

WORLD NEWS *and* PROPHECY

Biblical Perspectives on Current Events

January 2001

Vol. 4, No. 1

European Union: An Idea Whose Time Has Come

The "glacier" of European unity is now moving at a faster pace.

by Melvin Rhodes

I called one of my brothers in England early in December. He asked me what I thought of the "Big Debate." Assuming that he was referring to the election impasse in Florida that was dominating our nightly news, I began to share my opinions, only to be interrupted by his saying, "No, not that. The *big* debate." I hesitated, trying to think of what he might be referring to. Having been cut off from the rest of the world by the American media that seems incapable of focusing on more than one major issue at a time, I wasn't sure. I had to ask.

"The European Rapid Reaction Force, that's the big debate over here!"

Sure enough. A few days later my

weekly *Spectator* magazine arrived from London and carried its own article on "The Big Debate" that had started millions of people talking about something that could, in time, fundamentally alter the postwar balance of power and change the

direction of the United Kingdom for decades to come. Not only the United Kingdom, either—all of Europe and



Will NATO be superseded by the European Rapid Reaction Force?

North America could be in for some big changes.

The announcement that triggered the big debate was the formation of the Rapid Reaction Force by the nations of the European Union. What is at stake is the future of the NATO alliance that has united the democratic

nations of North America and western Europe for over 50 years and given all

(See "EUROPEAN," page 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 February 9 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.

“EUROPEAN,” (Continued from page 1)
participants unparalleled peace and prosperity. The concern for America is that U.S. domination of the alliance may be coming to an end—that the European Rapid Reaction Force may be the beginning of the end for the EU-U.S. alliance. Concern in Washington led to the U.S. Secretary of Defense visiting Brussels to talk with European leaders.

An article in Britain’s conservative *Daily Mail* newspaper showed that Prince Charles, the heir to the British throne who is not supposed to get directly involved in politics, is expressing his own grave concerns about the development of the new European military force, fearing that it will be the end of Britain’s military alliance with America, which goes back to World War II. When asked for her opinions on the new force, former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher said: “I prefer NATO.”

Nothing is imminent. The multinational force is not expected to be fully in place for three years. It will have only 60,000 troops in operation at any time, with an operational force of 90,000. The force is to be used in emergencies like the 1999 situation in Kosovo or the former ethnic conflicts throughout the Balkans, a region in Europe’s own backyard. Its emphasis will be on humanitarian and peacekeeping responsibilities. The concerns being expressed are about where the rapid reaction force may be leading.

It was the continuing breakup of the former Yugoslavia during the ’90s that exposed Europe’s military weakness and dependency on the United States. Americans have been saying that Europe needs to do more and help the United States cut down on its military expenses in Europe. Europeans have been reminded on a number of occasions that they are as rich as the United States and should be willing to devote more of their GNPs to defense.

At the same time, while the United States has a huge deficit on its international trade, most European nations have a surplus. This means that the United States needs to cut expenditures overseas while the Europeans should be

able to spend more. The EU’s population also exceeds that of the United States, and most of the nations that make up the EU have compulsory military service, unlike the United States which is suffering a manpower shortage. The idea, therefore, of a European Rapid Reaction Force sounds logical. It makes sense. The traditionally independent-minded French, who have been in the driver’s seat of the EU for the past six months, have been pushing for this. The big question is: Who will control the rapid reaction force? The United States is naturally concerned that American leadership of the Western world may be in question. America’s recent electoral woes have contributed to this fear—will the new U.S. president have difficulty leading the West when his “credentials” have been contested so much at home?

Other European developments

The Rapid Reaction Force is not the only recent development in Europe. The December summit of EU leaders in Nice, France, shows a more urgent commitment to European expansion and European political unity. Also the increasing strength of the euro against the dollar amidst fears of a slowdown in the U.S. economy could lead to a loss of confidence in the United States to lead the free world.

Following the Nice summit, the BBC World Service’s “Analysis” program raised the possibility of a new European superpower as it asked the following question: “In 1990 there were two superpowers. Now there is only one. Could there soon be another?” It was the first time this listener had heard Europe referred to as a superpower (though in the sense of a *potential* superpower). The BBC went on to state that any two superpowers will inevitably have areas of conflict and specifically mentioned the Middle East as an area of potential conflict between the United States (Israel’s main supporter) and the EU (which tends to support the Palestinians).

The idea of a European superpower to rival or even surpass the United

States is not an unrealistic one. At the turn of the last century the European powers dominated the globe. Great Britain was the world’s most powerful nation. Germany, France, Austria and Russia were the other great ruling powers. Twice in the first half of the 20th century the central European Axis powers threatened the peace of the world—their second attempt at world conquest almost succeeded.

Throughout history different leaders have tried to forcibly bring about a united Europe. Because they used force they ended up fighting internal battles as well as wars with nations outside of Europe who were threatened by them. Napoleon and Hitler were recent examples of this drive to revive the idea of a united Europe, which goes back to the days of the Roman Empire.

In the prophetic Old Testament book of Daniel there is a prophecy of the four great gentile empires that would dominate the world between the time of Daniel and the establishment of the Kingdom of God. The fourth empire, the Roman system, was to be a dominant force in the world down to the second coming of the Messiah (Daniel 7:23–27). Revelation chapter 17 shows that there will be another resurrection of this system before Christ’s return, and this union will lead right into the second coming of the Messiah (Revelation 17:12–14).

All previous attempts at European unification ultimately failed because they were dictatorships that used force and acted against the best interests of the people.

Aware of the mistakes of the past, today’s European leaders are building a united Europe peacefully—no one man is trying to conquer the continent for his own ends. This means that the new Europe is coming together more slowly, but the hope is that it will be without many of the internal divisions and conflicts that characterized previous attempts at unification. Many of today’s European leaders are inspired by the Emperor Charlemagne, crowned by the pope in 800 A.D., who had a vision of a united Christian Europe that would return the continent to the glory of ancient Rome.

An annual Charlemagne prize is awarded by European leaders to the individual who has contributed the most to the idea of European unity in the past year. In 2000, U.S. President Bill Clinton became the third American recipient.

Leaders at the Nice summit pledged themselves to speed up the admission of new members to the EU which, by 2010, will likely have 28 members rather than the current 15. This cannot be achieved overnight. The countries requesting membership are all poorer than the average EU member. There are concerns that their economies could slow down EU momentum and that more prosperous EU countries could be swamped with millions of immigrants from new member nations seeking a higher standard of living. But EU members are pledged to welcome these new nations as full members. It's only a matter of time. The EU began as six countries in 1957 and has slowly expanded to the current 15.

