Part I: Atheism’s Legacy —
A License to Kill (the mass murders of history)

Note: Throughout 2008, my articles (6 part series) focused on Christianity’s Legacy. You can read those bi-monthly apologetics on the Chapel Foundation web site [www.fortsnellingmcf.org]. Beginning with this first issue of 2009, I will share with you the legacy of atheism [those who disbelieve in the existence of God or deities].

While they regularly fault religion for its role in promoting conflicts and violence, secular writers rarely examine the role of atheism in producing wars and killing. It’s interesting that we routinely hear about how much historical suffering religion has caused, but we seldom hear about how much suffering atheism has caused. Five hundred years after the Inquisition, we are still talking about it, but less than two decades after the collapse of “godless Communism,” there is an eerie silence about the mass graves of the Soviet Gulag. Why the absence of accountability? Does atheism mean never having to say you are sorry?

Atheist writers who take up the question concede that atheists, like religious people, sometimes do terrible things. According to atheist Richard Dawkins, “What matters is whether atheism systematically influences people to do bad things. There is not the smallest evidence that it does.” In other words, “Individual atheists may do evil things but they don’t do evil things in the name of atheism.” Physicist Steven Weinberg concedes that scientific atheism “has made its own contributions to the world’s sorrows” but “where the authority of science has been invoked to justify horrors, it really has been in terms of perversions of science.”

In this article, I want to focus on the really big crimes that have been committed by atheist groups and governments. In the past hundred years or so, the most powerful atheist regimes — Communist Russia, Communist China, and Nazi Germany — have wiped out people in astronomical numbers. Stalin was responsible for around twenty million deaths, produced through mass slayings, forced labor camps, show trials followed by firing squads, population relocation and starvation, and so on. Jung Chang and Jon Halliday’s authoritative recent study Mao: The Unknown Story attributes to Mao Zedong’s regime a staggering seventy million deaths. Some China scholars think Chang and Halliday’s numbers are a bit high, but the authors present convincing evidence that Mao’s atheist regime was the most murderous in world history. Stalin’s and Mao’s killings — unlike those of, say, the Crusades or the Thirty Years’ War — were done in peacetime and were performed on their fellow countrymen. Hitler comes in a distant third with around ten million murders, six million of them Jews.

So far, I haven’t even counted the assassinations and slayings ordered by other Soviet dictators like Lenin, Khrushchev, Brezhnev, and so on. Nor have I included a host of “lesser” atheist tyrants: Pol Pot, Enver Hoxha, Nicolae Ceausescu, Fidel Castro, Kim Jong-il. Even these “minor league” despots killed a lot of people. Consider Pol Pot, who was the leader of the Khmer Rouge, the Communist Party faction that ruled Cambodia from 1975 to 1979. ‘Within this four-year period Pol Pot and his revolutionary ideologues engaged in systematic mass relocations and killings that eliminated approximately one-fifth of the

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President's Corner

As I write this article it is pre-Thanksgiving and pre-Christmas. I pray your holidays were a blessed and worshipful one. When you receive this issue it will be a New Year. We pray your New Year will be filled with happiness and good health!

Thinking about the New Year, I pondered as to what kind of challenge to write for our chapel family. I thought of a theme: "Let’s Keep the Main Thing, the Main Thing" and the main focus should be on Jesus Christ and His return.

In Philippians 3:20 we read that "our citizenship is in heaven." We await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly bodies to be like His glorious body by the power that enables Him to subject all things to Himself. There is and always has been much speculation about who the anti-Christ will be. Unfortunately, some people are more focused on who the anti-Christ is going to be than they are the return of Jesus Christ. That should be our true focus.

Let’s make sure we have the right focus. Let’s not just look at this world; we must look at the world to come. Augustine, the great theologian and philosopher, loved the city of Rome. When Rome was sacked by vandals in the year 420 and he learned about it, he grieved, but he said these words, "whatever men build, men will destroy." How true: a modern day example; 9/11 the World Trade Center disaster! Man made and man destroyed! Let us not dwell on such disasters or any distractions, but focus on the business of helping our precious Lord and Savior, build His Kingdom.

