



In This Issue:

November 2003 | Vol. 6, No. 9

Has America Lost Its "Moral Mind"?

by Cecil Maranville 1

Restoration: A Short History of Walls

by Darris McNeely 2

Europe at a Crossroads!

by John Ross Schroeder 5

History and Prophecy Coincide in Louisiana Purchase

by Fred Nance 7

Politics *Not* as Usual!

by Melvin Rhodes 10

In Brief... World News Review

by Cecil Maranville and John Ross Schroeder 12



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This Is the Way... The Ageless "Heart Steps" of a Pilgrim's Walk

by Robin Webber. 16

Has America Lost Its "Moral Mind"?

While You Were Sleeping was a movie several years ago about dramatic developments in a family when one of its members was in a coma. Were you sleeping last summer? Do you know what happened in the "American family"?

by Cecil Maranville

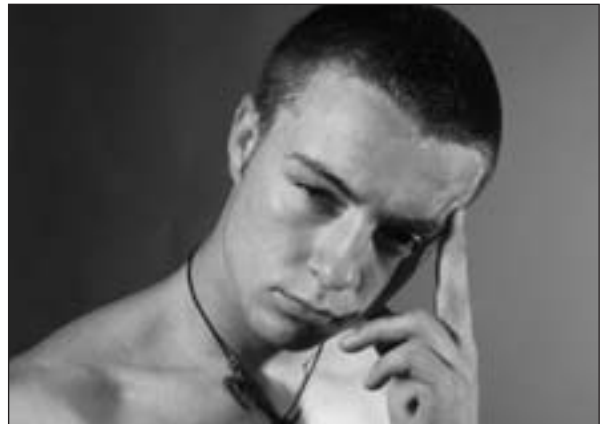
One of the most-watched television programs in the United States in the summer of '03 was *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy*. NBC ran the program on its cable outlet and was surprised by the audience it drew. So, NBC executives decided to air a rerun on their regular network stations, which is backwards from the way this usually works. The response again surprised them, so they aired yet another rerun.

This is but one of many family-hour television shows whose programming catapults over the barrier of what used to be thought of as taboo only a few years ago. Gay themes dominated the summer programming in cable and reality channels. In addition to the above, the following were gay or had overtly gay themes: *Boy Meets Boy*, *The Amazing Race*, *Chained*, *Survivor* and *Big Brother*.

I think of the summer of 2003 as the time when America lost its moral mind.

It was the summer of "the kiss." Madonna, Britney Spears and Christina Aguilera were performing at the annual MTV awards. Madonna turned to

Britney and they exchanged an open-mouthed kiss, after which Madonna turned to Christina and they did likewise.



Stockbyte

Where do you stand? Is your authority Hollywood's standard, community opinion, your own ideas—or the supreme, beautiful, wise and merciful law of God?

I did not watch the awards program, but was listening to a cable news show the next morning while preparing breakfast. When the reporter said, "Things got a little out of hand at the MTV awards last night," I reflexively looked up at the screen. I was sorry I did.

Network news, cable news and
(See "MORAL MIND," page 3)



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

Subscriptions: *World News and Prophecy* is sent free to members of the United Church of God, and all who request it. There is no subscription price. To request a subscription, write to *World News and Prophecy*, P.O. Box 541027, Cincinnati, OH 45254-1027, phone (513) 576-9796 or download from www.ucg.org

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"Whom heaven must receive until the times of

Restoration

of all things ... ACTS 3:21

A Short History of Walls

On a recent trip to Great Britain, our tour stopped at a portion of Hadrian's Wall in the northern part of England. Since childhood I had read about this famous wall erected in the second century by the Roman Emperor Hadrian. In its time, it stretched 73 miles from coast to coast across the country. It was built to keep out the barbarian Picts from the north, in what is today Scotland. It succeeded while it, and the will of the Romans, lasted.

But times change and most walls like this eventually become relics of failed ideas. Rome eventually retreated from Britain. Most of the wall was pulled down and its stones were used to build homes and barns, roads and smaller boundary walls between properties. What is left today can be easily stepped over by an average-sized adult. The section I viewed is in the midst of a modern town. Traffic roars by it, and the locals mostly ignore it.

History tells of other walls. In China before the time of Christ, emperors began construction on a great system of walls to again protect their rule and boundaries from invading peoples. This became one of the largest building projects ever constructed. It worked for a time, but eventually other technologies made it obsolete.

Fourteen years ago this autumn, another wall came down. In Berlin, a wall built in 1962 to keep East Germans from fleeing into the city's western sector came crashing down in a triumphal display of freedom trumping oppression. To have seen the Berlin Wall in its time was to witness the futility of a human government's ability to solve fundamental problems. Walls do not solve fundamental issues of human beings. They can serve a partial and temporary purpose for security and protection. But in the end, they will be rendered ineffective and be torn down through a change in thinking.

In Israel today, another wall is going up. To provide its citizens protection from Palestinian terrorists, a security wall is being erected along the borders between Israeli and Palestinian settlements. In addition to concrete and wire, the system will include sophisticated sensors designed to monitor any movement along the system. Millions of dollars are going into this effort to provide security for a beleaguered nation intent on holding on to its place in the world. If history is any indicator, this wall will one day fall and become another relic of human experience.

In an imperfect world in which nations continue to "lift swords" against each other, a strong case can be made for the temporary protection provided by "walls" of security. Bible prophecy shows that people will one day achieve the security all men seek, not through walls and not by their own efforts. God inspired Ezekiel to write of a time when Jesus Christ will help people to live securely in "unwalled villages" (Ezekiel 38:11).

In the world to come, when all things are restored, peace will be achieved among nations without the need of any kind of wall. Even now, every individual who is willing can seek God's help to tear down the walls that divide people and insulate us from paths of reconciliation—knowing that Christ's supreme sacrifice destroyed the "wall of separation" that stood in the way of genuine spiritual reconciliation to God and each other (Ephesians 2:13-14). Which way do you choose?

—Darris McNeely

Read *World News and Prophecy* as soon as it is completed. The next issue is scheduled to be available by Dec. 10 on the Internet at:

<http://www.ucg.org/wnp/>

“MORAL MIND,” (Continued from page 1)
entertainment news shows repeated the scene countless times in the following days—and in doing so, lent credence to the deed as being newsworthy, as well as fit for viewing. In fact, neither is true.

This fall sees the addition of *It’s All Relative*, a sitcom with a homosexual “couple.” And cable will introduce the first lesbian-themed show, *The L Word*.

Brace yourself for worse still

Cable television launched a new channel in the late summer, “Spike TV,” designed to go even further than the sleazy summer programming went. Read what John Motavalli wrote about it in “Spike TV: Pushing the Limit.”

“Pushing aside prohibitions on bad taste, sex, naughty language and general prurience, Spike TV plans to *test the limits of what is acceptable* on basic advertiser-supported cable TV in a big way . . .

“This kind of programming—a mix of violence, sex and sophomoric stunts—is bursting out all over basic cable, which is not regulated by the Federal Trade Commission and is therefore, theoretically, reined in only by concerns of cable operators and advertisers” (*Television Week*, Sept. 1, 2003, online edition, emphasis added).

