

Wimps or Warriors?

Few Christians in this country expected Soviet communism to crumble when it did. In fact, in the mid-1980s, so-called Bible prophecy experts predicted the Soviets would soon march into Israel and trigger World War III. Some spread the idea that Russian leader Yuri Andropov was the Antichrist. When he died in office after only 15 months, other fearmongers announced that his successor, Mikhail Gorbachev, had assumed the Antichrist mantle. (After all, Gorbachev had a suspicious accent and a strange red splotch on his forehead!)

No wonder churches in this country were taken by surprise when the Iron Curtain fell in 1989. We expected defeat, but the enemy's stronghold collapsed instead. We were shocked again in 1991 when the Soviet Union abruptly dissolved, opening Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and other nations to the gospel for the first time.

But we weren't ready. The American church was so busy worrying about the scary communists that we couldn't see how God was orchestrating His redemptive agenda behind the scenes. Our fears had paralyzed us. As a result, many of us missed our window of opportunity.

Today, history is repeating itself.

Osama bin Laden and his network of outlaws are threatening to rule the world with hijacked planes, homemade nuclear bombs and bioterrorism. In response, Bible prophecy experts have redrawn their charts, rewritten their books and identified new threats so we can know who to be afraid of. Fear breeds more fear, and panicking Christians slink into their corners to

hide, hoping that Jesus will rapture us out of this mess before someone mails us letters laced with anthrax.

Can we stop being such wimps? God is not worried about Osama's threats. The Bible says the Lord laughs at those who conspire against Him (see Ps. 2:1-6).

So why are we fretting about radical Muslims when we should be laughing

in faith, knowing that our Bible says Jesus intends to establish His kingdom

everywhere—even in the Middle East?

Thankfully, not all of us have acted like wimps when challenged by the enemies of the gospel. Missionaries Kevin and Leslie McNulty (see page 30) weren't intimidated by communism or Islam when they began holding evangelistic campaigns in Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan eight years ago. They have won thousands of Muslims to the Lord at a time when many American Christians have been lying on their couches reading doomsday novels.

I wonder: Will we be poised to evangelize the Muslim world when the Islamic curtain falls?

If we aren't, the Christians in China's underground church will go in our place. When I visited China in January, I met many believers who were preparing to travel to Muslim countries as evangelists. They are not wringing their hands over Chinese communists, the KGB or Osama bin Laden. Because they have been imprisoned and tortured, they don't fear death. Their faith inspired me to be a warrior.

This is not a time to panic or to pull up the drawbridge. The

gospel must penetrate every Muslim nation until the praises of Jesus are heard in Cairo, Tehran, Baghdad, Kabul and even Mecca. This is the hour for the church to advance in faith.