

UNDER ATTACK



As I watched the unthinkable horror of the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon unfold, I found myself thinking back to the previous night's much smaller, yet still significant terrorist attack on our home in Plymouth,

Massachusetts. Rocks were thrown through our windows and our car tires were slashed. Of course, the two events were vastly different in magnitude, yet they were chillingly alike in essence.

Although it has not yet been proven who specifically is responsible for the plan to hijack several commercial airliners and use them as missiles to destroy the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, and to murder thousands of innocent people in the process, there is little doubt that it can be attributed to some Middle Eastern demagogue¹ whose followers have the hope of paradise awaiting them on the other side of their martyrdom. I found myself wondering what could have been going through the minds of those men who hijacked the planes as they sat waiting at the gate to board their flight, along with the unsuspecting men, women, and children whose brutal murder they were planning. How could they be so heartless?

They were soldiers fighting for a cause, a "holy war" against the "Great Satan" — the United States. All their lives they had been taught to hate those American *infidels* whose country supports Israel, to the point that they no longer saw them as human beings, but as objects of God's wrath. They were doing their highest service to Allah by losing their own lives in killing these *infidels*.

H O L Y W A R



But radical Muslims did not originate the "holy war" concept. In the 11th through 13th Centuries it was the Muslims who were made the objects of God's wrath as several popes waged war on them to regain control of Jerusalem and the "Holy Land", ruthlessly slaughtering men, women, and children in the name of Christ.

In the 13th Century the popes turned their attention to the Albigenses (Cathars), a Christian sect that flourished for centuries in southern France. Once the Church had branded them as heretics, they were brutally repressed and ultimately destroyed. The Inquisition was launched on the Albigenses, but continued for centuries to dehumanize and then destroy many other religious groups on this same pattern: brand them as a heresy or *cult*, pronounce God's judgment upon them, then declare open season on them.

The spirit of the Inquisition was carried right into the Protestant Reformation by John Calvin and Martin Luther, both former Catholics. Calvin was merciless to those he deemed heretics, his most famous victim being Michael Servetus, whom he had burned at the stake for the crime of not believing in the doctrine of the Trinity. Martin Luther ruthlessly persecuted the Anabaptists² and also penned a venomous treatise against the Jews, giving a seven-step plan to destroy them as a people (which we utterly reject and denounce):³

"What shall we Christians do with this rejected and condemned people, the Jews? Since they live among us, we dare not tolerate their conduct, now that we are aware of their lying and reviling and blaspheming. If we do, we become sharers in their lies, cursing, and blasphemy. Thus we cannot extinguish the unquenchable fire of divine wrath, of which

the prophets speak, nor can we convert the Jews. With prayer and the fear of God we must practice a sharp mercy to see whether we might save at least a few from the glowing flames. We dare not avenge ourselves ... I shall give you my sincere advice:

- *Set fire to their synagogues and schools, burying and covering with dirt what won't burn, so no man will see a stone or cinder of them. This is to be done in honor of our Lord and Christendom.*
- *Second, I advise that their houses be seized and destroyed.*
- *Third, I advise that all their prayer books and Talmudic writings be taken from them.*
- *Fourth, I advise that the rabbis be forbidden to teach henceforth on pain of life and limb.*
- *Fifth, I advise that safe conduct on the highways be abolished completely for the Jews, for they have no business in the countryside, since they are not lords, officials, or tradesmen. Let them stay at home.*
- *Sixth, I advise that usury be prohibited to them, and all cash and treasures be taken and kept for safekeeping.*
- *Seventh, I recommend putting a flail, an axe, a spade, a distaff, or a spindle into the hands of young, strong Jews and Jewesses, letting them earn their bread by the sweat of their brow, as was imposed on the children of Adam. For it is not fitting that they should let us accursed Goyim toil in the sweat of our faces while they, the holy people, idle away their time ... boasting blasphemously of their lordship over the Christians by means of our sweat ... For, as we have heard, God's anger with them is so intense that gentle mercy will only tend to make them worse and*

worse, while sharp mercy will reform them but little. Therefore, in any case, away with them!" (Luther's Works)

About four hundred years later, Julius Streicher, one of the most notorious anti-Semites even in the perverse world of the Third Reich, used Martin Luther's seven recommendations in his defense at the Nuremberg Trials. Not only was Martin Luther the spiritual father of the Protestant Reformation, but also of the Nazi Holocaust. His teachings contributed to the dehumanizing of the Jews to the degree that millions of good Lutherans and Catholics either actively participated in or passively watched the wholesale slaughter of a race.





