

WORLD NEWS *and* PROPHECY

Biblical Perspectives on Current Events

August 1999

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Waiting for the “End of the World”?

We are on the very threshold of a brand new millennium. But how does the Bible advise those who count on the “end of the world” around New Year’s Day, 2000?

by John Ross Schroeder

Armageddon and Apocalypse are in the air. The fast approaching turn of a century and a new millennium is greatly intensifying a nervous eschatological impulse. Some even expect the “end of the world” and Jesus Christ’s return precisely on January 1, 2000.

Not a few people have gone right “over the top.” For instance, a small group has moved to the Mount of Olives near Jerusalem to help usher in the second coming. In a separate incident the Israeli government has had to intervene and cancel a simulated “Christian” enactment of the events of Armageddon—a so-called preview of the coming catastrophe. Millennial madness seems to be in vogue during 1999.

Not long ago hundreds of members of a doomsday group disappeared into the remote mountains of Colombia in South America. They were said to be members of a Gnostic church.

There have always been some Christians who believed so intensely that they knew exactly when Christ must come back to this earth that they tried to *make it happen*. How absurd this must seem to God. Christ is our Lord and Master—not the other way around (John 13:13).

Nonetheless, He did tell us to watch world events (Luke 21:36). We are to carefully assess the genuine signs that would precede His second coming, but in a balanced and rational way—never attempting to set a date!

A Decision Reserved to the Father

But when it does occur, the actual return of Jesus Christ will be remembered as one of those hugely important benchmark events in world history. It will take its place alongside the Creation, Noah’s Flood and Christ’s first coming. The time factor is so crucial that God the Father has reserved the decision to Himself. At the time of His humanity even Christ did not know when it would be (Matthew 24:36).

But the disciples continued their persistent questioning after His resurrection to eternal life. They still wanted to know
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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).

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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.

“WAITING,” (Continued from page 1)

when. Christ gave them virtually the same answer that He had previously. “It is not for you to know times or seasons which



Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem

the Father has put in His own authority” (Acts 1:7).

Historically this reply has been very hard for us humans to accept. Somehow we want to circumvent Jesus’ own words and figure out some way to know exactly when. For nearly 2,000 years a few have wound up with egg on their faces. From time to time the overly zealous have set dates, and they have all come and gone without the appearance of Jesus Christ. One would have thought that we would have learned the lesson by now.

At one time or another we all seem to be prone to this weakness. Even the early apostles fell victim to the belief that Christ would return in their lifetimes. But later in life they came to a more realistic view (see 2 Peter 3, 2 Timothy 4).

Now let’s take a brief scriptural look at both the first and second advents from the overall biblical perspective.

Carefully Planned in Advance

The first coming of Jesus Christ was a very carefully planned occurrence. It did not happen by accident, or just at any time in history. “But when *the fullness of the time* had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law” (Galatians 4:4). Other translations render this expression variously as “the appointed time,” “the right time,” etc. God plans what He does in advance. The right time is that particular period which is most suitable to His plan and purpose.

“The Lamb [was] slain from the foundation of the world” (Revelation 13:8), but the actual event was postponed for several thousand years. Remember the New Testament passage—“so Christ was offered *once* to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear *a second time*, apart from sin, for salvation” (Hebrews 9:28). Scripturally both comings are connected and interlocked together (Isaiah 61:1–2), yet there is a considerable prophetic time lapse between these two separate events. Both are enormously important steps in God’s master plan for humanity.

Consider the words of the apostle Paul to the church at Ephesus. “In Christ our release is secured and our sins forgiven through the shedding of His blood... He [the Father], has made known to us His

secret purpose, in accordance with the *plan which He determined beforehand* in Christ, to be put into effect *when the time was ripe*, namely that the universe, everything in heaven and earth might be brought into a unity with Christ” (Ephesians 1:7–10, Revised English Bible).

Paul speaks of a general period of time that certainly includes the second coming of Christ in retrospect, yet is way out on beyond that crucial event. He is apparently primarily referring to the time of the new heavens and new earth of Revelation, chapters 21 and 22. All is divinely purposed according to a step-by-step plan revealed to the Church through God’s annual Holy Days.

We can be absolutely sure that no
(See “WAITING,” page 8)

The Biblical End of This Age

Some equate the end of the world with the second coming of Jesus Christ. Actually the world itself will *not* end when Christ returns. But this benchmark event will finish the age of man’s misrule and usher in the beginning of Christ’s marvelous millennial government.

The Bible is very clear on this point. This present age of man—“this present evil world” (Galatians 1:4, KJV)—will

be replaced by the thousand-year reign of Jesus Christ on this earth (Revelation 5:10; 20:4–6).

The second coming will mark a pivotal time of transition between two worlds—man’s and God’s. Yet the planet itself will continue to rotate around the sun and mankind will still inhabit the earth—even though catastrophic end-time events will have drastically reduced the population. —JRS

Focus on the Temple Mount

There is a curious relationship between evangelical Christian groups and radical Jewish groups who want to see a restored temple in Jerusalem on the mount where the ancient temple of Solomon stood. Today, that spot is occupied by the Islamic Dome of the Rock and is one of the holiest spots in the Muslim world. According to some Christian interpretations of prophecy, a temple must be built on that spot prior to the coming of Christ. Orthodox Jews see the need of a restored temple for similar, but distinctly different reasons. They look for the coming of a Messiah, who is definitely not the returning Christian savior, to restore the glory of Israel.

Last fall 1,500 supporters of a group called the Movement for the Establishment of the Temple rallied in Jerusalem to show support for the goal of rebuilding the temple. Its leader, Gershon Salomen, feels a divine calling to rebuild the temple. His group receives money from several Christian denominations as well as Jews. He receives numerous invitations to speak to Christian tour groups who come to Israel. This shared expectation of dramatic events to occur in Jerusalem, and specifically at the temple mount, makes for strange bedfellows of groups with fundamentally different religious perspectives. —Darris McNeely

The View From Down Under

The world looks different from "down under." Recent changes in the region are pressuring Australia to rethink its policies.

by Melvin Rhodes

BRISBANE, AUSTRALIA: Australia is the only country that is an entire continent. It's as big as the 48 contiguous United States of America, but has only 18 million people, most of them living a Western lifestyle under the belly of a huge expanse of land with more than two billion people living in Third World conditions.

Asia lies to Australia's north. Clearly, it's always been there, but only fairly recently has it become of paramount concern to Australians and the Australian government.

Australia is the odd man out in Asia. The people are predominantly of a different race with a different culture and a different religion from most of the other nations in the region.

Prior to World War II Australia was very much a part of the British Commonwealth and saw its security lying within that multinational association. At the same time most of Asia was ruled by one European colonial power or another.

Australia's closest neighbor, Indonesia, was a Dutch colony. The French ruled Indochina. Great Britain still possessed the Indian subcontinent, Malaya and some of the islands of the Pacific and Indian Oceans. New Zealand to the east was also a member of the British Commonwealth. Australia felt secure.



