

A wise man once said, *"If voting could change things it would be illegal."*

But people are predictable. The politicians and bankers know this, and they take advantage of it at every turn. Actually, they take advantage of it daily ... but the national election season stands out in its four year cycle.

If Americans could remember four years in a row they'd stop voting. They'd stop dancing like puppets on strings, stop being fools, and stop spitting in God's face by participating in the golden-calf spectacles of "elections."

### **STUPID PEOPLE IN LARGE NUMBERS**

The masses have always been easily herded by fear. Like cattle, they are pushed here and there by political cowboys (campaign leaders). They use fear to manipulate

and control the herd's reaction. Patriotic cattle move when they are pushed. They don't jump fences. They don't question what they are told to think.

They are motivated by fear – not common sense. They fear disease, so they get their vaccinations and don't question the doctors. They fear the police, so they do everything government tells them they must do ... terrorizing and killing people. They fear the future, so they do everything the bankers and economists say they should do. They fear going to hell, so they do everything the church leaders say they should do. They fear terrorists, so they're thankful for Homeland Security, and they "support their troops" attacking small defenseless countries.

How is that working out for America? Well, this country is coming apart at the seams. Americans today are asking, *"What went wrong? I did everything I was supposed to do! I followed the rules laid out by the universities and the government. I should be succeeding. But I lost my job. I lost my home and my family. I'm not happy ... and no one will help me or tell me how to fix my situation."* What has happened to the American dream?

More and more people are starting to realize that they were sold "a pig in a poke." Americans have been misled by con men called politicians and preachers.

I get asked often these days, *"Why are Americans so blind and helpless?"* I always reply, *"This is what happens to any society when it rejects God."*

America is falling apart. It is obvious. Some of us have eyes to see it, but most still don't. Most are just floating along, watching their lives disintegrate. For these folks life is a continual hopelessness: a fear and a dread of facing each day. They are hooked on antidepressant pills, booze and FOX News. It is pretty sad.

### **FALSE REMEDIES FOR FALSE FEARS**

Rumors, fears and prejudices are the things that move most people to do terrible things. People seek false remedies for false fears. They are consumed in a matrix of ignorance and illusions. As they lose their concept of God

they also lose their spiritual vision and their common sense.

14. *But if you will not listen to me, and will not do all these commandments;*
15. *And if you shall despise my statutes, or if your soul abhors my judgments, so that you will not do all my commandments, and you break my covenant:*
16. *I also will do this to you; I will even appoint over you terror, consumption, and fevers that cause the faculties to fail and the soul to pine away: and you shall sow your seed in vain, for your enemies shall devour it.*
17. *And I will set my face against you, and you shall be slain before your enemies: they that hate you shall reign over you; and you shall flee when no one is pursuing you.*

Lev. 26: 14-17

Americans today trust their real enemies and fear imaginary enemies. They believe propaganda from liars and thieves (politicians). They then find themselves helpless when things go terribly wrong – which they always do.

#### **“FOR GOD AND COUNTRY”**

It's a motto to inspire good men. Right?  
Wrong!

Another historical battle cry is *“God wills it!”*

All the cemeteries in the world could not contain the ignorant and innocent slain in wars under the guise of fighting for their false gods.

One of the most enlightening lessons of history is a study of the crusades of the 12th and 13th centuries. Most people don't know much about them ... except what they've read in kids' books or seen in silly movies.

Learn about the crusades if you want to start understanding the dynamics of politics and human nature.

I recommend everyone getting a copy of the book titled **EXTRAORDINARY POPULAR DELUSIONS AND THE MADNESS OF CROWDS**. This book is full of enlightening history ... including a large chapter on The Crusades. Much of what follows in this article comes from this book. It is available from Amazon.com for a very reasonable cost.

For a couple hundred years previous to the crusades, religious pilgrims had streamed into Palestine in quest of holy relics (water from the River Jordan; pieces of wood gathered from the hill of crucifixion, imagined to be from the cross; tears from the Virgin Mary; hems from her garment; skulls, bones, toe nails and hair from the apostles, etc.). Pilgrims sought to feast their eyes on the hallowed scenes ... believing that a divine blessing there would exonerate them from their blackest sins practiced regularly at home.

Early on, these pilgrims were welcomed as they brought tourist trade to the Holy Land. A tax was eventually imposed, and various fees. The Europeans gladly paid for the privilege of experiencing the “hallowed sights” ... which, in reality, no longer retained a resemblance to Bible times.

