

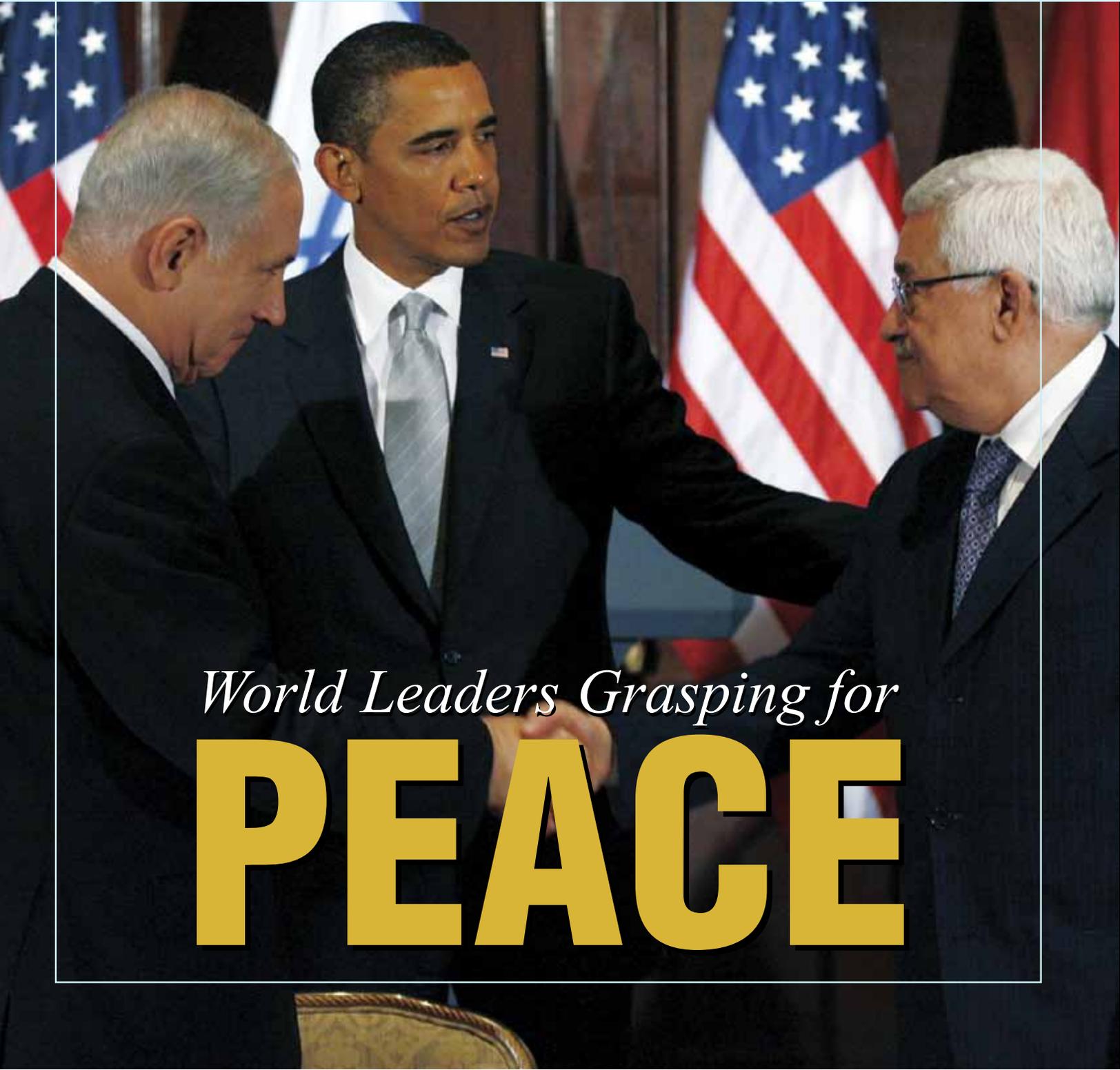
DECEMBER 2009

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REAL TRUTH

A MAGAZINE RESTORING PLAIN UNDERSTANDING



World Leaders Grasping for

PEACE

THE REAL TRUTH

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ARTICLES

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Is Mary More Important Than Jesus?

One billion people adore and pray to Mary. Is this practice biblical?

Page 14

Loneliness – Insoluble Social Problem?

Despite technological advancements that allow people to more easily connect with each other, why do so many feel lonelier than ever before?

Page 3

Proof of God in the Palm of Your Hand!

Sir Isaac Newton once said, “In the absence of any other proof, the thumb alone would convince me of God’s existence.” How is this possible?

Page 6

Profile: Stephen Harper – Prime Minister of Canada

Once referred to as a “warrior in power,” what do Mr. Harper’s conservative ideals mean for Canada?

Page 9

World Leaders Grasping for Peace

Everybody wants peace, yet no one delivers. What is the answer?

Page 11

The Mary of Antiquity

Clever Counterfeit Exposed!

While most believe they pray to Mary, the mother of Jesus, the truth of whom they actually pray to will surprise you.

Page 18

FEATURES

Personal from David C. Pack
World News Desk

1
28

■ **FRONT COVER:** United States President Barack Obama (center) meets in New York City with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu (left) and Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas (right) in an attempt to restart peace talks (Sept. 22, 2009).

PHOTO: JOHN ANGELILLO-POOL/GETTY IMAGES

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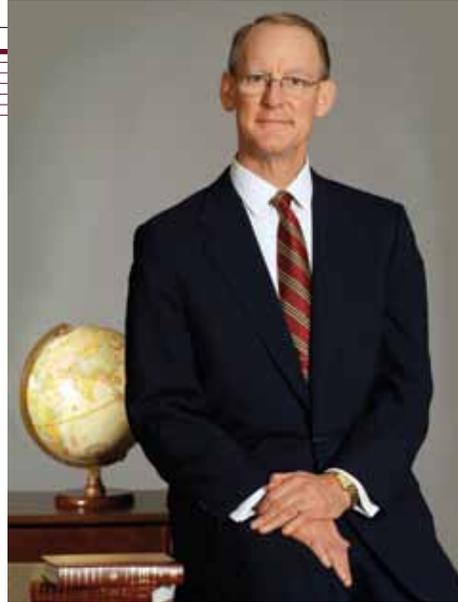
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PERSONAL FROM

David C. Fack



The Coming Economic Collapse!

THE GLOBAL ECONOMY is in the worst crisis since the Great Depression of the 1930s! Despite unparalleled affluence in the Western World, personal and corporate bankruptcies are soaring. So is consumer credit. *Millions* are losing jobs. More millions their homes. The United States national debt is measured in *trillions* of dollars! Headlines of credit fraud, identity theft and corruption fill the news. Events are spinning out of control.

All of this is unnecessary—IF you have God's KEYS to financial prosperity.

Let's consider some sobering statistics: Since 2007, the economic crisis has erased a staggering \$50 trillion dollars in wealth around the world. The world's largest economy, the United States, is now more than \$12 trillion dollars in debt—and this debt is growing by about \$4 billion daily! This amounts to a \$39,000 bill for every U.S. citizen—or over \$111,000 per taxpayer. Some expect the debt to be almost \$14.5 trillion after the next fiscal year—which means a growth of additional billions per day next year! Such debt can never be repaid! Tragically, most nations of the West are being crushed by impossible debt. Catastrophe now looms—and, in the case of America, here is why.

The United States expects to receive an estimated \$2.19 trillion in tax revenue in 2009. (However, this estimate continues to shrink.) Projected spending is at \$3.94 trillion for 2009. (This number continues to rise.)

Now suppose these estimates represented the spending of an American family of median income. Such a family would take in \$50,303 (2008 estimate), but be planning to spend \$90,042—while already carrying more than \$275,632 in debt! Individual families would *not* do this—or if they tried, would go bankrupt before it could happen. But governments can print money.

Such deficit spending is unsustainable—and the national debt is projected to top \$18.6 trillion in 2014!—and \$24.5 trillion in 2019!—more than double the present. Now understand that just a small one percent interest rate increase will raise the interest payment from \$200 billion to over \$800 billion each year. But this is only true if the deficit *did not rise!* Incidentally, many think *all* these projections to be VERY conservative. They will likely be *much* worse.

No thinking person believes such overspending can continue without end. Further, the addition of expensive new government programs and exotic new kinds of taxes will only greatly exacerbate the problem. America will not stop spending because it is conditioned to believe it can have anything it wants. It need never deny itself. A country this big, this great, and one with such a rich history, cannot fail.

This thinking is tragically wrong. What world empire—with *half* America's problems—ever survived?

The economies of America and other nations of the West will soon collapse into full-blown bankruptcy.

This *will* happen, although things could temporarily get a little better. Various individual states will in fact likely precede this country into bankruptcy, and thus hasten the overall collapse. Of course, nature abhors a vacuum, and a European-based world government *will* step in to fill America's abdication as global leader. This cannot now be far away.

The world as you know it—including *your life*, and I mean *all* aspects of it—will change beyond your wildest imagination.

So far, we have only discussed government debt. Private debt—from loans and credit cards—amounts to an additional \$54,000 for every American, compared to an average savings of only \$2,700.

Since 2007, \$7 trillion has been lost in the U.S. stock market and \$6 trillion in its housing market. These are devastating losses to people's investments, including stocks, bonds, retirement plans, employee stock ownership and home values. Hopes and dreams crash daily!

Global Downward Spiral

Employment is now shrinking at the fastest rate since the Great Depression. Unemployment percentages have climbed into the double-digits in the United States. And this does not include the discouraged who have given up looking. Many other countries are much worse.

The combination of exploding debt and unemployment is hitting home! In 2009 alone, well over 1 million Americans declared bankruptcy, with more and more families also winding up jobless and in despair—facing abject poverty. This problem is worldwide. Many well-educated, middle-class people now live on unemployment, or welfare and food stamps—having never thought this could happen to them. Tent cities are springing up across America. Thousands are living in cars, and growing numbers now live in sewer systems!

