

WORLD NEWS *and* PROPHECY

Biblical Perspectives on Current Events

March 1999

Vol. 2, No. 3

King Hussein's Uncertain Legacy

Power is passed to next generation in key Mideast nation

by Melvin Rhodes

Not many world leaders really make a difference, either in their own country or on the world stage. Even fewer make a positive impact. One such man who made a difference was Jordan's King Hussein, who died February 7 of cancer, aged 63.

When King Hussein ascended the throne, Churchill, Truman and Stalin were still in power. Today's world is very different from theirs. No longer is the world dominated by these three great powers. The United States remains the only super power but fails to get its own way, especially in the Middle East, the most unpredictable and volatile region in the world.

King Hussein was a voice of moderation and reason in the region, work-

ing for peace with Israel and trying to contain the radical influences calling for the destruction of the Jewish state. For this reason his death could make a big difference. Even if his son and heir, King Abdullah, continues the same policies as his father, his lack of experience could still be a decisive factor in the Mideast cauldron.

Additionally, the sudden change in the succession just two weeks before the King's death may have led to division in the royal family and divided loyalties in the military and amongst the Bedouin clans (the support of all of these groups is needed by the new king to succeed). It is to be remembered that King Hussein was present when his grandfather, Jordan's first king, was

assassinated in 1951 and survived more assassination attempts himself than any other monarch of the modern age.

An Autocratic Region

When we look at the recent history of the Middle East, it is very clear that the stability of the region depends on the survival of the remaining monarchies in the area, Jordan and Saudi Arabia being the most important.

Although Britain and America in turn have played major roles in the Middle East during this century, it remains the case that there is no democracy in the region, other than the Jewish state of Israel, which is only 50 years

(See "HUSSEIN," page 3)

In This Issue...

**Natural Disasters — King Hussein's Legacy — Atheistic Scientists —
World News Review — A World of Violence — Character Counts**

WORLD NEWS and PROPHECY

Biblical Perspectives on Current Events

March 1999

Vol. 2, No. 3

World News and Prophecy is published monthly by the United Church of God, an International Association, 5405 Dupont Circle, Suite A, Milford, OH 45150. © 1999 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 editors: Doug Johnson, 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, telephone (513) 576-9796, or download a copy off our Web site at <http://www.ueg.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 Fax: 01257-453978

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, *association internationale*, 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
E-mail: gutenachrichten@compuserve.com

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, P.O. Box 541027, Cincinnati, OH 45254-1027, U.S.A.

NEW ZEALAND: United Church of God, P.O. Box 22, Auckland, 1015, New Zealand. Phone: 0508-463-763

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.ueg.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.ueg.ca> accesses the Church's Canadian Web site, <http://www.ueg-aus.org.au> the Church's Australian Web site, <http://www.labuonanotizia.org> the Church's Italian Web site, and <http://www.ueg.org.za> the Church's Southern Africa Web site.

Contents

King Hussein's Uncertain Legacy

by Melvin Rhodes page 1

The Cause of Natural Disasters

by Rod Hall page 4

Atheistic Scientists Who Play God— Where It Might Lead

by John Ross Schroeder page 7

And the World Was Filled With Violence

by Mario Seiglie page 8

In Brief... World News Review

by Darris McNeely, David Palmer,
John R. Schroeder page 11

This Is the Way... A Walk In the Snow

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.

“HUSSEIN,” *(Continued from page 1)*

old. Many of the Arab nations that were carved out of the defeated Ottoman Empire following World War I had kings, usually local emirs from Turkish days, installed on their thrones by Great Britain.

These were constitutional monarchies but their parliamentary systems did not work well, leaving the monarchs with most of the power. Many of these monarchs and their children received their education and military training in Britain. They

The stability of the region depends on the survival of the remaining monarchies in the area.

often had alliances with the British until Britain began withdrawing from the region following the loss of the Suez Canal in 1956. King Hussein received his education at Britain’s most prestigious private school, Eton, followed by military training at Sandhurst. One of King Hussein’s four wives was British. Their son now sits on the Hashemite throne. He speaks with a perfect British accent.

These monarchs have all been influenced by western ways and western thinking. Unfortunately, they have had to contend with a rising tide of Arab nationalism and Islamic fundamentalism which has led to some of the thrones being overthrown and has made the future of the others uncertain.

Fifty Years of War

The post-World War II turmoil in the Middle East began with the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948, ending the British mandate over Palestine. Only two years before, the British had given independence to Jordan, installing the Hashemite King Abdullah on the throne. Upon the creation of Israel, Arab armies from Jordan, Egypt, Syria, Iraq and Lebanon all tried to obliterate the Jewish state in its infancy. They failed, surprisingly because of support from Eastern Europe, communist nations hoping for a foothold in an area dominated by western colonial powers.

This failure by the Arabs eventually led to disgruntled army officers in Egypt overthrowing King Farouk in July 1952. Farouk was not pro-British but had an international reputation as a playboy and was perceived as a corrupt influence on the Egyptian people. After his overthrow Farouk made the following prediction: “Eventually there will be only five kings left in the world: the king of spades, the king of diamonds, the king of hearts, the king of clubs and the king of England.” Farouk’s prophecy has not quite been fulfilled but a

number of thrones were to fall in the following years. His overthrow led to a radicalization of the Arab world and increasing Soviet influence. The Russian presence has virtually gone but the radicals remain.

Tumbling Monarchies

Britain lost control of the Suez Canal to Egypt’s President Nasser four years after Farouk’s overthrow, and over the next fifteen years withdrew most of its military presence from the region. In 1958 Iraq’s monarchy was violently overthrown, its young king and all the other members of the royal family executed. A period of political instability followed, ending only with the ascendancy of the ruthless President Saddam Hussein. Four years later Yemen’s monarchy fell. Seven years later Libya’s King Idris was overthrown by Colonel Gaddafi. Non-Arab but fellow Moslem Iran saw its Shah overthrown and a new radical Islamic regime take its place early in 1979. Ironically, the Iranians were celebrating the twentieth anniversary of their revolution the same week that King Hussein was buried.

As you can see from the above, each time a monarchy has been overthrown in the Middle East, a radical anti-western regime has replaced it. In most cases the army overthrows the monarch, Iran being the exception. The army usually attracts people who are less educated and not able to succeed in civilian society. The various radical presidents in the region bring to mind a scripture in Ecclesiastes 9:16–17: “Woe to you, O Land, when your king is a child (or slave—somebody from the bottom echelons of society), and your princes eat in the morning (unused to living well); Blessed are you, O Land, when your king is the son of nobles, and your princes eat in due season, for strength, and not for drunkenness.”

