

Be Not Afraid

✘ As I showered in preparation for our last day of sightseeing, I reflected on many of the places we've visited. A list with a one- or two-sentence description would fill the rest of this blog. While each now holds a special place in my heart, and many brought the Bible to life and me to tears, one common thing connects them—fear. Rather, the lack of it.

I've realized how much we live in fear in the United States. With crime, murder and rape rates at mindboggling levels, we're forced to bolt our doors at home, keep our cars locked while in the driveway, and be always mindful of our surroundings. Despite these safety precautions, robbery, theft, murder and rape dominate the nightly news.

Is Today's Bible Correct?

✘ Believers are often confronted by skeptics who bark out their opposition to our present translation of Scriptures, charging that the translation is not the same as the original Word God gave to Moses, the prophets, and the apostles.

However, an event in 1948 helped settle the controversy of the authenticity of the 1611 translation of the English Scriptures as it relates to the Old Testament.

Suspect Indicted in Bombing at Messianic Leader's Home

✘ Officials in Israel on Thursday indicted the man accused of sending a bomb to the home of a Messianic minister in March 2008 that nearly killed the pastor's teenage son.

Jack Teitel, 37, was indicted for attempted murder, among other charges, for allegedly sending a bomb hidden in a gift basket to the home of David Ortiz, pastor of a Messianic

congregation in Ariel, Israel.

(Photo of Ami Ortiz, Compass Direct News)

The package, opened by Ortiz's 15-year-old son, Amiel, damaged the family's apartment and left Amiel covered with blood and burns, and full of needles and screws contained in the bomb. Now, 20 months later, 16-year-old Amiel is back in school and playing basketball.

Dozens Run to Free Victims of Human Trafficking

✘ A Florida-based ministry is racing to end human trafficking.

Run for Freedom will host a 5K race in Cocoa Beach Saturday to raise money and awareness about what the United Nations calls one of the fastest growing criminal industries in the world.

"Our main purpose is to raise awareness about human trafficking," said Rachel Manzo, whose parents founded Run for Freedom. "Most people think that it only happens overseas ... but [it's] right here in our own back yard."

What is Real Peace?

Believers around the world look to the Middle East for signs of peace. And the Bible tells us to pray for our enemies, for the peace of Jerusalem and more. Any human attempts to accomplish peace apart from God are futile, a temporary fix to a centuries-old problem. Scripture says, "When a man's ways please the Lord, He makes even his enemies to be at peace with

him” (Prov. 16:7). There will be no rest without intervention from the Prince of Peace. Click below to watch video.

Ahmadinejad: Obama Must Choose Iran or Israel

✘ Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said President Barack Obama must choose between Israel and Iran. The comment was made Tuesday in Istanbul during an economic address before the 57-nation Organization of the Islamic Conference.

“The support of both Israel and Iran can’t go hand in hand. No change is made unless great choices are made,” said Ahmadinejad. “We will clasp any hand that is extended sincerely toward us, but changes should be made in practice.”

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Muslims Attack Worship Service in Uganda

✘ About 40 Muslim extremists with machetes and clubs tried to break into a Sunday worship service outside Uganda's capital city of Kampala on Nov. 1, leaving a member of the congregation with several injuries and damaging the church building.

Eyewitnesses said the extremist mob tried to storm into World Possessor's Church International in Namasuba at 11 a.m. as the church worshipped.

(Photo: Compass Direct News)

"The church members were taken by a big surprise, as this happened during worship time," said Pastor Henry Zaake. "It began with an unusual noise coming from outside, and soon I saw the bricks falling away one by one. Immediately I knew that it was an attack from the Muslims who had earlier sent signals of an imminent attack."

The pastor said the disturbance brought the worship service to a standstill.

"There was a tug-of-war at the entrance to the church as members tried to thwart the Muslim aggression from making headway inside the church," he told Compass.

A member of the congregation who was taking photos of the worship service—and then the attack—was beaten, sustaining several injuries, church leaders said. He was later taken to a nearby clinic for treatment. During the pandemonium, some church members were able to escape through a rear door.

Pastor Umar Mulinde added that nearby residents helped repel the attack.

“At the scene of the incident were rowdy Muslims with machetes and clubs ready to destroy the church,” Pastor Mulinde said. “The good neighbors of the church also came in, and we were able to overpower [the assailants].”

Police arrived and put a stop to the assault, but officers did not arrest anyone, church leaders said.

“We have reported the matter to the central police station, and we are surprised that no action has been taken,” Pastor Zaake said. “So far no person has been arrested as a result of this mayhem. It is as if the police are not concerned about our security and lives.”

Many in the church are now living in fear, he said, noting that last Sunday (Nov. 8), attendance decreased from 250 to 100 people.