As we look at the countries of the world, including the United States, we readily see, whatever men build, men will destroy. Let’s all focus on building the church of God, and to sharing the Gospel with all passion and strength that God has given us, every chance we have to our needy world.

Ephesians 5:16 states, "Redeeming the time, because the days are evil." the New Living Translation says it this way, "taking every opportunity to do good, while there is still time" — that is the main thing!!

Thank you all for your support and prayers as Clarys recovers slowly from her fall.

God’s richest blessings in 2009!

Building the Kingdom,
Bob Peterson
Foundation President
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The Board welcomes input from members. If you have an idea or suggestion, please feel welcome to contact the appropriate Board person.

Scheduled Board Meeting:
Sunday (1:30 p.m.) ... in the Chapel
8 February 2009 ... in the Chapel

A copy of the 2008 Annual Report will be yours at the 42nd Annual Meeting scheduled for Sunday, 8 February 2009 (1:00 p.m.) in the Chapel sanctuary. If you would like a copy ... after this date ... please call the Foundation Office at (612) 970-7866 and leave your name/mailing address that we may send you a copy of this impressive report of last year's accomplishments.

In the Event of Inclement Weather

If on a Sunday morning it is significantly snowing ... or tremendously cold ... or the winds are resulting in drifting conditions, please call our Foundation office at 612/970-7866 for an announcement of worship cancellation. In this way we will attempt to inform you of Chapel closings.
Cambodian population, an estimated 1.5 million to 2 million people. In fact, Pol Pot killed a larger percentage of his countrymen than Stalin and Mao killed of theirs. Even so, focusing only on the big three — Stalin, Hitler, and Mao — we have to recognize that atheist regimes have in a single century murdered more than one hundred million people.

Religion-inspired killing simply cannot compete with the murders perpetrated by atheist regimes. I recognize that population levels were much lower in the past, and that it’s much easier to kill people today with sophisticated weapons than it was in previous centuries with swords and arrows. Even taking higher population levels into account, atheist violence surpasses religious violence by staggering proportions. Here is a rough calculation. The world’s population rose from around 500 million in 1450 AD to 2.5 billion in 1950, a fivefold increase. Taken together, the Crusades, the Inquisition, and the witch burnings killed approximately 200,000 people. Adjusting for the increase in population, that’s the equivalent of one million deaths today. Even so, these deaths caused by Christian rulers over a five-hundred-year period amount to only 1 percent of the deaths caused by Stalin, Hitler and Mao in the space of a few decades.

Dawkins seems to have deluded himself into thinking that these horrors were not produced on atheism’s behalf. But can anyone seriously deny that Communism was an atheist ideology? Communism calls for the elimination of the exploiting class, it extols violence as a way to social progress, and it calls for using any means necessary to achieve the atheist utopia. Not only was Marx an atheist, but atheism was also a central part of the Marxist doctrine. Atheism became a central component of the Soviet Union’s official ideology; it is still the official doctrine of China; and Stalin and Mao enforced atheist policies by systematically closing churches and murdering priests and religious believers. All Communist regimes have been strongly anti-religious, suggesting that their atheism is intrinsic rather than incidental to their ideology.

Similarly, Nazism was a secular, anti-religious philosophy that, strangely enough, had a lot in common with Communism. While the Communists wanted to empower the proletariat, the Nazis wanted to empower a master race. For the Communists the enemy was the capitalist class; for the Nazis the enemy was the Jews and other races deemed inferior. The Communists and the Nazis treated the Christian churches as obstacles and enemies. Both groups proclaimed that they were engaging in revolutionary action in order to create a new type of human being and a new social order freed from the shackles of traditional religion and traditional morality.

In comparing the crimes of religion and the crimes of atheism, it’s important for us to apply a consistent standard. Philosopher Daniel Dennett supplies such a standard in his book Breaking the Spell. He proposes that religion be judged by its consequences, or, as the biblical expression has it, “by their fruits ye shall know them.” Dennett doesn’t particularly care whether these consequences were intended by the founders of the religion or if they represent its highest values. He’s not especially interested in separating the true teachings of religion from its distortions. “It is true that religious fanatics are rarely if ever inspired by, or guided by, the deepest and best tenets in those religious traditions. So what? Al Qaeda and Hamas terrorism is still Islam’s responsibility, and abortion clinic bombing is still Christianity’s responsibility.” This is all very fine. Let’s accept Dennett’s standard. But then by this very same criterion the millions of murders committed by Stalin, Hitler, and Mao — not to mention those of a range of lesser tyrants — are all atheism’s responsibility.