Rapid changes in Asia and the Pacific have left Australians anxious about their own future.

That security ended abruptly when Japan started moving south, bombing the Australian city of Darwin and taking control of most of the islands immediately north of Australia, islands that seemed like stepping stones from mainland Asia across the ocean to Australia itself.

Japan was defeated, but the world was never to be the same again. The colonial powers tried to go back to their former possessions, mostly without success. The Dutch lost control of Indonesia and the French Indochina. America had lost the Philippines, though retaining vital

military bases right up until this decade. The British went back into their former colonies, but soon handed over the reins of power to new leaders, granting independence to all its Asian colonies within a few years of the end of World War II.

The balance of power had changed in Asia. As the European colonial empires withdrew from the area, the Americans took over as the dominant military power. Australia still felt secure.

The balance of power is changing again. Its impact on Australia has suddenly become cause for concern among many of its citizens.

Rapid Changes Among Neighbors Leave Aussies Anxious

Rapid changes in Asia and the Pacific have left Australians anxious about their own future as the realization has slowly sunk in that the island nation cannot remain unaffected by what happens to its neighbors.

Foreign news in Australia frequently focuses on events in Papua-New Guinea (PNG), close neighbor to Australia and very special to older Australians who remember the support of the people there during World War II. Recent political upheavals in the new country are cause for concern. Papua-New Guinea, once a colonial possession of Australia itself but independent since 1975, has suffered a major breakdown in law and order, its economy severely affected by its political instability.

When PNG's government recently decided to recognize Taiwan in return for massive loans, the Chinese government reacted with considerable anger, contributing to the downfall of the PNG government and further destabilizing the country, with ripple effects throughout the region.

Indonesia, with the fourth largest population in the world, is of greater concern. Its 130 million people live mostly in poverty. Only recently have the Indonesians come out from under 50 years of dictatorship, following

centuries of colonial rule. Now the people are demanding that their lot be improved. The 33-year rule of President Suharto came to an end last year and the country has been unstable since. Recent elections resulted in the opposition party of former President Sukarno's daughter Megawati Sukarnoputri winning the biggest single number of votes, but not enough to clearly show who is going to be the new civilian president.

Added to the internal division is the uncertainty over East Timor, a Portuguese possession until 1975 when it was taken over by Indonesian forces without the consent of its people. A rebellion has been taking place ever since. Deciding to cut its losses, the new temporary Indonesian government announced that the East

When Papua-New Guinea's government recently decided to recognize Taiwan in return for massive loans, the Chinese government reacted with considerable anger...

Timorese people would be allowed to vote on whether or not to stay in Indonesia. Violence did not end, as there is a sizable faction in the country that wishes to remain a part of Indonesia. Others want independence. The outcome is uncertain.

President Suharto's downfall was a wake-up call for Australia. Months of turmoil in Asian financial markets, rising unemployment and economic recession led to the downfall of an administration that was universally seen as corrupt. The army could not maintain control. Not only was the government overthrown. Ethnic conflict led to the deaths of thousands of

Chinese residents, resented because of their dominance in trade. Other non-Indonesians were killed in separate incidents of ethnic strife, sometimes in a very gruesome manner.

The volatile racial, cultural and religious mix in nations to the north is an explosive situation that could seriously impact Australia. With a long coastline and few inhabitants, Australia has had difficulty keeping illegal aliens out of the country, announcing new measures to try to stem the flow of economic refugees recently.

U.S. Tariff on Australian Lamb Impacts Farmers

Another item dominating the nightly news in the first two weeks of July was America's imposition of a tariff on Australian lamb exported to the United States, a move which will seriously impact Australian farmers. Older Australians remember too well Great Britain's turning its back on trade with the country in favor of joining the European Common Market more than 25 years ago, a decision that severely affected the nation's economy as it struggled to find new trading partners. Australian farmers, like their American counterparts, are having difficulty staying in business.

The decision is also very short sighted on America's part, impacting one of Washington's most reliable allies negatively. Australians ultimately depend on the United States for their security, but America has derived great benefit from its military alliance with Australia for almost 60 years, ever since General Douglas MacArthur moved his headquarters to the country following the fall of the Philippines. The two countries were allies during World War II and have remained close friends ever since.

The priorities in Australia's news media are certainly different from those in the United States. It's always interesting to travel to another country and see the world from a different perspective. ❖

Will “Covenant Marriages” Slow Divorce?

Many see covenant marriage laws as the key to reversing the damage done by no-fault divorce laws. Prophecy indicates that there are more forces at work than merely bad legislation!

by Cecil E. Maranville

Why is there a movement to pass legislation in 15 U.S. states, as well as in Canada, to establish covenant marriages?

I live in one of two U.S. states that have recently passed legislation establishing “covenant marriages.”

On May 21, 1998, Arizona’s governor signed into law an amended version of Title 25 of the Arizona Revised Statutes permitting people to enter into a covenant marriage.

The statute reads in part: “We solemnly declare that marriage is a covenant between a man and a woman who agree to live together as husband and wife for as long as they both live. We have chosen each other carefully and have received premarital counseling on the nature, purposes and responsibilities of marriage. We understand that a covenant marriage is for life. If we experience marital difficulties, we commit ourselves to take all reasonable efforts to preserve our marriage, including marital counseling.

“With full knowledge of what this commitment means, we declare that our marriage will be bound by Arizona law on covenant marriages and we promise to love, honor and care for one another as husband and wife for the rest of our lives.”

Before the state will issue them a marriage license, the couple must provide an affidavit proving that they have received premarital counseling from a member of the clergy or a marriage counselor and that the counseling program includes a full discussion of the requirements of the covenant marriage statute.

Most people reading this article would say that they have *always* believed that marriage is a covenant relationship! So why is there a movement to pass legislation in 15 U.S. states, as well as in Canada, to establish covenant

marriages? And, more importantly, where will it lead?

30 Years of No-Fault Divorce Laws

Legal “no-fault divorce” has existed for 30 years. “No-fault” statutes were introduced in the 1960s to reduce barriers to divorce, essentially making it possible for one spouse to terminate a marriage without either declaring or proving grounds for divorce. Divorce became easier to obtain than ever, and the divorce rate skyrocketed.

In 1920 the marriage to divorce ratio was 7.5 to 1—that is, one divorce for every 7.5 marriages. In 1940 the ratio had increased slightly to 6 to 1, or one divorce for every six marriages. By 1960 the ratio was 3.8 to 1, and in 1980 it was 2.3 to 1. In 1996 the ratio of marriages to divorces was 2 to 1. Today, 60 percent of new marriages in the U.S. will end in divorce or separation (*USA Today*/Gannett News Service).

Statistics can be misleading and misused. Louis Harris has written, “The idea that half of American marriages are doomed is one of the most specious pieces of statistical nonsense ever perpetuated in modern times.... It all began when the Census Bureau noted that during one year, there were 2.4 million marriages and 1.2 million divorces. Someone did the math without calculating the 54 million marriages already in existence, and presto, a ridiculous but quotable statistic was born.... Only one out of eight marriages will end in divorce. In any single year, only about 2 percent of existing marriages will break up” (*Christianity Today, Inc./LEADERSHIP Journal*, Summer 1996, Vol. XVII, No. 3, page 69).

