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E D I T O R I A L

Evil lurking in the light

The premeditated heinous attacks on the U.S. World Trade Centre and Pentagon that caused the death of over 5,000 innocent people have triggered the questions: Why did God, whose eyes are too pure to look upon evil, allow the wicked plotters to succeed? Why did He not thwart their plan?

The tragedy was a vivid portrayal of evil that would not be stamped out even if the perpetrators are caught and put away. Evil existed way before the world was created and will continue to grip us to the end of time. In fact, the Bible warns that “iniquity shall abound (Matt. 24:12)” in the end-time days.

From the beginning, man always had to grapple with evil. He was not alone, though, in his attempt to overcome evil. God was merciful and provided a plan of redemption. By sacrificing His Son Jesus on the cross, He “destroyed the works of the devil” (1 Jn. 3:8).

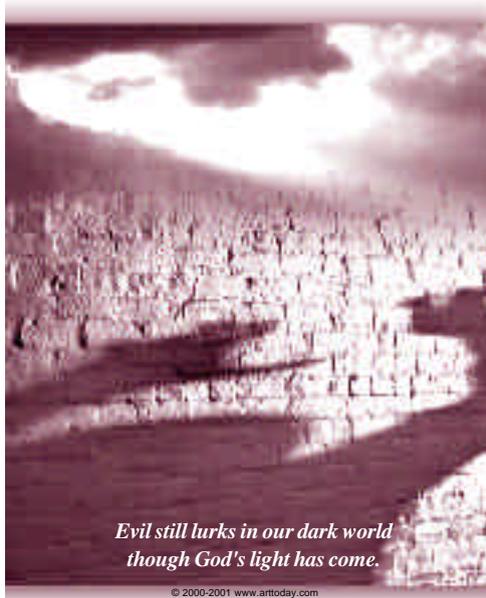
Thereafter, no other vision can better inspire man in his battle against evil. As Henry Blocher once said: “Those who share in the Kingdom hate the enemy ... they penetrate to the heart of its strategy and attack the evil of evil.”

As God continues to reign supreme, evil seems to rule alongside. But for God’s people, evil has been overcome and will remain a vanquished foe.

We see shreds of God’s triumph over evil even at the tragic sites in New York where God’s amazing grace and love was demonstrated through the spontaneous response of kindness by volunteers, blood donors, and humanitarian organisations.

Through this tragedy, there is now a greater urgency to resolve the Middle East conflict. Also, there is a more united international community willing to put aside ethnic, religious, cultural and political differences to fight a common enemy – terrorism.

Indeed, God has turned this tragic evil act into a blessed global spiritual awakening for His creation to turn to Him. This



*Evil still lurks in our dark world
though God's light has come.*

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is reminiscent of Joseph’s words in Gen. 50:20: “You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done ...”

Church’s Duty to Society

In society, the route evil takes usually begin in an individual’s mind as a perception against those responsible for the economically-deprived, politically-unjust and culturally-frustrated situation he is in. Over time, this seed of evil takes root and reaches into the deep recesses of the individual. Mere perception in the mind ends up as deep conviction in the heart. Left unchecked, this conviction finally explodes, viciously causing hurt and destruction to lives and property.

The church has a duty to pray for and support the authorities in their

effort to stamp out evil. The apostle Paul says: “For rulers are not a terror to good works but to the evil ... he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil” (Rom. 13: 3-4).

Action also must be quickly taken against the evildoers as Eccl. 8:11 urges: “Because the sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.”

But while the Church supports the authorities in bringing the evildoers to justice, it must remind the authorities not to act out of vengeance. For vengeance belongs to God; He will repay the evil done (Rom. 12:19). The authorities’ response to the evildoers must be redemptive rather than destructive, securing justice and protecting the innocent.

A just redemptive response will ensure controlled action and a predictable outcome that clearly displays the Kingdom principles of righteousness, peace, and love for enemies. Any response

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World Leader to Arise from Chaos

Bible Prophecy Unfolding

By Rev. Datuk Dr Prince Guneratnam
NECF Malaysia Chairman

The state of the world today is causing anxiety to many. Each day seems to bring more news of political and economic crises. The effects are not limited to specific nations or even regions, but the whole world.

The world is moving into a vacuum for world leadership. The cry will be for a world leader capable of meeting global challenges and acceptable to all – East and West, religious and secular, Arabs and Jews.

The person will be looked upon not as a citizen of a specific nation but as a world citizen. All nations will want to work and cooperate with him, and will willingly accept his authority over them to solve their social, economic and political woes.

Does the Bible address a situation of this nature?

Indeed. Rev. 13:18 speaks of a time just before the Second Coming of Jesus when nations will be perplexed and will welcome the emergence of a man who will bring peace and unity among all nations.

This leader is called the Antichrist by John the Apostle (1 Jn 2:18, 22; 4:3, 2 Jn 7) and is pictured as a leader who proclaims peace but ends up as a great world dictator. Many will be deceived and worship him as God (Rev. 13:1-18; 2 Thes. 2:4) but will then see that his leadership has been



empowered by Satan. Jesus then returns to destroy the works of Satan and establish His Kingdom.

The events happening before us could very well be setting the scene for the emergence of the Antichrist. They remind us of the imminent return of Jesus Christ. Every believer must see these events as a wake-up call to holy living and a reminder of the urgency to be a witness for the Lord.

While we cannot tell the exact day of the Lord's return, we can be sure that in the light of all that is happening, it will be soon. ■

Evil lurking in the light: from page 1

should be reform-oriented (Jn 8:3-11), encourage reparation (Ex. 22:1-2) and act as a deterrent (Deut. 21:21).

With the end-times scenario of prophetic evil unfolding before our eyes, the Church must shake off its leave-us-alone attitude and get involved. As Jeremiah urged his people before they were carried into exile: "Also, seek the peace and prosperity of the city, to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the Lord for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper (Jer. 29:7)."

This is also a timely reminder for us Christians – individually as well as corporately – to repent, forgive and receive forgiveness. Being God's people of power and knowing that war is a painful necessity

in a fallen world, Christian peacemakers and reconcilers need to engage in concerted prayer – for the victim's families, authorities concerned and also the 'enemies' – so that peace, godliness and holiness could prevail (1 Tim. 2:2).

Now is the time for us to arise as a community of God's people to help the authorities build confidence; to promote public debate on reconciliation between conflicting parties; and to be God's redemptive force on earth. As John Stott once said: "God is a peacemaker. Jesus Christ is a peacemaker. So if we want to be God's children and Christ's disciples, we must be peacemakers too." ■

Shalom.

What Makes An Islamic State

The Islamic state issue, thus far the domain of PAS, took a new turn when Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad declared that Malaysia was already an Islamic country when he opened the Gerakan annual delegates conference.

Malaysians are understandably anxious over the statement for fear that it will become part of our national consciousness if repeated often enough. Many question if this could be a strategy to steer Malaysia towards the direction of fundamental Islam?

The Prime Minister attempted to smooth the ruffles when he said: "Although we declare Islam as our official religion, non-Muslims are free to practice their religions. This is in line with the teachings of Islam. There is no compulsion in Islam because Islam abhors chaos, which might happen if Islamic laws are forced upon non-Muslims.

"If because of this non-Muslims perceive Malaysia as a secular country, it is their perception and they are free to do so." (Star On-line, Sept 30)

And when DAP deputy chairman Karpal Singh stated that Article 3 (1) of the Federal Constitution could not be interpreted to reflect that Malaysia is an Islamic state, the Prime Minister replied: "He can say what he likes. He can call it a secular state. We are not objecting to him calling it a secular state, so why should he object to us calling it an Islamic state?" (The Star, Oct 14)

Indeed, we have the freedom and the right to maintain that Malaysia is a secular state according to our Constitution.