The building of the new Europe has certainly taken time. As an article in a recent issue of the *Spectator* put it: "...the process of integration never stops.... Construction of the European Union resembles a glacier—you never see it moving. But at some point somebody has to sit up and say that it has moved" ("Season of Myths," by Sarah Helm, *Spectator*, November 25, 2000).

The glacier has certainly been moving. One thing today is very clear—*European unity is an idea whose time has come.*

The euro's slow progress

Nowhere is this fact better illustrated than with the euro, the EU's 11-member single currency launched two years ago. The transition from national currencies to one currency for the euro zone countries has been a difficult one, with the euro steadily sinking in value against the U.S. dollar even before euro coins and banknotes are actually in peoples' pockets. But this decline was reversed, at least temporarily, in December with heightened concern about the U.S. economy. Interestingly, the dollar continued to fall on international markets even

after the election issue was resolved and George W. Bush was declared the new president-elect. Normally, a Republican victory would be seen as good for the world economy. This time the reaction has been much more cautious on international financial markets.

The euro may still have some serious challenges ahead, but the European member states remain committed to it in the enthusiastic drive toward European unity. With the recent addition of Greece as a member, 12 of the 15 EU members are now in the euro zone. There have been a number of advantages to the euro for member nations, mostly in the corporate bond market and in promoting trade between members who no longer have to hold back due to fears of fluctuating currency values. In January 2002 citizens will start to use the new coins and notes. Six months later the old currencies will cease to circulate. The continuing U.S. trade deficit is seen internationally as an indicator of a further weakening of the U.S. dollar. The dollar is not about to lose its preeminent role in world financial markets, but any weakening in the value of the dollar (thought to be necessary to correct the trade deficit) will benefit other major currencies.

European countries have been content to do nothing about the U.S. trade deficit as so many European companies were quite happy to use their surplus dollars to buy up American companies. But now that corporate profits are down in the United States, there is no use for those extra dollars and attention has focused on structural weaknesses in the American economy.

Europhiles vs. Europhobes

While most people on the continent of Europe are either enthused about the prospect of further European integration or at least willing to let it happen, there are many in the United Kingdom who are very skeptical, even fearful of further unity. There has always been an ambivalent attitude in the British Isles to Europe. The country has long had two factions—one can be called Europhiles; the other,

Europhobes. Those who love Europe and those who don't.

For most of the last 450 years following the Protestant Reformation, the British saw their security and future beyond the seas, away from Europe. There was a determination to stay out of European affairs unless a European nation was threatening the peace and balance of power in Europe (France under Napoleon, Germany under the Second and Third Reich).

This started to change in the 20th century, as is illustrated by comparing the international interests of Britain's monarchs during the century. King Edward VII (1901-10) concentrated on building European ties, while his mother, Queen Victoria, had made the Empire her main focus of attention. Edward's son King George V (1910-36) again concentrated on the Empire, as did his successor King George VI (1936-52). Queen Elizabeth II began her reign in 1952 with the Empire and Commonwealth her main focus, but Europe has been increasingly important since Britain entered the European Common Market almost 30 years ago.

There are those in Britain who are very committed to the idea of a united Europe. They have had the upper hand for the last three decades. But there are those who are at best skeptical of European union and increasingly hostile to it. They see the EU as an increasing threat to Britain's independence and way of life. Asleep for most of the last 30 years, they are now waking up to the full implications of EU membership—loss of financial independence followed by loss of sovereignty.

The creation of the Rapid Reaction Force and the future of the euro are the two major issues for those opposed to the idea of a European super state. One could end Britain's close military alliance with the United States, which has been the foundation of Britain's defenses since the end of its empire. The other would remove Britain's control over its own finances, effectively giving control of its economy to foreign powers—ironically, the very powers Britain has fought the most in the last 300 years. ❖

The Best Government in Existence?

Is the U.S. form of government “the best existing, or that ever did exist”? Does its system of “checks and balances” produce strength—or contentiousness?

by Cecil E. Maranville

“**W**ith all the imperfections of our present government, it is without comparison the best existing, or that ever did exist,” wrote Thomas Jefferson to Edward Carrington in 1787 (*Thomas Jefferson on Politics & Government*, © 1995-1998, by Eyler Robert Coates, Sr., ME 6:227). Now 213 years later, the 2000 presidential election process afforded a test of that lofty claim. Is the U.S. form of government really “the best existing, or that ever did exist”?

Leaders who answer to no one have it easier than leaders in a democratic republic. Interviewed by the press after meeting with partisan leaders of Congress, President-elect George W. Bush commented that he would not want to live in a dictatorship—“unless I was the dictator,” he quipped!

But, despots are easily corrupted. History is replete with the biographies of kingly leaders who were corrupt either before their coronation or were corrupted in time by the cheers of their subjects. Setting aside for the moment the despots who have forced the hands of their citizens together in applause, even well intentioned, democratic leaders have also fallen prey to the praise of those who surround them. Too easily, they begin to rate themselves more highly than they should.

Enter the American model of government. (By “American,” I mean U.S.—apologies to Canada, Central and South America!)

“The Founding Fathers knew well the kind of government they were trying to avoid, but could only project what their own experiment in government would become. They based this

projection on their analysis of governments in the past, on principles derived from natural rights, and on an assessment of the nature of man” (ibid., Introduction).

Looking forward along the annals of time, Jefferson forecast, “Those who will come after

us will be as wise as we are, and as able to take care of themselves as we have been” (Thomas Jefferson to Pierre Samuel Dupont de Nemours, 1811, ibid. ME 13:40). Have the present leaders and citizens fulfilled his optimistic prophecy?

Let’s first consider how the U.S. founding fathers construct-

ed the U.S. governmental structure.

Checks and balances

Theoretically, each of the three branches of government in the United States “checks” or restrains the other two. An executive (the president) administers and enforces laws that are made by the legislature (the House of Representatives and Senate). A court (the ultimate being the Supreme) speaks to the legitimacy of executive policies, based upon law, and the validity of new legislation, based upon the Constitution.