However the statistics are presented, the divorce rate has increased dramatically in

recent years. And the United States has the dubious distinction of “leading” other countries in divorces. The number of divorces for every 1,000 married women in the U.S. in 1982 was 21. For Britain in the same year, the number was 12. In Canada, it was 11. In Germany, 7, and Italy, 2.

What happens to children forcefully illustrates the harm that the increase in divorce has done to Western society. “Divorce contributes to as many as 3 in 4 teen suicides, and in 4 in 5 teen psychiatric admissions. Children of divorce are much more likely to drop out of school, to have premarital sex and become pregnant outside of marriage than those in intact families. Young adults 18–22 from divorced families are twice as likely to have poor relationships with parents and show high levels of emotional distress than young adults in intact families” (ibid.).

It is in response to this social disaster that various individuals and groups have begun to lobby for the creation of covenant marriage laws. When Louisiana (the only other state to date to pass covenant marriage legislation) enacted its statute, marriage expert Maggie Gallagher, author of the book *The Abolition of Marriage*, said, “This will be a fascinating experiment. This is the first public retreat from the legal no-fault divorce.”

Proponents of covenant marriage legislation say that *divorce lawyers* were responsible for creating the no-fault divorce laws, largely for *their* convenience rather than in the broader interests of society. A recently released Canadian study called no-fault divorce laws “disastrous” and charged that they “allow adults to steal at children’s expense” in a country where 50,000 children see their parents divorce every year (*The Ottawa Citizen*, 1999).

Canada’s divorce rate has increased sixfold in the 30 years since no-fault divorce legislation was introduced in that country, said professor Doug Allen of Simon Fraser University. “The unilateral aspect of no-fault laws means that too often divorce is little more than an act of theft that leaves behind poor wives and children with

reduced human capital—or husbands with only the nominal title of father” (*The Ottawa Citizen*, 1999).

Professor Allen, along with his American counterparts, believes that some form of covenant marriage would greatly reduce the numbers of divorces and thereby improve the general health of society. Divorce lawyer John Crouch, testifying before the Maryland Legislature in March 1999 said, “I think covenant marriage will be helpful for people who choose it, and for people who don’t choose it, and even for some people who don’t get married. I think it will reduce fault and no-fault divorce.”

Covenant Marriage Laws Have Limitations

There are many limitations with the idea of covenant marriage laws. They do not eliminate divorce, but

“Divorce contributes to as many as 3 in 4 teen suicides, and in 4 in 5 teen psychiatric admissions. Children of divorce are much more likely to drop out of school...”

rather the possibility that one spouse can terminate a marriage when the other does not wish to do so. It is still possible for divorce to occur when both parties want to end the marriage. The hope is that the existence of a covenant marriage contract will slow the divorce rate because of the greater length of time required before parties can file for a divorce. Admittedly, the idea is an experiment.

Another limitation on their effectiveness lies in the fact that covenant marriage laws are binding only upon those who voluntarily submit to them. Couples in states that have the option are free to choose a covenant marriage, but are not required to do so. It is

argued that people who would choose to have a covenant marriage are unlikely to divorce anyway. (So far, a very small percentage of couples in Arizona and Louisiana have opted to be married under the provisions of their covenant marriage laws.)

Also, there is no uniformity to the laws. Just because a given state enacts covenant marriage legislation does not mean that marriages throughout the entire country will be under equally high standards. Each state determines its own marriage regulations, and some of the laws being proposed are not particularly strong. The Arizona law, for example, is not as strong as the Louisiana covenant marriage statute, and bills being debated in the Texas and Colorado legislatures are weaker still.

Legislators, sensitive to their constituents, are hesitant to enact covenant marriage legislation for various reasons. “I hear from my constituents all the time, ‘stay out of my bedroom, stay out of my house,’” said Colorado state Rep. Marcy Morrison. Some lawmakers oppose covenant marriage laws even though they firmly believe in the permanence of marriage. But they are unconvinced that more laws would make any difference. Colorado Rep. Dale Wells said a foundering marriage would not be helped by yet more government regulation. It should be enough, said Wells, to take a vow before God! (*Capitol Bureau* by Mick Hinton, 1999).

Divorce Is Terrible, but Is Legislation the Cause—or the Solution?

Who can argue that our people are reaping terrible consequences from divorce? Said John Crouch, “We divorce lawyers see our clients getting more and more alienated from the system, wanting to take vengeance on each other, and getting the kids involved in their crusade against each other. Our response has been to tell clients: ‘Divorce is a normal part of life. Get some therapy and support groups for yourself and the kids, get

over it... But we have been telling people these things for 30 years, and they just seem to be getting worse, madder, [and] more desperate. So I've been wondering, if divorce is so normal and people have had 30 years to adjust to no-fault, why does it still drive so many people nuts?

"Regardless of who started it, the potential costs of divorce are unlimited. Their lawyer can't even tell them how much it's going to cost—all we can say is that it depends on what the other spouse and their lawyer do. Any divorce can turn out to be a death match where the richer or meaner spouse wins by attrition" (Maryland House Judiciary Committee Hearing March 16, 1999).

There's no denying that no-fault divorce laws have greatly increased the rate of divorce. But in the rush to do something about it, we need to understand what the real root cause of divorce is. Did you notice that the statistics quoted above from 1920 to 1960 show that the trend *before* no-fault divorces were legalized was toward ever-increasing numbers of divorces? Plainly, the problem of failed marriages cannot be laid at the doorstep of no-fault divorce legislation alone. The fundamental nature of man apart from God makes it increasingly likely that human relationships will fail.

Two Prophecies Predict the Future for Marriage

Marriage is a covenant relationship, made so not by the words on the marriage license, but by a couple's commitment to each other and to God. Matters of the heart and spirit cannot be legislated! A covenant marriage can be made and last a lifetime only with those who *have the heart* to enter into and remain faithful to a covenant. "O LORD, I know the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man who walks to direct his own steps" (Jeremiah 10:23). How true those words are when it comes to marriage.

In *World News and Prophecy* we examine current events in the light of Bible prophecy. There are two prophe-

cies that predict the future of the marriage institution in our present world. Paul predicted "times of stress" (RSV) at the end of the age. Included in the list of problems is one translated "trucebreaker" in the KJV (2 Timothy 3:3). This word, from the Greek *aspondos*, is translated "unforgiving" in the NKJ and "implacable" in the RSV.

While it can mean "untrue to one's promise," the principal meaning is that the person *will not enter into a covenant*. The literal meaning is "'without a libation'...i.e., 'without a truce,' as a libation accompanied the making of treaties and compacts... 'one who cannot be persuaded to enter into a covenant'" (*Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words*, Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1985, article "Implacable").

