

# Christian Action Ministry Newsletter

Involving the Christian in Community Action

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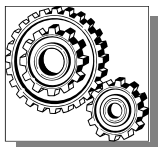
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*Questions you can use in discussing the conflict in the Middle East.*

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**If you would like to be added to our mailing list, please call 655-0280, email, or contact our website (see back page)**



**In the Works**

## Special Fall Event

Are you interested in becoming involved? CAM is looking for interested and active people to act as liaisons to their church, helping to keep the Christian community informed. Contact CAM at 372-6442.

## The Decline of a Nation

by  
Dick Trudell

**W**e know the importance of learning from our mistakes.

That lesson is just as relevant to a country or a civilization. George Santayana said that "...those who forget the past are condemned to repeat it."

It has been said that the average age of a great nation is 200 to 300 years. The United States is at that point. Rome in its full glory lasted 500 years, Greece as a power lasted 313 years, Media-Persia lasted 200 years. When historians look at the great nations of the past they see a pattern, and have developed a list of 10 stages that nations go through. Those stages and how the United States can be compared are:

1. The first stage moves from bondage to spiritual faith. (*Our forefathers left Europe to escape from religious and political bondage.*)
2. The second stage from

spiritual faith to great courage. (*The faith of the first settlers, evidenced in their writings, resulted in the Declaration of Independence—an act of courage to face Britian, a great world power.*)

3. The third stage moves from great courage to liberty. (*The American Revolution and our Constitution.*)
4. The fourth stage moves from liberty to abundance. (*The expanding of our country, industry, innovation, & living standards.*)
5. The fifth stage moves from abundance to selfishness. (*Increased focus on self and personal gain.*)
6. The sixth stage moves from selfishness to complacency. (*The feeling that nothing can go wrong and wealth will continue to increase.*)
7. The seventh stage moves from complacency to apathy. (*Lack of knowledge of*

*our founding, low voter turnouts.*)

8. The eighth stage moves from apathy to moral decay. (*Decline of Judeo-Christian morality, increase in promiscuity, abortion, homosexuality, & political corruption.*)
9. The ninth stage moves from moral decay to dependence. (*Looking to the government for support of everything, the development of the nanny state*)
10. And the tenth and last stage moves from dependence to bondage. (*Marxism, Socialism and crushing national debt.*)

This doesn't have to occur. We can change the direction our country is taking, but time is getting short. Take an interest in what is going on around you.

*Dick Trudell is President of the Christian Action Ministry and attends Community Bible Church in South Burlington*

## What have we learned in 2066 years?

**"The budget should be balanced, the Treasury should be refilled, public debt should be reduced, the arrogance of officialdom should be tempered and controlled, and the assistance to foreign lands should be curtailed lest Rome become bankrupt. People must again learn to work, instead of living on public assistance."**

**Cicero—55 B.C.**

**(Apparently nothing!)**

# Homeschoolers need to stay vigilant.

by  
Lynn Caldwell

Recently in the State House, in the flurry of activity to get bills moved through committee, the Department of Education (DOE) tried to push through a major revision in the current home school statute under a bill called the Technical Corrections bill. This bill is normally intended as a catch all bill to make minor corrections to current legislation, not full revisions. To make matters worse, the DOE was making these changes without input from homeschooling parents or their advocates.

The current homeschooling laws in Vermont are among the strictest in the nation. Vermont is one of only six states that HSLDA<sup>1</sup> has identified as a “high regulation state”, meaning that it is a state that “requires parents to send notification or achievement test scores and/or professional evaluation, plus other requirements (e.g. curriculum approval by the state, teacher qualification of parents, or home visits by state officials)” to the DOE. In addition, Vermont is the only state that requires that parents submit “independent professional evidence” on whether the child “has a disability that would interfere with his/her ability to learn.”

The two main changes that the DOE were proposing were to

the enrollment procedures and to the end of year assessments. The enrollment changes were actually a benefit to homeschoolers, changing the current system of paperwork and lesson plans, to a notification only letter. The “gotcha” moment came with the changes to the end of the year assessments. Under the current law, the parent has a choice of three assessment methods: 1. a certified teacher assessment, 2. a portfolio that the parent submits to DOE, or 3. a standardized test that can be parent administered that is chosen from a list supplied by the DOE.