The hypothesis continues with the premise



“Those who will come after us will be as wise as we are, and as able to take care of themselves as we have been”—Thomas Jefferson

Has the United States demonstrated that “man can be trusted with self-government”?

that every branch strengthens the other's performance. The mutual strengthening lies in the fact that no one branch is permitted to do the tasks of all three: create and administer law, as well as respond to challenges about both law and its administration. The system acknowledges the founders' assumption that any person or group of people vested with overly much power would become despotic.

A given division of the government that performs questionably in the discharge of its responsibility would face challenges by the other two. Thereby, orders, propositions and rulings would be made stronger than they would be if their issuers answered to no one. It's at least a partial application of the biblical proverb, "Iron sharpens iron" (Proverbs 27:17).

In idealistic terms, the ultimate authority of the U.S. government, the force that could and would stop all abuses of power, is its citizenry. The Electoral College chooses the president. How the college members vote is determined by popular vote in each state (not by the popular vote nationwide, as many were reminded in the daily civics lessons associated with the recent election contest). Members of the Congress are selected by popular vote, based upon a formula that was designed to insure a stable government. The president appoints members of the Supreme Court for life, but the Senate must confirm each appointee.

The American press evolved over the centuries into a "fourth branch of government," often called "the Fourth Estate," taking on the role of holding the nation's leaders to an honest commitment to the constitutional responsibility each occupies. (The media did not always enjoy the freedom and power it now notably wields. Once, in frustrated anger over the Washington press corps, President Jefferson had every member of it jailed over a weekend! How times have changed!) Ostensibly, the media is made up of "the people" and furthers the objectives of the U.S. founders.

So, it is ultimately the people's government. Common citizens can question the highest officials of the

land. The sought-after result is a nation whose citizens would enjoy the greatest possible freedoms to pursue their personal goals.

Government of, by and for the people

Jefferson extolled the foundational role of the citizenry in a private letter to Richard Price in 1785. "The happiness of governments like ours wherein the people are truly the mainspring is that they are never to be despaired of. When an evil becomes so glaring as to strike them generally, they arouse themselves, and it is redressed. He only is then the popular man and can get into office who shows the best dispositions to reform the evil" (ibid., Papers, 7:630).

President Lincoln, in his renowned Gettysburg address, intoned, "...we

As charges and countercharges were fired back and forth during the recent postelection challenges in the United States, many reporters observed that at least it was words, not lead, being fired.

here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain—that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom—and that government *of the people, by the people, for the people*, shall not perish from the earth."

Has the United States been able to fulfill this noble, idyllic aim? As charges and countercharges were fired back and forth during the recent post-election challenges in the United States, many reporters observed that at least it was words, not lead, being fired. To be sure, this is good! The country's politicians lauded themselves that they resolved their disputes peacefully.

Did they? I referred to Proverbs

27:17 above, noting the sense of "iron sharpens iron" imbedded in early American thought. The rest of that verse reads, "so a man sharpens the countenance *of his friend*." That is, challenges made with respect to people who are honored can engender better decisions, better thought, better policies. However, hostile opposition and rivalry will only reinforce a party spirit—as postelection events have demonstrated.

Thomas Jefferson wrote: "We have no interests nor passions different from those of our fellow citizens. We have the same object: the success of representative government. Nor are we acting for ourselves alone, but for the whole human race. The event of our experiment is *to show whether man can be trusted with self-government*. The eyes of suffering humanity are fixed on us with anxiety as their only hope, and on such a theatre, for such a cause, we must suppress all smaller passions and local considerations" (Thomas Jefferson to Gov. Hall, 1802, ibid.).

More selfish than selfless

Has the United States demonstrated that "man can be trusted with self-government"?

What began as the world's best answer to despotism has become a complex tangle of conflicting interest. Presidents "legislate" by executive order, bypassing the lawmakers. President Clinton used this avenue to place thousands of acres into national parks, without going through legislative channels. Many conservatives already are calling on the incoming Bush administration to issue countermanning executive orders to rescind the Clinton directives.

Legislators have their own "creative" means of getting their way, by adding non sequitur amendments to critical bills. For example, a congressman may write an amendment that authorizes several thousand dollars to be paid to someone in his district for the study of methane gas produced by cattle manure (seriously!). He would then add that amendment to a crucial highway appropriations bill that has passed

committee debate and is ready to go to the president for his signature.

Activist courts go beyond interpreting the law, adding precepts to existing statutes. For example, the U.S. Supreme Court, not the Congress, mandated busing. Vermont had no law acknowledging same-sex relationships, but the Vermont Supreme Court ruled that such “couples” were entitled to the same benefits as married couples. The legislature felt obliged, with the encouragement of the governor, to respond by creating the infamous civil union law. A more recent example of an activist court is the Florida Supreme Court, whose justices added new election law in the course of interpreting existing law. Another example of judicial activism is the action of the U.S. Supreme Court, which decided the presidential election.

Nothing human could be perfect

“Perfect human government” is an oxymoron, for nothing “human” could be “perfect.” Truthfully, Americans themselves make no claim that their government is perfect, but they often assert that it is “the best possible” form of government. We’ve already noted several imperfections. Breaking down the U.S. system further, we see more.

That ambiguous entity, “the White House” is synonymous with the presidency at the same time as it affords an illusory anonymity. “White House sources” attempt to mold and shape public opinion, amplifying the influence of the executive branch of government. An “unofficial” call from the White House, asking for consideration for a certain person or project conveys a weighty endorsement in itself.

The Congress is comprised of liberals, moderates and conservatives principally of the two major political parties, Democrats and Republicans. Each one theoretically represents his constituency, his ideological allies in both parties, his own party, his own conscience and his personal political ambitions for reelection or for higher office—at the same time! Additionally,

congressmen respond to professional lobbyists who seek legislation favorable to their private interests.

Courts theoretically are made up of men and women who are not ideologues, but rather “pure” jurists who seek to adjudicate the law and the Constitution. The Supreme Court justices typify the “supreme” jurist—in theory, anyway. In practice, students of the high court know that the justices are selected for the bench, in part, on the basis of their personal ideology. Why else would people pose the oft-asked question of the presidential candidates: “Would you nominate a pro-life or pro-choice judge for the Supreme Court?” Further, many justices have been blatant about pursuing their personal political convictions at every possible turn.