That is, agreements were typically solemnized by taking a ceremonial drink. Hence, the Greek word for "without a libation" was a graphic way to portray a person unwilling to commit to a treaty or covenant with another person. No more important covenant can be made between people than that of marriage.

Another problem is foretold in the first chapter of Romans. The word in verse 31 that is translated "unforgiving" in the NKJ and "untrustworthy" in the KJV, comes from the Greek *asunthetos*. Its principal meaning is "covenant breaker."

Vine's explains that there is a fine distinction between these two Greek words. One denotes a person who cannot be persuaded to enter into a covenant, while the other denotes a person already in a relationship who will not be persuaded to resolve differences equitably—hence, breaking the covenant. Together, the words prophesy the state of our present society.

Both types of people are clearly evident in today's world. Some have no respect for the idea of a permanent marriage relationship, while others will enter into marriage only to fail to continue in a covenant relationship. Marriages will continue to fall short of the hopes of those who look to stem the tide of divorce, *regardless of the words on a marriage license*. ❖

"WAITING," (Continued from page 3)

major event in prophecy will ever occur without precise planning. In looking back, crucial occurrences will have happened "when the time was ripe" (Ephesians 1:10)—and not before!

The Bible makes this crucial point very clear. "For this was the plan of the One [the Father] who shapes the whole course of events to His appointed ends" (verse 11, Translator's New Testament).

God the Father will send Christ back to this earth at precisely the right time. He always sees the whole picture—everything that is happening in this world at any given time plus His perfect knowledge of the past and the future. We can only perceive a part of the overall scenario. "We know in part and we prophesy in part," wrote the apostle Paul.

Yet Christ told us to pray "Your kingdom come," plainly telling us that He wants us to eagerly and enthusiastically seek the time of His massive intervention in human affairs. In the meantime we are to diligently watch world news and trends while taking care to see that our spiritual life is in order as well (Psalm 50:23, KJV).

Sober Words of Warning

But we should also heed Jesus Christ's own words of warning in the Olivet Prophecy. "Then if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or 'There!' do not believe it. For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect... Therefore if they say to you, 'Look, He is in the desert!' do not go out; or 'Look, He is in the inner rooms!' do not believe it" (Matthew 24:23–24, 26).

If people would only understand and heed the very words of Jesus Himself, they wouldn't be setting up some sort of prophetic residence on the Mount of Olives or trying to act out the events of Armageddon in advance. Truly the second coming is a global event (verse 30). God's angels will gather His elect everywhere on earth—wherever they happen to be (verse 31). Our principal role today is preaching the gospel of the kingdom (Matthew 24:14) and waiting patiently. "He who endures to the end shall be saved" (verse 13). ❖

Globalization Reviews

Reviews of *The Lexus and the Olive Tree* and *The Great Betrayal*.

by Darris McNeely

In last month's issue of *World News and Prophecy* (see article, "What to Watch to Discern the Times"), I referred to a book about globalization called *The Lexus and the Olive Tree*, written by the foreign affairs columnist for the *New York Times*, Thomas L. Friedman (Farrar, Strauss, Giroux, New York, 1998). Since then several have commented about the book and its value in helping to understand the world economy. It is a fascinating subject and an important one for our readers to understand. In this issue I'd like to review Friedman's book and another called *The Great Betrayal*. This second book is written by Pat Buchanan and gives another perspective. Read together, these books can help us see globalization as more than an economic system.

The One Big Thing

Friedman states: "I believe that 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." The lens which Friedman uses goes back to the 19th century to show that the world had a previous period of globalization. What we see today is another round of a continuous cycle of the world economy.

The last period of globalization started in the mid-19th century and lasted through the 1920s. The amount of trade and capital flows between nations was similar to today. Then, Great Britain was the dominant global power as its empire reached its zenith. The steamship, telegraph, railroad, telephone and transatlantic cable helped to transport people, goods and even crises from one continent to the other in a period when one could go between countries without the need of a

passport. Indeed, the world did shrink in size during this period.

It took World War I, the Great Depression and World War II to bring this period to a close and lock the world in place with the period called the Cold War. When the Berlin Wall fell in 1989 the rush was on again to renew this process and create a global economy. This new era of globalization is turbocharged in comparison to the last. "The previous era of globalization was built around falling transportation costs. Today's era of globalization is built around falling telecommunications costs—thanks to microchips, satellites, fiber optics and the Internet. These new technologies are able to weave the world together even tighter" (page xv).

Here is how Friedman describes this new period of globalization: "the globalization system (is) a dynamic ongoing process: globalization involves the inexorable integration of markets, nation-states and technologies to a degree never witnessed before—in a way that is enabling individuals, corporations and nation-states to reach around the world farther, faster, deeper and cheaper than ever before, and in a way that is also producing a powerful backlash from those brutalized or left behind by this new system. The driving idea behind globalization is free-market capitalism—the more you let market forces rule and the more you open your economy to free trade and competition, the more efficient and flourishing your economy will be. Globalization means the spread of free market capitalism to virtually every country in the world. Globalization also has its own set of economic rules—rules that revolve around opening, deregulating and privatizing your economy" (page 8).

If the earlier period of globalization was dominated by Great Britain, then this

latest is dominated by American culture. Mickey Mouse, McDonalds, CNN and iMacs symbolize today's period. The Internet, another American invention, circles the globe and brings instant communication to those who are attached. It is like we are all connected but no one is in charge. This is a two-edged sword. While many people want the wealth and image projected by the American culture, there is also an envy bordering on jealousy that goes alongside. America's economy is the main engine of today's world economy. This is a blessing which comes from the hand of God.

So what does the title *The Lexus and the Olive Tree* mean? It is the contrast between a modern global culture, such as Japan which builds the Lexus automobile, and a Middle Eastern culture where they are still fighting ancient battles over the land known for its olive trees. Friedman explains, "It struck me then that the Lexus and olive tree were actually pretty good symbols of this post-Cold War era: half the world seemed to be emerging from the Cold War intent on building a better Lexus, dedicated to modernizing, streamlining and privatizing their economies in order to thrive in the system of globalization. And half of the world—sometimes half the same country, sometimes half the same person—was still caught up in the fight over who owns which olive tree" (page 27).

The Other Side of the Coin

This is a good point to jump to the Buchanan book, *The Great Betrayal: How American Sovereignty and Social Justice Are Being Sacrificed to the Gods of the Global Economy* (Little, Brown, and Company, Boston, 1998). Pat Buchanan is a former speech writer for President

Richard Nixon and a cable television talk show host. Twice he has sought the Republican Party nomination for president. As the title shows he is not terribly excited about our new global world. He advocates protectionist tariffs, is against NAFTA (North American Free Trade Association), and traded in his Mercedes Benz for a Lincoln Navigator.

Buchanan admits that early in his career he supported free trade. He wrote articles in support of any bill Congress passed which opened up the borders of trade among the nations. But within the last 10 years after seeing many U.S. based businesses close their doors and take jobs to cheaper international labor markets, he has changed his tune and now passionately shouts a warning that America should wake up to the dangers of the new global economy. Americans, he says, are taking for granted the inherent freedoms they've come to expect.