Alas, Steven Weinberg wants to have it both ways. Weinberg apparently believes that the crimes of religions regimes reflect the true face of religion, while the crimes of atheist regimes represent a distortion of the atheist spirit of rational and scientific inquiry. By Dennett’s standards, this is an evasion. If Christianity has to answer for Torquemada, atheism has to answer for Stalin. By the same token, if the ordinary Christian who has never burned anyone at the stake must bear some responsibility for what other self-styled Christians have done on behalf of religion, then atheists who think of themselves as the kinder, gentler type do not get to absolve themselves for the horrible suffering that their beliefs have caused in recent history. Weinberg is employing a transparent sleight-of-hand that holes Christianity responsible for the evils done in its name, while seeking to exculpate secularism and atheism for the greater crimes perpetrated in theirs.
Special Patriotic/ Veterans Events . . .

Sun, 1 Feb 09 — Four Chaplains Remembrance — commemorating the 66th anniversary of the sinking of the USS Dorchester on which four chaplains gave their lives.

Sun, 24 May 09 — Memorial Day Remembrance — honoring the memory of those armed forces service members who gave the ultimate sacrifice.

Sun, 14 Jun 09 — Flag Day — a day to display the US flag and wear proudly the colors of red, white and blue.

Sun, 5 July 09 — Independence Day — celebrating the 233rd birthday of our nation ... culminating in an ice cream social.


Sun, 20 Sept 09 — POW/MIA Remembrance — remembering those who are prisoners of war and those missing in action.

Sun, 8 Nov 09 — Veterans Day Remembrance — recognizing U.S. veterans of all branches of the armed forces.

Sun, 6 Dec 09 — Pearl Harbor Remembrance — recognizing survivors ... with the tolling of the ship bell for those who have passed away since last year.

Mark your calendar with these dates ... and join us at 11:00 a.m.

Getting to Know You . . .

In April 1521, when Ferdinand Magellan reached the Philippines on his voyage around the world, he landed on the island of Cebu in the midst of that 7,000 island archipelago. Magellan would meet his demise there before the end of April that year, but he first converted the people of Cebu to Christianity. Also on the island of Cebu more than 400 years later, Bernis Edolverio would come into this world in what is still the only Christian nation in Asia. Her father, Antonio, was a fisherman and carpenter who lived with his family on the west coast of Cebu near the giant Atlas Mining Corporation complex in Toledo City.

Daniel Johnson, meanwhile was growing up on a farm outside of Wanamingo, Minnesota. Then one day around 1970, his father received a letter from the Peace Corps asking him if he would like to take his family to the Philippines. Accepting the offer, Lloyd Johnson did take his wife and four children, including Dan, the oldest son, to Lipa City, which is about fifty miles south of Manila. There he worked with the Philippine Bureau of Animal Industry as an extension agent for three years, teaching Filipino farmers the rudiments of swine production. Dan and his brother Ron adapted to the nearly 100% humidity and tropical life as they attended De La Salle High School in Lipa. Coincidentally, the site of the school was also the location of the US Army's 11th Airborne Division jump school at the end of World War II. Even more of a coincidence, the 11th Airborne was the unit to which Dan's father had been assigned as part of the occupation forces in post-war Japan. Dan graduated from De La Salle a year later after completing all of the courses, including Filipino (the national language) grammar and literature. Dan learned to duck when entering the low ceilinged Filipino Nipa Huts made of the ubiquitous cogon or "elephant" grass.

