

WORLD NEWS *and* PROPHECY

Biblical Perspectives on Current Events

July 1999

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Politics and Religion

Is religion the latest political football in the U.S. presidential election?

by Cecil E. Maranville

God is “getting a lot of press” lately as all the major presidential candidates have brought religion into the campaign. Not in controversial fringe issues, but rather in addressing major social concerns. Is the United States undergoing a significant change? Or are we witnessing politics as usual?

In an honest, if somewhat crass declaration, senior policy adviser to Vice President Al Gore, Elaine Kamarck, told *The Boston Globe*, “The Democratic Party is going to take back God this time” (“Gore Includes Religion in Agenda,” 1999, AP). She was referring to her party’s “religious strategy” in the rapidly heating up 2000 presidential race.

While Mr. Gore’s principal spokesman attempted to distance himself and his boss from such a blatantly political approach to religion (“I don’t think God is partisan”), campaign speeches from all candidates already ring with a

variety of uncharacteristic references to religion.

Mr. Gore regularly refers to his “faith tradition” (few people know that he actually studied at Vanderbilt’s divinity school as a young man). In stark contrast to typical Democratic Party tradition, Mr. Gore has called for “a new partnership between church and state” (Ibid.).

The vice president opposes organized prayer in public schools during the school day and also opposes using public dollars to send children to parochial schools. What, then, has changed? What he appears to promise is an open ear to the influence of the religious lobby. “If you elect me president,” he said before a Salvation Army audience, “the voices of faith-based organizations will be integral to the policy set forth in my administration” (Ibid.).

“The moment has come,” said Mr.

Gore, “for Washington to catch up with the rest of America.... Americans profoundly, rightly believe that politics and morality are deeply interrelated” (Ibid.).

He is certainly right about the popularity of religion in the United States. According to a recent survey of nearly 6,000 Americans, religion plays an important part in the lives of a majority. “Quite simply, God is back,” said Ira Matathia, CEO of the group that conducted the survey (“Trendsetters’ Turning to Religion” 1999, News America Digital Publishing, Inc.).

“Faith-based” Is the Buzz Word

Other presidential candidates openly refer to their personal faith and offer promises of support for “faith-based organizations”—the generic phrase most

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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, Mike Bennett

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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

FIJI: Dick Marr, United Church of God, P.O. Box 10-577, Nadi, Fiji

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

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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.

“POLITICS,” (Continued from page 1)

candidates as well as reporters seem to prefer. In formally declaring his candidacy, popular Republican Governor George W. Bush declared among his campaign goals: “Draw a moral line” and get “faith-based organizations” such as churches involved in easing social problems.

Appearing in what one reporter called “a faith-based crisis pregnancy center” in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, former Vice President Dan Quayle said of his wish to occupy the most powerful posi-



U.S. presidential hopeful George W. Bush

tion in the world: “We think it’s going to be God’s will. But we will find out. You know, we believe in the power of prayer” (“Quayle Takes His Platform to Iowa for Grab at Caucus,” 1999, *The Arizona Republic*).

Former New Jersey Senator Bill Bradley, currently the only rival to Mr. Gore from his own party, has publicly come out in support of “faith-based programs,” promising public funding for some programs operated by religious organizations that deal with social problems.

Republican candidate Elizabeth Dole has openly acknowledged a “return to God in her life.” She begins every day with prayer and attends church regularly. Both Mrs. Dole and Mr. Bush have long advocated school prayer and public funds for religious education, in addition to aligning themselves with church groups.

Mr. Quayle has from the beginning of his campaign promised to “reset America’s moral compass,” linking violence in schools with the country’s departure from school prayer. He also supports public funding for religious education.

Is This Selfish or Sincere?

Not to diminish or impugn the sincerity of any of the presidential candidates, but all of the sudden open talk about religion in the context of the upcoming election sounds much more like politics as usual than faith. I am reminded of a parody that I heard many years ago in Canada during an election campaign. The words went: “Take a ____ to lunch this week (you fill in the blank with a member of a politically correct minority)! Show them they’re a ‘regular bunch’ this week!” The obvious implication was that “election allegiances” would last only as long as the campaign.

Does all this talk of “faith-based” things portend a significant change in the United States? Or will it live only as long as the campaign?

Associated Press writer Sandra Sobieraj offers a blunt analysis: “For Gore, the political benefit of religious talk is twofold: it sneaks some ground out from under Republicans who have long dominated the morals debate; and, less overtly, may serve to disassociate him from [President] Clinton’s personal scandals” (Ibid. “Gore Includes Religion in Agenda”).

Such overt embracing of religion by politicians has shocked organizations that are dedicated to the separation of church and state. It is indeed confusing in a country that bans religion from its classrooms. Recently, a New Jersey first-grader made national headlines when his teacher, citing First Amendment concerns, denied his desire to read a story from the Bible to his classmates. A legal battle is currently underway in northern California where the Oroville Union High School barred the valedictorian of the class of 1999 from mentioning God in his valedictory.

It is a well-publicized conundrum that survivors of violence-victimized Columbine High School flocked to neighborhood churches for consolation and comfort—at the same time that federal law mandates a sharp separation between religion and education.

Dropping God’s Name to Get Elected?

Has the nation made a 180-degree turn to the things of God? Will U.S. leaders actually lead the nation’s citizenry, by example and by policy, to return to God? Time will tell. For the present, what all have said thus far is a continuation of “politically-correct-speak” voicing support for concepts that are known to have wide appeal with the electorate. That’s done, of course, for the sake of winning votes.

This article is not intended to be either anti- or pro- any political candidate or party, for the United Church of God, *an International Association*, is nonpolitical. But this article is anti-insincerity. Turning to God involves profoundly more than merely providing support for the social programs of “faith-based organizations.”

Quoting the God that many politicians seemingly want to publicly embrace, “What right have you to declare My statutes, or take My covenant in your mouth, seeing you hate instruction and cast My words behind you?” (Psalm 50:16-17). It is one thing to want to be photographed with God, so to speak, and quite another to actually do what God says.

Warning of the prevailing self-absorption of people of the last days of human history, the apostle Paul prophesied that societies would be dominated by men and women fettered by obvious indulgences. “But know this, that in the last 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, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God” (2 Timothy 3:1-4).

(See “POLITICS,” page 10)

What to Watch to Discern the Times

A look at three key trends: globalization, religious ecumenism and global power shifts.

by Darris McNeely

In 1 Chronicles 12:32, we are told the sons of Issachar were able to discern the times in Israel. The nation was in a time of transition to the monarchy of David after the demise of the house of Saul. Here was a group of men who understood and could act upon the shifting events of their day.

