

PASTOR GENERAL'S REPORT

TO THE MINISTRY OF THE
WORLDWIDE CHURCH OF GOD



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FROM MINISTERIAL SERVICES

"WORLD TOMORROW" Announcement for Church Bulletins

We would like to have all the local churches follow the Headquarters example by placing "The WORLD TOMORROW" telecast announcement first in the local announcement bulletins. This will give the telecast the important emphasis it should have. We want to encourage the brethren to view the program in all areas where it is available, thereby helping them to stay on top of what God is doing through Mr. Armstrong in this vital part of the work of God's Church.

Helping the Brethren Prepare for the Feast of Tabernacles

As the Feast of Tabernacles draws near, let's keep in mind the need to be preparing the brethren for the Feast through instruction about proper Christian conduct, dress, supervision of children and teen-agers, thoughtful budgeting and planning, as well as the meaning of the Feast and the need to keep it in the right attitude and frame of mind.

God has called us to be lights in a dark world. Our example as a group is always strongly evident at the Feast of Tabernacles. Each year, we receive dozens of positive and appreciative comments about our brethren from local business establishments and residents at the various sites around the world.

God has given His ministry the task of teaching His people His way of life that produces godly fruit, a way that is a light to the rest of the world. Let's take full advantage of the weeks ahead preceding the Feast to once again remind God's people of the supreme calling He has given us, not only to be lights now, but to become teachers in His soon-to-be-restored government as pictured by this festival.

As the Feast fast approaches, pastors can help ensure that the brethren will have a well-planned, safe and happy Feast free from illness or other major problems by giving certain reminders and instruction in advance. Bible studies, sermonettes, sermons and announcement time can be used to mention a number of areas of importance. These would include the following:

(1) Driving When Tired Mr. Armstrong has repeatedly admonished us to avoid driving all night or late into the night. A common-sense rule of the road is to pull off and rest or sleep anytime you feel drowsy while driving. This is not only a matter of safety for one's own family or passengers, but also for other drivers on the road. This is a specific application of God's law of love--of outgoing concern and consideration for others. The same applies to driving over the speed limit. Not only are we as Christians to be considerate of the safety and welfare of others, God also instructs us to obey the laws of the land. Highway laws, as all laws that do not prevent us from obeying God, should be carefully observed by God's people. The use of seat belts and proper safety restraining systems for little children should also definitely be encouraged.

(2) Planning Ahead Thought and planning should go into the Feast trip so that potential problems can be avoided. Vehicles should be checked out and made ready before the trip to help prevent problems from coming up at the Feast, where parts, repairs, etc. may be far more expensive and difficult to find. A budget should be prepared so that funds are regulated throughout the Feast, with no surprises in the middle. All articles and suggestions pertaining to Feast preparations in the WORLDWIDE NEWS and other publications should be read well ahead of time so that all bases are covered.

(3) Plan Ahead to Serve Others There is no surer way to have a miserable Feast than to go with the idea of having a good time for yourself as the only or main goal. Deuteronomy 16:14 shows us that our rejoicing is to include far more than just ourselves. In fact, unless we do have the attitude of helping others have a wonderful Feast, we simply will not be able to properly and truly rejoice as God intends. The Feast points us to the time when true happiness, based upon God's law of love, will prevail. That is the attitude we must carry to the Feast if we hope to fully observe it.

A sermonette on ways to serve at the Feast would be of value. This would be especially good for singles and teen-agers. By involving themselves in Church activities and seeking ways to serve others, their Feast can be much more meaningful than it would be if their minds are focused only on "singles activities" or "youth activities." Being a part of the whole Church through service and active participation instead of becoming part of separate special interest groups should be of paramount importance to our singles and older teen-agers.

(4) Plan to Have a Healthy Feast There is a cause for every effect. Colds and flus can dampen the Feast for yourself and others. Avoid illness by getting enough exercise and sleep both before and during the Feast. Avoid overeating, as well as too many rich or sugary foods. The better we feel, the better Feast we'll have.

