

WORLD NEWS *and* PROPHECY

Biblical Perspectives on Current Events

March 2000

Vol. 3, No. 3

“Peace, Peace!” When There Is No Peace”

After somehow surviving perhaps the bloodiest 100-year period in all of human history, is the peace process finally going to work in the 21st century?

by John Ross Schroeder

A noted British author and journalist, A.N. Wilson, observed recently, “The history of the twentieth century is the history of death and slaughter on a scale [of] which our forebears could have had no inkling. The millions killed by the folly and wickedness of politicians far outstrips the numbers in Africa and Asia who died of unnecessary starvation.”

Yet, about halfway through 1999, the Anglo-American media was generally optimistic in its judgment of the peace process. For instance, the writers of *The Economist* summed up prospects on the last day of that July. “On the face of it, this has been a good season for peace, and a good one for intervention. Over the past few weeks, agreements have been reached

to end three of Africa’s nastiest wars—in Congo, in Sierra Leone and between Ethiopia and Eritrea.

“And restraint has prevailed, with some help from outsiders, in the dispute between India and Pakistan over Kashmir. And in Kosovo the West has put a stop to Serb ethnic cleansing. *All of a sudden the world looks quieter.* Those who have worked to end the violence—whether by diplomatic means, as in Kashmir, Congo, Ethiopia and Eritrea, or by military intervention, as in Kosovo, Sierra Leone—may feel encouraged. Blessed are the peace-makers” (emphasis added throughout).

That *Economist* article did not mention that considerable progress had appar-

ently been made in the long-running dispute in Northern Ireland. And even more importantly, the Middle East peace process had taken a decided turn for the better with the “olive branches” offered by Ehud Barak, prime minister of Israel.

Where are we today?

But where are we now? Reading the morning papers at the time of this writing was not encouraging. Several stories indicate that progress toward peace is not as advanced as the above analysis suggests.

Sadly, the war of words between India and Pakistan is escalating again. It would be foolhardy to imagine that these
(See “PEACE,” page 3)

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**A Kinder, Gentler Hell? — Extreme Right Reappears in Central Europe —
U.S. Not Secure Against Bioterrorism — 10 Million AIDS Orphans**

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Read *World News and Prophecy* as soon as it is completed. The next issue is scheduled to be available on April 7 on the Internet at <http://www.ucg.org/html/literat.shtml#4>.

The United Church of God provides *World News and Prophecy (WNP)* as an educational service for interested persons. The purpose of *WNP* is to help readers discern the times and increase their awareness and understanding of current events in the light of Bible prophecy. Although the staff strives for truth and accuracy in its reporting, analysis and Bible commentary, *WNP* is not a doctrinal publication. Articles do undergo both an editorial and a review process.

“PEACE,” (Continued from page 1)

two neighboring countries have really settled their long-running dispute over Kashmir. An exchange of firepower could come at any time—and nuclear weaponry could conceivably be used. A major article in the *Financial Times* stated, “Pakistan’s General Pervez Musharraf and India’s Atal Behari Vajpayee are perilously close to taking their countries into another war over the disputed state of Kashmir.”

According to this article, “India regards U.S. analysis of the situation as misguided,” and says that “we are not going to be immobilised [British spelling] because of the nuclear factor.” It also stated that “the mullahs with nukes scenario that so horrifies the U.S. cuts little ice in India.”

The African Angola war in the Congo area is another case in point. Never mind how many papers may have been signed, the fighting has never really ceased. The latest news is that government forces have captured a rebel center in the south. *The Telegraph* also alleged that the “Angolan leader keeps [the] country at war for profit.” *The Independent* added that “escalation of the Angolan war could undermine Congo peace negotiations and lead to instability across the region.”

Such are the ups and downs of the peace process. Kosovo in Southeastern Europe is very much back in the news. Realistically, the “peace” that NATO made possible has been punctuated by local massacres and ethnic cleansings. The positive *Economist* article quoted above stated, “Even optimists admit that full-scale blood-letting will resume unless outside troops keep the combatants apart, certainly for years, maybe for decades.”

Bringing the Kosovo scene up-to-date, violence has recently erupted again as 70,000 Albanian protesters tried to storm the bridge which separates the Serbian and Albanian communities in the city of Mitrovica. Geographically, only the Ibar River keeps them apart.

Unfinished conflicts

The Observer dubbed this conflict “the unfinished war.” So many of our modern wars seem never to fully end. Correspondent Tim Judah stated that “a

year ago the world’s eyes were focused on the slaughter of Kosovo. Now the TV crews have gone, but the agony remains.” Mr. Judah “toured the torn cities and uneasy borders where all sides are braced for a return to guerrilla fighting.” It’s a very uneasy peace at best.

In Northern Ireland the peace process has at least been temporarily halted by a dispute over the long-hoped-for decommissioning of Irish Republican Army (IRA) weapons. Said a *Daily Mail* editorial, “Why should anyone be surprised that the IRA has refused to hand over so much as a single bullet in the cause of peace?” Currently, there is a frantic scramble among politicians to preserve the Good Friday Agreement.

The peace process in the Middle East has also at least temporarily been interrupted by Hezbollah attacks against Israeli soldiers in Southern Lebanon,

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jeopardizing a potential peace deal between Israel and Syria.

This article is far from a comprehensive study of all the world’s trouble spots. For example, we have not assessed the events in Chechnya and East Timor—or the potential perils of Taiwan. China has again threatened military action in its continuing quest to bring Taiwan under its rule. Undoubtedly, more hot spots will flare up between the time this is written and the time it is published.

Erratum

The article “Reengineering Babel” in last issue incorrectly referred to Britain’s “former” Commonwealth. Of course the Commonwealth still exists. *WNP* regrets the error.

Where do we go from here?

Certainly, the peace process as conceived by human beings has many tortuous twists and turns. Things seem to be better and then they get worse, and vice versa. The entire process can turn out to be incredibly deceptive. The Bible predicts a future time when, just as the peace process looks its most promising, war (big time) will suddenly break out.

Near the middle of the first century, the apostle Paul wrote these sobering words, “the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night [at an unsuspected time]. For when they shall say, ‘Peace and safety!’ then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman” (1 Thessalonians 5:2–3).

Jesus Christ said the end time would be like the days of Noah. But how so? People will be going about the normal everyday business of living—buying and selling, building and planting, eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage—that is, until the penny finally drops and the world explodes in a multitude of troubles (Matthew 24: 37–39). It will be like it was in the Noachian age, when the Flood destroyed nearly all human life. There were no survivors outside the ark. Thankfully, at the end time, there will also be some survivors due to the Work of God through His elect (Matthew 24:21–22).

The destruction that came on the pre-Flood world was sudden. Appearances just beforehand were deceiving, the people having paid no attention to Noah’s warnings (2 Peter 2:5). They simply didn’t comprehend what was about to happen. In the vernacular, they didn’t have a clue.