The collected monies, gladly given, was a mine of wealth to the Moslem governors as well as the merchants.

Then, at the close of the 11th century and the beginning of the 12th, pilgrimages to the “Holy Land” took on a different mood due to the rumor that “the thousand years of the Apocalypse” was at hand, and that Jesus Christ would descend from the sky, upon Jerusalem, to judge mankind.

The churchgoers of Europe were in a superstitious panic. Terror seized upon the weak, the credulous, and the guilty (i.e., the majority of the population). Time was running out for them to rid themselves of their lifelong burden of sins. This could be remedied in one fell swoop by going to the Holy Land. Signs of “the end” were showing everywhere. Stars were observed to fall from heaven, earthquakes shook the land, and hurricanes blew.

The fear of judgment sent pilgrims scurrying to Jerusalem, wallets in hand, to procure their salvations and remissions of sins. The result of this hysteria was that hardships set in, and beggars lined European highways to Constantinople. Starvation and homelessness were rampant.

And if that wasn't bad enough, when this new brand of pilgrims began pouring into Jerusalem they found the residents not so happy to receive them in such numbers and with no money. The Turks and Saracens were appalled by the swarms of poverty-stricken, delusional immigrants arriving or passing through their lands.

In time, the epidemic terror of “the day of judgement” passed, and some of the pilgrims returned to Europe with stories of the hardships encountered at the hands of the inhospitable “infidels” of Palestine. An indignation arose in the churches of Europe.

#### **PETER THE HERMIT**

Every age has its peculiar folly; some scheme, project, or phantasy into which it plunges, spurred on either by greed, a need for excitement, or the mere force of stupidity. These madresses are always fomented by political or religious causes, or both combined.

All of these things influenced the Crusades and rendered them the most extraordinary on record in terms of the extent to which mass delusion and enthusiasm can be carried. The truth is, the Crusaders were ignorant and savage. Their motives were unmitigated bigotry, and their pathway was one of blood and tears.

The mood in Europe was ripe for some man to step forward with a mission from God. Peter the Hermit was exactly suited to the age. Bigoted, if not insane, he was the very prototype of the time. A monk from Amiens, France, he eloquently claimed to speak for the lowly. He had been to Jerusalem and returned with such indignation as to shake the world with his story of the wrongs that Christians suffered at the hands of the infidel “Mussulmans.”

The priests and preachers readily took hold of the moment, driving the fanatical mood of the people. Fiery sermons and projections of the will of God concerning the dire circumstances within the Holy Land were repeated.

Fanaticism and the love of battle impelled them to the crusades ... which were, in themselves, a political answer to

the financial needs and flagging popularity of the church and state. Wars have always been the number-one remedy to restore declining popularity and treasuries of rulers in both church and state.

Peter went about in a woolen tunic, his arms and feet bare, eating neither flesh nor bread but subsisting on fish and wine. Thus he went, untired, inflexible, and full of devotion, communicating his own madness to his hearers, until Europe was stirred from its very depths.

This crusade would be only the first. For two-hundred years there were eight or nine crusades until the madness wore down and subsided. Patriarchs, Popes of Rome, various bishops, counts and kings all made merchandise of the ignorances and prejudices of the uneducated and superstitious masses.

Addressing a huge crowd at Clermont Cathedral, Pope Urban spoke as if divinely inspired. As he lifted up his hands to ensure attention, every voice immediately became still.

He began by detailing the miseries endured by their brethren in the Holy Land; how the plains of Palestine were desolated by the outrageous heathen, who, with the sword and the firebrand, decimated the possessions of the faithful; how Christian wives and daughters were defiled by pagan lust; how the altars of the true God were desecrated, and the relics of the saints trodden under foot.

*"You," continued the eloquent pontiff (Urban II was an eloquent orator), "you, who hear me, and who have received the true faith, and been endowed by God with power, and strength, and greatness of soul,— whose ancestors have been the prop of Christendom, and whose kings have put a barrier against the progress of the infidel,— I call upon you to wipe off these impurities from the face of the earth."*

As you can see, the crusaders' propaganda hasn't changed much. Similar rhetoric is spouted by crazed Zionists and zealous American patriots today.