Later Jesus Christ, in talking to those of His generation, expanded the thought to a broader context in Matthew 16:3 when He answered the challenge of the Pharisees for a sign by telling them: “Hypocrites! You know how to discern the face of the sky, but you cannot discern the signs of the times.” Can we discern the signs of our times?

With this issue of *World News and Prophecy* we complete our first year of publication. We have been pleased with the reception the magazine has had within the United Church of God. Comments from many readers tell us we are read by many more who are not part of the United Church of God. We have seen our press run increase throughout the year and know that many others access us through the World Wide Web.

Our goal from the start has been to “provide...commentary and analysis of selected world news topics in light of Bible prophecy...to help our 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).”

What events should we be watching in today’s world that will help us discern the times? Let’s look at three key trends that are forming and starting to shape the future: globalization, religious ecumenism and global power shifts.

Think Globally

Thomas Friedman, in his recent book *The Lexus and the Olive Tree*, writes, “if you want to understand the post-Cold War world you have to start by understanding that a new international system has succeeded it—globalization. That is ‘The One Big Thing’ people should focus on. Globalization is not the only thing influencing events in the world today, but to the extent that there is a North Star and a worldwide shaping force, it is this system” (Farrar, Strauss, and Giroux, New York, 1999, page xviii).

You will not understand the front pages of today’s papers that describe social unrest in Indonesia, the problems of the Russian economy or the astronomical pricing of Internet stocks without a firm grasp of this concept called globalization. Friedman describes globalization as “the overarching international system shaping the domestic politics and foreign relations of virtually every country” (Ibid., page 7).

He lists six interrelated areas that make up this trend: world financial markets, politics, culture, national security, technology and the environment. None of these considered alone could give a complete picture of what is taking place today. But viewed together they give definition to the progress of the developed world toward a highly integrated network of relationships. There is a seamless web connecting these key areas.

But the world is not just high technology, finance or politics. Important as these are to the health and welfare of nations, there are other deeper rivers that feed into the ocean of humanity. One of these is religion.

What events should we be watching in today’s world that will help us discern the times?



Ecumenism

Religion has done more than any other institution to shape the development of nations and influence the lives of people. Religion is a defining force in life—for both good and bad. Christ told His disciples to watch religion under the guise of His name or authority as a key end time trend. The end result would be deception (Matthew 24:4, 5).

For all the faith that religions have generated in history, they have fueled untold division and schisms among peoples. The Christian world alone has been divided since A.D. 1054, nearly a millennium, into western and eastern segments. Since the Protestant Reformation of the 16th century, hundreds of different denominations have developed along with a variety of religious ideas.

The movement to unite the different faiths is called “ecumenism.” Today the movement to promote a worldwide religious unity and cooperation centers on the calls and efforts of the current Roman Pontiff, John Paul II. His vision to unite the factions of Christianity has resulted in past gatherings of leaders from a variety of faiths to pray and focus on common tenets of faith. The influence of the papal office across denominational lines is evidenced in a recent paper produced by a joint Anglican-Catholic commission that stated, “only the Pope has the moral authority to unite the various Christian denominations” (*Electronic Telegraph*, Issue 1448, May 13, 1999, article by Oliver Poole).

There is slow but incremental movement along the path of religious unity. It’s important to understand that progress is being made step by step. A 500-year-old rift between Lutherans and Catholics over the doctrine of justification was recently resolved. It took 30 years of talks to reach this accord, but does represent a significant development when one remembers this was a significant doctrine that Martin Luther challenged.

Revelation 17 shows a powerful and influential religious system symbolized by a woman sitting on a scarlet beast with a name on her forehead “Mystery, Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots and of the Abominations of the Earth.” She holds in her hand a cup full of abominations (a corrupt mixture of religious dogmas) and is drunk with the blood of the

Revelation 17 shows a powerful and influential religious system.... To wield the kind of influence described in this chapter will take a high degree of cooperation between, or control of, many of the world’s religions.

saints (Revelation 17:3–6). To wield the kind of influence described in this chapter will take a high degree of cooperation between, or control of, many of the world’s religions. The movement toward religious unity will be but one part of the massive shifting of power to occur in the coming years.

Global Power Shifts

In the aftermath of the Cold War there has been a 10-year period of

changes. The Soviet Union broke apart in 1991, leaving a significant vacuum in Europe. The former Iron Curtain countries of Eastern Europe have developed in varying stages. Some, like Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic, are now part of NATO, the alliance formed as a Western defensive bulwark against the old Soviet Union. Germany has been reunited and today plays a significant political and economic role in the European Union and among the Western democracies. Yet, as we have tragically seen in the Balkans, some nations have not been able to handle the freedom from external control without resorting to age-old hostilities which have resulted in the unspeakable atrocities of ethnic cleansing.

The introduction of the euro, the single monetary unit of the European Union, has yet to display a significant impact on the world economy. This does not mean it will not do so in future years. The launch of the unit last January is a milestone all by itself. The transition to a single currency among all members of the EU may yet trigger other social and economic reforms that will have far reaching consequences on the world economy.

Though the current value of the euro has fallen compared to other currencies, its long-term impact should not be underestimated. A recent *Wall Street Journal* article pointed out that in 1985 the mighty British pound sterling had fallen to \$1.03. Today at over \$1.80 it is considered a strong currency within a vibrant economy. It takes years, not weeks, to sort out the many elements that ultimately determine the success of a new currency unit. If anything has been learned in the last 50 years of European history, it is that far-reaching change and progress toward any goal takes a long and circuitous route before achieving completion.

Russia-China Alliance?

Events in Asia are also important for us to understand. Relations between China and the United States are going through their worst period in

50 years. Revelations of Chinese spying and the theft of sensitive nuclear information from supposedly top secret U.S. nuclear laboratories have shocked those who really understand what is at stake. Coupled with the outright sale of computer technology in the past three years, China now has the ability to develop, arm, launch and target cities and sites in the United States.

A recent forecast by the Stratfor agency projects: "Russia and China will be moving into a closer, primarily anti-American alliance in 1999. That process is the most important global trend today. It is well under way and is also intensifying" (Stratfor's Third Quarter Forecast, June 27, 1999). The report refers to a proposed summit meeting which will take place in Beijing between Russian President Boris Yeltsin and Chinese leader Jiang Zemin sometime this summer or autumn.

Two significant items need to be resolved between these nuclear powers. The first is the status of Central Asian republics, which are experiencing ethnic and religious unrest from Muslim groups within their midst. This is spilling over into Chinese provinces causing problems for the Chinese leadership. The Russian leadership is reluctant to get involved with these sticky disputes, but there is pressure from some elements in the Russian military and government to exert control as a show of strength, with hopes of reviving some of the lost glory of empire. In the wake of Russian involvement in the Kosovo and Iranian crises of the past year, there is cause to be concerned.

