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The Cost of Immorality in the War on Terror

Pictures of abuse of Iraqi prisoners of war by American servicemen and servicewomen have shocked the world. What are the implications for America and the war on terror?

by Melvin Rhodes

The biblical book of Proverbs reminds us that "righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people" (14:34).

As I write this, U.S. President George W. Bush is giving two interviews to Arab-language television stations in an attempt at damage control.

The Arab world is incensed at pictures of Iraqi prisoners being sexually abused and humiliated while naked, involuntarily posing for photographs taken with gloating American servicemen and at least one servicewoman. American leaders have expressed horror and shame at these incidents. These apologies are not likely to change Arab public opinion, which is increasingly anti-American.

The president of Egypt, ironically the second-biggest recipient of U.S. aid, proclaimed America "this most hated of nations." Although well-known for his penchant for overstatement, his words are reminiscent of a prophecy in Deuteronomy 28, a chapter that promises God's blessings for obedience and warns of the inevitable curses that come from disobedience to God's laws. As a nation turns away from God, it will "become troublesome to all the kingdoms of the earth" (verse 25).

U.S. Secretary of Defense Donald



Reuters/Jim MacMillan

U.S. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld addresses U.S. military personnel during a visit to the Abu Ghraib prison on the outskirts of Baghdad May 13.

Rumsfeld said in a television interview that the American servicemen responsible for these atrocities were not typical of Americans serving in the military and that their behavior was not the norm in the United States.

Almost certainly this is true for Mr. Rumsfeld's generation, but is it true for all Americans?

Pornography gains recognition

Some time ago, ABC *Nightline's* (See "IMMORALITY," page 3)



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The mission of *World News and Prophecy* (WNP) is to provide United Church of God members and other 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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"Whom heaven must receive until the times of

Restoration

of all things ... ACTS 3:21

'We Proceeded On'

Last month marked a key point in America's bicentennial celebration of the epic Lewis and Clark Expedition. On May 14, 1804, the Corps of Discovery left St. Louis, Missouri, and headed up the churning Missouri River to survey the vast territory recently purchased from France. President Thomas Jefferson had approved negotiations, which led to the Louisiana Purchase for what amounted to three cents an acre. With one stroke the world's greatest land deal doubled America's real estate.

Many of the 34 men of the corps recorded their experience in journals. One of Meriwether Lewis' oft-used phrases was, "we proceeded on." At one point when the party reached the hills where they thought they would find the Northwest Passage, the prime goal of the trip, they saw instead only the far-off peaks of the Rockies. Finding no passage to the Pacific, they saw only more hills to struggle up and over. So, they "proceeded on," eventually reaching the Pacific Ocean and returning to St. Louis after a trip of 863 days. Were it not for the help of friendly Indians, a remarkable young Shoshone woman (Sacagawea) as their guide and a good measure of blessing and ingenuity, the corps would have perished in the wilderness, becoming only a footnote in history. They "proceeded on" and today are remembered and honored as one of the world's great heroic expeditions.

The Lewis and Clark Expedition is more than an American story. It links to man's desire to push onward looking for a passage to the ultimate prosperity, security and success. Jefferson wanted a waterway through the West that would tie America's farmers, manufacturers and the nation itself to a larger world economy. Like this heroic journey, the world's quest is toward a utopian dream of peace and prosperity. The journey of the Corps of Discovery did not find the water passage to the Pacific they sought, and the world continues searching for a way to peace.

The war in Iraq continues. This month it is expected that control of the country will be turned over to an interim council. Preparations will continue to restore order to the country and prepare for elections of a permanent government. Complications, such as the mistreatment of Iraqi prisoners in the Abu Ghraib prison, distort the process and have brought shame upon America. Melvin Rhodes puts this incident in perspective this month in his article, "The Cost of Immorality in the War on Terror."

Cecil Maranville continues this theme of America's moral decay in his article, "The Mothers of 2015." Violent entertainment is shaping a generation's behavior and sensitivity toward self and others. Many commentators see the problem, but few see the solution. Unless the current trend is checked, we will see further decline in culture and morals. Mr. Maranville's article is a must-read for every parent in our audience.

John Ross Schroeder points us to the real hope of the Kingdom of God in "Utopian Prophecies of Our Future Dwelling Place." He aptly points out that we are inundated with bad news today. We must have a foundational understanding of hope for a better future. The Bible details God's plan to bring about a time of universal peace for all.

Lewis and Clark's search for a clear passage through the Western lands came full circle. They returned to St. Louis with fabulous stories of a land rich with promise for those who would tame its challenges. The phrase, "we proceeded on," sums up the attitude that allowed them to endure hardship and hold together till the end of their journey. The Kingdom of God, the time when all will be restored, looms before us. To reach that time of refreshing, in a walk worthy not only of Lewis and Clark, but the greatest hero of all, Jesus Christ, we, too, must "proceed on."

—Darris McNeely

“IMMORALITY,” (Continued from page 1)

Ted Koppel related an incident at a U.S. airport. Upon his arrival, a member of the public recognized him and came forward asking for his autograph. While signing, he saw that a fellow passenger was mobbed by people as he got off the plane, also requesting his autograph. He did not recognize the passenger and inquired as to who was receiving all this attention.

He was informed that the man was a famous American porn star. Clearly, this man was a lot more famous than Mr. Koppel. Obviously, more people watch adult movies than tune in to what I believe is America’s most serious nightly television news program.

But Mr. Koppel made another observation—that there was no sense of shame or embarrassment among those surrounding the porn star, requesting his autograph. They were quite open in public about the fact that they all watched his “movies.”

A whole generation (or two) has grown up since the legalization of pornography 35 years ago. For over 10 years porn has been available on the Web where even children can access the material. Is it any wonder that U.S. servicemen should submit captured prisoners to the same humiliating sexual acts that they may have seen on film or the Internet thousands of times?

Should we be shocked that one of the acts they made Iraqi prisoners perform was shamelessly exhibited before the whole world from the Oval Office of the White House during the formative teenage years of these same soldiers?

“Recruitment posters for al-Qaeda”

Is it any wonder that terrorists, most notably Osama bin Laden, have exploited this sexual depravity to their own advantage? One of the principle reasons given by al-Qaeda’s leader in his “Letter to America” for the attacks on Sept. 11, 2001, was the shameful sexual sin committed in the White House, for which he holds all the American people responsible. His reasoning is based on the fact that the United States is a democracy whose leaders are answerable to the people.

Extracts from Osama bin Laden’s

“Letter to America” were published in the *London Observer* newspaper on Sunday, Nov. 24, 2002. The full text was available on the paper’s Web site. When cataloging America’s sins, the leader of al-Qaeda spoke out strongly against immorality.

“You are a nation that permits acts of immorality, and you consider them to be

horrendous act and then distributing the graphic image over the Internet for the whole world to see. They further declared this would be the fate of any other American males who came into their hands, whereas female Americans caught would be sold into slavery. These punishments are in accordance with Islamic teaching and traditions—



Iraqi boys look at wall paintings (based on the prisoner abuse scandal in the Abu Ghraib prison) in the Shi’ite suburb of Sadr City in Baghdad May 27.

pillars of personal freedom.” Continuing: “Who can forget your President Clinton’s immoral acts committed in the Oval Office? After that you did not even bring him to account, other than that ‘he made a mistake,’ after which everything passed with no punishment. Is there a worse kind of event for which your name will go down in history and be remembered by nations?”

