

The Worldwide News

OF THE WORLDWIDE CHURCH OF GOD

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DEC. 9, 1991

Yugoslav civil war endangers members, families in Croatia

By Becky Sweat

PASADENA—Since Croatia declared independence from Yugoslavia June 25, at least 10,000 people have died in the bloody civil war.

The five members and their families living in the troubled Yugoslav republic have not been affected directly by the violence, but some live in danger zones.

Zorka Taubkin, an elderly female member living in Zagreb, Croatia's capital, is safe, despite living close to the fighting. The stress of being in the middle of a war zone is taking a toll on Mrs. Taubkin's health.

A large number of refugees, primarily children and elderly, are coming to Zagreb from the surrounding countryside.

More than 55,000 refugees have come to Zagreb since the start of the war, forcing up prices of consumer goods and lowering wages. Food is sufficient, but conditions are deteriorating daily.

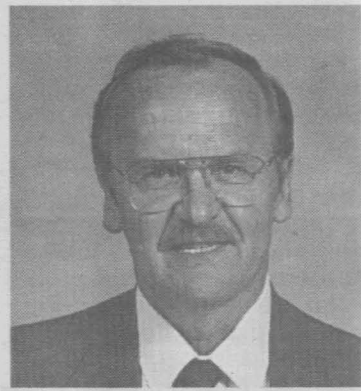
Two members live in Split, a coastal city in southern Croatia. Split is isolated and cut off as fighting has reached the city.

One of the members has been offered a position as a university lecturer. The other has only a few more exams to take for his degree

in electrical engineering.

As able-bodied men, they were required to sign up for the military. Both are army trained but are seeking civilian duty so as not to take up arms.

"Since Split has been bombarded, they have spent some nights with others in cellars and tempo-



ROBERT BERENDT

rary bomb shelters," says Robert Berendt, Munich and Nuremberg, Germany, and Salzburg and Vienna, Austria, pastor.

"Both men speak Croatian and only a little English, so their education and future lie in Croatia. The situation for them is especially difficult because as strong healthy young men, they are

expected to fight, especially since they are trained and have gone through compulsory army duty."

Mr. Berendt said the two men are not only in danger from enemy forces, but are also "looked upon as cowards and traitors by some of their own folk," he explained.

The other two members living in Yugoslavia are Minka Mersol and Darka Jesenko, who live in Novo Mesto, not far from Zagreb. They are out of Croatia and away from the danger zone.

Pance Hadzi-Andonov, a member from Macedonia, his wife and three children fled Yugoslavia last month and are living in Australia as refugees.

In addition to the members in Yugoslavia, at least a dozen prospective members and co-workers live in Zagreb, Belgrade and Maribor.

Help to Preko refugees

Ivo Ivin, a member, and his family are Croatians living in Germany. Their parents, brothers and sisters live in the battle zone.

"Their families and friends asked what they were going to do to help," Mr. Berendt told *The Worldwide News*. "Urgent appeals came from the Ivin family's hometown, Preko. Many refugees



VIOLENCE IN CROATIA—In addition to five members in Yugoslavia, at least a dozen prospective members and co-workers live in the provinces of Croatia, Serbia and Slovenia. [Map by Ron Grove]

have been housed there for two months and the situation is becoming desperate."

A hotel manager in Preko wrote a direct appeal to the Ivins for help, requesting blankets, food and heating oil.

About 160 refugees are housed in his hotel, including 110 children between the ages of three months and 16 years, along with elderly people and mothers. Some of these children have lost fathers in the fighting.

The Munich, Nuremberg, Salzburg and Vienna churches donated money and supplies to refugees at the hotel and to other groups in Preko.

Relatives and friends of Church members made contributions once they heard what the four churches were doing.

'We could not just stand by'

"Carloads and carloads of used clothing and blankets were donated, so much so that we had to rent a truck to take the supplies down," Mr. Berendt said. "It was obvious we could not just stand by."

Brethren donated roughly 4,500 deutsche marks (US\$3,500). With the money Mr. Ivin bought powdered milk, rice and other nonperishable food for the refugees. Leftover cash was used for heating oil.

Some of the contributions came from unexpected sources. "I was in the drugstore buying some eye medication for Mrs. Taubkin," Mr. Berendt related.

"When I was talking with the druggist I mentioned this was for

(See CIVIL WAR, page 3)

PERSONAL FROM

Joseph W. Tkach

Dear Brethren,

What is the real purpose of Bible prophecy?

Does prophecy have a special value for each individual Christian and for the Church as a whole?

The answer is a resounding yes. But some misunderstand.

Some tend to see Bible prophecy as a sort of jigsaw puzzle or secret code God left the Church.

They believe that if Church members study prophecy carefully enough, they will be able to figure out the answers to such curiosity-arousing questions as when Jesus will return, the personal identity of the beast of Revelation, or which modern nation will attack another.

However, to think of Bible

prophecy in this way is to think of it from a faulty premise—from the faulty premise that it is somehow important for Christians to know the answers to such questions.

Consequently, a person can unknowingly miss the point of prophecy and put his or her spiritual priorities in the wrong place.

Once again, we must go back to Jesus' clear statement: "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority" (Acts 1:7, New International Version unless noted).

Jesus also said: "No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father" (Matthew 24:36). A few verses later, he added, "So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him" (verse 44).

Be ready always

Jesus commanded us to be ready for his return. He did not command us to figure out when he would return. He told us we must always be ready, because we will not know when.

In verse 42, he tells us to watch. The reason? Because we do not know the hour. By watch-

ing, we will always be ready.

Matthew 25 continues the theme with the parable of the 10 virgins, five of whom remain ready by taking oil with them and five of whom do not.

The point of the parable? "Therefore keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour" (verse 13).

Chapter 25 then goes to the parable of the talents. The point? Use what our Master has given us so that we may be ready when he returns.

How to be ready

Next in Matthew 25 comes the powerful picture of the second coming with Christ seated on the throne of judgment. What is his standard for dividing the righteous from the wicked? Read Matthew 25:31-46 again. This is the key to being prepared for Jesus' return. This is the basis for "watching."

Let us never forget that Jesus said: "By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another" (John 13:35).

God has called us to a new life in Jesus Christ. We are his disciples. This new life is not one that is focused on how we can save ourselves.

Indeed, Jesus said: "For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will save it" (Luke 9:24). Instead, we are called to a life of love and service. This is what we are to be doing when Christ returns—living in him and he in us.

Despite Jesus' words, some want to persist in making a spiri-

tual priority out of what Jesus plainly said is not for us to know. Jesus *did* tell us what to do while we await these prophesied events. Somehow, though, what he told us to do is not nearly so exciting to some as what he didn't tell us to do.

To many people, prophecy is the most fascinating subject the Bible has to offer. A person can really get excited about seven-headed beasts, mysterious seals, a great red dragon, four ghastly

(See PERSONAL, page 6)

Troops attack in Togo; ministers cancel trip

By Marsha Sabin

PASADENA—After an attempted overthrow of the government of Togo, Bernard Andrist, who pastors French-speaking Africa, and Tony Gallagher, Lyons, France, pastor, were unable to visit Togo in November.

A curfew is in effect in Lome, the capital. The French government sent 300 marines and paratroopers to the neighboring country of Benin.

While the situation in this West African republic has calmed down for the moment, people remain in their homes, borders have been closed and it is considered too dangerous to enter Togo.

Had Mr. Andrist known about the newly instituted 30-day visa,

he would have requested it rather than the 48-hour visa, which they acquired.

Mr. Andrist feels it was God's intervention on their behalf that spared them from obtaining the extended visa, or they would have arrived in Togo during the coup.

About 50 members and their families live in the Lome area.

Though unable to cross the border into Togo, Mr. Andrist met with a member who traveled to Benin to see him and take care of Church business.

Under continuing pressure from soldiers supporting President Gnassingbe Eyadema, Prime Minister Joseph Koffigoh agreed to appoint a cabinet to represent "all political persuasions."



INSIDE

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Soviet turmoil: Europe looks East, South

PASADENA—The disintegration of the Soviet Union continues to have a dramatic impact on world affairs.

Sunday, Dec. 1, voters in the Ukraine overwhelmingly approved breaking ties with the central government in Moscow. They doomed, for now at least, Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev's plan to implement a new, looser union to replace the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

"A new Ukraine has been born," said Leonid M. Kravchuk, an ex-Communist, who was elected his nation's first president. "A great historical event has occurred, which will not only change the history of the Ukraine, but the history of the world."

