

THE ONE WHO IS COMING WILL COME, AND HE WILL NOT DELAY!

# MARANATHA!

HOPE OF GLORY

#29 \* JANUARY 2007

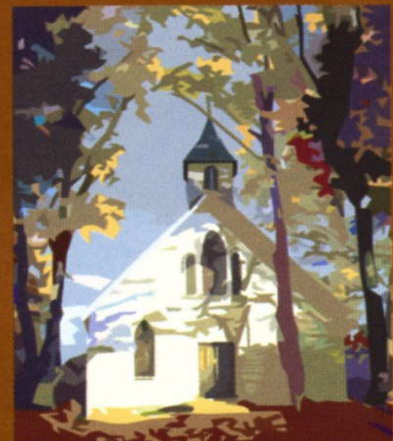


## BHUTAN'S NEW KING

NAMGYEL WANGCHUK

## THE EMERGING CHURCH

ALARMING TRENDS





**maranatha!**

**THE MESSIAH IS COMING**

**My dear Reader,**

Warm greetings in the Name of *Y'SHUA NISSI* (our banner), our Redeemer, and our coming King.

In times like these we need a banner – but not a man-made banner, or slogan! We need the Banner that the Almighty has provided. His Name is Y'shua!

“In that day the Root of Jesse (*the Messiah*) will stand as a banner for the peoples; the nations will rally to Him; and His place of rest will be glorious.”  
(Isaiah 11:10)

Friends, we are living in days of great apostasy; and it is imperative in these times that we, the people of God, uphold the banner – *Y'shua Nissi* the banner of truth – and take a bold stand in His Name.

The trends in much of the church are quite alarming, as I am sure you will agree after reading the article by Roger Oakland, in this issue, about what is being called, **“The Emerging Church.”**

These are also days of increasing persecution. In democratic, secular India, a wave of persecution is afflicting believers in many states – even in the capital, New Delhi. Let us pray that believers everywhere will lift up the banner of Y'shua high, and look to Him to tread down the adversaries.

King David in the midst of battle wrote these words to express his faith that, with the banner of God going before them, he and his army would do valiantly:

“You have given a banner to those who fear You, that it might be lifted up because of **the truth**; that those You dearly love may be delivered. Save with Your right hand, and answer us! ... Through God we do valiantly, and He treads down our adversaries.” (Psalm 60: 4-5, 12)

Persecution is often the fan that kindles the flame of God. Over the past several years we have been hearing of severe persecution in the Arab and Islamic world. But now we hear that the God of the Bible is moving powerfully and dramatically throughout the Muslim world.

It's not being reported by the mainstream media, but the number of Arab and Iranian Christians is surging despite wars, rumors of wars, and terrible persecution.

A December report by Joel Rosenberg (USA) says, “More Muslims converted to faith in Jesus Christ over the past decade than at any other time in human history. A spiritual revolution is underway throughout North Africa, the Middle East, and Central Asia.”

He reports that in December 2001, Sheikh Ahmad al Qataani, a leading Saudi cleric, appeared on a live interview on Aljazeera satellite television to confirm, and lament, that Muslims were turning to Jesus in alarming numbers. “In every hour, 667 Muslims convert to Christianity,” Al Qataani warned. “Every day, 16,000 Muslims convert to Christianity. Every year, 6 million Muslims convert to Christianity.”

Stunned, the interviewer interrupted the cleric. "Hold on! Let me clarify. Do we have six million converting from Islam to Christianity?" Al Qataani repeated his assertion. "Every year," the cleric confirmed, adding, "a tragedy has happened."

<http://joelrosenberg.blogspot.com/2006/12/record-number-of-ex-muslims-celebrate.html>

While many Christian churches in the Western world are retreating into the darkness, many Muslims, Hindus, and Buddhists are coming into the glorious Light of the Gospel of Christ. So let us not sleep, brethren, but let us be encouraged to hold up the banner higher!

### NEW MRC WEBSITE

I am delighted to let you know that after quite a lapse, our MRC website has been rebuilt and is up and running. Our webmaster is Ian Yates in UK, an enthusiastic supporter of the Maranatha messages. A number of our books, and many articles and news reports are available on the site, and God-willing, we'll be adding material, old and new, to the site regularly.

Please pray with us that the website will be accessed by multitudes, and that it will bring the truth of Messiah to many seeking souls around the world. I praise Yahweh that we have been able to place the whole of our book, "The Life and Teachings of Y'shua the Messiah" on the site. Also, "The Rapture," "The Messiah," and "How to Survive if you are Left Behind."

And there's a mission field "page" focusing on "Tibet-Bhutan-Nepal." And lots more. Please check it out at

[www.maranathaMRC.com](http://www.maranathaMRC.com)

Now may the Master bless and keep you until the trumpet sounds. And keep looking up!

In fellowship with the Messiah,

Your brother, *Don*



### THE MIDDLE EAST SITUATION

#### HIZBULLAH STEPPING UP ITS BID TO BRING DOWN THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT

JAN. 9, 07. The Hizbullah-led Lebanese opposition has vowed to step up its protest campaign aimed at bringing down the government with daily marches outside ministries and public facilities.

Supporters of the opposition have camped out in central Beirut since Dec. 1, turning the area into a city of tents where thousands of people gather daily, shouting anti-government slogans less than 100 meters (yards) from the government building where Prime Minister Fouad Siniora has been living.



Cabinet minister Ahmed Fatfat suggested in an interview with Al-Arabiya TV station that security troops would move against protesters if the marches and demonstrations disrupted freedom of movement and work in government institutions.

### **“ISRAEL PLANNING TO NUKE IRAN’S NUKES”**

JAN 7, 07. In a story that has topped headlines in all of Israel’s news media today, the widely read and highly influential London *Sunday Times* reported that the Israel Air Force was preparing to carry out a nuclear attack on Iranian’s nuclear plants.

IAF pilots had been carrying out special training in Gibraltar; and three flight paths to target sites in Iran had already been mapped out.

The plan, according to the paper, is for Israel to use bunker-busting bombs to drill “tunnels” through thickly reinforced steel and concrete shields at the Natanz plant, and then drop relatively small tactical nuclear bombs into the actual facility, destroying it. Conventional bombs will be used on two of the country’s other sites at Isfahan and Arak.

If employed, it would be the first time that nuclear weapons were used in war since 1945. The Israeli nukes for this operation are thought to render about <sup>1</sup>/15th of the yield of the atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima in 1945.

