

Assassination of Rabin shatters dreams of peace

"I always believed that most people want peace and they are ready to take a risk for it."



ERIN HILL
COLUMNIST

So said Yitzhak Rabin last Saturday night at a Tel Aviv peace rally with over 100,000 people in attendance, one of the largest demonstrations in Israel's history.

After the rally, he was fatally shot in the heart by an assassin.

The bullet hit much more than the flesh of one person. Rabin, the first prime minister born in what was to become Israel and the first assassinated there, was an Israeli war hero who had fought with and commanded Israel's noted army.

With the death of Rabin, the chief architect of peace in the middle east, hopes of peace for Israel were wounded.

He was slain on the Sabbath supposedly by another Jew. He was a native son shot on native soil.

"I acted on God's orders, and I have no regrets," said Yigul Amir, the right-wing extremist law student arrested on suspicion of assassinating the Prime Minister.

He and other right-wing extremists opposed Rabin's efforts to return land to the Palestinians.

They felt Rabin was too friendly with other Arab nations, such as Jordan and Syria, with whom Rabin had either signed a peace agreement (the former) or was trying to negotiate one (the latter).

World peace was a dream, dreamt in the night

before the dawn of this century. In history classes we learned about the frustration felt by Americans when attempts to form a peaceful ideal society fell apart during the first World War. The dreamers wanted a civilized, humane world. That's all.

It was the assassination of the Archduke Ferdinand of Austria, in fact, that triggered that war. A gunman yanked the dreams of

idealists into the harsh daylight un-awares, just as Amir has done.

The turn-of-the-century world was stunned by the carnage and destruction. The disillusionment that accompanied the war permeated the core of our society and affected the generations that followed after.

The holocaust and horror of the second world war did nothing to eliminate the disillusionment, nor did the assassinations of key political figures such as John F. Kennedy, Robert Kennedy and Martin Luther King Jr. in the 1960s.

The years following the deaths of the Kennedys and King were also tumultuous. Our founding fathers' 200-year-old hopes of creating a better soci-

ety were undermined again and again by humankind's inherent bad behavior.

Anwar Sadat, former president of Egypt, also paid for his peace efforts with his life when Muslim extremists, opposing his political negotiations with Israel, killed him in 1981.

It would be nice to think otherwise, but it seems that we are no better than we were 1,000 years ago, just more advanced technologically.

We're still violent, selfish and stupid.

And dreamers like Rabin are still being slain.

In the wake of this tragic event, it's difficult not to conclude that the world is going to hell in a hand-basket. How close are we now?

Clinton said, "A senseless act of violence has robbed the United States of a close friend and robbed the world of a statesman and a courageous champion of peace. Yitzhak

Rabin was a brave man who defended his country for half a century and whose vision and tenacity brought the world closer to peace.

"He was a man of hope, a man of wisdom, a man who sought to improve the lives of all those he touched. The peace process that he began will

be his legacy. The people of the United States and the peace-loving people of the world are determined that the peace process will go forward."

Who doesn't believe in peace? Who doesn't want it to happen? The answer seems obvious, but we're not all bubbling in the same letter on our global scantron, if you know what I mean.

Peace is more complex than just loving everyone and being nice.

It's tricky and slippery, and Rabin seemed to know what he was doing. It takes someone with courage and intelligence to be able to fight for peace, a seeming oxymoron. We've lost a clear thinker and a force for peace in that area of the world.

Rabin won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1993. And he was martyred for his cause in 1995. The events in Israel and the Middle East over the past few years had us believing that we were making progress. Now, with the loss of Rabin, we mourn and fear.

How can Israel and the world find another Rabin? The credibility he had cannot be manufactured — it must be earned — and his motives, too, cannot be forced on anyone else.

He was a rare man, desperately needed by not only his country, but the world family.

The assassin's bullet ripped a hole through the tapestry of peace that Yitzhak Rabin had helped weave.

Now the world is left with the impossible task: Finding another who can repair the threads and make it whole.

Erin Hill is a graduate pursuing a teaching certificate



New century calls for new religion

Answers are no longer being found in the pews and pulpits of Christianity

Three summers ago, I was working in downtown Houston.

When I was returning one day from my lunch break, a curious sight caught my eye.

Standing in front of a huge office building was an elderly man dressed in dark slacks and a white shirt. He was talking, shouting actually, at people walking past him.

He yelled left and right about how each pedestrian was going to hell for their actions if they didn't repent.

And in his hand there was a small can for donations — a coffer for salvation, if you will.

