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Exit President Putin, Enter Prime Minister Putin

Russian President Putin must leave office early next year. Yet his policies and his posture are those of a man building an empire, rather than merely a legacy. It's clear he intends to hang onto power. What does this mean for the EU, the United States, China and Southern Asia?

by Cecil E. Maranville

When Presidents Ronald Reagan and Mikhail Gorbachev held the famous 1986 summit in Reykjavik that began the end of the Cold War, a major in the Russian KGB named Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin was quietly going about recruiting spies in East Germany. He passionately believed in the Soviet Union, convinced that Communism could and should have modernized it.

But being a politician was the furthest thing from his mind. "[To be a politician] one had to be insincere and promise something which you cannot fulfill. So you either have to be a fool who does not understand what you are promising, or deliberately be lying" (Putin in 1998 interview, quoted by David Hoffman, "Putin's Career Rooted in Russia's KGB," *Washington Post* Foreign Service, Jan. 30, 2000, p. A1).

Putin was recruited for the KGB out of college. He spent 17 years as a mid-level agent in foreign intelligence, rising to the rank of lieutenant colonel. He left the KGB in 1991 to work as an aide to the first post-Soviet elected mayor in St. Petersburg, a job he fulfilled with purposeful anonymity.

From St. Petersburg, he went to Moscow in 1996 to a series of jobs that propelled him with startling speed to the premiership and then, the presidency. His first job was on the Kremlin staff; then he was named head



Vladimir Putin and Mahmoud Ahmadinejad wave during a welcome ceremony in Tehran Oct. 16.

of the Federal Security Service (successor to the KGB). Boris Yeltsin appointed him prime minister in 1999, resigning shortly thereafter, making Putin acting president.

Putin was elected to his first full term as president in March 2000 and reelected in 2004. Initially, he appeared to continue putting Russia on the path toward becoming a Western-style democracy. But as the Russian economy recovered its muscle, he began steering the country back under powerful Kremlin control.

One illustration is the federalizing of regional governors. When a botched terrorist takeover of a school in Beslan in 2004 resulted in the death of over 350 people, 156 of them children, Putin declared it an attack

(See "PUTIN," page 3)

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"Whom heaven must receive until the times of

Restoration

of all things ... ACTS 3:21

Facing the Pain and Suffering

As I looked closely into my guide's eyes, I could see the lingering pain and the unanswered question. Although she was much closer to the situation than I was, she still had no answer after many years.

It was my third visit to Yad Vashem, Israel's memorial to the Jewish dead of the Holocaust. Of all the world's memorials to this catastrophic break with civilization, Yad Vashem is most poignant in what it offers within the setting of the ancient land of Israel. You are sobered and shaken after a walk through the grounds.

The first stop for a visitor is the memorial to the children who perished in the camps and ghettos. One and a half million children perished in the Holocaust. The Hall of Candles, where the light is infinitely reflected through a display of mirrors, makes one think of God's promise that not one little one would be lost or forgotten. God holds their memories in eternity, awaiting the day when He will renew their lives in a better world with better promises. Every time I walk through this memorial I am reminded of the hope of the resurrection for the "dead, small and great" (Revelation 20:11-12).

The new Holocaust museum at Yad Vashem is more than one can absorb in one visit. On this recent trip I focused on fewer exhibits, taking in the layout of the building and the story it tells. Immediately upon entering, you see a wall of moving images from a vanished world—that of the Jews in Europe in the 1930s. You see children, young couples, old men and women going about their lives in places like Warsaw, Berlin and Prague. These would become the victims. They laugh, they sing and they live on the eve of a great tragedy. They did not know what was coming. We look back in time and struggle not to forget.

From this beginning you walk through rooms that tell the story. It is a raw and visceral tale. Here you see the roots of anti-Semitism from the writings of Augustine. In another room you see evidence of the complicity of Poles, Czechs and Ukrainians in the extermination. No one is left out; no one is exonerated. The guilt and shame is spread among all who took part. At one point you stand over a collection of shoes taken from those about to perish. Dark, cracked leather is all that is left of lives that once harbored hope and possibility.

The last room you visit in the museum is the Hall of Names, designed to be a repository for biographies of every man, woman and child who perished. Over two million names are recorded here, with room for more than six million. Pictures and pages of testimony are part of a cone that reaches to the ceiling, reflected in a pool of water resting in the bedrock of the mountain on which the memorial stands.

From this room, as you exit the memorial, you ascend a short rise and come out onto an open-air platform that causes you to look to the sky and the tops of the trees on the hillside below. It is a cleansing, refreshing pause before moving on with the present. You have to pause and remember, and promise to God that you will never forget.

The pain I saw in my guide's eyes is obvious. The question is one for the ages and for all peoples who have suffered. Why did 6 million Jews die in the Holocaust? We could also ponder why Armenians were slaughtered in 1915. Why did tens of millions of Russians and Chinese die at the hands of their own leaders in the middle of the 20th century? Why is there evil and suffering?

God does not leave us without answers or solutions. That is the good news, the gospel. The bad news is this world continues to see war and terror bring pain and death to the innocent and guilty, the weak and the strong. And the Bible foretells a time of greater suffering for the nations in the years directly ahead of us. Dealing with this question of evil in our world continues to challenge the skeptic and believer equally. Read or request our free booklet *Why Does God Allow Suffering?* for the biblical answers (www.ucg.org/booklets).

—Darris McNeely



Darris McNeely

“PUTIN” (Continued from page 1)

on the entire country. Shortly thereafter, in the name of national security, he suspended the then decade-long practice of electing governors, declaring that the Kremlin would appoint them throughout the country.

President Bush has taken a pounding from critics for his statements about “looking into Putin’s soul and seeing someone I can work with” in June 2001. Bush wasn’t entirely wrong; Washington indeed could work with Putin at the time, for Russia’s economy was still so weak that it needed the United States. But Bush was wrong about Putin’s “soul” or heart. The Russian president’s heart belonged then, as it does now, to Mother Russia.

The BBC’s Caroline Frost accurately assessed the man’s character in a 2004 profile: “Shadowy bureaucrat turned assured world leader, Putin talks of market democracy and capitalist western values. But his early life was spent in the former Soviet Union, and he looks back fondly on this time of state control. *Political pundits wonder when the real Putin will reveal himself*” (“Vladimir Putin: The Mysterious President,” July 4, 2004, www.bbc.co.uk/bbcfour, emphasis added).

A tangled scheme to retain power

The man who disdained politics and politicians now yearns to retain a hold on the chief political office of the nation. By law, he can’t stand for a third consecutive term as president, but the constitution doesn’t bar him from running for the office again in 2012. However, a bizarre formula for him to remain Russia’s leader is now taking shape.

Kremlin watchers have been speculating for some time on how he might do this. Some thought he would change the constitution, allowing him to run for a third term. Putin himself expressed a desire to see the presidential term expanded from the current four years to as many as seven years, but denied that he would seek to change it before his term ends.

