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God's Mandate to America

In light of President Bush's reelection, what should be the real focus of America's vision? What can we learn from the message God sent to Israel and Judah through the prophets? The message, or mandate, is radically different from what anyone really wants to consider.

by Darris McNeely

Two days after U.S. President George W. Bush won his second term, journalist Tom Friedman wrote in his *New York Times* column what many were already saying. "Meanwhile, there is a lot of talk that Mr. Bush has a mandate for his far right policies. Yes, he does have a mandate, but he also has a date—a date with history" (Nov. 4, 2004).

Time will tell whether President Bush has a date with history. There is little doubt the president will use his victory and spend the "political capital" he claims to have from the American electorate. The question is whether the president is listening to the right voice.

Campaign issues

Americans seemed to be voting on three major issues this season. The first was the issue of security. Within this are the war on terror against Al-Qaeda and the ongoing wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The president is now free to pursue his goals. Within days of the election, Marines began an all-out offensive against the rebel stronghold in the city of Fallujah, Iraq. If Iraq is to be stabilized to the point that democratic elections can be held, the rebel insurgents will have to be neutralized. Iraq is a test case for President Bush's desire to democratize the region. Failure here would be a major setback.



U.S. President George W. Bush on Nov. 4 during his first news conference after reelection (photo by Shaun Heasley/Reuters)

Look for the majority of troops to withdraw as soon as the "mission is accomplished," leaving a peacekeeping force in place, either in Iraq or some other country such as Kuwait. American troop presence in the Middle East will likely remain for some time.

Values were a second issue on the minds of Americans. Gay marriage, abortion and stem cell research are hot button items for those with traditional religious values. There remains a culture war within the nation.

(See "MANDATE," page 3)



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"Whom heaven must receive until the times of

Restoration

of all things ... ACTS 3:21

Another Brick in a New World

I wonder when filmmakers will take a bold step away from sex and finally tell a story without major emphasis on the sexual preferences of the main characters. Maybe not in my lifetime, but I can always hope.

I just returned from seeing the latest "blockbuster" movie of the season, *Alexander*. It is the story of the fourth century B.C. colossus, Alexander the Great, which opened during the Thanksgiving holiday weekend. (See *World News and Prophecy*, November 2004, "The Man Who Would Be God.") If I were a film critic, I would have to give this movie a thumbs-down because of one major thematic element.

Alexander's bisexual nature is given more emphasis in this film than it deserves by any credible standard. Alexander changed his world and future generations when he took his army east against the Persians and conquered everything in his path until he came to the Indus River in India and was forced to turn back when his troops would go no further. In 11 years he turned his world upside down in his effort to unite the peoples of Europe and Asia.

He was a study in contrasts. Ambitious, driven and bold, he was benevolent to those who showed deference to his power and vengeful to any who dared challenge or stand in his way. In the end he died from years of warring, alcohol and, some say, the absence of worlds to conquer.

Alexander did great things and is a fascinating figure to study. He was successful for many reasons, but his sexuality was not one of them. Unfortunately, the makers of this film chose to spend much time on this while omitting whole chapters of his story, all far more interesting and vital to understanding the man and his deeds.

Today America is in the midst of a struggle over legitimization of marriage between gay couples. During the past election there were several initiatives on the ballot attempting to deal with this divisive issue.

Many conservative religious groups are pushing for a constitutional amendment defining marriage as an institution between a man and a woman. Such an amendment would take years of debate to ever come into existence. The result would likely be further polarization of a culturally diverse population in America. History proves that morality cannot be legislated.

We are watching a relentless erosion of traditional marriage as defined by religion and the state. The attempt to legally recognize the union of gay couples is a defining issue of our day. It is an attempt to put heterosexual and homosexual unions on equal par, and an attempt to legitimize the gay lifestyle.

Of course marriage is under attack from other elements as well. Divorce continues to be a major social problem. Today more and more people are opting for living together without the commitment of a marriage vow. We are experiencing the breakdown of the fabric of an ordered, stable society. In time we will reap the whirlwind of disintegration of our world as we know it. Bible prophecy shows this to be true.

This cinematic portrayal of Alexander's homosexuality is another brick in the wall of cultural division in America. This wall will take many more turns until those who seek a new social structure construct a completely new house.

The biblical definition of marriage is under attack, and it appears that only the intervention of the very author of marriage, God Himself, can restore the proper relationships intended for humanity. It is one more reason Jesus Christ must intervene to restore all things.

—Darris McNeely

“MANDATE,” (Continued from page 1)

According to a Pew Research Center report, 80 percent of Americans believe in God and 60 percent agree that “religion plays an important part in my life.” While people differ on how they express their faith, and to what depth, there is still a large well of “God-fearers” in America. Many look nostalgically back on the world that was, while at the same time they fearfully look forward to an uncertain future.

The third issue this year was the economy—bread and butter social issues. In many states hit hard by unemployment, jobs are a big concern. The nation’s Social Security system is in need of major overhaul to ensure benefits for millions of baby boomers and the generations to follow. Health care and prescription drug prices were also debated.

All of these are perennial issues of concern. It seems every presidential debate in living memory has included these critical social issues. You have to wonder what is lacking in our system that would create economic stability from one generation to the next.

Still, America has a good system, based on a strong benevolent strain. It has fed the world and itself like biblical Joseph fed Egypt and the surrounding nations. Yet many global forces shape today’s world. America will not always be able to drive those forces to her advantage. There are changes ahead in the world economy—many of which will seriously impact the American way of life.

What about God’s mandates?

There are great issues before the world at this time. Beyond the war on terror is the threat of nuclear weapons in the hands of countries that may use them to influence their agenda. Dealing with Iran’s and North Korea’s nuclear programs are immediate concerns. The idea that a nuclear weapon could fall into the hands of a terrorist group keeps many awake at night. America leads the world in dealing with these threats.

An overarching issue is America’s preeminent position as the political, economic and military leader of the world. What would happen if the

winds of history turned and America’s role was greatly diminished? This is a subject covered quite extensively in past issues of this publication. The world would be a far different place. For that reason, we believe President Bush and America would be better served listening to the mandates of God than to the various and sundry political interests within the country.

The pages of your Bible show that when God had a message for His nation Israel, He sent it repeatedly through His prophets. These messages



Workers remove a Ten Commandments monument from the Alabama Judicial Building Aug. 27, 2003 (photo by Tami Chappell/Reuters)

contained words of warning—we might call them mandates—to return to the first principles of a relationship formed at Mount Sinai. That covenant was the basis of every aspect of their national life. When they forgot and strayed from its terms, they suffered and fell short of their great God-given calling.

The message of God to Israel of old is the same for our peoples today. The English-speaking nations of America, Great Britain, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and perhaps a few others received a modern inheritance from God because of the promises made to Abraham. The story is told in our free booklet, *The United States and Britain in Bible Prophecy*. This amazing truth holds a vital message for these nations

at this critical juncture in history. God has a very different set of mandates for America and Britain than most would imagine.

Walk in God’s law

God raised up a sheepbreeder named Amos in the seventh century B.C. and sent him to the capital of Israel in Samaria. Included in his mandate was a sharp warning to return to the law, embodied in the Ten Commandments.