Perhaps, some have already resigned themselves to the fact that Malaysia is an Islamic country; their question, however, is: "How Islamic is the country?" Others may think it is a matter of conflicting interpretation, which essentially is a socio-political conflict and not a theoretical one. Another group may just argue that Malaysia, although officially a secular state, is pro-Islam in orientation.

Before any judgment call is made, we need to understand the Islamic concept in both

local and broader contexts as well as the logic behind the Islamisation process. Sadly, Christians often lack a clear understanding of how the state is viewed in Islam.

Firstly, Islam draws no distinction between the religious and the temporal spheres of life. By definition, the Muslim state is a religious one; the state itself is a religious institution. On the other hand, religion is incomplete unless the state is somewhat Islamic. (Goddard, Hugh. "Some reflections on Christians and Islamic Political Thought," *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations*. Vol.1, No1, 1990, pp 25-43.)

Thus for the conservative Muslims, it seems impossible to have a secular state in the western sense with all religions enjoying equality.

Based on the extent of implementation of the Syariah Law – the hallmark of an Islamic state – the Muslim world may be divided into three groups:

- Islamic states with Syariah as the supreme rule. Examples: Saudi Arabia, Iran, Egypt, Pakistan and Sudan.
- Nations that are not constituted Islamic state but with the Syariah given an important role in some specific areas and Islam having a privilege position. Examples: Malaysia and Nigeria.
- Explicitly secular states with majority Muslims populations and equality for all religious groupings. Examples: Turkey and Indonesia.

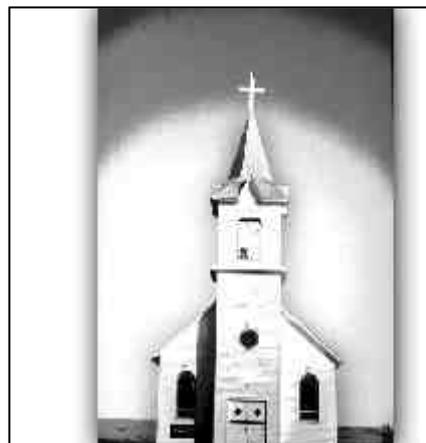
From the above, we see that Malaysia falls in the second group as it is a constitutional state with Islam having privilege position.

However, the United Nations and Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) recognise Malaysia as an Islamic nation based on the centuries of Sultanate rule, the provision in the Constitution that Islam is the religion of the state, political power in the hands of Muslims, and a strong Islamic component in the Malay ethos and culture.

But let's note the well-known remark of our first prime minister, Tunku Abdul Rahman: "There is no way we should have an Islamic State here ... we cannot force the non-Malays and non-Muslims to follow our way of life. Our slogan 'live and let live' must be maintained because it is the only practical solution in a multi-racial society like ours."

Therefore, let Article (3) and (11) of the Federal Constitution rule. It is therefore absolutely important to understand and defend our present constitution, which guarantees the religious liberty of every person in this nation. — *Contributed by Lim Siew Foong, NECF Malaysia Executive Secretary (Research)* ■

Editor's Note: NECF Malaysia has been discussing the issue with the various parties concerned and will be providing members with in-depth information soon. Look out for it in your mail.



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Guidelines on land issues

NECF Malaysia has produced a manual to help churches deal with the local authorities on issues relating to their church premises. The manual offers step-by-step guidelines on the actions to take by the church should it receive a summons from the authorities concerned. NECF Malaysia will send the manual to all its member-churches soon.

COMFORT ZONE Invaded

By Rev. Dr Eu Hong Seng,
NECF Malaysia Vice-Chairman

From the time President Bush vowed retaliatory action against the culprits of the attacks on the US World Trade Centre and Pentagon, the world waited with bated breath for war. On Oct 24, the US finally went to war. Today we are experiencing unprecedented worldwide undercurrents, and Malaysia has not been spared.

Besides the possibilities of religious hostilities, a world war and a world recession, we face the prospect of a rise in Islamic extremism on the home front.

Disenchanted proponents are threatening and menacing some religious segments perceived to be sympathisers of the West. Hoaxes and even 'white powders' have been sent to groups in Malaysia itself. These attempts to 'talibanise' the community and culture is most unfortunate and uncharacteristic of Malaysia.

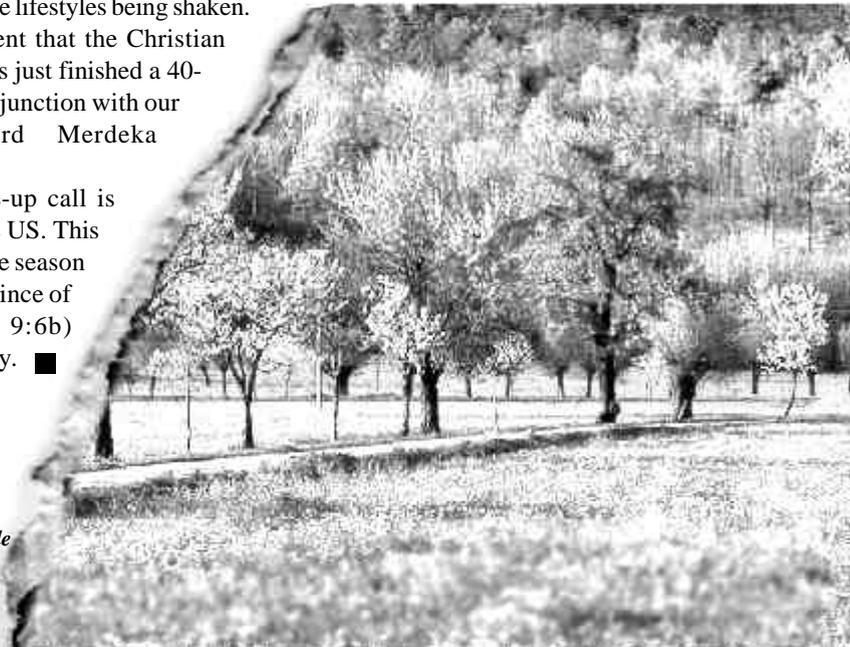
Many voices abound in these times. Some pronounce judgments, some advocate negotiation, while others prophesy of more calamities.

Whatever one's views, there is this undeniable greater openness for one-world government strategies. A definite religious polarisation is being birthed, coupled with a rise in inter-faith ecumenical prayer meetings. These are signposts for the discerning.

The Church must pray and fast as never before. We must beware that we are not thoughtlessly sidetracked by worries over our comfortable lifestyles being shaken. It is no accident that the Christian community has just finished a 40-day fast in conjunction with our nation's 43rd Merdeka celebrations.

The wake-up call is not just for the US. This is definitely the season to know the Prince of Peace (Isa. 9:6b) more intimately. ■

We live in a fragile world where a lifetime's labour can be destroyed in a moment.



World events are moving and changing at blinding speed but God's Word remains the same.

S-G is now WEF Vice-Chairman

NECF Malaysia Secretary-General Rev. Wong Kim Kong has been elected to a four-year term as Vice-Chairman of the World Evangelical Fellowship (WEF).

He was elected by co-members of the WEF International Council at their first meeting after the WEF 11th General Assembly here in May. (It was at the assembly that Rev. Wong was elected a member of the WEF International Council.) The meeting was held at WEF head office in Chicago, USA.

As Vice-Chairman, Rev. Wong heads the Search Committee for a new International Director. He is also responsible, together with WEF Honorary Secretary cum Treasurer John Langlois, for reviewing the constitution of WEF. Closer to home, he is responsible for WEF's property in Singapore.