Jesus told us that the inhabitants of Sodom were similarly unaware of impending disaster just before the heavens rained down fire and brimstone as a judgment against their ungodly lifestyle. True, they were warned. But they simply didn’t see or hear it, having ignored God’s messenger, Lot (verses 6–8).

Beware a counterfeit peace

A coming time of *counterfeit* world peace will seem so very real just before a
(See “PEACE,” page 8)

A Kinder, Gentler Hell?

*As public opinion about hell changes, so have the teachings of many churches.
But what does the Bible really say?*

by David Treybig

Syncretism—the assimilation of cultural values and social agendas—has long defined mainstream Christianity. Biblically assigned days of worship were set aside centuries ago in favor of Sunday, Christmas and Easter.

Similarly, popular tradition long ago replaced the biblical teaching about hell. Recently, beliefs about hell have begun to change again. A recent poll reveals an amazing shift in opinion among the American populace as to what hell is. True to historical form, major religious organizations are adjusting their teachings accordingly. The latest version could be called “hell lite” or a “kinder, gentler hell.”

According to *U.S. News and World Report*, in 1997, the majority belief among U.S. citizens was that “Hell is a real place where people suffer eternal fiery torments.” Now, 53 percent believe “Hell is an anguished state of existence eternally separated from God” (“Hell Hath No Fury,” Jeffrey L. Sheler, January 31, 2000, p. 47).

The change has been gradual and is attributed to several factors. “Lampooned by modern intellectuals and increasingly sidelined by preachers preferring to dwell on more uplifting themes, the threat of post-mortem punishment of the impenitent in an eternal lake of fire all but disappeared from the religious mainstream by the 1960s. Theological discourse on the subject at the nation’s divinity schools almost evaporated. And while polls showed that the majority of Americans professed to believe in hell’s existence, almost no one thought he would go there” (ibid.).

The reasoning behind the shift often paints punishment as a childish fear tactic that is no longer valid or needed by mature adults. Others reason that a good God couldn’t possibly punish people forever, as that would be against His very nature. “‘Once we discovered we could create hell on Earth,’ says John Dominic Crossan, professor emeritus at DePaul University in Chicago, ‘it became silly to talk about it in a literal sense’ ” (ibid., p. 50).

Authenticating this modern interpretation for

Catholics, Pope John Paul II stated last summer that “rather than a place, hell indicates the state of those who freely and definitely separate themselves from God.” In so doing, he described hell as something figuratively portrayed in the Bible as a “pool of fire” or a “second death” (ibid., p. 45).

Catholic funeral masses have been changed to reflect this view. White priestly garments have replaced black ones and prayers like *Dies Irae* (Day of Wrath), which describe the torture of the wicked, have been set aside in favor of ones dealing with hope and the resurrection.

In concert with this socially-driven change, “The doctrine commission of the Church of England recently recommended a hell of ‘final and irrevocable choosing of that which is opposed to God’ instead of medieval fire and torment. And the newest Presbyterian catechism hardly mentions the subject at all.... [Even] among evangelicals, hell as a subject from the pulpit is less ubiquitous than before” (*USA Today*, “Churches Give Hell a Makeover,” Gerald L. Zelizer, February 21, 2000, p. 15A).

The modern religious consumer

In an effort to explain recent changes in teachings about hell, Gerald Zelizer, who is the rabbi of a conservative congregation in Metuchen-Edison, New Jersey, offers three reasons he believes hell is being refashioned. First is the religious consumer’s needs-based view that he or she is more in need of positive things, such as love, hope, peace and marriage enrichment, than being saved from hell. Second is the American psyche that feels people are entitled to be happy and successful. Third is ambiguity within Christianity over what Matthew meant when he said that evildoers would be “cast into a furnace of fire.”

In an age where the religious consumer drives the market, churches are now not only striving to meet the individual where he or she is emotionally and intellectually, but are also adjusting doctrines to attract and retain such people. Like a technician

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who can't resist the urge to tweak the knobs of an already operating system, theologians and parishioners alike have a record of regularly adjusting doctrinal teachings to fit their changing perspectives. Jesus' first-century condemnation of substituting "the commandments of men" for the teachings of God (Matthew 15:9; Mark 7:7) has gone unheeded.

Yet, strangely, some theologians paint their revisions as honorable, carefully thought-out methods of taking the gospel to contemporary culture. Thomas Reese, editor of the Jesuit journal *America*, reasons that today's gentler hell, based on relationships and psychological experiences like loneliness, wouldn't have made sense to earlier generations.

Jeffrey Sheler notes that this most recent change in hell is similar to other changes in Christian teaching. "It took the Christian community 300 years to come up with the doctrine of the Trinity at Nicaea and an additional 125 years to articulate the dual nature of Christ at Chalcedon."

But not everyone agrees with such humanly devised changes of biblical teachings.

The history of change

Today, evangelical Protestants and conservative Catholics (who comprise much of the 34 percent of Americans who still hold to the traditional view that hell is a literal place of eternal punishment) do not accept the kinder, gentler hell. Yet, many of those resistant to the recent change are unaware of the fact that their traditional beliefs represent societal revisions of the biblical teaching made centuries ago.

Surprising as it may sound, the idea of hell as a literal place where evildoers are punished for eternity did not arise until centuries after Jesus Christ's life on earth and subsequent crucifixion. As Rabbi Zelizer explained, "In the Hebrew Bible, there is no mention of hell at all, but only a deep ravine of rocky earth outside the Old City of Jerusalem, where the Israelites burned garbage and emptied sewage, and Sheol, a non-descript underworld into which both the good and the bad descended after death."

So, where did the idea of hell as a place of eternal punishment come from?

In Mark 9:43–48, Jesus spoke of hell as a place where "the fire is not quenched." Did He mean that evildoers would be punished forever? Or, did He mean that the fire would not be put out until the wicked are completely consumed? This question has left many confused, as have the disagreements among third- and fourth-century theologians over whether the punishment was sensory or only symbolic of separation from God.

Origen, another theologian of the period, offered this theory: hell was reme-



A view of the second death as portrayed in U.S. News and World Report

dial in nature, a place where sinners could be rehabilitated. The Council of Constantinople in 543 A.D. rejected Origen's view. From this time forward, people were divided between two perspectives: the majority believing in a never-ending punishing of the wicked, the minority believing in a one-time punishment of the wicked—that they would be annihilated.

Little changed until the 14th century when Dante presented a fictional description of hell in his work *The Divine Comedy*. Using vivid imagery of the horrors associated with a multi-leveled subterranean chamber, Dante galvanized popular opinions about sensory punishment.

However, the doctrinal evolution did not end there.

