



Great Commission News

大使命家訊

SUMMER 2005

Tel:650-968-2985 Fax:650-968-4856 E-mail:info@gcciusa.org www.gcciusa.org

AMBUSH ALERT

—The Barbarians Are Here!

Thomas Wang

"The men of Ai looked back and saw the smoke of the city rising against the sky, but they had no chance to escape in any direction, for the Israelites who had been fleeing toward the desert had turned back against their pursuers...they turned around and attack the men of Ai."—(Joshua 8:20-21)

Joshua the man of valor who succeeded Moses, crossed River Jordan with the Israel people on dry ground. In obedience to God's strategy they conquered Jericho.

But when they came upon the city of Ai they were defeated. The Israelites prayed and wept before the Lord and were told that there was sin in the camp. After Achan's sin of covetousness was exposed and dealt with the Lord promised victory to Joshua and laid out a battle plan including an instruction: "Set an ambush behind the city." (Jos. 8:2). Joshua did as told.

As soon as the two forces met, the Israelites pretended a defeat. They retreated and ran toward the wilderness (away from the city). The king of Ai and all his people gave chase and left their own city open and vulnerable. At this time and according to plan, Joshua raised up the javelin in his hand toward the city. With this signal the Israeli ambush soldiers came out, entered the undefended city and set it on fire.

When the pursuing people of Ai saw their city was aflame they knew the end has come. Joshua and the fleeing Israelites turned around and attacked the people of Ai and took the city. A remarkable campaign indeed!

However, in today's spiritual warfare the order of things is in reverse. It is not God's people who are doing the ambush but the Adversary and his followers. While there are more missionaries in the world today serving in global frontiers, Satan is coming in from behind and waging a decisive ambush by assaulting the mission-bases, by secularizing the sending churches and by "paganizing" the home countries. This is exactly what happening today to the Christian world (especially the West).

Ever since the early years of the Renaissance in the 16th century, humanism has been gradually but consistently on the rise. Nothing in human instincts is more readily to be used by the Adversary than human pride.

Renaissance—16th, 17th centuries

Thought pattern: "Man, the measure of all things."

Enlightenment—17th, 18th centuries

Thought pattern: "Man has come of age and is no longer in need of God."

Modernism—19th, 20th centuries

Thought pattern: "Man overcomes nature (heaven)."

Post-modernism—20th, 21st centuries

Thought pattern: "Man not only is independent from God but man is God."

This was the way Adam and Eve fell. This was the way the Devil himself fell (Is. 14:12-15). This

(from p.1)

is also the way Satan has been enticing mankind into self-exaltation against their Creator throughout history.

The Christian West in recent years (the Scandinavians, the rest of Western Europe, Canada and America) has in various degrees become not only non-Christian but anti-Christian. This situation has been intensifying ever since World War II. Sadly, the Christian world has allowed Satan's ambush to reach its targets in their society, schools, home and even the church.

Dr. Carl Henry in "Twilight of A Great Civilization" said in 1988, "A half-generation ago the pagans were still largely threatening at the gates of Western culture; now the barbarians are plunging into the...mainstream. As they seek to reverse the inherited intellectual and moral heritage of the Bible...we are engaged as never before in a rival conflict for the mind, the conscience, the will, the spirit, the very selfhood of contemporary man."

Dr. Henry gave further analysis of the world, its essence:

1. Today's West

Main stream thought-pattern: Atheism, secularism, humanism and post-modernism.

2. Today's America

Drifting away from God. Newsweek magazine had this to say in one of its covers: "The American century is over; the world order is changing."

3. Today's Culture

No one lives in cultural vacuum; one either transforms it or transformed by it. Post-modernism has rendered all presuppositions relative. But as Christians, we ought to think Christianly, serve Christianly and live Christianly.

4. Today's Society

Today's most dreadful disease is not AIDS but atheism—the destruction of both body and soul.

Bishop Lesslie Newbigin has this to say: "Today's society is not secular but pagan."