Buy American

Writing with the fervor of a secular evangelist, Buchanan's book traces the historical development of American trade practices. Beginning with the Revolutionary War period he shows how America's separation from England centered on the friction created by unfair trade practices imposed by the government of King George III. The events of this period, such as the Boston Tea Party and the Stamp Act, were economic in origin and fueled the passions which ignited the war.

The colonists' dependence on Britain for goods became a major problem. To gain more control over his finances, George Washington stopped growing tobacco for export to England and grew wheat for Americans. His business prospered and he opened other projects such as weaving and milling for local consumption. Thomas Jefferson saw that Virginia planters were indebted to British mercantile houses and needed to take control of their distribution channels to escape financial servitude and insure their financial futures.

Buchanan argues that the American move for independence was firmly rooted in a desire to control its economic destiny just as much as its political future. It is a

sound argument since the two are always intertwined in the story of a nation. When George Washington spoke the first presidential oath in 1789 he determined to wear a new suit of clothes fashioned from cloth ordered from a mill in Connecticut. "Buy American" was the signal given by the hero of Valley Forge.

"Spitting into the Wind?"

While Buchanan acknowledges he is fighting an uphill battle against the tide of globalization, his book is valuable for two reasons. First he shows that nations ultimately will act to protect their own self-interest. He attacks the argument that free trade will break down the barriers of nationalism, religion and race that divide people and lead to conflict.

He quotes Richard Cobden, a 19th century English Quaker who was a vigorous advocate of free trade. Cobden is to free trade ideology what the apostle Paul is to Christianity. "It has often struck me that it would be well to try to engraft our free trade agitation upon the peace movement. They are one and the same cause. It has often been to me a matter of surprise that the Friends have not taken up the question of free trade as the means—and I believe the only human means—of effecting universal peace" (emphasis ours). Again Cobden is quoted: "Free Trade! What is it? Why breaking down the barriers that separate nations; those barriers behind which nestle the feelings of pride, revenge, hatred, and jealousy, which every now and then burst their bounds and deluge whole countries with blood" (pages 58, 61). The same theme was echoed as recently as 1997 in President Bill Clinton's State of the Union Address: "By expanding trade, we can advance the cause of freedom and democracy around the world" (page 60).

History proves these sentiments wrong. In the 19th century England was involved in conflicts all over the globe. In 1914 World War I broke out among the free trading nations of the European heartland. Nations are inherently tribal. One of the first principles of geo-politics is that no nation enters any form of agreement with another without insuring its interests will be protected and promoted. When either

of those fail, the agreements end and armed conflict often is the result.

The second value of this book lies in the material he cites which shows the historical development of free trade theory. The modern world's ideas spring from the Enlightenment, that age where man began to shed religion in favor of a more reasoned and scientific view of the world. The writings of Adam Smith and John Stuart Mill stirred intellectual minds and promoted free trade ideas as a new, secular gospel of salvation.

"As early as 1836, classical liberal Henry Fairbairn had looked into the future and seen free trade coming on the wings of angels: 'Seeing then, that in the natural order of things the triumph of Free Trade principles is now inevitable, magnificent indeed are the prospects that are opening for mankind. Nations will become united in the golden bands of peace; science, liberty and abundance will reign among the inhabitants of the earth; nations will no longer be seen to descend and decline, human life will become prolonged and refined; years will become centuries in the development of the blessings of existence; and even now the eye can reach to the age when one language, one religion, and one nation alone will be existing in the world'" (page 187).

The Age of Enlightenment hastened the demise of religious influence among the leaders of Western nations. No longer did established religion hold the minds of men and control nations in the same way. God and religion were removed from the center of the universe and replaced by man. The search for the kingdom of God on earth would now be done through the efforts of human creativity apart from the shackles of religious dogma. In time the field of economics contributed its ideas to this goal in the form of free trade. Free trade would be the way in which man would create utopia on earth.

This is the reason we should understand the basics of this concept called globalization. In the past 10 years it has come to dominate the world's economies. It is certain to form the basis for what we see described in Revelation as a one world economic colossus called Babylon the Great. These two books will help you to watch with understanding. ❖

In Brief...

World News Review

Berlin Store Fined for Skirting Sunday Restrictions

BERLIN: (AP)—A Berlin department store that tested Germany's strict shopping laws by opening on Sunday drew tens of thousands of excited shoppers—and a \$27,000 fine.

The Berlin Office of Workers' Protection said Monday it would fine Kaufhof, a large store on Alexanderplatz in eastern Berlin, that tried to get around the law by labeling everything sold as souvenirs. German laws that prevent businesses from opening on Sunday allow exceptions for those catering to tourists. Store officials said they would appeal the fine.

About 50,000 shoppers flocked to the Kaufhof on Sunday, buying goods ranging from clothing to appliances labeled with stickers reading, "Berlin Souvenir." The store will face a fine of up to \$54,500 if it tries to open this Sunday, said Robert Rath, the worker protection agency's spokesman. Officials may also order the store closed if it continues, he said.

Unions, churches and local government heads oppose the push for Sunday shopping, arguing it is unnecessary and unfair to workers. If Sunday becomes a day like all the others, "then there will be no common time for families to be together with friends who are still at work," Margret Moenig-Raane, president of the Trade, Banking and Insurance Union, told Deutschlandradio Berlin.

Anglo-American Trends Against Marriage

According to the latest issue of *British Population Trends*, married couples will constitute a minority of the population before 2010. Back in 1981, 65 percent of adults were married. By 1997, 23 percent fewer marriages were contracted. By contrast the rates of growth in cohabitation and illegitimate children have been enormous.

Most Western governments have either knowingly or unknowingly conspired against the divine institution of marriage. Over the last 50 years and more their legislation has periodically weakened the marriage bond. While giving lip service to marriage, their philosophy has produced the legal loopholes that have made divorce far easier and alternative relationships more economically viable.

The words of Jack Straw, Britain's Home Secretary, are an example of this philosophy. "While marriages should be supported and strengthened, there are other kinds of families, includ-

ing single-parent families, that do equally well for children."

Do they? Juvenile crime figures tend to show otherwise.

Mr. Straw continued: "The government cannot pressure people into one type of relationship or force them to stay together. We are not in the business of moralising, preaching or nagging people on how they should live their lives."

Across the Atlantic the situation in the United States sounds very similar. Wrote Cheryl Weltzein of *The Washington Times*: "Marriage in America has gone from better to worse, with fewer couples marrying and fewer still saying their lives together are wedded bliss according to a report released on July 1.... As marriage has faltered, rates of divorce, cohabitation and bearing children out of wedlock have soared to record levels" (*Financial Times*, March 17, 1999; *Daily Mail*, June 21, 1999; *Washington Times*, July 12–18, 1999).