Dan faced choices different from most young Americans in 1972 after graduating in the Philippines. After some consideration, he decided to join the Air Force. His family accompanied him up to Clark Air Base, Philippines where he enlisted in July of 1972. After completing basic training at Lackland AFB, Texas, Dan was given a Direct Duty Assignment back to Clark before the end of the year. Standing guard-mound every morning and going to post, Dan could look to the east and see the sun rise over the beautiful dormant volcano, Mt. Arayat. Many years later, people all over the world would become familiar with a no longer dormant volcano behind the base named Mt. Pinatubo. Back in 1973, he was able to stand on Clark's flight-line and witness the return of our POW's from Hanoi. Dan was also selected to provide security as an elite guard for President Marcos of the Philippines when he came to Clark to observe Operation Homecoming. A law enforcement specialist, he worked as part of the base police and reached the rank of Sergeant in 1974. Upon the creation of a Resources Protection Branch within the 3d Security Police Group, Dan volunteered to work in the new section as a base perimeter patrolman. Clark was well known

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Along the same lines, Sam Harris attempts to exonerate atheism by alleging that Stalinism and Maoism were each "little more than a political religion." Christopher Hitchens advanced a similar line of argument, suggesting that as the Stalinists and Maoists sought to replace religion those ideologies should be considered substitute religions. Should religion now be responsible not only for its crimes but also for the crimes committed by atheists on behalf of atheist ideologies?

As for Nazism, Harris writes that "the hatred of Jews in Germany ... was a direct inheritance from medieval Christianity." Indeed, "the Holocaust marked the culmination of ... two hundred years of Christian fulminating against the Jews." Therefore, "knowingly or not, the Nazis were agents of religion." Atheist web sites routinely claim Hitler was a Christian because he was born Catholic, never publicly renounced his Catholicism, and wrote in Mein Kampf, "By defending myself against the Jews, I am fighting for the work of the Lord."

How persuasive are these claims? Hitler was born Catholic just as Stalin was born into the Russian Orthodox Church and Mao was raised as a Buddhist. Those facts prove nothing, as many people reject their religious upbringing as those three men did. From an early age, historian Allan Bullock writes, Hitler "had no time at all for Catholic teaching, regarding it as a religion fit only for slaves and detesting its ethics." How then do we account for Hitler's claim that in carrying out his anti-Semitic program he was an instrument of divine providence? During his ascent to power, Hitler needed the support of the German people — both the Bavarian Catholics and the Prussian Lutherans — and to secure this he occasionally used rhetoric such as "I am doing the Lord's work." To claim that this rhetoric makes Hitler a Christian is to confuse political opportunism with personal conviction. Hitler himself says in Mein Kampf that his public statements should be understood as propaganda that bear no relation to the truth but are designed to sway the masses.

The Nazi idea of an Aryan Christ who uses the sword to cleanse the earth of the Jews — what Hitler once called "Positive Christianity" — was obviously a radical departure from traditional Christian understanding, and was condemned as such by Pope Pius XI at the time. Moreover, Hitler's anti-Semitism was not religious, it was racial. Jews were targeted not because of their religion — indeed many German Jews were completely secular in their way of life — but because of their racial identity. This was an ethnic and not a religious designation. A Jew could not escape Auschwitz by pleading, "I no longer practice Judaism," "I am an atheist," or "I have converted to Christianity." This mattered nothing to Hitler — because he believed the Jews were inferior racial stock. His anti-Semitism was secular.

Hitler's Table Talk, a revealing collection of the Führer's private opinions assembled by a close aide during the war years, shows Hitler to be rabidly anti-religions. He called Christianity one of the great "scourges" of history and said of the Germans, "Let's be the only people who are immunized against this disease." He promised that "through the peasantry we shall be able to destroy Christianity." In fact, he blamed the Jews for inventing Christianity. He also condemned Christianity for its opposition to evolution. Hitler reserved special scorn for the Christian values of equality and compassion, which he identified with weakness. Hitler's leading advisers — Goebbels, Himmler, Heydrich and Bormann — were atheists who hated religion and sought to eradicate its influence in Germany.

Historian Richard Evans writes that "the Nazis regarded the churches as the strongest and toughest reservoirs of ideological opposition to the principles they believed in." Once Hitler and the Nazis came to power, they launched a ruthless drive to subdue and weaken Christian churches in Germany. Evans points out that after 1937 the policies of Hitler's government became increasingly anti-religious. The Nazis stopped celebrating Christmas, and the Hitler Youth recited a prayer thanking the Führer rather than God for their blessings. Clergy regarded as "troublemakers" were ordered not to preach, hundreds of them were imprisoned, and many were simply murdered. Churches were under constant Gestapo surveillance. The Nazis closed religious schools, forced Christian organizations to disband, dismissed civil servants who were practicing Christians, confiscated church property, and censored religious newspapers. Harris cannot explain how an ideology that Hitler and his associates perceived as a repudiation of Christianity can be portrayed as a "culmination" of Christianity.

