

Greetings from Tyler,

Probably the most potentially distressing international news of the week is carried in an AP story just today outlining the fact that Pakistan is transferring about 20,000 troops away from the border with Afghanistan and repositioning them near the border with India. Tensions have run hot since the recent terrorist attack on the historic commercial center of Mumbai, with India demanding that all co-conspirators in the attack be turned over for questioning. Pakistan has steadfastly refused, claiming that they will handle the militants internally. The troop deployments surely qualify as saber-rattling and we can only hope and pray it will not lead to war between the nuclear armed neighbors.

Israel is contemplating a strike against terrorists in Gaza, as the rocket launches continue unabated. One went astray this week, reportedly striking the home of Arab residents inside Gaza. Jimmy Carter was in the region this week, bemoaning the fact that Israel's enemies don't have adequate defenses against the prospect of an Israeli attack. Of course, there has been no progress in U.S. sponsored peace negotiations, despite the best efforts of the Bush Administration and the State Department. It is clear that there will be no peaceful resolution, and a virtual (if not actual) state of war will persist until the end of the age.

In a humorous segment of Fox News, bringing "Season's Greetings" from the editors and engineers of all the local affiliates, the camera zooms in on one reporter working at his keyboard. When he sees the camera, he starts to tell how December 25 is the date chosen by Rome to coincide with the celebration of the Winter solstice. At that point the camera turns away from the reporter and starts to flee down a hallway with the reporter in hot pursuit trying to complete his rendition of the story. I thought, how very apt. Many know the truth of this story, but this little skit perfectly illustrates the fact that nobody wants to hear it! There was the annual "Christmas" debate again this year, and all sides of the debate manage to miss our point of view every time.

This week the Garner Ted Armstrong program covered that very subject offering "Christmas, the Untold Story" in printed and audio formats. By noon we'd tabulated 386 requests, with one hundred seventy five first time contacts.

We've just contracted to place the Garner Ted Armstrong telecast on a UHF station (also carried by satellite providers) in the Los Angeles, CA market. It will air at 6:00 p.m. on Sunday evenings beginning January 4, with a potentially huge audience. But it is in a "prime time" spot when many will be tuning in familiar programming. We're going to try it for at least a short run and monitor the results carefully, as it is not a cheap market. Even so, we're elated that we are able to broadcast God's word, in the form of my Dad's program, into one of the great population centers of the United States.

Even in these tough and frightening economic times the Work of taking the witness and warning to the world goes on, by the grace of God. Our thanks go out to all of you in the field, and we hope you'll have a peaceable Sabbath!

Mark Armstrong