Turkey Accused of Attacking Iranian Targets

Iranian media has reported that a number of Iranians were killed when Turkish planes bombed suspected Kurdistan Worker's Party positions inside Iran. Turkey has denied carrying out the strikes. Iranian media has also suggested that Turkey may have been behind provoking the recent student unrest in Iran. Iran and Turkey routinely trade diplomatic barbs, and this could be a groundless spat. After all, Turkey has enough domestic and international concerns to deal with without increasing tension with Iran. But given ongoing international realignments, Ankara may not be entirely averse to ratcheting up tension with Iran (Stratfor.com, Global Intelligence Update, July 20, 1999).

Has Milosevic Used His Nine Lives?

ZURICH, SWITZERLAND—There is nothing more wasteful or dismal than a lost war. So it's no surprise many angry Serbs are calling for the overthrow of Slobodan Milosevic who led them into four disastrous wars.

The wily Milosevic has repeatedly shown a remarkable gift for surviving defeats and confounding his many internal and external enemies. This time, however, his nine lives may be running low. Serbia lies in ruins; its economy is moribund; its morale at rock bottom. The Serb Orthodox Church, whose clergy formerly blessed Milosevic's ethnic cleansing as a "new holy crusade," has turned against its erstwhile champion and denounced his crimes in Kosovo.

As U.N. police investigators in Kosovo uncover mass graves filled with the remains of murdered women and children, even the staunchest former defenders of Serbia have fallen silent (Eric Margolis, July 18, 1999).

Barak Tries to Redefine the Peace Process in Washington

The Middle East peace process has obsessed and collapsed over the Palestinian question for decades. Ehud Barak wants to redefine the issue; instead of focusing on the Palestinian question, he wants to focus on a peace treaty with Syria. He has good reason to believe that Syria is ready for a peace settlement. The problem, in our eyes, is not Syria but Turkey. Israel and Turkey are allied against Syria. The United States is highly dependent on Turkey for its regional strategy and is not eager to see the boat rocked. The U.S. must be convinced that accords with Syria can be the foundation for Syria's general integration into America's regional system and not the preface for a geopolitical upheaval. On the whole, from the American point of view, sticking with the Palestinians is the safer course (Stratfor's Global Intelligence Update, Weekly Analysis, July 19, 1999).

China Boasts It Has Technology to Make Neutron Bombs

BEIJING: (Reuters)—China announced July 15 it had the technology to make neutron bombs, but gave no details. "China officially announced here today that it has already mastered the neutron bomb design technology," the official Xinhua news agency said in a one-paragraph report.

The announcement came amid a dispute with rival Taiwan, which abandoned its "one China" policy that has helped underpin East Asian security for decades.

The three-line Xinhua report gave no clue as to when the neutron bomb was developed or whether China had conducted tests, begun mass production or deployed the weapon.

The AIDS Epidemic Continues

WASHINGTON—AIDS is the leading cause of death in Africa. In Harare, Zimbabwe, four out of 10 adults are HIV-positive. The full force of the epidemic has yet to hit, but it becomes clearer all the time that AIDS will have vast and long-term consequences for many societies. Fewer people in the West are dying of AIDS, thanks to new drug regimens, but even here the virus is not defeated. Last year in North America there were some 44,000 newly reported infections.

These are some of the gloomy tidings from Peter Piot, a Belgian physician and microbiologist who directs the U.N. program on AIDS. Last year, according to the World Health Organization, about 54 million people died. AIDS was responsible for 2.3 million of those deaths—more than

malaria or tuberculosis or lung cancer.

AIDS is now among the top five killers in the world, and in many places the epidemic is still advancing. Its toll is especially high in developing countries, most of all in Africa, where the virus originated. In Botswana, children born in the next few years can expect to live, on average, to just past their 40th birthdays. Were it not for AIDS, their life expectancy would be 70. The picture of reduced life spans and orphaned children is repeated throughout much of southern and eastern Africa. Some 1.4 million Latin Americans, nearly a million North Americans and 7 million Asians also are living with HIV, and India and China may still lie ahead in the epidemic's path (*The Washington Post*, July 19, 1999).

Taiwan Sticks to Sovereignty Declaration—Much to U.S. Chagrin

Taiwan has refused to back down from President Lee Teng-hui's declaration that the island was abandoning the "One China" concept, despite economic, political and military threats from Beijing. However, Taiwan has yet to face the likely threats from the U.S., which is attempting to mend relations with Beijing and so does not appreciate being put in the middle of a new crisis (Stratfor.com, Global Intelligence Update, July 14, 1999).

Missile Tests and North Korea's Strategy of Survival

North Korea has sort of announced that they are about to test a new missile in August, a missile able to reach parts of Alaska. The U.S. has a carrier battle group in Pusan, South Korea. The Japanese are pleading with the Chinese, the Mongolians and anyone else who will listen to get the North Koreans to stop the test. A report is being prepared by a former U.S. Secretary of Defense on the whole North Korean problem. For a country that was supposed to starve to death during each of the past five winters, the North Koreans have done remarkably well in making themselves the focus of major powers. That achievement was not accidental. It was part of a skillful strategy we call the "Crazy Fearsome Cripple Gambit." In its own way, it is a work of art (Stratfor's Global Intelligence Update, Weekly Analysis, July 12, 1999).

House Passes Bill to Restrict Teen Abortions

WASHINGTON: (AP)—The House approved new abortion restrictions... by voting to make it more difficult for a minor to end a pregnancy.

Under a bill adopted 270-159, anyone who avoids parental involvement laws by taking a pregnant girl out of

state for an abortion could be prosecuted in federal court. But the vote was more than a dozen short of the required two-thirds majority, or 286 votes, needed to overturn a threatened White House veto.

Supporters said the measure will protect the rights of parents, the health and well-being of their minor children and uphold laws in more than 30 states requiring parental consent or notification for their minor daughter's abortion.

Opponents argued that most minors already involve parents in the decision to have an abortion. They said girls who cannot turn to a parent, for whatever reason, would be isolated and left to handle the situation alone.

The White House is threatening a veto unless the bill is amended to exclude from liability close family members, counselors and medical professionals (Darlene Superville, AP, June 30, 1999).

When Terrorists Turn to the Internet

It's 8 a.m., morning rush hour in New York. People and cars move slowly and somewhat irritably toward the city. Suddenly, the power goes down and traffic lights cease working. Everything comes to a complete stop.

Meanwhile, half a country away, the water system malfunctions in Detroit. Then, in Dallas, air traffic becomes dangerously chaotic as guidance systems go offline.

On the surface, it seems like a series of unconnected events. But information security experts say it could also be the sign of a terrorist cyber-attack—well-coordinated, extremely effective, and so anonymous it leaves its targets not quite sure what happened.

While the above situation has never taken place, many industry experts say it could. In fact, they're somewhat surprised it hasn't already.

The U.S. government and U.S. businesses know that developing an effective response to cyber-terrorism is essential. This, at least, is the first step, even though they have a long way to go in addressing the problem (Tom Regan, *The Christian Science Monitor*, July 1, 1999).