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If Nazism represented the culmination of anything, it was that of the nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century ideology of social Darwinism. As historian Richard Weikart documents, both Hitler and Himmler were admirers of Darwin and often spoke of their role as enacting a "law of nature" that guaranteed the "elimination of the unfit." Weikart argues that Hitler himself "drew upon a bountiful fund of social Darwinist thought to construct his own racist philosophy" and concludes that while Darwinism is not a "sufficient" intellectual explanation for Nazism, it is a "necessary" one. Without Darwinism, there might not have been Nazism.

The Nazis also drew on philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche, adapting his atheistic philosophy to their crude purposes. Nietzsche's vision of the übermensch and his elevation of a new ethic beyond good and evil were avidly embraced by Nazi propagandists. Nietzsche's will to power almost became a Nazi recruitment slogan. I am not suggesting that Darwin or Nietzsche would have approved of Hitler's ideas; but Hitler and his henchmen approved of Darwin's and Nietzsche's ideas.

Some people have expressed bafflement that atheist regimes have produced bloodbaths that no other force in history has matched. Dawkins himself raises the question of how an absence of belief can possibly cause social harm. Little does Dawkins realize that his own deepest beliefs provide a clue to the "final solution." The atheist killers regarded their cause as so grand and noble that nothing should be allowed to stand in its way. They viewed themselves as acting on behalf of inexorable and incontrovertible forces like science, reason, and progress.

Science? Yes, the Nazis saw themselves promoting the survival of the fittest, in precisely the way evolution has always done. Reason? The Communists saw their project as an institutionalization of the age of reason. Marx was in the Enlightenment tradition of the French Jacobins, who enthroned a goddess of reason in the Cathedral of Notre Dame and then unleashed the Reign of Terror, in which "unreasonable" people — noblemen, priests, and other representatives of the old order — were sent to the guillotine. And progress? As the Communists and the Nazis always stressed, history was on their side, and therefore their opponents were religious or bourgeois reactionaries who should be eliminated because they were retarding the forward march of society. This secular apotheosis of science, reason, and progress — a doctrine that is very much with us today — is precisely what licensed men to do things to other people in a manner and on a scale that were previously unthinkable.

A second reason for the horrors of atheist regimes is that they operated without any of the moral restraints that are the product of religion and that, however slightly held back the bloodthirsty tyrants of the past. Nietzsche saw this coming. Writing in the nineteenth century, he predicted that the next two centuries would be cataclysmic, with wars and violence beyond all imagining. The death of God, Nietzsche wrote, would result in the total eclipse of all values. Since values no longer came from God, they would now be made up by men. And since man is descended from the animal kingdom — an idea Nietzsche adopted from Darwin — man was likely to embrace the value of the libido dominandi (the lust to dominate) that we see everywhere in nature. Superior humans would eliminate inferior ones for the same reason that lions eat antelopes. "Master morality" prevails over "slave morality." It becomes useless to appeal to pity and compassion and decency any more. That would be like telling lions that they should stop being lions.

In other words, the atheist bloodbath is the product of a hubristic modern ideology that sees man, not God, as the creator of values. In rejecting God, man becomes scornful of the doctrine of human sinfulness and convinced of the perfectibility of his nature. Man now seeks to displace God and create a secular utopia here on earth. In order to achieve this, the atheist rulers establish total control of society. They invent a form of totalitarianism far more comprehensive than anything that previous rulers attempted: every aspect of life comes under political supervision. Of course if some people — the Jews, the landowners, the unfit, the handicapped, the religious dissidents, and so on — have to be relocated, incarcerated, or liquidated in order to achieve this utopia, this is a price the atheist tyrants have shown themselves quite willing to pay. The old moral codes do not apply, and ordinary atheist functionaries carry out behavior that would make a church inquisitor quake. The atheist regimes, by their actions, confirm the truth of Dostoevsky's dictum: if God is not, everything is permitted.
throughout the Air Force as the largest overseas US base in the world with the longest perimeter fence and the highest theft rate. These conditions made life interesting for Dan as he chased and apprehended a large number of intruders while on patrol in M-151 jeeps and also M-706 Armored Personnel Carriers affectionately known as "Rubber Duckies." Additionally, because of his familiarity with the Philippines, Dan provided escorts for many off base munitions convoys to the big Navy base at Subic Bay and also to Wallace Air Station on the northwest coast along the South China Sea.