Israel’s plan has been formulated as Tehran continues its race to acquire nuclear know-how unperturbed by the international community’s half-hearted effort to boycott the Islamic Republic into compliance.

The growing fear in Israel is that the world will sit by and allow yet another genocide of the Jews. While Israeli governments have long insisted that Israel will not be the first to introduce nuclear weapons into the region, the nation feels that it has its back to the wall in the face of increasingly determined Islam-driven efforts to destroy it. - Stan Goodenough Jerusalem Newswire,

Israel has denied that it is planning such an attack.

### **OLMERT CHANGES STANCE ON UNILATERAL WITHDRAWAL**

JAN 10, 07. While on a visit to China early this month, Israeli PM Ehud Olmert gave an interview with Chinese news agency *Xinhua*, in which he said that unilateral withdrawal has proven to be a failed policy.

While he expressed willingness to negotiate a withdrawal from most of Judea and Samaria, Olmert said that it would only be done in the framework of bilateral negotiations with the Palestinian Authority.

In the spring of 2006, Olmert set a deadline for PA leaders to come to the negotiating table to discuss permanent borders with Israel. If the PA leadership did not manage to make it to the table by the end of the year, he warned, Israel would get the job anyway - alone.

At the time, the PM said he was convinced that if the PA continued to refuse to cooperate on measures to reach a final status agreement, unilateral withdrawal was the only way to ensure a Jewish majority in the Jewish State and to provide effective security for Israeli citizens. Olmert explained his new position to the Chinese interviewer by referring to the Israeli withdrawals from Lebanon in 2000 and from Gaza in 2005, both of which, he said, encouraged terrorism and increased the likelihood of war.

“A year ago, I believed that we would be able to do this unilaterally,” he said. “However, it should be said that our experience in Lebanon and the Gaza Strip is not

encouraging. We pulled out of Lebanon unilaterally, and see what happened. We pulled out of the Gaza Strip completely, to the international border, and every day they are firing Kassam rockets at Israelis. Under the existing circumstances, it would be more practical to achieve a two-state solution through negotiations rather than [unilateral] withdrawal.”

With his latest statements, the prime minister is joining other political leaders in retroactive criticism of Ariel Sharon’s unilateral withdrawal policy, which Olmert supported and defended vigorously at the time.

## **GAZA TERRORISTS SEEK TO USE KATYUSHAS**

JAN 8, 07. A number of Palestinian terror cell members recently left the Gaza Strip and traveled abroad to learn how to manufacture and effectively launch short-range Katyusha rockets which have an estimated range of over 35 kilometers, high-ranking defense officials told *The Jerusalem Post*.

While Kassam rockets have been the Israel Army’s immediate focus, a high-ranking defence official said that it was necessary to begin preparing for the possibility that the Palestinian terror organizations in the Gaza Strip would also soon obtain rockets with even longer ranges than that of the Katyusha.

## **CONDOLEEZZA: “PA rifles won’t be aimed at Israel”**

### **ABBAS: “Raise rifles against Israeli occupation!”**

JAN 11, 07. In a speech commemorating the 42nd anniversary of the founding of his Fatah party, Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas called on Arab factions to put an end to weeks of infighting and instead fight Israel. “Shooting at your brother is forbidden. Raising rifles against the occupation is our legitimate right, but raising guns against each other is forbidden. We should put our internal fighting aside and raise our rifles only against the Israeli occupation,” he said in a speech in Ramallah.

Abbas also railed against “the sons of Israel ... who are corrupting humanity on earth.”

His statements came soon after the US, aided by Ehud Olmert, provided 7,000 assault rifles and more than 1 million rounds of ammunition to militias associated with Abbas’ Fatah party. Abbas’ call to arms was not reported by most major media.

JAN 13, 07. Two days later, US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice sought to give the assurance that PA rifles will not be aimed at Israel.

The United States has been supplying the PA president’s personal militia with weapons to give him a military edge over the rival Hamas militia. Terrorists have vowed that the weapons will be used against Israel, as they were in the 1990s when the Israeli government, headed by then-Prime Minister Yitzchak Rabin, gave the PA security forces thousands of rifles.

The Jewish State has since allowed other nations to send weapons to the PA, and Israeli intelligence officials have documented their use in attacks against Israel.

But Condoleezza Rice, talking to reporters en route to Israel, said this time it will be different. “The US will prevent a repeat of previous attacks on Israel with arms supplied to PA forces,” she said. “This is a train-and-equip program that is going to move over time, so it is not as if you simply arm the Palestinians on Day One and then have no input or control over what happens from then on,” she said. “I think as a result you can maintain some control on what is being done.”

However, Fatah Force 17 security officer Abu Yousef said that other terrorist groups will use the weapons. He added that many of the members of Abbas' personal militia are also members of other terrorist organizations, including Hamas. "Our organizations are infiltrated [by Hamas]," he said.

Hamas spokesman Abu Oubaida told *WorldNetDaily* last week that his terror group will obtain any American weapons transferred to Fatah militias or purchased by Fatah using the incoming \$86.4 million in U.S. aid. "I can confirm 100% that this money and the purchased weapons will find their way to Hamas," he said. - Reported by WorldNetDaily and other reports

## HOW TO KNOW WHEN THE EMERGING CHURCH SHOWS SIGNS OF EMERGING IN YOUR CHURCH?



BY ROGER OAKLAND

[www.understandthetimes.org](http://www.understandthetimes.org)

The world is changing. So is the Christian evangelical church. There was a time — not that long ago — when the Bible was considered to be the Word of God by the majority of evangelical Christians. Now that we are well into the third millennium and the post-modern, post-Christian era, the term *evangelical* can mean almost anything. What has happened? Why is this happening and what is the future for mainstream Christianity?

For the past several years, I have been speaking around the world on current trends that are impacting Christianity. After these presentations, I am approached by Christians who come from many different church backgrounds. Many are expressing their concerns about what is happening in their churches, troubled by the new direction they see their church going. While they may not always be able to discern what is wrong, they know *something* is wrong and that it needs to be addressed.

Further, many have told me they have attempted to express their concerns with their pastors or church elders. In almost every case, they were told they had a choice to make — get with the new program or get out of the church.

This move towards a *reinvented* Christianity (one designed to "reach people") seems to be here for the long haul. It is not just a passing fad. I am often asked by concerned brothers and sisters in Christ to provide an explanation in order to help them understand what they have encountered. They want to know why these changes are underway and what to expect in the future. As well, they want to know what, if anything can be done, to stem this tide. It is for this reason I am writing this commentary — to provide biblical insight regarding the Emerging Church and where it is heading in the future.