This current process is comprehensive, and gives homeschoolers a choice as to what would work best for their family. The proposed changes would do away with these choices and force homeschoolers to fall in line with the government school mandate of achievement tests — the same failing government schools that most in the homeschooling community work hard to avoid. This would put Vermont in the unique position of being the only state to have homeschooled students taking a government run school test without a choice of the type of test or an alternate method of evaluation.

Furthermore, there have been discussions in the DOE that a homeschooled student’s failure on these achievement tests would result in a hearing to

revoke the right of the parents’ choice for education, or worse — an automatic revocation. When was the last time that a student, family and teacher in the government school system were called into a hearing when that pupil failed to perform well on a standardized test? Do they fire government school teachers who have pupils doing poorly on achievement tests? Again, it appears the state of Vermont wishes to have a double standard concerning homeschoolers.

There are also many questions to ask when making revisions to law, such as when dealing with homeschooled children who have special needs such as autism, dyslexia, or Down syndrome. Students with these needs may struggle with a standardized test, but still may be making great progress and learning well. Does that mean that the parent should lose the right to homeschool that child simply because the evaluation method did not fit? Moreover, requiring standardized government testing would force homeschooling parents to do as the government schools do and “teach to the test,” thus removing our freedom to choose materials and curricula that best meet the needs of the individual child.

This issue was brought to light in mid March, just a few days before the crossover date, the date when bills move from

Senate to the House, and vice-versa. Very little time was left to act on and discuss these changes. Fortunately, homeschoolers were, as usual, paying attention to what the politicians and bureaucrats in Montpelier were doing. In response, an overwhelming number of parents in the homeschooling community rallied and persuaded the Senate Committee on Education to remove the language from the Technical Corrections Bill. The Senate committee instructed the DOE to meet with homeschoolers and to reintroduce the legislation in the next session. The homeschooling community needs to ensure that the DOE listens to our wishes, and puts in place legislation that meets their requirements, but does not unduly restrict parents and their choices.

Homeschoolers and the public community at large need to remember that the government works for us. Sometimes we need to remind them of that.

To learn more about the state of government-run education we highly suggest the movie “Waiting for Superman.”

1. HSLDA- Home School Legal Defense Association  
<http://www.hslda.org/>

Lynn Caldwell homeschools her two sons and attend the Harvest Baptist Church in Milton.



***When the people fear their government, there is tyranny; when the government fears the people, there is liberty." Thomas Jefferson***

# Questions about the Israeli – Palestinian Conflict

by  
Dick Trudell

**S**ometimes we are confronted by friends or acquaintances about the “Israeli-Palestinian conflict”. Eventually they will get around to asking, “Why can’t Israel just withdraw to the pre-1967 borders? If they do, there will be peace! Isn’t that the right thing to do?”

I was privileged to attend an event this past fall presented jointly by Christians and Jews where Rabbi Yossi Jacobson, the featured speaker, addressed that question in a Socratic manner. By asking four questions intended to make someone think about the situation, an excellent response can be made, not only to the original question of the pre-1967 borders, but to the entire conflict. Those questions were along these lines.

**Q. In what year was the PLO (Palestinian Liberation Organization) formed?** The PLO, which later was converted to the Palestinian Authority, has as a goal in its founding charter the destruction of the State of Israel. The PLO was founded in 1964. At that time (1964), Gaza belonged to Egypt, the West Bank belonged to Jordan, the Golan Heights was controlled by Syria, East Jerusalem was under Jordanian control, and there were no Jewish settlements. In other words, Israel was at its pre-1967 borders when the PLO was founded. Given those facts, why did the

founding document of the PLO called for Israel’s destruction? Do the Palestinians want peace or the destruction of Israel? If Israel today withdrew to the pre-1967 borders, the Palestinian Authority’s charter still calls for its destruction. That clause has never been repudiated or removed.

