

WORLD NEWS *and* PROPHECY

Biblical Perspectives on Current Events

August 2000

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Another Sea Gate Threatened?

Shipping lanes off Indonesia may seem irrelevant to the West. But at stake is part of an ancient promise to Abraham that his seed would possess the "gates of their enemies."

by Darris McNeely

Events in the South Pacific may seem irrelevant to the West, but could bring significant changes affecting both American naval influence and continued freedom of shipping through a critical world sea passage.

Not long ago the United States turned over the Panama Canal to the Republic of Panama, thus relinquishing control of a major passage linking the Atlantic and Pacific shipping lanes. Many observers saw little significance behind this event, since today's Internet-dominated global economy seems little impacted by ocean-borne commerce. One pundit commented, "Windows 2000 travels

over the Internet not on the deck of a ship."

Now, another vital sea passage in an increasingly unsettled region of the world could come under the control of powers with different views than those of Western nations.

A strategic Asian passage

The Strait of Malacca is one of the world's crucial strategic choke points. Many experts consider it a vulnerable objective of any hostile power seeking regional control and influence upon the Western economies.

The Strait of Malacca is a narrow waterway between Malaysia and the



Indonesian island of Sumatra. Virtually all commercial sea traffic between the Far East and Europe, the Middle East and India passes through the Strait. All fuel and gas shipments purchased from the Persian Gulf for the Far East pass through there. Moreover, Singapore—the regional
(See "SEA GATE," page 3)

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Read *World News and Prophecy* as soon as it is completed. The next issue is scheduled to be available on September 8 on the Internet at <http://www.ucg.org/html/literat.shtml#4>.

The United Church of God provides *World News and Prophecy (WNP)* as an educational service for interested persons. The purpose of *WNP* is to help readers discern the times and increase their awareness and understanding of current events in the light of Bible prophecy. Although the staff strives for truth and accuracy in its reporting, analysis and Bible commentary, *WNP* is not a doctrinal publication. Articles do undergo both an editorial and a review process.

“SEA GATE,” (Continued from page 1)

commercial and communication center, and a key port, lies at the eastern mouth of the Strait.

Today more than 60,000 ships a year pass through the Strait. Within four years that number could go as high as 100,000—thus showing the need for regional stability to insure free passage for ships of all nations. Yet, the region has historically been plagued by animosities of ethnic and religious bias, demands for scarce resources and, in the post-colonial period, poor government. The American Navy recognizes the value of the waterway to its projection of power from the Persian Gulf to the South China Sea and further east in the Pacific.

China’s strategic objectives

Controlling access to this key sea gate has become a strategic priority of China. China knows that any role it may play in southwest Asia and beyond will require the ability to control access to not only the important shipping lanes, but also to the broader oceans bordering so much of Asia.

China also understands that its naval capability is several years away from matching that of the United States. America’s Seventh Fleet is capable of projecting force from the Straits of Taiwan throughout the western Pacific, South China Sea and beyond into the Indian Ocean and Persian Gulf. For China to fully assert power over the Asian region, it will someday have to confront the United States and, at the least, check its vast military power in the region. Exactly how this could be done is widely discussed among those who understand the ambitions that China nourishes and cultivates.

Yossef Bodansky, a director of the congressional Task Force on Terrorism and Unconventional Warfare writes, “Any Chinese naval and military surge into the Indian Ocean—a major strategic priority of Beijing—must pass through the Strait of Malacca. Beijing considers its surge into the Indian Ocean as part of a strategic surge of global proportions aimed at con-

solidating military posture in a hostile environment (from both a global and regional strategic point of view), and in a strategic grand design that anticipates the possibility of a major military clash with the U.S. in the foreseeable future” (“Beijing’s Surge for the Strait of Malacca,” Yossef Bodansky, www.freeman.org/m_online/bodansky/beijing.htm).

Writing in the *National Review* of March 20, 2000, Mark Helprin, contributing editor of *The Wall Street Journal*, chronicled China’s future possibilities in an article entitled, “East Wind.” He quotes Deng Xiaoping’s *16-Character Policy*: “Combine the military and the civil; combine peace and war; give priority to military products; let the civil support the military.” Over the last two decades, all signs point to China’s determination to become a major modern world power by taking every advantage from the West and preparing itself for future conflict. “It is approaching this with purposeful concentration...and resolve.... Its task is to win the next war, whenever that may be, and its determination is not to be dismissed” (p. 37).

Clearly the coming years will continue to see China assert its influence on the affairs of its neighbors as part of its grand design. With this in mind as we look at current events in this region we can understand their significance.

Unrest in the Pacific islands

Since 1998, the Indonesian archipelago has been going through significant change and upheaval. The autocratic rule of President Suharto was replaced by the regime of newly elected President Abdurrachman Wahid. His short term has seen separatist movements unravel Indonesia’s fragile unity. Last September the former Portuguese colony of East Timor voted for independence. Evacuating Indonesian troops carried out a



Source: The CIA World Factbook

vicious revenge upon the inhabitants. Today, while trying to rebuild with the help of United Nations’ troops, tiny East Timor is a shambles. Moreover, Indonesia faces continuing separatist movements.

Closer to the all-important Malaccan strait is Aceh. Inhabitants of this region have long sought their independence. Before Indonesia was formed, they fought the Dutch for the right of sovereignty. Since the 1950s, a strong independence movement has sought autonomy from greater Indonesia, which presents a major challenge to the stability of the Wahid government.

Other regions of Indonesia are seeing the rising tide of separatism, which threatens to fragment this country of 13,000 islands, containing 300 ethnic groups with 365 languages. Recent fighting in the northern Moluccas resulted in the imposition of martial law and the call by some for international intervention.

Although further to the east and not a part of Indonesia, the small island of Fiji has also been racked with civil unrest, as the majority Fijian population have lashed out at the dominating economic and political influence of the Indian inhabitants. An attempted coup and political hostage taking has resulted in an ongoing drama.

Decades of fragile unity are unraveling in an area of the world that few understand.

A potentially important chapter

Stratfor's Global Intelligence Update of June 12, 2000, put these isolated events into a broader perspective. "It is therefore startling to step back and realize that with these two crises, a virtually unbroken belt of instability now stretches from the Straits of Malacca in western Indonesia to the south central Pacific.

"It is easy to dismiss this as an interesting coincidence. And it may well be that purely local forces exploded simultaneously. Nevertheless, the strategic implications of events may be very real, if not at all intended by the actors involved. Alone each of these events means little. But taken as a whole, they could threaten commercial shipping—and naval traffic. If, in the course of a few years, hostile forces emerge in control of these islands and portions of Indonesia, the world will find every reason to care.

"But what power would be in a position to benefit from this situation? There is but one: China. The government in Beijing is clearly intent on becoming the dominant East Asian power; it has an interest in keeping U.S. forces at bay and it has the means to take advantage. So long as American fleets lurk just over the horizon, China will fail in its ability to redraw a new regional order."

