

# GLOBAL INIQUITY

RAYMOND E. GINGRICH  
Professor of Bible  
LeTourneau College

Historians someday will write that the United States in the 1960's experienced an era of anarchy unparalleled in a free country governed originally by a written constitution and once dedicated to the principle of law and order.

We are today on the verge of a complete breakdown of our governmental structures.<sup>1</sup>

Here, we have a statement that not only presents a noted columnist's views concerning the State of the Nation during this decade, but that also stirs the heart of one who examines current trends through the spectrum of divine prophecy.

The anarchy to which Mr. Lawrence refers is but an expression of the spirit of iniquity which affects not only the United States, but has also permeated the world systems: East and West; North and South.

What is this iniquity which appears in the title of this paper? It is a translation of anomia a word which appears frequently in the New Testament, and means "without law," hence "lawless" (Matt. 24:12; II Thess. 2:3, 7-8; I John 3:4). In its essence it is, fundamentally and constitutionally, rebellion against the sovereignty of God. It is, therefore, insubordination to divine law; and, hence, to human government and law which are ordained by God for the orderly existence of human society. "Iniquity" is the word used in the King James Version for "lawlessness," the word adopted, for example, by the Lockman Foundation scholars for the New American Standard Bible (a revision of the American Standard Version of 1901).

Iniquity (lawlessness) is basically an attitude, rather than a succession of acts against society and against God. The violations of law and order are but the symptoms of the ailment: the spirit of lawlessness that produces the symptoms. Behind this attitude is a controlling personality who is the embodiment and essence of iniquity. This being is Satan. He is at the root of all lawless activities, so that his masterpiece, the Lawless One who shall appear at the climax of this age, is energized by none other than Satan himself (II Thess. 2:9). This Lawless One will be brought into focus again in the final portion of this study. It is sufficient at this point to state, as does George G. Findlay, that "the Lawless One is the ultimate embodiment of the world's wickedness and defiance of God."<sup>2</sup> The Apostle Paul indicates that this spirit is at work already, but is working under certain restraints (II Thess. 2:7-8).

It is our objective, first, to take a careful look to see wherein we may find this evil spirit engaged in pressing toward his objective of usurping God's sovereign position among his creatures (Isa. 14:13-14); then to evaluate these activities through the revelation of the prophetic Word.

### THE DIFFUSION OF INIQUITY

It is rather disconcerting to observe the evidence for the diffusion of this spirit of lawlessness, both intensively and extensively, in our modern age. We wish it weren't there. We hope we won't find it. But there it is, very real, and very threatening to our personal and national security, so that even the Federal Bureau of Investigation is concerned with its potentialities, and has warned the American people of its danger to our national survival as the bastion of democratic freedom.

#### The Intensive Diffusion of Iniquity.

As in the first lecture in this series, so here, we find an embarrassment of riches in the great wealth of evidence testifying to the diffusion of iniquity within our American culture. We may see it everywhere: in the home; in the school; in the church; in the government; in our industrial complex. Our problem is not in finding evidence, but rather, in selecting and classifying it. Then, too, our cultural patterns are so interwoven that there is great overlapping of evidence. We have attempted to limit ourselves to four great areas of investigation.

#### The Diffusion of Iniquity in Our Political Structure.

The spirit of iniquity has become so commonplace in our political institutions that we tend to take it in stride, like a boxer rolling with the punch so that he may avoid injury from the blow that has been struck; but we wonder just how successful we have been in our effort.

The breakdown of law and order is a national scandal in American political life. It is our conviction that this frightful spectacle has developed against a backdrop of machine politics, wherein expediency rather than principle is the determining factor. Race riots and mob violence have received little attention, or at least a minimum of condemnation from upper echelons of political Washington. Many thoughtful observers have been of the opinion that the silence was based upon the vote-getting potential that such silence stimulated when balanced against its possible vote loss.

A law passed by the eighty-ninth Congress which was designed to strengthen the law-enforcement agencies of our national capital was vetoed by President Johnson, much to the frustration and consternation of the head of Washington's police force. At the same time, crime and disregard for law and order are a matter of national concern. In fact, an editorial appeared in The Longview Daily News, written by Bill Schulz under the caption "A National Scandal," which attempted to alert the nation to the appalling record of lawlessness in our nation's capital. We quote it in part:

In January, 1963, a youthful burglar with an extensive criminal record forced his way into the Washington home of former Rep. Brooks Hays (D.-Ark.). The intruder, Huntley Ruff, Jr., gave the elderly Mrs. Hays a severe beating and broke her wrist. Captured by police, he was convicted and sentenced to eight years in prison. A District of Columbia prosecutor predicted it would 'be a long time' before Ruff was again free to prey on defenseless men and women. He was wrong. Washington police arrested Ruff last week and charged him with the recent rapes of two Capitol Hill housewives. Ruff, who had been sentenced to eight years behind bars, was released after three years as a reward for good behavior. What J. Edgar Hoover terms 'turnstile justice' has become a national scandal. As the FBI chief says bluntly, "Decent people in all sections of the country have suffered too long at the hands of terrorists set free with little more than a pretext of impartial consideration of their guilt."<sup>3</sup>

Vice-President Humphrey put himself on record as being soft on street rioting and disorder by classifying such waves of lawlessness as "revolts" which he himself might "lead." He was speaking in a frame of reference to Harlem, Watts, Chicago, and Cleveland rioting and mayhem in which homes and businesses were burned, murder and pillaging were rampant, and attacks upon law enforcement officers were tolerated. On the same day in which he was calling revolt the name of the game, two stirring examples of popular uprising occurred. One was in Cleveland, where three people were shot, eight fires were set and 300 policemen faced sniper fire to restore order. The other was in New York where shots were fired, three were arrested, and mobs hurled bricks and debris at police officers.

The brutal oppression that sparked these revolts? The Vice-President might have checked the Associated Press story for the deep grievances that caused the violence:

. . .the trouble started (in Cleveland) when irate patrons tore up a tavern after they learned they could no longer get free ice water.

and,

The outbreak began in Harlem when police sought to disperse a crowd of youths playing bongo drums.

Revolutions may be made for such causes, but somehow we doubt it. "Free ice water or fight," and "Battle for your bongos," just don't seem to be suitable war cries for an authentic uprising against oppression."<sup>4</sup>

J. Edgar Hoover has lamented "conveyor belt justice," by which criminal elements are shuttled from prison to court chambers, to the underworld, to crimes of violence, to probation by sentimental judges, and back into their old haunts from which they came. What does one find who walks the trail of these lawbreakers? Let us look at the record of a few.

Case I. Three nuns in Newark, New Jersey, were criminally attacked, with attempt to rape all three, by a 25-year-old man who had been arrested 14 times for previous offenses;

yet he had never served a day in jail for his behavior.

Case II. Two teenagers in New York were arrested and charged with the kidnapping of a 17-year-old waitress. One of the youths had previously served part of a sentence for assault and robbery, but was out on parole. The other youth was likewise on parole after serving less than two years of a five-year sentence for his attempted murder of his mother with a baseball bat.

Case III. On Palm Sunday, 1966, an 80-year-old grandmother, her 44-year-old daughter, and her 14-year-old granddaughter, all of Philadelphia, were all three beaten and raped by Ronald Dessus and two companions, who were out looking for a house to rob. Dessus had been arrested for his violent and brutal iron-bar attack on his former employer, and was free to roam the streets by the good grace of a magistrate who had released him on bail.

Senator John McClellan, Chairman of the Senate Investigations Subcommittee has blamed the nation's soaring crime rate on legal "sentimentalists who are bent on excusing every unlawful act from truancy to murder or social ills."<sup>5</sup>

Carl L. Estes, noted publisher of two Longview, Texas, daily newspapers: the Morning Journal and the Evening Daily News, one of the founders of LeTourneau College, and a U. S. carrier commander in World War II, wrote an impassioned editorial in his Sunday Journal, July 17, 1966, under the caption, "Reaping The Whirlwind." He wrote in part,

Chicago--always a city in which the underworld influence was a prime factor, a metropolis which traditionally has given sanctuary to the criminal element--is finally reaping the whirlwind.

Present and past city administrations have used the Negro and other minority groups as a means of perpetuating themselves in office and it is primarily their blame today that it is not safe for a woman to walk the streets of that city. . . We have little sympathy for the political bosses of these areas. What is happening to their communities is the result of short-sightedness and exploitation, of deprivation and intimidation.<sup>6</sup>

Mr. Estes was writing about the terrible riots and violence that rocked Chicago during the "long hot summer" of mid-1966. But he was writing in a much larger and more significant context. He was writing about the disregard for law and order, not only in the streets of cities North and South, but also in our national government. He was writing as a Southern citizen who felt a deep sense of outrage and injustice burning within. Listen as we quote further from his editorial:

Are there different laws and rules for North and South? It seems so. Civil rights legislation was all right so long as the North was excepted. Now with a housing section which would apply to the North, there is plenty of opposition. They are squealing like so many pigs caught under iron gates.