"Two hundred years later, leaders of the Protestant Reformation rejected the terrifying depictions of hell in art and literature. While Martin Luther and John Calvin regarded hell as a real place, they believed its fiery torments were figurative. Hell's worst agonies, they said, were the terror and utter despair of spending eternity cut off from God," wrote Jeffrey Sheler.

Given the various options, what should one believe? Is there no definitive, biblically based answer? One often overlooked passage sheds enormous, clarifying light on this entire debate.

The biblical explanation

While many have noted Christ's references to punishment for evildoers in Mark 9:43–48 and Revelation 20:15, few have seen the connection between this subject and Malachi 4. Written approximately 400 years before the birth of Christ, Malachi's book has been mistakenly assumed by many to be simply a historical record of that time. Yet, the last two chapters of this book (Malachi 3 and 4) focus on Jesus' second coming.

Malachi 4:1–3 explains what will happen to the wicked: "For behold, the day is coming, burning like an oven, and all the proud, yes, all who do wickedly will be stubble. And the day which is coming shall burn them up," says the LORD of hosts, "That will leave them neither root nor branch. But to you who fear My name the Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in His wings; and you shall go out and grow fat like stall-fed calves. You shall trample the wicked, for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet on the day that I do this," says the LORD of hosts."

The punishment that evildoers will receive is to be burned up. This is not a case of eternal punishing but of eternal punishment. The wicked will not burn forever. Indeed, they will be reduced to ashes. Similarly, in Matthew 25:46, Jesus said the wicked "will go away into everlasting punishment" and "the righteous into eternal life." The punishment will be eternal in the sense that it has eternal consequences—no one will return to life,

(See "HELL," page 15)

Extreme Right Reappears in Central Europe

A disillusionment with democracy and worries about immigrants are fueling the growth of right-wing parties.

by Melvin Rhodes

Disillusionment with the cozy political arrangements of the older political parties, together with fears of a flood of immigrants, are two of the main factors that have brought the Freedom Party into government.

International fears of a fascist revival followed Austria's announcement that Jorg Haider's Freedom Party would be joining the conservative coalition government of Austrian Chancellor Wolfgang Schuessel. Demonstrations in major European cities followed the announcement in spite of the charismatic Haider's refusal of a Cabinet post for himself.

Even his subsequent resignation as leader one month later was only seen as a tactical move and could result in forcing an election that might give his party a boost and speed his way to leadership of this central European nation. Haider has previously shown some sympathy for those involved in the country's Nazi past, while accusations of xenophobia accompany the Freedom Party's stance on immigration and the European Union.

Is this the start of a fascist revival in Europe? Europeans have not forgotten that another charismatic Austrian almost 70 years ago led his political party to victory in neighboring Germany, heralding the birth of the Third Reich and plunging the world into the Second World War. Adolf Hitler was eventually defeated by the Western allies, but not before tens of millions of people died.

Three dominant ideologies of the 20th century all began in Europe. Fascism and communism (together with the more moderate socialism) followed the collapse of the centuries old established order that fell apart in the aftermath of World War I. The 1914-18 war was the single most defining moment of modern European history. The rival powers that went to war following the assassination of the Austrian heir to the throne inadvertently destroyed themselves. The age of monarchy seemed dead.

With the collapse of the old order new ideologies emerged. Communism had taken over in

Russia, with attempts to establish communist governments elsewhere in Europe and fears of further revolutions to follow.

Whereas communism was a utopian ideal of world government where everything would be publicly owned, fascism emphasized the nation state and supported capitalism. Fascists glorified their own country, often accompanied with ideas of racial superiority. The individual did not count. Only the state, the national government, mattered, and all must submit to it. In order to succeed, fascism needed a charismatic leader.

Hitler and Mussolini were the two main fascist leaders in Europe. The Italian fascist slogan "to believe, to obey, to combat" was the antithesis of "liberty, equality and fraternity." The word *fascism* was first used by Italy's Benito Mussolini in 1919. It is derived from the Latin *fascis*, a bundle of rods with an ax in it. This symbolized the power of many united and obeying the one will of the national leader.

Fascists took their inspiration from the ancient world. Christianity with its emphasis on the individual was out. The ancient Greek city of Sparta was in. Discipline and devotion to duty were all that mattered. Complete coordination of all intellectual and political thought and activity was left to the state—to the supreme leader who would bring about the utopia that the people deserved and wanted. This was the essence of fascism.

Fascists were given a boost in the 1920s and 1930s by the severe economic problems that impacted Europe at that time. High unemployment in Germany following the Wall Street crash of 1929 and the Great Depression enabled Hitler to gain power. Even so, Germany's dictator only received a third of the votes. By agreeing to cooperate in a coalition government, he was eventually able to manipulate himself into supreme power. The coalition steppingstone to total power



Time magazine's depiction of Austria's Jorg Haider

is not forgotten as the Freedom Party joins the coalition government that will rule Austria.

Fascism was not confined to Europe. Japan's military government that came to power in 1936 was fascist, with veneration of the emperor as the sun-god at its center. Fascists also came to power in South America and were very influential in South Africa. There were active fascist parties throughout the Western democracies, but democratic institutions were strong enough to withstand them. But it was in central and southern Europe that fascism was strongest over a period of 25 years beginning shortly after World War I. As late as 1942 fascism posed a very real threat to the Western democracies. The outcome of World War II was not a foregone conclusion.

Fascists remained in power in Europe after World War II, and retained total control of Spain and Portugal until the mid-1970s. There are still governments in power around the world whose ideology is fascist, but they no longer use the term in describing themselves. Fascism is unlikely to return under its old name as the movement was greatly discredited by the excesses of World War II.

But could it return to power under a new name?

The road to power

How and why did fascists gain power in the years that led to World War

II? Wherever fascist movements have arisen, they have come to power as a result of national disillusionment and disappointment with the established political process. Democracies do not change quickly. The political process is often slow and rarely are needed reforms effective in solving problems. Fascism offers simple solutions to complex problems. One man rule sounds good. Let the leader have total power without the hindrance of a parliament or congress and what needs to be done will soon be done. Decrees issued at the top will soon solve all the problems.

It sounded good, but it didn't work out that way. The immediate post-World War II generation knew and understood that fascism had failed. Few were tempted to try it again. Western-style democracy brought prosperity and stability. Everybody seemed content.

But now new problems have arisen, problems created by the liberal Western values that replaced fascism. Meanwhile, a new generation has grown up that knows little about World War II. There is a general disillusionment in many Western nations with the democratic system. Politicians are not trusted and are often seen as corrupt.

A recent corruption scandal in Germany has ruined the reputation of one of the most respected German leaders of modern times, Helmut Kohl. Scandals elsewhere all revolve around abuses of power. It seems like the elite only take care of themselves while nothing much changes for the ordinary man on the street. As a result, some turn to extremist parties for the solutions to their problems.