The article goes on to show the possible ways China could take advantage of a breakdown in the region and assert control. The countries that stand to lose the most in such a global power shift—the United States, Australia and New Zealand—are not taking the critical steps necessary to prevent such long-term threats. It concludes by saying, "A potentially important chapter is opening in the Pacific." How important may be better understood by a look at what Bible prophecy says about the future of the modern-day descendants of ancient Israel.

Students of biblical prophecy who understand the identity of Israel in the end time, will focus on the prophecies made to Abraham and his descendants concerning the possession of certain

"gates." God made this promise to Abraham first in Genesis 22:17, where it says, "...and your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies." This is repeated to Rebekah in Genesis 24:60: "Our sister, may you become the mother of thousands of ten thousands; and may your descendants possess the gates of those who hate them."

Traditionally these gates have been understood to be land and sea passages that controlled access to larger geographic regions and allowed one nation to control and influence trade, travel and political and cultural affairs of other countries.

Historically, the modern descendants of Israel, with Britain (Ephraim) and America (Manasseh) leading the way, have held control of many such gates scattered around the globe. Events of the past two hundred years have seen a remarkable collection of such possessions play a major role in the ascendant power of the two nations.

Gibraltar, which stands at the western gate of the Mediterranean Sea, is still today a British possession. The Suez Canal, once called "the backbone of the British Empire" came into British control during the late 19th century. At its peak, the British Empire controlled or influenced such major world "gates" as Hong Kong, the Khyber Pass, the Cape of Good Hope and many others. Possession of these strategic points helped create and maintain the economic and military dominance of the British Empire.

Similarly, the United States acquired control of key points that helped it grow into a great single power. The United States has taken up the power vacuum left behind by the demise of the British Empire in the 20th century. The Panama Canal, a modern engineering marvel, is one such example. With the Strait of Malacca, the power of the U.S. Navy insures unhindered passage of both Western and Eastern commercial interests.

What will the future bring?

The past decade has seen the American military begin withdrawing

from Asia. In 1992 the navy shut down its huge base at Subic Bay in the Philippines. This was its largest repair and fueling station in the Pacific. Okinawa in Japan is another major U.S. military installation. Japanese protests over this presence are a recurring problem, which creates pressure to withdraw. Recent reunification talks between North and South Korea highlight the presence of U.S. peacekeeping troops that have been there since the end of the Korean War. Should those two nations reunite, there would be no compelling political reason for the American troops to stay. The pressure to leave would be very strong.

In Leviticus 26:19, God says to Israel that because of sin and breaking of divine law there would be a breaking of the "pride of your power...." The dual nature of this prophecy applies to modern descendants of Israel as well.

Though no one would say that modern day Manasseh's (U.S.) power has been completely broken—indeed America straddles the world today as the sole superpower—there is a part of this prophecy that is instructive. In verse 17, God says, "I will set My face against you, and you shall be defeated by your enemies. Those who hate you shall reign over you, *and you shall flee when no one pursues you.*"

The United States and Britain have reaped the blessings of their forefather Abraham. Their unprecedented wealth and global influence is traced to the obedience of that man. Today, the moral fiber of these nations has the cancer of greed and immorality, which has severely eroded national will.

Empires fall for a variety of reasons. A common cause is a loss of will, the inner impulse to expand or to defend and preserve core values and national principles. Part of Britain's retreat from its empire was due to its lack of desire and conviction to maintain the far-flung territories gained at a different time by another generation. Today, other nations are watching America to see if it has the will to defend its founding principles on the world scene. The balance of power in today's world depends on that outcome. ❖

The Politics of Education: “It’s Not the Money, Stupid!”

“It’s the economy, stupid!” was Clinton’s theme in 1992. One of the greatest issues arising out of the current U.S. presidential election is the crisis in education. Most proposals include injecting large sums of money into the current educational system. But money alone will not bring the desired results.

by Cecil E. Maranville

“**T**he U.S. educational system gets a failing grade” is commonly acknowledged. What can be done about it? How can we make the schools “stay after school” until they bring their grades up? This is a broad issue with numerous ramifications and complexities. Should more teachers be hired, so class sizes can be cut and the teacher-student ratio improved? Should teachers be paid a better salary, in order to retain the good ones and attract high caliber ones from other professions? Do classrooms need to be “wired” for Internet access and equipped with the latest technology? Should children with behavior problems be separated from the normal student population? Should tax dollars fund private schools, if they can provide a better education than public schools do?

All of these strate-

gies have been suggested—and implemented on small scales in various parts of the country. They all have one thing in common—a high price tag. Cost to taxpayers will be in the multiple billions of dollars. Both presidential candidates of the major parties proffer a large influx of federal money to address the problems. That’s the first thought—reach for the checkbook, especially with the burgeoning federal budget surplus.

But will more money produce the desired result? Congress already passed the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 2000, allocating \$1.3 billion for “class size reduction.”

However, few seem to realize that class sizes in public schools *have actually been declining* over the past 30 years. In 1970, the average class contained 22.3 students. Today, the average is 17 students per teacher (syndicated columnist Mona Charen, “Who Needs Computers in Schools,” June 27, 2000, emphasis added).

Has student performance improved? The “National Assessment of Educational Progress, the gold-standard test of academic achievement given every two years to students in grades four, eight and 12 nationwide, shows *no discernible educational benefit* in reading scores for children in smaller classes” (ibid., emphasis added).

Missing dimension in education

One of the presidential candidates, campaigning in California, was chided by a member of the audience for not proposing even more money for education. He replied that spending money wasn’t the only solution to educational problems. How true that is! A good education is not directly proportional to the amount of

Both presidential candidates of the major parties proffer a large influx of federal money to address the problems in education.



money spent on it! There is a missing dimension in education, and it's not dollars.

Three phenomena have affected the U.S. educational system greatly: working mothers, single mothers and feminism. They all relate to "the missing dimension in education."

Regardless of the quality of care provided to infants, no program and no human being can replace the good accomplished by the full-time presence of a mother. Until recently, few studies had linked this unique mother-care with educational performance.

"An extensive study of child development suggests that children's educational achievement can be significantly held back if their mothers work," reported Ed Crooks in a May 15, 2000, article in *The Financial Times*. He was referring to a survey of over 4,000 children in the U.S. published by the non-partisan National Bureau of Economic Research.

The survey discovered that the full-time presence of the mother in the life of a young child is essential for optimum verbal and math skill development. The child's first year is apparently critical in the development of verbal ability, and his or her first three years in the development of math skills.

"Earlier studies, both in the U.S. and elsewhere, have found that working mothers had little effect on child development. But [the author of the report] says these have generally used smaller samples and controlled for fewer factors..." (ibid., p. 1).

Single-mother homes

The article also noted that "the involvement of fathers in bringing up young children also appears to be important." What does this have to do with educational performance? Much. It is widely known that high divorce rates have increased the number of single-parent (usually the mother) homes. The National Fatherhood Institute reported that 18 million children lived in single-parent homes in 1995 (Melinda Sacks, "Fatherhood in the '90s: Kids of Absent Fathers More 'at

Risk,'" *San Jose Mercury News*, October 29, 1995).