In the steel-price issue little more than a year ago, FBI agents raided homes of steel executives in the middle of the night and made them produce company

records. Labor unions have struck -- right now, five major air lines are down because of a strike -- but has a labor hall been raided by federals? All in all, Chicago is just the current example of expediency and exploitation.<sup>7</sup>

There is more, much more to the Estes editorial, but this will suffice to impress us, favorably or unfavorably, depending upon which way our individual inclinations may react to the political philosophy that governs Washington. And it is well-known that the ethical philosophy that prevails at the top will gradually filter down into the lower levels of national life.

While the courts seem to concentrate upon the rights of law-breakers and criminal elements, crime increases five times faster than the increase of population, according to the Federal Bureau of Investigation. In Dallas, Texas, during the year 1963, according to a report in The Dallas Morning News, "a law was broken for every twelve people residing within the city limits. One in fifty became victims of the eight most serious crimes."<sup>8</sup> All editorial comment which we have read on the problem of law-enforcement, has agreed that more, not less, provision must be made to aid the law-enforcement arm of government in protecting the non-violent from the violent segments of society, and in bringing the criminal elements to justice. The failure to do so not only has become one of our national scandals, but raises a serious question whether or not there is a conspiracy to bring about a collapse of law and order, and replace it with anarchy.

An editorial appeared recently in The Shreveport Times under the caption "Soaring Crime Rate" in which the editor lamented the expanding crime wave in the United States, and warned of where it is leading. We quote it, in part, in support of our growing concern over the continuing diffusion of iniquity around us, and because of its vital relation to our ultimate conclusion in this lecture:

As this crime wave expands, it is not far-fetched to imagine the criminal underground element ultimately taking over or controlling the United States and its people. Organized crime grows more powerful, interweaving itself with legitimate interests, each year that passes.

Meanwhile, those who are responsible for law enforcement find themselves increasingly hampered in their duty because of a trend in court decisions that offers the criminal an ever-growing latitude of safety in his law-breaking efforts.

At the same time, there is a moral laxity abroad in the land that seeks to blame all wrong-doing on "society as a whole" rather than fixing the blame on the individual who broke the rules. When everybody is guilty, nobody is guilty. The line between right and wrong, good and evil is blurred. This is the kind of hothouse atmosphere in which criminal activity thrives.

On the fringes of real crime, all kinds of unethical and immoral doings prosper in a moral climate that offers no individual guilt -- in business, labor, politics,

education, and every walk of life. Violations of Christian codes of ethics and behavior are, indeed, often encouraged and glorified as acts of "freedom."<sup>9</sup>

We express our indebtedness to The Shreveport Times, a daily newspaper, for this fine editorial, suitable for reproduction in an evangelical periodical, and very apropos to this thesis.

#### The Diffusion of Iniquity in Our Social Culture.

Were we not so calloused through long familiarity with American social degeneracy, we must have been frightened into action by the moral level with which we operate. The police chief of one American city writes:

How can Christian people sit idly by when they have seen the national morals sink to a new low, when an educator speaks out in favor of free love, a man of God condones sexual excursions by unmarried adults, movies sell sex as a commercial commodity, book stores and cigar stands peddle pornography, a high court labels yesterday's smut as today's literature, record shops feature albums displaying nudes or near nudes, night clubs stage shows that would have shocked a smoker's audience a generation ago, TV shops and TV commercials pour out a flood of sick, sadistic and suggestive sex situations, a campaign is launched to bring acceptance to homosexuality, radio broadcasts present discussions for and against promiscuity, magazines and newspapers publish pictures and articles that flagrantly violate the bounds of good taste, four letter words once heard only in barroom brawls now appear in publications of general distribution. Birth control counsel is urged for high school girls. . . As our standards have lowered, our crime levels and social problems have increased. Today we have a higher percentage of our youth in jail, in reformatories, on probation, in trouble more than ever before. A study of the statistics on illegitimate births and broken marriages, on juvenile crime, on school drop-outs, on sex deviation, on dope addiction, on high school marriages, the crimes of passion, with the figures going higher and higher.<sup>10</sup>

Remember, it was not a conservative theologian, out of step with today's world, who said what we have just read. It was a city police chief and head of crime prevention who said it in a paper he read before a gathering of law enforcement officers, April 22, 1966.

We have before us, as we write, an article taken from the Chicago Tribune Press Service, dated November 29, 1966, written by Walter Trohan, under the caption "Capital Youth Corps Has Problem: 75% of Girls in Unit Pregnant." We will quote only the first paragraph.