(5) Plan to Have a Spiritual Feast The Feast of Tabernacles is no time to let down in prayer and Bible study. How can we expect God to be with us and bless us during the Feast if we shut off communication with Him? How can we expect to fully understand the spiritual meat given to us at the Feast if we are not spiritually renewing ourselves daily, as God tells us to do through Paul? (II Cor. 4:16.)

Spending time with God's people in wholesome fellowship and activities is another important facet that will contribute to having a spiritual Feast, and something that should not be neglected.

Proper emphasis should be placed on attending services. Attendance at every service ought to be a priority. THIS INCLUDES THE OPENING NIGHT MESSAGE! We should not miss any service for some activity, trip or any other reason except illness or emergency. We must not let the purpose of the Feast escape us by putting too much emphasis on fun and activities.

Another area to be mindful of is excessive talking and walking around during services. Sometimes it seems that the biggest offenders in this are ushers, deacons, and ministers. These are the people who ought to be setting a right example. Only such talking as is absolutely necessary should take place during services. Storytelling and laughing, general discussion, and all other unnecessary conversation simply displays a lack of respect for services, the speaker, and for God.

(6) Conduct at the Feast Jesus said, "You are the light of the world." We have a responsibility before God to set a right Christian example at all times. At the Feast we are all the more under close scrutiny.

Another area that has been a problem, sadly, is conduct on the Sabbath. The Sabbath is not the time for pool parties, loud playing and shouting by children, playing video games, sports, etc. Let's show respect for God by keeping the Sabbath holy as God created it. The same admonition certainly would also apply to God's annual Sabbaths.

(7) Prepare Your Children for the Feast We should be preparing our children for the Feast by discussing with them their own examples. Their behavior in public, not being noisy, not running in buildings, etc. should be a part of their instruction well before the Feast.

Now is also the time to discuss the Feast with your children's school-teachers. Many hard feelings and problems for your children can be avoided by politely and courteously discussing Feast plans with their teachers far in advance, thereby showing respect for and cooperation with the teachers' needs and plans.

God intended the Feast of Tabernacles to be a time of great rejoicing. With careful preparation physically and spiritually, we can all have a superb Feast this year!

Supervision of Teens at the Feast of Tabernacles

It seems that one of the biggest problems at the Feast of Tabernacles each year is the number of unsupervised teens. In some cases, the parents have attended one site and left their teen-agers to stay with friends at another site.

The Feast is a family occasion--something we should all strive to emphasize in every possible way. Therefore, teen-agers should not be attending the Feast alone. If there is a case where the parents must attend a different site than their children, they should see to it that the children are under the supervision of qualified adults. This provides not only for the proper supervision of the youngsters, but also for their safety and well-being!

In the case of teen-agers no longer living at home, it should be up to the pastor to determine whether they should attend the Feast away from their parents. If the young person is genuinely interested, he or she should be treated as a prospective member.

Even for those teen-agers who are attending with their parents, there should be some instruction in services prior to the festival regarding parental responsibility and the proper supervision of children of all ages at the Feast.

Comments From Monthly Church Reports

From Australia

MELBOURNE (EAST), VIC--BILL BRADFORD: Enthusiasm, confidence, and zeal continue to be exhibited in members' lives. Many are commenting how excited they are with the direction of their lives

in God's Church. Response to all Church activities--Bible studies, Spokesman and Graduate Clubs, Y.O.U. programmes, fundraisers--is excellent.

MELBOURNE (NORTH), VIC--GAVIN CULLEN: There has been a sudden jump in the numbers and the quality of PMS. Last month we visited ten new people--from the North (3), West (3) and Geelong (4)--more than I visited in the North for the whole of last year. A number have already contacted me back for another visit within a week or two. There doesn't seem to be a set pattern as to the type of people--a general cross-section of society--except they all show a great desire to obey God and come to services.

