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What Do You Mean, "Under God"?

You've heard the controversy about "under God" and that the vast majority of Americans are in no mood to even consider removing these words from the U.S. Pledge of Allegiance. But is the United States a nation under God? The words are simple enough, but have you thought about their meaning? What do they mean to God?

by Cecil E. Maranville

From the average citizen to the U.S. president and the entire Congress, indignation was spontaneous over a poorly thought-out ruling by a San Francisco federal appeals court that declared the words "under God" in the American Pledge of Allegiance to be unconstitutional. A *Newsweek* poll taken immediately after the ruling was publicized showed Americans in favor of retaining the phrase by a margin of 87 percent to 9 percent (July 8, 2002, issue).

The country and the world are still reeling from the devastating impact of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks on the U.S. mainland. Few are in a mood for a technical debate over the acceptability of acknowledging God. Harkening back to the days immediately following the terrorist attacks, there were many open and unabashed references to God. A national prayer service in Washington D.C. on Sept. 14, 2001, was attended by a number of former U.S. presidents and many members of Congress, along with countless other dignitaries, all of whom heard repeated appeals to God for comfort and help.

At that service, President Bush said, "We come before God to pray for the missing and the dead, and for those who love them. . . On this national day of prayer and remembrance, we ask Almighty God to watch over our nation and grant us patience and resolve in all that is to



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Students say Pledge of Allegiance

come. We pray that He will comfort and console those who now walk in sorrow. We thank Him for each life we now must mourn, and the promise of a life to come. As we've been assured, neither death nor life nor angels nor principalities, nor powers nor things present nor things to come nor height nor depth can separate us
(See "UNDER GOD," page 3)



Hope Beyond the Headlines

What a summer when it comes to headlines! Just like the stock market, our hearts, hopes and dreams have gone up and down on an incredible roller coaster ride of news events. Many have affected us personally and others have allowed us to rejoice as one big global neighborhood.

America's stock market has tumbled, taking with it billions of dollars of investment savings, which for many were the hopes and dreams of a secure retirement. Today more than half of Americans are invested in the stock market. The fall in stock value rivals the great October 1929 Wall Street crash, which led to the Great Depression. The biggest bankruptcy in history is proclaimed as WorldCom restructures its debt and tries to survive. Instead of seeing executives leap from windows, we see them hauled away in handcuffs to face charges of theft, deceit and corruption.

Throughout the Western states, raging forest fires have burned millions of acres, destroying homes and other personal property. The force of these fires is staggering. Drought continues in many areas where below average amounts of rain not only limit the crops of one season but also fail to replenish rapidly diminishing water tables, threatening whole regions for years to come.

Even seasoned worldly-wise commentators use biblical-type descriptors such as "signs," "portents" and "end time," while trying to come to grips with the news.

Terrorist bombings continue in Israel. President Bush was furious when American students studying at Hebrew University were killed in a bomb blast on July 31. No one, it seems, has any idea how to bring the Palestinians and Israelis together in peace.

We have watched in sadness and horror while little girls are kidnapped from their homes, brutally assaulted and tossed aside by sick-minded men who don't fit in a civil society. The loss is compounded as the media, cloaked in the thin guise of reporting, seeks to milk each tragedy for all its pathos and poignancy.

And then, during the last week of July, two incidents occurred that give a ray of encouragement and note of hope. Two teenage girls in Southern California were kidnapped at gunpoint. A convergence of recently installed technology, public alertness and, one hopes, providence brought authorities to the rescue. Although the girls suffered assault, their lives were spared.

The other story is that of the "miracle nine" coal miners trapped for nearly four days in a collapsed southern Pennsylvania mine. Rescuers worked around the clock drilling holes into the mine to pump oxygen and create a shaft large enough to raise the men from the cold underground waters. During those uncertain hours, families gathered to pray and encourage one another. And then in the early hours of July 28 we saw the men rise from the ground, one at a time. It made you think in terms of a resurrection. It was a happy occasion for the country. You could sense a spirit of encouragement, if only for a brief time, in the midst of all the other serious and sad events.

When people come together to save lives, it gives hope. For those in our audience who pray "Your kingdom come," these miracles are a reminder of good things to come as we are refreshed with the ageless reality of Christ's words in John 10:11, "I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly." God has not forsaken the earth or His people. Christ rules from His throne in heaven waiting and watching for the time to return to the earth in power and glory as King of Kings. All things, including peace, justice and safety, will be restored. —Darris McNeely

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“UNDER GOD,” (Continued from page 1)
from God’s love. May He bless the souls of the departed. May He comfort our own. And may He always guide our country. God bless America” (text published by *The Washington Post*).

People speak of God in tragic times

“Neither death,” etc. is a direct quote from the Christian Bible in Romans 8:38-39. By his open and direct appeal to God, the president matched the mood of the nation, which, in numbed shock, was looking for divine comfort and help. In times of tragedy, people almost universally turn to God. So, in the days and weeks following Sept. 11, 2001, it seemed appropriate and acceptable to openly acknowledge and call upon God.

A few days later, over 60,000 people gathered in New York City’s Yankee stadium for a prayer service, featuring Mayor Rudy Giuliani, television talk show hostess Oprah Winfrey and actor James Earl Jones. Of course, both of these highly publicized meetings included clergy among the speakers, but it’s not unusual that religious individuals would call upon or refer to God. However, it is rather unusual in the American culture that other public figures would speak of Him openly.

References to prayer and wishes for God’s blessing, normally heard only on the religious broadcast stations on Sundays, were openly expressed by reporters and news anchors.

I witnessed the same recently in the state of Arizona, which suffered from a catastrophic forest fire. Seasoned firefighters spoke of the power of the Rodeo-Chedeski fire in hushed tones, repeatedly testifying that they’d never seen its like in force and intensity. Anthony Yellow Owl, a professional “fire-eater” brought into Arizona to fight the fires, described ground zero as looking like it had been struck by “an atomic bomb.”

The amount of energy released by the fire staggers the imagination. One report said that, at its peak, the massive fire released energy equivalent to

a Hiroshima-strength atomic bomb every 15 minutes. Local news reporters, typically as non-religious as their national counterparts, openly spoke in terms of praying for rain.

One television station developed a

friends and neighbors and the other areas affected by the fire” (emphasis added throughout).

If you followed the coverage of the fire, you’re familiar with the name “Show Low,” the largest community



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Forest fires and other disasters lead many people to speak of God

feature story about a handwritten message, “pray for rain,” which was scribed in the dust and ash that covered one of the dozens of fire-fighting vehicles. Arizona’s governor, Jane D. Hull, spoke of the need for God’s help. President Bush visited one of the many evacuation shelters in the fire zone. “I’m here to say on behalf of the American people, ‘God bless you,’” he said.

Pray for rain

The Associated Press reported an Apache medicine man’s singing prayer for rain. The official Web site of the Pinetop Fire Department in Pinetop, Arizona, posted the following message at the peak of the raging fires: “I actually felt some drops of rain at Blue Ridge this morning, *so keep up the prayers* . . . We will be OK *with all of the prayers* and support coming from our friends. Thank you! Make sure you *continue to pray* for our

threatened by the massive blaze that burned a territory larger than the area of Los Angeles. The president of the local chamber of commerce also spoke openly of God’s help: “As I sit here in my home, *praying* for us all, I cannot help but think about all my friends and associates in the White Mountains. . . *God bless them all and please keep them safe* . . . PS—As our President said today—‘Hang in there.’ *God Bless Show Low, Arizona, and all the White Mountain communities.*”

The message, posted on the official Arizona White Mountains tourism Web site, is signed by Linda Ells, president of the Show Low Chamber of Commerce (www.pinetoplakesidechamber.com/ells.html).