A false virtue

What’s happened in the United States—a country built upon Judeo-Christian values? Subjects that were once taboo and considered inappropriate for public discussion are not only spoken of, but are presented as everyday actions. I have a theory. I believe that a generation of people grew up being taught, whether in so many words or by example, that the highest virtue of all is tolerance. By that, I mean never condemning anyone for anything. We constantly hear of lawsuits and court rulings that punish any action or even an implication of intolerance.

Make no mistake—tolerance is a godly virtue or value. My point is that it does not supercede or cancel out all other values God gave mankind in His Word. Intolerance can be truly damaging. Intolerance of different racial or ethnic groups is wrong. Intolerance of

opinions different from your own is boorish. Looking down one’s nose at passersby on the basis of what they “seem like” to you reflects the pettiness of a childish bully. Leaping to negative opinions of others based upon sketchy information or assumptions is loutish behavior.

However, tolerance of *evil* is wrong in itself! I realize that many people have a great issue with calling any action “evil” or “sin”—but this is evidence that they embrace the false premise that tolerance trumps all other standards of behavior that God revealed to mankind in His Holy Word.



One of the most-watched television programs in the United States in the summer of '03 was Queer Eye for the Straight Guy.

These “new Americans” undoubtedly have opinions that certain actions are wrong; everyone does. But they purr, “We mustn’t judge anyone,” because that is what society has trained them to say. A friend of mine quipped, “Some people are so open-minded that their minds should be closed for repairs!”

Sadly, many people who would describe themselves as believers of God have accepted the theological mush served to them by today’s Christendom. Consequently they, too, gullibly believe there is something wrong with thinking in terms of moral law (that is, God’s law) governing human behavior.

People with horrible values and trashy standards vigorously promote their way of thinking, as evidenced by the seismic shift in television program-

ming over the past summer. And many people bit their tongues, because, “We must not judge.”

A different Christ from what some think

Some cite Christ as an example of one who tolerated anyone and everything, which intrigues me. I am guessing these people don’t read the Bible. “Jesus did not judge or condemn anyone,” they declare, but *they are wrong*. He said to the woman caught in the act of adultery, “Sin no more” (John 5:14).

He did not say or intimate, “Oh, adultery is no big deal; everyone is doing that sort of thing these days. I mean, it’s not like you killed someone or anything as serious as all that.”

Further, He did not attempt to parse wrong behavior with, “Well, it depends on what your definition of ‘adultery’ is.” Nor did He make a case about consenting adults. And He didn’t announce that He was basing His judgment on community standards.

He made a judgment that her behavior was wrong—and told her to stop it!

Today, people like to pretend that some wrongdoing is “social sin” and therefore not serious. If some sins are “social,” do we mean that other sins are “unsocial”? That’s ridiculous babble! In an attempt to excuse wrongful behavior, people parse the concept of sin in odd ways. “If it doesn’t hurt anyone, it’s permissible.” “If every party involved consents to an action, it is OK.” “When one is an adult, he can decide right from wrong on his own.”

This kind of thinking spells trouble for our people. I appreciate the fact that

Correction

The August 2003 column of “This Is the Way” entitled “When the Really Big One Doesn’t Get Away” (page 14) inadvertently applied the principles found in Matthew 10:28 in relationship to Satan being the enemy of mankind. While Satan can certainly be considered a destroyer of humanity’s potential, only God alone can ultimately destroy “both body and soul in hell.” The verse is clearly speaking of God’s perogatives, not Satan’s ability.



Many who consider themselves Christian accept a stand that actually is no different from those moral relativists who believe they can and should decide right and wrong for themselves.

U.S. President George W. Bush often says, “May God continue to bless America,” but I think: “We cannot expect that to continue, Mr. President, if our society persists on its present course.”

I believe that Mr. Bush means what he says, but many other prominent U.S. politicians routinely tag an appeal line for God’s blessing at the end of their speeches. In comparing notes on this topic with John Ross Schroeder, our British correspondent, he reminded me that this customary plea for a divine blessing has no parallel among British politicians. And yet, he remarked, Sir Winston Churchill did not shrink from saying plainly that England’s people needed the strength of God.

“We don’t do God”

In stark contrast, Alistair Campbell, former assistant to Prime Minister Tony Blair, once quipped, “We don’t do God.” That’s too true. So, how long will He continue to do for us?

Let’s go back to the situation

between Christ and the woman. By speaking of her adultery as “sin,” He acknowledged that there is a divine law that governs human behavior. If you believe in Christ, you must accept the fact that there is right and there is wrong. You must also accept the fact that defining right versus wrong behavior is not a matter for the community, the courts or the individual. Rather, it is God’s sole prerogative.

Many who consider themselves Christian accept a stand that actually is no different from those moral relativists who believe they can and should decide right and wrong for themselves. The nominal Christian version is, “Christians will know right from wrong by nature.” But they do not realize the Bible teaches that even Christians have a nature inclined to spiritual destruction and that they, too, need the guideposts of the law of God. (See our booklet, *Transforming Your Life—The Process of Conversion* for the full story.)

Proverbs 29:18 says, “Where there is no revelation, the people cast off

restraint; but happy is he who keeps the law.” The King James Version has “vision” for “revelation” and the Revised Standard Version has “prophecy.” All mean the same: if people receive no knowledge from God and/or reject His authority, if they look to themselves for standards, they will cast off all restraint.

Well, Americans either aren’t hearing God or they have indeed rejected His guidance, for the majority of the entertainment industry and millions who drink in the brews they concoct have assuredly cast off all restraint. The shift in television programming to championing immorality, filthy talk and violence, coupled with the public appetite for it, makes me think that the summer of 2003 was when America lost its moral mind.

Where do you stand? Do you have “a moral mind”? Is your authority Hollywood’s standard, community opinion, your own ideas—or the supreme, beautiful, wise and merciful law of God?

Read, request or download *The Ten Commandments* to discover how God’s law pertains to the Christian and to all aspects of everyday life. You may be surprised to learn how relevant every one of these laws is today. And, like the Proverb promised, genuine happiness will come to those who live by God’s moral standard. ✦

Recommended Reading

Millions want the Ten Commandments to be kept on display, but how many really know all of them or how and *why* God wants us to keep them? Request *The Ten Commandments* booklet to explore the Bible teaching on this vital subject. It is provided free of charge.



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Europe at a Crossroads!

Major choices on the European continent are now in the offing. Crucial decisions on defense (NATO or an EU army), the new European draft constitution and a critical one at the very pinnacle of the Vatican will be made in the not too distant future. In the light of biblical prophecy, where are these European events and trends leading the world?

by John Ross Schroeder

From its inception, *World News and Prophecy* has continually covered the European scene—both with broad brushes and, as required, in detail. This is not due to any innate bias or prejudice against this historic part of the globe, but because of Europe's central importance in fulfilling biblical prophecy.