The second item is the desire to create a viable Russian-Chinese alliance that offers a credible counterweight to Western influence (read American) in Asia, the Middle East and Europe. Peripheral nations such as Turkey, Iraq, Iran, India and Pakistan, all of which have had recent conflicts, continue to be courted by China and Russia. A strategic alliance of these huge Asian nations would dramatically impact the interests of America and other Western powers. Ezekiel's prophecies of a massive Eurasian army

in the end time take on greater significance when we can see such activity. The irony is that neither Russia nor China wants to seriously disrupt relations with America. Both need U.S. financial and technological assistance. America's wealth and technology is a major plus for her continued influence and dominance on the world stage. You might say the power created by this wealth is a shield that protects the cherished freedoms of the United States.

Yet Bible prophecy shows us there will be a shift in some unknown, yet critical, manner that will alter the balance of power among all nations and particularly the leadership role of the United States. Leviticus 26:19 foretells the breaking of "the pride of your power" because of sin. It is written to

A strategic alliance of these huge Asian nations would dramatically impact the interests of America and other Western powers. Ezekiel's prophecies of a massive Eurasian army in the end time take on greater significance when we can see such activity.

Israel and its modern descendants, including the United States. When this happens, the stage could be set for the rise of an end time economic and political power called "the beast" which the book of Revelation shows will dominate the world.

From Babel to Babylon

All three of these trends can be linked into one overarching theme that runs through the Bible from Genesis to

Revelation. Mankind has sought to build a global system operating against the will and purpose of the Creator God. In Genesis chapter 11 we see the attempt to create a city with a tower to reach into the heavens. The goal was to make a name for themselves to prevent their dispersion upon the earth. There is strength in numbers and uniformity, and here was the first round of globalization in human history. Understanding that nothing would be beyond the grasp of man, God thwarted this effort by confusing their languages, which caused confusion and led to a scattering over the face of the earth (Genesis 11:1-9).

Babel was an attempt to weld together human society into one system. No doubt there were noble and seemingly benevolent reasons for doing so. But God knew that any such universal human culture built without His will and plan in mind would lead to tyranny. Every attempt since then has failed. Empires and systems of government have risen and fallen through the generations. Most have attempted to dominate the world or at least the known world of their day, from Alexander the Great in Greece to Adolf Hitler in the 20th century.

Revelation shows that at the end of the age there will be one final effort to revive this system. It will come closer than any previous attempt and is called Babylon the Great. Revelation 18:3 shows that all nations will participate in some manner of her dominating control over world systems. "For all the nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth have become rich through the abundance of her luxury."

To His people, the Israel of God, the Creator says, "Come out of her...lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues" (Revelation 18:4). Like the sons of Issachar, we must discern the times and understand the course of events in today's world. *World News and Prophecy* will continue to keep you informed on the major trends shaping today's world. ❖

India and Pakistan at War Again

A potentially more dangerous conflict than Kosovo continues to brew in South Asia.

by Melvin Rhodes

While the attention of the major powers was on the Balkans, a potentially more dangerous conflict resurfaced thousands of miles away on the Indian subcontinent. There are a number of similarities between these two wars that have their origins in ethnic rivalries that go back centuries. Both are what might be termed “post-colonial ethnic conflicts.”

The proliferation of wars in the Balkans has happened because of the collapse of the Soviet Empire. Yugoslavia itself was never a part of the Soviet Warsaw Pact alliance of eastern European communist nations, but the fall of communism throughout the region released long suppressed nationalist sentiments in the area that soon spread to Yugoslavia.

Precisely because it had been a more liberal and less centralized state, Yugoslavia was easier to divide. Added factors were the former divisions throughout the nation between regions that had historically been a part of the Catholic Hapsburg Austrian Empire and the Muslim Turkish Ottoman Empire right up until the early years of the 20th century. A further complication was the outside support of sympathetic nations in Europe—Russia supporting the Orthodox Serbs and Germany quick to recognize the independence of the Catholic Croats and Slovenians.

Contrast India and Pakistan. Predominantly Hindu India and Muslim Pakistan (together with what is now



Last year Pakistan tested a nuclear device. India followed a few days later.

Bangladesh) were one country until 1947, administered by a British viceroy appointed from London. The British Empire had ruled the subcontinent for over 200 years, often having to police ethnic tensions and doing so effectively enough that few predicted the post-independence conflicts that have arisen. Ironically the descendants of those same British rulers are now having to police ethnic conflicts nearer home in the Balkans and even at home in Northern Ireland.

Three Terrible Wars

It wasn't until after World War II that the British decided to pull out of India, granting independence to its more than 320 million subject peoples. Muslims,

concentrated mostly in the northwest of the subcontinent, were terrified at the prospect of being ruled by Hindus and quickly demanded independence of their own.

The weeks leading up to the partition of the nation saw possibly millions killed in inter-ethnic rioting and mass killing. Independence itself was soon followed by the first war between the two nations.

A second war followed in 1965. A third erupted only six years later when India helped East Pakistan separate from West Pakistan and form the new nation of Bangladesh, then the poorest country in the world.

Between wars there has been constant simmering tension with occasional skirmishes.

As with other post-colonial conflicts, the major powers soon got themselves involved, with India receiving support from the Soviet Union and Pakistan from the United States and later China.

Added to this political cauldron was Pakistan's relations with other Muslim nations and its comparative technological advancement. This soon led to talk of an "Islamic bomb," possibly sponsored by Libya, Iran or Iraq. Frequent rumors surfaced of nuclear research being conducted in the area.

Last year Pakistan tested a nuclear device. India, which already possessed nuclear capability, followed a few days later. The exclusive international nuclear weapons club increased its members from five to seven (undoubtedly others also secretly have the bomb, most notably Israel and South Africa). In a few days the world had become much more dangerous.

The conflict widened with increased tension between India and China. Pakistan supported anti-Soviet forces during Soviet occupation of Afghanistan from 1979 through the '80s. This was a major contributory factor in the collapse of the communist regime in Moscow. It has been said that the two men who did most to bring about the fall of communism were Pakistan's then rul-

ing General Zia and the Polish Pope John Paul II.

Nuclear War Possible?

The latest conflict between India and Pakistan is over the disputed territory of Kashmir. The two countries have long fought over Kashmir. Now that they are both nuclear powers, the need for a peaceful resolution of the conflict is much greater. The potential of a nuclear war in this region is greater than it is anywhere else on earth at this time.