As of this writing, that particular fire is 100 percent controlled. The horrifying evidence of its devastation remains, but the public comments about prayer and God’s blessing died down about the same time that the

flames did. But it certainly illustrates that in a time of major tragedy, everyone wants God's help.

Perhaps the atheist who filed the suit against his daughter's school for saying the Pledge of Allegiance thought the country's mood had returned to its pre-9/11 norm. Maybe the judge on the Ninth Circuit Court of

Pledge of Allegiance. They were added by an act of Congress, jointly sought by the legislature and President Eisenhower, in the 1950s. At the time, the national mind-set was anticommunist. The Western world saw itself locked in a Cold War between the United States and the U.S.S.R. that could go nuclear at any moment. Public

schools routinely had nuclear bomb drills for their students, in which children were trained to get away from windows, not to look in the direction of the blast and get down under their desks. Private citizens built bomb shelters in their backyards or basements; cities and towns designated public buildings that could be used as shelters.

It was in this context that the United States wanted to make a highly public statement to the communist and atheistic world: this country is "under God." With patriotic fervor, Congress added these words to the Pledge of Allegiance in 1954 and Americans have recited it that way ever since.

Opponents of the use of these words argue that public schools that require their students to recite the present Pledge of Allegiance are contravening the first amendment to the U.S. Constitution: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof . . ." Their argument is that requiring the recitation of "under God" is the government imposing a religion, specifically the belief in a God, on children who don't believe in God.

Let's step aside from the constitutional argument for a moment and analyze those words—"under God."

According to a standard dictionary, "under" means: "Subject to the authority, control, guidance, or instruction of" (2002, *Merriam-Webster's Online Dictionary*). Do you suppose that the citizens of the United States understand the phrase this way? I do not doubt that some citizens sincerely do, but I doubt that the majority of Americans have even thought about the subject beyond sentimental and emergency situations.

The sentiment of being anticommunist in the 1950s was strong and sincere. Similarly, the sentiment of wanting God's help in a tragedy—a natural disaster, an act of terror or any time our life or the life of a loved one is threatened—is sincere. But even in times of tragedy, people aren't thinking in terms of "authority, control, guidance or instruction" from God. They're thinking in terms of God granting miraculous healing, divine protection or defeat of their enemies.

In case of emergency, call on God

It's almost as if people prefer to place God under a glass cover to which is attached a hammer and under which is a sign that reads: "Break in case of emergency." When the emergency has passed, the glass is replaced. American citizens want to be able to pursue their lives without any "authority, control, guidance or instruction" from God.

Those who would edit "under God" out of the Pledge of Allegiance argue that the U.S. Constitution makes no reference to God. That's true. However, the Declaration of Independence, conceived by the same minds and penned by the same hands that drafted the Constitution, makes several open and obvious references to the Creator God. The opening paragraph speaks of "Nature's God."

Perhaps the most-remembered words of the entire document follow in the very next statement: "We hold these Truths to be self-evident, that all Men are created equal, that they are endowed by *their Creator* with certain unalienable Rights . . ." And the Declaration's closing paragraph

(See "UNDER GOD," page 11)



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Independence Hall, where the Declaration of Independence was signed, giving deference to the Creator and Supreme Judge

Appeals who wrote the ruling thought so too. But he got the message and stayed his own ruling: the country was in no mood for the technical debate.

America isn't ready to forgo saying, "one nation under God." CNN reported President's Bush's terse comment on the ruling, "We receive our rights from God." President Bush went on to say that he would appoint people to the bench who clearly understood that fact.

Origin of "under God"

You may not know that the words "under God" weren't in the original

Money Won't Solve These Problems

The recent International AIDS Conference in Barcelona called on rich nations to spend still more money on AIDS. Governments spending more money won't solve this or any other problem.

by Melvin Rhodes

It's been less than a decade since the death of the British-born political scientist C. Northcote Parkinson, best known for Parkinson's Law, a law of economics that governments in particular seem determined to repeatedly prove correct.

Parkinson's Law: the Pursuit of Progress was published in 1957 at a time when the British Empire was shrinking in size, while the Colonial Office that presided over it increased its staff from 372 in 1935 to 1,661 in 1954. Observing this interesting development, Parkinson came to his repeatedly proven law of economics: "work expands to fill the time available for its completion, and subordinates multiply at a fixed rate, regardless of the amount of work produced" (*Cambridge Biographical Encyclopedia*, 1998, p. 722). Some would say it's as certain as the law of gravity. Governments especially are prone to constantly be expanding with little if any positive results actually being achieved.

This is exactly what God warned the ancient Israelites about when they wanted a king "like all the nations" (1 Samuel 8:5). God then warned the people of Israel what having such a governmental system would inevitably lead to. Read verses 11 to 18—it's Parkinson's Law written three thousand years before Parkinson, showing again just how relevant the Bible can be to us today. God's warning to the



C. Northcote Parkinson developed Parkinson's Law that "work expands to fill the time available for its completion"

people was that their government would keep on growing and would cost them more and more as time went on. "And you will cry out in that day because of your king whom you have chosen for yourselves, and the LORD will not hear you in that day" (verse 18).

Democracy has only made things worse. As the franchise has widened, so the demands on government have increased. As the people demand more, so taxes must rise to cover the increased services—and the bureaucracy that oversees the projects.

All governments have proved the veracity of God's warning and, in modern times, of Parkinson's Law.

Calls for millions more dollars at AIDS conference

During a recent trip I took to Africa (late June and early July), three African news items caused me to reflect again on God's Word and on the late Mr. Parkinson.

The first item that dominated the news during my stay was the 14th Annual International AIDS conference held in Barcelona, Spain. As Africa is the continent suffering most from AIDS, this was big news in the region.

Again, fears were expressed about the spread of the HIV virus. Concerns were shared about the need for more educational programs to make people more aware of a virus that is set

God's warning to the people was that their government would keep on growing and would cost them more and more as time went on.

Source: www.born-today.com/Today/07-30.htm

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.



*Nelson Mandela speaks at AIDS conference in Barcelona July 12.
Almost 40 percent of the peoples of southern Africa will die of
AIDS in the next decade*

to kill a greater percentage of people than the medieval Black Death.

Almost 40 percent of the peoples of southern Africa will die of AIDS in the next decade—an unbelievable statistic that is impossible to comprehend.

And again, there were calls for more money—from the West, of course. “Western nations must send more money to halt the spread of AIDS” was the demand. Some of this money would be used to train more people to spread the message to the remotest villages and towns, the message of how HIV is spread and of how they can “save themselves” through the use of condoms!

Allow me for a moment to fast-forward to my return home. On Sunday July 14 the BBC World Service’s *Newshour* included an interview with a doctor from the Hospital for Tropical Diseases in London, England. She was not talking about AIDS, but what she had to say directly addresses the issue of AIDS and the calls for more funding.

The lady was talking about diarrhea, indirectly the biggest killer of children in Africa. Diarrhea itself does not kill, but the gastrointestinal and respiratory problems that diarrhea often leads to can kill. Millions die every year from this problem.

One simple step could be taken which would reduce the numbers of deaths considerably—the washing of hands with soap after going to the toilet. As most people in Africa do not do this, the process of food preparation inevitably means that people are consuming contaminated food and drinks.

