

Pastor's Note

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Are you expecting this week's Prayer Guide to be more of the same old stuff? Well, it isn't. I hope you'll find this different, and fresh, and – as it is intended to be – a thought-provoking stirring up our your spiritual sensitivities to 'the spirit of antichrist' which is even now at work.

While some of you have little to no interest in reading about warfare, watching war movies, war documentaries, or in reading war stories, there is benefit to it. As for me, personally, I watch with a two-eyed interest. One eye is trained to see 'in the physical world the manifestations of what is waged in the spiritual world.' I am quite convinced that what emerges in this world usually begins in the spirit world. With my other eye, I watch to see how war is waged, and how it is eventually won – or lost. I want to learn this because I am a soldier in the Lord's army – an officer – and we are each and all in a real-time war leading warriors entrusted to my command.

I share command with fellow-officers, our ruling elders, and they too have a duty to determine the strength and strategy of our enemy, and to supply, and train, and watch, and enlist, and to urge all to engage the enemy.

The objective in this warfare is to re-take territory lost to the enemy, to liberate all captives, and to establish God's kingdom – and HIS kingdom is righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit (Rom 14:17 NASB) – THAT is what we bring to a conquered and enslaved people who live under the tyranny of the rulers of the kingdom of darkness.

Having made these observations, I now to take you to World War II, and compare our spiritual battle to that war. It is admittedly an ambitious attempt for me, and granted, it will be a stretch for you. But before we go on, YOU might decide if this stuff of which I am writing (spiritual warfare) is delusional idiocy or if it's Biblical and real. I cannot imagine that you would deny it, but you must do more than simply 'not deny it,' you must declare it here and now: "We are at war; I am either fighting, or supporting the cause, OR, I am hindering it, but WE ARE AT WAR – and Perrow Church is one of the "companies" in God's army.

That IS what we are, a COMPANY. You see, in the US Army, a battalion consists of two to six companies – 300 to 1000 soldiers, and is a part of a UNIT. A COMPANY usually consists of platoons, and is roughly 120 to 150 soldiers (Perrow Church), and is led by a captain who is supported by a First Sergeant. Within the company are platoons which are comprised of anywhere from 20 to 40 troops.

And they work together against a common enemy.

(I told you this Prayer Guide was going to be different.)

To REALLY get a better grasp of how what happened in pre-WW II Germany is remarkably similar to what is happening is modern-day America, read "Hitler's Cross" by Erwin Lutzer . . . a very helpful book.

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■ MONDAY, AUGUST 2, 2010

Post- World War I, extremist political groups imagined themselves the means of Germany's restoration. It was a time of great depression brought on by the 'War Clauses' in the Treaty of Versailles (1918). That treaty placed all economic burden of post-war reparations upon Germany – a burden it would have taken 70 years for Germany to repay (1988)! One party whose anger simmered at these humiliating requirements was the German Workers' party (GWP). The (GWP) established a platform combining socialist economic ideas with a super-nationalist patriotism – and an 'in your face' attitude toward the Allied countries' placing of these punitive burdens upon Germany. The party's ideology and fervor attracted disoriented war veterans, including Adolf Hitler, Hermann Goering, and Rudolf Hess. Over time, Hitler ascended to leadership, and his influence began to turn the group toward his strongly held 'principles,' ideas formulated in prison and articulated in his book, 'Mein Kampf' – 'My Struggle.' Hitler's ideology supported racist doctrines expounded by earlier writers (e.g., Comte de Gobineau, a French white supremacist, Houston Stewart Chamberlain, British philosopher). Too, it was fueled by the nationalism of German historian Heinrich von Treitschke and philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche, the 'God is dead' existentialist. Granted, at first Hitler's "Nazi" ideas were vague and mystical, not well-defined principles but a glorification of prejudice and myth seasoned with nihilism (a philosophy where everything is 'nothingness,' anarchy is a prevailing political condition solvable only by forceful leadership). Hitler's doctrines of prejudicial racial inequality and his insistence upon loyal adherence to a party leader, or Fuehrer (himself) opened up people to 'hope' and 'change' – and a new destiny: nationalist expansion. QUESTIONS: What does this teach about spiritual warfare? Was this 'the spirit of antichrist'? Do you see similarities NOW to THEN?

Scripture: MONDAY

2 Chron 32:1-33:13; Rom 15:23-16:9; Ps 25:16-22; Prov 20:16-18

Staff: Jeff Mitchell, Custodian

Deacon: Jeff Knight

Member: Jeremiah Stevens

Military: Travis Williams

Missionaries: Kim & Carolyn Fowler

Teacher: Melody Sizemore

■ TUESDAY, AUGUST 3, 2010

As touched upon yesterday, Germany DID fall hopelessly behind in its reparations payments and soon (1923) France and Belgium took over German industrial territory as a means of forcing payment. In protest, workers and employers closed down the factories in the region. Catastrophic inflation ensued, and Germany's economy began to collapse. By the time the crash came (November that year), a lifetime of savings would not buy a loaf of bread. At the time, the Nazi Party led by Hitler launched a coup against Germany's government. But the Nazis were crushed and Hitler was imprisoned (during which time he wrote 'Mein Kampf'), but Germans increasingly sympathized with the Nazis – stewing in their hatred of the Treaty of Versailles. A decade later, Hitler would exploit this bitterness among Germans to seize