The Kashmir dispute goes back to the hurried push for independence over 50 years ago. The then maharajah of Kashmir, Sir Hari Singh, was a Hindu, but 91 percent of

The Balkans and the Indian subcontinent are not the only areas of the world that are going through what might be called "post-colonial stress syndrome."

the people in the region were Muslim.

In the months preceding independence, as it became clear that the British really were about to leave, the maharajah did nothing to prepare for the inevitable. When independence came in August of that year, the future of Kashmir had not been decided. Tension mounted, the maharajah fled, and in the confusion India took control of most of the territory. An attempt by the British to rectify the oversight of 1947 during the queen's visit to the two countries celebrating 50 years of independence was not appreciated by either side. Suggestions of a referendum have also been rejected by the Indian government.

Complicating events is political instability in both India and Pakistan and the seemingly never-ending conflict in Afghanistan. The immediate cause of the latest problem was Pakistani-backed Islamic forces in Afghanistan that had seized mountainous territory close to the disputed border area with some loss of civilian lives. Additionally, Pakistani troops boldly crossed the Line of Control, the de facto border between India and Pakistan since 1972.

Ethnic Conflicts Prophesied

The Balkans and the Indian subcontinent are not the only areas of the world that are going through what might be called "post-colonial stress syndrome." The Middle East is another conflicted area. The division of Palestine less than one year after India's partition has still not been resolved.

Ethnic conflicts throughout Africa are another example, as new nations are frequently torn apart by ancient divisions that were suppressed by the brief period of colonial domination.

Perhaps this is why Jesus warned us in Matthew 24:6 about "wars and rumors of wars" as a sign of His "coming and of the end of the age" (verse 3). There have always been wars, but at no time in human history have there been so many conflicts and potential conflicts as in today's world. The proliferation of nations in the post-World War II, post-colonial world, has complicated our world and increased conflict on every continent. Most of the conflicts are along ethnic lines. Interestingly, the Greek word for "nation" (in verse 7) is *ethnos*, showing that these increased conflicts would be largely ethnic-based wars.

"For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom" (Matthew 24:7). Watch out for more ethnic conflict as prophesied by Jesus Christ on the Mount of Olives nearly 2,000 years ago. ❖

Still a Troubled and Dangerous World

The end of the Cold War promised a safer time, but our planet has become more perilous. Why?

by John Ross Schroeder

Recently *Newsweek* observed that “Suddenly the world looks like a troubled, dangerous place again.” Apparently the American public agrees. In a relatively up-to-date *Newsweek* poll, 39 percent of the respondents believe that our planet is a more perilous place than it was during the period of the Cold War. Only 18 percent thought it safer.

Columnist Paul Reyes of *The Fort Worth Star-Telegram* recently wrote: “I don’t hear the sound of people beating swords into plowshares. I hear only sounds of war echoing from the four corners of the earth.” He pointed out that conflagrations have flared up between the two Koreas, India and Pakistan and that there are now accusations between Iraq and Iran. Of course, there are myriad, low-grade ongoing battles all around the world. Not a nice way to round the corner into a new millennium.

A War in Sub-Saharan Africa

While the troubles in Kosovo have settled somewhat, other less publicized areas continue in crisis. Take Ethiopia and Eritrea. Though far away from the current attention of most of the world’s media, these two African countries have been fighting the globe’s biggest war. And it is spreading. Many thousands have been killed, wounded or taken captive on both sides. China, Bulgaria, Romania and Russia are supplying fighter aircraft to these two opposing countries.

Both Ethiopia and Eritrea are currently mobilizing vast armies of 250,000 men. Each has also spent hundreds of millions of dollars on modern weaponry. Already poor countries, they are foolishly mispending their national substance at the expense of their citizenry.

Nearly half are illiterate, live on less than a dollar a day, lack safe drinking water and

have very low worker productivity. Although these estimates are for the whole of the Sub-Saharan region, they would not be found that far wrong when applied to individual countries.

Surely national health and economics should be an important priority, but as *Foreign Affairs* stated, “A rising trend is the propensity of African states to invade each other.”

The Refugee Problem in Africa

Recently much has been written and publicized about refugees in the Balkans. And rightly so. However, Africa is plagued by a major problem of some 5 million such people. For instance, tens of thousands have fled the Eastern Congo because of the war against President Laurent Kabila. Political unrest in Burundi has caused hundreds of thousands to seek refuge elsewhere, principally in Tanzania.

According to U.N. statistics, the African total represents about one-third of the world’s 16.8 million refugees and displaced people.

Shifting the scene to Asia, the simmering, potentially explosive conflict between India and Pakistan over Kashmir continues to worry world leaders. Irresponsible nuclear threats from both sides have made observers wonder if a substantial war, should it ever break out, can be kept within the bounds of conventional arms.

Broadening out this problem, the potential threat of a rogue, long-range missile attack from any of two dozen Third World states is a major problem for future Western security. As a feature article in *The Washington Times* advises: “Prudence dictates that we deploy a national missile defense, before, not after, rogue states acquire missiles capable of destroying American cities.” Many are the

The potential threat of a rogue, long-range missile attack from any of two dozen Third World states is a major problem for future Western security.

problems that confront the United States.

The Legacies of Kosovo

Independent journalist Mark Almond tells us that global paranoia and anti-Americanism are two legacies of Kosovo. NATO's firepower coupled with the unlimited possibilities for so-called humanitarian intervention in our imperfect world should set us to thinking. This is utopian globalism before Jesus Christ's coming millennial reign. Any attempt at world government now during man's age promises to be a false utopia.

Mark Almond writes: "Ten years after the fall of the Berlin Wall, a phenomenon is rapidly developing which hardly existed behind the Iron Curtain before [the] then-popular anti-Americanism. Decades of Communist propaganda from [East] Berlin to Peking failed to produce any genuine hostility to Americans, but today on my travels around the ex-Soviet bloc, to meet it is routine. Suspicion, indeed downright disbelief, of American political motives is now widespread."

Although Americans know this concept isn't true, "Bombing Belgrade confirmed for umpteen millions of people the idea that Washington seeks world domination," the article continued.

Why Such a Troubled World?

Space prevents us from a comprehensive panoramic picture of the world in this article. For example, China, South Africa and the Middle East have not been addressed. Yet all three are very topical today.

But we have selected sufficient events and trends to suggest that today we still inhabit a troubled and dangerous age. But why?

The biblical book of Revelation has been written with the world stage clearly in mind. One passage is particularly relevant. "So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world" (Revelation 12:9). We

live in an age that has been very seriously misled by Satan. He is ultimately responsible for our troubled world.

