

Is This the Answer to Preventing World War 3?

"I don't know what weapons would be used to fight World War 3, but 4 would be settled with sticks and stones." –Albert Einstein

USA Today ran this front-page headline recently: "World War 3: Americans are Thinking About the Unthinkable." Data from Google searches shows incredible spikes for—you guessed it—"World War 3." And the Doomsday clock is now as close as it's ever been to midnight.

Not long ago there was a similar situation, but it was providentially avoided because of the friendship of two outstanding leaders. Can you guess who they were?

This is the absolutely amazing account of two of history's greatest leaders and their bond of friendship that changed the world and averted a nuclear nightmare. Both are gone but their story is worthy of reflection in these tense times.

Ronald Reagan was one of America's greatest presidents, and his stature is sorely missed. Think for a moment on his victory margin in the 1984 election of 525 to 13 electoral votes as he won 49 of 50 states.

His opponent, Walter Mondale, only won his home state of Minnesota and that by 3,761 votes. "The Gipper's" electoral votes remain the highest total ever received by a presidential candidate. Don't forget he was 73—the oldest president in America's history.

He's my hero, and I treasure the autographed picture of him in my study. Millions draw inspiration from his life and legacy.

Since we are known by our friends, it behooves us to discover

who was Reagan's closest friend. It may surprise you.

It's been said there are four types of friends:

- Just friends—social
- Rust friends—oldies
- Trust friends—counselors
- Must friends—gifts from God

President Reagan had a God-given gift in a person with whom he changed the course of history. And it wasn't his beloved wife, Nancy, to whom he was married for 52 years. Actor Charlton Heston called this unique relationship, "The greatest love affair in the history of the American presidency."

Some Simple Clues

My father came from Poland as an immigrant. My mother was Polish, as were almost all of our relatives.

We were dyed-in-the-wool Catholics. I had 12 years of parochial school. My autobiography, *Clap Your Hands*, helped reach a quarter-million predominately Catholic people, and both my father and I had the privilege of ministering the gospel in Poland.

Whether you're Catholic or not, you're most likely familiar with the first Polish pope in history who also gained sainthood in the Catholic Parthenon of saints.

This towering figure connected with President Reagan, and today they are recognized together as the principal players in collapsing Communism and averting a nuclear war.

Pope John Paul II was born Karol Jozef Wojtyla in 1920 and was athletic, manly and an outspoken advocate for human rights. When Nazis occupied Poland during World War II, he studied in a secret seminary in Kraków, became pope in 1978 and traveled

to over 129 countries sharing the message of Jesus Christ.

He stood up to Communism using his influence and moral authority so effectively that he is credited with its fall in Poland and throughout Europe. Lech Walensa, founder of the Solidarity movement and the first post-Communist President of Poland, repeatedly honored John Paul for giving Poles the courage to affect change peacefully, altering the politics of the land.

Even Soviet leader Mikael Gorbachev once said, "The collapse of the Iron Curtain would have been impossible without John Paul II." (CBS News Online: "Pope Stared Down Communism in His Homeland—and Won!" [June 30, 2008]).

For years prior to his death, this icon was a prophetic symbol of perseverance under pressure and pain as he never stopped his missionary work while trembling severely with Parkinson's.

'A Pope and a President'

Paul Kengor, political science professor and author, has just released his amazing book reviewing this little-known relationship. Its subtitle is *A Pope and a President: John Paul II, Ronald Reagan and the Extraordinary Untold Story of the 20th Century*.

In a compelling way, Kengor documents the spiritual connection between the Catholic pope and the Protestant president that strengthened each other in confronting the paramount evil of the 20th century: Soviet Communism.

We learn the following:

- Communism's demise was not triggered by tearing down the Berlin Wall but Poland's election and the Pope's catalytic role.
- Both men were almost assassinated just weeks apart in 1981; each should have died as they almost bled to death; and, later

during personal time in the Vatican, they shared their belief that God spared their lives for a special purpose: to take down atheist Communism.

- The Soviet Union was on the brink of invading Poland the very day Reagan was shot, but with America on full nuclear alert, the highest level of DEFCON, they stopped abruptly to avoid the conflagration of a nuclear war.
- The CIA allegedly but secretly confirmed Russia's role in the shooting of the pontiff by Mehmet Agca (whom the pope later visited, forgave and prayed with in prison).
- Ronald Reagan specifically identified him as his "best friend" and Nancy as his "closest friend."

Application Today

Former President George W. Bush once labeled North Korea and Iran as two players in the "axis of evil." When Mitt Romney ran for president he said Russia was the No. 1 geopolitical foe of America. The threat of all three nations to world peace is an alarming reality today.

People are understandably on edge. Add to the mix the ever-present terrorist activity in our nation and abroad, and we do have a recipe for potential disaster overnight.

It's important to remember the strong prayer emphasis prevalent during the Reagan era as we study the providential hand of God in the friendship of Ronald Reagan and Pope John Paul II. It should motivate us afresh to pray "first of all... for all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceful life in all godliness and honesty" (1Tim. 2:1-2).

Inspired by the supernatural intervention of God both during the Reagan years and in this recent election, may we all rededicate ourselves to praying for our elected officials, our nation and another spiritual awakening during these turbulent

times. {eoa}