The common denominator of all of the examples cited above is the personal hatred in the heart of a leader, especially a religious leader, towards a people with a different religion, different values, and a different way of life. It is impossible for such a leader to be objective, but instead he becomes obsessed in his passion to destroy the object of his wrath. But as a leader he must maintain some degree of composure and respectability, so rather than doing the dirty work himself, he speaks publicly about the supposed dangers of this group, gathering a following for himself by feeding their insecurities, fears, and prejudices. As people look to him as the authority on the subject, it fuels his own sense of self-importance, increasing his confidence to vilify⁴ the group. Those who look to him as the authority, in their desire to be recognized themselves, inflate, distort, or even invent tales of the beliefs and practices of the hated group. So the cycle escalates until there is enough animosity for violence to break out against the group.

So what does this have to do with the Twelve Tribes communities today?

Recently a series of articles about us appeared in the *Boston Herald*, presenting us as a

dangerous cult. The articles were filled with inflammatory language, half-truths, distortions, and outright lies, painting a horrific picture of cruelty and abuse inside our many “compounds”⁵ in New England and New York, and the daring late-night “escape” of one of our youth from the sinister clutches of the elders. All of a sudden people we had never met began hurling insults at us as they passed our homes and our businesses, calling us a filthy cult of child abusers.

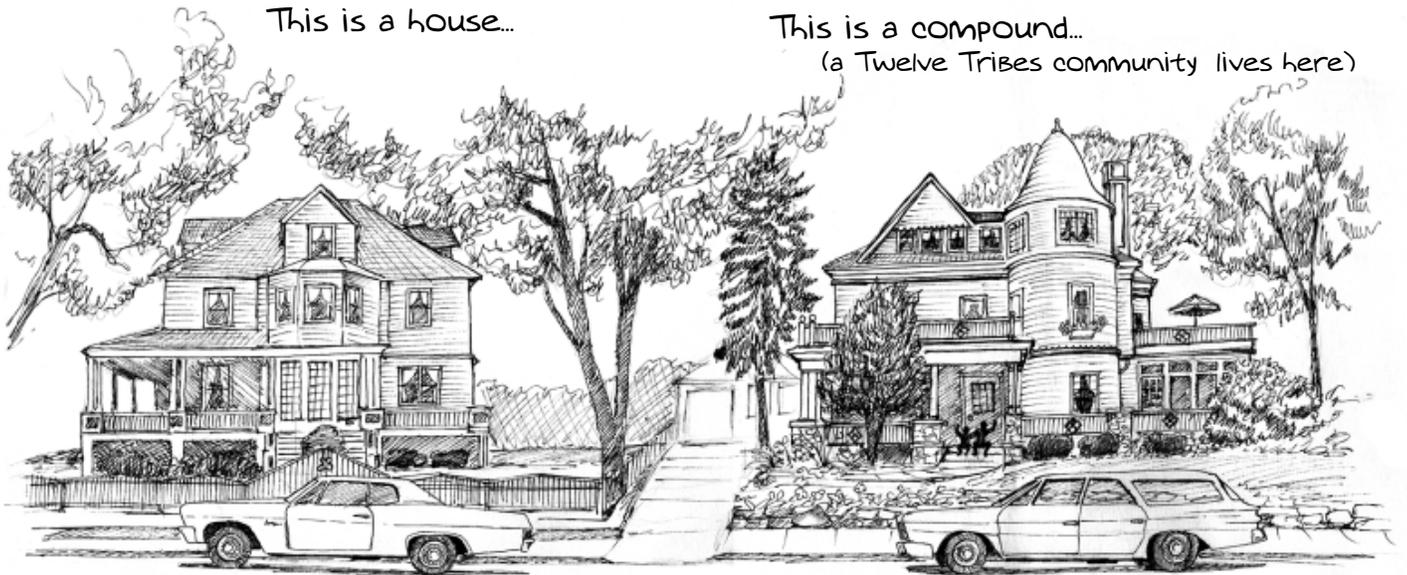
Evidently the writer for the *Boston Herald* got most of his “facts” from the “Reverend” Bob Pardon, who bills himself as the “Executive Director” of the *New England Institute for Religious Research*. If you didn’t know better, the name of Mr. Pardon’s “Institute” might bring to mind a beautiful campus of ivy-covered stone buildings full of serious and studious researchers plumbing the depths of the spiritual life of the human soul. And you might expect to find the Reverend Robert T. Pardon, M.Div., Th.M., this fine institute’s Executive Director, sitting in a comfortable old leather-covered chair behind a huge antique desk in his walnut-paneled office, surrounded by floor-to-ceiling bookshelves full of impressive theological texts such as *Calvin’s Institutes*. But until recently you would only have found Mr. Pardon and his one associate sharing a little rented office in a church basement in a