Jefferson’s prayer

Thomas Jefferson said he prayed that selfishness of the few would not obstruct serving the needs of the many. “A government regulating itself by what is wise and just for the many, uninfluenced by the local and selfish views of the few who direct their affairs, has not been seen, perhaps, on earth. Or if it existed for a moment at the birth of ours, it would not be easy to fix the term of its continuance. Still, I believe it does exist here in a greater degree than anywhere else; and for its growth and continuance...I offer sincere prayers” (Thomas Jefferson to William H. Crawford, 1816, *ibid.*, ME 15:31).

His prayer might have been answered for a time, or it simply may have taken time for the innate selfishness of human nature to permeate the U.S. system. Either way, selfishness is more evident than cooperation for the

common good. Even those who proudly claim “the system works” would not be so naïve as to posture that its participants act unselfishly.

The perception of the U.S. founders about the corruptibility of human nature truly was insightful, and the model of government they devised has been remarkably successful. However, Americans would be remiss to take undue credit for their triumph, given the state of their government’s inherent divisiveness. It is to the credit of God’s will and mercy that the country has endured so long.

If the U.S. form of government is truly “the best existing, or that ever did exist” and if the “eyes of suffering humanity are fixed on” the United States as its only hope, then the future of humanity is bleak indeed. Such a claim likely sounds patriotic to its citizens and, perhaps, self-

congratulatory to other world citizens, but it actually is a presumptuous assertion.

Nonetheless, an answer to Jefferson’s prayer will come—not in the way that he expected. The best is yet to come in the form of the government of God, which Christ will soon establish over the world. He alone will rule with unselfishness. His government will not be “of the people, by the people” for no human government could achieve what a government should accomplish. But, His government truthfully will be “for the people.”

Of this perfect government, Isaiah prophesied, “And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom, understanding, counsel and might; the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord. His delight will be obedience to the Lord. He will not judge by appearance, false evidence or hearsay, but will defend the poor and the exploited. He will rule against the wicked who oppress them. For he will be clothed with fairness and with truth” (Isaiah 11:2–4, *The Living Bible*). ❖



*Thomas Jefferson
prayed that selfishness
would be overcome*

Book Review: *Euro Crash 2007*

What happens if Europe doesn't get the euro in gear? German economist Bruno Hollnagel pens a scary scenario in his book Euro Crash 2007—The Countdown Has Started.

by Paul Kieffer

Hollnagel has carefully analyzed the Maastricht treaty, and his novel reflects what he believes to be the major weaknesses of the impending monetary union.

It is early October in the year 2007, the month when stock markets are known to be jittery. Some early rumblings are felt when, on the second Friday of the month, after-hours trading on European exchanges begins to reflect the late news release in New York of the European Union's new budgetary figures for the year 2008. When late night computer trading ends, European stock indexes are down an average of 8.6 percent, to be following by a further 9 percent drop when normal trading reopens the following Monday.

European financial markets are shocked by the rumor at 11:30 a.m. on the same morning that the president of the European Central Bank has been assassinated in Frankfurt, apparently by a private stock market trader who has been ruined by recent developments in Europe's currency and stock markets. For European stock markets the news means that there is only one possible direction for share prices: down, and fast at that.

Is this the horror vision of some frustrated séance medium? Not at all. Bruno Hollnagel, a German financial commentator holding a degree in economics, has penned a novel entitled *Euro Crash 2007—Der Countdown läuft* [*Euro Crash 2007—The Countdown Has Started*], in which he outlines his scenario for the future demise of the euro. Some aspects of his vision, interestingly enough, are not entirely discounted by other observers.

Hollnagel's decision to write his book was prompted by his irritation over what he considered to be the positive bias in reporting on the treaty of Maastricht, which provided the basis for the European Monetary Union, i.e., the euro. Hollnagel has carefully analyzed that treaty, and his novel reflects what he believes to be the major weaknesses of the impending

monetary union. He projects in step-by-step manner a coming great depression in Europe, which has its origins in the prerequisites for participation in the euro, including limits on the national rate of inflation and deficit spending required of all participating countries. In Hollnagel's opinion, those goals can only be met by bookkeeping shenanigans, a view shared by a number of respected politicians and economists in Germany.

In his criticism of the Maastricht treaty Hollnagel seizes on a weakness seen by other observers in Europe as well: individual countries in the monetary union continue to determine national economic and tax policy on their own, with no requirement to coordinate policy within the euro zone. As Hollnagel portrays it, the mid- to long-term result will turn out to be instability within the entire euro region, as the instability of individual member countries, resulting from their domestic economic policies, is automatically exported to all other countries within the euro zone. His comment on the lack of political responsibility in addressing this potential problem is scathing: "Europe's politicians are like fortune hunters on the prowl for the best offer."

In Hollnagel's scenario, the European Central Bank president and his team are unable to stem the tide. The ECB is supposed to be a supranational bank responsible for the financial stability of the euro region, but in reality the bank will not have the power to counteract the finance ministers of member countries. The result, according to Hollnagel, will be increased deficit spending within "euroland," an inflation rate that hits 45 percent and capital flight from European financial and equity markets, all of which reach their peak in 2007. Following the

(See "CRASH," page 13)

Chaotic Start to a New Century: What's It Mean?

From many perspectives, the year 2000 was not a good year. What does the Bible say about the pangs this world is experiencing?

by John Ross Schroeder

As the year 1999 wound down to its final days, observers around the world kept a weather eye on air traffic, the stock markets, in fact everything governed by electronics. Would the millennium bug strike and grind the world to a halt? Thankfully, it did not.

Yet 12 months later, we as a world realize that we simply did not have a good year. Good years and bad years regulate the salaries of American baseball players. Two or three bad ones in succession spell a salary cut, or worse yet being sent down to the minor leagues. Once Babe Ruth was asked why he made more money than the U.S. president. "I had a better year than he did," quipped the legendary baseball star.

Be that as it may, 365 days down the line the year 2000 must be judged a disappointment. Not only here in Britain (where this writer resides), but also in many other nations around the world.

It's been a period of frustrating and expensive rail and road gridlock for parts of England, Scotland and Wales. Rail transport experienced its worst year in living memory. Frightening accidents revealed serious structural problems in the nation's trackbed. Road transport was hit by a massive protest over skyrocketing fuel prices.

Abroad the year 2000 has brought us a whole range of dispiriting images: the lingering uncertainty of the U.S. presidential election, the



"World 2000 is a misshapen creation demographically, economically, culturally"

Mideast peace process at least temporarily in tatters, Haider's rising presence in Austria, mayhem in Zimbabwe, even a threat to democracy in fabled Fiji. All this is not to mention other cumulative problems that plague the world year by year.