**The Gospel According to the Scriptures**

Throughout church history, various trends have come and gone. While culture changes from place to place, biblical Christianity has always been based upon the central message of the Bible which is the gospel of Jesus Christ and the message never changes.

This gospel message is about who Jesus Christ is, and what He has done. A child can understand the gospel message. This message proclaims that life here on planet earth is finite and that life after death is eternal. The good news is that we can be saved from our sins if we will repent and simply ask for forgiveness and follow Him.

How we respond to the gospel message during the time we have on earth determines where we spend eternity — heaven or hell. Jesus, the Creator of the universe, provided a way and the only way we can spend eternity with Him. It is a matter of making a personal decision whether or not we will accept the plan He has provided.

God's adversary does not want mankind to understand the simple message. His plan is to deceive the world. If he can blind people from the gospel or convince them that they believe the gospel when indeed they do not, his plan has been successful. Throughout the ages, countless billions have been duped, either rejecting the truth, or believing that they had believed the truth when instead they had been deceived.

### **The Gospel According to Postmodernism**

Times change! However, the gospel must remain the same no matter what else changes. We are now living in the postmodern era. In a sincere attempt to reach the postmodern generation with the gospel, it seems many Christians have become postmodern in their thinking.

Perhaps the term *postmodern* is new to you. Let's examine what it means.

First, the modern era was characterized by a time of rational thinking based on factual observation. Many claim the modern era ended in the mid 1900s.

The postmodern mindset moves beyond the rational and the factual to the experiential and the mystical. In other words, in the past it was possible to know right from wrong and black from white. In the postmodern era all things are relative to the beholder. What may be right for you may be wrong for someone else. There is no such thing as absolute truth. The only thing that is absolute is that there is no absolute.

We now live in a time in history that is characterized as postmodern. Professors at universities teach students there is no right or wrong. All things are relative. The gospel message to the postmodern mindset is far too dogmatic and arrogant. They say it is necessary to find a more moderate gospel that can be accepted by the masses.

Many church leaders are now looking for ways to reach the postmodern generation. They believe they can find the appropriate methods to do so without changing the message. However, in their attempt to reach this postmodern generation, they have become postmodern themselves and have changed the message. As the gospel is fixed upon the Scriptures, the gospel cannot change, unless of course it becomes another gospel. This is what is happening in the Emerging Church.

### **“He Didn't Come”**

Many have noticed that since the turn of the millennium, their churches have changed positions on Bible prophecy and the Second Coming of Jesus. Many have given up on the return of Jesus. From the '60s on there was an excitement about the imminent return of Jesus. The Jesus People were excited about Bible prophecy and could see signs that Jesus would descend from the heavens for His Bride at any moment.

The year 2000 was of particular importance. When Jesus didn't show up, it seems many were apparently disappointed. “Perhaps Jesus has delayed His coming,” some

have said. Others are even taking the position that He may not be coming at all, at least not in the manner we have been taught. They are now convinced that we need to be busy about “building His Kingdom” here on earth by “whatever human effort is required.”

### **The Gospel of the Kingdom**

One of the main indicators that something has changed can be seen in the way the future is perceived. Rather than urgently proclaiming the gospel according to the Scriptures and believing the time to do so is short, the emphasis has now shifted. No longer are “signs of the times” significant. The battle cry is very different. A major emphasis among evangelicals is the idea that the world can be radically improved through social programs.

This concept, while on the surface may sound very good, has some serious biblical implications. According to the Scriptures, there will be no kingdom of God until the King arrives. All the human effort man can muster up will fall short of bringing utopia. In fact, according to the Scriptures, fallen man will lead us further down the road to a society of despair and lawlessness just like it was in the days of Noah.

Thus, this *purpose-driven* view of establishing global utopia may be a plan, but it is “driven” by humanistic reasoning and not led by the Holy Spirit. While it is of course good to do good unto others, all the goodness that we can do will not be good enough. Pastors and church leaders who get involved in such man-driven programs can usually be identified by certain characteristics:

- \* Sound biblical doctrine is dangerous and divisive, and the experiential (i.e., mystical) is given a greater role than doctrine.
- \* Bible prophecy is no longer taught and is considered a waste of time.
- \* Israel becomes less and less important and has no biblical significance.
- \* Eventually the promises for Israel are applied to the church and not Israel (Replacement Theology).
- \* Bible study is replaced by studying someone’s book and his methods.
- \* Church health is evaluated on the *quantity* of people who attend.
- \* The truth of God’s Word becomes less and less important
- \* God’s Word, especially concepts like hell, sin and repentance, is eventually downplayed so the unbeliever is not offended.

### **Spiritual Formation and Transformation**

Much of what I have described provides the formula for a dumbing-down of Christianity that paves the way for an apostasy that will only intensify in the future. This trend away from the authority of God’s Word to the reinvented form of Christianity has overcome all evangelical denominations like an avalanche. Few Bible teachers saw this avalanche coming. Now that it is underway, few realize it has even happened.

However, there is another big piece to the puzzle that must be identified in order to understand what is emerging in the Emerging Church. While biblical Christianity has been dumbed-down and the light of God’s Word diminished, another avalanche of deception is underway that is equally devastating.

This is best described by the Word of God giving way to experiences that God’s Word forbids. The best way to understand this process is to recall what happened during the Dark Ages when the Bible became the “forbidden book.” Until the Reformers translated the Bible into the language of the common person, the people were in darkness. When the light of God’s Word became available, the gospel according to the Scriptures was once again understood.



This trend, which is underway today, shows us that history is in the process of repeating itself. As the Word of God becomes less and less important, the rise of mystical experiences is alarming and these experiences are being presented to convince the unsuspecting that Christianity is about feeling, touching, smelling and seeing God. The postmodern mindset is the perfect environment for the fostering of what is called “spiritual formation.” This teaching suggests there are various ways and means to get closer to God. Proponents of spiritual formation erroneously teach that anyone can practice these mystical rituals and find *God within*. Having a relationship with Jesus Christ is not a prerequisite.