When we consider the broad, global context of the entire Olivet Prophecy, certainly in principle the instruction of Jesus Christ includes the solemn duty of watching major news events and world trends that would signal the end of this present age (see Luke 21:34-36; Mark 13:34-37). In Mark 13, three times in the space of four verses Jesus emphasizes the importance of keeping a watchful eye, which would include unfolding world events as well as our own spiritual condition.

Note His concluding emphasis in verse 37: "What I say to you, I say to everyone: Watch!" (New International Version.) No one is exempted. We dare not neglect the plainly declared instruction of our Savior.

Notice how the European scenario has been developing. Let's begin with the current controversy over defense.

NATO or a European Union army?

Britons were shocked by a recent headline in *The Sunday Times*: "Germans Want British Army to Be Run by EU." The companion headline in *The Daily Mail* was even more arresting: "Germans Seek Control of Our [Britain's] Nuclear Weapons."

The Sunday Times article continues: "German military chiefs want Britain to hand control of its nuclear weapons to Europe, it emerged last night. The idea comes in a disturbing document from the German defence ministry, setting out the aspirations for a future Euro Army. It talks of Germany's 'visionary goal' for a comprehensive land, sea and air force financed by the European Parliament and built on the proposed EU constitution" (Oct. 24, 2003).

These proposals come on the heels of gravely expressed American concern about this fledgling

European army and why it is needed in addition to NATO. Washington has already reacted to Franco-German defense planning for an independent EU army by requesting crisis talks with its NATO comembers—fearing that it would undermine the military organization dominating the defense of Western Europe almost since the conclusion of World War II (remember that France is not a member of NATO).

Although the leading European nations (including Britain) have moved to calm U.S. fears, Washington remains somewhat suspicious of the motives for a Euro army independent of the NATO command structure. The most recent attempt to allay American concerns came from Peter Struck, the German defense minister. He went so far as to say that the EU planning unit should be attached to NATO.

Previously, British Prime Minister Tony Blair stated, "I will never put NATO at risk," with the accompanying declaration of simultaneously remaining loyal to both NATO and the EU army (*The Daily Telegraph*, Oct. 18, 2003). It calls to mind the words of Jesus Christ, "No man can serve two masters."

An American official responded by saying that "a spearhead defense group of limited membership could deflect Britain's engagement in NATO and take on a divisive life of its own" (*International Herald Tribune*, Oct. 27, 2003).

The new European Constitution

Normally Buckingham Palace says very little about politics, remaining generally aloof, as Britain is a constitutional monarchy. However, Queen Elizabeth II apparently signaled concern to 10 Downing Street over where the contents of the proposed European constitution will leave the British royal family.

According to *The Sunday Times*, "*The Daily Telegraph* has learnt that Buckingham Palace has asked for documents highlighting the constitutional implications of the EU's plans to be sent to her [the queen's] advisers. Her worries came to light as Tony Blair prepared for an EU summit

World News and Prophecy has continually covered the European scene because of Europe's central importance to fulfilling biblical prophecy.

today in Brussels, where European leaders will begin final negotiations on the text for the new EU treaty” (Oct. 16, 2003).

The British Labour MP for Birkenhead, Frank Field, recently articulated a worst-case scenario for the palace. “It is wonderful that at last the palace has got wise to this,” he said. He further indicated that in most respects the EU constitution would relegate the queen to the role of a “glorified head of a county council” (*The Daily Telegraph*, Oct. 16, 2003).

Negotiations and bargaining have now begun in earnest over just where the real power will constitutionally reside in the new Europe. Although current EU membership numbers 15 states, another 10 are slated to be added in due time. A *Daily Mail* feature article sums up the fight over the final power structure. “The disputes pit a majority of small member states fearful of losing influence against the big powers—Germany, France, Italy and Britain—who are determined that their population size and political weight are effected in decision-making” (Oct. 17, 2003).

The Labour government is very proactive in resisting any and all attempts to persuade it to submit the new European constitution to a referendum of the British people. Opponents insist that giving up so much sovereignty in so many crucial areas of national life requires the permission of the country’s citizens.

Praise for John Paul II and the impending change

Recently several British newspapers have almost “deified” Pope John Paul II in their praise of his reign. The following statement published in *The Financial Times* is a case in point: “For his leadership and authority in these challenging times, how fitting it would be for Karol Wojtyla, the humble Polish priest, to be remembered as *John Paul the great*” (Oct. 16, 2003, emphasis added).

His reign as pope will be a hard act to follow. But it is his creation of so many cardinals (mostly men who reflect his worldview) that might ensure that the pontiff’s conservative policies will survive his death. Nonetheless, there is a widening gap between belief and actual practice among the Roman Catholic membership, especially in Europe and the United States. Pressures for liberalization of the

official policies have been relentless. It may prove doubly hard for the pope’s successor to hold the line. And world events themselves may well shape the political policies of the next pontiff.

Some observers think it may be easier for a pope from Africa or Latin America to resist the cries for change on such issues as birth control, celibacy, divorce and annulment. The faithful in the developing world are thought to be generally less liberal in outlook and perhaps more easily influenced by their religious leaders.

There is a clarion call among some cardinals to “look to the third world for a pope—not tired old Europe” (*The Times*, Oct. 22, 2003). Even so, the demographics of the newly expanded College of Cardinals is nearly 49 percent European.

Remember that Bible prophecy clearly indicates that the last person to occupy the papal throne will play a major part in the revitalized new Europe to come—currently unimagined and undreamed of by the vast majority of mankind. (For further understanding of this vital point, please request our free brochure, *The Book of Revelation Unveiled*.)

The foundation of the new Europe?

The public deceptions about Europe are many. But perhaps none is so potentially damaging as the misconception that “reason, not emotion will be the foundation of a new Europe” (*The Financial Times*, Oct. 11, 2003). This concept flies in the face of contemporary history on the European continent, especially in the 20th century.

The writer adds: “Europeans should be grateful that the EU will not for decades be able to mount an appeal to its peoples based on gut emotion. We all know to what horrors such appeals have historically led.” We have a different view. To use the vernacular, don’t bet on the timing!

The Bible shows that in the future the European populace and much of the rest of the world *will be swayed by raw emotion* induced by supernatural miracles. Indeed the book of Revelation tells us that the whole world (misled by raw emotion) will worship a future charismatic European political leader termed “the beast” along with his religious counterpart, “the false prophet.”

That is, all except those relative few who have allowed the Bible to alert and enlighten them to the true significance of future events. God’s Word terms these called-out ones, “the firstfruits.” (If you are seeking such biblical understanding, you can have a unique opportunity to truly comprehend God’s truth and avoid being misled by the deceptions of the devil that cloud the minds of most human beings today.)

Even now *Daily Telegraph* reporters in Berlin tell us about the supposed need for a “Teutonic Margaret Thatcher to reverse Germany’s increasingly sclerotic economic performance” (Oct. 14, 2003). This notion is gaining ground among influential thinkers in Germany.

The Fatherland is now struggling with many complex financial problems like the aging population, high unemployment and a struggling economy. Even though Mrs. Thatcher formerly labeled the euro as “a German racket designed to take over the whole of Europe,” her past leadership in Britain is still much admired in Germany.