This is not to say that the monarchies in the region are perfect, by any means. Some of them are ostentatious with their wealth, thereby encouraging resentment and dissidence within their kingdoms. But their overthrow could unbalance the whole area.

Delicate Balancing Acts

There are still a number of pro-western monarchies left in the Middle East, notably the small Gulf states. But two are of particular importance: Saudi Arabia and Jordan. These are the two biggest in size and their geographical position makes both extremely important to the west. Both have radicals within their midst, both nationalists and fundamentalists. Some of those radicals are both. At this time, their strength is contained by the presence of their pro-western leaders. But it is interesting to note that their influence must be taken into account. When the U.S. and Britain sought support in December for their bombing raids on Iraq, not one of the

(See “HUSSEIN,” page 10)



The Cause of Natural Disasters

Some experts see an overall increase in the destructiveness of natural disasters, especially in the last few decades.

by Rod Hall

Various types of earthquakes, plagues and major upsets in the weather, including drought, floods, tidal waves, tornadoes, and hurricanes will continue to wreak havoc on countless thousands around the globe.

Officials fear the death toll may rise to over 2,000 from the recent earthquake in Colombia. The massive destruction left the country looking like a bombed-out relic of a war zone, with an estimated 200,000 left homeless, and many without clean water, sewage disposal, electricity or adequate food. Hurricane Mitch left 23,500 dead or missing in Central America. We have experienced the effects of “El Niño” and “La Niña”.

A recent *Life* magazine article summarized, “Not since the Dust Bowl days of the 30s has meteorological mayhem so dominated headlines and minds....The rogue Pacific current known as El Niño began wreaking havoc around the world. Indonesia’s jungles burned while Chile’s Atacama Desert got a foot of rain. Snow fell in Guadalajara for the first time since 1881. Canada suffered its worst-ever ice storm. Floods killed thousands in Africa. In Peru endless downpours created a 2,300 square mile lake. Thunderstorms with hurricane-force winds trashed Moscow. The rain-swollen Yangtze River killed more than 400 as it cut a swath through central China.”

All of this chaos is unsettling. While there have been cataclysms of greater immensity and intensity in our century, the distribution, variety and frequency of the recent unpredictable weather has been extraordinary. This past year has been the third most severe in a decade, tying that of 1982–83 as one of the century’s worst.

Are upset weather conditions, earthquakes and natural disasters on the increase worldwide? Are there spiritual causes behind them or are they just the result of random, environmental happenings? Do disasters have any meaning or message for humankind today?

Some see natural disasters as nature’s way of some monumental system of checks and balances, designed to control the world’s population. To others it seems like pure happenstance, impure accidents or random violence that proceeds mindlessly out of a universe without a pattern.

However, Jesus mentions that many natural disasters, as we term them today, would be a sad reality of life throughout history and would build in impact as we approach the end of the age. He predicted: “There will be *earthquakes* in various places; there will be *famines* and *calamities*; this is but a beginning of the *intolerable anguish* and *sufferings*” (Mark 13:8 Amplified). Various types of earthquakes, plagues and major upsets in the weather, including drought, floods, tidal waves, tornadoes, and hurricanes will continue to wreak havoc on countless thousands around the globe.

Increased Destructiveness

It is difficult to know for sure whether earthquakes and natural disasters are occurring at a greater frequency and intensity today. There is, at best, only sketchy information about the distant past. Some feel what appears to be an increase in natural disasters is in reality better record keeping and better reporting.

The National Earthquake Information Center for the U.S. Geological Center indicates, “We continue to hear from many people throughout the world that earthquakes are on the increase. Although it may seem that we are having more earthquakes, earthquakes of magnitude 7.0 or greater have remained fairly constant throughout this century and, according to

our records, have actually seemed to decrease in recent years.”

They indicate that a partial explanation may lie in the fact that over the last 20 years, more have been *located* each year because of the tremendous increase in the number of seismograph stations and improved global communications. Scientists locate about 12,000 to 14,000 each year or approximately 35 per day.

However, they indicate that the effect of earthquakes has been “more pronounced.” In spite of building safer structures, losses (both human and property) are greater. They suggest this is because the earth’s population is increasing and more property exists that can be destroyed. Regardless of the frequency and intensity of earthquakes and natural disasters, their increased impact and destructiveness is certain.

Other experts also see an overall increase in the destructiveness of natural disasters, especially in the last few decades. Dr. William H. Hooke, Director of the U.S. Weather Research Program Office, of National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, asked in a recent speech, “Is the seeming increase in the occurrence of natural disasters real?” He used the increasing annual cost of damage as a definite indicator that it is. The annual U.S. losses to natural disasters, while highly variable, have averaged \$50 billion per

damages each decade, in constant dollars, over the last 35 years.

Dr. Hooke indicates impact is increasing as a result of societal changes such as urbanization and technological interdependence. While disaster losses are expected to vary considerably from year to year, it is expected that they generally will continue to increase, as a fraction of the gross national product (GNP).

He indicates that the frequency, strength, and location of hazards—storms, floods, droughts, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, and wildfires—are intimately connected to “longer-period global change,” whether due to natural variations or human-induced changes.

Random Natural Disasters

Today, many natural disasters appear to be “normal” environmental happenings, through natural environmental conditions that exist in God’s creation.

God does not directly cause all natural disasters. Many are simply freak

occurrences that strike at random. God in general has taken a hands off approach, letting mankind go his own way experiencing the fruit of his actions. Wise King Solomon observed, “The race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, nor bread to the wise, nor riches to men of understanding, nor favor to men of skill; but time and chance happen to them all. For man also does not know his time: Like fish taken in a cruel net, like birds caught in

a snare, so the sons of men are snared in an evil time, when it falls suddenly upon them” (Ecclesiastes 9:11–12).

Jesus Christ explained this principle of random destruction by giving an example of Pilate killing some Galileans in order to mix their blood

with his sacrifices. “Do you suppose that these Galileans were worse sinners than all other Galileans, because they suffered such things? I tell you, no; but unless you *repent* you will all likewise perish” (Luke 13:2–3, emphasis ours throughout). He goes on to give

another example of the tower in Siloam falling on and killing people passing by (verses 4–5). Perhaps an earthquake caused its collapse. Regardless, the point Jesus was making is that natural disasters, circumstances or accidents can cut short human life for those who are caught by them.

This does not mean those who suffer this fate are necessarily more evil than others in society. However, disasters should send a warning message to us all. *Repent* and turn to God for protection while there is still time. “For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away” (James 4:14).

