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the Continent together

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CARTOON JIHAD

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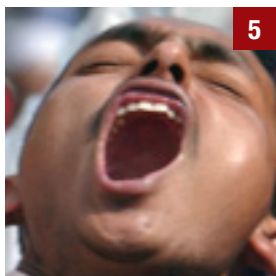
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COVER High-rise buildings under a Chinese flag sky represent a modernizing Asia. Photo illustration by Philip Nice

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Gerald Flurry

How Europe Will Unite!

SINCE WE STARTED THE *TRUMPET* MAGAZINE IN 1990, we have consistently predicted that a united Europe would ultimately become a global superpower. For over 50 years before that, Herbert W. Armstrong declared the same message in the *Plain Truth* newsmagazine, and on the *World Tomorrow* program on radio and television. Bible prophecy clearly shows that *Europe WILL unite!*

Current events are starting a chain reaction that is going to stir Europe into actions that will *shock* this world. The iron strength at the core of an imperial European Union is growing. As it has done repeatedly in history, once again it is going to *smash* its way to global dominance!

After World War II, the grand vision of a united Europe started with the European Steel and Coal Community in 1951. Through several treaties since then, it has evolved into what it is now—a union of 25 European nations. Last year, it looked like this process reached a stalemate when France and the Netherlands rejected the draft European Constitution. Of course, there has always been division in Europe: Different interest groups have fought over each of the eight treaties that built this political beast from a trading community in 1951 into the empire we now call the European Union.

The whole world can see how much *economic* power the EU has. It is the greatest single economic and trade bloc on Earth. But its trade, business and financial strength isn't matched right now by political or military strength. Europe doesn't have a single powerful leader, or a unified foreign policy, to back up its drive for world power.

But that is now set to change—and change *rapidly!*

Emergencies Bring Church and State Together

Throughout Europe's history, what has helped it to overcome its division has been a unity of purpose between *church* and *state*. Charlemagne showed how strong Europe could be when he formed a partnership between Germany and the Roman Catholic Church to create the Holy Roman Empire. That empire has risen up repeatedly since that time.

But this church-state union hasn't always been a happy marriage. Usually the two have been drawn together because of a *crisis*—an *emergency*.

Charlemagne felt it his duty to defend the church. In A.D. 799, he came to the aid of the pope, who had been accused of

wrongdoing and deposed by a band of conspirators. With the military backing of Charles and his Frankish troops, the pope was cleared of all wrongdoing and reinstated to his office. The following year, in Rome, while Charlemagne was kneeling in prayer during a Christmas celebration inside old St. Peter's Church, the pope placed a crown upon his head, pronouncing him "the 73rd emperor of the Fourth World Empire."

A century later, Otto the Great butted heads with Rome over his claim to the imperial crown, but in A.D. 961 Pope John XII called him to Rome asking for protection against an Italian tyrant. As payment, the pope crowned him emperor.

REUTERS

**STRONGER**

Merkel and Germany are at the core of European politics.

Current events are starting a chain reaction that is going to stir Europe into actions that will shock this world.

together the separate nations and cultures within the empire.

Herbert W. Armstrong believed the same pattern would occur again in our time—that European nations would unite suddenly because of a crisis, and that the Roman Catholic Church would play a huge role in solving that emergency. In times of *crisis*, religion has a way of pulling people together!

Fall of the Dollar

What emergency might unify Europe again? Mr. Armstrong believed that crisis would be the fall of the dollar. The dollar's collapse could trigger a world financial crisis and make the European currency an attractive alternative for investors around the world. What other currency comes close? If the euro became the world's new reserve currency, Europe would be flooded with money and would dominate world markets.

Today the dollar is in real trouble. The chief economist at Morgan Stanley, Stephen Roach, predicted at a meeting in November 2004 with select investors that "America has no better than a 10

percent chance of avoiding economic ‘Armageddon’” (*Boston Herald*, Nov. 23, 2004). Roach predicted a 30 percent chance of a slump soon and a 60 percent chance that “we’ll muddle through for a while, and delay the eventual Armageddon.” THAT IS A TERRIFYING PROPHECY FROM A MAN OF HIS ECONOMIC STATURE!

Is anybody listening?

We can be sure that the dollar is going to collapse. The massively debt-burdened American economy simply can’t remain afloat much longer. Many investors are already pulling out of the sinking dollar and putting it into the rising euro. When this trend plays out, it will strongly empower and unify Europe.

Germany Restored to Health

To see Europe’s future, just look at its most powerful country. After a decade of economic difficulties, once again *Germany is on the rise*. Gerhard Schröder made some strong moves when he was chancellor, putting German troops in Afghanistan, the Balkans, Sudan, the Horn of Africa, the southern Caucasus and the Palestinian territories. Now the new chancellor, Angela Merkel, has taken German boldness in foreign policy to a new level, showing a stronger Germany than the Western world has seen in decades. And the German people love her.

A speech Merkel gave to the Munich Conference on Security Policy February 4 is a good example. She criticized Russia for using energy supplies as political leverage with former Soviet satellites. She questioned whether Europe needed to be tougher with China because of its human rights problems. She warned Hamas, the terrorist group that now controls the Palestinian government, that if it didn’t recognize Israel, it would be ostracized. She was very harsh in speaking out against Iran’s president. UPI described the speech as having “a muscular tone rarely used by German leaders” (February 6, emphasis mine throughout).

Even before Merkel was “elected” as chancellor last fall, Stratfor likened some of her rhetoric to the “sentiments of

a certain earlier German government”—referring to Adolf Hitler. (See my editorial in our January 2005 issue.)

Ironically, in her February 4 speech, when Merkel attacked Iran’s president, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, for denying the Holocaust and saying Israel should be eliminated, she compared him to Adolf Hitler in the 1930s. In other words, *someone needs to stop him now before the problem gets a lot worse!*

Those are strong words coming from Germany.

Bible prophecy shows that the Germans are going to use more than just words against Iran.

Chancellor Merkel is alarmed about Iran getting nuclear weapons. A former German defense minister, who is a member of Merkel’s political party, said Germany needs nuclear weapons of its own in order to deter terrorist-sponsoring nations from developing nuclear programs.

Not long ago, whenever Germany wanted to make a strong move, it did so under the cloak of the European Union. That is beginning to change.

As Germany becomes bolder, it will become the single DRIVING FORCE behind European unity. That is already happening.

Germany as European Unifier

Economists are reporting an upswing in the German economy. The *International Herald Tribune* says it is “on the mend, with quickening growth, surging investor confidence, signs of a rebirth in consumer spending, and even a modest decline in unemployment” (January 17).

Why? Partly because of the new government, “which has helped lift the mood in this often pessimistic country.” Merkel “has gotten off to a sure-footed start, political analysts say, raising hopes that she can push through overdue economic changes” (ibid.).

Europe is already beginning to look to the success in Germany. “The European Central Bank is confident enough in the

Nuke Mentality Changing in Europe

A MINDSET IS CHANGING IN Europe—as recent statements by French President Jacques Chirac and a former German defense minister suggest.

In a January 19 speech at a nuclear submarine base in Brittany, France, President Chirac expanded his country’s definition of nuclear deterrence when he warned that France could use its nuclear weapons if attacked by a state or state-sponsored terrorist organization: “[T]he leaders of states who would use terrorist means against us, as well as those who would consider using, in one way or another, weapons of mass destruction, must understand they would lay themselves open to a firm and adapted response on our part.”

Chirac explained that such a response “could be a conventional one. It could also be of a different kind.” He added that France would con-

sider a nuclear response in the event of “unbearable act of aggression, a threat or blackmail” (www.elysee.fr, January 19).

To add credibility to his threat, Chirac then announced the reduction of the number of nuclear warheads on some of France’s missiles so as to carry a smaller payload to deliver precise hits.

Chirac’s speech shifted France’s nuclear doctrine from one purely dissuasive and defensive in nature to one that supports a limited nuclear response to just the *threat* of an attack. France, once seen as the Western model for social integration and tolerance, is displaying its willingness to deliver nuclear strikes to specific targets.

Jean-Pierre Maulny, deputy director of the Institute of International and Strategic Relations, said Chirac



CHIRAC

broadened the definition of the “vital interests” France would defend with nuclear weapons to include not just France itself, but its allies as well (ibid.).

Chirac’s announcement demonstrates a change in how Europe views its dependence on America’s nuclear umbrella. The leading nations in Europe are unsatisfied with their status as junior partners in the trans-Atlantic alliance. Europe has always been embarrassed that even within its own territory, such as the Balkans, it has needed American troops and funds in order to keep peace. Europe is eager to show that it is just as capable as the United States in solving international problems.

Dominique Moisi of the French Institute of International Relations interpreted Chirac’s statement as

growth of Germany and Europe that it lifted interest rates last month [December] for the first time in five years ..." (ibid.).

On January 25, Chancellor Merkel gave an impressive half-hour speech before an audience of European policymakers. She promised that when Germany takes over the EU presidency in the first half of 2007, it will fight the EU's cumbersome red tape. She said that "obsolete EU legislation should be abolished and that future EU directives should carry an expiry date" (EUobserver.com, January 26).

Germany wants a more efficient, more streamlined Europe. And it might be able to bring that about—especially since its economy appears to be improving, and Europe's political leaders are practically infatuated with the new German chancellor.

When strong, Germany has always been able to thrust its will on Europe—especially when working in tandem with the Vatican. So it can be deceptive if we see a crippled European Union. **THE REAL POLITICAL, MILITARY AND ECONOMIC STRENGTH OF EUROPE WILL BE GERMANY—THAT IS WHAT WE MUST WATCH!**

In its January 16 forecast, Stratfor pointed to a "new trend" to watch in Europe: "TRADITIONAL EUROPEAN POWER BALANCES BEGIN[NING] TO REASSERT after a 60-year absence." Of course, it is talking about *Germany rising to the top*.

From the end of World War II to when Chancellor Schröder was in power, Germany was in a "geopolitical deep-freeze," according to Stratfor. Even "everything Schröder did was couched in terms of the *European* interest (which meant mostly French interest). Europeanism was the only approved outlet for German nationalism.

"But now there has been a *clean break*."

"Angela Merkel is now in charge of Germany, and despite presiding over an unwieldy and uncomfortable coalition government ... she already has emerged as the center-point of Euro-

an announcement to the U.S. that Washington doesn't hold "the monopoly of deterrence" (Agence France Presse, January 20).

The idea of freeing Europe from its nuclear dependence on Washington is slowly catching on. Such a considerable shift in France's nuclear policy sparked minimal debate in Europe. Across the Rhine, a German government spokesman, Thomas Steg, backed up Chirac's statements, saying Berlin didn't see a "reason to believe that France's policy has changed or will change in the future."

German Defense Minister Franz Josef Jung, though he called Chirac's comments counterproductive, also said, "We need all options at our disposal. But before that, everything must be attempted on the diplomatic front" Yes, diplomacy comes first, but Germany won't leave out a military option either.

Interestingly, a week after Chirac's speech, a former German defense min-

Not long ago, whenever Germany wanted to make a strong move, it did so under the cloak of the European Union. That is beginning to change.

ister and member of Germany's ruling party, Rupert Scholz, broke a national taboo by telling a newspaper, "We need a serious discussion over how we can react to a nuclear threat by a terrorist state in an appropriate manner—and in extreme cases with our own nuclear weapons" (www.expatica.com, January 26).

While Germany is not likely to violate any proliferation treaties just yet, Scholz's comment demonstrates just how much Europe's mindset is changing. Sixty years ago, even the idea of allowing Germany to have its own nuclear arsenal would have sparked outrage within its neighbors and the U.S. As recently as 1990, Germany, as a prerequisite for reunification, renounced the manufacture and possession of nuclear weapons. Now the idea that was once so outrageous is gaining acceptance.

Of course, that is what France and Germany are aiming for. If they float the idea of using nuclear weapons now,

pean affairs," Stratfor wrote. Again, "GERMANY IS RETURNING TO ITS TRADITIONAL ROLE AS THE CORE EUROPEAN POWER."

What does this mean? Historically, as Stratfor states, it has been Germany's strength or weakness that has dictated the geopolitical structure of Europe. "When Germany is weak ... other powers are able to rise and assert their interests. *But when Germany is strong*, it DOMINATES THE HEART OF THE CONTINENT and relegates its neighbors to POWERLESSNESS—until such time as they ally to crush it" (ibid.).

This pattern has occurred at three major points in history—during three German "Reichs." "Charlemagne's Holy Roman Empire (the first iteration of what is now 'Germany') dominated Europe until it fell in Europe's religious wars. Its death is what allowed Britain, France and Russia to rise as major

powers. Imperial Germany played a similar dominating role from its rise in 1870 until its fall in World War I, when Weimar Germany's weakness allowed a French and Russian renaissance. And of course

Nazi Germany's rise again put all eyes on Berlin, and its destruction led to the superpower standoff—and, *eventually, to the rise of a 'united' Europe*" (ibid.).

Stratfor predicts that "2006 will mark a new turning point as Germany *begins to ascend for a FOURTH TIME!*"

The Fourth Reich is rising before our eyes!

This will be key in bringing Europe together. But a Europe united under Germany will be a superfederalist state that serves *Germany's* interests.

Look at the period surrounding World War I as an example. Germany goaded Austria and Hungary into increasing their demands on Serbia so much that the Serbs couldn't possibly meet them. And that led to war. *This was another attempt by Germany to resurrect the Holy Roman Empire*. That thinking has been there since the time of Justinian! Many historians recognize this.

eventually, when the time comes to assert their power, the people will accept this deadly measure.

What better time to justify the use or possession of a nuclear arsenal than when radical Islam and its terrorist supporters are on the verge of lunacy? Possessing or using a nuclear arsenal just doesn't seem so outrageous when Iran's president is calling for a whole nation to be wiped out and his country is actively seeking its own nuclear arsenal.

Though the idea of a nation today using nuclear weapons may seem far-fetched, Bible prophecy shows this is exactly what will happen. Chirac's shift in policy is bringing us just one step closer to when a German-led Europe will engulf the world in a nuclear World War III. For more information, request our free booklet *Germany and the Holy Roman Empire*. **DAVID VEJIL**

More recently, Germany put Serbia in a bad situation again when it first stimulated, then acknowledged, the separation of Croatia and Slovenia from the Yugoslav Federation in 1991. This move was quickly supported by the Vatican. So Roman Catholic Croatia and Slovenia have become colonies of the EU. (This history is explained in our free booklet *The Rising Beast*.)

The way America's leaders work with Europe today, it is clear they are monstrously ignorant of this history.

Germany has a history of being dangerous when you least expect it. Germany started a war with France in 1870 and conquered it. Germany used the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand as an excuse to go to war—when almost nobody expected a war. Germany's aggression in taking over neighboring countries in 1939 led to the greatest war known to man. You never know what Germany is plotting. It is prone to get into wars!

Many nations have been conquered by Germany. It often happened because the soon-to-be victims and their allies refused to face reality—like they do today! The Bible says our peoples and their leaders are like watchdogs that won't bark (Isaiah 56:10).

Isaiah 10:7 describes Germany by saying it is "in his heart to destroy and cut off nations not a few"! You can read a thorough explanation of this prophecy and many more like it in our free booklet *Germany and the Holy Roman Empire*.

Iran's Pushiness

This prophecy of Germany's future aggression may seem unbelievable. Who would think Germany would lead Europe in starting another world war? Most people would dismiss the idea, especially looking at Europe's comparatively weak military today.

In December 2004, when EU peacekeeping troops officially took over operations in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Xinhua News Agency reported: "Although the EU has done a lot in enhancing its independent military role and capabilities, EU leaders have come to realize that Europe has lagged far behind the United States in armaments, intervention capabilities and abilities to cope with crisis. ... Though the EU has a force of over 2 million troops, merely 2 to 3 percent of them can be employed to undertake a peacekeeping task as in Kosovo. Observers say that as things now stand in the EU countries, there is still a long way to go for the bloc to build an efficient independent defense and military intervention system to make the EU a 'genuine tiger.'"

But don't forget Germany's history of rapid military buildup. Stratfor referred to the rise of Prussian power under Otto von Bismarck leading to the Franco-German War: "This was Europe's first taste of just how fast Germany could change: In 1865, Germany effectively did not exist. WITHIN SIX YEARS, it not only existed but was capable of dealing decisive defeat to the Continental superpower of the time" (March 9, 2005).

After being shattered in World War I, Germany built the military force to plunge the Continent into war just 20 years later.

Germany certainly has a history of being able to "come from nowhere" and surprise the rest of the world!

Despite Europe's current weakness, prophecy shows that Europe's military is about to become a formidable power, symbolized by "great iron teeth" in the biblical book of Daniel. A major world crisis would produce those teeth almost immediately.

A prophecy in Daniel 11 shows that the EU *will* come to possess a powerful military. It shows that a "king of the south" (radical Islam, led by Iran) will "push" at the "king of the north," or this final resurrection of the Holy Roman Empire. Here is yet another catalyst, another emergency, that will cause Europe to unite! If you understand what Iran is doing today, you can see that this "push" has already begun—and Europe is already waking up to the fact that it will have to act!

Daniel says that when this "push" gets strongest, a united Europe will respond in blitzkrieg fashion, smashing the radical Islamic power! In this German-led strike, "many countries shall be overthrown" (see Daniel 11:40-42).

AFP/GETTY IMAGES



PUSHING

The Iranian president is forcing Germany to react strongly.

Compare that prophecy with Europe's failure in dealing with the Iranian nuclear crisis so far. European leaders keep wanting more *talks*, which is just a senseless game that only buys Iran *more time to build nuclear weapons!* Sanctions won't work,

because too many countries need Iran's oil. Without that oil, the price for oil would soar, causing a worse crisis economically.

Iran has a lot of power and thinks it can "push" at Europe all it wants.

How much longer can this go on? Germany and Europe are not going to put up with Tehran's bullying forever. Daniel says the Holy Roman Empire will come against Iran in the historic Germanic way: "like a whirlwind"! (verse 40).

That time is coming soon.

The Good News of a United Europe

Crises are developing that could lead to this "emergency" that will cause Europe to look to a newly strengthened Germany and end up bringing church and state together—from the weakening of the U.S. economy to danger brewing in the Middle East.

And even though a united Europe and the rise of the Fourth Reich spell doom for "many countries," these gloomy events all lead to magnificent news!

Daniel 7:9 reads, "I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire."

This awesome and intricate description follows on the heels of the last resurrection of the Holy Roman Empire, described in verse 8. (Our free booklet *Daniel Unlocks Revelation* explains this prophecy in detail.)

This fiery God is about to return and conquer the final Roman beast—which is rising powerfully on the world scene even as I write! IT IS DREADFUL AND TERRIBLE, AND CHRIST IS ABOUT TO RETURN AND DESTROY IT FOREVER!

GET READY FOR THE RETURN OF JESUS CHRIST. That greatest event ever to occur in the universe is almost here! ■

RAGE

Bangladeshi Muslims scream in protest of Danish cartoonists' caricatures of the Prophet Muhammad.

CARTOON JIHAD

Revenge attacks over depictions of Muhammad prove that war between Islam and Europe is inevitable. BY JOEL HILLIKER

MUSLIMS WANT DOMINATION. If the infidels won't submit, then they want war. Political correctness shuns such statements. But the violence and carnage unleashed in retaliation for the publication of a few cartoons proves these statements are true of many powerfully influential Muslim leaders and their followers.

They are true enough, in fact, that war is inevitable.

While many in the West apologetically bend over backward trying to explain how the yawning Judeo-Christian/Muslim divide is no clash of civilizations, Muslims push their strategy for civilizational domination on several fronts.

Push is just the word for it. It is the word the Prophet Daniel used in foretelling the actions of the force of radical Islam in our day. Daniel 11:40 is a

scripture that regular *Trumpet* readers know well. Radicals will *push* until they achieve domination or war.

Nervousness

If you have not seen the cartoons, you might make the effort to do so. Keep in mind their origin: A Danish author of children's books wanted to produce a book about the life of Muhammad but couldn't find a willing artist, since many Muslims believe that illustrations of Muhammad are forbidden by the Koran. (They are not.) Some artists refused the job for fear of suffering the same fate as Dutch filmmaker Theo van Gogh (who, for producing a film that offended Muslims, was shot with a barrage of bullets, had his throat slit, was stabbed in the chest and left for dead with two knives planted in his torso on Nov. 2, 2004). Danish newspaper *Jyllands-Posten* reported the story and initiated a debate

over how much Danes should censor themselves in the name of cultural pluralism. The paper's editor requested a cartoon about Muhammad from Denmark's 40 syndicated cartoonists; 12 accepted the invitation. *Jyllands-Posten* published their work last September.

To a Western mind, these cartoons are tame, innocuous, even timid. They demonstrate religious insensitivity less than they reveal the climate of terror that radical Islam has already created within Europe. One depicts a cartoonist hunched over his drawing of Islam's prophet, nervously looking over his shoulder for fear of attack.

That cartoon was the most prophetic of the lot.