I don’t remember the exact words her interviewer then used, but he asked a question about the need for funds to educate people in this area. Her response was astounding. “Oh, we’ve tried education, but it doesn’t work.” She went on to explain that the last hope lies with the manufacturers of soap—perhaps they could come up with soap commercial jingles that would make people change the hygiene habits of thousands of years.

Since education about fundamental hygiene hasn’t worked, should we expect that it will work when it comes to HIV/AIDS? If people won’t change their hygiene practices, are they likely to change their sexual practices if millions more dollars are spent on education? No, they are not.

Governments certainly have a responsibility in this area. But that responsibility can be fulfilled quite easily and cheaply. Billboards (for those

who can read) along with radio and television ads (most people in Africa have access to the former, few the latter) should carry a simple message that everybody can understand: “Abstinence before marriage, fidelity within.” Just five words will do it. As most African governments control the media, the cost would be minimal.

God uses five words to convey the same message, once again emphasizing just how relevant the Bible is in this day and age. God’s words are timeless and would end the HIV/AIDS crisis in less than 20 years—if people simply took His command at face value and put it into practice in their lives. “You shall not commit adultery” (Exodus 20:14).

Sadly, pressure will be brought to bear on Western nations to come up with extra cash, which will then be sent to African governments whose leaders will pocket most of it, proving yet again that “foreign aid is money taken from poor people in rich countries and given to rich people in poor countries.”

And not just with AIDS.

More government, more money not the solution

Yet another plan is in the works for an increased governmental role that will mean more taxes for Westerners and more gain for African leaders—ironically with the stated purpose of ending all such corruption.

Calls for canceling Africa’s debts to Western nations (and banks) have continued for some time, along with calls for increased aid and investment. The dilemma for Western governments is how to help without repeating the mistakes of the last four decades. Africa has been the world’s biggest recipient of financial aid but remains the poorest continent. One reason for this is corruption. Money sent rarely finds its way to the intended beneficiaries, instead being diverted to Swiss and other offshore bank accounts, as top people in each country take the money for themselves.

Pondering on this problem, the G8 Summit leaders invited four African presidents to their annual meeting, this time held in Alberta, Canada. The visiting presidents suggested a peer review board be set up to ensure that donated funds would make it to their intended

destination. Naturally they volunteered African presidents to sit on this peer review committee. Critics see this as the equivalent of Western nations putting the Mafia in charge of the police force! But Western leaders made no such provocative comment and will no doubt continue to hand over taxpayers' money in the hope of keeping Africa quiet. And again, increased donations will enable bureaucracy to grow.

Former Zambian President Kenneth Kaunda was also interviewed on BBC radio's *Newshour* program on Thursday, July 25. Asked about the famine in southern Africa, he put the blame firmly on politicians who were only concerned about themselves. Even now, he said, when millions are faced with the threat of starvation, their primary concern is to make something for themselves before approving foreign food aid.

Also interviewed on the BBC's African radio service was an American economist from the Clinton administration who saw democracy as the only way to ensure that aid got where it was supposed to go. However, this won't work either. The reason the military takes over in African countries is because politicians are so corrupt.

OAU=AU=EU? No!

A third opportunity for bureaucratic expansion and the inevitable corruption that will accompany it is the new African Union (AU), the organization that has replaced the 39-year-old Organization of African Unity (OAU). Meeting in Durban, South Africa, African presidents agreed to form the AU, theoretically modeled on the European Union (EU).

The aim is closer African union. One stated purpose is for African nations to police other nations whenever the need arises. Delegates committed themselves to the democratic process. As Libya's Colonel Gadhafi was behind the proposed new organization, it is difficult to take it seriously. It will simply provide for another expanding bureaucracy whose positions can be filled with relatives of those already in charge. Little or nothing will be achieved.

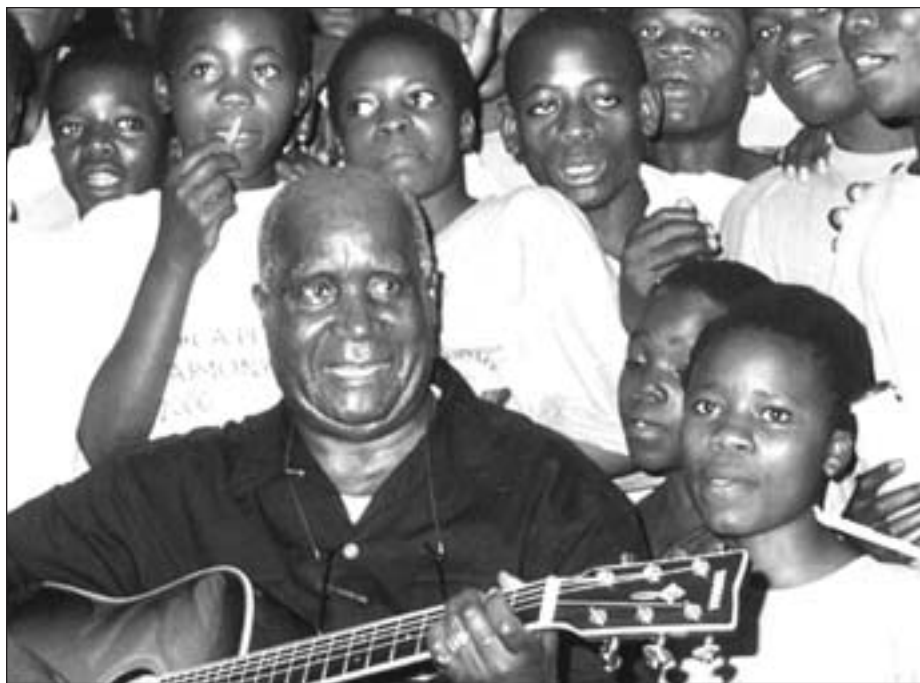
Evidence that this will be the case can be seen in West Africa. Almost 30 years ago when the European Economic

Community (now EU) expanded to embrace the United Kingdom, Ireland and Denmark, the 16 nations of West Africa formed ECOWAS, the Economic Community of West African States, with the same goals as the EEC. Three decades later, the Europeans are a great deal closer to full union, but no progress at all has been made in West Africa where governments are reluctant to give up any of their sovereignty.

One example of this is in the area of

Opportunities to demand bribes increase with each border crossing, customs post and police barrier—nothing will be done to remove any of them.

It's all very sad. These deficiencies mean that the sufferings of the African peoples will continue for some time to come. Making things worse is the lack of a free press in most African countries. All the developments reported above will be portrayed as positive developments which will raise the hopes of the



Reuters

Former Zambian President Kenneth Kaunda puts the blame for famine in southern Africa on the politicians

border controls. Whereas Western Europe has virtually abolished all passport and customs controls, a journey from ECOWAS member Nigeria to fellow member nation Ghana via two other ECOWAS countries, Benin and Togo, is a nightmare for all travelers. The same distance could easily be driven in five hours in the United States but takes at least a day in Africa.

At the same time I was there, a friend visited Ghana from Nigeria. The cost of his transport (one way) was the equivalent of \$50. An additional \$56 was needed for the customary "paperwork" (most of it bogus but still demanded by officials before he could continue his journey). Too many vested interests make closer union between nations unlikely.

people, when the reality is that little or nothing will be accomplished—at great expense!