Jesus Christ clearly warned us that "in the world you will have tribulation" (John 16:33). Though He spoke these words to His original disciples, they manifestly apply to our age as well. Christ called His own generation "adulterous and sinful" (Mark 8:38), and the expression fits our own modern world all too well.

The testimony of the New Testament is consistent. The apostle Paul described it as "this present evil age" (Galatians 1:4). Also John wrote that "The whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one" (1 John 5:19), reminding us again who is ultimately responsible for the human condition.

To those who have set themselves

We live in an age that has been very seriously misled by Satan. He is ultimately responsible for our troubled world.

to faithfully carry out Christ's commission, persevering to the end, He promises to keep them from "the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world to test those who dwell on the earth" (Revelation 3:10; compare Luke 21:36). Today we are on a vast world stage, anticipating events to come together that will finally produce the great "crisis at the close."

But in the meantime, one great responsibility we have is to watch and analyze world trends and events—and warn the people of a great time of trouble—unprecedented in world history (Matthew 24:14, 21–22; 28:18–20; Jeremiah 30:7; Daniel 12:1). ❖

Sources: *Newsweek* (Atlantic edition), May 24, 1999; *The Independent* (Britain), June 6 & 22, 1999; *The Washington Times* June 7–13, 1999; *Foreign Affairs*, March–April 1998; *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, June 21, 1999.

"POLITICS," (Continued from page 3)

Who could disagree that such immoral shortcomings in character make for poor leadership? How true are the cries of the candidates for a need to "reset America's moral compass" for its present compass setting is leading the country to certain shipwreck! Where are the leaders who are genuinely guided and live by godly principle instead of by the hedonistic forces listed in the above paragraph?

True Faith Is Not a Political Issue

But the list of selfish corrupters includes a less obvious one—religion. Or, in keeping with the trends, we should call it "faith-based corruption." Paul spoke of people motivated only by self-interest that have "a form of godliness but [deny] its power" (2 Timothy 3:5). The power of God is able to transform lives if people honestly learn what God expects of them, stop doing what God forbids and literally behave as He intends they should.

Unless or until leaders actually embrace the words of God, they only flirt with the illusion of morality. If talk of "faith-based" this or that is only politics as usual, it is cruel talk indeed—so much "faith-based baby kissing." If the campaign thundering produces nothing of substance, the speeches will be clouds without water in a moral drought. Rather than follow those who voice such talk, Paul advises "from such people turn away!" (Ibid.).

Calling upon the name of God is not a political ploy to be manipulated as another tactic in an endless list of strategies to secure one's election to office. It's for men and women who believe God and will live by His words regardless of the popularity of those words with the masses. Are there such leaders—people with unfeigned godly character? Many are saying, "I am!" We'll see. ❖

Sources: *The Christian Science Monitor*; Nando Media; News America Digital Publishing, Inc.; AP; Agence France-Presse; Reuter's; *The Arizona Republic*

In Brief...

World News Review

Romania Confronts Transylvanian Separatism

Romanian President Emil Constantinescu has rejected the call for Transylvanian self-government within a federal Romanian state. The devolution argument, while framed in economic terms, has clear ethnic overtones as Transylvania is home to a large population of ethnic Hungarians. The Transylvania question is but one of the ethnic minority issues that continue to plague the new NATO members and aspiring NATO members of Eastern Europe. With NATO seen as effectively sanctioning the devolution, if not independence, of an ethnically Albanian Kosovo from Serbia, keeping these other problems in check will be an increasingly difficult task (STRATFOR's Global Intelligence Update, June 9, 1999).

Israel, Ehud Barak and the non-Revolution in Israeli Foreign Policy

Outside Israel, from Damascus to Washington, the election of Ehud Barak is being hailed as the rebirth of the peace process. The process will be reborn, but the levels of optimism are unwarranted. The 1999 election had less to do with foreign policy than it did with fundamental domestic issues, particularly whether Israel is a secular or religious nation. Even on domestic issues, the outcome of the election was not particularly clear. However, given Barak's domestic agenda, he may have less room for maneuver than foreigners think. With Clinton urgently in need of a foreign policy triumph in the next 18 months, this points to increased U.S.-Israeli tension once the honeymoon is over (STRATFOR's Global Intelligence Update Weekly Analysis, May 24, 1999).

City Folk Worried About Y2K Bug Head for the Hills in Virginia

CNN—Dozens of Y2K refugees have moved to Floyd County, a sparsely populated area of the Blue Ridge Mountains that has welcomed social dropouts for generations, including the hippies of the '60s and the New Agers of the '90s. There are at least a dozen small communes where people share the work and earnings. Most of the communes grow their own food and are not connected to the commercial electrical system. There is also an established barter system for obtaining necessities.

India Wages War on Polio

CNN—India is fighting an ancient war in a desert village, not against an armed enemy, but against the scourge of polio. Cases of polio are reported from almost every district in the country, and an estimated 10 million children have not been immunized, according to the World Health Organization, which has set a goal of eradicating polio in India by 2000. Although the number of new polio cases reported in India has dropped from 4,791 in 1994 to 2,489 in 1997, WHO says a great deal of work remains.

Venezuela and Brazil Step up Latin American Integration Efforts

Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez and Brazilian President Henrique Cardoso have agreed on concrete measures that would lead to the establishment of a Latin American free trade zone. Their stated objective is to create an economic bloc that could counterbalance U.S. economic power in the region. Because the grand vision of regional economic integration is practically unattainable, given the current circumstances in Latin America, its only real objective is to serve the domestic political objectives of its populist and nationalist creators (STRATFOR's Global Intelligence Update, May 19, 1999).

“It's the Russians, Stupid”

President Bill Clinton had a sign taped to his desk at the beginning of his first term in office that read, “It's the Economy, Stupid.” He should have taped one on his desk at the beginning of the Kosovo affair that said, “It's the Russians, Stupid.” From the beginning to the end of this crisis, it has been the Russians, not the Serbs, who were the real issue facing NATO.

It's not about Kosovo. It is not about humanitarianism or making ourselves the kind of people we want to be. It's about the Russians, stupid! And about China and about the global balance of power (STRATFOR's Global Intelligence Update Weekly Analysis, June 14, 1999).

The Real Victors in Kosovo

GENEVA—Everyone involved in the strange Kosovo conflict is claiming victory—except its chief victims, the Albanians. The muddled accord almost certainly assures continued vio-

lence in Kosovo and a legion of future troubles for the Balkans. Many of the one million Albanian refugees are afraid to return to Kosovo, whose borders will remain under Serb military and police control, thus cementing Milosevic's terrorism. Albanians know once NATO loses interest, the Serbs will be back.