Rage

Small local protests began immediately, but the newspaper stood by its right to print the images. Ambassadors from Iran and several other Islamic countries sought a meeting with the Danish prime minister to demand that the paper be prosecuted. The prime minister refused.

Then, a group of Danish imams traveled to Saudi Arabia and Egypt in order

to circulate the drawings—along with a number of *truly* inflammatory drawings it deceitfully claimed had also been published. The images began spreading via the Internet throughout the Muslim world. Hatred and outrage grew like snakes in an incubator. Saudi Arabia recalled its ambassador, and Libya shut its embassy in Denmark.

In a show of solidarity with *Jyllands-Posten*, other European newspapers took a rare stand on free-speech grounds and republished the cartoons. Radical Muslim leaders essentially took this as their cue to unleash a firestorm, whipping their followers the world over into a white-hot rage. In Iran, a special suicide bombing course was created to exact revenge on the Danes, drawing scores of Iranian students—including women—to register for “martyrdom-seeking operations” training. One prominent Iranian newspaper sponsored a competition for fresh cartoons about the Holocaust—to test the West’s commitment to free speech. President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad banned Danish imports and halted all trade and business ties with the country in an effort to place Iran at the head of the anti-Denmark campaign. Countries such as Iraq, the United Arab Emirates and Qatar stepped in line behind Tehran’s boycott. Protesters in Syria and Lebanon firebombed Danish embassies. Muslim journalists were

Western infiltration including cinemas, music and video stores, banks, fast-food restaurants, gas stations and mobile phone outlets. While they were at it, they burned effigies of the Danish prime minister and one of the cartoonists. An Indian court sentenced the artists to death; the Indian minister for Ethnic Minorities offered a bounty of \$11.5 million—plus the weight of the murderer in solid gold.

Calculation

This violence was not spontaneous emotional reaction to the sight of a few cartoons. It was rooted in *organized efforts* by influential Islamist leaders to shore up their position against the West. In the vanguard is *Iran*. President Ahmadinejad called the controversy “a blessing from God.”

In the words of analysts at Stratfor, “As Iran moves toward a confrontation with the United States over nuclear weapons, this helps to rally the Muslim world to its side: Iran wants to be viewed as the defender of Islam, and [other Muslim factions] are now seeing Iran as the leader in outrage against Europe” (February 7). Iranian author Amir Taheri offered this assessment: “People watching TV news may think that the whole Muslim world is ablaze with righteous rage translated into ‘spontaneous demonstrations.’” He says that, in fact, the demonstrations have been deliber-

Several Europeans have received death threats or are the objects of *fatwas* calling for their assassinations.

Europeans have responded to these terrifying events in two very different ways.

The first of those reactions plays directly into the hands of those Muslims who want to dominate the infidels—that is, *abject submission*.

Prostration

Islam seeks to spread itself worldwide. Within Islamic law, non-Muslims can assume a state called “dhimmitude.” It is a subordinate social state based on a koranic verse requiring Muslims to fight non-Muslims until they are *humbled*—which, in the words of medieval koranic commentator Ibn Kathir, means “with willing submission,” “in defeat and subservience,” and “subdued—disgraced, humiliated and belittled.” As long as they accept this status, “dhimmis” are officially tolerated.

This is essentially the miserable state to which some European leaders have already descended, as their response to the cartoon *jihad* illustrates.

Vebjørn Selbekk, editor of Norway’s *Magazinet*, was first to reprint the cartoons after *Jyllands-Posten*. Though he received death threats from Islamists and pressure from the government to apologize, he refused—until February 10, that is. At a hastily called press conference, “Surrounded by cabinet ministers and a phalanx of imams, [Selbekk] issued an abject public apology for reprinting the Danish Muhammad cartoons,” wrote columnist Mark Steyn. “... Mr. Selbekk was prevailed upon to recant and the head of Norway’s Islamic Council, Mohammed Hamdan, graciously accepted the apology and assured the prostrate editor that he was now under his personal protection” (*Chicago Sun-Times*, February 19). Steyn then quoted an American author: “It was a picture right out of a *sharia* courtroom.” Norway’s Islamic leaders were delighted.

Similar acts of *dhimmitude* were undertaken by other European nations. In Italy, Muslims blamed violence in Libya on the Italian reform minister because he wore a T-shirt imprinted with one of the offending cartoons; the minister succumbed to pressure to resign his post. In several countries, officials defended “free speech” while cautioning that it must be exercised “responsibly”—meaning, in accordance with Muslim law. Franco Frattini, the European Union

THE VIOLENCE WAS ROOTED IN ORGANIZED EFFORTS BY INFLUENTIAL ISLAMIST LEADERS TO SHORE UP THEIR POSITION AGAINST THE WEST.

arrested for republishing the cartoons in Jordan, Algeria and Yemen.

Rallies rolled across northern Africa and spread as far south as Kenya. In Nigeria, which is half Muslim and half Christian, Muslims torched churches and targeted Christian businesses, killing over 120 people. Riots and demonstrations cut a swath of anger across Asia: through Afghanistan, Pakistan, Kashmir, India, Bangladesh, Thailand, Indonesia, the Philippines, China and Russia. Indonesian protesters attacked the U.S. Embassy, claiming the cartoons were masterminded by the *American* government. Muslims brandishing placards and shouting slogans such as “Death to Denmark!” and “Butcher those who mock Islam” set fire to buildings representing

ately “put on by the radicals and the Iranian and Syrian security services” (*New York Post*, February 9).

Iran’s aggressive moves are, in fact, forcing the *radicalization* of moderate Muslims. Extremists are attacking non-action as being tantamount to tolerating the defamation of Mohammad—turning the matter into a “test of authenticity for Muslims,” as Stratfor put it (op. cit.).

Europe, the primary object of this maelstrom of anger, also faced mass rioting by Muslims within its own borders in England, Germany, France, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Ireland, Austria and Belgium. London’s mayor joined thousands of protesters in Trafalgar Square carrying signs saying such things as “Massacre those who insult Islam.”

commissioner for freedom and security, proposed a charter that would force journalists to exercising “prudence” in covering Islam and other religions—though, in response to a barrage of criticism, he later tried to backtrack.

An increasing majority of Europeans view this weakness in certain of their leaders with embarrassment and disgust—creating a reaction of intolerance toward Muslim sensitivities. The *New York Times* talks of “a growing grassroots backlash against the multiculturalism that has spread through Europe over the past 20 years. People are increasingly challenging the care taken in Nazi-chastened Europe, and in France in particular, to avoid the sort of racial or religious insults that led to widespread protests in the Muslim world ...” (February 28).

In Germany and a few other countries, you do not see the cowering toward *dhimmitude* that infected Norway. There, you more generally see the *second* of the two European reactions to the cartoon controversy—*indignation and anger*, trending toward *firm action*.

Vengeance

More and more, Europeans are realizing that those voices calling for greater sensitivity to Muslims—as if that would prevent the problem from ever breaking out again—simply do not understand the nature of what they are up against: a religion that seeks to *convert or subjugate all non-Muslims*. A European culture that would be sufficiently “sensitive” to Islamic law would quite frankly be one in *subjugation* to Islamic law—and anything short of that is going to produce clashes of the sort we are witnessing today.

The cartoon *jihad* is actually the latest in a series of events that has put Muslims and Europeans on a collision course: the Van Gogh assassination; the Madrid bombing; the London bombing; the France riots. These have each served as flash points, punctuating and exacerbating an increasing discomfort among Europeans with the fact that their homelands house 20 million more Muslims today than 30 years ago, that Islam has grown to become Europe’s second-largest religion, that trying to accommodate Muslims seems only to increase their lust for more accommodations.

In the long run, Europeans simply will not abide such circumstances. Even before this latest incident, the popularity of right-wing, anti-immigration political platforms was rising among vot-

ers. Many European leaders have been taking action, establishing stronger anti-terrorism forces, increasing their police’s freedom to act against Islamist elements, expelling radical Muslims from their midst. “Welcome to the end of tolerance,” *Newsweek International* writes, “or at least to the nonnegotiable limits to what Europeans will tolerate. ... After decades of relatively unfettered immigration and cultural *laissez faire* when it came to accepting people of dif-

as a pretense to inflame the hatreds of Muslims to the point that they are baying for blood, it is only a matter of time before Europeans decide that they have simply had enough of this nonsense, and that it is time to strike back.

That is exactly what was proposed by Roberto Calderoli, a member of Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi’s cabinet. In the words of *Spiegel Online*, Calderoli “called in all seriousness for Pope Benedict XVI to lead the Christian world

IRAN’S AGGRESSIVE MOVES ARE, IN FACT, FORCING THE RADICALIZATION OF MODERATE MUSLIMS.

fering values and social mores, there are signs that a potentially ugly backlash is setting in” (March 6).

A February 27 meeting of the EU’s foreign ministers—not the toughest, straightest-talking bunch, by any measure—is an interesting illustration of how the cartoons have strengthened this trend. In composing a statement about the crisis, the ministers scrupulously avoided anything that could be construed as an apology for the drawings. This was a tame, politicized representation of a positively defiant populist reaction in Europe. Muslim anger over the cartoons has created a toughening of Europeans’ attitudes toward what they view more and more as an alien and hostile culture. As Muslims decry insensitivity toward their faith, Europeans argue that the case is a matter of freedom of speech—that no culture should trump the cardinal principles of democracy. They view the fear and subjugation some EU leaders are entrapped in as just as much a problem as the violence that created the fear.

A growing number of Europeans simply will not let Muslims dictate what it means to be European. These angry citizens represent the majority. *It is their swelling numbers and hardening attitudes that portend the future of this crisis.*

With the cartoon controversy, it appears we have crossed a threshold in the clash of civilizations. Rather than dissipating, the crisis grows, with both sides bunkering down in their positions.

There are, in fact, few signs that either side *wants* the crisis to dissipate—certainly not at the cost of compromising or backing down.

How can this situation NOT lead, eventually, to war?

If Islamic leaders can use *cartoons*

against the ‘threat of Islam’ just has his predecessors did in the 16th and 17th centuries. Just as a major reaction was necessary then to beat back the Turks from the gates of Vienna, Calderoli said, countermeasures are necessary” (February 14).

The response from the Muslim to this threat was telling. “Berlusconi must fire his minister and *ask Islam for forgiveness*,” demanded Seif al-Islam al-Gadhafi, son of Libyan leader Muammar Ghaddafi. Otherwise, he threatened, “Libya, the Arabic world, and Islam would be forced to react” (ibid.).

THESE ARE VOICES FROM TWO CIVILIZATIONS ON A COLLISION COURSE.

Of the significance of the current Islamic situation, Stratfor stated: “What is new is the *breadth of the Muslim response* and the fact that it is directed obsessively not against the United States, but *against European states*” (op. cit.; emphasis mine). That takes us back to Daniel’s prophecy of the “push.” This is an aggressive foreign policy exercised by an Islamic king of the south against a *European* power that will ignite world war! For now, Europe is responding with defiant speeches—but it won’t stop there. At some point, the radicals will push too far.

The outrage on both sides of this issue may calm down in the short term, but it is only a matter of time before another incident brings the simmering hatreds right back to a boil. Soon, the lid will blow off completely. The narrative of end-time events provided by biblical prophecy explicitly describes a dramatic clash between the most violent of Islamic forces and the European beast they are already beginning to provoke. Watch for it.

Muslims want domination. If the infidels won’t submit, then they want war. Prophecy shows they are going to get it. ■



MIDDLE EAST PEACE PROCESS R.I.P. 1978-2006?

GETTY IMAGES

BY MARK JENKINS

LOOKING FOR THE “PEACE” IN THE Middle East peace process has always been like looking for gold nuggets in a garbage dump: there was never any treasure to begin with, and the search makes you sick.

Up until now, though, Israel could at least cling to the pretense—however misguided—that Palestinians as a whole *wanted* to live peacefully beside them.

No more. With the terrorist group Hamas elected to office by the democratic choice of the Palestinian populace, the Israelis can be assured that when Hamas officials say Israel should not exist, they speak for the people. Men who favor violent solutions are the popular choice.

A February 15 *Jerusalem Newswire* article, “Israel signals ‘peace’ process is dead,” said this: “[T]he government of Israel is finally starting to realize that any semblance of a ‘Palestinian’ peace partner has now disappeared.”

But what did the peace process ever really accomplish? Rather than bringing peace, it only opened up a gaping wound in the heart of Israel.

The Process

The peace process has lived a bloody, violent life that could have been predicted by the circumstances surrounding its birth.

After centuries of wandering as a peo-

ple without a nation, Jews began returning to their historic homeland after World War I, which had come under British rule. In 1947, the United Nations decided to form two independent states—one Arab and one Jewish. On May 14, 1948, the British Mandate ended and the UN implemented the plan that returned the Jews to their home—the ancient nation of Israel.

Peace didn’t even last one day. adamantly opposed to any Jewish state, the Arabs attacked on May 15.

The Jews had no army and were losing within three weeks, when the UN successfully established a truce. Although the Arabs soon broke the truce, the respite gave the Jews time to arm and train their troops. Many Jews acknowledged this opportunity as a miracle from God. By the time fighting ended in 1949, the Jews had expanded the land the UN had allotted them by nearly 50 percent. Though they still controlled only half of Jerusalem, the new nation called Israel declared Jerusalem its capital.

In 1967, the Arabs poised to attack Israel again. Egyptian troops filled the Sinai Peninsula and ordered UN forces out. Egypt, Syria and Jordan allied and prepared to start a war.

Amid terrifying odds came more miracles. Launching a preemptive strike, Israel captured East Jerusalem, the West Bank of the Jordan River, Syria’s Golan Heights,

the Gaza Strip and the Sinai Peninsula in just six days.

In 1973, the Arabs launched another surprise attack—and lost even more territory in both Syria and Egypt.

In these repeated attempts to displace the Jews from their homeland, the Arabs lost all of the land granted to them by the UN, including the city of Jerusalem.

In 1977, the peace process was conceived when U.S. President Jimmy Carter persuaded Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin to give the Sinai back to Egypt based on the philosophy that gifting land to mortal enemies would produce peace.

The peace process was *born* on Sept. 17, 1978, when Israel and Egypt signed the Camp David accords, which outlined the “framework for peace in the Middle East”—a polite phrase that meant gradual Israeli concession of land to Arabs engaged in acts of terrorism against Israel.

Egyptian President Anwar Sadat, who signed these accords, was assassinated in 1981 by members of the Egyptian army who opposed *any* type of peace with Israel.

In 1987, the first Palestinian *intifada*—a mass uprising against Israel—began, a sure sign that the peace process was in poor health.

In 1993, Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Yasser Arafat—leader of

the Palestinians and a notorious terrorist—shook hands in an agreement that the Palestinians would recognize Israel's right to exist in exchange for more land. The agreement, called the "Declaration of Principles" or the "Oslo accords," specified Israeli military withdrawal from most of the Gaza Strip and from the town of Jericho in the West Bank.

On September 24 of 1995, Rabin signed Oslo II, agreeing to divide the West Bank into three zones, an act that would cost him his life. He was assassinated shortly thereafter, and replaced by Shimon Peres—one of the architects of the failing peace process.

In 1996, the terrorist group Hamas—founded on the principle that Israel should not exist—responded to the land concessions and peace agreements with devastating suicide bombings against Israel's military and its civilians.

In 1996 elections, Peres was replaced by Benjamin Netanyahu, who campaigned against the Oslo deals with the slogan "Peace for Security." Despite his platform, he gave up 80 percent of Hebron in January 1997 and agreed to further withdrawals from the West Bank on Oct. 23, 1998, by signing the Wye River Memorandum. He lost his party's support as a result and was replaced by Ehud Barak, who promised to end the Israeli-Palestinian conflict within a year.

True to the spirit of the peace process, however, Barak agreed to further land concessions. The Palestinians declared a second *intifada*, which raged in the West Bank and Gaza well beyond Barak's term in office. He resigned in December of 2000 in hopes of receiving a new mandate from his people. Instead, he was replaced by Israeli hero Ariel Sharon, the most right-wing leader yet—a sure sign that Israel would take a tougher approach. True to Sharon's promises, Israel recaptured most of the West Bank, killed the terrorist leader of Hamas, and refused to deal with Yasser Arafat. The peace process appeared comatose.

Palestinians continued suicide bombings, and Israel continued to launch air strikes in response; the spiritual leader of Hamas—Sheik Ahmed Yassin—was killed in a targeted missile attack.

Meanwhile, Arafat died in November 2004 and was replaced by Mahmoud Abbas, who, unlike his predecessor, was not a known terrorist. In many minds, the installation of a Palestinian leader who might consider reactivating the principle of land for peace showed that the peace

process, while diseased, was not yet dead. Israeli politicians indicated a willingness to make more concessions to the Palestinians, and the hope for a Palestinian state looked very much alive.

Shockingly, Sharon turned back to the principle of land for peace, deciding to unilaterally withdraw all Jewish settlers from the Gaza Strip. Israeli soldiers evacuated about 8,000 Jewish citizens, some of them by force, from settlements in the Gaza Strip and certain enclaves in the West Bank during August and September 2005. The Palestinians thanked Israel by launching Kassam rockets from the newly acquired land into Israeli towns—62 attacks in September alone. The attempt to buy peace with land was again proven a failure.

On Jan. 4, 2006, Ariel Sharon suffered a stroke that left him in a coma with no signs he would ever wake again.

On January 25, the Palestinian people democratically elected Hamas to parliament by an overwhelming majority. With this stunning election, the Palestinian people essentially put their stamp of endorsement on the idea that Israel should be, as Iranian leader Mahmoud Ahmadinejad recently said, "wiped off the map."

Hamas chief Khaled Mashaal, speaking at a February conference in Sudan, expressed his commitment to peace this way: "Our mission is to liberate Jerusalem and purify the al-Aqsa mosque. ... Allah is leading us to victory and liberation."

According to recent polls, nearly half of Israelis and some Israeli politicians are willing to give up *some* of East Jerusalem to the Palestinians now. But East Jerusalem contains the Temple Mount—the Jews' holiest site, where both the first and second biblical temples were located. The Arabs have two major mosques there and consider it their second or third holiest site. Neither side will willingly give it up.

The terrorist group Hamas will neither denounce terrorism nor recognize Israel's right to exist; Israel will not recognize Hamas as a legitimate representative of government as long as it is bent on Israel's destruction. Jerusalem is about to suffer a violent and emotional explosion.

The Middle East peace process has been a deadly delusion.

Judah's Wound

As far back as 1996, *Trumpet* editor in chief Gerald Flurry identified the peace process as "Judah's wound." The Bible refers to the present nation of Israel as

"Judah" (hence the name *Jew*). It is in a prophecy in Hosea 5:13 that the interesting word *wound* can be found. *Gesenius' Lexicon* defines it, "the pressing together, binding up of a wound; HERE USED FIGURATIVELY OF A REMEDY APPLIED TO THE WOUNDS OF THE STATE." IN OTHER WORDS, THE REMEDY IS THE WOUND!

Could a single word better describe Israel's "peace" process? Is there any more grievous wound than the naive, strength-sapping negotiation that has Israel virtually begging the Palestinians to stop their terrorism, giving up more and more land and resources along the way? This galling "remedy" has crushed Israel's will; the peace process *itself* has left Israel in mortal danger.

Hosea's prophecy shows that, at some point, the Israelis will *see* their wound. They will recognize the futility of the land-for-peace formula.

We could already be witnessing the fulfillment of this aspect of the prophecy.

With Israel's archenemy Hamas in power, the chances of Israel seeing the emptiness of the land-for-peace ideal are much greater, while the prospect of it returning to that ideal are measurably dimmer.

At some point, Israel will see the effect of its wound—but not the cause. Look at Hosea 5:13: "When Ephraim [speaking of modern Britain] saw his sickness, and Judah [today's Israel] saw his wound, then went Ephraim to the Assyrian, and sent to king Jareb: yet could he not heal you, nor cure you of your wound." As you can see, the next event prophesied in this biblical pronouncement involves a desperate diplomatic frenzy, involving Britain, whereby Israel will cry out to "the Assyrian" for protection as its last hope for survival as a nation. It will, one last time, try to remedy its plight through a peace pact.

Assyria, in Bible prophecy, refers to modern-day Germany.

Watch for signs of the fulfillment of Hosea's prophecy—a time when Israel will consider all negotiation with the Palestinians "dead," and look outside the region for security. Rather than trusting God, it will again trust negotiation with Gentiles to bring peace—a strategy that is destined to result in even more violence and death. ■



For more information, log on to theTrumpet.com to read or request our free booklet *Jerusalem in Prophecy*.

The ASI

Asia is becoming central to global operations. Its ascension is accelerating the decline of America and spurring the rise of a united European power. BY BRAD MACDONALD

EVERY NIGHT, IT SEEMS, I receive two or three calls from people trying to persuade me to purchase their product or service—a better credit card, a new water filter, a free air ticket. These calls used to be annoying; but now I find them rather fascinating and quite enjoyable.

Occasionally I end up involved in an interesting conversation with an amiable fellow from India, or a pleasant girl from the Philippines. This is intriguing. On virtually any night of week, for free and from the comfort of my own couch, I can learn firsthand about the weather in Baguio City, or politics in Islamabad. Asia has a very real presence in my home, and probably yours too.