But there will be an end to all this. God's promise of a future Kingdom whose King will be Jesus Christ promises a time of "judgment and justice from that time forward, even forever" (Isaiah 9:7). No longer will there be corruption and self-seeking, expanding bureaucracies and governmental incompetence. It will also be a time when "out of Zion the law shall go forth" (Micah 4:2), clearly showing the way to end the scourge of AIDS and other diseases that plague the peoples of this world.

Christians need to pray fervently, "Your Kingdom come" (Matthew 6:10). ❖

When Is Enough . . . Enough?

Speculation rises about when, not if, America will invade Iraq and overthrow Saddam Hussein's repressive regime. But what will be the consequences of such an invasion? Experts are divided as the time for action draws closer. Is America asking the really hard questions in the unfolding war on terror?

by Darris McNeely

On July 31 the Senate Foreign Relations Committee held hearings to discuss Iraq's capacity to produce and deliver weapons of mass destruction and to determine America's response to this growing threat to stability in the Middle East.

Former United Nations weapons inspector Richard Butler testified that Saddam Hussein obstructed his team's efforts to inspect and catalog Iraqi weapons during the mid-1990s. By 1998 all weapons inspection in Iraq stopped. It is suspected that Iraqi ability to produce chemical and biological weapons has been developed further along with the means to deliver these deadly weapons.

The fear of using terrorist groups to release smallpox, Ebola or anthrax over cities in Israel, Europe or even the United States is a possibility that sends fear through the minds of those who understand the devastation that could occur. The possession of these weapons serves to keep such a man in power through the use of fear. Nations in the region, which may well understand the extent of his power, seem unable or incapable of condemning, much less reacting to, such a destabilizing threat.

More than 20 years ago Israel struck preemptively against a nuclear reactor, where Iraq was attempting to produce fissionable nuclear material to build nuclear weapons. Israel understood then that Iraq posed a threat to its survival. Today the voice of Israel is among the strongest advocating a conclusive strike to bring down the Hussein regime.

A former Iraqi nuclear engineer, Khidar Hamza, testified that over the years Iraq has maintained contacts with various Islamic terrorist groups, including al Qaeda and Osama bin Laden. Establishing a strong connection to these groups will be an important element in justifying American intervention as part of its declared war on terror. Without this linkage

other allies will be reluctant to support the fight. Jordan's King Abdullah is one regional leader who has expressed concern over America's plan.

In an interview published in *The Washington Post* on Aug. 1, 2002, the king said the reluctance of others to confront the Bush administration over Iraq may leave the impression there is little opposition to military action. Abdullah said, "All of a sudden this thing is moving to the horizon much closer than we believed. In all the years I have seen in the international community, everybody is saying this is a bad idea. If it seems America says we want to hit Baghdad, that's not what Jordanians think, or the British, the French, the Russians, the Chinese and everybody else."

An invitation to chaos?

There are some who argue for a policy of containment against Iraq. Leave Hussein alone, the thought is, and eventually an internal coup or some other uprising will force his ouster. Hopefully, a saner leader will emerge to lead Iraq back into the community of civilized nations. The problem with this view, say others, is that no previous attempt to oust Saddam has succeeded and the longer the delay, the more time he has to develop nuclear weapons or use the existing weapons in inventory. It is estimated that Iraq has 20 Scud missiles left over from the Gulf War. Some experts predict Iraq is three years away from developing a nuclear weapon. The longer the wait, the greater will be the risk.

Opponents of an invasion also argue that to launch a strike would result in chaos. Iraq would feel embattled and see itself as fighting for its survival. Its only option would be to unleash a doomsday scenario leading to massive loss of life and instability in the region.

A recent article in *Fortune* magazine

It is suspected that Iraqi ability to produce chemical and biological weapons has been developed further along with the means to deliver these deadly weapons.

offered this comment: “. . . An attack intended to get rid of Saddam will prompt him to use whatever weapons of mass destruction he has, specifically against Israel, to widen the war and go down as a modern-day Saladin, the slayer of infidels. And in fact, if he’s going out anyway, it’s hard to believe he wouldn’t want to do so in what in his mind is a blaze of glory. If he believes he’s going down, everything he has will probably be headed toward Israel. If any of it hits its intended target and the Israelis retaliate, ‘chaos’ is a mild word for what will ensue. A region-wide conflagration, an oil embargo, ever more hatred directed at Israel’s sponsor, the U.S. You get the picture. Leave him alone, say the containment advocates, and eventually the world will be rid of him” (“How a War With Iraq Will Change the World,” July 8, 2002).

Many changes since Gulf War

The Islamic world has changed since the last Gulf War. The presence of American troops in Saudi Arabia has forced the government to live a double life. Allowing “infidel” troops on the sacred soil has caused a seething resentment, which fuels the perverse ambitions of Osama bin Laden and his followers. Muslim clerics have been allowed to preach hatred of the West from their pulpits and in Islamic schools, which have biased a generation of Arab youth. It appears the Saudi government will see a change in leadership soon. The current King Saudi Fahd lies seriously ill in a Swiss hospital and the court intrigue to select a successor is growing.

The Palestinian Intifada has further inflamed Arab resentment against Israel and its chief supporter, the United States. Some question the timing of an attack, given the current climate.

University of Maryland political scientist Shibley Telhami says, “Context, and the tenor of the times,” are critically important. Telhami, who organizes extensive public-opinion soundings in the Arab world, believes it is likely that a war with Iraq would result, at least in the short run, in an increase in terrorism throughout the Middle East, directed at any regime—Egypt, Jordan, the other Gulf monarchies—seen as supporting

America, and inevitably bring the homicide bomber phenomenon to U.S. shores. That’s precisely what President Bush is trying to avoid.

Charles A. Duelfer, an ex-UNSCOM (the United Nations inspection agency) official and one of the most knowledgeable Americans about Iraq, supports removing Saddam but doesn’t disagree with Telhami. “There is,” he says glumly, “no shortage of kids in the region who seem to want to grow up to be cruise missiles. To the skeptics, an invasion now would only increase the arsenal” (ibid.).

The economic impact

Consider the impact that an attack would have on oil prices and the world economy. Crude oil is currently selling in the mid-\$20-per-barrel range. A war



How will it affect oil prices?

could cause it to go as high as \$60 per barrel.

“A proposed attack on Iraq is an extraordinarily high-risk economic adventure that could either destabilize the governments of one or more oil exporting countries by creating a prolonged period of low prices, or, if things went wrong, lead to a prolonged disruption of world oil supplies, which could be even more devastating,” says Philip K. Verleger Jr., an oil expert and fellow of the Council on Foreign Relations (Thomas Friedman, *New York Times*, July 31, 2002).

Every \$10 increase in oil price decreases the GDP by one point. No one wants to see the impact this would have

on the American economy and world money markets.

On the other hand a short, quick, successful war could bring the price of oil down to \$6 per barrel.

Here is Friedman’s analysis: “The scenario that could produce \$6-a-barrel oil goes like this: Iraq under Saddam has been pumping up to two million barrels of oil a day, under the U.N. oil-for-food program.

“Let’s say a U.S. invasion works and in short order Saddam is ousted and replaced by an Iraqi Thomas Jefferson, or just a ‘nice’ general ready to abandon Iraq’s nuclear weapons program and rejoin the family of nations. That would mean Iraq would be able to modernize all its oilfields, attract foreign investment and in short order ramp up its oil production to its long-sought capacity of five million barrels a day. That is at least three million barrels of oil a day more on the world market, and Iraq, which will be desperate for cash to rebuild, is not likely to restrain itself.