An abbreviated tour at Lackland AFB returned Dan to the States for nine months in 1978-79, then it was back to Clark for more law enforcement work from 1979 to 1981. In August 1981, Dan was again selected for a unique assignment in the Philippines because of his language skills and knowledge of the land. For the next four years, Dan served as NCOIC of Security Police at Camp John Hay, a mile high recreation base in the Cordillera mountain range one hundred miles north of Clark. Considered the premier military convention and recreation, the base regularly played host to VIP's such as Pope John Paul and important meetings such as the annual PACAF commanders conferences. Admiral Crowe, the CINCPAC who later became chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, also liked to play tennis on John Hay's courts during his regular visits. Dan received notification in 1985 before leaving Camp John Hay that he had been selected for promotion to Master Sergeant.

From late 1985 through the fall of 1986 Dan spent another year at the Strategic Air Command's Fairchild AFB in eastern Washington State. In November of that year, he was again reassigned to Clark AB in the Philippines. It was later learned this reassignment was due to a request by the Deputy Commander of the Security Police Group there. Upon arrival, Dan took over as superintendent of the Quad Agency Patrol, popularly known as Town Patrol. The four agencies making up Town Patrol were USAF and Philippine Air Force security police, Philippine Constabulary and local police. For Dan's first year, Town Patrol in the Philippines carried on investigating off base traffic accidents involving US military personnel off base and breaking up bar fights at night. Then, on 28 October 1987, the military wing of the Communist Party of the Philippines, the New Peoples Army or NPA decided to take drastic action against the American bases in their country. Simultaneous assassinations of four US personnel at various locations off base near Clark shocked the American community which had lived at the huge base as if at home in the US. A year or so later, Col James N. Rowe, an Army advisor to the Philippine military in Manila was assassinated on his way to work. Tragically, Col Rowe had been the only US POW in Vietnam to escape on foot from the enemy and return to friendly areas.

Following the assassinations, Town Patrol beefed up its presence outside Clark and also it's firepower. M-16's became a common sight in the Quad Agency Patrol jeeps. This new armament along increased support for the Philippine military and police fighting the NPA resulted in new threats from the communists to assassinate Clark AB officials, including the superintendent of Town Patrol.

In the late 1980's, Bernis decided to leave her hometown on the island of Cebu, and to seek her fortune in Manila with the help of a relative living there. Bernis had been assisting her mother, Rosario, who was employed by Atlas Mining Corporation, which after many years, was still the largest business in Toledo City. She worked first as a nanny for the children of a Filipino Chinese businessman and eventually moved on to work as a cashier and finally as a manager at some businesses near Clark.

By 1988, Dan had become NCOIC of Law Enforcement Operations at Clark AB, and then again, because of his language skills, Security Police Liaison to the Philippine government. He was also administrator of the 200 Filipino DoD Special Police at Clark.

During this time, Dan was tasked by his commander to conduct security surveys of all off base contract hotels near Clark used by TDY personnel. At this time, he met with the owners and managers of the hotels, including an Australian businessman who was Bernis' employer at the time. While this survey did not result in Dan and Bernis meeting, their paths soon crossed because of their proximity. By 1991, almost two years later, Dan was due to rotate to the US once again. Assisted by acquaintances from years of working with the US Embassy in Manila, Dan was able to obtain a visa for Bernis to travel to South Dakota. About two weeks

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Whatever the cause for why atheist regimes do what they do, the indisputable fact is that all the religions of the world put together have in three thousand years not managed to kill anywhere near the number of people killed in the name of atheism in the past few decades. It's time to abandon the mindlessly repeated mantra that religions belief has been the main source of human conflict and violence. Atheism, not religion, is responsible for the worst mass murders of history.