Disillusioned with democracy

Fascism is a reaction to liberal values and their consequences. Post World War II democratic Europe has seen a major assault on traditional values. Family life has been negatively affected by liberal legislation that has encouraged the breakdown of the old family unit, while the streets are not as safe as they used to be.

People looking for simple solutions to complex problems often blame new

arrivals for their social problems. They also fear being culturally swamped by these immigrants who have been arriving in Western Europe in increasing numbers following upheavals in the former Communist countries and many parts of the Third World. With an estimated one in eight Austrians now from foreign countries, there is a genuine fear of the nation being overwhelmed culturally, ethnically and racially.

Disillusionment with the cozy political arrangements of the older political parties, together with fears of a flood of immigrants, are two of the main factors that have brought the Freedom Party into government. A third factor has been Austria's fairly recent membership in the European Union. Full membership for the country only came in 1995, with some loss of sovereignty as the country moved toward closer integration with its European neighbors.

A further loss of independence is anticipated with the move toward the euro currency now in full swing. But the euro is not the issue that is causing concern. The biggest fear with EU membership comes from the likelihood of a rapid growth in the number of members of the EU with the collapse of the Communist bloc to the east. Those nations, all much poorer than Austria, seek membership in the EU. With that membership would come the free movement of people. The result would be millions more unwelcome guests arriving in Austria's cities.

Austria's concern can be understood from a historic perspective. In their minds they did not vote for fascism. Jorg Haider's party is a democratic party working within the democratic system. But its outspoken concerns over immigration, its xenophobia, are reminiscent of Hitler's anti-Semitic policies and his views of Aryan superiority—ideas formulated when he was a young man growing up in Austria. Too many memories of Austria's voluntary involvement in Hitler's Third Reich have been rekindled. Indeed, support for Hitler was proportionately greater in Austria than in Germany itself.

Disillusionment with the political status quo is not confined to Austria, nor

is Austria the only European country with an extreme right wing political party. Small extremist parties litter the European political landscape, resulting in increasingly interesting general elections.

All Western European countries suffer from the same problem of too many immigrants. Europeans are much more sensitive to this than North Americans as their countries are generally overcrowded. At the same time, the nations of central Europe had no colonial empires with dark-skinned inhabitants, so they feel more threatened by the unfamiliar. Additionally, most EU member states have double-digit unemployment (Austria's is much lower at 4.4 percent). This results in increased resentment at the presence of foreigners who are seen as taking jobs away from nationals.

Recent political scandals in Germany involving donations to the Christian Democratic Union (conservative) have exposed corruption there at the highest level. Corruption is endemic in the member countries that border the Mediterranean. At the highest level of the European Union, the entire European Commission had to resign some months ago amidst evidence of corruption.

Disillusionment with the present political system is understandable. Corrupt politicians put the entire system at risk. What is often overlooked is that democracy is relatively new to the nations of central Europe. Modern Austria's political system is not even 50 years old yet. That makes it rather fragile. It has not stood the test of time. Faced with a major political or economic crisis, would the Austrian Republic survive? Would the 50-year-old Federal Republic of Germany? Or the present French Republic established as recently as 1958? The Italian Republic has had over 50 governments since 1946 when it came into being. A crisis could once again, as it did in the 1920s and 1930s, result in extremists coming to power.

When the first Austrian Republic ran into problems, confrontations with extremists led to a brief civil war in 1934. Four years later Austria became one with Germany in the Anschluss (union).

One leader can make a difference

The desire for simple solutions to complex problems is an understandable one. The world we live in is far too complicated for most people to even begin to fathom. At times it seems as if one man could make a big difference. But history shows that people should not put their faith in any human being. Power soon goes to the heads of those unrestrained by constitutional law. Democracy may look bad at times, but extremism has historically been far worse.

A time is coming, however, when one ruler will solve the problems of this world—one with the right system of government. The Bible shows us that Jesus Christ is returning to this earth to establish the government of God. The

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government.*

Kingdom of God will usher in the greatest time in history for mankind. A perfect, just and righteous government will replace all the kingdoms and republics of this world. You can read about this righteous and perfect government in Isaiah chapter 11.

Sadly, before that time there will be a brief period of extremist human government, prophesied in Revelation chapter 17. Ten kings will come together in a union of states. These leaders will then choose one single leader, the prophesied "beast," who will set up a system even more evil than anything that has gone before (verses 12 and 13). Extremism will return, but only for a very short period prior to the second coming of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. ♦

"PEACE," (Continued from page 3)

great time of trouble begins in deadly earnest. Jeremiah foresaw and was inspired to write of it. "They [the false prophets] have also healed the hurt of My people slightly [superficially], saying, 'Peace, peace!' when there is no peace" (Jeremiah 6:14). The world will be told that there is nothing really to worry about, and that all will be well.

All will be well, but *only after* the second coming of Christ, who will establish and administer the Kingdom of God—the only hope of lasting peace. However, in this age of man ("this present evil age," Galatians 1:4), Christ warned us *not* to judge according to appearance. We have to look deeper with the spiritual insight given to those who are truly converted. We have to see beyond the superficial and often deceptive surface of current events.

Many people today do not really understand the principle of cause and effect. In the vernacular of some 30 years ago, they are "now people." They take little notice of history and give little thought to the future. Solomon said, "Because the sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil" (Ecclesiastes 8:11). It's potentially easy to be fooled into thinking that the day of reckoning or payback time will never come.

That is one reason we publish *World News and Prophecy*. We earnestly desire to alert our readers to the perilous times just ahead, the consequence of the wholesale breaking of God's spiritual law—a wonderful law that would govern humankind for its benefit and make life really work.

With the apostle Paul, we are hopeful that our readers will be among those who do take heed, and we therefore repeat his encouraging words of yesteryear, fully applicable to us today:

"But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day [time of great trouble] should overtake you as a thief. You are all sons of light and sons of the day.... Therefore let us not sleep, as others do, *but let us watch and be sober*" (1 Thessalonians 5:4–6). ♦

U.S. Not Secure Against Bioterrorist Attacks

Is the U.S. vulnerable to attack by terrorists using biological agents? How likely is it that such attacks would be launched in the next five to ten years?

by Cecil E. Maranville

Terrorists will likely attack the United States with a smallpox or anthrax virus within the next five to ten years, warned D.A. Henderson, director of the Johns Hopkins Center for Civilian Bio Defense Studies, at a large conference on bioterrorism held in San Diego, California, in early February.

Bioterrorism is a word that has been coined to describe acts of terrorism that utilize deadly bacteria, viruses or products of those agents. The most likely weapons include smallpox, anthrax and the plague. These are considered probable players because they have the potential to spread quickly and cause many deaths.