Urban continued: *"Oh, brave knights and faithful people! Ye will not be restrained from embarking in this great cause by the tender ties of wife or little ones, but will remember the words of the Saviour of the world himself, 'Whosoever loves father and mother more than me is not worthy of me. Whosoever shall abandon for my name's sake his house, or his brethren, or his sisters, or his father, or his mother, or his wife, or his children, or his lands, shall receive a hundredfold, and shall inherit eternal life.'"*

Any doubts that had held back the true believers were overcome. The enthusiasm was no longer to be restrained, and loud shouts interrupted the speaker; the people exclaiming as if with one voice, *"Dieu le veult! Dieu le veult!"* ("God wills it!"). He continued, *"Let the army of the Lord, when it rushes upon his enemies, shout but that one cry, 'Dieu le veult! Dieu le veult!'"*

*"Let whoever is inclined to devote himself to this holy cause make it a solemn engagement, and bear the cross of the Lord either on his breast or his brow till he set out; and let him who is ready to begin his march place the holy emblem on his shoulders, in memory of that precept of our Saviour, 'He who does not take up his cross and follow me is not worthy of me.'"*

Thus, Rome's symbol of the cross was adopted as a signet of the crusades ... eventually equated with the order of the Templars: "Soldiers of Christ."

A singular feature of the popular madness was the enthusiasm of the women. Everywhere they encouraged their lovers and husbands to forsake all things for the holy war. Many of them burned the sign of the cross upon their breasts and arms, and colored the wound with a red dye as a lasting memorial of their zeal. Others, still more zealous, impressed the mark by the same means upon the tender limbs of young children and infants at their breast.

Monks made incisions on their foreheads in the shape of a cross, which they colored red, and claimed that angels had done it while they slept.

## LEADERS AND LEMMINGS

Some came on horseback, some in carts, and some came down the rivers in boats and rafts, bringing their wives and children, all eager to go to Jerusalem. Very few knew where Jerusalem was. Some thought it fifty thousand miles away, and others imagined that it was but a month's journey; while at sight of every town or castle the children exclaimed, *"Is that Jerusalem? Is that the city?"*

Parties of knights and nobles might be seen travelling eastward, and amusing themselves as they went with the royal diversion of hawking, to lighten their day.

The meadows of France were covered with tents. As the belligerents were to have remission of all their sins on their arrival in Palestine, hundreds of them gave themselves up to the most unbounded licentiousness. The courtesan, with the red cross upon her shoulders, plied her shameless trade with sensual pilgrims without scruple on either side. Drunkenness and debauchery flourished. Their service to the Lord was to wipe out all faults and lusts, and they had surety of salvation as their promise. This reasoning entitled the ignorant, and the sounds of lewd revelry and the voice of prayer simultaneously rose together from the camps.

Leaders like Peter the Hermit, Walter the Pennyless, and Gottschalk (God's Servant) marched their followers like a tide through Europe ... stealing, killing and raping as they went. Their excesses and indiscretions were pre-sanctioned ... because they were holy warriors going to the Holy Land.

The swarm was not content with ordinary food, but craved luxuries also. They attacked and plundered dwellings as they passed through Europe, and thought nothing of murder where resistance was offered. The "Crusaders" pilfered and murdered all along the way.

On their march through Hungary, the outraged Hungarians collected in large numbers and attacked the invaders from the rear, slew a great many of the stragglers, and, taking away their arms and crosses, affixed them as trophies to the walls of the city. Walter's army, destructive as a plague of locusts while plunder urged them on, were useless fighters against a determined enemy. They continued to be thus harassed by the wrathful Hungarians until they were out of their territory.

On his entrance into Bulgaria, Walter met with no better fate. The cities and towns refused to let him pass;



the villages denied him provisions; and the citizens and country people united, and slaughtered his followers by hundreds. The progress of the army was more like a retreat than an advance; but as it was impossible to stand still, Walter continued his course till he arrived at Constantinople with a force which famine and the sword had diminished to one-third of its original number.

Having arrived at Constantinople, the crusaders were reduced to fighting among themselves. The Lombards feuded with the Normans, and the Franks feuded with the Germans. Many renounced their faith and became "Mohametans." Others were put to the sword.

Walter the Pennyless and his multitude met as miserable a fate. He faced an enemy much superior, and he had no secure position to fall back upon. He was intercepted by the army of the sultan: a fierce battle ensued, in which the Turks prevailed. Out of twenty-five thousand crusaders, twenty-two thousand were slain.

