

# WORLD NEWS and PROPHECY

## Biblical Perspectives on Current Events

November 2000

Vol. 3, No. 9

# Will America Go to War Over Taiwan?

*Is Taiwan significant in the broad picture of world events? Or is its future merely a local concern?*

by John Ross Schroeder

“**I**n word and deed—namely its biggest military show in 35 years—China has made it clear that it views the United States as potential enemy No. 1” (“China Prepares Scenario for War With America,” by John Leicester, AP, *San Antonio Express-News*, October 23, 2000).

“Describing its relations with Taiwan as ‘complicated and grim,’ China defended its recent military buildup Monday and warned that it would go to war if necessary to reclaim Taiwan. The threat came in a policy paper on the military issued by the cabinet” (“China Repeats: We’ll Fight to Take Taiwan,” by Michael Dorgan, Knight-Ridder Newspapers,



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50 years had indicated its willingness to protect this island from a forceful takeover by the Chinese mainland.

Are these serious threats or is China merely bluffing in order to gain the diplomatic advantage? One former American diplomat said the following: “The whole relationship between China and the United States is based on an untruth. It is an untruth that China is prepared to go to war to defend [Taiwan].”

Is this a credible view or is there another side to the story? Before we attempt to answer, a brief political history of Taiwan is in order.

(See “TAIWAN,” page 3)

*Corpus Christi Caller-Times*, October 17, 2000).

Go to war with whom? Definitely with Taiwan itself, but also potentially with the United States, which for

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The mission of *World News and Prophecy (WNP)* is to provide our membership and interested persons with commentary and analysis of selected world news topics in the light of Bible prophecy. Its purpose is to help readers discern the times and increase their awareness and understanding of the answers Christ gave to His disciples' questions: "Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?" (Matthew 24:3).

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Read *World News and Prophecy* as soon as it is completed. The next issue is scheduled to be available on December 8 on the Internet at <http://www.ucg.org/articles/wnp/index.html>.

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.

## A brief history

China successfully invaded Taiwan in 1683 and retained control until 1895 when the Chinese lost a naval war with Japan. The island was then ceded to the Japanese. Nearly 50 years later at the Cairo Conference in 1943, President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill decided to give Taiwan back to China. Chiang Kai-shek's Chinese Nationalist government took Taiwan over in 1945.

After losing the Civil War with the Chinese Communists in 1949, Chiang fled to Taiwan with a million troops and a small army of bureaucrats. He remained there until his death in 1975. From a Western perspective, his successors gradually transformed the island from a relatively benevolent dictatorship to a prosperous, thriving democracy.

Two observers of China summed up China's relationship to Taiwan in the 20th century. “Except for the Civil War years between 1945 and 1949, Taiwan has not been under the control of any government on mainland China since 1895” (*The Coming Conflict With China*, by Richard Bernstein and Ross H. Munro, 1998, p. 157).

This is not to say that the mainland has not had its eye on Taiwan. It has! There was trouble with the United States over two smaller islands in the general vicinity with serious implications for Taiwan during the Eisenhower presidency in the '50s. And again in 1996 when President Clinton sent the aircraft carriers *Nimitz* and *Independence* to meet another serious Chinese threat. American support had firmed up after the Korean War started in 1950.

But for most of the last 50 years, the Chinese have followed Mao's basic dictum that “there was no urgency on Taiwan, that only the larger strategic issues were important.”

China has basically sought reunification with Taiwan through a mixture of propaganda, economic exchanges and diplomacy with the occasional exercising of military threats, which

have become more pronounced in the last few years.

## Good reasons for a peaceful resolution

In the last half century economic relationships between China and Taiwan have grown to the point that wealthy Taiwanese have invested some \$30 billion in mainland enterprises. In fact, China represents the most important area of financial growth for the island, and at least one third of all long-distance telephone calls from Taiwan are made to the mainland.

China also has its own domestic reasons for avoiding a war over Taiwan, a prominent one being their ongoing preparations for entering the World Trade Organization (WTO).

Another important factor is that once a limited war fought with conventional weaponry has started between opponents who both have a nuclear arsenal, it might just spread far beyond the originally intended constraints.

Of course, there is always another side to the story—the one that worries some of the world's keenest international observers.

In 1997, China assumed control of Hong Kong after several years of protracted negotiations with the British. Then, in 1999, the island of Macau passed from Portuguese sovereignty to the Chinese. So, the desire to see all of their historic territory under a single national roof is growing—especially in the light of China's solid economic growth over the last several years coupled with widespread predictions of ultimate superpower status.

## Understanding U.S. attitudes

A case has been made that the lives of U.S. soldiers should not be jeopardized over Taiwan—that Taiwan is solely China's domestic concern, merely a residual problem from an “unfinished” civil war, and definitely too far away from American shores to really count.

But, this is simplistic thinking. The reality is that if China were allowed to take Taiwan by force, the implications for all of East Asia would be profound. The Asian balance of power would suf-

fer and relatively peaceful conditions along with recent unprecedented prosperity (with a few negative blips on the chart) would be seriously put at risk.

Chinese domination of East Asia would be a virtual certainty—and that possibility is clearly understood from Tokyo to Australia.

That is why, in spite of constant Chinese protests, America has continued to equip Taiwan with hundreds of millions of dollars worth of modern military equipment, as well as sending its own aircraft carriers when the island seemed under serious duress.

Was the bombing of the Chinese embassy in Yugoslavia during American and allied air raids really an accident? Or was the United States sending a message to China?

## Probability of a future war

When I visited several major cities in China with a church group in the autumn of 1986, relations between the mainland and the West never seemed better. There was talk of “our Russian enemies,” and President Nixon and Secretary Kissinger's benchmark diplomatic successes with China in the early '70s appeared to be bearing real fruit.

Now, not quite 15 years later, the tide has turned.

Will there be a war between America and China over Taiwan in the near future? Looking only at the evidence of qualified Asian observers, who feel that China's military capacity simply cannot match the American standard, we would say, probably not.

But, who would have predicted the sudden and protracted violence in Palestine when negotiations for a peaceful settlement seemed so promising only months before? International affairs can suddenly take a turn for the worse. Nations, as well as individuals, can quickly abandon all logic, and act emotionally and irrationally in a given situation.

