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America's Culture War: Threat to Homeland Security?

While the war on terror continues worldwide, another war—one of colliding cultures—heats up in the courts of America. Where will this lead the country? Is this war a greater threat than terrorists?

by Darris McNeely

Last month President George W. Bush traveled to Great Britain for a controversial state visit. His goal was to restate his case for the war against terror in general and the invasion of Iraq in particular. He spoke of the historic ties between America and Britain, particularly during the 20th century battles of aggression on the European continent. He was greeted with loud protests from those who do not share his vision of the mission he articulates for the United States and Britain in the world.

While he was abroad, the Massachusetts Supreme Court handed down a landmark ruling, which stated that homosexual couples have the right to marry. By a 4-3 decision, the court not only bypassed federal courts, but also all other state and federal legislative bodies, to decree a new definition of marriage.

By this ruling the court decrees that marriage is no longer defined as a relationship between a man and woman. Equal protection under the law now extends to homosexual couples without prejudice. With one decision, likely to be followed by other states, the divine institution of marriage has been stripped of its God-ordained intent. Massachusetts Governor Mitt Romney has vowed to fight this ruling with an amendment to the state's constitution.

Not only is this decision undemocratic, it is ungodly. It raises itself against

the laws of God regarding the sacred marriage covenant between a man and a woman, given by Him at creation. It is another battle in an ongoing culture war that weakens the moral fabric of society. This war, a war of cultures, threatens the survival of this nation as much as does the war on terror. It is important that our readers understand the extent of this war and where it will lead. It may be too late to reverse the outcome, but we can be forewarned of its consequences and pray for our merciful God to stay His hand of judgment.

History chronicles the efforts to fashion the world according to various religious or political ideologies. Most of these ideologies center on creating a governmental structure that establishes universal peace and freedom. The yearning of individuals to live peacefully, free from oppression of any sort, is universal. People, and the nations they create, hunger for the freedom to live as they choose.

Yet we also see the field littered with the wreckage of countless failed designs to create or impose such a world. In America today the battle between those who desire to maintain a religious foundation to the laws of the nation, and those who envision a society without a religious view, is reaching a critical level. This is where the battle lines are drawn.

(See "CULTURE WAR," page 3)



World News & Prophecy

BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVES ON CURRENT EVENTS

December 2003 Vol. 6, No. 10

World News and Prophecy is published monthly by the United Church of God, an International Association, publisher of *The Good News* magazine, 555 Technecenter Drive, Milford, OH 45150. © 2003 United Church of God, an International Association. Printed in the U.S.A. All rights reserved. Reproduction in any form without written permission is prohibited.

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

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

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

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"Whom heaven must receive until the times of

Restoration

of all things ... ACTS 3:21

Will We Heed the Warning?

President George W. Bush continues to sound an alarm that America and the West face "a grave danger" from terrorists spread throughout the world intent on destroying the freedoms and liberties of America, Britain and other countries. With him stands British Prime Minister Tony Blair. These two statesmen stand like sentinels on the wall warning their cities' inhabitants of approaching danger.

What do they see that most other leaders don't? Why are they moved with such a sense of urgency? Most importantly, will their warning be enough to forestall further catastrophe?

As managing editor of *World News and Prophecy*, I am sometimes struck by the themes that appear in our articles. Our writers live and work in scattered locations and we don't always communicate every article idea to each other. But sometimes the articles arrive in my computer carrying a common thread or thought. This issue is one of those times.

The dominant news today is the war in Iraq and the efforts to fight a global war on terror. Our writers have a main purpose to put these and other news events into the context of Bible prophecy and the entire Word of God. We want our readers to have the larger understanding of what the Holy Scriptures say about the events shaping our times. In this issue we have addressed the gathering threat to American and British peoples from four different angles. We are giving you a vision that not even President Bush and Prime Minister Blair have seen.

God told the biblical prophet Ezekiel that He would make him a watchman upon the ramparts of Israel to give warning of approaching danger. "So you, son of man: I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel; therefore you shall hear a word from My mouth and warn them for Me" (Ezekiel 33:7). The prophet heard the word from God and gave it on His behalf. That made it a tough and unpopular task. Telling people their sins and warning them of the dire consequences if they do not change is never popular. People do not like to hear that message.

Today our peoples do not even want to hear the disconcerting message that terrorists and their sympathizers wish us harm and will stop at nothing to defeat us. For many the war on terror is not real. People are stumbling and falling over themselves to buy the latest toy or gadget at the department stores in this holiday season. We are oblivious to the dangers from without and within.

Like the prophets God sent to Israel, we who write for this publication do not look to humans for the ultimate solutions to the world's problems. We know the promises of a perfect world, the Kingdom of God, will not be created by any form of human government. They are the sure promises of hope, the only real hope this world has. But the peoples of the earth will have to await the return of Christ to see their fulfillment in any lasting form.

As you read this issue, think about the need for the Kingdom of God. Think about the warnings coming with each speech by President Bush and Prime Minister Blair. Be glad they have the political courage to sound an alarm. But most of all, be thankful for the promise that Jesus Christ will return to restore all things (Acts 3:18-21). That promise and hope is the only sure light that will lead us through the spiritual darkness today and into the peace of the Kingdom of God.

—Darris McNeely

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

“CULTURE WAR,” (Continued from page 1)

These issues are worthy of our examination in light of what the Bible says about the role of God in the public life of any nation. Both sides need to heed what the eternal Creator says about His law and truth. Neither side will escape the judgment God will bring on a world that has both ignored and forgotten the basis for true liberty and freedom. Is religious freedom under attack in America?

The recent controversy over the Ten Commandments in Alabama highlighted an ongoing battle, largely in the courts, over the separation of church and state in the public life of America. For refusing to remove a granite monument inscribed with the Ten Commandments from his courthouse, Judge Roy Moore was recently removed from his post as chief justice of the Alabama Supreme Court.

In refusing to remove this monument, Judge Moore defied a federal judge’s order, a very dangerous precedent for any magistrate. However, his supporters remained outraged by the lack of respect for the religious roots of the U.S. legal system, which they saw symbolized in this drama. His action fed the flames of a hotly debated issue in American public life. Many people, of differing religious persuasions, are deeply concerned about the erosion of the moral foundation of the nation.

John Adams is famously quoted as saying the U.S. Constitution was “made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate for the government of any other.” Adams’ friend, Thomas Jefferson, who authored the Declaration of Independence, wrote: “No nation has ever yet existed or been governed without religion. Nor can be. The Christian religion is the best religion that has ever been given to man and I as Chief Magistrate of this nation am bound to give it the sanction of my example” (David Limbaugh, *Persecution*, 2003, p. 320).

Judge Moore is not the only religious official to come under attack for publicly affirming his personal faith. U.S. Attorney General John Ashcroft, an openly religious man, is the target of many who feel his religious zeal is not suited for the nation’s top legal post.

Ashcroft, an evangelical Christian and a political conservative, is constantly derided and takes blame for overstepping

civil liberties with his enforcement of the Homeland Security Act. This is not surprising given the complexity of today’s political and social environment and the needs of fighting the war on terror. Libertarians are concerned that American civil liberties not be sacrificed as terrorists are hunted within American borders.

America in 2003 is a divided country when it comes to interpreting the laws of the land in light of changing morals. The 2000 presidential election exposed a nation divided into two cultures. One is rural, conservative and religious, while the other is urban, liberal and secular. Those in the former tended to vote for Republican George W. Bush while the latter group voted for Democrat Al Gore. It appears that the 2004 election will continue to highlight the differences between these two Americas.

