

The Pope's Line

A research paper
on the division of the world
under Catholic jurisdiction
by Pope Alexander VI
and its spiritual implications

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1. The Background

The concept of Spiritual Mapping, which has played a part in some of the Latin American revivals of recent decades, is testament to the validity of its use in modern evangelism.

In writing this paper I have used some of the principles used by “mappers” to highlight a little known historical event that I believe has spiritual implications for Australia, in particular the state of Western Australia.

In 1494, Pope Alexander VI declared the then known world should be divided in two to satisfy continuing brawling between Spanish and Portuguese explorers. The resulting line of demarcation was called “*the Pope’s Line.*”

This study will look at how this came about, what spiritual implications it has, and the resulting effects on Australia. It would be worthwhile reading my companion study to this, called “***The Great Southland of the Holy Spirit.***”

Scripture urges us to be alert to the wiles of our adversary, Satan. It is clear from the Word of God that not only do individuals worship false gods, but that towns, cities and nations themselves have often been dedicated to unholy spiritual powers, and thereby influenced by them. Whenever we come across such bondage in the nations, we are to bring in the light of the Gospel.

One way this can be done is to engage in spiritual warfare using information we have regarding that country’s history and heritage. On three occasions Australia has been given over to the “protection” of Mary as the Queen of Heaven. This must have some detrimental spiritual effect upon our nation’s psyche. If that be true, then so too would the Pope’s Line.

In this booklet you will see how this might be so, with some suggestions what to do about it.

I believe that Western Australia in particular has been effected detrimentally by the drawing of the Pope’s Line. For that longitudinal line also happens to be the eastern boundary of the entire state!

I encourage you to be open to what you now read, to seek spiritual confirmation, and if required, to act on this information.

May the Lord lead us to “*cleanse defiled land*” (Ezekiel 39:12; Numbers 35:34 cf: Leviticus 18:25, 27) and help prepare the way for this nation’s turning to Him.

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2. Some History

During the heyday of the New World exploration, both the Spanish and Portuguese sought new lands to put under their respective umbrellas.

Claims to various nations were also made by the Dutch, English and French. Each were looking for new and fast trade routes to the Far East. While one of the main reasons for sailing so far south was trade, it was not discounted that they also hoped to discover a fabled Southland, rich in gold and other minerals.

Early maps, like those of Mercator, showed a great land mass south of modern Vietnam, called Locac. Fables spread of this great land; many believed gold was abundant, spices plentiful and jewels there for the taking. But horrifying creatures were also believed to live there – men with dog's heads and one huge foot on which they hopped!

A belief seemed to exist in the minds of the northern hemisphere explorers that the further south one travelled, the more demonic and awful the creatures would be. Whales that ate ships and infernal landscapes. And so the Great Southland was "demonised" right from the beginning.

Therefore it was only natural for the British to surmise that they could send their own "demons" to that land in the form of convicts. Australia had been called a "*continent of sin*" from the beginning (see "*The Fatal Shore*" by Robert Hughes p.44).

This in itself gives us some reason to pray for a release from such degrading comments. It would be interesting in the annals of world history to see which countries were spoken of in a derogatory manner and how their national character turned out. The up-side of speaking positively about a land would, of course, have to be God's message to Abraham about the "Land of Promise" that his descendants would inherit.

Be that as it may, early explorers both longed-for and were afraid of what lay south of the equator. Perhaps the most adventurous sailors of the period were the Spanish and Portuguese. Both sent expeditions in search of new trade routes, and both were on the look-out for the fabled Southland. After all, this great unknown land had been in the minds of writers like Pomponius as far back as 50 AD.

Because Spain and Portugal were Catholic nations, the expeditions also took on a religious content. It was argued that if the creatures of this southern region were so demonic in looks and nature, then the inhabitants surely needed the salvation offered by Catholicism.

So most Catholic expeditions of the time carried with them a small contingent of priests and monks. But national pride often overrode common religious ideology. The Spanish and Portuguese clashed as they investigated more and more new territory. Eventually something had to be done, and the Pope was approached to broker a deal between the two nations.

The result was the Treaty of Tordesillas, negotiated with Spain and Portugal by Pope Alexander VI on June 7th 1494 - the Pope's Line!

3. Pope Alexander VI

He was born Rodrigo de Borja y Doms, of Spanish parents, in 1431. At the age of 25, his uncle, Pope Calistus III, made him a Cardinal.

He became Pope in 1492 and took the name of Alexander. Continuing to live the licentious and energetic lifestyle he had pursued before his election, he made many new enemies. During this time he forged an alliance with Spain, giving to King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella the title of Catholic sovereigns.

When the dispute between Spain and Portugal, over territorial rights in the Indian and Pacific oceans, happened, Alexander called the parties together at Tordesillas, in northern Spain. On June 7th, 1494, the Treaty of Tordesillas was struck.