Insignificant as it might seem, this personal story symbolizes a momentous trend occurring on the global scene—the *incredible rise of the Far East*.

Once beset with internal division and economic instability, Asia has moved from being significantly underdevel-

oped to emerging as the production house of the world.

We all have an intimate connection with this region. Our televisions, DVD players, shoes, microwaves, designer clothes and car stereos, and most Wal-Mart goods come from Asia. The increasingly popular Toyota, Nissan and Honda vehicles are manufactured in Japan. The semiconductor chips that form the brains of China's technology goods came from Taiwan and South Korea.

India and the Philippines are home to call centers for some of America's largest companies. Call tech support or customer service at Dell, United Airlines, GE, Microsoft, American Express, Citibank, IBM or Hewlett Packard and you're more likely to be talking with someone from India than Idaho. Even your tax return could be prepared by a graduate accountant in India without your knowing it.

Asia has significantly more relevance to your life than you probably think!

And we've only considered the tip of the Asian iceberg. China and Japan's purchase of U.S. bonds and Treasuries

finances America's current spending spree. The Australian, Latin American and African mining industry booms owe their success largely to Chinese projects and the region's insatiable appetite for minerals. And politically, China, Japan and India are playing greater roles on the world scene.

Asia's renewed political presence is redefining global politics, driving the evolution of historical alliances and proving to be a new challenge for American, and even European, foreign policy. Eastern influence now permeates the politics, economies and cultures of even the world's most powerful states.

The Far East can no longer be marginalized or left alone. First-rate powers are seeking assurances and assistance from China, India, Japan and even the smaller Asian nations.

Asia's mounting influence impacts entire regions and continents. China's growing presence in Latin America, for example, is helping redefine the political landscape of the region—and the outcome doesn't look good for America.

A Effect



Wracked with internal division and embroiled in a war against radical Islam, America has failed to give Asia's rise the attention it warrants. At a time when Asian states are becoming more influential in global politics, the U.S., though highly involved in trade within the region, finds itself being increasingly shunned by the East. Where America has been neglecting many of its traditional allies in Asia, China, India and Japan are not. Asia is no longer a dependable partner for Washington.

Asia's rise will affect Europe even more dramatically. European integration is proving very challenging. Asia's rise will prove to be a catalyst for Europe's unification and subsequent ascension to power.

With largely non-Christian Asia growing more influential and the Islamic Middle East doing the same, European nations are beginning to realize that their religion and culture are under threat. Europe is starting to recognize that unless it sobers up and casts off the shackles of disunity, its largely Christian

continent could be overrun by Islam or overtaken by Asia.

We need to learn about the rise of the East. Why? Because it is acting as a catalyst for two other global phenomena—the decline of the United States and the unification of Europe.

Dawn of the East

No one denies that Asia has had a global presence for decades, though that presence has recently been outshined by the machinations of other great powers. Times are changing, however.

The large-scale offshoring of factories and plants to places like China is redefining the manufacturing sector of the American economy. The outsourcing of service jobs such as call-center, tech-support and customer-service jobs to India is revolutionizing the way business is done in America, as well as Australia and many European nations. Asia's deepening imprint increasingly impacts not only America, but also the whole world.

But by far the greatest impact has been the radical change in the Ameri-

can economy over the past half-century. Asia is largely the reason that the U.S. economy has moved from being a production-based economy to primarily a consumer-based one.

In his book *Three Billion New Capitalists*, Clyde Prestowitz wrote, "Increasingly, American, and also Japanese and European, companies are finding China's low costs irresistible." Prestowitz, president of the Economic Strategy Institute in Washington, D.C., and former counselor to the Secretary of Commerce during the Reagan administration, cites Jim Hemmerling of the Boston Consulting Group, who says that "going offshore, especially to China, will save a manufacturer 20-50 percent of the landed cost of making and shipping the goods. ... Building and equipping factories in China can cost as much as 70 percent less than in the developed countries. Thus a \$50 million factory in the United States might be available in China for as little as \$15 million" (emphasis mine throughout).

This is startling. Is it all that surprising that American and European com-

panies so frequently set sail to the Far East to set up shop?

China's popularity as a place for corporations to manufacture reduced-cost goods has grown exponentially in recent times. For the entire decade of the 1980s, foreign direct investment (FDI) in China totaled \$20 billion. The following decade, that figure soared to \$200 billion, and from 2000 to 2003 it more than doubled to \$450 billion—which meant that China surpassed the U.S. as the world's top recipient of FDI.

In 2002, Wal-Mart imported about

\$12 billion worth of goods from China into the U.S. In 2003, this figure grew to an estimated \$15 billion, or about 15 percent of America's trade deficit with China for that year. As a company, Wal-Mart imports more from China than the entire nation of Germany does.

By developing into a manufacturing powerhouse, China has successfully carved itself a foothold into the economies, and even the lifestyles, of the Western world.

Many claim that outsourcing manufacturing jobs is a win-win scenario.

This is an extremely short-sighted view. While corporations benefit from cheaper costs, and Asian nations such as China benefit from the influx of FDI, the nation that is benefitting from lower costs is also losing jobs, money and investment. This disturbing trend has been hurting the American economy for years!

Asia's Common Denominator

As Asia has woven a common economic thread among nations, China has emerged as a tie that increasingly binds Asian nations together.

The analytical magazine *American Prospect* noted that Beijing is now the

Don't Forget INDIA

The world's second-most populous nation is pumping out highly skilled workers at a record pace.

Focused on the rapid rise of China, many people are not as aware of the threat being posed by a nation just to its west: India.

India, in many ways, should concern Americans and Europeans even more than China should. Like China, the nation teems with cheap labor, but it also has a workforce that is highly educated, very efficient and very willing to work. India now produces more than 3 million college graduates a year, compared to 1.3 million in the United States and 2.9 million in all of Europe.

India's skilled workforce is gaining a foothold in a number of booming sectors across the world, including technological development, software development, engineering, medical science, accounting, call-center operation and the list goes on. An increasing number of American and European companies are realizing that for a fraction of the cost they can farm out much of their work to India. An American tech company, for example, employs an American computer programmer for \$80,000 a year, but could hire an individual with the same qualifications and competency in India for only \$11,000 a year.

Thanks to this highly skilled, dirt-cheap labor force, India is on its way to dominating critical sectors of the global economy. Take software development, for example. "In 2000, Indian software exports were about \$6 billion. By the end of 2004, they were estimated to have hit \$16 billion. The big accounting and consulting firm Deloitte forecast last year that within five years, the world's largest financial firms will have shifted \$356 billion and 2 million jobs offshore, mostly to India" (Clyde Prestowitz, *Three Billion New Capitalists*). Even your taxes could be done in India this year. In 2004, 25,000 American tax returns were prepared by graduate accountants in India. The following year, that number multiplied eightfold, to 200,000.

For around a quarter the cost of a call-center employee in America, a company can employ an Indian college graduate to answer phones in Islamabad. And the salary for the Indian employee is a good one; in many cases it includes insurance and medical benefits for the individual and his or her family. When call-center jobs arise, literally hundreds of applicants, including many college graduates, seek to fill each vacancy.

GE, for example, employs more than 15,000 Indians in its call center and back-office processing operations. It also has one of the largest



LOADED

India teems with workers, technology and talent.

research and development centers in Bangalore, employing several thousand highly educated scientists and engineers who work on the cutting edge of GE developments.

As Prestowitz stated, "[T]his combination of skills, low cost, quality work and instant communication means that few aspects of your life will remain untouched by the outsourcing of services to India. You may not be aware of it, but whether it is your yellow pages, the interactive websites of companies like Boeing or Morgan Stanley, or the report on the X-rays you had yesterday, the skilled hands and brains of Indians are present." This new availability

of a highly skilled, hard-working Indian workforce is revamping entire sectors of the world's largest economies!

The United States is encouraging and augmenting India's rise both because New Delhi is critical to Washington's security policy in the region, and also to provide a counterweight to the rise of China both economically and militarily. President George W. Bush sought to strengthen ties with India on a recent visit to New Delhi.

But is India a reliable ally? When push comes to shove, will it support America, or side with its Asian neighbor?

Rapprochement between traditional enemies China and India, in fact, has already begun. China and India established an economic cooperation partnership last year intended to facilitate an increase in trade from the current \$13 billion to \$20 billion within two years. The two countries have concluded a declaration of intent to increase cross-border businesses and transport networks. Cooperation, they have declared, should also be strengthened "in the development and use of oil and gas resources in third countries." They are even talking about creating, in the words of *Spiegel Online*, "a joint Sino-Indian common market based on the European model. If that effort ever prevailed, it would result in the world's largest economic unit, with around 2.5 billion consumers, one third of the world's population" (March 6).

Ironically, it is likely America's overtures to India that will spur China to forge a closer alliance with India to counter U.S. advances.

Bible prophecy shows the outcome: Asia will align both politically and militarily, and the U.S. will be shut out. In the end, the rising star of India will go the Asian route.

nucleus of Asia. “In Singapore, high officials describe the *recent rise of China as akin to the arrival of a new sun in the solar system*. All over Asia, one hears talk of a shift, not in the balance of power but in the ‘balance of influence.’ In a poll asking Thais which nation they considered their country’s closest ally, the response was 75 percent for China against 9 percent for the United States” (March 3, 2005). In the Philippines, Chinese pop stars are topping the charts and enjoying unprecedented success.

James F. Hoge Jr., editor of the analytical journal *Foreign Affairs*, noted China’s growing presence in Asia in

At the expense of the U.S., trade between China and Japan is flourishing. In 2005, for the seventh year in a row, Japan’s trade with China increased, hitting an all-time record of \$189.3 billion. Almost 80 percent of Japan’s increase in exports came as a result of Chinese demand. China currently buys more than twice as much from Japan as it does from the U.S. At the same time, Japan’s imports from China also continue to grow. “The truth is that Japan’s imports from China rose by 48 percent in the five years to 2002. Yet Japan’s imports from the U.S., *ostensibly its closest ally*, declined by more than 23 percent in that period. The end result is

were intra-Asian. By 2001, that figure was 47 percent; today it is about 53 percent.

Trade and economic interests often strengthen the coalition of nations. With trade among Asian nations burgeoning to new heights, we will soon see these nations integrating *politically*. As this occurs, Asia will increasingly assume a more strident voice in global affairs.

Asia’s New Role

Asian integration was the principal theme of the book *Remapping East Asia: The Construction of a Region*. In the introduction, T.J. Pempel, director of the Institute of East Asian Studies at the University of

CHINA has emerged as the new sun in the solar system of Asian nations.

his July-August 2004 article “A Global Power Shift in the Making”: “China has become the engine driving the recovery of other Asian economies from the setbacks of the 1990s,” he wrote. With more than a billion people, China is saturated with cheap labor and the ability to produce low-end goods. But it has lacked the technological knowledge and infrastructure to produce much-needed high-end goods. This is where some smaller Asian nations enter.

As the world leaders in production of high-end goods, Taiwan, South Korea and Japan are the primary suppliers of such goods to China. According to Prestowitz, “Although China is the world’s largest producer of such items as DVDs, microwave ovens and television sets, it imports over 80 percent of the semiconductor chips that are the brains of these devices” (op. cit.). In 2000, China only produced \$900 million worth of semiconductors, while Taiwan and South Korea produced \$11 billion and \$12.4 billion worth respectively. Both nations sold most of this merchandise to China.

As the most technologically savvy nation in the region, and with one of the largest economies in the world, Japan too benefits from Chinese demand for high-end products. Tokyo has also come to realize the benefits of outsourcing some of its manufacturing to China. Japanese firms have invested hundreds of millions of dollars in China in their efforts to establish new factories, call centers and manufacturing plants.

One substantial difference separates American outsourcing and offshoring to China from Japan’s efforts to do the same. That difference is Beijing’s reciprocity.

that, in 2002, China displaced the U.S. as Japan’s largest source of imports. Given that the Chinese economy is merely an eighth the size of America’s, this is remarkable” (*Prospect*, UK, May 2004). In matters of trade, China and Japan clearly give each other preferential treatment.

In his *Foreign Affairs* article, Hoge even wrote that it is China’s emergence that has sparked Japan’s rise out of its decade-long economic malaise. Regarding the region-wide trend of China becoming the common denominator, Hoge stated, “[Asian] states are steadily integrating their economies into a large web through trade and investment treaties. Unlike in the past, however, *China—not Japan or the United States—is at the hub*.”

Bilateral trade between China and the 10-nation bloc of smaller Asian nations called the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) is increasing faster than anyone expected. Trade between ASEAN and China increased 25 percent over the previous year, to nearly US\$60 billion in the first half of 2005.

Created in 1967, ASEAN is comprised of Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, the Philippines, Brunei, Vietnam, Laos, Myanmar and Cambodia. In recent years, ASEAN has become the primary voice for these smaller nations of the region.

In 2002, when China and ASEAN agreed to set up a free-trade area, they set a goal for trade to reach \$100 billion by 2005—a goal they more than met a year ahead of schedule.

The growth of intra-Asian trade since 1970 amplifies the growing extent of Asia’s economic cooperation further. In 1970, about 30 percent of Asia’s total exports

California, Berkeley, stated, “... East Asia has in recent years become considerably more interdependent, connected and cohesive. This increased cohesiveness has been driven by developments, among other things, in trade and investment, cross-border production, banking, technology sharing, popular culture, transportation, communication, and environmental cooperation, as well as in crime, drug and disease control. Such areas demonstrate that the region has developed an increasingly dense network of cross-border cooperation, collaboration, interdependence, and even formalized institutional integration.” Once plagued by disputes and contention, Asian states are growing increasingly aware of the benefits of cohesion rather than conflict. A renewed spirit of collaboration and cooperation is settling over the region. Asia has undergone more political alignment over the past 10 years than in the previous 10 decades.

This newfound cooperation is steadily earning Southeast Asian nations a more prominent role in global politics.

Politically, ASEAN is the face that largely represents the region in international politics. ASEAN owes much of its growing geopolitical weight to the affirmation and support that it receives from such heavyweights as China, India and Japan.

A February 11 article in *China Daily* noted the mounting global influence of ASEAN, commenting that it is “getting increasingly assertive as a player in regional and world arenas.” When ASEAN sponsored the first East Asia Summit last year, the “United States, Russia and the European Union all had to be content sitting on the bench, watching the events unfold.”

ASIA Approximate gross domestic product for Russia, India, China and Japan.



etload of money.

The *Washington Post* highlighted this trend: “China is hastening to complete a deal worth as much as \$100 billion that would allow a Chinese state-owned energy firm to take a leading role in developing a vast oil field in Iran, complicating the Bush administration’s efforts to isolate the Middle Eastern nation and roll back its nuclear development plans, according to published reports” (February 17).

As the *Post* noted, this deal would not only advance China’s quest for resources, it “could also undermine U.S. and European initiatives to halt Tehran’s nuclear plans, possibly generating friction in Beijing’s relations with outside powers.” This is not an irrelevant trend.

China’s refusal to throw its weight behind America and Europe on this issue provides further evidence of its national determination and political independence. To disagree with some middle African state on such an issue would be one thing; but to stand up against Europe and America demonstrates ardent political determination and increasing national confidence.

India too weighed in on the Iranian equation earlier this year. While India has aligned itself more with Europe and America than with China, “the Singh administration has made it clear that despite its public siding with Washington to pressure Tehran, *New Delhi will not sacrifice relations with its Iranian ally in the face of U.S. pressure*” (Stratfor, February 17). The Iranian situation, according to Stratfor, demonstrates that “India is not interested in being pushed around by the United States; it much prefers performing its traditional balancing act among the big power players” (ibid.). China’s and India’s support of Tehran is making it increasingly difficult for the West to act convincingly against the nation.

As Asia stamps its new geopolitical mark on global affairs, it’s becoming evident that it isn’t shaping up to be nearly as pro-American or pro-Western as the West would like.

Impact on America

As China’s prestige increases, American power stands challenged, especially in Asia. Since World War II, the U.S. has had strong allies in Asia, particularly Japan and the Philippines. Even today, many Asian nations, including Thailand, still work closely with America—especially in the war against terrorism. But this is rapidly changing!

ASEAN’s success, as well as the credence it is being given on the international scene, “indicates that ASEAN is by no means a passing trend in regional cooperation, but a permanent player” (ibid.).

This trend should not be surprising. ASEAN nations comprise some of the most strategic territory in the world. They are cradled between the Indian and Pacific oceans and surround some of the most critical waterways in the world. The region is rich in natural resources, and home to some of the world’s most popular tourist destinations. ASEAN has the potential to be much more than a secondary, to Western eyes, insignificant, “Third World” alliance.

In a sign of where Asian integration could be heading, ASEAN signed a declaration last December that calls for the group to draft its first constitution, which could be signed as early as 2007. Although a lot of water needs to flow under the bridge before Asia can take such a step, the unification of ASEAN nations, especially if China and Japan strengthen their influence over the alliance, would overturn the global balance of power in one gigantic swoop.

Geopolitics

Aside from the growing political influence of ASEAN, Asia is home to three

geopolitically crucial national governments—China, Japan and India. Of these three, most recently it has been China, bolstered by its massive economic clout, that has been throwing its weight around on the world scene.

A member of the World Trade Organization since 2001, China has not only transformed the global economic system—but it is also raising its political profile significantly. A member of the United Nations since 1945, Beijing has transitioned from a relatively unimportant state, once marginalized by fellow UN nations, to one of the UN’s most vocal members. Lately, it has proved an especially painful thorn in the side of its counterparts America and Europe.

When Europe and America turned up the heat on Iran over its nuclear program earlier this year, China quickly made clear which side of the line it stood on. Concerned that supporting UN sanctions against Iran might impair its burgeoning relations with the desert rogue, Beijing did as much as possible to thwart American and European efforts.

In fact, as America and Europe wrestled head to head with Iran over the nuclear issue, China made it abundantly clear that what Tehran can expect from Beijing is a warm handshake and a buck-

Distracted by other pressures, America is neglecting relations with Asian states—and China is filling the void. The *Far Eastern Economic Review* presented the likely outcome of this Sino-American melee: “China’s feverish economic diplomacy has forged closer ties with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, Japan and South Korea, stimulating trade and investment that the United States warmly welcomes. *But behind Beijing’s ‘win-win’ rhetoric of gains for everyone lies another agenda that Washington may find less palatable in the long run.* In a little-noticed ‘Strategic Partnership’ agreement, which China and ASEAN quietly signed in Bali in early October [2003], are buried the seeds of *closer security cooperation* that analysts and officials say China aims to use to *dilute American influence in the region*” (Nov. 20, 2003).

The article quoted a senior ASEAN official: “They want a situation in Southeast Asia that automatically takes into account China’s interests. *The whole objective of the policy is to avoid strategic encirclement by the U.S.*” China is finally acting on its long-held ambitions to unite East Asia and is squeezing out U.S. interests there.

Beijing’s plans for its Asian brothers extend beyond the south and east. “*China’s ambitions stretch farther than ASEAN.* ... China has a road map that envisages a Northeast Asia Free-Trade Agreement encompassing Japan and Korea, and a pan-regional East Asian FTA. Chinese commentators, reflecting official think-

Beijing is forging a foreign policy aimed to *passively* increase its influence in the region. On its western borders, China has made such uncharacteristic gestures as conceding long-disputed tracts of land to historic rival India and other central Asian nations. Through warm gestures such as gigantic trade and commerce deals, Beijing is causing Eastern nations to grow more reliant on China.

Further complicating matters, China is taking its battle with America outside of the Asian ring. To fuel its growing economy, China, as well as other Asian states, is on the hunt for resources. This battle for resources is already impacting the U.S., as well as Europe, and is only going to grow more intense. (To learn more of the specifics of China’s war with America over resources, read “Superpower Under Siege” in the March 2006 *Trumpet*.)

China is also revamping its military to make it a more streamlined and battle-ready force. It is advancing its nuclear program, a program that, according to analyses by the Pentagon and intelligence officials, “threatens U.S. interests” (*Washington Times*, February 16). As China’s military muscle strengthens, and as the region continues to draw closer together, watch for Asian states to increasingly seek shelter under China’s military umbrella rather than America’s.

Regarding the rise of new power blocs, James Hoge stated, “Major shifts of power between states, not to mention regions, occur infrequently and *are rarely peace-*

growing more willing to stand against American attempts to police the world.

The rapid evolution of this Eastern phenomenon is spurring a contrary trend across the Pacific—the *decline of the United States!*

Impact on Europe

Similar to its effect on the U.S., the rise of Asia is impacting Europe in a number of negative ways. European unemployment levels hover around 9 percent, and over the next 10 years the Continent is expected to lose more than a million jobs to Asia. Manufacturing and service jobs are increasingly farmed out to China, India and other Asian nations.

It’s not all bad news for Europe, though. “... Europe’s and Japan’s trade with China and the rest of the world, unlike America’s, is not all one way,” writes Prestowitz in his book. “[W]hile the EU has a [trade] deficit [with China] of \$55 billion, it sells China bullet trains, ships, steel, machine tools, electronic components, silicon and lots of other capital equipment and high-tech components—*things Americans no longer make or no longer make competitively for overseas markets.*” China’s reciprocity with Europe overwhelmingly exceeds that with the United States.