Others thought that Putin would nominate someone who would continue his approach and policies. His popularity is so strong (in the 80 percent range) that the man he nominates for the presidency is virtually assured election. It appeared that Putin might be moving to that end by appointing Dmitry Medvedev and Sergei Ivanov, two strong politicians, to the rank of first deputy prime minister, which essentially put them in the running for the presidency.

However, this could backfire, as an independently strong leader isn’t likely to share power with Putin; plus, a strong man might not find it easy to step down for Putin to run for president in 2012. But in September, Putin appointed Viktor Zubkov, a longtime adviser, as Russia’s prime minister. Unlike other likely presidential candidates, Zubkov doesn’t have a strong political base apart from Putin.

Why would Putin choose Zubkov over others?

“Analysts say that the Russian leader could in theory leave the presidency for a brief period, during which time the Kremlin would be run by a handpicked ally. Then he could return for a third term in snap elections” (Sebastian Smith, “Putin to Rule



Russia’s President Vladimir Putin and Prime Minister Viktor Zubkov at the Kremlin Oct. 2.

Russia Even After Leaving Kremlin: Ally,” AFP, Oct. 17, 2007).

Putin will apparently seek the leadership of the dominant party (United Russia) in the Dec. 2 parliamentary elections. The party is assured a bruising majority in the Duma; as party leader, Putin would then become the speaker of the Duma. “As a speaker, he can suggest that the incumbent president (he himself) nominates the leader of the majority party as premier (likely also Putin)” (Angelique van Engelen, “Putin’s Russian Roulette,” *Global Politician*, Oct. 25, 2007, globalpolitician.com).

So, in preparation for the March 2008 presidential elections, Putin will step down from the presidency; run for parliament (the Duma); “suggest to himself” that he choose himself to be premier and acting president

until the new president is elected; a brief time after the new president (presumably Zubkov) takes office, the president would resign, appointing Putin to the presidency again; then there could be a snap presidential election in which Putin can run “legitimately”!

Confused? While strange to Western thinking (to say the least!), analysts say that this will not seem out of place to the Russian electorate.

Putin is Russia

It’s important that there’s a high turnout in the December parliamentary elections. Low numbers would weaken his claim to the helm, whereas a large vote would justify his using the office of speaker of the Duma to retain the leadership of the country. At a national convention of Russia’s mayors in October, Putin promised them a greater share of regional tax revenues as an incentive to get out the vote in their cities.

Opposition parties immediately protested that Putin was abusing his position to solicit support, but the head of the Central Election Commission quickly dismissed the charges. The fix is in, if the schemers have their way. Of course, God ultimately determines or allows leaders to take and hold power (Psalm 75). And, in the words of the King Nebuchadnezzar, “The Most High rules in the kingdom of men, gives it to whomever He will, and sets over it the lowest of men” (Daniel 4:17).

Only weeks ago, the head of the United Russia party unambiguously declared in a front-page article of the government newspaper, *Rossiiskaya Gazeta*, “Vladimir Putin will remain national leader, regardless of the post that he holds. Modern Russia: this is Putin. Russia without Putin: this is a Russia without leadership.”

The Russian psyche still seethes in anger at losing the Cold War to the United States. Prophecy indicates a lingering antagonism by Russia toward America and its brother nations. We see this playing out daily in today’s news. To better understand these crucial national relationships, request or download our free booklet *The United States and Britain in Bible Prophecy*.

Russia still has serious economic problems, in spite of a treasury bursting with oil and gas revenues. But Moscow has been able to get its citizens to look past the problems simply by launching into patriotic, anti-American rhetoric.

Far beyond mere political obstructionism, Russia is in a position to give the United States, as well as Western Europe, a great deal of grief. The EU is highly dependent upon Russian natural gas. And as the world's leading producer of oil, Russia holds considerable clout over the global economy.

Growing anti-Western hostility

In "Putin's Hostile Course," *The Washington Post* published the following on Oct. 18, 2007: "Indeed, at virtually every turn, Mr. Putin and the Russian leadership appear to be doing their best in ways large and small to marginalize and embarrass the United States and undercut U.S. foreign policy interests."

Putin humiliated U.S. Secretary of State Rice and Defense Secretary Gates by forcing them to wait 40 minutes before meeting with them in October; in a TV appearance immediately after the meeting, Putin slammed U.S. plans to deploy a missile defense radar system in the Czech Republic and Patriot missiles in Poland, claiming that America was launching a new arms race.

Yet Russia has been dealing arms as it did in the Cold War days, selling an air defense missile system to Syria and providing Hezbollah with antitank missiles that it used against Israel in the recent war. Putin has also announced Russia's eagerness to reenter the world market as a supplier of military aircraft. He is threatening to pull Russia from the treaty that barred nuclear missiles from Europe and another that limited the level of military forces between the Baltic and Black Seas. Nominally in retaliation for the U.S. proposal to place 10 Patriot missiles in Poland (an anti-missile system for protecting Europe from an Iranian missile attack), Putin is threatening to retarget Russia's nuclear missiles at Europe.

In open defiance of American and Western opinion, Putin publicly declared Russia doesn't view either Hezbollah or Hamas as terrorist organizations. And on a recent trip to Tehran, he backed the Iranians' right to develop "peaceful nuclear energy," lending cover to Tehran's thinly disguised end run toward the nuclear weapons club.

During that same Iranian trip, Putin warned the United States not to develop

energy pipelines through one of the former Soviet republics on the Caspian Sea. Washington (and, likely, the EU) would like to secure access to the region's vast oil and gas reserves without having to transit Russian territory. With Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, he announced that all five Caspian states had to agree before any energy pipeline could be implemented.

A joint Russian-Chinese military exercise was held in conjunction with the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) last August. SCO members include Russia, China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. At the time of the exercise, Russian newspapers ran articles calling the SCO an "anti-NATO alliance" and a "Warsaw Pact 2," although Putin downplayed the idea.

Reportedly, Washington's requests to attend the SCO sessions as an observer have been denied. Iran's president, on the other hand has twice been invited as a guest of honor; Iran would like to join the alliance, which has a NATO-like pact of, "Attack one of us, and you attack us all." That would significantly raise the ante in any possible military action by the United States against Iran.

While Putin is increasingly unhinged in his rhetoric, China isn't yet willing to growl at Washington. The Chinese have their own agenda of becoming an economic superpower and need the American markets for now.

Russia misses the superpower influence it once wielded on the world stage, and it will blunt the edge of America's policies anywhere it can. Vladimir Putin has become a master at it, and it looks as though he will continue in this role for the foreseeable future. ❖

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The United States, Britain, Australia, Canada and other English-speaking peoples have played a major role in the world. Why are they increasingly hated? What does the Bible say about their future?



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What's Ahead for America?

Sensing a weakness of will, hostile nations appear to be ganging up on America. Some consider the United States a second-rate power. What are some of the specific problems, internationally and domestically, and how will they affect America's future?

by John Ross Schroeder

Late last year Harvard historian Niall Ferguson labeled America as “the nation that fell to earth.” In terms of dwindling domestic and international support, the war in Iraq is gradually becoming another Vietnam. In addition, what is currently occurring elsewhere on the international stage highlights the overall problem.

What are the Russians up to?