These teachings, while actually rooted in *ancient wisdom* (the occult), were presented to Christendom post-New Testament and not found in the Word of God. The spiritual formation movement is based upon experiences promoted by desert monks and Roman Catholic mystics – these mystics encouraged the use of rituals and practices, that if performed would bring the practitioner closer to God (or come into God’s presence). The premise was that if one went into the silence or sacred space, then the mind was emptied of distractions and the voice of God could be heard. In truth, these hypnotic, mantric style practices were leading these monks into altered states of consciousness. The methods they used are the same that Buddhists and the Hindus use as a means of encountering the spiritual realm

Such methods are dangerous, and are not sanctioned in the Bible – God gives no instruction for this. On the contrary, he warns severely against divination, which is practicing a ritual or method in order to obtain information from a spiritual source. While proponents of spiritual formation (like Richard Foster) say these methods show that the Holy Spirit is doing something new to refresh Christianity, I would suggest that what is happening is not new and is not the Holy Spirit.

The spiritual formation movement is being widely promoted at colleges and seminaries as the latest and the greatest way to become a spiritual leader in these days. These ideas are then being exported from seminaries to churches by graduates who have been primed to take Christianity to a new level of enlightenment.

As well, these contemplative practices are being promoted by emergent leaders such as Brian McLaren, Robert Webber, Dallas Willard and others. Publishers like NavPress, InterVarsity and Zondervan are flooding the market with books promoting contemplative practices based on Eastern mysticism. Pastors and church leaders read these books and then promote the ideas as if they were the scriptural answer to drawing close to God.

### **Signs the Emerging Church is Emerging**

There are specific warning signs that are symptomatic that a church may be headed down the emergent/contemplative road. In some cases a pastor may not be aware that he is on this road nor understand where the road ends up. Here are some of the warning signs:

- \* Scripture is no longer the ultimate authority as the basis for the Christian faith.
- \* The centrality of the gospel of Jesus Christ is being replaced by humanistic methods promoting church growth and a social gospel.
- \* More and more emphasis is being placed on building the kingdom of God now and less and less on the warnings of Scripture about the imminent return of Jesus Christ and a coming judgment in the future.
- \* The teaching that Jesus Christ will rule and reign in a literal millennial period is considered unbiblical and heretical.
- \* The teaching that the church has taken the place of Israel and Israel has no prophetic significance is often embraced.

- \* The teaching that the Book of Revelation does not refer to the future, but instead has been already fulfilled in the past
- \* An experiential mystical form of Christianity begins to be promoted as a method to reach the postmodern generation.
- \* Ideas are promoted teaching that Christianity needs to be reinvented in order to provide meaning for this generation.
- \* The pastor may implement an idea called “ancient-future” or “vintage Christianity” claiming that in order to take the church forward, we need to go back in church history and find out what experiences were effective to get people to embrace Christianity.
- \* While the authority of the Word of God is undermined, images and sensual experiences are promoted as the key to experiencing and knowing God.
- \* These experiences include icons, candles, incense, liturgy, labyrinths, prayer stations, contemplative prayer, experiencing the sacraments, particularly the sacrament of the Eucharist.
- \* There seems to be a strong emphasis on ecumenism indicating that a bridge is being established that leads in the direction of unity with the Roman Catholic Church.
- \* Some evangelical Protestant leaders are saying that the Reformation went too far. They are re-examining the claims of the “church fathers” saying that communion is more than a symbol and that Jesus actually becomes present in the wafer at communion.
- \* There will be a growing trend towards an ecumenical unity for the cause of world peace claiming the validity of other religions and that there are many ways to God.
- \* Members of churches who question or resist the new changes that the pastor is implementing are reprimanded and usually asked to leave.

### **What does the Future Hold?**

If the Emerging Church continues unfolding at the present pace, mainstream evangelical Christianity will be reinvented and the gospel of Jesus Christ according to the Scriptures will be considered too narrow and too restrictive. In other words, the narrow way to heaven that Jesus proclaimed will eventually be abandoned for a wider way that embraces pagan experiential practices. I call this reinvented, re-imagined form of Christianity that is unfolding — “Christian Babylonianism.”

This new form of Christianity will replace biblical faith with a faith that says man can establish the kingdom of God here on earth. The Word will continue to become secondary to a system of works driven by experiences.

An ecumenical pattern towards unity with Rome will become more apparent. Those who refuse to embrace this will be considered spiritual oddballs that need to be reprimanded. Those who stand up for biblical faith will be considered the obstructions to the one world spirituality that is promoted as the answer for peace.

The best way to be prepared for what is coming is to gain an understanding of what is happening now. While there are not many who seem to discern the trend underway, there are some. Without the Bible and the Holy Spirit as our guide, the darkness that is coming would be overwhelming. However, the light of God’s Word penetrates the darkness and there are those who are being delivered from deception and see what is taking place.

I am convinced we are seeing apostasy underway, exactly as the Scriptures have forewarned. This means that this current trend is not likely to disappear. We must continue to proclaim the truth in the midst of deception with love. As Paul instructed Timothy:

And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient; in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; and that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will (2 Timothy 2: 24-26).

There are still pastors and churches who are dedicated to proclaiming the truth. Find out where they are and support them. If you are in a location where this does not seem to be possible, seek out materials that are available from solid Bible-based Christian ministries and hold Bible studies in your own home.

And keep looking up! Jesus is coming soon!

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## **EUROPEAN UNION EXPANDS TO 27**

### **Huge celebrations in Romania and Bulgaria mark accession**

JAN 1, 2007. 17 years after the fall of Communism, Romania and Bulgaria joined the European Union, extending the borders of the now 27-member bloc eastward to the Black Sea.

The EU flag was raised outside the government headquarters in Bucharest to the European anthem, Beethoven's *Ode to Joy*.

It is hoped the accession of these two states on New Year's Day - the EU's second wave of enlargement into formerly Communist Eastern Europe - will give the Union a stable political and economic anchor in a region surrounded by unstable neighbors.

European nations led by Britain, with the enthusiastic backing of the US, have supported further EU expansion because the promise of membership has helped accelerate economic and political change in Europe.

Romania and Bulgaria, the EU's poorest members, hope that membership will help them raise their per capita wealth, which at present is only one-third of the EU average.

Romania suffered a brutal Communist dictatorship under Nicolae Ceausescu before he was overthrown in 1989. Now, with a population of about 22 million, it is the EU's seventh largest member.

For Bulgaria, whose history is marked by conflicts with the Ottoman Empire and Soviet occupation, EU membership is also viewed as a source of economic and democratic stability.

In an emotional address to the nation, Bulgarian President Georgi Parvanov called the country's EU entry a 'heavenly moment.' "But let's make it clear, our future success as a nation depends not on European funds and resources, but on our own work."

