

## How Long?

As I write, this, it is Tuesday, and the World Trade Center towers have collapsed, and the pentagon has been bombed, as well as an unsuccessful attempt in the Camp David area.

When I hear of the ten thousand and more who were killed, after reassuring myself that my children are safe from these attacks here in rural Iowa, the words of Habakkuk echo through my mind:

(Habakkuk 1:2, NIV) *How long, O LORD, must I call for help, but you do not listen? Or cry out to you, "Violence!" but you do not save?*

So many times, it seems that God is absent, that He has turned His back on us. We wonder when and where it will end, and where will we be when it's over?

But God has assured us that, despite the problem of sin in the world, despite the curse we're all under, that He has already won the victory. When Jesus died on the cross, the power of death was destroyed, so while these terrorists may cause fear and death, they, and their father, Satan, the real source of these attacks, will not win the final victory. Ultimate victory can only be found in the cross and the empty tomb, so even those whose bodies were destroyed will live again, and those with faith in Christ will see death forever destroyed.

Meanwhile, we turn our eyes to our Lord to protect us in this world, trusting our Shepherd to lead us through. (Psalms 23:4,5, NIV) *Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.*

As we walk through these dark days, don't be afraid. God doesn't fear our enemies, and if God is for us, who can be against us? (Romans 8:38b)

I would also like to share with you the statement made by our newly-installed Synod president, Rev. Dr. Gerald B. Kieschnick:

The monstrous attacks on New York City and Washington, D.C., are an astounding example of mankind's fall into sin and the forces of evil at work in this world.

The fall was not a one-time event. It continues to happen. It is an ongoing process, a downward trajectory, that shapes every moment of our lives.

To deal with such sin and evil in the civil world, God has given us civil authorities--President Bush and our government--to promote peace, order and to provide protection for the American people. Along with our prayers for the thousands of victims of these attacks and their loved ones, we pray for our leaders, that they may learn who is responsible and take the appropriate action. In times of crisis, we encourage all to turn their eyes to Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace, who works peace in men's hearts and among the people of the earth who trust in Him.