

Religion

Is wartime ordinary time?

Third Sunday in Ordinary Time
Mark 1:14-20
Jan. 27, 1991

Every Schoolgirl Knows...
"Is Wartime Ordinary Time?"
This question was asked of high school girls in Baghdad by a Western journalist on January 15. The girls were preparing for exams.

"Yes," was the answer, delivered bravely, but only a few hours before a desert storm began rolling through the city at 3:00 a.m. on January 16.

For these students, the ordinariness of exam-time and night-time would be brutally disrupted. Perhaps for some of them the ordinariness of being alive would be disrupted.

But I believe the answer of those schoolgirls. They have already lived through eight years of wartime, a wartime in which they found time for exams and sleep.

How could they anticipate the storm that would descend on them from the desert that night.

In this country, high school girls are also preparing for exams. Ask them the same question and some will give the same answer. They have watched wars on the Peter Mansbridge Show for years, and they've always been able to write their exams and then go to sleep at night.

Others are not so sure. They're afraid of terrorist attacks.

But high school girls, whether in Iraq or Ontario, are too much like the rest of us: convinced of the inevitability of war.

Perhaps they've heard of theories that say we are a naturally aggressive animal. "We have the killer instinct."

They may have heard that war is a way to regulate the social system. "Whenever society is pressured by a too rapid increase in population, war will provide a solution: either reduce the population or increase the amount of land."

They may have done independent studies on the wars of the Maring tribe in New Guinea. "These people engage in a war with neighboring tribes every 12 or 13 years. War is started when

the relationships between people, pigs and land are no longer symbiotic."

They may have considered wars of the recent past using the criteria of the Just War Theory. "Is there right intention; does the evil done outweigh the good anticipated?"

But every schoolgirl has also watched movies about nuclear war on T.V.

Every schoolgirl knows that nuclear war could disrupt life altogether instead of making life cleaner and meaner as the functionalists would say.

Anthropologist Marvin Harris says, "With nuclear weapons, war can now be escalated to the point of total mutual annihilation. So we have arrived at a phase in the evolution of our species when the next great adaptive advance must be the elimination of nuclear weapons or the elimination of war itself."

Fathers and Sons
Personally, I was surprised by my own reaction to the news of the start of hostilities.

I started to cry.
I can pinpoint two reasons for this response: 1) A letter from a young boy in Cold Lake, Alberta, to his father, who is serving in the Armed Forces in the Gulf. The boy read his letter over the CBC a few minutes before 7:00 p.m. on

Jan. 18.
2) The sight of my own two-week-old son sleeping on the floor.

I'm not alone.
Other men love their sons.
These men may live in Baghdad or in Jerusalem; they may be flying CF-18's over the desert, or launching Tomahawk cruise missiles from ships in the Gulf.

Surely there are other ways to solve our problems.

War and Religion
All of us rationalize behaviour that makes us uncomfortable. This is especially true in the case of the "official" exercise of violence. Unfortunately, religion has often been used as a legitimization of the violence of war.

Religion is used to fit the madness of wartime into the overall plan of divine-sanctioned ordinary time.

Saddam Hussein, a secular man, is using religion for this purpose.

So is George Bush.
An Example of Irony
The CTV morning show, Canada A.M., reported on the morning of January 15, that George Bush had declared Sunday, Jan. 20, Sanctity of Life Day.
Endnote: Marvin Harris is quoted from Cannibals and Kings, Toronto, 1977.

Question Box

The Rev. Kenneth Gallinger, who's feature column Question Box appears in every issue of the United Church Observer, will be on hand this Wednesday at 8:00 p.m. at St. Andrew's United Church.

Rev. Gallinger's column Question Box answers questions from writers relating to policies and practices of the United Church and sometimes his answers can be controversial.

So bring along your concerns and questions for an informative night of Question Box hosted by the St. Andrew's United Church, Sinclair and Mountainview.



THE CORPORATION OF THE
Town of Halton Hills
1 Halton Hills Drive — P.O. Box 128
HALTON HILLS (Georgetown), Ontario L7G 5G2
873-2600