This is a house...

This is a compound...

(a Twelve Tribes community lives here)



small town in Massachusetts. Oh, and you would also find *Calvin's Institutes* there, as Mr. Pardon is an avid disciple of John Calvin, gladly carrying on in the spirit of the Inquisition, searching out *heretics* to destroy.

The lofty image Mr. Pardon labors to present of himself and his "Institute" is merely the pitiful appetizer for the juicy banquet of misinformation he dishes up for all who are impressed with his credentials. As he writes of himself in his own web site, "*Rev. Pardon is recognized as one of the foremost experts in the United States on a number of religious groups, including the Twelve Tribes,*"⁶ Mr. Pardon has indeed made us the prime object of his inquisition for the past seven years, branding us a *cult* and stirring up animosity against us. Although he may shake his head in disapproval when the rocks come flying through our windows, or when a madman comes cursing into our place of business, swinging a baseball bat past our heads and smashing our equipment, he refuses to take responsibility for these effects of the fear and suspicion he persistently injects

into all who will listen to him. In opposing us, he thinks he is doing God a favor.⁷ Why is it always those who think they have the "right doctrine" who persecute and kill those whom they think have the "wrong doctrine"? They are those who "claim to see" (John 9:41). Those who boast in their "right doctrine" are the very ones who would think they are doing God a favor.

It is a sad irony that in Plymouth, Massachusetts, the very village where our courageous Pilgrim forefathers established a beachhead for freedom of religion in the New World, self-appointed Inquisitor Bob Pardon is fueling the



fires of animosity against us. We are not troubled that he disagrees with our understanding of the Bible; he is entitled to his own opinions. What is really troubling is that, in a country whose system of justice is founded on the principle that one is *presumed* innocent until *proven* guilty, Mr. Pardon aggressively portrays us as *presumed* guilty unless *proven* innocent. And really, no proof we might offer can stand in his courtroom since he holds his handful of disgruntled ex-members as more credible than the thousands of happy men, women, and children who daily love and care for one another in the communities of our Twelve Tribes.

But we are not surprised at this treatment, for our Master Yahshua, the Messiah, forewarned us that it would be this way.⁸ It was the religious establishment that persecuted Him and ultimately demanded His execution — religious leaders like Bob Pardon were threatened by His radical message and the loyalty of His followers. They considered Him a heretic,⁹ and His followers a dangerous cult¹⁰ that might have been eradicated shortly after His death had it not been for the wisdom of one Pharisee named Gamaliel:

Then one in the council stood up, a Pharisee named Gamaliel, a teacher of the law held in respect by all the people, and commanded them to put the apostles outside for a little while. And he said to them: "Men of Israel, take heed to yourselves what you intend to do regarding these men. For some time ago Theudas rose up, claiming to be somebody. A number of men, about four hundred, joined him. He was slain, and all who obeyed him were scattered and came to nothing. After this man, Judas of Galilee rose up in the days of the census, and drew away many people after him. He also perished, and all who obeyed him were

dispersed. And now I say to you, keep away from these men and let them alone; for if this plan or this work is of men, it will come to nothing; but if it is of God, you cannot overthrow it — lest you even be found to fight against God." (Acts 5:34-39)

We wish that the self-appointed cult experts of today would observe this simple wisdom. 🙏

¹ *Demagogue* — A leader who obtains power by means of impassioned appeals to the emotions and prejudices of the populace.

