

WORLD NEWS *and* PROPHECY

Biblical Perspectives on Current Events

December 1998

Vol. 1, No. 4

The Millennium Bug— Is the Threat Real?

Concern that critical computer chips will cease to function at the beginning of the year 2000.

by Cecil E. Maranville

Called the El Niño of computer-based communication, the mysterious Y2K (year two thousand) problem is a topic of much conversation. What is being done about it? Should you be concerned?

While conducting business recently in a branch of a major American bank, I asked a bank officer if the bank is ready for the Y2K problem. When she looked at me with a quizzical expression and said she had no idea what that meant, I thought, This does not bode well for what little money I have in the bank if there really is a serious problem! Another bank patron spoke up and said, “Oh, you mean the Millennium bug” whereupon the light of recognition dawned in the eyes of the bank officer. She quickly assured us, “Oh yes, we’re completely prepared for that.

We anticipate one, maybe two heavy business days—nothing more.”

Only a busy day or two? Not everyone is so nonchalant or confident.

The Armed forces of Canada are on standby, ready to provide backup for civil authorities in the event of chaos when the millions of embedded computer chips turn to—or crash at—the beginning of the year 2000. Police forces in Toronto and Vancouver as well as the RCMP have been notified that no personnel will be allowed to take vacation time from a few days before the end of 1999 over into the year 2000. Montreal’s fire department is instituting a similar Y2K vacation ban, as is the Calgary police force. That doesn’t mean that the Canadian military or civil authorities *know* that chaos will strike—

nobody knows. It does mean that the threat is being taken seriously by more than just doomsayers.

Y2K is shorthand for the year 2000. Concern is rife that devices with built-in computer chips will cease to function at the beginning of the year 2000 because their programming does not recognize that date. Prophets of Y2K terrors warn of the sudden failure of devices that utilize pre-programmed chips, including cars, airline navigation, medical equipment (such as pacemakers), virtually all communications systems, and most businesses—from the producers of food to the trucking firms that distribute it to the supermarket shelves! Dire predictions have been widely circulated about these concerns.

(See “BUG” page 3)

In This Issue...

Religious Deception — Russia’s Nuclear Arsenal — World News Review —
The Citadel and the Caravan — Turning Swords Into Plowshares

WORLD NEWS and PROPHECY

Biblical Perspectives on Current Events

December 1998

Vol. 1, No. 4

World News and Prophecy is published monthly by the United Church of God, an International Association, 5405 Dupont Circle, Suite A, Milford, OH 45150. © 1998 United Church of God, an International Association. Printed in the U.S.A. All rights reserved. Reproduction in any form without written permission is prohibited.

The mission of *World News and Prophecy* (WNP) is to provide our membership and interested persons with commentary and analysis of selected world news topics in the light of Bible prophecy.

Its purpose is to help readers discern the times and increase their awareness and understanding of the answers Christ gave to His disciples' questions: "Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?" (Matthew 24:3).

Editor: Don Ward
Managing editor: Darris McNeely
Senior editor: Melvin Rhodes
Contributing editor: John Ross Schroeder
Copy editor: Cecil E. Maranville
Layout/design: Peter W. Eddington

Scriptural references are from the New King James Version (© 1988 Thomas Nelson, Inc., Publishers) unless otherwise noted.

Subscriptions: *World News and Prophecy* is sent free to the membership of the United Church of God, and all who request it. There is no subscription price. To request a subscription, write to *World News and Prophecy*, P.O. Box 541027, Cincinnati, OH 45254-1027, or download a copy off our Web site at <http://www.ucg.org>

Address changes: POSTMASTER—Send address changes to *World News and Prophecy*, P.O. Box 541027, Cincinnati, OH 45254-1027.

International addresses:

AUSTRALIA: United Church of God—Australia
GPO Box 535, Brisbane, Qld. 4001, Australia
Phone: 0755 202-111 Fax: 0755 202-122

BAHAMAS: United Church of God, P.O. Box N8873, Nassau, Bahamas. Phone: (242) 324-3169 Fax: (242) 364-5566

BRITISH ISLES: P.O. Box 4052, Milton Keynes, Bucks, MK13 7ZF England. Phone: 0181-386-8467

CANADA: United Church of God—Canada, P.O. Box 144, Station D, Etobicoke, ON M9A 4X1, Canada
Phone: (416) 231-9379, (800) 338-7779 Fax: (416) 231-8238

FRENCH-SPEAKING AREAS: Église de Dieu Unie (Suisse romande), P.O. Box 541027, Cincinnati, OH 45254-1027, U.S.A.

GERMANY: Vereinte Kirche Gottes, Postfach 30 15 09, D-53195 Bonn, Germany. Phone: 0228 - 9454636 Fax: 0228 - 9454637

ITALY: La Buona Notizia, Chiesa di Dio Unita, Casella Postale 187, 24100 Bergamo, Italy
Phone: 0039-035583474 Fax: 0039-035582140

The NETHERLANDS: Verenigde Kerk van God, Postbus 55940, 2505 BA Den Haag, Netherlands

NEW ZEALAND: United Church of God, P.O. Box 22, Auckland, 1030, New Zealand

SOUTH AFRICA: United Church of God, P.O. Box 4345, 2125 Randburg, South Africa
Phone: 011 886-4650 Fax: 011 886-7610

SPANISH-SPEAKING AREAS: United Church of God, P.O. Box 458, Big Sandy, TX 75755, U.S.A.
Phone: (903) 636-4928

Internet access on your computer:

The United Church of God, an International Association, has a home page on the Internet's World Wide Web. The address <http://www.ucg.org> gives you access to general information and news about the Church, issues of *The Good News* and *United News*, as well as our booklets. The address <http://www.ucg.ca> accesses the Church's Canadian Web site, <http://www.ucg-us.org.au> the Church's Australian Web site, <http://www.labuonanotizia.org> the Church's Italian Web site, and <http://www.ucg.org.za> the Church's Southern Africa Web site.

Contents

The Millennium Bug—Is the Threat Real?

by Cecil E. Maranville page 1

Religious Deception in the Post Modern World

by Donald Ward page 4

Russia's Dangerous Nuclear Arsenal

by Mario Seiglie page 8

The Citadel and the Caravan

by Melvin Rhodes page 10

In Brief... World News Review

by Cecil Maranville, Fred Nance,
David Palmer, John R. Schroeder page 12

Book Review

by John R. Schroeder page 14

This Is the Way... Turning Swords Into Plowshares: Starting Now

by Robin Webber page 16

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.

“BUG” (Continued from page 1)

Another area of much concern is that of financial transactions. From governments to grocery stores, computers are used to buy and sell. Will your life be turned upside down by Y2K? Will you be unable to access your money in the banks? Will you be able to purchase food, water and other necessary commodities?

The Truth is—It’s Difficult to Say

One assessment characterizes the Y2K problem as the “El Niño” of the vastly complex world of computer-based communication. That is, there may be devastating and catastrophic “storms”—or there may be nothing other than the ordinary glitches. That’s one of the more evenhanded predictions opined on the subject, as forecasts vary from a complete breakdown of life as we know it to what would amount to an extremely loud false alarm.

One thing is for certain: a lot of money is being spent to ensure that the Y2K problem (if there is one) is minimized, if not eliminated. Otis is in the process of checking the roughly one million elevators it maintains, not really anticipating any problem with its own systems, but rather potential problems interacting with security systems in the buildings that have Otis elevators. The World Trade Center has ordered a replacement for its parking system, fearing that the present one is not Y2K compliant.

British Telecom has already spent £350 million on the problem; Railtrack has spent £150 million to prevent rail disruption in Britain. The British government is offering to train up to 20,000 people from small companies to be “bugbusters,” able to help their companies avoid any Y2K catastrophe. The allocated budget for this project?—£100 million!