Recently Russia's President Vladimir Putin traveled to Tehran, where he declared that no other country should interfere militarily or politically in the affairs of the five Caspian bloc nations. Some observers understand this as a clear warning that the United States should not carry out any military action against Iran.

President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad has been invited to Moscow for further talks. Only a short time ago the Iranian president was allowed to vent his anger against America inside its own borders, during a visit to the UN headquarters in New York City. As *U.S. News and World Report* editor-in-chief Mortimer Zuckerman observed, “Iran's President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad came to America to stick his thumb in our eye and *deliver a sanitized version of 'Death to America and the Holocaust Never Occurred'*” (Oct. 8, 2007, emphasis added throughout).

Russian aid to Iran is nothing short of astonishing. For instance, it is a massive supplier of arms to Tehran, including a \$700 million air-defense system.

Naturally both Russia and Iran oppose the eastward movement of NATO. Iran is counting on both Russia and China to oppose any future rounds on sanctions from the UN Security Council.

According to *The Guardian*, a resurgent Sino-Russian political embrace is already well under way: “Moscow and Beijing are closer now than in the Communist period... They have frustrated Western hopes for sanctions or other tough action on disputes ranging from Burma and Darfur to Iran. They are blocking a solution on Kosovo” (Jonathan Steele, “The Sino-Russian Embrace Leaves the U.S. Out in the Cold,” Oct. 12, 2007).

Russo/American tensions are clearly on the rise, alarmingly so.

On another issue, Russia is not budging on the American plan for missile defenses in Eastern Europe. A communiqué to *USA Today* (Oct. 26, 2007) quotes Russian Defense Minister Anatoly Serdyukov as saying, “We are sticking to our position.” The report continued: “The United States says its plan is aimed at Iran. Russia says Iran is years away from being a threat and the U.S. plan undermines Russian military strategies.”

Robert Kagan is a senior associate at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. He recently analyzed threats to world peace by writing:

“Many hoped the end of the Cold War might herald a genuinely new era in human development. But those expectations proved misplaced. China has not liberalised, but has shored up its autocratic government. Russia has turned from imperfect liberalism decisively towards autocracy... It is folly to expect China to help undermine a brutal regime in Khartoum [Sudan] or to be surprised if Russia rattles its sabre at pro-western democratic governments near its border” (“The World Divides... and Democracy Is at Bay,” *The Sunday Times*, Sept. 2, 2007).

The Turkish conundrum

Turkey, a longtime American ally, is on the point of hindering American plans and intentions in Iraq. A large-scale Turkish incursion into northern Iraq to thwart Kurdish rebels may be imminent. Turkish jets have already attacked Kurdish bases from the air (*The Daily Telegraph*, Oct. 25, 2007). Clearly any large-scale attack would complicate Washington's plans in this strife-torn country.

At this crucial time of policy differences between the United States and Turkey, the Democratic Party-controlled House of Representatives tried to formally condemn the World War I-era massacre of Armenians by Turks as genocide. However valid the facts may be, the time is highly inopportune. So President George W. Bush has asked the House to think again, and

American prestige and perceived power have slipped even as domestic morality declines. What's it all mean for the future of the increasingly lonely superpower?



The fall of the dollar adds to the perception of U.S. decline.

the measure failed. These are not the easiest days for American diplomacy.

A fraying Anglo-American alliance

Another disturbing setback has been a cooling of the normally stable Anglo-American alliance. Gordon Brown is no Tony Blair. The new prime minister is not seen as fully supporting America in the same way.

Increasingly Britain is being sucked into Europe with more concessions of British sovereignty now in the offing should the new EU treaty be approved. As it stands now, the British people will apparently be denied a referendum. Yet only an independent Britain can fully stand shoulder to shoulder with America as new and more deadly challenges to Western civilization present themselves in the months and years ahead.

In 1940 Winston Churchill warned that unless the English-speaking countries triumphed over Nazism, the world would “sink into a new dark age.” How much more would this be the case if the West should utterly fail in its war on terrorism?

America and Britain eventually prevailed in two 20th-century world wars. Our own century is not without its own civilizational showdowns. Albeit in different ways, recent trends show America and Britain are gradually being boxed into a corner and that should deeply concern us all.

Most do not understand the crucial importance of the origins of the English-speaking peoples around the world. The historic and prophetic implications will yet prove to be enormous. To understand just how, request or download our free booklet *The United States and Britain in Bible Prophecy*.

We’ve looked at the international front. Now consider briefly what is happening on the American domestic scene.

America becoming a second-rate power?

Alan Webber is founding editor of the business magazine *Fast Company*. On a recent business trip to Europe he heard some disturbing thoughts about the United States. At one gathering in Austria the comments came in the form of laments. “You used to be such a great country...What happened to the great idea that once defined America?”

Consider Mr. Webber’s personal comment on America, looking at the country from afar: “You realize how far the United States has drifted from its promise, how large the gap is between what we profess and what we do...how diminished our economic superiority has become; and how worn our once impeccable image has become.”

The dollar is currently viewed as a second-rate currency in Europe. The euro is looked at as towering over the

once vaunted American dollar. Alan Webber asked: “Is there a point where diminished prestige actually becomes diminished economic leadership?”

Summing up, he concluded: “In America, it’s business as usual. We’ve simply learned to accept our way of life, *rather than confronting the reality of our decline*. Maybe that’s what happens to once-rich, once-powerful superpowers as they gradually decline. *They lose track of their own standards*” (“From Afar, America Resembles a 2nd-Rate Power, *USA Today*, Oct. 19, 2007).

Confronting the decline of American values

We are all familiar with the length and breadth of the United States (the Atlantic to the Pacific), its fabled strength in diversity, the capacity of one section of the country to come to the aid of another and an awesome ability to bounce back from adversity. Witness the America of the ’40s and ’50s and briefly even in the ’80s. For a brief period after 9/11, moral standards actually improved.

What is disturbing is the persistence of serious moral problems: abortion, pornography, adultery, a growing gay movement and out-of-control personal debt—to name just a few.

In response to the tragedy at Virginia Tech, one reader wrote to a major newsweekly: “Why does it perplex us when these violent eruptions take place? One needs only to channel surf the television any night of the week to see show after show dealing with murder, rape, stalkers, violence toward police, gangs, war and domestic violence” (“Nation in Mourning,” *Time*, Nov. 9, 2007).

America doesn’t want the Ten Commandments in its schools or in its public buildings. Yet these laws are the master key to a much-needed moral revival. Summing up God’s spiritual law, as revealed in the Bible, they reflect love for both God and neighbor.

You need our free booklet, simply titled *The Ten Commandments*. This publication shows how we break all 10 in ways we don’t even realize anymore. You can obtain your free copy by mail or view it on the Internet at www.ucg.org/booklets. ❖

Turkey, a U.S. Ally, Threatens to Widen War in Iraq

Kurdish rebels, seeking an autonomous Kurdistan, have been attacking Turkish troops from the sanctuary of northern Iraq. Turkey now threatens to send troops into the most peaceful region of Iraq. Complicating the problem was an attempt in the U.S. Congress to condemn Turkey for a massacre that took place almost a century ago.

by Melvin Rhodes

The world seems unable to get away from the Ottoman Empire, almost a century after its demise.