A line was drawn over the face of the globe at 51° W and 129° E longitude. The New World was now divided into Spanish and Portuguese zones for the purpose of exploration and Catholic evangelism.

Everything east of the 129° W (which passes through Australia) would become part of the Spanish territory.

This effectively meant the east coast of Australia was, in the Pope's eyes, under Spanish jurisdiction.

Correspondingly, everything west of the line was to be under Portuguese control and oversight.

Alexander also conferred on the Spanish and Portuguese monarchs the title "*Patronato Real*" - the "Royal Control," authority over the church in the mission lands they would colonize in his name.

The Pope's Line was a line drawn from pole to pole, 100 leagues west of the Cape Verde islands. Spain and Portugal were to have exclusive rights over their designated region, and neither power were to occupy another's territory or any land already in the hands of another "Christian" ruler.

However, no other European powers of the day accepted the Treaty.

Later a minor dispute erupted between Spain and Portugal and the respective ambassadors re-aligned the boundary moving it between 48° and 49° west of Greenwich.

This realignment was ratified in 1506 by another Pope, Julius II.

So much for the historical background. But what does it have to do with Australia, and Western Australia in particular? Well, the longitudinal line of 129° W is the eastern border of the state of Western Australia.

This effectively means the nation of Australia was divided by a Pope, splitting west from east!

Any Australian knows the great divide there exists between "the West" and the "Eastern states." Whether it be in politics or sport, much ado is made about eastern and western state rivalries.

While this is not at all uncommon in many nations, it does seem to have had a specifically detrimental effect on Western Australia.

This is the subject of chapter 4.

4. Western Australia

The state of Western Australia is the largest out of the seven states and territories that make up the Commonwealth of Australia. In land mass it is nearly a staggering three million square kilometres.

Due to its remoteness from the early British settlements of Sydney Cove and Melbourne Town, Western Australia had lacked much of the resources needed to kick start it as a viable colony.

Even today there exists a mentality that “the West” is out of sight, hence out of mind. At least this is the common feeling amongst Western Australians in regard to eastern states politicians.

In fact, Perth, the capital of Western Australia, is the most isolated capital city in the world! While the size of the state is massive, it only has a population of 1.5 million, most of whom live in the city and suburbs.

There are times when it almost seems that political considerations and concerns stop at the South Australian/Western Australian border – the Pope’s Line!

Now it could be easy to make too much of all this, and to read into the situation something that is not really there.

However, I hope to show that although there are probably other cities and states in the world suffering from a similar “isolationist” mentality, there may well be more to it in this case.

The history of Western Australia shows it has been regarded as being “on the fringe.” In fact, when Australians voted at the 1900 July referendum to become a Federation, the state of Western Australia held out until the very last minute, such was the distrust felt against centralism in the east.

Ever since then there has been constant talk of secession. Even today I heard the Western Australian State Premier speak over national radio about how the eastern states had once more ignored the isolated state – over the allocation of tickets for the 2000 Sydney Olympics!

As one who was born in South Australia but lived in the west for over 28 years, I have often contemplated what it is that makes some Western Australians so antagonistic to “eastern staters.” It is not simply that they were born in the west and are therefore just “parochial” in their views, for a significant percentage of the Western Australian population were born either interstate or overseas.

The remoteness from such cities as Canberra, Sydney and Melbourne could account for some of this. But I can not help feel there is more to it than that.

My suspicions were aroused when I discovered that the Western Australian state flag had been altered from its original design of 1875.

Initially the state flag depicted a black swan (the state emblem) facing “outward” - away from the hoist. However, in 1953 this was reversed, making the swan face “inward” toward the hoist. Once the emblem was “outward” looking, now it has turned in on itself – perhaps for aesthetic appeal but now unwittingly, perhaps indicating an

inward isolationist mindset.

The Western Australian state flag, prior to 1953, showed the black swan facing to the right, “outward” – now it faces “inward,” to the left.

Flags are popular icons depicting the character and sense of destiny that the people have, whom it represents, so it is not inconceivable that the inward facing emblem is telling us something deep about the psyche of Western Australia.

Remember what the Pope’s Line set out to accomplish? To divide those on the west of the 129° longitude line from those on the east of the line.

Is it possible that Pope Alexander’s line, which is the very eastern border of Western Australia, has actually played a part in bringing about secessionist feelings?

This is what Spiritual Mapping does. It aims to look for reasons why a community or nation behaves the way it does. Often this reason is directly linked to spiritual issues.

But there is another factor yet to be considered.

5. A Nation Within A Nation

Over the past 30 years, Australian Aborigines have been working to revive their cultural heritage. As with most people groups, the land is intrinsically linked to their sense of destiny and existence.

If you look at a map of Australia from the 1950's, you will notice little evidence of Aboriginal land ownership. In most cases there was none, for even the Reserves were under the direct control of the Commonwealth Government in Canberra.

However a map of the late 1990's paints a radically different picture. Starting with land being handed over to Aborigines in the north of the country, we now see how much this has mushroomed. From the north, almost to the south, of the continent, there are vast tracts of land under Aboriginal ownership.