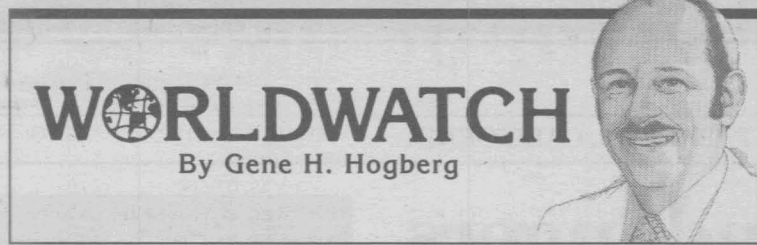
Only days before the vote, the United States government signaled it was resigned to the breakup of the Soviet state.

The Bush administration intends to recognize an independent Ukraine once its new leaders comply with U.S.-Soviet arms reduction agreements regarding nuclear weapons on Ukrainian soil.

First European synod

The historic change in the Ukraine coincided with the first synod, or church conference, of European bishops of the Roman Catholic Church in Vatican City.

At the opening session of the two-week conference Nov. 28,



WORLDWATCH

By Gene H. Hogberg

Pope John Paul II told the 137 assembled bishops—70 of them from Western Europe, 50 from Eastern Europe, plus 17 observers from other continents—to help him restore what he calls Europe's Christian roots after the collapse of communism.

"May this synod," he said, "move souls toward a new evangelization of Europe in this decisive historical moment."

New opportunities certainly exist in the East, despite some tensions between the Church and new non-Communist authorities. For one, the European Community—culturally Catholic at its core—is expanding eastward.

Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia signed association agreements with the EC Nov. 22. Complete ties may still be eight to 10 years away, but the preamble to the agreement explicitly states that "the ultimate objective of the three countries is to become full Community members."

Now, a new era opens, both in the political and religious spheres, with the dramatic development in the Ukraine.

Literally, *Ukraine* means "bor-

derland." True to its designation, this agricultural and industrial heartland straddles Europe's religious divide, between the Orthodox world to the East and the Roman Catholic and Eastern rite (Orthodox ritual with allegiance to Rome) communities to the West.

It is also important to note that both the Ukrainian and Russian nations trace their conversion to Christianity to the same date and place—988, when the ruler of Kyivan Rus, Vladimir (Volodymyr in Ukrainian) ordered his people into a tributary of the Dnieper River for a mass baptism.

(The Kyivan Rus state was a Slavic kingdom expanding outward from the region of Kiev in the ninth century and fell to the Mongols in the mid-13th century.)

Leaders of the Russian, Serbian, Romanian and Bulgarian Orthodox churches declined papal invitations to the pan-European synod, but other Orthodox delegates came. In a warm welcome, the pope said their presence could contribute to healing

the almost 1,000-year-old schism between Catholic and Orthodox bodies.

Adding a new dimension

At the Vatican conference, the 71-year-old Polish pontiff expounded again on his dream of a Continent united by the Christian faith. But he added a new geographical dimension to his vision.

A revitalized Christian Europe should extend not only "from the Atlantic to the Urals," but also "from the Mediterranean to the North Pole."

By including this new north-south axis, John Paul II acknowledged two key factors. First, the Nordic nations are taking up their European calling, at least economically, by linking up with the EC.

In the religious realm, the pope also wants them on the inside. Two years ago the pope made a grand tour of largely Protestant Scandinavia. He reminded his audiences of their common religious heritage with Rome that preceded the "sadness of divisions ... of the 16th century."

The second geographical factor adds importance to the Mediterranean as being the southern, religious frontier of Europe. This boundary abuts the world of Islam.

Synod moderator Cardinal Camillo Ruini drew attention to this reality. "Of particular importance is our relationship with Islam," he said. "We must encourage dialogue and collaboration with respect for religious freedom on all sides."

The disintegration of the Soviet Union bears on this developing

north-south issue as well. The five republics of Soviet Central Asia are predominantly Islamic in religion and "Turkic" by race and language—essentially the same people that inhabit Turkey today.

Throughout this vast region, Islam is surging in the wake of communism's demise. Future independence is not impossible.

Russian leader Boris Yeltsin says that, with the Ukraine going free, his republic cannot afford the cost of supporting Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and the others.

In the Caucasus, another Turkic people, the Azerbaijanis, most of whom are Shiite Moslems, are virtually at war with their Armenian Christian neighbors.

Turkey has recognized Azerbaijan's claim to independence. It also appears to be interested in expanding its influence through the vast Turkic realm.

Interestingly, the European Community's ambassador to the United States, Andreas Van Agt, interviewed in this column last issue, was asked after his speech in Los Angeles whether a Middle Eastern nation could ever become a member of the Community.

"It is inconceivable," he replied. "The EC would no longer be European." This brought up the question of Turkey, he continued, that part-European but mostly Asian nation that has tried for years, unsuccessfully, to enter the EC. Turkey, he conceded, would probably not be admitted "in my lifetime."

A frustrated Turkey, though still officially a secular state, will likely throw in its lot with future forces in the Islamic south. Therefore, the lines of a Catholic Europe-Islamic Middle East confrontation are steadily being drawn.



Just one more thing

By Dexter H. Faulkner

How God looks at you

As someone once said, each of us is composed of three people—the person we see ourselves as, the person other people see in us and the person we really are.

Of course, God views us the way we really are, not the way we see ourselves or the way others see us. The fact that God views us the way we really are sounds like the worst news possible.

But, there is good news. God sees us as we are, regardless how we see ourselves.

If we have an attitude of humility, then God will look upon us with mercy and favor. God says: "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, New King James through-out).

Moses the Meek

Aaron and Miriam were criticized of Moses because he had married an Ethiopian woman. But God rebuked them and said: "If there is a prophet among you, I, the Lord, make Myself known to him in a vision, and I speak to him in a dream. Not so with My servant Moses; he is faithful in all My house. I speak with him face to face, even plainly, and not in dark sayings; and he sees the form of the Lord" (Numbers 12:6-8).

God had high regard for Moses and asked Aaron and Miriam why they were not afraid to speak against his servant (verse 8).

Aaron and Miriam viewed themselves highly (verse 2) but didn't view Moses highly enough. They didn't see him the way God did.

God viewed Moses favorably because he "was very humble, more than all men who were on the face of the earth" (verse 3).

In Jesus Christ's parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector, the Pharisee was self-righteous and had a high opinion of himself.

He pointed the finger at others—extortioners, unjust, adulterers and the tax collector—and exalted his own qualities: "I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess" (Luke 18:9-12).

If we have an attitude of humility, then God will look upon us with mercy and favor.

The tax collector neither accused anyone else nor exalted himself. He humbly asked: "God be merciful to me a sinner!" (verse 13).

Christ said the tax collector (who recognized his need to be put right with God) would be justified rather than the Pharisee.

"For everyone who exalts himself will be abased, and he who humbles himself will be exalted" (verse 14). This Christ said to those "who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others" (verse 9).

Brethren, which attitude are we closer to, the Pharisaic attitude or the repentant, humble attitude displayed by the tax collector?

The Bible shows us clearly, however, that the Pharisees held no monopoly on the tendency to condemn others, while ignoring personal character flaws.

What God counsels us to do is to learn to see other people and

ourselves as he does.

A clear vision

God and Jonah had a different view of the people of Nineveh.

Jonah saw the enemy of his people. God also saw people, but he wanted to give them a chance to repent and live (Jonah 4:11).

The One who created all of mankind, who has in mind our ultimate potential and who would die to ensure we can achieve it is concerned that people change.

Jonah should have been joyful, instead he was resentful. His is a story in how selfishly we can judge others. But even some of Jesus' closest disciples were quick to condemn.

James and John wanted to bring fire down from heaven to destroy a Samaritan village because the people didn't receive Christ.

What James and John didn't see clearly was that they too had fallen short of the mark. Their condemnation of sin was right,

but their desire for instant punishment for the sinner showed little forgiveness. They had forgotten how merciful God had been to them.

Christ told James and John: "The Son of Man did not come to destroy men's lives but to save them" (Luke 9:56).

Sometimes we forget how God looks at us. He can see the way we are now and he sees within us the possibility of what we can become.

He is there to help us make that change, which is now under way for those who put off the old sinful life and are learning to "put on the new man which was created according to God, in righteousness and true holiness" (Ephesians 4:24).

When he looks down on this corrupt, lawless world, he sees us as his saints, his children, a sprinkling of pure white salt in an unsavory, sick society.

European Diary

By John Ross Schroeder



Europe: more change

BOREHAMWOOD, England—In my last column I discussed some of the changes now occurring in Europe. Following are further changes that will continue to reshape the Continent and, perhaps, the world.