But how does this relate to the school issue? "The impact of parental divorce and subsequent father absence in the wake of this event has long been thought to affect children quite negatively. For instance, parental divorce and father loss has been associated with difficulties in school adjustment" (Thomas S. Parish, "Children's Self Concepts: Are They Affected by Parental Divorce and Remarriage?" *Journal of Social Behavior and Personality*, 1987, Vol. 2, No. 4, pp. 559-562, quoted on fathermag.com).

Societal pressures and trends have encouraged women to remove themselves and their children from the children's father. At the same time, government programs have encouraged industry to make it easier and more profitable

A good education is not directly proportional to the amount of money spent on it! There is a missing dimension in education, and it's not dollars.

for women to care for a family without a husband. That's not to say it is easy—more on that in a moment.

First, look at the facts: 85 percent of all children that exhibit behavioral disorders come from fatherless homes (Centers for Disease Control). Children from fatherless homes are *20 times more likely* to have behavioral disorders than those from homes with a father and mother. A University of Michigan study showed that 63 percent of children whose parents had divorced suffered subjective psychological problems such as anxiety, sadness, pronounced moodiness, phobias and depression. And 56 percent had poor grades or grades substantially below ability and/or past performance.

(Statistics from "Fatherless Homes Breed Violence," p. 1 and "Fatherless Homes Statistics," p. 1, *Fathering Magazine*, fathermag.com.)

It *should be* self-evident that the children populating our schools have come from our nation's homes. As goes the health of our homes, so goes the behavioral health of our nation's students.

"Because schools reflect the families from which pupils come, school discipline was bound to worsen as more broken families resulted in more troubled or badly reared children" (columnist George Will, "Schools Beset by Lawyers and Shrinks," June 15, 2000).

A further negative spin-off to the single-mother home is poverty, which spawns poor performance in all areas of life, including academics. "A new study by the Centre [British spelling] of Budget and Policy Priorities, a Washington think-tank, suggests that America's poorest families, those headed by single women, have fallen more deeply into poverty" (*The Economist*, August 28, 1999).

Again, it's not a matter of opening the public purse and doling out more dollars. Dependency on welfare perpetuates itself, rather than developing the kind of moral character that a family needs to succeed in life. Besides, the amount of money required to bring a single-mother home up to the economic standard of a two-parent home is staggering. A University of California at Santa Barbara study quotes economists' estimates that "it requires an increase in family income of *approximately \$50,000* to counter the father's absence" (UCSB press release, "Study Finds Teen Pregnancy and Crime Levels Are Higher Among Kids From Fatherless Homes," *Father Magazine*, fathermag.com, p. 1).

Consequences of feminism

Enter the consequences of two decades of feminism. Evidence of feminism from Christina Sommer's book, *The War Against Boys*, is related by columnist John Leo:

"Sommer's book is packed with examples of the anti-male attitudes that

pervade the public schools. At University High School in Pacific Heights, Calif., boys must sit quietly through a 'Women's Assembly,' in which women are celebrated and men are blamed. Boys in one San Francisco class are regularly put through feminist paces—made to enjoy quilting, forced to listen as girls vent their anger at males. When Barbara Wilder Smith, a teacher and researcher in the Boston area, made 'Boys Are Good' T-shirts for her class, all 10 female teachers under her supervision strongly objected to the message. One of the 10 was wearing a button saying 'So many men, so little intelligence.'"

Leo adds: "Teachers know that girls are better suited to schooling. So, if you want to teach boys, allowances must be made. One of the tragedies of the last 20 years or so is that school systems are increasingly unwilling to make those allowances. Instead, in the wake of the feminist movement, they have absorbed anti-male attitudes.... They are now more likely to see ordinary boy behavior as something dangerous that must be reined in. Or they may tighten the screws on boys by drafting extraordinarily broad zero-tolerance and sexual-harassment policies. Worse, they may simply decide that the most active boys are suffering from attention deficit disorder and dope them up with Ritalin...."

"We spent most of the 1990s fretting about bogus research claiming that schools were shortchanging and damaging girls, when the truth is that boys are the ones in trouble.

"Boys were much more likely than girls to have problems with schoolwork, repeat a grade, get suspended and develop learning difficulties. In some schools, boys account for up to three-fourths of 'special-education' classes. They are... four to nine times more likely to be drugged with Ritalin. Student polls show that both girls and boys say their teachers like the girls more and punish the boys more often.

"Girls get better grades than boys, take more rigorous courses, and now attend college in much greater numbers. While the traditional advantage of

boys over girls in math and science has narrowed..., the advantage of girls over boys in reading and writing is large and stable. In writing achievement, 11th-grade boys score at the level of eighth-grade girls. The Department of Education reported this year: 'There is evidence that the female advantage in school performance is real and persistent.' The school failure of so many boys, magnified and fanned by anti-male hostility, is a severe social problem" (columnist John Leo, "It's Tough to Be a Boy in American Schools," July 10, 2000).

"Boys are wired differently," says Michael Gurian, family therapist and author of *The Wonder of Boys*, "noting what he sees as the boy's natural inclination to be more competitive, aggressive risktakers—tendencies which can be interpreted as misbehavior. 'It's the teacher's job to create a classroom environment that accommodates both male and female energy, not just mainly female energy'" (Brad Knickerbocker, "Young and Male in America: It's Hard Being a Boy," *The Christian Science Monitor*, April 29, 1999, p. 2).

Children oppress, women rule, leaders mislead

In a long ago prophecy of the consequences of moral corruption of a nation, God warned His people, "As for My people, children are their oppressors, and women rule over them. O My people! Those who lead you cause you to err, and destroy the way of your paths" (Isaiah 3:12).

Children, whose lives have been scrambled by incomplete homes and who have been abused by a society confused about sexual identity, truly have become oppressors. Their behavior is making them unteachable and the teaching profession untenable. Women are often the sole authority figures in the home; men are largely absent. Not a *feminine*, but a *feminist* philosophy leads education.

One of the primary reasons why it is difficult to obtain and retain good teachers is the fact that schools are not safe places in which to work. Students

are increasingly violent in their behavior and less inclined to subject themselves to the discipline of a learning environment. They cause an unsafe environment and one in which both learning and teaching are impossible. Gifted teachers who love their profession are being driven from the classroom, but not over pay issues. More dollars in their paychecks cannot compensate for the unworkable circumstances.

How long will it take to rectify the current condition? If God's instructions to His model nation of Israel are an indication, it will take at least one generation—one that believes and lives by godly values, which in turn passes those values on to its children. Then children will be teachable. When the Israelites were poised to enter the Promised Land, God explained how they could ensure a peaceful society:

"Now this is the commandment, and these are the statutes and judgments which the LORD your God has commanded to teach you, that you may observe them in the land which you are crossing over to possess, that you may fear the LORD your God, to keep all His statutes and His commandments which I command you, you and your son and your grandson, all the days of your life, and that your days may be prolonged. Therefore hear, O Israel, and be careful to observe it, that it may be well with you, and that you may multiply greatly as the LORD God of your fathers has promised you—'a land flowing with milk and honey.'..."

"And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates" (Deuteronomy 6:1-9).