Faces of capital poverty fighters flushed with embarrassment this week when they were told that 75 per cent of the girls in one segment of the war on poverty got pregnant.<sup>11</sup>

Now just in case anyone argues that this situation is the result of the girls (and men, we suppose) coming from the lower strata of society, let us remind ourselves that sexual promiscuity is an accepted norm of behavior among a vast number of university men and women, according to authorities qualified to speak out on that subject. If anyone viewed the NBC TV show, Sex In The Sixties, aired Thursday evening, January 12, 1967, he must be convinced of that conclusion.

A writer wrote under the heading, "Colleges Told Not to Worry About Private Sex," in The Dallas Morning News, to the effect that it was not to be the concern of college administrators what sexual activities were practiced by students so long as the practice did not infringe upon the sensibilities of other people. The writer was reporting the conclusions of a group of psychiatrists who had made some pronouncements on college life and behavior, which report was edited by Dr. Harrison Eddy, former psychiatric consultant to Vassar College. Incidentally, the report also dealt with the problem of homosexuality on the campus, and concluded that "Private homosexual, like heterosexual, behavior need not become the direct concern of the administration."<sup>12</sup>

While we are on the subject of homosexuality, let me just point out that this moral aberration has become one of our major problems, and we predict will become increasingly so. Many, including several American leading clergymen, have placed their stamp of endorsement upon homosexuality as being a normal behavior. England is softening its laws governing this perversion, and agitation is being waged in Washington to follow suit.

Every serious student of the Word of God is keenly aware that this sin is an indication of a degenerate culture, and an evidence that God may soon abandon it to its just and awful doom. One has only to recall the judgment of God upon Sodom and Gomorrah, or read Romans, chapter one, verses twenty-four through thirty-two, to be aware of this warning.

Billy Graham has stated that his organization learned, during its latest crusade in metropolitan New York, that teen-age crime and vandalism was one of New York's most pressing problems. Speaking in his Hour of Decision program one Sunday, he said,

Before this Sunday is over, here in this city of ours, one of us will die as a result of criminal negligence. Twenty-seven of our people will have been assaulted. Three women will have been raped. One hundred and forty of our homes and businesses will have been burglarized. Forty of us will have our cars stolen. Thirty-one of us will have been held up and robbed on the streets of the city. Sixty-nine larcenies will have been committed and fifteen other miscellaneous felonies. Most of these crimes will have been committed by teen-agers.<sup>13</sup>

This was not Mr. Graham's personal description of the situation in New York. He was quoting from a radio report of its police commissioner who was appealing for public concern and cooperation in helping to curb this wave of crime and vice. One school teacher, stated Dr. Graham, became almost hysterical in telling him of the situation in her school. She lived under constant dread of violence.

As we wrote this material a report of the Federal Bureau of Investigation covering the first nine months of 1966 came to our desk. It claimed that violent crimes against the person (hence social lawlessness), including murder, rape, robbery and aggravated assault, had increased 11 per cent over the previous year's (1965) first nine months. Some regions of the United States increased as much as 12 per cent.

### The Diffusion of Iniquity in Our Intellectual Community.

The academic world has not escaped the leavening process of the spirit of iniquity. In fact, it may have made its most damaging gains in this area, if we include the training of the clergy in the intellectual community, rather than treat it separately in the spiritual structure. "What happens when the new collegiate 'sick look' tries to take over a campus dedicated to religion and morality?"<sup>14</sup> asked Dr. Max Rafferty, Superintendent of Education for the State of California. Under the caption of "Accreditation Experts Find Unusual In Utah," Dr. Rafferty laments and exposes the forces of lawlessness that have raided American education. Continuing, Mr. Rafferty asks, "When the irresistible forces of obscenity, treason, and atheism, now so much a part of the academic climate, collide head-on with the immovable objects of decency, patriotism and faith, who wins?" California's Superintendent of Education has spent a few days lecturing on the campus of Brigham Young University: the "Y" to the thousands of undergraduate students enrolled at that great school. Mr. Rafferty pays his respect and offers his commendation to the "Y" for her excellent facilities, her academically qualified faculty of dedicated men and women, and the high level of student devotion to the purposes and philosophies upon which the university was founded. "But the Y is in trouble with her peers these days," states Dr. Rafferty.

It seems she's being "accredited" by one of the nation's great academic and professorial associations, and she's having a hard time cutting the mustard under the new rules. The visiting accreditation team has some grave doubts.