● **Economic expansion.** A further development on the Continent is the agreement by the EC with the seven European Free Trade Association nations (EFTA). This will make the EC-EFTA combine the largest trading bloc in the world.

Other regions of the world, including North America, fear they might be excluded by high tariffs from this market of some 380 million consumers, and exclusion could lead to a trade war.

● **Religious failure.** Meanwhile, spiritual values are in decline on the Continent, with few Europeans attending church. The Anglican church in Britain has lost its influence to guide the nation morally.

Surveys show a breakdown in family life. One-parent families in Britain have doubled in 20 years, the highest rate in Europe. More than one child in five was born out of wedlock in England and Wales last year. A 24-year-old man fathered nine children by six women.

Elsewhere in Europe, a similar rejection of traditional family values is occurring.

Meanwhile, crime continues to

increase. Britain is witnessing the highest rise in the crime rate (18 percent) in its history.

● **The ecological scene.** One observer called Europe "Our Green and Poisoned Land."

Scientists warn that drastic steps are required to control acid rain. Thirty percent of British land suffers more acidification than it can stand. Europe is inundated with pollution.

Extra pollution often comes from economic growth—the kind of material growth that the EC needs to ensure future economic wealth. It is not easy to have both.

● **Racial violence.** I have saved the worst trend in Europe for last: racial hatred. The specter of neo-Nazism is rearing its ugly head again.

The papers have been full of violence against foreigners for months, worse now than at any time since World War II.

In an Austrian public opinion poll, 20 to 30 percent of Austrians were shown to hold anti-Semitic and xenophobic views.

In France, extreme right-wing, anti-foreigner politicians are growing in power and popularity.

A leader in the American Ku Klux Klan traveled to Europe to forge links with neo-Nazi race thugs.

Europe is certainly going through a period of changing times.

Worldwide News survey shows 'Personal' most-read column

By Thomas C. Hanson

PASADENA—Thanks to all of you who responded to our May 13 survey. Our continual interest is to serve you, our readers, better.

Our thanks to Wayne Pyle and Rita Sampson of the media analysis section of the Church's Mail Processing Center for compiling the responses.

About 7,700 member households responded. This represents 11 percent of total worldwide English-speaking membership (70,200 households) in May.

"The survey does not necessarily reflect the opinions of the 89 percent who did not respond," Mr. Pyle said.

The most-read column is Mr. Tkach's "Personal," read by 98 percent of the respondents. Following in order are "Just One More Thing," "Iron Sharpens Iron," news articles about the Church, "Worldwatch," "From Our Scattered Brethren," "European Diary" and articles about members.

Survey comments

Forty-three percent said they spend more than one hour reading each *Worldwide News*, 27 percent spend 45 minutes to one hour, 14 percent spend 30 to 44 minutes, 12 percent spend 15 to 29 minutes and 1 percent spend less than 15 minutes.

Seventy-eight percent read 75 to 100 percent of the paper. Eighteen percent read half to three quarters of the paper.

Seventy-one percent felt that the *WN* explains Mr. Tkach's decisions and directions concerning the Church very effectively, and 26 percent said the decisions were explained effectively.

The Worldwide News

CIRCULATION 71,000

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Here are some comments we received from our readers:

● Please end each article on the page where it begins.

This is a common request and one that we try to fulfill when possible. However, it would overly restrict our layout to never continue an article on another page.

Standard newspaper practice is to put the most important news articles on page one and continue them inside the paper.

● Please publish a penpal section so we can write to other members.

The Worldwide News had a penpal section in the 1970s. However, many used this section to submit what in effect were matrimony ads. This led to problems as some decided they wanted to marry their penpal after the first letter.

We surveyed pastors and they asked that we discontinue the penpal section.

It is not our policy to publish the names and addresses of members. This has led to members receiving unwanted mail.

● We read about a problem and are asked to pray about it, and that's that. We would like very much to see some development, for example, one way or the other.

We are trying to improve in this area. If you receive a prayer request, we suggest that you pray about it, and, if after a few months you haven't read anything about it in the *WN*, you may want to delete it from your prayer list. If we don't purge our prayer lists they can soon become unmanageable and frustrating.

It is impossible for *The Worldwide News* to be as up to date as the daily news. Periodically we publish a list of countries and the number of members in each one. We suggest that when you hear of trouble in certain countries that you pray for those people and check the list of members so you can pray for the members there.

● The announcements of births, weddings, anniversaries and obituaries are out of date.

Announcements are the first headline of the paper. The cutoff date is three weeks before the paper is printed, so it does take a while

for announcements to be published. However, most announcements appear late because we receive them late.

Several mentioned that misspellings or other errors occurred in announcements or articles they sent in. If this happens please let us know as soon as possible so we can determine why.

We also ask that announcements be typed or printed. Even with good handwriting it can be difficult to determine precisely what each letter is. It can be easy for us to offend people when we telephone them and say we cannot read their writing.

● Our 25th wedding anniversary was reported by our children in September 1989 and was not published, which frankly discouraged us. The picture and write-up was not returned.

It is our policy to respond when we cannot publish an announcement, so we would like to determine where the problem is. If your announcement does not appear within four issues after you send it, please contact us immediately.

● Please make the print bigger, especially on the Announcements page.

We are considering this. The drawbacks, however, are that we would either have to increase the number of pages (a matter of money) or decrease the amount of material in the eight pages.

Civil war

(Continued from page 1)

a lady in Zagreb who couldn't get her medication. I told him this because I didn't know if it was required to have a doctor's prescription."

Mr. Berendt told him they were getting supplies together for the refugees in Preko and the druggist asked if he could make a contribution. "I said yes, of course," he continued.

"The people down there really need things like painkillers, ointments, antiseptics and vitamins. The druggist came out dragging such a big sack I had to carry it with both hands. It must have been

Already we have more news than we can fit in most eight-page issues. We publish 12 pages when we have too much of a backlog.

● The paper takes too long to arrive. The late arrival of *The Worldwide News* makes it *Worldwide History*. It is difficult to be fervent when the news is really out of date.

This is frustrating for us also. However, it would be extremely expensive to mail *The Worldwide News* by a faster method.

In the United States, a change from third class to first class would increase postage alone \$8,160 for each issue or nearly \$196,000 each year.

● Have sections in foreign languages.

We don't plan to add foreign sections in the English *Worldwide News*. Abbreviated *Worldwide News* editions are already published in German, French and Spanish.

● Writing is unclear and poorly punctuated. Use *A Manual of Style* by the Government Printing Office and *English for Modern Business*.

Stylebooks vary on correct usage. *The Worldwide News* uses the Church's stylebook, with the Associated Press Stylebook, a standard in the U.S. newspaper industry, for backup. Occasional errors do occur, however diligent we may be.

● Some American words we middle-aged "Brits" don't understand, e.g., sophomore.

We have two British editors on the staff. With their help, we try not to write something that British members would not understand.

● Use the full name of states

in the United States so that overseas brethren will know the location.

We are considering spelling out the names of U.S. and Australian states, and Canadian provinces.

● We like unleavened bread recipes. But we cannot make some of the recipes since many of the ingredients are not available in the Caribbean.

We plan to publish unleavened bread recipes Feb. 17, 1992. We would love to have recipes from around the world.

How we are perceived

Other readers made these remarks:

● Remember, there is more to the world than America. In fact, America is only 5 percent of the world's population. Stick to God's values and not American ones and be culturally sensitive!

We are not all Americans and do not strive to be so, but we do aspire to be good Christians in our own cultural environments.

● The California-based writers of the *WN* are not aware that many readers are not as affluent as they are, or live in rural areas where the "typical suburban lifestyle" is not found.

● I really appreciate Mr. Tkach's open approach to us all, his thanks and the kind, considerate way he speaks to us women.

● I devour *The Worldwide News* like a ravenous beast!

● I am not able to attend Sabbath services and therefore really appreciate *The Worldwide News*. It helps me feel part of God's Church and provides me with a source of valuable prayer material.

a thousand dollars worth of medication."

The needs of the Yugoslavian brethren are being taken care of. Donations from other areas of the world are not needed at this time.

Croatia: economic standstill

The Croatian economy has come virtually to a standstill. According to one news report, some 50,000 workers in Zagreb will be waiting indefinitely for their paychecks.

Universities and schools are closed. Coastal cities such as Split and Preko, once tourist cities, are basically shut down. Hotels void of tourists are filling up with refugees.

Although not a big problem for brethren, unemployment is a growing concern. More than 272,000 are unemployed in Croatia—21 percent of the population.

"Even though the economy is bad, at this point the brethren are managing," Mr. Berendt says.