“Bottom line: A quick victory that brings Iraq fully back into the oil market could lead to a sharp fall in oil incomes throughout OPEC that could seriously weaken the oil cartel and rob its many autocratic regimes of the income they need to maintain their closed political systems” (ibid.).

Is God still with America?

Listening to the experts and reading all the articles trying to predict what will happen presents two sides and a lot of questions. Everyone recognizes the danger posed by Saddam Hussein to the world order. No one wants to see his murderous regime continue. Those who are hawkish are beating the drum for a direct attack, with the objective of overthrowing the regime and replacing it with a more user-friendly government which is cooperative with the United Nations and seeks to live in harmony with its neighbors. This solution must also include the commitment to discard and dismantle the weapons of mass destruction, which Iraq has been building for several decades.

Those like Europe and other Arab states, which oppose a U.S.-led invasion, desire the same outcome but look for it in less intrusive ways. A division

of opinion exists about what will happen when the invasion comes. As we have seen, it could be a short war, or it could be a long one.

President George Bush faces a momentous decision with regard to Iraq.



Reminder of the last Gulf War

To commit American forces to this task will be far different than the invasion of Afghanistan. Iraqi forces are better equipped and trained than the Taliban and al Qaeda. Saddam Hussein sees himself as a Saladin or a Nebuchadnezzar, recalling ancient figures of his land. He will not go down easily. President Bush may find wisdom in looking at the biblical example of King Josiah, who found himself in the uncomfortable position of launching an attack upon a foe without the backing and support of the most important ally, God.

Repeatedly we have been told that America's fight against terror is to preserve our freedoms and liberties against enemies who have demonstrated contempt for our way of life and a cold-blooded determination to inflict harm. Yet, amid the renewed patriotism and public support behind this war effort there is the need to ask, "Is God pleased with the ways of this nation? And how long will He continue to protect America against the storms brought by those who seek her demise?" When is enough . . . enough?

A good king who overreached and paid the consequences

Josiah was the 16th king of Judah and one of the good kings who tried to

renew the nation's mission and covenant with God. In 2 Chronicles 34:3 it says, "He began to seek the God of his father David." And in the 12th year of his reign, "he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem of the high places, the wooden images, the carved images, and the molded images."

He went throughout the nation and even into the northern nation of Israel in his quest to rid the land of idolatrous worship. At Bethel, site of an altar erected during the rebellion of Jeroboam, he fulfilled an earlier prophecy made by a man of God who said the bones of rebellious priests would be burned upon it (1 Kings 13:2).

Then as God's priests were cleaning the great temple of Solomon in Jerusalem, a scroll of the law was found and brought to Josiah. Before him were read the words of Deuteronomy, which revealed the penalties to befall the nation if they forsook the law and covenant of God.

Josiah's heartrending response to these words prompted the prophetess Huldah to say that the punishment would be stayed during the lifetime of Josiah, but would surely come upon the nation after his death.

Perhaps in the hope of evoking a repentance toward God, Josiah called the people to an assembly, read the law and promised in a solemn vow to "follow the LORD, and to keep His commandments and His testimonies and His statutes with all his heart and all his soul, to perform the words of the covenant that were written in this book. And he made all who

Yet, amid the renewed patriotism and public support behind this war effort there is the need to ask, "Is God pleased with the ways of this nation? And how long will He continue to protect America against the storms brought by those who seek her demise?"

were present in Jerusalem and Benjamin take a stand. So the inhabitants of Jerusalem did according to the covenant of God, the God of their fathers" (2 Chronicles 34:31-32).

Josiah and the people went on to celebrate the Passover with a pomp and splendor not seen for many years. Josiah was a good man, sincere in his belief, but he could not undo the past, nor, in spite of his personal example and inspiring words, produce a lasting change in

his countrymen. His reforms, far reaching as they were, were too late and did not go deep enough. "Nevertheless the LORD did not turn from the fierceness of His great wrath, with which His anger was aroused against Judah . . ." (2 Kings 23:26). To paraphrase the words of a later king of France, "After Josiah, the deluge."

Josiah's death came in battle as he involved himself in a dispute which God warned him to avoid. Pharaoh Necho of Egypt allied himself with the faltering Assyrian Empire against the rising Babylonian nation. Necho passed through Judah on his way to Carchemish by the Euphrates. Josiah went out with an army and engaged the Egyptians.

A just cause isn't always what it seems

God's methods sometimes baffle us. Speaking through this pagan king, God warned good king Josiah not to meddle in something that was not his affair. "What have I to do with you, king of Judah? I have not come against you this day, but against the house with which I have war; for God commanded me to make haste. Refrain from meddling with God, who is with me, lest He destroy you" (2 Chronicles 35:21).

Josiah ignored this warning and engaged in battle. An archer's arrow pierced his body and the mortally wounded king was carried by his soldiers back to Jerusalem. Great mourning followed the death of this beloved

monarch. None wept more poignantly than the prophet Jeremiah, who more than anyone else understood what lay in store for the nation upon the passing of Josiah (2 Chronicles 35:22-25).

Judah's days of freedom were ended. She spent her last days as a vassal to Egypt before succumbing to the Babylonians.

Notice the words of Jeremiah. "Is Israel a servant? Is he a home born slave? Why is he plundered? The young

lions roared at him and growled; they made his land waste; his cities are burned, without inhabitant . . . Have you not brought this on yourself, in that you have forsaken the LORD your God when He led you in the way? And now why take the road to Egypt, to drink waters of Sihor? Or why take the road to Assyria, to drink the waters of the River? Your own wickedness will correct you, and your backslidings will rebuke you. Know therefore and see that it is an evil and bitter thing that you have forsaken the LORD your God, and the fear of Me is not in you,' says the Lord GOD of hosts'" (Jeremiah 2:14-19).

No one can predict the outcome of a war with Iraq. On paper, the United States, the world's only military superpower, is the odds-on favorite. Iraq's army and technology are no match for the state-of-the-art warfare waged by American troops. But America's leadership should walk carefully in this and any future engagement. Overconfidence can lead to overreach. The same God who weighed ancient Israel and Judah in the balance, and found both wanting, sits in judgment today over the United States and all other nations, including Iraq. God looks at evil from a different perspective than most humans. His standard of righteousness is based on a higher set of values than any of today's human governments possesses.

Recently a major issue arose over a U.S. Circuit Court ruling that the phrase "under God" in the Pledge of Allegiance was an unconstitutional mixing of church and state. Many were indignant, and rightly so, that a federal court would dare such a ruling. America can claim to be "under God," but if the fruits are not evident, there exists a major disconnect. Continuing to ignore the fundamental laws of God creates a state of unrighteousness for which God will demand an accounting. God is a God of judgment. At some point He will say, "Enough is enough!"

America cannot expect to indefinitely stride the world as a colossus while it ignores the ways of the God who has blessed it with the riches of the earth. For more on how God looks at America today, write for our free booklet, *The United States and Britain in Bible Prophecy*. ❖

"UNDER GOD," (Continued from page 4) includes an appeal to "the Supreme Judge of the World" and asserts that the new nation has "a firm Reliance on the Protection of divine Providence."

One would be a fool to try to portray the U.S. Founding Fathers as men intent on excluding God from the nation that they had a hand in building. Plainly, when they referred to "the Creator" and "the Supreme Judge of the World," they were thinking of the God of the Christian Bible.

Is there any place in that Christian Bible that speaks of nation building?

Yes, there is. The obvious section of Scripture to look at is the part that describes God's will for His model nation. There's no mistaking the role that He envisioned He would play in a nation that was truly "under God."