It’s hardly surprising that some have described the pictures of Iraqi prisoner abuse as “recruitment posters for al-Qaeda.”

As if to emphasize this point, a few days after the publication of the first photographs, an al-Qaeda cell operating in Iraq beheaded an American civilian, 26-year-old Nicholas Berg, filming the

the beheading of infidel males and the selling into slavery of their wives and children.

The propaganda war

The war in Iraq is becoming a propaganda war as much as a military conflict. This is in stark contrast to the first Gulf War fought in 1991. In the intervening years, satellite television has become a big factor with hundreds of millions of people around the world now seeing vivid images of daily conflict every hour on the hour. Two Arab language satellite television stations constantly broadcast negative images of the U.S. role in Iraq while playing down atrocities committed by terrorists.

Even in the United States, while many pictures were shown of the pris-

Reuters/Ali Jasim

oner abuse, television stations refused to show the beheading of Mr. Berg and showed heavily edited pictures of the four American civilians who were shot, burned, hacked to pieces and then hanged from a bridge. These pictures were considered too gruesome for people to see, although they were no worse than Hollywood's daily fare. The result, though, is very serious—the world gets a distorted image of the conflict—with Americans routinely portrayed as the bad guys fighting an “innocent” enemy that simply wants Americans to go home.

Columnist Molly Ivins summed up the present situation on May 22, 2004, in an article titled “Time to Cut Our Losses in Iraq”:

“On the plus side, Saddam Hussein is no longer in power. On the minus side, we have encouraged anti-American terrorists everywhere, put ourselves at greater risk of terrorist attack, lost enormous amounts of goodwill around the world, earned the resentment of many of our closest allies and cost ourselves around \$200 billion we really could have used for more constructive projects. The worst possibility is that we have set up the Iraqis for a horrible three-way civil war, a development that was foreseen before the invasion and is looming now.”

Greater risk?

“Put ourselves at greater risk of terrorist attack?” *U.S. News and World Report* led its “Washington Whispers” section the same week with a brief item headlined, “From the White House, a Nightmare Scenario” (May 24, 2004, p. 6). “‘We assume,’ says a top administration official, ‘an attack will happen leading up to the election . . . [and] it will happen here.’”

The report continues: “There are two worst-case scenarios, the official says. The first posits an attack on Washington, possibly the Capitol, which was believed to be the target of the 9/11 jet that crashed in Pennsylvania. Theory 2: smaller but more frequent attacks in Washington and other major cities leading up to the election.”

The threat of an imminent attack or series of attacks cannot be blamed solely on the immoral acts of a few

American troops. But those acts only confirmed the negative impression many around the world already have of the United States—an impression reinforced on a daily basis by American movies and television shows.

When American leaders talk of bringing democracy to a former dictatorship, people with little or no knowledge of democracy automatically equate democracy with American culture. To many, if not most, democracy equals too much freedom equals American culture equals sexual immorality and children talking back to their parents! And they don't want it.



“There are two worst-case scenarios, the official says. The first posits an attack on Washington, possibly the Capitol, which was believed to be the target of the 9/11 jet that crashed in Pennsylvania” (U.S. News and World Report, May 24, 2004).

The shameful acts forced on Iraqi prisoners of war will incur a heavy price on other military personnel serving in that country. More seriously, they have exposed the hypocrisy of a nation historically committed to human rights, which has become the leading producer of pornography. Americans shamelessly perform sexual acts for the entertainment of people around the world, a degrading trade in “the bodies and souls of men” (Revelation 18:13).

A friend of mine, who is a U.S. marine and whose unit recently served

in Iraq, informed me that Iraqis are capitalizing on the sexual weaknesses of American servicemen, providing them with a night's “entertainment” with a female for \$300. Their religion forbids them from using Iraqi women for such purposes, so instead they bring in women from Eastern Europe and Russia, some of whom may be there against their will—that is, they are sex slaves.

“The great Satan”

This is in stark contrast to World War II, when Congress refused to authorize the distribution of condoms among American GIs for fear it would encourage immorality. In World War II, remember, Americans were considered the good guys. Today, the United States is perceived in the Islamic world as “the great Satan.”

Although there are many factors that contribute to this perception, the lack of morality among some U.S. troops has become a major factor in the ongoing war on terror.

If America were to begin to earnestly pursue a morally upright way of life, based on God's eternal Ten Commandments, the nation could count on God's blessings. Many faithful who live a true Christian life believe that a veil of protection has been withdrawn because of so much immorality in the land. Ultimately a nation's welfare and protection is in the hands of the Almighty. ❖

Recommended Reading

How does God want us to live? How can we avoid the tragic consequences of what the Bible calls sin? What guidelines and eternal principles will lead to happiness now and blessings for eternity? Our free booklet, *The Ten Commandments*, sheds light on this important subject.



Contact any of our offices listed on page 15, or request or download them from our Web site at www.ucg.org

Utopian Prophecies of Our Future Dwelling Place

Bible prophecy is not just about gloomy future happenings belonging to this present evil age. It also encompasses Christ's coming millennial rule on earth and the Kingdom of God. This article focuses on our futuristic dwelling place in that glorious Kingdom to come.

by John Ross Schroeder

Perhaps a decade ago, noted British news broadcaster Martyn Lewis startled the U.K. media world by strongly suggesting that daily news output should include a substantial dose of really good news. The reaction was electric and immediate. So addicted were his peers in the broadcast media to our almost daily diet of bad news that they shouted him down in word and print. For a time his career was practically in ruins.

We are so attuned to news of extreme criminal behavior, unconscionable terrorist bombings, roller-coaster stock markets, gasoline price increases and the incredible antics of certain actors and pop stars in their upside-down personal lives, that there seems to be an unconscious human craving for an overflowing continuance of bad news.

The fact that God inspired many prophecies about geopolitics and social trends demands that we watch world news and trends and even lament the horrendous happenings of our present age (Ezekiel 9:4). This publication exists in large measure to fulfill those necessary purposes.

But an exclusive diet of bad news sooner or later will prove detrimental to our spiritual health. Christians should supplement negative information with regular good news from the pages of the Bible.

The world tomorrow

While Luke highlighted in summary the many Old Testament prophecies regarding the days of vengeance in his Gospel account (Luke 21:22), he later underscored the many positive restoration prophecies of the Old Testament in his book of Acts (Acts 3:19-21). The apostle Peter referred to this wonderful utopian period yet ahead as “times of refreshing” and “the times of restoration.” (The lead feature column of this newsletter is called “Restoration” with these truths in mind.)

During the prophesied 1,000-year reign of Christ, the millennial prophecies of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel and Micah will find their ultimate fulfillment. The government of God will be restored to this earth as foretold by Isaiah and

Micah. Swords will be beaten into plowshares, the need for military academies will completely cease, the lame and the blind will be healed, abundant harvests will turn global and the deserts of this earth will bloom as roses.

However, there is an even better time on beyond Christ's 1,000-year reign and the Great White Throne Judgment period. At the conclusion of God's plan for mankind, human life will cease reproduction on this earth and be replaced by the everlasting spirit life granted to the overcoming sons and daughters of God. The fullness of the Kingdom of God is the focus of this article.