The two states, like the eight ex-Soviet countries already in the EU club, are poorer than the first 15 members; they have many more farmers, are predominantly Christian and have right-leaning views on issues such as immigration and gay rights.

### **THE EU IS STILL INCREASING**

The EU began in 1957 with six members. By 1995 it had increased to 15, and in May 2004 a new wave of entrants brought it to 25 members. With the latest additions, the EU's population increases to **493 million**, and its economy grows to 10.9 trillion euro - the biggest single market in the world.

But the entry of the Balkan countries comes as the EU is experiencing expansion fatigue following the bloc's enlargement to the 25 countries in 2004.

Recently EU leaders toughened their tone on enlargement but stopped short of setting new hurdles to expansion. They reaffirmed backing for the **eventual membership of Turkey** and the western Balkan states: **Albania, Bosnia, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia**.

But they insisted that expansion could not proceed unless the EU changed its outmoded institutions, including a decision-making system in which national vetoes remain widespread.

The EU will now work in 32 official languages, and the Brussels bureaucracy will expand to take in 27 European commissioners.

Both Romania and Bulgaria have ratified the draft EU constitution as part of their accession treaties, and this has raised the total number of EU states that have approved the charter from 16 to 18.

### **RESTRICTIONS IMPOSED**

Both Bulgaria and Romania are much poorer than the rest of the EU, with GDP per capita of about 33% of the EU average.

Average income in Romania and Bulgaria is E60 to E200 a month while some live on just E60 a month. In Romania, Roma slums have worse living conditions than parts of the developing world.

The two new countries will be subject to strict monitoring to ensure they make progress in the fight against corruption and organised crime. They will also face export bans on certain foods, and Bulgaria has been warned that 55 of its aircraft could be grounded unless they reach EU safety standards.

One of the EU's fundamental principles - **freedom of movement** - has been put in doubt as the richer EU nations impose restrictions on Romanian and Bulgarian workers heading their way.

The EU is already grappling with fears that westward migration from its poorer members in the east risks undermining the bloc's social standards. At the time of the EU's last enlargement, in May 2004, the European Commission estimated that the number of migrants throughout the bloc would total 70,000 to 150,000 a year. Britain alone is estimated to have received up to 600,000 in the past three years.

Job-seekers from Romania and Bulgaria are likely to face stiff restrictions in the rest of the EU. Britain, Sweden and Ireland, which opened their doors to EU newcomers in 2004, have already signaled that they are less inclined to do so now.

Romanians and Bulgarians may also face obstacles in labor markets in Hungary, Slovakia, and the Czech Republic, which are themselves confronting restrictions by countries further west. Romania and Bulgaria fall into place as third-class EU members.

### **SLOVENIA ADOPTS EURO**

Slovenia, the first of the 2004 new members, has become the 13th EU member state to introduce the euro, ditching its national currency on 1 January. The existing Slovenian currency, the tolar, remained in dual use with the euro for just 14 days.



## **GERMANY TAKES ON PRESIDENCY OF EU**

On Jan 1, Germany took over from Finland the presidency of the European Union, for six months. It also took over the presidency of the G8 - the world's eight most industrialized nations, for one year.

During its time as head of the EU and the G8, Germany, the biggest economy and most populous country in Europe, will seek to revive international efforts for Middle East peace, to relaunch the EU constitution, and to advocate a gentler form of globalization.

Berlin has set ambitious targets and achieving them will test the diplomatic powers of Chancellor Angela Merkel, who has won widespread praise for her approach to foreign policy since taking over in November 2005.

Merkel told Germans in a New Year's speech Sunday that the dual presidencies presented a unique opportunity to help shape Europe's future in a globalized world. "Only a united Europe can tackle not only the challenges of globalization including international trade, but also violence, terror and war," she said. "A divided Europe is doomed to failure."

### **Germany wants to restart Mideast Peace Process**

Germany will renew efforts to find a solution to Mideast troubles. Angela Merkel and Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier have called for a January meeting to "revitalize" the Middle East quartet — grouping the EU, the US, the UN and Russia — to help kick start peace efforts between Israel and the Palestinians.

Steinmeier has said the aim is for the quartet to exercise a "stabilizing" influence in the region and encourage preliminary talks between Israeli PM Ehud Olmert and Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas to continue.

### **BREATHING NEW LIFE INTO DEAD EU TREATY**

The most pressing item for Europe is the stalled EU constitution. Merkel has cautioned against overly high expectations saying that half a year may not be sufficient to resurrect a treaty that has been in the deep freeze for more than 18 months. (French and Dutch voters dealt a blow to the constitution treaty by voting against it in 2005, but 18 of the 27 countries have ratified it).



[VICTORIA, AUSTRALIA](#)

### **“POLICE FORCE IS CORRUPT” SAYS EX-JUDGE**

11 JAN 07. *The Australian* quotes one of the nation's most respected judicial figures as saying Victoria's police force is riddled with "deep-seated and continuing corruption" that will only be flushed out by a powerful and wide-ranging royal commission.

Justice Don Stewart said Victoria Police and the Bracks Labor Government oppose a royal commission because they do not want the extent of corruption within the force made public

“They know that it would reveal what they don’t want revealed,” says the former Supreme Court judge and founding head of Australia’s first national crime agency.

Dismissing arguments that dirty police are already being driven out of the force through the courts, he says the recent convictions of senior Victorian officers on corruption charges are “the tip of the iceberg.”

“The arrest of some corrupt police only proves that corruption is deep-seated and continuing,” Mr Stewart says in a book to be published in March.

A Victoria Police spokesman said: “Justice Stewart is entitled to his opinion. But Victoria Police has a proven track record in not only identifying corruption but also successfully investigating and prosecuting corrupt officers.”

Victoria Police was criticised by one of its own corruption investigators in October for failing to investigate adequately up to 24 allegedly corrupt officers in the force. - The Australian / 11 Jan 07

Corruption is one of the signs of the times. The Messiah, Y’shua, said:

“Just as it was in the days of Noah, so also will it be in the days of *the return of the Son of Man*.” (Luke 17:26)

“Now the earth was **corrupt** in God’s sight; the earth was full of violence. God saw how **corrupt** the earth had become; for all humanity on the earth had **corrupted** its ways. Then God said to Noah, ‘The end of all people has *now* come before Me; for the earth is filled with violence because of them. Watch! I am about to destroy them *along* with the earth’.” (Genesis 6:11-13)

Corruption is rife all around the world, and in all areas of society in varying degrees – in governments, in the police, the army, the commercial world, the United Nations, and in education and health; its also in entertainment, arts, and social and religious systems; and even in international aid organisations.