Much publicity has been given to the mandated anthrax vaccination of all 2.4 million active duty and reserve U.S. troops. Pentagon sources say that forces stationed in South Korea and the Middle East are at the most risk; it is widely believed that Iraq has anthrax agents in its arsenal of biological weapons.

Although a U.S. House of Representatives subcommittee recently called on the Pentagon to suspend its required vaccination program, the military refused. The Department of Defense believes the vaccine is safe and that it provides ample protection. Hundreds of military personnel have refused the inoculation, based on a lack of trust of the Pentagon's assurances of the vaccine's effectiveness and safety.

The House Government Reform national security subcommittee released a sharply worded criticism of those assurances. "Just how much protection is acquired, by whom, for how long...are

questions the Defense Department answers with *an excess of faith but a paucity of science*" ("Pentagon to Keep Anthrax Program," by Robert Burns, AP Military Writer, February 18, 2000, emphasis added).

Some soldiers who have had the requisite series of six shots have complained of side effects of fevers, muscle pain and dizziness. Testimony before the House subcommittee told of low morale over the issue.

Of greater concern, counters the Defense Department, is what anthrax can do to a person. It causes death within a few days of being inhaled. (According to D.A. Henderson, the United States is five years away from having an effective anthrax vaccine available to the public.)

In a November 30, 1999, AP story printed in *The Washington Post*, "The General Accounting Office [GAO]...criticized the Departments of Health and Human Services and Veterans Affairs, as well as a special Marine Corps unit, for failing to manage their supplies for treating civilian victims of a chemical or biological terrorist attack."

Due to the mismanagement, the GAO concluded that these federal agencies could not assure that required medical supplies would be available in case of such an attack.

The same article reported that a few months earlier, "emergency management and medical officials told a House subcommittee that local public health systems remain ill-prepared for [biological or chemical attacks]."

"Sooner or later there is going to be a biological attack on a major city. Are we prepared to deal with it? Not a chance," says Debora McKenzie in "Bio-armageddon," (*New Scientist*, September 19, 1998). She describes how a terrorist group can infect a city such as San Francisco, California, with anthrax by spray from a small private plane and kill more than one million people.

Authorities are well aware of the fact that terrorists narrowly missed killing hundreds of times the few that actually died when they released deadly sarin nerve gas in a Tokyo subway in 1995.

Over 300 physicians, scientists, law-enforcement agents and public officials participated in the San Diego conference on bioterrorism. "Bioterrorism: living with the threat of hyper-violence," was on the agenda of the representatives to the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, a few days before the San Diego conference.

Clearly, it's a concern taken seriously around the world. The potential horror of biological warfare brings a sober realism to the end of the age plagues spoken of in the prophecies of Revelation.

Sources: "Bioterrorism Preparation Said Poor." by David Ho, AP, November 30, 1999; "Diary—Davos World Economic Forum Jan. 27 to Feb. 1," Reuters, January 27, 1999; "'Bio-terrorism—The Medical and Public Health Response' Western Regional Conference," PRNewswire; "US Biological Attack Said Inevitable" by Michelle Williams, AP, February 4, 2000. ♦

10 Million Orphans—an AIDS Holocaust in Africa

AIDS has taken a horrible toll in Africa. And the plague is far from over. If not conquered, it will take an increasing toll around the world. What will stop this horror?

by Mario Seiglie

"By the end of this year an astonishing 10.4 million African children under 15 will have lost their mothers or both parents to AIDS—90 percent of the global total of AIDS orphans."

Over 10 million orphans. It took a while for the headline in a recent *Newsweek* magazine to sink in. Over 10 million African children have lost one or both parents due to the AIDS plague. "A full-blown crisis is upon us, and it's worse than expected" said *Newsweek*. "By the end of this year an astonishing 10.4 million African children under 15 will have lost their mothers or both parents to AIDS—90 percent of the global total of AIDS orphans" (January 17, 2000, p. 12).

In any other part of the world, the news would be scandalous, but in Africa, a continent largely disconnected from the rest of the world, AIDS is still mostly a silent epidemic. At least it has been finally recognized for what it is—a worldwide plague. In the recent edition dedicated to AIDS in Africa, *Newsweek* titled the leading article, "The Plague Years."

The facts are slowly sinking in about how terrible and widespread this plague has become. It has already killed close to half a million Americans, almost 10 times the number who died in the Vietnam War. No nation is immune. China and India together have more than seven million cases.

According to the United Nations, with each passing minute, 11 persons become infected with the AIDS virus, or 16,000 a day. This totals an appalling 5.6 million people stricken with the plague last year. The number of people who have AIDS worldwide is around 38 million.

How many have died from AIDS? A million? Five million? Or 10 million? No—it is far worse. The official figure is 16.3 million. Just last year, 2.6 million died of the virus, which is equivalent to the population of Jamaica. Perhaps because two million of those died in Africa (total AIDS deaths in Africa so far—13.7 million), the wails of grief are seldom heard

beyond the villages of the dead. Yet, they are all people made in God's image, but whose dreams and aspirations have been shattered.

The figures have grown to such astronomical proportions that they are finally causing alarm in the world community—but it appears largely due to self-interest. "The spread of this disease," said U.S. Ambassador to the U.N., Richard Holbrooke, "could not be contained in Africa, and the destruction of Africa from AIDS will not be limited to the continent. If we don't work with the Africans themselves to address these problems...we will have to deal with them later when they will get more dangerous and more expensive" (p. 12, emphasis added throughout). Apparently, the United States is now acting out of expediency, convinced that containing the virus would be more dangerous and costly later.

Factors that cause AIDS to spread

Why has the AIDS virus been particularly virulent in Africa? The *Newsweek* article continues, "The disease began in Africa and spread, in part, because of social instability—via migrant workers, refugees and women who had few other means to support themselves than prostitution. Cultural factors also played a role: superstitions spread in some areas that the best cure for an HIV-infected man was to sleep with a virgin" (p. 12). In Africa it appears that AIDS is a primarily heterosexual challenge.

The caution with which some of the Western news media deals with the AIDS epidemic is due mostly to the political issues involved. Prostitution, promiscuity and homosexuality are all contributing elements, intimately connected with the AIDS virus, but are considered "politically incorrect" subjects by

many journalists. In a world where sexual morals are being increasingly relaxed, it is difficult for the news media to deal with the main culprit of the AIDS outbreak—the breaking of the Seventh Commandment—“You shall not commit adultery” (Exodus 20:14).

One insightful *Newsweek* reader later commented about the special edition dedicated to AIDS: “In 14 pages of text, the words ‘casual sex’ or ‘promiscuity’ were not mentioned once, even though this is the direct or indirect cause of 98 percent of all new infections in Africa. Nor was the fact that HIV is a sexually transmitted infection alluded to” (*Newsweek*, February 14, 2000, p. 5).

To be sure, there are many innocent victims of AIDS in Africa. Tainted blood used in transfusions is one cause. Mates unknowingly contract AIDS from a spouse who is a carrier. And then there are the children who inherit it from birth.