BALLARAT, VIC--KARL KARLOV: Newsstand distribution has more than tripled over the past 12 months--to the current level of 4,300 per month. Members' attitude and involvement in this are very pleasing to see. In just the first days I've been back from the Refreshing Program, three definite new visit requests came in, and two more possibilities. Our existing PMS are asking about baptism. Going on their fruits, several are likely to be baptised soon.

PERTH, WA--BOB REGAZZOLI: We finally had a breakthrough in Geraldton with four newsstands opening up within a month of the telecast starting in the area. The PT waiting room programme has been highly successful with 1,070 new waiting rooms added in Perth. A very dedicated group of members did an excellent job. Plans are now underway to expand the programme to the country areas.

SYDNEY (NORTH), NSW--TERRY VILLIERS: Enthusiasm is running high for the growth of the work of God's Church after Mr. Morton's presentation. Currently we are forging ahead with the waiting room programme pending openings for newsstands. We have more than enough volunteers on the list to service stands throughout Sydney North.

Several ex-members contacted this month wanted to come back to church. We have also had very positive feedback from both parents and teens with regard to W.E.P. (Winter Educational Programme). All were very thrilled with the experience.

LAKE MOOGERAH, QLD--DAVID NOLLER: The members are enjoying meeting at the W.E.P. camp for services and Bible studies. Those who live in Ipswich particularly enjoy leaving the city and coming out into the beautiful country environment. Also, I met a man who signed out Mr. Armstrong's book THE INCREDIBLE HUMAN POTENTIAL from a local library. After reading it he asked for a visit.

From Asia

JOHORE BAHRU, MALAYSIA--YONG CHIN GEE: More requests for visits are coming from PT readers in Singapore. Among those contacted, many faced the test regarding the Sabbath. They all expressed interest in attending Church services. A few PMS are counseling for baptism and hopefully will be baptised before long.

--Joe Tkach, Ministerial Services

UPDATE FROM MAIL PROCESSINGReminder About "Church Information" Calls

Every week, a number of brethren call on our WATS lines to request information about Sabbath services in various cities across the United States. This is especially true during summer vacation time and around the holy days. We are happy to provide this service to members, but would like to give a few reminders about these requests.

- Members should try to avoid calling at the last minute. We are staffed with volunteers Friday evening and all day Sabbath rather than with regular operators. Also, it may be difficult to get through while the telecast is airing on Sabbath morning.
- Services are sometimes held at a different time or location, particularly just before or after the Feast. We generally are not aware of such changes. (However, we will usually give a minister's phone number and recommend that he be called.)
- Since Church location information is confidential and issued only to members, it is necessary that we ask for a member's name and address so we can verify his status.
- Please be patient. Processing these requests may take several minutes, especially when fewer operators are available.

Once again, our number is 1-800-423-4444 in the continental U.S. Callers in Alaska and Hawaii should call collect at 1-818-304-6111. These numbers are also listed in the inside front cover of The PLAIN TRUTH and GOOD NEWS magazines.

Audiovisual Programs Greatly Aid MPC Training

To keep current with our ever-growing needs, Mail Processing has made use of audiovisual aids, mainly slide shows and video tapes, to more effectively train new employees.

The old adage "A picture is worth a thousand words" is often true in job training. Slides and films provide visual instruction in procedures and equipment usage. They also ensure that all employees receive the same information about a particular task or job. This is especially important in the Telephone Response (WATS) section, since upwards of 1,500 employees and volunteers work there each year.

Upon being hired, all MPC employees are shown a video presentation about the department as a part of their orientation. Other programs include such topics as using our specially designed phone system, adding names and addresses to the computer files, mail reading and "telephone personality."

These audiovisual presentations have not replaced personal instruction by supervisors and on-the-job experience. However, we have found that they effectively complement these traditional methods, resulting in more thorough training. In this way, employees are better prepared to handle the increasing volume of mail and phone calls.