"The people in Yugoslavia are really pulling together. They are pooling their resources and doing what they can to get by."

For many the hardest part of the civil war is the memories it revives of World War II.

"In that war one million Yugoslavian people died, and 500,000 of them were killed by their own people," he said.

"The Croatians were allied with Hitler and they killed 300,000 Serbs. At the end of the war the Serbs, as guerrilla fighters, killed 200,000 Croatians. Both sides have deep-rooted hatreds."

14 cease-fires broken

No quick end to the war is in sight. Fourteen cease-fires have been broken.

Added Mr. Berendt: "Although few people think Yugoslavia can be one country again, the average person on the street—Serb or Croat—has no desire for this war."

Letters to the Editor

The Worldwide News welcomes your comments. Letters for this section should be addressed to "Letters to the Editor." The editor reserves the right to use letters so addressed in whole or in part, and to include your name and edit the letter for clarity or space.

Worldwide family

I just wanted you to know how much my husband and I enjoy *The Worldwide News*. We always enjoy looking forward to reading Mr. Tkach's "Personal." He explains all the changes and important information to us.

I also enjoyed the Sept. 16 issue with all the news about our brethren in different parts of the world and the maps to show us where they are located. It seems like I am there seeing their circumstances. Thanks for the pictures and the information about their trials so I can pray about them.

Amarillo, Tex.

Personal finances

The Sept. 16 edition of *The Worldwide News* contained so many helpful hints shared by others on finances, as well as its other usual enlightening articles.

I would like to add a personal experience...

My personal experience deals with my job as a conservation education secretary where occasionally I travel to confer-

ences and often must spend one night in a motel on the way.

Unless I carry cash (dollars with pictures of presidents), I have to carry a credit card because most of the motels do not accept checks.

Fortunately for me, some time ago I took the opportunity to obtain a MasterCard. It lay unused in my billfold for nearly two years. It was merely because I am on the road a lot and felt the need for something to fall back on in case of car trouble (driving a 15-year-old car—which grew to be a 20-year-old car before I finally was able to buy a new one).

I do not have money, and lots of places away from home do not accept checks. I'm afraid credit cards are a necessity rather than a luxury in today's society.

Murfreesboro, Tenn.

Financial tips needed

Thank you for the "Reader Suggestions on Financial Tips." I have prayed to God many times asking for just such a program. We must grow spiritually. However, we are still physical and need help dealing with topics such as finances.

Some of us have struggled to get the most out of our money for years. We need this type of education very much. I hope such articles continue for years to come!

Jackson, Mich.

"Into all the world..."

Your involvement in the Work produces fruit. This column shows how the Church's publications and the telecast change the lives of subscribers, co-workers and prospective members.

Plain Truth makes a difference

Many thanks for copies of *The Plain Truth* over the years, as it has really helped me understand the Bible. It all makes sense now and that old saying "you can't judge a book by its cover" has proved true. When I started reading years ago, it did not make much sense. Now, it's the only book worth reading.

M.T.
Australia

The series of articles in the *Plain Truth* magazine about the history of the Church have been excellent. They contain thought-provoking information about the efforts of people who have helped shape the development of the Church, and about the people who made up the congregations standing diligently by their faith in spite of numerous, outside, nega-

tive pressures. The articles have helped me imagine how people lived by God's word in very, very different times.

J.L.
Australia

Thank you for your very interesting and free magazine. I often wonder how it is that you can publish it and send it to people all around the world at no cost to the recipients. Perhaps you could send copies to our government ministers! In fact, I think it would be great if most of the world's governments were to read it.

T.S.
New Plymouth, New Zealand

I have known for some time that our church does not approve of *The Plain Truth*. I cannot see why. I have taken some time to think about this issue and have finally decided to ask you to take me off your mailing list. I looked forward to getting your booklets and magazine, but find that in the long run, I must be obedient to the church I belong to.

E.M.
Wellington, New Zealand



IRON SHARPENS IRON

You must be born from above

The historic confrontation in John's Gospel

By K.J. Stavrinides

The conversation between Jesus and Nicodemus is the climax of a rejection that was announced as early as the first chapter of John. "He came unto his own, and his own received him not" (verse 11).

Luke adds that Jesus' contemporaries "hated him" (Luke 19:14), but as representatives of the realm of darkness, the Jews were not able to quench his light (John 1:5).

Evangelist K.J. Stavrinides is professor of classics and philosophy at Ambassador College.

Even though John the Baptist witnessed that Jesus was the Son of God (John 1:15-34), Jesus' identity was evident in his miracles (as in turning the water to wine, John 2). Some Jewish rulers and teachers (3:10) knew that he had divine powers, but they rejected his message.

Samaritans, ironically, believed him and accepted his teaching (4:39-42).

John's intention, in chapter 3, was to highlight the Jewish rejection in terms of a national confrontation, between two representative individuals (Jesus and Nicodemus).

That Nicodemus represented Judaism in this account is evident from John's description of him as a Pharisee, a teacher and a ruler of the Jews (John 3:1, 10).

A clearer indication that this was a national confrontation is afforded by the plural personal pronouns used both by Nicodemus and by Jesus in the claim "we know" (3:2), in which Nicodemus refers to Judaism, and in Jesus' response "I told you [plural] but ye..." (3:12). These pronouns present Nicodemus as the embodiment of Judaism, speaking on its behalf and receiving replies for the whole nation.

In addition to the hints mentioned above, John has included a reference to the blindness of the Jews, in the veiled connection with the night (3:2).

Nicodemus' preference for the night echoes the thought that the Jews loved darkness because their deeds were evil (3:19-21). Jesus could have praised Nicodemus for coming to him, but the issue in this account is Judaism, not Nicodemus' personal attitude toward the truth.

Nicodemus approached Jesus with a comment that is often misread. He began with an acknowledgment that Jesus was a man "come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him" (John 3:2).

This admission did not grant that Jesus was the Son of God, but only that he had been commissioned by God. For that matter, so were the prophets of the Old Testament and John the Baptist. At very best, the Jews represented by Nicodemus were prepared to allow no more than a divine mission for Jesus.

In John's terms, however, the status of a divinely commissioned teacher does not capture the truth concerning Jesus.

Nicodemus indeed could see that miracles were being performed, but was not able to perceive their full import or purpose.

For this reason, Christ pointed out to him that these were only signs, a visible manifestation of a higher power, and could not be experienced through the senses.

Sense experience is what John meant by "see" (John 3:3), as can be surmised from expressions like "see life" (3:36) and "taste death" (Mark 9:1).

The kingdom of God would be in view only if the missing condition were present, namely an internal change that would bring about an entirely new outlook. The person who undergoes this internal change is so drastically changed that he could be described as a new being. Since the new being would see things from a higher perspec-

tion, it was "woven from the top [anōthen] in one piece" (John 19:23). John uses the expression only in the sense of "from above" (see also John 3:31, 19:11).

When John wants to say "again," he uses other terms. One such term is *palin* (John 1:35, 4:3, 13, 46, 54, etc.). John 3:3, therefore, should be rendered "born from above," not "born again." Of course, if someone is born from above when he is old, he is also born again.

John's meaning is a birth from God, not merely a second birth. Only a birth from God would enable Nicodemus to perceive that the kingdom of God was at work in the miracles that the Jews had witnessed.

In fact, John says clearly that those who receive Christ (1:12) are born (*gennao*) "not of blood, nor of

Spiritual matters can be experienced only by those who are equipped by a spiritual birth. Man, then, needs two births, otherwise he is hampered by his limitations.

the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (1:13).

Meaning of *gennao* and *tikto*

Gennao derives its meaning from the root *genna* (birth). It means "to produce through birth." Whether the agent is male or female, the meaning of the verb is the same, "to bring a child into the world." Some clear passages that illustrate the meaning of this verb are:

Matthew 2:1: "Jesus was born [*gennao*] in Bethlehem."

Matthew 19:12: "...eunuchs, which were so born [*gennao*] from their mother's womb."

Luke 1:13: "Thy wife Elizabeth shall bear [*gennao*] thee a son."

Greek has other verbs for describing birth specifically as an act of a woman. One of these verbs is *tikto*.

This verb cannot be applied literally to a father because he is not bodily equipped for this function, but a figurative application of the verb to a man is in order.

In this sense, Onesimus became Paul's son—"who became my son [*tikto*] while I was in chains" (Philemon 10, New International Version).

Some clear passages in which *tikto* is used literally (to describe parturition) are:

Matthew 1:21: "She shall bring forth [*tikto*] a son."

Luke 1:57: "Elizabeth's full time came that she should be delivered [*tikto*]."

Hebrews 11:11: "...and was delivered of a child."