"It's not the money" that will solve the educational problems of America. When its homes are healthy again, then its schools will pass the grade. ❖

Hollywood and History

The movie industry may not always accurately represent history, but it has played a role in shaping it.

by Melvin Rhodes

Most people today won't remember Mrs. Miniver, but she played a major role in swaying American public opinion toward Great Britain immediately before Pearl Harbor.

Who was Mrs. Miniver? A figment of somebody's imagination, as played by actress Greer Garson.

Mrs. Miniver, in the film of that name, was a middle-class English housewife in a remote country area caught up in Dunkirk and the Battle of Britain, when Nazi Germany came very close to adding Great Britain to its lengthening list of vassal states.

America was neutral during the first 27 months of the war. Hollywood wanted to change that. The movie capital was then in its greatest and most influential period. The year war broke out in Europe, 1939, is still often referred to as Hollywood's greatest year, the year of *Gone With the Wind*, *Stagecoach*, *Gunga Din*, *Wuthering Heights* and *The Wizard of Oz*.

Hollywood had so many English actors that the city boasted its own cricket team and the phone directory, oblivious to the ban on titles dating back to the beginnings of the American republic, carried a long list of titled stars. The younger actors deserted the city at the outbreak of war, returning to Britain, Canada and Australia, volunteering to fight for "King and Country." The women and older male actors were encouraged to remain to influence American public opinion.

They were not the only ones wanting America to enter the war—the movie moguls had the same idea.

Many were Jewish and were deeply concerned about Hitler's anti-Semitic policies, even before details of the extermination camps were revealed.

These movie moguls set about changing public opinion, not an easy task when the 1940 election was fought on the issue of keeping America out of the war. Eventually they were helped, of course, by Pearl Harbor, but not before they had made some very influential movies. Patriotic

movies, drawing on British and American history, were made throughout the war, inspiring the people to victory. Winston Churchill was so inspired by the 1941 movie *That Hamilton Woman* (British title: *Lady Hamilton*) that he watched the movie every night as he crossed the Atlantic to meet with President Roosevelt. The movie was set during the war against Napoleon, a previous European despot set on conquering the world.

The power of film

The power of film had been realized long before World War II. The 1915 silent movie *Birth of a Nation*, considered the most influential movie of all time, still influences racial thinking in America to this day.

Nor were the United States and Britain the only nations to realize the power of film. Hitler's propaganda machine was churning out movies depicting Jews as the stereotypical fat, immoral bankers exploiting good-looking, blonde, blue-eyed Aryan "volk."

Stalin's master of propaganda was Sergei Eisenstein who was asked to inspire the Russian people by drawing on heroes from their history, examples of Russian leaders who stood up to foreign conquerors as Stalin was doing. Movies like *Alexander Nevsky* (victorious over the Germanic Teutonic Knights in 1242) and *Ivan the Terrible* were made at this time. Eisenstein included his own propaganda against Stalin in the second part of *Ivan the Terrible* by showing the 16th century Russian leader's creeping insanity. The public could see the similarity with their wartime leader.

The power of television and film cannot be doubted. Why else would advertisers spend millions of dollars for a few moments of television time? But do we realize how much we are influenced by what we see?

Do we stop and think as we watch a movie, questioning its accuracy and asking ourselves what this film might be doing to us, how it could be influencing our minds?

Do we stop and think as we watch a movie, questioning its accuracy and asking ourselves how it could be influencing our minds?

There's an interesting contrast between movies made in Hollywood's heyday and movies made in the last four decades. Morally, older movies were usually sound. Some did deal with adult themes like adultery, but the subject was usually handled discreetly, so that any children present in the theater would not be negatively affected. Today, movies are explicit and leave little, if anything, to the imagination.

Politically, Hollywood has done a total about-face, a 180-degree turn. Movies made in the '30s and '40s often had a patriotic theme, glorifying American and British history. This served to unite the people and make them proud of their citizenship, preparing them for the inevitability of another conflict with the forces of despotism. Movies made in the last 40 years do the exact opposite—they expose and often exaggerate the mistakes of the past to advance a liberal agenda. Political correctness rules.

Isaiah 5:20–21 could be applied to this time of political correctness and revisionist history. “Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; who put darkness for light, and light for darkness; who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight!” Everything has been turned upside down. History has been rewritten.

If you want to see what a difference 30 years made, watch the 1936 U.S. version of *The Charge of the Light Brigade*, then follow it with the 1968 British version. The two movies depict the same battle, but each with a totally different emphasis.

Based on a true story?

Hollywood is not in the business of teaching history. The 1932 film *Rasputin and the Empress* is famous for two reasons. One is that it was the only film to star the three Barrymores, famous in American theater at the time. The other reason it's famous is that the movie was besieged by lawsuits. The real murderer of the evil Rasputin, Russian Prince Felix Yousupov, took MGM to court where he was awarded what was, in 1932, a princely sum of \$1 million. MGM had taken

considerable dramatic license depicting much fiction as fact. The movie led to the habit of most movies carrying a warning in small print after the credits: “The characters in this movie are fictitious. Any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, is purely coincidental.”

In more modern times, historical movies will often show the words “Based on a true story” near the beginning of the movie. This is the entertainment equivalent of a health warning. “Based on...” should read “Loosely based on...,” because most such movies are far from factual.

While researching a recent article on the 55-day siege of Western embassies in Peking that took place a century ago, I watched the 1962 movie *55 Days at Peking*. Although a siege lasting 55 days did take place in history, there is little in the movie that is accurate. A Russian countess was even created just to provide Charlton Heston with a diversion while taking on the challenge of the Boxers.

The recently released *U571* caused quite a stir in England. The movie depicts an American submarine crew that captures a German U-boat in 1942 and breaks the Enigma Code—a major breakthrough in World War II. “Based on a true story,” the actual incident involved a British submarine crew and took place in 1941 before the U.S. entered the war. Hollywood sent researchers over to England to research the story, interviewing the British commander. Nothing was said about the significant change that was to be made in depicting this exciting story. An upcoming movie on the German wartime prison of Colditz depicts American escapees when no Americans were ever incarcerated there. British prisoners of war did, in fact, escape from the prison.

Another recent movie has led to considerable criticism on the eastern side of the Atlantic Ocean. The movie *The Patriot* shows Mel Gibson taking on the British army during the Revolutionary War. The movie depicts a number of atrocities by the British, including the burning of a church full of innocent civilians, mostly women and children. The nature of war brings out atrocities on all sides, yet there is no recorded instance of anything like

this occurring during the American Revolution. It wasn't until 1943 that such an incident took place, when Nazi forces burned down a church full of French civilians. As one reviewer on National Public Radio put it, “If we depict the British as Nazis, then the Nazis become ordinary.”

Here lies the danger

Just as movies in the '30s and early '40s tended to bring the United States and Great Britain together, recent movies can only undermine an alliance that was pivotal to the peace and stability of the world during the last century. When the British (or rather, the English) are depicted as Nazis in movies like *Braveheart* and *The Patriot*, it's easy to understand how people in Washington can overlook the history of nations like Germany and Japan and seek closer alliances with them at the expense of their traditional ally in London.