Courts setting the laws

In a recent book titled *Persecution*, David Limbaugh highlighted the depth of this rift in the legal arena of courts and judges. Limbaugh tells the story of discrimination against religion in American society. To make his case he chronicles numerous examples in the courts, mainstream media, Hollywood entertainment, public education and the private sector. This process is especially clear in the courts, where great strides have been made to create vast social change by striking down laws dealing with issues of religion, sex and gender. The result is nothing short of an attack on God and His laws.

Legalized abortion continues to be a major topic, which pushes deeper into the rift of American society. In 1973 the U.S. Supreme Court, in the landmark *Roe v. Wade* case, ruled that abortion was a constitutional right for a woman. This, becoming the de facto law of the land, is despite the fact that the Constitution says nothing about abortion.

Since then, millions of so-called legal abortions have been performed in every state in spite of opposition and debate,

which cuts across all society. Former President Ronald Reagan was on record as opposing abortion and on this issue aligned himself with millions of Americans who feel abortion is murder and a blight upon society. Abortion is legal in America only because of *Roe v. Wade*. Neither state legislatures nor the U.S. Congress have enacted a law that legalizes the procedure. It is “law” because of the Supreme Court ruling.

In June of 2003 the Supreme Court issued another landmark ruling. It involved a Texas law, which forbade two persons of the same sex to engage in intimate sexual conduct. In *Lawrence v. Texas* the court, in effect, declared any state law dealing with sex between homosexuals to be invalid and unconstitutional. Speaking for the majority opinion, Justice Anthony Kennedy said homosexuals “are entitled to respect for their private lives. The state cannot demean their existence or control their destiny by making their private sexual conduct a crime” (*Los Angeles Times*, “Bans on

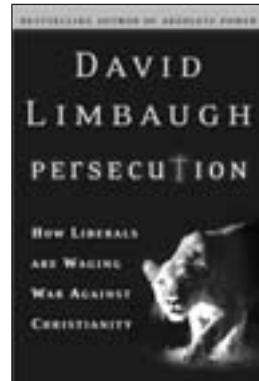
Gay Sex Ruled Unconstitutional,” June 27, 2003).

Justice Antonin Scalia spoke for the minority, saying the court “signed on to the so-called homosexual agenda” and that its ruling “effectively decrees the end of all morals legislation” (*ibid.*). By court decree the United States, like Canada, is “legalizing” marriage between homosexual partners. Scalia’s warning has come to pass in November’s Massachusetts Supreme Court ruling.

Keeping the knowledge of God

Judicial activism in determining the moral law of the land is alarming many who see this as contrary to what the framers of the Constitution intended. It is also seen as a deliberate attack upon religious values in American society.

In 2000 the Supreme Court decided a case involving public prayer in a school before a football game. A chaplain gave a prayer over the school’s public-address



In a recent book titled Persecution, David Limbaugh tells the story of discrimination against religion in American society.

system. Some students were upset and sued. In *Santa Fe Independent School District v. Doe*, the court struck down a school district policy that allowed student prayer before activities. The court said students should not have to face “personally offensive religious ritual.”

David Limbaugh writes in his book: “Chief Justice William Rehnquist got to the real nub of the problem when he commented on the majority’s overt antipathy toward religion in public life, an antipathy—as this case alone shows—that has permeated the highest reaches of our judicial system. Rehnquist wrote: ‘But even more disturbing than its holding is the tone of the Court’s opinion; it bristles with hostility to all things religious in public life. Neither the holding nor the tone of the opinion is faithful to the meaning of the Establishment Clause, when it is recalled that George Washington himself, at the request of the very Congress which passed the Bill of Rights, proclaimed a day of “public thanksgiving and prayer, to be observed by acknowledging with grateful hearts the many and signal favors of Almighty God.”’”

Limbaugh comments, “This case dealt a significant blow to religious freedom by holding that a public school . . . violated the Establishment Clause” (op. cit, pp. 23-24).

The Establishment Clause is the section of the First Amendment to the Constitution that says, “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion . . .” In the area of public education, this statement against federal support of religion has been interpreted to some extreme ends. Doing so has systematically removed much of the Judeo-Christian teaching upon which the educational structure was founded.

Limbaugh goes on to say that this void has been filled with other values. “While the education establishment vigorously opposes the dissemination in schools of any value or belief that can be remotely traced to the Bible, it affirmatively endorses other values that many Christians find repugnant. Public schools are replete with values-laden curricula, from sex education and sexual orientation

instruction to notions of self-esteem and death education” (p. 4).

In their effort to remove school prayer and other religious values from the school environment, the courts engage in lofty and erudite language to defend the modern interpretation of the Establishment Clause. The same defense is used to remove a monument containing the Ten Commandments from a courthouse.

The U.S. Constitution is a noble doc-



Abortion is legal in America only because of Roe v. Wade. It is “law” because of the Supreme Court ruling.

ument, forged by wise and understanding men who searched centuries of law codes to write their document. It can even be demonstrated that in the political writings of the Founding Era (1760-1800), the founding generation cited the Bible more often than any other source (Limbaugh, p. 312).

Yet the First Amendment, however understood, is only the writing of men and does not carry the same weight as the Word of God. When the judges of a nation hold a human document in higher regard than the Bible, there will come a divine judgment of terrifying proportions. God says, “But on this one will I look: On him who is poor and of a contrite spirit, and who trembles at My word” (Isaiah 66:2). The apostle Paul said men did not “like to retain God in their knowledge,” becoming “haters of God.” They merit the “righteous judgment of God” (Romans 1:28-32). If America is to retain its lofty status

as the world’s most powerful nation, it would do well to heed this warning.

It is plain that the governmental mechanisms established to insure liberty are now being used to undermine the remaining values of faith and virtue in the legal code. The framers of the Constitution understood the need for a system of checks and balances to restrain human nature in government. James Madison, the father of the Constitution, wrote in *The Federalist 51*: “If angels were to govern men, neither external nor internal controls on government would be necessary. In framing a government which is to be administered by men over men, the great difficulty lies in this: you must first enable the government to control the governed; and in the next place oblige it to control itself” (Limbaugh, p. 319).

This ideal state has never been achieved. It could be argued that democracy has come closest, yet Winston Churchill is reputed to have said, “Democracy is the worst form of government, except for all the others that have been tried from time to time.”

In 1 Samuel 8 the story is told of the ancient nation of Israel rejecting God as their king and demanding a king like all the other nations. Samuel the prophet warned them of the problems that would come. He predicted the ultimate downfall of every human form of government when he said, “You will be his servants” (verse 17). When any government fails to serve the good of its people and is placed above the will of God, it is on the slippery slope of decay and decline.

“They all slept . . .”

The French historian Alexis de Tocqueville toured America during the 19th century. He observed the unique religious nature of the people. He saw that religion and liberty were so “completely mingled that it is almost impossible to get them to conceive of the one without the other. Religion . . . must be regarded as the first of their political institutions; I do not know whether all Americans have a sincere faith in their religion—for who can search the human heart?—but I am certain that they hold it indispensable to

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the maintenance of republican institutions” (ibid., p. 321).

If America is a religious nation, why has our society seen such overwhelming transformation of foundational institutions? For years many have chronicled the decline of morality in the popular culture. Politicians, clergy and business executives, to name only a few, have come under the withering satire and denigration of movies, music and television. Marriage and traditional gender roles have been redefined before the catatonic eyes of a public amused into a comatose state.

The past 40 years have seen great social changes take place in the country. In all of this, where were the churches? Why hasn't religion, with all its megachurches and modern marketing techniques, stirred the country to another “great awakening”? Could it be that they have been asleep and that they lack the true power of the Holy Spirit?