David Detert remains as WEF Chairman. ■

Seizing Young Hearts for Missions

National Youth Missions Camp II • Date: July 19 to 21, 2002 (Friday to Sunday)

Every great missions era in Church history saw a parallel youth missions movement which has produced some legendary names such as William Carey and Hudson Taylor. In the last two decades of the 19th century alone, 100,000 youths committed themselves to missions. The end-result: 20,000 went out to the field, supported by the remaining 80,000.

Not everyone is called to go to the mission field, whether as missionaries or tentmakers. But we believe that ALL should be committed to seeing the Gospel preached to all nations.

As a new 'sending country', we need to invest in the future by planting the seed of missions in the hearts and spirits of our youths now. This seed of commitment will be sown among our youths at the National Youth Missions Camp II (NYMC II). We hope to gather at least 500 secondary and tertiary school students and young working adults at the camp.

Sowing the 'mission seed' in our young people's lives now will ensure a good harvest of missionaries and senders later. Then, we will confidently say: "The harvest is wide and we have enough labourers." —*Beram Kumar, NYMC II Organising Chairman* ■

Churches may get survey report before year end

Response better than expected

The first NECF Malaysia Survey of Churches, Pastors and Christians 2001 successfully concluded recently and the taskforce hopes to release the initial report by the end of the year.

However, the report will contain only the raw data (frequencies), according to taskforce chairman Edmund Ng. "We want to get the survey data out fast so that the participating churches can immediately use them for their planning," he explained.

"Hopefully, the pastors and church leaders concerned will meet and discuss their personal analysis and evaluation of the survey findings."

A subsequent report containing an analysis of some of the data will be published



next year. The taskforce hopes to enlist the help of experienced analysts to evaluate the data. Those interested in this project should have a working knowledge of statistical

software and be familiar with analysis techniques such as multiple regression.

Ng said that the survey report would give a clearer picture of the situation the Malaysian Church is in. "From here, we must seek to discern what God is doing in our midst and make plans for our churches according to His direction. Having a better knowledge of our situation will also enable us to develop a more proactive approach to meet the challenges of the 21st century."

NECF Malaysia received more than 4,000 questionnaire replies, a response rate of 56 per cent which is more than double the industry standard for mail surveys. The survey covered all the states in Peninsular Malaysia and all the denominations affiliated with NECF Malaysia. ■

Blessed Christmas u Joyous New Year

The Council and Staff of NECF Malaysia wish all readers a blessed Christmas and a joyous New Year. May you enter the new year in His peace, hope and love.

And may His light shine even brighter through you in the year to come.

RALLYING FOR UNITY at Prayer Rallies

Church unity continue to burden the hearts of Christians throughout the country at this year's Merdeka prayer rallies on Merdeka eve.

Additionally, participants at the nationwide rallies were also burdened to pray for 'pastor unity' – that pastors of different churches in the same localities will desire to work together to reach out to their communities. The unity theme was extended when participants prayed for a stronger bond between pastors and their congregations. Arising from these prayers on unity was a sense of hope and expectation that God will move the hearts of His people in this direction.

The rallies, a yearly prayer event organised by NECF Malaysia in partnership with local churches, were simultaneously held in 18 towns across 13 states following the 40-day nationwide Fast and Prayer.

Reports from various states

In KUALA LUMPUR, about 2,000 Christians opened the rally at Menara PGRM with the national anthem *Negara Ku* followed by a time of praise and worship led by Praise City Church.

The night's message was delivered by Dr Dick Eastman, founder of Every Home for Christ. He shared on the role of prayer in accelerating the preaching of the Gospel globally. In recent years, prayer evangelism has helped to usher multitudes into the Kingdom as intercessors work alongside evangelists in proclaiming the Gospel.

Dr Eastman quoted places such as Mongolia and Russia where explosive church growth was recorded following intense intercession.

NECF Malaysia Secretary-General Rev. Wong Kim Kong then led the crowd in a prayer of repentance.

Just before midnight, the lights were switched off and suddenly, coloured glowsticks sparkled like fireflies throughout the darkened hall.

Instantly charged with youthful zest, the crowd sang and danced joyfully in rising excitement as the digits reflecting the time on the front screen rolled closer to midnight. At 12.00, cheers broke out, followed by unrestrained shouts of "Merdeka" 14 times for the 14 states.

The prayer rally ended at 12.30am.

In IPOH, about 400 people from about 20 churches started the rally in worship after waiting for 45 minutes in the heat and darkness due to the power failure, reported *Lai Moo Him*. After singing a few lines of "Jesus, we enthrone You", the lights suddenly came on and "light up" the atmosphere. Prayers were focussed on tearing down strongholds of vice and idolatry, and for inter-church harmony and cooperation.

In KUANTAN, about 450 people from 12 churches and six



When the clock strikes 12 in Kuala Lumpur... flag bearers raise the states' flags and leaders raise their voices in the anthem Negara Ku.

denominations gathered at Vistana Hotel for the rally. *Pr Richard Ong*, the coordinator, reported a greater sense unity and fervency in prayer.

In KOTA KINABALU, some 1,800 people from 60 churches representing 10 denominations filled the entire Pacific Sutera Hotel ballroom and beyond, according to *Dr Philip Lyn*. "The turnout was unbelievable," he said and attributed it partly to the 40-day Fast and Prayer, which had generated excitement towards prayer. The rally was a festive celebration of God's faithfulness. At midnight, the participants shouted, blew whistles and lit flare sticks and torches, creating a joyful din. Earlier, various church leaders prayed for the authorities, continuing harmony and peace and revival in Malaysia.

Over at JOHOR BAHRU, *Pr Tay Wah Seng* said 950 people from about 30 churches met at Full Gospel Church and prayed throughout the night, particularly for open doors for ministry in schools and the current youth problems. There was no message because "everyone felt that's how a prayer rally should be," *Pr Tay* said.

TAWAU churches decided to hold the rally at three different places to cater to the three languages. The BM service was held at SIB, English at St Patrick Church and the Chinese at Calvary Charismatic Church. Altogether, about 800 attended the three services. The Lord's presence was keenly felt by all throughout the night, reported *Pr Sim Siew Kee* and *Pr Teh Bun Hui*.

In ALOR STAR, there was a great sense of excitement, breakthrough and freedom for the 200 people gathered at Full Gospel Church, said *Pr Leonard Lim*. Representing five churches, the participants prayed particularly for the political situation in Kedah and the current black metal issue. "It was really good to come as one. There is something special that you do not normally experience when praying alone as a single church," *Pr Lim* shared.

SEREMBAN was the only place which conducted the rally in all the four languages. It also recorded the largest turnout – about

I S S U E 5 9

Women to Women



Woman be Free

By Marilyn B. (Lynn) Smith

John 11:1-44

***This is not intended to be an exegesis of this passage of Scripture
but simply to serve as a dramatic analogy.***

The raising of Lazarus can serve as an appropriate analogy for us as women. We are hearing the voice—the loud voice of Jesus saying, “Woman, come out! Come out of the tomb—the place of death—the place that has imprisoned you—come out into life and freedom and the fullness of the abundant life to which I have called you. Woman, come out!”

And in obedience we are coming out—coming forth from the darkness of the tomb into the light of life—and yet we are finding our hands and feet and faces still bound by the grave clothes. We are unable to speak and to act because customs and attitudes of our society bind us into stereotypes—roles determined by others—not put there by God. And again we are hearing the voice—the loud voice of Jesus saying, “Take off the grave clothes and let her go!”

Only the voice of Jesus can call us forth from the tomb. He is the only one who gives life. But He asks that we roll away the stone and unbind each other from the restrictive grave clothes that inhibit our freedom to live that new life. For that we need each other. We need the community to be obedient so that, as individual women, we can follow the voice of our Master.

What is the stone?