Throughout the 19th century, the Ottoman Empire was “the sick man of Europe.” Its decline brought independence to a number of nations in the Balkans and North Africa. One of the consequences of its dismemberment was World War I, triggered by a Serbian nationalist’s assassination of an Austrian archduke. Serbia was one of those countries that came into existence as the Ottomans gradually fell back to their Turkish homeland.

In 1914 they allied themselves with Germany and Austria against Britain, France and Russia. After the war, the empire was carved up at the Treaty of Sèvres and a number of new nations entered the world scene, with complications and frictions that continue to this day:

- Saddam Hussein’s claim on Kuwait, which led to the first Persian Gulf War, went back to the Ottoman Empire’s regional divisions.
- Syria’s incessant interference in Lebanon similarly goes back to that time.
- The pre-2003 Sunni domination of majority Shiite Iraq similarly went back to the Ottomans.
- The 30-year-old division of Cyprus owes its origin to the Ottomans, who settled on the island centuries ago.

- The demise of the Ottoman Empire set the stage for the current never-ending conflict between the Israelis and Palestinians.

- And now the Kurds are the center of attention as they push for a unified autonomous state of their own.

Even the U.S. Congress seems unable to get away from the Ottoman Empire, which was finally replaced by the Republic of Turkey in 1923. After almost a century, Congress seemed set to condemn Turkey for the 1915 massacre of Armenians, until it realized that Turkey is the main supply route for American troops in



Reuters

Students carry a banner that says “America is the murderer” of Turkish soldiers killed by Kurdish rebels from Iraq.

Iraq. Additionally, the United States is trying to restrain the Turks from attacking the Kurds in northern Iraq, hitherto the only peaceful area of the country. Congressmen are now hesitant about upsetting Turkey, an old U.S. ally, any further.

The Ottoman Empire had many faults, but it did bring peace to the Middle East for four centuries. One hundred years ago, nobody alive could have foreseen the volatility that is today’s Middle East.

However, two millennia ago, somebody did.

What Christ foretold

In a major prophetic section of the Bible, Jesus Christ tells His followers to “watch” what is happening in the world (Mark 13:33). In Luke’s parallel account, in Luke 21:20, Jesus showed that the Middle East would be the center of tension in the end time, immediately prior to His second coming.

In the other parallel chapter, Matthew 24, Jesus said: “For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom” (verse 7). A kingdom is a political entity that may contain

The Ottoman Empire had many faults, but it did bring peace to the Middle East for four centuries. One hundred years ago, nobody alive could have foreseen the volatility that is today’s Middle East.

many ethnic groups. But the word *nation* here is from the Greek word *ethnos*, which refers to ethnic groups or tribes. One of the signs of the end time is a marked increase in conflict between ethnic groups.

The assassination that ultimately led to the fall of the Ottoman Empire was rooted in ethnicity. The Serbs had been under the rule of the Ottoman Turks for centuries when they finally achieved independence in 1817. Some Serbs, however, remained under Austrian rule. The desire for a greater Serbia inspired a Serbian nationalist to fire the shots that triggered World War I.

Since that pivotal turning point in world history on June 28, 1914, a trend throughout the world has been the desire of different ethnic groups or tribes for their own independent homeland. Ethnic conflict has increased as tribes want to break away from the dominant political entity.

The Kurds are one of these ethnic groups.

The struggle for Kurdistan

Numbering about 20 million people, the Kurds are a non-Arab tribe of predominantly Sunni Muslims, roughly half of whom live in Turkey. The other half are mainly in the Kurdish province of northern Iraq, the most peaceful area of that war-torn country. Others are scattered throughout neighboring countries, and there is a significant Kurdish diaspora in Europe and North America.

The dream of many throughout the last century was of a unitary Kurdistan, which would have meant both Turkey and Iraq losing territory.

Today the Kurdish nationalist movement, the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), has said it will settle for a Kurdish autonomous region. Now that this has effectively been achieved in Iraq, the PKK's primary efforts are directed against the Turkish government, with regular terrorist attacks in Turkey conducted from neighboring Iraq.

Turkey is threatening to send troops into Iraq, further exacerbating the conflict there. The United States and Britain are trying to restrain the Turks from taking this action.

A Turkish military invasion of northern Iraq with the intent of suppressing the Kurdish nationalist movement could provide Iran with the pretext to do the same in the south, annexing the Shiite area of Iraq, thereby dismembering the country.

It is important for people in the West to realize that many of the Middle Eastern

borders are arbitrary. The boundaries often go back to old regional borders within the Ottoman Empire and have little to do with tribal loyalties. This means that many countries are unstable and there is little to hold them together, which is one reason why brute force is the norm in this region.

The majority of the people in Turkey, however, are ethnic Turks. The Kurds number about 20 percent of Turkey's population and are concentrated mostly in the east near the borders with Iran, Iraq and Armenia.

"Having been decimated by the Turks in the years between 1915 and 1918 and having struggled bitterly to free themselves from Ottoman rule, the Kurds were encouraged by the Turkish defeat in World War I and by U.S. President Woodrow Wilson's plea for self-determination for non-Turkish nationalities in the empire. The Kurds brought their claims for independence to the Paris Peace Conference in 1919.

"The Treaty of Sèvres (1920), which liquidated the Ottoman Empire, provided for the creation of an autonomous Kurdish state. Because of Turkey's military revival under Kemal Atatürk, however, the Treaty of Lausanne (1923), which superseded Sèvres, failed to mention the creation of a Kurdish nation" (*The Columbia Encyclopedia*, sixth edition, 2001-05, "Kurds," www.bartleby.com/65/ku/Kurds.html).

Frustrated, the Kurds rebelled in 1925 and 1930, rebellions that were crushed by Turkish troops. "Later (1937-38) aerial bombardment, poison gas, and artillery shelling of Kurdish strongholds by the government resulted in the slaughter of many thousands of Turkey's Kurds. The Kurds in Iran also rebelled during the 1920s, and at the end of World War II a Soviet-backed Kurdish 'republic' existed briefly" (*ibid.*).

The overthrow of the Iraqi monarchy in 1958 gave the Kurds hope in Iraq, but it didn't last. It wasn't until the first Persian Gulf War in 1991 that they had any realistic hope of autonomy. This came briefly with the coalition victory that year over Saddam Hussein. But the Kurds were badly let down by the United States and its allies and were soon crushed again by Saddam.

The second Gulf war, which began in 2003, changed things. The Kurds were quite happy to be liberated by coalition forces and have enjoyed autonomy since that time. They have been the most peaceful, stable and prosperous region of Iraq. All of this would be lost if Turkey chooses to send troops into

the region to track down Kurdish rebels from Turkey who take refuge among fellow Kurds in Iraq.

"As Turkey moves troops toward the Iraqi border and officials scramble to prevent an invasion, the Kurdish separatists at the center of the storm are again proving their ability to use a well-oiled international support network to confound decades-old Turkish efforts to defeat them," writes Philip Shishkin and Yochi J. Dreazen in the *Wall Street Journal* ("Turkey's Rebel Kurds Still Elusive," Oct. 23, 2007).