Sure, BYU has fine professors, but none of them happen to be atheists. How are her students going to develop that "healthy scepticism" so much demanded these days if none of her instructors are out plugging nude orgies and waving "God is dead" placards? . . . But the accrediting experts are not really interested in the Y's grand buildings, bountiful curriculum and high student morale. They're looking for radicalism, rioting and rutting, and they're not finding them at Brigham Young. And by the twisted perverted reasoning of the day, they are dismayed at the lack of dissipation and decadence there as contrasted with their own convulsed campuses. Something's just got to be wrong.

Result: The threat of a "short-term" accreditation for one of the great universities of the West.

Obvious intention: To force the Y to knuckle under.

Pressure like this has worked on other universities. Somehow I can't see it working at the Y.<sup>15</sup>

It is our candid opinion that such attitudes and behavior as those for which Dr. Rafferty indicts a top-level accreditation agency, speak of a deep-seated antagonism toward basic, fundamental principles that have their root in divine sovereignty and law. The antagonism is not so much against the educational institution as it is against the principles for which the school stands. They attack the Creator through attacking His creatures.

Every knowledgeable person is aware that the prevailing philosophy in the academic community is inimical to God and his sovereignty in human affairs. The display of intellectual dishonesty on the subject of origins; the continued promotion of the theory of organic evolution, giving the impression that it has now become a proven fact, in spite of a great wealth of contradictory evidence, together with the simultaneous rejection of creationism are, to us, rooted in a deep-seated spirit of lawlessness which refuses to be subject to God or to recognize the validity and authority of His Word.

The current pattern of realism in the literary area of the intellectual community, with its over-emphasis of the sordid and corrupt, and its corresponding de-emphasis of that which tends to uplift and ennoble appear to our way of thinking, to be an expression of iniquitous rebellion against divine standards of purity and righteousness. The Word of God asks us to think on "whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report. . ." (Phil. 4:8). It is difficult for us to see how we can obey that admonition by reading and studying such literary "masterpieces" as Farewell to Arms, by Hemingway; Grapes of Wrath by Steinbeck; A Streetcar Named Desire by Williams; Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf by Albee; Lady Chatterley's Lover by Lawrence; or Ulysses by J. J. Joyce; yet such are commonly accepted or required readings in a typical contemporary literature course in an average American college or university. We find it difficult to reconcile the work of such "Literary Scavengers" with a cultural pattern in which God is a dynamic factor. If these literary masterpieces represent the best in today's world of letters, what must be the character and content of the worst? If anyone has any doubt let him glance over the book titles and pictures on the front of the paperbacks that line any popular book stand. Surely the shades of Sodom, Gomorrah and Pompeii are falling upon our times! Nor will a review of modern art and theatrical literature represent an improvement in the intellectual climate of the twentieth century.

#### The Diffusion of Iniquity in the Spiritual Complex.

Tremendous currents are flowing in the spiritual ocean of humanity, reminding one of the Gulf Current which so vitally affects life and climate on the northwestern coast of Europe until it is dissipated in the frigid waters of the Arctic Ocean. Complex and mysterious are the influences and directions being taken by twentieth century spiritual currents. Neither unmixed good nor evil are their immediate by-products, but the end is not yet. The informed observer must be aware that the immediate complex has tended to bring into focus a spirit of toleration, not only between the various segments of the Christian Faith, but also between the recognized religions of the world. At least, this is seemingly true on the surface, though what really lies underneath the placid waters today remains to be seen tomorrow, when storms begin to churn up the waves and they toss their debris upon the shore. What then?

The diffusion of iniquity in the spiritual complex is so intensive that one scarcely knows where to begin with a presentation of the evidence. The humanizing of God of several years back has now produced the "God is dead" cult of today. The tendency to reject the authority of the Bible in human philosophy and behavior has now caused a festering abscess in the moral and spiritual life of America, and the western world community. Its deadly poison now permeates our political, social, intellectual and spiritual culture--the whole lump is being leavened! Even we evangelical Christians have not been missed in the process. We now sanction or tolerate, and sometimes endorse, at least by our silence, fashions, fads, and behavior patterns which a generation ago would have been read out of our society. We allow "the world to squeeze us into its mold," as Phillips has translated Romans 12:2, only we tend to follow along, rather than set the standards ourselves.