In the wake of the impeachment and sex scandals of President Bill Clinton in 1998, Paul Weyrich, a leader of the Christian political movement Moral Majority, wrote in the *Washington Post* that conservative Christians had “lost the culture wars.” His words implied that religion does not exert a strong or life-changing influence on the national scene. This may seem contradictory in light of the public's perception of the influence of churches and religion.

Polls indicate 80 percent of Americans believe in God. Yet Gallup polling shows church attendance has actually declined since the 1960s and has remained level since 1980 with no appreciable growth. Two thirds of the population may claim membership in a church but that does not always translate into attendance, much less the practice of a faith.

Some evidence suggests that Americans tell pollsters they attend church when they really don't. A recent article in *The Atlantic Monthly* quoted John G. Stackhouse Jr., a teacher of theology and culture: “Beginning in the 1990s a series of sociological studies has shown that many more Americans tell pollsters that they attend church regularly than can be found in church when teams actually count” (May 2003, p. 34).

For those who do attend, what do they believe and how does that translate into a living faith? Sociologist Alan Wolfe has written a book titled, *The Transformation of American Religion: How We Actually Live Our Faith*. His conclusions, after traveling the country interviewing and observing churches and members, are enlightening and sobering. He says that American religion has become mainstream enough to look like the popular culture of the land. He concludes that American culture has triumphed over religion.

If so, then the power to halt societal decline does not rest in religion. It has lost its power. Wolfe says: “In the United States, culture has transformed Christ, as well as other religions found within these shores. In every aspect of the religious



Some evidence suggests that Americans tell pollsters they attend church when they really don't.

life, American faith has met American culture—and American culture has triumphed.”

On matters of fundamental biblical doctrine, things have dramatically changed. “Talk of hell, damnation, and even sin has been replaced by a nonjudgmental language of understanding and empathy. More Americans than ever proclaim themselves born again in Christ, but the lord to whom they turn rarely gets angry and frequently strengthens self-esteem . . . Far from living in a world elsewhere, the faithful in the United States are remarkably like everyone else” (pp. 2-3).

Many large popular evangelical churches do not systematically teach or clearly define their doctrines, because they want to attract the unchurched, the large mass of middle America who claim no attendance or affiliation. In a theological “catch 22,” Wolfe states, “Evangelical churches lack doctrine because they want to attract new members. Mainline churches lack doctrine because they want to hold on to those declining numbers of members they have” (p. 87).

To benefit from faith, we must be willing to pay the price of repentance, commitment and conversion. If one wants inner peace, God's blessing and a resilient free country, then there must be a turn to God and a true faith unlike any experienced before. For there to be a turnaround in the United States that will reverse the cultural and moral slide, there must be a recognition that change cannot take place without a transformation from the values of the society to the values of the Kingdom of God.

With God's help we can change ourselves, but we cannot change the world. Only God can change this world, and the Bible shows that will not happen until the return of Jesus Christ. Until then the message of the Kingdom is preached and those who seek it must “take it by force” (Matthew 11:12). Living by the values of the Kingdom is a daunting task in today's world. The teachings of Christ shed an embarrassing light upon those whose work mirrors the kingdom of darkness.

It is time Americans see the grave danger gathering on the horizon of our beloved nation. It may be too late to change the course of this nation and its drift from its moral foundations. But it is not too late for you, the individual citizen, to turn to God in profound repentance.

Through the prophet Ezekiel, God said, “When a wicked man turns away from the wickedness which he committed, and does what is lawful and right, he preserves himself alive.” To the House of Israel, He said: “Repent, and turn from all your transgressions, so that iniquity will not be your ruin . . . Get yourselves a new heart and a new spirit. For why should you die, O house of Israel?” (Ezekiel 18: 27, 30-31). ❖

Can We Win the War on Terror?

The world is at war. It's not the long-envisioned nuclear exchange, but don't count nuclear weapons out. This is a shadowy war of principle, one the United States, Britain and their allies are ill-equipped to win.

by Cecil Maranville

The worldwide war of terror began with the embassy bombings in 1998, but the world didn't realize it until three years later on Sept. 11. Many still do not recognize its true scope.

In August 1998, the U.S. embassies in Nairobi, Kenya, and Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, came under violent attack by a then little-known terrorist group—al-Qaeda. Although its leader, Osama bin Laden, issued his now infamous “World Islamic Front for Jihad against the Jews and Crusaders” in February of that year, no one imagined the consequences. The death and injury toll was considerable—301 dead and more than 5,000 injured—but the bombings did not betray their significance.

The truth is, they started a worldwide war of terror.

The world did not realize it until the next major battle three years later. This time the number of dead was 10 times as great, when in a twin “airline missile” attack on the World Trade Center, this shadowy enemy murdered innocent people from 80 nations in a period of minutes (the other attacks were directed toward the U.S. government and military).

The world was at war again.

Just as at the outset of previous world wars, not all nations realized what was happening or joined the battle at the same time. And, over two years later, some still waffle over their allegiances.

Bin Laden's name and al-Qaeda were associated with the 9/11 attacks within hours. It was shocking to learn that a lone, ill-defined terrorist cell had been able to strike at the heart of the world's only superpower. But it was inconceivable to the point of defying sanity to think that al-Qaeda would draw the entire world into a protracted war.

To this day, many do not believe a tiny army of fanatics could have pulled off the 9/11 attacks. A recent poll of German citizens revealed that a startling 20 percent of its people believe the U.S. government *engineered the attacks on its own people* (“German Disbelief Over 9/11,” CNN, July 24, 2003).

The attack slapped the United States to wakefulness, leaving not only dead and wounded, but also inflicting a draconian injury to its economy estimated at a \$2 trillion loss.

“Good vs. evil”

U.S. President George W. Bush began speaking of the battle as “good vs. evil,” with the “good” being democratic nations and the “evil” being what he called “global terrorism.”

There are two ways to understand “global terrorism”: (1) terrorism on a global scale and (2) terrorism *against* the globe, that is, against the world. While the first definition is no doubt what the president initially had in mind, the passage of time gives us the benefit of hindsight. We now know that *both* definitions apply.

The struggle pits the world's nations against a radical Islamic group whose wispy but deadly tentacles know no national boundary.

Bin Laden had been a low-level leader among freedom fighters in Afghanistan who opposed the occupying Russian forces. Once the Russians were ousted, he turned his attention and passion against the government of his native Saudi Arabia, seeking to “purify” his country of the “corrupting presence” of the United States. (The United States maintained a continuing military presence there after the 1991 Gulf War.) The royals were in no mood for a rabble-rouser and ordered him out of the country, revoking his citizenship.

He returned to Afghanistan and began organizing former freedom fighters into his private army, a military tool that could enforce his religious vision. He was the man for the moment, giving voice and modern identity to a type of religious terrorism that has waxed and waned since Muhammad's days.

A monster child

Bin Laden's brand of radical Wahhabism was a suitable mate for the Afghan government,

controlled by the Taliban. State-sponsored Islamic terrorism on a massive scale was the monster child of that ideological marriage.

Perhaps the U.S. government would have been more effective in responding to the 1998 embassy bombings had then President Clinton and his administration not been distracted by scandal. If so, maybe al-Qaeda would have died an infant. That's a question for history.

What bin Laden financed and led in some fashion (many believe that he does not have the intelligence or the charisma to be the singular leader of the group) now has a life of its own. U.S. intelligence believes that al-Qaeda will continue to be a major threat, whether bin Laden lives or dies. The monster child is grown and is alive and well.

Al-Qaeda is suspected to be involved in the "battle for the peace" in Iraq. Demonstrating its capacity to carry out operations in more than one country at the same time, it bombed two synagogues and the British consulate in Turkey last month, killing dozens and injuring upwards of 750.