Milosevic, who keeps power by creating trouble, will now turn his perpetual-motion crisis machine on neighboring Montenegro, unstable Macedonia, Bosnia and Serbia's forgotten Muslim region of Sanjak. He will emerge from the war a hero and inspiration to the growing force of racism among Balkan Slavs and the Greeks.

Russia and, to a lesser degree, China are the big winners of this botched war, and at no cost to themselves. NATO and Serbia have achieved merely Pyrrhic victories. They have made a desert, and call it peace. The Kosovar Albanians have lost everything (Eric Margolis, June 13, 1999).

Montenegrin Faction Presses for Independence

The Montenegrin independence movement has moved into high gear as NATO troops move into Kosovo. With Milosevic licking his wounds and NATO present in the region in force, now appears as good a time as any for Montenegro to secede from the Yugoslav Federation. However, there is a great deal weighing against secession, not the least of which is the impact a Montenegrin civil war would have on NATO efforts to stabilize Kosovo. Therefore, the pro-Western government of President Milo Djukanovic appears willing to postpone an independence bid for the time being. The question is, will Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic force the issue in Montenegro, generating a new crisis in an effort to remain in power? (STRATFOR's Global Intelligence Update, June 17, 1999).

Two Million Women Sold as Sex Slaves

VIENNA—At least two million women from Eastern Europe have been sold as "white slaves" in the West in recent years, according to unofficial estimates by Interpol.

The practice, figures on which were released at a conference on slavery in the Bulgarian city of Varna, shows no sign of abating, with organized crime increasingly dealing in the sale of Eastern European women—often lured with promises of lucrative jobs and modeling contracts—to supply the sex trade in the West. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees has warned that young female Kosovo refugees have been forced into the prostitution racket in refugee camps, and have been sent to work as prostitutes in European Union countries (*South China Morning Post*, 1999, Sonya Yee).

Another Doomsday Clock Is Ticking, Ticking

GENEVA—U.S. and European intelligence agencies are

reporting mounting evidence that Russia and China have massively violated the 1972 Biological and Toxic Weapons Convention, and subsequent international and bilateral agreements to control biowarfare weapons.

According to Ken Alibek, a former deputy director of the Soviet-era top-secret biowarfare program who defected to the West, Russia never ended its offensive biological warfare research. Alibek claims Russia has stockpiled many hundreds of tons of anthrax and plague, as well as smaller quantities of smallpox, Ebola and Marburg virus, and toxins designed to attack plants and animals. Russia is also developing a new strain of invisible biowarfare agents, known as bioregulators, that destroy the body's immune or neurological systems (Eric Margolis, June 20, 1999).

Anthrax "Time Bomb" Ticking in Aral Sea, Researchers Say

CNN—In the 1960s, Vozrozhdeniye was merely a tiny island in the vast Aral Sea. Today, with the sea reduced to half its former size, and a much larger Vozrozhdeniye closing in on the shore, some U.S. researchers believe the island is a toxic time bomb set to infect central Asia with some of the deadliest germs on earth.

According to the Monterey Institute of International Studies in California, Vozrozhdeniye was a secret biological weapons test site. Soviet, and later Russian, scientists routinely released deadly agents—including plague, small pox, tularemia and anthrax—into the air over the island for much of the last 50 years, the Institute claims.

EU Orders Belgian Poultry Destroyed

AP—In its biggest food scandal since mad cow disease, the European Union called June 2 for the destruction of Belgian chickens, eggs and any byproducts that could be laced with cancer-causing dioxin. Belgium's dioxin food poisoning scandal spread further when the government issued a slaughter ban on pigs, fearful that many of them may also have been infected by the same contaminated animal feed.

In an earlier food scandal, the EU Commission imposed a worldwide export ban on British beef in 1996. The ban came after the British government acknowledged a possible link between a brain-destroying cattle ailment called bovine spongiform encephalopathy and the equally fatal human illness, Creutzfeldt-Jacob disease.

Gradually Going Under

Global warming has been blamed for the sinking of two islands in the Pacific Ocean. The islands, Tebua Tarawa and Abanuea, are a part of a large group of atolls strung out over two million square miles of the Pacific. Neither was inhabited.

"The sea-level rise is so horrible here the people just don't

want to think about it," stated Jorelink Tibonn, general manager of the Marshall Islands' National Environmental Protection Agency.

So far only small uninhabited islands have actually sunk into the ocean, but populated chains are threatened in various ways. For instance, the coastline of the Marshalls has eroded into the sea and crops are becoming difficult to grow because the rising waters are poisoning the soil with salt (*The Independent on Sunday* [Britain], June 13, 1999).

Religion Important to Americans

A recent consumer marketing survey revealed that 54 percent of Americans say "religion plays an important part in my life." Other Western countries showed much smaller figures: The Netherlands, 25 percent; The United Kingdom, 19 percent; Germany and France, 14 percent (*The Los Angeles Times*, from AP, June 5, 1999).

Update: the War Against Infectious Diseases

According to a recent report by the World Health Organization, mankind has foolishly underestimated the potential threat posed by bacteria and viruses to millions. Even with the widespread use of antibiotics, infectious diseases still kill 13 million annually—about half that figure in prosperous countries.

Increasing resistance to antibiotics is a major factor. TB drugs are losing some of their effectiveness and those used to combat malaria have lost their cutting edge in Asia and Africa. "The minute we let down our guard, infectious diseases come back," said David Heymann, WHO's Director of Infectious Disease Control. The steady increase in international travel poses a serious threat to future disease control (*USA Today*, June 18, 1999).

Catholic Church Ends Salvation Dispute With Lutherans

NEW YORK: (AP/BN)—The Roman Catholic and Lutheran churches have ended a nearly five-century-old dispute over how people achieve salvation. The accord represents "a decisive step forward in the process of reconciliation," said Rev. Ismael Noko, general secretary of the Lutheran World Federation.

After 30 years of consultations among theologians, the two sides announced agreement almost a year ago on a Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification, meant to resolve a doctrinal debate at the heart of the 16th century Protestant Reformation that split Western Christianity. But differences remained on the interpretation and wording of the accord, and it took several more months to complete a three-page annex and statement clarifying the churches' position.

Marian Congress of Year 2000 An Important Celebration of Jubilee

ROME: (ZT)—As part of the celebrations of the Great

Jubilee of the Year 2000, Rome will be the host site for the next International Marian Congress which will address the topic, "Mary and the Mystery of the Trinity." The congress will be held from September 15-22, 2000, and will bring together experts in Mariology from all over the world.

The Congress is organized by the Pontifical International Marian Academy. The Academy was founded in 1946 to coordinate Marian studies worldwide. The Mariology Congresses are held every four years in an effort to promote progress in the scientific and speculative, as well as the historical and critical, study of Mary.