One book of the Bible that summarizes God's thinking succinctly is Deuteronomy. We do not find a "God under glass" who is content to be called upon in emergencies to relieve suffering and to guarantee victory in war, but who would remain silent the rest of the time. To the contrary, we find a God whose thinking is frankly quite well summarized by the words "under God."

That is, He expected to lovingly exercise authority and control over the nation, by giving it guidance and instruction on an ongoing basis—the classic dictionary definition of "under."

Benefits and obligations of being a nation "under God"

Can a nation under God count on Him to always love it? Yes, of course it can. Can a nation that wants to be thought of as under God count on God to give it healing, protection and blessings regardless of the actions of its citizens? The painful truth is, no, it can't.

Let's allow God to speak about this for Himself. When rescuing the people of Israel to create a nation under God, He said: "For you are a holy people to the LORD your God; the LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples on the face of the earth" (Deuteronomy 7:6). The people could count on His unconditional love.

Could they also count on those benefits that any nation wants—security and protection, including success against sworn enemies? Yes. "You may go in and possess the good land of which the LORD swore to your fathers, to cast out all your enemies from before you, as the LORD has spoken" (Deuteronomy 6:18-19).

Were the citizens free to live as they chose, subject to no authority but their own, controlled by no one but themselves, guided by whatever philosophy they wished? No, they weren't; "under God" meant "under God." The words of the verses which preface the above promises of benefits are plain: "You shall diligently keep the commandments of the LORD your God, His testimonies, and His statutes which He has commanded you. And you shall do what is right and good in the sight of the LORD, that it may be well with you" (Deuteronomy 6:17-18).

The consistent testimony of the nation-building scriptures is unbreakable. If a nation was truly under God, it was under His authority and control; He guided and instructed it. In conjunction with these obligations, He promised the benefits that all nations desire—divine intervention in emergencies, protection from tragedy and victory over enemies.

The benefits are inseparable from the obligations. Would anyone say that a child should expect a father to extend unlimited emergency benefits, regardless of that child's behavior? Of course not. We recognize that he would be a selfish child who expected such and he would be an overly-indulgent father who provided such.

Americans still pray in the face of tragedies, and leaders still ask God to bless America. To date, He has been extremely merciful, giving its citizens time to realize their responsibility and to live up to it. That will change, because the United States *should be* a nation "under God," and frankly, it isn't. Being "under God" isn't a way of speaking, but a way of living.

The consequences of whether America chooses to truly be "under God" are clearly expounded in our booklet, *The United States and Britain in Bible Prophecy*. ❖

In Brief...

World News Review

Blair Pushes for a European Superpower

Britain's Prime Minister Tony Blair has challenged Europe to stop complaining about the United States and instead bring together its military resources to become a superpower on the same level with America.

In a broad interview reported in a recent issue of the political magazine *Prospect*, Blair said there was "a certain scratchiness" in European Union's relations with the United States, an apparent reference to countries, including France and Germany, that have expressed concern at U.S. talk of overthrowing Iraqi president Saddam Hussein.

Blair was quoted as saying, "My challenge to Europe is this: if we want to have greater sway and greater power, then instead of complaining about America, we've got to face up to what we need to do. That means developing a coherent defense capability and a set of institutions to allow Europe to speak strongly."

The United States says Saddam is a sponsor of international terrorism and seeks nuclear weapons. But allies have shown little appetite for a military campaign to oust him without hard evidence that Iraq had a role in the Sept. 11 attacks on the United States.

The prime minister, a strong U.S. ally, said if the time comes for action against Iraq, "people will have the evidence presented to them" to show that Saddam "is trying to acquire weapons of mass destruction, in particular a nuclear capability."

Blair said some European criticism of America "comes from an irritation with their huge superpower status. If we pool our sovereignty in a way that gives us a strong voice and, if we improve our defense capability, we will be the strategic partner that America needs and wants."

European allies spend about 1.8 percent of their gross domestic product on defense, compared with the United States' 3 percent.

Plans to create a European defense force with up to 60,000 soldiers in a rapid-reaction peacekeeping unit have stalled because Greece objects to a deal that would allow Turkey to veto deployment in its region. Turkey is a member of NATO but not the EU.

Sources: The Associated Press, ABC.com.

Fears That Saudi Arabia Could Fall to al Qaeda

Saudi Arabia may be dangerously close to collapse, fueling concerns of an extremist takeover of one of the West's key

allies in the war on terror. Antigovernment demonstrations have swept the desert kingdom in the past months in protest of the pro-American stance of the de facto ruler, Prince Abdullah.

Saudi sources said the Pentagon had recently sponsored a secret conference to look at options if the royal family fell. The British Foreign Office believes that the failure of Abdullah's recent Middle East peace plan could have terminally undermined his position. British officials are fearful that Prince Abdullah could face a palace coup from elements within the royal family sympathetic to al Qaeda.

Demonstrations across the kingdom broke out in March, triggered by a fire in a girls' school in which 14 pupils died after the religious police stopped them from escaping. Unrest in the east of the country rapidly escalated into nationwide protests against the royal family that were brutally suppressed by the police.

The tensions between the royal factions will intensify with the death of King Fahd. The condition of the king, in the hospital in Switzerland, is "unstable," doctors said.

British-based Saudi dissident Dr. Saad al-Fagih said: "There is now an undeclared war between the factions in the Saudi royal family."

Sources: *Guardian Unlimited*, *The Observer*.

Calculating Obesity

Last month *World News and Prophecy* ran an article on the worldwide health crisis of obesity. How can you know if you are overweight or obese? There have been many divergent opinions on what constitutes a healthy or unhealthy weight range. The formula that is more and more being accepted as the standard is your Body Mass Index (BMI).

Here's the formula for calculating it. Determine your height in inches and then multiply that figure by itself. Then, take your weight in pounds and divide it by the square of your height in inches. The result should be a low figure, such as .03543279. The last step is to take that number and multiply it by 703.

The answer should be a two-digit number. A number less than 25 is considered to mean that the person is not overweight. A person with a BMI of between 25 and 29 is considered overweight. And a person with a BMI of 30 or more is considered obese.

Before you panic, we would like to explain that the formula is imperfect, because it does not consider the difference between fat and muscle. "Mass" does not distinguish between them. Illustrating the shortcomings of the formula, Sammy Sosa and Arnold Schwarzenegger are obese by that standard! And Brad Pitt and Michael Jordan are overweight.

Nonetheless, the formula can give one a general guideline of a healthy weight range.

Sources: George F. Will, "Supersize Menace," *The Washington Post*, Feb. 28, 2002; Kathleen Parker, "In War on Fat, It's the Food's Fault," *Jewish World Review*, July 31, 2002.

People Who Divorce to Be Happy Are Likely to Be Disappointed

For decades, marriage and family therapists counseled people who were unhappy in their marriages that their children would be better off if they divorced. Extensive research has subsequently proved that to be a myth. Divorce is much worse for children than living in an unhappy home. Also, counselors encouraged unhappy people to think of themselves. Divorce was supposed to free them from their unhappiness. Now, new research done by the Institute for American Values is showing that this also is a myth.

"According to the survey conducted by a team of family researchers, unhappily married adults who divorced were no happier five years after the divorce than were equally unhappy marrieds who remained together. And two-thirds of unhappily married people who remained married reported that their marriages were happy five years later. Even among those who had rated their marriages as 'very unhappy,' nearly 80 percent said they were happily married five years later. These were not merely bored or dissatisfied whiners. They had endured serious problems, including alcoholism, infidelity, verbal abuse, emotional neglect, depression, illness, and work and money troubles."