In Psalm 14, David lamented the moral foolishness and corruption of the whole human race and longs for the establishment of the righteous kingdom of God.

“The fool has said in his heart, ‘There is no God.’ They have **acted corruptly**; they have committed vile deeds. There is no one who does good. YHWH has looked down from heaven upon the sons of men, to see if there is a wise one, seeking God.” (Psalm 14:1-2)

It’s as we read in the New Testament:

“For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” (Romans 3:23) And “the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in the Messiah, Y’shua our Master.” (Romans 6:23)

For “The LORD is ... not wanting anyone to perish, but for everyone to come to repentance.” (2 Peter 3:9)

## **EXPLOITS OF KINGS OF PERSIA, GREECE, EGYPT AND SYRIA**

**A STUDY IN THE BOOK OF DANIEL  
BY BOB HINES, AUCKLAND, NEW ZEALAND**

PLEASE READ DANIEL CHAPTER 11: 1-35

This chapter of Daniel reads like a history lesson. A history lesson that was given in advance and one which has proven by history itself to be 100% accurate!

Because of the wealth of historic detail given to Daniel in this chapter, critics insist that this chapter could only have been written after the events and not by Daniel. Of course they have to believe that as to believe otherwise proves that there must be a God for only God could foresee such events way into the future.

King Cyrus was still the ruler of the Medo-Persian Empire in the year 536 BC when Daniel received this vision. He was told that there would be three more rulers after Cyrus then a fourth more powerful ruler would arise.

As we would know by now history proves the truth of God's prophetic word. The three kings were Cambyses who ruled from 529 – 522 BC, Pseudo-Smerdis from 522 – 521 BC, and Darius I Hystaspes from 521 – 468 BC. The fourth King was Xerxes I (486 – 465 BC) who became very wealthy and amassed an army large enough for him to believe that he could invade Greece. He did so in 480 BC with disastrous results for Persia.

It is true that there were several more Kings after Xerxes, however it is clear that Daniel's vision was only up until the time that Persia invaded Greece. After that point in time the vision carries on to describe the future "mighty King" of Greece. This King was of course Alexander the Great who led the Greek – Macedonian army to attack the Medo-Persian Empire in 334 BC and who eventually ruled the then known world.

History confirms that Alexander's empire was indeed "broken up" and his kingdom was indeed divided into four parts. Alexander died at the young age of 32 and as his sons were murdered ("it did not go to his descendants") the kingdom was divided between his four generals ("parceled out toward the four winds of heaven").

The Southern division, Egypt, ruled by the Ptolemies and the northern division, Syria, ruled by the Seleucids became the most prominent of the four kingdoms. Years later Ptolemy II of Egypt forced Antiochus II of Syria to divorce his wife, Laodice, in order to form an alliance when Ptolemy's daughter, Berenice, who then married Antiochus. ("The daughter of the king of the South will go to the king of the North to make an alliance.")

Just a few years later however Ptolemy died and Antiochus promptly discarded Berenice and took back Laodice who was so bitter that she then had her husband, Bernice and Berenice's baby murdered along with all the people that had come with Berenice from Egypt ("she will be handed over, together with her royal escort ...").

Ptolemy III, Bernice's brother, succeeded his late father as the new King of Egypt and to avenge his sister's murder he successfully invaded Syria and put Laodice to death. ("One from her family line will arise to take her place. He will attack the forces of the King of the North ...")

Some years later a new king, Seleucus Callinicus, reigned in Syria and his two sons gathered a huge army to retake their land occupied by the Egyptians. By 219 BC they had successfully regained control of Syrian territory and had in the process gained parts of Israel and Transjordan. Although one of the sons had been killed early in the conflict the other, Antiochus III, reigned supreme. ("His sons will prepare for war ...")

Eventually the king of Egypt retaliated and in 217 BC the two armies met on the battlefield. Egypt won a great victory and Antiochus retreated to lick his wounds. ("Then the king of the South will march out in a rage and fight against the king of the North ...")

"After several years" the King of Egypt died and was succeeded by his 4 year old son. Antiochus seized his chance and after enlisting support from the Macedonians

as well as Egyptian and Jewish rebels (“the violent men among your own people will rebel...”), he successfully attacked Egypt.

Antiochus now ruled over Israel (“He will establish himself in the Beautiful Land ...”) and at first, treated them well.

However a new threat was arising for the Syrians. The Roman Empire was growing and to combat this rising power Antiochus decided that he would be better off if he formed an alliance with the Egyptians rather than fighting them.

Consequently he married off his daughter, Cleopatra, to the ten year old Egyptian king, Ptolemy Epiphanes. (“He will make an alliance with the King of the South. And he will give a daughter in marriage ...”)

He had an ulterior motive however as the plan was that his daughter would work against her husband to ruin Egypt from within. However Cleopatra sided with her husband rather than her father (“but his plans will not succeed or help him”).

From then on Syria lost battle after battle with Rome as the Roman Empire grew in strength and size. Antiochus retreated to his home land with his power gone. (“After this he will turn back towards the fortresses of his own country ...”)

Antiochus was succeeded by his son who was in turn succeeded by Antiochus IV Epiphanes who ruled Syria from 175 – 164 BC. This king was not the rightful heir to the throne but took it by means of trickery and deceit. He was so evil that he became known as Epimanes (madman). (“He will be succeeded by a contemptible person who has not been given the honor of royalty.”)

Antiochus’ rule was based on flattery and intrigue at which he excelled. He played the princes and nobles of Egypt off against each other thus weakening them from within and did the same with the Jewish High Priests. (“... he will act deceitfully, and with only a few people he will rise to power.”)

Hearing rumors that Antiochus had been killed the Jews rebelled against Syrian rule. However Antiochus was alive and well and when he heard of the rebellion he slaughtered many of the Jews, sold many others into slavery and stole the temple treasures. (“... his heart will be set against the holy covenant. He will take action against it ...”)

“At the appointed time” Antiochus invaded Egypt again However the Romans sent ships which prevented him from taking Egypt. (“Ships of the western coastlands will oppose him ...”)

His anger and frustration were now turned in full upon Israel (“He will vent his fury against the holy covenant.”) and his army occupied the Temple. (“His armed forces will rise up to desecrate the temple ...”)

Antiochus attempted to eradicate the worship of the Jewish God and he erected an altar in the temple upon which he sacrificed pigs to the Greek god, Zeus. (“Then they will set up the abomination that causes desolation.”)