In John 3:3, the verb is *gennao*—which describes coming into the world, not a birth in the sense of parturition.

Again or from above?

The verb *gennao*, in John 3:3, is accompanied by the adverb *anōthen*. Depending on the context, this adverb can mean "again" or "from above."

The nearest expression in English is "from the top" (*ano* = above, *then* = from). Christ's tunic

was "woven from the top [anōthen] in one piece" (John 19:23). John uses the expression only in the sense of "from above" (see also John 3:31, 19:11).

When John wants to say "again," he uses other terms. One such term is *palin* (John 1:35, 4:3, 13, 46, 54, etc.). John 3:3, therefore, should be rendered "born from above," not "born again." Of course, if someone is born from above when he is old, he is also born again.

John's meaning is a birth from God, not merely a second birth. Only a birth from God would enable Nicodemus to perceive that the kingdom of God was at work in the miracles that the Jews had witnessed.

In fact, John says clearly that those who receive Christ (1:12) are born (*gennao*) "not of blood, nor of

the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (1:13).

Born or begotten?

Some translators render *gennao*, in John 3:3, as "born," others as "begotten." The resulting phrase varies: "born again" (King James Version), "begotten from above" (New American Bible).

The word *begotten* is obsolete in modern English, except in rhetorical expressions (such as "hatred begets murder"). When the Bible says that Abraham begot Isaac (Matthew 1:2), it means that Abraham was the father of Isaac. Instead of "Isaac begot two sons," modern English uses "Isaac had two sons."

The difference between *bear* and *beget*, in King James English, is that the first applies only to parturition while the latter can refer to the

father's bringing a son into the world (obviously through his wife's parturition).

A mistake has been made with respect to the two verbs, by associating *beget* with the union of the spermatozoon and the ovum (conception)—but from the standpoint of a father.

The verb *beget* does not have such a meaning, and the wide acceptance of the wrong meaning is due to the fact that *beget* is an obsolete verb, thus lending itself more easily to misuse.

Compound verbs beginning with the prefix *be* describe personal involvement in the action indicated. Thus *beget*, *beseech*, *beguile*, *behave*, *betray*, etc. express personal involvement. It is for this reason that the translators of the King James Version chose to say that Abraham begot Isaac.

With reference to John 3, Jesus was explaining to Nicodemus that the Jews experience physical matters (including the visible miracles he had performed) only because they are equipped by their physical birth for that task. Spiritual matters

as if it were a part of rudimentary physics. Christ was not distinguishing the different substances (flesh from wood or metal, for example), but was stressing what he had enunciated already, that Spirit is not limited.

Flesh cannot aspire to spiritual truths because God's kingdom functions at a higher level. Whatever is born of flesh is flesh—that is to say, flesh cannot transcend its limitations. On the other hand, that which is born of the Spirit is spirit—that is to say, spirit reaches areas that lie beyond the physical realm.

In the verses that follow, Jesus took the thought one step further. Since the Spirit of God is so important, because it functions beyond the physical man's grasp, Jesus introduced the analogy of the wind (verses 7 and 8).

One knows the results of the activity of the wind—leaves blown about, trees bending, etc.—but the origin, the cause, the "where from" and the "where to" of the wind are not disclosed in the physical results.

Lives are changing and miracles are taking place, but the source and destination of what is evidenced are not understood. In the context of this lack of understanding, the Jews of Christ's day were rejecting the kingdom of God, and John constructs the account in a way that incorporates the truths that the Jews had rejected: Jesus was the Son of Man, coming from heaven (3:13), the Son of God (3:17, 18), the Light of the world (3:19).

Misuse of Christ's words

The conversation in John 3 was initiated by Nicodemus. We have no reason to believe that Jesus ever went to anyone to ask if that person had been born again, as one finds today.

The account given by John is often treated as a passport for confronting unbelievers to ask if they have been born again, or to encourage them to do so by accepting Jesus Christ. The purpose of the passage is to register a serious lack in Judaism, in which the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit was not understood and the work of God's kingdom was not perceived.

Conception and Resurrection

Contexts of *gennao* outside John's Gospel

By K.J. Stavrinides

The verb *gennao* appears in various contexts in the New Testament. In some places, *gennao* would seem, on the surface, to have a meaning other than that which it has in the Gospel of John. Those passages of the New Testament are isolated and explained below.

Conception

Matthew 1:20 says: "that which is conceived [*gennao*] in her is of the Holy Spirit." The task of the translator is difficult. He has to decide if he will give a rendering that reads smoothly in English (or in some other language), or one that stays close to the original at the expense of the new version.

If the rendering of Matthew 1:20 were to stay close to the original, it would have to say: "that which is *begotten* [*gennao*] in

her" or "that which is *born* [*gennao*] in her"; but either rendering is stilted in English.

The older translators, both English and Latin, had noticed the difficulty and tried to convey the sense correctly. The Wycliff Bible speaks of that which is *borun* (born) in her, and the Vulgate does the same with the expression *natum est* (is born) in her.

Since the King James Bible was meant to be read in churches, it had to reflect good English throughout. The translators gave the sense of the original rather than the exact translation of the terms used.

Had they chosen exact parallel terms, they would have had to construct an English sentence that would refer to the result—to that which had been brought about in Mary's womb.

On the other hand, had Matthew

intended to describe conception (the beginning stage) rather than what he describes (the final stage), he would have used the verb *sul-lambano* (to conceive).

No reference to conception is being made in Matthew 1:20, and, despite the problems of translation, the verb *gennao* is used in the same sense as it is used in John's Gospel.

The resurrection

In Acts 13:32-34, Luke wrote: "This day have I begotten [*gennao*] thee," which would suggest a reference to the resurrection. Those who espouse this interpretation would have to grant that Christ became the Son of God at the resurrection—which contradicts countless passages in the New Testament where Christ is declared to be the Son of God,

(See GENNAO, page 6)

Dutch Office

Nieuwegein, Netherlands

Dutch Regional Office serves 'close-knit group of people'

By Becky Sweat

With just seven full-time employees, the Dutch Office is the smallest of the Church's regional offices.

The office administers four churches which, when combined, add up to no more than 500 people (the size of one large congregation in the United States).

"The Dutch brethren are a close-knit group of people," says Bram de Bree, regional director for the Dutch-speaking areas and pastor of the four Dutch-language churches.

"In a group this small, you really get to know one another. When one of the church areas has a social, members from the other three churches also come. People here are very involved with one another."

Mr. de Bree says the Dutch brethren don't mind traveling to visit one another. "Public transportation in the Netherlands is very good," he says. "You can get anywhere you want by train or bus in a relatively short time. By car it is possible to drive the entire length of the country in under four hours."

Small country

The Netherlands is a small country, covering an area of

15,892 square miles (41,320 square kilometers), which is about half the size of the state of Maine.

With a population of 15 million people, the Netherlands is one of the most densely populated nations in the world.

In addition to the Netherlands, the Dutch Office covers the northern half of Belgium, where



BRAM & TRUDY DE BREE

Dutch is also spoken. This is also called the Flemish part of Belgium.

The southern half of Belgium speaks French and is administered by the French Department in Pasadena.

Three of the Dutch-language churches are in the Netherlands:

Doorn, Zwolle and Tilburg.

The fourth congregation is in Antwerp, Belgium.

"Although they share the same language, there are cultural differences," Mr. de Bree said.

The Dutch *Plain Truth* (*De Echte Waarheid*) with a circulation of 37,000, primarily goes to people in the Netherlands and northern Belgium, but some subscriptions also go to remote parts of the world such as Indonesia, Suriname (formerly Dutch Guiana) and St. Martin and Curacao in the Caribbean.

Big challenges

Doing the Work in the Netherlands offers some big challenges. (See DUTCH, page 8)



DUTCH SERVANTS—Full-time employees of the Dutch Office in Nieuwegein are (back row from left): Johan Wilms, Margit Zijderveld, Jan Zijderveld, Bram de Bree; front row: Truus Triezenberg, Iepke Klarenberg and Jane Gregory. Not pictured is Harold Van Lerberghe, a local church elder in the Antwerp, Belgium, church, who handles personal correspondence. The office uses six professional translators on a consulting basis. [Photo courtesy Rob Glastra Fotografie]

Adding spice to Dutch area Prisoner of war carries memories of colonial past

By Richard Steinfort

From 1596 to 1949, the islands of present-day Indonesia were a Dutch colony. Formerly known as the Netherlands East Indies (N.E.I.), the islands provided the Netherlands with sugar, coffee,

tea, rubber, textiles and spices.

Into this setting Louis Joost de Lange was born in 1918, in East Java and worked with his nine brothers and sisters on their father's sugar plantation.