God's Miraculous Protection

This week's letter comments reflect God's care and protection of Church members and others involved with God's Church. They include examples of personal property being safeguarded, deliverance from disastrous weather and accidents. We thought you would find the following firsthand accounts inspiring.

These are trying times and we thank you for praying for us as we are praying for you. This brings to mind the tornado which passed through here not too long ago and how God protected us.

I was sitting on our porch deck when big drops of rain began to fall. I thought I had better go into the house but didn't shut the kitchen door. When the tornado struck, I ran to shut the door because the water was flooding my kitchen and soaking me. A cement block was picked up and hurled toward the door but never touched it. Instead, it dropped down in front of the door. Half of the porch cover was torn off and thrown on the bank, where it took two men to move it. God spared my life through all that and showed me what a powerful God we have.

M.H. (Morgantown, WV)

Before my fiancée and I started watching your show, we lived our lives to want more and more material items. We each had a good job, a new car, plenty of money and a nice apartment. But we both seemed to have been leaving out the one who blessed us with these gifts--God.

Then one evening in January 1984, we had a very serious auto accident. We were hit from behind and our car exploded into flames. The police and those who saw it said we should have been killed instantly, especially the two girls, 6 and 8 years old, who were trapped in the back seat with no way to escape.

We cried and prayed for God's help, when something made me run toward the car. The car was totally engulfed in flames, but the fire parted like a pair of drapes opening, which allowed me to reach the children. We all escaped with only minor injuries.

Since that night we have totally changed and have given our lives over to God. We now have God as ruler and leader and live by His commandments and laws.

M.S. (West Warwick, RI)

I know we are all truly blessed by keeping God's commandments. Though flood waters washed all around my house--in some places over knee deep--I was safe. The flood only washed out some of my driveway, which I was able to fix myself. I do thank our merciful God.

Mrs. R.W. (Dover, AR)

Last year I was hit by a car while walking on the highway. I flew 65 feet down the road, where I was hit again by the same car. The police said I was not breathing when they got to me, which was almost immediately, because they had been following the car down the highway at the time and were about to pull the driver over for

drag racing with his buddy. I received CPR and oxygen and on the way to the hospital had to be revived several more times. They didn't hold out much hope for me. As it turned out, I had no broken bones or internal injuries. I did receive ten stitches in my scalp. I was up and walking one month later.

J.L. (Cliffwood, NJ)

Enclosed is a thank offering for an answered prayer. Recently, I used my personal video cassette recorder at school for one of my classes. We had a faculty meeting after school and I forgot to go back to the room and get my recorder. On the way home (30 miles away), I remembered it and since it was too far to return, I asked God to protect it.

The next day when I walked into the classroom, the first thing I noticed was that the school's video equipment had been stolen. During the night someone broke into the room and took the TV monitor, camera and recorder but my recorder was still sitting there--two feet from the empty cart. Furthermore, they took the school's camera off of my tripod and left the tripod.

About a month later, in another answer to prayer, the school's equipment (which is under my direct control) was returned during the night. God still performs many miracles and answers prayers. Thanks be to Him.

W.G. (Tucson, AZ)

Today God's miraculous power saved me from certain death or great injury. I own a John Deere garden tractor with a 48-inch mower deck. The combined weight of the two is in excess of 1000 pounds. The tractor was scheduled for service maintenance today.

While attempting to load the machine on the back of my pick-up truck, the loading ramp collapsed, flipping the tractor and me upside down. I fell down and landed on my back on the splintered loading ramp only to look up and see the tractor falling directly on top of me. I raised my hands in the air, caught the tractor by the hood and held it in the air above my head for several seconds.

After calling for my wife, I attempted to shift my body out of line to drop the tractor to the ground. The tractor ever so gently lowered to the ground, pinning my leg only, which was easily freed. Only the great hand of God and His mighty power could have given me strength to hold the tractor in the air above my body.