In the longer term, Bible prophecy indicates a major power from the East will send troops west in such large numbers that it seems only China could fill the bill. You'll find this prophecy in chapter 9 of the book of Revelation. ❖

# First the End of Empire— Now, the End of Britain?

*Are we witnessing the end of the nation whose people, “relative to their numbers, contributed more to civilization than any other people since the ancient Greeks and Romans”?*

by Melvin Rhodes

*Peter Hitchens  
contrasts  
Britain at the  
time of  
Churchill’s  
funeral with  
the nation 32  
years later at  
the funeral of  
Princess Diana.  
It is as if he is  
looking at two  
different  
countries.*

I can still remember when the news came over the radio. It was a Sunday morning in late January, 1965. Sir Winston Churchill had died.

His funeral was the following Saturday. He was only the second commoner in the history of Great Britain to be given a state funeral, normally reserved for royalty. The first had been for the Duke of Wellington, the military genius who had thwarted Napoleon’s plans for world conquest at the Battle of Waterloo in 1815, thereby ushering in a century of Pax Britannica. Churchill had defeated an even greater evil, Hitler’s Third Reich. He didn’t do it single-handedly, of course, but without him the outcome would almost certainly have been very different.

I also well remember the silence after the funeral. It was the only time I can remember all of the television and radio stations closing down for a period of silence in honor of the great old man to whom so much was owed.

People were truly thankful for the fact that he had led them to victory in World War II—at a time when everybody else seemed inclined to compromise with Nazi Germany.

Churchill rejected the honor of a dukedom and turned down the opportunity to be buried in Westminster Abbey along with many other famous Britons.

Churchill’s funeral was, for Britain, the end of an age.

Ironically, his death came at the end of a 20-year-period that had seen the nation reject just about everything he stood for.

## Postwar Britain

It had started 20 years earlier, shortly after VE Day. With the European war ended,

Churchill had called an election. All indications were that his Conservative Party would win. The world was shocked when the results came in. The Labour (Socialist) Party had won by a landslide. Although grateful for Churchill’s role as a wartime leader, people had decided they wanted change. Their desire was for a different world. They didn’t want their young men fighting wars in far off places they had never heard of; nor did they want them coming home to low-paying jobs or unemployment.

It seems the time had come when God would “break the pride of [their] power” (Leviticus 26:19). After being universally acclaimed as the British lion that roared in defiance of Hitler and the man who had led them to victory, Churchill appeared to be headed for victory. But, seemingly, it was time for Britain’s rapid decline to begin. The prophet Daniel reminds us that it is God who “removes kings and raises up kings” (Daniel 2:21). The same God who had given Britain its victory, then took away the empire that He had given to them, the multitude of nations promised to Joseph’s son Ephraim (Genesis 48:19).

The next few years saw massive changes, including the nationalization of key industries (steel, railways, coal mines) and the institution of a government-run medical system. To concentrate on these radical reforms, the country turned its back on an empire that had been built up over 400 years. India and Pakistan were granted independence in 1947. By the time of Churchill’s death, all the major colonies had gone. Britain had, to quote U.S. statesman Adlai Stevenson, “lost an empire and not yet found a role.”

It might have been very different if Churchill had won that pivotal election. He was an empire loyalist. His love of history taught him that Britain's security lay with the multitude of nations built up gradually since the time of Queen Elizabeth I. Later, after winning the 1951 election, as prime minister at the time of the accession of Queen Elizabeth II, he talked of a "new Elizabethan age," surpassing the first in greatness, but it was not to be.

Great Britain had embarked on a new course, which continues to this day. With the British Empire gone, now it is Britain's turn to be dismantled and the present Labour government has set the course.

### *The Abolition of Britain*

A thought-provoking book on this subject by British writer Peter Hitchens was recently published. In this work, titled *The Abolition of Britain*, Hitchens contrasts the country at the time of Churchill's funeral with the nation 32 years later at the funeral of Princess Diana. By his own account, it is as if he is looking at two different countries.

Outside the British Isles many people get confused at exactly what constitutes Great Britain and where England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland fit into the equation. At one time all four nations were separate entities. Their eventual union came about over a long period.

England conquered Wales during the time of Edward I in the 13th century. Edward proclaimed his son the Prince of Wales, emphasizing the fact that Wales is a separate principality, but was to be administered as a part of England. For 700 years, the heirs to the British throne have been titled "Prince of Wales."

Scotland and England (with Wales) were united later. When Elizabeth I died in 1603, she left no heirs. This was deliberate on her part. Historically, Scotland had often allied itself with France against England. It was time for the two

countries to be united, so that this would never happen again. Upon her death, her cousin's son, James VI of Scotland, became King James I of England. James gave the country its new name, "Great Britain." The new flag was nicknamed the Union Jack after him.

The two kingdoms were still administered separately, but they had the same monarch. A century later (1707), they were fully united under one parliament, giving Scots the opportunity to share in the benefits of the growing worldwide empire. Another century later, the Irish Parliament was abolished and the "United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland" was formed (1801).

### **Reversal**

The dismantling of this kingdom actually began 80 years ago when most of Ireland was given independence as the Irish Free State, theoretically still subject to the Crown. In 1949, the Free State became the Irish Republic, severing that tie. The six counties of Northern Ireland that have remained within the United Kingdom (U.K.) have been strife-torn for over three decades. The problem remains insoluble. At some point, it is likely that another "reforming" government in London will force a change on the province, as British governments since Churchill's time have eventually given in to terrorists in every disputed territory.

With increasing support for Scottish and Welsh nationalists, the present British government, led by Tony Blair, came to power in 1997 promising "Devolution." The two

ancient Celtic peoples would be given their own parliaments and be responsible for their own internal affairs. London would still conduct foreign policy. Both Scotland and Wales now have their own assemblies with increased calls for full independence.

Some of the English, meanwhile, are resentful of the fact that they do not have their own parliament. Scots, Welsh and



*Sir Winston Churchill*

Northern Irish members still sit in the House of Commons in London and can vote on legislation that affects the English people, while the English people do not have a say in the internal affairs of the Celtic nations around them.

Meanwhile, the European Union has been fulfilling its dream of an "ever closer union." The Irish Republic has benefited greatly from its membership in the EU, ironically partly subsidized through Brussels by the U.K. taxpayer. This has reduced some fears of Irish unity in the North. The South had always been poor, the North far wealthier, so even Catholics had been somewhat apprehensive of unity with the South. Not any more.

Polls show the English to be increasingly weary of the EU. Scottish Nationalists, however, see the EU as increasing the likelihood of Scottish independence. No longer would the five million people of an independent Scotland be unable to make it economically on their own—within the EU, they would prosper, just like Ireland and other small countries. Similar feelings are evident in Wales.

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It is conceivable that at some future time the English could find themselves outside of a politically unified EU, with the Scots, Welsh and Irish inside. Queen Elizabeth I's worst nightmare would have come true, four centuries later, of an England surrounded by hostile nations in alliance with the continental powers.