Evaluating a world of chaos

As one American columnist put it: "World 2000 is a misshapen creation demographically, economically,

culturally, culturally." Planet earth now has to feed over 6 billion people. Some 800 million of us suffer from chronic hunger and malnutrition. We probably have enough food to feed the world, but politics and greed prevent us from proper distribution.

Part of the basic problem is that we always seem to be living on the edge of chaos. Periodic threats like the millennium bug emerge out of our global woodwork. Much of our daily lives revolve around computers, mobile phones and the like. The more complex our world becomes, the greater the uncertainty. When things go wrong, like a computer virus or a minor glitch in the stock market, it can set off a damaging chain reaction. The markets are all connected.

Usually when a problem occurs we know about it. Thanks to 24-hour news coverage, e-

Today we lurch from crisis to crisis. One problem fosters another and the potential for global meltdown is always there.

mail messages, the Internet and mobile phones, we are able to react instantly. The CEO is almost never out of touch with the head office, whatever the location.

Yet sometimes when you try to fix a difficulty, two or three other problems suddenly emerge unexpectedly. Minor hiccups quickly turn into major problems. This is the complex world we live in.

Today we lurch from crisis to crisis. One problem fosters another and the potential for global meltdown is always there. We live in an age of perpetual uncertainty. No wonder our medicine cabinets are filled with drugs.

Bringing order out of chaos

Of course, some degree of order and stability is constantly correcting and counteracting the changing levels of chaos. The Bible reveals that human beings were created in the image of God (Genesis 1:26–27). Though Satan had struck at God’s original creation, resulting in massive chaos, God restored light and order to an earth of perpetual darkness. (For details please request our booklet, *Life’s Ultimate Question: Does God Exist?*)

Given the wondrous legacy of the image of God, we also know how to restore order and restrain chaos. It is built into our genetic structure. The Scriptures tell us that “God is not the author of confusion” (1 Corinthians 14:33), and the Church is told to do all things decently and in order (verse 40).

The ratio of order to disorder is always a matter of degree. To fulfill His great purpose for human life, God has temporarily allowed a surprising amount of chaos to stalk this earth. Scientists tell us it even exists in the universe itself. Yet Halley’s Comet arrives right on time, and general stability still outweighs and rules over outbreaks of chaos.

An unseen influence

Satan is the prince of the power of the air—the unseen ruler of this present world. In due time he will be deposed

and the restitution of God’s government will soon follow.

But for the time being, the devil influences humans to produce all types of chaos, not only in the world at large but in personal lives as well. For instance, members of warring, dysfunctional families attack one another in front of mass audiences on TV shows, both verbally and physically. Their lives are in chaos. It is very likely that their numbers will grow.

Yet God is the ultimate Sovereign over both heaven and earth (Matthew 11:25). He inspired one of His true servants, the apostle Paul, to write: “The whole created world is waiting with eager expectation for the Sons of God to be revealed.... The created world itself would be freed from its enslavement to decay and receive the glorious freedom which belongs to the Children of God” (Romans 8:19, 21).

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God promises to bring
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order....*

This means that the Creator is masterminding and fashioning something incredibly worthwhile out of the chaotic behavior of mankind. God promises to bring us a peaceful and prosperous new world order, ending all the present chaos (Acts 3:19–21). God knows what this present age is like. Jesus told His disciples that “in the world you will have tribulation” (John 16:33).

Romans 8—a big key

Few chapters in the Bible explain the human condition better than

Romans 8. Read verse 22 with the chaos of our current age firmly in mind: “For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now.” How much more now than when Paul wrote these words almost 2,000 years ago!

A new world is being formed out of this one. The Jerusalem Bible grasps the sense of verse 22: “From the beginning till now the entire creation, as we know it, has been groaning in one great act of giving birth.”

Metaphorically, civilization is experiencing the pangs of childbirth. Ultimately, God will liberate planet earth from every disaster, every act of irrational violence, every contrary force that now harms and holds humanity hostage.

However, for the present time the twists and turns of our torturous, chaotic age affect even those who truly understand God’s purpose, those doing their level best to get this gospel message to the world. God’s people are not immune from the stresses and strains of this deceptive society.

The J.B. Phillips Modern English translation expresses this point very well. “It is plain for anyone with eyes to see that at the present time all created life groans in a sort of universal travail. And it is plain, too, that we who have a foretaste of the spirit are in a state of painful tension” (verses 22–23).

Yet these brave souls continue to preach and publish the gospel. Seeing the world around them struggling for survival, they are moved to do something truly helpful.

There is nothing more urgent than actively helping humankind survive the world crisis that is coming on this entire globe.

The year 2001 may be a good year—or it may be a bad one. It’s the general direction that really counts. Certainly the potential for a major meltdown is always with us. Constantly we need to maintain a balanced biblical perspective. God has assured His people that everything is going to turn out all right at the end of the day (Luke 21:28). ❖

In Brief...

World News Review

Will Germany Take Reins of European Leadership?

Long perceived to be a leading European nation, is Germany poised to become the EU's undisputed leader? The intelligence group Stratfor reported a significant development in its December 18, 2000, briefing that, in their words, "may shift the European balance of power."

It's no revelation that Russia is heavily in debt to many European nations, Germany included. With no hope of repayment in the foreseeable future, Germany has proposed to accept most of its compensation in shares of Russian companies. Russia and Germany have already agreed in principle to the pact, which is worth several billion dollars. The climate for forging a fiscal alliance is enhanced by the fact that President Putin speaks German.

Russia is disaffected with how it believes its relationship with the U.S. has gone—many cheers from the U.S. about the end to communist rule, but no real economic help. It's not in the interest of the EU or Germany for Russia to fail. Beyond economic concerns, the EU views Russian strength and viability as added security on the EU's eastern border at a time of increasing power among Islamic radicals.

A German-Russian economic "marriage"

would benefit the EU in another way. Russia affords the EU with a Euro-Asian commerce corridor, cheaper and faster than any other.

Russia has few options. China can't afford to help, even if it was so inclined, and Japan won't in the face of unresolved territorial disputes with Russia.

How significant might this developing agreement between Russia and Germany be? Once in a great while,

a single pact is so significant it has the potential to alter history's course. This might be such a time.