² The name *Anabaptist* means "one who baptizes again"; it refers to the Anabaptists' practice of adult baptism, even of persons who had been baptized in infancy... The Anabaptists believed in the paramount importance of personal faith in God, as opposed to ritualism... Some Anabaptists wished to establish communal and egalitarian Christian communities and opposed participation in civil government (*Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia 2000*).

³ *Luther's Works, Volume 47: The Christian in Society IV* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971), pp 268-293.

⁴ *Vilify* — spread negative information about.

⁵ Somehow the press persists in calling our nice houses and farms "compounds" even though they are all quite open, visible, and accessible, right in the midst of the towns and villages where we live, with no walls to keep people out or in. Why do they do this?

⁶ See <http://religiousmovements.lib.virginia.edu/nrms/tribes.html> for an objective view of the Twelve Tribes and Mr. Pardon's credibility as an "expert".

⁷ John 16:2 ⁸ John 15:18-21 ⁹ Mark 2:7; Luke 5:21; John 9:16,29; ¹⁰ Acts 28:22





Who We Are

We live this life in response to the love and life of one man, Yahshua* the Messiah. His love compels us to live together just as it compelled those who believed in Him 2,000 years ago to do the same. They loved Him because He first loved them. They became His loyal followers. *They?* Who were *they*? You might expect them to have been the ones who said they were waiting for the Messiah, the devoutly religious men and women of the day. But they weren't. For the most part, His followers were the least regarded in their society: the uneducated, the least influential, the social failures, even the outcasts. Only a very few righteous were among their number; hardly any of them are noted as being good citizens. Yahshua Himself said that it is the sick who need a physician.¹ He had come to heal the sick — not just the physically sick (the lame, the lepers, the blind), but those who were deeply aware of the sickness in the human heart² that hinders a man from loving his wife or his neighbor as himself, that causes a woman to not trust the heart of her husband. He came to *heal* them of the deep malady of living for themselves, of self-centeredness. How did that healing come?

Living with Him meant living with all the others whom He loved, living with all their problems and they living with yours. Oh, the circumstances that came up as they lived together! Their

selfish and hurtful ways were exposed. He corrected them and *disciplined* them in love, for they were His *disciples*. And the result? Were they a stern and severe religious order?

Not at all! Their light burned brightly, a vibrant life of love that started to shine as the witness of the kingdom He came to preach.³ He was full of life and He wanted to empower them to love like He did, selflessly. It was good news! At least to the needy, the spiritually poor who didn't think they had all the answers, to them it was good news. But to others, those who claimed to see,⁴ it wasn't good news at all.

Ironically, it was those who were leading the people in worshiping God who hated the Son of God. They called Him a deceiver, and an evil-doer.⁵ They accused of Him inciting the people to rebellion and claimed He was a threat to their national security and their own position.⁶ Doesn't that seem incongruous? It wasn't the Romans, the unbelievers, or the bad people in town who wanted to destroy Him. No, the men who came by night and took Him to their council, to blindfold Him and strike Him with their fists, were the respectable men in their country.⁷ They themselves thought they were serving God when they plotted to kill Him.⁸ But really they were jealous and leavened with hypocrisy.⁹

Their hatred was enough to kill His body, but they couldn't kill His spirit. His Father raised Him up again, once He had paid for all the sins of men, even of those who had mocked Him on the cross. That's the kind of love He has for people. He has forgiveness for all sinners, for those who want to follow Him.

We know this man. He paid for our sins in death and we have experienced His love for us. We are followers of Yahshua, just as those needy ones were back in His days on earth. After He returned to His Father, His Holy Spirit was poured out on His followers for a purpose: that they would love like He loved. And they were obedient to what that love required. Their life turned the world upside down,¹⁰ and just as their Master said, they were hated as He was hated.¹¹

2,000 years have gone by and in these last days, spoken of by the prophets, His Spirit is once again being given to those who obey Him.¹² We have believed in Him, as the Scriptures say, and received eternal life.¹³ We no longer live for ourselves,¹⁴ but for Him, for without Him we are nothing. He forgave us when our deeds certainly made us deserving of eternal death. This man Yahshua has given us another chance. We have a new life. *He is our life.* Apart from His forgiveness we would be alone in the world, without hope, strangers to His covenants.¹⁵ Our life is the response to His love. Love doesn't make us want to be stronger than others; love enables the strong and the weak to live together. The weak ones are made strong and the strong ones are made humble. His love makes this possible. And just as our Master Yahshua was, we are devoted to seeking and saving the lost,¹⁶ bringing them home to the Life¹⁷ described in Acts 2 and 4.