The existing high priest, Menelaus, turned to the service of Zeus so that he could retain his high position. The people were forced to worship Greek gods and those that refused to do so were put to death. (“... but the people who know their God will firmly resist him.”)

A temple priest, Mattathias Maccabeus, along with his five sons refused to forsake their God and killed Antiochus’ representative and thus started the Maccabean revolt. Several of Mattathias’ sons were killed as were many of their followers.

Verse 33 – 35 tell us that this happened in order for God’s people to be refined that they might better serve him. We are also told that this would continue to happen until “the time of the end” which would come “at the appointed time.”



Many prophecy students believe that verses 2 – 35 record past historic events fulfilled by Antiochus Epiphanes and history certainly supports this view. However the prophecies beginning in verse 36 and continuing on through chapter 12 are believed to relate to future events which will be fulfilled by The Antichrist in the last days prior to the return of Jesus Christ. Antiochus was in fact a “type” of the Antichrist to come.

WE WILL STUDY VERSE 36 THROUGH CHAPTER 12  
IN THE NEXT AND FINAL INSTALLMENT.

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## NEWS ~ INFORMATION ~ GOOD AND BAD

### INDIA'S NEW CHIEF JUSTICE - A DALIT

JAN 07. India's “untouchable” Dalits may have a new advocate in the country's most powerful court. Konakuppakattil Gopinathan Balakrishnan, a Dalit, was appointed to serve as chief justice of India's Supreme court beginning Sunday, Jan. 14, and scheduled to serve through May 2010 when he is slated to retire. Balakrishnan's life is testament to the fact that Dalits are denied the same basic freedoms and opportunities awarded to the upper castes. Since he was born to a Dalit family in 1945, Balakrishnan was not welcome at public schools.

He changed his name to Kunhachan Marcos so people would think he was a Christian. He received his education at a church-run school, went on to college and later practiced both civil and criminal law. He was promoted to the Supreme Court in 2000 after serving on the Gujarat state court.

### TSUNAMI FEARS EASE AFTER 8.2 PACIFIC QUAKE

JAN 13, 07. A powerful 8.2-magnitude earthquake has rocked the northern Pacific, prompting warnings for thousands of Japanese to flee for higher ground before tsunami fears eased as only small waves hit the coast.

### JAPAN PERMITS U.S. ATTACKS FROM ITS TERRITORY

JAN 8, 07. TOKYO - The *Asahi Shimbun* newspaper reported that the US and Japan have agreed on military cooperation in case of an armed conflict on the Korean Peninsula, a missile attack on Japan or the launching of an operation to protect Taiwan from China.

Some 50,000 American troops are regularly stationed in Japan as part of the existing alliance between the countries.

### 130 MILLION CHINESE CHRISTIANS

Internal meetings of the Chinese State Administration for Religious Affairs revealed research indicating that the number of Christians in China has reached 130 million, including 20 million Catholics. This number is much higher than official government statistics that often underestimate the number of Christians.

“The unprecedented growth of the Chinese church has happened under ceaseless persecution,” said China Aid Association President Bob Fu. Pray that China will realize true religious freedom soon.

## BIRD FLU UPDATE (JAN 12, 07)

## **AT LEAST 50 COUNTRIES HAVE HAD OUTBREAKS**

Two deaths from bird flu have been recorded in Indonesia in the last few days - a 37-year-old woman and a 14-year-old boy. These bring confirmed deaths from bird flu in Indonesia to 59 - the highest number of any country in the world.

Since the H5N1 influenza virus re-emerged in Asia in 2003, according to data from the WHO, outbreaks have been confirmed in around 50 countries and territories. The virus is known to have infected at least **264 people** of which **158 people have died**. The confirmed deaths have occurred in Indonesia, Vietnam, Thailand, Azerbaijan, Cambodia, China, Egypt, Iraq and Turkey. Almost all human deaths from bird flu have been linked to contact with infected birds.

During 2006, more than 30 countries reported outbreaks; most cases involved wild birds such as swans.

## **PRAY FOR THE PERSECUTED**

THOUSANDS OF BELIEVERS ARE PERSECUTED EVERY DAY,  
AROUND THE GLOBE

### **A FLOOD OF PERSECUTION REPORTS FROM INDIA**

Dec 29. A mob beat a pastor and 14 believers in Kaldurki on Maharashtra-MP border.

Dec 31. Christians in Nagashettihally, Bangalore were preparing for a watch night service when they were assaulted by a group of young men.

Jan 2. Four evangelists were beaten by about 100 militants in Indrapuri, Delhi. The four were distributing tracts when they were attacked. Their vehicle was badly damaged and all four sustained internal injuries.

Jan 2. Two Christians were attacked in the village of Devera in MP. The militants claimed the victims were “disturbing religious harmony” and “indulging in conversions.”

Jan 6. A mob beat a pastor with clubs near Nizamabad, AP. He sustained broken ribs and head injuries.

Jan 7. A pastor and a church member were attacked by two men inside their church building in Bangalore. The two men demanded the pastor stop worshipping in the building. “We will crucify you in the same way that Christ was crucified,” they threatened.

### **MONGOLIA: EVANGELIST SENTENCED**

Pray for Wu Gilan an evangelist who was sentenced to one years “re-education through labour.” She was convicted of “spreading heresies” such as that “one should believe in the heavenly God instead of worshipping Genghis Khan, which is useless.”

### **GAZA: CHRISTIANS HARRASSED BY PALESTINIANS**

Pray for Hanna and Suhad Massad. Hanna leads the only evangelical church in Gaza, and Suhad is the director of the only Bible shop in the city. Recently Suhad went to Jordan to give birth and to rest with family. Hanna visited her and then returned to Gaza, but now officials will not allow Suhad and their daughter, Joyce and the new baby, Jolene to return.

### **AZERBAIJAN: BELIEVERS UNDER SURVEILLANCE**

Many believers meet in secret to avoid the watchful eyes of the police and KGB, who question and harass them. This is a first generation church; **prior to 1990 there were no Azeri Christians and now there are approximately 18,000 believers.** Pray that the planned changes to the religious law will bring greater freedom for believers.

### **NORTH KOREA: MOST PERSECUTING COUNTRY**

Christianity is observed as a dangerous foreign influence which stimulated the collapse of communist regimes in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union and therefore poses one of the greatest threats to the regime's power. As a result, the North Korean authorities are making harsh efforts to root out Christianity. It is believed that tens of thousands of Christians are currently suffering in North Korean prison camps, where they face cruel abuses.