In the November 4, 1966 issue of Time (a rather worldly wise periodical we would say), a column appears under the caption "Is Nothing Obscene?" It reviews some of the sordid filth characterizing a foreign film which Time labels "a sardonic shocker."<sup>16</sup> The list of shocking sins is such that we don't feel free to quote from it in this reference. Yet, as is usually the case, the film is defended on the ground of being a valuable aid to the study of psychiatry. United States and European critics have praised the film for its valuable contribution to the science of psychiatrics. The last word has not yet been spoken on whether or not this film will win court approval for release in America. Many which have been pointed at appealing to the prurient interest of a socially and spiritually decadent community have been so approved. Such are becoming increasingly commonplace, and provide evidence of the wide-spread diffusion of iniquity.

The growing toleration and encouragement of sexual expression outside of the standards established by God for the well-being of man's total personality is, in our mind, an evidence of the intensive diffusion of iniquity within the spiritual complex. Recently a committee of thirteen clergymen, doctors and educators, appointed by the British Council of Churches with instruction to prepare "a statement of the Christian case for abstinence from sexual intercourse before marriage and faithfulness within marriage," ignored the instruction of the Council and brought in a report, instead, which refused to endorse the Biblical ban against fornication, which it found occasionally permissible, as when it is a "total encounter" between consenting adults. The report expressed toleration or approval for social practices which are forbidden or for which God's judgment has so often been inflicted upon nations which were leavened by them. The committee even went so far as to express a charitable toleration for the notable four- and five-letter words which have made the campus placards appear so spicy to current beatnik rabble rousers.<sup>17</sup> Such rebellious and decadent attitudes are the outgrowth of a spirit of lawlessness which begins in the spiritual life of a community, then filters through into other vital areas of a nation's thinking and behavior.

The iniquitous reaction to the authority of God's Word, and hence to God Himself, in the matter of human origin has taken on a new mode of expression lately. An article recently appeared in the Houston Chronicle, under the caption "Science-Religion Conflict Reconciled in New Hymn." It relates the account of the introduction of a new hymn at an 11 a.m. Sunday service at the United Church of Clear Lake in Houston. The hymn was written by Dr. Curtis Beach, pastor of a Pittsburgh, Pa. United Church of Christ and is entitled "Praise to the Living

God"; it is allegedly an attempt to reconcile Biblical creation and scientific evolution. Among its philosophies is a reference to "the living God who planted in the ocean depth the first faint seeds of life."<sup>18</sup> So now they're singing about what may be intended to sound like theistic evolution, although we are not certain of the intention! At any rate, it doesn't sound very much like Biblical Creationism to our ear, but just one more effort to turn the mind of the unsuspecting public away from a confident faith in the Word of God.

Before leaving this area of consideration, we just must call attention to one more not-so-subtle effort to spread iniquity in the spiritual complex in America. We have in hand a musical revue in two acts, entitled For Heaven's Sake! published by Baker's Plays, Boston, Massachusetts, and written especially for the North American Ecumenical Youth Assembly, which more than thirty denominations of the United States and Canada participated in commissioning for production. Some two thousand young people gathered on the campus of the University of Michigan "to discover what God was calling them to be and do within the North American setting."<sup>19</sup> Now, ecumenically oriented churches are sponsoring the revue elsewhere.

For Heaven's Sake! is one of the most vulgar, sordid, salacious plays we have reviewed. Then, after it has spread its corruption before its audience, it seems to suddenly become real noble and sanctimonious in drawing certain apparently worthwhile conclusions. We were reminded of the Apostle Paul's statement in Romans, "If so, why should we not do evil so that good may come of it? That is what we are accused of preaching by some of our detractors; and their condemnation of it is just" (Rom. 3:8 Knox tr.). The thought that the end justifies the means was abhorrent to Paul, and is just as abhorrent to God in the twentieth century as it was in the first. This sordid musical revue under the guise of seeking the divine will seems to us to be just another evidence of the diffusion of iniquity in the spiritual realm.

The wealth of evidence for our treatment of the intensive diffusion of iniquity in our national culture is so overwhelming that one can scarcely bring himself to an end of the revue, but common sense dictates that it must be done.

#### The Extensive Diffusion of Iniquity.

The conditions which we have been describing as being characteristic of American culture in a major degree, are diffused, in various forms of expression, throughout the world. Keeping in mind that all lawlessness is aimed at subverting the laws of God, then it becomes apparent that the whole Communistic philosophy is iniquitous in its character and objectives. It is not only atheistic but also antitheistic, which is, in reality, a strange paradox. It seems a bit ridiculous to us to consume so much time, energy, and expense combating that which has no existence; that is, God. In a recent newspaper headline we read, "Soviet Union Driving Hard to Uproot Religion." The article, datelined Leningrad (UPI), went on to emphasize that the Soviet policy is not only to exterminate Christianity within its boundaries, but also to establish its "state religion of Atheism." Russian policies concerning the control of evangelical Christianity may serve to purify the true Church in the land of the Soviets, but it is aimed at ruling God out of the land that once claimed to be the protector of the Christian Faith.