The iron seat was bent in two, the steering wheel broke against my stomach, the hood, lights and dash all were damaged. My sun glasses were smashed flat, yet I suffered absolutely no cuts or broken bones. Except for some sore muscles, God Almighty protected me from harm. I praise God for loving me so much to look after me every second of every day. I now realize the great importance to daily put on the full armor of God, daily pray and talk with Him.

J.T. (Kennewick, WA)

--Richard Rice, Mail Processing Center

ON THE WORLD SCENE

ISRAELIS CONFRONT RISING RELIGIOUS FANATICISM (PART II) We may well be witnessing the beginning of a twin-pronged "holy war" mentality among religious extremists in the Middle East, within both the Islamic and Jewish communities.

In the Red Sea more than two dozen ships have struck mines. A group calling itself Islamic Jihad is claiming responsibility for having laid 190 mines in the key waterway. The little-known group (which also claimed responsibility for blowing up the U.S. marine barracks in Lebanon last year) was praised by Tehran Radio for aiding the Islamic struggle against "arrogant powers."

Although the government of Ayatollah Khomeini disclaims ties to Islamic Jihad--jihad means "holy war"--U.S. officials believe it nevertheless is an active supporter of it, in an attempt to spread its conflict with Iraq to a wider Mideast arena.

Meanwhile, in Israel, as we discussed last week, the specter of religious-based terrorist activity is also rising. Last January, for example, mosque guards foiled an attack upon Jerusalem's Al-Aqsa Mosque, located on the Temple Mount. Grenades left behind by the attackers were similar to those used in assaults on other Moslem and Christian shrines in the preceding two months.

Sometime later, in March, four American Jews were charged with an attack with automatic weapons on an Arab bus on the West Bank. And in April Israeli security officers blocked an attempt by Jewish extremists to blow up Arab-owned buses in Jerusalem, in response to similar acts over the years by PLO terrorists. An Israeli security official planted within the ring of the suspected terrorist circle foiled the plot.

On June 18, the identities of 25 men were revealed who are alleged to be members of a Jewish terrorist underground. The June 19 JERUSALEM POST profiled all of them, many of whom were active members of Gush Emunim, the ultra-nationalist organization of Jewish settlers on the West Bank. They are all accused of planning or executing various terrorist attacks such as the 1980 attack on Arab mayors, the attempted bus sabotage and a 1983 attack on Islamic University in Hebron. Sixteen of the 25 were implicated in a plot to blow up the Islamic sites on the Temple Mount. One of the accused, Ya'acov Heineman, had reportedly raised the idea of bombing the Temple Mount from the air. The idea was rejected by his cohorts who feared damage to the Western Wall.

The resorting to "terror against terror" by religious zealots is worrying many Israelis. One of these is Chaim Pearl, Rabbi Emeritus of the Conservative Adath Israel Synagogue of Riverdale, New York. He now lives in Jerusalem, where he is a writer and lecturer. In the June 13 issue of THE JERUSALEM POST, he penned an article entitled "Tora and Terror" (normally spelled Torah in the United States). Here are key excerpts:

The title of this piece brings together two opposites, but so joined they focus on a frightening situation, which deeply concerns many Israelis. Why is it that a large proportion of Orthodox Jews, particularly the youth, are identified with right wing and extremist militant sections of the Israeli community?

Not so very long ago the ideal picture of the Tora-observing and believing Jew was of one who had great room in his heart for the pursuit of peace. He took seriously the exhortation of the rabbis to be of the disciples of Aaron, loving peace and pursuing peace. Natural gentleness and piety would condition him to show tolerance and love of his fellowman.

Today that picture has drastically changed. Today the Orthodox Jew is frequently represented by a young man with full beard... who totes a gun over his shoulder as he walks along the streets of the West Bank. Certainly, this new image of modern Orthodoxy can be favourably interpreted. It is possible to applaud it with joy and declare, "Here is the new Jew, brave and unafraid in his determination to defend Jewish life and property wherever the Jew chooses to settle--even in areas of the West Bank heavily populated with Arabs."