The stone is that which seals us into the tomb—the symbol of death, of non-existence. It is whatever says we are dead, interferes with our life, robs us of our identity.

We are commanded to roll away the stone—to give back to women the identity given to them by God.

It’s easier to respond by saying, “There’s a bad odour—she’s been in the tomb too long!” Things have been this way for so long

that it won’t be pleasant to call her forth!”

Indeed it won’t be pleasant, or easy, because in order to give her back her identity—the identity ordained by God—we need to challenge the way societal values and historical practices have distorted the biblical teachings, relegating women to a



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secondary status and lowering her self-esteem. It won’t be easy!

But Jesus speaks!

When Jesus says, “COME FORTH,” who is this woman who emerges?

She, like the male, is made in the image of God. She, like the male, is redeemed by the blood of the Lamb, called into the royal

priesthood, gifted by the Holy Spirit for the edifying of the body of Christ. She is one with man as the Bride of Christ—being purified and glorified—transformed into His likeness. She, like the man, is made in the image of God, to image Christ to a hurting world. Let us then obey the first command and roll away the stone that interferes with this God-given identity and allow her to “Come Forth.”

The second command we may find even more difficult: to take off her grave clothes and let her go free—free to fulfil the destiny of her identity.

What are the grave clothes?

The grave clothes are those things which restrict her freedom, which bind her hands and feet and cover her face, preventing her from speaking and doing what she was called to say and do by her Creator God.

They are those things imposed upon her by cultural practices which interfere in any way with the quality of life intended for her by a loving God.

They are those things which demean a woman’s value—in her own eyes and in the eyes of others.

They are those attitudes, laws and practices which result in:

- exploitation
- violence
- sexual discrimination, and
- silence.

The woman created in the image of God, called forth by God and commissioned by God, needs to be set free to live with dignity and value.

If these are the grave clothes which we need to remove for women to be set free, how do we go about doing it?

CHANGE ATTITUDES—CHANGE LAWS—CHANGE PRACTICES

The church needs to take off the grave clothes!

FIRST BY SEEING THEM:

The church needs to acknowledge the reality of exploitation, injustice, violence and poverty within our own communities.

THEN BY TAKING ACTION:

The road to empowerment must be paved by those who have the power. Lazarus was brought to life by the voice of Jesus, but Jesus expected those standing by to become involved. They were the ones who had the power to set him free—to remove the restrictive grave clothes.

Christ is calling the church - both men and women - to be the church, His body. We cannot, DARE NOT, stand by and do nothing.

The church needs to begin to live as a community. The personal lifestyle accepted by the church in many cultures is a privatized, individualized model which removes any accountability for what happens within the confines of one's own home—even if it involves emotional and physical abuse. The church needs to reject that model and begin to live the kind of community that Christ came to establish.

A Christian community operates on mutual submission, respect, building up of one another, challenging one another, caring for one another, sharing with one another. In a truly Christian community there will be no violence, no exploitation, no injustice, no exclusion based on gender, social status, or race.



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We can learn to live a theology of covenant and mutuality. We can change decision-making systems such as church committees and governments and function with men and women in leadership positions.

In a Christian community, men and women will work together to remove the obstacles in the way of women's full participation. Men and women can pool resources, be creative, learn from each other and support one another to restore the dignity of those on the margins of our society. If this is done, the church will distinguish itself as a compassionate and humane community which honours the name of Christ.

And in doing so, the church will address the reality of the fear that women live with—FEAR IS THE BAD ODOUR! It is a woman's reality that many men do not understand.

God has given men and women together the power to change the world. Let's call one another to share that power and use our energy to work alongside each other.

Together, let's challenge the church to allow women to point out the injustices, and then listen—listen carefully—to their muffled cries and their screams of pain, even if they are couched in shouts of anger.

The church is called to be obedient to the voice of Jesus. We can be. We can hear the loud voice of Jesus. We can begin to remove the grave clothes and allow women to fulfill the destiny of their identity. ■

Taken from Gender or Giftedness? A study on the role of women prepared for the Commission on Women's Concerns of the World Evangelical Fellowship.

Releasing an Army of Women into Front Line Ministry

By Pastor Susan Tang

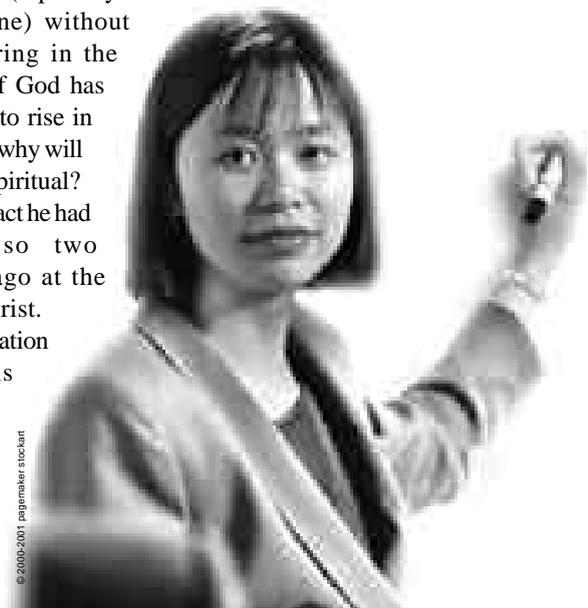
The rise of women into world leadership during the last two decades has been phenomenal. In the United States, President Bush has five women in his cabinet with the two most powerful jobs allotted to them! His personal counsellor is a woman and the chief of national security is a woman.

Changes are taking place even in Muslim countries where women had lived for centuries under the dictum of men, and had been dismissed and slighted as insignificant. Women have now managed to come to the forefront! There have been women presidents or prime ministers in Sri Lanka, India, Guyana, Central African Republic, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Turkey and Rwanda with some of them still in office right now. It will not be a surprise should Benazir Bhutto, two-time president of Pakistan, return to the presidency for the third time.

A woman is now at the reins in the Philippines. In Malaysia 60 per cent of the workforce in government service are women and lately more cabinet posts have been assigned to women. India's High Commissioner to Malaysia is a woman, and in many western countries women have risen to the forefront to become Prime Ministers, senators, governors, mayors, etc. Such things were unheard of in the yesteryears! What is happening?

The world may be baffled at the battalion of women rising in power but this should not trouble us. What is happening is, God is at work! He is simply engineering and manoeuvring events to accomplish His purposes. There can be no radical changes in the earthly realm (especially in the political scene) without divine manoeuvring in the spiritual realm. If God has permitted women to rise in the physical realm, why will He not do it in the spiritual? He surely will! In fact he had already done so two thousand years ago at the advent of Jesus Christ.

Christ's penetration to earth and His death at Calvary actually introduced a



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redemptive process designed to both lift and restore women to the high position they had enjoyed in the original creation, as co-heirs with men in God's Kingdom. When Jesus Christ was on earth, His very attitudes and actions towards women implicitly tell us three things: i) that women can be initiated into full discipleship ii) that women can be co-heirs with men in spiritual things and be iii) trustworthy witnesses for Him.

King David foresaw God's great promise to recruit women into His army thousands of years ago. In Psalm 68 he saw this army of women being commissioned into God's service. This is what he said, "The Lord gave the word, great was the company (army) of those (the Hebrew word is in the feminine gender) that published it" (Psalm 68:11). In this Psalm David was actually chanting God's triumphant victory over all His enemies and in the midst of his song, he prophesied the indispensable part the women must play and had played in contributing to this victory. David saw them recruited into the army, receiving their word of command directly from the Lord Himself. Despite all the seemingly insurmountable circumstances, they did not fail their commander-in-chief; they preached the Word!

Yes, this army of women rose to the forefront and fought alongside the men and the result was awesome—the spoils of war was so extensive that even those who were not in the army got a share of it!