Stratfor summarizes, "Assisting in Russia's integration into Europe *would result in Germany's emergence as the larder of a united Europe* with Russia on its side. Such a development would *significantly weaken the U.S. influence in Europe*. On the other hand, Chinese positions will be weakened as well, with Russia drifting away from it and toward Germany and Europe" ("Shifting Europe's Power Balance," December 18, 2000, Stratfor, Inc., emphasis added).

Brits Give Nod to Stem Cell Research

By more than a 2-to-1 margin, Britain's Parliament voted December 19, 2000, to amend an existing law to allow stem cell research to go ahead. Stem cells can be engineered to become any kind of cell and are touted as providing a potential quantum leap forward in the treatment of such terribly debilitating diseases as Parkinson's and Alzheimer's.

Have the Brits legally sanctioned cloning? "No," promised Public Health Minister Yvette Cooper. "The idea of cloning babies is completely unacceptable to the House and public opinion as well." Ms. Cooper assured the House of Commons that it was not being asked to "cross the Rubicon" and sanction human cloning. That is not entirely true.

A close inspection of the science necessary to accomplish stem cell research reveals that the British government has glossed over profound ethical issues. In fact, current stem cell research does require human cloning. A cell from the patient under treatment is fused with an egg cell taken from a donor, after which an electrical stimulus "tricks" the egg into "thinking" it has been fertilized. Thus, the life of a clone of the patient is begun. Parsing words, one could claim that human life hasn't been cloned only because the embryos are not allowed to develop into fetuses and be born.

The early cells produced by the new embryo are the precious stem cells for which medical scientists are searching.

Another "ethical Rubicon" is crossed when the embryos



Berlin's Brandenburg Gate

thus created are destroyed within 14 days. No one seems willing to say, “the emperor has no clothes”—that is, none dare call it murder. Life is begun and ended in the name of medical science assisting in the cure of diseases.

The proposed amendment was supported with emotional testimony from people suffering from chronic illnesses, who pleaded with the Commons to give license to the medical community to go forward with stem cell research. No one gainsays the suffering of the diseased and their families, but framing the amendment in both the white coat of medical research and this emotional cloak obscures other issues that are involved.

Liam Fox, Shadow Health Secretary, opposed the amendment, saying that he was not convinced that the same benefits could not be realized by other means. He eloquently summarized, “...the medical revolution carries with it moral, ethical and philosophical consequences and our ability to deal with these matters sometimes lags behind our technical knowledge. *Just because we can do something does not mean we have to*” (emphasis added).

The moral, ethical and philosophical consequences Dr. Fox mentioned are monumental, and yet they’re brushed aside as mere political debating points that can be negotiated away.

Sources: “MPs Give Go Ahead for Embryo Research,” by Philip Webster and Greg Hurst, the London *Times*, December 20, 2000; “Wanted: Women’s Eggs for Research,” by Anthony Browne and Gaby Hinsliff, *The Guardian*, December 17, 2000.

Weird Twist in Nativity Scene

In the name of marketing in a way that the public will be drawn to purchase their products, British merchants have changed how they present the traditional nativity. Some have removed Joseph altogether, presenting Mary as a single parent to appeal to single parent customers.

Other merchants have changed Joseph into a woman, portraying him “as a figure with rosy cheeks and curly hair, donning a headscarf and cloak....” Such displays, say British shop owners, were designed to appeal to customers with “Sapphic (lesbian) inclinations.”

Thereby an already flawed tradition, the unscriptural nativity scene, is distanced further from the teachings and principles of God’s Word.

Source: “Nativity Story Retold PC Style—Minus Joseph,” UPI, December 17, 2000.

“Pray for Me” Has Different Meaning in India Than in U.S.

President-elect Bush called upon U.S. citizens to pray for him, his family, Vice President Gore and his family in his acceptance speech before the nation. Americans, whether or not they actually pray, understand and warm to such a request.

However, not all the world’s citizens think the same way.

An Indian columnist wrote that liberals and leftists in India would not want to be seen or thought of as praying themselves, much less asking others to pray for them. “They would die of shame if they ever admitted to praying.”

The columnist continues, “For many in India, modernism is negation of religion and God. So, anyone who turns to God or to religion is treated as an evolutionary vestige.”

This is a small, but realistic demonstration of the challenges in communicating to the world community.

Speaking to diverse beliefs and interests within the United States in a way that all are comfortable with and responsive to, is a profound challenge for the president-elect. However, he speaks to a much broader constituency, as the leader of the world’s most powerful nation. The challenges are proportionately multiplied.

Source: “The Hour of Compassionate Conservatism,” by Parsa Venkateshwar, Tehelka.com, December 14, 2000.

Has Israel Chosen to Have War?

Columnist Don Feder drew upon the piercing warning Churchill gave to (then) Great Britain in 1938 to describe Feder’s perception of the current Israeli position vis-à-vis the Palestinians. “You were given the choice between war and dishonor. You chose dishonor and *you will have war*.”



City of Peace destined for war?

Feder believes that none of the candidates for prime minister have the heart to confront Palestinian terrorist violence—not the outgoing prime minister, Ehud Barak; not former Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu; and not the hawkish Ariel Sharon—all of whom have responded with little more than words to Palestinian aggression. (Feder’s column ran on December 20,

2000. In the fast-breaking situation in the Middle East, Netanyahu has since dropped from the race and Shimon Peres has both attempted to join the race and been rejected.)

Perhaps the columnist’s indictment is unfair, for he allows no leniency for the pressure that the U.S. has brought to bear on the Israelis to negotiate with Yasser Arafat. Nonetheless, his echoing of the Churchillian indictment is sobering.

No Churchill exists among the current choices for Israeli prime minister. Or, does he? Some historians believe that cir-

cumstances make the leader, rather than vice versa. We may not have long to wait to see the theory tested.

Daniel Pipes, director of the Philadelphia-based Middle East Forum, says, "Arab-Israeli relations...resembles the bad old days of pre-1967." Overconfidence on the part of Arab nations spurred them into all-out war in June 1967.

A current UPI piece quotes Arab weekly *Al-Zawraa*, reporting Iraqi Defense Minister Lt. Gen. Hashem Ahmed's boast that Iraq could destroy Israel and that Iraq would not hesitate to commit its armed forces to defend any Arab country targeted by Israel. The general plainly stated that there would be no Middle East peace until Israel returned the Palestinians' land to them. He wasn't referring to disputed territory presently under negotiation, but rather to the long-standing mantra that all Jews must *leave Palestine entirely*. UPI also reported that between 1.5 and 2 million people responded to a recent call by President Saddam Hussein for "volunteers" to fight against Israeli forces in an Arab-Israeli war over Palestine.