England: Census of Homosexual Couples

LONDON: (BBC)—For the first time in the history of England, a census of homosexual couples will be made. This marks a radical change in procedure from the census a decade ago. Then, there were no questions of a personal nature. The census form does not specifically ask about sexual orientation, instead asking specifically about cohabitation with a member of the same sex. For the first time since 1851, responders will have to declare their religious preference as well.

Undoubtedly, it will be the most detailed census in British history, but many are wondering if it is worthwhile. The Labor government disagrees; it considers the "gay" question very important. The census would help decide how social benefits should be allocated, in areas that up to now were ignored.

Dissent in the Ranks of Iraq's Republican Guard

On June 2, the London-based newspaper *Al-Zaman* reported that a fatal clash erupted on May 24 between two Iraqi Republican Guard units in the Suwayrah camp, 60 kilometers south of Baghdad. The clash was quickly quelled, with a number of surviving officers being arrested for questioning. Iraqi President Saddam Hussein has shown considerable skill over the years, fending off as many plots against him from within his country as from outside.

However, with an increasing number of apparent threats emerging ever closer to his inner circle, time may be running out for the Iraqi leader.

French Clown Rescues 800 Romanian Children From Sewers

BUCHAREST: (ZT)—Miloud Oukili, a French clown who has been living in Bucharest, Romania, for the past six years, has rescued over 800 abandoned children from the sewers where they lived. They are children who have left home, abandoned in the streets by parents who cannot support them; victims of the abuse of unscrupulous adults; who need to steal to eat. Currently, some 2,500 children share underground space in Bucharest with rats.

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“PEACE,” (Continued from page 16)

They represent 20 percent of Turkey’s 63 million people. This yearning goes back to the aftermath of World War I when the victors began to carve up the defeated and exhausted Ottoman Empire. The hope for a “Kurdistan” was dashed, as this same area was the geopolitical crunch zone between the national interests of the British Empire, an emerging Soviet Union, and a developing modern state of Turkey. The modern nations of Iraq and Iran to various degrees have granted Kurds limited autonomy, while Turkey has sought to crush the Kurdish independence movement and eradicate a separate identity by banning the teaching of the native tongue. Margolis pinpoints the concern “that recognition of Kurdish cultural identity, Turkey fears, would lead to demands for political autonomy, and then inevitably, creation of an independent Kurdish state.”

Why the Turkish intransigence? Margolis continues by stating, “all Turks vividly recall the 1920s, when Turkey was to be divided up by the victorious allies into zones run by France, Britain, Greece, and Italy. Russia’s century-old attempt to destabilize Turkey and seize Istanbul and the Dardanelles remains a constant threat to most passionately nationalistic Turks. In the Turkish view, all attempts by past and present ethnic minorities, notably Armenians and Kurds, to gain autonomy were part of a plot hatched by foreign powers to dismember the Turkish nation.”

Terrorists or Founding Fathers?

But now, everything has changed, or has it? Ocalan is in Turkish hands. As Margolis so aptly states, “the vital question now facing Turkey is whether the brutal Ocalan is better at the end of a rope or heading up a legitimate Kurdish party agitating for autonomy or independence.” The geopolitically vital land bridge of Turkey, resting between Europe and Asia, cannot be stabilized till the Kurdish question is answered. Empires, kingdoms and nations have a historical habit of running out of soldiers before turning to solutions. Will Turkey?

Proverbs 25:2–3 tells those who would read and understand to reach for new horizons when it comes to problem solving. “It is the glory of God to conceal a matter, but the glory of kings is to search out a matter. As the heavens for height and the earth for depth, so the heart of kings is unsearchable.” These verses suggest that we extend our search and reach new depths in our quest for solutions. It has often been stated that “yesterday’s terrorist is today’s founding father.” Often men of revolution and war become men of vision and transcend their beginnings and reach the new heights spoken of in Proverbs. For a moment let’s focus on the example of Anwar Sadat.

Changing the Fabric of Our Thoughts

Sadat’s early life was engaged in revolution alongside his mentor Nasser in trying to set up an independent Egyptian nation which was then under the sway of the British Empire. He served jail time during British rule. Stuck in prison, he began to unclog his thinking in a way that perhaps gives us a key to resolving the Turkish dilemma. For it was here that Sadat would begin to establish the line of thinking of possibilities that would lead him to his famous visit to Jerusalem. That daring and decisive visit broke the rules of history and allowed Egypt and Israel “to move from soldiers to solutions.”

Author Stephen R. Covey captures the essence of Sadat’s historic visit to Jerusalem that has since changed the political landscape of the Middle East. Covey states, “Sadat stood between a past that had created a huge wall of suspicion, fear, hate, and misunderstanding between Arabs and Israelis, and a future in which increased conflict and isolation seemed inevitable. Efforts at negotiation had been met with objections on every scale—even to formalities and procedural points, to an insignificant comma or period in the text of proposed agreements. While others attempted to resolve the tense situation by hacking at the leaves, Sadat drew upon his earlier centering experience in a lonely prison cell and went to work on the root. And in doing so, he changed the course of history for millions of people.”



Kurdish rebel leader Abdullah Ocalan, on trial for treason

Quoting Sadat, Covey continues, “It was then that I drew, almost unconsciously, on the inner strength I had developed in Cell 54 of Cairo Central Prison—a strength or capacity, for change. I found that I faced a highly complex situation, and that I couldn’t hope to change it until I had armed myself with the necessary psychological and intellectual capacity. My contemplation of life and human nature in that secluded place had taught me that he who cannot change the very fabric of his thought will never be able to change reality, and will never, therefore, make any progress” (*The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*, Simon and Schuster, 1989, page 317).

Turks and Kurds now face a “highly complex situation” like Sadat’s. To simply hang Ocalan could, as Margolis points out, “extend the tension between the two groups creating further repression in Turkey, severe economic strain, and exclusion from Europe. On the other hand, continued intransigency by the impoverished Kurds or the set up of a mini-Stalinist state under Ocalan will not solve their need for jobs, water and agricultural projects.” The options for both sides lead us to the thought—“just because we can, does it mean we should?” Perhaps there is a better way.

A Better Way

In Philippians 4:5, the apostle Paul states, “Let your moderation be known unto all men” (King James Version). Interesting words from a man who at one time had been regarded as a spiritual terrorist rampaging through the early Christian community. But, a miracle occurred in his life. He went from being one who tore down, based upon what seemed reasonable, to an individual who became a builder of what seemed impossible!