Under international pressure, Turkey is going to try diplomacy first. The article quotes the Turkish foreign minister: "We will continue these diplomatic efforts with all good intentions to solve this problem caused by a terrorist organization... But in the end, if we do not reach any results, there are other means we might have to use" (*ibid.*).

While America and Britain try to restrain the Turks from attacking Iraq, a resolution in the U.S. Congress condemning the Turkish massacre of Armenians in 1915 could provoke them into immediate military action.

"The Turks are a proud, prickly people, easily offended by criticism. That much is clear from the row over a resolution, passed by a Committee of the United States House of Representatives on October 10th, calling the slaughter of Armenians by Ottoman Turks in 1915 genocide. [The full House backed off from supporting the resolution.]

"But Turkey has reacted angrily, recalling its ambassador. It is talking of cutting military ties and even denying the Americans use of the Incirlik airbase that is vital for the supply of their troops in Iraq" ("A Resolution Too Far," *The Economist*, Oct. 20, 2007, p. 16).

It would be short-sighted to say that this problem must be resolved in the next few months. Whatever the outcome of these immediate concerns, the Kurdish issue is not going to go away at any time in the foreseeable future. The Turks are not likely to grant autonomy to the Kurds, so future conflict is certain.

The position the United States and its European allies take, however, could change things dramatically. Turkey, a modern secular Islamic country with democratic credentials, has long sought membership in the EU and remains the second biggest military force in NATO. It is these ties that are at stake every bit as much as the future of the Kurdish people. ❖

From Berlin to Brussels

Some Germans are questioning whether their government is still a parliamentary democracy. Their underlying concerns apply throughout the evolving EU, as national sovereignty is subtly transferred to a central authority.

by Paul Kieffer

One of the major achievements resulting from World War II was the establishment of a viable parliamentary democracy in Germany. The only previous attempt at democracy in Germany was the failed Weimar Republic, followed by 12 years of dictatorship under Adolf Hitler's Nazi regime.

Democracy in the post-war Federal Republic of Germany has so far passed the test of refusing to compromise democratic principles when it was challenged by the domestic terrorism of groups like the Baader-Meinhof gang and the lengthy East-West conflict.

But is Germany still a parliamentary democracy? Among those asking the question is no less than Germany's former federal president, Roman Herzog. According to Germany's constitution (called the "Basic Law"), federal law is enacted by the German parliament, the Bundestag.

In an article written earlier this year, however, Herzog pointed out that the majority of laws affecting domestic German policies no longer originate in Berlin, but rather in Brussels. It involves European Union legislation that has to be adopted by EU member countries.

In fact, according to an analysis by Germany's ministry of justice, between 1998 and 2004, 23,167 laws and decrees took effect in Germany. An incredible 84 percent of them never were debated or passed as legislation by the Bundestag. Instead, they were laws and decrees issued by the European Union's Council of Ministers.

"The Bundestag has to adopt every decree passed by the [EU] Council of Ministers," Herzog wrote, adding "that the question can be asked whether the Federal Republic of Germany can still be called an unrestricted parliamentary democracy" (*Welt am Sonntag*, Jan. 14, 2007).

Germany's federal government in the person of the chancellor is elected by the Bundestag. It would seem logical, then, for the chancellor and all cabinet ministers to be subject to oversight by the Bundestag and its resolutions.

However, because Germany is a member of the European Union, that's not the case. An agreement between the German government and the Bundestag, however, gives the federal government the right to act at variance with the wishes of the Bundestag when it



Reuters/Michael Dauter

Former German President Roman Herzog says most laws no longer originate in Berlin, but in Brussels.

comes to applying EU decisions involving "important foreign policy matters or [EU] integration policy."

Transfer of power from national to supranational

Although his comments were intended primarily for his own country, the situation Roman Herzog described applies to all other EU countries as well. Since 1957 when the Treaty of Rome was signed, national parliaments like the Bundestag have approved one EU treaty after another. Those treaties provided the legal framework for expanding either the European Union itself by admitting new members or its scope by extending the realm of EU jurisdiction.

In the latter case, each time a national parliament approved a treaty, it transferred, either immediately or potentially, a portion of its own legislative power to Brussels. However, since the Bundestag itself is a democratically elected parliament, one could argue that the German people themselves have indirectly approved this transfer of power from Berlin to Brussels.

At their meeting last month in Lisbon, EU leaders approved a new treaty for the European Union that will replace the constitution rejected in 2005 by French and Dutch citizens in national referendums. For the first time, the new treaty will give national parliaments a consultative voice in proposals for new EU legislation. If approved, the Lisbon Treaty will allow

With its "double majority" provision, the Lisbon Treaty will make the transfer of power from national parliaments to the European Union easier.



German Chancellor Angela Merkel, French President Nicolas Sarkozy and British Prime Minister Gordon Brown chat in Lisbon Oct. 19. EU leaders agreed on a treaty to reform the 27-nation bloc's institutions.

each national parliament to receive proposals directly from Brussels rather than via its respective national government, for the purpose of determining whether proposed legislation infringes on its jurisdiction.

However, as Roman Herzog points out, under the new treaty national parliaments will not be able to force the EU to withdraw any legislation. Objections by at least one third of national parliaments of EU countries would mean only that the European Commission must review a proposal, but without any obligation to amend or withdraw it.

The Lisbon Treaty also introduces the new “double majority” voting system that would actually make it easier for new EU legislation to be passed. Instead of the current unanimous vote requirement, the “double majority” system means that legislative proposals would be passed if a minimum of 55 percent of member states (currently 15 of 27 countries) representing at least 65 percent of the EU’s population approves the measure. The new system takes effect beginning in 2014, with a complicated transition period to 2017 granted at Poland’s request.

With its “double majority” provision, the Lisbon Treaty will make the transfer of power from national parliaments to Brussels easier.

Overlapping jurisdictions— iron and clay

The fact that a national government

could ignore resolutions of its parliament in the interest of EU unity reflects a complaint some have about the current EU and its future development. The EU has become to some extent a system of confusing, overlapping and partial jurisdictions.

EU members may join the euro monetary union and the Schengen Treaty if they wish, but don’t have to. With the “opt-out” provision of the Maastricht treaty, EU members may decline participation in other EU institutions. Hence, Britain and Ireland will apply EU decisions in the area of police jurisdiction and justice affairs as they wish, but with no authority to prevent their EU partners from proceeding to full integration in these areas.

The EU approach of allowing its members to be “partially unified” reminds one in some ways of Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar’s dream recorded in Daniel 2. Nebuchadnezzar saw a human image with a head of gold, arms and chest of silver, a midsection of bronze and legs of iron. The feet and toes of the image were a mixture of iron and clay.

From the prophet Daniel’s interpretation of that dream, we learn that the four parts of the image represent four successive kingdoms. The fourth and final kingdom will exist when Jesus Christ returns, symbolized in Daniel 2:44 by a stone not cut by human hands (symbolizing the fact that it comes

from God), which strikes the image on its feet.