Daniel Pipes describes a believable scenario of Palestinian terrorist attacks and Israeli responses that could spark a full-scale war. The present climate calls for patience and wisdom, coupled with firm and appropriate governmental action.

As the outgoing U.S. president pushes Palestinian-Israeli peace negotiations, hoping to accrue to himself this positive legacy in the annals of history, the present reality implies that war is more likely than peace.

Sources: "Israel's Leaders Choose Dishonor, Will Get War," by Don Feder, *www.jewishworldreview.com*, December 20, 2000; "Iraq Can Destroy Israel, Defense Minister Says," by Ghassan al-Kadi, UPI, December 21, 2000; "The Winds of War," by Daniel Pipes, *The Jerusalem Post*, December 20, 2000.

News From the Vatican

Reflecting the Roman Catholic perspective that the Kingdom of God is brought about on the earth by the actions of people who have the love of God motivating them, the pope invited an audience of 30,000 to join in bringing about the Kingdom of God in the world.

The invitation was followed a day later with a statement that is viewed as a modification of an earlier, unpopular pronouncement that no one outside of the Roman Catholic Church would find spiritual salvation. In his most recent statement, the pope said that the way of salvation was virtually open to "all of the just on Earth, including those who ignore Christ and his Church [by which the pope meant the Roman Catholic Church]."

Weighing in on one of the hottest current political debates, the pope called recently for globalization of the world's economy. He is reportedly troubled by the self-serving definition of globalization espoused by the wealthier countries and economies of the world, and envisions instead a world without tariffs or quotas. He believes that it is appropriate for the Catholic Church to involve itself in the politics of economics. He sees it as an integral part of bringing the Kingdom of God to the world in the way described above.

It's easy to see how present world conditions could quickly transition into fulfilling the prophecies of Revelation 13 and 17-18.

Sources: "Pope's Invitation to Cooperate in the Coming of K.O.G.," *Noticias Eclesias*, December 7, 2000; "Pope: Heaven to Everyone," *The London Telegraph*, December 8, 2000; "A Gospel of Freedom," by William McGurn, *Wall Street Journal*, December 22, 2000.

Contributor: Cecil E. Maranville

"CRASH," (Continued from page 8)

assassination of the ECB president, euro member countries refuse to shoulder EU debts generated by the monetary union, and the euro is abandoned in favor of individual currencies.

The climax of Hollnagel's book—the demise of the euro—reflects his personal opinion on what Europe needs to do anyway. He supports a referendum within the euro zone member countries as a potential face-saving way to ease out of the euro before it is too late.

For English-language readers, American author John Newhouse published a book in 1997 entitled *Europe Adrift* with his prediction that the euro would eventually cause the demise of the European Union. One year earlier the London Center for the Study of Financial Innovation worked its way through a hypothetical report from a parliamentary investigative committee in which the demise of the euro by the end of 2003 is predicted. Interestingly enough, all three projections have common ground in their reasoning for the predicted failure of the euro: Europe is not a political union, and without that political union the euro member countries are still too economically divergent to have a successful common currency.

Will Hollnagel's scary scenario become reality? In the author's opinion, it is far too early to tell. On the one hand, recent public opinion surveys in Germany and the Netherlands reflect growing concern over the perceived weakness of the euro, especially in relation to the U.S. dollar. On the other hand, the weakness of the euro in recent months has provided a price advantage for euro zone exports that has resulted in major German car manufacturers like Volkswagen and BMW announcing record annual earnings achieved largely through sales to merchants outside the euro zone.

Pedro Solbes, the European Union's commissioner for economic affairs, views the worrying within euroland over the perceived weakness of the euro as a psychological overreaction. "A euro is a euro," he tells his listeners. "I tell people the depreciation against the dollar will not affect their living standards with the euro zone. You will not pay anything more when you go on vacation in Spain or Italy. And your house is worth exactly the same in euros as it was a few months ago—unless you want to sell it and buy something in the United States."

Euro Crash 2007—Der Countdown läuft, by Bruno Hollnagel, published by Langen Müller/Herbig, costs 38 German marks. ❖

“CHAD,” (Continued from page 16)

paper up to the light to discern “the intent” behind our partial answer?

Making excuses versus exercising responsible character by correctly “punching through life” is as old as recorded human history. Perhaps the first request for a recount was in the Garden of Eden. God had specifically laid out instructions to Adam and Eve about their responsibilities (just like Floridians were given complete instructions on how to mark their ballots, so as not to be invalidated). But Adam and Eve took a different route, ignoring God’s directions. One moment in time, one bite of the fruit, and history was altered forever by their actions, not anyone else’s. They thought they could get by, that God would perhaps understand their “intentions,” rather than their lack of full cooperation.

Amazingly, when Adam was confronted with the consequences of his decision, he attempted to blame God and Eve for his error. “The woman whom *You* gave to be with me, *she* gave me of the tree, and I ate” (Genesis 3:12, emphasis added). Adam was the first to complain about a judgment from the Supreme Court of Heaven. He simply would not take responsibility for his own ineptness.

People have recently sought to blame a host of others for their personal failure to follow directions. The list includes the voting machinery, the local canvassing boards, the Secretary of State of Florida, state court judges, federal circuit court judges, the Supreme Court of Florida or the U.S. Supreme Court.

Tragedy clouds triumph

Uzzah’s untimely death illustrates individual responsibility and the need to follow instructions. Just like the recent national election in the United States, the return of the ark of the covenant to Jerusalem was a major national event during the reign of King David. It was the will of David, and certainly the “will of the people,” to have the precious ark brought to the new capital city. The ark was placed in a cart, driven by two brothers, Ahio and Uzzah. Everyone *assumed* God would be pleased. What should have been a triumphant event was clouded by a tragedy.

“And when they came to Nachon’s threshing floor, Uzzah put out his hand to the ark of God and took hold of it, for the oxen stumbled. Then the anger of the LORD was aroused against Uzzah, and God struck him there for his

error, and he died there by the ark of God” (2 Samuel 6:6).