Clearly the notion of rescue from severe economic problems by a strong leader has not left the German psyche. This approach to deliverance has a ringing emotional element.

Summing up

Europe certainly appears to be at a crossroads in at least three major areas: defense, the new EU constitution and the papacy. Watching the news on a day-by-day basis can sometimes prove confusing, because the world’s news media lacks the filter that Bible prophecy gives us. Realistically, it is virtually impossible to correctly comprehend and assess world events without obtaining a much-needed biblical background.

For starters we offer the following free brochures: *You Can Understand Bible Prophecy*, *The Book of Revelation Unveiled* and *Are We Living in the Time of the End?* Although there is some overlap in content, each will emphasize a distinct but complementary approach to understanding biblical prophecy. You need to request and carefully read these three brochures in order to fully understand the significance of today’s world news, especially on the European scene. ❖

History and Prophecy Coincide in Louisiana Purchase

One of history's greatest bargains was a step forward in one of the Bible's most significant physical promises.

by Fred Nance

This year marks the 200th anniversary of the Louisiana Purchase, one of the greatest land deals in the history of the world. It involved the peaceful transfer of 900,000 square miles of territory from which all or part of 13 states in what is now the central part of the United States were formed. Much of what is considered the heartland of the country, with an abundance of agricultural wealth, was purchased at a bargain price. Yet it almost didn't happen.

The major European power that controlled the area at the time the United States gained its independence did not want to see the infant republic expand into the territory. Another European country that obtained the region by a secret treaty had designs of colonization by its people. Even political forces within the United States were against westward expansion.

Despite all of these forces against pioneering this bountiful land, it was destined to be peopled by the descendants of Joseph, one of the tribes of ancient Israel. God promised the patriarch Abraham, "I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing" (Genesis 12:2). The Louisiana Purchase was a major step in fulfilling this prophecy and others that followed to Isaac and Jacob, for its territory doubled the size of the young country and set it on course to become the major world power of the latter 20th century.

All of the history and the various intrigues that led up to the famous Louisiana Purchase are described in a new book titled *A Wilderness So Immense* by Jon Kukla. Unless otherwise noted, all quotations are from Mr. Kukla's book.

Louisiana

The French explorer, Robert Cavelier De La Salle, led an expedition south from Quebec down the Mississippi River to the Gulf of Mexico, passing through what he described as

"the most beautiful country in the world" (p. 30). On April 9, 1682, he claimed the interior of the continent for France and named it "Louisiana" after the king of France, Louis XIV.

During the Seven Years War (1756-1763), France was fighting against Great Britain and Prussia on two fronts, Europe and North America. France eventually lost the war and, through a treaty, ceded Canada to Great Britain and the Louisiana territory to Spain.

Carlos III, king of Spain, now had control of the vast land tract just about 13 years before the United States would declare its independence from Great Britain. He was glad to obtain this huge land mass, since it served as a buffer between the American colonists and the rich silver mines of Mexico. Spain now controlled not only most of South America but a huge part of North America as well.

Silver production was booming in Mexico, accounting for half the export trade of the entire Spanish Empire. Thus, the Louisiana territory in Spanish hands served to keep the aggressive colonists away from the lucrative silver production in Mexico, and the king of Spain wanted to keep it that way.

Navigation of the Mississippi

Separating the now Spanish Louisiana territory and the newly independent United States was the mighty Mississippi River, which served as a rapid means to move trade goods down to the port of New Orleans. Many colonists flocked to the west along the tributaries of this great river to try to make their fortunes. "The navigation of the Mississippi we must have" (p. 20), wrote Thomas Jefferson as he set out to negotiate with Spain for those rights.

The king of Spain sent a special minister, Don Diego de Gardoqui, to negotiate Mississippi navigation rights, but the king's objective was to stall and delay with no real intention of granting the Americans' request.

The Louisiana Purchase was one of the greatest land deals in the history of the world. Yet it almost didn't happen.



The Louisiana Purchase involved the peaceful transfer of 900,000 square miles of territory from which all or part of 13 states in what is now the central part of the United States were formed. Much of what is considered the heartland of the country, with an abundance of agricultural wealth, was purchased at a bargain price.

He began bargaining separately with the New England states, whose fishing industry was becoming lucrative. Gardoqui encouraged a separate northern confederacy and a commercial treaty with Spain.

This scheme had potential, as many in the New England states did not see the value of the Mississippi and westward expansion. A heated controversy developed between New England and the southern states, which desired free navigation of the river and westward expansion. The young nation came dangerously close to splitting apart only 12 years after gaining independence.

The Spanish intended to keep the Louisiana territory in their hands. In terms of world dominion of territory, the Spanish Empire was at its peak in the year 1786.

Rise of Napoleon Bonaparte

As long as Louisiana remained in its hands, Spain had no intentions of permitting Americans to enter the land. But events in Europe would change the situation dramatically.

God revealed to the prophet Daniel that it is He who “removes kings and raises up kings” (Daniel 2:21). Amazingly, at the precise time of the U.S. negotiations with Spain, a revolution took place that saw the king of France (Louis XVI) toppled and a fragile republican government established. Even more amazing is that bad weather set the stage for Louis’ defeat. On July 23, 1788, violent hailstorms destroyed crops and wildlife throughout most of France. “As though some biblical curse had been unleashed . . . drought followed the hailstorm” (p. 41). A terrible winter followed the drought. A prophetic scripture in Psalm 148:8 declares that God uses weather to accomplish His purpose: “Fire and hail, snow and clouds; stormy wind, fulfilling His word.”

Weather played a part in these historical events, enabling the emergence of the leader who would sell the vast Louisiana territory to the United States. Weather would again play a role in later events, as we shall see. Meanwhile, angry and starving Frenchmen became

organized, pushed by enlightenment ideas; the revolution became violent, culminating in the execution of King Louis XVI.

In 1792, an aggressive French Republic declared war on Austria and the following year on Great Britain and Spain. The war against the Spanish went well for France and soon Spain had to sue for peace. As part of a treaty, they gave up their short-lived alliance with Great Britain and the colony of Santo Domingo (now the Dominican Republic). Meanwhile, Napoleon Bonaparte, a military genius, was promoted to the rank of brigadier general at 24 years of age. He began moving up in power and grabbed total control of France. In 1799, he became a virtual dictator. Now, the players who would affect the historical land transfer we call the Louisiana Purchase were in place.

Napoleon had visions of regaining the former French colony of Louisiana in North America. As the war with France was going badly for Spain, Madrid decided to cut a deal and relinquish the territory to France. In a secret treaty, Spain ceded Louisiana back to France and on March 21, 1801, France took title to the land.

The U.S. government was unaware of these secret dealings, although it suspected something odd was afoot. Once discovered, the new development alarmed the foreign secretary of Great Britain, Baron Hawkesbury: “The acquisition might enable France to extend her influence and perhaps her dominion up the Mississippi and through the Great Lakes even to Canada” (p. 226).

Indeed, he had cause to be alarmed, because Napoleon began planning an expedition to occupy and fortify Louisiana in April 1801.