Notice, “Thus says the LORD: ‘For three transgressions of Judah, and for four, I will not turn away its punishment, because they have despised the law of the LORD, and have not kept His commandments. Their lies lead them astray, lies which their fathers followed. But I will send a fire upon Judah, and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem’” (Amos 2:4-5). In this prophecy, Jerusalem symbolizes the entirety of the nations of Israel and Judah.

Ten of the tribes had split into a separate kingdom after the death of King Solomon. Jeroboam led the split and started the country on a long slide into apostasy. His first act was to erect idols in convenient locations to make it easier for people to worship (see 1 Kings 12:25-33). Israel never recovered from this idolatry, its first major step away from God. The people suffered as a result.

Amos was only one of the prophets who brought a message to Israel that they had broken faith with God and His law. Every subsequent social and political problem they faced stemmed from that decision.

Part of the culture war today is over the display of the Ten Commandments in public buildings. In the summer of 2003 a controversy erupted over the Alabama chief justice’s decision to put a stone monument containing the commandments on display in the Alabama Judicial Building. The resulting furor not only highlighted the cultural divide, but also brought up the fact that many pay only lip service to the idea of the law rather than looking deeply into its precepts in critical self-examination.

Amos’s message, or should we say God’s mandate, applies as much to us

as it did to Israel of old. We also have “despised the law of the LORD, and have not kept His commandments.” Those are strong words that many in our audience do not want to consider. But let’s look at what God said through another prophet concerning just one of these commandments.

The Sabbath mandate

Through the prophet Ezekiel, God indicted Israel and Judah for both idolatry and Sabbath breaking, violations of the Second and Fourth Commandments. Today people would not want to focus on the observance of a day in honor of God. Few would consider that God looks at keeping the Fourth Commandment as a crucial sign of those who worship Him in spirit and in truth. Fewer still would accept the biblical injunction to observe the seventh day of the week as holy time as was the manner of Jesus Christ and His New Testament followers.

Ezekiel 20 is a key chapter to show how important the Sabbath is to God. It records that a group of elders—spiritual and political leaders—came to the prophet for understanding of their world and its times. After showing a hint of impatience, God lays out His case. Notice beginning in verse 5: “Thus says the Lord GOD: ‘On the day when I chose Israel and raised My hand in an oath to the descendants of the house of Jacob, and made Myself known to them in the land of Egypt, I raised My hand in an oath to them, saying, “I am the LORD your God.”’

“On that day I raised My hand in an oath to them, to bring them out of the land of Egypt into a land that I had searched out for them, “flowing with milk and honey,” the glory of all lands” (verses 5-6). God was the source of their blessings, just as He is the source of our blessings today.

But He goes on to show how Israel did not forsake the false gods of Egypt, but desired them instead of the truth. This rebellion incited God’s anger. The history of Israel’s rebellion actually spans the time from when God planted His people in the Promised Land to the time when He sent them into exile. It encapsulates the history of the nation recorded in the Old Testament Scriptures. God formed with the nation

a covenant based on His statutes, judgments and law, a system that ensures success and abundance (verse 11).

Key to this was the Sabbath, the Fourth Commandment. Notice verse 12: “Moreover I also gave them My Sabbaths, to be a sign between them and Me, that they might know that I am the LORD who sanctifies them.”

The Sabbath is a sign between God and His people. It was a critically important feature of Israel’s national life. Notice how God connects it to their existence as a nation: “Yet the house of Israel rebelled against Me in the wilderness; they did not walk in My statutes; they despised My judgments, ‘which, if a man does, he shall live by them’; and they greatly defiled My Sabbaths. Then I said I would pour out My fury on them in the wilderness, to consume them” (verse 13).

Israel continued to walk contrary to

Would our leaders today dare look at the words of the prophets to receive a mandate from God for their leadership of their nations?

the laws of God, and eventually this led to their decline. Sabbath breaking and idolatry were linked together as twin pillars of defilement for the nation. “Because they despised My judgments and did not walk in My statutes, but profaned My Sabbaths; for their heart went after their idols” (verse 16).

The words of God echo down through the years as a witness to the modern descendants of this ancient people: “I am the LORD your God: Walk in My statutes, keep My judgments, and do them; hallow My Sabbaths, and they will be a sign between Me and you, that you may know that I am the LORD your God.”

“Notwithstanding, the children rebelled against Me; they did not walk in My statutes, and were not careful to observe My judgments, ‘which, if a man does, he shall live by them’; but they profaned My Sabbaths. Then I said I would pour out My fury on them and

fulfill My anger against them in the wilderness” (verses 19-21).

Modern “prophets”

Ancient Israel went into captivity, their power eclipsed by other nations, because they would not heed the mandates of God through the prophets. Ezekiel singles out idolatry and Sabbath breaking as two specific problems leading to their fall. Would our leaders today dare look at the words of the prophets to receive a mandate from God for their leadership of their nations? Would President Bush, Prime Minister Tony Blair of England, Prime Minister Paul Martin of Canada, Prime Minister John Howard of Australia or Prime Minister Helen Clark of New Zealand open the Bible, read these words and lead a national repentance and a return to God based on these mandates?

Some American religious leaders have issued public calls to President Bush to enact their personal views about God’s will for the country. This publication believes the ultimate solution involves a much different vision, a completely new path for the United States to return to the God of our fathers.

That path follows the course laid out by Elijah, another prophet of God, who said to Israel, “How long will you falter between two opinions? If the LORD is God, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him” (1 Kings 18:21). It is not a popular way, but it is the only way to a secure future, with any hope of avoiding the full impact of end-time prophecies.

A mandate against false religion

Our peoples, and our national leaders, would be better served by listening to another of God’s mandates when it comes to those who claim to speak in the name of God, yet are not sent by Him.

Notice the words from Micah. “Thus says the LORD concerning the prophets who make My people stray; who chant ‘Peace’ while they chew with their teeth, but who prepare war against him who puts nothing into their mouths: Therefore you shall have night without vision, and you shall have darkness without divination; the sun shall go down on the prophets, and the day shall be dark for them. So the seers shall be

(See “MANDATE,” page 7)

The Growing Menace of Gambling

Compulsive gambling can and does destroy lives just like drug addiction and alcoholism. It is just one more sign of the moral decline currently gripping our Anglo-Saxon nations.

by John Ross Schroeder

Just living from day to day involves a certain degree of hopefully intelligent risk taking. The pioneering Americans who conquered the Western frontier exercised this quality in abundance as they crossed the Great Plains in pursuit of land and settlement. But these courageous pioneers were willing to work and wait for the eventual emergence of their material goals. They did not expect something for nothing. No quick fixes were contemplated.

Pursuing instant success is becoming a pervasive part of Western culture. Patience and anticipation of the satisfying rewards of hard work are not as evident as they once were. The growing menace of gambling is but a symptom of the times.

Americans in particular are a nation of risk takers. It is an integral part of their national cultural ethic. This characteristic goes some way in explaining over 225 years of general commercial success as a nation.

But today's outright gambling—expecting instant windfalls to solve stubborn financial problems—is both foolhardy and dangerous. Except for a very few people, instant monetary gratification is but an illusory dream. It does happen, but instant “rags to riches” is a very rare occurrence. Yet many continue to gamble in the vain hope that magically they will be one of the favored few who “strike it rich.”