Kashmir Crisis Was Defused on Brink of War

Two months ago, as fighting raged between Indian and Pakistani forces in the disputed province of Kashmir, American spy satellites revealed a new and alarming development hundreds of miles to the south. In the desert state of Rajasthan, elements of the Indian army's main offensive "strike force" were loading tanks, artillery and other heavy equipment onto flatbed rail cars.

India, it seemed, was preparing to invade its neighbor.

At least in the short term, President Clinton helped avert that prospect during his widely reported Independence Day

meeting with Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, who agreed after hours of tense discussions to withdraw the forces that had triggered the flare-up in early May.

But the full dimensions of the crisis are only now coming to light. According to senior administration officials who spoke on condition of anonymity, the latest conflict over Kashmir came much closer to full-scale war than was publicly acknowledged at the time—and raised very real fears that one or both countries would resort to using variants of the nuclear devices each tested last year.

"This is one of the most dangerous situations on the face of the earth," said a senior administration official who closely tracks the issue. "It was very, very easy to imagine how this crisis...could have escalated out of control, including in a way that could have brought in nuclear weapons, without either party consciously deciding that it wanted to go to nuclear war." The danger is far from over (John Lancaster, *Washington Post*, July 26, 1999).

China, Falun Gong and the Politics of Economic Depression

China has become obsessed with a couple million middle-aged members of a group that does a lot of strange exercises and whose leader lives in New York. Sensible people—like those at the *New York Times*—can't understand why the Chinese government cares about Falun Gong when there are so many serious economic problems to worry about. That's a good point, since China is in deepening economic depression. The reason China is so concerned is because the Chinese know that there is no solution to their economic problems. Therefore, they are bracing for the social and political consequences of long-term economic failure. Beijing understands that in times of misery, seemingly harmless groups can suddenly challenge the regime. The crackdown on Falun Gong expresses Beijing's deep-seated insecurity. If China's economy can't recover, can the regime survive? President Jiang Zemin intends to do whatever is necessary to make certain it can (Stratfor's Global Intelligence Update, Weekly Analysis, July 26, 1999).

Hezbollah Vows to Continue the Fight

As a proposed peace agreement between Israel and Syria gains momentum, most of the militant Palestinian factions seem prepared to support the process. Even Hamas has taken a cautious wait-and-see approach to the talks. The Lebanese Hezbollah, however, is vowing to continue the fight. Yet judging by comments to the Lebanese press by Hezbollah leader Seyyed Hassan Nasrallah, even

(See "NEWS," page 15)

“FATHERLESS,” (Continued from page 16)

Palace, his beloved getaway that he turned into a home for neglected children.” Here, within the glimmering white walls, Hussein is simply called “Daddy” by the young residents. “It’s still a shock; we miss him so much,” said Sahar, 14, who was abandoned as an infant, but came to know the king on a first name basis.

Hussein inherited his royal titles, but how did he come by this endearing one?

The reporter defines the moment. “In 1997, when Hussein made an unscheduled visit to a children’s shelter in Amman, run by his own foundation... [he] was appalled by the conditions. He found malnourished children living in filthy, crowded conditions. In some cases there was evidence of abuse.” It is here that the king followed the counsel of another Middle East ruler of another time whose thoughts are found in Proverbs 25:2–3. “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.”

Hussein dug deep into himself to make a difference. “After tossing and turning for much of the next night, Hussein gave the abrupt order to turn the ornate guesthouse into a children’s palace.” Tayseer Elias, the clinical psychologist who directs the orphanage, states the moment of decision came, “with a snap of his fingers and it was done. The children went from the worst of conditions to the best.” Perhaps unknowingly, but not unwittingly, the king echoed the United Nations declaration that “Mankind owes to the child the best it has to give.” As a wise ruler and parent, Hussein recognized that you must deal with children when they are young, or you will have to deal with them when they are older.

Reporter Torriero describes the palace as “being outfitted for children who range in age from several months to mid-teens. Bedrooms were turned into dorm rooms. Financed mostly by the royal family’s private coffers, the orphanage hired a staff of cooks, doctors, nurses and teachers. Under Hussein’s personal direction, each child’s condition was recorded and monitored. The children were given clothes, but not regal garb. They are given healthy meals, but not gourmet cuisine.” And they were sent to a suburban neighborhood school where they mixed with local Jordanian children.

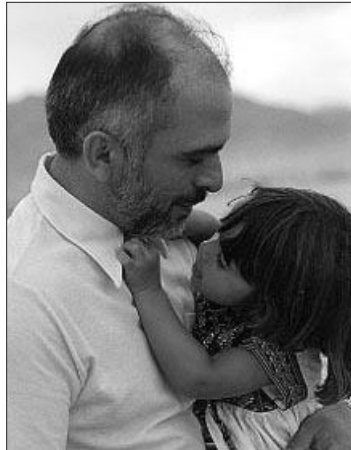
The Personal Touch

Beyond the physical realm it was Hussein’s personal touch that truly was the bond. Proverbs 20:28 states, “Mercy and truth preserve the king, and by lovingkindness he upholds his throne.” It is said that King Hussein insisted on knowing details of many of the children’s lives. He often showered them with gifts. Director Elias said, “It was as if they were his own children.” Young 14-year-old Sahar, who was left on the doorstep of a shel-

ter as an infant, said Hussein became her father figure. “You could talk to him,” she said. “When he came around, we knew we were safe.”

Hussein hid news of his advancing cancer from the children of the orphanage. But there would be a time when he could no longer come back. While the king’s death shook his nation, children at the orphanage were especially traumatized. Some fainted. Others became ill. All feared the government would close the orphanage. “They were afraid of going back to the miserable life they had lived before they came here,” said Director Elias. Only days after the king’s death, his successor and son, King Abdullah II, visited the orphanage with his wife and promised to keep it open. He lives on a hilltop mansion that the children pass on their way to school every day.

As the children remember King Hussein in life and death and the enduring kindness of his son, the echo of Proverbs 29:14 clearly cements the compact between king and subjects: “The king who judges the poor with truth, his throne will be established forever.” There is a cause and effect that cannot be dismissed.



Children loved King Hussein, shown here with Princess Haya

On the Day You Were Born

Long ago, God rescued an orphan people that the nations of this world had pushed aside. Ezekiel 16:4–7 vividly describes this event. “As for your nativity, on the day you were born your navel cord was not cut, nor were you washed in water to cleanse you; you were not rubbed with salt nor wrapped in swaddling cloths. No eye pitied you, to do any of these things for you, to have compassion on you; but you were thrown out into the open field, when you yourself were loathed on the day you were born. And when I passed by you and saw you struggling in your own blood, I said to you in your blood, ‘Live!’ Yes, I said to you in your blood, ‘Live!’ I made you thrive like a plant in the field; and you grew, matured, and became very beautiful.” God always took Israel back to this time of rescue in describing proper and responsible human relationships.