Napoleon wrote to his minister of marine on June 4, 1802, “My intention is that we take possession of Louisiana with the shortest possible delay, that this expedition be organized in the greatest secrecy, and that it have the appearance of being directed on St. Domingue” (p. 227). Furthermore, he directed the minister to plan “for the fortifications and batteries we should have to construct there in order to have a harbor and some men-of-war sheltered from superior forces” (p. 227).



Even Napoleon, reflecting upon the magnitude of the event said, "This accession of territory strengthens forever the power of the United States." What a great series of events to reflect upon. This little noticed 200th anniversary truly marks one of the greatest moments in American history.

The ambitions of Napoleon were to occupy, fortify and colonize the Louisiana territory. Had this happened, the course of history for the United States and the world would have changed! But events on Santo Domingo and, again, the weather would eventually force the dictator to change his plans.

He first sent an expedition to claim the sugar-producing island of Santo Domingo, from which the French were to move on Louisiana. A fierce rebellion by slaves on Santo Domingo forced the French into fighting a guerrilla war that expended thousands of troops. Yellow

fever then began to take its toll, claiming the lives of thousands of French soldiers.

Meanwhile, a second expedition set to go directly to Louisiana with 3,000 soldiers and many ships met numerous delays. Freezing weather for almost three months did not allow the fleet to set sail. Then a terrible storm damaged many of the ships. Napoleon became so disgusted with the problems and delays that he gave up on the whole idea and decided to sell the Louisiana territory!

The United States had sent special envoys to France (during all of the secret French maneuvers) with the hopes of buying New Orleans and maybe Florida (also then in French hands). Robert Livingston (one of the envoys) wrote that "Florida and New Orleans might be a cheap purchase at twenty millions of dollars" (p. 241). They were surprised when Napoleon offered them all of the Louisiana territory! They began to negotiate a price. It eventually cost \$15 million, which breaks down to be four cents an acre.

What a bargain!

"I give it to you"

In the book of Genesis, we read: "And the Lord said to Abram, after Lot had separated from him: 'Lift your eyes now and look from the place where you are—northward, southward, eastward, and westward; for all the land which you see I give to you and your descendants forever . . . Arise, walk in the land through its length and its width, for I give it to you'" (Genesis 13:14-15, 17).

The Nelson Study Bible adds an interesting commentary to verse 17: "Abram's walk in the land is a symbol-

ic act of taking possession. Abraham would not take possession of the land; his descendants would" (p. 29). This was partially fulfilled when the children of Israel took possession of the land of Canaan. But the Louisiana Purchase was an even greater fulfillment, as a major portion of Abraham's modern descendants took possession of a land promised to Abraham.

Consider the blessings promised to Abraham's descendant Joseph: "The blessings of your father are stronger than the blessings of the eternal mountains, the bounties of the everlasting hills; may they be on the head of Joseph, on the brow of him who was set apart from his brothers" (Genesis 49:26, NRSV). (See our booklet, *The United States and Britain in Bible Prophecy* for the full story.)

The Louisiana Purchase treaty was dated April 30, 1803, and after working out translations and the necessary ratifications, Louisiana was formally transferred to the United States from France on Dec. 20, 1803.

The great nation that God promised to make of one branch of Abraham's descendants took a huge leap forward from this time on. Even Napoleon, reflecting upon the magnitude of the event said, "This accession of territory strengthens forever the power of the United States" (p. 281). What a great series of events to reflect upon. This little noticed 200th anniversary truly marks one of the greatest moments in American history. ❖

Recommended Reading

What's ahead of us now? What does the Bible say about our future? We offer several well-researched booklets that can help. Request *You Can Understand Bible Prophecy*, *Are We Living in the Time of the End?* and *The United States and Britain in Bible Prophecy*. They are provided free of charge.



Contact any of our offices listed on page 2, or request or download them from our Web site at
www.ucg.org

Politics *Not* as Usual!

California and Switzerland may not have much in common. But in October, both had significant elections. A noteworthy contributing factor was the issue of immigration.

by Melvin Rhodes

California and Switzerland may not have much in common. When the former is mentioned most people think of sun and sand, while the latter evokes images of snow and mountains.

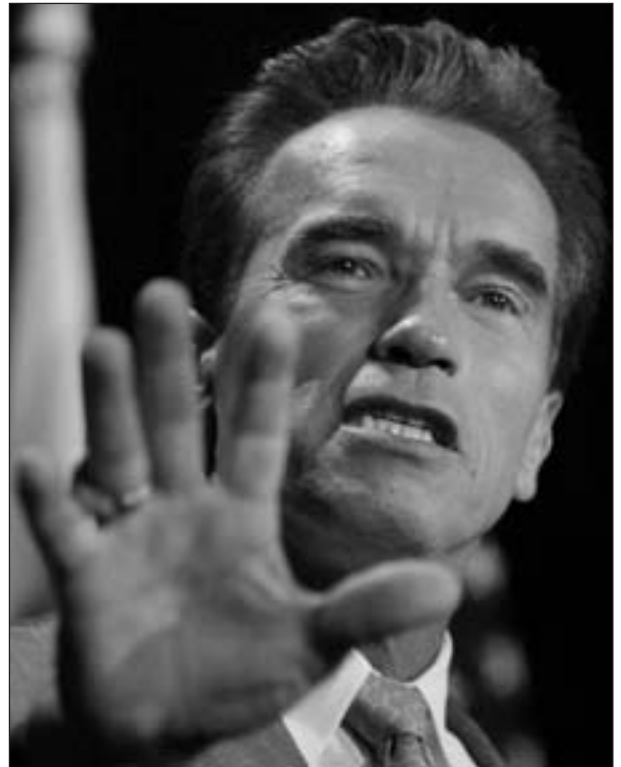
But in October both places had what may turn out to be significant elections. The results could be the beginning of a period in which it will be “politics *not* as usual.”

In the United States, California’s election received unprecedented coverage for a gubernatorial contest. A chief reason for this was the candidacy of movie star Arnold Schwarzenegger. With no political experience in his past, the former body builder was an easy victor, attracting the biggest voter turnout in the state’s history. The message for politicians? People are tired of politics and politicians—put a famous celebrity up for election and people will vote for him, even if he has no experience (perhaps *because* he has no experience!).

So what was so significant about Switzerland and how do the two fit together?

Switzerland has a unique form of democratic government. The country is effectively run by a seven-man council, elected by the Federal Assembly. In October, what the Western press has labeled as an “extreme right wing” party gained ground and is now the dominant force in the government.

The Swiss Peoples’ Party (SVP) is an anti-immigrant party that has gained public confidence in recent years, at the expense of the left-leaning Social Democrats. The change in the composition of the ruling council has ended a coalition government that held power for 44 years. Fears of the massive numbers of Islamic immigrants to Western Europe have been fueled by the



Reuters/Robert Galbraith

With no political experience in his past, movie star and former body builder Arnold Schwarzenegger was an easy victor, attracting the biggest voter turnout in California’s history.

attacks on the United States and subsequent terrorist attacks elsewhere.

Although the issue of immigration was not often openly expressed in the California election, it was nevertheless a primary reason for the election being held in the first place.