Added to this is the fact that unlike the United States, European nations are not swimming in debt financed by foreigners. Japan and China are not financing weekend getaways and new kitchen appliances for Europeans. European

ASEAN nations comprise some of the most strategic territory in the world.

ing, envisage an East Asian economic and security community with institutions like an Asian Monetary Fund and an Organization of East Asian Cooperation ... within five years” (ibid.).

In its November-December 2003 issue, *Foreign Affairs* wrote, “China is rapidly emerging as the engine of growth in Asia, which affords it increasing influence and leverage. Although the United States remains the strategic incumbent there, Washington needs to *pay consistent attention to managing relations with regional friends and allies if it hopes to maintain its pull.*”

Make no mistake: *China is quickly becoming the nucleus of Asia.* Within the region, it is proving itself an attractive alternative to America as an ally. From Kazakhstan to the Philippines, Japan to Thailand, and every nation in between,

ful.” He then cited the examples of Germany and Japan prior to World War II. But “[t]his time, the *populous states of Asia are the aspirants seeking to play a greater role.* Like Japan and Germany back then, these rising powers are *nationalistic, seek redress of past grievances, and want to claim their place in the sun*” (op. cit.)

Responding to Asia’s rise is proving one of America’s most difficult tasks. Who can deny Asia’s growing influence over America? The region is slowly taking over U.S. manufacturing, transportation, industry and commerce sectors. As the largest holders of American Treasuries and bonds, both Japan and China are the pillars holding up the American economy. Buoyed by China’s increasing presence, many smaller Asian states are realigning themselves with Beijing and away from America. China and India are

nations don’t operate with extreme account deficits; many possess currencies that are rising, not falling.

Europe’s economic poise means it stands to gain from Asian ascendancy. In the short term, the same is true politically.

A desire to displace the U.S. from the helm of the globe underpins both Chinese and EU foreign policy. Beijing is aware that it cannot pursue this goal without securing somewhat stable relations with Europe based on shared efforts to limit U.S. hegemony.

As Europe steadily coalesces, and as its major national economies emerge from a state of economic malaise, Asian nations see the potential power of the Continent. Relations between both regions will likely remain amiable; in the short term, cohesion and cooperation will prevail.

Aside from trade and economic cohesion, Asia and Europe are working together on other fronts. India and China contribute significantly to Galileo, Europe's GPS-like satellite program. And Europe is committed to assisting both China and India in their efforts to construct nuclear power plants.

However, history tells us that cohesion between regions is fickle and rarely lasts long. Sympathies thrive only when both regions have something to gain. Collaboration will exist as long as it benefits both regions. Although Europe is enjoying the benefits of Asia's newfound global influence, be assured that Europe's politicians have considered the dangerous side of Asian supremacy.

Of course, the evolution of an Asian powerhouse isn't Europe's only concern. Islamic radicalism is dominating Middle East politics and becoming a threatening presence in Europe itself. To the east, as European-Russian relations cool, the resource-rich Russian bear appears to be augmenting its relations with China and the rest of Asia. Externally, Europe is feeling pressure from the east and south—while, internally, it still faces a severe identity crisis.

Unless *decisive action* occurs soon, the European people risk losing power and influence to radical Islam to the south and the Asian superpower to the east. Bible prophecy says that the next few years will be the most defining years of European history! Although it requires great foresight to see it now, *decisive action* against these trends is precisely what we can expect out of Europe in the coming months and years.

God says the pride of American and British power is broken (Leviticus 26:19), which is why their global power and influence is waning. Exactly the opposite is true for Germany and Europe. They will respond to Asia's ascent much more assertively!

Watch Asia—Watch Europe

In Habakkuk 1:6, God says He is raising up the Chaldeans—modern-day Germany—and will use them to punish modern Israel, including America and Britain. This time period, called the *Great Tribulation* in Matthew 24, will be a period of unprecedented devastation and disaster. At the center of it all is a German-led European beast power!

Even as you read, this power is steadily rising. And the rise of Asia is helping to spur that growth!


Verses 6 through 17 of Habakkuk 1 describe the terrible and dreadful character of this European phenomenon. Asia is already a powerful force to reckon with, but it won't dominate global affairs as the European superpower will. Nevertheless, after Europe rises temporarily to global domination, Bible prophecy explains that Asia will enter the picture in a big way.

The Bible says that toward the end of the Tribulation, after the European beast power has swooped down and defeated the king of the south (Daniel 11:40-43), it will turn its attention *east* because of rumblings out of Asia (verse 44). That is because by that time, Russia and Asia will have amassed a gigantic 200 million man army (Revelation 9:16) in preparation for war with the European power. That number may seem inconceivable, but not when you add China's 1.2 billion people with Russia's 150 million, along with several smaller nations in Asia that will join the alliance. Fearing the powerful Asian alliance, Europe will lash out against it first, setting off a final firestorm of fury just before Christ returns. In response, the Asian hordes will strike back, dealing a devastating, near-death blow to Europe.

Combining recent events and trends with what God prophesies makes the picture clear. Asia will one day use its mounting powers of destruction—not against America, as many may think, but against *Europe!* The Bible describes how these events culminate in the spectacular return of Jesus Christ to Jerusalem. These events are described in greater detail in our free booklet *Russia and China in Prophecy*.

All these geopolitical wranglings might seem confusing, but they are not to God. God's hand is behind all of this. God has a plan that will be carried out with detailed precision, right up to the return of His Son, Jesus Christ. He will use a European power bloc to correct His people Israel during the Tribulation—then He will use the Asian hordes to correct Europe.

The evolution of Asia into a global power is incredibly important. In the short term, it is hijacking America's influence on the world scene, and acting as a catalyst for Europe to unify. In the longer term, Asia's rise proves that Jesus Christ's return is drawing very, very near! ■



For more information, log on to theTrumpet.com to read or request our free booklet *Russia and China in Prophecy*.



WORKING ON IT
In the spirit of Mao Zedong and with the power of a 21st-century economy, China is carefully and methodically preparing for something big.

CHINA'S C

While China perfects a timeless art, American interests become dangerously vulnerable.

BY MARK JENKINS

AS A MILITARY POWER, THE United States of America is without peer; for a foreign government to launch an attack on the U.S. would be suicide. But war is seldom initiated by direct military conflict—especially for the Chinese. Their most famous general, Sun Tsu, wrote in *The Art of War*: “In antiquity, those that excelled in warfare first made themselves unconquerable in order to await the moment when the enemy could be conquered.”

To understand the current Chinese relationship with the U.S., we would do well to remember the Chinese mindset: that preparation for the battle is more important than the battle itself. The U.S. has typically shown no understanding of this mindset in its dealings with Beijing. If U.S. officials did acknowledge how the Chinese view conflict, they would



REUTERS

Quiet War

know that the actions Beijing has taken recently are, in the Chinese view, the behavior of a people at war.

In the last decade, Beijing has made a concerted effort—a highly successful one at that—to control shipping lanes around the world. A Chinese company controls the entrance and exit points of the Panama Canal. China controls the seagate at Freeport, Bahamas. A Chinese firm is financing the building of a Pakistani port at Gwadar. From Europe to Latin America, from California to Hong Kong, the Chinese have aggressively moved to buy controlling interests in the world's major sea port facilities.

As Sun Tsu said: "Whoever occupies the battleground first and awaits the enemy will be at ease; whoever occupies the battleground afterward and must race to the conflict will be fatigued. Thus one who excels at warfare compels men and is not compelled by other men." Washington is doing little to prevent the Chinese from achieving a major, bloodless victory in this strategic arena.

Taking Over America's Backyard

Last year, Beijing worked hard and invested billions to develop its interests in

Latin America—to the detriment of the U.S. A simple reading of international headlines would tell anyone that the U.S. has two main opponents in Latin America right now: Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez and the seemingly immortal Fidel Castro of Cuba. What might not be so evident is the support both countries have from China.

President Chavez has already signed deals to purchase long-range defense radars and a modern communication satellite from Beijing. The Venezuelan defense minister has signed a contract for three mobile air-defense radar systems, which will replace U.S. systems. More than simply providing technology for Venezuela, the Jamestown Foundation in Washington points out that these purchases will make Venezuela dependent on Chinese technology: "We can anticipate that Chavez will soon be buying Chinese weapons" (*Washington Times*, Nov. 20, 2005).

President Chavez also said he is looking to replace his American-made F-16s: "Maybe we'll have to buy Russian or Chinese planes to defend ourselves," he said, even adding that he might give China and Cuba some U.S.-made military jets to examine (*ibid.*).

What's more, U.S. officials are concerned that the Chinese are trying to undermine U.S. policy by their sale of military equipment. Current U.S. law—the American Service Members Protection Act—denies military aid to any country that refuses to exempt U.S. soldiers from the International Criminal Court; 11 of the 22 affected countries are in Latin America. As usual, China is happy to fill in the gap, with sales to Venezuela being

a consequence, PLA [People's Liberation Army of China] Special Forces will gain the benefit of this U.S.-developed and -funded knowledge base" (*ibid.*).

Venezuela is currently the United States' fourth-largest supplier of crude oil, and President Chavez has recently threatened to remove that supply. In contrast, in August last year, Venezuela and China signed a preliminary agreement to drill for oil in eastern Venezuela. Should China be able to secure access to what has been, to now, a prime U.S. asset, this would fall in line with Sun Tsu's ideology: "The wise general will concentrate on securing provisions from the enemy. One bushel of the enemy's foodstuffs is worth 20 of ours; one picul of fodder is worth 20 of ours."

Washington is also concerned that the Chinese are intercepting U.S. communications by using intelligence-gathering facilities in Cuba. The president of the Washington-based Asia-America Initiative, Al Santoli, warns that the most significant threats to the U.S. are the Russian electronic and cyber-warfare bases in Cuba: "These bases not only permit enhanced electronic surveillance of broad areas of the U.S. at present. ... In the future they can be used to disrupt critical U.S. strategic communications during a period of conflict."

Santoli clearly tells us why the Chinese are establishing these ties: "China's growing military ties in Latin America have a direct link to their international quest for energy and other vital natural resources ... as well as their efforts to reinforce the growing reach of Fidel Castro and Hugo Chavez to create a counterweight to U.S. influence in the region" (*Washington Times*, *op. cit.*).

Instead of offering organized resistance to a gradual takeover of U.S. dominance in critical areas, Washington appears to be passively watching while Beijing takes the lead as a new superpower.

a prime example.

Last year, Venezuela ended its 35-year military relationship with the United States. Now, the Jamestown Foundation is concerned that Venezuela will share its knowledge—especially of Special Operations training—with the Chinese: "It is clear that Venezuelan Special Forces instructors are able to convey a deep familiarity with U.S. special-operations doctrine and operations. ... As

These activities in Venezuela and Cuba are merely two examples of heavy, region-wide Chinese involvement in Latin America. Chinese President Hu Jintao toured six Latin American countries in 2004 and promised \$100 billion of infrastructure investment to Argentina, Brazil and Chile, among others. U.S. Gen. Bantz Craddock warned about China's growing presence in Latin America in March 2005, pointing out 20 visits to Latin

America from Chinese military officials and visits from nine Latin American defense ministers to Beijing in 2004. The general “added that Beijing’s most recent outline of military strategy ‘departs from the past and promotes a power-projection military, capable of securing strategic shipping lanes and protecting its growing economic interests abroad’” (ibid.).

Rather than understanding the implications of Chinese initiatives, the U.S. response is so timid as to invite other countries to marginalize Washington as well. Instead of offering organized resistance to a gradual takeover of U.S. dominance in critical areas, Washington appears to be passively watching while Beijing takes the lead as a rapidly developing new superpower.

Dominating Technology

The United States is being similarly marginalized in science and technology. In May last year, China demonstrated how seriously it takes technological dominance when Chinese computer maker Lenovo paid \$1.75 billion to purchase the personal computer arm of IBM. Last December, a report from the Paris-based Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development showed that the Chinese had already overtaken the U.S. in the sale of technological goods in 2004. Exports of information and computer technology increased 46 percent that year—to \$180 billion—over the previous year.

According to Clyde Prestowitz’s *Three Billion New Capitalists*, “China already produces two thirds of the world’s photo copiers, shoes, toys, and microwave ovens; half of its DVD players, digital cameras, cement, and textiles; a third of its

DVD-ROM drives and desktop computers; and a fourth of its mobile phones, TV sets, PDAs, steel, and car stereos.”

Also, according to the *New York Times*, China has moved to assign its own standards to a wide range of consumer products—mobile phones, digital photography and wireless networks, to name a few. The Chinese government has even launched an alternate Internet root system. Viewing these attempts

of the technology supply chain is “raising the prospect of future U.S. dependency on China for certain items critical to the U.S. defense industry as well as vital to continued economic leadership” (ibid.). Fisher warned that the Chinese have the money to turn their ideas into weapons.

What’s more, on Dec. 12, 2005, the head of a leading security institute (SANS), Alan Paller, said that efforts to hack U.S. government and industry

As the Chinese technology industry becomes more dominant, the U.S. educational slide is guaranteeing that the situation will be worse in a few years.

to control standards alongside China’s technological dominance has led many analysts to conclude that Beijing wants to control the tech market worldwide.

Less evident, however, are the *military* implications of this technological boom.

Rick Fisher, vice president of the International Assessment and Strategy Center in Washington, said, “The People’s Liberation Army is moving very quickly to adopt practically every information-related aspect of military technology that the U.S. is pursuing at this time” (*International Herald Tribune*, Dec. 12, 2005). The *International Herald Tribune* called the cooperation between the Chinese military industry, information technology companies, and government research and development groups a “‘digital triangle’ that supports the country’s rapid military modernization” (ibid.).

A November 2005 report to Congress from the United States-China Economic and Security Review Commission said that China’s repositioning itself at the center

computers last year were probably the work of the Chinese military. After explaining that the attacks were traced to the Chinese province of Guangdong, Paller said the attackers “were in and out with no keystroke errors and left no fingerprints, and created a backdoor in less than 30 minutes. How can this be done by anyone other than a military organization?” (*China Post*, Dec. 14, 2005).

As the Chinese technology industry becomes more dominant, the concurrent U.S. educational slide guarantees the situation will be worse in a few years. According to *Reader’s Digest*, China will graduate six times more engineers this year than will the U.S. The percentage of American students planning to pursue engineering degrees has dropped from 36 percent to 6 percent over the last decade. The president of the California Institute of Technology warns, “We can’t hope to keep intact our standard of living, our national security, our way of life, if Americans aren’t competitive in science. Period.” If something doesn’t change, 90 percent of the world’s scientists will live in Asia within five years.

Though the U.S. export of information technology is still growing, its leadership position is gone—and it isn’t coming back. In accordance with biblical prophecy, the U.S. is losing its superpower status in one area after another, continually being overtaken by China and the European Union. Now that the U.S. has been surpassed in technology exports, we can expect its growth to slow and eventually become a bona fide decline.

China’s Future

Latin American and African countries may be poor, but they are rich in resources, and China wants those assets. Right



SWITCHING SIDES

Chavez (right), who has turned Venezuela away from the U.S., deals with Chinese Vice President Zeng Qinghong in Caracas in January.

PHOTOGRAPHERS

now, Beijing is systematically planting its feet in those regions. At the same time, the U.S. is being pushed out of Latin America by leftist leaders like Hugo Chavez, Fidel Castro and the newly elected Bolivian president, Evo Morales. U.S. power is fading, and the Chinese are grabbing as much of that power as they can.

But is that *war*?

Though the U.S. is being severely marginalized, these maneuvers are still a long way from direct military conflict. But according to the Chinese concept, a direct military attack would be the lowest form of war. Sun Tsu wrote: "Thus the highest realization of warfare is to attack the enemy's plans; next is to attack their alliances; next to attack their army; and the lowest is to attack their fortified cities." China will not attack U.S. cities; Bible prophecy would warn us of such an attack, and no such warning exists.

But though America really has nothing to fear from a direct military attack by the Chinese, significant dependency on any foreign power leaves a country in a weak position militarily.

Ezekiel 7:14 tells us about a time when the trumpet blows—signaling that war is at hand—but no one goes to battle. This could very likely be a result of mission-critical military systems being compromised by cyberattacks or other foreign-initiated sabotage.

Aside from the military implications, China is marginalizing the U.S. politically and economically as well. This is all combining to make the U.S. increasingly vulnerable.

The Chinese recognize that the U.S. is the major competitive nation on Earth right now—but the scene will change.

At some point, China's attention will focus more on Europe. Currently, EU interests seldom clash with those of China; in fact, China collaborates with the EU on major projects like Galileo. This will not last, however: Bible prophecy tells us that China and Europe will go head to head—and the United States won't even be a factor. Its decline will be so absolute that it will have no role in the final battles before the return of Jesus Christ.

Herbert W. Armstrong continually—and rightly—warned that we should watch Europe. The U.S. does not see what is coming from the political and religious unification of the European nations. Nor do the Chinese. In the end, though, the Chinese will resort to that "lowest form" of war: armed conflict with a fully formed European power. ■

The EMPIRE Strikes Back

Russia's state-owned gas monopoly is on the attack.
Just how powerful is the former empire becoming?

MOVIEGOERS might identify that headline with Lucasfilm, Ltd., but foreign-policy watchers identify it more with recent Russian policy.

It was only 15 years ago when the Communist Death Star that was the Soviet Union imploded, sending cheers throughout the free world. Sure that this meant a future of democracy and capitalism for behemoth Russia, Francis Fukuyama proclaimed the late-20th century world as "the end of history."

But now we see a return to the historic majesty of the Russian "Republic." "Under Putin's stewardship, Russia is gradually putting the Kremlin in control of everything that matters: energy, the economy, politics and the media," wrote the *Chicago Tribune*. "Last year, Russian authorities engineered takeovers and deals that gave the state partial or complete control in some of the country's most lucrative enterprises. The most significant of those deals involved the acquisition of Russian oil major Sibneft by state-owned Gazprom, the world's largest natural gas producer" (January 15).

Gazprom even bought one of Russia's largest newspapers last June, not to mention acquiring former German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder (who now chairs Gazprom's major North European Gas Pipeline project).

The monopoly has also been eyeing energy deals that will help Moscow regain control of former Soviet states like Georgia, Armenia and Uzbekistan. It has a pipeline deal with Germany already, and is in talks for one with Greece.

Now Gazprom's insatiable appetite for takeovers and acquisitions has it considering bids even further from home. There was one rumor, later denied, that it wanted to buy Scottish Power. Now come reports that it is interested in the UK's largest energy supplier, Centrica. Associated Press paraphrased Gazprom's deputy CEO as saying, "Gazprom would like to control about 20 percent of the British gas market" (February 2). Centrica's shares jumped 30 percent on the London Stock Exchange after a Gazprom official said on January 18, "The issue is being analyzed and is under consideration."

Russia's return to relevance is largely attributable to its vast energy supply. Our planet's limited oil and natural gas supplies are in greater and greater demand. The world's most powerful nation gets much of its oil from the world's most precarious region. Other growing nations are jockeying for contracts in more stable parts of the world. Some are considering different forms of energy, including nuclear power. Add to that, the world's fourth-largest supplier of oil, Iran, has now been reported to the United Nations Security Council for its nuclear shenanigans.

To say the least, things look extremely unstable in the world energy market. Put bluntly, we are gearing up for the resource war of the ages.

Where does reborn Russia fit in?

Whether Russia takes over Centrica is largely irrelevant. The idea's mere consideration shows the peril that once-self-sufficient nations like Britain are in—how crown jewels like Centrica are in danger of being lost as resources are lapped up in an energy-hungry world.

Russia, because of its ample oil and gas deposits, sits in a good position, and we can expect it to become more bold and defiant in its foreign policy. Remember when Moscow unilaterally and audaciously decided that Ukraine—and by extension the rest of Europe—didn't deserve its energy supply for those few brisk days in January?

Gazprom's—and Russia's—growing sphere of influence certainly will cause concern in Europe, as it has historically just before full-scale war has broken out.

Watch for Russia's growing preponderance to stimulate greater change in world politics. Europe will be driven to unite. By forming alliances with Iran and other nations hostile to America, Russia will hijack American interests and handicap U.S. foreign policy. Russian oil and gas will continue to fuel the rise of China.

A galactic struggle lies just ahead.

RYAN MALONE



Gazprom: one of Russia's best diplomatic weapons.

The REAL PLAN to Pay Off the DEBT

PRESS "CTRL+P"
Newly printed dollar bills
roll off U.S. presses.

BY ROBERT MORLEY

ARE YOU WORRIED ABOUT PAYING off the massive and ever-increasing national debt, which is now over \$27,000 per person? The federal government certainly doesn't seem worried. Vice President Dick Cheney, in fact, said that debts and "deficits *don't matter*" (*Weekly Standard*, Feb. 15, 2005; emphasis mine throughout).

Why would politicians feel this way? Because the government knows just how it can pay off the debt—and it is the craftiest, yet oldest, trick in the book.