The third generation to live on N.E.I., his paternal grandparents and maternal great-great-grandparents had left the Netherlands to make their living there.

While growing up, Mr. de Lange became acquainted with mechanical and electrical technology, farming, hunting and jungle survival. He also learned how to get along with different cultures and religions.

At age 19, Mr. de Lange left his planters job to fulfill compulsory military service.

In the Royal Netherlands Navy, Mr. de Lange trained as a radio operator. He was stationed on HMS *De Ruyter*. Well before the Battle of the Java Sea, when the ship sank, he was transferred to the naval air force.

"I really felt protected when I realized that HMS *De Ruyter* had sunk. In my first air combat against a Japanese Mitsubishi Navy 96, I felt protected as well."

A bullet silenced a radio one foot away from him, Dec. 17, 1941.

In March 1942 N.E.I. surrendered. Mr. de Lange was transferred through several Japanese prisoner of war camps to Burma to work on the Burmese railroad.

After the navy Mr. de Lange worked for the air service department of the Shell company. "Those flights were not ordinary flights from point A to point B but were more like discovery flights. I still love traveling and flying."

In 1956 he worked as an air traffic controller for the Dutch government on Dutch New Guinea, sometimes working around the clock.

Until he retired in 1983, Mr. de Lange was a government personnel adviser for the ministry of defense and the ministry of agriculture.

First Sabbath service

In 1959 Mr. de Lange responded to a *Plain Truth* ad in the Australian *Reader's Digest*. On a trip

to the United States in 1975 Mr. de Lange attended Sabbath services for the first time.

"I wanted to see what had come of the money I had donated for the building of the Auditorium," he explains. "I accidentally ended up in services and heard a vigorous man of 86 years [Herbert W. Armstrong] speak."

At that point, Mr. de Lange still didn't know there were Church services in the Netherlands. "That same year a colleague of mine whose brother was coming from New Zealand asked me if his



FLYING DUTCHMAN—Travel and flying buff Louis de Lange plans a trip to Israel from the Netherlands. [Photo by J. de Moeij]

brother could come to services," he relates.

"I answered that there were no services in the Netherlands. He assured me there were. So I called the one telephone number I knew. The man on the other end of the line was Mr. Johan Wilms [Dutch Office manager]. When I asked if there were services on the Feast of Trumpets he answered yes."

Mr. de Lange was baptized June 12, 1976.

A true gentleman

Bram de Bree, Dutch regional director, called him "an example and a true gentleman, who in a friendly and charming way adds something from a different culture."

"He is a true reminder of our colonial past," said Mr. Wilms. "So just like the colonies provided the Netherlands with spices from its plants, so Mr. de Lange adds flavor to the Church in the Dutch-language area."

INTERNATIONAL DESK FROM OUR DUTCH OFFICE

By Johan Wilms
Dutch Office manager

The Netherlands went through a period of severe austerity after the Second World War and the 1945 to 1949 Colonial War in Indonesia.

In addition to recovering from the two wars, the country had to cope with going from a colonial power to a European power, and from an agriculturally based economy to an industrial trade-based economy, with only limited raw material at its disposal.

These changes have been remarkably smooth, primarily because the country realized there were no alternatives for hard work and austerity. The government did its share to live within its means.

The participation in the European Common Market (EC), which started with the Common Coal and Steel Agreement among the European nucleus of the six in 1951, boosted the economy into a more modern, industrial society.

Another change came in the mid-1950s with the discovery of the biggest natural gas reserves in Europe. Suddenly the Netherlands found itself on top of its biggest resource ever, dwarfing the Dutch oil resources, which were already in operation on the European continent.

Since then sizable natural gas and offshore oil fields in the North Sea have been added, like those of Great Britain and Norway.

The economic implication and consequences were enormous. To become the proverbial rich Dutchman again from being a poor European is quite a change.

Rotterdam, with vast chemical

industrial complexes and oil refineries, has surpassed New York as the biggest seaport in the world. Sitting on the estuary of the Rhine River, which is the main artery of Europe, Rotterdam has been called the gate of United Europe.

All this has affected the way the country has been governed. Ironically, government spending is the biggest economic problem.

The Netherlands has undergone a great deal of political change. Leftist economic principles have become prominent. Until 30 years ago the Dutch government had always been a left-right combination with an emphasis on the right. But then it embarked on vast social programs, which made it the envy of the world.

Its social security system and services (which include education, health care, housing, insurance and pensions) can be regarded as one of the most profuse. Add to this the obligations to the EC, NATO, Third World aid (2 percent of the national income), severance payments to the former Dutch colonies Suriname and the Dutch Antilles and a costly civil service program, and the outcome is a country with stupendous taxes and national debt.

Of the accumulated national debt of more than 360 billion guilders (US\$200 billion), some 38 billion guilders in interest has to be paid in 1992. This alone eats up

more than 17 percent of the national government budget. The budget deficit for 1992 is estimated at almost 15 percent.

Of every five guilders of taxable income, one guilder has to be paid on interest for the national debt.

By comparison the Federal Republic of Germany pays one deutsche mark for every six deutsche marks of taxable income on interest of its national debt. They have taken up the extra burden trying to get the former Eastern Germany on its feet again.

With the collapse of the socialist systems in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, the Dutch government has seen the need to cut spending. This will create political unrest because vast sections of the society profit from and are dependent on the social system.

If the Netherlands doesn't get its social house in better shape soon, they will make a bad start in the United Europe and the fully fledged Common Market beginning in January 1993. The old proverb is still in force, "The borrower is servant to the lender."



NORTHERN EUROPE—From Nieuwegein, the Dutch Office serves four churches and brethren in Holland and northern Dutch-speaking Belgium. [Map by Ron Grove]

Gennao

(Continued from page 4)
even before his resurrection.

For example, John the Baptist declared him to be the Son of God (John 1:34). Satan challenged Christ by saying: "If you are the Son of God..." (Matthew 4:3), the demons recognized this status (Matthew 8:29), and the crowds that jeered at him, while he was on the cross, taunted him on the same point (Matthew 27:40).

It is clear that Acts 13:33 cannot mean that Jesus became the Son of God by the resurrection from the dead.

The expression "This day have I begotten thee" is a quotation from Psalm 2:7. The sonship of Christ was pronounced from heaven, as a quotation from the same psalm, during the transfiguration (Matthew 17:5), and earlier still—during his baptism (Matthew 3:17), and before his human birth (John 3:16).

As far as these passages are concerned, including Hebrews 1:5 and 5:5, the word *today* is a part of the Old Testament scripture that carries the all-important element of Christ's sonship. The passage is quoted because it contains the phrase, "You are my Son."

Even today, one quotes whole passages when he needs only a part of them. Since these passages cannot be saying that Christ became God's Son by the resurrection, their meaning in the original context (that of Psalm 2:7) needs to be determined.

'This day' in Psalm 2

The context of the psalm (verse 2) is that kings rise up and conspire against the Lord and his *anointed*—a prophetic reference to Christ. This is a Messianic hymn, one that the early Christians must have quoted frequently. Verse 6 of the psalm speaks of a decree and of the king's ascension to the throne, and verse 12 adds the consequent—homage to the king.

Some help toward a better

understanding of the passage is afforded by II Samuel 7:12-14, where God makes a covenant with David to establish Solomon's kingdom and announces that he will be Solomon's Father, and Solomon will be his son.

This passage refers to a human king rather than prophetically to Christ, because verse 14 adds, "If he [the king] commits iniquity, I will chasten him." On the day of the ascension, the king was "begotten of God"—a standard formula uttered on that great event.

Further support for this is found in later Jewish literature. One of the Targums says: "Thou art as dear to me as a son to his father,

tlefield in such a way as to win the battle and bring his forces home intact, he may receive a medal for ingenuity.

One could say that the battle was historic or that it "declared him to be a general with unusual strategic prowess." This statement is not meant to be taken to declare him to be a general. He was a general, even before the historic battle. The statement declares him to be a *brilliant* general.

The above example can help clarify Paul's statement. The resurrection declared Jesus Christ to be the "Son of God with power"—that is to say, the *powerful* Son of God.

The power that is brought out is

marked with power.

Firstborn from the dead

The argument is proposed, on the strength of Colossians 1:18 and Revelation 1:5, that Christ would not be called the firstborn from the dead unless others would be born in the same way later. In other words, the term *first* suggests that others follow, who are born in like manner as the first.

This interpretation is wrong. There is no term *first* or a term *born* in the text. The term *firstborn* is used, which is a title. The meaning of the title is, not order of birth, but privilege.