What do you think would have happened if women had not risen in the past decades to teach, preach, pastor and pioneer mission fields? More than 60 percent of the work in God's great Kingdom would have been left unattended! King David saw this thousands of years before its fulfilment. This is now being fulfilled before our eyes. Women have indeed broken into the frontline of leadership both in the secular, political and spiritual world in great magnitude. No wonder the prophet Jeremiah prophesied about God doing a new thing, a thing totally unheard of in the past. "A woman shall compass (protect or encircle) a man."

Yes, the God who had allowed such an uprising of females in the secular and political world will also do it in the spiritual world. An even greater army of trustworthy women will rise up and do even greater exploits for God in the coming decades—exploits that will baffle the minds of men! Whether men like it or not, women will rise



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because this is what Father God wants done in the endtimes as a final defiance and reproach to the works of darkness. It was through a woman that sin entered the world; it will be through the indispensable contributing force of women that the works of darkness will be shamefully defeated. The purpose of this book is to call men in every nation to rise as strong intercessors. The need has never been so great because if women are rising to the forefront of ministry, then men must rise and cover them with their prayers! If ministering women do not have this covering of prayers from the men, then it is going to be very easy for them to enter into deception, become side-tracked, become weird or cultic, etc...O how we ministering women in high positions of leadership need the men in our nation and in every nation to rise up and pray for us and protect us. Just as Eve could not make it without Adam, we definitely cannot make it without the praying men.

I would like to plead with all Christian men on behalf of all women ministers that they pray for us, cover us and release us into ministry instead of belittling, intimidating or hindering us. There is much spoil to be brought in for the Lord in this endtime battle for souls, and if women are not recruited into God's army with the blessings of the men, then God's great work will not increase in magnitude.

How wonderful it will be if all Christian men in this nation will make it a point at every church meeting to pray for women ministers (pastors, missionaries etc) by

saying, "O God, we rise to cover and to bless women who are active in the battle field. We, as the head of the women take our stand against the works of darkness over their lives and break their authority over them! We men are here to form this wall of protection around them—the enemy cannot touch them unless they first touch us and they cannot touch us unless they first touch the Lord, who is our supreme Head!"

Yes, men, return to your highest calling. Return to your greatest place of honour ...intercede before the throne of Father God for women. We surely need your prayers and your priestly covering. ■

Taken from Prevailing as Davidic Intercessors by Pastor Susan Tang. Available at Christian bookstores.



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Year-end Reverie

By Goh Poh Gaik

It's year-end again. That time of year when a kaleidoscope of memories cascade through our minds as we move into the Christmas season and as we get ready to turn over the last page of 2001. What a year it has been! In many ways it has not been different from past years - the ups and downs, the pains and the joys, the victories and the failures. Yet it has been a year like no other. In some ways our world will never be the same again. That's how a friend emailed me after the September 11 events in the States.

Events of catastrophic proportion may have taken place in our lives. A major decision. A major move. Laughter may have criss-crossed with tears. Whatever. You will probably be able to bear testimony to this: Whenever I have taken a painful event and brought it before the Lord in reflection, I have, nearly always, come away calmer in spirit and gladder than ever that I am His child. More pleasant events, given reverie attention, have brought glowing warmth on the inside and a deep gratitude for His love and provision.

Year-end reveries are beneficial year-end activities. It may be a couple of hours, a day or a weekend. Let's try to work it into our schedules. During these times with the Lord, reading God's Word is essential, as we all know. God speaks and He speaks clearly and powerfully through His Word. Christian material may also be helpful as they

prod us on to review, reflect and rededicate our lives to the Lord. I have selected 10 points from *A Closing Challenge to Men and Women* taken from *What's the Difference?* by John Piper to help us along.

My earnest prayer and challenge for you is ...

Women

1. That all of your life—in whatever calling—be devoted to the glory of God.
2. That the promises of Christ be trusted so fully that peace and joy and strength fill your soul to overflowing.
3. That this fullness of God overflow in daily acts of love so that people might see your good deeds and give glory to your Father in Heaven.
4. That you be women of the Book, who love and study and obey the Bible in every area of its teaching; that meditation on Biblical truth be the source of hope and faith, that you continue to grow in understanding through the chapters of your life, never thinking that study and growth are only for others.
5. That you be women of prayer, so that the Word of God will be opened to you, and so the power of faith and holiness will descend upon you; that your spiritual influence may increase at home and at church and in the world.
6. That you be women who have a deep grasp of the sovereign grace of God



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which undergirds all these spiritual processes; and that you be deep thinkers about the doctrines of grace, and even deeper lovers of these things.

7. That you be totally committed to ministry, whatever your specific calling; that you not fritter your time on soaps or women's magazines or unimportant hobbies or shopping; that you redeem the time for Christ and His Kingdom.
8. That, if you are single, you exploit your singleness to the full in devotion to God (the way Jesus and Paul and Mary Slessor and Amy Carmichael did) and not be paralyzed by the desire to be married.
9. That, if you are married, you creatively and intelligently and sincerely support the leadership of your husband as deeply as obedience to Christ will allow; that you encourage him in his God-appointed role as head; that you influence him primarily through your fearless tranquility and holiness and prayer.
10. That you develop a wartime mentality and lifestyle; that you never forget that life is short, that billions of peoples hang in the balance of heaven and hell every day, that the love of money is spiritual suicide, that the goals of upward mobility (nicer clothes, cars, houses, vacations, food, hobbies) are a poor and dangerous substitute for the goals of living for Christ with all your might and maximizing your joy in ministry to people's needs.

Blessed reverie and have a meaningful Christmas. ■

WOMEN to WOMEN

Advisor/Co-ordinator: Goh Poh Gaik

Women to women, a project of the NECF Commission on Women's Concerns, is a bimonthly supplement to Berita NECF.

It has the broad objectives of:

- educating and raising awareness of the social and theological issues affecting women
- stimulating efforts towards networking and dialogue amongst women
- encouraging one another in the use of our gifts and talents for the Lord's Kingdom

Your letters and contributions (feedback, suggestions, ideas, articles, poems, cartoons, etc.) are most welcome.

Send to:

The Co-ordinator, **WOMEN TO WOMEN**

NECF, 32, Jalan SS2/103, 47300 Petaling Jaya, Selangor Darul Ehsan, Malaysia

The views expressed in this supplement do not necessarily reflect those of the Commission or the NECF.

Going for the Good Life

'High quality of life' – what does it mean? Can one, living with little, still be happy? It all depends on how 'quality of life' is understood and measured, says DR LEONG TIEN FOCK.

The impetus behind globalisation is economic growth (at the national level) and profit maximisation (corporate level). Ultimately at the individual level, it is the quest for a higher standard of living. But, it has been widely felt, when the standard of living goes up, the quality of life goes down. In fact 30 years ago, it was this unhappy realisation in the developed West that led to a new field of study known as Quality of Life studies.

Standard of living is measured by per capita income – what money can buy. There is no question that globalisation brings a higher standard of living, though unevenly. But does it really lower the quality of life? It all depends on how 'quality of life' is understood and measured.

Since standard of living is a measure of material comfort, quality of life is likewise a reference to non-material comfort. Basic to a high quality of life is an absence of chronic anxieties and an overall satisfaction with life. Though quality of life refers to a subjective experience, it is usually measured quantitatively just like standard of living.

For instance, some years ago, the Geneva-based Corporate Resources Group undertook a study of 118 cities worldwide, ranking them according to quality of life.

They used four quantifiable criteria: the level of personal security, public services and infrastructure, medical and health considerations, and political and social stability. The result was that the top 30 positions, with the exceptions of Singapore (9) and Tokyo (28), were all occupied by Western cities. 'Boring' Geneva came in first while strife-torn Algiers was last. Kuala Lumpur was 53.