Make no mistake: The national debt is soaring. The last time the federal government actually paid off some of its debt was 1960. Even then, it paid less than \$1 billion of the over \$291 billion it owed at the time. The debt has soared so much that the \$1 trillion in federal debt that President Ronald Reagan declared "incomprehensible" in 1981 when elected to office

has grown 800 percent, to more than \$8 trillion today. The federal government has borrowed more money from foreign governments and banks during the past two presidential terms alone than during all other American administrations put together. More debt will have been added during these last two presidential terms than in the previous 200 years (*Daily Reckoning*, January 20).

And these numbers are just the federal debt. If you include state and municipal debts, total governmental debt mushrooms an additional \$1.7 trillion.

As of January 24 this year, according to the U.S. Treasury Department website, the federal debt stood at \$8.1853 trillion. But here's the kicker: The national debt "ceiling" mandated by congress is only \$8.184 trillion—a whole billion dollars less! Since January 24, the government of the United States has actually been operating in technical default.

Back in November 2004, the last time the debt ceiling was about to be breached, the Treasury Department did everything it could (and then some) to avoid breaking through it. Congress quickly passed the necessary legislation allowing for an additional \$800 billion debt so the debt ceiling was not breached. A short year and two months later, the new borrowing limit was surpassed. This time around, the debt ceiling was openly exceeded, with hardly a peep heard from politicians or the media. This is surprising, especially since the amount and rate of debt increase is unprecedented.

Government debt no longer seems to carry any stigma for politicians. According to Texas Congressman Ron Paul, "The original idea behind the debt limit law was to shine a light on government spending, by forcing lawmakers to vote publicly for debt increases" (www.house.gov/paul, Oct. 25, 2004). However, over

time, increases have become so commonplace (over the past 40 years, the debt ceiling has been raised *50 times*) that the media scarcely report them, and those who vote for more debt face no political consequences. Moreover, seeking a mandate for more debt has become an after-the-fact matter.

Meanwhile, even as it blatantly exceeds its debt limit, the government tries to reassure the public that it is seeking to reduce the deficit. For example, House Budget Committee Chairman Jim Nussle responded to President George W. Bush's Fiscal Year 2007 speech by saying, "As we *continue our efforts to control spending and reduce the deficit*, the president's proposal provides a solid starting point for this year's budget by focusing on our most pressing needs: sustaining our strong economy and job creation, and ensuring the strength of our national defense and homeland security" (washingtonpost.com, February 6).

However, when examined, the 2007 budget proposal actually doesn't do anything to cut the debt! That's right: It doesn't cut the debt at all. It actually creates more debt.

Under the plan, the \$423 billion deficit (the amount the U.S. is expected to go further into debt this year) would eventually be whittled down to \$183 billion by 2010 (ibid.). Superficially this sounds positive, but still having a deficit each year means that we are still sinking further into debt. America's overall indebtedness will still grow.

But not only does the budget create *more debt*, it also underreports the official deficit numbers. The cost of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, for example, are not even accounted for in the budget. In fact, over \$100 billion in war money is included in "off budget" funds (*Texas Straight Talk*, February 13). If the government's report on the actual yearly deficit included war costs, it would be approximately 25 percent higher.

But the federal debt is yet higher than that, because government officials conveniently do not include future "entitlement costs"—costs associated with promised government-funded benefits like pensions, Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security—in their deficit and debt calcula-

tions. If these were properly factored into the calculation, America's reported deficit and debt levels would skyrocket. The debt per person would, in fact, be closer to \$176,000, not the reported \$27,000.

According to *USA Today*, U.S. governments are, as of 2004, in truth short \$53 trillion in "entitlement costs," with more than \$1 trillion being added to that figure every year. This is the amount that "federal, state and local governments need immediately—stashed away, earning interest, beyond the \$3 trillion in taxes collected last year—to repay debts and honor future benefits promised under Medicare, Social Security and government pensions" (Oct. 4, 2004).

Given these facts, it is a gross understatement to say that repaying the debt and paying promised benefits is a challenge. Actually, it is like trying to climb Mount Everest with your spouse and three children (Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid) strapped to your back!

This is why David Walker, the comptroller general of the United States (the nation's top auditor), is publicly warning that, as *USA Today* paraphrased him, the "nation's finances are going to h---" and that the "United States can be likened to Rome before the fall of the empire" (Nov. 14, 2005).



Been a while ...

1960 was the last time the federal government paid off some of its debt. Even then, it paid less than \$1 billion of \$291 billion it owed at the time.

Mr. Walker highlights that America's 80 million baby boomers, born between 1946 and 1964, are getting set to start retiring—the first ones in 2008. Because the baby boomers had fewer children than their parents did, as more boomers retire there will be fewer people entering the workforce—which makes for a comparatively smaller tax base to pay ever-increasing Social Security and other retirement benefits. Right now about 4.1 workers fund every retired person. By 2020, that number is projected to be only 2.9, and by 2030 only 2.2 (*Congressional Quarterly*, Oct. 21, 2005).

Consequently, a progressively greater proportion of the governmental budget will need to be set aside to pay for benefits in the future.

Right now, Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security costs already take up \$1.1

trillion, or about *40 percent*, of the total federal budget.

Social Security, especially, is a catastrophe just waiting to happen—one that could easily have been avoided. As people have paid money into the fund, the government has actually been spending that money and giving IOUs in return.

How does this work? Joe Taxpayer pays money into Social Security. While Joe works and waits to turn 65, the government uses the money he sends in for his future benefits to pay for Joe's dad, Jack Retiree. The government has already spent the money Jack paid into the plan in order to pay for retirees before him.

Any extra money left over after paying current retirees is called a "surplus." The government takes the surplus and in exchange puts an IOU in the Social Security fund. The government then spends the surplus money on whatever it wants to. All the money that has been paid into Social Security is gone and has been spent. What is left in return is just a bunch of government IOUs.

What the government has done with Social Security is no different than a corporation funding its pension plan with its own debt (i.e., its own bonds or IOUs)—an act strictly forbidden by regulatory authorities that oversee corporations (*Investment News*, Sept. 19, 2005).

Frighteningly, this Social Security situation sounds eerily similar to the Enron scandal, in which Enron was investing its employees' retirement money back into its own stock, thereby inflating its own value and making the company look healthier than it really was, encouraging shareholders to buy more shares. When the stock crashed, the employee retirement funds crashed too.

Right now, the huge Social Security debts are manageable because people are still paying in more than is being paid out. But the surplus will shrink as baby boomers begin retiring and increasingly less will be available to cover budget shortfalls in other areas that the Social Security funds have been funding. Beyond that, a major crisis is coming.

Once the surplus disappears, what is going to pay for Social Security—the IOUs? Just how will the government pay for all its debt, including the escalating Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid costs? It

See **DEBT** page 33 ▶

MIDDLE EAST

If Iran Were Attacked, Iraq Would Defend It

DURING A JANUARY visit to Tehran, anti-American radical Iraqi Shiite cleric Moqtada al-Sadr told the head of Iran's Supreme National Security Council that *in the event of an attack on Iran, Iraq would come to its aid.*

One spokesman quoted Sadr as saying, "If any Islamic state, especially the Islamic Republic of Iran, is attacked, the Mahdi Army [Sadr's militia] would fight inside and outside Iraq" (*Washington Post*, January 24).

At one time, it may have been presumed these were just the words of a firebrand cleric, not reflecting Iraqi thinking as a whole. It would be hard to argue that now. Not only does Sadr have his Mahdi Army militia—which, with its thousands of fighters, controls much of southern Iraq—but he was one of the biggest winners in last December's Iraqi elections. Results of the election released in late January reveal that Sadr's party, which won 29 parliamentary seats, "will be one of the largest in the first permanent government" of Iraq (*Newsday*, New York, January 22).

Sadr's bloc is one of the major parties in the Shiite alliance that controls the National Assembly, thereby leading Iraq and dominating its security forces. (Once again, we see democracy working for the benefit of anti-Western Islamic militant groups; incidentally, there are reports that it was Iran that pushed Sadr to join the Shiite coalition.)

So, when Sadr pledged to



VOCAL Iran's top nuclear negotiator (right) and Iraqi Shiite cleric Moqtada al-Sadr speak to reporters in Tehran, January 22.

defend Iran in case of attack, he was speaking not only on behalf of his militia, but also as a political force—one that is gaining popularity among Iraqis and is described by some as the number-one force in Iraq. As such, Sadr's assurance of assistance raises the specter of "Iraqi Shiite militias—or perhaps even the U.S.-trained Shiite-dominated military—taking on American troops [in Iraq] in sympathy with Iran" (*Washington Post*, op. cit.).

No wonder Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad is so cocky at the moment: If U.S. troops are battling to contain the current Sunni insurgency, what would be their choices if faced with a Shiite uprising as well? The Mahdi Army is certainly not averse to such action, as the armed uprisings against American (and British) troops in 2004—which were, in fact, orchestrated by Iran—demonstrated.

If we put together Iran's actions and statements over recent weeks and months, a clear pattern emerges: As Tehran challenges Western nations on the nuclear issue, it keeps reminding these countries of the power it holds over

them. It threatens to squeeze world oil supplies to neutralize the threat of economic sanctions. It meets with Hezbollah, Hamas and other terrorist organizations to remind Israel of the price military action would bring. Now it reminds the U.S. once again of the hand it holds in Iraq.

Yasir al-Za'atirah, a

entire region if the United States resorts to military action against Iran."

At the same time, Iraq's allegiances are becoming clearer in this complex battle for power in the Middle East. As the *Trumpet* has said all along, when it comes to choosing sides, Iraq will support Iran over the U.S.

Iran Vows to Support Hamas

THE TRANSITION FROM outsider terrorist group into mainstream politics isn't easy for Hamas.

To be accepted by the international community, it must take a more diplomatic approach—and yet it doesn't want to lose its credentials as a hardcore Islamist organization. Where will it find its place between the extremes of bombs and banter, death and diplomacy?

Western politicians are optimistic, but realism demands a much dimmer view. The *Trumpet* expects Hamas to take some decisive, violent action relatively soon.

Facing pressure from Israel and the West to disarm and embrace a warmer political tone, Hamas will

likely seek assurance and comfort in the arms of those of like mind and *religion.*

Watch for Hamas to draw closer to groups like Hezbollah in Lebanon, the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, the government of Syria and, particularly, the Middle East's most roguish nation—Iran. In fact, this is already happening—specifically with promises of financial support in the wake of likely loss of revenue from Israel and the West.

In February, Iran and Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood both called for Muslims to give money to the Hamas-led Palestinian government. Iranian supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei praised Hamas for not giving in to international pres-

Jordanian journalist and writer, said on Al-Jazeera TV January 23 that "the Iranians wanted to send a warning message to the United States concerning the Iranian nuclear program and what Iran can do" (BBC News, January 26). Iran's actions of late mean that "Iranians want to brandish the other option in the face of the Americans," Al-Za'atirah said, "namely, that they would inflame the

ALTA KENARE/PHGETTY IMAGES

Hezbollah Can Keep Arms

RADICAL ISLAM IN THE Middle East notched up another victory recently when the terrorist group Hezbollah successfully demonstrated its power over the government of Lebanon.

For nearly two months, five Shiite cabinet members belonging to the Hezbollah and Amal movements had boycotted and thus paralyzed the Lebanese government. The political freeze ended on February 2 only when the prime minister acceded to the Shiite members' demands to recognize Hezbollah as a "national resistance group" rather than a militia.

This was no small victory for Hezbollah. Beirut had been under pressure from Washington to fully implement a UN resolution requiring the disarmament of all *militias* in Lebanon. Created as a legal means to force Hezbollah's disarmament in particular, this

would have left Hezbollah weaponless.

But redefining Hezbollah as a national resistance group has placed the group outside the jurisdiction of the UN resolution and provided the Islamist terrorists with a loophole to stay armed.

Now Hezbollah will remain Lebanon's most dangerous and highly armed terrorist group—legally. By way of reassuring its supporters of its "resistance" credentials, Hezbollah fired at an Israeli army post only hours after the announcement of the boycott's end.

This sets a dangerous precedent for other Islamic parties in the Middle East—specifically Hamas. Watch for Hamas, buoyed by Hezbollah's successful efforts to avoid disarmament, to exploit political maneuvering to circumvent pressure to disarm.

These trends will dramatically transform global politics. For more, request our free booklet *The King of*

U.S.: Iran Has Nuclear Capability

ON FEBRUARY 6, THE United States gave its gravest assessment to date of Iran's nuclear program. Iran has the ability to enrich uranium and complete the nuclear fuel cycle, U.S. undersecretary of state for arms control Robert Joseph told a news conference at the Foreign Press Center in Washington, D.C.

This marks the first time the U.S. has publicly confirmed that Iran has attained nuclear weapons capability.

These statements come on the heels of the leaking of details of a European intelligence report revealing that Iran has been successful in obtaining sophisticated equipment needed to build a nuclear bomb.

Though talk of plans being drawn up for U.S. military action against Iran is intensifying, Tehran remains unperturbed. One day Iran is threatening to withdraw from the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, the next day it is reaf-



MAKING THE GRADE An Iranian heavy-water production facility that could produce bomb-grade material.

firming its commitment to the treaty; one week it bars short-notice International Atomic Energy Agency access to its nuclear facilities, the next it gives the agency copies of documents outlining how to build nuclear warheads.

Iran continues to advance its case that it wants a diplomatic solution while frantically advancing its nuclear program.

Mr. Joseph called on the international community to "take whatever measures are necessary" to dissuade Iran from pursuing nuclear weapons. He also gave assurance that the avenue of diplomacy had not yet been exhausted, saying the end-of-January referral of Iran to the United Nations Security Council was "moving diplomacy to the next level."

But with China and Russia—two of Iran's major trade and political partners—holding veto power on the Security Council, attempting to get any resolutions against Iran passed only buys Tehran more time.

Iran's confrontational behavior will bring things to a head, though Bible prophecy indicates that it will not occur the way most people think.

See our January 2006 article, "The Ostrich, the Warriors and the Whirlwind" to see how this confrontation will play out.



COHORTS Iran's president (left) welcomes Hamas's leader February 20.

sure to recognize Israel. "Annual financial assistance to Palestine is one way that Muslim nations can share the responsibility of Palestine," he said in talks with Hamas's political chief Khaled Mashaal (Associated Press, February 20). The Muslim Brotherhood announced the launch of a fundraising campaign. "Supporting Hamas is the responsibility of all

the peoples of the free world and Arab world," Brotherhood spokesman Issam al-Aryan told Agence France Presse (February 20).

Discussing meetings that occurred between Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and Hamas leaders just

days before the Hamas election victory in January, the Israeli *Haaretz* noted, "Ahmadinejad promised Hamas financial and political support and closer military ties. ... Iran intends to make sure Hamas does not give in to political pressure from the West and several Arab countries to reach a political compromise including recognition of Israel and a stop

to the violence in return for Western financial aid to the [Palestinian Authority]. Iran and Syria are demanding that Hamas stand firm on its ideology. Tehran is promising financial aid in place of the West, and says it has vast resources from oil sales to help Hamas" (February 5). If Iran can successfully wield enough influence over an already subservient Hamas, the Palestinian Authority will be in the hip pocket of the most brash and pushy country in the world today.

Iran's growing influence over Hamas is bad news—not just for Israel, but for the entire world. Our free booklets *The King of the South* and *Jerusalem in Prophecy* explain why.

Auto Industry Running on Fumes

FOR THE AMERICAN AUTO industry, things just keep getting worse. Last November, General Motors Corporation announced plans to cut 30,000 employees, a whopping 14 percent of its workforce, in an effort to cut losses and return to profitability as soon as possible. Then, on January 23 this year, Ford Motor Co. announced that it also plans to lay off up to 30,000 North American workers over the next six years so it too can return to profitability.

These cuts represent up to a quarter of Ford's employees, of which the first 4,000 were to receive their pink slips by the end of March. As a result, Ford representatives expect vehicle-manufacturing capacity in North America to drop from 4.55 million units to 3.35 million by 2008.

Spurring Ford's cuts was the \$1.55 billion in losses its North American operations suffered in 2005.

Ford's chairman and chief executive Bill Ford stated, "We will be making painful sacrifices to protect Ford's heritage and secure our future Going forward, we will be able to deliver more innovative products, better returns for our shareholders and stability in the communities where we operate" (Associated Press, January 23).

It is fine that Mr. Ford is looking out for the shareholders' returns and the investors that lend Ford money, but what about the "returns" for his employees? How will 30,000 workers losing their jobs bring "stability" to the "communities where [they] operate"?

More layoffs look to be on the way. The day after Ford's announcement, Daimler-

Chrysler declared that it would also be cutting 6,000 employees. Although a number of Daimler-Chrysler's cuts will probably be overseas, some will be American too.

Will these cuts do the trick and jumpstart the American automotive industry? In Ford's and GM's case, Wall Street doesn't think so. After getting a glimpse of the automakers' restructuring efforts, Standard & Poor's Corp. and other rating agencies cut their credit ratings deeper into junk-bond status. Ford and GM shares, which trade on the New York Stock Exchange, are also cascading in value.

However, one famous investor—Kirk Kerkorian—who recently purchased 9.9 percent of GM, seems to think that at least GM can be rescued (*Wall Street Journal*, January 26). This is a big challenge, considering that GM is \$278 billion in debt—



DISASSEMBLING A plant in Hapeville, Georgia, is one of 14 planned to be shut down by 2008, Ford announced in January.

an amount greater than Australia's public debt! Ford too has massive debt, owing more than \$154 billion.

American vehicle manufacturers are definitely in trouble. It seems that profits accumulated during their golden years have been squandered. Today they produce inferior vehicles (or so is the perception in many cases), profits are falling, foreign competition is in-

tense, and the debt, health-care and retirement liabilities are massive.

The atrophied American automotive industry is just one symptom of the overall sickness in the U.S. economy. Over the past few years, much of America's manufacturing capacity has closed up shop, moved out or gone bankrupt. America as a nation is on a rapid decline that is visibly worsening.

Taking Stock of the U.S. Economy After Greenspan

JANUARY 31 MARKED retirement for Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan. As most people old enough to remember would agree, his 18 years on the job were pretty easy years compared to the previous 18. However, America's past 18 years of "easy" living—provided by easy credit—have caused serious problems for the economy and have left the nation on the verge of collapse.



GREENSPAN

Just in case Federal Reserve Bank cheerlead-

ers have convinced you that the American economy is all roses, here are some startling facts—condemning facts—from Bill Bonner, co-author of the *Wall Street Journal* best-seller *Financial Reckoning Day*, that much of the media has avoided covering. Mr. Greenspan isn't necessarily the cause for many of these woes, but his retirement is good enough reason to take stock of how the American economy has fared these past 18 years.

Since 1987, when Mr. Greenspan joined the

Federal Reserve Bank, government debt has grown from just over \$2 trillion to over \$8 trillion.

In 1987, America was a creditor nation, able to lend money from its surplus. Now, the United States has become the world's largest debtor nation, with more than \$11 trillion worth of assets in foreign hands. That is more than a 500 percent increase since 1987.

America's personal debt has mushroomed too. During the same period, the total consumer debt of Americans has grown from \$2.7 trillion to \$11 trillion. Consequently, debt levels for the average household rose from \$28,892 in 1987 to \$101,386 in 2005. Mortgage

Protestants, Catholics Closer

COMPROMISE, THE HALLMARK of Protestant pluralism, has Protestants edging closer to Catholicism.

Guiding the ecumenical movement forward, Pope Benedict XVI met with the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC) in Vatican City on January 8. The meeting continued the long-standing interfaith dialogue between the Roman Catholic Church and Western Christianity.

In an age of cultural pluralism, interfaith unity is in vogue. To make this pluralism work, however, two factors must be in place: The participants must forget the past, and they must compromise.

The last four decades have seen creeping success in the drive for unity. Texts resulting from the Vatican II initiative, coupled with other major documents like the 1964 "Restoration of Unity" by Paul VI and the 1995 en-

cyclical, "That They May Be One," by John Paul II, outline the Catholic desire for one universal Catholic Church.

Since the death of Pope John Paul II, that drive has increasingly manifested itself in a major effort by Protestants to enter back into the Roman Catholic fold.

Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams broke an ancient taboo by attending the funeral of John Paul II. He called his attendance there "a mark of the deep bonds of personal closeness and intimacy that have come to exist between the office of the archbishop and the papacy." He went so far as to label John Paul "one of the very greatest" 20th-century Christian leaders.

John Paul II brought a renewal to the ecumenical movement between Protestants and Catholics.

debt rose a whopping 455 percent, from \$1.8 trillion to a record \$8.2 trillion last year. Personal bankruptcies and credit card delinquencies also rose steadily and are now at record levels.

The trade deficit (the amount of goods and services the U.S. imports in excess of exports) skyrocketed from \$150.7 billion to \$725.8 billion. In other words, last year, \$725.8 billion more left the country through trade than came in—and next year this figure is projected to be even worse. Even billionaire investor Warren Buffett is warning that the trade deficit could turn the U.S. into a nation of "sharecroppers" (*Guardian*, March 7, 2005).