In Exodus 4:22, Israel is described as God's "firstborn."

Those who have love are born of God and those who believe in Jesus Christ are born of God. Those statements are about a regeneration that takes place on the basis of a change of perspective.

and innocent as though I had this day created thee."

The reason for the king's privileged position was the anointing. The king was God's anointed. On that day he was set apart and was accepted by God.

The Book of Revelation echoes the same formula in the promise made to the believer who inherits God's kingdom: "I will be his God, and he shall be my son" (21:7; see also II Corinthians 6:17, 18).

In saying that God will be a Father and the believer a son, God is not implying that he is not a Father now, or that believers weren't sons before that time (Matthew 6:9).

Son of God—by the resurrection

Romans 1:4 says that Jesus Christ was "declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead." The difficulty presented by this passage is not one of translation, text or context. It is one of exegesis.

The first step is to analyze the statement itself. A parallel may help in this respect. If a general maneuvers his armies on the bat-

implicit in the exaltation of the Son of God. That he was already the Son of God is evident, even from verse 3: God's Son "was born of the seed of David according to the flesh."

In other words, God gave his only-begotten Son for the sins of the world (John 3:16), and that only-begotten Son of God came as a physical descendant of David (Romans 1:3).

Paul's theology demands careful handling of this refinement. He is saying that Christ's physical descent is not the fullness of the Son of God, but his resurrection from the dead places him in a special relation to us—one

This title does not assert that Israel was born first or that others would be born later. It is a title of honor, not a reference to birth or birth order. It describes a privileged position over other nations.

In light of the above, Christ, as the "firstborn among many brethren" (Romans 8:29) has a special position. He is preeminent, even to the extent of being worshiped by the angels (Hebrews 1:6).

Those born of God do not sin

I John 3:9 refers to practicing sin as a way of life. "Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for his seed remains in him;

and he cannot sin."

Economy of words, which limits translators, is not an issue in many modern language versions. For example, the Williams translation of the New Testament says: "No one who is born of God makes a practice of sinning ... and so he cannot practice sinning, because he is born of God."

This understanding of the passage is consonant with John's teaching. He stresses that those who have love are born of God (I John 4:7), and those who believe in Jesus Christ are born of God (I John 5:1). Those statements are about a regeneration that takes place on the basis of a change of perspective.

The Jews who opposed Christ were described as a generation (*gennao*) of vipers—a contrast with a proper attitude that comes from God's Spirit.

A Christian is a new creation as soon as he receives the *Spirit* of God and the *word* of God (I Peter 1:23). He is considered a "newborn babe," requiring "pure milk of the word" and *spiritual* growth (I Peter 2:2), until he comes to the fullness of Christ (Ephesians 4:13).

The birth from above marks only the beginning of the Christian life. There are important foundations to be laid, spiritual edifices to be constructed, maturity to be achieved and knowledge to be obtained.

An emphasis on birth from above, apart from these considerations, is a misguided, unbiblical and sentimental slogan. Such a slogan is not found in the Gospel of John or anywhere else in the New Testament.

PERSONAL

(Continued from page 1)

horsemen, vast armies and cosmic destruction.

Such dazzling and sensational images cannot help but arouse interest and wonder, especially when they're in connection with the end of the world.

Purpose of prophecy

But why prophecy, really? The purpose of prophecy is given in the Bible, of course. But human curiosity about the specifics of "what, when, where and how" often tend to obscure the over-arching "why"—the truly important lessons God gives his people through prophecy.

First and foremost, Bible

Prophecy is a motivation toward righteousness, a warning to be on guard against joining the evil in the world... Prophecy reminds us of God's love and faithfulness.

prophecy leads us to God. It reminds us that God is in control, that he supervises and intervenes in human affairs whenever he desires, that, by his power, he will bring the future he has promised, and that in the end, good will win over evil (Daniel 4:17, II Peter 3:7).

Bible prophecy reminds us that God is Judge, the final arbitrator of all things. Through prophecy we learn that nobody really "gets away with it." Oppression of the poor and the weak by the wicked will not last forever. Every action will be brought into account. Judgment will surely come.

Prophecy, then, is a motivation toward righteousness, a warning to be on guard against joining the evil in the world (II Peter 3:11).

Prophecy reminds us of God's love and faithfulness. The time will come when his kingdom will be fully established over all nations. When all is said and done, God's will is that all people come to repentance (verse 9).

Therefore, through prophecy, God reassures us that our faith is not in vain. All that he has promised will surely happen. We are not told when. But we are told *what to do while we wait*.

We are to have faith. We are to have hope. We are to live godly lives as faithful children. We are to shine as lights in this world's darkness (Matthew 5:16).

Though there will be wars, small and large, Bible prophecy tells us the world will not be totally destroyed by nuclear war

guaranteed that our labor of love in Jesus Christ is not in vain.

We are given confidence that all wrong will be righted, that all crooked places will be made straight, that there is life beyond death—happy, peaceful, fulfilled life, *forever*. And, knowing all these things, we are motivated to live godly lives in Jesus Christ (verse 14).

There is indeed a bright future ahead (Jeremiah 29:11). Though human sin brings its expected result, God will not forget his people. The world to come is a world of hope, of opportunity, of peace.

Prophecy assures us of that hope, and moves us to make our calling and election sure (II Peter 1:10).

Who is the beast? Is he (or it)

or any other kind of human warfare.

God himself will ultimately destroy this corrupt earth and create in its place a new heavens and new earth "in which righteousness dwells" (II Peter 3:12-13, New King James).

Exactly *how* God will do that, or precisely *when* he will do that, we are not given. But, through what he reveals to us in Bible prophecy, we rejoice in the sure knowledge *that* he will do it. And we are motivated by his Spirit to live accordingly.

Prophecy encourages

Through Bible prophecy, then, we are comforted and encouraged. We are assured that the course of history is being controlled by God, the God of love, peace and mercy. We are

now stirring on the world scene? Maybe. Maybe not. That's not the issue. Believing the truth of the final outcome and *living accordingly*, though, is the issue. And God tells us what that outcome will be through Bible prophecy.

Let Bible prophecy always guide us to faithful living, not to empty speculation. Knowing *when* Jesus will return is not the issue. Knowing *that* he will return is.

Let's be more concerned about *how* we wait than *how long* and under what circumstances we wait. Prophecy indeed has special value for each Christian and for the entire Church.

Let's take care to see that we use it rightly, and for its intended purpose.

1991 International Ministerial Transfers

British Region

Name	Transferred to
Ken Buck, assistant	Brighton, Croydon and Maidstone, England
Michael Ogunlase, assistant	Benin, Nigeria
Eke Udeagha, assistant	Owerri, Nigeria

Canada

Kevin Armstrong, associate	Montreal (English), Que.
Steve Gore, assistant	Halifax, N.S.
Phil Hopwood	Newcastle, N.S.W.
Wilhelm Mandel, assistant	Edmonton, Alta., South
Todd Martin	Cornwall, Ont.
Laurie Nyhus, associate	Edmonton North and South, and Evansburg, Alta.
Terry Roth	Salmon Arm and Kamloops, B.C.
Chris Starkey	St. John's Nfld.
Colin Wallace, associate	Ottawa, Ont.

New Zealand

Jack Croucher	Auckland
Dennis Richards	Palmerston North, New Plymouth and Napier

South Africa

Joseph Mpofu, student	Ambassador College
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Spanish

Javier Flores, associate	Mexico City, Mexico
Felipe Neri	Mexico City, Mexico
Larry Roybal	Monterrey and Torreon, Mexico

All positions are pastor unless noted otherwise.

NEWS OF PEOPLE, PLACES & EVENTS IN THE WORLDWIDE CHURCH OF GOD

UPDATE

PASADENA—Plain Truth writer **John Halford** visited London, England, and Amsterdam, Netherlands, Nov. 16 to 23 and Dallas, Tex., Dec. 3 to conduct interviews for a Plain Truth article and World Tomorrow telecast about religion and science.

In Amsterdam he interviewed **Willem Drees**, a professor at the Interdisciplinary Center for the Study of Science, Society and Religion.

In London he interviewed **Michael Poole**, a pioneer in space science and chairman of the London Bible College; and **Sir Robert Boyd**, a fellow of the Royal Society.

In Dallas he visited the superconducting super collider (a high energy subatomic particle accelerator) and interviewed three physicists: **Fred Gillman**, head of the physics research division; **Tim Toohig**, an experimental physicist; and **Sid Meshcliff**, a

theoretical physicist.

The interviews showed that a scientist can be a committed Christian. "These men showed there need be no conflict between an intelligent belief in God and a proper understanding of the direction of scientific research," Mr. Halford said.