Gambling in the United States

Says Susan Gluss: “America has a nasty gambling problem. From Maryland to California, states desperate for a politically painless way to increase their tax revenues are turning to slot machines and casinos” (*The Weekly*, Nov. 13, 2004, quoted from *The San Francisco Chronicle*).

The statistical picture is grim! For instance, in the year 2002 seven out of 10 Americans participated in legal gambling. Over 50 percent bought lottery tickets and over 30 percent gambled in casinos (“Gambling in America,” *The Gallup Organization*, May 7, 2004). The annu-



Gambling is portrayed as fun, sexy and desirable to make one rich. But the truth is, with society's addiction to gambling, everyone is on a losing streak.

al gambling growth rate has been nearly 10 percent for about a decade (Alex Berenson, “The States Bet Bigger on Betting,” *The New York Times*, May 18, 2003). U.S. citizens spend more money on gambling than videos, DVDs, movies and books all rolled into one (*ibid.*).

Millions of Americans are problem gamblers, many on a lifetime basis. Even more disturbing is the fact that 20 percent of the nation's youths are taking up the habit, according to the National Gambling Impact Study Commission.

When I was growing up in south Texas during the 1940s and '50s, Americans had to go to Reno or Las Vegas, Nevada, to gamble legally. *Time* magazine (July 26, 2004) states that last

Now 47 states have some form of legal gambling—apparently bringing in nearly 5 percent of total revenues. But is the cost in broken human lives really worth the increased revenues?

year residents and visitors spent \$6.1 billion on gambling in Las Vegas alone. According to *USA Today* (July 29, 2004), 37 states now have authorized slot machines. Furthermore, 47 states have some form of legal gambling—apparently bringing in nearly 5 percent of total revenues.

But is the cost in broken human lives really worth the increased revenues? We will address this question later in the article.

The problem in Britain

In the words of U.K. journalist Olivia Stewart-Liberty, “A British gambling revolution is in the cards.” She recently visited several London casinos to research and write an article for the *Evening Standard* magazine supplement (Nov. 12, 2004), concluding, “In the end, everyone’s on a losing streak.”

Recently the British government’s stated intention to relax national gambling laws has created an uproar in the media. A proposal of 40 new super casinos across the country has suddenly been lowered to less than 10.

Little wonder, as Britain is already the betting capital of Europe, with money spent on gambling having increased from £7.6 billion to almost £40 billion just in the last three years (*London Daily Mail*, Oct. 5 and 7, 2004). The explosion has raised Britain to a notorious third in the world, just behind the United States and Japan.

Gamblers Anonymous estimates that there are about 300,000 to 400,000 addicts in the United Kingdom. Noted columnist Simon Jenkins, a self-confessed liberal but a very competent journalist, has branded the government’s proposed gambling bill as “not deregulation but graft and corruption.” He further states, “Governments have a duty to diminish the harm that people do to themselves and their families—or at least not increase it” (*The Times* [London], Oct. 27, 2004).

Good advice from Australia

Australians have urged Britain to think twice before it eases its gambling laws. They’ve been there, done that.

In 1997 Australia liberalized its

gambling regulations with the result that 82 percent of all adults now gamble, about 40 percent at least once weekly. The “land down under” now has some 300,000 problem gamblers, the highest per capita in the world, says Anna Gizowska in *The Sunday Telegraph*.

One addicted Sydney businessman admitted to more than one suicide attempt. He said: “*Gambling in Australia is becoming an epidemic*. It almost ruined my life. My gambling addiction cost me everything: My family, my kids, my home, my business, my investments. They’ve all gone. I lost everything” (ibid., Oct. 17, 2004, emphasis added throughout).

The statistics tell the story. “There are more than 170,000 gaming machines in Australia to cater for its 19 million population—triple the number

These biblical principles show us how to handle our material blessings in ways that lead to a better life, both materially and spiritually. Gambling is not the answer to our material woes. God is!

of machines in Europe with a population of 520 million” (ibid.).

The burgeoning human cost

Noted writer Bel Mooney observed: “The vision of a Britain dominated by the sleazy glitz of casino culture is truly depressing. What good will come of it?” (*London Daily Mail*, Oct. 7, 2004). Since 1994, Gamblers Anonymous in Britain has seen a 17 percent increase in cry-for-help calls.

Religious writer Paul Richards reported that “studies show gamblers going without food and clothes, resorting to theft and other illegal activities to get money [for the gambling habit] and suffering high rates of family breakdown” (*The Church of England* newspaper, Oct. 29, 2004).

According to American writer Susan Gluss, “*Gambling ends up costing more than it brings in*. Economist Earl Grinols has studied the rates of crime, lost productivity, domestic abuse and other social ills in countries with and without casinos. He found that the 3% to 5% of players who become problem gamblers each end up costing society about \$11,000. States would need to seize half a casino’s profits, calculated Grinols, to cover the ‘social wreckage’ it generated” (*San Francisco Chronicle*).

Missouri is a case in point. “Gambling tax revenue brought in a ‘seeming windfall’ of \$242 [million] in 2002. Yet the state lost an estimated \$572 [million] in related business failures, crime, unemployment and other social costs” (ibid.). On the other hand, South Carolina banned all slot machines, resulting in two thirds of its Gamblers Anonymous groups having to disband for lack of callers.

Susan Gluss sums up the problem: “Gambling provides only the illusion of easy money. We all pay the social and financial consequences, dearly” (ibid.).

Applying the biblical principles

Although the Bible does not mention the term *gambling* by name, the Christian principles are clear and plain. Compulsive gambling for stakes that make a difference is a violation of the Tenth Commandment forbidding coveting (we are not talking here about a private poker game among old friends for matchsticks or dimes).

This commandment forbids greed and covetousness (Exodus 20:17; Deuteronomy 5:21). Indeed the apostle Paul labels covetousness as a form of idolatry—putting something else in the place of the true God. Contrary to the advice of a popular film actor in the role of a Wall Street baron, greed is not good. The kickback is far too high a price to pay.

The Proverbs, mainly of King Solomon, are replete with admonitions that place the desire for riches and wealth in a proper, godly perspective. Taken together they advocate patience, diligence, hard work and trust in God

as preparatory steps toward success. Here are 12 of them:

- Treasures of wickedness profit nothing (10:2).
- He who deals with a slack hand becomes poor; but the hand of the diligent makes one rich (10:4).
- The labor of the righteous leads to life (10:16).
- The blessing of the LORD makes one rich, and He adds no sorrow with it (10:22).
- He who tills his land will be satisfied with bread, but he who follows frivolity is devoid of understanding (12:11).
- Wealth gotten by vanity shall be diminished; but he that gathers by labor shall increase (13:11, KJV).
- Better is a little with the fear of God than great treasure with trouble (15:16).
- The thoughts of the diligent tend only to plenteousness; but of every one who is hasty only to want (21:5, KJV).
- The borrower is servant to the lender (22:7).
- Will you set your eyes on that which is not? For riches certainly make themselves wings; they fly away like an eagle toward heaven (23:5).
- He who tills his land will have plenty of bread, but he who follows frivolity will have poverty enough (28:19).
- Give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me (30:8, KJV).