The result is puzzling. In the first place, it was the unpleasant realisation that the quality of life in developed societies had deteriorated that prompted interest in the study. How then is it possible that the cities with the best 'quality of life' are cities in the developed world?

The answer is simple: though the criteria go beyond measuring standard of living, they still measure the wrong things.

Based on the four criteria used in the above study, as long as people felt safe on the streets and in their homes (even if lacking peace in their hearts); as long as there was convenience (even if lacking contentment); as long as they were physically healthy (even if spiritually empty); as long as there was no frequent change in government nor occurrence of riots (even if



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marriages were falling apart and children unmanageable) – the people were considered to have a high quality of life, even if they were experiencing a pervasive sense of discontentment as well as emptiness and meaninglessness!

What were measured are basically social, political and economic factors that are contributive to, but not necessarily indicative of, a better life beyond material comfort. Non-material comfort is also affected by other quantifiable factors not measured (such as parents' working and children's schooling hours) as well as non-quantifiable factors (such as parents' pressure at work and children's pressure at school).

The concept of quality of life is flawed not only in how it is measured but also how it is understood, at least among English-speaking people.

see page 12

Rallying for unity at prayer rallies: from page 6

500 attendees from 15 churches – since the first rally was held 10 years ago, according to *Pr Voon Yuen Woh*. Though the rally was a short one – it ended at 10pm – the attendees had a solid time of intercession at the Agape Gospel Assembly. They prayed especially for more development in the state, which will lead to better job opportunities, so that more Negri Sembilan Christians will remain in the state. They also prayed for more land to build churches and more Christians to answer the call of full-time ministry.

Bernard Yogaraj reported that in TELUK INTAN, more than 70 members from the English, Chinese and Tamil congregations gathered at separate places to pray especially for the social problems in Hilir Perak and for a burial land for the Christian community.

In KANGAR, about 55 people from three churches were engaged in fervent intercession at Kangar Baptist Church, said *Pr Heng Kwang Tiang*. There was a special burden to pray for strong Christian families as a witness to the community. ■

SHARING
RESOURCESGlobalisation
Booklet

NECF Malaysia's booklet on globalisation, *Engagement or Isolation: A Malaysian Christian Perspective on Globalisation*, presents a Christian encounter and perspective with globalisation.

Churches are challenged to go beyond their own agenda and private plans, to encourage one another to think and act globally because they are called to be the salt and light of the world (Matt. 5:13-14).

Available from NECF Malaysia office at RM10 each. ■

NECF Malaysia's 2002 Events

Jan 19	Globalisation & the Church Consultation (Registration deadline: Jan 14)	
Mar 16	Globalisation & the Marketplace Consultation (Registration deadline: Mar 11)	
April 20	Globalisation & the Family Consultation (Registration deadline: April 15)	
22-25	Biennial General Meeting and Leadership Conference 20th Anniversary Dinner NECF Open Day	
April	BM Prayer Conference*	
May 18	Globalisation & Society (Registration deadline: May 13)	
July 6	Launch of 40-Day Fast & Prayer	
19-21	2nd National Youth Missions Camp	* Dates to be confirmed
21-Aug 29	40-Day Fast & Prayer	
Aug 14	Resolving Spiritual Conflicts and Cross-Cultural Ministry Conference with Neil Anderson	
Aug 15-16	Pastors & Leaders Meeting with Neil Anderson	
Aug 16-17	Seduction of Our Children Seminar with Joe & Kathy Wasmond	
Aug 27-30	Prayer Conference*	
Sept 22-25	National Pastors' Consultation on Missions*	
Nov	International Month of Prayer for the Persecuted Church	



Going for the good life: from page 11

The biblical view

In the Gospels, there are two Greek words that can be translated 'life': *bios*, from which we get 'biology' and *zoe*, from which we get 'zoology'. From the word 'bio-graphy' (the writing of a person's bios), we can see that bios is the kind of life that we read about in a biography, that is the life of a person that can be described. In contrast, *zoe* refers to the inner indescribable vitality and there is no such thing as a 'zoo-graphy'.

Standard of living is the standard of bios. What is labeled 'quality of life' is actually quality of bios and not *zoe*. It is more consistent to label it 'quality of living' and reserve 'quality of life' for quality of *zoe*, a concept ignored in secular thinking but crucial to Christian theology.

Jesus says: "I have come that they may have *zoe*, and have it to the full" (Jn 10:10). He is not saying we do not already have a *zoe*, without which we would have no *bios*. But a *zoe* not filled with Christ is one that is 'alive' just enough to sustain the *bios* and to keep nagging the person that something is still missing. Also, without an assurance of an eternal hope that comes with a Christ-filled *zoe*, one is most likely to experience meaninglessness.

Such a fulfilled *zoe* enables one to be happy despite a low standard of living. And with a life of such high quality, a high standard of living will lead to a high quality of living. This quality of life and living that Jesus offers is available to everybody. But many – even those who go to church – have not found it. Why? ■

Preoccupation's distraction

Jesus says there are hearers of God's Word "who have heard, (but) as they go on their way are choked with worries and riches and pleasures of this life (*bios*), and bring no fruit to maturity" (Lk. 8:14). He is saying that those preoccupied with standard and quality of living are unable to benefit from the hearing of God's Word.

In a globalising society, this temptation is extremely great due to unprecedented economic opportunities as well as the atheistic mood that infuses such a society in which God does not seem or feel real anymore. (In the pre-modern world, the concept of 'economic growth' was non-existent.)

This has serious implications for Christians as well as non-Christians. For a preoccupation with temporal things leads non-Christians to reject, and Christians to neglect, Jesus as the Source of life of the highest quality. Also, such a preoccupation renders one less able to cope with the problems of modern living. For example, his emotions may go up and down with the stock market.

Thus, generally speaking, when the standard of living goes up, the quality of life, and even the quality of living, goes down. But if Christians recognise the spiritual implications of globalisation and see through the muddled thinking behind 'quality of life' and respond accordingly, it is possible to enjoy a high standard and quality of living through the cultivation of a high quality of life. ■



COMING UP ...

Consultations on Globalisation A Malaysian Agenda for Prayer, Faith and Action

The NECF Malaysia Research Commission is organising a series of five consultations on globalisation in relation to various aspects of life. At each consultation, the commission will inform attendees on globalisation's effects in that area (for example, the family) and frame responses for prayer and action.

The five full-day consultations, to be held at NECF Malaysia conference room, are:

- Globalisation: The Political, Economic & Social Realities on Nov. 17, 2001;
- Globalisation & the Church on Jan 19, 2002;
- Globalisation & the Marketplace on March 16, 2002;
- Globalisation & the Family on April 20, 2002; and
- Globalisation & Society on May 18, 2002.

Registration fee, which includes seminar materials and lunch, is RM30 per consultation or RM120 for all. The commission has invited a range of speakers who are authorities in their areas. Among them are Dr Ng Kam Weng, Dr Chan Kok Eng, Prof. Dr Chiam Heng Keng, Dr Robert Tee, Pr Daniel Ho, Mr Philip Koh, Dr Tan Kang San, Rev. Tony Lim, Mr Tan Kong Beng and Mr Cheong Seng Gee.

Globalisation affects all strata of society and these consultations are designed for all Christians, especially pastors, parents, evangelists, missionaries and intercessors.

For more information, contact NECF Malaysia office at 03-77278227 (tel.) or research@necf.org.my (e-mail). ■



DOULOS to dock here

The world's largest floating bookshop, MV Doulos, will sail into Malaysian waters in November and remain until February 2002.