Similar to their Canadian counterparts, British police forces will cancel all leaves over the four-day extended Millennium bank-holiday next year. The British army is also preparing a program of emergency transportation for assisting police forces in the event of a serious Y2K-caused breakdown in computer-controlled services. Downing Street has denied that the military is involved in any “doomsday scenario,” and emergency plans are being laid out in a quiet and low-key manner.

What possible problems do the British foresee? “The planned use of army Chinook helicopters to airlift police around the country raises the prospect of the motorway chaos because of the shutdown of the computer-controlled anti-congestion warning systems. Millennium bug problems are also officially regarded as posing a potential threat to electricity and telecommunications services” (“Army on Standby over Bug” by Alan Travis ©1998 *Guardian Media Group*).

Operation Abacus is the Canadian military’s name for its emergency plan. It’s named after “an ancient Chinese bead-and-string calculator that needs no power and is not susceptible to glitches” (“Army Fears Civil Chaos from Millennium Bug” by Jeff Sallot and John Saunders, © 1998 *The Globe & Mail*).



An honest assessment is offered in the same article. “No one knows [emphasis mine throughout] whether a common programming flaw—a seemingly small matter of dealing with dates beyond 1999—will cause cascading failure in the world’s computer systems, knocking out in the dead of the Canadian winter machines that run everything from traffic lights to nuclear reactors. *It could turn out to be one of history’s great anticlimaxes*, but the armed forces are taking no chances.

The British army is also preparing a program of emergency transportation for assisting police forces in the event of a serious Y2K-caused breakdown.

“Navy captains have been told their ships may have to dock to serve as garrisons, power plants, field hospitals and soup kitchens.

“As police, fire and other civilian emergency services make their own plans, military commanders have been told that meeting the threat of the year 2000 bug is their highest priority and will be the focus of all training from January on. The equipment purchases that do not contribute to the effort are to be postponed” (op. Cit. *The Globe & Mail*).

Some Envision Immense Problems—Others See Little Threat

Is this all a “Tempest in a Teapot?” Perhaps so, according to Lee Gomes of the *Wall Street Journal*. “Moreover, the extent of the damage caused by Y2K bugs in embedded chips is likely to be relatively limited. For example, a traffic light with a Y2K problem probably wouldn’t stop working, but it may be out of synch [sic] with the lights at other intersections” (“Will Computer Chips Go down When the Year 2000 Arrives?” © 1998 Dow Jones & Co., Inc.).

On the other hand, concerns about building security systems appear to be legitimate. They “need to work with dates and are usually programmed to open all doors in the event of a glitch. That is one reason that most state prison systems now have active Y2K efforts” (op. Cit. *The Wall Street Journal*).

Many have speculated that both commercial air travel and air-freight will be interrupted, if not shut down at least temporarily, by Y2K. Is the case overstated? Consider this report about a large American aircraft manufacturer: “Boeing Co. says it has found embedded Y2K problems in three different on-board systems affecting roughly 750 of the 12,000 commercial planes it has manufactured over the years. In 700 of the aircraft, the embedded bug would merely cause the year to be displayed incorrectly on a control panel. In the other 50, though, the bug would keep the plane from ever leaving the gate. One example of a problem: navigation systems that rely on date information. [But...] A Boeing official

(See “BUGS,” page 7)

Religious Deception in the Post Modern World

How will the sophisticated people of the Western world be deceived?

by Donald Ward

Church pews in Europe are all but empty on Sunday mornings. Even though European history is inextricably linked to Western Christianity, the link seems irrelevant in the post-modern world. The countries that comprised the Holy Roman Empire show little evidence of holiness. Save for the peals of their bells, the imposing church structures of Europe are but silent relics of the past. Europeans have little interest or time for religion in a society given to secular pursuits. Of the people in England who profess to be Christians, only ten percent attend church regularly. Even though the percentage is higher in the U.S., its social, political and educational institutions are secular to the core.

Yet, Bible prophecy reveals a time of religious deception so great that if it were possible “they shall deceive the very elect” (Matthew 24:24 KJV). The thoroughly secularized peoples of the Western world view themselves as sophisticated and educated. Nothing is to be accepted as valid, reliable or relevant unless it can be scientifically proven. So how are the highly sophisticated, educated and scientifically oriented people of the Western world going to be deceived?

Satan’s insatiable desire to be worshiped will eventually be realized. “All who dwell on the earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world” (Revelation 13:8). The false prophet will unleash a barrage of deceptive miracles that will deceive everyone but the very elect (Revelation 13:13, 14).

The peoples of the world are being conditioned to accept these miracles. Movies portray various invasions from outer space. Various forms of alien life have become common place on our television and movie screens. From Star Trek, to the American television program “Touched by an Angel,” moviemakers and television producers

are increasingly portraying supernatural characters and supernatural phenomena in their productions. Several of the new movie releases portray apocalyptic events. Psychic hot lines abound. Even some in the scientific community tell us that in all probability life exists beyond our planet earth. More and more people regularly consult various spiritual mediums in their quest to cope with the postmodern world.

They seem to be saying we have tried education and science and found them lacking. As knowledge increases, and science discovers more and more, we know less and less about the big issues of life. “But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come...always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth” (2 Timothy 3:1, 7).

Many voices are crying out concerning the human condition. Many of them eloquently identify and articulate the root cause of the sense of helplessness and hopelessness that saps our creative energies. When the second leading cause of death for persons under thirty years old is suicide, it takes little discernment to realize the problem is spiritual.

We live in very paradoxical times. On the one hand, the world is enjoying one of the most peaceful periods in human history. One could easily ask why all the fuss? But on the other hand, there is great unrest and dissatisfaction with the human condition. The gap between the rich and poor continues to expand. Crime, disease, immorality, family decay, political corruption, aberrant behavior of all sorts, national and ethnic squabbles, war and rumors of war, apathy and loss of vision and lack of leadership plague people around the world.

The solutions to these problems cannot be solved through science or by politicians. These problems reside deep within the heart and mind of

Bible prophecy reveals a time of religious deception so great that if it were possible “they shall deceive the very elect.”



humankind. These problems are spiritual in nature. Solutions can come only from the true source of all spiritual knowledge—the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

World Ripe for Deception

The peoples of the world have been deceived into believing that there are many gods, or that the true God has manifested Himself in different ways to different cultures. All of the world's major religions are looking for a great spiritual leader to come on the scene at the beginning of the next millennium. Christians are looking for the return of Jesus Christ as King of kings and Lord of lords. Jews are looking for a Messiah. Hindus are looking for Krishna. Moslems are looking for the Iman Mahdi. Buddhists are looking for the fifth Buddha. New Agers are looking for Maitraya. The world is ripe for great religious deception.

The great end-time deception will parade under the banner of Christianity. The False Prophet will deceive the world into believing that God's true witnesses are the Beast and the False Prophet. So the Beast makes war against God's servants and kills them (Revelation 11:7). "And those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them, make merry, and send gifts to one another, because these two prophets tormented those who dwell on the earth" (Revelation 11:10). One will sit in the temple of God exalting himself above all that is called God while showing himself that he is God (2 Thessalonians 2:4, paraphrased).

Even though the two witnesses have power to perform miracles and call fire down from heaven, they will not seek to glorify themselves. Their mission will be to warn people of God's impending judgment upon all nations. Satan will deceive the earth into believing that the plagues the two witnesses inflict upon the peoples of the earth, in an effort to bring them to repentance, are not of God. Satan will cleverly reverse the roles. He will feign the return of Christ and set himself up as God.

Exactly how this deception will take place no one knows for sure, but Christ

warns us: "For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. See, I have told you beforehand. Therefore if they say to you, 'Look, He is in the desert!' do not go out; or 'Look, He is in the inner rooms!' do not believe it. For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be" (Matthew 24:24-27).

The current pope, John Paul II, believes that after a series of heavenly signs he will be given the authority to create a new universal religious system and rule over a church-state world government.

A former Jesuit Priest, Malachi Martin, in his book, *The Keys to This Blood*, writes of the current pope's devotion to the visions (apparitions) of Fatima. Martin's book reveals that the political

John Paul II is totally devoted to carrying out the demands of the Fatima messages. His devotion to the messages was firmly set on the day that the Turkish assassin, Ali Agca, tried to kill him.

and religious agenda of John Paul II is dramatically influenced by these visions.