In Exodus 22:21, God takes them right back to this moment of rescue by stating, “You shall neither mistreat a stranger nor oppress him, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt. You shall not afflict any widow or fatherless child.” In taking them back to their roots as a people, God wanted them to offer as much as they had been given. Deuteronomy 10:18 completes the thought by stating God’s personal example that He desires His people, now and then, to emulate. “He [God] administers justice for the fatherless and the widow, and loves the stranger, giving him food and clothing.”

Let the Little Children Come

During His earthly ministry, Jesus set a marvelous example

Hezbollah has agreed not to launch attacks that could fundamentally disrupt the peace process. What brought Hezbollah in line? In all likelihood a promise from Syria that, if Hezbollah behaved itself, it could continue business as usual in southern Lebanon after the Israelis were gone. And in the Middle East, all rhetoric aside, business is business (Stratfor.com, Global Intelligence Update, July 28, 1999).

Ukraine Struggles Now for Neutrality

The pendulum of Ukrainian foreign policy swung closest to the West on June 12, when Kiev briefly closed Ukrainian airspace to Russian aircraft trying to reinforce Russian troops at Slatina airbase in Kosovo. For Moscow that was too far and Russia has launched a major campaign to reverse Ukraine's trajectory. Following very pointed discussions with Russian President Boris Yeltsin on July 4, Ukrainian President Leonid Kuchma has reaffirmed Ukraine's strategic partnership with Russia, while declaring neutrality to be at the root of Ukraine's foreign policy. For Kiev, NATO was a fleeting dream and neutrality is a desperate hope, but strategic partnership may be the final reality (Stratfor.com, Global Intelligence Update, July 15, 1999).

The Legacy of Kim Il-Sung

Flowers and trees are miraculously blooming out of season in honor of the fifth anniversary of the death of the late “Glorious Leader,” Kim Il-Sung. So reports North Korea's state press.

The defunct Kim, who founded North Korea in 1945, was just named “Eternal President” of the hermit nation of 25 million by his son and heir, “Beloved Leader” Kim Jong-Il, a semi-recluse who appears even more bizarre and unpredictable than his father. North Korea also used the occasion to blast the U.S. for “impudent interference, blackmail, and warmongering;” roasted the hated Japanese for “militarism” and warned of nefarious South Korean plots. In short, more vintage weirdness from dangerous, clearly psychotic North Korea (Eric Margolis, July 11, 1999).

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

by placing the needs of children at the top of His agenda. His aides and “handlers” had other ideas, but Jesus quickly stated the importance of children in His eyes.

Mark 10:13 shares the action. “Then they brought little children to Him, that He might touch them; but the disciples rebuked those who brought them. But when Jesus saw it, He was greatly displeased and said to them, ‘Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of God. Assuredly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will by no means enter it.’ And He took them up in His arms, laid His hands on them, and blessed them.”

In reading this wonderful account of Christ and remembering the story of King Hussein, I wonder how often the king's aides and handlers questioned the time he spent with the orphans of Hashimeyah Palace? “Sire, time to talk to the American president; time to visit Morocco; time to negotiate terms with Syria; time for [you fill in the blank].” But the reality is he filled these young lives not only with palace halls but the love of a king.

I Go to Prepare a Place

In an interesting parallel, Christ gives encouragement to His followers that He has rescued from a world cut off from their heavenly Father. He offers in a sense a “palace experience” far beyond what any earthly sovereign can offer. John 14:1–3 reads: “Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also.”

Before our reception into that “palace experience,” the prophecies of your Bible indicate humanity is going to perpetrate horrific acts. They are even going to battle against God. The events of Revelation 16, 17 and 18 indicate that divine judgment is going to be rendered on the armies of this earth. Between the events of the tribulation and the day of the Lord, many people are going to die. Ever thought of the number of orphans who are going to need care at the dawning of the Millennium? Who is going to care for them? Who does God say are going to be kings and priests?

Revelation 5:10 is an invitation to service. It is an invitation to extend the sensitivity and capacity to care that we have begun to develop with the challenges that we are now encountering. But then it will be astonishingly enhanced by the earthly presence of a heavenly King and all that His spiritual realm can offer. Revelation 5:10 is an invitation to intervene when you see help is needed, even if it means giving up a part of something precious—that is, until you see a greater need which cannot be measured in dollars. No, none of us has a palace in the wings to offer those less fortunate than we are in this life, but what we do have, we are to share and make a way. Nothing plus nothing equals nothing. But when we give our something, no matter how small, God can take that seemingly small something and make it everything to serve His purpose.

King Hussein offered the wisest of counsel about what really are true riches. “Many years from now it will not matter what my earthly possessions will have been. What will matter is that I was important...in the life of a child.” A king, a warrior, a “father to the fatherless” to orphans running around in palace halls looking for “Daddy”—it was in those moments of walking hand in hand with his young subjects that the king could turn around and say to us “this is the way, walk you in it.” ❖

This Is the Way...

“A Father to the Fatherless”

by Robin Webber

The dictionary defines orphan as “a child whose parents are deceased.” That’s a very short definition that is to the point, but it nowhere begins to reflect the long life of challenges that face young people in this predicament. For all of us who consider ourselves Christian, one telling scripture is James 1:27 that defines “pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble.” God succinctly points out that pure religion, or what we might call “the real stuff,” is not so much what we know, but much more what we are doing for others who have no way at this time in their lives to give to us in return. God lays special claim to such young ones by proclaiming in Psalm 68:5 that He is a “father of the fatherless.”

I want to share with you a remarkable example of a man now dead, whose memory lives in the heart of the fatherless, and whose legacy can be a tool for understanding our role in future events.

The Indianapolis Star recently picked up a story written by E.A. Torriero for the *South Florida Sun-Sentinel* titled “Jordanian Orphans Call Palace Their Home, Thanks to the Late King.” This piece was written shortly after the death of King Hussein of Jordan. It describes a unique love affair that emerged between a man of incredible privilege and wealth and orphans facing an uncertain future.

Torriero describes “pictures of the smiling, famous king—the man the peasant teenagers so dearly adored—hang neatly in every room of the ornate mansion.” Why the pictures? Why the adoration? The palace was King Hussein’s favorite retreat. High on a windswept hill, it gazed west to the glimmering lights of Jerusalem. Hussein built the \$87 million, two-story residence in the 1970s as living quarters for himself and his third wife, Queen Alia. After the queen was killed in a helicopter crash in 1977, Hussein buried her on a knoll within sight of his bedroom window. Upon the king’s remarriage, Hashemiyeh Palace became the official guesthouse for visiting dignitaries. President Clinton, Yasser Arafat, Israeli prime ministers and European leaders have all stayed here.

To Search Out a Matter

Today, the sprawling estate is home to Sahar Falah, who is neither a head of state nor a foreign dignitary. She is an orphan, and shares her home with 230 other orphans. Our reporter defines the late monarch as “a towering statesman, a playboy king, an iron-fisted ruler who carved a thriving Arab kingdom out of mostly barren desert. But within the royal family, one of the king’s most enduring legacies is Hashemiyeh

(See “**FATHERLESS**,” page 14)