A warning from God

God has repeatedly warned mankind in the past that He will not tolerate rampant sexual immorality forever. We read in 2 Peter that He turned “the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, condemned them to destruction, making them *an example* to those who afterward would live ungodly...” (2:6).

God’s intervention in world affairs is also linked in Daniel 8 to a rise of ungodly living, of which the AIDS plague is both a symptom and a part. There it is prophesied, “And in the latter time of their kingdom, *when the transgressors have reached their fullness*, a king shall arise...against the Prince of princes [at Christ’s second coming]; but he shall be broken without human means” (verses 23–25). It seems that sin has to rise to a certain peak level before God decides to launch the planned intervention of His Kingdom.

A past plague

So far, the death toll from AIDS has not equaled that of plagues in the past. The 1918 influenza virus was esti-

mated to have killed over 20 million people. It spread quickly, and then died out. But a real plague is known for its lasting deadliness. So far, the AIDS epidemic has lasted some 20 years.

There are no known cures for AIDS. Very expensive and powerful drugs are able to hold it in check somewhat, but not eliminate it. Enormous efforts and resources have been direct-



Newsweek illustrated its article about AIDS and Africa with this photo of mother and son who both have AIDS

ed at finding a cure, and some scientists believe they are on the right track to a lasting solution. This would be good news, for no one wants AIDS to continue, and there are too many innocent victims.

Fear of contracting the virus has slowed the rampant immorality in some countries. One wonders if a cure for AIDS would “free” people from their fears and actually lead to increased promiscuity. Other sexually transmissible diseases continue to multiply—in spite of their devastating consequences.

Long-term solution to AIDS

The long-term solution to the AIDS problem includes more than eliminating the virus. People must choose to *stop their sexual misconduct* that spreads it around. God promises

that people will choose this solution under His government, which Christ will establish at His return to this earth. Jesus described the dire world conditions prior to His arrival: “And because *lawlessness* will abound, the love of many [for God’s ways] will grow cold. But he who endures to the end shall be saved” (Matthew 24:12–13). He also foretold that “pestilences...in various places” would be extant before His coming (Matthew 24:7).

Christ promised us He would return to save this sin-stricken world from itself. He will usher in a kingdom where these diseases will no longer exist, because the world’s citizens will choose a better way of life. We read about this in Isaiah 11:9, “For the earth shall be *full* of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.” With true knowledge, people will not choose damaging lifestyles.

A change of heart

For that to occur, though, man’s heart must be changed. God’s laws must be written in a person’s heart. God has prophesied this will occur: “For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: *I will put My laws in their mind and write them on their hearts*; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people” (Hebrews 8:10).

Imagine a world where marriage is respected to the point where no one will be looking for another sexual partner—where youths are not promiscuous and commit to wait until marriage to have wholesome sexual relations. AIDS and other venereal diseases will then be a distant memory. That is part of God’s promises, which He will bring about when Christ establishes His blessed kingdom.

The United Church of God is committed to proclaiming the gospel of God’s Kingdom and the marvelous truths that will eventually lead to the elimination of the world’s present plagues. Then, and only then, shall the words, *AIDS* and *venereal disease* be part of man’s past history. ♦

In Brief...

World News Review

Will Same-Sex Marriages Be Sanctioned by Sanctuaries?

Reform Judaism will debate the issue of sanctioning same-sex marriages in March. The United Methodist Church is scheduled to debate the same issue in May and, in June, the Presbyterian Church will take up the matter.

In mid-summer, the Episcopal Church will discuss and decide at its national convention whether or not to accept a recommendation from an Episcopal commission that the church continue to allow individual dioceses to decide on their own if they will bless same-sex unions.

One wonders if churches are reading the Book—the Bible—or opinion polls, as they formulate their policies. While this is an explosively controversial subject in our present society, it is not a new question for the Church of God. The early New Testament Church was also confronted with it.

The apostle Paul addressed it in 1 Corinthians 6:9–10:

“Do not know that the unrighteous and the wrongdoers will not inherit or have any share in the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived (misled); neither the impure and immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor those who participate in homosexuality, nor cheats—swindlers and thieves; nor greedy graspers, nor drunkards, nor foulmouthed revilers and slanderers, nor extortioners and robbers will inherit or have any share in the kingdom of God” (Amplified Bible).

The language is strong and plain. Based upon the biblical instruction, the United Church of God, *an International Association* (publisher of *World News and Prophecy*) believes any homosexual behavior to be both unnatural and sin (Romans 1:26–27).

However, the UCGIA does not discriminate against those who have chosen or been forced into such mistakes.

Note what follows the above quote from 1 Corinthians 6:

“And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God” (1 Corinthians 6:11, New King James).

That is, members of the Church of God in Corinth had participated in some or all of the sins listed—including homosexuality—but later became converted and turned from their sin. Following the scriptural example, the UCGIA

graciously welcomes into its fellowship all people who repent of their sins—any sins.

Source: *The Christian Science Monitor*, February 14, 2000.

Kosovo a Quagmire

Remember when most of the West was on a self-anointed mission to solve the Kosovo conflict? Several months after the U.S.-led NATO air action, no evidence has been produced that demonstrates the “ethnic cleansing on a scale unequaled since Hitler”—the justification for bombing Serbia.

New York-based Human Rights Watch has reported that NATO’s bombing of Yugoslavia caused approximately 500 civilian deaths. The Pentagon suggests a much lower figure, claiming that only 20 to 30 incidents resulted in civilian casualties. Of course, the Yugoslav government claims still a different figure, putting the civilian death toll at around 5,000.

Whatever the actual number, this type of report is an embarrassment to NATO and the United States. Instead of a genuine peace, outbursts of fighting are common. Serbian and ethnic Albanian citizens of Yugoslavia still clash violently—in spite of KFOR’s presence, and even threatening the safety of the KFOR troops.

To be sure, the Milosevic-directed action against the KLA and innocent citizens was stopped. It remains debatable whether the Milosevic forces achieved their initial objectives or not. The KLA were stopped from bullying and instigating Kosovo’s ethnic Albanian population into breaking away from Yugoslavia as an independent republic.

On the other hand, some argue that the KLA is now more firmly ensconced than ever, largely legitimized by its recognition in the fighting. Further, many former KLA members are established as police officers in Kosovo.

Violent acts by KLA sympathizers and Milosevic thugs are regularly in the news. It should come as no surprise that nothing has been resolved. Peace does not come by or through force.

Fearful of a repeat of the accusations that it did nothing when hundreds of thousands were massacred in Rwanda’s civil war (or in the slaughter of as many as two million in

Sudan), the U.S. administration felt it had to intervene—yet again—in the Balkans.