Beginning on May 13, 1917, Mary supposedly appeared to three peasant girls over a period of five months. During this time she gave them three secret messages. In brief, these messages elevate Mary to a position of worship, and demands that the world, especially Russia, be consecrated to Mary. The visions also contain various details concerning end time events that will afflict the world at the close of this millennium. For example, the third vision speaks of the great political, military and natural disasters that will come upon the world if the Vatican does not take the actions demanded by the messages. Pope John XXIII and Paul VI allegedly read the messages of Fatima but refused their authority. According to Malachi Martin, Pope John XXIII explained his refusal to

his papal successors by stating that, "these [predictions] do not concern our times."

Pontiff Devoted to Fatima Messages

By contrast, John Paul II is totally devoted to carrying out the demands of the Fatima messages. His devotion to the messages was firmly set on the day that the Turkish assassin, Ali Agca, tried to kill him. On May 13, 1981, during a papal audience the Pope noticed a little girl wearing a picture of Mary at Fatima. As the Pope bent over to greet her, Ali Agca fired two shots at his head. The bullets missed their mark because at that instant the pope stooped to greet the child. But the next two shots hit his body. As the Pope recovered from his wounds, he seriously considered the visions of Fatima in relationship to his role in their fulfillment (*Final Warning* by Grant Jeffrey page 157).

On the first anniversary of the assassination attempt, John Paul held a special service at Fatima in which he affirmed his commitment to obeying the commands in the visions of Fatima. His personal motto is "Totus Tuus" (entirely yours). He publicly professes that his life is motivated and directed by Mary.

John Paul II firmly believes that he is destined to be the pope that fulfills the third vision of Fatima. According to Malachi Martin, the Pope is waiting for a great miraculous intervention from heaven that will stun the world with its display of supernatural power. The event will feature an appearance of Mary in conjunction with the sun.

Martin writes, "He is waiting, rather for an event that will fission human history, splitting the immediate past from the oncoming future. It will be an event on public view in the skies, in the oceans, and on the continental landmasses of this planet. It will particularly involve our human sun, which every day lights up and shines upon... this earth for our eyes. But on the day of this event, it will not appear merely as the master star of our so-called solar system. Rather, it will be seen as the circumambient glory of the Woman whom the apostle describes as 'clothed with the

sun' and giving birth to a 'child who will rule the nations with a scepter of iron.' Fissioning it will be as an event, in John Paul's conviction of faith, for it will immediately nullify all the grand designs the nations are now forming and will introduce the Grand Design of man's Maker. John Paul's waiting and watching time will then be over. His ministry as the Servant of the Grand Design will then begin. His strength of will to hold on and continue, and then when the fissioning occurs, to assume that ministry, derives directly from the Petrine authority entrusted solely to him the day he became Pope, in October of 1978. That authority, that strength, is symbolized in the Keys of Peter; washed in the human blood of the God-Man Jesus Christ. John Paul is and will be the sole possessor of the Keys of this Blood on that day" (*The Keys of This Blood* by Malachi Martin). Martin alleges the Pope believes that this phenomenon will give him the authority to create a new religious order and rule over a new church-state world government.

Marianism Increasingly Popular

Couple the fact of apparitions of Mary occurring all over the world and John Paul's commitment to ecumenism, and you have the formula for great religious deception. These supposed appearances of Mary basically coincide with the visions of Fatima. That is, Mary has been sent to warn the world that unless they repent and become consecrated to her, God will bring severe plagues on the earth.

Web sites dedicated to disseminating Mary's messages to the faithful abound in cyberspace. Of these sites, the Medjugorje site is perhaps the most notable. The site "is dedicated to providing information about one of the most incredible and important supernatural events of our time." Since 1981, Mary has been appearing and giving messages to the world in a small village named Medjugorje in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Her messages are communicated through "visionaries." (The "visionaries" Mirjana, Vicka, Jacov and Ivanka, reside in Medjugorje. There is one other visionary, Marija, who currently resides in Italy.) The visionaries receive

the pilgrims daily (Medjugorje Web site).

Mary tells the "visionaries" that God has sent her to our world, and that the time she is spending with us is a time of grace granted by God. Millions of people from around the world have visited the site. Thousands of believers claim that they have been healed and converted as a result of visiting Medjugorje. Throughout the month of September in the shrine of the Queen of Peace in Medjugorje, 114,000 "holy communions" were distributed and 2,732 priests from around the world con-celebrated "Holy Mass."

According to the Medjugorje Web site: "Medjugorje is the continuation of



Web sites dedicated to disseminating Mary's messages to the faithful abound in cyberspace.

Fatima.... Through her presence in Medjugorje—in this year dedicated to her Son, Savior of the world, she—the mother of God, continues to encourage us to follow the pope, the vicar of Christ, wherever he goes. Medjugorje has become like Fatima, an international center of prayer and of spiritual sustenance for the universal church and, in a particular way, for the ministry of Pope John Paul II. One reason why the Queen of Peace came to the village of Medjugorje was to confirm the 'Totus Tuus' of the Holy Father by helping him carry to the end the immense work the Lord has entrusted to him. This work entrusted by the Lord to the Holy Father, as he himself often recall, is the task of bringing the church in the third millennium."

The Marian Web sites are totally

committed to helping John Paul II fulfill the visions of Fatima and Medjugorje. These visions call upon the Vatican and the Pope to usher in a new world order. The pope delivers from time to time "The Novus Ordo (New Order) Mass." The Marian Web site, Yellowstone, greets its visitors by stating: "Welcome to one of the busiest sites on the Internet covering the nefarious new world order from a Christian perspective." Yellowstone offers a book titled "Rebuking the New World Order." In their view, the creation of a new order is reserved for John Paul II. They reason that John Paul's "new order" will derive its authority directly from God. So any other "new order" is of the Devil.

John Paul is working feverishly to unite the people of the world under the banner of religion. In his Papal Encyclical titled, "Ut Unum Sint" (That They May Be One) he writes: "I myself intend to promote every suitable initiative aimed at making the witness of the entire Catholic community understood in its full purity and consistency, especially considering the engagement which awaits the church at the threshold of the new millennium. That will be an exceptional occasion, in view of which she asks the Lord to increase the unity of all Christians until they reach full communion... This is the specific duty of the Bishop of Rome as the successor of the Apostle Peter. I carry out this duty with the profound conviction that I am obeying the Lord, and with a clear sense of my own human frailty... Together with all Christ's disciples, the Catholic Church bases upon God's plan her ecumenical commitment to gather all Christians into unity."

Pope Sees One Spirit in All

The Pope's tactical strategy for bringing the nations of the world together through religious unity centers around the presence and action of the "spirit" in other religions and in the world. In an article titled, "Presence and Action of the Holy Spirit in The World and In Other Religions," Giovanni Cereti writes, "Sincere and full recognition of the Spirits's action in the world and among non-Christians, fully constant with biblical facts, has come about in the Catholic

Church above all thanks to the courageous declarations made by John Paul II. In his message addressed from Manila to the people of Asia in 1981, the Pope says he has come as a witness of the Spirit, who [sic] acts in the history of peoples and nations, and whose action thus seems not to be limited to calling non-Christians to the Church.... In his address to the Roman Curia after the World Day of Prayer for Peace in Assisi, Pope John Paul II stressed once more the universal presence of the Holy Spirit, stating that every authentic prayer is called forth the Holy Spirit, who [sic] is mysteriously present in the heart of every person, Christian or otherwise.”

In his Apostolic Letter for the Preparation of the Jubilee of the Year 2000, John Paul explains how he hopes all Christians and peoples of other religions will join hands in a simultaneous celebration of the Jubilee in Rome and in local churches throughout the world. The Pope hopes to create a religious ground swell that will rally the peoples of the earth to help him fulfill the visions of Fatima.