Scripture: TUESDAY

2 Chron 33:14-34:33; Rom 16:10-27; Ps 26:1-12; Prov 20:19

Staff: Keith Cobb, Senior

Elder: Doug Dean

Member: John Stewart

Military: Ron Brown

Missionaries: Steve & Becky

Bresler

Teacher: Dee Wegert

control of the German state. Although the Treaty was revised in Germany's favor (early 30s), the belated amendment was too late to stop the rise of German militarism and nationalism. Germans not only wanted to recover from their humiliation, but wanted to 'feel better about themselves' – to be proud again, and Nazism's geopolitical theories fed that desire: (1) it advanced the notion that the Germans were descendants of a master race of conquerors suited to rule; and (2) Germans were entitled (by superior genetics, and by earlier exploits) to "Lebensraum" – living space. They 'deserved' a kingdom.

But, as it was propagandized over and over again, there were powerful Jews behind the scenes who were in the way – "enemies." QUESTIONS: What did the devil 'use' to incite the German people toward war? How do you see 'the spirit of antichrist' at work in these developments?

■ WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 4, 2010

Hitler, once in power, secured his position by the "Blood Purge" (June, 1934) of SA leader Ernst Roehm and others who might challenge him. Understanding the "Night of Long Knives" or "Blood Purge" at the beginning of Hitler's reign entails understanding struggles between political and military bodies but also the relationship and struggle between the two leaders. Hitler saw a more progressive Germany, a New Socialism to replace the weak Weimar experimental Republic, with a focus on a return to concepts of the Volk, a Nordic-Aryan mysticism, an intense focus on modern technology and social applications of Darwinism, under a far more 'idealistic' mystical nationalism which would reflect a Germany of ancient history entering a 3rd Reich seeing a 'new age' of Germany somewhat similar to how Christians see the Millennium, although far from having Christ as head, it would be Hitler, and Himmler; Himmler even believed himself to be a reincarnation of Heinrich I, the sovereign of the 1st 'Reich'.

Scripture: WEDNESDAY 2 Chron 35:1-36:23; 1 Cor 1:1-17; Ps 27:1-6; Prov 20:20-21
Staff: Jack Maxwell, Associate Pastor Emeritus
Deacon: Duane West
Member: Linda Stewart
Military: John Profit
Missionaries: Dave & Jamie Hanson, Alitachi
Teacher: Keith Crewdson

The ruling "master race" would need to be organized into an authoritarian pyramid, at the apex of which stood the imposing Fuehrer. Strength and discipline were deified by the Nazis, and democracy was spurned as a depraved form of government that protected the weak and mediocre. **The judicial system was reorganized, and courts were established to deal with political offenses.** Nazi ideology was enthroned as national law, and Nazi methods replaced rational legal procedure. Anti-Semitic legislation (the Nuremberg Laws) forbade intermarriage with Jews, deprived Jews of civil rights, and barred them from professions. A German Christian Church was set up to control Protestant churches; its chief opponent, Martin Niemoeller, was arrested. The Gestapo tracked down all political opponents, Jews, and other 'non-sympathizers' with the Nazi regime.

■ THURSDAY, AUGUST 5, 2010

It is this LAST paragraph (from yesterday's entry), that most excites my interest. One important component to the demonized rise to power by Hitler and the Nazis was the 'neutralization' of the church. Already, political concessions were made to appease Hitler and his growing number of sympathizers. That only strengthened his position and power. Loyal Nazis were placed in positions of authority within the government and eventually came to control it. A corporative state was established in which labor lost all rights and was

even regimented in its recreation by the “Strength through Joy” movement. Youth, schools, and the press came under repressive control. The books of “undesirable” authors were repeatedly burned. Propaganda prevailed.

What had to happen NEXT was for Hitler to render the church ineffective. How did he do that? By making the leaders feel a part of this ‘nationalistic’ and ‘patriotic’ surge. The clergy were made to be impressed with the stately order and pomp and power of the Nazi machine, and most were all too willing to set aside the gospel for this ‘new millennial ascension of Germanic power.’ People were ‘living their best life now,’ and ‘self-esteem’ was on the rise. “It MUST be the favor of God! Look at how WELL Germany is doing!” This pragmatism reinforced the deception of church leaders.

But those who did NOT agree, who suspicioned there was more going on than met the eye, soon found the power of intimidation at work against them. They FELT that power – consternation from their peers, disapproval from their congregations, and decreasing opportunity within their denominations. A great power was at work, a dark and evil one, and the church was the last barrier to the satanic agenda – domination and destruction.

