

Greetings from Tyler,

We were in Fayetteville, NC last Sabbath for a special meeting arranged by Mr. Robert Nunnery. There were eighty-seven in attendance, with twelve first time visitors. The meeting centered heavily on current events, how they line up with Bible prophecy, and how far we as a nation have strayed from our foundational tenets. We were certainly blessed with the enthusiastic participation of the local group and with the assistance of Mr. Kelly Pierson and others who came from miles around. Mr. Nunnery planned the well-attended family dance for Saturday night in a beautiful Doubletree hotel ballroom, complete with a professional DJ. A good time was had by all.

A media obsession with the dreaded swine flu began last weekend, and we've heard little else since. You are aware of the many scares we've had in the past, with everything from west Nile fever, SARS, the bird flu. Wes Pruden (columnist for the Washington Times) called it a "Pandemic of Panic," and asked the rhetorical question, "Are we dead yet?" Nobody seems to quite know what to make of the swine flu. Although it is known to have had its origins in Mexico, the borders remain open. It's no secret that people with ailments routinely come north to the U.S. for free (to them) medical care.

It seems rather trite to have the leader of the (formerly) free world advising us to wash our hands and cover our mouths when we cough. It falls roughly into the same category as recommending we check our tire pressure to deal with the energy crisis. It's kindergarten all over again, and we're the five-year-olds.

How any of this ranks in priority with the likely fall of Pakistan to the Taliban, a soon to be nuclear armed Iran, a potential break in U.S. relations with Israel, bankrupting the United States with profligate spending and the systematic government takeover of finance and industry, is rather hard to figure. But here we have it, another media obsession to the virtual exclusion of all else. On the other hand, it is dangerous to be too dismissive of the reports. We are all aware that worldwide plagues will play a role in end-time events and we should all take common sense precautions as a matter of course.

Since there was no update last week, I have figures on the Garner Ted Armstrong telecast from this week and last. Last week we aired a program on the Mark of the Beast and offered a sermon on the Antichrist. We had a total of 464 requests with two hundred thirty two first time callers. This week, the program was on Sunday observance and the Sabbath. So far we've tallied 578 responses, with two hundred seventy six first time contacts.

I am pleased to be able to report to you, despite the dire financial news, spiraling unemployment, record numbers of foreclosures and a contracting economy, our income remains solid. Response to recent letters has been beyond expectation, and the work going out from Tyler is apparently appreciated by a great many. Thank you all for your organizational work in the field, and for the warm and friendly environment you provide for each other and for those who come to us in search of the truth.

Have a great Sabbath, and we'll be in touch.

Mark Armstrong