As is typical of terrorism, no one knows who the next target is. The U.S. intelligence assessment is stark: "The Al Qaida network will remain for the foreseeable future the most immediate and serious terrorism threat facing the United States. Al Qaida will continue to favor spectacular attacks but also may seek softer targets of opportunity, such as banks, shopping malls, supermarkets, and places of recreation and entertainment.

"Al Qaida will continue its efforts to acquire and develop biological, chemical, radiological, and nuclear (CBRN) weapons. We judge that there is a high probability that Al Qaida will attempt an attack using a CBRN weapon *within the next two years*" (April 17, 2003, report from the U.S. ambassador to the UN, emphasis added throughout).

Chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear

The Central Intelligence Agency's report "Terrorist CBRN: Materials and Effects" (May 2003) provides us with more information on the possibility of CBRN weapons: "Al-Qa'ida is interested in radiological dispersal devices



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"Both 11 September attack leader Mohamed Atta and Zacharias Moussaoui expressed interest in crop dusters, raising our concern that Al-Qa'ida has considered using aircraft to disseminate [biological] weapons."

(RDDs) or 'dirty bombs.' Construction of an RDD is well within its capabilities as radiological materials are relatively easy to acquire from industrial or medical sources. Usama Bin Laden's operatives may try to launch conventional attacks against the nuclear infrastructure of the United States in a bid to cause contamination, disruption, and terror.

"A document recovered from [an] Al-Qa'ida facility in Afghanistan contained a sketch of a crude nuclear device . . .

"A simple explosive RDD consisting of a live-shielded container—commonly called a 'pig'—and a kilogram of explosive attached *could easily fit into a backpack.*"

Al-Qaeda may also use biological weapons.

"Both 11 September attack leader Mohamed Atta and Zacharias Moussaoui expressed interest in crop dusters, raising our concern that Al-Qa'ida has considered using aircraft to disseminate [chemical and biological] weapons.

"Analysis of an Al-Qa'ida document recovered in Afghanistan in summer 2002 indicates the group has crude procedures for making mustard agent, sarin, and VX . . .

"Initial skin contact with mustard causes mild skin irritation, which develops into more severe yellow fluid-filled blisters. Inhalation of mustard damages the lungs, causes difficulty breathing, and death by suffocation in severe cases . . .

"Sarin . . . and VX are highly toxic military agents that disrupt a victim's nervous system by blocking the transmission of nerve signals" (ibid.).

It is almost impossible to defend against the production of some chemical weapons. Ricin is a good example. It "is a plant toxin that is 30 times more potent than the nerve agent VX by weight and is readily obtainable by extraction from common castor beans. *There's no treatment for ricin poisoning after it has entered the bloodstream.* Victims start to show symptoms within

hours to days after exposure, depending on the dosage and route of administration” (ibid.).

A fight to the death over principle

In some ways, the objective of the war is terror itself, invading the sanctity of a free nation and destroying its sense of security. But there is a broader objective.

The objective in this world war is not to invade and conquer land, but rather to invade and conquer a way of thinking. The president of the United States was right in declaring it a war of good vs. evil, that is, a war of principle. It is a war between the wild-eyed definition of Islam that Wahhabism sponsors and Western-style democracy, with roots in Judeo-Christian teaching.

Wahhabism is rapidly igniting passionate support for its goals in the dried grass of poverty in the Islamic dictatorships and monarchies, in the few Islamic democracies and in Islamic minorities throughout the democratic world.

But is the democratic world ready for an ideological war? And is it equipped to fight it?

The answer to the first question is no, for nations bicker and squabble over which nation is in charge. Jealous resentment of the United States on the part of a slowly maturing EU is painfully obvious. Most notable among those more willing to argue over who will lead the column than who will join it are those historical rivals of each other, France and Germany. Russia cannot make up its mind whether it is friend or foe, so much like the scorpion and the frog, à la Aesop.

Clearly, the world’s democratic nations *do not yet recognize their common threat*.

China, whose ambition to be the next superpower is thinly veiled indeed, also feels no threat. If anything, it sees the present world conflict as an opportunity to advance its own interests.

In light of all of this, the answer to the second question must also be no. How could the world be equipped to fight a war of principle when its leading powers cannot agree on the simplest of principles?

The United States seized the lead for

several reasons. Most obviously, it absorbed the initial assault, not just on its interests, but also on its soil. Also, it continues to protect its interests by taking the war to Iraq and seeking to defeat the enemy far from home, if possible.

But many American citizens firmly believe that the main reason the United States took the lead was due to the leadership of a principled man, President George W. Bush, who clearly saw this as



It is almost impossible to defend against the production of some chemical weapons.

a war of ideology. Shoulder to shoulder with him is British Prime Minister Tony Blair. The American president said from the beginning that this is a fight to the death. He repeats that mantra nearly every time he speaks, showing he is up for the battle.

America and Britain not up to the challenge

But is the nation he leads? Americans’ interest in matters of ideology or principle is ever shrinking, in reverse proportion to its ever-expanding appetite for self-indulgence and entertainment. Americans responded with

historic fervor at first, but the World War I patriotic song, “The Yanks are coming and we won’t come back ’til it’s over, over there” is rapidly giving way to a whine: “*When is it going to be over, over there?*”

A *USA Today*/CNN/Gallup Poll released Nov. 19 shows a country nearly evenly divided on its approval for going to war in Iraq, and “most are unconvinced that the war has made the United States safer from terrorist attacks” (Richard Benedetto, “Poll Finds Splits Over Iraq to Be More Even: 55% Disapprove of U.S. Management of the Situation,” *USA Today*).

Political correctness keeps authorities from zeroing in on the core issue of Wahhabism vs. the West with its Judeo-Christian roots. Saudi-sponsored Wahhabi schools operating within the United States have been widely publicized. But the government is loath to speak against them directly, in spite of the fact that the Wahhabi philosophy wants nothing less than the total end of all things Judeo-Christian. The reason? The United States walks the tightrope of combating Wahhabi terrorism and avoiding destabilizing Middle Eastern governments in order to maintain a fragile peace.

That’s a political decision the United States and Britain will lament.

In spite of the fact that the United States and Britain owe their glorious histories to the God of the Bible (see our booklet, *The United States and Britain in Bible Prophecy*), both avoid fully embracing Him and His laws. Indeed, the basis of much of the powerful hatred within a large sector of the American people toward their president is a dislike for the fact that he is a man of obvious Christian convictions.

In other words, the United States and Britain are pulling their punches in this *war of principle*. Our peoples turn to God when we hurt, but we are getting over the hurt of 9/11. Continuing to fight in Iraq only reminds us of what we would prefer to shut out.

Meanwhile, the other side, in part led by al-Qaeda, presses forward with nothing to lose. Who would have thought that such a war would be so difficult to sort out—or that so few could topple so many? ❖

A Looming EU-U.S. Trade War?

Recently articles like "Europe Plans Huge Trade War" and "Costs . . . Will Soar in a Trade War" hit the headlines in Britain again. What is their ultimate significance?

by John Ross Schroeder

For well over 40 years there has been periodic talk of a potential trade war between Europe and the United States. The latest upsurge of verbal threats was occasioned by the World Trade Organization's (WTO) recent ruling that U.S. steel tariffs imposed by the Bush administration were illegal. The purpose of these tariffs was to render financial assistance to the struggling American steel industry and its thousands of employees.

Retaliatory thoughts surfaced rather quickly. *USA Today* reported from Brussels, "The World Trade Organization cleared the way Monday for more than 20 foreign countries to hit the U.S. with billions in export taxes in retaliation" (Nov. 11, 2003).