The divorced sample also showed slightly more depressive symptoms and more alcohol consumption than the married group. The results of the studies show that 64 percent of unhappy couples that stay together will be happily married in five years. By contrast, only 19 percent will be happy in five years if they divorce and remarry.

It's worth noting how unhappy couples turned their relationships around. Of course, it required effort. The study highlighted three successful techniques: enduring (taking one day at a time and working through problems); assertively tackling the problems (setting aside private time with each other, seeking counseling from clergy or professional marriage counselors, getting help from relatives and even threatening divorce); seeking personal happiness (individuals found other ways to improve their happiness, which lessened the impact of shortcomings in their marriage relationship).

"The capstone of this research is [a] *New Yorker* cartoon: A man stands with his arm around his wife's shoulders and explains to another couple, 'Our divorce wasn't working.'"

If you are unhappy in your marriage, don't be taken in by the misconception that divorce is the solution. You can find a lengthy summary of the Institute for American Values study in a press release posted on their Web site at www.americanvalues.org.

Source: Mona Charen, "Happy Marriages and Unhappy Divorces," *Jewish World Review*, July 19, 2002.

New Archbishop Amid Controversy

Recently Queen Elizabeth II, supreme governor of the Church of England, formally approved the nomination of Rowan Williams, age 52, as the new archbishop of Canterbury after a meeting with Prime Minister Tony Blair. When he is enthroned (probably early next year) as the 104th archbishop, it will be at a time when secularism threatens the spirituality of Britain as never before. Public interest in mainstream Christianity is at an all-time low.

Although Dr. Williams (currently archbishop of Wales) is said to "read scripture seriously" and to be orthodox in his basic beliefs, some of his public statements seem to run contrary to what is said in Scripture. Fellow Church of England clergyman William Taylor, rector of St. Helens Bishopgate in London, takes public issue with him. He said of the newly appointed archbishop: "Some of his views in the area of gender and sexuality are in conflict with the Bible. He has labelled those who disagree with him as adopting an 'abstract fundamentalist' use of scripture and of applying 'narrow and crude' criteria . . . My hope is he will make a clear statement to the effect that his previous statements were ill-advised" (*The Independent on Sunday*, July 28, 2002, emphasis added).

According to the same article, William Taylor's congregation "represents a strain of evangelical belief that has been openly critical of Dr. Williams's support for the gay clergy."

Christians around the world may find some of Dr. Williams' previous public declarations rather disturbing. Consider his lecture principally about homosexuality titled "The Body's Grace" (1989): "The worst thing we can do with the notion of sexual fidelity . . . is to 'legalise' it in such a way that it stands quite apart from the ventures and dangers of growth and is simply a public bond, enforceable by religious sanctions . . ."

"An absolute declaration that every sexual partnership must conform to the pattern of commitment or else have the nature of sin and nothing else is unreal and silly . . . If we are looking for a sexual ethic that can be seriously informed by our Bible, there is a good deal to steer us away from assuming reproductive sex is a norm, however important and theologically significant it may be" (quoted in *The Guardian*, July 25, 2002). An unusual view of the Bible's teachings!

The new archbishop faces several challenges within the Church of England itself. Two publicly-acknowledged gay clergymen in same sex relationships would like to see a significant increase in their numbers. But the conservative Anglo-Catholic wing of the Anglican Church speaks in terms of "we may have to walk" when they hear serious talk of the possible proliferation of gay clergy and women priests. Also, the Church of England has almost lost 1 billion pounds on ill-advised stock market investments and may face a radical financial restructuring when Rowan Williams assumes office.

The words of *Times* columnist William Rees-Mogg ring in English ears: "Will this be the man to bring us to our knees?"

Sources: *The Times*, *The Sunday Times*, *The Independent on Sunday*, *The Guardian* [all London].

Contributors: Cecil E. Maramville, John Ross Schroeder and Jim Tuck

“SKIN,” (Continued from page 16)

Wilkinson’s report continues: “Today, three surgeries later, a nut rests about one third of an inch from his heart. Nine nickel-sized holes are gouged in his arm. Mizrahi’s recovery, if there is to be one, takes five hours of body-bending therapy four days a week.”

Bombs show no partiality to age or gender. Reporter Wilkinson shares another story with us in the saga of 15-

ously used. Yesterday’s bombs of choice were high velocity explosives with penetrating small ball bearings. Now, the techniques have changed.

Today’s bombs often use nuts, bolts, screws, nails, scrap metal from construction sites and even rat poison, which are jettisoned with a lower velocity device that, in turn, leaves the shrapnel embedded in a victim. Today’s bombs often explode in small confined spaces like buses or pizzerias, which can amplify the effects on intended targets. They have sensitized the medical community to new understandings that indeed more than ever they have to “get under the skin” to understand what is happening to the person in front of them. New realities demand new skills.

More than meets the eye

The previously mentioned Dr. Avi Rivkind is the centerpiece personality of Joshua Hammer’s focus in “Code Blue in Jerusalem.” More than 1,800 Intifada-related victims, both dead and alive, both Jew and Palestinian, have entered his trauma section of Hadassah Hospital.

Dr. Rivkind thoroughly and now instinctively understands that not everyone in a bombing is shredded by shrapnel. The impact of the bomb’s shock waves bouncing off ceilings and walls can be just as deadly. Medical professionals are coming to terms with the fact that it’s not always what meets the literal eye, but rather the “sensitized eye” of the caregiver

who understands what is going on underneath the skin.

To illustrate this reality, Hammer shares the encounter of Dr. Rivkind with Shari Nigari. Shari was brought into his unit shortly after a bomb blast in the annexed Jerusalem neighborhood of Gilo. Seventeen people had died immediately. Now the wounded started to pour in. Shari was the first to arrive.

Reporter Hammer paints a verbal picture of a young 22-year-old woman who seemingly didn’t have a scratch on her body and was fully conscious. But Dr. Rivkind immediately saw something else. He recognized the signs of massive internal injuries caused by shock waves from the blast. How, you ask? He could sense the preternatural calm of eerie stillness he had seen in other bomb victims. He knew something she didn’t know, that few knew who haven’t been there. Rivkind recalled, “You could look into the face, hear the voice, see how she was slowing down. I knew she was burning inside.”

Hammer continues with the dramatic encounter by shar-



Photo © 1999-2002 www.arttoday.com

The hospital staff doesn’t have time to pontificate on the big questions of the day; they’re too busy just trying to keep people alive. Head nurse Etti Ben-Yaacov says: “We work under the principle that we have one golden hour to save a life after a severe shock-trauma.”

year-old Adi Hudja. Last December she picked the wrong evening to go strolling with friends in search of an eating place. Two bombers blew themselves up, killing 11 other people and wounding nearly 100.

Wilkinson reports that about 40 steel nuts bored their way into Adi’s body—two in her rib cage, six in the pelvic region. Photographs that night showed her legs looking like Swiss cheese. But then Wilkinson goes on to share an even more harrowing sequence in Adi’s misfortune.

“One of the bombers used rat poison in his explosive device, according to Dr. Avi Rivkind, head of Emergency Care at Hadassah Hospital. The poison works as a blood thinner and causes those exposed to bleed more profusely and die quickly. Adi ‘bled like hell,’ Rivkind said. He finally stopped the bleeding with a drug used for hemophiliacs.” Fifteen surgeries later, Adi will still never be the same.