These biblical principles, expressed in differently worded proverbs, show us how to handle our material blessings in ways that lead to a better life, both materially and spiritually.

Gambling is not the answer to our material woes. God is! He teaches us a way of life that includes planning, hard work and real enjoyment. A more complete account of how we can implement biblical laws and principles is found in our free brochure *Making Life Work*.

Also, if you are in debt (or even if you are not), please ask for our free companion booklet *Managing Your Finances*. Following its advice will put you on the road to getting out of debt and taking control of your money. Both publications are available in print or online. Ask for both! ❖

“MANDATE,” (Continued from page 4)

ashamed, and the diviners abashed; indeed they shall all cover their lips; for there is no answer from God.

“But truly I am full of power by the Spirit of the LORD, and of justice and might, to declare to Jacob his transgression and to Israel his sin. Now hear this, you heads of the house of Jacob and rulers of the house of Israel, who abhor justice and pervert all equity, who build up Zion with bloodshed and Jerusalem with iniquity: Her heads judge for a bribe, her priests teach for pay, and her prophets divine for money. Yet they lean on the LORD, and say, ‘Is not the LORD among us? No harm can come upon us’” (Micah 3:5-11).

Is this the time for America to listen to the voice of God and make a deep examination of its ways and come to a heartfelt repentance for walking contrary to the Word of God? Is God holding back a gathering storm of change, giving us another opportunity to heed His mandate for repentance? Perhaps this is the moment to hear another prophet’s warning—a warning not to trust in lies that cannot save.

Notice the words of Jeremiah, spoken while standing in front of the magnificent temple built by Solomon to the glory of God: “The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying, ‘Stand in the gate of the LORD’s house, and proclaim there this word, and say, ‘Hear the word of the LORD, all you of Judah who enter in at these gates to worship the LORD!’”

“Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: ‘Amend your ways and your doings, and I will cause you to dwell in this place. Do not trust in these lying words, saying, “The temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD are these.” For if you thoroughly amend your ways and your doings, if you thoroughly execute judgment between a man and his neighbor, if you do not oppress the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, and do not shed innocent blood in this place, or walk after other gods to your hurt, then I will cause you to dwell in this place, in the land that I gave to your fathers forever and ever’” (Jeremiah 7:1-7).

God’s mandates always hold the hope of restoration if there is repentance. There is still time for a change,

but we must look to God and not trust in what we think is right. God has blessed America and Great Britain. To Him alone America owes its position as a modern colossus. We may be paused at a critical period of history when the tide could turn quickly and the world could go through dramatic changes. America may be in the last days of a long and prosperous summer.

The presence of God

Four years ago in his first inaugural address, President Bush spoke of God’s presence over America. He quoted from a letter written soon after the signing of the Declaration of Independence. The letter was from Virginia statesman John Page to Thomas Jefferson. Speaking of the tumultuous times, he said, “We know the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong. Do you not think an angel rides in the whirlwind and directs this storm?” President Bush concluded, “This work continues. This story goes on. And an angel still rides in the whirlwind and directs this storm.”

The allusion was to the book of Ezekiel and speaks to the presence of God among His people. The president was right, “an angel still rides in the whirlwind and directs this storm”—but for how long? The answer depends on whether he listens to the voice of the people or the mandates of God. Let us pray he listens to God. ❖

Recommended Reading

What is ahead of us now? What does the Bible say about the future for nations like the United States, Britain, Canada, Australia and New Zealand? We offer a well-researched booklet that can help.



Request *The United States and Britain in Bible Prophecy*. While you are at it, request copies of *The Ten Commandments* and *Sunset to Sunset—God’s Sabbath Rest*. They cover important information for today, and they are all free of charge.

Contact any of our offices listed on page 15, or request or download them from our Web site at www.ucg.org

Governments Legislating Morality

Does the freedom of Western democracy license people to choose their own morality? Or can government legislate it? Actually, neither is true!

by Cecil E. Maranville

Americans were embroiled in a heated debate throughout the recent presidential election about some form of government imposing a standard of morality. Some feared that one party would impose conservative moral values, so they voted against that party. Others feared that the other party would appoint activist judges who would “legislate” liberal moral values from the bench, so they voted against that party’s candidates.

A battle over the same issues, but in a different guise, took place in the Netherlands on the same day as the American election. The result was bloody.

As filmmaker Theo van Gogh rode up to his building in Amsterdam, the Netherlands, a shot rang out, and he tumbled to the ground. Seriously wounded, he managed to get to his feet and stumble the remaining few feet to his building before falling again. Van Gogh’s attacker pounced on him, slit his throat and stabbed a knife into his chest to pin a five-page ranting call for all Muslims to kill the “infidel enemies,” meaning those of the Western culture.

The prime suspect is Muhammad Bouyeri, a 26-year-old Dutch Moroccan with ties to al-Qaeda.

Van Gogh produced films on the mistreatment of women in the Islamist culture, claiming the religion itself promoted violence against women. His work inflamed the anger of the 1 million Muslims now living in the Netherlands, a figure that grows by 30,000 every year. The last straw was a film titled *Submission*, released last summer.

Van Gogh’s murder was a brutal, immoral and criminal act. But it represents more than an isolated attack by a single Muslim assailant on a lone critic of Islam. It was a battle over one group attempting to force its standards of morality onto another.

Normally the Netherlands is the liberal free expressionist’s dream. Almost anything goes—literally. In Amsterdam, anyone may order mar-

ijuana and hashish from a public restaurant menu. Heroin and cocaine have been decriminalized for all practical purposes for many years.

Never mind that drug addiction and drug-related crime have skyrocketed since drugs were decriminalized—the important thing to those who demand “social freedoms” is that no law defines drug use as wrong.

The country is infamous for prostitutes, which number about 30,000 (about 10,000 are in Amsterdam alone, where they display themselves in storefront windows for passersby to see)—all protected by the government and unions.

Never mind that there is a substantial increase in STDs (sexually transmissible diseases)—the sex is “legal.”

Recently, a brothel chain sued the government for failing to license the “Yum Yum Caviar Club” at Amsterdam’s Schiphol airport, a brothel that intends “to cater to stressed travelers in transit.” No problem, the government said, we’re just waiting until there is enough space in the terminal for the “business.”

In 2000 the Netherlands became the first nation in the world to legalize same-sex marriages. The nation epitomizes social liberalism.

Netherlands attempts to legislate sin

The script for *Submission*, the film that cost Theo van Gogh his life, was written by a Dutch politician, Ayaan Hirsi Ali. That five-page letter hideously fastened to Van Gogh’s body threatened the life of Ms. Hirsi Ali. She now has the most intensive police protection of any politician in the country.

She is a member of the People’s Party for Freedom and Democracy (the acronym for the Dutch name of the party is VVD), free-market liberals with a strong national-conservative orientation. Ms. Hirsi Ali represents the VVD on immigration and integration issues in parliament.

The assassination of controversial filmmaker Theo van Gogh highlights the conflicting views of morality in today’s world.