The 10 toes of the image are 10 kings who are in power when that occurs. The Luther Translation for verse 43 describes the 10 toes graphically: “They will mingle themselves *by marrying*, but they will not cleave to one another, just as iron cannot be mixed with clay” (emphasis added).

A *marriage* is an agreement based on a contract. A contract made between nations is a treaty. In Revelation 17 we also read about this union of 10 kings who will be in power at the time of Christ’s return. The context of Revelation 17, when compared to Daniel 2 and 7, shows that these 10 kings will actually be a revival or resurrection of the fourth beast of Daniel 2, the Roman Empire.

Like its predecessors, that final resurrection of the Roman Empire will be centered in Europe. Revelation 17:13 tells us that the 10 kings comprising that resurrection “will give their power and authority” to a central authority called “the beast.” In other words, the “beast” does not take or wrest authority from the 10 kings. Instead, the kings give or cede their power to him because they “are of one mind.”

The European Union is no doubt a forerunner to that final union of 10 leaders and the nations they represent. In a manner perhaps similar to the way that national parliaments have successively ceded more jurisdiction to the EU’s Council of Ministers, a future group of 10 leaders will voluntarily turn over power to a central authority.

Those 10 “kings” could well be democratically elected leaders who are authorized by their respective national parliaments to promote European unity in a crisis situation. They could also be leaders who act at odds with the desires of their national parliaments.

However it occurs, in the European Union there is already a pattern established for the voluntary transfer of power from the national level to a central authority. The next step in transferring national sovereignty to the EU will take place over the next 18 months as EU members decide whether they will ratify the Lisbon Treaty.

This time, though, France and the Netherlands are not planning any national referendum on the question. The matter will be decided by national parliaments, virtually assuring the treaty’s approval by the proposed deadline of spring 2009. ❖

The Wonderful World Beyond Today A New Way of Thinking

What do you do if everyone in the world needs a heart transplant?

by Mike Bennett

"Men since the beginning of time have sought peace...Military alliances, balances of power, leagues of nations, all in turn failed, leaving the only path to be by way of the crucible of war. We have had our last chance. If we do not now devise some greater and more equitable system, Armageddon will be at our door.

"The problem basically is theological and involves a spiritual recrudescence and improvement of human character that will synchronize with our almost matchless advances in science, art, literature and all material and cultural development of the past two thousand years. It must be of the spirit if we are to save the flesh" —Gen. Douglas MacArthur (1880-1964) at World War II surrender ceremony on the U.S.S. *Missouri*, Sept. 2, 1945 (emphasis added).

God promises a world of peace and prosperity will come (Micah 4:1-4)! It's what everyone has always wanted, but mankind has never been able to achieve it. Why?

Why is humanity helpless to bring peace?

Science and technology haven't brought it. All the experiments in various governmental and economic systems haven't moved us closer to peace, but seem to draw us ever nearer to destruction.

Education should be a key to the kind of world we want. As God said, "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge" (Hosea 4:6). But the kind of knowledge funneled into students' minds today doesn't seem to produce lasting happiness or to have brought the world closer to peace. Nor are parents instilling values and character training in their children at home.

Hosea makes it clear the missing knowledge is about God and His laws (Hosea 4:6-10). Modern education ignores and ridicules spiritual knowledge and belief in a Creator God. When humans are seen as evolving animals, and survival of the fittest is considered the active principle of the universe, how can we expect

anything but selfishness and warmongering? When information about the physical universe is seen as the highest knowledge, how can we expect anything more than greed and materialism?

When children are molded more by their entertainment and their peers than they are by spiritually mature and wise parents, how can future generations be truly prepared for life?

But, some would counter, has religion done any better? Haven't many bloody wars, atrocities and acts of terrorism been perpetrated in the name of religion?

The truth is, sadly, the major religions of the world do not fully follow the precepts of the Bible. They, too, have rejected or not known the way of peace. God's way has never been fully tried in this world. But it will be!

Source of evil removed

The Bible describes an evil being who has literally deceived the whole world from the Garden of Eden until now (Revelation 12:9). He is the enemy of God, and fights to prevent humans from understanding and following God's ways.

But at Christ's return, John in vision saw an angel who "laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished" (Revelation 20:2-3).

Satan's "broadcast" (Ephesians 2:2) of negative attitudes and emotions will be ended! Finally mankind will be freed from slavery to Satan and sin! No more will religious deception be spread. Materialistic and humanistic education will be replaced with true education of the whole person—heart, mind and spirit.

Moreover, children will learn godly values from birth, growing up in stable homes led by lovingly strong fathers and nurtured by wise and caring mothers.

However, even without Satan's active pres-

*God's
graciousness
makes it possible
for us to have a
new heart—one
capable of living
His way of love,
obeying His laws.*

ence, our human minds have been programmed throughout our lives to think the way Satan thinks. It will take time for the thinking of God to sink in. The traditions, ideologies and thought patterns that come naturally today will eventually be seen for what they are—harmful and self-destructive. In the meantime, God’s educational system will spread around the world, sometimes meeting pockets of resistance.

Interestingly, the Holy Days of God described in Leviticus 23 and reflected in many New Testament passages provide an outline of God’s plan. (For more on this, download or request our booklet *God’s Holy Day Plan: The Promise of Hope for All Mankind* from www.ucg.org/booklets.) The Bible tells us they will eventually be celebrated universally in God’s Kingdom, just as they are today by His faithful Church.

“And it shall come to pass that everyone who is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the Feast of Tabernacles” (Zechariah 14:16).

There is an indication that even this wonderful festival might be met with resistance. Zechariah records that God will need to encourage uncooperative nations to come to the Feast by withholding rain from them (verses 17-19). To overcome the influences held over from the “present evil age” (Galatians 1:4), this will be a necessary step.

But God knows such encouragement and coercion are not the ultimate solution. For people to become good citizens of His Kingdom, they must individually choose to make changes.

Changing hearts and minds

The author of Hebrews, most likely the apostle Paul, makes clear the changes needed to transform humans from the selfish and self-destructive beings of today to the giving, peace-making and joyful citizens of God’s Kingdom. For without changes to the human heart, we would soon revert to the evils of today rather than sustaining the beautiful world tomorrow.

“For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel [and eventually with all people—Romans

2:29; 10:11-13; 1 Timothy 2:4] after those days, says the LORD: I will put My laws in their mind and write them on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people” (Hebrews 8:10, quoted from Jeremiah 31:33).

The problems of the world can ultimately be traced back to breaking God’s eternal law of love. He has revealed that law in the Bible through the Ten Commandments, the first four of which show how to love God the way He wants to be loved, and the last six show how to love our neighbor as ourselves (Exodus 20:1-17; Matthew 22:37-40). These principles are explained and expanded throughout the Bible in every word of God.

But even the people to whom God revealed these laws did not keep them. As Hebrews records, the fault with the first covenant was “with them,” not with the perfect laws (Hebrews 8:7-8). When Israel agreed to obey God’s laws, He told Moses wistfully, “Oh, that they had such a heart in them that they would fear Me and always keep all My commandments, that it might be well with them and with their children forever!” (Deuteronomy 5:29).