Not easy to grasp

Humanly we do not naturally have the required spiritual focus to truly understand the wonders of the next world. The apostle Paul makes this clear in 1 Corinthians 2:9-10: “But as it is written [in the Old Testament]: ‘Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him.’ But God has revealed them to us [Christians] through His [Holy] Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God.”

Unless we are truly converted (or at least on the road to conversion), the nature of the Kingdom of God remains hidden from us. It is simply beyond the grasp of our five senses without the aid of the Holy Spirit. Humanly, we are helpless to envision the wonders that are beyond this physical life.

Yet we are told over and over again to focus our minds on spiritual matters, rather than the concerns of this life. For instance, the apostle Paul tells us to “seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. For you died [figuratively in the waters of baptism] . . . When Christ who is our life appears, *then you also will appear with Him in glory*” (Colossians 3:1-4, emphasis added throughout).

Verse 4 speaks of the second coming of Christ when we join our Savior in resurrected glory, changed to everlasting spirit life as 1 Corinthians

An exclusive diet of bad news sooner or later will prove detrimental to our spiritual health. Christians should supplement negative information with regular good news from the pages of the Bible.

15 explains. Focusing on the spiritual is not an easy task when we have to pay the rent and put bread on the table. But Christ tells us God will gladly add the necessities of this physical life if we will only put His Kingdom first in our lives (Matthew 6:33).

Throughout his writings, Paul continues to insist on the necessity of understanding the things of God. Ephesians 1:16-18 is a case in point: “[I] do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers: that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, *the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints.*”

Our prayers to God should be that He would grant us much greater spiritual insight, leading us to more understanding of the very points that Paul mentions here in the first chapter of Ephesians.

The City of God

Our readers may or may not be familiar with Augustine’s (A.D. 354-430) book, *The City of God*. Whatever the merits of this ancient theological work, the contents remain rather far from the description of God’s city revealed in the New Testament.

The faith chapter in the book of Hebrews gives us an important biblical insight into the nature of this, our future dwelling place. “By faith Abraham obeyed [obedience and faith go together] when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance . . . By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country . . . *for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God*” (Hebrews 11:8-10). This passage describes a heavenly city. In contrast, the cities of this age were and are constructed by human hands.

The Promised Land is a physical type of the spirit city to come mentioned in verse 10. Ultimately these promises will be fulfilled by everlasting spirit life in a majestic environment beyond human description.

None of these men and women of great visionary faith received the ultimate promises in their lifetimes. “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” (verse 13).

Today’s Christians are no different. We wait patiently for these same ultimate promises given to the faithful men and women of old. Notice what Paul wrote in Philippians 3:20-21: “*For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.*”

Hebrews 11 goes on to tell us: “For those who say such things declare plainly that they seek a homeland” (verse 14). We hear a lot in America today of “homeland security” and rightly so, but this is speaking of that city whose builder and maker is God, a city in which our personal security will never again be threatened.

Verse 16 reads: “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.*” Then in the two concluding verses of the faith chapter, the writer reiterates an important point: “And all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise, God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect [in the first resurrection] apart from us” (verses 39-40).

At that critical juncture in human history, true Christians will join the men and women of past ages in the Kingdom of God. (For further understanding, please request our free booklet *What Happens After Death?*)

Dwelling with God

Not long before His death by crucifixion, Jesus made a wonderful promise to His disciples, which also applies to Christians today. “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 [to this earth] and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also” (John 14:1-3).

“Mansions” is a very poor translation in terms of today’s contemporary English. The Revised English Bible renders the expression as “dwelling places”; The New International Version, “rooms.”

This passage has been almost universally misapplied by mainstream Christianity to say that the saved go to heaven. But verse 3 plainly indicates that Christ will return to this earth and the disciples will then be with Him. The crucial question that few seem to ask is: “Where will Christ be after His return?”

The clear answer is that He will be ruling with His saints on this earth. Another book written by the apostle John clarifies this passage in John’s Gospel. Remember that the Bible interprets the Bible, a long-neglected principle of scriptural studies.

Revelation 5:10 says that true Christians will be “kings and priests” and they will “reign on the earth.” Revelation 20:4 tells us that they will rule with Christ for a thousand years. The entire context of events in Revelation chapters 19 and 20 places them on planet earth.

Furthermore, the beginning verses of Revelation 21 tell us that the city of God, the New Jerusalem, will come to this earth. How shocking the truth of the Bible must be to those who have long believed that the saved immediately go to heaven at death. (For an in-depth examination of all of the important issues on this topic, please request our free booklet *Heaven and Hell: What Does the Bible Really Teach?*)

But don’t let the wonderful truths of the Bible be obscured by doctrinal misinformation. False teaching is one of the devil’s methods by which he hopes to keep people overlooking the real meaning and intent of disputed biblical passages like John 14:1-3.

The city of God arrives on earth

The explanatory knowledge revealed in Revelation 21:1-4 is almost beyond our human comprehension. Yet the apostle Paul has written that we can begin to grasp it with God’s help through His Holy Spirit.

The apostle John tells us what he witnessed in vision in Revelation 21:1-4: “Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea.” Physical human beings need the oceans to survive, so we are looking at a kingdom of spirit beings—no longer flesh and blood but transformed into forever-new spirit bodies.

“Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven
(See “UTOPIA,” page 9)

Why the Western World Uses an Awkward Calendar

Many have attempted to change the calendar in common use, due to peculiarities that complicate trade and commerce. Yet through all attempts to alter the calendar, God has seen to it that the seven-day week cycle was preserved.

by Paul Kieffer

In a memorandum to the United Nations in 1953, the Indian UN ambassador proposed the adoption of a new calendar to replace the Gregorian calendar, which is used worldwide to provide a common time reference for conducting business in today's world. In explaining the reason for the proposal, the ambassador listed the facts that months, quarters and half years are of unequal lengths on the Gregorian calendar.

These factors skew business statistical analyses. And they can cause the number of working days in a given month to vary from year to year.

The ambassador wrote: "The greatest drawback from a statistical and commercial point of view is that, since the various days of the week are not of the same value as regards volume of trade, and the years and the months do not from year to year include the same number of individual weekdays, there can be no genuine statistical comparison between one year and another, while the various subdivisions of the year itself—the half years, quarters and months—are likewise incapable of comparison" ("Memorandum to the United Nations Economic and Social Council," Document E/2514, Oct. 30, 1953).

Other criticisms of the Gregorian calendar include its adherence to a solar cycle, which produces a "unique" calendar from year to year. This means that a given date will vary from one year to the next: July 4 will be a weekday most years but can also fall on the weekend in some years. A given day of the month will not be the same weekday the next year, nor will a weekday in a given week of the year have the same calendar date as the previous year. Months and the year cannot be divided into an exact number of weeks. The exact reproduction of the calendar for any given year will take place only once every 28 years.

The asymmetrical Gregorian calendar, with its origins dating back to a prescientific age some 2,000 years ago, does seem to be an anachronism in today's technological world.

For decades, proponents of calendar reform have advocated the adoption of a new calendar.

The candidates are . . .

The League of Nations, following World War I, and the United Nations, after World War II, offered for the first time forums for discussion on worldwide societal change. Each organization received a proposal to replace the Gregorian calendar. Both calendars proposed had been developed in the mid-19th century and had a key similarity of special interest to Sabbath-keepers.