In Britain *The Independent* stated, "Europe can now impose duties on products ranging from T-shirts and lavatory paper to bras, pantyhose, suspenders, ballpoint pens, ski suits and bowling alley equipment" (Nov. 11, 2003). These products are most probably only starters. More heavyweight items would surely follow.

In an article titled "The Trade Trap" in *The World in 2004* (published by *The Economist*), the author predicted, "The [coming] year would be hazardous for the world economy." A U.S.-EU trade war would make this prediction all but a certainty.

Pointing the finger of blame

Naturally the United States has tended to blame Europe for trade war threats and vice versa. Predictions of serious economic problems go back to the early 1960s. In 1961 one top editor of an American business magazine sounded the following warning: "In terms of its meaning to every manager and every worker in the United States, what may well be one of the greater challenges of our lifetime is now developing in Europe.

"It will affect our standard of living, the competitive position of our industries and the future safety of our freedom and democracy. It will have effects second only to those of World War II. I refer, of course, to the booming strength of the European Common Market"

(*Advanced Management*, July-August 1961).

Writing in *The Wall Street Journal* over 40 years ago, a leading foreign trade analyst of that time sensed similar implications, expressed more dramatically. "Whichever direction the U.S. turns in trade policy, it encounters an entirely unprecedented economic prospect. For the first time since it became an industrial society, this nation will find its factories at war along an enormous front against an overseas industry which before long should have an essential capability for fabricating any product, almost without exception, at lower cost. That is the meaning of the [European] common market . . .

"The planned and unplanned responses America will make as it first senses and then suffers so smashing an economic impact elude full comprehension" (Dec. 6, 1961).

So far, an economic catastrophe resulting from the ever-emerging presence of the European Union nations and the possible financial spin-offs of a damaging and potentially disastrous trade war has not happened. For one thing, these lower costs in Europe never materialized on an across-the-board basis. Another consideration is that the leaders on both sides of the Atlantic have always chosen to pull back from the brink during a serious trade crisis. President Kennedy did so during the steel crisis back in 1961.

The tendency to achieve compromises in response to a damaging crisis would seem to continue even to this day. While still visiting Britain, President George W. Bush said that Prime Minister Tony Blair had spoken to him about the U.S. steel tariffs, not once but three times. The president added that he was certainly willing to take a second look at these controversial tariffs. But what of the future?

What about the future?

Based primarily on prophecies in the book of Daniel in the Old Testament and Revelation in the New, for some 70 years the Church of God has been warning the world about the ultimate effects of an economically and politically resurgent Europe that would threaten world peace.

The divergent interests of the European Union and the United States could prove "hazardous for the world economy" in the years ahead.



“The steel row is only one of a number of trade disputes which threaten to poison relations between the EU and the U.S. and could help stymie prospects for economic recovery” (The Independent, Nov. 11, 2003).

A trade war might be one important avenue to the fulfillment of many important biblical prophecies in this region of the globe. It may be the means of bringing the principal English-speaking nations to their knees because of their mounting sins against God and His way of life. Some of these key prophecies are recorded in the 17th and 18th chapters of the book of Revelation—the final book in the Bible. They indicate that an emerging economic and political system in Europe will dominate the world scene, heavily influenced by a major religious system calling itself Christian.

The Bible correctly labels this whole political, economic and religious system as “Babylon the Great” (Revelation 18:2), a union having enormous global effects. Verse 3 states: “For all the nations have drunk the maddening wine of her adulteries. The kings of the earth committed adultery with her, and *the merchants of the earth grew rich from her excessive luxuries*” (New International Version, emphasis added).

Figuratively speaking, Scripture also refers to this system as the Beast power. When finally God judges this end-time union of nations, “The merchants of the earth will weep and mourn over her

because no one buys their cargoes any more” (verse 11), indicating a worldwide trading system dominated by this European power.

Verse 12 goes on to describe a wide range of goods and luxuries. Verse 14 tells of “riches and splendor.” In this modern 21st-century world of ours, many of these riches will most probably emerge as a result of a vast trading combine.

A much more comprehensive understanding of these highly significant future events may be obtained by requesting our free brochures *The Book of Revelation Unveiled* and *You Can Understand Bible Prophecy*.

Back to the present

To return briefly to the here and now, a recent *Daily Telegraph* article summed up the current trade situation by relating the words of British Chancellor of the Exchequer Gordon Brown. He “told European Finance Ministers that they must move beyond outdated notions of a ‘sheltered trade policy’ if they wanted to halt the alarming decline of the European economy” (Nov. 5, 2003). Mr. Brown was not including the United Kingdom in this assessment.

The Independent adds: “The steel row

is only one of a number of trade disputes which threaten to poison relations between the EU and the U.S. and could help stymie prospects for economic recovery” (Nov. 11, 2003).

In proposing a possible resolution to these knotty trade difficulties, *The World in 2004* concluded that “America needs to make the first move—not because it is the principal wrongdoer (the EU probably deserves that distinction), but because only the United States is powerful enough to break the impasse at its own initiative.”

Our free brochure, *The United States and Britain in Bible Prophecy*, shows that these two English-speaking nations are the descendants of the biblical patriarch Joseph. Despite their differences, they tend to stand together in any severe world-impacting crisis. At least on a governmental level, they have done so in prosecuting the war and the recovery efforts in Iraq.

But Britain’s ever-increasing entrapment in the politics of the European Union (and its trade policies) may even threaten the special relationship between these two countries. The present policies of several other key nations seem to have a goal of isolating the modern descendants of Joseph from the world community—and perhaps attempting to divide the two brothers, Britain and America.

To understand the overall historic and prophetic impact of the modern descendants of the house of Joseph upon the whole world, please request this free brochure. You cannot fully understand key biblical prophecies without this essential knowledge. ❖

Recommended Reading

What’s ahead of us now? What does the Bible say about the future for nations like the United States and Britain? We offer several well-researched booklets that can help.

Request *The Book of Revelation Unveiled*, *You Can Understand Bible Prophecy* and *The United States and Britain in Bible Prophecy*. They are free of charge.



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www.ucg.org

Will the EU Split the Special Relationship?

Former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher once observed that the great lesson of the 20th century was that whenever the United States and Britain fight together, they always win. But now Britain has to make a crucial decision on its future—a future that could mean the demise of the special relationship with the United States, ending a formidable, long-lasting alliance.

by Melvin Rhodes

It's been more than 80 years since the last state visit to Britain by an American president.

The year was 1919 and the visitor was Woodrow Wilson, who had led America into World War I on the side of the Allies to help ensure the defeat of the central European powers.

Since then, many American presidents have visited London, but always on an official visit. The difference? On an official visit the guest is received as the head of a foreign government; on a state visit, he is received as a head of state. Before World War I, most heads of state were reigning royalty from the continent of Europe. Today they are more often executive presidents who are often both heads of state and government. In the British system, the monarch is head of state, while the prime minister is the head of government.

The practical difference is this: foreign leaders on state visits stay at Buckingham Palace as guests of Queen Elizabeth II where they are wined and dined at great expense—and there are only two state visits a year. The last state visit was by Russia's President Vladimir Putin.

The state visit of President Bush to London emphasized the strengthened relationship between the two countries. Often referred to as "the special relationship," the formal alliance between the United States and Britain goes back to the Atlantic Charter of 1941, when British Prime Minister Winston Churchill met with President Franklin Roosevelt in Bermuda.

At the time, the British and their empire were standing alone against Nazi Germany and needed help. The United States offered help, receiving in return access to British military facilities throughout the Empire. The two nations didn't know it at the time, but a long-lasting alliance had been formed that would preserve the freedoms of the Western world for the remainder of the century and beyond.

Nineteenth-century German Chancellor Otto von Bismarck had predicted that the most significant geopolitical fact of the coming 20th century was that the United States and Britain spoke the same language. They also shared similar values.