The ship, registered in the Guinness Book of World Records as the "Oldest Active Ocean Going Passenger Vessel", has more than half a million books carrying some 6,000 titles covering science, medicine, cooking, and the Arts, as well as a large selection of Christian literature and children's books. Most books are in English but there is a selection of books in Bahasa Melayu and Chinese.

Doulos – "servant" in Greek – was built

in 1914 and currently houses a crew of 320 volunteers (including 13 Malaysians) from 37 different countries. Since 1977, it has visited over 400 ports in 87 countries.

This is its third visit here. The public is invited to participate in events held on board as well as on shore. The Doulos schedule is: Kuching (15 to 19 Nov); Pasir Gudang (23 Nov to 4 Dec); Port Klang (7 Dec to 2 Jan, 2002); Penang (18 to 26 Jan, 2002); Pulau Langkawi (28 to 31 Jan, 2002); and Penang (2 to 7 Feb, 2002).

For more information, please contact 03-7034887 / 03-703 5321 (tel.) or doulospkelang@pd.jaring.my (e-mail). ■

Seminar on Ethics Nov. 19 - 22, 2001

Malaysia Bible Seminari is holding a seminar with the theme Building Christ's Body Through Ethical Living – Some Current Ethical Concerns in Malaysia. Among the issues to be covered are euthanasia, religious freedom and conversion, bribery and corruption, libel and defamation, and money, sex and power. The speakers are Lim Kar Yong, Dato' Daniel

Tay, Lee Min Choon and Dr Alex Tang.

Seminar fee for the whole course is RM120 excluding meals and accommodation which are available upon request and for a small sum. It will be held at the Klang college premises. For more information, contact MBS at 03-3427482 (tel.) or mbs@bible.po.my (e-mail). ■



Implications of Globalisation
A Malaysian Agenda for Prayer, Faith and Action

Do you Know ...

...that the World Evangelical Fellowship (WEF) has official representation in the United Nations Economic and Social Council, particularly in the Human Rights Commission? It has special consultative status and has used its privileged position to

express the views and concerns of the worldwide evangelical community.

WEF is the umbrella body representing 114 national evangelical fellowships and alliances, which in turn represent some 160 million evangelicals.

NECF Malaysia is a member of WEF. ■

FOREIGN NEWS

Indonesian Muslims More Moderate Than Perceived

A recent BBC report on Indonesia's Muslim leaders calling for a *jihad* on the United States should it attack Afghanistan caused great concern, particularly among neighbouring countries.

The report, "Indonesia clerics threaten *jihad*", widened the perception that most Indonesians are radical Muslims and that the country is heading towards an even more extremist direction. But this may not be so, as Mark Albrecht found out in an interview with the WEF Religious Liberty Commission chief Indonesian correspondent, a professor of theology who prefers to remain anonymous.

Albrecht is the Commission's conference moderator.

Q. According to the BBC report, a large group of mainstream Muslim religious leaders called the MUI has issued a strong statement of radical opposition to the US, which could take the country in a much more extremist direction before any military conflict has even begun.

A. That would be true if the MUI were actually 'mainstream Islamic scholars and religious leaders across the country' as the report said. In reality, the MUI is a relatively small Muslim organisation with little popular following. They had strong ties to the old Suharto regime, which is why the press sometimes still think they are 'mainstream.'

In fact they are a very conservative right-wing group with extremist views, and would support the Laskar Jihad army in their armed fight against the Christians in the Moluccas. Just to give you an example of their mindset, several years ago they issued an order forbidding Indonesian Muslims from saying "Merry Christmas" to their Christian friends. This became controversial and most Muslims disobeyed it and continued to greet their Christian friends.

Q. How would you characterise the overall attitude of Muslims in Indonesia concerning Christianity and religious pluralism?

A. The Indonesian constitution established the concept of *Pancasila* which states that all Indonesians must have a religion. Islam, Christianity, Hinduism and Buddhism are the acceptable choices, but the old animistic mysticism that underlies Indonesian culture, especially in Java, is the real religion of most people, and so Indonesian Islam generally has a more mellow and tolerant demeanor than in the Middle East.

Q. What do you mean by "more mellow and tolerant"?

A. For example, most Indonesian Muslims would probably say that it is God's will that there is more than one religion, and that salvation is not exclusive to Islam. They would likely argue that Islam is the most refined and accurate religion, but that Muslims must live in peace with other religions. This is certainly the case in Java, where I live.

These sentiments are actually part of the official teaching of the Nahdatul Ulama (NU), Indonesia's largest Islamic organisation. The NU is headed by former president Abdurrahman Wahid and has about 40 million members. The Muhammadiyah, the country's second-largest Muslim organisation with 30 million members, is more conservative, but also embraces this teaching.

Q. What causes this confusion and tension about Islam and its 'true teachings'?

A. It's rather complex, but many think it has to do with seemingly contradictory sentiments within the Quran itself. Islamic scholars often point to the chronologically earlier sections of the Quran as being more peaceable.

But there is a shift in mood in the later writings, thought to be from the time the Prophet Muhammad spent in Medina (where he became a political figure and his enemies began to oppose him more vigorously). In these 'Medina writings' we see more combative and warlike statements. Of course this view is not universally accepted in Islam, and remains a topic of sharp debate among Muslims.

(Note: Indonesia is the world's most populous Islamic nation. The official government figures state that 90 per cent of the population are Muslims. Most Christians, however, agree that 80 per cent is more accurate, with 15 per cent being Christians and the remaining 5 per cent Hindus, Buddhists and animists.)



Iran to have Christian TV programme

Come Christmas, Iranians will be able to receive Bible-based programs in the Farsi (Persian) language from SAT-7, the Christian television satellite network that broadcasts to the Middle East and North Africa.

SAT-7 hopes to provide a range of programmes including children's programmes, drama, Christian music, and teaching programmes.

When asked if this would be the first time Christian programmes in Farsi are to be broadcast in Iran, SAT-7 Chief Executive Officer Terence Ascott said: "As far as I know, there has not been a regular service of Christian programming by satellite television to Iran. So far, there have been occasional transmissions of the JESUS Film and we have broadcast a few programmes simultaneously in Arabic and Farsi." — *Assist News Service*

Cardinal: Christianity almost vanquished

Christianity has almost been "vanquished" in Britain, the leader of the Roman Catholic Church in England and Wales said in a candid speech reported in British media yesterday.

Christianity no longer influences the government or people's lives, and revolutionary thinking is needed in order to reach lapsed Catholics, non-believers and young people, Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O'Connor, Archbishop of Westminster, told the National Conference of Priests in Leeds.

He said Christ was replaced by music, new age movements, occult practices and green issues as the source of peoples' "glimpses of the transcendent." His comments echoed the sentiments of the Church of England's Archbishop of Canterbury Dr George Carey, who last year said Britain was a country where "tacit atheism prevails." — *Reuters*

FOREIGN NEWS

Prosperity theology and the poor

Success, health and most of all wealth, will surely come to those who give hefty offerings to the Universal Church of God's Kingdom, preach its leaders. Founded 24 years ago by Brazilian Edir Macedo, the church takes in US\$1 billion annually and has three million members in Brazil alone.

Among its holdings are a bank, newspapers, radio stations and Brazil's third most popular television network. The church has spreaded to other parts of Latin America and Africa. Critics call prosperity theology among the most dangerous religious trends because it causes further impoverishment of the poor in the Third World, reports the *Chicago Tribune*, which estimates that 20 to 30 per cent of Brazil's evangelical churches are prosperity churches.