The older of the two calendars was a proposal for a 12-month scheme with identical quarters, presented by an Italian priest, Abbé Marco Mastrofini, in 1834. Mastrofini's calendar is known today as the "World Calendar" or the "Universal Calendar." It retains the 12 months used in the current Gregorian calendar, but all four quarters are always of equal length. Each quarter has three months, two of 30 days length and a third month of 31 days. Each quarter is exactly 13 weeks or 91 days long, beginning on Sunday and ending on Saturday. In addition, each month contains an equal number of 26 working days plus Sundays. The World Calendar has days and dates that always agree from year to year, and holidays are permanently fixed: The calendar remains identical from year to year.

The other calendar proposal was developed by Auguste Comte in 1849. Comte's calendar was made up of 13 months of exactly 28 days each, or four full weeks. Comte's calendar was adapted at the beginning of the 20th century to retain the names of the current months, with an additional 13th month, "Sol," added during the summer season in the northern hemisphere. This calendar is known as the "International Fixed Calendar," and it was promoted in the United States in the 1920s by George Eastman of Eastman Kodak fame, earning it the name "Eastman Calendar."

The American public, however, did not

For decades proponents of calendar reform have advocated the adoption of a new calendar. Will it happen?

warm up to Eastman’s calendar initiative because familiar dates would change. America’s birthday, the Fourth of July, would have become “Sol 17.” The only part of the Eastman calendar that would have been comparable to the current Gregorian calendar would have been the first 28 days of January.

The 13-month calendar was effectively killed when the League of Nations submitted only the World Calendar to member nations for an evaluation. This is the calendar promoted by the Indian ambassador to the United Nations in 1953.

However, at its 905th meeting on April 20, 1956, the UN Economic and Social Council adjourned discussion on calendar reform *sine die* (i.e., with no target date for future action). Since then, there has not been any further worldwide initiative to reform the Gregorian calendar.

Change would spell the end of the seven-day week

Both the “World Calendar” and the 13-month calendar had an annual cycle of exactly 364 days. However, the solar year is a little over a day longer than that. How were these two calendars to compensate for the difference?

To preserve the perennial nature with all dates always occurring on the same day of the week, both calendars provided for one extra “nameless day” at the end of the year. This day would have had a date, but no day of the week assigned to it. Every four years an additional “nameless day” would have been added at the end of another month, thus preserving the solar year, but also not disturbing the permanent correspondence between days of the week and calendar dates.

When Auguste Comte first proposed his 13-month calendar in 1849, he adopted the “nameless day” concept from Mastrofini’s World Calendar. Mastrofini was a Catholic priest, and his “nameless day” at the end of each year would have disrupted the seven-day week. Each year the real weekly cycle would have advanced one day—and in

leap years by two days—relative to the calendar in use.

When the UN Economic and Social Council asked for input on India’s proposal to adopt the World Calendar, some delegations voiced concerns because of the undesirable effect it would have on certain aspects of religious life—the observance of a weekly day of rest in particular. Oddly enough, the Vatican did not comment on this aspect of the calendar proposal, although Catholic countries would have been influenced by any position taken by Rome.



The dominance of the Gregorian calendar

The influence of the Catholic Church was the initial impetus for the dominance of the Gregorian calendar. Its predecessor, the Julian calendar, dated back to the Roman Empire but was actually slightly longer than the solar year. As a result, by the 16th century the beginning of spring fell in early March.

To correct this problem, Pope Gregory XIII exercised his papal authority and excised 10 dates from the calendar by shortening October 1582. (The weekly cycle remained uninterrupted, however.) He also revised the leap-year rule by deciding that century-ending years would be leap years only if they were divisible by 400. (For example, the year 2000 was a leap year, but 1700, 1800 and 1900 were not.)

Catholic influence in Europe ensured that most European nations adopted the papal reform quickly. The rift between England and the Roman Church made England and its colonies an exception, but in 1752 they, too, adopted the Gregorian calendar when 11 dates were skipped to bring the British calendar into sync with the rest of Europe.

The French adopted a “Revolutionary Calendar” for about a dozen years in the 19th century, until Napoleon reestablished the Gregorian calendar in 1806. Russia and the ensuing Soviet Union converted to the Gregorian calendar in 1918, following the October Revolution a year earlier. The “October Revolution” actually took place in November 1917, according to the Gregorian calendar. In 1923 Greece

adopted the Gregorian calendar, followed by Turkey in 1927.

Other calendars continue to be used for traditional or religious purposes, like the Chinese calendar or the “Revised Julian Calendar” used by the Eastern Orthodox churches. However, in practical application, the Gregorian calendar is the real world calendar, providing the basis for a common time reference for business transactions, etc.

Changing “times and laws”

Daniel’s prophecy of four wild beasts in Daniel 7 is a parallel prophecy to Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar’s dream in chapter 2. Both chapters describe the same four successive world kingdoms. The fourth beast of Daniel 7 is the same world kingdom represented by the legs and feet of the image seen by Nebuchadnezzar in his dream: the Roman Empire.

Daniel 7 provides an interesting description of this fourth beast: “The fourth beast will be a fourth kingdom on the earth, which will be different from all the other kingdoms, and it will devour the whole earth and tread it down and crush it. As for the ten horns, out of this kingdom ten kings will arise; and another will arise after them, and he will be different from the previous ones and will subdue three kings.

“And he will speak out against the Most High and wear down the saints of the Highest One, and *he will intend to make alterations in times and in law*; and they will be given into his hand for a time, times, and half a time” (verses 23-25, New American Standard Bible, emphasis added).

The power described as “another” in verse 24 appears to be involved in religious matters: It speaks out against God and persecutes true Christians. Since any civil government would be involved in normal legislation, this power would be distinguished by assuming ecclesiastical authority to alter “times” and “law.”

Rome was involved in changing “times” long before Pope Gregory XIII adjusted the Julian calendar in 1582. The most notable change was the introduction of the seven-day week as part of Rome’s acceptance of Christianity as a state-sanctioned religion. In A.D. 321, Emperor Constantine declared Sunday

the first day of the seven-day week. (Although his purpose was to entrench Sunday worship, his calendar also inadvertently preserved the seven-day weekly cycle with the Sabbath as the seventh day of the week.)

With Constantine's edict, the Roman Empire no longer persecuted this dominant form of Christianity. Instead, over time, Rome's new state religion progressed to persecuting those Christians who did not agree with its teachings, and it continued the pattern established by Constantine of altering ecclesiastical "times" and "law." Most notable is the well-documented transfer of the biblically enjoined day of rest from the seventh day of the week, the Sabbath, to Sunday.

Rome's influence is the only authority that exists for observing Sunday, as is readily admitted by many scholars. "The Church changed the observance of the Sabbath to Sunday by right of the divine, infallible authority given to her by her founder, Jesus Christ. The Protestant claiming the Bible to be the only guide of faith has no warrant for observing Sunday. In this matter, the Seventh-Day Adventist is the only consistent Protestant" ("The Catholic Universe Bulletin," Aug. 14, 1942, p. 4).

In 1975 Germany's parliament, the Bundestag, established a new "German Industrial Standard" (DIN 1355) giving civil recognition to the Catholic week. Since 1976 calendars in Germany have been printed with the first day of the week as Monday and the seventh day as Sunday, Rome's day of rest for a Christianity different from that practiced by the New Testament Church of God.