I am not saying this is wrong, but I do point out one thing. If you draw these land parcels onto a map you will clearly see where the majority of indigenous land ownership lies. Right along the Pope's Line!

From the north coast right through to the Great Australian Bight in the south, there exists vast blocks of land that are effectively under direct Aboriginal control.

People need land. Land ownership requires laws. Only recognised "nations" (*ethnos*) can administer laws. Hence the Australian Aboriginal people are a nation.

So we have a Nation within a Nation. And the only place in Australia that exists with such a conglomeration of Aborigine-owned land is directly along the Pope's Line.

While Australia, like many nations, has a multi-cultural mix amongst its population, when one group takes ascendancy over other minorities, it is not too long before they begin to seek (if not demand) their own sovereignty.

They effectively become a nation within a nation. This is what has happened with the Australian Aboriginal population. Another example of this would be the French speaking province of Quebec in Canada – effectively a "nation within a nation." The Basques of Spain are yet another example.

Handled rightly, and with sensitivity, this should not cause problems. But Jesus warned that in the last days "*ethnos would rise against ethnos.*" (Luke 21:10)

The meaning of *ethnos* is literally "*nation.*" (Strongs G1484)

When one *ethnos*, already existing within a larger ethnic group, seeks its own separate identity, problems are bound to arise. Secession is a real threat. In extreme cases, violence and civil war can erupt.

We see this, to some extent, with the Palestinians living in Israel. They want their own sovereignty, laws, capital, and so forth. The ensuing tension brings civil unrest and violence – to put it mildly!

Whether the Aborigines have the right to such vast tracts of land, or need their own sovereignty, is not really the issue here. Rather the issue is where their land claims are located!

It is not that the Aborigines have knowingly chosen that tract of land to deliberately divide the nation. They chose it because of its historical cultural value.

But it just happens to be along the Pope's Line. And it just happens to divide the nation, placing another nation's land bang slap in the centre of Australia, dividing west from east.

There remains a small slither of a corridor open to the south. This is an area surrounding the Eye Highway along the Nullabor Plain. Were it not for this small slice of land, still owned by the Commonwealth Government, there would be an entire block of land owned by another "nation," cutting the West off from the East.

In some countries, like Israel, this scenario could spell danger, but here in Australia that is not likely. But what it does show us is that the eastern border of Western Australia is more than just a state boundary. It has become a Line of Demarcation. The very intent of the Pope's Line.

It matters little whether the Spanish and Portuguese, or the Eastern states and Western Australians, are the players – the effect is the same.

I write this not to cause animosity between east and west or Aborigines and whites. I am searching for one of the reasons why east-west relationships in this nation are so strained.

Notice I said "one of the reasons." There, of course, may be a number of historical issues that have caused a sense of isolation, to say nothing of the geographical considerations.

But as Christians we are called to be ministers of reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5:18). And although, in context, that refers to us assisting in reconciling sinners back to God, it also has other overtones. One is to attempt to break down dividing walls.

Where we find such barriers, either literal or metaphorical, we are to bring peace to bear as much as possible. This is the intent behind this study. What can we do to help bridge the gap and bring a measure of harmony?

Intercessors have often remarked how answers to intense and fervent prayer come about 18 to 24 months after the prayer climaxes. In other words, there seems to be a "waiting period" in between gaining the victory in prayer and seeing it manifest "on the ground," as it were.

And although there are plenty of instances when God has answered prayer quickly, in the case of national issues, a time lapse seems almost the norm. A Biblical example of this would be in the famous story of Daniel interceding, yet the angel is delayed and he must wait (Daniel 10:12-13).

The purpose of bringing this study to light is to assist ministries as they seek true reconciliation in our land. Spiritual Mapping is part of the weaponry available to us in winning this nation to the Lord.

I pray that you will be encouraged by some of the insights here, and be fired up to intercede and act – for Australia. What you may find unconvincing, I simply ask you to put that aside, and take what you can, using the information wisely and with discretion.

6. What Next?

Based on this historical information, an obvious step would be to pray that the Pope's Line would no longer act as a line of division. Ideally this should be done on-site.

I propose that Christians should gather at the northern and southern extremities of this Line (near Wyndham in the north, and at Eucla in the south), on a common day, and break any unholy spiritual powers that may have been invoked, albeit unwittingly, by Pope Alexander.

Ideally, some in the prayer team would need to be representatives from both the eastern states and Western Australia. Included in such a team there could also be some former Catholics (since the Pope drew the line), and Aboriginal and white Christians.

Having engaged in spiritual warfare on-site, we could then intercede for God's reconciling power to move. A time of identificational repentance could also be important as we come in the opposite spirit to Division.

As a result of this, and other spiritual endeavours currently taking place in Australia, I believe there will, in time, be the start of reconciliation between east and west, black and white.

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into maturity as we
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