Manifestations of Divine Power

Earthquakes and environmental occurrences can also be manifestations of divine power. When God delivered the ten commandments from Mount Sinai, it was accompanied by thunder, lighting, thick clouds, smoke, and a great earthquake (Exodus 19:18). Jesus Christ’s death was marked by a major earthquake to reinforce God’s presence and power (Matthew 27:54; 28:2).

God, on occasion, will bring earthquakes and natural disasters to strike the

The annual U.S. losses to natural disasters, while highly variable, have averaged \$50 billion per year in the last few years, or roughly one billion dollars per week.



year in the last few years, or roughly one billion dollars per week. Of even greater concern are long-term trends in costs, showing a doubling or tripling of

rebellious in order to teach lessons or bring His righteous judgments. For example, God used an earthquake to strike down the rebellion of Korah against Moses and the leadership God had chosen. Notice, “and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up, with their households and all the men with Korah, with all their goods” (Numbers 16:32).

Cause and Effect

Since Eve bit the forbidden fruit, natural disasters have plagued mankind. Because Adam also chose to rebel against God, his descendants would have to struggle with the created environment to survive. Adam was told, “*Cursed is the ground for your sake; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life. Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, and you shall eat the herb of the field. In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for dust you are, and to dust you shall return*” (Genesis 3:17–19).

History records man’s constant struggle with foul environmental conditions to survive. Even today, one seventh of the human race, 840 million people, lives in conditions of chronic and persistent hunger. Every day 24,000 people die from hunger. Three quarters of them are children.

God has occasionally intervened in the course of human endeavors to bring blessings for obedience and curses for disobedience. He told Israel, “But if you do not obey Me, and do not observe all these commandments...I will break the pride of your power; I will make your heavens like iron and your earth like bronze...and your strength shall be spent in vain; for your land shall not yield its produce, nor shall the trees of the land yield their fruit... And I will bring a sword against you that will execute the vengeance of the covenant; when you are gathered together within your cities I will send *pestilence* among you; and you shall be delivered into the hand of the enemy...when I have *cut off your supply of bread*” (Leviticus 26:14,19–20,25–26).

Satan’s Tools?

God also, on occasion, allows Satan to use various natural disasters to hurt or destroy people or their possessions. Job and his family, servants, animals and property were victims of Satan’s direct attacks. In one day marauders killed with swords, fire from the sky struck and a great wind storm blew down Job’s home, killing all his children. He lost nearly all of his physical possessions and immediate family (Job 1:13–19). God allowed Satan to humble Job, teaching him valuable lessons. Eventually, God in His mercy restored to Job twice as much as he had lost (Job 42:10).

At the time of the end Satan will inspire his representative, the false prophet, to perform signs and won-



ders using some natural looking phenomena like fire falling from heaven (Revelation 13:13). The Apostle Paul indicates: “The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved” (2Thessalonians 2:9–10).

Some signs may be similar to those used by the Egyptian magicians. As a counterfeit to the miracles of God’s power working through Moses, they brought natural disasters, rivers turning to blood, frogs, lice and flies plaguing the land (Exodus 7:21–22; 8:7,18).

Signs of the End Time

Earthquakes, and what we call natural disasters, will be major signs of God’s power in the countdown of events leading toward the time of the end. They will be orchestrated by supernatural powers. God’s end time servants, the “two witnesses,” will be able to use fire to devour their enemies. They will “shut heaven, that it rain not in the day of their prophecy: and have power over waters, to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will” (Revelation 11:3–6 KJV). In addition, “thunders, and lightnings, and an earthquake,” will precede the seven trumpet plagues and seven last plagues that bring massive destructive disaster to the ecosystem (Revelation 8:5–13; 11:19; 16:1–21; Joel 1:15–20; 2:1–12).

Even after Christ begins to reign on the earth the natural environmental elements will strike some nations who stubbornly continue to disobey (Zechariah 14:16–19). Until Jesus Christ returns to set up His kingdom, the impact and destructiveness of earthquakes and natural disasters will increase just as He predicted (Matthew 24:24). They will strike many unsuspecting people at random. Good and evil supernatural forces will utilize them more frequently as the end time approaches. The lesson we should learn is clear: *repent* and draw close to God for protection while there is time.

The good news is, eventually magnificent environmental blessings will be poured out on the obedient. Many biblical prophecies picture a utopian environment developing as a result (Isaiah 41:17–18; Mica 4:3–4; Amos 9:13). The fundamental cause behind the curse of natural disasters will be removed. The rebellion begun by the first Adam will at long last be stopped by the arrival of the second Adam, Jesus Christ (Isaiah 11:9–10). ❖

• Rod Hall is a United Church of God member in Spokane, Washington.

Atheistic Scientists Who Play God – Where It Might Lead

For science to work properly it has to be governed by moral values and ethical standards.

by John Ross Schroeder

Modern science and religion have had an uneasy relationship often marked by suspicion and contention. Despite recent attempts to forge a common philosophical approach and considerable media publicity about efforts to harmonize science and theology, the relationship remains a difficult one.

In fact, a recent survey shows that fewer scientists believe in God than ever before. Today only about 7 percent of leading scientists profess belief. Doubt, disbelief and agnosticism reign in the world of science. The statistics are not encouraging (please see sidebar).

Britain's Richard Dawkins is in the forefront of militant atheism. Noted journalist Paul Johnson has named him as a prime candidate for the title: "The most dangerous man in Britain." Dawkins presently occupies a specially created professorial chair at Oxford University.

Writes Mr. Johnson: "Dawkins, a handsome, plausible and self-confident performer on TV and radio, uses his position not only to undermine belief in God, but to press the case for scientific adventurism of the kind many find frightening." Professor Dawkins is a strong advocate of human cloning.

Paul Johnson continues: "When Dolly the sheep was cloned, Dawkins said he looked forward to having a copy of himself made, 30 years younger, so that he could go on pontificating well into the 21st Century."

Two Types of Scientific Inquiry

There is both a right and wrong

type of scientific inquiry. In many ways science has made every day life in the 20th Century a better experience for millions upon millions of people. As Mr. Herbert Armstrong has said, "It is not the thing itself, but the wrong use of the thing." A good thing that science creates could be put to a wrong use, or the thing itself could be intrinsically wrong.

For science to work properly it has to be governed by moral values and ethical standards. No field of human endeavor can exempt it itself from basic rules, and still avoid horrendous consequences. It helps a great deal if scientists truly believe in God and the Ten Commandments.