Historians like Norman Davies think that none of this matters. In his recent book, *The Isles*, he reminds readers that England at one time was physically a part of the European landmass. At other times, it was a part of Europe. It was the most westerly province of the Roman Empire from 43 to 410 A.D., a period of almost four centuries. The English church was a part of the Roman church for almost 1,000 years. The Plantagenets in the Middle Ages ruled England as well as parts of France, spending most of their time in the bigger and warmer part of their territories.

But Paul Johnson, another British historian, gave the following cautionary warning in the pivotal year 1972 (between the British Parliament's vote to join Europe and Britain's accession the following January): "Disunity has always proved fatal to the offshore islanders." (*The Offshore Islanders* was the title of his book, dealing with Britain's relationship with Europe throughout history.) In other words, the disuniting of the United Kingdom has always been fatal in the past, enabling hostile powers to successfully invade the country. Why should it be any different this time?

The biblical wisdom holds true: "Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and every city or house divided against itself will not stand" (Matthew 12:25).

### A new generation

A different generation is in power now. Tony Blair, today's British prime minister, prefers to

identify with a different period. He is the first British prime minister who does not remember Winston Churchill. In a speech just before the election that brought him to power, he described himself this way: "I am a modern man. I am a part of the rock and roll generation—the Beatles, colour TV, that's the generation I come from" (*The Abolition of Britain*, paperback edition, p. xix).

It's a generation that is the victim of "revisionist history," with an emphasis on "multiculturalism," downplaying Britain's role in frequently leading its empire into conflict against despotic European pow-

*"What is vanishing, and not slowly, is the nation to which the United States traces much of its political and cultural DNA.... [The people who] relative to their numbers, contributed more to civilization than any other people since the ancient Greeks and Romans."*

ers that wanted to conquer the world, while, at the same time, emphasizing all the mistakes Britain made, negatively presenting the British Empire as a shameful era in the nation's history.

It's also a generation that, as in the United States and other Western countries, has been raised with emphasis on material values, with little concept of morality and often lacking any knowledge of God. Many in the new government reflect these realities.

Writing of "the end of Britain" in *Newsweek* (July 10, 2000) American columnist George F. Will reminded readers of the late English writer



Source: www.pbs.org/newshour

*"I am a modern man. I am a part of the rock and roll generation—the Beatles, colour TV, that's the generation I come from."—Prime Minister Tony Blair*

George Orwell's dismissive comment on English intellectuals: "England is perhaps the only great country whose intellectuals are ashamed of their nationality." (Orwell died in 1950 before this disease spread to America.)

Mr. Will added, "Many Europhiles are English intellectuals of the sort George Orwell despised because they despised their nation." It's hard to understand how much hatred so many people now have for all of the old values symbolized by Sir Winston Churchill. "God, King and Country" have no place any more in the minds of so many, certainly the majority of English intellectuals.

### Does this matter to Americans and the rest of the world?

Let George Will have the final say: "What is vanishing, and not slowly, is the nation to which the United States traces much of its political and cultural DNA. Unless this disappearance is resisted, and reversed, soon all that will linger... will be a mocking memory of the nationhood that was the political incarnation of a people who (as has been said), relative to their numbers, contributed more to civilization than any other people since the ancient Greeks and Romans" (ibid.). ❖

# A Lesson From U.S. Election Fever

*Has the media focus on the U.S. election kept people from being aware of even more important issues? World News and Prophecy is committed to providing a dimension you do not readily find elsewhere.*

by Cecil E. Maranville

The United States is just completing the exhausting exercise of selecting its president—a process over which the U.S. media, if not its citizenry, obsesses.

For many months, the hourly radio news updates, nightly TV news broadcasts, the Internet news sites, newsmagazines, newspapers and talk shows have been bloated with talk of the race for the presidency.

It began long before actual candidates clashed in the New Hampshire primary and continued past Election Day. It's what people want, what they expect. There isn't any point in debating whether the producers of the media set out to cultivate this craving in the U.S. population, or whether the citizens demanded this political saturation diet of the media. Either way, the result is the same: people have been listening to and reading an endless stream of election-speak.

What have they missed in the meantime?

Some *World News and Prophecy* articles over the past several months have referred to the 2000 election, for who leads the only superpower in the world at the beginning of the new millennium (which starts on January 1, 2001) is unquestionably newsworthy. However, we have not based most articles on that theme or even necessarily mentioned it in every publication.

Why not?

The focus of our publisher, the United Church of God, an *International Association* (UCGIA), is nonpolitical—neither for, nor



Source: www.abcnews.go.com

*Coverage of the U.S. presidential election seemed never ending*

against the political process. That doesn't mean its members are not involved. UCGIA members are encouraged to regularly ask God's intervention in the selection of national leaders and His blessing on them in their tasks. Paul urged Timothy to teach, "that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all men, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life, godly and respectful in every way" (1 Timothy 2:1-2, RSV).

But *World News and Prophecy* has side-stepped the media frenzy about the U.S. election. The focus of this publication and of the UCGIA is on announcing and encouraging people to prepare for an entirely different type of government, the Kingdom of God on earth. In doing so, our articles concentrate on themes that illustrate that God's Kingdom is needed, as well as on how His Kingdom will bring about lasting solutions.

*For months people have been listening to and reading an endless stream of election-speak. What have they missed in the meantime?*



## Two dimensions in *WNP*

*World News and Prophecy* seeks to offer our readers a worldview with a difference, staying abreast of world news, but framed in a two-dimensional context based on the Bible. We demonstrate that this present world system is not working, and show how the system God promised to bring will accomplish what human systems have not.

I lived and worked in Canada for nearly 17 years, although I am a U.S. citizen. Typically, I always welcomed news of my country of origin. With ready access to all of the U.S. networks, that was easy to obtain. At the same time, I needed to be aware of my adopted home, and listened to Canadian broadcast news.

The difference was remarkable. At the time, in the 1970s and 1980s, Canadian news had a worldview. U.S. news sources offered a much narrower view, which included some international news (mostly as it related directly to U.S. interests) and much local area coverage.

One could argue that Canada was a much smaller country, with less newsworthy material, but that wouldn't do justice to the reality behind what I witnessed on a daily basis.

Actually, Canadians, as a rule, were preferred over other nationals for international work, for they were generally knowledgeable about other cultures—a natural outgrowth of the perspective their news sources gave to them.

That's part of the outlook that we all need to have.

## General U.S. media vs. *WNP*

Within the last year, while the U.S. media has myopically reported on and analyzed the participants and the process heading into the presidential election, *World News and Prophecy* published several articles on developments in Europe.