Through Paul, God asks us to focus on moderation. The Greek word for moderation is *epiekes*. It means “yieldedness or pliability.” Perhaps the thought implies flexibility towards problem solving and a capacity that allows us to view the future good for all, over our very real present grievances. It is interesting that this phrase comes from one of Paul’s “Prison Epistles.” It is shared at a time when the author himself was under the shackles of the Roman Empire. Perhaps Paul, like Sadat, discovered that the loneliness of prison could allow one to rethink a new and different future based on new and challenging options.

Will the Turkish government come to accommodation with Ocalan and the Kurdish people? Will there be capacity to “change the very fabric of their thoughts?” Will the prison experience allow Ocalan to outgrow his terrorist past? How about you? Remember the opening paragraph? Where is the target, what is your focus, and how would you take aim on this particular problem?

“Let Us Take Our Journey”

Long ago, the biblical patriarch Esau set a marvelous example of bridge building between two peoples seemingly on a collision course. He became a transitional person of incredible capacity who looked beyond all the “ifs, ands and buts” of past hurts and grievances.

He had been snookered out of his birthright by a cunning foe, none other than his brother. Talk about too close for comfort and “in your face!” Yet after years of separation, Esau chose to make a difference and took the moderate course.

As these two special families came together on a common road, history was in the making! We know that Jacob was scared to death. But something happened that caused Esau to choose to forgive. Then and there he forged and founded an alliance with a brother who had often betrayed his interests. The rope of justice was in his hand and the numbers were on his side.

It’s often been stated that the human version of the Golden Rule is “those who have the gold, make the rules.” But Esau didn’t go there! Instead of stretching his brother’s neck with a noose, he chose to pull him into a partnership. He states in Genesis 33:12, “Let us take our journey; let us go, and I will go before you.” Esau could have remained confined to an emotional prison of his own making, but he applied the key of forgiveness and decided to build a future with his brother. Then and there a crowded neighborhood of humanity with a backdrop of different perspectives and injustices came to peace.

Will modern day Turkey and the Kurds have the same vision as Esau in dealing with their nemesis? Only time will tell, but their “then and there” is now! Whether they do or not, it is the voice of Esau that echoes the millennial refrain “this is the way, walk you in it.” ❖

Church Panel Backs Gay Ordinations

FORT WORTH, TEXAS: (AP)—Gays and lesbians are one step closer to becoming part of the Presbyterian church’s leadership. In a 24 to 14 vote, the Church Orders and Ministry committee recommended striking a clause from the church’s constitution that forbids the ordination of “self-affirming, practicing homosexuals.” The issue now goes to the full 560-member assembly. Approval would require a simple majority. If it passes, it then goes before the ordained Presbyterian ministers and elders nationwide for approval.

World Looking Better Prepared for Y2K

NEW YORK: (AP)—Six months after the first global conference on the millennium bug, experts from over 170 countries met at the United Nations to assess progress in dealing with Year 2000 problems and preparations for coping with possible computer glitches. “We are meeting as we did last December to work on the last headache of the 20th century and to ensure that it does not become the first crisis of the 21st century,” said Pakistan’s U.N. Ambassador Ahmad Kamal, who chairs the U.N. working group dealing with Y2K problems.

Carlos Braga, director of the World Bank’s Y2K program, said it was encouraging that over 100 developing countries had now initiated national programs, compared with less than 10 in January 1998. “In spite of all our efforts it’s impossible to guarantee that there will be no disruptions due to the Y2K problem. With less than 200 days remaining until the century date change, this outlook is unlikely to change significantly,” Braga said.

At a press conference, Y2K coordinators from Europe, Asia, the Americas and Australia provided a glimpse of some of the problems and challenges they face. Mario Tagarinski said the 29 countries in East and Central Europe and Central Asia need independent assessments of their Y2K problems—and help to fix them. One country, Yugoslavia, hasn’t even been heard from on the millennium bug issue, he said. At the other end of the spectrum, Venezuela has invested \$200 million to ensure oil is delivered on time and the country’s Y2K oil expert, Ivan Crespo, said all critical components in the oil industry will be fixed by August.

Contributors: Peter Eddington, Darris McNeely, Cecil Maranville, David Palmer, John Ross Schroeder

This Is the Way... “Ready, Aim—Peace!”

by Robin Webber

Regular readers of *World News and Prophecy* recognize that prophecy is not only about the passing away of this current age of human rule, but the establishment of a future world government under Jesus Christ. Revelation 5:10 declares that He is now preparing “kings and priests” to rule and teach within that new society. Christians are now in training to learn how to administer justice and long-term peace in that new realm. Let me present a scenario from today’s news and ask you, “What would you do?” Based upon your answer, the outcome may be the difference between “fire, ready, aim” or “ready, aim, peace.”

Eric Margolis, foreign correspondent for *The Toronto Sun*, recently wrote about the capture of a well known terrorist in his article “A Unique Opportunity to End the War Against the Kurds” (Inside Track on World News, *The Toronto Sun*, June 5, 1999). This unexpected and surprising turn of events now presents an incredible dilemma to the Turkish government. This event is the focus of this article.

Win the War, but Lose the Peace?

The article begins, “In a stunning development, the captured Kurdish rebel leader, Abdullah Ocalan, who is currently on trial for treason, called last week for an end to the 15 year rebellion against Turkey, and admitted responsibility for the many charges against him.” Margolis con-

tinues, “Other leaders of the outlawed Turkish Workers Party, or PKK, backed Ocalan’s dramatic offer to end the bitter war that has killed 30,000 civilians and 5,500 Turkish troops, and to transform the outlawed PKK into a civilian political party. Ocalan, who was kidnapped in Kenya on February 15 by mercenaries and turned over to Turkish security forces, faces a death sentence, and may be trying to save his own skin by admitting guilt and calling for an end to the long Kurdish insurrection.”

Let’s ask ourselves a question. Why not pull the trigger on this terrorist who is known as the “Kurdish Stalin?” The PKK, in the author’s own words, is a “violent Marxist organization which has murdered thousands of innocent citizens and supporters who ran afoul of Ocalan.” Simply put, there is no allowance to sanitize the image of this man. He is a killer and terrorist.

Ocalan’s capture and confession allow the Turks every justifiable reason to fully punish this man. But is it possible that Turkey could win the war but lose the peace by responding hastily? Gaining momentary satisfaction at the expense of long-term stability of the region is a distinct possibility.

Let’s look closer at a long and bloodied history. In his article, Margolis states that 20 to 22 million Kurds, a people ethnically distinct from their Turkish and Arab neighbors, have long demanded an independent homeland carved out of Anatolia and northern parts of Iraq and Iran.

(See “PEACE,” page 14)