Many, however, have left the church and blame it for their financial problems. One woman *Tribune* interviewed said she gave money to get the blessings that Universal promised, but the pastor kept asking for more. After years of giving, her husband still was an alcoholic and she was broke. "The pastor kept insisting people should give more money, and now I have more problems." —*World Pulse* ■

Joint Christian-Muslim Statement

Senior Christian and Muslim leaders in London, England, have issued a joint statement calling for the protection of Muslim minorities in the West and Christian minorities in the Muslim world from revenge attacks as a result of the Sept 11 US attacks.

Part of the three-paragraph statement said: "We express our sadness that here in the British Isles, Muslim individuals and communities have already been visited with acts of violence, and we have the fear that in countries with a Muslim majority the pursuit by the United States and its allies of those who perpetrated these tragic attacks may result in reprisals on minority Christian communities.

"Both Islam and Christianity proclaim that life is God-given and precious. Those who seek to impose their wills through violence cannot justly claim the support of either religion. Moreover, the true worth of any community or society is to be judged not least by the way in which it treats minorities in its midst."

The statement was signed by three Muslims, five Christians and a member of the World Conference on Religion and Peace. —*Barnabas Fund* ■

Dead: New Tribes Missionaries Kidnapped in 1993

New Tribes Mission (NTM) has concluded, based on multiple guerrilla testimonies, that three American missionaries kidnapped eight years ago in Panama were shot by their captors, believed to be Colombian guerrillas, three years after the kidnap.

The three missionaries were captured by Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) guerrillas on Jan 31, 1993, while planting a church among the Kuna Indians.

They were later taken across the border into Colombia; their wives returned to the United States.

NTM has concluded that the three were killed in 1996 in a military assault on the rebels near Acandí, a mountain village in northwest Colombia just 15 miles from Púculo.

The Colombian government and FBI will continue to pursue the case. An NTM spokesman said: "It's a sad thing. It's another terrorist act that have happened in Colombia as well as around the world. It's a terrible loss for the families and for the mission, but I think everybody is encouraged that we're going forward now." —*Compass* ■

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Welcoming our New Members



In September, seven new members joined our 'family' of churches and organisations. We welcome:

- **Living Sanctuary** in Ampang, Kuala Lumpur, pastored by Foo Yuen Po
- **Sanctuary Church**, Ipoh pastored by Joseph Loh Wee Kok
- **Gereja Yong Peng** in Johore pastored by Ling Tieng Ong
- **Perling Philadelphia Christian Fellowship**, JB in Johore pastored by Ling Pegk Ngeh
- **Pertubuhan Persaudaraan Damai Yesus Kristus** in Menglembu, Perak, pastored by Chan Wing Song
- **Jeeva Oli Assembly** in Port Dickson represented by Elder Devadason s/o **Seeni Christian Life Centre**, Sitiawan in Perak pastored by Rev. Thomas Ong

Membership Renewal

Please be reminded that all membership with NECF Malaysia expire on December 31, 2001. Kindly renew now.



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For Your Intercession



U S A

The attack on the New York World Trade Centre and the Washington Pentagon on Sept 11 is a tragedy that has, not only left thousands dead, but also a nation reeling in emotional pain, fear, trauma and confusion. We must pray concerning all these things. The situation also has the potential of evoking adverse consequences in matters directly related to religious liberty. This, too, needs our prayers.

This tragedy could well be a critical turning point for Muslim-Christian relations worldwide. Media exposure of Islamic masses celebrating the attack and anti-Muslim rhetoric and sentiment is encouraging 'Islamophobia' in the West. If this situation is not handled well, the world could find itself divided along religious and ideological lines with an intensity and hostility unknown in European and Western nations.

Just as God was concerned over the fate of the people of Nineveh, so too is He concerned today about the eternal fate of men, women and children of every race and language. We should resist the temptation to be like Jonah who wanted to see judgement and destruction befall the Ninevites more than compassion and salvation.

Christians need to choose to be different from those who react with hate and hostility. We must respond prayerfully in faith with love and a desire for peace and reconciliation. Pray for:

- God to guide and strengthen world leaders now challenged to confront the growing menace of Islamic militancy and terrorist activity, that they will not descend into negative stereotyping that could inflame religious tensions, destroy social harmony and cripple Christian witness.
- Wisdom for the Christian leaders of the world as they need to expose the dark forces behind Islamic militancy and terrorism while still promoting love for Muslims, who must be seen not as our enemy, but as people in need of Jesus.
- Christians (particularly those in prison) living in places ruled by Islamic extremists. Their situation will be even more desperate if 'battle-lines' are drawn.
- Those who are grieving, suffering, anxious or fearful due to the US tragedy,

that they may all turn to God for comfort and peace (Ps 121:1-2).

- The Church worldwide to renew its commitment to proclaim Christ to a fallen world in desperate need of direction, truth and salvation (Jn 16:1-3).
- God to use this situation to bring glory to His own name and fulfil His purposes.

P A K I S T A N

Pakistan is inextricably linked with Afghanistan and the Taliban, and has its own large Islamic contingent. President General Pervez Musharraf's cooperation with the US is threatening to split the nation violently. An alliance with the US could enable Musharraf to reduce the influence of the hardline Islamic religious leaders and bring about reforms to oppressive laws such as the Blasphemy Law.

However, the immediate threat is civil war, chaos and anarchy. The increased militant Islamic zeal in Pakistan could lead to harsher persecution on Christians.

Pray for:

- God to work actively through policy makers and all those whose decisions can influence world affairs (Ps 47).
- God to give wisdom, courage, strength and divine protection to the Pakistani Christians who are in danger from threatened war and an Islamic uprising within the nation.
- Mercy for the imprisoned Christian aid workers in Afghanistan, where only God can protect them and restrain their Taliban jailers.

I N D O N E S I A

Hostile Islamic forces in Indonesia are making their presence felt. Since the threatened response by the US to the Sept 11 terror attacks, anti-US demonstrations in Jakarta have become a daily event and militant Islamic groups have confronted US citizens and warned them to leave. The council of Islamic teachers has said it will call a *Jihad* "to defend Islam" if the US strikes Afghanistan. Islamic fervour has risen in the nation in the past decade and several radical Islamic groups with connections to international militant organisations (such as Osama bin Laden's al-Qaeda) have become established there. The majority of Indonesian

Muslims and many leaders believe in peaceful co-existence. Now that the US has struck Afghanistan, there is fear that Christians in Indonesia will become victims of retaliatory *Jihad* attacks. Pray for peace, law and order in Indonesia.

N I G E R I A

In February 1999, Nigeria elected a democratic civilian government with Olusegun Obasanjo, a strong Christian southerner as president. Obasanjo's election displeased the northern Muslim governors who have ruled the country in a succession of military dictatorships since independence about 30 years ago.

To challenge and de-stabilise Obasanjo, the governors stirred up Islamic zeal by imposing the Syariah Law in their states, an act that directly flouts Nigeria's constitution, which mandates a secular government. Since then, religious differences and tensions have escalated.

In September, religious and ethnic tensions erupted into a bloodbath in the central Nigerian city of Jos. The death toll after three days of intense violence stood at 165 with 900 injured and 6,000 refugees. Only the quick and decisive response by the military stopped the strife from spilling into surrounding regions.

The conflict was triggered by a minor incident, demonstrating the explosive nature of the sentiment and fear lurking beneath the surface. But as Christians and Muslims were killing each other, other Christians and Muslims were at the same time sheltering and caring for each other.

More recently, at least another 200 were killed in religious clashes in the northern Nigerian city of Kano triggered by protests against US-led air strikes in Afghanistan, according to a *Reuters* report. Thousands fleeing to safe havens in military barracks reported an orgy of killings by militant gangs.

One of the worst-hit areas was Zangan district on Kano's outskirts, a Muslim stronghold with a significant Christian minority. Those fleeing were Christians.

Pray for wisdom and courage for President Obasanjo as he deals with the Muslim-Christian conflict that threatens to divide the nation.