Can you be deceived? The Apostle Paul wrote to the church at Thessalonica urging them to love the truth so they would not be deceived. “And for this reason [not loving the truth] God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the [not a] lie” (2 Thessalonians 2:11). What was the great lie that Paul was addressing at Thessalonica? He was warning them not to believe the lie that “the day of Christ had come” (2 Thessalonians 2:2). Paul then gave them specific signs to watch for. Then the scene shifts to the end times in which some are deceived because they loved not the truth and were deceived.

In view of the deceptive times in which we live, we must put on the whole armor of God. Now is the time to fill our lamps with oil. This is the time to love the truth. This is the time to search the Scriptures. Now is the time to prove all things and hold fast to that which is good. Before Christ’s return, Satan will establish a new order that forces the world to worship him. So even though the churches of Europe are empty today, they may be filled tomorrow. This is indeed a time to watch and pray as never before. ❖

“BUGS,” (Continued from page 3) stressed that these problems aren’t likely to occur because the systems will have been updated by customers by next year” (op. Cit. *The Wall Street Journal*).

On the other hand, the British government, once again, is taking the possibility of air traffic problems seriously. “The Department of Transport has already talked of banning some flights from Third World airlines to the U.K. because of expected computer-related problems in developing countries” (op. Cit. *Guardian Media Group*). More than a few experts warn that while computers in the western world may be made Y2K compliant before the deadline, linkage with computers in the developing world that are far behind the technological curve will crash the entire communications system.

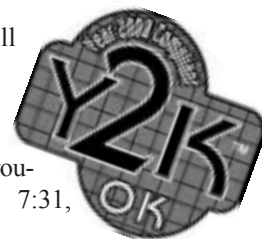
What about medical equipment? Should users of pacemakers fear their sudden failure? Indications are that problems will not be serious. Thomas B. Shope, who works on the Y2K problem with the Food and Drug Administration, called the idea that pacemakers will stop working next year “an urban legend,” adding that, “Implanted devices don’t depend on the date.” In addition, the FDA “has sent Y2K surveys to nearly 2,000 medical-device makers and has so far heard back from two-thirds of them. While scores of testing and diagnostic devices may have some problems unless they are updated, most of the problems will be small, like displaying a date incorrectly...” (op. Cit. *The Wall Street Journal*).

Disaster Preparedness

Many voices can be heard calling for people to prepare for the ultimate catastrophe, including no food, water, or money, for a protracted period of time. Certainly the Bible addresses the subject of preparedness. We are told, for example, to consider the ways of the common ant that gathers food when it is available against the times when it is not (Proverbs 6:6–11).

On the other hand, the Christian is counseled to avoid panic. Jesus said, “Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’... Therefore do not worry about tomorrow,

for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble” (Matthew 7:31, 34).



Even if the threat of technical problems associated with Y2K fizzles out, widespread panic could create the predicted shortages as people hoard supplies. In the financial markets, panic—justified or not—can trigger disastrous results.

No matter what happens with Y2K, disaster preparedness is wise. “If an earthquake, hurricane, winter storm or other disaster strikes your community, you might not have access to food, water and electricity for days, or even weeks.” So says a brochure prepared by the Federal Emergency Management Agency in cooperation with the American Red Cross and the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

The brochure contains information on calculating emergency food and water needs for your family, how to store water and food, the shelf life of various foods, how to purify water, and provides a list of disaster supplies that every family should have on hand. Free to the public, the brochure can be found on the Internet at [http://www.disasterrelief.org/Library/Prep are/food.html](http://www.disasterrelief.org/Library/Prep%20are/food.html).

A final word of caution: the subject of disaster preparedness brings out the basest elements of human nature in some people. Financial counselors stand ready to advise you on how you can make yourself rich by taking advantage of the financial losses of others in a coming disaster. Other people boastfully talk of stocking up on ammunition to use against any that would try to take their food and water. In such, we observe a chilling fulfillment of the apostle Paul’s prediction that “in the last days perilous times [times of stress] will come: For men will be lovers of themselves [selfish], lovers of money [greedy]... brutal [violent]” (2 Timothy 3:1-2).

How will the Y2K threat end? Only time will tell. ❖

Sources: *Guardian Media Group* © 1998; *The Globe and Mail* © 1998; *The Wall Street Journal* © 1998 Dow Jones & Co., Inc.; U.S. Government Agencies.

Russia's Dangerous Nuclear Arsenal

In some ways, we are closer to nuclear war than we were in the 1950s and '60s. Then, at least, the nuclear forces were well controlled and well paid.

by Mario Seiglie

Beneath the map was a row of buttons, offering a menu of attack options on targets in the U.S.



“**R**ussian military officers stared wide-eyed at the glowing image on their radar screens: an incoming missile on course to hit Moscow in 15 minutes.... One buzz went to the three nuclear code briefcases assigned to President Boris Yeltsin and his top two military officials. The officer carrying Yeltsin’s case rushed to the President and flipped it open. On an electronic map inside, they saw a bright dot over the Norwegian Sea. Beneath the map was a row of buttons, offering a menu of attack options on targets in the U.S. On military bases across Russia, red lights flashed and horns blared, alerting the troops in charge of the country’s strategic nuclear weapons to get ready to use them.”

Perhaps this may sound like another plot out of a Hollywood blockbuster movie—but it isn’t. It actually happened back on January 25, 1995. How are we all still alive? Let’s read on, as *Newsweek* reported in an article titled, “Nuclear Disarray” in the May 19, 1997, pages 24–26.

“Yeltsin and his military commanders, linked by phone, waited to hear whether an attack had been confirmed. About 12 minutes after the mystery missile soared onto the radar screens, military analysts could see that it was not heading for Russian territory. It turned out to be a Norwegian scientific rocket sent aloft to observe the aurora borealis. The Norwegians had dutifully notified the Russian embassy in Oslo, but the word was never relayed to the military. ‘For a while,’ says Sergei Yushenkov, a member of the Russian parliament’s Defense Committee, ‘the world was on the brink of nuclear war.’”

Mix-ups Common

Such catastrophic mix-ups are becoming more common. The same article mentions because of the lack of maintenance of their nuclear arsenal,

“the Russians might wrongly think they were under attack from the West and fire their rockets. This danger has greatly increased because the Russian early-warning system is not what it used to be. It has lost major radar stations in the new nations of Ukraine, Latvia and others. Some of its satellite-tracking stations have gone to Ukraine, Georgia and Kazakhstan. The high command is now partially blind, which increases its apprehensions, produces false alarms and makes good decisions harder.”

Defense Minister Igor Rodinov goes even further. The article continues: “Last year [1996], the nuclear strategic forces received 10.5% of the funds needed for maintenance. The result, he predicts, is that, ‘We may lose the entire system.’ The links between radar and headquarters, the computer management of missiles and the physical security of the warheads could all break down.”

To add to their woes, troops of the Strategic Nuclear Forces (SNF) are earning an average of \$100 to \$200 a month—when they are paid. The same article reports, “One major, who has served 24 years in the SNF and will retire in six months, did not see a paycheck for four months.” Another officer commented, “We’re living in poverty. That’s all you need to know.”

The *Newsweek* article concludes: “The potential is there for some form of nuke-napping—grabbing weapons for ransom or nuclear blackmail—or sales to rogue states or terrorists, or unauthorized launches by renegade commanders. Some Russians even fret about a nuclear civil war. If a region in Siberia were to declare its independence, a retired senior officer in Moscow speculates, ‘The entire missile force in the area might cut itself off from the chain of command and control and get re-programmed to be able to launch at will.’”

False Sense of Security

Meanwhile, the world is being lulled into thinking everything is peachy—when it's not. Another *Newsweek* article of June 2, 1997, mentioned the current mood in the U.S.: "The country has rarely felt so secure from the threat of war. The bomb silos on the Great Plains are on their way to becoming curious museums; to today's children, the three little triangles that denote bomb shelters might as well be an odd form of teenage graffiti" (page 4).