The EU is arguably one of the most powerful economic blocks in today's world, with ever more marked signs of evolving into a loosely woven political entity. We

*UCGIA publications convey the same theme...as the message brought by Jesus Christ—that this world's systems don't work, and that the system from above, God's Kingdom, will.*

have reported on month-by-month developments, analyzing them in the light of biblical prophecies that call out more than the facts alone reveal.

Our articles have drawn your attention to China and Russia several times, as we have noted shifts in international alliances against the broad backdrop of the outline of Bible prophecy.

Crises of apocalyptic proportions—including the threat of bioterrorism, the world population bomb and the tragedy of AIDS in Africa—have been brought to your attention, so that you would be aware of these serious developments. They are harbingers of the fact that neither this present world's assortment of governments, nor the altruism of individ-

uals, are able to bring about the utopia that all men crave.

Who writes or thinks in terms of strategic choke points in our everyday media sources? *World News and Prophecy* has called your attention to those land and waterways that potentially control commerce and the flow of military materiel. As we reported these significant events, our perspective was guided by God's promise to give and then to remove the control of those choke points from the modern descendants of ancient Israel shortly before the transfer from the human age to God's Kingdom.

Other articles have reported social trends, analyzing them from the point of view of the way of life God reveals in His Word. While democratic governments think in terms of what their populace prefers or finds acceptable, and set their standards accordingly, we have taken a hard look at topics such as morality, same-sex marriages and drug abuse from the point of view of the one firm moral standard. That standard is what the Creator God says about them, showing us what brings disastrous consequences and what would bring blessings.

## Religion that delivers and religions that don't

One more significant theme that you have read in these pages in the past year is that of religion. To the average citizen of the United States, religion may well be thought of as merely a ceremonial part in his or her life. Yet, whether realized or not, our relationship with God—or the lack thereof—has much to do with whether or not life works. In these heydays of economic prosperity, the people of Uncle Sam's house may be lulled into thinking that "life works just great!" But, as we have striven to make clear, there is more to life than money. When the latter is gone, the former will become more evident.

To citizens of the Middle East, the peoples of the Catholic countries of Europe and Latin America, the inhabi-

*(See "ELECTION," page 11)*



# Martyrs for a Homeland

*Teenage girls are the best candidates for suicide bombers among the Tamil Tigers.*

by Graemme Marshall

**C**aptured in a photograph, taken minutes before the bomb blast that assassinated Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, were girls waiting in line to present flowers. Indian authorities believe one of these girls was a Tamil Tiger suicide bomber.

In an election rally explosion in October 1994 in the suburbs of Colombo, more than 50 Sri Lankans were killed—including Gamini Dissanayake, one of the leading candidates for president. Seen just before the blast was a young woman reaching up under her T-shirt, probably pressing the detonator of a powerful bomb strapped to her body. The bomb was loaded with ball bearings to make it more deadly. The woman's head was later found on top of a building 80 yards away. The explosion was widely assumed to be the work of Tamil Tigers.

## **Why so young, so committed and why girls?**

Faced with harassment and economic deprivation, young Tamils are ready to give up their lives. To them it is the ultimate sacrifice. They are ready to pay it. There is a growing pantheon of martyrs for the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), which has fought a 17-year war of independence for northern Sri Lanka. Why do they feel this way? "The only way we can get our Eelam [homeland] is through arms. That is the only way anybody will listen to us. Even if we die" ("Ultimate Sacrifice," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, June 2000, p. 64).

The LTTE and other Tamil rebel groups want Tamil-dominated parts of Sri Lanka to break away and create a separate Tamil nation—Eelam—in the north and east.

## **Suicide bombers an effective weapon**

In addition to the assassinations of Gandhi and Dissanayake, suicide squads have claimed



the lives of hundreds, perhaps thousands of Sri Lankans. Suicide bombers have disrupted political rallies leading up to recent elections, killing members of the public. More than just an effective weapon in the Tigers' arsenal, suicide bombers are a powerful symbol of control—the ultimate with which to hold Sri Lankan society to ransom.

Suicide squads undergo six months arduous training at a Tiger camp. At the end, they swear an oath of personal loyalty to the Tigers' leader and place an amulet containing a cyanide capsule around their necks.

Boy recruits are called Black Tigers while the girls are known as Birds of Freedom. They are normally aged from 14 to 16, with about three females for every two males.

Women and younger boys are often preferred to men for the simple reason they are not subject to the same kind of movement restrictions or body searches. The layers of a woman's clothing can more easily disguise the bulky suicide belt, which is conspicuous under a man's shirt and trousers. Adult male recruits are better to beef up combat forces.

*In addition to the assassinations of Gandhi and Dissanayake, suicide squads have claimed the lives of hundreds, perhaps thousands of Sri Lankans. Why?*

## Why young people are prepared to die

Their willingness to assume such an annihilative role is borne from a sense of frustration at the lot of the minority Tamils in Sri Lanka. Army intimidation is a fact of daily life and young Tamils can look forward to only the bleakest of economic prospects. As explained by Dr. Anila Liyanaga, a leading psychiatrist in Colombo: "It is a feeling that death and destruction is far better than life in the given circumstances" (*Far Eastern Economic Review*, June 1, 2000, p. 64). The harsh reality seen by many is that a Tamil in Sri Lanka is and will remain a second-class citizen to the Sinhalese. Decades of discrimination and anti-Tamil violence have convinced them they can never enjoy equal status with the Sinhalese in a united country.

The Tamil Tigers and other rebel groups want to run Eelam, the Tamil-dominated nation they propose, without Sinhalese interference. The resultant war has consumed 70,000 lives, drained the economy and continues to find ready human ammunition. It's a war that has diverted the energies of a potentially productive country and made everyday life a dangerous gamble.

## Why no peace

People want democracy and individual rights, but also group rights, as well. In practice, this means conflict and secession as minority groups seek their own sovereignty and independence.

Witness East Timor, West Papua, the Solomon Islands, Fiji and the Palestinians in Israel. The fires of conflict are too often stoked by the media, which lavishes glory and fame on independence movements. To fight for freedom is portrayed as an honor. For every Palestinian who has killed an Israeli, there are hundreds of Kashmiris, Tamils, Eritreans and others eager to shoot at their enemies.

Newspapers, television and movies foment that sense of honor. They mag-

nify each crisis, glorify each rebellion, and feed the fires of conflict. In Bosnia, Kosovo, Rwanda, Lebanon, Afghanistan, Northern Ireland, the ETA in Spain and France and in countless other places, people who have lived and worked together and even intermarried have gone on a rampage, killing, raping and robbing one another with gusto. This appalling carnage will one day painfully teach these people they must see one another as brothers, not hostile competitors or enemies. Sadly, there will be more of this "aversion therapy" until Christ intervenes to make them heed the lesson.