But atheism can be dangerous! Those who advocate human cloning are *not* usually strong believers in God and the Bible, but the very opposite.

In the past, questionable inventions in the scientific laboratory have been misused by irresponsible political tyrants seeking to impose their godless doctrines and ideologies on many others. Human cloning may soon be added to the already extant dangers of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons.

Mr. Johnson points out that "the desire to produce armies of identical superwarriors is an

ancient one in China, as thousands of recently-unearthed terracotta figures, more than two millennia old, testify." Dictators using human cloning on an industrial scale is a frightening prospect. What about Saddam Hussein's notorious revolutionary guards, chosen for their size, strength and cunning?

We live in an uncertain world filled with all kinds of jeopardy. Certain aspects of scientific inquiry threaten to go amok. Only the principles of the Bible can keep scientists on the right track. That is one reason why atheism, twinned with the rejection of Scripture, is so potentially dangerous to humankind.

Sources: *The Daily Mail* (London), February 1, 1999; *The Atlanta-Journal Constitution*, February 7, 1999; *Newsweek* (Atlantic edition), July 27, 1998.

LEADING SCIENTISTS REJECT GOD

This survey was conducted by asking 1,000 scientists listed in a reference book of top scientists about their religious beliefs.

Belief in a Personal God

	<u>1914</u>	<u>1933</u>	<u>1998</u>
Personal belief	27.7	15	7.0
Personal disbelief	52.7	68	72.2
Doubt/agnosticism	20.9	17	20.8

Source: *Nature Journal* (quoted by *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*).

And The World Was Filled With Violence

"The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence."

by Mario Seiglie

With the constant stream of violence we see daily in the news, it is difficult not to become jaded. Yet it is vital to avoid falling into this trap. The worldwide phenomenon of violence is something relatively new in history, and we should be aware of it.

For instance, back in 1980, when we moved to beautiful Santiago, Chile, violence was relatively rare. We were always kidding that this part of the world was behind the times by at least 20 years and so were the cars! It was not uncommon to see Latin gentlemen still tipping their hats when a lady passed by. This was such an isolated part of the world that foreigners were viewed with a certain awe. They wondered, "Who would ever come down this far to live?" It was, on the whole, a peaceful and conservative society with relatively high morals and few crimes.

Not any more. What a change in close to 20 years! It seems violence has now penetrated even the remotest regions in the world. As everywhere else, now there are tabloid newspapers that luridly describe details of the daily murders, rapes and robberies. Drugs are rampant with the youth. At night, everyone bolts their doors and there are bars on every window. It seems we are the ones that live as prisoners inside our homes while the robbers roam freely outside. Such is the world we now live in, wherever that may be.

Also, a "hidden" type of violence to take into account is the many abortions taking place annually around the world. According to the U.N. population statis-

tics for 1997, of approximately 175 million pregnancies that take place each year, 45 million end in abortions and 75 million live births are unwanted. Also they estimate 60 million baby girls would now be alive if they had not been aborted due to their sex. Finally, they mention each year, two million girls from ages 5 to 15 enter the business of prostitution (*World Population Prospects for 1997*, United Nations Population Fund, May 27, 1997, pages 2-3).

Until this century violence was limited, among other factors, by the ways murder could be perpetrated. It was difficult to carry it out with only a knife or a club. It was a messy thing, where a struggle was involved, and the proximity was horribly close. It was not always successful, and the criminal could end up being killed. But in this century, with the advent of cheap guns around the world, suddenly there was a faster, cleaner and more distant way to commit murder. This has certainly helped criminals in multiplying their crimes in a fit of rage. Millions of guns are now available to the local population worldwide.

Although man has been violent since his inception, as the first murder of Abel by Cain can attest, many factors, such as those mentioned, had kept the crime rates down. Only once before has history recorded violence on a worldwide scale comparable to what we are seeing now. It was in Noah's time. "The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence" (Genesis 6:11, emphasis ours throughout).

*Only once before
has history
recorded
violence on a
worldwide scale
comparable to
what we are
seeing now. It
was in Noah's
time.*

Christ mentioned in the end times that the conditions in the world would be similar to Noah's day. "And as it was in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man...when the Son of Man is revealed" (Luke 17:26, 30).

Paul also described the end time society as being cruel and violent. "But know this, that in the last

The increasing level of violence in the world is one of the factors that will bring about the end time scenario.

days perilous times will come: For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, *brutal*" (2 Timothy 3:1-2).

Isaiah, one of the major prophets of the Old Testament, was used by God not only to describe the worsening moral conditions in Israel during his days, which would lead to captivity and exile, but also to describe as a parallel what would occur in the end times. From the outset, in chapters one and two, we see God going back and forth, describing first the atrocious corruption of Israel in those days, and then the same circumstances which will prevail in the final days, when the kingdom of God will be inaugurated.

Isaiah begins in chapter 1: "Why should you be stricken again? You will revolt more and more. The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faints. *From the sole of the foot even to the head, there is no soundness in it, [society as a whole] but wounds and bruises and putrefying sores; they have not been closed or bound up, or soothed with ointment* (Isaiah 1:5-6). And in chapter 2, it then describes the end times: "Now

it shall come to pass *in the latter days* that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established on the top of the mountains...and all nations shall flow to it. Many people shall come and say, 'Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, and we shall walk in His paths.' For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word

of the Lord from Jerusalem" (Isaiah 2:2-3).

This duality of the accounts continues throughout Isaiah. In chapter three it describes the increasing amount of violence: "And the worst sort of *anarchy* will prevail—*everyone stepping on someone else, neighbors fighting neighbors, youths revolting against authority, criminals sneering at*

Until this century violence was limited, among other factors, by the ways murder could be perpetrated. It was difficult to carry it out with only a knife or a club. It was a messy thing, where a struggle was involved, and the proximity was horribly close.

honorable men" (Isaiah 3:5, *Living Bible*). This certainly is an apt picture of what is occurring today.

Daniel also describes rampant violence and immorality as conditions of the end time. "And in the latter time of their kingdom, *when the transgressors have reached their fullness, a king shall arise*" (Daniel 8:23). Thus, sin has to reach *a certain level* until God intervenes and allows the end time scenario to

unfold. Then shall arise the chief personalities that will lead it.

Revelation describes the same thing: "And I heard another voice from heaven saying, 'Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues. For *her sins have reached to heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities*'" (Revelation 18:5).