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before Mt. Pinatubos big explosion, Dan had moved to Ellsworth AFB in Rapid City. When Bernis arrived, they were soon married, and Dan started planning for retirement in 1992 after twenty exciting years. A move back home to Wanamingo followed, and their son Joseph was born in the fall of the year.

Dan, Bernis and Joseph were not quite finished with the Philippines. In 1994, a former colleague from the US Embassy in that country became the general manager of Pinkerton Consulting in Manila. He offered Dan an opportunity to serve as Pinkerton's senior security consultant in the Philippines, which he quickly accepted. Dan managed commercial investigations and became involved in personnel security operations for international executives visiting or living in Manila. He also worked with architects on security design for a number of new buildings and finally became the marketing manager for Pinkerton Philippines.

In 1996, Dan and Bernis decided to return to Minnesota where Joseph could begin school, and Dan quickly obtained a position as a DoD police officer at the Minneapolis St. Paul Air Reserve Station. Dan is now one of the senior desk sergeants for the 934th Security Forces Squadron, which protects the Army, Navy, Marine and Air Force military reserve centers at the Minneapolis International Airport. Bernis, meanwhile, provides care for young children as an employee of the Kenyon Wanamingo school district.

\[Photo: Dan and Bernis Johnson of Wanamingo, MN.\]

\[Photo: Mrs. Pilgrim (Kelly Linn) tells children of the first Thanksgiving during the worship service of 23 Nov. Behind her are 76 shoeboxes presented for Operation Christmas Child ... a project of Samaritan's Purse (Franklin Graham).\]
Benevolent Giving ...

Mother Teresa. The name conjures up the thought of a very saintly woman who gave up everything to help the poor and the sick. The Twin Cities also has a very saintly woman who's name is Mary Jo Copeland. She is the founder of an organization called Sharing and Caring Hands (SCH), often referred to as Mary's Place. This is a 501(c)3 non-profit Christian outreach program to help house, cloth and feed the poor in the Twin Cities area, located in downtown Minneapolis. Mary Jo started the organization in 1985 after volunteering at Catholic Charities but was frustrated by all the government regulations to help the poor and saw many people fall through the cracks. Mary Jo was presented with the "One of the Eleven Who Cared" award by KARE 11 TV. With this award, she received $2,200 which she used to start her organization. She became a super sales person asking local churches, businesses and residents to help with donations and volunteering to help SCH grow.

The city of Minneapolis' redevelopment project of the surrounding area of the original site forced her to move the program to where it is currently located. She purchased the building for $250,000.

In 1992 she built another building that was paid for by donations of close to $500,000. She received no government funds. At first the city of Minneapolis would not issue the necessary building permits but with the help of the media and friends SCH the new buildings became a reality, spreading over 5.3 acres. The campus contains 92 housing units; kitchen; nurse and dental office; child and teen center; food shelf; chapel; and computer and library rooms. All of this is provided at NO charge to the residents or visitors. All of the money that is donated to SCH is used to support the organization.

I made a site visit on 18 November and when I arrived I observed a very beautiful complex with residents and staff coming and going, and school buses picking up children. In the front lobby, I was greeted by a volunteer who happens to be a nun from Nigeria. She was checking badges for those authorized to be in the facility. I then noticed an older lady smiling and greeting all those around her with a warm gesture and a gentle touch and a cross pendant around her neck. I knew this was Mary Jo. I was so impressed by how much the staff and residents showed her respect and love. The facility was spotless and quite amazing. Mary Jo personally gave me a tour of her facility while explaining the operations and funding. The program operates on a 5.7 million dollar budget with 93% of all donations going directly to the needy. The staff includes 24 paid positions and over one hundred volunteers. Mary Jo has never received a pay check or compensation for her work. She did all of this while raising a large family of her own in Brooklyn Park where her husband worked for Rainbow. Mary Jo has a commitment to not accept government funds.

