

he was widely hailed as the Saviour of the nation. He made, as a radio commentator said, the trains run on time.

Where possible Mussolini used the church to further his powers, to justify his militarism and to support his administration. There was no protestant segment with which to deal so he had but one area of concentration and in that he worked well. He was in time a great embarrassment to Rome and to Italy as well.

In Mussolini's ascendance some Bible scholars thought they saw the rise of the anti-Christ and not a few prophetic teachers labeled him that. Another good example of being overly specific in areas where the Bible is not.

With regard to Russia...

The notes cannot fully develop this. The Russian situation came out of disaster in the war and hundreds of years of oppression by the nobility. Following the Bolsheviki struggles Lenin brought in national communism and was soon followed by Stalin who now appears to have been the greatest persecutor of all time. The concept in any totalitarian society is one of non toleration for dissenting ideals and Stalin led in this. The church was bitterly opposed since much of it (Russian orthodox) was "married" to the old state. There is no record of the vast number of priests, servants, etc., who were outrightly killed, banned, tortured. Of the non established church the persecution was equally severe. The writings of Solzhenitsyn are enough for this.

Following World War II Stalin obtained a better grip on the Patriarchate and made what some thought was a peace with the Orthodox church. In fact he found some dupes and sent these into the western world to speak of freedom of religion in Russia. But the communism of Lenin and Stalin (from the spark of Marx) was totally anti-Christian and the Russian religious community suffered from it through all the years. In more recent times (very recent) there has been a little relenting in the Soviet Union and we can only wait to see how this will work in time to come.