What should a Christian do?

The Bible says a great deal about “truth.” One of God's grievances against Israel in Hosea chapter 4 is that “there is no truth” in the land (Hosea 4:1). The following verse reads like a description of contemporary movies: “By swearing and lying, killing and stealing and committing adultery, they break all restraint, with bloodshed upon bloodshed.” Movies built largely or solely on such gratuitous content should be avoided by all Christians—and we should be circumspect about any movie that we watch. Philippians 4:8 reminds us that “whatever things are true... noble... just... pure... lovely... of good report; if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy, meditate on these things.”

When it comes to truth, realize that no movie has depicted historical events with total accuracy. The degree of accuracy varies from movie to movie. The book of Proverbs tells us to “buy the truth, and do not sell it” (Proverbs 23:23). The verse adds “also wisdom and instruction and understanding.” An interesting movie can inspire us to seek further instruction and understanding which, in turn, lead us to greater wisdom on the subject.

(See “**HOLLYWOOD**,” page 11)

The Crisis of Third World Debt

Since the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank began their “debt relief” programs, most Heavily Indebted Poor Countries have moved more deeply into debt.

by Graemme Marshall

Today 52 countries are listed as HIPC (Heavily Indebted Poor Countries) and the number of people in extreme poverty increases daily. Despite some forgiveness, the remaining debt burden still stands around \$216 billion. Meanwhile, in those countries, millions of people are starving or sinking towards starvation. Why does the problem of debt remain, even after substantial relief? What are the enormous global challenges involved with forgiveness of debt, and what is the prophetic solution?

The Jubilee 2000 campaign to forgive HIPC debt

In 1990, a petition was started among students at Keele University to present to the UN secretary-general about the debt problem. Two thousand students signed it, and in 1993 a small charity, Jubilee 2000, was launched, drawing for its title the biblical injunction about debt forgiveness. It has amassed 20 million signatures and expects to surpass the 22.5 million mark of the largest petition ever, that of the anti-apartheid campaign. Its deadline is December 2000, and its object is to force agreement among international financial institutions that it is possible to cancel debt. But not all nations are in agreement that forgiveness of debt is the answer.

What is feared is that unresolved Third World debt will further widen the gap between the rich and poor, the “haves” and the “have nots.” Some believe that to allow this to happen at a time of immense change through globalization and other fundamental shifts in societal attitudes would be dangerous for everyone. Jubilee 2000 aims to use its 20 million plus supporters as political leverage so a minimally decent life can be had for over one billion people, as they enter the new millennium.

It’s noble but prophetically doomed to failure. The real way (and revolutionary in man’s view) is the biblical jubilee—but administered as God originally intended.

Bill Peters is cofounder of Jubilee 2000 and vice president of the Jubilee 2000 coalition. In an article on the Third World debt crisis, he suggests a radical solution is required. He gives reasons why urgent reforms of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) are overdue (*Round Table*, Issue 354, April 2000, p. 195). Here are what he sees as stumbling blocks to the process.

Major problems

Balance the budget insistence: IMF guidelines often insist debtor countries balance their budgets in order to gain monetary assistance. This invariably leads indebted governments to cut back on easy targets like health, education and sanitation, and sets back immeasurably health and education programs carefully built up over the previous 30 years.

Switch to exports: Repeatedly, the 52 countries have been urged to switch, particularly in agriculture, from production for the domestic market to production for export. Aside from its effect on the domestic cost of living, this inevitably causes a swing in the trade of the economies involved.

Institutional optimism: The International Finance Institutions (IFIs), along with the IMF and World Bank, are too removed from the cultural problems of Africa and predict in rosy terms what they believe aid will accomplish. In 1988, the World Bank predicted that by 1995, sub-Saharan Africa would owe about \$29 billion. In fact by 1995, sub-Saharan Africa’s debt had risen to \$129 billion.

In 1993 a small charity, Jubilee 2000, was launched, drawing for its title the biblical injunction about debt forgiveness. It has amassed 20 million signatures....

Interest rates keep rising: For 41 HIPC countries, the first two years of debt relief they received was wiped out by rising interest rates on the remaining debt they owed.

Corruption: Although careful note is taken of corruption in IFI planning, large scale dishonesty by prime offenders, the leaders of nations, still goes unchecked. Bill Peters cites Zaire as a case in point. During the Cold War, Zaire was considered crucial for the balance of Western power in Africa. For decades, large amounts of IMF and World Bank (WB) funds were funneled there. Yet a very small percentage of this went into the Zairean economy (*ibid.*, p. 201).

In a buttressing illustration, news reports about North Korea suggested upwards of 2 million people died of starvation, although hard-line communist authorities accepted overseas aid. It was diverted for troops instead.

Lack of independent audits of the IMF and WB: Peters further observed that there is no external audit of the IMF or WB in their dealings with HIPCs. He concludes that two organizations with the seeming power to do so much good or evil for other nations are still in a phase of self-regulation. Powerful contractors win bids and feasibility studies are produced at great expense, only to sit on shelves after the payment of hefty contractors' fees.

Although the debt crisis is mostly blamed on inflation and the West's demand for oil, corruption and major inefficiencies also play a big part. Then, too, there is the enormous vested interest of some 20,000 staff in highly paid jobs. Peters states why he considers a radical reform of the WB and IMF is overdue: "In 18 years of working on the problem of poverty and debt in the Third World, it has become clear to me that the *inert mass of establishment figures and supporters* of the status quo in world economic affairs forms the main obstacle to settling a major global injustice" (*ibid.*, p. 204).

An example given was about a simple hut for a fish-farming scheme in Bangladesh. A 40-page project specification was generated in language the builders could not understand. Subsequently, no small contractor could compete. The contract went to rich "bully

boys," locally called *mastaans* ("strongmen") who pushed up the costs.

God's jubilee—the real solution

One incentive for Israel's obedience to God's laws was the promise that they would enjoy such abundance that they could lend to other nations. Notice how God explains it: "For the LORD your God will bless you just as He promised you; you shall lend to many nations, but you shall not borrow; you shall reign over many nations, but they shall not reign over you" (Deuteronomy 15:6).

And further: "The LORD will open to you His good treasure, the heavens, to give the rain to your land in its season, and to bless all the work of your hand. You shall lend to many nations, but you shall not borrow" (Deuteronomy 28:12).

We can be grateful there are countries today that help other nations. Although sadly, it seems a political motive is too often at the foundation of their generosity.

In God's Kingdom, God's blessings, as well as the application of the biblical seventh year release of debt and the 50th year jubilee, will bring a time of prosperity starting with Israel and spreading to the other nations.

"Then you shall see and become radiant, and your heart shall swell with joy; because the abundance of the sea shall be turned to you, the wealth of the Gentiles shall come to you" (Isaiah 60:5).

And again, "But you shall be named the priests of the LORD, they shall call you the servants of our God. You shall eat the riches of the Gentiles, and in their glory you shall boast.