While these events were taking place, fresh hordes were issuing from the woods and wilds of Germany, all bent for the Holy Land. Falling behind a fanatical priest named Gottschalk they swarmed through Hungary. Robbery and murder seem to have journeyed with them, and the poor Hungarians were rendered almost desperate by the numbers and rapacity of this mob, which amounted to at least one-hundred-thousand men.

Karloman, the king of Hungary, made a bold effort to get rid of them; for the resentment of his people had risen to such extremes that nothing short of the total extermination of the Crusaders would satisfy them. Gottschalk had to pay the penalty, not only for the ravages committed by his own bands, but for those of the swarms that had come before him. He and his army were induced, by some means or other, to lay down their arms: the enraged Hungarians, seeing them thus defenseless, set upon them, and slaughtered them in great numbers. How many escaped their arrows is unknown; but not one of them reached Palestine.

Other swarms, under nameless leaders, issued from Germany and France, more brutal and more frantic than any that had preceded them. Varying in numbers from one to five thousand, they traversed the country in all directions, bent upon plunder and massacre. They wore the symbol of the Crusade upon their shoulders, bent on killing as many Turks and Jews as they met. Outnumbered, and subjected to terror and mutilation, great numbers of their victims committed self-destruction to avoid falling into the hands of the crusaders who were in one campaign preceded by a goose and goat they believed to be holy.

Again it fell to the lot of the Hungarians to deliver Europe from these pests. When the crusaders tired of the murder and pillage they banded into one body and proceeded on to the Holy Land on a route stained with the blood of three-hundred-thousand who had gone before.

On the 3,000-mile trek to Palestine most of the crusaders fell along the way ... never reaching Jerusalem. In Hungary so many of them perished that witnesses reported that the fields were actually heaped with their

corpses, and that for miles in its course the waters of the Danube were dyed with their blood.

It was at Mersburg, on the Danube, that the greatest slaughter took place, – a slaughter so great as to amount almost to extermination. At a crossing of the river the Crusaders attacked a city only to be defeated. Throwing down their arms, they fled panic-stricken. The Hungarians followed, sword in hand, and cut them down without remorse, and in such numbers, that the river is said to have been choked by their dead bodies.

At least one faction succeeded in reaching Jerusalem under the leadership of Godfrey with many thousand crusaders still lusting after blood, and their sure ticket to heaven earned by virtue of their swords. After breaching Jerusalem's walls they slaughtered thousands upon thousands - men, women and children - within the gates.

Another account, recorded as "The Siege of Ma'arra," occurred in 1098 in what is modern-day Syria. They breached Ma'arra's walls and massacred about 8000 inhabitants.

That winter, as they suffered from starvation and malnutrition, they could not find enough food. So they resorted to feeding on the decomposing corpses of those they had slaughtered. One of the crusader commanders wrote to Pope Urban II: "*A terrible famine racked the army in Ma'arra, and placed it in the cruel necessity of feeding itself upon the bodies of the Saracens.*" One chronicler, wrote: "*In Ma'arra our troops boiled pagan adults in cooking-pots; they impaled children on spits and devoured them grilled.*"

The best known and most repeated legend of the Crusades is the tale of Robin Hood and King Richard of England. The king did indeed go to Jerusalem, but his exploits were twisted by historians to suit the British clergy who profited from them. That was about the extent of England's involvement in the crusades. Europe was the big loser with her millions of ignorant and superstitious whose lives were destroyed by following the crazed monks.

Seven or eight more "Crusades" followed the first one. One was made up of children and derelicts. The pitiful mob died and fell along the way never getting to Palestine.

The Crusades stand as tributes to two-hundred years of religious ignorance and hysteria. Historians and churches twist the records to give them an air of good intent ... but in truth it was religious paganism and it infected ignorant people with madness.

The grand result of these struggles was that millions of Europeans acted like animals ... and died. God only knows how many Muslims died. And for what? A handful of knights held possession of Jerusalem for about one hundred years, then Muslims reclaimed the land and held it till the Israelis and British stole it from them again in the last century.

What an expression of fanaticism and madness ... all done in the name of Jesus. And the beat goes on ... as insane Zionist Holy Wars continue today ... with Muslims still the targets of crusading madmen.

Pray that the eyes of Americans will be opened.

*Ben Williams*