Yet, in some ways, we are closer to nuclear war than we were in the 1950s and '60s. Then, at least, the nuclear forces were well controlled and well paid. At that time there were only two superpowers eyeing each other. Now there are a host of nations, some with terrorist backgrounds that could detonate a nuclear bomb. Russia still has an estimated 22,000 nuclear warheads and the U.S., 12,000. The year 1998 has been even worse for Russia's economy, and the troops have not seen their lot improved.

On the other hand, the breakdowns in the strategic nuclear system were so alarming in 1997 that, with the urgings of the U.S., some improvements have taken place in 1998 to increase the security aspects of the nuclear arsenal. "Not all the news from Moscow is bad," reports *Newsweek*, in the May 25, 1998, edition. "Russia has sharply upgraded security at more than 30 sites containing fissile material."

Yet, the rest of the problems still remain. How long will the underfed and underpaid forces go on without something giving? What about the deficient radar systems? Will they continue to deteriorate as funds become scarcer? No one knows, but the dangers of mix-ups, accidents or thefts are certainly real.

Nuclear Threat is Real

Some think that since Russia's warheads (and the U.S. is presently trying to do the same with China) are no longer pointing towards the



U.S., the world is much safer. Unfortunately, the difference between having them aimed or not is just a matter of a minutes. The computer memory in the missiles retain their former targets, and they can be reprogrammed very quickly. As long as Russia remains unstable economically, politically and militarily with such a large nuclear arsenal, the rest of the world cannot breathe a sigh of relief—especially the U.S.

From what has occurred so far, it appears the world's dangerous nuclear arsenal will continue to grow, especially as other nations, such as India and Pakistan, join the nuclear club. Just recently, the U.S. announced it would upgrade and modernize its nuclear missile systems so they would be in optimum condition beyond the year 2025. Despite its economic weakness, Russia and the other nations of the nuclear club will attempt to do the same. It appears as we enter the 21st century that the world will be chock-full of high-tech nuclear weapons, and they will be far more of a problem as more unstable nations gain access to nuclear technology.

What we read in Matthew 24:22 certainly seems to be borne out by the facts told of our present and future generation: "And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened."

This scenario also brings to mind the issue of unawareness and thinking everything is safe, which the Bible mentions will occur on the earth before the coming of Jesus Christ. "But take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that Day come on you unexpectedly. *For it will come as a snare on all those who dwell on the face of the whole earth.* Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man" (Luke 21:34-36).

Let's not be lulled into a false sense of security. Things are really not improving much on the nuclear front, especially as more nations join the nuclear club. Others, such as Iran, Iraq and Libya—not to mention terrorist groups—are waiting in the wings. Things could heat up very quickly! ❖

"PLOW," (Continued from page 15)

personal and historical past behind once and for all, be it people or nations.

Isaiah 58:12 (RSV) shows us that when Christ comes again what this "new order," this new and different way of thinking, will accomplish. "And your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt; you shall raise up the foundations of many generations; you shall be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of streets to dwell in." Is this simply speaking of physical ruins? Are the cities of Israel, and the rest of the world to be rebuilt? Certainly. But how can they be rebuilt if there is not a healing of a greater breach between nations? Today in our world, many nations cannot even begin to build any meaningful dialogue because of the dismal historical ruins of war or cultural misunderstanding. Most nations have not spoken the courageous and sensitive words of the Emperor

and Prime Minister of Japan. Neither have nations heard the response of a visionary like the Korean President. Imagine those first years of the Millennium when nation after nation will be following in their footsteps. No longer an anomaly, but the most important step in future international relationships. Diplomatic communiqués of "We were wrong, We are sorry, We forgive You." What a wonderful world we have to look forward to!

This work of the future, our privileged opportunity now, is shown clearly in Isaiah 2:4: "They shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks." As "kings and priests in training," we are being called to fulfill a very tangible role in the future rebuilding of relationships between individuals, peoples and nations. But, before we can assist others in bending instruments of war into instruments of peace, and straighten out

the seemingly endless cycle of frustrations between nations, we have to do some bending and straightening in the present. We have to go to work on ourselves.

You might be saying, "Unthinkable! Unheard of!" But 50 years ago at the end of World War II who ever thought that the Imperial Japanese Empire would one day apologize to their former colony for the horror inflicted upon them? What's holding us back from dealing with our former or current adversaries? Waiting till Christ comes back? God doesn't always grant a 50-year period of reconciliation as in the case of Japan and Korea, and He doesn't always have a "great fish" off shore as a reminder of the work of reconciliation to which we are called. Rather, He has given us a Spirit to guide us. It is the same straightforward and powerful Spirit of God that stirred the prophet to say, "This is the way, walk you in it!" ❖

The Citadel and the Caravan

In explaining Europe to Americans, and America to Europeans, I have sometimes used the analogy of a citadel and a caravan. Europe is the citadel and America the caravan.

by Melvin Rhodes

Prague, Budapest and Vienna are three of the most magnificent cities that any traveler can visit. Situated right in the heart of mitteleuropa (central Europe), these Imperial cities of the Hapsburgs have often shared a common history. Although the capitals of three distinct peoples, each with their own language and customs, their histories have been intertwined for over two millennia.

What immediately strikes any American visitor is how old the buildings are. Most of the architecture pre-dates America's birth as a nation. Yet these buildings are all still in daily use. Churches that go back the best part of 1,000 years, palaces of the nobility built during the golden age of the Hapsburgs in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, cobbled streets that were already there the last time the world welcomed in a new millenium, even an elaborately made church clock in Prague's market place that's about 700 years old (and still works, in contrast to the watch I bought in Hong Kong three years ago).

These Cities are living and breathing history.

It is difficult for those who have not had the opportunity to travel to other continents to sometimes appreciate and understand the differences in outlook that geography and environment can lead to. In explaining Europe to Americans, and America to Europeans, I have sometimes used the analogy of a citadel and a caravan. Europe is the citadel and America the caravan.

A citadel is a solid, permanent building, a fortress designed to survive any crisis and protect those within it from all the dangers outside. It is a permanent dwelling. A caravan is constantly moving, seeking new horizons, leaving the past behind.

Citadels are Built to Last

Most buildings in America are built to last 50

years. After that, they depreciate as the buildings need more and more maintenance and start crumbling. It's hard for Americans to understand that while older buildings in the U.S. generally are cheaper, older buildings in Europe are usually more expensive. The older the building, usually the better built (more solid), and the more likely to withstand the elements.

One reason for this difference is space. In Europe, lack of space. When Americans have made a mess of a big city, they can move out and build a new city in the suburbs. Europeans, due to lack of space, do not have that luxury. They have to rebuild the big cities. And when they rebuild they tend to build with long-term needs in mind. Buildings are built to last.

It can also be said that the great royal dynasties of Europe were built to last. When Peter the Great founded his new royal Russian capital of St. Petersburg on the banks of the River Neva, he wanted a magnificent capital that would last for centuries, just as his dynasty would.

Similarly, the royal house of Hapsburg that ruled for centuries over Vienna, Budapest and Prague, built buildings to last. The Hapsburg dynasty lasted more than twice as long as the Russian Romanov family—over six centuries to the Romanov's three.

Readers may remember the television series "Civilization" presented by the British architectural historian Lord Kenneth Clark, shown on the BBC and PBS over 25 years ago. Lord Clark showed that the great architecture, literature and music of western civilization was all produced in the absolute monarchies of Europe (a put-down, incidentally, to both Britain and the U.S.). The emperors, kings and princes of the various territories sponsored their proteges, their Bachs and their Michelangelos. Their heritage lives on to this day.

A citadel is a solid, permanent building, a fortress designed to survive any crisis and protect those within it from all the dangers outside.

What twentieth century heritage will be passed on to future generations?