Decide for yourself how good America's economy is—but from the *Trumpet's* perspective, which is grounded in biblical prophecy, the "easy" times are almost over.

The mountains of "easy" money and subsequent debt created over the past 18 years are going to contribute to the crash of the U.S. economy. The housing bubble looks topky, interest rates have been rising, inflation is much higher than reported and the dollar looks ready to drop like a dead duck.

It is no wonder Alan Greenspan politely declined President Bush's 2003 invitation to stay on for another four years.

He was especially focused on interfaith unity. For instance, in a December 2004 message to archbishops and bishops, he articulated what he saw as the need for the Catholic Church to lead the drive for unity among all mankind.

Now, Benedict has taken up that role. Right from the get-go, Benedict stated his "primary task" would be to unite all Christians. In keep-



DIALOGUE Benedict XVI meets the archbishop of Canterbury at the Vatican, April 2005.

ing with that goal, the purpose of the January 8 meeting was, in the pope's words, to "bear fruit in a renewed commitment to work for the unity of all Christians" (*Zenit*, January 8).

Under the cloak of religious pluralism lurks the fact that the Catholic Church is simply the dominant "Christian" force in the theological world, and everyone knows it.

In September 2000, former Cardinal Ratzinger issued a scathing rebuke of the notion that any Protestant denomination was equal with the Catholic Church in the document "Dominus Iesus." In the document, Protestant congregations are termed "not churches in the proper sense." On the sensitive subject of apostolic succession—one-man rulership of the church—Ratzinger states, "there exists a single Church of Christ, which subsists in the Catholic Church" And on the subject of salvation, he calls

all Protestant churches in a "gravely deficient situation in comparison to those who, in the [Catholic] Church, have the fullness of the means of salvation."

The Benedictine view of religious pluralism has been definitively stated. Why, then, do Protestants persist in the charade of "interfaith" dialogue?

Again, for religious pluralism to thrive, one of the conditions must be compromise. The Catholics will never compromise, and they are not trying to hide that fact.

Protestants, on the other hand, continue to wash away their memories of the Dark Ages, of religious persecution, of great bloodletting. Clifton Kirkpatrick, president of WARC, sums up the Protestant viewpoint: "There is still much to be done to *move beyond our past condemnations* of one another ... [and to] serve God together without worrying about inhibitions ..." (*Zenit*, op. cit.; emphasis ours).

As for the more than 400 million Protestants whose leaders are engaged in ecumenical dialogue with the Roman Catholic Church, the Bible indicates these will eventually return to the fold. Some of our readers may remember Herbert W. Armstrong saying, "Protestant churches everywhere are gravitating toward UNION with the Roman Catholic Church. These religious movements are speeding the fulfillment of prophecies of the resurrected Roman Empire" (Oct. 27, 1963).

The outcome of these talks has been prophesied—it is guaranteed. For more, read the article "O Come All Ye Faithful" from our February 2000 issue at theTrumpet.com.

Debunking The Da Vinci Code

Many recently have embraced
Gnostic teachings that

Jesus Christ fathered a child with Mary Magdalene. Was Christ married? Where do we turn for the answer to this question? Let us explain the stunning truth.

BY DENNIS LEAP

JESUS CHRIST: GOD, SAVIOR, COMING KING OF THE Earth—fact or fable? What do you know about Jesus Christ? Many people claiming to be Christian don't know the honest facts about Jesus. They don't know why He came, what He accomplished, what He is doing now. Only a few know what He is planning to do in the near future.

Some scholars say we know very little about Jesus Christ—that somehow the facts have been lost in history. Many scholars say that scriptural accounts are unreliable. Experts reason that the Gospel writers—Matthew, Mark, Luke and John—overstated the facts about Jesus's life and actions, especially the miracles He performed.

Yet here is something truly ironic. Some of these same men and women reject the canonized books of the Holy Bible, but accept the fantastical apocryphal books such as the gospels of Thomas, Philip and Mary. You may have never heard of these works. In what are known as the Gnostic gospels, Thomas has Christ teaching Hindu and Buddhist philosophy. The gospel of Philip identifies Mary Magdalene as Christ's "companion," meaning sexual partner. The gospel of Mary makes Mary Magdalene out to be the chief instructor to the 12 apostles. Shouldn't we ask why intelligent people go after such spiritual nonsense?

The world of modern Christendom is about to celebrate one of its two most sacred seasons. As always, there is going to be a lot of talk about Jesus. But will it be the truth? It is certain that this year's discussion about the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ will be full of wild controversy. Dan Brown's most popular and controversial novel, *The Da Vinci Code*, will hit movie screens in May. The book has regenerated historical research, philosophical discussions and heated debates over the historical facts about Jesus Christ. The book has also drawn considerable fire from re-

In May, *The Da Vinci Code* will be released as a movie starring Tom Hanks and Audrey Tautou, bringing the book's message to an even wider audience.

ligious groups. The build-up to the movie's release is sure to be just as intense. *Newsweek* and *U.S. News* featured major articles related to the movie and book as early as January.

BLASPHEMY CLOAKED AS ROMANTIC THRILLER

The plot of Brown's bestselling novel weaves together the Gnostic gospels and medieval folklore that Jesus and Mary Magdalene were married and had a daughter whose descendants founded the Merovingian dynasty. According to Brown, the legend of the Holy Grail is about *Mary's womb*, not the last supper chalice. Brown's widely popular thriller is set in the present day. A Roman Catholic sect called Opus Dei is killing people to hush up the secret about Christ and Mary. Why? Knowledge of their descendants would topple the authority of Roman Catholicism. The book makes Da Vinci to be the past leader of a secret order—the Priori of Sion—to protect the documents proving the bloodline of Christ's child. As the plot thickens, the leading feminine character of the book becomes a key puzzle piece in breaking the code identifying the location of Mary Magdalene's tomb and the identity of Christ's descendants on Earth today.

Some in the publishing industry recognize that Brown's book may have saved a slumping hardback industry. It has literally been the best seller of bestsellers. The book has drawn both high praise and sharp criticism. Some love the book because they believe it is an attempt to recapture the original truth about Jesus Christ. Others sharply disagree.

In fact, the book panders *blasphemy* in the form of a romantic mystery thriller.

CATHOLICS INCENSED

Roman Catholics are incensed over the book's negative portrayal of their church.

Although the book is a novel, it does mix some historical fact with legend and fiction. Obviously not all historians would agree with Brown's interpretation of the past. Brown states that Constantine destroyed the older "true" Gospel accounts and replaced them with the New Testament Gospels we have today. Brown puts his own spin on the quirks that Leonardo da Vinci obviously put in his paintings. He interprets why the Knights Templar, a favored papal secret society, were rounded up and executed. Many historians see the book as being shallow in its historical research.

Yet Brown digs up some dark history that Catholics would rather not have brought back into the light—namely, the Catholic Church's 13th-century extermination of the Cathars. Branded heretics by the church, they were virtually wiped off the map. Even though they developed a rich cultural heritage of art, literature and music, with centers of learning in Southern France, Italy, Bulgaria, Switzerland, Germany, Bosnia and Croatia, little remains of their history except in *Inquisition* records.

A majority of the Cathars were Gnostics who embraced heretical views of Christ and Mary Magdalene similar to those Brown uses in his plot. Yet there were thousands of other peoples—not Gnostics—such as Jews, non-Catholics, and members of the true Church of God—who were victims of the genocide. The Cathar rebellion laid the groundwork for the immensely evil Spanish Inquisition. Although Brown interprets the his-

tory for his own purpose, it is history nonetheless.

Catholics are also upset that Brown draws upon Alexander Hislop's book *The Two Babylons*. Brown asserts that Constantine, an avowed sun-worshiper, repackaged his sun-worship as a new faith, assigning pagan symbols to Christian concepts.

Although Hislop's book has been attacked vigorously for decades, it *rightly* shows that the Catholic Church is perpetuating the Babylonian mystery religion established ages ago by Nimrod and Semiramis. Sun symbols are a central theme in Roman Catholic ceremony. Some experts feel that the Brown's book is so popular because of all the recently exposed corruption in the Catholic priesthood.

It is important to recognize that Brown does not single out just the Catholic Church. He takes a huge swipe at established religion as a whole. In the book, the main male character states: "[E]very faith in the world is based upon fabrication."

WORLD OF RELIGIOUS CONFUSION

Brown's book is revealing—though not in spiritual truth. There is no spiritual truth in the book. The book shows us the sad state of modern religion. Established religion has failed us. If modern religion truly satisfied us, none would have gone after Brown's book. We need to face the fact that all mankind is caught in the clutches of religious confusion.

Never before has there been so much confusion about Jesus Christ. Brown's book only adds to the problem. He does not see Christ as divine, but as a shrewd descendant of David trying to recapture the throne.

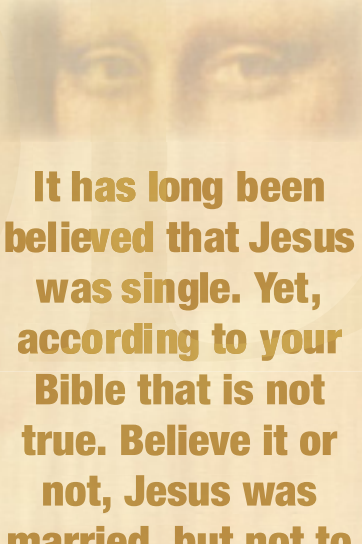
Why is there so much confusion about Jesus Christ, God and religion? Herbert W. Armstrong wrote, "What *is* religion? It is defined as the worship of, and service to, God or the supernatural. It is man's relation

to his Creator. Some religions have perverted that definition. They worship not the God who created them, but gods which *they* have created" (*Mystery of the Ages*). Mankind has created its own gods and religious systems. Not one can fulfill human spiritual needs.

Unfortunately, modern Christianity has done the same with Jesus Christ. The many denominations have created and teach about their own Christ. People within each denomination have shaped and believe in their own Christ. Isn't this why churches are empty? Isn't this the reason so many are cynical about religion? The absolute and pure truth about Jesus Christ has been buried under a mound of human reasoning and satanic deceit (Revelation 12:9).

Let's take an honest look at the truth about Jesus Christ. What is our source of the truth? The Holy Bible is the only reliable source. Brown is anti-Bible. A leading character in his book states authoritatively, "The Bible is a product of *man*, my dear. Not of God. The Bible did not fall magically from the clouds. Man created it as a historical record of tumultuous times, and it has evolved through countless translations, additions and revisions. History has never had a definitive version of the book."

Shall we follow Brown? Paul instructed Timothy: "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness" (2 Timothy 3:16). The Bible is *the* reliable source of truth.



It has long been believed that Jesus was single. Yet, according to your Bible that is not true. Believe it or not, Jesus was married, but not to Mary Magdalene.

WAS JESUS CHRIST MARRIED?

It has often been said that truth is stranger than fiction.

Was Jesus Christ married? It has long been believed that Jesus was single. Yet, according to your Bible that is not true. Believe it or not, Jesus *was married*, but not to Mary Magdalene. Let us explain.

How do we know that Jesus was not married to Mary Magdalene? Jesus Christ was totally obedient to God the Father (John 8:29). He faithfully obeyed all of the Ten Commandments. He did not do away with the Ten Commandments—He filled them to the full (Matthew 5:17). He taught others to obey them (Matthew 19:17-22). At His crucifixion, He demonstrated His absolute faithfulness to the Fifth Commandment: “Honour thy father and thy mother ...” (Exodus 20:12). In his Gospel, John describes Jesus’s final moments with good detail. He wrote: “Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son! Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home” (John 19:25-27). Please read these verses in your Bible.

Just before dying, Christ ensured that His widowed mother was taken care of. Essentially, He designated that John was now her son, and that he was required to see to her needs. He told his mother to look upon John as her son and to allow him to take care of her. Notice that verse 27 states that John took Jesus’s mother Mary into his home. This demonstrates Jesus Christ’s depth of love for his mother and his absolute selflessness. Though He was suffering excruciating pain and torture, He took care of His responsibility as her firstborn son.

Notice that Jesus’s aunt and Mary Magdalene were also present (verse 25). If Mary Magdalene were Christ’s wife, wouldn’t He have seen to her needs as well as His mother’s? The Seventh Commandment demands that a husband love and care for his wife. Jesus Christ would have been well aware of the laws governing marriage that stated: “Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh” (Genesis 2:24). This scripture demonstrates that the marriage bond is even more demanding than the family bond. A loving husband would see to his wife first, mother second. Surely, Christ would have taken care of His wife—especially if she was going to have His child. Christ doesn’t even mention Mary by name. How absurd to believe that Jesus and Mary were married!

MARRIED TO ISRAEL

The truth is, Jesus Christ is a perfectly faithful husband. He is a powerful provider. To fully understand this fact, you must know who Christ was in prehistory. John shows us that He existed in perfect harmony and unity with God from eternity (John 1:1-3). Jesus Christ is the person of the Godhead known as *the Word*. Our English *Word* is translated from the Greek *Logos*, which means *Spokesman* or *revelatory thought*. Jesus Christ was the *Spokesman* for these two supreme God Beings. Paul tells us that God who became the Father created all things through Jesus Christ (Ephesians 3:9). The world knew nothing about God the Father until Jesus Christ came to this Earth. It was Jesus Christ who revealed the Father to us (John 1:18).

Here is the mind-numbing truth: *Jesus Christ was the God of the Old Testament*. He revealed himself to Moses as “I AM” in Exodus 3:13. Jesus Christ also revealed this to the Jews of His

day, and they tried to stone Him for it (John 8:58-59).

As God of the Old Testament, *Jesus Christ married the nation of Israel*. The covenant established in Exodus chapters 19 through 24 was a marriage covenant.

Through Isaiah, Jesus Christ said to Israel, “For thy Maker is thine husband; the Lord of hosts is his name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; The God of the whole earth shall he be called” (Isaiah 54:5). Jesus Christ took the nation of Israel, a filthy slave people, and made them his beautiful wife. Yet, they continuously rebelled against Him: Spiritually they played the whore, worshiping the pagan gods of the nations around them. Christ remained faithful—always. He pleaded with them through Jeremiah: “Turn, O backsliding children, saith the Lord; for I am married unto you” (Jeremiah 3:14). Jesus Christ’s love for His wife was undying.

WILL MARRY HIS CHURCH?

When Jesus Christ came to this Earth as a human being, He came among the Jews, who were part of Israel—His wife. Though His wife had been unfaithful, He was not. While on Earth, Jesus Christ had to observe the laws of marriage as stated in Romans 7:1-3. He had been alive from eternity. The nation of Israel still existed. (Even the 10 “lost tribes” existed—but not in the world’s view. Write for a copy of *The United States and Britain in Prophecy* for a thorough explanation of this subject. It will be sent to you gratis upon request.) So, Jesus Christ could not have married another.

Yet because of His death and resurrection, at His Second Coming Christ is free to marry the Spirit-born Church of God!

The true Church of God is Christ’s affianced bride. This fact staggers the imagination. Paul teaches this incredible fact in Romans 7:4 and Ephesians 5: 30-33. Study these verses. This coming reality will dazzle the whole world.

Jesus Christ brought a tremendous message from God to this world. The Prophet Malachi describes Christ as “the messenger of the covenant” (Malachi 3:1). Malachi is referring to the gospel, or *good news*, of the coming reign of the Kingdom, or Family, of God. The gospel is all about the New Covenant, which is a marriage covenant. Jeremiah states: “Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord” (Jeremiah 31:31-32).

Could human beings marry God? Your Bible says it is true. Humans have the potential to marry Jesus Christ. Shouldn’t you take a new look at your Bible? Concerning the coming marriage of Christ and the Church, Revelation states clearly: “Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready” (Revelation 19:7). Christ’s marriage to the Church will usher in the utopia all men desire. This truth should excite every man more than some cheap piece of fiction.

MARY MAGDALENE

Brown’s book focuses on goddess worship, or worship of the divine feminine. He ties this pagan mysticism to Mary Magdalene. Brown would have us believe that Christ and Mary Magdalene were active participants in a pagan sex cult. It’s all wild, darkly evil fable. Brown takes his proof from Da Vinci’s painting *The Last Supper*. He assures us that it is Mary Mag-

dalene sitting next to Christ, not John.

Brown plays upon the Gnostic legends that Christ wanted Mary to head the Church, but the *chauvinists*—Peter and the other apostles—prevented this from happening after Christ's death. Legends say Mary became a famous preacher founding Christian communities.

The huge error in Brown's book makes Mary Magdalene out to be more important than Jesus Christ. This fact has attracted a large feminist audience to the book.

What do we know about Mary Magdalene? We must turn to the Bible for the truth.

We first encounter Mary Magdalene in Luke's Gospel. He wrote, "And it came to pass afterward, that he went throughout every city and village, preaching and showing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God: and the twelve were with him, And certain women, which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities, Mary called Magdalene, out of whom went seven devils, And Joanna the wife of Chuza Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others, which ministered unto him of their substance" (Luke 8:1-3). None of the other Gospel writers mention Mary at this same juncture. Yet they do mention her at the events of Christ's crucifixion and resurrection.

What we need to understand most is that Luke (and the other Gospel writers) tells us very little about Mary Magdalene. Recognize, Luke wrote his Gospel well after the events took place. He was well informed of the facts. Had Mary been the major player that Gnostic writers would have us believe, he would have told us.

Here is what he does tell us. She was from the small fishing village of Magdala, two miles north of Tiberias. Her surname was not Magdalene. Since there were several women, including Christ's mother, with the same name, her city was added to her name to set her apart from the others. Luke tells us that Christ cast seven devils out of her (Luke 8:2). This means that Mary had been seriously afflicted with, more than likely, physical and mental problems. To be healed of such maladies would make her truly grateful. She obviously became a devout follower of Jesus Christ.

HOLY WOMEN

But notice carefully: While Mary Magdalene traveled with Christ, she was not the only woman who traveled with Him. Luke states that she traveled in company with "Joanna the wife of Chuza Herod's steward, and Susanna, and *many others*" (Luke 8:3). Mary traveled with a company of women who ministered to Christ and the 12 apostles (verse 1). How many were in the group, Luke does not say. But he does add that there were *many others*. Mary was only *one* of a group of women who took care of Christ and the disciples' needs as they preached the gospel.

Although this truth is not appealing to feminists, Mary was most likely a cook. Yet Luke honored her and several others by name for their works of service. These devout women would have been faithfully obedient to the Ten Commandments—holy women (1 Peter 3:5). Never would Mary or the others have been Christ's sexual partner.

To make the statement that Mary was most likely a cook does not in any way denigrate the role of women in the early Church.

In fact, Christ demonstrated through His ministry that women had an equal opportunity to obtain the Kingdom alongside men. Christ totally surprised the apostles when He conversed with the woman of Samaria (John 4:1-27). Christ had a wonderful relationship with Martha and Mary, the sisters of His friend Lazarus. Even the Apostle Paul drew upon the necessary support of women as he preached the gospel unto the Gentiles (Philippians 4:3).



Detail of Leonardo Da Vinci's *The Last Supper*

MESSAGE TO APOSTLES

Matthew, Mark and John place Mary on the scene at the crucifixion of Christ (Matthew 27:56; Mark 15:40; John 19:25). Luke does not mention her by name. Notice she is among a group of women—all said to have ministered unto Christ. These women saw to Christ's burial needs. It is important to note that these women

were more loyal to Christ in that they stayed with Him at His most difficult hour, while the apostles, except for John, fled.

The end of the Bible history of Mary is given to us by all four Gospel writers. Because Jesus Christ was killed on the Passover day, just prior to the High Sabbath, He was buried in a hurried manner. Then, after a weekly Sabbath, Mary and a group of women planned to return to the tomb to complete the burial tradition of adding spices to the burial clothes.

When they arrived early on a Sunday morning, Christ had already risen from the dead. The scene at the sepulcher was shocking. The body was gone. To get the full story, you must study a good harmony of the Gospels. The women reported the missing body to the disciples. The disciples did not believe the women. Peter and John ran to inspect the tomb. It was empty. John believed Christ was alive; Peter returned home awestruck by what had seen. Mary and the women remained behind, weeping.

Mark tells us that Christ appeared first unto Mary (Mark 16:9). She and the women returned to tell the disciples (Luke 24:10). Still, they did not believe the women's words. Christ later appeared to them and reprimanded them for their unbelief.

Why did Jesus Christ appear to Mary first and then have her carry the message of His resurrection to the other disciples? Was it because she was His companion, or wife? Never! Was it because of her loyalty to God, the truth and Jesus Christ? Absolutely!

Brown brings out in his book that the Roman Catholic Church has taught error concerning Mary in order to ruin her reputation and discredit her as Christ's wife. The Catholic Church has taught that Mary was a prostitute. The Bible does not say that. Catholic traditions had connected her with the woman caught in adultery (John 8:1-11). The Bible does not name this woman. Catholic traditions have also stated that Mary Magdalene washed Christ's feet with costly perfume (John 12:1-6). The context of these verses would prove that the Mary here would be Lazarus's sister Mary (John 11:2).