David was angry! Why was God displeased? God had given Israel a three-part instruction for transporting the ark. 1) It was to be carried by men on poles inserted through attached rings. Why? God knew that human transport would be more reliable than that of an ox cart. 2) They were to be



How something so small as a piece of chad on a ballot could cause a nation to teeter on the brink of uncertainty for so long is worth a second look

carried by specific people—the “sons of Kohath”—who were Levites. 3) No one, but no one, was to touch the ark itself. Clear standards were given, and God expected them to be followed (Numbers 4:1–15).

It may have seemed that everyone was sincerely pursuing a good cause in the national interest on that day, but the reality is that David chose to use a shifting standard. He followed the example set by the Philistines (1 Samuel 6:7), rather than God’s explicit instructions. Both David

and Uzzah probably knew better. It cost Uzzah his life, and it cost King David and the nation great anguish.

Leaders of nations, cities, church organizations, congregations, communities and families have a tremendous responsibility to be sure that standards are known and followed. Proverbs 29:2 declares, “When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice; but when a wicked man rules, the people groan.”

The shifting goalposts of humanism

Today, people are more likely to excuse David and Uzzah’s error because of their good intentions. Would we? The humanism that pervades Western society today is spreading its cancerous tentacles into every fabric of society, even religion. It focuses on pain rather than product. It focuses on emotion rather than effect. It focuses on tears rather than performance. It focuses on human reasoning and justification rather than sound principles and

justice. Humanism and its companion, modern psychology, have blurred the lines between success and failure where “almost” becomes “all right.”

Two thousand years ago, the apostle Paul spoke to this issue in his famous address to the Athenian intelligentsia gathered on Mars Hill. Their philosophy approached modern humanism in that they distanced themselves from an active God, present in everyday life. Acts 17:21 pinpoints an abiding flaw with humanism. The Athenians are described as spending “their time in nothing else but either to tell or to hear some new thing.” Truth, values, standards were all “shifting goalposts” to be moved about, based upon the whim of the moment or the latest understanding.

Paul’s masterful message revealed God’s functions as Creator and Judge. The Athenians had no difficulty with the thought of a “first-cause God” who now operated distantly as an absentee landlord, leaving the tenants to themselves. However, the true God “has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained” (Acts 17:31).

Paul introduces the concept of judgment and a judge—Jesus Christ. This was a foreign concept to Athenian thought. “Greek thought had no room for such an eschatological judge as the biblical revelation announces. But not only is the judgment day fixed: the agent of the judgment has also been appointed” (*The Book of the Acts*, by F.F. Bruce, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament*, pp. 340-341).

Paul had bluntly declared that the Athenians could not be a law unto themselves or have shifting standards. The Athenians could not accept this. The context indicates that only a couple of people came up to support Paul after his speech. The message of values, personal responsibility and the finality of judgment by an “outside force” fell flat in ancient Athens.

Today you and I live in the “nouveau Athenian age.” The same philosophy is here, alive and well. It increasingly permeates our Judeo-Christian culture to the point where human reasoning and self-justification are the prevailing winds of today’s society. The voice of that society increasingly declares that if “everybody is right, then nobody is wrong.” It has become a society that elevates *intent* to the same stature as *action*.

The big question lying before us as we turn a calen-

dar year is how prevalent is “the argument of the chad” in your life? How clearly do people hear what you say and see what you stand for? Is your character as indistinct as a pregnant, dimpled or hanging chad? Do people try to bring your life into better light to try to figure out what you really stand for? How many recounts are you going to demand in school, church and on the job this year? You fill in the answers.

Will we learn from history?

It’s not only some people in Florida who didn’t handle their ballots correctly. It happens every day with the “elections” or choices of life. “Haste makes waste” knows no boundaries. Remember how I said that in a sense we are all Floridians. As the historian George Santayana so clearly

stated, “Those who fail to learn the lessons of history are doomed to repeat them.”

We are not responsible for old voting machinery that may be stuck or the now famous butterfly ballots of Palm Beach or the mix-ups of Dade County, but we are responsible for the “hanging chads” of our personal choices.

Long ago, God told those who would follow His way, “Whatever I command you, be careful to observe it; you shall not add to it nor take away from it”

(Deuteronomy 12:32). He was saying, “Hit it right on and punch clear through to the other side with the standards I clearly have in place.” For every cause, there is an effect.

There’s a little dangling chad on a ballot now destined for the Smithsonian Institute as an enduring (not endearing) memento of American history. Perhaps, if we take a closer look in that now famous format of holding it up to the light, we too, can divine the greater intent of that hanging chad that echoes, “This is *not* the way, and do *not* walk in it again.”

As we proceed into this new calendar year of 2001, let’s remember that life doesn’t give much room for “recounts.” ❖



The ancient Athenians are described as spending “their time in nothing else but either to tell or to hear some new thing.” In our age their philosophy is alive and well

This Is the Way... The Power of the Chad

by Robin Webber

The world's only superpower and oldest democratic republic has just come through a stunning election process. Most of the world ultimately turned its attention to the state of Florida where the election process literally teetered on the brink of pandemonium due to "the incredible chad." Amazingly, this word has been imbedded into our memory banks forever. This little shred of paper frustrated an entire nation for over a month. How something so small should cause a nation so great to teeter on the brink of uncertainty for so long is worth a second look.

Recently, *Time* magazine selected George W. Bush as "Man of the Year." If I were doing the selecting, I might have chosen the chad! Just imagine *Time's* cover with a "dimpled chad" just waiting for the light to burst through it! Perhaps your own cover would have the full hanging chad, clinging to a lonesome corner.

Nearly 200 years ago, Thomas Jefferson made a powerful unifying statement after another close election between John Adams and himself. He declared, "We are all Federalists, we are all Republicans!" His focus was oneness towards the future.

With that thought in mind, I would like to suggest that "we are all Floridians" and look at a unifying les-

son for all of us. Every day we "elect" or make choices about a variety of activities that ultimately affect the well being of others. Our choices can affect our families, our congregations, our communities and ourselves.

Intent equated with action

Today, we live in a world that focuses on "feelings" rather than actions. A world that increasingly wants to reward effort as much as achievement. A world that places as much weight on what a person "has gone through" as on what he or she has done.

Please notice I said "as much." Certainly, as Christians, we should care about others' feelings and sufferings, and we should respect their efforts. But excusing personal responsibility due to these factors is a pathway to societal suicide.

This coming year, are you going to tell the police officer that you would like another try at traveling the appropriate speed limit? That perhaps a recount is in order? That he or she didn't understand your intent? As students, are we going to tell our teachers to hold the

(See "CHAD," page 14)