She feeds 800-900 people per day with food donated by area churches. She took me to the kitchen where all of the food is cooked. There was a line of over 200 people waiting to get in to be fed that day. Mary Jo goes to the front of the line and greets all those coming in to be fed. When a family needs housing, Mary Jo personally interviews each family and then she will wash the feet of each family member and provide them with new socks and shoes. If Mary Jo has room for them, they will receive a transitional apartment at no charge. There are strict requirements though; the adults must get up everyday and go to work and they must save at least 30% of their pay check to help them get on their feet. They can stay at the facility for up to two years. There is a 9 p.m. curfew and there is no smoking allowed in the rooms. All children must go to school. The schools in the local area send buses to pick up the children. After school, there is a supervised child and teen center. There is an on-site dental and nurse's office staffed by volunteers. Mary Jo continues to care for the poor, but runs it like a company. There is a crucifix, pictures of Jesus Christ, and statues of the blessed Mother Mary in every room and in the hallways. Mary Jo talked to every adult and child that came within voice range and always had words of kindness and encouragement, which they in turn did the same.

As Chairman of the Benevolence Committee, I have done many site visits but I have never witnessed such an unbelievable organization as Mary's Place. Mary Jo wanted to give a heartfelt thank you to everyone from the Fort Snelling Memorial Chapel Foundation for their support of Sharing and Caring Hands/Mary's Place. At the last Board of Directors meeting of the Foundation, the Board approved a $500 benevolence gift for Sharing and Caring Hands/Mary's Place. I would like to say thank you for the kindness that Mary Jo showed me and to the entire staff and all of the volunteers at Mary's Place. If you would like to donate money, food, clothing or volunteer your time, please call 612-338-4640 or write to 525 North 7th St., Minneapolis, MN 55405 www.sharingandcaringhands.org

— Pat Hoy, Chair
Benevolence Committee
Fort Snelling Memorial Chapel Foundation

This is a non-denominational Christian church founded in 1967. We invite you to join us for worship each Sunday at 11:00 a.m. at this historic Chapel.

The Fort Snelling Veterans Memorial Chapel is a unique Minnesota memorial — a splendid monument to the patriotism, the moral earnestness and the convictions of the people of this state — a shrine to commemorate those who have died for their country. Weekly Sunday worship is sponsored by the Fort Snelling Memorial Chapel Foundation and is not subsidized by the state.

For Fort Snelling Memorial Chapel Foundation information call the Foundation Office at (612) 970-7866, or write to the Fort Snelling Memorial Chapel Foundation 1 Federal Drive Fort Snelling, MN 55111-4027

or e-mail to info@fortsnellingmcf.org

or check our web site at www.fortsnellingmcf.org

Ft. Snelling Memorial Chapel Foundation Staff

Rev. Dr. Kenneth L. Beale, Jr., Chaplain
Ruth Fardig, Minister of Music
Leila Campbell, Administrative Assistant

The Snelling Spirit Staff:

The Snelling Spirit is a bimonthly publication of the Fort Snelling Memorial Chapel Foundation. We welcome your input, your letters and your suggestions.

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**January 2009**

Fort Snelling Memorial Chapel Foundation Stahl

1 Federal Drive, Fort Snelling, Minnesota 55440

**Foundation Memorial Chapel**

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### February 2009

1 Federal Drive, Fort Snelling, Minneapolis 55111-4027

Fort Snelling Memorial Chapel

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### Event Schedule

- **Sunday, February 1**: Valentine’s Dinner @ Philippines Roselle
- **Monday, February 2**: Foundation Chapel Anniversary of 43rd President
- **Tuesday, February 3**: Board
- **Wednesday, February 4**: Bible Study & Foundation Chapel Service
- **Thursday, February 5**: Foundation Chapel Service
- **Friday, February 6**: Foundation Chapel Service
- **Saturday, February 7**: Foundation Chapel Service

### Monthly Events

- **February 28**: Last Sunday after Epiphany
  - Music: Eugene Vroman, Choir
  - 11:00 am Worship Service
  - 10:00 am Bible Study

### Weekly Events

- **Sunday School**: 11:00 am
- **Foundation Chapel**: 11:00 am, Worship Service
- **Bible Study**: 10:00 am

### Additional Information

- **Music**: Kristin Vroman, Dr. Thomas G. Olson, Dr. James Vroman
- **Sermons**: "Healing Our Heritage" (Jan 11), "Preserving Our Heritage" (Feb 15)
- **Special Events**: Foundation Chapel Service

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**Contact Information**

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Website: www.forsnelling.org