PUBLIC INFORMATION SESSION

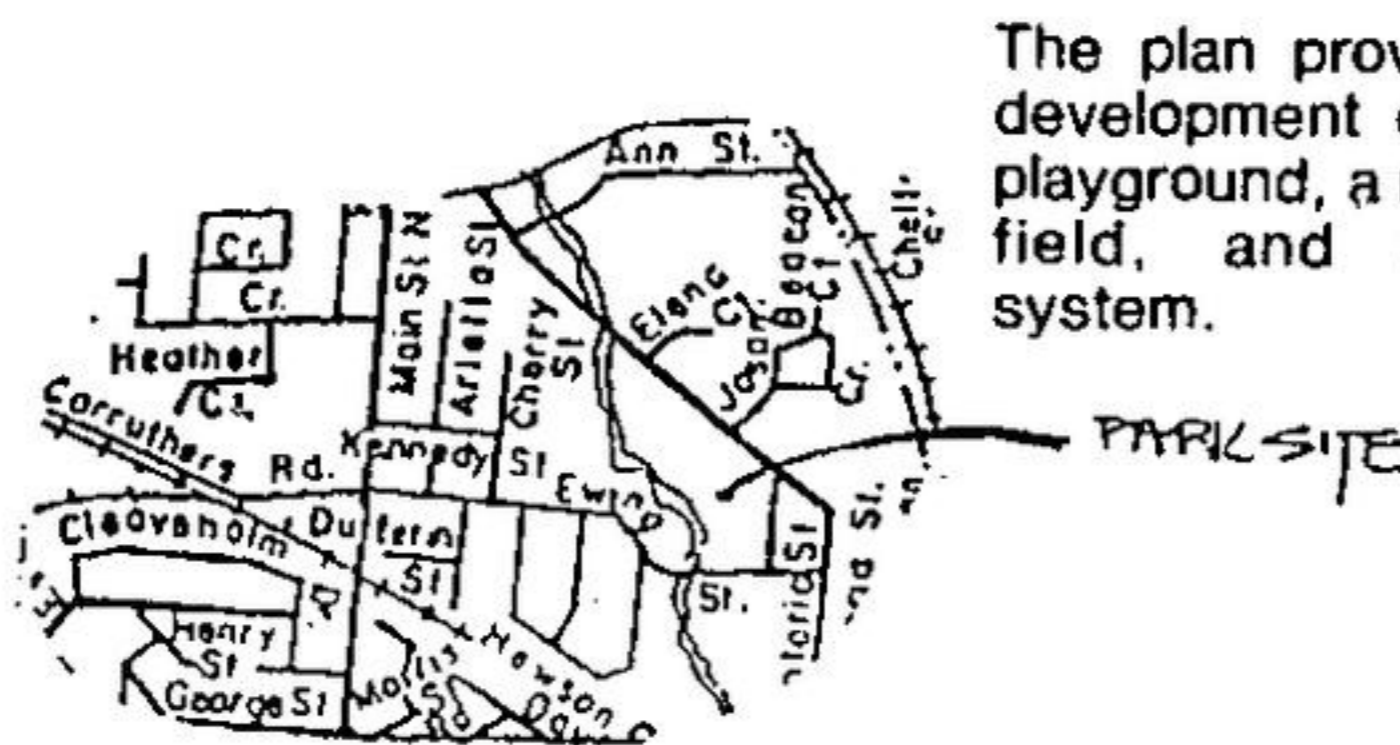
Halton Hills residents are invited to attend a Public Information Session concerning Park Development Plans for Park Sites at Ontario and Ewing Streets (Georgetown), and at Confederation and Main Streets (Glen Williams).

The Public Information Session will be held as follows:

SESSION DATE: February 5, 1991
TIME: 4:00 P.M. to 7:30 P.M.
LOCATION: General Committee Room
Town of Halton Hills Civic Centre
1 Halton Hills Drive
Halton Hills (Georgetown), Ontario

The Public is encouraged to attend the Session to review the development plans for two park sites at the following locations:

Ontario and Ewing Streets on the Silver Creek Valley (Georgetown)



The plan provides for the development of a creative playground, a minor softball field, and a pathway system.

Confederation and Main Streets on the Credit River (Glen Williams)

The plan provides for the development of a pathway system, landscape improvements for beautification purposes and park furniture for passive recreational uses.



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RECTOR:
Reverend Carol A. Skidmore, L.Th.
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Rector — Rev. Stephen Wagner
853-4627

"A HEARTY WELCOME TO ALL"

Bible Digest

"It is better to trust in the Lord, than to put confidence in man." Psalm 118:8.

Your confidence in the Lord can be one of the greatest assets of your life. Lean on Him. He loves you!

"Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin." James 4:17.

Neglecting to do the will of God is sin too. Give your best for the Lord today.

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WHAT DO YOU THINK About Your Regional Government?

What are your ideas on the structure of Regional Government?

Should Council remain the same size?

Should Regional Councillors serve on both Local and Regional Council?

Should the Regional Chairman be elected by the public?

Your comments on these and other questions relating to accountability, representation and services are vital to this review of Regional Government

To assist in gathering information, a questionnaire is available or written submissions will be accepted.

To obtain a copy of the questionnaire
Call Halton Region at Ext. 476
Burlington/Oakville/Milton 827-2151
Burlington/Aldershot 639-4540
Halton Hills/Georgetown 878-8113
Halton Hills/Acton 853-0501

Questionnaires can also be picked up at the Clerk's Department in the City of Burlington and Towns of Oakville, Milton and Halton Hills

Completed questionnaires and submissions should be forwarded no later than **March 1, 1991** to:

Halton Region Review Committee
Region of Halton
P.O. Box 7000, 1151 Bronte Road
Oakville, Ontario, L6J 6E1

J. Louise Temple
Regional Clerk