Breaking those eternal laws required the death penalty. God’s gracious plan included the incredible sacrifice of Jesus Christ to pay that penalty in our place, so that the perfectly just and righteous God could also be perfectly merciful.

Because Christ willingly took our place, He said, “I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more” (Hebrews 8:12).

A heart transplant

But God’s graciousness doesn’t end there. He also made it possible for us to have a new heart—one capable of living His way of love, obeying His laws.

“I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them” (Ezekiel 36:26-27).

The apostle Paul outlines this

process in Romans 12:2. “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”

The Bible describes this process as including repentance—not only seeing the need for forgiveness and conversion, but also deeply, humbly seeking God’s mercy and fully committing to a life of change. It includes belief in God and acceptance of Christ’s sacrifice to pay our penalty for sin.

This is followed by baptism, symbolizing burying the old person. Then comes the gift of God’s Holy Spirit that makes it possible for us to truly become like God (Acts 2:38; 3:19; 8:37-38; Romans 6:3-7).

The many scriptures on this vital subject are amplified in the helpful free booklets *Transforming Your Life: The Process of Conversion* and *The Road to Eternal Life*. You can download or order free copies at www.ucg.org/booklets.

The wonders of the world beyond today

You’ve heard of the seven wonders of the ancient world, and some have tried to list the buildings and monuments that could be considered the wonders of the modern world. But what will the wonders of God’s Kingdom be?

However magnificent the buildings will be, they will pale in comparison to the “wonders” described in Galatians 5:22-23. These nine fruits of God’s Spirit are building blocks in producing God’s heart and mind within us. Imagine a world where the works of the flesh listed in Galatians 5:19-21 no longer prevail. Better yet, imagine a world where these fruits of the Spirit are growing and spreading:

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.”

Imagine having a neighbor like that. Imagine having a teacher, a boss, a police officer and a mayor treat you that way—God’s way!

What a wonderful world that will be! What an incredible future is ahead! ❖



A Page on the World

Reviews of books that count, endure and light the path ahead

Why the Jews? The Reason for Antisemitism

Dennis Prager and Joseph Telushkin look at the implications of anti-Semitism (paperback 2003, ISBN-10: 0743246209).

Reviewed by Nathan Albright

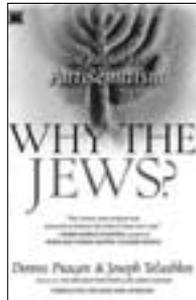
Recently, I had the opportunity to visit the Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial in Jerusalem. The museum, in chilling detail, demonstrates both the incredible will of some people to endure the most extreme suffering, as well as the capacity for other people to behave in the most destructive and despicable ways imaginable. After touring the museum I had the opportunity to purchase and read *Why the Jews? The Reason for Antisemitism* by Dennis Prager and Joseph Telushkin.

Their purpose is to explain the origins, historical manifestations and implications of anti-Semitism. The authors identify four components of Judaism that have been under attack through history: The first is a set of beliefs that includes God, Torah, Israel and “chosenness.” The second is ethical monotheism, which they define as the belief in the need of mankind to obey God and follow His law. The third is the longstanding Jewish mission to repair the world, challenge the superstitions and failings of the outside world and make moral demands on others. The fourth cause of anti-Semitism identified by the authors is the high quality of life that results from obedience to God’s laws.

After identifying these causes, the authors then comment on some commonly held explanations for anti-Semitism today.

The book then details anti-Semitism in history as well as the modern world. Throughout history Jew hatred has been a consistent thread in ancient, polytheistic societies bothered by Jewish monotheism, in Christian and Muslim societies offended by Jewish commitment to their law and refusal to convert to the newer religions, as well as Enlightenment thought offended by Jewish commitment to their national identity and belief in God. The authors note that in modern society Jews are most disliked by those on the political left who dislike the Jewish commitment to their nation and by Muslim societies that deny the right of the Jewish people to a nation of their own that they call Israel.

The implications of this are important. Virtually the only nation in the world to consider itself Judeo-Christian, and therefore sympathetic and protective to Israel, is the United



States, so hatred of the Jews usually comes to mean hatred of the United States as well.

Given these conditions, the authors echo a concern also voiced in the pages of this publication about the consequences of post-Christian Europe allying with Islamic countries with regards to anti-Israel and anti-America politics. The large Muslim minorities in many European nations (especially France and Germany) have combined with Europe’s own insecurities about American power to make Europe as unsympathetic to

Israel as it has been since the Second World War.

The authors also comment on the very small size of Israel, compare the Palestinian refugees and their fate (largely the fault of Israel’s neighbors) with that of European refugees after WWII, and give a few suggestions about how Jews can work to increase ethical monotheism in order to reduce anti-Semitism.

Given this present geopolitical situation, it is not difficult to imagine a world where those who have a similar commitment to God and His laws, and who believe the world can survive only when it is subject to the same God, would run afoul of authorities who are offended by these beliefs. In such a world, those who take the entire Bible as the Word of God could be subject to the same persecution that has historically come to Jews: Restrictions on professional behavior, harassment, loss of legal rights, exile, vandalism and seizure of property, as well as martyrdom. Obviously, this is serious business.

Even with the somber reflections upon the Holocaust and the implications of Jew hatred today, the authors manage to end their book with a ray of hope. The same is true for us even as we reflect upon the dangers of today’s world and the promises of future tribulation. Knowing how this age of humankind ends—with the victory of God over a rebellious humanity and the establishment of His Kingdom of righteousness—gives hope instead of hopelessness.

So we look forward to God establishing His Kingdom on earth, thus removing the threats and dangers to those who worship Him in spirit and in truth. ❖

“**FIGHT**” (Continued from page 16)

made an astute observation regarding the nature of man, as he witnessed the dismantlement of the Roman Empire:

“It is with the desire for peace that wars are waged...Every man seeks peace by waging war, but no man seeks war by making peace. For even they who intentionally interrupt the peace in which they are living have no hatred of peace, but only wish it changed into a peace that suits them better” (*Great Ideas: A Syntopicon of Great Books of the Western World*, Vol. 2, p. 1015).

Winston Churchill told a parable to illustrate the same lesson: “Once upon a time all the animals in the zoo decided they would disarm, and they arranged to hold a conference to decide the matter. The rhinoceros said that the use of teeth in war was barbarous and horrible, and ought strictly to be prohibited by general consent. Horns, which were mainly defensive weapons, would, of course, have to be tolerated. The buffalo, stag and porcupine said they would vote with the rhino; but the lion and the tiger took a different view. They defended teeth and even claws, as honorable weapons.

“Then the bear spoke. He proposed that both teeth and horns should be banned. It would be quite enough if animals would be allowed to give each other a good hug when they quarreled. No one could object to that. It was so fraternal, and would be a great step toward peace. However, all the other animals were offended with the bear, and they fell into a perfect panic.”

God tells it like it is!