It is not enough for the readers of *World News and Prophecy* to remove themselves from the evil of this world to escape God's correction. But we are to move to a greater understanding of God's transcendent purpose—to not only focus on the effects, but consider the cause of human conditions. Notice Ezekiel 9:6: "Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and put a mark on the foreheads of the men who sigh and cry over all the abominations that are done within it." Unless we are truly grieved over the state of human affairs, we will not desire to separate ourselves from this world. Jesus built on this concept found in the Old Testament when he mentioned in His "Sermon on the Mount," "Blessed are those

who mourn for they shall be comforted."

Truly, the earth is filled with violence and immorality, but we don't know at what point God considers it has reached its "peak" level and decides to intervene. But in the meantime, we should continue to watch and be aware that the increasing level of violence in the world is one of the factors that will bring about the end time scenario. ❖

Character Does Count

But as all the wrinkles were slowly ironed away at Philadelphia’s Constitutional Convention, a lingering nerve of contention remained before the delegates. Having cast off (in Colonial eyes) a tyrant, would they ever again dare invest authority in an executive power? Washington’s powerful life example spoke louder than any good arguments. It would not be by his grasp for power or intellectual wit that he would ascend to the presidency—but simply by “quiet tracks in the snow” laid over a lifetime.

Pierce Butler, of South Carolina, thought the president’s powers were “full, great, and greater than I was disposed to make them. Nor do I believe they would have been so great had not many of the members cast their eyes towards General Washington as President; and shaped their ideas of the Powers to be given a President by their opinions of his virtue.” From the beginning America’s concept of the presidency, was the idea of virtue—let’s put it plainly—character. The standard would be—not simply what you do—but what you are. This was the only way a young and frightened nation could come to terms with trusting an executive leader. Washington’s lifetime of self invention based upon his “Rules of Civility” had served him and the nation well.

Today, during and after the recent impeachment hearings and trial, there is talk of “compartmentalization”—the notion that all the parts of one’s life do not necessarily have to connect, that moral character and job competency do not have to be in one man. This is simply not the original American



equation of republican ideal and it is certainly not biblically founded. Notice the power of cause and effect as outlined in Proverbs 29:2: “When the righteous are

pro-western leaders openly supported the allied action. To have done so could have led to increased opposition in their own countries and their possible overthrow. They walk a fine line.

Because they are willing to work with the United States toward peace in the Middle East, which basically means patiently cooperating as the U.S. puts increasing pressure on Israel to give up the occupied territories, the stability of the monarchies is important to the United States. However, the tie with America can be a negative for the kingdoms themselves, as their leaders can be blamed for American actions in the region, including “aggression” against Iraq.

These monarchs have all been influenced by western ways and western thinking. Unfortunately, they have had to contend with a rising tide of Arab nationalism and Islamic fundamentalism which has led to some of the thrones being overthrown and has made the future of the others uncertain.

King Abdullah begins his reign with much in his favor. He has the goodwill of his subjects as a result of the respect and devotion accorded his father; he is well educated and has military experience; he understands the West and will likely continue to receive the aid his poor nation needs to survive; he is married to a Palestinian, which should help him with the majority of his subjects who are also Palestinians; he has the support of the various desert tribes within Jordan; he has the sympathy and respect of the Israelis who sent a sizeable delegation to his father’s funeral; he will again receive financial support from the Gulf states, support that was withdrawn when his father did not back the allies against Iraq; but he still retains Iraq’s friendship and even Syria’s.

He has everything going for him. The peace of the Middle East depends very much upon this man. ❖

in authority, the people rejoice, but when a wicked man rules, the people groan.”

Washington’s stepping off his horse, and later his stepping away from the executive office after his second term, set forever the mode of America’s greatness of being gallant enough to conquer the problems that lay in her path, but also to have the ability to muster the “right stuff” and go back home when the task was accomplished.

Snow is a wondrous attraction. So are the revolutions of history. What appears wondrous can take a sharp turn

towards disaster. Many revolutions would follow the American experiment. Hope would turn to despair as tyrants of royal blood would be replaced with demagogues with radical blood flowing in their veins. Much of Latin America would devolve for nearly two centuries into military dictatorships. The great revolutions of France and Russia would go through stages of moderation to radicalism—ending with much of their citizenry losing their lives, because of the lack of a galvanizing example of moderation like Washington’s. Imagine a “modern day Manasseh” whose civilians would report to the military or whose chief executive maintained total power for a lifetime. Then, think again of one man’s influence as he walked in the snow for a nation to follow. ❖

In Brief...

World News Review

The death penalty continues to stir debate in many parts of the world. On February 23 a jury in Texas found John William King guilty of the brutal murder of James Byrd Jr. Byrd, an African American, was dragged to his death behind a vehicle driven by King and two others in a vicious hate crime that shocked the country. The judge sentenced King to death by lethal injection. We feature two reports on the status of the capital punishment in this issue.

The Death Penalty: Britain's Dilemma and America's

British Home Secretary, Jack Straw, has virtually signed away Parliament's right to restore capital punishment. The hanging penalty was removed from the law books in the United Kingdom over 30 years ago. Mr Straw recently endorsed the Sixth Protocol of the European Convention on Human Rights—making it very, very difficult to reverse the Human Rights Act now enshrined in British law.

The Daily Mail commented: "Among everything Britain has signed away to Europe, the right to reintroduce the death penalty may be the one that is regretted most, especially by victims of future murderers." Polls over the last 30 years have shown that the vast majority of the British people want hanging reintroduced. Though former Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher always voted "yes," the British Parliament consistently refused to do so when the decision was still in its power.

This landmark decision comes at a time when the evidence is beginning to show that the reintroduction of capital punishment in some 38 states is working in the United States. The American murder rate has dropped considerably over the past ten years, and some observers feel that the death penalty is primarily responsible.

Take New York state: capital punishment was reintroduced in 1995 and the number of murders has fallen by about 50 percent since. Murders in New York City have dropped from 1,200 in 1994 to 500 in 1998.

Correspondent Daniel Jeffreys summed up his report from the Big Apple: "It has taken 15 years but the streets of America's big cities are now safer than they have been for generations. All categories of violent crime are down." Of course, this does not mean that America is completely out of the woods. There is still far too much

general crime and the murder picture, though much improved, still has a long way to go.

Source: *The Daily Mail*, January 28, 1999

MANILA AND NEW YORK: (Innovative Media, Inc.) — The year 1999 could prove to be very decisive in the history of human rights if there is success in abolishing the death penalty. Next autumn, the U.N. General Assembly could decide on a moratorium regarding the death penalty. It will be a highly debated issue, as countries are increasingly declaring themselves with clarity in favor of or against execution.