Recently, the Catholic Church has corrected their errors concerning Mary Magdalene. Does this make Brown right? Has the real truth about Jesus Christ and Mary Magdalene been hidden in a secret code? Hardly!

Let's recognize that Brown's empty pagan theology can never give us the truth about Jesus Christ. There is a truth that will totally satisfy all human longings. Next month, we'll give you the stunning truth about why Jesus Christ came to this Earth. ■

No Gambling Allowed

Think you might strike it rich? Think again.



rooms with a year-round occupancy rate of about 90 percent. Almost 3.7 million passengers per month travel through its international airport, and many of them come with a dream—to strike it rich. But the overwhelming majority of visitors are not the ones getting rich. In 2005, Las Vegas casinos, after payouts to winners, took in an average of almost \$27 million *per day* in gross gambling revenue.

An Escalating Trend

In the United States, prior to 1990, only Las Vegas and Atlantic City had legal casinos. Today, casinos are legal in 36 states. The government began to actively *promote* gambling in 1964 when New Hampshire conducted the first state lottery. Today, state lotteries have become a source of government money in 41 states plus the District of Columbia. In one form or another—whether it be casino “gaming,” state lotteries, horse racing, dog racing, bingo or whatever—gambling is now legal in 48 of America’s 50 states. Utah and Hawaii are the only exceptions.

Gambling in the U.S. has reached an unprecedented level of acceptance. According to *www.family.org*, nationwide gross gambling revenue, after winner payouts, was \$72.9 billion in 2003—more money than Americans spent on movie tickets, theme parks, spectator sports and video games *combined*! But Americans are not the only ones smitten with the urge to gamble.

Britain has roughly one fifth of the U.S. population, yet the British are now spending about the same amount on gambling as Americans do. According to the Global Betting and Gaming Consultants (GBGC), gambling revenue in Britain skyrocketed, in just three years, from £8 billion to £40 billion (US\$75 billion) in the 12 months ending September

2004! One reason is that INTERNET gambling has boomed in Britain, rising 566 percent between 2003 and 2005 (Agence France Presse, Jan. 30, 2005). This dramatic growth is largely due to an increase in women gamblers. YouGov pollsters estimate that 80 percent of online gamblers in Europe are British, and 30 to 40 percent of online British gamblers are women. The largest online gambling firms are based in the UK, and, in fact, the UK will host the world’s first international summit on online gaming this fall.

In Australia, more than 80 percent of adults gamble, and they spend more money on gambling, per capita, than any other nation in the world. At least 40 percent gamble a minimum of once a week! While Australia has a population of only 20 million, the famed Australian “pokies” (poker slot machines) accounted for 21 percent of all the gambling machines in the world, as of 1999. According to Prof. Bo Bernhard, director of gambling research at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas and world-renowned gambling expert, “Australia has a real issue with problem gambling. ... I like to tell my students that Las Vegas is the Australia of the United States” (*Daily Telegraph*, Sydney, Australia, Nov. 13, 2004).

Around the world, gambling is a fast-growing enterprise. GBGC calculates that gamblers worldwide lost a total of \$208 BILLION in 2003—an average of almost \$570 million a day! While the personal financial losses are astounding, there are a host of other problems that spring up from the gambling craze.

Some Side Effects

As gambling opportunities become more commonplace, *addiction* to gambling increases. So stated the National Gambling Impact Study Commission (NGISC) final report issued on June 18, 1999—the first comprehensive report of gambling’s effects in the U.S. in 23 years. It affirmed the NORC (National Opinion Research Center) finding that “the presence of a gambling facility within 50

BY FRED DATTOLO

THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE WHO visited the city of Las Vegas last year (38.6 million) exceeds the entire population of Canada! What’s more, in 2004 Vegas visitors spent a whopping \$33.7 BILLION—the equivalent of more than \$92.3 million PER DAY—for total expenses, including food, lodging and various forms of “entertainment”! About a fourth of it was spent on gambling.

Las Vegas oozes with prosperity and lavish opulence. A staggering 16 of the 20 largest hotels *in the world* are located in that city! The newest one opened in April 2005 with a mind-numbing construction cost of \$747,943 *per room*!

Driving along the famous Las Vegas strip at night, one is awe-struck by the dazzling display of alluring lights. The hotels and casinos glisten with a brightness that masquerades as broad daylight—in stark contrast to the reality of the dark sky overhead. Impressive are the structures cast in various motifs, including a stunning Florentine palace, a magnificent white castle, Egypt’s pyramids, Paris’s Eiffel Tower, ancient Rome, Venice, New York City, tropical and island oases, Arabian nights, swashbuckling pirates and much more.

The city boasts about 133,000 hotel

miles roughly doubles the prevalence of problem and pathological gamblers.”

A compulsive gambler becomes *obsessed* with gambling to the point that it absorbs all his other interests to the detriment of his family and friends. He is pathologically hopeful about winning but can't stop gambling if he does win. If he wins, he wants to win more. If he loses, he tries to win back his losses—and the more he loses, the more he's sure he'll win the next time! The addicted gambler will eventually risk more than he can afford. That leads to other problems.

Gambling increases crime. Desperate to recover gambling losses, some highly regarded and trusted employees resort to embezzlement and fraud. According to the National Research Council, “As access to money becomes more limited, gamblers often resort to crime in order to pay debts, appease bookies, maintain appearances, and garner more money to gamble” (ibid.). Violent crimes also go up. According to the National Coalition Against Legalized Gambling (NCALG), after casinos were introduced in Atlantic City, total crimes in the city tripled in just three years and the *per capita* crime rate shot up from 50th in the nation to first (www.ncalg.org).

Usually, within three to five years of a newly opened gambling market, some residents who have become compulsive gamblers, rather than resort to crime, will file for bankruptcy to gain relief from

creditors. One study confirmed that personal bankruptcy rates are *twice* as high in counties with casinos than in counties without (www.ncalg.org). That impacts *all* the residents in those counties, because businesses will typically recover those losses from the rest of the consumers.

Gambling can so consume a person that it leads to loss of productivity on the job and subsequent unemployment. Roughly one fourth to one third of gamblers treated in Gamblers Anonymous report losing a job because of a gambling problem (NGISC report). Sadly, some end up homeless. “In a survey of 1,100 clients at dozens of Rescue Missions across the United States, 18 percent cited gambling as a cause of their homelessness. Interviews with more than 7,000 homeless individuals in Las Vegas revealed that 20 percent reported a gambling problem” (NGISC report).

In addition to these hardships, gamblers are regularly exposed to sexual vices. The gambling *venue* is often a racy, sensuous and hedonistic environment connected to sexual lewdness, prostitution, fornication and adultery; offering repeated temptations to a discouraged gambler. More than likely, the family of a gambling addict bears a lot of emotional damage, often culminating in domestic violence, child neglect and/or divorce.

The life of a compulsive gambler is miserable, and a gambling addiction is so *gripping* and depressive that “the sui-

cide rate among pathological gamblers is higher than for any other addictive disorder” (ibid.). One study revealed that 20 to 30 percent of addicted gamblers surveyed *attempted* suicide (www.ncalg.org).

You may be thinking, yes, it's too bad that some people can't control their urge to gamble, but most people are not *addicted* to it. So what's wrong with having a little fun?

Gambling Is Always Wrong

The Apostle Paul said he did not know that to covet was sin until it was revealed to him by God's law (Romans 7:7). That law is simply an expression of how God *lives* and how He wants *us* to live. Keeping His law is a *way of life*—actions and thoughts—that builds godly character.

Do you gamble? If you do and are honest with yourself, do you not gamble *hoping* to “hit the jackpot”? And is that not founded on a desire—a lust—for *easy money*? Beware of that attitude! God warns that “the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows” (1 Timothy 6:10, New King James Version).

Gambling in any form exploits a character flaw because it is motivated by greed. Notice carefully what educator Herbert W. Armstrong wrote: “Coveting MONEY and that which money will buy is merely the manner of manipulating Satan's WAY OF LIFE—‘GET’ instead of ‘GIVE’—TAKE and COMPETE instead of COOPERATE—*self*-concern and self-gain with desire to WIN, instead of LOVE toward GOD and LOVE toward neighbor” (Good News, September 1986). Let's apply this principle *specifically* to gambling.

If you “win,” you've done so at the expense of someone else. A *genuine* spirit of love desires that *every* person receive his rightful due. For example, for every lottery winner sensationalized in the media, there are millions of unheralded losers who will *never* recover what they gamble. And many of them are financially disadvantaged. Studies prove that the poor, less-educated and the young are disproportionately enticed to gamble. They are more vulnerable and susceptible to “getting hooked.” So even though they *voluntarily* participate, does it make it *right* to take money from them? Does it make it *right* to participate in a system that preys on their plight? God *condemns* it! (see Proverbs 28:20; Amos 5:11 and Ephesians 5:5-7).

State-Sponsored Propaganda



DREAMSTIME

Not so long ago, most people conceded that gambling was a vice to be avoided. Today, state-sponsored lotteries in the United States have significantly reduced the stigma once associated with gambling. Only nine states do not play the lottery.

One way state governments advance the lottery is to convince voters that a percentage of ticket-sale proceeds will go to a worthy cause—like education. In reality, usually nothing is added to the specific budget. Instead, the government simply allocates less to that area from its overall budget. Thus spending levels stay the same. Most states, like the federal government, run budget deficits. Lottery proceeds to state coffers may reduce the gap between what is taken in and what is spent *overall*, but they usually don't *increase* budget for a specific cause.

A study on this subject concludes: “[C]itizens should recognize that claims that lotteries will improve education funding are likely to be as misleading as their odds of winning those lotteries are meager” (State and Local Government Review, Winter 1997).

However, since most states now depend on lottery income, we can expect a continuation of public-relations ploys and advertising propaganda designed to boost lottery participation.

Granted, not all types of gambling—like bingo—have the potential for a huge payout. It's still wrong. ALL forms of gambling encourage the principle of trying to *get* something for nothing. *And that is not God's way!* That kind of thinking, no matter how small, stifles the character trait of productive effort (see Proverbs 13:11).

When the something-for-nothing concept gets lodged in our minds, it undermines the work ethic—especially in our young people, who are *five times* more likely to have gambling problems than adults. It erodes the propensities to work, save and invest in education and training because it promotes the idea that *luck* or *chance* lead to success instead of wise *choices*. We must all learn that life is NOT a gamble IF we obey God's law and follow *His* way of life. Then all risk is removed and one can be *assured* of success. Please request our free booklet *The Seven Laws of Success*. All who have truly succeeded have followed these seven laws!

Gamblers Always Lose

People start gambling for various reasons. Some few say they have too much leisure time and a lack of excitement in their lives so they seek "adventure" through gambling—perhaps fascinated by and attracted to the risk involved. Others are drawn in by new gambling facilities introduced into their neighborhood or seduced by advertising cam-

paigns that promise instant wealth and instant happiness to boot. The implication is, "This could be your way out." Some have financial problems and are attracted by the possibility of winning a large sum of money. Their lust for money outweighs any moral considerations.

Compulsive gamblers are enticed by a *fantasy*: In their minds they are just one turn of the cards, one spin of the wheel or one roll of the dice away from a dream world where everything will be wonderful. It's a way to *escape* from their responsibilities. They feel emotionally comfortable and secure when they are "in action." Also, they usually have a strong desire to be a "big shot." They spend a lot of time thinking about all the great things they are going to do as soon as they hit the jackpot. But it's a *never-ending* quest.

"When compulsive gamblers succeed, they gamble to dream still greater dreams. When failing, they gamble in reckless desperation and the depths of their misery are fathomless as their dream world comes crashing down. Sadly, they will struggle back, dream more dreams, and of course suffer more misery. No one can convince them that their great schemes will not someday come true. They believe they will. For *without this dream world, life for them would not be tolerable*" (www.gamblersanonymous.org, emphasis mine).

Compulsive gamblers have *emotional* problems. Those who tend to flee from

reality have pronounced levels of emotional insecurity and immaturity. Nevertheless, the reasons people start gambling always include a certain degree of *lust* for money, prizes or recognition.

The bottom line is that any and all forms of gambling corrode our *character* to one extent or another—and that's why gamblers always lose, even when money is won (seldom as that is). They find that they have problems that no amount of money or winnings will resolve. Genuine happiness still eludes them.

You don't have to be ensnared by that kind of false hope. There is a way out!

The God Family Vision

"If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable" (1 Corinthians 15:19). Your real potential lies beyond this physical life. You need to have the *VISION* of your future in the Family of God burning in your bosom and work *now* toward attaining it—like Abraham did. He looked forward to receiving the promise, which included the vision of a *remarkable* city (Hebrews 11:10), a *STUPENDOUSLY BEAUTIFUL* city with massive gates made of pearls and streets paved with the most superb gold, "the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven [to be placed on Earth] from God!" (Revelation 21:10).

"The twelve gates were twelve pearls: each individual gate was of one pearl. And the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass" (verse 21, New King James Version). It is a *STUNNING* sight, *sparkling* with a *DAZZLING* array of pure gold and the finest precious stones in its walls and construction (verses 18-20). *IMAGINE* that! "The city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God [the Father] illuminated it. The Lamb [Jesus Christ] is its light" (verse 23, New King James Version). What magnificent splendor!

This is the *REAL* "city of lights"! Las Vegas is but a cheap imitation, a veritable *junkyard* in comparison! In *this* city, however, there is no gambling allowed. The wonderful thing about it is: No one will want to gamble anyway. Everyone will be fully satisfied—full of joy and contentment. Can you even begin to grasp what God has in store for you? You need to read our free book *The God Family Vision*. It's a message about bringing God's government, peace and joy to the *whole universe!* It's the *only* message that will fill you with *HOPE!* ■



Prediction Addiction



GETTY IMAGES

Video gambling machines have been proven to be the most addictive form of gambling in history. People who get hooked on them become compulsive gamblers in about one year, rather than the usual three to four years it takes for all other types of gambling. Robert Hunter, nationally-recognized expert on gambling addiction, stated that "video gambling machines are 'the crack cocaine' of gambling because they are so addictive" (*Miami Herald*, Oct. 30, 2002).

One reason is that people can bet *very quickly*. Besides very fast turnaround, Internet gambling affords very easy access and privacy. According to *USA Today*, "at least three states are edging toward legalizing online gambling, and Great Britain is on the verge of permitting its land-based casinos to take bets online from U.S. citizens" (March 16, 2005).

Internet gambling is just beginning to take hold. A scant three years ago, worldwide online bets for the highly popular game of poker alone were about \$16 million per day. Two years later, they were more than *\$200 million* per day! (*ibid.*). Thanks to the Internet, we can expect gambling addiction and its attendant problems to skyrocket.

is already up to its eyeballs in debt, and is spending far more than it is taking in, so more borrowing has its limits.

The government will also not likely be able to cut other programs to pay for retirement benefits. Congress is struggling to trim a mere \$50 billion from the budget over a period of five years! And that is out of the projected \$1.6 trillion deficit over that period.

If extra borrowing and/or budget cutting are not probable options for the longer term, then that leaves the government only three other conventional alternatives: significantly hiking taxes, slashing benefits and raising the retirement age. But these are political “hot potatoes,” so they won’t be the solutions of choice for politicians.

So, just what is this “crafty trick” the government has for paying off the debt, and paying for the entitlement costs?

It is the same trick that many other debt-bloated empires,

such as Rome, Weimer Germany, John Law’s France and the Soviets, employed just before they crashed.

Based on the Federal Reserve’s past proclivity to expand the money supply every time there is a crisis, politicians will likely take the seemingly easy way out: simply *print the additional money* needed to repay debts and promised entitlements under Medicare, Social Security, Medicaid and government pensions—the \$53 trillion-plus worth. This way, the government can prolong the façade of a healthy fiscal business model a little longer—paying debt and promised benefits with devalued dollars.

As long as the dollar doesn’t devalue too sharply or quickly (loss of value is the result of expanding the money supply relative to demand), paying debt with devalued dollars could sound like a pretty good deal for the U.S. In fact, the U.S. has been doing this for a while. The government is able to borrow money from taxpayers and foreigners, spend it, then pay back the money later at a discount. Crafty. At the very least, it

decreases any incentive for politicians to get out of debt.

However, this scheme is very risky because of the sheer levels and pace of our accelerating debt, especially in light of future entitlements promised. While inflation temporarily alleviates the symptoms, it does not fix the *cause* of America’s overspending habits. And *runaway* inflation may result from the massive amounts of money that would need to be printed. To this point, foreign lenders have been willing to accept dollars, but at some point, when they decide that they no longer enjoy having their dollar holdings constantly losing value, especially at a precipitous pace, they could decide to dump them.

If that occurs, America’s “crafty trick” of devaluing the dollar certainly won’t seem so crafty. The trillions of dumped dollars would come flooding back into the U.S., causing the dollar to drop like a rock and creating inflation on an unprecedented scale.

Maya MacGuineas, president of the bipartisan Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget, is half right when she says that Americans are in for a “future of unfunded promises” and a “lower standard of living” (*USA Today*, Nov. 14, 2005). Although Americans certainly will be in for a much lower standard of living, the government will likely continue to pay its “promises” for a time. But instead of being able to purchase ten loaves of bread with your devalued benefit dollars, you will only be able to purchase five loaves, or even fewer.

America is in serious financial trouble, and its economy is much more precarious than almost anyone realizes. The debt collectors are no longer just on the horizon, they are at the door. All lenders eventually demand repayment. The good times America has enjoyed while living beyond its means are just about over.

The *Trumpet* can state with certainty that the American economy will collapse, bringing on a global crisis of unrivaled proportions!

If you want to know why this economic collapse is coming, request our free book *The United States and Britain in Prophecy*. It will prove to you where America’s economic collapse is leading and how that will subsequently affect the world. It will also reveal the urgency of the times we are in and show your responsibility to get your spiritual house in order.

Are you willing to face reality? ■



Local Losers

Beyond the federal government, state and local governments will also soon start to feel entitlement pains associated with their mismanaged retirement plans and a rapidly aging population. In fact, cities, towns, school districts and even water authorities are all in for the same kind of shock (*New York Times*, Dec. 11, 2005).

The Governmental Accounting Standards Board has now ordered states and communities to start reporting how much they owe their retirees for health coverage. Consequently, they will have to start properly funding their retirement plans (*ibid.*).

Take, for example, Maryland’s dire discovery, which will soon be repeated across the country. Maryland currently spends \$311 million annually on retiree health premiums, but when the state calculated the total value of all the retirement benefits it had promised to current employees, the total came to \$20.4 billion! Now, under the new accounting rule, Maryland will have to accrue \$1.9 billion per year for retiree health plans—a sixfold increase (*ibid.*).

Pension experts say that the true costs, which governments at all levels have conveniently failed to keep track of, are staggering and that the “tidal wave of costs that eventually will hit agencies statewide will require taxpayer bailouts or service cuts and could bankrupt some agencies” (*Daily News of Los Angeles*, Sept. 25, 2005). Jan Lazar, an independent benefits consultant in Lansing, Mich., says that if people really understood the size of the “huge liability” that governments have, they would “freak out” (*New York Times*, *op. cit.*).

When the city of Duluth, Minn., found out that its health-care liabilities for its current and retired employees were more than double the city’s entire operating budget and growing, it knew it was in trouble. Mayor Herb Bergson was very direct in saying, “We can’t pay for it The city isn’t going to function because it’s just going to be in the health-care business” (*ibid.*).

These massive unfunded liability costs, once fully disclosed, are sure to have repercussions, some very alarming. Governments at all levels may have such huge liabilities that their bond ratings will plummet. That would drive down the value of any of their existing bonds and make it extraordinarily expensive or even impossible to borrow new money.

CORRECTIONS

March, page 6 We stated erroneously that the United States imports over 4 trillion barrels of oil annually. The correct statistic is 4 *billion* barrels of oil annually.

March, page 36 A reference to 1 Corinthians 10:10 should have been 1 Corinthians 1:10.

The State of America

I HAVE SEEN THE UNFOLDING OF EVENTS from the '50s, the '60s ... to the present days, and I am completely dismayed. This is NOT what America was all about! Particularly what struck me was ["Learn From History—Or Perish," January], where you analyze Mr. Churchill, Lord Nelson and our Abraham Lincoln. This is a poignant observation Morality and stupidity (ignorance at the core) are pushing America to the limit. The idiocy of criticizing Mr. Bush for everything has nothing to do with democracy and freedom of speech. It is a systematic suicidal campaign of the extremists to return to power and continue their giveaway programs to stay in power. ... I agree with ... what you say from the Scriptures point of view. But what are we going to do about it? ... I am a confused and bitter citizen, and when I read your articles, I get a bit of relief to know somebody in America is saying some truths. To me it is not enough! More must be done Our diplomats who are supposed to be a listening post do nothing, and our disoriented media do not report reality. All they want to do is report murder, rape, political scandals, sex and all the sensational that sell their programs to place advertisements. What a disgrace. The U.S. has a tremendous responsibility because it is the leader of Western values and sanity. However, our leaders are incompetent and the Democrats don't care. ... I don't have the answer, but I wish I did. If we only could see the birth of another party, as it almost happened with Perot. ...