Later that same summer, I went with my parents on a trip to my grandmother's home in South Texas.

While sitting in the backseat of my parents' car, I noticed a small, white building, an old-time church, in one of the towns that litter Highway 59 from Houston to my grandma's place in George West, Texas.

The church had not been used in quite some time. It was dilapidated and crumbling, signaling that its usefulness had come to an end.

Ironically, there seems to be a connection between that little church on the side of the highway and the obnoxious man on the street in Houston.

In fact, that dying church is connected to the entire Christian faith.

Christianity no longer has the kick it used to. The days when almost every man, woman and child went to church every Sunday are long gone. Instead, apathy and disdain for

religion is often the rule.

It may be hard to grasp this at Texas A&M, where many students seem to attend some form of church at least once a week.

But outside the confines of campus, many people worship about as often as we see a solar eclipse.

The most deplorable part of this is that the most noble institution of the Christian religion — the church — is largely at fault for the decline of faith.

The clergy has lost much of its credibility in the eyes of mainstream America, especially with citizens who do not go to church.

People like Jim Bakker and Jimmy Swagart have soured us on religion and tarnished the image of other priests and pastors. How can we look toward Christianity as a guiding light when those closest to God seem to be shrouded in darkness?

Other people have grown tired of the modern approach to religion, which I call the "Help Me" motif.

Many church services are spent forgiving the congregation for their sins or condemning it for sinning.

While nothing is wrong with either, these actions only result in one thing: providing temporary relief or criticism for a recurring problem. This way churches turn into mental wards for the spiritually defunct.

This "Help Me" mentality of today's Christianity has driven some people, myself included, away from the trappings of organized religion.

I decided a long time ago that if I were to find God, it would have to be without the help of a pastor or a church.

But others may have decided to leave the church, and God with it, behind.

The modern church has to change its methods if it is to regain its prominence.

It must begin to teach the righteous path, not forgive or admonish those who stray from it.

It is almost the year 2000, and people today do not like to be yelled at or consoled, they like to be shown how to do it right the first time around.

Christianity has to adapt to new society like it has over the last two millennia, or it may fall to even lower depths than it already has.

The "Help Me" mentality of today's Christianity has driven people away from the trappings of organized religion.

Christianity itself is losing its power heading into the new millennium.

The faith that has survived for almost 2000 years now comes to a critical crossroads. One path leads to a renewed importance, the other leads to dwindling prominence for the Bible.

The power to change, however, lies not with the current hierarchy of modern religion. It lies in the next generation of pastors, priests, deacons and clergy.

They must realize the current ways are not working.

If they do not, a lot more people will spend their Sundays watching the boob tube instead of getting closer to God.

Pity.

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EDITORIAL

FAULTY FOUNDATION

The Development Foundation should not shortchange Evans library.

The Texas A&M Development Foundation has not just captured the spirit in its fundraising campaign, but a lot of money, too. In recent weeks, it reached its impressive goal of securing \$500 million in private donations in five years.

However, a closer look reveals that the University will not benefit much in areas which needs help the most.

The 12th Man Foundation received \$22 million, all of which goes to athletics, and \$25 million went to the Association of Former Students.

\$60 million of the donations were earmarked for scholarships, but they will benefit only a handful of students.

In a comparison of allocations to colleges within the University, the cash-starved College of Liberal Arts, with an enrollment of 5,615 students, received \$10.8 million.

In contrast, the College of Geosciences and Maritime Studies, with only 2,058 students, received \$17.3 million. The College of Engineering was given a whopping \$74 million.

Sterling C. Evans Library is the most pressing need at Texas A&M, but it only received \$14 million, or 2.8 percent of the \$500 million.

The goals, according to Jim Palincsar, the Development Foundation's vice president for development, were to "attract great students, attract and retain faculty and build strong academic programs."

Unfortunately, the few students and faculty members who get a share of the money will be disappointed when they try to use the library to work.

The Development Foundation should recognize areas of desperate need on campus, and direct its fundraising efforts toward them. It may be easy to raise money for a special events center, but a better library will do more to improve the University and benefit all students and faculty members.

Palincsar said the fundraising campaign is not over. That's fine, but the Development Foundation should also acknowledge that in some areas, it is just beginning.



MAIL CALL

quick response. During my years as a student at Texas A&M, I was part of and felt the Aggie Spirit many times. But I never felt it on such a personal level as last Saturday. I will be eternally in debt to the Pulse of the Spirit of Aggieland: The Fightin' Texas Aggie Band.

G. Wesley West
Class of '93

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