

Cross-Cultural Perspectives



Settled Facts in Unsettling Times

Pick up a newspaper. Tune into a radio station. Surf the Net. Dreary stories are plentiful. The economy plummets. Terrorists provoke panic. Political chaos prevails. Extortionists plunder. Calamities produce pressure. The future is pessimistic. It would be easy to be caught in despair, depression, and desperation. It's a fact. We live in unsettling times. However there are a couple more facts to remember. God's Word remains the same. It is forever settled. And, our God never slumbers or sleeps (Psalms 121:4). We can put our confidence in Him and His Word.

N. McMichael tells this: "A poor woman, as the Eastern story has it, came to the Sultan one day, and asked compensation for the loss of some property. 'How did you lose it?' said the monarch. 'I fell asleep,' was the reply, 'and a robber entered my dwelling.' 'Why did you fall asleep?' 'I fell asleep because I believed that you were awake.' The Sultan was so much delighted with the answer that he ordered her loss to be made up. But what is true, only by a legal fiction, of human governments, that they never sleep, is true in the most absolute sense with reference to the Divine government. We can sleep in safety, because our God is ever awake. We are safe, because He never slumbers."

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow wrote:

And in despair I bowed my head
"There is no peace on earth," I said,
"For hate is strong and mocks the song
Of peace on earth, good will to men."

Then pealed the bells more loud and deep:
"God is not dead, nor doth He sleep;
The wrong shall fail, the right prevail
With peace on earth, good will to men."

Longfellow wrote those dreary words while grieving the loss of his wife in a tragic fire, and after hearing the news that his son, Charles, had been severely wounded in the Civil War. It was a distinct possibility his son would never make it home alive. In despair he pinned his poem. Later it became a Christmas carol, recently revived and made popular by "Casting Crowns." The words illustrate our undeniable and unwavering faith in the Almighty, all-seeing God; trusted by both you and me.

2009 is off to a swift start. When looking at the future it is easy to think of one word to describe it: "unknown." I love this famous poem, written by Minnie Louise Harkins and used in the end-of-the-year message of King George VI, in 1939:

I said to the man who stood at the gate of the year
'Give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown.'

And he replied,
'Go into the darkness and put your hand into the hand of God
That shall be to you better than light and safer than a known way!'

So I went forth and finding the Hand of God
Trode gladly into the night
He led me towards the hills
And the breaking of day in the lone east.

So heart be still!
What need our human life to know
If God hath comprehension?

I'm not sure what you may be going through in your field of labor, or what may be taking place in your lives individually, or with your families. Put your hand into the hand of our all-knowing God and walk into the unknown. He is in control. Someone said, "Those that see God's hand in everything, best leave everything in God's hand."

Remember:

God is alive.

God is awake.

God is aware.

God is alert.

God is active.

God is actively pursuing His plan in your life. I pray God's best for you in 2009!