The combined budget deficit and weakening dollar threaten to introduce hyperinflation, ruin the finances of America's citizens, and totally destroy the country's economy. China, Japan, Germany and other creditor nations are deeply concerned about investing more money in a bankrupt country. If they either pull out of American investments *or* call in their loans, the consequences will be disastrous. The world's second richest man, Warren Buffett, declared the U.S. economy has "fallen off a cliff"—his words (*CNBC*).

Most troubling for this superpower—long the engine of the world's economy—may be the ongoing woes in its banking system. In 2008, 25 banks collapsed. In 2009, this may multiply *six times*.

What started with subprime mortgage losses has now grown into a full-blown financial crisis. U.S. banks have lost many, many billions of dollars, and this will grow much higher. No one knows how much—and thus where it ends.

America's economic problems have ignited a global firestorm! Several European and Asian countries are also in recession. Many face shrinking economies, big deficits, mounting debt, unstable currencies and rising unemployment. Financial markets are unraveling with a speed not seen since the Great Crash of 1929.

To compound matters, increasing economic, health and hunger crises in Third World nations are adding to the First World economic burden. As leaders scramble for solutions, deep fear pervades the world's corridors of power!

All of this threatens to destroy the global economy. Attempting to solve the crisis, leaders are calling more often for a unified economic system. Some now suggest one currency, one economy and one world government!

Understand. The world economic outlook is grim and growing darker

daily. In time, this will affect you. How does one escape what is coming?

It is important to first understand the origins—the *CAUSES*—of today's economic distress.

Reckless Lending

The crisis began with the so-called "credit crunch"—the reduction in the availability of loans. Banks became reluctant to lend—to individuals, businesses or other lenders.

Banks traditionally operated by taking deposits from customers and lending to those seeking loans. The difference between the interest rate paid on deposits and the higher one charged on loans—the "spread"—was profit. If customers defaulted, banks were liable to depositors for payment. They held the risk "on the books"—it was their responsibility.

It was therefore in a bank's interest to carefully screen customers before lending. The customer needed a good job and sizeable down payment. This conservative approach enabled banks to be sound—and highly profitable—for decades.

In the 1990s, banks changed their way of operating. Seeking ever-higher profits to satisfy shareholders, and to secure executive bonuses, they decided they could make even higher profits if they loaned more. Careful screening of applicants stopped.

Customers who previously never qualified under standard lending procedures—"subprime" customers—were aggressively targeted as a lucrative source of income. Loans were provided to people with no income, no job and no assets—so-called NINJA loans.

Other "sweeteners" were provided, such as no down payment and interest-only payments. Those who approved these loans were no longer attached to the risk of default—

*Please see **PERSONAL**, page 24*

Death
Society

Health
Divorce
Depression

Loneliness

Insoluble Social Problem?

Despite technological advancements that allow people to more easily connect with each other, why do so many feel lonelier than ever before?

BY LARRY J. MCELROY

IN THE LATE 1950s, Andy Williams sang “Lonely Street.” The song’s lyrics contained a question: “Where is this place called Lonely Street?” These words are more relevant today than 50 years ago.

Studies indicate that loneliness is increasing in spite of incredible communication advancements over the past decade. Not only is it a social issue, but it also contributes to health problems.

Abigail Van Buren, creator of the “Dear Abby” column, said, “Loneliness is the ultimate poverty” (*The Buffalo News*). As people struggle to establish satisfying friendships, they often only become lonelier.

What about you? Do you feel isolated in spite of working around dozens of people or living in a crowded city? Despite your best efforts to reach out, do you find yourself feeling alone—just one in a sea of humanity?

You can turn your situation around, identify causal factors that bring about loneliness, and change your behavior so that you too can enjoy close friendships.

But first we must ask: what has brought us to Lonely Street?

Societal Trends

An article by Kerby Anderson, a nationally syndicated columnist, stated: “...the baby boom generation is headed for a crisis of loneliness. The reasons are simple: demographics and social isolation. More boomers are liv-

ing alone than in previous generations, and those living with another person will still feel the nagging pangs of loneliness.”

He stated that the three “Ds” of statistics—death, divorce and deferred marriage—play a role in more and more loneliness.

Death: As people live longer, there is a greater possibility that one mate may die. After years of companionship, these people may find themselves alone and unable to relate to other couples.

Divorce: Baby boomers have produced the highest divorce rates in history. This has left many children in the care of only one parent. A single parent must then struggle to support, care for, and nurture them—with little quality time to spare. Lonely children become

lonely adults, often unable to function socially because they are not emotionally equipped to relate to others. This tragedy perpetuates itself across generations. Divorce tears apart the family unit, often isolating those who were members of a once-cohesive group.

Deferred Marriage: Adults today marry much later in life—living alone longer before marriage. Additionally, many millions “live together” and never tie the knot. This commitment-free lifestyle leads to easily dissolved, superficial attachments, which rarely develop into close, long-lasting relationships.

Kerby Anderson also wrote, “Commitment is a foreign concept to most of the million-plus cohabiting couples. These fluid and highly mobile situations form more often out of convenience and demonstrate little of the commitment necessary to make a relationship work. These relationships are transitory and form and dissolve with alarming frequency. Anyone looking for intimacy and commitment will not find them in these relationships.”

Desire for Mobility and Privacy

In *A Nation of Strangers*, Vance Packard puts forth the idea that America’s mobile society contributes to the country’s social isolation. He outlines five forms of mobility separating people: (1) frequent moves; (2) growing commu-

nities in which a population has been uprooted from another area; (3) apartment complexes in metropolitan areas; (4) employees of multi-shift, 24/7 manufacturing plants, who do not have the opportunity to meet their neighbors face-to-face; (5) fragmentation of families, with members moving away after a divorce.

Another aspect of increasing social isolation is people’s strong desire for privacy. By and large, society values privacy over face-to-face interaction—in other words, taking the necessary time for others. For example, without company coming over, you do not have to clean your home, provide refreshments and a meal, or take close interest in another person’s life.

Often, it is our own propensity toward the path of least resistance that leads us to feel lonely.

Declining Personal Interaction

In a *Stanford University News* article, Kenneth M. Dixon provided insight as to how the Internet has produced unintended consequences, including isolation.

“The Internet has revolutionized the way Americans live and communicate, but at a steep social cost, according to researchers at the Stanford Institute for the Quantitative Study of Society (SIQSS). Compared to those who do not use the Internet frequently, those

who do—31 percent of the U.S. population, according to the study—spend a whopping 70 minutes less daily interacting with family, 25 minutes less sleeping and 30 minutes less watching television.

“‘[The Internet] has been an extraordinary productivity enhancer and an enormously powerful tool to stay in touch,’ said political science Professor Norman H. Nie, director of SIQSS. ‘But if you look at every major social innovation, there are both positive consequences intended and negative consequences unintended.’”

Excessive Internet use can isolate individuals and distract them from face-to-face contact with others—even within their own families.

Loneliness, isolation and a sense of social exclusion also create many health-related problems.

A *Daily Telegraph* article revealed that loneliness is “as harmful as smoking and obesity.” Professor John Cacioppo, the co-author of a loneliness study, told the newspaper: “The lonely have poor health. They exercise less, are more likely to quit.” He also said they eat foods with more calories, fats and sugars.

Additionally, isolation and loneliness are leading factors in the likelihood of depression, which can lead to ill health and premature death.

Hard Questions

Even our own personal attitudes can contribute to feeling isolated. This is perhaps the greatest area where individuals can control and conquer loneliness.

Ask yourself: Do I withdraw from others when overwhelmed with life’s stresses? Do I expect others to first approach me, but never take the first step myself? Does embarrassment inhibit me from initiating new relationships? When others do not match my expectations, do I reject them?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, you could be unknowingly isolating yourself.

Other factors that can block you from growing close to others include distrust because of emotional scarring from previous traumatic relationships and unre-



Divorce tears apart the family unit, often isolating those who were members of a once-cohesive group.

solved anger—self-anger, anger toward others, or anger in general toward the world we live in. Resentment and an unforgiving attitude ruin your chances of building a close rapport with others.

Additionally, lacking knowledge of how to be a friend, including a disregard for social protocol, have produced a socially inept generation. Many lack listening skills, talking about their lives only: “my this,” “my that,” and do not take time to listen to others. This can cause us to come across as self-centered and make people not want to be around us.

Never-ending Cycle?

Loneliness does not have to be a permanent way of life! You can change and become a person who creates friendships and is approachable. The Bible, a book few look to for answers, teaches us how to be friendly and see this life and interaction with others in a proper perspective. “A man that has friends must show himself friendly; and there is a friend that sticks closer than a brother” (Prov. 18:24).

Being friendly can be as simple as smiling, offering a courteous greeting, being the first to start a conversation, extending a firm handshake or taking time to listen to others. This often includes empathizing, and trying to understand life experiences from someone else’s perspective.

These simple gestures exhibit a deeper concern for others—part of the way of GIVE—the opposite of what is generally seen today.

God’s Word predicted that as civilization progressed, humanity’s social behavior would grow worse, as evidenced on the front pages of newspapers and in local and national television newscasts. “This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection [unsociable], trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent [without self control], fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady [reckless], highminded, lovers of pleasure



“You can change and become a person who creates friendships and is approachable.”

more than lovers of God” (II Tim. 3:1-4).

Human nature, with its vile behavior, has produced a world of fear, alienation, lack of trust and aversion to meeting new people. All population segments and age groups suffer from this social problem.

The real solution is remarkably simple but profoundly difficult to implement in a world violating the basic commandments of God. Again, the way of give—love—is simply showing outgoing concern for others.

