

Editorial

The clash of civilizations

Recently a number of books and articles have pretended to defend western civilization against the depredations of the hordes of the "non-white races." Thus on Oct. 13 of this year, an up-and-coming German parliamentarian named Friedbert Pflueger warned an audience at the Evangelical Academy in Tutzing in Bavaria about a growing threat to Europe posed by countries of the developing world.

"In the 19th century," he said, "there were wars between nations; in the 20th century, wars between ideologies; and in the 21st century, there will be wars between civilizations, on a worldwide level." To strengthen his contention, he cited from the Summer 1993 lead article in the New York Council on Foreign Relations' *Foreign Affairs* magazine by "political scientist" Samuel Huntington, entitled "The Clash of Civilizations?"

Huntington wrote: "Differences among civilizations are not only real; they are basic. . . . These differences are the product of centuries. They will not soon disappear. . . . The world is becoming a small place. The interactions between peoples of different civilizations are increasing; these increasing interactions intensify civilization consciousness and awareness of differences between civilizations and commonalities within civilizations." This is followed by: "The interactions among peoples of different civilizations enhance the civilization-consciousness of people that, in turn, invigorates differences and animosities stretching or thought to stretch back deep into history."

Extracts from Huntington's piece have appeared, in translation, in the European press. At a time when large numbers of people (in the former East bloc, Africa, Ibero-America, and elsewhere) have been stripped of the very means of existence through the usurious banking practices of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, or through a war of extermination (Bosnia), such an argument is akin to a philosophical treatise by Heinrich Himmler on behalf of the practices of Hitler's SS. Huntington directs the John M. Olin Institute for Strategic Studies at Harvard University, which gave the world Jeffrey Sachs.

The Huntington thesis contrasts sharply to the traditional Christian view of evangelization. A case in point is the experience of the young American nation with the Cherokee nation. The book, *Trail of Tears, The Rise and Fall of the Cherokee Nation*, by John Ehle, tells a devastating story documenting the brutality of Huntington's predecessors such as Andrew Jackson, who drove the Indians from their homes in the eastern United States to resettle in the West.

What is remarkable is the other side of the story and what happened 60 years before Jackson's brutality. Within the span of a lifetime, from 1780 until 1830, the Cherokee leadership were in the process of transforming their nation and their people. Their first priority was to make available to their children the most advanced education possible, not merely to have them learn the rudiments of English and mathematics. The combined influences of the church, polyphonic music, and the constitutional process of building a new nation modeled upon the United States of America were the motive force for this.

One of these Cherokee children of the new America, Elias Boudinot, expressed all of this in a speech he gave in Philadelphia: "You behold an *Indian*; my kindred are *Indians*, and my fathers sleeping in the wilderness grave—they too were Indians. But I am not as my fathers were—broader means and nobler influences have fallen upon me. Yet I was not born as thousands are, in a stately dome and amid the congratulations of the great, for on a little hill, in a lonely cabin, overspread by the forest oak I first drew my breath. . . . In after days, I have had greater advantages than most of my race; and I now stand before you delegated by my native country to seek her interest, to labor for her respectability, and by my public efforts to assist in raising her to an equal standing with the other nations of the earth."

The United States of today, can either follow the Christian tradition represented by Boudinot, or the brutal paganism of an Andrew Jackson or Samuel Huntington. The choice should be obvious.