

CHURCH OF THE  
G E T E R N A L

“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.” –Matthew 24:14

April 7, 2003

Dear Brethren:

For the last several weeks, the ongoing war with Iraq has been the primary focus of the daily news. I had just arrived in Germany, when the war began. I was visiting my parents in Germany and I am very happy to report that my father (94) is doing much better. While there, I was able to experience first-hand the reaction of the people in Germany and continental Europe to the outbreak of the war -- the reaction was a mixture of shock, anger, frustration, rejection and protest. Magazines and newspapers, as well as daily television newscasts, made European disagreement with the Bush administration widely known, and daily mass anti-war demonstrations around the world have become the norm, rather than the exception.

In the United States, the vast majority has been supporting the war against Iraq, since it began, although about half of the people had been opposed to it prior to its outbreak. A similar occurrence has been observed in Great Britain, where originally almost 80% were against the war (Recent reports show that presently 48 % of the British support the war, according to *Der Spiegel Online*, April 3). This switch in position has been explained as a result of patriotism and the need to support the troops.

In times like these, God's people must be very careful that they are not being swept away by popular opinion. It behooves all of us to reflect on our real allegiance – especially in light of the fast approaching days of Passover and Unleavened Bread. We in God's Church should know, of course, that the present events are occurring in direct fulfillment of Biblical prophecy. Whether or not the Allies will win the war against Iraq, they have already lost in the public world opinion. The longer there is such an overwhelming presence of the coalition forces in Iraq, anti-American feelings will become stronger around the world, and even anti-war protests within the United States and Great Britain are expected to increase. Questions have been raised as to what will happen in Iraq, once the war is over. Many observers feel that America's real troubles will begin at that time.

Several most influential spiritual leaders of the Muslims, including Iran's Sheik Muhammad Abu Al-Humud and Russia's Talgat Tadshuddin, have already preached that the Koran demands of all Muslims to resist the “aggression toward Iraq by the Allies,” encouraging Muslims from all countries to help Iraq by participating in a “Jihad” or “holy war.” Much to the surprise of the Allies, many Iraqis, including civilians and Shiites, do not welcome them as liberators, but rather as imperialists. There is also the anxious desire of the persecuted Kurds in Iraq to create their own independent state -- which poses another problem for the United States, as Turkey, an important ally, strongly opposes such an independent state.

At the same time, Arab voices have been heard asking for German involvement. While Germany is reluctant to do so at this point, Germany, France, and most of continental Europe are realizing that they need to totally unite in order to be able to speak with one voice – politically and militarily.

It is also noteworthy that the pope's strong continued stance against the war with Iraq has been accompanied with a surprising rejuvenation of his health. One German magazine, *Der Stern*, even suggested prior to the war that the pope might be able to prevent the outbreak of the war, by moving to Baghdad. While this did not happen, one can easily see that there is, in the minds of Europeans, a need for an increasingly important and influential role of the pope.

Amazingly, it has been prophesied in the Bible thousands of years ago that the United States of America, as well as Great Britain, will ultimately find themselves in total world isolation. At that time, a “king of the south” – a mighty military and spiritual leader – will arise in the Arab world, while the Catholic Church will play an increasingly influential role within a powerful united Europe. The most recent events show how quickly prophecy is marching in this pre-determined direction.

God's people, though, are not to be a part of the politics of this world. They are to observe what is happening, to be able to realize how near is Christ's return (Matthew 24:32-34), motivating and inspiring them to make themselves “ready” (Revelation 19:7). They are to make sure that they will be counted worthy to *escape* all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man (Luke 21:36).

While the people of this world may be cheering for or against military actions of the governments of “their” countries, God's people must be different, as they are called ambassadors of a better, that is, a heavenly country (2 Corinthians 5:20; Philippians 3:20; Ephesians 2:6; Hebrews 11:13-16). They are to

make every effort to see to it that the Originator and Provider of their true citizenship – God – is pleased with them.

God the Father loved us so much, even when we were still His enemies, that He gave His only-begotten Son to die for us (John 3:16), so that we could repent and obtain forgiveness of our sins and reconciliation with God (Romans 5:10). When we repented of the ways of this world and accepted Christ's sacrifice by becoming baptized, our allegiance changed. We became God's children, forsaking what this world holds dear (1 John 2:15-17; 1 John 3:1-3). Since we are still living in this world, however, we must consistently be on the alert not to fall back into old habits and not to support wrong causes. It is very easy, in times of war and patriotism or nationalism, to cheer for "our" worldly countries. However, it is God who determines the outcome of wars. He is right now very angry with the modern tribes of the house of Israel, as well as with the rest of the world. God's people are not to participate in the wars of this world – not even in their thoughts. Christ died for us so that we could live for Him – so that we could follow His directives. He told us to love our enemies – to do good to those who hate us. The way of this world, which advocates the killing of our enemies before they can hurt and kill us, is totally opposite to God's Biblical instructions.

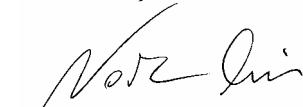
We are not to partake of the Passover "unworthily" (1 Corinthians 11:29), and we are to "walk worthy" or "worthily" of God in this world (Ephesians 4:1; Colossians 1:10; 1 Thessalonians 2:12). In order to do so, we must examine ourselves to see whether Christ lives in us, and whether we are in the faith (2 Corinthians 13:5). Undue support of actions of war – even in our minds – may be indicative of the fact that we are not as close to God as we ought to be.

It is critical that we come out of this world, rejecting its ways and concepts, and replacing them with the way of God. We must learn to think as God thinks and to bring every thought "into captivity to the obedience of Christ" (2 Corinthians 10:5). We must forsake the religious and political Babylonian confusion of this world and be separate (Revelation 18:4; 2 Corinthians 6:17). For instance, God demands that we leave behind the pagan holidays of this world and that we keep instead His special Holy Days, including Passover and the Days of Unleavened Bread. Most people, even if they have heard the truth on this vital matter, refuse to do what God commands. God does not take such stubborn resistance lightly. This is, surprising to some, *one* of the reasons why the United States of America and Great Britain find themselves embroiled in another unpopular war.

Our new booklet, *God's Commanded Holy Days*, addresses the vital question, as to how we are to live "worthily" in the eyes of God. In keeping God's Sabbath and annual Holy Days, and in rejecting the pagan holidays of this world, we become "sanctified" and "holy" – we can view our future with confidence and hope, knowing that we have come under the wings of God's protection. We are very pleased to enclose your personal copy of our new booklet. We are also busy developing our new web-cast program, and we are hopeful to be up and running later this month. This program, with its proposed title, "Standing Watch," will be a weekly news and commentary video posting accessible from the Church's web page ([www.eternalgod.org](http://www.eternalgod.org)). This new endeavor will aid us in preaching the gospel more effectively and to go through doors that God is opening for us. Please continue to pray fervently for God's direction and help as we all seek to serve Him with renewed zeal through the power of His Holy Spirit.

We are wishing all of you a very meaningful and spiritually uplifting Passover season.

In brotherly love,



Norbert Link