Jesus Christ said, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, *You shall love your neighbor as yourself*” (Matt. 22:37-39).

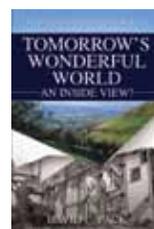
To most this makes sense—as long as your neighbor is first to take steps toward achieving

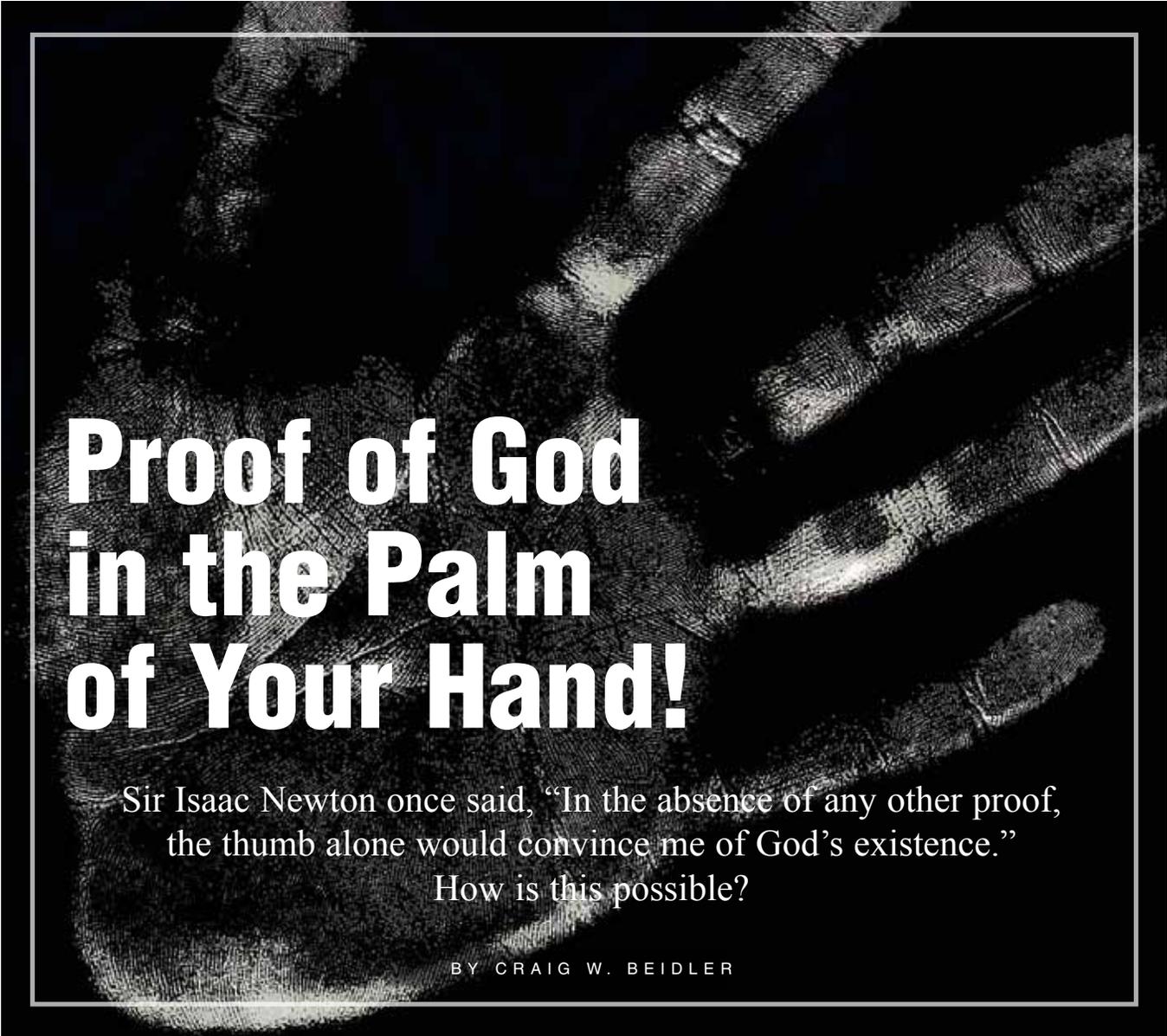
this goal! But love must first be put into effect in your own life, by first *changing yourself*. This will focus your life more toward others.

Imagine what the world would be like if everyone followed the way of GIVE—a world of joyful people excited to talk with you—a world without strangers—a world where children have no fear. A world where the song “Lonely Street” would no longer be sung.

Such a day is drawing near—the pages of *The Real Truth* proclaim the GOOD NEWS of the soon-coming kingdom of God—when loneliness will be eliminated. God’s laws regarding treatment of others will be implemented.

Read David C. Pack’s article “You Can Live the Abundant Life!” and his book, *Tomorrow’s Wonderful World – An Inside View!* to learn more. □





Proof of God in the Palm of Your Hand!

Sir Isaac Newton once said, “In the absence of any other proof, the thumb alone would convince me of God’s existence.”

How is this possible?

BY CRAIG W. BEIDLER

PHOTO: STOCK.XCHING

THE QUESTION of how the universe began and living creatures came to be is the subject of intense debate. Atheist cosmologists believe the universe popped into existence out of nothing—the result of a “quantum fluctuation” that occurred by chance. Atheist biologists say that life, in all of its variety and complexity, evolved from non-living matter by chance.

To them, chance is the god of atheism, and evolution is the handmaiden of chance.

According to the theory of evolution, over a billion years ago, life began in a primordial soup. Over time, “higher” (more complex) life forms “evolved” from “lower” (less complicated) forms by an unguided process of natural selection and random genetic changes, called mutations. Natural selection supposedly “chose” mutations better suited for survival, ultimately producing all living creatures.

After decades of nearly unchallenged supremacy, this view of reality is under serious attack. Discoveries in fields as diverse as biochemistry and astrophysics portray a finely tuned universe containing amazingly com-

plex life forms. These discoveries have cast much doubt on the assertion that the universe exists by chance and that life randomly evolved from non-living matter.

Not surprisingly, despite mounting evidence to the contrary, atheists still defend evolution with a ferocity that casts them more as cheerleaders for their cause than impartial seekers of truth. They simply will not accept that, “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth” (Gen. 1:1).

In contrast to the mantra of atheism, the explanation offered by people of faith is that God created the universe and all life forms on Earth. As

expressed in the Bible, man was created not by a lengthy process of evolution, but rather, “the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul” (Gen. 2:7).

From the order and complexity found in the universe and in living creatures, philosophers and theologians reach the conclusion that God exists. This is known as the design argument. As the writer of the book of Psalms expressed it, “The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows His handiwork” (Psa. 19:1).

In the book of Romans, the apostle Paul expresses the argument as follows: “For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse” (Rom. 1:20).

Evidence of design can be found as far away as the most distant stars, and as close as the palm of your hand. Familiar and seemingly simple, the human hand is a marvel of functional utility and complexity that provides powerful evidence for the existence of God.

Anatomy of the Human Hand

The hand consists of 27 bones, including eight in the wrist, five in the palm, and 14 in the fingers and thumb. The narrow wrist bones form two rows of four bones that fit into a socket in the forearm bones. The hand moves by a sophisticated and coordinated relationship between bone, muscle, tendons, nerves and the brain.

Bones have no power to move themselves; they are moved by muscular exertion through tough cord-like fibers called tendons. One end of a tendon comes from the end of a muscle. The other end attaches to a bone.

Tendons attach the muscles of your forearm to the bones of your fingers. When the brain signals muscles in the arm, wrist and hand to move the hand, some muscles contract while others relax. Extensor muscles straighten the fingers. Flexors permit the fingers to

bend and grip. The thumb has two flexors that help us to hold objects.

In comparison to primates (such as great apes or monkeys), humans have a longer opposable thumb. Partly because of this appendage, humans have a greater ability to manipulate and firmly grasp objects of various shapes.

“Compared to animals, human behavior with hand tools is fundamentally distinct. Exclusive elements of hand movement are attained *only* when the unique human hand’s muscular configuration and the brain’s disproportionately large hand sensory and motor function centers are integrated together” (Randy R. Guliuzza, *Made in His Image: The Connecting Power of Hands*).

The human primary motor cortex in the brain (which controls voluntary movements) is four times larger than a chimpanzee’s.

Robotics

Despite all of the advances in engineering and computer technology, the development of a robotic hand that is as dexterous as a human hand still exceeds the grasp of modern science.

“‘A robotic hand which can perform tasks with the dexterity of a human hand is one of the holy grails of science,’ said Dr Honghai Liu, who lectures [about] artificial intelligence at the [Portsmouth] University Institute of Industrial Research. The Institute specialises in artificial intelligence including intelligent robotics, image processing and intelligent data analysis. He adds, “Nothing which exists today even comes close” (*ScienceDaily*).

What is so amazing, so complex, about the human hand that makes it difficult for scientists and engineers to effectively replicate it in a robot or mechanical device of some kind?

Finger Movements: The astounding dexterity of human fingers is made possible primarily by the coordinated actions of seven muscles that control the index finger, five muscles unique to the thumb, and three other muscles that move the little finger.

Doctor Randy Guliuzza, national representative of the Institute for Creation Research, notes that neuromuscular control of the hand is so optimized that using your fingertips, you can “squeeze to crack an egg with about ten pounds of force and abruptly stop within the distance of the shell’s thickness—about 1/100 of an inch.” He adds, “Evidence shows that the central nervous system predicts the best outcome of every finger movement *several movements ahead* of its current state.”

An example provided by Dr. Guliuzza illustrates the point: “... skilled typists will visually process up to eight characters *in advance* and then—in anticipation—the forward plan for muscle movements will commit the finger muscles to an action about three characters in advance of actually striking the keys. Times between keystrokes are commonly as low as 60 milliseconds. Interestingly, speed is fastest if successive keystrokes are between fingers on opposite hands.”