The ability to buy and sell

In Revelation 13 we find a prophecy with implications for the end time. In this chapter two beasts are depicted; one of them is a civil authority able "to make war with the saints and to overcome them" (Revelation 13:7), and the other masquerades "like a lamb," but in reality speaks "like a dragon" (verse 11).

This second "beast" of Revelation 13 shares similarities with Daniel's little horn of Daniel 7:23-25. It performs miracles (verses 13 and 14) and "exercises all the authority of the first beast"

(verse 12). The second "beast" of Revelation 13 is obviously a religious power, since it has the appearance of a lamb and even works miracles, although in reality, it speaks like its actual source, Satan the devil!

In addition to forcing people to worship (a religious act) the first "beast" of Revelation 13, the second "beast" enforces a sign on the people who refuse to worship the first one: "He [the second beast] causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads, and that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name" (Revelation 13:16-17).

The mark of the Beast will be some means of identifying people who are in submission to the authority of the Beast power. The language used—"right hand" (symbolic of actions or behavior) and "foreheads" (symbolic of mind or thoughts)—is identical to the description God gave His people Israel in the Old Testament to describe what His law should be to them (Exodus 13:9; Deuteronomy 6:8). Those who "worship the first beast" will therefore not be worshipping the true God, even though they will likely be deceived into believing that they are (John 16:1-2). Instead, they will be worshipping the Beast and following the Beast's commands.

Of all the points of God's basic spiritual law, the Ten Commandments, the one that is questioned or ignored most frequently is the commandment involving the Sabbath, which God intended to be a special sign for His people (Exodus 31:13). In fact, the Sabbath can be viewed as a test of a person's willingness to be totally subject to God's will for Christians. One sure way to prevent people from obeying God fully is to "alter times" by changing the calendar, as practiced throughout much of Europe and even achieved by civil legislation in Germany.

In the last 70 years, the Gregorian calendar remains the calendar of choice, simply because the religion of Rome, having altered the calendar centuries ago to suit its doctrines, seems unlikely to support any change that would do away with Sunday and the weekly cycle. ❖

"UTOPIA," (Continued from page 6)

from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice saying, 'Behold, the tabernacle of God [the Father] is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God.'" On occasion take the time to meditate and think on this our glorious future in the Kingdom of our Creator. (Verses 22-23 tell us that the Lamb, Jesus Christ, is also present in this city.)

"And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away," permanently. All of our human problems will have become part of the distant past. Will we even remember them?

One of the greatest deceptions ever foisted by Satan the devil on gullible men and women is that obedience to God is unnecessary for salvation. But notice one of the requirements for entry into this precious city of God. "*Blessed are those who do His commandments*, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city" (Revelation 22:14). Stubbornly unrepentant and disobedient persons are excluded (verse 15).

Finally we read the promise of Jesus Christ (who died for our sins) to faithful, forgiven and obedient Christians. "Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world'" (Matthew 25:34). ❖

Recommended Reading

The Bible gives surprising and comforting news about the future. Our booklets *What Happens After Death?* and *Heaven and Hell: What Does the Bible Really Teach?* examine the scriptures on these vitally important subjects.



Contact any of our offices listed on page 15, or request or download them from our Web site at www.ucg.org

The Mothers of 2015

As you look at the girl “tweens” (8- to 14-year-olds) of today, what kind of mothers do you think they will make for tomorrow? What type of young woman is our Western culture producing? Each girl has a clear choice between two wildly contrasting possibilities.

by Cecil E. Maranville

What do you think the mothers of the future will be like? Picture this scenario: At a birthday party for a 14-year-old girl, her former boyfriend responds to the teasing of several girls to give a 12-year-old girl a kiss on the cheek. The birthday girl’s mother is so immature that she takes offense at this, seeing it as the “betrayal” of her daughter. I know this will likely seem incredibly silly, but bear with me for a bit.

The mother takes her birthday girl aside and tells her to “handle her business.” So the birthday girl attacks, not the boy, but the girl he kissed. The mother joins in, scratching, kicking and stomping the “offending” 12-year-old. Three other teen girls and the birthday girl’s 19-year-old sister join in the assault, beating the 12-year-old into a coma, leaving her possibly brain-damaged for life.

You are likely thinking that I’ve dreamed up a truly lame and impossible image of the mother of the future. In fact, it isn’t made up, and it isn’t about the future. This ugly scene actually happened in Baltimore, Maryland, earlier this year.

What kind of mothers will the “tweens” (8- to 14-year-olds) in this story make a few years from now? What kind of mothers will Western culture produce?

Not mother material

Violence, real and imagined, is a part of the lives of many young girls today. Movies and video games, such as *Tomb Raider*, feature females in violent roles. Laura Croft, the main character (I can’t truthfully say, “heroine”) of *Tomb Raider*, brawls, battles and shoots her way through her adventures. She is pencil-thin, except for exaggerated curves in certain areas, and dresses in skin-tight outfits, conveying the idea that young women should be sexy and slim. Completing her wardrobe are two automatic pistols, one slung low on each hip.

There are a series of Laura Croft movies for girls to watch. She holds cult status with many of them. They can play several video games about her, surf countless Internet sites featuring chat rooms for fans and video clips, and play online *Tomb Raider* games.

What kind of mothers will Laura Croft inspire?

Paris Hilton, Britney Spears and Christina Aguilera, although now in their 20s, continue to be role models for tween girls. Belly shirts and low-slung pants are common styles, seen even in dress-up situations like church services.

Madonna, the maven of modern female entertainment, is in the process of bringing standards of decency to even greater lows than she did last summer. Her “Re-Invention” tour opened in Los Angeles, California, in May, featuring “plenty of lesbian love,” according to *Fox News*. She sings “Papa Don’t Preach” in front of a chorus line of nearly nude, heavily pregnant women.

Americans will flock to see the million-dollar production. An estimated 750,000 will pay \$65 to \$930 apiece to fill their eyes, their ears and their minds with filth. Joe Levy of *Rolling Stone* tells us: “Madonna always has a message to put across. Some people get the message, others don’t—but everyone gets a fair amount of value for their entertainment dollar” (Orla Healy, “Madonna’s New Tour Is Most Shocking Yet,” *Fox News.com*, May 21, 2004).

Some message. Some messenger. What kind of mothers will tweens who copy the dress, mannerisms, language and message of Madonna make a few years from now?

Real life, real pain

In real life, young girls are coping with homes broken by divorce, Mom’s new boyfriend, as well as drug and other alcohol abuse in their home environments. How is all this affecting girls in Western society? U.S. Justice Department arrest and survey statistics of 25 or so years ago show that incidents of violence among young boys outnumbered those among young girls by a margin of 10 to 1. Today, violence is still more prevalent among boys, but only by a margin of 4 to 1. Clearly, there is a disturbing trend here.

Violence between young U.S. girls is so common today that virtually all school authorities have to be conscious of it and trained in how to respond to it. Bill Bond heads a project on school safety for

In real life, young girls are coping with homes broken by divorce, Mom’s new boyfriend, as well as drug and other alcohol abuse in their home environments. How is all this affecting girls in Western society?

the National Association of Secondary School Principals. In April of this year he said, "I've been to 17 Association meetings this year and the topic has been addressed at every meeting" (Wiley Hall, "Violence Among Girls Increasing in U.S.," AP, April 25, 2004).