The European Union is clearly abolitionist, having overcome Great Britain's reluctance and paid attention to the pope's defense of life.

The hard core countries in favor of the death penalty are the U.S., many Islamic countries, and some Asian states like Singapore, China and the Philippines.

If the United Nations attempts to have the death penalty abolished on a worldwide scale, would the U.S. use its veto to overrule such a mandate? And if the United States were successful in their influence, what will be the reaction in Europe and especially in Rome?

The Looming World Water Crisis

Experts on the world's water situation issued a warning last week that within fifty years two billion people will face a severe water shortage. Actually, if one uses UNDP figures for current water usage and availability, the situation may be even more serious. Using the cutoff point of 2,000 cubic meters per person per annum as indicating a severe shortage, most of Africa and most of Asia will be in dire straits in less than twenty years. Exceptions might be the Congo basin, a few regions along the coast of West Africa, Bangladesh, and some areas of Southeast Asia. Much of Europe as well as Latin America outside the Amazon basin are also included in this situation.

Some of the world's most populous nations are already facing looming shortages. In northern China and in much of India the water table is dropping 1 to 2 meters per year due to increasing use of wells. Most of the world's rivers have been tapped for irrigation, and much of the planet's irrigated land is under threat from salinization.

Experts on conflict tell us that many of the wars in the

new century could be fought over the distribution of water from shared river basins. Some 260 rivers are shared by more than one state. Potential disputes over the sharing of water exist in over half of these.

The situation is probably the most grave in the region which is often the focus of Bible Prophecies—the Middle East. War could easily break out over shared rivers in the Nile, Tigris-Euphrates, and Jordan valleys. Experts on the Middle East warn that any attempt by Turkey to cut off Euphrates or Tigris river waters to Syria or Iraq would provoke a *major* war. Both of these down river states are watching Turkey's Southeast Anatolia Project with increasing apprehension. Israel's mining of the groundwater under the West Bank is one of the key issues standing in the way of a final settlement between Israel and the Palestinians.

Bangladesh Movement Highlights New Pan-Islamic Identity

TEHERAN, IRAN : (SNS) — The recent arrest of a network of terrorists in Bangladesh and India points to an important new pattern emerging among fundamentalist Islamic militancy.

Terrorist financier and organizer Osama Bin Laden has rejected the traditional militant hotbeds of Iran and the Levant, and with them the tacit equation of Islamic identity with Arabic or Persian identity, and has instead turned to the Indian Ocean basin. There he has set about forging a new pan-Islamic identity and movement that ignores ethnic, social, and political differences.

While there is nothing wrong with religious unity, in this case, forged by a terrorist, it has a distinctly violent underside—one we expect to plague Africa, South Asia, and Southeast Asia for some time to come.

It may not be long before we see the sword of Islam unsheathed again in the hands of a madman with a vengeful hatred for America. Bin Laden's terrorist activities are not finished. They are merely on hold.

John Paul II Greets Palestinian President Arafat Receives Committee of “Bethlehem 2000” International Forum

VATICAN CITY: (Innovative Media, Inc.) — The United Nations Conference on the “Bethlehem 2000” project, which ended this week at the FAO headquarters in Rome, was the common denominator of two papal audiences.

Yasser Arafat, president of the National Palestinian Authority, came to Rome for the opening of the conference

and to address aspects of the “Bethlehem 2000” project, an ambitious program financed by the European Union, the United Nations, and several governments and private entities.

The Bethlehem project will build the infrastructure necessary to transform the city of Jesus' birth into an attractive place for the pilgrims of the Jubilee.

Arafat expressed his satisfaction with the idea, although he emphasized that Bethlehem is still not a free city; it continues to be surrounded by old and new Jewish settlements. Arafat reiterated his invitation to the pontiff to visit Bethlehem, where the pope's presence is greatly anticipated. John Paul II accepted the invitation, which was first made during the Palestinian president's last visit. This was Arafat's seventh visit to the Holy See. His first was in 1982, and his most recent visit was last June.

Patriarch of Jerusalem: Christians' Moral Fiber Being Tested

JERUSALEM: (APB) — Patriarch Michael Sabbah of Jerusalem has been among the participants of the “Bethlehem 2000” Conference in Rome. Commenting on the situation in the Middle East, he said: “Our expectations for ‘Bethlehem 2000’ are for a spiritual life that is more sincere on the part of Christians, who are few, both in Bethlehem itself as well as in the rest of the Holy Land.”

Referring to King Hussein of Jordan's death, the Patriarch said, “We hope that Jordan's politics will not change, and that the new king will follow in his father's footsteps, doing the same work, and giving the same input for peace.”

In face of the current standstill in implementing the Peace Agreements, the Patriarch said that “the Palestinian people believe and hope that a new government in Israel will have a new vision, capable of integrating Israel's need for security with the Palestinians' right to liberty. Only with this broader vision can there be hope to achieve peace.”

Russia Calls on Japan and Germany For Economic Help

GLOBAL INTELLIGENCE: (SNS) — The Russians have mounted a full-court press focused on Germany and Japan. They have had no luck pleading with the Americans directly on economic issues. They have now focused their attention on two key American partners who also are extremely vulnerable in their own ways.

The Japanese are vulnerable economically, given their lack of recovery from financial problems. The Russians are carrying this message to the Japanese: unless Western help is

forthcoming, Russia's economy will continue to worsen, undermining the prospects of a global economic recovery. Therefore, the Japanese have a serious interest in advocating the Russian position to the Americans. Moreover, unless the Japanese succeed in this task, they can forget about recovering Japanese islands occupied by the Russians at the end of World War II.

The Russians were delivering a more geopolitical message to the Germans. The Germans badly want stability along the territory running from the Baltics to the Balkans. They are more directly affected by instability in these regions than any other major power. They have made enormous investments in this region as well as huge investments in Russia.

Russia is letting Germany know that more than investments are at stake in this region. Russia is in a position to destabilize the entire region. This would lead to increased German dependence on the United States for stability, to Germany being forced to intervene in the region on its own or in concert with other European nations, or to the acceptance of instability and tension in its own back yard. None of these options appeal to the Germans. That is what the Russians are counting on.

During this past week recent press reports began to surface to the effect that Russia and its partner Belarus were supplying arms to Iraq. Similar reports have been surfacing for a while, but their frequency and prominence are increasing. There is little doubt in our minds that Russian and Belarussian weaponry is reaching Iraq.