Chaos versus Continuity

This has been the century of political chaos in Europe, of two world wars that ended the continent's 500 years of world dominance. When the great European empires collapsed in the aftermath of World War I, fledgling republics replaced them that were soon overwhelmed by internal contradictions leading to dictatorship. The lowly born dictators of the various European countries turned out to be far worse than any of the monarchs that preceded them.

Europeans learned the lesson of Ecclesiastes 10:16–17, that rule by nobles is preferable to rule by the worst elements of society.

Only in this decade are many of these nations finally coming out of the dark age of despotism and tyranny that succeeded the Romanovs, the Hapsburgs, the Hohenzollerns (Germany) and the other smaller dynasties that fell at various times throughout the century.

The Hapsburg dynasty that ruled over central Europe from Vienna was particularly progressive. One of the most famous modern Hapsburg monarchs was the Empress Maria Theresa, a great reforming monarch that ruled the empire in the middle of the eighteenth century up until the time that the United States became a nation.

Perhaps the greatest achievement of the Hapsburgs was to rule peacefully and progressively over many nations in central Europe, uniting them when they might otherwise have been constantly fighting each other. This unity also enabled most of Europe to avoid rule by the Islamic Ottoman Turks who conquered most of south eastern Europe, but were held back at the gates of Vienna in 1688 by fighting men from all the nations that then comprised the Austrian Empire. The Polish pope, John Paul II, joined in the tercentenary celebrations marking this victory ten years ago, remembering the sacrifices of his Polish ancestors in the battle.

Religion—Catholic and Protestant, Moslem and Jewish—has played a major role in central Europe's history, a subject I will examine in a future issue of *WNP*.

E.U. Built Like a Citadel

Austria's name in German is Österreich, the eastern empire. Whereas the other reich, the German Reich, historically looked west, this Germanic Reich looked east. The weaker nations of the east became a part of the Austrian Empire, the lands of the Hapsburgs, subdued, yes, but also benefiting from the peace that unity brought. The peoples of these other nations looked west, to Vienna, for hundreds of years. The Pope's home city of Krakow did not look to Warsaw, Poland's present capital, but to Vienna, the capital of the Empire of which it was a part. The same was true of Prague, Budapest, Sarajevo and Bratislava.

Is it any wonder then that the newly

The most demanding construction work lies still ahead—the introduction of the euro followed by further steps to full political and military union.

freed nations of eastern Europe are now looking west, to Vienna and through Vienna to the nations of the European Union, of which Austria is a member? Anxious to distance themselves from their former Soviet masters, these nations seek rapid membership in the E.U.

But the E.U. is being built in typical European fashion. Like a citadel. And it takes time to build a citadel. One of the most magnificent buildings in Prague took almost 600 years to complete. The vision of those who laid the foundation stone of this great cathedral was not realized in their lifetime, but they still built it because they were convicted it needed to be built.

The E.U. began in a small way shortly after World War II, with just three small nations, Belgium, Luxembourg and Holland. By 1957 it had become the European Economic Community with

six members (West Germany, France and Italy were added). Sixteen years later, it was enlarged to include the United Kingdom, Ireland and Denmark. Now there are fifteen member countries and a waiting list of almost as many.

Steady Progress in the E.U.

But expansion does not take place until previous gains have been solidified, just as a building must have a solid foundation before a higher floor is added. A badly built building in the United States may fall down with only minor consequences, but when there is no space to maneuver—as in Europe—the result could be disastrous. There have been many badly built “buildings” erected this century—Germany's Second and Third Reich, the communist Soviet Union, Franco's Spain, Vichy France and the Fourth Republic; along with artificial nations like Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia that could not hold their minorities together under one flag.

The E.U. progresses slowly, ensuring that each level and every step of the Citadel is built to last. The most demanding construction work lies still ahead—the gradual introduction of the euro beginning January 1st, followed by further steps to full political and military union.

Revelation 17:12–13 suggests a future action that would lead to a supranational leader who will preside over the new united Europe. “And the ten horns which you saw are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast. These have one mind and shall give their power and strength unto the beast.” This scenario is similar to the cautious manner in which other steps have been taken on the road to European unity.

“Unless the Lord shall build the house, the weary builders toil in vain,” says a pertinent scripture. Prophecy shows that this attempt at full European unification will not last, that the kingdom with the most solid foundation of all will replace it—the Citadel built to last for eternity, the kingdom of God. ❖

In Brief...

World News Review

Manitoba's Francophone Perspective on Quebec

French explorers once roamed the vast Canadian wilderness, setting up communities not only in Quebec but in villages scattered across Canada. None outside Quebec was more dynamic than the French-speaking enclave of St. Boniface. But bigotry, sometimes sanctioned by provincial officials, wreaked havoc on this Francophone community, and the example of what happened here is cited as a prime reason why some French Canadians believe Quebec should become an independent country.

Simply put, the fear is that Canada's English-speaking majority could eventually overwhelm the language and culture of Francophone Canadians. French-speaking Canadians who were pupils in St. Boniface in the 1940s and 1950s still vividly recall how their language was banned and how they were forced to hide their textbooks when provincial school inspectors came around to ensure that nobody was being taught French.

Today there are 4,400 students studying in French at 22 schools run by The Division Scolaire Franco-Manitobaine, but many French-speakers fear the modest gains they have made in the recent past could be wiped out if Quebec secedes.

The November election in Quebec is as much a vote of confidence in the Canadian dream of a bilingual nation from coast to coast as on whether to elect a government committed to holding another referendum on Quebec secession.

If Quebecers re-elect their secessionist government on November 30, they may soon be asked to cast their votes on the same issue put to them three years ago in a referendum that came within an ace of splitting Canada apart.

Although Manitoba was admitted into Canada as a bilingual province in 1870, the right to French-language education was not guaranteed and was abolished 20 years later. In Quebec, what is now known as the "Manitoba Schools Question" was seen as the most significant loss of French rights in non-Francophone Canada.

Some fear this could be repeated if Quebec separates. Many Franco-Manitobans such as Francine Martin take a more cautious view of their future in a Canada without Quebec. "I think French-language services will be the first thing to go including French language schools."

Source: Reuters News Agency

Illness Tied to Global Warming

Global warming could trigger an explosion of life threaten-

ing infectious diseases in areas where they are not now present, according to a recent report released by the World Wildlife Fund. The report cites malaria, cholera, dengue fever, yellow fever and encephalitis among diseases likely to crop up as gases collect in the atmosphere and warm the earth.

WWF released the report at the Climate-Change conference in Buenos Aires in early November

Source: *National Post*

Korean Concerns

Much press has been given to the ongoing Iraqi crisis, but recent actions by the North Korean government are setting off alarms. The Korean peninsula was called "the most unpredictable security tinder box in the world" in a recent *Boston Globe* article.

North Korea fields the world's second-largest army, adding 13,000 soldiers and 900,000 reservists last year alone, in spite of widespread food shortages and even famine. U.S. intelligence says the country has three nuclear devices. Recent missile launches demonstrated North Korean capability to reach all of South Korea, Japan, and Okinawa.

For perspective, contrasting North Korea with Iraq, the North Koreans have thousands of tons of chemical and biological weapons along with the capacity to use them. The Communist Koreans have also openly threatened the 37,000 U.S. troops based in South Korea, and recently refused to allow weapons inspectors access to sites of suspected underground nuclear facilities.

Sources: *The Arizona Republic*, © 1998 ; Eric Margolis, © 1998

Europe Seeks Military Role

"In a series of recent speeches and articles, British Prime Minister Tony Blair has pushed the long-debated issue of a 'European defense identity' to the fore, urging Europeans to create the means to do more for their own security without undermining the Atlantic alliance" ("Europe Seeks Own Credible Military Role" ©1998 Reuters).

Citing the recent crises in Iraq and Kosovo, European foreign defense ministers discussed the need to create a European defense structure at their meeting in mid November. Such a structure will not be easy to put together, given the complex relationship



between the European Union, the Western European Union and NATO.