"Instead of your shame you shall have double honor, and instead of confusion they shall rejoice in their portion. Therefore in their land they shall possess double; everlasting joy shall be theirs" (Isaiah 61:6–7).

A cancellation of debt mechanism is coming. Observing the seventh year and the 50th-year jubilee, as God instructed, will accomplish this revolutionary change.

The current noble attempt by the Jubilee 2000 campaign doesn't have the power to bring the lasting changes that the biblical injunction for a millennial reality will achieve. ❖

"HOLLYWOOD," (*Continued from page 9*)

When you've seen a movie depicting historical events, while it's fresh on your mind, take a few minutes to read up on the subject in an encyclopedia or a biographical dictionary, two useful tools to have around the house.

I did this recently after watching the movie *Gladiator*, set in the reign of the Roman Emperor Commodus (180 to 192 A.D.). While the gladiators in the movie were all fictional characters, the emperors Marcus Aurelius and his son Commodus were not. I looked up both in my biographical dictionary and found that the movie portrayed the characters of the two men accurately, but not in every detail. It only took a few minutes and the facts soon replaced the fiction in my mind.

The same with *Braveheart*. I looked up William Wallace and Edward I. I discovered that Wallace died two years before the arrival in England of the Princess of Wales with whom he had a romantic relationship in the movie. In other words, they never knew each other. There were other historical inaccuracies, which I will leave you to discover.

The movie *Elizabeth*, centered on the life of Elizabeth I, was fairly accurate but you would never have guessed she was called "the Virgin Queen" from the movie. Yet a recent biography by Alison Weir, *The Life of Elizabeth I*, gives some sound historical and psychological reasons why she was justifiably given that title. Frequently Hollywood will assume that the morals of people in history were no different from people today.

Remember that Hollywood is there to entertain you. Movies are out to make money, not to teach the facts about history. Never leave the theater or switch off the television thinking that you have the facts. It's far more likely that you haven't.

Coincidentally, the day that I am writing this, newspapers and TV are carrying reports of research on the brain that shows a definite link between reading and remaining mentally alert into old age. The same research says that too much television and movies cause the brain to "go into neutral" and make Alzheimer's more likely in later life. It sounds like a good time to quit watching movies and check out some history books at your library! ❖

In Brief...

World News Review

Future of Jerusalem

“Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: ‘May they prosper who love you. Peace be within your walls, prosperity within your palaces’” (Psalm 122:6–7).

The city of Jerusalem continues to be a focal point during the current peace talks between Palestinians and Israelis. Both sides lay claim to sovereignty over the city which is holy to the three world monotheistic religions, Christianity, Islam and Judaism. Israelis of all political persuasions insist that a united Jerusalem will be the eternal capital of the Jewish state—come what may.

In contrast, Palestinians insist that partial control must be ceded to an Arab authority as part of a comprehensive peace settlement. Part of the city is already controlled by Palestinians and some speculate that a building under construction in east Jerusalem will serve as the capital building for the future Arab government.

Last month’s failed talks at Camp David broke down largely over the issue of the future status of Jerusalem. Both Ehud Barak and Yassir Arafat knew they could not bargain away their positions on the city and hope to effect a peace settlement with their peoples.

On July 23 Pope John Paul II spoke out on the religious importance of Jerusalem. From his summer home in Castel Gandolfo he urged the parties, “not to overlook the importance of the spiritual dimension of the city of Jerusalem...” The pontiff added, “The Holy See continues to maintain that only a special, internationally guaranteed statute can effectively preserve the most sacred parts of the Holy City and ensure freedom of belief and worship for all believers who, in the region and throughout the world, see Jerusalem as the crossroads of peace and coexistence” (*L’Osservatore Romano*, July 26, 2000).

The Vatican, as a sovereign entity and in the interest of peace, could offer its unique services to resolve this generational conflict between the descendants of Abraham. Daniel 9:26–27 clearly shows that at the time of the end conflict over religious issues will play a critical role in the stability of this city.

Proposed French Law Anti-Religion?

A bill working its way through the French legislature has provoked concerns in religious groups around

the world. Ostensibly responding to the horrific mass suicides of Solar Temple sect members in Canada, Switzerland and France, the French Socialist Party has introduced what they call “anti-sect legislation.” On the surface, it sounds responsible. Beneath the surface, it looks like legislated atheism.

On the drafted list of sects are smaller and controversial religious groups such as the Jehovah’s Witnesses, Scientologists and Unificationists. However, also included is a large Baptist denomination. All together the list names 173 groups considered “dangerous” in France. Germany, Austria and Belgium also created commissions to draft similar lists. The YWCA was included on the Belgian list!

Is this responsible legislation—or overreaching by a minority prejudiced against all faiths?

The core of the proposed legislation is an attempt to outlaw “mental manipulation” of the public through “religious proselytizing.” The law doesn’t clarify who would determine what either mental manipulation or proselytizing is, but one thing is certain—the French are serious. The penalty for these “criminal acts” is imprisonment for up to two years!

As written, the law would empower the government to shut down a religious group when two representatives are found guilty of one legal infraction.

American religious freedom advocates are protesting the French law, and officials of the U.S. State Department have spoken with French lawmakers over concerns. The Catholic pontiff called on the French news media to “be vigilant and to treat fairly and objectively the different religious denominations,” although he did not specifically address the proposed French law or the legislators.

So far, the EU has not followed the French lead in creating a blacklist against small religions. Since the United Church of God, *an International Association*, would be categorized as “a small religion” and considered out of the mainstream of religion, we are concerned about the actions of the French—and potentially the Germans, Austrians and Belgians. Is this a precursor of prophesied legislative controls over religion? See Revelation 13:11–18.

Source: *The Washington Times*.

Same-Sex Minority Has “Majority Voice”

A small minority of the U.S. population that is homosexual continues to wield undue influence on American law and the U.S. economy. Minutes after the state’s so-called “civil union legislation” took effect, two women in the small southern Vermont town of Brattleboro stood before a justice of the peace. Justice T. Hunter Wilson pronounced, “By the powers vested in me by the state of Vermont, I join you in civil union.”

Reuter’s headlined it as “U.S. Gays Tie Historic Knot in Midnight Marriage.” So much for the careful crafting that Vermont legislators put into the law to avoid lending its approval to same-sex marriages. Encouraged by the Green Mountain lawmakers, a gay New York state senator is drafting a bill similar to the Vermont civil union law. Openly gay Rhode Island legislator Michael Pisaturo is intent on leading his state to expand marriage law to include homosexual couples.

Reuter’s coverage of the Brattleboro union reads like a society page piece report on a wedding, giving detailed descriptions of what each of the women wore.

In a related story, Subaru launched an ad campaign that targets the homosexual market. The slogan—“It’s not a choice. It’s the way we’re built”—would not necessarily catch the ear of the uninitiated. But it was carefully worded to market the Subaru product to homosexuals. One of the ad campaign’s developers explained that it’s apparent to gay people, while straight people would not know what’s going on.

“Subaru has become so successful at attracting gay customers that some drivers consider themselves members of a ‘club,’ in which fellow Subaru owners share an implied message in their cars’ brand,” reports Kimberly Palmer of *The Washington Post*. The CEO of a gay marketing firm said, “We call [Subarus] Lesbarus” (ibid.).