By the time today's young girls become young mothers, they will bear many scars. You may be thinking of emotional and psychological scarring. To be sure, there will be an abundance of those types, but I'm thinking of literal, physical scars—and by their own hand. Joelle Babula of *The Arizona Republic* tells of a rash of girls burning, cutting and bruising themselves in Phoenix-area high schools ("Self-Injury Among Teens on the Rise," April 26, 2004). Mesa Public Schools has such a high incidence of self-inflicted injuries that they include specialized training in dealing with it for all of their counselors.

In twisted logic, teens, mostly girls, are hurting themselves physically as a means of coping with stress and relieving anxiety. These kids are cutting themselves with box cutters, broken glass and knives. Perhaps self-inflicted injury is a type of hurting they can control, in contrast to the emotional pain and stress put on them by others. One of the pressures they are trying to cope with is the media's message that they must be sexy and attractive. If they aren't genetically predisposed to reflect the image of today's pop culture queens, they try to make themselves ugly—to take themselves out of the running, so to speak.

Babula cites Andrew Levander, director of a self-inflicted injury treatment program in Los Angeles, who calls this "the fastest growing adolescent behavior problem of our time."

This horrible trend is so new that there are no national statistics on it yet. But there are indications of it all over the nation. At S.A.F.E., a self-inflicted injury treatment facility/program in Chicago, Karen Conterio has seen these types of incidents skyrocket from hundreds to thousands a month. If girls do not receive treatment, their self-inflictions will increase to breaking bones and infecting wounds with bacteria and filth—even *self-injecting with HIV* (ibid.).

This physical scarring will only add to the mental scarring already troubling tomorrow's mothers.

Why so many young women are exposing themselves

Conservative commentator and religion teacher Dennis Prager wrote a two-part series in early 2004 on why young women are exposing themselves in the way they dress. I would like to summarize some of the reasons he offered.

- *Sameness between men and women.* With every aspect of society promoting the equality of the sexes, young women are announcing, "Hey, I am female," in one of the few ways that they can. Women used to be able to express their femininity by distinctively female dress, such as a skirt and blouse or a dress. Today, there isn't much clothing that is uniquely female. Women wear pants and pant suits, even mannish suits right down to the necktie. The modern young woman's confused sense of "feminine" is clothing that uncovers her femaleness.

- *To attract men.* Prager writes that women who expose themselves are sexually attractive to him as a male, but at the same time offend him as a man. He adds that his grandmother, who never went to school, knows more about men than the average female college graduate today. Women expose themselves to exert power over and get their way from men, seemingly ignorant of the sexual overtones of their methods.

"What you so often call cute or attractive," he writes to young women, "men see only as a sexual come-on." Wanting love, women seek to attract it by exposing themselves. But, Prager counsels, "The more skin men see, the more they think sex, not love. And that includes guys your age, your male teachers, your clergyman, your mailman, and the old man next door."

Some are making good choices

Not surprisingly, teens are sexually active today. The Alan Guttmacher Institute published study results that show one half of all American youth will contract a sexually transmissible disease by age 25. Some of those STDs can cause infertility, which will deny some of today's tweens the blessing and privilege of giving birth altogether. However, there is some good news: The percentage of teens who are sexually active is down from 54 percent in 1991 to 47 percent in 2003. But that's still nearly one half of all teens experiencing something for which their minds

and spirits were designed to enjoy *only* in the context of marriage.

We hope that more and more teens will reject the tendency of their peers and the pressure of the world around to emphasize sexuality. There are signs of a healthy backlash against slut-slumming styles. Some teens reject the trend. They refer to the tweens caught up in piercing belly buttons, wearing belly shirts and off-the-hip pants as "prostitots"—a not-so-subtle declaration of their revulsion for the fashion.

One of the Bible's proverbs observes that a beautiful woman without good judgment is as attractive as a gold ring dangling from the nose of a pig (Proverbs 11:22)—not a very pleasant depiction, but it certainly gets the point across!

We sympathize with how truly hard it is for young women to know how to conduct themselves, how to dress and how to walk and talk today, with such great glorification of crude and coarse women like those mentioned above. But there are still some moms who are models of true beauty. We hope you have a mature eye and that you can spot this classiness.

One of the cartloads of so-called reality shows today is *The Swan*, in which physically unattractive women undergo a series of extensive cosmetic surgeries to remove this and augment that—conveying the message that beauty is on the outside. "If you can be beautiful outside and you can expose it in just the right tease, you will have made it." Will you? Oh, no, a hundred times, *No!* You will have "made it" when you are mature enough to realize that beauty is on the inside; that what is outside is of such little significance.

Another biblical proverb—this in the section about the true beauty of a woman, Proverbs 31:30-31—warns that the exterior charm and beauty of a woman fades ever so quickly, adding that what one sees on the outside pales into insignificance in comparison with a woman who is beautiful inside.

To you who are young teens: Are you honest? If so, you are beautiful! Are you morally clean? You are beautiful! Are you dressing in a *feminine*, as opposed to a *female* way? You are beautiful! Can you be what you want to be, regardless of what those about you say and do? Ah, you are a beauty indeed! And you have the potential to be a great mother. ❖

In Brief...

World News Review

Drought Threat Looms Large Over North America

NOAA, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association, is predicting continued drought in virtually every Western state of the United States and in many of the states on the High Plains. Additionally, summer forecasts predict drier-than-average conditions for the Pacific Northwest, likely meaning drought for Washington and parts of Oregon.

Western Canada also labors under an extended drought. British Columbia is looking down the barrel of the worst drought since the Great Depression. Accumulated precipitation for lake levels in the province were close to the lowest figures of the 1920s. And the huge Okanagan Lake is as low as it was in the early 1900s.

During the time of great expansion into the American West, little thought was given to there not being enough water to meet the needs of the burgeoning population. To be sure, there were contentions over sharing water, but all thought there was enough to go around. In 1922, Arizona, California, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah and Wyoming signed the Colorado River Compact, designed to share the water of the system proportionally. Along with a subsequent treaty with Mexico, it required the availability of 8.23 million acre-feet of water annually.

Any damming of the river was not to interfere with this figure, calculated by hydrologists at the time. But they miscalculated—greatly overestimating the water available in the system by more than double. In 1956, Congress authorized building the massive Glen Canyon Dam on the Colorado River, just above Lees Ferry, the halfway point between the Upper and Lower Basin regions.

The dam, which took as much concrete as it would take to build a four-lane highway from Phoenix, Arizona, to Chicago, Illinois, created the second-largest man-made lake (behind Lake Mead, also on the Colorado system) in the country, Lake Powell. The Colorado River Compact required the dam to release 8.23 million acre-feet of water a year, based upon the theory that the snow melt and tribu-

tary collections would deliver that much to Lake Powell.

In reality, the lake received less than half of that amount in most years, so it released over twice what it took in. That worked for many years, as long as the states did not use their allotments. But now, all the states on the system are demanding their full allotments and Lake Powell cannot meet the demands. It has dropped to 40 percent of its top capacity, exposing cliffs 10 stories high.

Congress may soon have to step in to resolve the growing “water war”—legal wrangling over distribution rights. An imposed federal solution isn’t likely to leave any party happy.