“Thinking” Tendons: The bulky muscles that move the hand and fingers are located in the forearm, where they do not impede the dexterity of the fingers. The power of those muscles is transmitted to the hand through a complex network of tendons. For years, doctors and scientists believed that the central nervous system alone controlled muscle movements. Recently, however, researchers have learned otherwise.

A 2007 article authored by scientists with the Neuromuscular Biomechanics Laboratory at Cornell University stated, “Current thinking attributes information processing for neuromuscular control exclusively to the nervous system. Our cadaveric experiments and computer simulations show, however, that the tendon network of the fingers performs logic computation to preferentially change torque production capabilities [the power to rotate or twist].”

Carefully follow this next quote. What computer models and studies on cadavers have shown is “that the distri-

bution of input tensions in the tendon network itself regulates how tensions propagate to the finger joints, acting like a switching function of a logic gate that nonlinearly enables different torque production capabilities” (ibid.).

The authors go on to state, “Moreover, this form of information processing at the macroscopic scale is a new instance of the emerging principle of nonneural ‘somatic logic’ found to perform logic computation such as in cellular networks.” They add that their “results highlight the biomechanical uniqueness and versatility of human fingers by showing that the nervous system and tendon network work synergistically to reach different regions of torque actuation” (ibid.).

What this technical language tells us is that the tendons connecting muscles to our fingers perform “logic computations” that actually regulate the degree of tension in fingers, and permit “a rich repertoire of finger joint [movement] not possible with simpler tendon paths” (*Journal of Neurophysiology*).

This research raises a question: Is this degree of complexity the result of blind chance and random mutation over millions of years, or does it make more sense to conclude that the hand was created “as is” by God?

Grip Strength: Human grip strength is powerful evidence of design. The hand is structured such that it is capable of three basic grips: crushing, pinching and supporting.

According to the Institute for Creation Research, “Gripping involves three tendencies for the hand to twist on an axis, and six mechanical variables for each finger. Thanks to the sophistication of the hand/brain relationship and the size of brain capacity, grip combinations are nearly infinite and amazingly versatile.”

Researchers at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee found that on average, adult males between the ages of 20 and 24 generate 121 pounds of “crushing” grip strength (similar to a handshake) in their right hands, and women in that same age group had 70.4 pounds of grip strength in

their right hand (*Archives of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation*).

But that does not even begin to describe the level of strength that human hands are capable of demonstrating. Over the centuries, the strongest of men have performed amazing feats of hand strength, including Samson, who slew a thousand men with the jawbone of a donkey (Judg. 15:16).

However, extraordinary grip strength is not necessary for mankind to fulfill the will of God. The hand strength of ordinary people is sufficient for them to engage in all those activities necessary to honor God and enjoy life as He intended.

Was this a chance occurrence?

The Marvel of the Human Hand

In his book *Fearfully and Wonderfully Made*, Dr. Paul Brand, who was one of the foremost hand surgeons in the world, testifies to the wonder—the miracle—of the human body.

Dr. Brand explained that although many people think that fat serves no significant purpose, it does on the hand.

“Underneath the skin in the palm of the hand lie globules of fat with the look and consistency of tapioca pudding. Fat globules, so soft as to be almost fluid, cannot hold their own shape, and so they are surrounded by interwoven fibrils of collagen, like balloons caught in a supporting rope net...where stress occurs, such as on the palm of the hand, fat is tightly gathered and enveloped by fibrous tissue in a design resembling fine Belgian lace.”

When you grasp a hammer in the palm of your hand, each “cluster of fat cells changes its shape in response to the pressure. It yields but cannot be pushed aside because of the firm collagen fibers around it. The resulting tissue, constantly shifting and quivering, becomes compliant, fitting its shape and its stress points to the precise shape of the handle of the hammer. Engineers nearly shout when they analyze this amazing property, for they cannot design a material that

so perfectly balances elasticity with viscosity.”

The skin of the hand is also well suited to the task of gripping and handling different kinds of objects.

Dr. Brand wrote, “If my skin tissue had been made harder, I might insensitively crush a goblet of fine crystal as I hold it in my hand; if softer, it would not allow a firm grip.”

The structure of human bones also reflects design.

“In 1867, an engineer demonstrated that the arrangement of bone cells forms the lightest structure, made of least material, to support the body’s weight. No one has successfully challenged his findings” (ibid.).

Although people take bone healing for granted, it is remarkable that “the skeleton is a growing organ. When I cut bone, it bleeds. Most amazing of all, when it breaks, it heals itself” (ibid.).

Another remarkable feature of a normal hand is its sensitivity. Dr. Brand states, “A normal hand can distinguish between a smooth plane of glass and one etched with lines only 1/2500 of an inch deep.” The fingertips have the ability to detect a difference of just three milligrams.

How extraordinary it is that the hand should be so well-suited for its purpose through all of these amazing features and abilities. Was this the product of chance or the creation of God?

Fingerprints Designed by God

What about fingerprints? If God designed the human hand, why do we have fingerprints? Do they perform a function, and if not, then why would God have created us with them?

Julien Schiebert and his colleagues at the Laboratoire de Physique Statistique de l’Ecole Normale Supérieure in Paris have demonstrated that our fingerprints help us to feel objects through vibrations.

As you move your fingers across a surface, you trigger vibrations that are picked up by nerves. Some of these

Please see **HAND**, page 22



PHOTO: MCT

STEPHEN HARPER

PRIME MINISTER OF CANADA

Once referred to as a “warrior in power,” what do Mr. Harper’s conservative ideals mean for Canada?

BY KENNETH M. OREL

SINCE STEPHEN HARPER was elected the 22nd prime minister of Canada in January 2006, a noticeable political shift to the right has occurred.

EKOS Research Associates Inc., a consulting firm specializing in market research, released a survey in mid-October 2009 revealing that the Conservative Party maintains a substantial lead over the Liberal Party.

As the Conservative Party (“Tories”) strengthens, Mr. Harper’s support continues to rise. This current lead

has conservatives positioning themselves to establish a majority government. According to EKOS, the Tories now enjoy 40.7 percent support compared to 25.5 percent for the liberals.

Described as a “warrior in power,” Mr. Harper’s conservative views appear to be taking root in a country that has not had a conservative leader since 1993. In a parliament of 308 seats, the Conservative Party currently has a minority government with 143 seats—up from 124 seats that the party had when Mr. Harper first took office during the last federal election in 2006.

Political Aspirations

Margaret Thatcher, Ronald Reagan, William F. Buckley and other conservative leaders of Great Britain and the United States have always intrigued Canada’s current prime minister, who has adhered to conservative values over the years.

When he was voted in as the new prime minister, his Conservative Party agenda was established on what has been described as four “pillars”: accountability, security, environmental protection and strong economic management.

Prime Minister (PM) Harper’s political ascent, however, was not an easy climb.

Born April 30, 1959 in Toronto, Mr. Harper was attracted to politics at a young age. He joined a group at his high school called the Young Liberals Club. Ultimately, he changed his political viewpoint to conservative because he did not agree with the National Energy Program of Pierre Trudeau’s government. (Mr. Trudeau was Canada’s 15th PM.)

Mr. Harper attended the University of Calgary where he received a bachelor’s degree in economics in 1985 and then a master’s in economics in 1991. During the mid-1980s, he became chief aide to Progressive Conservative member of Parliament (MP) Jim Hawkes. He later became disenchanted with both the party and the fiscal policies of the government of Brian Mulroney, Canada’s 18th PM from 1984 to 1993.

In 1993, Mr. Harper was elected to the House of Commons as the reform MP for Calgary West. Over the next four years, he was at odds with the center-left Liberal Party, which had a majority government at the time. Mr. Harper sharply criticized the left, saying that Canada was a “northern European welfare state in the worst sense of the term” (*CBC News*).

During this period, Stephen Harper married Lauren Teskey. The couple had two children, Benjamin and Rachel.

In March 2002, he ran again for Parliament and won, becoming the leader of the Canadian Alliance Party. In May of that year, he was elected to the House of Commons in Calgary Southwest.



■ **THE FIRST COUPLE ABROAD:** Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper and his wife, Lauren, arrive at the opening dinner of the 2007 G8 summit at Hohen Luckow, Germany.

PHOTO: SEAN GALLUP/GETTY IMAGES

The next year was a turning point. In December, as leader of the Canadian Alliance Party, Mr. Harper signed an agreement to join forces with Peter MacKay, leader of the Progressive Conservative Party, forming the Conservative Party—a more effective “right-wing opposition” to the Liberal Party.

In March 2004, Mr. Harper became the leader of the newly formed party, favoring lower taxes, smaller government and more decentralization of federal government powers. Today, the prime minister is still a firm believer in low taxes for working families, reforming the criminal justice system and rebuilding the Canadian Forces.

During the 2004 federal election, though the Liberal Party won, it was a close, hard-fought contest. But support continued to build for Mr. Harper and the new Conservative Party. In spring 2005, at the Conservative policy convention, issues such as opposition to same-sex marriage, lower taxes, a tougher stance on crime, closer relations with the United States and an elected Senate were brought to the table. Mr. Harper received overwhelming support from the party’s delegates.

Commitment to His Views

Mr. Harper has rarely shied away from confrontation or standing for his conservative views.

During a 2003 Parliament session, Mr. Harper took

an opposite position against the Canadian government’s unwillingness to participate in the invasion of Iraq.

“This party will not take its position based on public opinion polls,” he said. “We will not take a stand based on focus groups. We will not take a stand based on phone-in shows or householder surveys or any other vagaries of public opinion...In my judgment Canada will eventually join with the allied coalition if war on Iraq comes to pass. The government will join, notwithstanding its failure to prepare, its neglect in co-operating with its allies, or its inability to contribute. In the end it will join out of the necessity created by a pattern of uncertainty and indecision. It will not join as a leader but unnoticed at the back of the parade.”