On the other hand, the new picture may represent a screaming and extreme militancy that proclaims, "The entire Land is mine, and God help anyone who tries to put the slightest obstacle in my way of keeping it." This interpretation, I believe, is closer to the full facts and therefore raises critical questions about the unavoidable permanency of war and about the place of religion in Israel. It is no coincidence that the leader of the Kach movement, who openly advocates clearing the country of Arabs, is an ordained rabbi....

The uncovering of an alleged Jewish underground, thought to have carried out some abominable acts, including the attacks on Arab mayors, killing of students at an Islamic college, and planting of bombs under Arab buses, has rightly outraged most Israelis. But with a few notable exceptions, the comments of religious leaders have been ominously platitudinous and even ambiguous, where they have been made at all....

Is there any way we can begin to understand this freak union of Tora and terror?... First of all, there is the motivation of the biblical record in which God's promise was made to the Children of Israel that they would inherit the Land.... Many religious Jews...are passionately wedded to the belief that after the victories of 1967, they would be sinning against God if they rejected His promise and did not take all the land that they had under their control.

They believe that the great religious destiny of modern Jewry is to regain all of biblical Eretz Israel. For a not insignificant number among them the Moslem mosques on the Temple Mount are not to be tolerated as a permanent feature of Israel's national life, and there is increasing talk of the possibility of the Third Temple. The first motive is thus fundamentalistically religious and pseudo-messianic....

Secondly, there is the new political thought that developed in the post-Holocaust age. The slogan "Never Again!" has taken root in the minds and hearts of many people.... One does not have to be Orthodox to be a proponent of Jewish survival, and many secular-

ists have the same political philosophy motivated by the slogan "Never Again!" Yet it cannot be denied that the Orthodox Jew, by his very way of life, is consistently and more strongly committed to the issues of Jewish survival. Among the motivations that lead him to keep the laws is the fact that he knows that observance is a very strong guarantee for Jewish survival. When this determination to ensure his people's survival is extended to his right wing political philosophy, he recognizes it as a natural extension of his religious commitment, because his personal life is already conditioned by a discipline geared to the same end-- Jewish survival.

Finally, there is a third point, which is not generally observed. This is the relatively large number of American immigrants, in comparison say with immigrants from other Western countries who are affiliated with right wing Orthodox militancy. The most extreme group of all, Kach, was started by an American, is led by former Americans, and is largely financed and supported by American sympathizers.

Something similar, though perhaps not quite to the same extent, is true of the Gush Emunim settler groups on the West Bank. Further, among those who are not particularly active in politics, I frequently find that Americans have some of the most articulated right wing militant views.

I don't claim to have the answers to explain this. One can perhaps understand an aggressive anti-Arab stance among Jews who came from Arab lands and who claim to "understand the Arab mentality." But we might have thought that former Americans, with their exposure to democratic values, sophisticated education and broader world outlook, would have all been more tolerant and more inclined to investigate an active programme for peace....

Perhaps the answer partly lies in the American history and settlement. In the U.S. guns are easily obtainable, and the streets in some big cities echo with violence. Perhaps a degree of this tough attitude has rubbed off on some American Jews and stayed with them as an emotional legacy.

A day earlier (June 12) in THE JERUSALEM POST, Chaim Pearl looked into the past for a dangerous parallel--the role of the Zealots in the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. His article was entitled "The Perils of Zealotry." Again here are excerpts:

We are given a number of thought-provoking answers to the question of why the Second Temple was destroyed. One observation frequently emphasized in the literature is that the destruction was due to the internecine strife which fragmented the community into rival camps. That sin, [the rabbis] said, was equal in its gravity to the three big sins which the people committed during the period of the First Temple [idol worship, sexual immorality and murder].

However, while such a rabbinic insight may give us a glimpse into the social conditions and inner weaknesses of the community, it can hardly be accepted as serious historical comment....