To appeal to the gay community, Subaru contracted with tennis great Martina Navratilova, a lesbian activist, to pitch their product.

In another related story, in the name of “fairness,” the city of Phoenix, Arizona, recently decided to extend the benefits it provides to its married employees to those employees in same-sex unions—a small minority of its workforce. The central Arizona county of Maricopa quickly followed with an announcement that it is considering doing the same for its employees.

Sources: AP, Reuter’s, *The Washington Post*, *The Arizona Republic*.

Terrorism Potential in Three Widely Different Areas

Three widely different areas that are vulnerable to terrorism have been in the news of late.

The Internet could be rendered unusable if only 4 per-

cent of its nodes were shut down, reported AP science writer Matthew Fordahl on July 27. The Internet is an interconnected web of computers spanning the globe. Like a blocked human blood vessel can be bypassed to keep needed blood moving, information will circumnavigate blocked nodes for the most part.

However, the Internet relies on a few key nodes that are so highly connected that they cannot be bypassed. Should those key points be attacked by terrorists, the entire World Wide Web could be shut down. Nothing like that has happened yet, although a number of relatively minor acts of criminal sabotage have occurred. CNN.com, Yahoo! and Amazon.com have all come under attack.

These essential nodes are scattered around the world and are generally in highly secure areas—but nothing can be totally secure. All it takes is enough money to finance a major assault on the Internet to bring it down. Fordahl’s article was a summary of a University of Notre Dame study on the susceptibility of the Internet to terrorist attack reported on in the journal *Nature*.

In an area more commonly thought of when one hears the word *terrorist*, the Middle East must concern itself with what the Stratfor Global Intelligence Service calls “a new terrorist dynamic.” For years, the Hezbollah guerrillas, sponsored by Iran, have attacked the Israelis in Lebanon. Since the Israelis have now pulled out of Lebanon, there are indications that Hezbollah is linking up with the Hamas—the Palestinian Islamic Resistance Movement.

Arms traffic and strategic coordination between the two terrorist groups signifies the likelihood of coordinated violent operations against the Israelis in the West Bank. Hamas’ ultimate objective, also sponsored by Iran, is the creation of an Islamic state. Their targets are largely civilian.

The threat of violence is a concern in itself. Additionally, Syria wants to forge peace with Israel, and the ability of recently confirmed President Bashar Assad to control the Hezbollah will be an important test of his foreign policy capability.

The third area declared susceptible to terrorism is the U.S. capital. The National Park Service commissioned a counterterrorism study that concluded that Washington, D.C.’s monuments are vulnerable to attack by terrorists. Equally sobering is the study’s assessment that the police force responsible for protecting the monuments is ill-equipped to prevent such action.

Millions visit the U.S. capital every year. Entrances to monuments are often left unlocked and unguarded. The U.S. Park Police force is undermanned and underfunded. And the United States enjoys an open and free society. All of these factors, combined with the obvious shock value of targeting Washington, D.C., make it an area of increasing concern to counterterrorist strategists.

Sources: AP, Stratfor.com, *The Washington Post*.

Contributors: Darris McNeely, Cecil E. Maranville

“OURS,” (Continued from page 16)

ed for a Ustashe concentration camp at Sisak designed for young Serbs. Watson describes vividly that “dysentery was a common killer in the filthy camp. Children often went days without food, and the gruel they were fed was frequently poisoned with caustic soda according to survivors’ testimonies.” About 4,000 of the 7,000 little “residents” would die.

The numbers would have been higher except for the clandestine and extremely dangerous efforts of Red Cross volunteers working secretly with Yugoslavia’s Communist underground in rescuing as many as possible and planting them as domestic servants or farm hands in the homes of Croatians, whose brethren had liquidated these children’s parents. As Watson shares, “this rescue effort relied on people working under code names in secret cells coordinated both in simple farm houses as well as aristocratic homes.”

After some time in Sisak, a man came to find a servant girl for his elderly grandmother and chose Dora (who was older than her nieces). Dora began to cry. So much so that a Red Cross volunteer, Stefica Prpic, was moved to intervene and take both of them. Unfortunately, this act of kindness was a day late for little 3-year-old Dragica who had died the day before. Nena realizes to this day that her aunt’s crying saved her life. Her aunt knew that Nena’s fate, if left alone, would be the same that befell Dragica. Prpic asked her sister and her sister’s husband, Barbara and Josip Jandricko, to find a home for Nena. The childless couple looked no further than themselves and took Nena to her new home, a one-room wooden shack.

But this would only be the beginning of the challenges that lay ahead. As Watson shares the now intertwined story of Nena and the Jandrickos, he tells of the probing questions of the local Ustashe snoop named Perkovic, who started asking questions about the village’s latest arrival.

The Jandrickos insisted that Nena was their niece, but Perkovic didn’t buy their line. He insisted that the entire family be rounded up as Communists for defying the official dogma that Serbs were enemies of the state along with Jews and Gypsies. Death was a very real possibility until a local notary public put his life on the line as well by guaranteeing that Nena was a full-blooded Croat. While that was sufficient for the moment to quiet the local fascists, the Jandrickos had little Nena repeat over and over again her phony Croatian parents’ names. As reporter

Watson puts it so powerfully, “to stay alive, she had to deny who she was!”

Meet Tilia Durieux

The name Tilia Durieux may not be on the tip of our tongues, but this well-known Croatian silent screen and stage star shared a role in a greater saga, the saving of Serb children. She spent most of the war in Zagreb after her husband, Jewish industrialist Ludwig Katzenellenbogen, was arrested and sent to his death in Germany’s Sachsenhausen concentration camp.

She took up residence with an old friend, a wealthy heiress named Zlata Lubienski, who was also in the “underground.” Their lovely residence, whose interior was bedecked with Renoir and Chagall paintings, became a favorite social stop for Nazi officers. Durieux secretly buried records of Serb children’s identities so that, one day, those who survived could know who they really were.

During the war, meat was so hard to come by that she raised rabbits, 70 of them in the yard, which gave her a good excuse to work in the dirt of the garden each day. This allowed her to conceal lists of more Serb children’s names and other vital documents. Working “life” into the soil with her bare hands and a child’s shovel under the

very eyes of their tormentors ultimately gave her the underground code name of “Puma,” denoting a stealthy mountain lion as black as her own hair.

But “her secrets,” which could have cost her dearly, were almost discovered near the war’s end. As partisan guerrillas pressed closer to Zagreb, a German major showed up in the mansion’s garden looking for the best place to set up five machine guns. “To my horror,” Durieux wrote, “one of the places he chose was the one where I usually buried the bottles with the fatal content.” She continued to share in her own words, “I was very close to fainting, but came to my senses quickly and smiled at him in a friendly way.” She then helped him to find a “better location.” The “Puma” would live to see another day!