On another front Russia has long been worried about Turkish intentions in the Caucuses, particularly among the Moslem nations in the region. Moscow has been increasingly close to Armenia, a non-Moslem antagonist to Turkey. In recent weeks, Russia began delivering S-300 surface-to-air missiles to Armenia, in a dramatic increase in weaponry certain to alarm Armenia's neighbors.

Such tactics are reminiscent of the Cold War. This time Russia's emphasis is not only the United States, but Japan and Germany as well.

Euro Prompts Talks of Northern American Currency

OTTAWA: (CP/BN) — Academics, economists and politicians met last month in Ottawa to discuss the state of the world's economy. One of the key items discussed was the possibility of debate on a common North American currency to compete with the euro.

The Canadian center for Policy Alternatives conference heard suggestions of a common currency, the dollar, to be used by the United States, Canada, and Mexico.

Among those opposed to the idea was Auto Workers Union economist John Stanford. He warns that using the U.S. dollar would be Canada's loss. He says it would mean accept-

ing U.S. leadership not only on currency but on Canada's socio-economic policies.

What's interesting is that economists in North America have known for years that the Europeans were working toward a common currency. Like so many things in this world the tendency is to wait...until it's too late. *After the fact* has become common place today. Although all nations live in a global village, some nations isolate themselves and then wonder what happened when the world doesn't unfold as expected. By the time North American economists even get around to discussing a common currency, whether using the U.S. dollar, or trying to incorporate a system that would include the Canadian dollar (often called the "loonie" due to the image of the bird on the reverse), and the Mexican peso, the European currency will be so entrenched in world economics that our economists would be wasting their time, not to mention tax dollars.

Recall the blessings God promised Israel if they followed the way He set out for them. "The LORD will open to you His good treasure, the heavens, to give the rain to your land in its season, and to bless all the work of your hand. You shall lend to many nations, but you shall not borrow. And the LORD will make you the head and not the tail; you shall be above only, and not be beneath, if you heed the commandments of the LORD your God, which I command you today, and are careful to observe them"(Deuteronomy 28:12-13).

Euro to Spark Political Integration

FRANKFURT: (Internet/Reuters) — The president of Germany's Bundesbank, Hans Tietmeyer, has said that the introduction of Europe's new single currency, the euro, should be accompanied by more political unity. Tietmeyer wants a "higher degree" of political cooperation.

Eleven of the 15 members of the European Union merged their currencies on January 1, forming a close Economic and Monetary Union (EMU). Mr. Tietmeyer, one of Europe's most influential central bankers, now says that EMU has to be accompanied by a "high degree of political unity at a European level." Speaking on German radio he warned that "if everyone goes their separate ways, that could lead to conflicts with what will be a supranational monetary policy."

He warned that the launch of the euro would intensify the competition between the economies in the eurozone. Until recently, countries with high unemployment were able to increase their competitiveness through currency devaluation. EMU will make that impossible. Mr. Tietmeyer's conclusion is that high unemployment can only be tackled through closer political cooperation.

Contributors:

*Darris McNeely, David Palmer,
Phil Schafer, John Schroeder*

“CHARACTER,” (Continued from page 16)

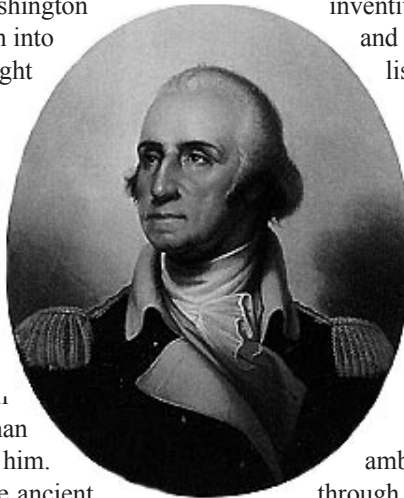
The Man Behind the Picture

Today, many people when confronted with George Washington, think of the man with the stern face painted by Gilbert Stuart that appears on America’s one dollar bills. As a landed gentleman, he would become first a general and later the first president of the United States. This is indeed a limiting picture, and to limit Washington is to limit ourselves. Rather than being stuck with the visual picture of the colonnades of Mt. Vernon, let’s understand that Washington was born in humbler surroundings, being born into a much lower rung of Virginia gentry. We might say towards the bottom.

At his father’s early death, in accordance with the British custom, most of the inheritance of family domain went to his half-brother Lawrence. Washington’s formal education was over at age 15. But he did an amazing thing. He wrote out a collection of European maxims which he titled “The Rules of Civility and Decent Behavior in Company and Conversation.” This exercise would instill in him a moral fabric in relating to other human beings. It would be his shining star to guide him. This is not too unlike the writing exercise the ancient kings of Israel were to perform. The instruction of Deuteronomy 17:18–20 states, “Also it shall be, when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write for himself a copy of this law in a book, from the one before the priests, the Levites. And it shall be with him, and he shall read it all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the Lord his God and be careful to observe all the words of this law and these statutes, that his heart may not be lifted above his brethren, that he may not turn aside from the commandment to the right hand or to the left, and that he may prolong his days in his kingdom, he and his children in the midst of Israel.”

God’s law was more than just rules for rules’ sake, but more about relationships. Relationships that would not separate men, but bring them together on the equal plane of “brethren.” Washington’s list is in no way holy writ, but it contains a lot of wisdom pertaining to personal dealings with others. Let’s read a few of the rules he wrote:

“In the presence of others, sing not to yourself with a humming noise, nor drum with your fingers or feet.” “Sleep not when others speak, sit not when others stand, speak not when you should hold your peace, walk not on when others stop.” My favorite is, “Spit not in the fire, nor stoop low



He recognized that if he were to succeed and be a person of worth he would have to establish standards and values—values that would work later in life for him

before it, neither put your hands into the flames to warm them, nor set your feet upon the fire especially if there be meat before it.”

What is interesting is the sense of value placed on outgoing concern towards others. These “proverbs” of the classical era would offer Washington a sensitized moral compass of “justice, judgment and equity,” as mentioned in the Bible and offer “to the young man knowledge and discretion—A wise man will hear and increase learning”(Proverbs 1:4–5). At a time when colonial America was still inventing itself, this young man was likewise self-examining and personally inventive. He recognized that if he were to succeed and be a person of worth he would have to establish standards and values. Values that would work later in life for him—recognizing that you do not find your values in a trial or situation, but you take them into the arena with you. The common self invention of the man and the nation would cross paths on the snow field of history 40 years down the line.