"Scientists and those who believe in God tend to misunderstand each other. It's a matter of understanding what the questions are and who should answer what.

"They agree that there are some questions science should not answer, and some theology cannot answer."

Mr. Halford added that rather than contradict religion, science can help people better understand God.

"If David saw 1,500 stars and said how great is God, how much more we should say how great is God because we can see a hundred million galaxies each with

millions of stars," he said.

☆☆☆

PASADENA—To answer those who have inquired about their conditions, **Jeff and Wendy Zhorne** are still recuperating from injuries sustained in an auto accident in England March 15.

Mrs. Zhorne now drives a car and walks almost normally, despite nearly constant pain from the pin surgically inserted in her leg. The pin will probably have to be removed. The other fractures have healed fine.

After the Feast, Mr. Zhorne underwent spinal surgery for a herniated disk in his lower back. Despite a crimped sciatic nerve in his leg that will take a few months to heal, he is recovering nicely and is already back at work in the Editorial Department here.

Mrs. Zhorne is now pregnant and due in early July. Your prayers for a safe pregnancy and successful delivery are appreciated.

☆☆☆

VANCOUVER, B.C.—Member **Susan Borm** received the Gold Duke of Edinburgh's Award May 31. The award was presented in a ceremony officiated by **John Hnatyshyn**, gover-



SUSAN BORM

nor-general of Canada.

The Duke of Edinburgh's Award program is available to young people between 14 and 25. Three awards are presented in ascending levels of achievement: bronze, silver and gold. Participants must satisfy the requirements of the four program sections: service, skills, fitness and expeditions.

To achieve the Gold Award, Susan fulfilled the service component with 70 hours of volunteer lifeguarding, helping in a Lions Club Care Facility for senior citizens and as a swimming and sailing instructor at Youth Opportunities United and

Youth Educational Services summer camps.

In the skills area, Susan built up her art portfolio in preparation for a career in graphic arts. She was also the president of her YOU girls speech club.

Participants in the program are required to show improved physical fitness over a required time frame, as Susan demonstrated in developing her own fitness program.

For the expeditions section, she went on several canoe trips into the British Columbia interior and coastal regions.

"This is a program for youths that is really worthwhile," Susan says. "The Duke of Edinburgh program teaches you to be selfless, to give something back to your community."

☆☆☆

CALGARY, Alta.—Nearly 680 brethren attended the 25th anniversary celebration of the church here Nov. 2.

Guest speaker at Sabbath services was evangelist **Frank Brown**, Canadian regional director.

Activities included a slide presentation, candlelight dinner and a musical production.

FROM OUR SCATTERED BRETHREN

"That also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad." (John 11:52)

KINGSTOWN, St. Vincent—For most of the 20 members and their families living on the Caribbean island of St. Vincent, attending their assigned Feast site in Grenada the last two years has not been possible.

Twelve of the members are teachers and before they can leave the island they must get a letter from the ministry of education granting them permission to leave.

"The problem is, there's another religious group, the Assemblies of Yahweh, which also keeps the Feast of Tabernacles," explains Paul Krautmann, Kingstown, St. Vincent, and St. George's, Grenada, pastor.

"This adds up to a lot of teachers taking the same time off and the ministry of education says this is too many. They will only allow a few from each group to go."

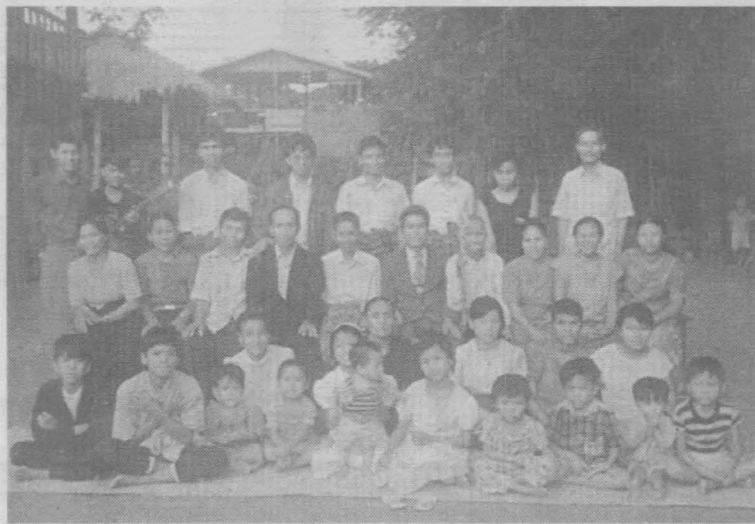
The ministry of education allowed five members to go to the Feast this year, and last year they allowed only three.

For the majority who remained on St. Vincent, Mr. Krautmann, Festival coordinator for the Grenada Feast site, flew down to St. Vincent the last two days of the Feast to conduct a two-day

mini-Feast of Tabernacles.

"Prayers for the members here concerning time off for next year's Feast would be greatly appreciated," Mr. Krautmann said.

Evangelist **Colin Adair**, Caribbean regional director, was to visit St. Vincent in December to talk to the ministry of education concerning the situation, and brethren are hoping for the best.



BRETHREN REJOICE—Thirty-two members and families observed the Feast at Kya In, Myanmar. Myanmar is bordered by India, Thailand, China, Laos and Bangladesh.

BOREHAMWOOD, England—More than 2,000 brethren celebrated the 1991 Feast of Tabernacles in East and West Africa.

"This is the largest attendance since the Work began in Africa," said David Stirk, business manager in the British Office for East and West Africa.

"In spite of the recession, which is affecting the entire world and causing fewer people to travel this year, attendance at all the sites showed an increase, as did Holy Day offerings, which were up an average of 25 percent."

Holy Day offerings for the year showed the following increases: in Ghana, 15 percent; in Malawi, 28 percent; in Kenya, 14 percent; and in Nigeria, 36 percent.

LAGOS, Nigeria—Inflation is having its effect on the members



SOUTHEAST ASIA—Some of the 33 brethren attending the Feast of Tabernacles at Sa Khan Gyi, Myanmar (formerly Burma). Minister Saw Lay Beh is fourth from the left in the center row.

here. Landlords are increasing rents abnormally. Rent for the Church suboffice has gone up 400 percent.

More than a dozen members have been served notices by landlords who are evicting tenants to bring in new tenants ready to pay exorbitant rents. Of course, the cost of food, clothing and other basic needs is also rising.

ARIMA, Trinidad—Despite difficult economic times, income for the Church here continues to rise.

"As of August we were 12 percent above the same time last year," Clifton Charles, Arima pastor, told *The Worldwide News*.

Unemployment, which stands at around 14 percent, is a significant problem in Trinidad, although less so for the members

Dutch

(Continued from page 5)

"The Dutch people as a whole are not interested in organized religion any more," Mr. de Bree says.

According to European Value Research, a study of 31 European countries conducted in 1990-91, only 32 percent of the people in the Netherlands have any confidence in their church, compared to the United States, for example, where the figure is 68 percent.

"The Dutch are a very outward-looking people," he says. "They want answers to questions such as 'who am I?' 'what am I?' and

'why am I?' We try to speak to them in ways they can relate to."

Like the United States, the Netherlands has traditionally been a haven for refugees. No other European country has anything like the Netherlands' variety of new residents living in such proximity and concentration. It is estimated that 10 percent of the Dutch population comes from foreign stock, primarily from Indonesia, Suriname, Turkey and Morocco.

"If you drive through the Netherlands you will see people of all different colors, sizes and shapes," Mr. de Bree says. "We live in a very open, tolerant society. It is much easier to settle from the outside into the Netherlands

than into a country such as Germany. The skinhead problem [violence toward foreigners] in Germany right now would be unheard of in the Netherlands."

Results of tolerance

The tolerant attitude, however, creates problems. Drugs and street prostitution may technically be a misdemeanor, but the laws are not enforced. In Amsterdam, those who are hooked on drugs steal to get money for their habit, adding to the city's infamous crime problem.

"The Dutch have a different approach in dealing with drugs and other problems than what's found in the United States," Mr.

de Bree says. "The Dutch government is not trying to stamp out the drug problem. They are trying to control it by allowing it in certain ways."

In some Amsterdam cafes, customers can openly buy marijuana in a variety of blends and flavors. Coffee shops serve hash-laced "space cakes" with butter and syrup. Souvenir shops sell T-shirts with the leaf of the marijuana plant on it and the slogan, "The grass is greener in Amsterdam."

Adds Mr. de Bree: "This is a society that tolerates any kind of thinking, and morals are on their way down. The Dutch are permissive to the point that their law is a law with no teeth."

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