*This appalling carnage will one day painfully teach these people they must see one another as brothers, not hostile competitors or enemies. Sadly, there will be more of this "aversion therapy" until Christ intervenes to make them heed the lesson.*

## The tragedy of Sri Lanka

This tear-shaped tropical island nation in the Indian Ocean, just 50 miles southeast of India, has so much physical and human potential. It is close to the southern Indian state of Tamil Nadu, which has long been almost a second home to many Sri Lankan separatists.

About the size of West Virginia and a bit smaller than the Republic of Ireland, Sri Lanka is home for about 18 million people. The largest ethnic group is the Sinhalese who make up about 74 percent, then come the Tamils and Muslims. The Sinhalese are both an ethnic group and linguistic identity, while some 93 percent also profess

Buddhism. Sinhalese Buddhists see Sri Lanka as a refuge for Buddhism and although the constitution guarantees freedom of religion, it grants Buddhism the "foremost place." This honor angers Hindus, Muslims and Christians alike. Extreme Sinhalese claim Sri Lanka's destiny is to be wholly Sinhalese and wholly Buddhist.

Tamils are about 18 percent of the population and are a distinct ethnic and language group. Most follow the Hindu religion. Sri Lankans can't usually tell just by looking at someone whether they are Sinhalese, Tamil or Muslim. Only when they speak does ethnic identity become apparent. Most Tamils live in the northern part of the country and the east coast, and this geography has encouraged many Tamils to envision a separate Tamil nation.

## How the war is financed

The Sri Lankan government has an 80,000-member army, a 50,000-member police force and a 5,000-member Home Guard against an estimated 10,000 Tamil Tigers. But, the Tigers raise money from the thousands of Tamil immigrants who have fled to Australia, Britain, Canada and Germany. They have offices in Britain and France and portray themselves as a political entity, as well as a military force. Many overseas sympathizers finance their cause.

What could a government do under such circumstances?

It could eliminate the feeling among the ethnic minorities that the system is totally stacked against them. It could give all religions equal status. It could end the educational quota that favors Sinhalese over Tamils and others. But, yet, it can't do any of these things.

Author Lawrence J. Zwier in *War Torn Island* says: "In 1987 Tamils made up about 5 percent of the police force and were almost absent from the armed services—only about 2 percent of the total. To have an almost entirely Sinhalese army marching against Tamil areas is divisive and inflammatory."

What a heartbreak, too, that about

25 percent of Sri Lankan tax revenues goes to fighting their own citizens!

### Parallels of martyrs for a spiritual “homeland”

The willingness of young Sri Lankans to be suicide bombers is borne from frustration and hopelessness for their future. What a contrast to Stephen (Acts 7) and Antipas (Revelation 2:13)! Here true Christian martyrs gave their lives inspired from hope, conviction, commitment and trust in a glorious future of a new world.

Moses chose to suffer affliction with the people of God, rather than enjoy Egyptian society. The book of Hebrews tells us he didn't fear the wrath of the king because “he endured as seeing Him who is invisible” (Hebrews 11:27). Similarly, Abraham desired a better country “that is, a heavenly country,” because he was convinced God had prepared an eternal city for our future (verse 16). Saints are prepared to die for that city of God. What a contrast of hope to the hopelessness that drives young Sri Lankans to become suicide bombers.

Saints will again be martyred. “I saw the woman, drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus” (Revelation 17:6). Men and women will have the strength to endure suffering for the greatest of causes, because they see a “homeland,” invisible, yet tangible in their mind's eye, through God's Spirit and promises.

Hebrews 11:35 tells us: “Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection.” It continues that others were mocked, scourged, chained and imprisoned, stoned, sawn in two, slain with the sword, became destitute, afflicted and tormented. God's view of them was that the world was not worthy of them. They stood for the faith, exultant in being persecuted for righteousness sake and ready to give their lives as a testimony for God. Are we ready to do the same?

If the vision of the Kingdom of God is powerfully in our lives as it was with them, then if God so requires, we, too, would be willing to be a martyr for our spiritual “homeland.” ❖

**“ELECTION,”** (Continued from page 8)  
tants of the Muslim republics of the former U.S.S.R. and the Indonesians whose lives were torn asunder by religious-based violence in the past year, religion has everything to do with life.

*World News and Prophecy* has published articles about major doctrinal trends and reported on international incidents from the point of view of their religious base, recognizing that present-day religions are often the driving force behind politics. An additional aspect confronts the perceptive: these religious-based actions *have not been able* to deliver the peace, harmony and prosperity that their adherents desire. So, we again have pointed to the promised Kingdom that will deliver.

Of course, all of these themes are also scrutinized in shorter articles in our “In Brief” segments included in each issue.

In addition, we have featured a regular column, “This Is the Way.” Looking at all of the serious angles of the news is necessary, for the overall message is that this world's systems (whether in the free world or in the part of the world that labors along under dictators) have failed, are failing and will continue to fail to produce the quality of life that mankind wants—and needs.

“This Is the Way” articles deliver the same message, but from a different perspective. They focus on a unique, positive example, which, when amplified, helps to illustrate the system that will succeed in accomplishing all that human schemes have not accomplished.

### “Watch”

UCGIA publications convey the same theme that the biblical servants of God wrote and spoke about. They're also the same as the message brought by Jesus Christ—that this world's systems don't work, and that the system from above, God's Kingdom, will.

*Prophecy* conveys to many the meaning of “revealing the details—

the what, when, why, where and how of future events.” Actually, the Revealer, Christ Himself, said that's not true. He said that we're going to have to pay close attention to what happens in our world, that there's no such detailed disclosure, as most expect. He told us to stay alert to what's going on around us, to avoid being so caught up in the routine of day-to-day life that we miss what are subtle signs of the unfolding of events foretold long ago.

“But of that day and hour [when the Kingdom will arrive, and the world's systems will collapse] *no one knows*, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only. As were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of man. For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage [absorbed in and by the routines of life], until the day when Noah entered the ark, and they did not know until the flood came and swept them all away, so will be the coming of the Son of man” (Matthew 24:36–39, RSV).

They were so very engrossed in “normal” life that they missed the signs of momentous and cataclysmic change. It'll happen again. People will be caught off guard.