Source: Reuters, ©1998

Killer Germs for Sale

The special insight team of reporters for the well-respected *Sunday Times* has uncovered a number of laboratories around the world willing to sell or export highly lethal biological agents capable of killing thousands of people in one go for a mere \$1,000. Posing as representatives for a medical lab in Africa, these undercover men were offered samples of anthrax and brucella by a lab in Indonesia.

This Asian plant made no check on their identities or even asked how these lethal products might be used. No questions asked! Another group of *Sunday Times* reporters were offered lethal botulinum bacteria by another plant in the Czech Republic. These two labs—one in Eastern Europe and one in the Far East—are among about 450 germ collectors globally. Some 50 offer anthrax; about 35 trade in the deadly botulinum bacteria, and so on.

Undercover British reporters contacted about 20 of these plants pretty much at random, including three in Mexico, Brazil and China. These latter ones did ask for an export license before approving the sale.

Microscopic amounts of these germs can kill hundreds at once if either inhaled or consumed in contaminated food products. Rogue countries such as North Korea and Iraq, along with various terrorist cells scattered throughout the world, are suspected of buying and storing these incredibly lethal biological agents. Several British politicians are, therefore, currently clamoring for much tighter international controls.

One particular feature article concluded with these words: “The CIA has warned that biological and chemical weapons represent the most urgent long-term threat to the West. There are fears that anyone with a basic scientific knowledge and a back-room laboratory could use the bugs to make biological weapons.”

Source: *The Sunday Times*, 22 November 1998 (two feature articles)

World Becoming Uninsurable?

The world’s major insurance firms are circulating a “climate disaster map” that combines the impacts of climatic events caused by El Niño and those predicted to result from increased global warming. A disaster assessment expert voiced the sober prediction that, “We are fast approaching the situation where some parts of the world are becoming uninsurable” (“Climate Disaster Map Pinpoints ‘No-Go’ Areas for Insurers” by Nick Nuttall, *The Times*).

The map indicates reduced rainfall in the grain-growing areas of the U.S., at the same time as rising sea levels and heavy storms threaten islands and the Caribbean, Indian, and Pacific oceans with severe flooding. Britain can anticipate buffeting winds from the Atlantic, as well as flooding along the coastline of the North Sea.

According to a U.N. official, “I am quite certain that there are some areas which will be unprotected and *may disappear* [emphasis ours]. A major problem is brewing.”

Source: Times Newspapers Limited, © 1998

Euro Ahead of U.S. Dollar

“Following its August 26 peak, the dollar has literally crashed, first against the D-mark and Swissie, and then against the Yen. The collapsing dollar has set off a run [on] U.S. bonds, as overseas bond-buyers rush to cash in their profits. In the meantime, Europe’s single new currency, the euro, has surged against the dollar” (Richard Russell’s Dow Theory Letters, October 21, 1998).

The euro was valued at 1.12 U.S. dollars in October 1997 and surged to 1.24 U.S. dollars by October 1998. And that is before anyone can actually buy euros at the banks—which will not be possible until 2002. As strange as it may seem, “for three years the euro will exist only as a sort of virtual money alongside of the existing currencies” (ibid. November 18, 1998).

“Note: Consider this, the 11 ‘euro nations’ have a net positive trade balance of \$140 billion a year. The U.S. has a negative trade balance for above \$100 billion a year. How long can this go on and the dollar still hold up?” (ibid. November 18, 1998).

Is Anyone Watching Latin America?

“The next near-death experience for world financial markets will occur in Brazil—within weeks, or even days. Consequences for North America could be catastrophic.... Brazil, with 164 million people, accounts for nearly half of Latin America’s total economic activity.... If Brazil implodes, Argentina, Chile, and Mexico could quickly follow. Venezuela is already in a tailspin and has recently devalued. Now, the really scary part...if Brazil’s economy comes crashing down, and takes the rest of the continent with it, American business and banks will be dealt a devastating blow that will dwarf the Asian crisis in magnitude and severity. U.S. banks have far more loan exposure to Latin America than they did in Asian or Russia...

“The financial world is overseen by three economic great economic powerhouses. Japan is overlord of Asia’s finances. Western Europe dominates East Europe and Russia. The U.S.’s bailiwick is Latin America, Central America, and the Caribbean. Japan, mired in deep recession, has failed visibly to defend Asia. Europe has done no better in Russia. If the United States fumbles its financial manifest destiny in Latin America, *head for the storm cellars* [emphasis ours]” (“Storm Warnings in Brazil” by Eric Margolis, October 8, 1998).

Europe Increases Its Presence in Latin America

The eighth Latin American summit was held in Oporto,

Portugal, in October with some interesting results. At this summit it became clear that the Europeans, led by the Spanish, are to increase their presence in Latin America, most of which was formerly Spanish colonial territory.

The door is opening for Europe in the region because the United States has suspended further development of an Inter-American free trade zone due to congressional opposition.

Spain initiated this forum, making it the “bridge country” between Europe and Latin America. European trade is growing in the region, spurred by an interest in one of the world’s most attractive emerging markets. Trade among the eight largest Latin American economies and their top five European trading partners reached a total of 61 billion U.S. dollars last year, according to IMF data. Germany is Latin America’s undisputed top trading partner,

followed by Italy, France, Spain and the United Kingdom, in that order.

“If the United States cannot advance the hemispheric integration process, Europe would be able to arrive to occupy new spaces,” said Miguel Rodriguez, the president of Costa Rica. Interestingly, Latin America’s leaders will meet with the leaders of the European Union in their first summit in June of 1999. The meeting will take place in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. An alliance is expected to be proposed between both parties with political and economic ties.

Sources: *La Nacion* (Buenos Aires); *The Miami Herald*; *Latin Trade* magazine

Contributors:

Cecil Maramville, Fred Nance,
David Palmer, John R Schroeder

Book Review...

When Nations Die

by Jim Nelson Black

Tyndale House Publishers, Wheaton,
Illinois, © 1994

Review by John R. Schroeder

“We are under tremendous pressures; we are confronted by a level of social disintegration that exceeds anything we have ever experienced in this nation”

— Jim Nelson Black

Bill Bryson’s new book, *Notes from a Big Country*, has only been on the market in Britain for a few weeks, and already it has vaulted to the top of *The Sunday Times*’ best seller list. This travelogue about America makes for generally very pleasant, entertaining reading.

Certainly millions around the world will undoubtedly buy and read Bill Bryson’s new book, but in stark contrast only a relatively few thousand have purchased *When Nations Die*, an important work about the darker side of American life. But to ignore the unpleasant and to pretend that bad things are not happening would be fatal to our civilization.

In recent years a number of useful books have been published about the gradual weakening of traditional stan-

dards and values in the Western world. *When Nations Die* is one of the best on the subject—perhaps mainly because it is anchored historically to the common problems of past civilizations and the American author’s fundamental principles are basically under-girded by biblical teachings.

Jim Nelson Black has had 25 years experience in several facets of the publishing field. He has conducted research at the University of Paris and received an award from a noted French academy. The book itself is well written and reader friendly, with many quotable statements.

For instance, Jim Black observed that “The entire nation must pay the price for the arrogant defiance of Divine Authority. The law of the land is no longer an inviolable standard. American justice is often unjust, and too many judges no longer subscribe to even common sense principles.”

The author also points out that every single one of the ten reasons for the decline and fall of past civilizations is “alive and well” on the contemporary American (and Western) scene. The ten warning signs are:

- Crisis of lawlessness
- Loss of economic discipline

- Rising bureaucracy
- Decline of education
- Weakening of cultural foundations
- Loss of respect for tradition
- Increase in materialism
- Rise in immorality
- Decay of religious belief
- Devaluing of human life

Although Mr Black concentrates on the United States, the British do not escape his attention entirely: “Britain, on the other hand, has turned even further away from its moral and political heritage in pursuit of a socialist utopia. And short of some miracle or a great spiritual awakening, even greater despair and some final collapse may be in the picture for Great Britain in the years just ahead.”

Although the United Church of God could not endorse everything written in *When Nations Die* (especially some aspects of the author’s political approach), reading this book would enlarge our understanding of what is currently happening to our Western civilization.