As Stephen Greenhut, a senior editorial writer and columnist for the *Orange County Register* in Santa Ana, California, stated it plainly in a recent article: “Open borders cost California billions—and maybe the governor his seat.”

Writing in *The American Conservative*,

In Switzerland, fears of the massive numbers of Islamic immigrants played a part in the change in power. Although the issue of immigration was not often openly expressed in the California election, it was nevertheless a primary reason for the election being held in the first place.

Mr. Greenhut showed the connection between immigration (people moving into the state), emigration (people moving out) and the state's resultant budgetary woes that precipitated the recall vote and victory for Mr. Schwarzenegger.

"Americans in other parts of the country generally have a hard time understanding how dramatically mass immigration has altered the California landscape. The raw numbers are startling: more than a quarter of the state's population is foreign born, with immigrants and their children composing nearly half of the state's population.

"The Census Bureau released statistics showing that between 1995 and 2000, 2.2 million Californians left the state for other states, whereas only 1.4 million people from other states moved here. Yet although many of the state's middle-class residents moved elsewhere, population has grown by about 600,000 a year, almost entirely from immigrants and their California-born children.

"As one commentator put it recently, California is becoming an island unto itself, ever more distinct from the remaining 49 states but ever closer in demographics and attachment to the Pacific Rim and Latin America.

"Old-fashioned assimilation still takes place, and many of the new immigrants can teach native-born Americans a lesson or two in hard work, family values, and independence from government. But facts are facts. California's population is expected to reach nearly 50 million by 2020, and almost all the growth is coming from relatively poor immigrants and the children of immigrants already living here.

"As former Controller Kathleen Connell, a Democrat, told me in an interview last year, 62% of the state's taxes are paid by 5% of the people. That 5% is mostly the aging Anglo population. These people are retiring to other states or taking their businesses elsewhere. They are being replaced by masses of immigrants who pay few taxes and use many public services" ("Total Recall," Sept. 8, 2003).

Greenhut adds, "Yet no one will

honestly talk about the mess." In fact, rather than have an open discussion on this problem with a view to finding a solution, the new governor-elect flew to Washington to ask the White House to help bail out the state.

Similar problems in Western Europe

The same situation prevails throughout Western Europe. While passing through England in early October, I saw newspapers spreading news of an admission from a government minister that each asylum seeker arriving in the country costs the U.K. taxpayer over 18,000 pounds per year. That's about \$30,000. In theory, asylum seekers are fleeing persecution. By international law they should be given asylum in the first country to which they flee, which you would think would be the nearest. Yet hundreds of thousands of asylum seekers each year are passing right through a number of democratic European nations en route for Britain, the majority crossing the English Channel by means of the many trains through Eurotunnel. Why? The United Kingdom provides them with more benefits.

Echoing the disillusionment of the California and Swiss electorates, one man I talked to about this while in England said he thought many would soon be voting for the BNP (British National Party, an anti-immigrant party that has not yet achieved office). Perhaps this is one reason the British government announced plans in late October to tighten up on asylum seekers who arrive without valid travel documents.

Across the Channel, France received much bad publicity lately in the United States, due to its anti-American stance on the question of Iraq. The press rarely mentions the immigration factor, one that undoubtedly helps shape policy. France has proportionately the greatest number of Muslims in the Western world, due to massive immigration since World War II from its former North African colonies. Fearing the kind of violence in the streets that brought down President Charles de Gaulle and



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Fearing the kind of violence in the streets that brought down President Charles de Gaulle and almost ended the Fifth Republic, Paris feels it has little room to maneuver.

almost ended the Fifth Republic, Paris feels it has little room to maneuver.

Fearful of the future, the neighboring Swiss sent a strong message to their government that they want no more immigrants from foreign cultures who will not or do not assimilate. Their fears seemed particularly directed at peoples from Islamic countries.

The numbers of people moving from one country to another has been growing in recent years, a reflection of economic and political problems in many of the world's less developed nations. Although some people are moving to the West out of fear for their lives, most make the move to advance themselves economically. While some of these attempt to become American, Swiss, British, French or German, many do not, preferring to retain their home culture in their new country. The presence of other cultures (including different religions) often leads to fear and friction.

The issue of immigration is not going to go away. Watch for more dramatic changes in future elections as a direct consequence. ❖

In Brief...

World News Review

California Burning

As we go to press, the firestorms that ravaged Southern California unchecked for several days are finally under control. A virtual army of firefighters 15,000 strong waged war on the monstrous fires. To give you an idea of how large a commitment of personnel and equipment that represents, that's 4,000 more people fighting the California fires than there are British troops on the ground in Iraq.

I am writing this in Phoenix, Arizona, where the skies are obscured with smoke and ash from the massive volume of debris roaring skyward carried by the normal winds and by the weather the storms themselves generate.

This is the worst disaster ever to hit the already-beleaguered state that has a \$38 billion deficit. Nearly 3,500 homes were destroyed, many of them worth several hundred thousands of dollars to more than a million. The burden of so many large claims on the pool of insurance funds will send shock waves through that industry.

The rebuilding will challenge Governor-elect Arnold Schwarzenegger's management skills. Elected largely on his promise to attract business to the state to invigorate revenue growth, instead of by raising taxes, he often added a footnote: "Unless there is a major disaster like an earthquake." In spite of the proportions of this disaster, he continues to promise he will not raise taxes. We will see if he is able to keep his word.

Undoubtedly, some television network or a movie studio is archiving video clips and has people at the drawing boards to rush to make the *California Firestorm of 2003* movie. There is a story to be told, for sure.

One element is the arsonist(s) who started several of the blazes. Journalists are already calling it a terrorist act, whether it turns out to be domestic or foreign. *The Arizona Republic* reported this summer that an al-Qaeda detainee told of a plot to ignite a series of brushfires in the western United States.

Conditions could not have suited their purpose better. The first fires were in the San Bernardino area to which San Diego firefighters committed crews. Then a hunter lost in the wilderness southeast of Julian, a tourist gold-mining town now famous for its apple orchards, lit a signal fire that quickly exploded into a fire of incredible ferocity. Covering 20 miles overnight, it swept down the slopes and into the small town of Santee on the outskirts of La Jolla. My son and daughter-in-law are on campus at the University of California at San Diego. The fire showered the campus with ash. They were told to pack their car and to be ready to leave on a moment's notice.

But, they couldn't get out of the San Diego area to go

east or north, because Interstates 5, 8 and 15 were all closed by fires! The winds changed overnight, and my children—along with hundreds of thousands of people in the same area—didn't have to flee, but the lesson was sobering. Smoke closed down the airport. Some could escape by going north on the Coast Highway, but it would accommodate only a fraction of the Southland's population, and they would eventually encounter another fire zone.

Much of San Diego's firefighting force was north of the city, fighting those early blazes. They couldn't get back to protect their own city for a while!

One of the largest population areas in the United States was virtually sealed off and threatened with disaster in a matter of a few hours, literally overnight. Who could imagine such a thing being possible?