The only substantial and reliable historical source is the work of Josephus, who was himself a leader of the Jewish revolt against Rome until he defected to the enemy and retired to Rome where he wrote his monumental WARS OF THE JEWS and ANTIQUITIES OF THE JEWS.

In spite of the prejudice which creeps into his account of the war against Rome, he is still the only authoritative historian of the period. If we were able to ask him the question the rabbis discussed, "Why was the Temple destroyed?" he would give the clear answer: "Because of the fanaticism of the Zealots."

By the time the Jewish revolt against Rome broke out in all seriousness, Roman power was invincible.... It needs little imagination to recognize that, of all the nations, tiny Judea was the least likely to be able to fight Rome with any hope of success.... But the Jews had the Zealots. And that made a big difference.

The Zealots were organized by Judah of Galilee in 6 BCE when Rome incorporated the Jewish state. Soon after, the Emperor Augustus ordered a census for the purpose of taxation. While the High Priest counselled submission so long as the religious life of the people remained undisturbed, Judah urged resistance and led his party of Zealots to reject the Roman demands and to harass them.

The Zealots proclaimed two clear principles: First, only God was master of the Jews. Second, it was tantamount to rebellion against God's teaching to provide the Romans with any part of the country's yield, since the land and its harvests were promised to the Jews by God.

Judah of Galilee was probably executed by the Romans, but the leadership continued in the control of his family. A son, Menahem, conquered the fort of Masada in the year 66, and a descendant, Eleazer ben Yair, led the desperate band of 1000 Jews in their subsequent futile struggle against Rome after the destruction of the Temple in the year 70.

It is clear that Josephus does not sympathize with the Zealots.... So, in his opposition to them, Josephus frequently refers to the Zealots of the Second Temple period as sicarii, dagger men. This is a distinctly pejorative term, the equivalent of "ruthless terrorists".... However, in spite of his dislike of the Zealots, Josephus does acknowledge their extraordinary courage and their acceptance of suffering for a cause which they consider righteous. He even recognizes their passion for liberty "which is almost unconquerable," and grants that their source of strength is their conviction that God alone is their leader and master.

But Josephus is also a realist.... In blaming the Zealots for their futile struggle, he also blames them, by clear implication, for the chain of events which led to the destruction of the Temple, the downfall of Jerusalem and the massive slaughter of the Jews....

From conjecture about the past one is led to consideration of the present. If Josephus was right and it was the Zealots who were chiefly responsible for the national disasters of their time, is it possible that the same desperate spirit of extremism and pseudomessianic fanaticism which exists today among certain elements in modern Israel could be the main cause of future tragedy? Is it fair to ask whether modern zealots such as the Temple Mount fanatics, Kach extremists, Gush Emunim militants and Jewish underground activists could lead a gullible public into an emotional and aggressive nationalism and its corollary of permanent armed conflict, with an erosion of Jewish moral values and even Jewish physical disaster?

Of course, conditions are entirely different. Then, Rome was the strongest power in the world. Judea was the weakest.... But by the same token one can argue that conditions are completely different in other aspects also.... Instant communication and modern travel have made the world a smaller place than it was, so that what happens in one country is immediately known and affects many countries.

It has been said that peace is indivisible. So is war. That is why, in the long run, the world may not absorb or even tolerate the harsh realities of an Arab-Israeli conflict with its time-bomb set to blow up the whole Middle East, and then possibly the world....

Zealotry derives from a different set of values, far removed from reason and compromise. Zealotry has no room for doubt and is motivated by a burning passion for a single point of view. Zealotry generates hot power. But, like an overheated boiler, it can explode, with horrific consequences for everyone. Perhaps a straight line can be drawn from the Zealots in the period of the war against Rome to their counterparts in modern Israel.

And perhaps another straight line may be drawn between zealotry and jihad-spawned violence in the Middle East to future European intervention in the region to put an end to the conflict before it gets out of hand.

--Gene H. Hogberg, News Bureau