Until World War II, Great Britain, the British Empire and Commonwealth carried the military burden of defending the free world. Franklin Roosevelt reminded Britain's King George VI in 1939 that the British Empire remained America's first line of defense. By the end of World War II, the roles were effectively reversed.

In 1940, when Britain and its empire stood alone against Germany, American historian James Truslow Adams wrote: "In this great crisis, we in America have a great stake . . . Different peoples may have different ideals of government but for those who have been accustomed to freedom of person and of spirit, the possible overthrow of the British Empire would be a catastrophe scarcely thinkable. Not only would it leave a vacuum over a quarter of the globe into which all the wild winds of anarchy, despotism and spiritual oppression would rush, but the strongest bulwark outside ourselves for our own safety and freedom would have been destroyed" (*The British Empire, 1789-1939*, p. 358).

Adams' chilling prediction was fulfilled. The postwar world has seen more conflicts than in any comparable period of world history, in spite of the existence of the United Nations formed towards the end of World War II. The last 13 years have also seen a dramatic increase in conflict around the world in the aftermath of the Cold War. The end of great empires leaves a vacuum that may take decades to fill.

As the British Empire crumbled following World War II, the United States took over Britain's leading role in policing the world and preserving the freedom of the Western nations. During this period, Britain was to remain a firm ally of America. Only twice have the two countries failed

Until World War II, the British Empire carried the military burden of defending the free world. By the end of World War II, the United States had taken on that role. If the special relationship between Britain and the United States is severed, what will happen to the free world?

to support each other—and each time they lost.

In 1956 Britain, together with France and Israel, invaded Egypt. Britain's primary purpose was to take back the Suez Canal, recently seized by Egypt's government. America's failure to support the three nations led to a humiliating withdrawal, which, in turn, led to the rapid dismantling of what remained of the British and French Empires.

Some years later the United Kingdom failed to support the United States in Vietnam. America suffered a similar humiliating defeat.

Each nation has had its own minor conflicts since World War II, but whenever there has been a bigger challenge, the two countries have usually acted together and victory has been the end result. It seems as if each country has its strengths and the two countries complement each other. Whereas Americans are risk-takers and usually attack with a strong initial force, the British are better peacekeepers, pacifying peoples after a conflict.

Without realizing it, the two nations have been fulfilling their prophesied role. After prophesying that Joseph's two sons would become both "a multitude of nations" and a "great" nation (the British Commonwealth and the United States of America), Jacob called his sons together to tell them "what shall befall [them] in the last days" (Genesis 48:19; 49:1).

Jacob prophesied how "Joseph is a fruitful bough, a fruitful bough by a well; his branches run over the wall"—a prophecy about the great prosperity that each nation would bring to the world, along with a military role mentioned in the following two verses. "The archers have bitterly grieved him, shot at him and hated him. But his bow remained in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the Mighty God of Jacob" (Genesis 49:22-24). Interestingly, here Joseph is mentioned as one, meaning that both sons' descendants would be fulfilling this passage, perhaps even sometimes together. This has certainly been the case historically.

But now there could be a dramatic change in their relationship.

Change of roles

Dean Acheson, secretary of State during the Truman administration, observed

in a speech at West Point in 1962, "Great Britain has lost an empire and not yet found a role." After leading its Empire and Commonwealth for almost four centuries, ensuring its security "beyond the seas," the British dramatically changed course. He added, "Britain's attempt to play a separate power role, a role based on a 'special relationship' with the United States, a role based on being the head of a 'Commonwealth' . . . this role is about to be played out . . . Her Majesty's Government is now attempting, wisely in my opinion, to re-enter Europe."

At the time of his speech, Mr. Acheson was an adviser to the Kennedy administration, which encouraged Britain to join Europe, desiring a reliable ally in the new European Common Market.

When the Treaty of Rome was signed in 1957, thus creating the European Economic Community (EEC), the British were not interested in joining. Within five years, the British sought membership in the new European trading bloc. Their first application received a resounding "Non" from French President Charles de Gaulle in 1962. A second application some years later received an encouraging "Oui" from de Gaulle's successor; and the United Kingdom, with Ireland and Denmark, entered the EEC on Jan. 1, 1973.

It was a fateful decision.

At the time, most British people were unaware of the implications. Others in Europe were determined that the EEC should become "an ever closer union," leading eventually to full economic, monetary, political and military union.

Thirty years later, the first two have been achieved. What is now called the European Union is a full economic and almost complete monetary union. There are 15 member nations, with another 10 set to join in May 2004. Out of the present 15, 12 are in full monetary union, all using the same currency, the euro, which has the potential of becoming the preferred currency around the world, replacing the American dollar.

Economic and monetary union accomplished, the EU member nations are now set on full political and military union.

A European defense force, outside of NATO and opposed by the United States, is in the process of being formed. At the same time, a new European constitution is due to come into effect. This would effec-

tively terminate the independence of each European nation, reducing each country to a status similar to an American state within a federal system. As Germany and



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The special relationship goes back to Winston Churchill and Franklin Roosevelt.

France are the two nations in the driving seat of the new European train, domination of a United Europe would fall to them. In fact, it would fall to Germany, the dominant economic continental power. Germany, with the biggest population in the new Europe, will have the most votes in the new federal structure. French aspirations to lead the new federal Europe cannot be realized without continued German support, unlikely once the federal power is fully realized.

Over three decades ago, when the British were contemplating a second application to join the EEC, nobody foresaw this. For centuries, the British have always resisted attempts to unify Europe, realizing their own security would be threatened by a dominant European power. Now they have inadvertently stumbled into helping to create the very force they were for centuries committed to thwarting!

If actually put into force with many of its present stipulations, the end result of the new European constitution will be the effective end of a sovereign United Kingdom. This, in turn, would mean the end of the Anglo-American alliance, which has contributed greatly to preserving the freedom of the West. History suggests that the absence of Britain would make a big difference to future military actions for the United States and vice versa.

As a potential province of a federal Europe, British troops would inevitably be

part of a European defense force. As Germany and France, in that order, will dominate the new federal Europe, Britain, ironically, will have handed over control of its military forces to the two nations that most threatened its existence during the last two centuries—France under Napoleon and Germany under first the kaiser and then Hitler.

State visit exacerbates divisions

President Bush's keynote speech during his visit to London extolled the Atlantic alliance formed in 1941, while ignoring the formal alliance of 1949 that established NATO (the North Atlantic Treaty Organization). It may simply have been an oversight, but the fact remains that the continental European allies, many of whom failed to support the United States over Iraq, were excluded by this comment. While the Anglo-American alliance was praised by the visiting president, there was no reference to the bigger alliance that has been credited by many for preserving the peace and security of the West during the four decades of the Cold War.

There is also a further division looming that became more visible during the state visit.

Two terrorist bombings against British targets in Turkey on the Thursday morning served to emphasize a negative aspect of the "special relationship"—that both countries will increasingly be targeted by Islamic terrorist groups. A message from al-Qaeda following the bombings specifically mentioned the United States, Britain and Australia as prime targets—the three nations that were in the invading force sent to Iraq earlier this year. Other nations mentioned were Spain, Italy and Japan. The first two now have troops in Iraq, while Japan is hesitant to send troops following an attack on Italian troops, the biggest loss of Italian military personnel since World War II. Support for the military action in all three countries remains very low.

The fact that terrorists seem to be targeting American, British and Australian interests could further isolate them from other Western nations as they pursue their own self-interest.