Many lessons will be learned, such as allowing the Forest Service to trim the forests, so overgrowth doesn't fuel such fires, as well as lessons in managing people and materiel in a crisis on this massive a scale. Our hearts and prayers go out to all who suffered loss.

But will Americans learn, I mean really learn so they never forget, how truly finite and vulnerable we are? That all we know as normal can be turned inside out in mere moments?

That those pursuits and possessions that demand most of our time and attention can evaporate seemingly instantly?

Will the shock of this catastrophe turn the hearts of people to true values, and away from those material possessions that can burn up? As in all disasters—and I'm reminded of similar firestorms in Arizona last summer, which we reported on in *World News and Prophecy*—people are calling on God for help and mercy. How soon will they forget Him, put Him back in an "open only in case of an emergency" box?

Who Is God?

According to a September 2003 Harris Interactive Nationwide Survey in America about how people view God, 48 percent thought of Him as a spirit that is able to take on human form, 27 percent a spirit power that doesn't take on human form, 10 percent didn't believe in God at all and 9 percent thought of Him as a human being with a body (*USA Today*, Oct. 24, 2003, Atlantic edition). Although Americans are 10 times as likely as Europeans to attend church on a regular basis, there is still no general consensus about His nature in the United States.

Across the Atlantic, the British are generally much less precise in the way they express their views. In Britain we

hear and read of “devout skeptics” as people steadily turn away from organized religion by the thousands. Many of the intelligentsia talk of “a dimension of spirit that transcends the mundane” or “the sense of the numinous within the human spirit.” God is often viewed as “the quest for goodness” or some such similar expression (*The Times* [London], Aug. 25, 2003). The personal God of the Bible seems far from their thinking.

But what does Scripture actually tell us about God? To find out, please be sure to request our free 72-page booklet simply titled *Who Is God?*

The American Era of Suburban Megachurches

A curious trend in large church construction has been building up in America for the last several decades. First built in the 1950s, megachurches began to spread across California and the Bible Belt in the '80s. The trend has continued into the 21st century and has expanded into other areas of the United States.

The concept of super large churches can include large auditoriums or amphitheatres, giant office complexes distinguished by crosses, gyms and playing fields of various kinds. Commenting on these religious “Wal-Marts,” Scott Humma of the Hartford Institute for Religion Research said, “They’re playing on a whole different understanding of religion. It’s not something that looks like your parents’ faith. They’re tapping into the bigger is better, mall-like mentality of America” (*The Financial Times*, Oct. 25, 2003).

A growing number of these megachurches are non-denominational in outlook and embrace a mixture of conservative and liberal religious values. While supporting the Ten Commandments and decrying abortion, they may simultaneously accept Darwinism and reject creation. This modern approach to church construction is apparently bringing in the large numbers, but is bigger always better in the biblical sense?

God once told ancient Israel that they were “the fewest of all people” (Deuteronomy 7:7, KJV) and Jesus Christ said, “Fear not little flock” (Luke 12:32, KJV). The biblical Church today constitutes only the firstfruits of salvation, being the Israel of God (Galatians 6:16).

Many modern churchgoers do not even understand that the Church is the spiritual Body of Christ and not a physical building. They would be astonished by what the Bible itself says about the Church. Most have either forgotten or never known about the Church in Scripture. For further understanding, please request our free booklet *The Church Jesus Built*.

China Now in Space: A Warning for the West?

Some astute observers believe that China’s recent space shot has far more symbolic significance than just the first

Asian entry into outer space. If ultimately successful, it’s another feather in the Chinese cap, like hosting the Olympics in 2008.

British historian Andrew Roberts says that this space venture is another strong indication of “the dawn of a Chinese century” (*The Sunday Telegraph*, Oct. 19, 2003). To this historian, “It is high time that we woke up to the threat that an awakened Chinese empire poses for our present [English-speaking] global hegemony.”

Napoleon once referred to China as “a sleeping giant” and then predicted, “When she awakes she will shake the world.”

Beijing’s \$100 billion trade surplus with the United States is not the only economic concern about China worrying the Western nations. In the last 10 years the Chinese economy has grown by an annual average of 10 percent (*The Times*, Oct. 20, 2003). Present growth patterns indicate that it is poised to overtake France in 2004 and Britain in 2005 (*The Sunday Times*, Oct. 12, 2003).

If by midcentury (as some are predicting) China should replace the United States as the leading global superpower, the world might be “looking forward” to a new dark age of oppression reminiscent of the Third Reich. The 2003 annual report of Amnesty International comments about China’s performance: “Serious human rights violations continued and in some respects the situation deteriorated. Tens of thousands of people continue to be arbitrarily detained or imprisoned



for peacefully exercising their rights to freedom of expression, association or belief. Torture and ill treatment remain widespread” (*The Sunday Telegraph*, Oct. 19, 2003). Of course, some China watchers pin their hopes on potential political and cultural reforms.

The U.S. government clearly regards China as both a potential economic and mili-

tary threat to democratic institutions and our Western way of life. Even as the president was visiting several Asian countries, “Washington’s top envoy in Taiwan issued a blunt warning to the island to strengthen its defences, saying failure to do so would soon tip the military balance in favour of rival mainland China” (*The Financial Times*, Oct. 18, 2003).

Therese Shaheen, chairwoman of the American Institute in Taiwan, specifically said: “We have a serious problem because [China] is building up rapidly missiles across the strait, and doing a lot of other things that don’t show peaceful interest” (op. cit.).

Contributors: Cecil Maranville and John Ross Schroeder

“PILGRIM,” (Continued from page 16)

families had already endured 66 days at sea in a 128-foot craft named the *Mayflower*. Those whom we now call Pilgrims shared the ship with seafarers and mercenaries they called “the Strangers.” The eight families of Pilgrims found it impractical to change clothes in such tight quarters. They survived on a rationed diet of salted meat, hard biscuits, fried peas and preserves. On the rough and bumpy waters of the North Atlantic, “the Strangers” could often hear the voices below raised in chorus, “Yet, Lord Thou canst save!” as the *Mayflower* was tossed to and fro by the ocean waves.

They sought relief from a world that had grown foreign and perverted to them. The year 1620 found much of Europe embroiled in late Reformation and Counter-Reformation antagonisms. “The Saints” desired a new world where their religious ways would not be lost upon their children, as they had fled from England to the Netherlands and back again to England.

“It is not with us as other men”

So important was their religious way of life that they indentured themselves as bondservants to go forth and create a “particular plantation.” In seeking a sponsor, they advertised, “It is not with us as other men, whom small things can discourage, or small discontentments cause to wish themselves at home again.” Good thing, for they would have to prove their boast all along the way.

These people were as poorly equipped in everything but courage as any group that ever landed in America. They had guns but knew little about shooting. They planned to become fishermen but knew little about fishing. They expected to settle in Virginia, but landed in New England. In their first year of building Plymouth Plantation the community of “Saints and Strangers” would lose 15 of 18 wives, 5 of 28 children, 50 percent of the sailors, and only five of the eight families of “the Saints” would survive the rigors of the New England winter.

In April of 1621, with winter now past, the *Mayflower* set sail for England. It was then that Elder Brewster would

say, “We are now well-weaned from the delicate milk of our mother country.” There was no going back, but only forward to the goal yet ahead.