Now, however, circumstances have rotated 180 degrees, and Stratfor reports that the U.S. administration is looking for a way out of Kosovo. Its motivation is similar to that which initially spurred the NATO action—it wants to avoid a public relations nightmare.

Things are coming unraveled in the Balkans again. There are warnings that yet another struggle may explode in violence in Montenegro, whose democratic reforms are moving it politically away from an unwilling Belgrade. Strife continues inside Serbia, where the Defense Minister during the NATO air strikes was murdered. The leader of an opposition group seeking to oust Milosevic declares, “There is anarchy and chaos” in Yugoslavia (“Yugoslav Vows to Fight Terror After Murder” by Fredrik Dahl, Reuters, February 8, 2000).

Also, threats of turmoil and rumors of armed protest against the Albanian government are coming out of that country. “In the end, Albania, with its inability to resolve long-standing regional, ethnic, and personal feuds, now threatens the security of the force that was inserted to protect the interests of ethnic Albanians in Kosovo. In short, the Albanians may accomplish what the Serbs could not—undermine NATO operations in the region” (“Albania/NATO,” 2000 WNI).

What started as a potential public relations dream for the United States may yet turn into a nightmare in this historically complex and perennially conflicted part of the world.

Additional sources: “Montenegrians Warn of More Conflict in the Balkans,” PRNewswire, February 1, 2000; “Report: NATO Bombing Killed 500 Civilians” by Fredrik Dahl, Reuters, February 7, 2000.

Vatican Responds to Israeli Criticism of Agreement With PLO

VATICAN CITY (ZT)—Israel’s response to the historic signing of an agreement between the Vatican and the Palestinian Liberation Organization was very harsh. A statement by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs expressed “profound dissatisfaction” with this declaration that addresses the question of Jerusalem. According to the Israeli executive, “Jerusalem was, is, and shall remain the capital of the State of Israel, and no agreement or declaration by these or any other parties will change this fact.” The spokesman for the Israeli Ministry went so far as to say that the agreement endangers the peace process in the Middle East.

Joaquin Navarro-Valls, director of the Vatican Press Office, published a statement in response to the above declaration in which he says that the document has nothing to do with the peace process, “but rather regulates the presence and activities of the Catholic Church in territories that depend on the Palestinian Authority.”

The Vatican spokesman added: “The only thing this agreement does is to reiterate what was established by perti-

nent U.N. institutions and by recent agreements between Israeli and Palestinian authorities.” Moreover, “as regards the city of Jerusalem, the agreement does not enter into territorial questions or sovereignty issues that affect the two interested parties—Israelis and Palestinians.” The document “refers to the universal religious and cultural dimension of the most sacred places of the city, recognized by the international community itself.”

Africa’s Catholics in Row Over Sacrifices

A black Catholic archbishop in South Africa has called for animal sacrifice to be incorporated into church services in a struggle that is dividing the country’s congregations along racial lines, according to a report in the London *Telegraph*.

Inigo Gilmore reported from Pretoria that the demand is part of an attempt by radical black priests of the African Catholic Priests Solidarity Movement to push forward the so-called “inculturation” of the church in South Africa, to the consternation of some white clergy.

In one incident, a video was made of a priest blessing chickens and goats during mass. The animals were then slaughtered and their blood poured into a hole outside the church. Some of the members have now transferred to another church.

Inigo Gilmore wrote: “In his plea for the introduction of animal sacrifice, Archbishop Buti Tlhagale of Bloemfontein has made the most controversial move yet. He argued that because animal worship is commonplace in African custom and used by millions across the country to celebrate birth, marriage or death, it deserved a place in church ritual.”

Archbishop Tlhagale said: “Animal sacrifice has a special place in the scheme of things and is celebrated in almost all African families. We have kept it out of the Church of God for too long. It is time we welcomed it openly into the Christian family of the living and the dead.”

The archbishop’s comments have reignited the debate over how far and how fast “inculturation” should go. At the end of the African synod in Rome in 1995, the idea of integrating indigenous religious practices was cautiously welcomed by the Vatican. But the pope stressed that the process must be compatible with “the Christian message and communion with the universal church.”

Archbishop George Daniel, who has presided over the Pretoria archdiocese for 25 years, told the *Telegraph* that he was aware that animal sacrifice, involving goats and chickens, was already taking place in parishes in his diocese.

“When we first spoke about the inculturation process we did not foresee some of the problems that would arise,” said the archbishop. “As to what would happen to those priests who decide to continue with the practice of animal sacrifice if we ultimately ruled against incorporating this activity into any services, we will have to cross that bridge when we come to it.”

Contributors: Cecil Maranville, David Palmer

“HEART,” (Continued from page 16)

the directional compass of how to have a big heart beyond the very real human hurts.

“The words poured from his mouth as he recounted the shock of this great war when he uttered, ‘Neither party expected for the war the magnitude or the duration which it has already attained. Each looked for an easier triumph. Both read the same Bible, and pray to the same God; and each invokes His aid against the other.’ In speaking of slavery, Lincoln would expound, ‘It may seem strange that any men should dare to ask a just God’s assistance in wringing their bread from the sweat of other men’s faces, but let us judge not, that we not be judged.... The Almighty has His purpose.’”

As Watson states, “This was not party language or political phraseology. Lincoln was talking out of the fullness of his heart, to a people and nation he loved, appealing for peace and tolerance, for understanding, for an end to sectional bitterness and strife.

“Lincoln concluded by stating, ‘With malice toward none, with charity for all; with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in; to bind up the nation’s wounds, to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow and his orphan, to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations.’ Others would comment that Lincoln’s speech was like a ‘sacred poem’ which embodied ‘a living principle of action.’”

Words that made peace

But why Lincoln, and why in America? Is it possible that he was emulating the qualities of an ancestor of long ago? Is there any possible connection between Lincoln of Illinois and Joseph of Egypt? Joseph had been sold into slavery by his own brothers and falsely accused of wrongdoing. His life in slavery led to other serious troubles. If anyone had a reason for vengeance, it was Joseph.

What would you do if your very own family had betrayed you like his did? When his brothers came to Egypt, and Joseph had risen to a position of great power, he chose words that made peace. Notice Genesis 45:4–8. “I am Joseph your brother, whom you sold into Egypt. But now, do not therefore be grieved nor angry with your-

selves because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life.... And God sent me before you to preserve a [remnant] for you in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance. So now it was not you who sent me here, but God....”

Notice the similarity between Lincoln’s call for the post-Civil War generation to set aside their animosities and Joseph’s words in verses 10–11. “You shall dwell in the land of Goshen, and you shall be near to me, you and your children, your children’s children, your flocks and your herds, and all that you have. There *I will provide for you*, lest you and your household, and all that you have, come to poverty...” (emphasis added throughout).