“Since the attack we have been receiving a lot of threats from the Muslims,” Pastor Zaake said. “There is a conspiracy that we can’t understand. This trend really gives me sleepless nights.”

Area Muslims have long opposed the existence of the church in Namasuba, complaining that church members try to convert area Muslims. Christian sources said the initial pretext for damaging the church building was that its outdoor stairway encroached on the alley; the estimated US\$535 (1 million Uganda shillings) in damages were limited to the stairway. The sources said that when the complaint of the stairway

encroaching on the alley fell on deaf ears, local Muslim and community leaders criticized the church for making too much noise.

Namasuba is predominantly Islamic, with some estimates of Muslim adherents going as high as 80 percent of the population.

Pastor Zaake said area Muslims have been holding meetings at night, which he suspects concern plans to paralyze Christian activities.

“It looks like they are planning for another attack, especially in light of the threatening messages I have been receiving on my mobile phone from anonymous senders,” a worried Pastor Zaake told Compass by phone.

The church has been meeting in Namasuba since March. It is located four kilometers from Kampala on a quarter-acre parcel.

Although the Ugandan constitution guarantees religious freedom, authorities hardly prosecute Muslim attacks against Christians, church leaders said.

“The police silence on the whole issue is worrying and leaves a lot to be desired,” Pastor Zaake said.

Apocalypse Tomorrow

“It’s the end of the world as we know it and I feel fine.” When piano-bar musician Tony Delgatto (George Segal) croons those lyrics to a sloshed crowd in the new film *2012*, he has no idea he’s performing the intro to a seismic disaster that’s about to take center stage on planet Earth.

It isn’t long, however, before everyone, everywhere in this apocalyptic movie, which opens Friday, realizes Mother Earth has started to reel like a drunken sailor and that something

is terribly wrong with her. What unfolds is a special-effects bonanza about the collapse of the world and the story of those who survive it.

Set from 2009 to 2012, the film opens with a discovery that the Earth's core temperature is rising rapidly. Causing this is an astro-physical phenomenon brought on by a freakish planetary alignment that occurs once every 640,000 years, according to ancient Mayan astronomers. They calculated the next alignment would start in 2010 and end on the winter solstice of 2012, or Dec. 21.

Right on cue, the planets line up, causing the sun to microwave the Earth's molten core and "melt" the world's landmasses. The result is a gargantuan displacement of Earth's crust—fault lines rip open, bodies of land implode, underwater earthquakes spike the seismographs and roll the planet from pole to pole with 4,900-foot tsunamis. Geological carnage is wreaked on a world that, thanks to joint governmental conspiracies, is clueless that an apocalypse is brewing.

At the center of the action are Jackson Curtis (John Cusack) and Kate Curtis (Amanda Peet), a divorced couple with two preteen kids. The four are reunited by circumstances just as the catastrophe strikes Los Angeles, where they live. Jackson Curtis, who works part time for a livery and was famous once for his best-selling science-fiction novel, has amazingly gotten wind of what's happening in the disturbed belly of the Earth. He's made it his mission to save his family, no matter what.

He piles everyone into his company's limousine to head for a local airport, where he's chartered a flight out of the city. Just as he does, Los Angeles begins to writhe and belch its molten guts out. Streets curl, jerk and snap like a bullwhip while Jackson drives pedal to the metal, dodging collapsing freeways, exploding gas lines, falling parking garages, disintegrating high-rises and pesky ground fissures.

Director Roland Emmerich does a decent job of pairing the film's unrelenting action with some lighthearted comic relief, just as he did with *Independence Day*. For one, he gives us Woody Harrelson as Charlie Frost, a pickle-poppin' hippie who lives in Yellowstone National Park in an ancient RV, from which he does pirate-radio broadcasts to expose government cover-ups about 2012.

The onscreen action is practically nonstop over the course of *2012*'s gargantuan 158 minutes, but you might lose count of the number of times you'll think, *The chances of that person surviving that disaster is, oh, about a gazillion to one*. And be prepared to roll your eyes at the lack of fear some of the characters exude in the face of utter devastation or certain doom. How many of us could really make wise cracks while we're standing under a sky that's raining fire?

The film also erroneously states that Christians refer to the end of the world as the rapture. And it pits the conclusions of Mayan seers against the Bible's teaching that humanity does not know the precise time (certainly not to the year) when the world will end.

You can be certain that *2012* is a cinematic thrill ride. But also know that the price of admission to this adventure is a hefty helping of absurdity you'll have to buy into to believe anyone, anywhere could escape the snapping jaws of our tranquil planet turned killer beast. But, after all, it's only a movie; so buckle up and enjoy the ride.

Content Watch: *2012* is rated PG-13. This movie is about disaster. There may be scary sequences that involve disasters killing countless people. Scenes may be too intense for young children. There is one momentary view of gore and no sex or nudity.