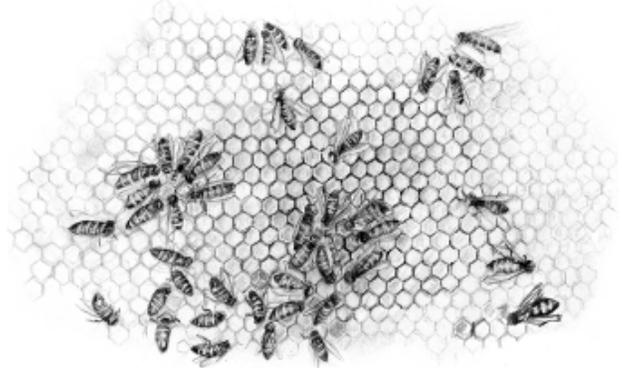
Like a Swarm

Have you ever watched a beehive? It is fascinating seeing thousands of little bees working together to produce honey. As you come near the hive, you can hear an exciting buzz as they go about the many tasks necessary to keep the hive alive. The workers are responsible to collect nectar and guard the hive. The young bees keep the hive in good condition, feed the larvae, and support in other household chores. There is never a dull moment in the busy life of a little bee.

This is much like the life that we have. No matter what we do, we love to do it together. Daily we gather to thank our Master Yahshua for His salvation, and to hear Him speak to us through one another. This gathering keeps alive a genuine love and care for each other. As we work, we take advantage of the daily situations, guarding ourselves from the selfishness and pride that would come in to separate us and take away our love. Our children are a vital part of our life. We not only educate them, but we work with them to accomplish the simple tasks necessary to maintain a family life. Our life is not a dull routine of chores,

but is full of the warmth that comes from the sweet fellowship of friends speaking their hearts to one another, celebrating the Shabbat every week, and participating in weddings and festivals.

But there are a few things that differ in our life than that of a beehive. One is that we are not driven by instinct or controlled by something separate from our own will. Each of us is here because we chose to leave behind our own separate lives to increase the life of this hive. Our life is not enclosed like the hive of a bee, nor do we have a stinger to harm any uninvited guests. We welcome anyone to experience our life with us. Please come and see what it is like to be part of a beehive of people expressing the warmth and love of our Creator. 🐝



^{*}*Yahshua* is the Hebrew name of the Son of God. It is what His foster father Yoceph (Joseph) and His mother Miriam (Mary) called Him when He was born, as recorded in Luke 1:31 and Matthew 1:21. The footnote for this verse in the NIV New Testament reads: *Jesus is the Greek form of Joshua.* In Hebrew, as in old English, there is no "J" sound, and the name is more accurately rendered *Yahshua*. It means, "I am powerful to save," since it is constructed from *Yah*, the name of the Father (as in *Hallelujah*, "Praise Yah"), which means "I AM," and *shua*, which means "power and authority to save." We call Him *Yahshua* because that is truly His name (John 5:43; 17:11). ¹ Matt 9:11-13 ² Jer 17:9 ³ Matt 4:23 ⁴ John 9:41 ⁵ Matt 27:63; John 18:30 ⁶ Luke 23:14; John 11:48-50 ⁷ Matt 26:57,59,67; Mark 14:61,63-65 ⁸ John 16:2 ⁹ John 12:10-11; Luke 12:1; Matt 23:38 ¹⁰ Acts 17:5-6 ¹¹ Mark 13:9,13; Acts 13:45,50 ¹² Acts 5:32 ¹³ Rom 10:10 ¹⁴ 2 Cor 5:15 ¹⁵ Eph 2:12 ¹⁶ Luke 19:10 ¹⁷ 1 John 5:12

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