The Muslim community in the Netherlands isolates itself as much as possible from the rest of the country. Muslims send their children to their own schools, frequent their own restaurants and attend mosques where imams who do not even speak Dutch conduct the services.

In a direct confrontation with the Muslim ways, Ms. Hirsi Ali is sponsoring legislation that would force Muslim women to integrate into Dutch culture. Of course, the VVD sees the proposal as moving women along a path of individualism and career, whereas the Muslims see it as an absolutely unacceptable intrusion into their faith.

There's a bizarre twist to this "emancipation." Since prostitution is considered to be a career in the Netherlands, the legislation sets up a possible scenario whereby Muslim women who want social benefits and who could not find work elsewhere would be forced to take "jobs" as prostitutes!

The government is in a position to enforce such policies, because large numbers of immigrants receive some form of social benefits, such as unemployment or disability. Most of the family members of immigrants who arrive as laborers are "unemployable" by the standards of the legal labor market, and they are therefore eligible for social benefits.

Forced prostitution isn't happening yet, because prostitutes are legally self-employed. But should the government confer employer-employee status on the nation's sex clubs, which it might do in order to recoup otherwise lost tax revenues, then the bizarre scenario above could become reality.

Let's set aside the radical Muslim and terrorism aspects to the story for the sake of getting the point about legislating morality.

"Don't tell me how to live!"

There is strong support for social liberalism throughout Europe, Canada and Australia, as well as in the United States. Some election analysts believe that one of the most passionate motivations for people who voted against President Bush was the fear that conservatives would force their morality on



The body of controversial filmmaker and newspaper columnist Theo van Gogh lies under a white sheet after he was killed in Amsterdam Nov. 2. Van Gogh was criticized for a film recently shown on Dutch television about a Muslim woman who was forced into an arranged marriage and abused by her husband and raped by her uncle (Maartje Blijdenstein/Reuters)

the rest of the country through legislation.

Much to the contrary, even conservative politicians tout America's multiculturalism, which allows for a mixed bag of human behavior. Illustrative of this is the fact that President Bush voiced support for civil unions for gays and lesbians in the waning days of the campaign.

Truly, morality cannot be legislated by any human government. Human behavior springs out of one's personal beliefs and self-control—or lack thereof. Of course, laws and judicial decisions can impact what happens in a country. But neither laws nor court rulings can make someone behave in a manner that he or she does not choose to do.

Some Americans will say, "But we aren't as liberal as those Europeans

are!" They are only kidding themselves. Look, for example, at what is happening to the youth of America. Every other year, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) conducts a Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance Survey, most recently in 2003. The results show that 46.7 percent of American teens admit to having had sexual intercourse.

Noted abstinence advocate Pam Stenzel says 12,000 teens in America (in addition to 38,000 adults) are infected with an STD every day (www.pro-life.com/stenzel.htm).

A recent PBS program titled *The Merchants of Cool* revealed that teenagers spend \$100 billion on themselves every year. Five companies (News Corp., Disney, Viacom, Vivendi Universal and Time Warner) control all the major film studios, all of the televi-

sion networks, most of the stations in the top TV markets, much of the radio broadcasting and part or all of every major cable network. They compete against each other for this treasure.

In enticing young minds, they also influence youths' values and lifestyle. Rebecca Hagelin writes, "One result of the MTV market research is the creation of a female and male character that are now seen in various forms in all MTV programming. The male image is known as a 'Mook' to industry execs, and the female is referred to as a 'Midriff'" ("What Constitutes Cool," Aug. 11, 2004, Townhall.com).

"Mook" and "Midriff"

Hagelin explains that the mook exemplifies "perpetual adolescence living on the edge. They seem to say: We get away with it—do what we do, look as we look—and you can, too."

The midriff "character is personified by the sexual bad-girl Britney Spears and dozens of other Britney look-alikes who dominate the airwaves. The 'role-model' teaches even preteen girls it's time they embrace their sexuality and learn how to use it to their advantage; the message is that girls are sexual objects and their sexuality is their power. That's why America's little girls are now baring their bellies and strutting an attitude in malls and schools around the country" (ibid.).

Don't kid yourself that programming guidelines the FCC began to enforce in earnest after Viacom brought America its X-rated halftime show at the 2004 Super Bowl are going to make America a moral nation. American kids are buying the entertainment, as well as the attendant merchandise the media giants promote. Worse than that, they are buying into the promiscuous philosophy, as their behavior amply demonstrates.

Some inside knowledge for you

I have some "inside information" that I want to share with you: A government *is* going to enact morality legislation! But it isn't the George W. Bush administration—or the administrations of Tony Blair, Paul Martin (Canada), John Howard (Australia) or Jan Peter

Balkenende (the Netherlands). It is the government of God.

Of course, God handed down this legislation several thousand years ago. Cal Thomas, in his column "Reflected Virtue," wrote: "When Moses came down from Mount Sinai to deliver the Ten Commandments to the ancient Israelites, he encountered a people having a party and worshipping a golden calf. Clearly, the people were not interested in what God had to say to them."



"Today, many people worship the 'golden calf' of the Dow Jones . . ." Would people listen to what God had to say if He appeared on a mountaintop near them with special morality legislation?

What about today? Are people interested in hearing from God? Thomas continues: "Fast-forward several thousand years. Today, many people worship the 'golden calf' of the Dow Jones Industrial Averages. In Dow we trust. Materialism has dulled our senses to anything that does not produce pleasure. And so we get 'gay marriage,' cloning, partial birth and every other kind of abortion, a high divorce rate,

cohabitation, promiscuity, nudity, profanity, indecency—all part of what some have called the coarsening of culture . . . Culture mirrors our collective souls."

Think about that last statement for a moment. The way we live shows our true character. Would people listen to what God had to say if He appeared on a mountaintop near them with special morality legislation?

Most would not. Would you? You can know the answer to that question by looking at how you are living now. God does not have to appear repeatedly to announce His legislation anew. The humble already got the message. Regrettably, many who claim to represent God think He changed His mind and that now He—like modern politicians—is a multiculturalist. Listening to these spokesmen, one would get the impression that God's highest priority is that everyone get along with everyone else, regardless of the way each chooses to live.

Of course, God wants everyone to get along. But He also insists on specific behavior—for our good! This includes refraining from any sexual activity outside marriage (certainly preteens and young teens do not need to "discover their sexuality"!) and clearly defines a biblically legitimate marriage as being only between a man and a woman.

Without argument, there are many ideas about God today—most if not all with some "good" points. But the God of the Bible calls on all people to worship Him alone. On a trip to Greece, the apostle Paul challenged people who had a multiculturalist view toward religion, calling that way of thinking—well, ignorant. Not the people or a specific religion, but that way of thinking.

His message was: "Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent, because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained" (Acts 17:30-31).

That One who is alone able to judge and to command mankind is Jesus Christ. And His appointed time to do that appears to be fast approaching. ❖

Trade Winds Blow Canada Toward EU

Although inextricably linked with the United States by geography and economics, Canada has been increasingly voting and trading with Europe.

by Graemme Marshall

Canadian firms export some \$19 billion worth of goods annually to the European Union (EU). Sales within Europe by Canadian-owned affiliates are four or five times higher than that. Through its plants in Quebec and Germany, Canadian aluminum giant Alcan supplies most metal required by European automakers BMW and Audi.