“Then two men will be in the field; one is taken and one is left. Two women will be grinding at the mill; one is taken and one is left” (verses 40–41). Two people who appear to live their lives in similar ways, even work at the same job, will perceive the changes in the world differently. One will see clearly, while the view of the other will be obscured.

Which describes you?

What should we do? “*Watch* therefore, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming.... For the Son of man is coming at an hour you do not expect” (verses 42, 44). An invaluable tool in achieving the kind of watching we must be doing is what you now hold in your hands. We are committed to helping you know and understand what is happening around you. ❖

# In Brief...

## World News Review

### Middle East Components Defy Simplification

“A fierce attachment to the land between the Mediterranean and the Jordan. The assertion of ties to ancient peoples who lived here thousands of years ago. A mythology of universal victimization and unblemished righteousness. National feelings nurtured in aberrant conditions of exile and statelessness. The dream of return to Paradise Lost and a righting of historical wrongs.”

Most readers would assume the above describes the Jewish peoples and their struggle to possess and retain the Israeli state. Not so. Michael S. Arnold wrote these words about the Palestinians in an article titled “Birth of a Nation” (*The Jerusalem Post*, Internet Edition, October 22, 2000). It speaks to why we see the depth of passion evidenced in recent clashes between Palestinians and Israelis as the postponed deadline for declaring a Palestinian state approaches again.

Observers of and participants in the fighting have asserted that the struggle is out of the hands of the PLO leader Yasser Arafat. Even if he were to attempt to make peace, the rank and file Palestinians say that they would not. On the Israeli side, feelings run strong that the fighting has only verified that the Palestinians never wanted to settle into a peaceful coexistence with Israel, but rather to eliminate Israel altogether—in the way once called for by Arafat in his overtly terrorist days.

Many of the Palestinian people were displaced 52 years ago with the creation of the Israeli state in 1948. Another 1.1 million were displaced in the '67 war, when Israel captured the West Bank. Not only are they still officially refugees (Palestinians represent 25 percent of *the world's* refugee population—UN figures), no compensation has been given to the Palestinians for lost land or homes. The “legal” argument maintained by Israel is that the Palestinians abandoned their property.

The estimated value of lost property runs approximately \$180 billion, \$40 billion of which has reportedly been offered by President Clinton (from U.S. taxpayers' money) as part of the “peace negotiations.” At best, that falls considerably shy of the actual value of Palestinian losses. Additionally, the deal on the table would exclude about half the total number of Palestinians, which number between 5 and 6 million. It's hardly surprising that it's been met with little enthusiasm.

So, there is no apparent mutually acceptable solution to the

conflict, and the thoughts that introduce this piece help illustrate why that is so.

Arnold adds, “Palestinian nationalism has been suffused with images of a perfect place that never was: orchards that produced the juiciest lemons known to man, the tastiest olives ever harvested. In many ways, Palestinian nationalism is a desire to return to the Garden of Eden, a pre-industrial paradise that is supposed to have existed before the Zionists came and ravaged the land.”

He quotes Fouad Ajami, a Lebanese-born political scientist, who offers, “The dream of Palestine was always bigger than Gaza and the West Bank; it was always *this grand concept*” (*ibid.*).

Additionally, a looming unknown is what attitude will Arafat's successors assume—will they be revolutionaries or diplomats? Will they be pragmatists, willing to scale down their expectations, tone down the nationalist fervor and correct the myths assumed about their past? Or, will they perpetuate them in order to stir the nationalistic “righteous” anger? While the latter would likely guarantee them control over the Palestinians, it would also guarantee that negotiating a peaceful coexistence with or within Israel would remain hopelessly out of reach.

Additional source: “Palestinians—Stay Out!” by Eric S. Margolis, October 22, 2000.

### Nightmare Virus Revisits Uganda

Rose Akello was the first to fall ill. The 38-year-old mother had a high fever, accompanied by unusual bleeding; she died and was buried in her wretched village of Gulu in northern Uganda. A two-week-old daughter died within another day, followed in two more days by Rose's teenage daughter and finally, by her husband, Alfred.

Ebola was back.

Hemorrhagic fever begins with flu-like symptoms. It's caused by a virus of unknown origin and spreads alarmingly easily through contact with an infected person. The virus attacks internal organs as it progresses, literally causing them to partially dissolve so that its victims bleed to death.

The worst of horrors threatened Uganda—and who knows what other part of the world in this one-community globe?—when Ebola broke out in the district that borders the one in which Rose and her family lived. Fears were inflamed when a case showed up in the southwestern part of the country, trans-

ported by a 20-year-old infected soldier returning to his home.

As we go to press, the death toll nears 100. Thankfully, the World Health Organization (WHO) announced on November 6 that they believed the outbreak to be under control. The WHO cannot declare it over, as 281 infected people remain under supervision. (In past outbreaks in Sudan, Gabon and the former Zaire, the death rate was between 53 and 88 percent of those infected.) The virus has an incubation period of up to 21 days, and the outbreak will not be declared over until a 42-day period has passed with no new cases appearing.

Control is attributed to the rapid and thorough response from the Uganda government, WHO and hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of international aid. Not only do humanitarian motivations stir the international community to respond, but also the sober awareness that transmission of this terror could be rapid and wide.

Journalists borrow the term *apocalyptic* from the Revelation prophecies when they report on such nightmarish illnesses. Revelation 6:7–8 warns: “When the Lamb opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature say, ‘Come!’ I looked, and there before me was a pale horse! Its rider was named Death, and Hades was following close behind him. They were given power over a fourth of the earth to kill by sword, famine and plague [disease], and by the wild beasts of the earth” (NIV).

Jesus also foretold of “famines, pestilences [plagues of disease], and earthquakes in various places” (Matthew 24:7) at the end of the age of mankind.

This time, it appears that the plague didn’t get out of hand and will be contained. How long will it be before it—or other diseases equally devastating—cannot be held back?

Sources: Reuter’s, *Times* Newspapers Ltd.

## “‘Aliens’ Cult About to Clone Dead Baby Girl”

The headline in one of those supermarket tabloids? A plot for *X-Files*? Sadly, no. It’s the title of a genuine news report by Lois Rogers, medical correspondent for *The Sunday Times*, and it ran in their November 5th edition.

As we have reported in the pages of *World News and Prophecy*, those who have watched the development of the science of cloning have known it was only a matter of time before humans would be openly cloned. Under the umbrella of “religion” that purports humans came from aliens, a company has been created to purchase surplus human egg stem cells from laboratories that treat infertile women.

Fertility treatment usually results in the fertilization of multiple eggs and therefore multiple embryos. For the sake of the health of the mother, the number of embryos “is pared” (read that “killed”) to “an acceptable amount.”