Numerically, Christianity has not only been depressingly diminished in the Soviet Union, but throughout the world. The number of professed Christians has not kept pace with the population increase, so that numerically Christianity is losing out in fulfilling our Lord's explicit instruction for a vital world-wide ministry. Nor has the vitality of Christianity been maintained as a potent force within the world structure in the twentieth century.

The ecumenical philosophy that has engulfed the church today is not, in our judgment, an evidence of a revitalized Christianity, but a compromised Christianity that is laying the foundation for the Roman Catholic hierarchy to assume control of Christendom, with the consent and cooperation not only of the liberal wing of Protestantism, but also of the evangelical wing. Witness the December 22 issue of Christianity Today with its five-inch ad for the University of Notre Dame, Department of Theology, Graduate School, in Indiana. Editor Carl Henry, claiming to be thoroughly evangelical and conservative in his personal theology, is almost radical in his advocacy of ecumenism, so that he now apparently helps to publicize Roman Catholic theological studies with their traditional mixture of Christianity, Judaism, and paganism. Verily, the shades of night are falling fast. Small wonder that our Lord warned, "Nevertheless when the Son of Man cometh, shall he find the faith on the earth?" (Luke 18:8).

To those who are championing the new look in Christendom may we say, we have also been looking--looking for the opening of doors for Christian missionary activity where more than half of the world's people live in spiritual darkness; where an evangelical missionary is not welcomed or allowed to enter; and where the native church is hard pressed to survive. China, India and the Soviet Union will suffice for illustrations of this deplorable fact.

But let us look at other evidences of global iniquity in its extensive diffusion. Lawless elements have become so threatening in the Soviet Union that the government authorized the formation of a new department during 1966 to deal effectively with this menace. Throughout the world United States embassies have been ravaged and her diplomats subjected to indignities. United States presidents have been forced to cancel speaking engagements in certain foreign countries because of threats upon their lives by lawless elements. American libraries in many countries have been burned by lawless bands of protesters. Communistic infiltrations have occurred in multiplied instances in countries on all the major continents of the earth, disrupting lawfully established governmental structures. Peacefully inclined countries, such as Thailand, Malaysia, and Israel have been subjected to harassment by lawless invasions from neighboring states. Egypt attempts to take over Yemen; Cuba attempted to take over Santo Domingo, and other Latin American States. Russia established a buffer zone of satellite states in Eastern Europe without the consent of the peoples involved. And so the march of iniquity continues unabated in the political and social communities throughout the world.

What is the meaning and significance of this tremendous current of unrest, lawlessness, and moral degeneracy? Where is the intellectual and spiritual antagonism to God and to His Word leading the human race? Are they just passing phenomena that have no long range objective or significance, or may they be the adumbration of the climax of the age and the coming of Him for whom we have been taught to watch and wait in the midst of our labor of love? Let us look for the answer in His Word.

## THE DENOUEMENT OF INIQUITY

Our Lord had been rejected by the national leadership of Israel, which was now demanding His elimination from the national scene. They were recently smarting from his denunciation of their hypocrisy and perfidy, and pronouncement of coming judgment upon their house. Said He:

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and you would not!

Behold your house is left unto you desolate.

For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord (Matt. 23:37-39).

Continuing into the following chapter in Matthew's record, we read:

And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and his disciples came to him for to shew him the buildings of the temple.

And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down (Matt. 25:1-2).

This startling pronouncement of coming judgment was upon the Herodian Temple, the center of what national pride there was left for Israelites to magnify. Yet within less than forty years the temple lay a mass of burned out ruins, "and recent explorations have shown that not a stone of Herod's temple remains in situ. The orders of Titus, given with regret, for the total demolition of the walls of temple and city, were carried out with cruel exactness. . ."20

As Jesus took His last leave of the temple and its memorable courts and began His evening journey toward Bethany, His recent words greatly troubled some who accompanied him. As He had so often done in the past He paused to sit upon the Mount of Olives, within plain sight of the sacred buildings across the Kidron Valley from where they sat. The sun was setting behind the marble cloisters and on the terraced courts, and glittered on the golden spikes rising above the roof of the holy place, the whole casting dark shadows across the deep valley before the little group of troubled disciples. Unable to contain their disturbed thoughts, Peter, James, John and Andrew (Mark 13:3), asked, saying, "Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the age? (Matt. 24:3).