New levels of cooperation on investment and trade are bringing Canada and the European Union closer.

As the EU undergoes the greatest enlargement of its 47-year history, Canadians and Europeans are cementing relations. "We've taken the strategic relationship between Canada and the EU to another level," remarked Irish Prime Minister Bertie Ahern, president of the European Council, at the close of a biannual summit between Canada and the EU held in Ottawa in March.

The summit, attended by Mr. Ahern, European Commission President Romano Prodi and Canadian Prime Minister Paul Martin, reinforced cooperation between Europe and Canada. The leaders adopted a Partnership Agenda between Canada and the EU on a wide range of joint interests. They set the framework for a future trade and investment agreement that will make doing business between the two progressively easier.

Canada, in fact, was the first non-European country to sign a framework agreement on political cooperation in 1976 with the then European Economic Community. This year Canada and France mark 400 years of historic relations, dating to cartographer Samuel de Champlain's arrival to establish the first French settlement in 1604.

Why the EU?

Why is Canada looking to the EU as a major trading partner? It's where the trade winds are blowing. It was ironic that on May Day of central Europe's not-so-distant communist past, three countries formerly part of the old Soviet Union were welcomed into the EU. The addition of

Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, along with five former Soviet satellites—the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia—as well as the Mediterranean island states of Cyprus and Malta, has enlarged Europe in an unprecedented manner. The 10 new members boost the EU's population by 20 percent to 450 million ("Canada World View," *Foreign Affairs Canada*, Issue 22, Summer 2004). It is emerging as a huge trading powerhouse.

The EU is Canada's second-largest trading partner, though this is a distant second to the United States, with two-way trade less than 10 percent of that with the United States. Yet in 2003 investment with Europe rose 25 percent while it fell 5 percent south of the border. Many well-known Canadian firms thrive in Europe: Alcan, Bombardier and Magna International. Some 50 percent of Alcan's business is in Europe, compared with 35 percent in North America. Bombardier and Nortel Networks are the largest employers in Northern Ireland.

Canada is seen by Europe as a leader in fiscal responsibility, governance, the integration of immigrants into society and technological innovation. A report published in May by Accenture Inc., an international technology-consulting firm, named Canada as the world's most electronically advanced government.

Geography and membership in the North American Free Trade Area are also important advantages, particularly for European firms looking to Canada as a gateway to the United States. And many countries—like Norway—view Canada as "compassionate," specializing in peace-making. Canada has distinctive ideas of peace, order and good government. They define national interest and in a chaotic world, other countries see these values positively.

Canadian-U.S. differences

Canadians are entwined with the United States, from "snowbirds" (people who go to warmer climates for the winter months) to immi-

(See "CANADA," page 15)

New levels of cooperation on investment and trade are bringing Canada and the European Union closer.

Nov. 2—A Sobering Lesson for Us All

Election Day in the United States was a day of great significance around the world, but not just because of the election results.

by Melvin Rhodes

One of the headlines that impressed me the most in the run-up to the U.S. election contained a numerical riddle that conveyed a deep meaning. It read: “9/10 or 9/12 on 11/2?”

In this case, 11/2 stood for the election date. The most memorable date in recent American history was 9/11. Although most nations put the day before the month, as in 11/9, 9/11 has become a familiar term around the globe. Saying “9/10 or 9/12” emphasized the choice that Americans faced in the eyes of the person who wrote the line: “Do you want to vote for the party of Sept. 10th (the Democrats) or the party of Sept. 12th (the Republicans)?”

The implication of the headline is that the Republicans are the party that is facing up to the challenges of the post-9/11 world while the Democrats choose to live in the past, still fighting the pre-9/11 issues.

The election result suggests that a majority of Americans agree with that author, although likely few people saw that particular headline, which appeared on an obscure Web site.

It's not just in America that some prefer to hold on to Sept. 10, refusing to recognize that the world has changed. British Prime Minister Tony Blair was interviewed by Tim Russert on NBC's *Meet the Press* on Nov. 14 during his visit to Washington, the first by any foreign leader following President Bush's reelection victory.

Mr. Blair explained that there are two kinds of people in the United Kingdom. On the one hand are those who liken the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11 to previous terrorist attacks by the IRA or the German Baader-Meinhoff gang. On the other hand are those who realize, like the prime minister himself, that 9/11 was something entirely different, that the world has entered a new and more dangerous phase. Certainly, in this respect, the prime minister and the American president are in full agreement.

The recently reelected Australian prime minister, John Howard, also shares this thinking. His opponent, Labor leader Mark Latham, saw

things differently, stating that the reason Australians had been attacked by terrorists in recent years was because Australia supported the United States.

Tony Blair in his interview said that yes, the United Kingdom could probably avoid more terrorism if it did not support the United States, but that didn't alter the fact that eventually the new threat that now confronts the world would threaten all civilized nations.

This threat became much clearer on Nov. 2, and not just because it was the date of the American election.

Nov. 2—a threat to freedom of speech

Before the voting booths opened in the United States, a particularly gruesome and chilling murder took place on the other side of the Atlantic Ocean, one that bodes ill for us all.

It was the murder of Dutch filmmaker Theo van Gogh, gunned down as he cycled in Amsterdam that Tuesday morning. He was murdered by a young Islamic radical with dual Moroccan and Dutch citizenship. The man approached Van Gogh from behind, emptying a pistol into him at point-blank range. Ignoring his pleas for mercy, his killer then ritually slit his throat so forcefully he almost decapitated him.

A long letter was affixed to the body, a message of grievance against Dutch society in general and, specifically, against the Jewish mayor of Amsterdam and a female politician who was formerly Muslim. The letter included the words, “I know definitely that you, O America, will go down.”

What was Van Gogh's crime against Islam? He had made a film called *Submission*, which highlighted physical, emotional and spiritual abuse of Islamic women by their husbands. Ironically, the project he was working on at the time of his death was a documentary on Pym Fortuyn, a Dutch politician murdered in 2002 for speaking out against Islamic fundamentalism. Mr. Fortuyn's murder was the first assassination in the Netherlands in over 400 years.

Before the voting booths opened in the United States, a particularly gruesome and chilling murder took place on the other side of the Atlantic Ocean, one that bodes ill for us all.

The Netherlands has been one of the most tolerant countries in the world. As in all free societies, it has permitted people religious freedom and the freedom to criticize people of other religions.

This second assassination (murder for political reasons) in a little over two years has shocked the country. The rest of the world should also take note. It is striking how Western liberals, who dominate the artistic communities, have remained silent following these murders that seriously threaten freedom of speech, while screaming out about supposed threats to their freedom of expression from the reelected administration in Washington.

“Fortuyn gave voice to concerns about the rising conflict between the Netherlands’ culture of freedom—including gay marriage, regulated prostitution and drug use, and euthanasia—and the rising political demands of Islamic groups seeking to impose their own norms. With approximately a million Muslims in the Netherlands, these questions are not merely hypothetical” (James Strock, “Dutch Killing Shows Real Threat to Us,” *Lansing State Journal*, Nov. 14, 2004). (Mr. Strock is a senior fellow at San Francisco’s Pacific Research Institute.)