5. Today's Faith

The West has adopted religious pluralism. Its laws and thought-pattern became increasingly atheistic. Morality, ethics and faith are being marginalized. Christians will be forced to accommodate, compromise and on the defensive.

6. Today's Marriage

God ordained traditional marriage between a man and a woman is facing unprecedented challenge. Sexual revolution in the middle of the 20th century has resulted in the increase of divorce, the killing of 1½ million pre-born babies annually, the spread of AIDS and the ushering in of same-sex marriage.

Holland, Belgium, Denmark, Spain and some of the Scandinavian countries have all legalized same-sex marriage. Canada may soon follow. May God have mercy upon America.

7. Today's Church

In theory America has 50 million evangelical Christians. But most of them are not living-out their "Christianness". Average American Christian gives 2.5% of his income for God's work. American churches openly split on the issue of the Inerrancy of the Bible.

8. Today's Warfare

The church is to be the valiant for truth like John the Baptist. Closed-door policy renders the church irrelevant. We are not to seek safety in the ark but to rise and shine! Our warfare today includes the battle of good and evil, man's will, Christian mind-set, Christian offensive, Christian leadership in education, media, art, politics and other areas of life.

While the essence of Henry's book does not present an optimistic picture of the West, it is nonetheless realistic. The entire book reads almost like a Requiem, lamenting the bygone days of a robust, righteous, compassionate, evangelistic and mission-sending Christian civilization, which has traveled its course and has now coming to its twilight hour!

An American missionary who serves in a Muslim country as a professional recently confided, "What I fear most in the country where I serve is not political unrest, religious tension or even my own safety. What makes me shudder is when the people whom I hope to convert would say to me, "Sir, please go back to your own country and convert your society. Our Muslim morality and social discipline are superior than yours!" What an indictment!

But it does not have to be this way. God's grace is sufficient and He does send help during men's crucial hours. He sent Luther when churches were selling indulgences. He sent the Wesleys when London was saturated with pubs and drunkards. He sent Finney and Moody for the weakening early American church. And He sent John Sung and Wang Ming-Dao to save the masses in China and to awaken the sleepy church.

Doing missions in the usual sense is no longer sufficient for today. Our home society, our sending church and our mission base are at stake. Current scenario demands us to wage war in two fronts, simultaneously:

1. Frontline battle: Evangelism, church planting and frontier missions.
2. Rear-guard battle: Prayer, repentance and revival to safeguard the spiritual health of the home country and the sending base.

May God protect America from Satan's ambushes. And may America walk not in the path of Sodom and Gemorrah, or the steps of the liberal philosophers, or Western Europe, but in the way of the Lord and follow Him to the end. "For there the Lord bestows His blessings, even life forevermore." (Ps. 133:3)

華人宣教動員05 Today's Challenge



今 世 挑 戰

日期：2005年12月26日至31日
(週一至週六)

地點：First Baptist Church
of Menlo Park
1100 Middle Ave.
Menlo Park, CA 94025

語言：國語 / 粵語

內容：

上午 研經：從使徒行傳看宣教的突破

大堂：宣教事工的四種方式

下午 專題工作坊、社區禱告行、
社區宣教實習

晚上 12/26 (週一) 開幕禮-迎接挑戰

12/27~29 (週二至週四)

時代培靈會

12/30 (週五) 動員會-披荊斬棘



查詢及報名處：太使命中心

848 Stewart Drive, Suite 200, Sunnyvale, CA 94085 www.gcciusa.org

**Encourage Your Chinese-Speaking Friends to Come
To The Chinese Mission Mobilization '05
Dec26~31, 2005**



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Mountain View, CA 94043

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Moving Notice!

Beginning June 1, 2005 our new address
will be:

848 Stewart Drive, Suite 200
Sunnyvale, CA 94085
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Tel: (408) 636-0030, Fax: (408) 636-0033

Email: info@gcciusa.org,
Website: www.gcciusa.org

You are welcome to visit our office.