What to do with the “garbage,” the cast-off embryos? The stem cells of embryos are prized by those seeking to clone humans, for they are perfect for the task. After extracting the

nucleus from a mature cell of the one to be cloned and implanting it into the fertilized stem cell, those controlling the process pass a small electrical charge through the new cell to provoke division to begin. This is the science that enabled scientists to clone a sheep, resulting in the famous “Dolly.”

Only now, circumstances have rushed past the debate over the ethics of doing this with human cells in order to “grow” replacements for diseased or damaged organs and directly into the heretofore theoretical arena of literally cloning humans.

The company involved plans as its first project the cloning of a young girl who died as the result of a medical accident. (Her cell tissue was frozen, which will supply more than enough viable cells to be used to clone the girl.) Her parents have provided the funding, and the cult that owns the laboratory has provided the volunteers to carry the baby.

Should they need them, 50 women have volunteered to be surrogate mothers for cloning projects.

This is no *Star Trek* fantasy. The reality is now, along with a myriad of complex issues. For example, two pairs of homosexual couples are on the company’s waiting list. Not only will the debate over the morality of this bizarre undertaking explode, so also will the debate over the “souls” of those who are cloned. Would they be human, made in the image of God?

Brace yourself for the consequences. The cloning of humans *is here*.

## Archbishop Calls Britain “a Society of Atheists”

ISLE OF MAN—The Archbishop of Canterbury, leader of the Anglican Church, said “a tacit atheism prevails. Death is assumed to be the end of life.”

George Carey, the archbishop, lamented that the British people looked to medicine for eternal life rather than religion—and that the Christian teaching of eternal life has virtually been abandoned. He further said that “many people are acting *as if* doctors can cure all ills and even postpone death forever” (emphasis added).

The archbishop connects this trend with a general loss of morality in an increasingly secular society. He called for the whole Church of God (ministry and lay people) to restore authentic Christianity to Britain.

But, according to the Scriptures, the loss of authentic Christianity should be laid primarily at the door of the clergy. In the words of our Creator, “Her priests have violated My law and profaned My holy things; they have not distinguished between the holy and unholy, nor have they made known the difference between the unclean and the clean; and they have hidden their eyes from My Sabbaths, so that I am profaned among them” (Ezekiel 22:26; cf. 44:23–24).

Quite an indictment! And it applies to the whole of the Western world—not just the British Isles.

Source: *The Daily Telegraph* (London).

Contributors: Cecil E. Maranville and John Ross Schroeder

**“FOOT,”** (Continued from page 16)

his leg with an elastic bandage. From that humble beginning would be his steady sequential climb nearly 20 years later towards Mt. Everest. He did not change his goals, but only how he would reach them. When he stated to friends that he would one day climb again, it caught them off guard. They would begin to shuffle, lose eye contact or simply dismiss his new goals as merely delusional dreams.

But step-by-step, literally one foot at a time, he reinvented his life. He kayaked down the Snake River in Idaho with crutches tucked in his boat. When he could finally afford a quality prosthesis, he resumed his backpacking and spelunking activities. He also completed a master’s degree in athletic administration and founded the Cooperative Wilderness Handicapped Outdoor Group to offer disabled individuals a chance to experience challenging outdoor activities. Yes, he had been sidelined, but not stopped in pursuit of a meaningful existence. As each step led to greater accomplishments, he moved towards his goal literally one foot at a time. A friend eventually challenged him to be the first amputee to ascend the loftiest perch on earth.

Susan Vaughn graphically shares the daunting statistics regarding Mt. Everest. “In the last 100 years, more than 150 climbers have died on Mt. Everest’s slopes. Countless others have been repelled by the mountain’s 100 mph winds, violent storms, wind-chill temperatures that reach 140 below zero, and oxygen-thin air.”

In spite of the dangers, Whittaker told Vaughn, “Once it was suggested, I couldn’t think of anything else.” Two tremendous obstacles faced him that didn’t necessarily face other would-be climbers. First, would be the raw reality that without his kneecap he had only about 50 percent muscle function in his right leg. If his stump were to swell during the ascent and he was unable to reattach his prosthesis, there was a chance he might not make it down the mountain alive.

Secondly, just getting the financial sponsorship of \$300,000 for such an expedition was almost more challenging than the climb. Due to recent climbing catastrophes on Everest’s slopes, sponsors were hard to come by—even without considering Whittaker’s disability. With that additional factor, imagine the public relations disaster for any potential sponsor if Tom Whittaker had died!

But, Whittaker moved forward one foot at a time, and

one climb at a time. It took him three separate attempts over a period of nine years to accomplish his goal. In 1989, his party was buffeted by a storm that took the lives of five people on other expeditions. Down he went. In 1995, he came to within 1,500 feet of the summit, only to be chased away by storms again.

Finally in 1998, he set skyward one more time. As his party ascended towards the goal before them, their tents and equipment were destroyed by 100 mph winds. Whittaker became gravely ill with a serious accumulation of fluid in his lungs. A physician urged him to leave the mountain. He simply would not hear of it. As a friend related, “I think part of his motivation came from hearing so many people tell him he couldn’t do it. He’s got a big ego, but he’s also got a big heart.” After his symptoms subsided, Whittaker, a colleague and four Sherpa guides made history on May 27, 1998. The first amputee to climb Everest stood at the top of the world. Amputating part of his body did not amputate his life.



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## Going after your dreams

When he is not scaling mountains, Whittaker works as a corporate motivational speaker. He has also founded a nonprofit organization, which supports other people with disabilities in reaching their goals. He offers “Five Tips for Going After Your Dreams.”

Many of our *World News and Prophecy* readers not only dream, but long for the reality of the Kingdom of God to come to this earth. Do we focus on the “mountain of the Lord,” or on the difficult challenges between here and there? Allow Whittaker’s “Five Tips for Going After Your Dreams” and a few of my thoughts to help show the way.

1) Make sure your goals come from within. Internal motivation is much more powerful than external motivation.

Remember how Whittaker stated, “I had to reinvent myself... I didn’t come to the United States to live a small life, I came to do something big!” Relate that to what Elijah came to understand from God. True power was not in an earthquake, wind or fire, but a “still small voice” that challenged him personally with: “What are you doing here?” Elijah had lost hope, crawled into a cave and kept talking about what he had done, rather than focusing on what God had yet in store for him to accomplish (1 Kings 19:11–15).

Each of us needs to answer: “What am I doing here?” What are we truly about? God works from the inside out,

not the outside in. Faith will always be challenged, but it need not be conquered. A goal, the right goal, the goal of God's Kingdom, will give you both roots and wings. Roots to stabilize you in traumatic times, and wings to lift you to new horizons. But you must own the goal. The story of God's Kingdom must be bigger than your story, and tucked deep inside.