The battle continues after the war

After World War II, the Communist partisans’ leader, Josef Broz Tito, himself a Croat, became Yugoslavia’s



Muzej Revolucije Narodnosti Jugoslavije, courtesy USHMM

Scenes from World War II concentration camps

dictator. As reporter Watson puts it, “he tried to exorcise the demons of ethnic hatred with a strict dogma of brotherhood and unity.”

Nena Koncar could now readily admit who she was. But while Nena’s life was no longer in jeopardy, her way of life was under daily assault. The local school required an Orthodox Serb child to learn the Catholic rites, and it was in a 1947 class that Nena realized for the first time “that something was wrong.” After the first two lessons, Nena did not get her homework right, and her instructor, a priest, gave her a sharp reminder of her place with a slash across two fingers. Then he called her a “*vlach*,” an ethnic slur, that as Watson writes would “cut deeper than the ruler’s edge.” Nena recounts, “He told me that I am an Orthodox child who had no business being there, and with that—with this blood—I arrived home.”

It’s never been easy for Nena and it’s never been easy for the entire area formerly known as Yugoslavia. It’s simply hard to put away “the hate.” As much as Marshal Tito strove to erase ethnic hatreds, it still led to war after his death.

A fountain with seven statues of children playing was raised as a memorial over the site of the Sisak Concentration Camp. Inscribed in a plaque on the fountain was a reminder of this horrific past event lest the local residents forget. But the fountain has remained dry since 1991 and the commemorative plaque was torn down the same year that Croatia and Serbia went to war. The former camp’s main structure where Nena slept on clumps of straw now houses a discotheque called the “Crystal Block of Happiness.” Nena used to go to this spot often to get in touch with her feelings about her long-lost family. When she visits now, it moves her to anger at how quickly the world forgets.

Two people who don’t forget

But Nena Koncar and Barbara Jandricko don’t forget! Nena, who is now well into her 60s, still makes the trek every Saturday and Sunday by bus to see her adoptive mother and gain the support of her Croatian brother, Duro, who is the Jandrickos’ only biological child.

Just like the thankful leper in Jesus’ parable regarding gratefulness, Nena returns often to the source of her childhood rescue. She simply cannot forget the moment of deliverance. The old shack is still there, with newer scars of bullet holes from the latest round of conflict between Serb and Croat in the early ’90s. As reporter Watson so aptly puts it, “Jandricko in her 87 years has survived enough ethnic hatred to ruin several lives, but she has never surrendered to it.”

Yes, it’s simply hard “to put away the hate.” Sometimes, it seems it is just easier to give up or simply join in and be like everyone else. Sometimes in frustration, you almost wish for total removal of the problem. As

Shakespeare so eloquently put it when Romeo and Juliet had both died because of the feud between their families, the Montagues and the Capulets: “a pox on both your houses!”

But, problems don’t go away that easily in real life. There has always been a steady line of heroes who have moved beyond the moment of personal safety to help the refugee.

Pharaoh’s daughter picked up a Hebrew baby. Rahab gave quarter to Hebrew men in an enemy city. Many a person risked everything to be one more link in the “Underground Railroad” moving slaves from bondage to freedom during the time of slavery in America. The Dutch and Danes are renowned for giving refuge to their fellow Jewish citizens during World War II. How many Hutus have given quarter to Tutsis in the mindless genocide in Central Africa? You can be sure there are stories to be shared.

Long ago, David offered a plaintive cry in Psalm 142:4, “Look on my right hand and see, for there is no one who acknowledges me; refuge has failed me; no one cares for my soul.” A reality statement echoed out of a cave where David was hiding. He saw relief in verse 5 by stating, “I cried out to You, O LORD: I said ‘You are my refuge, my portion in the land of the living.’” Since that time there have been many “Davids,” many “caves” and many cries for help.

Yes, on occasion, God sends angels to the rescue. But, I sense that His favorite tool is a human being, be it royalty like Pharaoh’s daughter, a prostitute like Rahab or a former film star like Tilia Durieux. Maybe you are such a person, “a tool in waiting.” He is not limited in the human tools that He uses. What limits God from using us is perhaps our narrow perspectives.

Again, my own perspective was jolted and then enlarged by the story of these two women of the Balkans. It reminded me to never paint an entire people with a broad brush of disdain. Long ago, God told His people in Leviticus 19:33–34, “And if a stranger dwells with you in your land, you shall not mistreat him. The stranger who dwells among you shall be to you as one born among you, and you shall love him as yourself....”

I don’t know if Barbara Jandricko is acquainted with this particular verse in Leviticus, but she is living it daily. In her own words, “It always seemed to me the right thing to do, and God probably made it that way.”

When asked by a visitor talking to both of them about what motivated her 58 years ago to save a young Serb girl’s life, Barbara Jandricko turned to Nena and asked, “How did I take you? I grabbed you with both of my hands and said, ‘she’s ours!’” As Isaiah 30:21 says, “this is the way, walk you in it.”

There are footsteps running from the banks of the Nile to a little shack in the Balkans. Perhaps it’s our turn to take that walk and add a step. ❖

This Is the Way... “She’s Ours”

by Robin Webber

Most of our reading audience is familiar with the wonderful story of the rescue of the baby Moses from the waters of the Nile River. It is a story of daring and courage on the part of several parties. It is a constant reminder that parents will go to incredible lengths to preserve their children from the grips of oppression.

Moses’ name, which literally means “drawn out,” also reminds us it is a two-part equation. Someone else on the other end has to be willing to step forward and literally scoop a little life out of the clutches of death.

But not everyone happens to be Pharaoh’s daughter, and not everyone turns out to be a Moses, and it’s not always a little basket of reeds headed down our personal stream of life that demands within us a discerning spirit towards the preservation of a life.

Nevertheless, this miracle of courage and sacrifice is borne out generation after generation by ordinary people who perform extraordinary deeds of kindness far away from the banks of the Nile. Such countless events with nameless individuals should continually remind us that it is not the stature of the personalities involved, but the stature of the event which is paramount.

Recently, *Los Angeles Times* staff writer Paul Watson placed a spotlight on such “nameless individuals” and gives us names, a rescue and an inspiring story of courage lived out in the 20th century. In his article

“The Heirs of Kindness in Croatia,” which appeared in the *Los Angeles Times*, July 24, 2000, he brings to life acts of courage in one of the most historically troubled sectors of oppression and counteroppression known as the Balkans.

What we have witnessed over the last 10 years in this troubled region is only the latest chapter of suspicion, hatred and war that has plagued this area for hundreds of years. It is the story of Croats during World War II who risked life and limb for Serb children adrift from their parents. It’s a story over 50 years old, but a story being repeated somewhere today, by someone else, for a little life caught up in the squeeze of history. It may be your story one day. It’s worth repeating.

Meet little Nena

Watson begins by taking us to a train platform in 1942 where Croatian troops were separating children from their parents. Little Nena Koncar is separated from her mother. Her father has already been killed in a massacre perpetrated by Nazi troops and their Croatian Ustashe allies in their mountain village home in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Now alone in the world except for her 3-year-old sister, Dragica, and her 13-year-old Aunt Dora who accompany her, little Nena travels in a cattle car head-

(See “OURS,” page 14)