Presently, we are not concerned with His answer to the first of this triad of questions. Rather, we are centering our interest on just one statement in our Lord's answer to the second and third questions, which seem to be very closely connected, in structure and meaning: "What shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the age?"

An essential and significant statement in the over-all answer of Jesus to the inquiring quartet of disciples is recorded in Matt. 24:12: "And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold." Literally translated the verse reads, "And because lawlessness is filled up, the love of many shall become cold." In other words, Jesus replied that when iniquity (lawlessness) had reached the saturation point, it would produce a spirit of coldness that would assert itself in an accompanying indifference to truth and to Him who is the Truth.

We have attempted to present, perhaps a bit excessively, an account of the intensive and extensive development of the spirit of iniquity on a global pattern in this study. It is everywhere! And wherever it has flourished it has spawned a prolific brood of indifference to truth and integrity, especially to God and His Word. Expediency and relativism have become the battle-cry of the present-day do-gooders, with their iniquitous disregard for basic principles of integrity and truth. Even in evangelical circles too often it has appeared to us that "love for the souls of lost men" has become the paramount emphasis without a properly balanced "love for the Lord Jesus Christ and the Truth" which He embodies in Himself, and has verbally expressed in His written Word. We were somewhat taken back as we read accounts of the World Congress on Evangelism assembled in Berlin, Germany recently. There was a proper call to world-wide evangelism. There was a valuable presentation of worth-while techniques of mass-communications. There was a statement to the effect that the world population was growing ten times as fast as the churches. There was a ringing challenge for fidelity to the supernatural message of the Bible and the old truths of God's Word. But, as was so pointedly indicated by one who reviewed the procedures of the Congress, "a link seemed to be missing between the orthodox reaffirmations of the theologians and the marching orders of the evangelists."<sup>21</sup> The observer who made this statement had already identified the "missing link." The Congress slogan, "One Race, One Gospel, One Task," had omitted a fourth necessary unity: "One Truth." This heterogeneous company of evangelistically-inclined Christians gave more attention to the heart of Christianity than to its head."<sup>22</sup> It is fine to talk about the Gospel, but the talk must be preceded by a definition of what the Gospel is before it may be intelligently preached, just as the Apostle Paul did in his evangelistic ministry (I Corinthians 15:3-4). Failure to do this makes a major contribution to the shambles through which the Christian Church is moving with uncertain tread in this twentieth century with its contribution to the spread of iniquity throughout the world.

The Apostle Paul throws additional light upon this global iniquity which our Lord declared would precede His return at the consummation of the age. In his second epistle to the church at Thessalonica, he emphasizes the fact that the return of Christ shall be preceded by a diffusion of lawlessness throughout the world, but held somewhat in check by a restraint until such restraint is taken out of the way. Then, Paul declares, a Lawless One shall be revealed whom Satan shall use to establish his further control over the earth. Deception and wickedness shall be employed in this evil conspiracy in such unprecedented fashion that there appears a saturation of falsehood and rejection of truth throughout the world. Verily, herein we may have the explanation for the lying and deceit in high places, without any seeming smarting of conscience, as in the Nazis and Communistic philosophies, and, we are sorry to admit, in so-called democratic philosophies as well. It seems to be a world-wide philosophy!

And what will bring such perfidy and iniquity to judgment? The coming of the Lord who shall destroy the Lawless One with the brightness of his coming (II Thess. 2:8).

Our conclusion is this! Our blessed Lord will return to the earth in a time of world-wide lawlessness--in a time when conditions will be as they are today. Of that day and hour no man knoweth. It may be soon; it may be delayed a while longer but, if later, then it will be similar to the lawlessness of today's world. Therefore let us be ready; for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of Man cometh (Matt. 24:44). Iniquity will abound. A sad declension from the truth will occur. The love of many will wax cold. Christians will leave their first love, as they did in the first century at Ephesus (and elsewhere). What of it? Is that any reason for me to be faithless? God has promised to be faithful and not allow me to be tested beyond what I am able to bear. And should I be faithful even unto death, patiently enduring unto the end, a crown of life awaits me before the judgment seat of Christ.

The signs abound on ev'ry side,  
That soon our mighty God will ride.  
Through starry meadows He'll descend;  
Before Him ev'ry knee shall bend.

The whole creation groans in pain,  
Awaiting His triumphant reign.  
With body fashioned like His own,  
We'll share His glory 'round the throne.

He's coming soon, oh blessed day,  
For which we're taught to watch and pray.  
He's coming soon, oh blissful day,  
When peace on earth will come to stay.

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