Salvatore G. Firrito

Your concerns are justified. The simple truth, however, is that a third political party cannot solve the problems endemic to the United States, because that party would be just as subject to the evils of human nature as are those that created the problems. In time, through bitter experience, we will learn that there can be no humanly devised political solution! God alone can save us. As Douglas MacArthur famously said before the U.S. Congress, the solution "must be of the spirit if we

are to save the flesh." Consider ordering a free copy of our booklet *What Is Human Nature?*

American Manufacturing

THE ARTICLE TITLED "THE DEATH OF American Manufacturing" by Robert Morley (February) was the most well-written article that I have ever read about America transitioning from a nation of industry into a nation of providing service. Communist China just cashed in on over \$725 billion from the American consumer (trade deficit 2005). ... Please stay encouraged and keep up the great job in proclaiming the truth. *Ty and Victoria Yu—EL CENTRO, CALIF.*

Biblical Nations of Israel

I READ YOUR COLUMN ABOUT JERUSALEM being divided (March) with great interest. One thing that I hadn't seen before was the phrase, "13 biblical nations of Israel." What would those nations be?

G. David Nystrom

Jacob, whose name was changed to Israel (Genesis 35:10), had 12 sons: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Zebulun, Joseph, Benjamin, Dan, Naphtali, Gad and Asher (verses 22-26). He pronounced his name, Israel, on the two sons of Joseph (Genesis 48). Now the 12 sons of Israel had become 13 (Joseph's lot being divided between his sons, Ephraim and Manasseh). Each son became the ancestor of a tribe of Israel (Jacob).

The nation of Israel grew and prospered under the reign of King David, and then under that of David's son Solomon. When Solomon died, the kingdom split between his son Rehoboam and his servant Jeroboam. The northern tribes became centered around Samaria; the Jews, along with parts of the tribes of Benjamin and Levi, formed the nation of Judah centered at Jerusalem.

The 10 tribes of northern Israel were conquered and taken into captivity by the Assyrians into the area of Scythia, in 721 B.C. Each of these tribes form modern nations that exist today. For the biblical proof of those modern identities, please request our free booklet *The United States and Britain in Prophecy*. Secular history also is replete with information concerning the location of the "lost" 10 tribes.

Religion and the True Faith

THE ARTICLE "RELIGION—AND THE TRUE Faith" by Ron Fraser (February) hit the nail on the head. It was extremely informative concerning the question of God, creation and the unfortunate violence

of the interaction between Christianity, Islam and Judaism, but most important is the fact it causes one to think about the questions that science cannot answer. Stephen Hawking is an exceptionally intelligent man, but he is blinded by his intelligence. ... Scientists believe on what you can see, smell, taste and touch. [They] concentrate on a tunnel-visioned approach based on man's senses. Don't our senses fail us and tell us lies at times? Only one thing could create this world of ours and orchestrate the creation of the universe—the almighty infallible God. Who are we to question God? ... God created us to glorify Him; why shouldn't we just accept it?

David Liston—ONTARIO, OREG.

The Church of God

I JUST HAD TO READ MR. FLURRY'S "Open Letter" (February) and boy, did it bring back many great memories for me. As for the opening chapter of Mr. Stephen Flurry's book, it just shows how Satan can influence people once the guiding figure leaves the scene. I had been a member of WCG for just over 20 years before I gave it away, not being able to stomach any further the changes that had been made. ... When I cast my memory back to my days in the Church, they were very fulfilling days and years. I was so involved with both clubs, Y.O.U., taking South Australian kids to the summer camp in Queensland the year Mr. Armstrong came out and meeting him, being very involved in the feasts, just about every year holding some office, being song leader and even taking up the piano after 30 years' absence when we needed the services of a pianist, giving sermonettes etc. ... They were very fulfilling years as I said.

Now, if it wasn't for the *Trumpet* and the *Royal Vision*, I would have no contact with the Church let alone know what was going on. However, I do miss the interaction that was there in the Church My prayers are with you and the work you are doing and judging from the way things are now moving in the world, mankind does not have much more time to live the way he is. ...

Subscriber—SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Comments?

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Edmond, OK 73083

Unpopular Parenthood

Lessons we can extract from demographic data BY JOEL HILLIKER

THE WORLD POPULATION IS RAPIDLY BECOMING MORE Muslim. Consider: Of the global population increase between 1970 and 2000, Muslims accounted for 26 percent; the developed world, just 9 percent. The shocking upshot of that disparity is this: While the proportion of Earth's people living in the developed world shrunk from 30 percent to just over 20 percent, the percentage living in Muslim nations increased from 15 to 20. That's right: In little more than a single generation, Muslim nations went from being only half as populous as developed nations to being virtually even. That is a seismic demographic shift.

But the shift is about to become even more dramatic. Given today's low infant and child mortality rates, for a population to remain steady each woman needs to have, on average, only 2.1 children. In poorer or predominantly Muslim countries like Somalia, Niger, Afghanistan and Yemen, birth rates soar above six children per woman. Throughout the Western world, however, many countries have birthrates *well below population-sustaining levels*. Already, the only reason Europe's current populace isn't shrinking is its massive immigration—most of which is Muslim.

Reasonable people could draw a number of conclusions from these data. Mark Steyn, reporting these statistics in a January 4 column in *Opinion Journal*, went so far as to predict the demographic demise of the Western world as we know it. Bible prophecy offers a different picture: It says this present world simply *won't last long enough* to see those trends play out.

Still, these numbers raise interesting questions about how the modern developed world *discourages parenthood*.

It is not difficult to see how a materialistic society that exalts individual excellence and personal fulfillment is less inclined to dedicate itself to the sacrificial effort that large families demand. As men and women become educated and success-oriented, often their focus drifts away from family and children. Such was also the case within the greatest empires of old. As Phillip Longman wrote in the March-April 2006 *Foreign Policy*, "Like today's modern, well-fed nations, both ancient Greece and Rome eventually found that their elites had lost interest in the often dreary chores of family life." Then and today, Longman says, a society that becomes "cosmopolitan, fast-paced, and filled with new ideas, new peoples and new luxuries" is one that loses its sense "of the necessity of reproduction."

Simply put, parenting requires a certain *selflessness*—a commodity in shorter and shorter supply in our world. The Apostle Paul prophesied that "in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be *lovers of their own selves*, covetous, boasters, proud ... *without natural affection* ..." (2 Timothy 3:1-3). Besides simply causing fewer people to choose to become parents, self-absorption also means that plenty of those who do become par-

ents are too busy to invest the time and to acquire the education to rear children properly, which results in dysfunctional children and fractured parent-child relationships. These make the idea of having children even less attractive to the childless: The likelihood of failure seems too high to be worth the labor.

It is also worth noting the role of *secularism* in declining birth rates. The unbiblical view that sex is recreation for singles as much as for married people removes what was once a strong incentive to marry and start a family. Abortion, used disproportionately by more politically liberal and non-religious women, is the most vivid example of a factor that dramatically curbs births: In the U.S., one quarter of pregnancies are aborted; over the last 30 years abortions have prevented, in America alone, 47 million people from ever registering in population statistics. Ironically, these secularist trends don't reproduce well demographically. In the U.S., those states that voted Democratic in 2004 had a 12 percent lower birth rate than those that voted Republican. In 18 years, these numbers would be reflected at ballot boxes.

Conversely, statistics reveal that *religion* is a powerful prod toward parenthood. Without religion, family is reduced to a relationship of convenience (which, realistically, it often is not). Religion, at its most basic level, tends to stress the value of stable families, of sexual fidelity, of the responsibility of a man to remain committed to his wife and children.

Beyond that is the spiritual component of family. The fact is that family is a God-ordained concept. God created romantic attraction; He created marriage—a lifelong commitment between a husband and wife. He designed the reproductive system and the nine-month gestation that gives two people time to prepare for the addition of another little family member. He fashioned children to grow up slowly, necessitating family life. Nowhere do you see a puppy or colt being looked after by its parents for 18 years before it is sent off on its own into the world—and then boomeranging back after four years because it still hasn't found the right job.

God designed us to have to leave our parents in order to cleave to a mate and begin families of our own. Do you know why? All of these beautiful aspects of family have a spiritual dimension. There was design and purpose behind them that points to a brilliant spiritual reality that most people do not fathom! These are expounded in inspiring detail in our free book *The Missing Dimension in Sex*.

Modern forces that discourage parenthood are not just doomed demographically: They are going to go down when this world goes down. When God's Kingdom is established, family will be exalted to the heights—the divinely ordained, self-reproducing institution that pictures the reality of a God Being who is reproducing Himself! ■



DREAMSTIME/JOEL HILLIKER

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Alaska, Fairbanks KWFA 8:30 am, Sun

Alaska, Juneau KWJA 8:30 am, Sun

Arizona, El Centro-Yuma KWUB 9:30 am, Sun

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Arkansas, Fayetteville-Rogers-Springdale KWFT 8:30, Sun

Arkansas, Fort Smith KWFT 8:30, Sun

Arkansas, Jonesboro KFOS 8:30 am, Sun

California, Bakersfield KWFB 9:30 am, Sun

California, Chico-Redding KIWB 9:30 am, Sun

California, Eureka KWBT 9:30 am, Sun

California, Los Angeles KDOC 9:30 am, Sun;

KPPN 6:00 am, Fri

California, Monterey-Salinas KMWB 9:30 am, Sun

California, Palm Springs KCWB 9:30 am, Sun

California, Sacramento KSPX 6:00 am, Fri

California, San Francisco KKPX 6:00 am, Fri

California, Santa Barbara KWCA 9:30 am, Sun

Colorado, Denver KPXC 5:00 am, Fri

Colorado, Grand Junction-Montrose KWGJ 10:30 am, Sun

Connecticut, Hartford WHPX 6:00 am, Fri

Delaware, Salisbury WBD 9:30 am, Sun

Florida, Gainesville WBFL 9:30 am, Sun

Florida, Jacksonville WPXC 6:00 am, Fri

Florida, Miami WPXM 6:00 am, Fri

Florida, Orlando WOPX 6:00 am, Fri

Florida, Panama City WBPC 9:30 am, Sun

Florida, Tallahassee-Thomasville 9:30 am, Sun

Florida, Tampa WXPX 6:00 am, Fri

Florida, West Palm Beach WPXP 6:00 am, Fri

Georgia, Albany WBSK 9:30 am, Sun

Georgia, Augusta WBAU 9:30 am, Sun

Georgia, Brunswick WPXC 6:00 am, Fri

Georgia, Columbus WBG 9:30 am, Sun

Georgia, Macon WBMN 9:30 am, Sun

Georgia, Savannah WBVH 9:30 am, Sun

Hawaii, Hawaii Na Leo Chan. 54 6:30 am, Sun; 8:30 am, Wed

Hawaii, Maui/Lanai/Molokai/Niihau Akaku Chan. 52 6:30 pm, Sun; 3:30 am, Mon

Hawaii, Kauai Ho' Ike Chan. 52 9:30 am, Tue

Idaho, Boise KWOB 10:30 am, Sun

Idaho, Idaho Falls-Pocatello KWIB 10:30 am, Sun

Idaho, Twin Falls KWTE 10:30 am, Sun

Illinois, Bloomington-Peoria WBPE 8:30 am, Sun

Illinois, Chicago WCIU 9:30 am, Sun; WCPX 5:00 am, Fri

Illinois, Rockford WBR 8:30 am, Sun

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Indiana, Indianapolis WIPX 6:00 am, Fri

Indiana, Lafayette WBFY 8:30 am, Sun

Indiana, Terra Haute WBI 8:30 am, Sun

Iowa, Cedar Rapids KPXR 8:00 am, Fri

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Iowa, Kirksville-Ottumwa KWOT 8:30 am, Sun

Iowa, Mason City-Austin-Rochester KWBR 8:30 am, Sun

Iowa, Sioux City KXWB 8:30 am, Sun

Kansas, Joplin-Pittsburg KSXF 8:30 am, Sun

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Kansas, Topeka WBKS 8:30 am, Sun

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Louisiana, Alexandria KAXN 8:30 am, Sun

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Louisiana, Lafayette KLWB 8:30 am, Sun

Louisiana, Lake Charles WBLC 8:30 am, Sun

Louisiana, New Orleans WPXL 5:00 am, Fri

Maine, Bangor WBAN 9:30 am, Sun

Maine, Presque Isle WBPQ 9:30 am, Sun

Massachusetts, Boston WBPX 6:00 am, Fri

Massachusetts, Holyoke-Springfield WBQT 9:30 am, Sun

Michigan, Alpena WBAE 9:30 am, Sun

Michigan, Cadillac-Traverse City WBVC 9:30 am, Sun

Michigan, Detroit WPXD 6:00 am, Fri

Michigan, Grand Rapids WZPX 5:00 am, Fri

Michigan, Lansing WBL 9:30 am, Sun

Michigan, Marquette WBMK 9:30 am, Sun

Minnesota, Duluth-Superior KWBD 8:30 am, Sun

Minnesota, Mankato KWYE 8:30 am, Sun

Minnesota, Minneapolis KPXM 5:00 am, Fri

Mississippi, Biloxi-Gulfport WBGF 8:30 am, Sun

Mississippi, Columbus-Tupelo-West Point WBSP 8:30 am, Sun

Mississippi, Greenwood-Greenville WBWD 8:30 am, Sun

Mississippi, Hattiesburg-Laurel WBHA 8:30 am, Sun

Mississippi, Meridian WBMM 8:30 am, Sun

Missouri, Columbia-Jefferson City KJWB 8:30 am, Sun

Missouri, Hannibal-Keokuk-Quincy WEWB 8:30 am, Sun

Missouri, Kansas City KPXE 5:00 am, Fri

Missouri, St. Joseph WBJO 8:30 am, Sun

Montana, Billings KWBM 10:30 am, Sun

Montana, Bozeman-Butte KWXB 10:30 am, Sun

Montana, Glendive KWZB 10:30 am, Sun

Montana, Great Falls KWGF 10:30 am, Sun

Montana, Helena KWHA 10:30 am, Sun

Montana, Missoula KIDW 10:30 am, Sun

Nebraska, Hastings-Kearney KWBL 8:30 am, Sun

Nebraska, North Platte KWPL 8:30 am, Sun

Nevada, Reno KWBV 9:30 am, Sun

New York, Albany WYPX 6:00 am, Fri

New York, Binghamton WBXI 9:30 am, Sun

New York, Buffalo WUTV 6:30 am, Sun; WPXJ 6:00 am, Fri

New York, Elmira WBE 9:30 am, Sun

New York, New York City WPXN 6:00 am, Fri;

WWOR 9:00 am, Sun

New York, Syracuse WSPX 6:00 am, Fri

New York, Utica WBU 9:30 am, Sun

New York, Watertown WBWT 9:30 am, Sun

North Carolina, Asheville WASV 10:00 am, Sun

North Carolina, Durham-Raleigh WRPX 6:00 am, Fri

North Carolina, Fayetteville-Lumber Bridge

WFPX 6:00 am, Fri

North Carolina, Greensboro WGPX 6:00 am, Fri

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North Carolina, Greenville-New Bern-Washington

WGWB 9:30 am, Sun

North Carolina, Wilmington WBW 9:30 am, Sun

North Dakota, Bismarck-Dickinson-Minot

KWMK 10:30 am, Sun

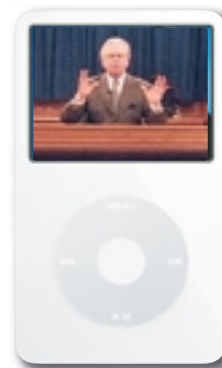
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Ohio, Zanesville WBZV 9:30 am, Sun
Oklahoma, Ada KSHD 8:30 am, Sun
Oklahoma, Lawton KWB 8:30 am, Sun
Oklahoma, Oklahoma City KOCB 9:00 am, Sun; KOPX 5:00 am, Fri
Oklahoma, Tulsa KTPX 5:00 am, Fri
Oregon, Bend KWBO 9:30 am, Sun
Oregon, Eugene KZWB 9:30 am, Sun
Oregon, Medford-Klamath Falls KMFD 9:30 am, Sun
Oregon, Portland KPDX 8:00 am, Sun; KPXG 6:00 am, Fri
Pennsylvania, Erie WBEP 9:30 am, Sun
Pennsylvania, Philadelphia WPHL 9:00 am, Sun; WPPX 6:00 am, Fri
Pennsylvania, Wilkes-Barre WQPX 6:00 am, Fri
Rhode Island, Providence WPXQ 6:00 am, Fri
South Carolina, Charleston WBLN 9:30 am, Sun
South Carolina, Florence-Myrtle Beach WFVB 9:30 am, Sun
South Carolina, Greenville-Spartanburg WASV 10:00 am, Sun
South Dakota, Rapid City KWBH 10:30 am, Sun
South Dakota, Sioux Falls-Mitchell KWSD 8:30 am, Sun
Tennessee, Jackson WBJK 8:30 am, Sun
Tennessee, Knoxville WPXK 6:00 am, Fri
Tennessee, Memphis WPXX 5:00 am, Fri
Tennessee, Nashville WNPX 5:00 am, Fri
Texas, Abilene-Sweetwater KWAU 8:30 am, Sun
Texas, Amarillo KDBA 8:30 am, Sun
Texas, Austin KBEJ 7:30 am, Sun
Texas, Beaumont-Port Arthur KWBB 8:30 am, Sun
Texas, Corpus Christi KWDB 8:30 am, Sun
Texas, Dallas KDFI 10:30 am, Sun; KPDX 5:00 am, Fri
Texas, Harlingen-Weslaco-Brownsville KMHB 8:30 am, Sun
Texas, Houston KPXB 5:00 am, Fri; KRIV 9:00 am, Sun
Texas, Laredo KTXW 8:30 am, Sun
Texas, Lubbock KWBB 8:30 am, Sun
Texas, Odessa-Midland KWWT 8:30 am, Sun
Texas, San Angelo KWSA 8:30 am, Sun

Texas, San Antonio KPXL 5:00 am, Fri; KBEJ 7:30 am, Sun
Texas, Sherman KSHD 8:30 am, Sun
Texas, Longview-Tyler KWTL 8:30 am, Sun
Texas, Victoria KWVB 8:30 am, Sun
Texas, Wichita Falls KWB 8:30 am, Sun
Utah, Salt Lake City KUPX 5:00 am, Fri
Virginia, Charlottesville WBC 9:30 am, Sun
Virginia, Harrisonburg WBHA 9:30 am, Sun
Virginia, Norfolk WPXV 6:00 am, Fri
Virginia, Roanoke WPXR 6:00 am, Fri
Washington D.C. WBDC 8:00 am, Sun; WPXW 6:00 am, Fri
Washington, Kennewick-Pasco-Richland-Yakima KWYP 9:30 am, Sun
Washington, Seattle KWFX 6:00 am, Fri
Washington, Spokane KGPX 6:00 am, Fri
West Virginia, Beckley-Bluefield-Oak Hill WBB 9:30 am, Sun
West Virginia, Charleston WLPX 6:00 am, Fri
West Virginia, Clarksburg-Weston WVWB 9:30 am, Sun
West Virginia, Parkersburg WBPB 9:30 am, Sun
Wisconsin, Eau Claire-La Crosse WBCZ 8:30 am, Sun
Wisconsin, Milwaukee WPXE 5:00 am, Fri
Wisconsin, Rhinelander-Wausau WBWA 8:30 am, Sun
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Wyoming, Cheyenne-Scottsbluff KCHW 10:30 am, Sun

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Chile WWOR 10:00 am, Sun

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El Salvador WGN 6:00 am, Sun
Guatemala WGN 6:00 am, Sun
Honduras WGN 6:00 am, Sun
Mexico WGN 7:00 am, Sun; WWOR 8:00 am, Sun
Panama WGN 7:00 am, Sun
Venezuela WWOR 10:00 am, Sun

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Bahamas WGN 8:00 am, Sun; WWOR 9:00 am, Sun
Belize WGN 7:00 am, Sun
Cuba WGN 8:00 am, Sun; WWOR 9:00 am, Sun
Dominican Republic WGN 8:00 am, Sun
Grenada CCN 7:30 am, Sun
Haiti WGN 7:00 am, Sun
Jamaica WGN 9:00 am, Sun; WWOR 10:00 am, Sun
Puerto Rico WGN 8:00 am, Sun; WWOR 9:00 am, Sun
Tobago CCN 7:30 am, Sun
Trinidad CCN 7:30 am, Sun

EUROPE

Malta Smash TV 4:30 pm, Sat; 10:00 pm, Tue

AFRICA/ASIA

Philippines nationwide Studio 23 8:30 am, Sun
South Africa CSN 6:30 am, Sun

AUSTRALIA/NEW ZEALAND

Australia nationwide Network Ten 4:30 am, Sun
Adelaide, South Australia Chan. 31 11:30, Sun
Perth, Western Australia Chan. 31 11:30 am, Sun
Tasmania Southern Cross TV 6:00 am, Sun
New Zealand nationwide TV3 6:00 am, Fri

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