Australia should not be forgotten. President Bush was not the only visitor to England in November. Earlier in the month, Australian Prime Minister John Howard visited London, where he dedi-

cated a new memorial to Australia's war dead, tens of thousands of whom died in the two world wars, fighting alongside their British allies. Indeed, proportionately, more Australians gave their lives in World War I than peoples from any other nation. This was a war in which Australia was not directly threatened. But Australians were a part of the British Empire and identified very much with it at that time. Australia was a major part of the prophesied "multitude of nations," descendants of Joseph's son Ephraim.

Prime Minister Howard reminded those in attendance that Australia has "links with many but there is no nation in the world with which we share as much history, language, culture, patterns of humor and even sporting rivalry as Great Britain. To Australians, the British heritage is immense. Britain's most enduring gift to Australia has been the institutions which have tooled our natural instinct for democracy—parliamentary government, the rule of law and the tradition of a free and, uncomfortably on occasion, skeptical media. Tomorrow, with Her Majesty the Queen and the British Prime Minister Tony Blair, I will unveil a memorial to those Australians who served with their British allies during the two great global conflicts of the last century . . . At this time we should recall those moments when the very survival of liberty seemed in peril . . ." (Australian Broadcasting Corporation Web site).

These nations now are increasingly isolated from the rest of the Western world, which often seems inclined to ignore the rising threat of terrorism, or even to appease the terrorists.

Entente cordiale vs. the special relationship

The leader of this faction, which has majority support at the United Nations, is France. French President Jacques Chirac arrived in London less than 48 hours after the U.S. president's departure, as Tony Blair attempted again to reestablish his pro-European credentials. To commemorate the centenary of the "entente cordiale," the alliance between Britain and France, which played a vital role in World War I, the queen has been invited to France next year for a state visit. The French president has similarly been invited to Britain later in the year.

Both leaders committed themselves to the new separate European defense force, saying that it would not undermine NATO.

The British prime minister is under great pressure at home. Partly this is because of his support for President Bush. Partly it is because the British perception is that the special relationship is one-sided, that Britain receives very little in return for its support of the United States. This perception is so extensive that Mr. Blair is often depicted in cartoons as "Bush's poodle."

In an editorial written on the eve of the president's visit to London, *Newsweek's* Stryker McGuire observed: "If Blair looks like a poodle, it's partly because he seems to get so little for his loyalty. 'Tony has walked the walk for Bush,' one of his ministers told *Newsweek*. 'We'd just like a little reciprocity.'" Blair, no admirer of Ariel Sharon, has found Bush immovable in his support of the Israeli prime minister. And Blair and his inner circle felt betrayed last month when Washington stepped in to criticize British efforts, with France and Germany, to create a modest European defense arrangement outside of NATO. Last week Blair aides were hopeful that the Bush visit would finally yield an American concession: a decision to rescind U.S. tariffs on steel imports.

"With reciprocity or without, Blair will stand by Bush. Despite Blair's reputation as an idealist, says the historian Ben Pimlott, 'he's essentially very practical.' Blair believes that for historical, cultural and economic reasons, the U.S.-British relationship is inviolable. 'You throw away a lot if you're an unreliable ally,' said Pimlott. Yet Blair, when he meets Bush this week, may be inclined to make that very same point" ("Is the Poodle a Doberman?" Nov. 24, 2003).

In Mr. Blair's mind, it is possible to be both a good European and supportive of the United States. Convicted of this, he has said he is trying to be a bridge between the two. But, beset by increasing divisions over Iraq, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the Kyoto treaty and trade, the bridge seems set to collapse. When it does, which side of the water Britain is on will go a long way to determining the future direction of the special relationship and of the Western democracies that have depended on the two English-speaking nations for their freedom for over 200 years. ❖

In Brief...

World News Review

Germany's Environmental Policy Increases Dependence on Russia

This autumn has been quite positive for Germany's Minister of the Environment Jürgen Trittin, a member of the the Green Party, the governing coalition's junior partner. After some initial criticism, his government's subsidy program for wind-powered electricity was renewed with only minor modification. A new government-subsidized geothermal electricity plant near Berlin also went on line. But perhaps the greatest satisfaction for Minister Trittin was the decommissioning in mid-November of the first of Germany's 19 atomic energy plants in Stade near Hamburg.

When Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder replaced Helmut Kohl's government in 1998, the Green Party made the elimination of nuclear power plants a condition for its participation in Schroeder's coalition. The electricity industry initially protested. However, after receiving assurances that its nuclear plants would be able to remain on line another 20 years, the industry acquiesced and began preparations for alternative energy sources.

Atomic power plants currently provide approximately 30 percent of Germany's electrical consumption. Minister Trittin's alternative electrical generation projects may help the environment, but fall far short of making up the gap that will be left by abandoning atomic power. The only natural resource that Germany has in abundance is coal, but as a signatory to the Kyoto protocol—and a vocal critic of U.S. President George W. Bush for abandoning that agreement—Germany is committed to reducing its use of coal. Oil has to be imported and is subject to the same Kyoto restraints as coal.

Clean-burning natural gas is the logical choice for Germany's looming energy gap. That gap, however, has important foreign policy implications for Chancellor Schroeder's government and its successors. To replace all electricity now generated by atomic power, Germany's consumption of natural gas would increase by an estimated 50 percent. Since demand is increasing, that figure will be higher by 2021, when the last atomic plant goes off line. Currently 52 percent of Germany's natural gas requirements are met by imports from the Netherlands, Norway, Britain and Denmark. Much of the remaining amount comes from Russia. And of those suppliers, only Russia has the reserves needed to provide Germany's growing appetite for natural gas.

Unless a future conservative German government reverses

the abandonment of nuclear power or decides to drastically increase the use of domestic coal—and violate the Kyoto protocol—Germany will be dependent on energy imports from Russia for at least a third of its electrical power needs. By 2010 Russia will provide more than half of Germany's energy imports from all sources (oil and natural gas). Ensuring that the gas pipeline from Russia remains open or responding to its unforeseen closure will surely impact Germany's foreign policy initiatives toward the east.

“Disease of Mass Destruction”

“In two short decades HIV/AIDS has tragically become the premier *disease of mass destruction*,” said Dr. Jack Chow of the World Health Organization in a recent news conference. He added, “The death odometer from HIV/AIDS is now at 8,000 a day and accelerating.”

The sobering statistical diagnosis: Over 40 million people are currently infected with HIV/AIDS, 2½ million of them children under 15 years of age; over 3 million died from the disease in 2002; 5 million more people were infected this year.

It is hard to absorb the meaning of these figures. Compare them with the deaths by terrorist acts. What impact would terrorism have on the world if it slew 3 million people this year? The world would reel in horror and galvanize into action to counter the threat.

Or what if a nation murdered that many people by act of war? The world's nations would denounce the deed as genocide. As it is, these are largely just statistics to most of the Western world—but not to the people in the midst of the plague.

Sub-Saharan Africa has so far borne the brunt of current infections and death. While Southern Africa represents less than 2 percent of the world's population, the region has roughly 30 percent of the world's current cases of the disease.

But that will change, with infections spreading rapidly throughout India, China, Indonesia, Russia and many of the former Soviet satellites. India is thought to be underreporting and underestimating the infection rate there. New estimates project that in 2010 the infection rate will be 25 million people.

Because it can take up to a decade or more for the disease to begin to kill after infection, this insidious evil will keep scything a wide swath of death in mind-numbing numbers into the indefinite future. It is truly reason for Christians to cry out, “Your Kingdom come,” praying for the only power that can truly heal the world of this and its many other plagues. That power is the government of God under the reigning hand of Jesus Christ.

Sources: Reuters; *The Independent* (U.K.).

Contributors: Paul Kieffer and Cecil Maranville



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“BETTER KINGDOM,” (Continued from page 16)

man”—one that Jefferson could respect on his own terms as an enlightened human teacher. Jefferson daringly, or should I say, foolishly, censored another man’s life without any basis other than his own opinion.