Failure to integrate

Why the change after 400 years of freedom of expression? One reason is changing demographics. Since World War II, the Netherlands, like other nations in Western Europe, has undergone profound changes as a result of unprecedented massive immigration from third world countries. Whereas at the end of World War II there were few, if any, Muslims in the Netherlands, today there are 1 million out of a total population of about 16 million.

As Pym Fortuyn realized, there is a fundamental conflict between liberal secular Western values and Islam, which is a very conservative and traditionalist religion. Undoubtedly, this is a major reason why Islamic nations do not permit immigration from the West—they do not want what they see as decadent Western ideas seeping into their countries.

However, Western liberals think differently; their conviction is that all people are basically the same. “Most people are basically good; wars are caused not

by evil motives but by misunderstandings that can be talked out; conflict can be overcome by more tolerance and examining of our own faults or by taking disputes to the United Nations” (John Leo, “Democrats and Terror,” *U.S. News & World Report*, Nov. 1, 2004).

It wasn’t just America that was divided on Nov. 2. All Western nations are divided similarly between those whose thinking has not changed since Sept. 11 and those whose thinking has changed. Reaction to the murder of Theo van Gogh highlighted this division as much as the U.S. election did.

In the Netherlands itself, mosques and Islamic schools were attacked in the aftermath of the murder and funeral. Muslims responded in similar fashion.

In an editorial titled “Upholding Tolerance,” the American edition of the British-based *Financial Times* commented on the situation in the Netherlands: “The fact that the film-maker was murdered by a second generation, Dutch speaking immigrant shows that . . . assimilation is no guarantee of real integration” (Nov. 12, 2004).

That sentence should disturb people throughout the Western world, where there are many second-generation Muslim immigrants who may harbor similar hatred toward the West, as that shown by the murderers (it turned out that others were involved) of Van Gogh.

What is surprising, though, is the next paragraph from the same editorial. Instead of questioning whether peoples of a totally different religion and culture can ever be fully assimilated and integrated into Western society, the paper states: “The right approach for the Dutch authorities is not to abandon their tradition of tolerance, but to try to make the vast majority of their Muslim co-citizens feel more at home . . .”

A couple of columns over, on the same page, was a letter from a native of the Netherlands living in London, who wrote, “Mr. van Gogh’s murder is chilling evidence that Islamic fundamentalism and Dutch tolerance, including the right to criticize other religions, simply cannot co-exist.” The solution? The writer adds: “Consequently, in order to maintain Dutch traditional values, we must redouble our efforts towards more active civil integration of our Muslim compatriots.”

In other words, integration hasn’t worked, so the solution is more integration! Go figure!

Some governments have even reacted to the growing threat to religious freedom by taking away some of that freedom themselves, making it illegal to say anything negative about Islam, thereby giving a special protected status to one religion over others.

I am reminded of an observation the French philosopher Voltaire made over two centuries ago. In his *Philosophical Letters*, he wrote, “If there were only one religion in England, we should have to fear despotism; if there were two, they would cut each other’s throats; but there are thirty, and they live in peace and happiness.” The same could have been written of the American colonies at the time.

The lesson here is that the United States and Britain, along with some other Western nations like the Netherlands, have a history of religious tolerance that goes back two or three centuries. It slowly evolved as a direct consequence of the Protestant Reformation and the religious conflicts that followed in the 16th and 17th centuries.

Exhausted by religious wars, most of the Protestant nations of Western Europe eventually learned to live and let live, to tolerate other denominations so that they themselves could have the freedom to worship. Many were influenced by the words of Jesus Christ, who told His followers that they should love their enemies (Matthew 5:44) and practice forgiveness (Luke 23:34). These are not concepts taught in all religions.

Other parts of the world did not share in this gradual historical process and have not learned the same tolerance. By definition, intolerance is not compatible with tolerance.

The Bible also poses the question: “Can two walk together, unless they are agreed?” (Amos 3:3). Protestant churches have their differences but share a great deal in common. There are far greater differences between the West today and Islam.

For this reason, there will be more deaths like Theo van Gogh’s and Pym Fortuyn’s—and freedom of expression, including freedom of religion, will surely die with them. ❖

“ENERGY;” (Continued from page 16)

about in her shrinking world of terror. The Bible clearly indicates that Jesus Christ is literally returning to this earth to alter the governments of mankind, as we know them.

Revelation 11:15 clearly announces, “Then the seventh angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, ‘The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!’” Yes, a shake-up of not only valleys, hills and mountains is going to occur, but human governments are going to go the way of the dinosaur—extinct!

Can we truly be prepared?

The big question is, will we be ready? Can we truly be prepared? *World News and Prophecy* is very much in the same spirit as that lone voice crying in the wilderness. In this publication you are not reading articles exalting or excusing human reasoning. What we offer is a spiritual diagnosis of our true spiritual condition. Yes, hear the grim realities echoing the sentiments of a teenage girl in World War II Holland, who cries from the grave, “Who will stop all this craziness?”

World News and Prophecy is one of the few publications you will read that tries to tell it exactly like it is. And that means, for the short term, world events are going to get increasingly darker before the radiant and glorious light of Christ’s second coming.

How will we be able to endure those difficult times? It’s going to take deep and abiding faith. The prophetic book of Revelation speaks of a people who “keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus” (Revelation 14:12). This is not merely speaking of faith in Christ, but possessing and exercising the same power of belief as the One who proclaimed both the manner of His death and the joy of His resurrection in the same breath. Now that is faith.

The just shall walk by faith

Don’t worry, God knows all this, and He knows all about you and me. And He loves us anyway. He knows that the natural man walks by fear, not by faith. He knows about the panic we

feel when we peek out the windows of our minds and see only a darkened world of shrinking returns, as Anne Frank saw.

Nonetheless, God tells us in Romans 1:17 that “the just shall live by faith.” What is faith? Simply put, faith is taking God at His Word. But allow me to stretch the equation just a little further. Faith is knowing that God’s ways work and work best and that He will answer at the right time, in the right way and never be late. For you and me, late is not spelled d-e-a-t-h. For we have a lively hope.

We’re not the first ones to face this



“In my doubly shadowed world faith gives me a reason for trying to draw harmony out of a marred instrument. Faith is not a cushion for me to fall back upon; it is my working energy.”—Helen Keller

spiritual challenge lined with human risks. Long ago, God asked Jacob to go down to Egypt. In Genesis 46:2-4, God made some amazing assertions and promises all wrapped into one. He said to Jacob, “I am God, the God of your father; do not fear to go down to Egypt, for I will make of you a great nation there. I will go down with you to Egypt, and I will also surely bring you up again; and Joseph will put his hand on your eyes.”

Now, humanly speaking, it was natural for the elderly Jacob to be fearful

about moving his entire family hundreds of miles into a nation where their security was uncertain. But did you notice the first thing God did? He validated Jacob’s natural fears, but He didn’t leave His servant stuck in fear. Our Maker knows we are shaking inside, even before the trembling starts on the outside. Nonetheless, God says, “Don’t let fear stop you, because you will not be alone!”

