

A PREZ RELEASE

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Through a Glass...Darkly? September 2003

Traveling outside the U.S. provides a stimulating vantage point from which to evaluate the driving forces of our times. I presently am in Singapore, an island of prosperity and advanced technology that is truly stunning. But the precision and organization of this "Asian Tiger" presents a revealing backdrop for global realities that are part of current events. The frustration of the continuing struggle for stability in Iraq overflows into everyday reality even in Singapore. Every vehicle coming to Singapore hotels catering to Americans is checked for bombs. As I have lunch with colleagues at the American Club, I am guarded by Ghurka commandos from Nepal armed with AK-47's at the ready. I am faced with the poignant reality that the chaos of Baghdad streets has some leakage even in peaceful Singapore. I struggle with a confusing thought... Am I a target just because I am American? Is this a new reality of life in the 21st century?

The gaps between peoples in this world are not just ideological... they are concrete and rooted in economic realities. The frustration of those economic realities spilled over once more as the World Trade Organization met in the resort city of Cancun, Mexico. The economic discussion focused on the vast differences between developing and developed nations around the world and indicated another flash point in the global economy... agriculture and its most basic product...food. While the sound bites that media provides focused on a Korean farmer's politically motivated suicide and the failure of trading guidelines to be approved, one does not need an MBA from Harvard to see what emerged on the scene as another threat to stability worldwide. If oil is a commodity over which the rich and powerful will war, think about the potential for conflict by the poor and rich when it is down to how much food will cost and who will have access to it?

So what's the point of this foray into the world's current events?

- Shock and awe don't necessarily yield peace and security
- Economic advantages are very fragile
- Political futures are very difficult to predict
- Hatred and violence are catalyzed by human depravity (i.e. evil is still sinful reality)

We cannot hope to meet the challenge of these emerging global realities with a Gospel that equates novelty and the mind-numbing rhetoric of prosperity with a message adequate for the hour. The challenges of the 21st century must be addressed by the Church that has no doubt who is in control of their eternal destiny and what is at stake in a

world bent on self-destruction. Will we dare act like a community who has been commissioned to give visibility to the reality of a Kingdom that has one Lord? Will we live with humility and confidence that results from the realization that God has no doubt about the preferred future He has ordained?

Rev. 5:13 (NIV) records an event that will demonstrate the future Christ has already secured: “Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all that is in them, singing:

‘To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb
be praise and honor and glory and power,
for ever and ever!’ ”

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