On January 9, 2006, during a political debate, Mr. Harper questioned the Liberal Party’s “moral authority to govern.” He asked then Prime Minister Paul Martin, “How many criminal investigations are going on in this government?” (*BBC News*).

Time magazine named Mr. Harper Canada’s “Newsmaker of the Year” in 2006, writing “that the prime minister who was once dismissed as a doctrinaire backroom tactician with no experience in government has emerged as a warrior in power” (*Canwest News Service*).

The question remains: will this “warrior in power” continue to lead Canada down the road of conservative political ideals or will the country turn back to its liberal past? □



WORLD LEADERS

Grasping for Peace

Everybody wants peace, yet no one delivers.
What is the answer?

BY MARK P. DENEE AND SAMUEL C. BAXTER

WORLD PEACE. Those two words bring to mind stereotypical images: a plastic-faced, beauty-pageant winner reciting an over-rehearsed answer between flashes of her bleached toothpaste-ad smile; a worn peace symbol sewn on a hippie's backpack; or a photo of children in a poor nation flashing the two-fingered peace sign.

Similar to these clichés, hardly anything can seem more trite or naïve than the desire for world peace. Yet nearly everyone longs for it.

Man's ever-present problems remain obvious to politicians, who must at least acknowledge them—pollution, disease, poverty, war and starvation. Although critics say they bring up these issues purely for political gain, most world leaders appear sincere. Many of these men and women

genuinely care about their nation and their fellow countrymen.

Even though there is not peace on Earth, it is not for lack of trying: the United Nations attempts to bring it to the world; the European Union seeks to unify a continent; presidents and prime ministers desire it for their nations.

Yet nation fights nation, drug lords bring countries to their knees, citizens riot when their sports team *wins* the

■ **TALKING PEACE:** U.S. President Barack Obama (center) watches Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas (right) shake hands during a trilateral meeting at the Waldorf Astoria Hotel in New York City (Sept. 22, 2009). Mr. Obama met with the two leaders in an attempt to restart peace talks.

PHOTO: JOHN ANGELILLO-POOL/GETTY IMAGES

championship, and cities brim with murder.

The Politics of Peace

Political press conferences and televised speeches are often laced with the “p” word. Calls for peace involve proposed international cooperation or programs to bring stability to struggling locales.

Take the Middle East. The Israelis and Palestinians have sought peace for decades, but to no avail.

Refusing Palestinian preconditions for future peace talks, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said, “I hope very much that the Palestinians will come to their senses and enter the peace process...The peace process is an Israeli interest as much as it is a Palestinian one” (AFP).

In response, Jordan’s King Abdullah II met in Cairo with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak. Both leaders insisted “on the need for an immediate halt of all Israeli unilateral actions, which undermine the chances of achieving peace, espe-

cially the settlement construction” (The Associated Press).

What about Russia? President Vladimir Putin told citizens a vote for his United Russia party in an upcoming election would aid in the peace effort: “Stability and peace on our land have not fallen from the skies, they haven’t yet become absolutely, automatically secured. This is the result of a very fierce fight, both inside the country and in the international arena” (AP).

Then there are the efforts between China and the United States to denuclearize North Korea. Following the China-U.S. Strategic and Economic Dialogue in July 2009, *Xinhua News Agency* paraphrased Chinese President Hu Jintao’s comments on the responsibilities of the two nations on the global stage.

“As two countries with significant influence in the world, China and the United States also enjoy extensive common interests and broad space for cooperation,” President Hu said. *Xinhua* also summarized him as saying

“that both China and the United States shoulder important responsibilities on a host of major issues concerning peace and development of mankind.”

In a letter delivered to North Korean leader Kim Jong-il, President Hu said, “China’s consistent goal is the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula to safeguard and promote peace, stability and development of northeast Asia...” (ibid.).

Religions also cry for peace.

After his trip to the Holy Land, Pope Benedict XVI told the congregation in Cassino, Italy, “As you know, in my recent trip to the Holy Land, I went as a pilgrim of peace, and today...have the opportunity to emphasize, once again, that peace is in the first place a gift of God, and therefore its power is in prayer” (Zenit).

“Once again I would repeat that military options are no solution and that violence, wherever it comes from and whatever form it takes, must be firmly condemned. I express my hope that, with the decisive commitment of the international community, the ceasefire in the Gaza strip will be re-established—an indispensable condition for restoring acceptable living conditions to the population—and that negotiations for peace will resume, with the rejection of hatred, acts of provocation and the use of arms” (ibid.).

United States President Barack Obama told reporters of progress in the Iraq War, “The United States will continue to stand with Iraq as a strong partner and as a friend. Tough challenges remain and I’m sure that there will be difficult days to come. But this agreement advances the political progress that can bring lasting peace and unity to Iraq, and allow for the orderly and responsible transition of American combat troops out of Iraq by next September.”

In response to Mr. Obama winning the prestigious Nobel Peace Prize, Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva said it was in “good hands,” expressing “hope that world peace is a reality and that we have no more nuclear bombs” (AFP).



■ MIDDLE EAST MEETING: Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak (right) and Jordanian King Abdullah II (left) in Cairo. The two leaders met as part of the Arab leaders’ efforts to contain the escalating violence in the Middle East (July 14, 2006).

PHOTO: KHALED DESOUKI/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Ironically, to achieve even short periods of peace, man thinks he must often engage in the opposite—war.

“Only power could protect peace,” China’s People’s Liberation Army Air Force Commander Xu Qiliang said, adding, “As the air force of a peace-loving country, we must forge our swords and shields in order to protect peace” (*Xinhua*).

The idea that war can bring peace is not new.

During the Yalta Conference at the end of World War II, U.S. President Franklin Roosevelt, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill and USSR leader Joseph Stalin signed an agreement stating, “It is our inflexible purpose to destroy German militarism and Nazism and to ensure Germany will never again be able to disturb the peace of the world.”

In his autobiography, Sir Winston Churchill said that “those who can win a war well can rarely make a good peace, and those who could make a good peace would never have won the war.”

Even ancient Greek scholars agreed. Aristotle once said, “We make war that we may live in peace.”

Manmade Answers

World leaders are seemingly the only ones in a position to end worldwide strife. These are highly educated men, often graduates of the world’s pre-eminent universities. Once in office, they gather the top experts in every field to advise them. If anyone has a chance of obtaining peace, it is them.

Their answer?

The United Nations, which regularly assembles almost 200 nations to discuss issues threatening the globe. Yet the democratic process slows any progress to a near-standstill.

The EU has also wanted to bolster European peace for decades. Yet it has only recently been able to force through a constitution—after putting it under the guise of a more easily ratified treaty.

A cursory glance at civil-war-torn Democratic Republic of Congo will tell you that individual nations cannot even find peace.



■ **PEACE AND SECURITY:** The United Nations Security Council meets before voting to adopt a resolution addressing sexual violence in armed conflict at UN headquarters in New York City (Sept. 30, 2009).

PHOTO: MARIO TAMA/GETTY IMAGES

Cities also struggle to keep it. Look at Mexico’s Ciudad Juarez, where machine-gun-wielding gang members fearlessly kill police officers.

Families have problems too—a shouting match over financial troubles, an ill-disciplined child disobeying his father’s direction, or a sibling dispute that ends in a fist fight.

In the end, getting just *two* people to live peacefully seems impossible.

Why? The problem lies on the individual level.

After a life of revolutionizing both science and war, Albert Einstein famously concluded, “The real problem is in the hearts and minds of men. It is not a problem of physics but of ethics. It is easier to denature plutonium than to denature the evil from the spirit of man.”

Abraham Lincoln saw it this way: “Human action can be modified to some extent, but human nature cannot be changed” (*The Lincoln Encyclopedia*).

Robert McNamara, U.S. Secretary of State during much of the Vietnam War, said at the end of the documentary film *Fog of War*, “You can’t change human nature. It tells you that

all of the other lessons are valueless, that the human situation is indeed hopeless.”

Thousands of years ago, the Bible outlined man’s true nature: “The way of peace THEY KNOW NOT; and there is no judgment in their goings: they have made them crooked paths: whosoever goes there shall not know peace” (Isa. 59:8).

This is re-emphasized in the book of Romans, “And the way of peace have they not known” (3:17).

Further, Romans also states, “There is none righteous, no, not one” (3:10).

Together, these quotes paint a bleak picture. The historic record proves these statements to be true—manmade solutions always lead to more wars, ruin, misery, death and destruction.

Yet engrained in man is a desire for something better. Despite his failure to bring lasting peace, man still strives for it, yearns for it. But thankfully, these hopes will be fulfilled—and soon!

Watch *The World to Come* video broadcast “The New World Order—How Peace Will Come!” at www.real-truth.org to find out how. □

IS
MARY
 MORE IMPORTANT THAN
JESUS?

One billion people adore and pray to Mary. Is this practice biblical?

BY JAMES F. TURCK



WITH ONE OF its many beads pinched between forefinger and thumb, a rosary sways in a woman's hand. She approaches a private, serene place, illuminated with burning candles.

Kneeling down, she begins to recite, almost at a whisper, a prayer of intercession. Her heart is deeply troubled—she is grieving over the loss of a loved one.

As minutes tick by and emotions well up, her prayer intensifies. Her fingers move from bead to bead. As her grip grows firmer, their faceted shapes leave little impressions on her fingers.

Lifting her head, the woman stares intently at the object of her devotion. Her misting eyes are fixed on a statue of a woman clothed in blue and white. A crown adorns the veil covering the statue's head; she cradles an infant in her left arm. The Madonna and Child captivate the woman's gaze.