**PRAY** that persecuted Christians throughout the world will put their hope in the Lord as the One who upholds their cause (Psalm 146). Pray that their faithfulness will be a light that draws others to Christ (Matthew 5:14-16). Ask God to strengthen and heal those who have been assaulted.

## **BHUTAN – LAND OF THE DRAGON**

THE Himalayan state of Bhutan is a mountainous country of breathtaking beauty, which calls itself the “Land of the Thunder Dragon.” The Bhutanese name of the nation, in fact, is DRUK – “dragon,” and the dragon is featured on the national flag.

The kingdom has a form of government which practices a separation of politics and religion; the king takes care of politics, and the head lama conducts the religious side.

Bhutan is becoming increasingly known for its pure practice of Mahayana Buddhism in the Tantric form, its untouched culture, its pristine ecology and wildlife, and the unparalleled scenic beauty of its majestic peaks and lush valleys. Bhutan is a land of dzongs (fortresses) and monasteries.



**KING JIGME SINGYE WANGCHUK**

### **BHUTAN'S KING ABDICATES, HANDS POWER TO CROWN PRINCE**

DEC 2006. King Jigme Singye Wangchuk has abdicated to make way for his son, Crown Prince Jigme Kesar Namgyel Wangchuk, to become Bhutan's first constitutional monarch.

The 51-year-old monarch had planned to abdicate in 2008 when Bhutan is slated to hold its first elections and become a parliamentary democracy. But it is understood the abdication has been brought forward to give 26-year-old Namgyel time to gain

more political experience. The decision by this very popular head of state to quit has come as a shock to the 700,000 Bhutanese citizens of the kingdom.

King Wangchuk was the fourth king of the tiny nation. He ascended to the throne in 1972 at 16 years of age, after the death of his father. He became most famous for having decided to make his isolated mountain nation's priority not its GDP, but its GNH — or “gross national happiness.”

Bhutan's monarchy dates back to 1907, when King Wangchuk's great grandfather was formally anointed the first king, with British support.

The isolated Himalayan kingdom of Bhutan is land-locked between India and Tibet (China), and has remained untouched by most modern influences. In recent years, Jigme Wangchuk slowly pulled the state into the modern world and opted to relinquish much of the monarchy's power.

Television arrived in Bhutan in 1999 and the Internet in 2000. But Bhutanese policies are directed at preserving the culture and environment of the nation. Only 6,000 foreign visitors are allowed in each year.



**JIGME KHESAR NAMGYEL WANGCHUK**  
**BHUTAN'S 5th DRUK GYALPO (King)**

Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuk, 26, is Jigme Singye Wangchuk's eldest son, who studied in the US before graduating in politics from Magdalen College at Oxford.

King Jigme Wangchuk, 51, said, “I am confident that a very bright future lies ahead for Bhutan with the leadership of a new king and a democratic system of government that is best suited for our country as enshrined under the Constitution. I have every confidence that there will be unprecedented progress and prosperity for our nation in the reign of our fifth King.”

The outgoing king expressed his confidence that Namgyel, as the fifth Druk Gyalpo was fully capable of carrying out his responsibilities.

Judging by the performance of Namgyel, as Crown Prince, and his thinking and principles, the abdicating king said he had no doubt that the fifth Druk Gyalpo would serve his nation with selfless dedication. If the Crown Prince was not worthy, Jigme



Wangchuk added, he would not have handed over his responsibilities to him just because he was his own son.

While overseas, Prince Namgyel became known as “Prince Charming” because of his pleasant manner and good looks.

### **BHUTAN'S NEW CONSTITUTION**

The announcement of the king's abdication in favour of the Crown Prince comes at a time when the nation is preparing to change from an absolute monarchy to a constitutional one.

Sources in Thimphu are reported as saying the king brought the date of transfer forward because he believed it better to democratize sooner rather than risk suffering the same fate as Nepal's King Gyanendra who was stripped of all his remaining vestiges of power and removed (at least temporarily) as head of state in Nepal, in December 06. (There is no suggestion, however, that the Bhutan king was under similar pressure.)

A new constitution is expected to be formally adopted very soon, which will set up a two-party democracy after nearly a century of absolute monarchy. The draft of this first written constitution was introduced in March 2005.

The constitution provides for two houses of parliament – a 75-member national assembly and a 25-member national council – with the king as the head of state.

The Constitution emanated from the King whose vision would take the country into the distant future, ensuring the well being of the people and the sovereignty of the nation. It also mandated for the people of Bhutan more fundamental rights than most other Constitutions.

King Jigme Wangchuk had himself worked on the Constitution for two years. He had studied more than 100 different Constitutions, not to copy their contents, but to draw from them and make the contents of the Bhutanese Constitution more meaningful.

The Chief Justice of Bhutan said that His Majesty, the King, was personally presenting the Constitution to the people of Bhutan. This had never before happened in human history.

There has been a lot of discussion in Bhutan on the provisions in the constitution regarding religion. The main religion of Bhutan is Lamaistic (Mahayana/Tibetan) Buddhism, but some advocates wanted the spiritual heritage of Bhutan to be specified as Drukpa Kagyu and Nyingma schools instead of generalising it as Buddhism. Others suggested that religion and politics should not be separated since Bhutan had prospered throughout history because of the harmony between religion and politics. One demand was for specific provisions for the rabdeys and goendeys, and another voice maintained that the Druk Gyalpo (Bhutan King) should be described as the protector of Buddhism and not of all religions.

The Chief Justice explained that the drafting committee had discussed these issues thoroughly and had come to the agreement that, since the Constitution was a document that looked 100 years ahead, it would not be advisable to mention different sects because there are other religious sects in Bhutan. The committee had also seen wisdom in the democratic philosophy of separating the Religion from the State because it would enable both religion and politics to flourish without interference from each other. He said that His Majesty the King, as head of state, was mandated to be the **protector of all religions**.

The emphasis on Buddhist culture has in the past led to serious rioting among the Nepali Hindu community in the south of Bhutan.

For a long time Christians have faced intimidation and imprisonment. Early 2006, two Bhutanese evangelists were imprisoned for several months after showing the Jesus film in a home.

**Let us pray that the new monarch will be a wise ruler, and that the constitution will indeed bring freedom, as it promises, to all the people of this beautiful land.**

**PRAY FOR A SPIRITUAL HARVEST IN BHUTAN!**