At that time your people shall be delivered

God is calling our end-time generations to more than a camel’s journey down to Egypt. He’s calling us to grow in faith toward Him as this world turns itself inside out before He turns it right side up. God’s Word clearly indicates that what lies ahead will pale in comparison even the lamentable world of Anne Frank and the world of lurking terrorism that confronts us today.

God’s prophet Daniel was told to write that “there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation, even to that time.” And then, the angelic messenger throws in a caveat—“And at that time your people shall be delivered, every one who is found written in the book [the Book of Life]” (Daniel 12:1). God makes a realistic statement and a promise of rescue from what Anne Frank called this “crazy” world.

Yes, the world is going to grow dark. The events that are related to the fulfillment of Daniel 12 are going to leave most people emotionally deaf, dumb and blind. Their senses and personal identities will have been stripped. And yet God will still be looking out after those who “walk by faith” and keep the commandments and have the faith of Christ. Just as with Jacob of old, God is telling His people today, “I will go down with you!”

A great gift from a great God

That kind of faith for such a life’s journey is not something natural or homegrown in the recesses of our mind. It is a great gift from a great God. And, even to this day, He is continuing to reach down into a world of darkness and grant the gift of living and abiding faith to those who ask. In His incredi-

ble mercy, He even touches and breaks through the darkened hearts of those who have lost their way, having been made senseless in an increasingly senseless world—the “crazy” world of Anne Frank’s diary.

Let’s allow the words of one blinded from birth to open our eyes to the power and need for faith to succeed in our walk down the path of God’s design, wherever it might lead.

Helen Keller, the renowned blind and deaf author and lecturer, explained it this way. “I know that faith made my life possible and that of many others like me . . . Reason hardly warranted Anne Sullivan’s attempt to transform a little half-human, half-animal, deaf-blind child into a complete human being. Neither science nor philosophy had set such a goal, but faith, the eye of love did. I did not know I had a soul. Then the God in a wise heart drew me out of nothingness with cords of human love and the life belt of language, and lo, I found myself. In my doubly shadowed world faith gives me a reason for trying to draw harmony out of a marred instrument. Faith is not a cushion for me to fall back upon; it is my working energy” (excerpts from *Let Us Have Faith*, 1940, pp. 9-11).

Each of us has a helper

What an incredible testament to love and faith! And yet, if the truth be known, each of us has a helper who has drawn us out of a world of increasing darkness. Each of us has been given a lifeline of language. For each of us has come into contact with the wise heart of none other than God the Father, who has drawn us to Him, embraced us with the safeguard of His promises and given us the life belt of faith.

Yes, the words of Helen Keller echo the sentiment of Isaiah 30:21 that tells us, “This is the way, walk in it.” Her heart is focused on clearly seeing that “faith is not a cushion for me to fall back upon; it is my working energy.”

It is such working energy that allows us to mirror the faith of Christ. This is a faith that will sustain us to literally see what Anne Frank could only write about—when “mankind will have to start all over again” under Jesus Christ. ❖

“CANADA,” (Continued from page 11)

gration to American radio and television. Especially sports! During the recent Stanley Cup play-offs, one commentator, remarking on how Canadians were now cheering for Calgary as a Canadian team, said, “In fact there are more Canadians playing with Tampa Bay than with the Calgary Flames.”

But there are differences. Although inextricably linked with the United States by geography and economics, Canada has voted with the EU on 50 out of 52 United Nations General Assembly security resolutions. The United States has voted with Europe only 21 times. Canada has been dismayed by “friendly-fire” fatalities of Canadian troops by U.S. forces in Afghanistan. For Canadian farmers, the border remains closed to beef exports, over the issue of mad cow disease.

Then, too, there is disquiet over interrogation and abuse of prisoners in Iraq. The scorn heaped upon the U.S. military is deflected by Canadians but hard to avoid because Canada is in North America. Such criticisms of the United States cause Canadian leaders, like former Prime Minister Jean Chrétien, to often say when promoting Canada abroad, “*We are North Americans, but we are not Americans.*” And in Europe these days, that’s a considerable distinction.

Prophetic trade winds blowing

The trade winds are blowing and Canada is being pushed in the direction they blow. Jeremy Kinsman, Canada’s ambassador to the European Union, says, “*Succeeding in Europe isn’t a strategy of choice. It’s a Canadian imperative.*”

As merchants of the EU build their wealth and luxury, Canada and other nations will be forced, for economic survival, to sail in her direction (Revelation 18:9-15). For more on the prophetic significance of these trends, read our free brochures *The Book of Revelation Unveiled* and *The United States and Britain in Bible Prophecy*.

We watch daily the events and combination of prophetic forces that will increasingly toss our people to and fro from one false economic hope to another. ❖

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by Robin Webber

The Working Energy of Faith

Just over 60 years ago in wartime Holland, closeted away in a secret room, a young Jewish girl penned into her diary a startling entry of her present reality and future predictions of what it would take to create a better world.

On May 3, 1944, Anne Frank shared her frustrations and expectations by writing, “As you can easily imagine we often ask ourselves here despairingly, ‘What, oh what is the use of this war? Why can’t people live peaceably together? Why all this destruction?’ The question is very understandable, but no one has found a satisfactory answer to it so far.”

She goes on to lament, “Oh, why are people so crazy? I don’t believe the big men, the politicians, the capitalists, alone are guilty of war. Oh no, the little man is just as keen; otherwise the people of the world would have risen in revolt long ago! There is an urge and a rage in people to destroy, to kill and to murder and until all mankind without exception undergoes a great change, wars will be waged, everything that has been built, cultivated and grown will be destroyed and disfigured, after which mankind will have to start all over again.”

The young lady with the big questions and even bigger conclusions died in the Holocaust.

But her solutions live in Scripture. Did you realize that the Holy Bible lays out the future hope when “all mankind without exception undergoes a great change” and “will start all over again”? Isaiah 40:1-5 outlines a coming time of great comfort. Isaiah writes: “‘Comfort, yes, comfort My people!’ says your God. ‘Speak comfort to Jerusalem, and cry out to her, that her warfare is ended, that her iniquity is pardoned; for she has received from the LORD’s hand double for all her sins.’”

For a moment let’s ask, has this actually occurred? Since Isaiah wrote this over 2,700 years ago, Jerusalem has rarely ceased from experiencing violence, even to this day. No! This is speaking of a future time, yet ahead of us—a time when Anne Frank’s questions will be answered.

The voice of one crying in the wilderness

Isaiah 40:3 goes on to state, “The voice of one crying in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the LORD; make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted and every mountain and hill brought low; the crooked places shall be made straight and the rough places smooth. The glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together; for the mouth of the LORD has spoken.’”

The big question is whether this is simply poetic wishful thinking. Or, to take it a step further; does it mean the physical strata around us is going to get a makeover that will straighten out all the tectonic plates into seamless equality? Or is there an even greater meaning?

The language of the Bible requires thoughtful consideration. The biblical term *mountains* is often used to describe nations or kingdoms in relationship to the greater mountain or “kingdom of God.” What is being spoken of here is more than poetic prose or a geographic facelift, but the “great change” and starting “all over again” of the geopolitical landscape that Anne Frank could only muse

(See “ENERGY,” page 14)