This was not a momentary emotional impulse or some diplomatic ploy on Joseph’s part. Some time later, after the death of Israel, their father, the brothers expected “the other shoe to drop.”

Joseph’s conciliatory nature is demonstrated in his response to their fears. “‘Do not be afraid, for am I in the place of God? But as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive. Now therefore, do not be afraid; I will provide for you and your little ones.’ And he *comforted them and spoke kindly to them*” (Genesis 50:19–21).

What an incredible parallel to the philosophy voiced by Lincoln, “with malice toward none, with charity for all.”

Joseph the fruitful bough

For a moment, let’s review some of the prophetic blessings visited upon Joseph and his descendants by his father’s God-inspired pronouncements. “Joseph is a fruitful bough, a fruitful bough by a well; his branches run over the wall. The archers have bitterly grieved him, shot at him and hated him. But his bow remains in strength...” (Genesis 49:22–24).

Also significant is the name Joseph chose for his firstborn son, Manasseh, which means, “making forgetful.” Joseph explained why he chose the name, “For God has made me forget all my toil and all my father’s house” (Genesis 41:51). Clearly he did not mean he forgot the family, but the pain the family brought on him. The big-mindedness and vision to forgive that pain was not an afterthought, but a first thought.

Descendants of the family of Joseph and Manasseh have continued to make that choice throughout the centuries since those days in ancient Egypt. Lincoln was not alone. Consider President Woodrow Wilson’s 14-Point



Peace Plan for a defeated Europe in World War I. Consider the Berlin air lift of 1948 in which America supplied the capital of its former enemy with food.

Joseph and Lincoln shared more than an obstacle. They shared a philosophy and a family characteristic that have come down to this day.

Repairers of the breach

Regular readers of *World News and Prophecy* recognize that Bible prophecy depicts an intense time in the future when “brother will betray brother” and “nation will rise against nation” (Mark 13:12, 8). This way will be prevalent until the time when Jesus Christ at His second coming rescues the world. There is good news beyond this time of human mismanagement. Christ is going to set up His Kingdom, but He is not going to do it alone.



“Those from among you shall build the old waste places; you shall raise up the foundations of many generations; and you shall be called the Repairer of the breach, the Restorer of Streets to Dwell In” (Isaiah 58:12). This can be your future! What Joseph accomplished in Egypt and the way Lincoln advocated in the last few days of his life not only illustrate our future destiny, but also our present responsibility.

Jesus stated it with simple power, “love your enemies” (Matthew 5:44). Paul amplified those thoughts, “Repay no one evil for evil.... Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath, for it is written, ‘Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,’ says the Lord. ‘Therefore if your enemy hungers, feed him; if he thirsts, give him a drink; for in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head.’ Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good” (Romans 12:17–21).

This way of life was used by Joseph to bring peace with his brothers. Lincoln urged brothers to do the same to heal the hurt inflicted by a horrendous Civil War. The same way of life can work for you and me.

Thousands of years ago, Joseph made a conscious choice to forget his hurts. A descendant of his—President Lincoln—did the same. There truly was a heart beyond the hurt in both of them. They made the choice that each of us has to make—we either exercise our hurts or we exercise our hearts. Our choice will dramatically affect our present and future lives.

President Lincoln’s words echo across the decades: “with malice toward none, with charity for all.” Those godly words of peace resound with the millennial refrain, “This is the way, walk in it.” ♦

“HELL,” (Continued from page 5)

once punished. However, the punishing is instantaneous.

The idea that one can work his or her way out of this punishment is also a mistaken concept.

Annihilationism

The understanding that the wicked will be destroyed is called “annihilationism.”

Addressing this understanding, Sheler reports, “A small but growing number of conservative theologians are promoting a third position: that the end of the wicked is destruction, not eternal suffering. Evangelical scholars such as Clark H. Pinnock, theology professor at McMaster Divinity College in Hamilton, Ontario; John R.W. Stott, founder of the London Institute for Contemporary Christianity; and Philip E. Hughes, a noted Anglican clergyman and author, contend that those who ultimately reject God will simply be put out of existence in the ‘consuming fire’ of hell,” Sheler wrote.

These noted theologians rightfully point out that, as Sheler writes, “the traditional belief in unending torment is based more on pagan philosophy than on a correct understanding of Scripture. They base their belief on New Testament passages that warn of ‘eternal destruction’ (2 Thessalonians 1:9) and ‘the second death’ (Revelation 20:14) for those who reject God, and on the Hebrew prophet Ezekiel’s admonition that ‘the soul that sins shall die’ (Ezekiel 18:4).

“They also raise ethical arguments. ‘How can Christians possibly project a deity of such cruelty and vindictiveness’ as to inflict ‘everlasting torture upon his creatures, however sinful they may have been?’ asks Pinnock in the *Criswell Theological Review*. A God who would do such a thing, Pinnock argues, is ‘more nearly like Satan than like God.’ ”

If you would like a more thorough explanation of what happens after death, request our free booklet titled *What Happens After Death?* You can order it by writing to our office nearest you or through our Internet site, where you can download or read it online, at www.ucg.org. ♦

This Is the Way... A Heart Beyond the Hurt

by Robin Webber

One of the great emotional challenges within the human experience is friction between brothers. Seemingly, the closer the bloodline, the more heated the conflict can be.

The most horrific wars are often those that occur between rival factions within a country. It's called a "civil" war. People who share the same ancestors, language, clothing and history can be driven more by their differences than by what they have in common. Such disagreements are often the very hardest to heal. The ability to forgive becomes almost humanly impossible.

The antidote for hate lies in looking beyond the hurt inflicted by those close to us. A true leader will move beyond the carnal reward of immediate vengeance, seeking to include the vanquished, as well as the victor. Such a leader was Abraham Lincoln, who presided over the terribly divisive Civil War in the United States.

I am writing this article at the end of the Presidents' Day holiday weekend—set aside, in part, to honor Mr. Lincoln. I picked from my library shelf a favorite book titled *Light From Many Lamps*, written by Lillian Eichler Watson. I would like to share her thoughts regarding Lincoln's second inaugural speech,

and then offer an additional perspective to show the potential for good when we choose God's way.

A sacred poem

Lillian Eichler Watson centers our mind's eye on the inaugural platform on the east front of the Capital building in Washington, D.C. She brings us to the moment when the president is surprised by the swelling roar of approval from the sea of humanity set before him.

"No man in American history had been so hated and reviled, so bitterly denounced, as he had been the past four years. He had been misunderstood, condemned, humiliated in public and in private, assailed alike by friend and foe. His life had been threatened. The South was about to fall, and the North was ready to reap the spoils of victory from their wayward brethren who had tried to break the bonds of union. It was a frozen moment in time between defeat and victory, and Lincoln desired not only to seize the moment, but set the tone for tomorrow. This one life which had been filled with so much personal despair would now offer

(See "HEART," page 14)