**Q. Why did Israel “occupy” the territories after the 1967 war?** Prior to Israel’s pre-emptive strike, six countries were mobilizing their forces jointly against Israel. They were Egypt, Syria, Jordan, Iraq Lebanon and Saudi Arabia with additional munitions supplies from the USSR, Kuwait and Algeria. The rhetoric from Egypt’s Nasser called for “the extermination of Zionist existence”, and from Syria’s Assad noting this was to be “a battle of annihilation”. It was to be another holocaust and was meant to push the Jews into the sea. But God had different plans. With those forces massing on Israel’s borders, a brilliant pre-emptive strike was called by Israel. Without the pre-emptive action that destroyed Egypt’s and Jordan’s air force, the superior numbers that the Arab armies had would have given them victory. After the war, Israel controlled the West Bank, the Golan Heights, and the Gaza Strip. Recall these areas were previously controlled by Jordan, Syria, and Egypt. There was no Palestinian state.

**Q. Why did Yasser Arafat reject the concessions made by Ehud Barak at Camp David?**

In 2000 President Clinton convened a meeting between the PLO’s Yasser Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak in which Barak was willing to give 100% of the Gaza Strip, 98% of the West Bank, and establish East Jerusalem as the capital of a Palestinian state. Arafat rejected the proposal and instead launched the intifada against Israel that included suicide bombers, bus explosions, and rocket attacks against Israel. How can peace possibly exist when one party has no interest in it, and only strives for the elimination of the other?

**Q. What did the Palestinians do when the Gaza Strip was turned over to them?** Ariel Sharon’s 2004 unilateral disengagement from the Gaza Strip was an experiment in giving Palestinians control over their land and future and the opportunity to be independent. Sharon destroyed the Jewish settlements in Gaza, expelled 10,000 Jews, and removed all Jewish soldiers from the region. Expectations were that the Palestinians would be happy and seek peace. However, the day Israel left the Gaza strip, Jewish synagogues were burned, greenhouses that provided the food and seeds for nutrition were destroyed, and Gaza was turned into a terrorist camp and a drag on the interna-

tional community which now has to pour massive amounts of aid into the region. Rockets were launched into Israel from Gaza and its elected leadership is intent on continuing the fight with Israel. Eventually Israel had to go back into Gaza to stop the attacks on its civilians and put an embargo on more munitions being brought in.

Is it rational to think that if Israel returned to the pre-1967 borders that peace would result? How can one reason with a people whose highest aspirations are to die as martyrs killing Jews, whose textbooks portray Jews as devils and an insult to Allah, and live only to see the destruction of Israel? Golda Meir once said that peace between the Palestinians and the Jews would happen when the Palestinians loved their children more than they hated the Jews. Westerners do not understand the middle eastern mind, and trying to assign western concepts of peace, honesty, and integrity to them will only result in our disappointment, if not our peril. We must remember that God, the same God both Jews and Christians worship, gave the land of Israel to the Jews and their descendants. I want to be on His side.

*Dick Trudell is President of the Christian Action Ministry and attends Community Bible Church in South Burlington*

**“The federal government has taken too much tax money from the people, too much authority from the states, and too much liberty with the Constitution.”**

**Ronald Reagan**

What can I do?



Faith without works is dead  
James 2:17

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**This fall the Christian Action Ministry is planning on bringing a nationally known speaker to the Burlington area to address Vermont Christians. The topic is undergoing some scrutiny and refinement now, but will address Bible prophecy, the Middle East, and America's role, if any, in the end times.**

**There has been a lot of worldly publicity about the Mayan Calendar and the year 2012, as evidenced by the blockbuster special effects film of the same name. As Christians we need to focus on what God tells us, not sensationalism which enriches Hollywood.**

**If you are interested in working on this event and have an interest in eschatology, get in touch with us and help us plan and produce this event. CAM needs new volunteers to put on these programs.**

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**Next Meetings**

May 10, 7:00 pm  
No. Ave. Alliance Church  
Burlington, Vt.  
June 21, 7:00 pm  
Parkinson home  
Hinesburg, Vt.

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