Her prayer soon becomes audible. The *Salve Regina* (Hail Holy Queen) pours out: "Hail, holy queen, Mother of Mercy! Our life, our sweetness and our hope! To thee do we cry, poor banished children of Eve. To thee do we send up our sighs, mourning and weeping, in this valley of tears. Turn, then, most gracious Advocate, thine eyes of mercy toward us; and after this our exile show unto us the blessed fruit of thy womb, Jesus. O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary."

She moves to another prayer: "Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death."

Confident her prayers were heard, the woman, still clutching her rosary, stands and leaves, knowing that tomorrow she will return.

She is not alone. For thousands of years, millions of women and men alike, across nations and cultures, have offered prayers and adoration to a Mary. Pictures and statues of this

PHOTO: DAVID MCNEWM/GETTY IMAGES



personage are commonplace. She is depicted in various ways: standing alone, holding a small child or a baby, or astride a crescent moon with stars surrounding her head. People erect shrines in her honor, with others claiming that she appears to them in visions.

Having been brought up in a large Catholic church, I recited the Hail Mary and Salve Regina many times. I never gave much thought about what I was saying or to whom I was saying it. Nor did I question whether the doctrines embodied by these prayers were scriptural—based solely on the Bible. Like so many others, I simply accepted what I had been taught without question.

Who is this Mary? Is she Mary, the mother of Jesus, spoken of in the Bible? Does God's Word support praying to her? Does she intercede on behalf of Christians? Is this the "queen of heaven" mentioned in the Bible?

Before answering these questions, keep in mind Jesus Christ's warning: "This people honors Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. Howbeit in vain do they worship Me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. For laying aside the commandment of God, you hold the *tradition of men*... Full well you reject the commandment of God, that you may keep your own tradition" (Mark 7:6-9).

Though some would try to redefine what worship is, and is not, the Second Commandment is most clear (Ex. 20:4-5; Deut. 5:8-10)! Religious images and statues always become objects of worship, and this also breaks the First Commandment (Ex. 20:3): "You shall have no other gods before Me."

Who Was the Mother of Jesus?

Mary was a young Jewish girl engaged to Joseph, a carpenter. Like any young woman, she probably had her life planned: marriage, bearing children, raising a family, growing old with Joseph, one day enjoying her own grandchildren and perhaps great-grandchildren.

Mary had no hint that she had been selected to experience a monumental,

life-changing event, a major step that would be part of the overarching Plan of God, affecting all peoples—past, present and future.

At a point, Mary came face to face with an archangel named Gabriel, whom God sent to Nazareth, a small town in Galilee, to carry out a special mission. "Hail, you who are highly favored," he greeted young Mary. "The Lord is with you: blessed are you among women" (Luke 1:28).

Mary was familiar with Old Testament accounts of God-fearing men and women who had encountered angels. Now she was standing before such a being. Naturally, she was startled, rendered virtually speechless. After all, God rarely sends angels to appear before human beings.

As Gabriel watched her struggle to find the right words to respond he said, "Fear not, Mary: for you have found favor with God" (vs. 29-30).

While Mary found favor *with* God, this verse says nothing about being "*full of grace*" or being able to "*extend grace*" to another. Nor does any other verse in God's Word say any such thing. This belief is simply not supported by Scripture.

Mary was a person of honorable character. Adultery and all other forms of promiscuity were common during the time she lived—yet Mary saved her virginity for her future husband. Also, rather than rebel against God, she submitted to His will, calling herself a "handmaid of the Lord" (vs. 38), despite rumors that she was an unwed mother.

However, Mary was not holy or without sin, as popular doctrine asserts. The Bible clearly states that, with the exception of Jesus Christ, "There is *none* righteous, no, not one," and "*all* have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:10, 23).

On one occasion, Jesus was approached by a certain ruler who asked Him, "Good Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" (Luke 18:18). Jesus' response? "Why call you Me good? *None* is good, save [except] one, that is, God" (vs. 19).

Take note. If Christ's mother was "holy" or "sinless," surely He would have mentioned it—yet He did not.

When a woman praised Jesus' mother in His presence, what was His response? "Yes *rather*, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it" (Luke 11:28).

Mary strove to obey God. Nevertheless, like any other human being, she was subject to the pulls and weaknesses of the flesh, and therefore sinned, as do all.

She knew and understood that she too needed a Savior (Luke 1:46-47).

The "Mother of God"?

Notice Luke 1:31-33: "Behold, you shall conceive in your womb, and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David: and He shall reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of His kingdom there shall be no end."

Many are familiar with this scripture. Mary did conceive by the power of the Holy Spirit—God's Spirit—and gave birth to Jesus, who was God in the flesh. In every sense of the word, she was Jesus' physical mother.

But does this mean she is "the mother of God"?

According to *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, "The title seems to have arisen in devotional usage, probably in Alexandria, sometime in the 3rd or 4th century; it was a logical deduction from the doctrine of the full deity of Christ, which was established as a dogma during the 4th century, and those who defended that dogma were also the ones who drew the inference." It is supposed that the "...determination of the Council of Nicaea in 325 that Christ was not merely the highest of creatures but belonged on the divine side of the line between Creator and creature was even responsible for the rapid growth of devotion and speculation attached to *Mary as the highest of creatures* [emphasis ours]. By the end of the 4th century, the [title "mother of God"] had successfully

established itself in various sections of the church.”

But what does the Bible say?

The apostle John wrote, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God” (John 1:1-2). Two divine Beings—both called God—have eternally existed.

Through the Word (who later became Jesus Christ – John 1:14), “All things were made...and without Him was not anything made that was made” (John 1:3)—“For by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him, and for Him” (Col. 1:16). This includes His physical mother, Mary.

Speaking to the Pharisees, Jesus said, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am” (John 8:58). Jesus Christ was the God of the Old Testament—the “I AM” who spoke to Moses (Ex. 3:14). Certainly, He also existed before Mary.

To fulfill an important part in God’s plan of salvation, the Word voluntarily decided to be born of a woman, to become God in the flesh. Because He was the Supreme Creator, His divine life far outvalued His creation. And because He was physical—subject to pulls of the flesh—He was capable of committing sin. Yet if He never strayed, never broke God’s laws, as a God-being in the flesh, He could offer His sinless, innocent life as the ultimate and perfect sacrifice.

Mary was a human instrument whom God the Father used and through which the Word—the pre-incarnate Jesus Christ—took on the appearance of flesh—came in the form and likeness of man, became God in the flesh. As the Word, He did not come into existence through a human birth—He had eternally existed. Mary was the mother of Jesus Christ—God in the flesh—but she was not the mother, the source or originator of God.

Search the entire Bible. You will not find one instance of the phrase

“the Mother of God.” No twisting of Scripture can make it otherwise. Nor is Jesus’ mother ever referred to as the “queen of heaven.” (But another “Mary” is!) Mary is only referred to as “His mother” or “the mother of Jesus,” the last instance found in Acts 1:14. After that point, the Bible no longer mentions her.

Why is this—especially if we are to adore and pray to her?

Perpetual Virgin?

There is a common misconception that Jesus Christ was an only child, and that it was impossible for Him to have brothers and sisters because of Mary’s supposed “perpetual virginity.”

Yet Matthew 13:54-56 (NKJV) states, “When He had come to His own country, He taught them in their synagogue, so that they were astonished and said, ‘Where did this Man get this wisdom and these mighty works? Is this not the carpenter’s Son? Is not His mother called Mary? And His *brothers* James, Joses, Simon, and Judas? And His *sisters*, are they not all with us? Where then did this Man get all these things?’”

Though some might try to spiritualize away what this passage clearly

reveals, the Greek (the language in which the New Testament was originally written) words for “brothers” and “sisters” mean just that—flesh-and-blood siblings.

From this single passage, we can draw a number of conclusions: (1) Mary was the mother of Jesus; (2) Jesus had four brothers; (3) He had at least two sisters; (4) Jesus and His six or more siblings had a common mother.

These are the most specific verses identifying the family relations of Jesus Christ. If one accepts these verses, it should be impossible to believe that Jesus was an only child, as this would plainly contradict the Bible.

Another passage clearly shows that Mary came together in sexual union with her husband *after* Jesus’ birth. Matthew 1:18 (NKJV) states, “Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, *before they came together*, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit.” This implies that, as husband and wife, they eventually shared intimate relations.

Continuing in verse 20: “But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, ‘Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary



■ **“APPEARANCES”**: A man holds a rock that he says looks like an image of the Virgin of Guadalupe, a popular apparition of the Virgin Mary, shown at right in a 16th-century painting. His father found the rock while searching for landscaping materials in an orchard in Oakdale, Calif.

PHOTO: LISA JAMES/MERCED SUN-STAR/MCT



your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit.”

The angel did not express any words forbidding Joseph to take Mary as his wife, but instead encouraged him with the words “do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife.” The angel did not say, “Do not dare touch Mary, for she is to be a virgin throughout her life.”

The concept of Mary’s perpetual, or lifelong, virginity derived from the early writings of a Catholic scholar named Origen (AD 185-254). His claims, based on the apocryphal Gospel of James, which focuses on the childhood of Mary up to the birth and childhood of Jesus, appeared around the middle of the second century.

As you can see, the perpetual virginity doctrine crumbles in a heap in light of these and other scriptures.

An Intercessor and Mediator?

Who is a Christian’s intercessor? Is it a shared role—or held by only one person? Is it Mary, Christ or both?

Let’s begin by examining the gospel accounts of Christ’s life and death. A key prophecy describing where Jesus went after His Resurrection is found in Luke 22: “And as soon as it was day, the elders of the people and the chief priests and the scribes came together, and led Him into their council, saying, Are You the Christ? Tell us. And He said unto them, If I tell you, you will not believe: And if I also ask you, you will not answer Me, nor let Me go. *Hereafter shall the Son of man sit on the right hand of the power of God*” (vs. 66-69).

Jesus’ words are clear. There is no mention of Mary.