The American West grew more in the past 20 years than ever before, but those were wet years, part of what turns out to be an unusual wet cycle. Comparing those 20 years to the last 800 years, scientists tell us that the wet cycle was a fluke. The climate patterns of the West typically feature extended drought conditions, punctuated by rare wet periods. So the abundance of rainfall during the 20th-century development of the West was an anomaly, rather than the rule.

Tree ring studies enable scientists to analyze the water patterns as far back as A.D. 900. Looking at dry versus wet years between 900 and 1300, research

reveals that only a few times did water levels come anywhere near what they were in the 20th century.

In other words, the drought now hitting the West is actually the norm; the wet period was abnormal.

Killer Floods in the Caribbean

In a related story, the opposite weather extreme is ravaging the Caribbean nations of Haiti and the Dominican Republic. Floods triggered massive mud slides that buried entire towns. As of this writing, the final death toll is not yet



Lake Powell can't meet the growing demand for water.



Photos © 2004 www.photos.com

in, although the skies are clear again over this two-nation island of Hispaniola.

The official death toll was just under 1,000, nearly equally divided between the countries, when Haitian officials announced that the town of Mapou, about 30 miles outside the capital of Port-au-Prince, may have another 1,000 dead in it alone.

Thousands are without homes and the essentials of life. The generous Americans and Canadians are again coming to the aid of the impoverished Haitians with water and food relief. Haiti's bankrupt government is hard-pressed to provide normal services to its 8 million citizens, much less to deal with a tragedy like this.

Islam Crowding Christianity out of Europe

At the same time that the Vatican is pressing for recognition—and power—for Christianity in the new Europe, European nations are becoming increasingly Islamic. Those who profess Christianity are practicing it less and less. Presently, more Muslims worship in their British mosques than members of the Church of England do in their churches.

Author Oriana Fallaci, in a new book, *La Forza della Ragione* ("The Force of Reason"), warns: "Europe becomes more and more a province of Islam, a colony of Islam."

European Christians are having fewer children than ever—not enough to sustain their numbers. Common in Western nations, they have their children later in life, and women are having an average of 1.5 children each. However, to sustain a population a birthrate of 2.1 children per woman is required. So, old Europe is dying out.

Of course, workers are needed to pay taxes and maintain the economy, so Europe is bringing in millions of immigrants. Approximately 1.6 million are needed every year to keep the working population even. But if Europe wants to maintain the current ratio of workers to retirees, with more of its aging population retiring all the time, it will have to bring in a staggering 13.5 million immigrants every year.

Many of those are Muslims. They join the 20 million Muslims now in Europe, about 5 percent of its population. Muslims tend to have their children when young, and to have many of them, in contrast to the native Europeans. Birthrates and immigration will put the Muslim population of Europe at 10 percent by 2020.

If people then begin to flee areas with sizable Muslim populations, as has happened in other regions, Europe could

be majority-Muslim within decades. Time will tell whether that will happen, but the sure consequence is that Muslim views will have an increasing influence on EU policy decisions. That will translate into even stronger pro-Arab and anti-Israel stands, as the EU takes a greater hand in foreign affairs than it has for many years.

Source: Daniel Pipes, "Europe en Route to Islamic Takeover," *Chicago Sun-Times*, May 12, 2004.

Does Anyone Care?

Described as "the worst humanitarian crisis in the world," it goes on today with few taking any serious note. In western Sudan the Arab-dominated government is trying to purge the Darfur region of black Africans. Up to a million people have fled their homes, many to neighboring Chad, seeking protection and shelter from marauding militia.

In the past year the border town of Tine has seen its population double as refugees have poured out of Sudan, fleeing Arab militiamen mounted on horses and camels who are waging a campaign of ethnic cleansing against their black neighbors.

There is an ethnic divide between Arabs and black Africans. Considered a sideshow only a year ago, this crisis is now too tragic to be ignored.

Many could only watch as the Janjaweed (as the militiamen are known) executed members of their families. Most lost their possessions when their houses were burned down. All were exhausted after walking for days through the desert.

Now they have collapsed in towns along the border in one of the most destitute regions of Chad, which is itself among the world's poorest countries.

Relief money channeled through the United Nations has disappeared. Aid workers from other agencies have accused the UN of inefficiency and perhaps worse. "What is going on here is very dark," said one Western aid worker at a non-UN agency.

Sudan has experienced sporadic and halfhearted attention from the West. An older civil war between the Muslim north and Christian south resulting in the enslavement of the latter by the former brought attention, and resulting pressure, from America's influential religious lobby.

Because of Sudan's ties to Osama bin Laden and his terror network, the country drew the attention of America after terrorist bombings in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998. In response former U.S. President Bill Clinton ordered a suspected munitions factory bombed.

However, no effective solution from the United Nations, United States or any Muslim nation has halted the civil wars and the resulting famines that have affected the lives of millions.

Ironically, last month African countries elected Sudan to serve on the UN's human rights commission.

Sources: *Economist* and *Financial Times*.

Contributors: Cecil Maranville and Darris McNeely



Birthrates and immigration will put the Muslim population of Europe at 10 percent by 2020.

“FOREVER,” (Continued from page 16)

while seemed to reverse itself, discouraging settler development and allowing the Wallowa band of Nez Percé to remain in their ancestral home. But the government again reversed itself two years later and threatened a cavalry attack if Chief Joseph’s people did not move to the reservation.

At first, recognizing that fighting would be futile, he begrudgingly began to move his people to Idaho. But matters were taken out of his hand when 20 of his young braves took their revenge by killing several of the settlers.

What followed was one of the most brilliant military episodes on the North American continent. In a course of maneuvers stretching in circles extending 1,400 miles, this band of 700 Native American men, women and children, with only 200 male warriors, would successfully confront 2,000 U.S. cavalry and Indian auxiliaries in four major battles and countless skirmishes.

The American headlines of the time described Chief Joseph as the “Red Napoleon.” General Sherman of Civil War fame chronicled: “The Indians throughout displayed a courage and skill that elicited universal praise . . . [they] fought with almost scientific skill, using advance and rear guards, skirmish lines and field fortifications” (ibid.).

“Hear me, my chiefs”

After a long list of skirmishes, Chief Joseph and his people were stopped just 30 miles short of their goal of reaching Canada and allying themselves with friendly tribes there. Chief Joseph came to the clear reality that you can win many battles, but lose the war. It is his surrender speech of Oct. 5, 1877, that immortalized his wisdom.

“I am tired of fighting. Our chiefs are killed. Looking Glass is dead. Toohoolhoolzote is dead. The old men are all dead. It is the young men who say, ‘Yes’ or ‘No.’ He who led the young men [Olikut] is dead. It is cold, and we have no blankets. The little children are freezing to death. My people, some of them, have run away to the hills, and have no blankets, no food. No one knows where they are—perhaps freezing to death. I want to have time to look

for my children, and see how many of them I can find. Maybe I shall find them among the dead. Hear me, my chiefs; I am tired. My heart is sick and sad. From where the sun now stands I will fight no more forever.”

Chief Joseph’s famous declaration served him little in his lifetime. He spent many years being transferred from reservation to reservation in Kansas, Indian Territory (Oklahoma) and ultimately to a reservation back in the Northwest, but not to his tribal homeland.

Too much talk

Chief Joseph’s wisdom and shrewd observations in later life moved beyond the confines of grassy battlefields to the warring factions within human nature. After visiting Washington D.C. in 1879, he came back with these reflections.