2) Develop a credo, based on your life values, principles and sense of self. Don't allow others to define these things for you—define yourself.

Know who you are, what you are about and be about doing it. People love to pigeonhole other people and keep them there. In Scripture, Goliath saw only a "boy" in David. The Sanhedrin gazing upon the apostles saw only "Galileans." On the contrary, God says in 2 Corinthians 5:17, "All things have become new." God doesn't pigeonhole us; He opens new doors with new possibilities. It's interesting that this is mentioned to the Corinthians who were the "wharf rats of Attica." They could have said, "Why couldn't we be noble Athenians?" God revealed that He had something better in mind for them, but that they needed to be willing to move towards it one foot at a time. How about you?

3) Don't compromise or take shortcuts. Love the process, rather than the illusion of "winning" or "getting there." By focusing on the journey, you become a better problem solver.

All of us are well aware of the blurring speed of our present technological society. Computers are making everything quicker, faster and more immediately attainable. Be it the remote control features on our computers or on our televisions, we simply flip and zip from "there to there" without passing through "here" which lies in between. It really has influenced our society, and Christians are no exception. Everybody wants everything right now! Any delay has become a painful nuisance in our society.

Whittaker's encouragement is to recognize that there are a lot of "heres" along the way that an individual has to move through. If it's worth obtaining, it's worth plowing through one foot at a time. God has not handed us a remote control with "Kingdom-forward" features. In 1 Peter 2:21, He simply encourages us through Peter to follow Christ's steps one foot at a time.

4) Face your fears. Acknowledge them and move ahead. Don't flee from anticipated pain or injury.

When Whittaker was first moving sequentially towards the ultimate goal of climbing Mt. Everest, he confronted a smaller challenge in climbing the "Outer Limits"

just outside of Yosemite Valley. Whittaker later shared the power of the moment: "As I stood at the foot of it, I realized here was the physical manifestation of all my hopes and dreams." He could have frozen in his tracks, but he didn't. He realized, as we need to realize, that recovery lies on the other side of the panic we feel.

Long ago, Shakespeare pondered the power of fear when he wrote that "cowards die a thousand deaths, but the brave only die once." Christianity is not about transference of the challenges in front of us, but the transformation of the challenge.

*"If [God] gave us no rough roads to walk, no mountains to climb, or any battles to fight, we would not grow. He does not leave us alone with our challenges, however. Instead he stands beside us, teaches us and strengthens us to face them."*

Psalms 18:32-36 brings this to light. "It is God who arms me with strength, and makes my way perfect. He makes my feet like the feet of deer, and sets me on my high places. He teaches my hands to make war, so that my arms can bend a bow of bronze. You have also given me the shield of Your salvation; Your right hand has held me up, Your gentleness has made me great. You enlarged my path under me, so my feet did not slip." *The Life Application Bible Commentary* offers this thought: "God promises to give us strength to meet challenges, but he doesn't promise to eliminate them. If he gave us no rough roads to walk, no mountains to climb, or any battles to fight, we would not grow. He does not leave us alone with our challenges, how-

ever. Instead he stands beside us, teaches us and strengthens us to face them."

5) Live a big life. Set tall goals. Achieve mastery in all that is important to you.

Many years ago Longfellow penned, "If you would hit the mark, aim the bow high for every arrow that flies feels the pull of the earth." There are very real and dynamic pulls and weights on nations, communities, congregations, families and individuals that can disturb, disappoint and depress them so that they depart from the challenges they face. After climbing Mt. Everest, Whittaker said, "My belief is that if, as people with disabilities, we argue for our limitations, that is what we will have—limitations." Big thought, big story, one life and yes, one natural foot. But, he practices what he preaches. He is still setting goals that move beyond all the naysayers.

Whittaker's next goal is to climb the "Seven Summits," which are the highest peaks of each continent. As he journeys forward, we, too, in our way and time, are invited to conquer the seemingly unconquerable. Whittaker's message is simple, "It's not the falling down, but the getting up that matters."

Such a message is an echo of an age-old refrain found in Isaiah 30:21—"This is the way, walk you in it." And, if I might add, "one foot at a time, if that is all that you have." ❖

# This Is the Way... One Foot at a Time

by Robin Webber

All of us, at one time or another, have been exhorted to plow forward through life's oncoming challenges with the simple yet profound phrase "one foot at a time."

It's a good message, a powerfully true concept, a worthwhile encouragement! But, what if you don't have one foot to follow the other? What if one foot is truly missing?

Such was the stark reality facing Tom Whittaker. His story appeared in the *Los Angeles Times* on October 8, 2000, in an article entitled "Aiming High Despite Life's Lows," written by *Times* staff writer Susan Vaughn. It is the story of a man who climbed Mt. Everest, the highest mountain on earth, with just one natural foot. The other foot was a prosthesis or "artificial foot."

How many nations, cities, communities, schools, congregations, families or individuals excuse themselves from meeting the challenges before them, because of perceived or very real disabilities or liabilities?

Isaiah 2:3 speaks of a time when all nations and individuals will cry, "let us go up to the mountain of the LORD." Have you ever considered how many handicaps they will possess at that time? Their future climb is our present one.

Let's look at the remarkable story of Tom Whittaker, so we can measure how well we are dealing with difficulties in our climb through life.

## "I had to reinvent myself"

Susan Vaughn begins by sharing the past exploits of Tom Whittaker before he lost his foot. He had scaled Mt. McKinley, El Capitan in Yosemite Valley, kayaked the Colorado River through the Grand Canyon and climbed frozen waterfalls in the Canadian Rockies. Originally from Britain, he emigrated to the United States to make adventure sports and education his full-time career. But in 1979, a distracted motorist struck Whittaker's Volkswagen van head on, crushing both his feet and shattering his right knee.

There was so much that he had planned to do! He pleaded with surgeons not to amputate his feet. They were able to save the left foot, but the right foot and kneecap were shattered beyond repair. The foot had to go! For the moment, Whittaker was crestfallen. Vaughn gives Whittaker voice by sharing his very real sentiments at the time: "I lost my foot, my life savings and my means of making a living. Now I had to reinvent myself and come up with a new plan. I didn't come to the United States to live a small life. I came to do something big."

Whittaker moved into an abandoned apartment building and took the first job offered him. Of all places it was a shoe store. Unable to afford a prosthetic foot, Whittaker crafted one from a cigar box and lashed it to

(See "FOOT," page 14)