To conclude on a note about America this book observes: “This nation desperately needs a complete refocusing of its views and values, a complete turnaround in its morals and behavior.” ❖

“PLOW,” (Continued from page 16)

totalled fewer than 50 years. Isn't it something we should be ashamed of and something we should be reproached for by our ancestors, who forged such a history, and by our descendants?" He received a standing ovation at the end of the speech.

Even so, as the old expression goes, and perhaps especially with the volatile field of emotions that forgiveness can cause to surface, sometimes it truly is "easier said than done." Mr. Sullivan brings to us this reality by stating, "Many conservatives in Japan continue to defend the occupation, saying it was legal under international law and no different from the actions of western colonial powers of the era." On Thursday, several senior lawmakers from the governing Liberal Democratic Party protested the ideal of Japan's issuing any kind of apology to Mr. Kim. Likewise, it is extremely difficult for many Koreans to move forward over the "roadblock of the past." Mr. Sullivan offers the immensity of their new challenge to accept the Japanese apology by relating, "In South Korea, where people were forced to take Japanese names, speak Japanese, attend Japanese schools and obey Emperor Hirohito, memories of the occupation are still fresh. In Seoul, a civic group representing South Korean women forced into sexual slavery by the Japanese military during World War II, said it was disappointed 'because the joint announcement does not even mention the issue of comfort women, the Japanese euphemism for sex slaves.'"

To say you are sorry is simply not an easy thing to do. On the other side of the coin, to hear others say they are sorry is not always easy to hear, especially when you are not ready to hear it! As it is with people, so it is with nations. For all of us it is often easier to stay in the past, where we are comfortable and can take pity on ourselves for life's unfair turn. We become "secure in our insecurity" because we don't have to take the challenge to live in the present, much less move towards the future. Tim LaHaye in his book, *Anger Is a Choice*, on page 116 shares the comical but very real dilemma of a man "who rushes into the marriage counselor's office and said, 'You've got to help me! My wife is historical!' 'You mean hysterical!' replied the counselor. 'No, historical! She keeps bringing up the past!'"

It is easy for both the perpetrator and the victim to simply stay "historical." But when persons or nations begin to walk down the path of apology, the victims have to face themselves and ask what they are made of. Some make it, some don't. All we have to think of is the brother of the prodigal son, whose world seemingly came crashing down when he had to face himself, rather than point to his brother's poor choices.

Mr. Sullivan shares in his article a pivotal and personal statement as expressed by Emperor Akihito at the welcoming banquet for Mr. Kim when he quotes Emperor Hirohito as saying, "He had deep sorrow, and that the sorrow that I feel over this never leaves my memory." It is a remarkable statement by the son of the wartime Emperor.

Forgiveness is Costly

Now it is up to the Korean populace to be able to mount the formidable challenge of being able to forgive the Japanese. Think again of the prodigal son's brother. As Tim LaHaye

relates on this pivotal moment of encounter on page 112 of his book: "Forgiveness is very costly. It costs you, not the person being forgiven. Forgiveness means that justice will not always be fulfilled. Forgiveness does not rebuild the house that has been burnt down by someone carelessly playing with matches. Forgiveness does not always put a broken marriage back together. Forgiveness does not restore virginity to the rape victim. Forgiveness is letting go. It is the relaxation of your death grip on the pain you feel." Le Haye quotes Archibald Hart as saying, "Forgiveness is surrendering my right to hurt you back if you hurt me." Le Haye concludes with a thought by David Augsburger saying, "Forgiveness seems too easy. There should be blood for blood. Eye for eye."

Earlier in this article the brother of the prodigal son was mentioned as an individual who had a hard time with forgiveness. Big brothers are not the only ones who can lack vision. Prophets, men sent from God, can also be lacking in the ability to reconcile. Jonah comes to mind. It is interesting to note that Jonah was commissioned and sent forth by God to call upon Ninevah to repent, which means to change its ways. Such a change could possibly have led to a new form of relationship between Israel and Ninevah. But as we know, Jonah could not move beyond the desire to see Ninevah destroyed. In fact, that is why he fled in the first place. He knew what God really desired. It's found in Jonah 4:1-3: "But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he became angry. So he prayed to the Lord, and said, 'Ah, Lord, was not this what I said when I was still in my country? Therefore I fled previously to Tarshish for I know that You are a gracious and merciful God, slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness, One who relents from doing harm. Therefore now, O Lord, please take my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live!'"

Jonah could only focus on the past relationships of his country with Assyria—one in which Israel lived in dreaded fear of the Assyrians and their war machine. The last thing he wanted to do was deliver a message that could improve the atmosphere between their two countries. He would rather face the jaws of a "great fish." In fact he felt, "It is better for me to die than to live" (Jonah 4:8).

Peace Must be Made

Jonah was a type of Christ, commissioned by God to go to an unbelieving people, buried in a great fish for 3 days and 3 nights, "resurrected" to new service before God and man. It's fascinating that his very name means "dove," often thought of as a symbol of peace. But it takes more than being named "Dove" or a desire for peace. God says, "Blessed are the peacemakers." Peace has to be built one word, one apology, and one act of forgiveness at a time. It takes vision, courage, and a willingness to see it through.

When Jesus first came and proclaimed the intent of the gospel it was very clear that he was ready to move forward when it came to relationships between God and man. He triumphantly stated in Mark 1:15: "The time is fulfilled, the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe the gospel." As The Interpreter's Bible, page 656 states: "A new order is at hand. Get a new mind that fits it." This was His initial call—to put our

(See **“PLOW,”** page 9)

This Is the Way... Turning Swords Into Plowshares: Starting Now

A nation ahead of its time in repairing the breaches.

by Robin Webber

At times prophecy can appear foreboding, even gloomy. Especially if we focus on aspects of the historical cycles of pain that humans inflict upon others that are not quite like themselves. Christ shared in the Olivet Prophecy this natural tendency brought about by deception, armed conflict, famine and pestilence. Any serious student of the Scriptures knows all too well the refrain “nation will rise up against nation, and kingdom against kingdom!” But have we ever considered the time when this phrase will be passe, replaced by “nation shall apologize to nation, and kingdom will say, ‘I am sorry to kingdom’”?

You will not find much news like this today. But occasionally there are faint glimmers of light in current events that offer us a sense of the possible that lies ahead when nations have the vision and capacity to apologize and forgive. The question or concern that so often holds off reconciliation—whether between nations, families or individuals—is, “Who goes first?”

Kevin Sullivan, a reporter for the Washington Post Service, writes of such a bold first step in “In a First, Japan’s Leaders Apologize to Kim for Occupation of Korea” (*International Herald Tribune*, October 6, 1998). Mr. Sullivan spotlights the challenge, frustrations, and opportunities that forgiveness between former enemies can produce. “Emperor Akihito and Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi have

offered frank and unambiguous apologies to President Kim Dae Jung of South Korea for suffering Japan caused during its 1910 occupation of the Korean Peninsula. In a joint statement issued by the leaders...during Mr. Kim’s state visit to Japan, Mr. Obuchi expressed ‘deep remorse and a heartfelt apology to the people of South Korea, having humbly accepted the historical fact that Japan inflicted heavy damage and pain on the people of South Korea through its colonial role.’”

The background to this historic event makes it all the more remarkable. “It was the first written apology issued to an individual country by Japan for its actions before and during World War II. In the past, Japanese leaders have expressed ‘regret’ for any suffering Japan may have caused this century, but never offered an outright apology or specifically mentioned Korea.”

Apology Accepted

It is one thing to officially apologize, another to have that apology accepted. “In a speech to the Japanese Parliament, Mr. Kim forgave Japan for its behavior during the occupation and emphasized a future of partnership between the Asian neighbors.” In a visionary thought, the South Korean leader said, “It is truly infantile to regard 1,500 years of exchanges and cooperation as insignificant because of unfortunate periods that

(See “**PLOW**,” page 15)