Today’s terrorist battle is so different from anything the Israeli physicians have had to encounter on a regular battlefield. Today’s bombs are very different from ones previ-

ing how Rivkind inquired of Shari, “How are you?” She looked up at him and said, “OK.” He encouragingly replied, “Don’t worry, it will be all right.” He immediately asked for the insertion of a tube to create an open airway for her breathing, and stayed with her over the objections of another doctor. As reporter Hammer conveys the tenseness of the moment, the other doctor felt that Rivkind should be treating the more “obviously wounded.” Rivkind eyed the other medic, and stated, “Trust me.”

The dreaded white butterfly

Once in the trauma unit, Shari’s X-rays substantiated what Rivkind had feared all along. There before him was the obvious “white butterfly pattern” that plainly proved his hunch that her lungs had exploded as a result of the shock concussions of the bomb. As she was rushed into the operating room, 20 medical personal gazed in horror as she was opened up to find heavily damaged lungs and liver with blood rapidly filling her chest cavity and abdomen. They were finally able to stop the bleeding. But after two hours of frantic activity, Shari’s life slipped away at 10:10 a.m.

But more has collapsed than Shari’s lungs. The confidence of Israel is slowly ebbing away. Reporter Hammer quotes *Ha’aretz* newspaper columnist Ari Shavit as lamenting, “There is this feeling that we tried politics, we tried the army, we tried everything. What’s left?”

But the staff at Hadassah Hospital doesn’t have time to pontificate on the big questions of the day; they’re too busy just trying to keep people alive. Hammer highlights the preciousness of each moment in capturing the thoughts of Dr. Rivkind’s aide, head nurse Etti Ben-Yaacov, who says it like it is: “We work under the principle that we have one golden hour to save a life after a severe shock-trauma.” But the big question to ponder is, even so, what quality of life remains for those who survive “the golden hour?”

Los Angeles Times staff writer Wilkinson quotes Sarah Levinsky Rigler, a writer who serves with a Jewish relief organization: “The thing I learned is, it never really ends—the trauma goes on, the nightmare, the fear of vulnerability. We think ‘lightly injured’ or ‘they got off lucky.’” Rigler concludes with the thought, “They’ll never be OK. It’s a misnomer. Lives are ruined.”

Even as I write this article, news has just come over the Internet—news that I’ll never get used to hearing. Others have now just joined the stories of Mizrahi, Adi and Shari. A bomb has just gone off at Hebrew University. Again, the target is a crowded cafeteria where young people are likely to gather. The initial tally is seven dead and 85 wounded, but by the time you read this you will know the rest of the story.

When will it ever stop?

The staff of *World News and Prophecy* is dedicated to the reality that Jesus Christ is coming back to this earth once and for all to save humanity from itself. Our goal is not simply to report the bad and sad news of today, but also to encourage our reading audience that real and lasting help is on the way with permanent and positive solutions for all peoples and nations.

God knows what He is going to do, and is about doing it. What He wants to know about us is whether we have the same level of concern that He does. That is why in Psalm 122:6 He asks us to “Pray for the peace of Jerusalem.” Is that simply because He is only concerned about the Jews? Not at all. When Christ lands on the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem as indicated in Zechariah 14:4, it is from that point of earthly contact that permanent peace is going to begin to emanate around this entire planet.

The words of Handel’s *Messiah*, which echo the prophetic refrain of Isaiah 9:6-7, will be more than glorious baroque music. They will be the day-to-day headlines that will replace the bad news of today.

Banner headlines will boldly shout out, “For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end, upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, to order it and establish it with judgment and justice from that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.”

Until that time

At this time in our lives, we cannot control the events that are occurring in the Middle East. Yes, as I have mentioned, we can pray about it, but what else might we do? The bottom line of the Christian reality is that we can only be responsible for that which comes within our sphere of influence. Indeed those things give us more than enough work to do!

I couldn’t help but marvel at Dr. Rivkind’s insight in recognizing when Shari came into his trauma center that she was “burning inside.” Simply put, things don’t always appear as they seem to be unless we take a closer look and “get under the skin” of another human being.

I had to ask myself how often have I not picked up on the telltale signs of an individual who looks all right, seems OK, but is actually suffering from the shocking concussions of life’s steady bombardments, and is slowly but surely emotionally bleeding and spiritually dying inside. Am I, can I—are you, can you—be attuned to the outward signs of the inward realities of the “white butterfly pattern” before it is too late?

So many people today have had “life’s air” knocked out of their existence. It takes someone very special to move beyond the hectic moments of life and make the proper decision regarding who needs help first and foremost.

Dr. Rivkind is a very special person. It is in his words and actions in the crazy and frenetic environment of a trauma center in the middle of Jerusalem that the spirit of Isaiah 30:21 is captured. It is a spirit that beckons us to understand, “This is the way, walk in it.” This precious understanding moves us beyond what is dramatically visible to understand those needs which are hidden, so we can assure those in need, “Trust me, and don’t worry, everything will be all right.” ❖



This is the Way

ISAIAH 30:21

by Robin Webber

Getting Underneath the Skin

Have you grown accustomed to the news that comes over the radio or television that there has been another homicide bomb blast in Israel? It's something I haven't gotten used to whatsoever. And I don't think I ever will! Every time I hear that three or four or 15 people have been killed, my heart just sinks. How about yours?

The thought of "oh no, not again" echoes through my mind as I can only meagerly contemplate from such a distance such a devastating loss of life.

But what about all the others who were injured in the bomb blast? What about those who didn't die immediately?

A little understood reality is that in the last 22 months, while 270 people have died as the result of 70 bombings, over 2,500 Israelis have been wounded—many with life-altering consequences. The incredible reality is that almost 10 times as many people are left in the never-ending state of the "walking wounded" as those who died immediately.

Let's take a reality check and fully realize that terrorism's ultimate goal is not simply to eliminate the living, but to physically damage and, more importantly, psychologically drive those who remain behind into a state of hopelessness even as the smoke clears.

Two recent articles identify this searing reality of man's inhumanity to man. "Code Blue in Jerusalem," written by Joshua Hammer, appeared in the July 1, 2002, edition of *Newsweek*.

A few weeks later, Tracy Wilkinson of *The Los Angeles Times* wrote a piece titled "Lives Forever Scarred

After Suicide Bombings," which appeared on July 21, 2002.

While the reporters interviewed different victims and medical personnel, a common thread runs through both articles. For one thing, our universal "Hollywood approach to violence" doesn't prepare us for the reality that suffering truly lasts beyond a two-hour movie time frame. Secondly, and most importantly, there truly are incredible people who strive to make a difference in the middle of hellish mayhem. Let's put some names and faces, hopes and dreams, heartaches and shared hearts behind the news headlines of "today, another bomb has gone off in Israel."

The nuts and bolts of terrorism

Many of us are simply not aware of the devastating reality of what happens when a bomb goes off. Due to our Hollywood-conditioned mind-set of violence, we think of a bomb going off with a blast, swoosh, bang and smoke hovering in the air. And it is all over. But in reality, the sad story is just beginning.

Let me introduce you, via reporter Wilkinson's interview, to one person, Motti Mizrahi: "Four months have gone by since Mizrahi was critically wounded in a Palestinian suicide bombing at a Jerusalem café where he was chatting with a friend. Steel nuts and bolts packed inside the bomb pierced his chest and the back of his skull. They smashed all the bones in his forearm and upper arm. His hand was nearly sheared off, held on by pieces of flesh and ligament."

(See "SKIN," page 14)