At times, all of us have reached for those “scissors” and gone to work trying to tidy up someone to our liking.

In the Bible you discover an incredible honesty about people of all backgrounds, persuasions and beliefs. God, who certainly could have “sanitized” the lives of His characters, held back His scissors and allowed us to see both their strengths and weaknesses.

God is calling a spiritual people today to become kings and priests to reign on this earth (Revelation 5:10). One of the main functions of a priest is to teach. “Teach what?” you might be saying. Ezekiel speaks of the role of priests. Ezekiel 44:23 states, “And they shall teach My people the difference between the holy and the unholy, and cause them to discern between the unclean and the clean.” *Discerning*, at least the way God does it, is a process, not just a clean snip of the scissors.

Consider how Scripture openly declares the Assyrian king’s bold proclamation towards repentance in Jonah 3. Or King Nebuchadnezzar’s extolling prayer regarding the Most High in Daniel 4. There is also King Cyrus’s kindness towards the Jews by allowing them to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem as described in Ezra. There are no scriptural qualifications neatly surrounding these men to make them better or less than they were. These men were tyrants and rulers, who conquered great portions of the earth with ruthless armies. Each had an agenda. To the best of our knowledge, none of them totally forsook his own gods and solely worshipped the God of heaven. Nonetheless, God caused their actions and words to be recorded in the Bible. Why? Sometimes He shows us why, and other times we are left with only the historical record, from which we need to be able to discern its value.

Using spiritual perception and the rest of the Bible as a guide, we can learn worthwhile lessons from the lives of people who decidedly were not “saints.”

Learn from the story; don’t tidy it up

Jesus often used instances in the lives of sinners to teach His disciples a spiritual lesson. He didn’t try to present every example as a saintly life. He never tried to tidy up the story of the centurion with the sick servant (Luke 7). The man was the leader of a hundred, an officer in the Roman army, helping to rule a conquered people. It never says whether the man ever became a member of the early Church. Christ focused on the man’s faith to teach us a lasting lesson (Luke 7:9).

Another example of Jesus’ approach to instructive encouragement is discovered in the story of the good Samaritan in Luke 10. Samaritans were a people who were on “the outs” with the religious folk of Israel. Seemingly, they were almost akin to a caste of untouchables. They worshipped God on a different mountain in a different city, as mentioned in John 4:20. But we should appreciate how Jesus never sanitized the central character of His story. He spotlights what the Samaritan does right. He does not qualify or disqualify him

for what he is or where he worships—only that he stepped up to the plate in the moment of need.

A great loss

If God left out of His Word all people who were not saints, the Bible would be devoid of many pages. More importantly, we would lose the benefit of many lessons illustrated in the lives of people less than saintly. Imagine, if you will, if we used “Jeffersonian scissors” on the stories of Rahab, Samson, Peter or Paul at any given stage of their spiritual journeys—or even on Nebuchadnezzar. One could surely make a case for his life being excised from the Holy Writ, due to his obvious carnality. But if we did, we would miss out on seeing what he was able to grasp when he gave voice to a profound truth, that God is the one who sets up and removes heads of state (Daniel 4:37). Let us be grateful that God wrote these lives into His Word, setting aside His scissors to allow us the chance to discern the full magnitude of the individuals: What they did right. What they did wrong. And why we should remember them.

The full scope of the Scriptures loudly blears forth the reality that God’s saints at times do sinful things, and sinful people at times act godly, if but for the moment. God puts His scissors away when it comes to what He shares with us and does not tidy up the picture, be it saint or sinner. Rather, in the wisdom that comes from above, He allows us to render to God what is God’s and to man what is of man. He encourages us to learn to exercise good judgment.

Jesus said: “Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment” (John 7:24).

I am under no illusion that man, of and by himself, can save himself from himself. The many pages of *World News and Prophecy* testify by current events and prophetic assurances that Jesus Christ is going to have to come to this earth to rescue humanity from its penchant for self-destruction. But until then, I would offer you an important point to consider. What can we learn from those around us and those who went before us? Are there yet spiritual lessons to be gleaned from the lives of people who aren’t wholly spiritual? I believe there are—untold thousands of them.

What can we take note of in the here and now? Can we admire the good that people are doing, rather than shutting them out entirely because of their errors? I believe their examples can and should prod us, push us, elevate us—we who have been granted so much—to gird up and get back into the game of life.

Perhaps the essence and purpose behind the “This Is the Way” column may be found in the example shared by Leroy Brownlow in his journal, *Today Is Mine*. In a section titled, “Do What You Can,” he wrote: “In a roaring and flashing thunderstorm, a family gathered into what they thought was the safest room. They huddled in fear. One of them was a little girl who folded her hands, closed her eyes and prayed. Then she confidently said, ‘O Mama, I have done what I could.’” Brownlow poignantly adds, “Oh! How it would add to life if we could say, ‘I have done what I could.’”

That should describe what Christians need to be about, till we meet in that “better Kingdom,” when each of us will be more than we have been in this life. We can learn from saint and sinner in order to do what we can in the here and now. ❖



by Robin Webber

Till We Meet in That Better Kingdom

It's been five years and 50 columns since I first started writing "This Is the Way." I selected the title for this column from a fondness for a verse I had often heard in church services as a young boy. Its use by the speaker was always offered in a positive and stirring sense about how those in the wonderful world tomorrow under Jesus Christ would have responsible teachers guiding them towards proper living.

Breaking into the thought, Isaiah 30:20-21 affirms: "But your eyes shall see your teachers. Your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, 'This is the way, walk in it.'" In a sense, it is a prophecy and a promise to give all of us hope.

"I would plant a tree today"

As I became a man, I came to recognize that while I longed with all my heart for the Kingdom of God to come to this earth, I had to also live fully for today, as well as yearn and prepare for a better tomorrow under Christ. As one person once said, "If I knew the Kingdom of God was coming tomorrow, I would still plant a tree today." There is always that incredible positive tension that pulls between the present and the future in the heart of a Christian.

While God uses the Holy Spirit to guide His children into wise decisions and offers marvelous examples in the Scriptures, I also firmly believe that God would ask for us to take note of those around us in everyday life or in human history who have "made a difference." While they may not be believers, some part of their lives can serve to illustrate what Christians need to be doing.

For five years now you and I have been on quite a journey in this column as we have spent time with kings, moun-

tain climbers, jungle explorers, doctors in trauma wards, dynamic crusaders for global causes and people who were gifted in word and tongue to be able to capture the essence of the moment and grant people a hope beyond their present despair.

My favorite subjects have been "the little people," those without famous names, those behind the scenes—who in a quiet way implore you and me to stand up and "see our teachers" in the here and now and, like them, do what we can.

Some of the individuals I have chosen to write about in this column over the years are the kind of people you would love to have over for dinner night after night, and some, you would want to rescue you when you were in need. Still others, well, at first glance, you might not want to be in the same dark alley with them.

All offered us a lesson, a word or an encouragement by their actions. As the moment came to them, they rose to the occasion. Perhaps in all of this there is an important lesson. Ultimately it can affect how we understand history, read the headlines of today or grasp the prophecies of the Bible. The lesson is simply, "Be careful how you use the scissors."

Be careful with the scissors

Many years ago, U.S. President Thomas Jefferson had problems accepting a certain person for what he was. So Jefferson took some scissors to the person's life story and reduced the individual to his own level of acceptability. That individual was Jesus Christ. Jefferson, a well-known deist, cut out all the miracles of Jesus' earthly ministry, and thus transformed "the Son of Man" simply into a "good

(See "BETTER KINGDOM," page 15)