

CHURCH OF THE
E T E R N A L
G O D

“And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.” – Mathew 24:14

March 15, 2002

Dear Members and Co-workers,

It is truly remarkable how fast times goes by, and how quickly prophesied end-time events are developing. I just reread our member letter to you, dated November 30, 2001. I can't help but wonder at how much has happened since then. In that letter, we wrote:

“More terrible things will have to happen first, before the end is here... Imagine that! The terror attack on New York and the subsequent war in Afghanistan, for example, are only the ‘beginning.’ Terror and war... will *increase!*”

“The Bible forewarns that Christ *must* return to save man from himself and ensure his very survival (Matthew 24: 21-22). By then, most people will have died. We read in Is. 24:5-6: ‘The earth is also defiled under its inhabitants, because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant. Therefore the curse has devoured the earth... and *few men are left.*’ God will *destroy* those who *destroy* the earth (Rev. 11:18).”

Consider, what all has occurred since then. The increasingly violent hostilities in the Middle East have now been correctly described as “war.” The keepers of the “doomsday clock” advanced its hands, on February 27, to seven minutes to midnight (“midnight” meaning “doomsday”). This is the closest since 1953, when the United States tested the first hydrogen bomb.

At the same time, the friendship between the United States and Europe has somewhat cooled off. President Bush’s signing a measure in early March to impose tariffs of up to 30% on imports of foreign steel for three years, has prompted sharp protests from the European Union, and Great Britain and Germany in particular. European newspapers were quick to ask whether the United States will have to be held responsible for another trade war.

And now, the world learned of a secret report by the Bush administration, directing the U.S. military to prepare contingency plans to use nuclear weapons against at least seven countries. As the Los Angeles Times revealed on March 9, the classified report, called the “Nuclear Posture Review,” (NRP), was signed by Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld and delivered to Congress in early January. It points out, “The Pentagon needs to be prepared to use nuclear weapons against China, Russia, Iraq, North Korea, Iran, Libya and Syria. It says the weapons could be used in three types of situations: against targets able to withstand nonnuclear attack; in retaliation for attack with nuclear, biological or chemical weapons; or ‘in the event of surprising military developments.’” The report goes on to say that “the Pentagon should be prepared to use nuclear weapons in an Arab-Israeli conflict, in a war between China and Taiwan, or in an attack from North Korea on the south. They might also become necessary in an attack by Iraq on Israel or another neighbor.” Although Russia is no longer regarded an enemy, according to the report, the huge Russian arsenal, including about 6,000 deployed warheads and perhaps 10,000 smaller “theater” nuclear weapons, remain a concern.

Reactions to the report were mixed. Some conservative analysts, according to the L.A. Times, insisted that the Pentagon must prepare for all possible contingencies, and that the report outlines the right way to develop a nuclear posture for a post-Cold War world. Others disagreed. One nuclear arms expert was quoted, stating, “This clearly makes *nuclear weapons* a tool for *fighting* a war, rather than deterring them.”

Much of the European press responded with fear and anger. The German weekly magazine, Der Spiegel, pointed out in its Online editions of March 10 and 11, that China, Russia, Syria, France and South Korea reacted with “deep shock,” “concern,” and “puzzlement.” Germany’s foreign minister, Joschka Fischer, reemphasized the absolute need for reduction of nuclear weapons. Der Spiegel quoted a member of the Russian Parliament as saying that a large arsenal of U.S. nuclear weapons is directed against Russia, “forcing us to draw our own strategic conclusions.”

This world is *indeed* facing nuclear war. John Isaacs, President of the Council for a Livable World, was quoted by the L.A. Times as saying, “They’re trying desperately to *find new uses for nuclear weapons*, when their uses should be limited to deterrence. This is very, very dangerous talk.”

God’s Church has long understood that, according to Biblical prophecy, worldwide nuclear war is coming. At the same time, we must make sure that God will not hold us, in any way, responsible for the destruction of this world. We must do what we need to do, to be counted *very worthy* to be called God’s people (cp. Luke 20:35-36; 2 Thessalonians 1:5. The Greek word “*kataxio*,” translated as “counted worthy,” literally means, “reckoned *very worthy*.”).

God tells us that, if it were not for His people, this earth *would be* stricken with *utter* destruction (cp. Malachi 4:6). If Christ would not intervene and stop impending cosmocide, no flesh would be saved *alive* (cp. Matthew 24:22). *Nobody* would survive! But Christ *will* intervene – for the sake of His elect people!

Can we see the tremendous responsibility that God has placed on the shoulders of His children who are living in this last generation? If we were to fail in our Christian tasks and duties, this world *would be* obliterated from existence!

If we want to be God’s children, we must be pure in His sight. When we sin, we must repent of it. Christ died for us so that we don’t need to perish (cp. John 3:16); provided, however, that we *repent* and *accept His sacrifice* for the payment of our sins. The annual memorial of Christ’s death, as commemorated by us at the Feast of Passover, reminds us of the Father’s and Christ’s *awesome love* for us. We will be keeping Passover this year on the evening of March 26, 2002, reflecting on our *need* for Christ’s sacrifice and the *forgiveness* of our sins (cp. 1 John 1:8-10).

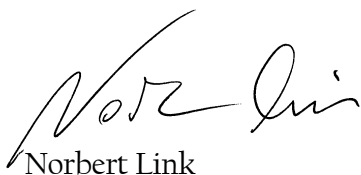
But, in order to receive God’s forgiveness, we must *forgive others* (cp. Matthew 6:12, 14-15). At the same time, we are not oblivious to the fact that *we*, too, have sinned against our fellow man. In dealing with one another, being human as we are, we *all* make mistakes. We *all* need to repent of wrong conduct, of wrong actions or reactions. God forgives us only when we *repent*!

We *all need* God’s forgiveness of our sins against God and man. How thankful we must be that God *is* ready and willing to forgive *us*. Let us not hold grudges against others, and let’s be equally *ready* to forgive those who have wronged us.

Our commitment to God must be ongoing. We must strive *not* to sin. And so, following the Passover, we will observe, for seven days, the Feast of Unleavened Bread from the sunset of March 27 until the sunset of April 3. These seven days teach us that we must not remain in, or return to sin, once we have received God’s forgiveness, but that we must strive to *come out of sin*, and to live a sinless life. When God lives in us, we will become more and more perfect, as our Father in heaven is perfect (Matthew 5:48), and we *will be* counted “*very worthy*,” [“*kataxio*” in the Greek], “to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man.” (Luke 21:36).

We wish you all a meaningful and spiritually rewarding Passover season.

With brotherly love,



Norbert Link