They made it through the coming year and when autumn came, they had a feast of Thanksgiving with Native Americans who had initiated them to the ways of wilderness survival. They feasted for three days on deer, geese, wild turkey and berries. They thanked God for their deliverance. In the course of time, “the Saints” would become known as the “old comers” and later would be called “the forefathers.” Today we commonly call them simply, “Pilgrims.”

Dateline: November 2003—

Your World Today As Christians from all nations, we have a fascinating linkage to these early Americans. Leaving old worlds behind and stepping onto new shores are steps of the heart not lost to history, but renewed and rekindled every day. The apostle Peter in 1 Peter 2:11 addressed the community of faith in his time, and for that matter, all times, as “sojourners and pilgrims.”

These terms are predicated upon Peter’s description that the people of God are a “chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy” (1 Peter 2:9-10).

But just what is a pilgrim?

Webster’s Dictionary defines a

pilgrim as, “a wanderer, sojourner, a person who travels to a shrine or holy place (i.e.—a destination).” *Roget’s Thesaurus* describes a pilgrim as one who is “a wayfarer, traveler, migrant, settler, pioneer, newcomer, and devotee.” *Webster’s* defines a sojourner as one who “lives somewhere temporarily as on a visit.” We come to a key observation that a pilgrim or sojourner is an individual who does not have a permanent residence. These people do not put down roots in some location of their own choosing. Why? They are on a quest towards a destination. As soon as they put down roots in some location of their own choosing, they are no longer pilgrims!



So important was their religious way of life that they indentured themselves as bondservants to go forth and create a “particular plantation.” In seeking a sponsor, they advertised, “It is not with us as other men, whom small things can discourage, or small discontentments cause to wish themselves at home again.”

“Now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly country”

The faithful people of God have never placed their roots in this world alone. They have always recognized that the kingdoms of this age are but pale comparisons to the fullness of the ageless Kingdom. Let’s notice how the term *pilgrim* again echoes out of Hebrews 11, as its author offers some of the outstanding attributes of a Christian pilgrim.

“These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For those who say such things declare plainly that they seek a homeland. And truly if they had called to mind that country from which they had come out, they would have had opportunity to return. But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly country. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them” (Hebrews 11:13-16).

Such spiritual pilgrims have a four-fold quality about them.

Number One: They are people of vision, for their “heart steps” take them beyond what their eyes can plainly see for the moment. They have not received the promises, “but having seen them afar off,” they are keenly aware of the goal and don’t settle for temporary imitations that promise much, but give little.

Number Two: They are people of faith, for they believe the promises of which they “were assured.” Like the Pilgrims of Plymouth Colony, they claim God’s promises even when their human premises look bleak.

Just like the “Saints” on board the *Mayflower*, they raise their voice in assurance of “yet Lord, Thou canst save,” as seemingly overwhelming conditions batter their finite world.

Number Three: They are people who “embrace” the reality that their spirit must be far different from the prevailing spirit of this age, in order to maintain the integrity of their calling to pilgrimage. They echo the sentiments of Elder Brewster: “We are now well-weaned from the delicate milk of our mother country.”

Number Four: They are people with astounding resolve who “confess” by what they say and do that there is no return to the former world from which God has called them. Just like the Pilgrim fathers of old, their life is mirrored in the daily reality that “it is not with us as other men, whom small things can discourage, or small discontentments cause to wish themselves at home again.”



As with every generation of spiritual pilgrims, God has never promised it would be easy, but He did promise it would be worth it . . .

Yes, as 21st-century pilgrims, it’s time for us to step onto the sure shore of God’s promises that will guide our “heart steps” through the challenges yet ahead in securing the promise of a brand-new world.

“Come out of her my people”

The call to spiritual pilgrimage of “pulling up stakes” from a familiar society and following the voice of God in your time and your place and becoming a part of a bigger story, the story of the ages, is as old as Abraham and as new as tomorrow. The prophetic call to the spiritual pilgrim resonates from Revelation 18:4: “And I heard another voice from heaven saying, ‘Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues.’”

As with every generation of spiritual pilgrims, God has never promised it would be easy, but He did promise it would be worth it.

The pages of *World News and Prophecy* are designed to vividly illustrate the contrast between the old world of man’s ways and the new world that God is preparing. Its articles are dedicated to encouraging you forward into the new spiritual frontier to which your God has summoned you.

The timeless adage of Isaiah 30:21, “This is the way, walk in it,” is best given renewed voice and purpose in the words of the Pilgrims from England as they confidently proclaimed, “It is not with us as other men, whom small things can discourage, or small discontentments cause to wish themselves at home again.”

Yes, as 21st-century pilgrims, it’s time for us to step onto the sure shore of God’s promises that will guide our “heart steps” through the challenges yet ahead in securing the promise of a brand-new world. ❖



by Robin Webber

The Ageless "Heart Steps" of a Pilgrim's Walk

Dateline: Dec. 21, 1620, The New World

Several men have just landed onto a thickly wooded shore line. The wintry air is cold and blowing, but certainly less in this sheltered bay than the howling winds of the open sea that had recently blown them off course. All that they cherished in family and material goods lies bobbing up and down in a vessel a mile off the coast.

While the thick woods in front of them appear to be a formidable wall protecting an unknown world, nonetheless it appears to be a welcoming obstruction in comparison to the 13 years of man-made roadblocks thrust upon this group of people who are fleeing the religious strife of their native homeland.

As they prepare to disembark, there is no dock to nuzzle up to, no rope to catch to pull them in, no dockhand to greet them. There is no quaint New England inn to lodge them and offer them a bowl of steaming soup, warm crusty bread and a good hot cup of coffee. There is nothing. They are alone. They are first. They are the Pilgrims.

Often, people who make history don't even know they are doing it at the time. They don't even realize they are the news event of the day or a historical benchmark for future generations, because no one else is around. Well, ultimately the footsteps of these brave men and women, self-described as "the Saints," would walk into our histo-

ry books and their example still rings loud and clear if we allow it to do so.

This coming Thanksgiving in America, the exploits of the Pilgrims and the lessons of pilgrimage can be lost in the holiday shuffle of preparing a fancy turkey dinner, watching a football game and catching up with friends and relatives.

What can we as Christians learn from the lives of these brave and unique people with their black and white garb, broad-brimmed hats, buckled shoes and wide-rimmed muskets? What were the underpinnings that lined their spiritual and emotional wardrobe?

Why should we devote space in the pages of *World News and Prophecy* to names like Carver, Bradford, Brewster and Alden? Why should the lives of eight families consisting of 50 people dominate our thinking for the next few minutes? Let's come to understand that the term and lifestyle of what we have come to call a "pilgrim" cannot simply be relegated to the distant woods of New England, but will yet forge an indelible impression on future world events and future prophecies that lie ahead.

But before we look ahead, let's go back for a moment and explore the singular nature of this "band of Saints."

"Yet Lord, Thou canst save"

Before the men had ever touched shore, they and their
(See "PILGRIM," page 14)