■ FRIDAY, AUGUST 6, 2010

British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain, contemporary of Adolf Hitler and Benito Mussolini, the pre-WW II leader of the United Kingdom, caved into the natural desire for peace, and settled upon a treaty with the fascists in 1938 known as the Munich Agreement. On Sept 30, 1938, he announced:

“...the settlement of the Czechoslovakian problem, which has now been achieved is, in my view, only the prelude to a larger settlement in which all Europe may find peace. This morning I had another talk with the German Chancellor, Herr Hitler, and here is the paper which bears his name upon it as well as mine. Some of you, perhaps, have already heard what it contains but I would just like to read it to you (*proceeds to read the agreement*). We regard the agreement signed last night and the Anglo-German Naval Agreement, as symbolic of the desire of our two peoples never to go to war with one another again.”

Later the same day, he stood outside 10 Downing Street and read from the document:

“My good friends, this is the second time in our history that there has come back from Germany to Downing Street achieving peace with honor. **I believe it is peace for our time. We thank you from the bottom of our hearts. And now I recommend you to go home and sleep quietly in your beds.**”

Within 6 months, Hitler pushed into Czechoslovakia, and onward to Poland. History has shown that Chamberlain was deceived, and his reassurance to the citizens of his nation to “go home and sleep quietly in your beds” some of the worst counsel of the 20th century.

Scripture: THURSDAY

Ezra 1:1-2:70; 1 Cor 1:18-2:5;
Ps 27:7-14; Prov 20:22-23

Staff: Harvey Wegert, Treasurer

Elder: Lyle Helmick

Member: Doug Stewart

Military: Daniel Lucas

Missionaries: Jennifer Walker, S.
Korea

Teacher: Cecelia Young

Scripture: FRIDAY

Ezra 3:1-4:23; 1 Cor 2:6-3:4;
Ps 28:1-9; Prov 20:24-25

Staff: Teresa Dean, Children’s
Ministry Director

Deacon: Jeff Knight

Member: Patty Stewart

Military: Eric Mallett

Missionaries: Bill & Wanda Perrow,
OAF

Teacher: Rusty & Bonita Bonasso

■ SATURDAY, AUGUST 7 2010

After WW II's conclusion, playwright Noel Coward wrote a stage play (in 1946) based upon Chamberlain's line: "Peace in our Time." Set in alternative 1940, the Battle of Britain was (in this play) lost, and the Germans took the British Isles and brought them under Nazi occupation. Inspired to write this after seeing the effects of the occupation of France, the patriotic Coward wrote: "I began to suspect the physical effect of four years' of intermittent bombing is far less damaging to the intrinsic character of a nation than the spiritual effect of four years of enemy occupation."

What Noel Coward saw after the fact, Winston Churchill saw prophetically, and, replacing Chamberlain as Prime Minister, he warned:

We have before us an ordeal of the most grievous kind. We have before us many, many long months of struggle and of suffering. You ask, what is our policy? I can say: It is to wage war, by sea, land and air, with all our might and with all the strength that God can give us; to wage war against a monstrous tyranny, never surpassed in the dark, lamentable catalogue of human crime. That is our policy.

You ask, what is our aim? I can answer in one word: It is victory, victory at all costs, victory in spite of all terror, victory, however long and hard the road may be; for without victory, there is no survival. Let that be realized; no survival for the British Empire, no survival for all that the British Empire has stood for, no survival for the urge and impulse of the ages, that mankind will move forward towards its goal.

But I take up my task with buoyancy and hope. I feel sure that our cause will not be suffered to fail among men. At this time I feel entitled to claim the aid of all, and I say, "Come then, let us go forward together with our united strength."

■ SUNDAY, AUGUST 8, 2010

Winston Churchill realized and acknowledged four realities of war:

(1) He knew it would not be soon over; (2) He knew it would not be without casualties; (3) He knew it would not be without considerable cost, (4) He knew it would not be possible without tremendous effort and sacrifice, and (5) He knew the alternative (of doing nothing) was worse than all that would have to happen to prevail.

We face an enemy more severe and more sinister than Adolf Hitler, and an alliance more powerful than Germany's with Italy. And for us, too, it will not be soon over, nor will it be without casualties and cost, effort and sacrifice. But the consequences of NOT fighting are worse than the cost of fighting.

Do not be ignorant of what is happening in the world. Discern the times (1 Chronicles 12:32). Understand the forces that are at work politically, and in the church.

Just because you are on the ground does not mean you can't figure out the battlefield.

Scripture: SATURDAY

Ezra 4:24-6:22; 1 Cor 3:5-23;
Ps 29:1-11; Prov 20:26-27

Staff: Ruth LaMachia,
Administrator

Elder: Bill LaMachia

Member: Denzil Stonestreet

Military: Dan Russell

Missionaries: Brian & Katherine
Miller, OAF

Teacher: Keith Cobb

Scripture: SUNDAY

Ezra 7:1-8:20; 1 Cor 4:1-21;
Ps 30:1-12; Prov 20:28-30

Staff: Debbie Dean, Staff Assistant

Deacon: Duane West

Member: Elaine Stonestreet

Military: Jenny Tant

Missionaries: John & Becca Bell,
Honduras

Teacher: Dave Witherell