After Jesus was raised from the dead, He continued to teach His disciples and prepare them for the work they would carry out after He was gone. The account in Mark records that after fulfilling His task, Christ ascended into heaven: “So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, He was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God” (Mark 16:19).

It is Christ whom God raised to the second-highest position possible on Earth or in heaven. Notice: “When He

[the Father] raised Him [Christ] from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, far above *all* principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and *every* name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and has put *all* things under His feet” (Eph. 1:20-22).

Again, no mention of Mary.

And what is Jesus’ role now that He is “sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high” (Heb. 1:3)?

Among His many roles and titles—such as Prince of Peace, Savior, Chief Apostle, King of kings, Lord of lords—Jesus Christ is also referred to as “High Priest.” “Seeing then that we have a great High Priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not a High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin” (Heb. 4:14-15).

Nowhere does God’s Word ascribe any office or title to Jesus’ mother!

Let’s examine more about Christ’s all-important office. In Hebrews 3:1-2, the apostle Paul writes, “Consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus; who was faithful to Him that appointed Him.” The Bible plainly states that God the Father appointed Jesus Christ to the office of spiritual High Priest. This is the office through which Christ—and Christ *alone*—works.

But what does Jesus *do* as High Priest?

In Hebrews 8, Paul elaborates on Christ’s responsibilities as High Priest. “We have such a High Priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; a Minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man. For every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices” (vs. 1-3).

Jesus Christ is described as a “Minister” in God’s sanctuary. He, and no one else, is actively working as Mediator between Christians and the Father. His sacrifice alone gives Christians access to God. Christians

do not have to—and cannot—go through anyone else to have access to God.

In Ephesians 2, Paul records, “But now in Christ Jesus you who sometimes were far off are made near by the blood of Christ...for through Him [alone] we both [Jew and Gentile] have access by one Spirit unto the Father” (vs. 13, 18).

Christ’s death was required to break this wall of separation. Through prayer, Christians are now permitted to enter God’s throne room (Heb. 4:16). Only through Jesus, the active High Priest over His New Testament Church, is this possible. His responsibilities include presenting spiritual sacrifices—prayers—to God the Father.

Paul wrote, “Wherefore He [Christ] is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him [He does not need anyone else’s help], seeing He ever lives to make intercession for them” (Heb. 7:25).

Christ intercedes on behalf of Christians. The word “intercede” means to “intervene between parties with a view to reconciling differences.” In I Timothy 2:5, *Christ* is also called the “Mediator between God and men”—not Mary.

It is plain then that Jesus takes an active role in working with true Christians and the Father—and no one else!

Where Is Mary and What Is She Doing?

Scriptures easily disprove commonly held erroneous beliefs about Jesus’ mother. We will examine two more: that Mary is alive in heaven and, at various times, appears in vision to believers.

Contrary to the beliefs of mainstream Christianity, when people die, they are *dead*—period. They do not roll around in heaven or eternally roast in hell. Neither do they bide their time in purgatory or roam the earth as ghosts. Therefore, they cannot appear or speak to anyone. These popular ideas are manmade inventions based on the “traditions of men” (Mark 7:6-7, 9).

The Bible teaches that “the living know that they shall die: but the dead

Please see MARY, page 22



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THE MARY OF ANTIQUITY

Clever Counterfeit Exposed!

While most believe they pray to Mary, the mother of Jesus, the truth of whom they actually pray to will surprise you.



WE HAVE SEEN that the biblical Mary is much different from the “Mary” popularly taught around the world.

But where did this other Mary originate?

David C. Pack’s book *The True Jesus Christ – Unknown to Christianity* provides unmistakable proof that the Mary of antiquity is tied to the same pagan holiday that led to the modern-day Easter celebration. The following excerpt from

Chapter 13 “Vain Worship—and Another Jesus” makes this plain:

It will come as a surprise to most that Easter is mentioned repeatedly in the Bible—but never in a good context. In fact, God condemns the custom in the strongest possible terms. We will see that Easter is interwoven with the worship of Baal and sun worship.



Before concluding that this cannot be true, force yourself to consider the facts of history. It is vital to understand the *origin* of Easter, and its connection to the Jesus worshipped by millions, because this spring celebration is considered the holiest in the Christian calendar.

So then, who or what is Easter? From where does this term derive?

The following sources answer the question: “What means the term Easter itself? It is not a Christian name. It bears its Chaldean origin on its very forehead. *Easter* is nothing else than *Astarte*, one of the titles of Beltis, the *queen of heaven*...Now, the Syrian goddess, or Astarte, is identified with Semiramis by Athenagoras (*Legatio*, vol. ii. p. 179), and by Lucian (*De Suria Dea*, vol. iii. p. 382)...Now, no name could more exactly picture forth the character of Semiramis, as queen of Babylon, than the name of ‘Ashtart,’ for that just means ‘The woman that made towers’...Asht-turit, then... is obviously the same as the Hebrew ‘*Ashtoreth*’” (Alexander Hislop, *The Two Babylons*, pg. 147, 446, emphasis ours).

Notice this conclusive quote from *Microsoft Encarta Online Encyclopedia*: “Ishtar was the Great Mother, the goddess of fertility and the *queen of heaven*.” In Jeremiah 7:18, God condemned baking cakes (hot cross buns) to the “queen of heaven.” So, in actuality, Ashtaroth (Ishtar) was Nimrod’s (Gen. 10:8-10) harlotrous, mother/wife widow, Semiramis, as many other ancient historians attest! Easter is none other than Ashtaroth! More proof will follow, but we can now examine the scriptures that show how God views the worship of this pagan goddess—by any name.

Easter, Baal and Israel

Now that we know that Easter is the goddess *Ashtaroth*, we need to look into the Bible and see what God thinks of her, and notice her connection to Baal.

This first of two sources about Baal comes from *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, and it begins to connect

Baal to Ashtaroth: “The Semitic word *baal*, meaning owner or master, was also used in ancient religions for lord or god, and it is still defined as a Canaanite or Phoenician deity. Among the greatest of the Semitic peoples’ deities were Baal and Astarte—both symbols of fertility. Baal, the god of the sun, was supposed to make crops grow and flocks increase. Astarte [was] the goddess of the moon.”

Now read this quote from *The Columbia Encyclopedia*, Sixth Edition: “Baal had become the ruler of the universe. The Ugarit tablets make him chief of the Canaanite pantheon. He is the source of life and fertility, the mightiest hero, the lord of war, and the defeater of the god Yam. There were many temples of Baal in Canaan, and the name Baal was often added to that of a locality, e.g., Baal-peor, Baal-hazor, Baal-hermon. The Baal cult penetrated Israel and at times led to *syncretism*...The practice of sacred prostitution seems to have been associated with the worship of Baal in Palestine and the cult was vehemently denounced by the prophets.”

Baal was the most popular and powerful god of his time, considered to be “ruler of the universe,” and Israel wanted to be associated with—to worship—both Baal *and* the true God. Hence, the above reference to “syncretism,” which is the mixing of true and false religion—the worship of the true God mixed with customs, practices and worship of other gods.

Merging worship of the true God with Baal worship was Israel’s problem. It led Elijah to indict all Israel: “How long halt you between two opinions? If the LORD be God, follow Him; but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word” (I Kings 18:21).

Now let’s examine Israel’s involvement with Baal and Ashtaroth: “And the children of Israel did *evil* in the sight of the LORD...And they forsook the LORD, and served Baal and *Ashtaroth* [Easter]” (Judg. 2:11, 13).

The context of the passage shows that God allowed His people to be taken from their land into foreign captivity as

a result of *this sin!* It continues, explaining that God delivered His people over and over again through a series of judges. After each deliverance, Israel returned to the same false gods, which in turn brought *another* captivity, via conquest by the nations around them. They never seemed to learn, as verse 19 makes clear: “And it came to pass, when the judge was dead, that they returned, and corrupted themselves... *in following other gods*...and...they ceased not from *their own doings*, nor from their *stubborn way*” (Judg. 2:19). In chapter 10, verse 6, Israel repeats this pattern of rebellion and stubbornness. And God, just as insistently, called it evil—as He still does today.

Baal and Ashtaroth worship reappeared during the prophet Samuel’s time. Samuel told Israel, “*Put away the strange gods and Ashtaroth from among you, and prepare your hearts unto the LORD, and serve Him only*... Then the children of Israel *did* put away Baalim and Ashtaroth, and *served the LORD only*” (I Sam. 7:3-4). Later, in I Samuel 12:10-11, Samuel publicly recounted Israel’s history to them. He reminded them that they continually returned to obeying God, only to fall backward into idolatry time and time again!

Let’s read one final example. The Bible states that King Solomon was the wisest man who ever lived. Yet, he made a mistake God considered so great that, after his death, He punished Solomon by removing the kingdom from his son.

His mistake?

Solomon married a Gentile “stranger” who led him into the worship of Easter (Ashtaroth). Notice I Kings 11:4-6: “For it came to pass, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods...For Solomon went after *Ashtaroth* the goddess of the Zidonians...And Solomon did evil in the sight of the LORD, and went *not fully* after the LORD, as did David his father.” Verses 11-12 demonstrate that the kingdom *was*, in fact, taken from his son.

God considered worship of this goddess as outright “evil.” This was

even though Solomon was only “not fully” seeking the true God.

German philosopher Georg Hegel wrote, “What experience and history teach is this,—that peoples and governments never have learned anything from history.” George Santayana took it further, stating, “Those who cannot remember the past are *condemned to repeat it*” (emphasis ours).

This lesson describes ancient Israel—but it also describes today’s modern world. Because Israel could not stay on track, they were taken into captivity, eventually becoming lost to history! (After one more captivity and punishment, prophecy reveals that God will gather them from a final, coming captivity just before Christ’s Return.)