Prepared For Future Battles

As a young man, Washington had burning ambition and a self-importance that moved him through the ranks of the colonial militia. His time spent in the French and Indian War would both prepare him for future battle and place a curb on his ego, as he experienced both triumph and failure. After the war, he married well, having taken Martha Custis to wife. At the outbreak of the Revolutionary War, he became commander of the Continental Army. As an interesting part of focused leadership, he had the Declaration of Independence read aloud to every soldier so that he might know what was at stake.

This would be very important in the bumpy road to independence from the British Empire. Early on, he would be chased from Brooklyn, lose Manhattan, flee across New Jersey, and pick up a couple of victories at Princeton and Trenton. But always his biggest victory would be keeping the army together. Imagine an army composed of merchants, farmers, backwoodsmen, including every ethnic and racial group in America (still in some cases speaking their native tongue), all from 13 different sovereign states. Yankees from New England, Dutch from New York, Germans from Pennsylvania, Scots-Irish from the South, Swedes from Delaware, and African-Americans seeking a piece of the dream for liberty .

But all this would come to a grinding halt in the snows of

Valley Forge, Pennsylvania, in the winter of 1777. Washington despaired, "The game will be pretty well up!" The British General Howe was outside Philadelphia, Congress had fled to Baltimore, and there before him in the snow was the sight of "men, without clothes, to cover their nakedness; without blankets to lay on; without shoes, by which their marches might be traced, by the blood from their feet." His army had shrunk to 3,000 men, and more were deserting daily. What had happened to that bright and wondrous picture of liberty? What had happened to the pure and glistening wonderment of government not based upon birth, but government based upon personal ability?

Like the snow, Washington now had to step out and make tracks where no man had gone before. Encouragement would come from a young, French nobleman, the Marquis de Lafayette. It is said that at one particularly low point the Marquis reminded his general that "the eyes of Europe are upon you!" Every step was being watched, every footprint in the snow was being analyzed by a world which had never known anything other than kings, emperors, czars and khans. Proverbs 29:18 says, "Where there is no vision, the people perish." Sometimes we need to remind one another exactly "why are we here?" In his book *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*, Steven Covey calls it "beginning with the end in mind." Herbert Armstrong called it "keeping the big picture." Remember, you don't find your values in a trial, you take them in with you. First Corinthians 3:13 vividly reminds us, "Each one's work will become clear: for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is."

The Most Famous Man in the World

The "greatness factor" of this one man's personal walk through the snow was yet to come a few years down the line. It came in 1783. The war was won and the long drawn-out peace accord was finally ratified. What Washington did next would astound the world. He simply got off his horse and went home to his beloved Mt. Vernon. This made him the most famous man in the world. The greatest victory he accomplished was letting go of power. This had rarely been done before. The snow was fresh and Washington carefully and surely laid a great print for others to follow. He was the modern day Cincinnatus, the Latin farmer of Roman lore. According to history as it comes down to us, Cincinnatus had victoriously defended Rome against her enemies at her gate and was invited to become ruler. But, he went back to his farm saying only that he had done his duty. What would you have done?

"But whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave."

In English history, having disposed of King Charles, Oliver Cromwell stayed on his horse at the head of the New Model Army and became Lord Protector. Napoleon a few years down the line would stay on his horse and go from being "first citizen of the republic" to Emperor. In the course of the American Revolution as sole commander, Washington had outlasted eight presidents of the Continental Congress. On December 23, 1783, at Annapolis, Maryland, Washington ceremoniously handed back to the president of Congress the parchment commission he had received in Philadelphia on June 15, 1775. He had never lost the vision. For this man, giving up power was more ennobling than winning a war. It is said that King George III asked the American painter Benjamin West what General Washington was likely to do when peace came. Would he stay with the army, would he become head of state? West replied, "Washington will probably return home to his farm." King George responded, "If Washington does that, he will become the most famous man in the world."

Rather than merely comparing Washington's example to Cincinnatus, let's focus on Christ's words in Matthew 20:25-28. "But Jesus called them to Himself and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave—just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."

Whether or not Washington fully recognized it, he was following someone else's tracks that had been laid out long before his.

For the remainder of his life, George Washington realized he would have incredible responsibility in how he conducted himself and used his fame and notoriety. He would be called on again and again to "walk through the snow." In 1785, two years after the final peace treaty had been signed, with the country tottering in its disunited infancy under the Articles of Confederation, he stated, "I can foresee no evil greater than disunion." Here were 13 loosely confederated states of America now more afraid of one another than the nearby lingering shadow of the British Empire. How could they ever unite? As he would state, "the fate of unborn millions" would rest on their deliberations. Here was an individual of growth and invention that would spend his life in transformation from a British subject, to a man of the South from Virginia, to a Nationalist.

(See "CHARACTER," page 10)

This Is the Way...

A Walk In the Snow: Character Counts In a Nation's Leaders

by Robin Webber

Historical episodes are much like a snowfield. Someone has to go first through the dual challenge of wonderment and danger. There comes a time in the human experience in which people, tribes and nations are confronted with this proverbial field of snow. I would like to share with you one man's walk in the snow on behalf of his nation. But before I do, let's understand who lays the field before us.

Long ago, God stated to Abraham that, "in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed"(Genesis 12:3). It is to be understood that first and foremost this is speaking of spiritual salvation for all humanity through the birth of Abraham's descendant, Jesus Christ. But there is also an added aspect of historical note regarding the physical descendants of Abraham that should be considered. It is found in Genesis 48:19. In speaking of Abraham's grandchildren, the Bible says, "He also shall become a people, and he also shall be great; but truly his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his descendants shall become a multitude of nations."

This verse spells out a prophetic blessing upon Abraham's descendants that defines a role of historical greatness. These verses speak of a people who would become "great" and a kindred people who would

become a "multitude of nations." We see spelled out verses that depict the modern rise of the *special relationship* communities of the United States (Manasseh) and the famous alliance of nations known as the British Commonwealth (Ephraim).

But *greatness* does not just occur. God utilizes men and women throughout human history to bring about His will and purpose. God intervenes in the human chronicle through the hearts and minds of people. Romans 13:1 exemplifies God's finger on the pulse of history by stating, "For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God."

Throughout the biblical narrative we think of Pharaoh, Nebuchadnezzar, Cyrus, Tiberius and Herod. What about George Washington? No, he is not biblically mentioned by name, but can we consider that he was directly used by God? Was he "appointed" by God to a role in His plan of establishing the "greatness" of modern day Manasseh? A "greatness" that would be molded by his personal walk through the historical fresh snow laid before him at the dawn of the American Revolution? Let's peek back in history and understand the tracks that Washington laid for future generations to follow.

(See "CHARACTER," page 14)