God spells out a clear diagnosis of the heart of the matter in Isaiah 59:8: “The way of peace they have not known, and there is no justice in their ways; they have



Artist's conception of the death of Joseph (c. 1840-1904), chief of the Nez Percé. He led his tribe in successful resistance to the settlers in 1877, but finally decided to surrender to save his people.

made themselves crooked paths; whoever takes that way shall not know peace.”

Christ inspired the apostle James to comment further: “Where do wars and fights come from among you? Do they not come from your desires for pleasure that war in your members?” (James 4:1). The problem is that humans like to think of themselves as good, while God is telling us that left to ourselves, apart from Him, the human condition is downright ugly. We need help!

But why? The chronicled record of mankind shows that each generation repeats the mistakes of the previous one, like a never-ending circle. It takes profound humility and courage for men and women to step out of that circle and change the course of history.

When a person's fight starts within himself, instead of lashing out at the other guy, he then starts a truly worthy struggle for the first time. But the cycle of going around in circles must be broken. Yet often as persons and societies, we end up going around and around like a hamster on a wheel, instead of making decisions that will alter our lives for the better.

Stepping out of a world of circles

A Nez Percé chief named Joseph led his band of Native Americans for several months in the 1870s through Oregon, Washington, Wyoming, Idaho and Montana. He had a genius for battlefield maneuvers and constantly

World News and Prophecy Seminars

If you find this publication interesting and helpful, you may be interested in attending a weekend *World News and Prophecy* seminar. Seminars are planned for:

- **New England**, Nov. 17, 2007 (speakers: Robin Webber and Melvin Rhodes).
- **Louisville, Kentucky**, Dec. 23, 2007 (Darris McNeely, Melvin Rhodes).
- **Oklahoma City, Oklahoma**, March 15, 2008 (Melvin Rhodes, Robin Webber).
- **Charlotte, North Carolina**, March 22, 2008 (Darris McNeely, Paul Kieffer).
- **Vancouver, British Columbia**, April 5, 2008 (Darris McNeely, Robin Webber).

For more information, please go to www.wnponline.org.

frustrated the pursuing federal troops that greatly outnumbered him. He skillfully applied advance and rear guards, skirmish lines and field fortifications. In doing so, he wove a web of circles, around and around, throughout the Northwest wilderness.

While going in circles enabled him to win many a battle, he ultimately realized he wasn't winning the larger war. Canada was only 40 miles away, and he made a decision. Enough was enough. It was time to exit a world of circles.

The words of his formal surrender were caught for posterity: "Tell General Howard...I am tired of fighting. Our chiefs are killed; Looking Glass is dead, Too-hul-hul-sote is dead. The old men are all dead. It is the young men who say yes or no. He who led on the young men is dead.

"It is cold, and we have no blankets; the little children are freezing to death. My people, some of them have run away to the hills and have no blankets, no food. No one knows where they are—perhaps freezing to death.

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

War no more!

The time is soon coming when all humanity will echo those words! Ultimately, humankind will have to admit that it is facing total extinction. Christ forecast 2,000 years ago, "Unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened" (Matthew 24:22).

Christ could look ahead to the potential of nuclear warfare; He realized that humanity has rarely invented a weapon it does not use. Jesus clearly indicated that until that final crisis, humanity would continue its destructive cycle of circular existence. He warned that we "will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass" (verse 6).

Oh no, we need not be troubled, because we look forward to that ultimate day of armistice when Christ stands on the Mount of Olives and declares His

unconditional peace terms on a global population that has been conquered by the hosts of heaven, sparing humans from self-annihilation (Zechariah 14:3-5; Revelation 19:11-16).

Read one of those terms: "Neither shall they learn war anymore" (Isaiah 2:4). Imagine. Yes, just dwell on that for a bit. Think of all the incredible dividends of peace when humanity is forced off the "hamster wheel of war" by the Prince of Peace. It is wonderful to imagine and consider.

God wants us to ponder how different His world will be from ours. Here's some homework for you. Make your own list of millennial peace dividends and let them fill your heart, for God wants us to see ourselves right in "the thick of peace." You might begin by reading Isaiah 11.

Leaning forward

Christians should always anticipate that day and hour, much more than the historic meaning of "the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month." Prophecy reminds us that while humans alone cannot silence the inclination of their hearts toward war, God can and will do so on that certain day in the future.

As responsible students of prophecy, we need to come to realize that we don't have a date to pin up on the walls of our heart like a Nov. 11, for no one knows the day or hour. But it is infinitely more certain than the false hope of fighting "a war to end all wars."

Until the day and hour of God's choosing, perhaps the best way of leaning forward is to live our lives as soldiers of peace in the service of Christ. We must be soldiers who do not take the circular path of human reasoning, but battle the inner conflicts of their lives, for as James said, wars come from within us!

Perhaps Chief Joseph sets our compass best in the direction of Isaiah 30:21, which prescribes, "This is the way, walk in it." It is a way that comes to a fork in life's road, at which you surrender your will to Jesus Christ, rather than to the way of war, because you have resolved, "... from where the sun now stands, I will fight no more forever." ❖



Robin Webber

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by Robin Webber

“I Will Fight No More Forever”

The cool days of November are upon us. Since I was a lad, this time of the year always causes me to think of the echoing pronouncement, “It was on the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month that the guns went silent.” In the Commonwealth nations, this is often rendered Armistice or Remembrance Day. In America, it is commonly called Veterans Day. This is the day the guns went silent on the Western Front of what was then known as the “Great War.”

Amazingly, it has been 89 years since our grandfathers and great-grandfathers fought on the plains of Europe. It wasn’t supposed to be a great war. It simply wasn’t supposed to last long. But the complicated quilt of alliances that reacted to the assassination of the archduke of Austria at Sarajevo would have it no other way.

Surely, the wise men could have stopped it. Or certainly the cousins who occupied the thrones of England, Germany and Russia could have handled this in a backroom family way.

But, well, the rest is history. Perhaps the various politicians and nations had to get the tensions that had been building for decades out of their system. And, as is so often the way with war, the troops were still fighting in the accustomed manner of the last century’s conflicts and were not prepared for the latest technological advances. Charging horses were no match for newly devised automatic weaponry, and the big guns of war would do their job.

The dead deserved a reason for dying

As the “Great War” unfolded, many sought a great vision and hope around which humanity might rally. Certainly the dead deserved a reason for dying. Thus, this global eruption would be framed as “The War to End All Wars.” Certainly a better world would emerge! It simply

had to be. The societal evolution of man, so popularly envisioned at the time, demanded nothing less.

But reality fell far short of such lofty ideals. In less than 21 years, horses and tanks would meet again on the plains of Poland and the second round of world war would commence.

Could not the rhythm and rhyme of the magnificent poem “In Flanders Fields” still the most volatile heart with its pastoral illusions?

*In Flanders fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our place; and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.
We are the Dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved, and were loved, and now we lie
In Flanders fields.*

You may not be aware of the final verse that breaks from the pastoral setting to urge:

*Take up our quarrel with the foe:
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high.
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders fields.*

Oh yes, the drumbeat of war rhetorically sounded even from the grave! But why?

A selfish peace

At the beginning of the fifth century, Augustine of Hippo
(See “**FIGHT**,” page 14)