“I cannot understand why so many chiefs are allowed to talk so many different ways, and promise so many different things. I have seen the Great Father Chief [President Rutherford B. Hayes] . . . and many other law chiefs [congressmen] and they all say they are my friends, and that I shall have justice, but while all their mouths talk right, I do not understand why nothing is done for my people.

“I have heard talk and talk but nothing is done. Good words do not last long unless they amount to something. Words do not pay for my dead people. They do not pay for my country now overrun by white men. They do not protect my father’s grave. They do not pay for my horses and cattle. Good words do not give me back my children . . . I am tired of talk that comes to nothing. It makes my heart sick when I remember all the good words and all the broken promises. There has been too much talking by men who had no right to talk” (ibid.).

It’s amazing to read his words nearly 130 years later and recognize that the



Chief Joseph, after a long and valiant struggle, said, “Hear me, my chiefs; I am tired. My heart is sick and sad. From where the sun now stands I will fight no more forever.”

more things seem to change, the less they actually do. Talk is cheap, and promises come and go.

Do not put your trust in princes

Long ago in the words found in Isaiah 59:4, 7-8, God offered this startling verdict regarding the inner workings of man left to himself: “No one calls for justice, nor does any plead for truth. They trust in empty words and speak lies; they conceive evil and bring forth iniquity . . . Their feet run to evil, and they make haste to shed innocent blood; their thoughts are thoughts of iniquity; wasting and destruction are in their paths. The way of peace they have not known, and there is no justice in their ways; they have made themselves crooked paths; whoever takes that way shall know not peace.”

It is no wonder that King David, a man thoroughly versed in the intrigues of politics, counseled others in Psalm 146:3, “Do not put your trust in princes, nor in a son of man, in whom there is no help.”

In 1904, Chief Joseph died. He was still in exile from his homeland. His

doctor said he died of a broken heart. Even so, Chief Joseph hoped for a new society in which there would no longer be broken hearts, but rather hearts with new ways of thinking and being.

“Whenever the white man treats the Indian as they treat each other then we shall have no more wars. We shall be all alike—brothers of one father and mother, with one sky above us and one country around us and one government for all. Then the Great Spirit Chief who rules above will smile upon this land and send rain to wash out the bloody spots made by brothers’ hands upon the face of the earth. For this time the Indian race is waiting and praying. I hope no more groans of wounded men and women will ever go to the ear of the Great Spirit Chief above, and that all people may be one people” (ibid.).

No more groans

When I read Chief Joseph’s words, “I hope no more groans of wounded men and women go to the ears of the Great Spirit Chief above,” I could not help but think of Paul’s words in Romans 8:21-22: “Because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now.”

Whether it is the historical sadness of yesterday’s abuses or the challenges facing all of us in our current world beset by terrorism, there is hope. Yes, there is a new world coming. A great spiritual “chief” that the Bible reveals as the “captain of [our] salvation” (Hebrews 2:10) is coming to this earth and establishing world peace for all humanity. Yes, every race, tribe, kindred and folk is going to be taught peace.

Men and women of good will are going to come to terms with their God and themselves. They’re going to recognize that the history of humanity is a cycle of circles. Yes, a lot of motion, some battles won along the way—but they will come to realize that by themselves they cannot win the struggle against human nature.

And like Chief Joseph, they will come to realize the futility of going

any further on their own, and come to terms of surrender, not before the generals and politicians of this world with their shifting agendas, but before none other than Jesus Christ, who is “the way, the truth, and the life” (John 14:6). When Christ gives His word that He will perform, He keeps it, even at the cost of His life.

God has a plan and strategy in place. It is going to entail a massive realignment of human energy and productive output. Isaiah 2:4 gives us a taste of such a world. It tells us, “He shall judge between the nations, and rebuke many people; they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.”

We are offered further illustration of this new world in the words of John as found in Revelation 21:4: “And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow or crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.”

Just imagine

Just imagine Chief Joseph someday walking through such a world. He will no longer have to look over his shoulder wondering when the cavalry will be coming over the rise. He will no longer have to watch the young children freeze and the old men die. He will not ask if God’s promises are worth any more than the paper on which they are written. He will never again die of a broken heart, but he will live with a new heart.

Imagine the smile that will come upon his face. And in that ageless kingdom to come, you and I will remember that this wise chief of the Nez Percé nation long ago echoed a phrase from the millennial refrain, “This is the way, walk in it” (Isaiah 30:21).

It is a phrase that one day all humanity will utter as they grasp the futility of going any further on their own, apart from God. It is a moment that comes to each person as he recognizes that his fight with a loving and caring God is over. It is the moment of Christian surrender when we utter, “From where the sun now stands, I will fight no more forever.” ❖

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by Robin Webber

'I Will Fight No More, Forever'

Today's news headlines continually blare forth the stark reality of a culture clash between the Western world and the world of Islam. Men and women of goodwill on both sides are being stretched and drawn to maintain their core values in an ever-changing road map to peace in the Middle East.

War very rarely leaves a country or region as it found it. The very nature or cause for war changes with the course of time. It can leave a lot of little people decimated and disillusioned along the way. People who are today's partners for peace can be transformed into tomorrow's adversaries if careful forethought is not given. No one necessarily plans it that way, but it happens. It's the nature of war as it twists and turns in the grip of geopolitical planners and mapmakers far from the smell of the battlefield.

Such a scenario was played out over 100 years ago in the Northwest region of the United States. Cultures clashed on a shrinking continent. The land between the Mississippi River and the Pacific Ocean was no longer big enough to maintain two equal but separate cultures. Longtime friends became enemies. As a result, people died. It was not a pretty picture. And for the moment, let's view it through the lens of one of America's wisest men, In-mut-too-yah-lat-lat, better known to a wider audience by his English name, Chief Joseph of the Nez Percé tribe.

Hearts that were friendly

Chief Joseph recounted late in his life how "the first white men of your people who came to our country were named Lewis and Clark. They brought many things which our people had never seen. They talked straight and our

people gave them a great feast as proof that their hearts were friendly. They made presents to our chiefs and our people made presents to them. We had great many horses of which we gave them what they needed, and they gave us guns and tobacco in return. All the Nez Percé made friends with Lewis and Clark and agreed to let them pass through their country and never to make war on white men. This promise, the Nez Percé has never broken" (*New Perspectives of the West*, "Chief Joseph Speaks," Public Broadcasting System).

His own father, Joseph the Elder, was one of the first Nez Percé to convert to Christianity and was an active supporter of the tribe's long-standing peace with the white man. He even assisted the Washington territorial governor to set up the Nez Percé Indian reservation that encompassed an area stretching from Oregon to Idaho. But in 1863, following a gold rush into Nez Percé territory, the federal government took nearly 6 million acres of land, and forced the Nez Percé tribe onto a reservation in Idaho only one tenth its original size.

Joseph the Elder denounced the United States, destroyed his American flag and his Bible. He refused to move his people to that location and would not sign any treaty regarding the newly proposed boundaries (*ibid.*).

The die is cast!

It is in this setting that Chief Joseph (the younger) had leadership thrust upon him in 1871. Tensions continued to mount with the ever-growing numerical onslaught of new settlers from the east. The federal government for a brief

(See "FOREVER," page 14)