This paragraph requires far too much explanation for this book. In fact, it requires its own full book to explain—*America and Britain in Prophecy*. You have never read anything like it.

What History Reveals

We are now prepared to examine the astonishing record from history, and allow it to expose the popular “another Jesus” worshipped today for who he *really* is. Prepare to be stunned—and, hopefully, even more deeply motivated to act upon all that you are learning!

First, there is this: “the conception of a Saviour-God was quite normal in the ancient pagan world...a conception of salvation underlies the notion of such Gods as Osiris, Attis, and Adonis” (John M. Robertson, *Christianity and Mythology*, p. 395).

And then this incredible admission: “It has often been urged that this belief in the Resurrection of Jesus is due to ideas of divine resurrection current in the contemporary world...stories of Attis, Adonis, and Osiris...In the pagan stories the rising again is a joyous reversal of defeat; in the Christian story it is the complement of victorious death. It may be said that Attis and Osiris saved by rising again, Jesus by dying...The Easter observance did not arise at once out of belief in the Resurrection, but

developed later by gradual stages out of the Jewish Pascha. The notion implied in the Easter greeting ‘*Christ is risen*’ is a secondary development; the idea comes from this festival and from its occurrence in spring; the festival does not come from the idea. The idea of Christ’s Resurrection was injected into the old practice of Easter observance and not the other way around” (A. Nock, *Early Gentile Christianity and*

to the winter solstice in December because that day was deemed the Nativity of the Sun; we can hardly be thought rash or unreasonable in conjecturing that the other cardinal festival of the Christian church—the solemnization of Easter—may have been in like manner, and from like motives of edification, adapted to a similar celebration of the Phrygian god Attis at the vernal equinox...*it is a remarkable*

“Bible “believers” today can think that they are worshipping the true Savior when they are really worshipping a false savior—“another Jesus”!”

coincidence...that the Christian and the heathen festivals of the divine death and resurrection should have been solemnized at the same season...It is difficult to regard the coincidence as purely accidental” (James G. Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, Vol. I, pp. 306-309, emphasis ours).

While very extensive, this next and final source is perhaps the most powerful—and the most fascinating to understand. Let its message crash on your ears: “The similarity of these

Its Hellenistic Background, pp. 105-107, emphasis ours throughout).

The powerful theme of this oft-repeated counterfeit is made absolutely clear by the famous historian, James George Frazer: “Now the death and resurrection of Attis were officially celebrated at Rome on the twenty-fourth and twenty-fifth of March, the latter being regarded as the spring equinox, and...according to an ancient and widespread tradition Christ suffered on the twenty-fifth of March...Thus the tradition which placed the death of Christ on the twenty-fifth of March...is all the more remarkable because astronomical considerations prove that it can have had *no historical foundation*...When we remember that the festival of St. George in April has replaced the ancient pagan festival of the Parilia; that the festival of St. John the Baptist in June has succeeded to a heathen Midsummer festival of water; that the festival of the Assumption of the Virgin in August has ousted the festival of Diana; that the feast of All Souls [Halloween] in November is a continuation of an old heathen feast of the dead; and that the Nativity of Christ himself was assigned

ancient pagan legends and beliefs with Christian traditions was indeed so great that it excited the attention and undisguised wrath of the early Christian...not knowing how to explain it... Tertullian also says that ‘the devil by the mysteries of his idols imitates even the main part of the divine mysteries’... Cortez, too...complained that the Devil had positively taught to the Mexicans the same things which God had taught to Christendom” (Edward Carpenter, *Pagan and Christian Creeds*, p. 25).

“The common notion is that...pagan gods...fled away in dismay before the sign of the Cross, and at the sound of the name of Jesus...yet, as is well known to every student, it is...contrary to fact...At the time of the...recorded appearance of Jesus...and for some centuries before...there were Temples without end...dedicated to...Apollo or Dionysus among the Greeks, Hercules among the Romans, Mithra among the Persians...Baal and Astarte among the Babylonians...and so forth...An extraordinarily interesting fact...is that notwithstanding great geographical distances and racial differences between...cults...in the details of their services,

the *general outlines of their creeds and ceremonials* were—if not identical—so *markedly similar*” (ibid., pp. 19-20, emphasis ours).

A fact that cannot be considered coincidental is that “of all or nearly all the deities...it was said and believed that...They were born on or very near our Christmas Day...They were born of a Virgin-Mother...in a Cave or Underground Chamber...They led a life of toil for Mankind...And were called by the names of Light-bringer, Healer, Mediator, Savior, Deliverer... They were however vanquished by the Powers of Darkness...And descended into Hell or the Underworld... They rose again from the dead, and became the pioneers of mankind to the Heavenly world...As to Krishna [part of the Hindu trinity], the Indian god, the points of agreement with the general divine career...are too salient to be overlooked, and too numerous to be recorded” (ibid., pp. 21, 24).

“That God sacrificed his only Son for the salvation of the world...is so mystical, so remote...yet the extraordinary fact is that a similar belief ranges all through the ancient religions, and can be traced back to the earliest times” (ibid., p. 131).

We can summarize the last two sources. The universal church at Rome often incorporated pagan festivals—pasting Christian-sounding names over them and calling them “Christian.” This was done to make Christianity more palatable and familiar to heathen worshippers, whom the Church was trying to attract. It became easy—natural—for the masses who accepted Christianity to be permitted to bring the familiar customs, traditions and beliefs about their own “savior” into worship of the new “savior,” from then on to be referred to as “Jesus Christ.”

While there is not space in this chapter to thoroughly cover the entire history and origin of this different “Jesus,” a brief summary, followed by one more revealing statement from history, is helpful.

The Mother and the Savior

Semiramis (Easter) was both the mother and wife of Nimrod, described in

Genesis 10:8-10, who was the great-grandson of Noah and the original Baal. In a blatant attempt to rebel against God shortly after the Flood—and the Tower of Babel was built so that civilization would be impervious to “any other flood that God might bring”—history shows that this mother/son duo appointed themselves as gods to be worshipped. History also records that Noah’s son Shem (Nimrod’s great-uncle) eventually tracked down and killed Nimrod, and sent his body parts throughout his kingdom. (This is also what happened to Osiris, the “father” in the Egyptian trinity with Horus and Isis.) Semiramis fled for her life, only to return 30 years later with her younger son, Horus (the son in the Egyptian trinity), whom she said was born supernaturally and was the reincarnation of Nimrod—the resurrected savior! Nimrod was Horus’s supposed father, and Semiramis claimed that she had immaculately conceived him. She also claimed that she came from the moon in a giant egg that fell into the Euphrates river and that this occurred after the spring equinox on the first full moon. This moon egg was known as Ishtar’s (pronounced Easter’s) Egg. She reinstated worship of herself and Nimrod, calling herself the mother of god and queen of heaven, among other things, by saying that Nimrod symbolized the sun as it “died” during the long cold winter. She also taught that Nimrod was resurrected, and that his son Horus was resurrected to join him in heaven, and Nimrod’s resurrection was represented by the sun returning each spring to warm the earth and renew life.

While there is much more to the story than can be included here, Semiramis’s new “mystery system” eventually spread to all peoples of the earth, as the earlier sources reveal.

Now notice this from the Akkadian (Assyrian-Babylonian) creation epic, speaking of Nimrod, the original “savior” of the world: “As for us, by however many names we call him, he is our god! Let us then proclaim his fifty names” (James B. Pritchard, *Ancient Near Eastern*

Texts Relating to the Old Testament, p. 69).

Here are some of them from history, many of which God condemned Israel for having followed: Nimrod, Molech, Chemosh, Baal, Milcom, Bacchus, Dagon, Osiris, Saturn, Adonis, Cupid, Apis, Volcon, Attis, Kronos and Tammuz, the son in the Babylonian trinity with Ninas (Nimrod) and Ishtar (Easter). (Ezekiel 8:14-16 directly connects Tammuz—the resurrected son of, and reincarnation of, Nimrod—to sunrise services and sun worship, which God calls there an abomination.)

It can now be better understood *why* the apostle Paul wrote the Corinthians to beware of the subtle deceit of “another Jesus *whom we have not preached.*” The original apostles understood that “another” very different “Jesus” whom they had “not preached” had existed for millennia.

Bible “believers” today can *think* that they are worshipping the true Savior when they are really worshipping a *false savior*—“another Jesus”!

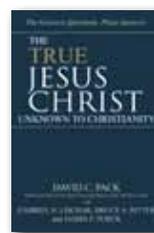
Understand. The entirety of traditional Christianity is worshipping Baal, the mediator and sun god, who was named after his “wife” Ishtar (who we have seen was really his *mother* Semiramis).

The modern mother/child “Mary/ Jesus” emphasis, including the worshipful adoration of Mary by millions, is a parallel with Semiramis and Nimrod that cannot be missed, even at a cursory glance.

One Mary—the biblical Mary—was a willing tool in God’s hand to accomplish a major step in His plan of salvation for mankind. She lived a full life and as a true saint, is now asleep in the grave awaiting the First Resurrection.

The other Mary—Ishtar—is an ancient false idol manufactured and propagated from the minds of men and condemned in the Bible. Millions still blindly worship her today.

To learn more about the true Mary, read David C. Pack’s book *The True Jesus Christ – Unknown to Christianity*. □



MARY

Continued from page 17

know not anything” (Ecc. 9:5). Christ Himself said, “...no man has ascended up to heaven” (John 3:13). Even King David, whom God said was “a man after My own heart” (Acts 13:22), did not go to heaven when he died. The apostle Peter preached, “He is both dead and buried, and his sepulcher is with us unto this day” (Acts 2:29).

Paul wrote that since all people have sinned (Rom. 3:23), they have earned the wages of sin—DEATH (Rom. 6:23)—not eternal life in hell, heaven or anywhere else! On the other hand, eternal life is a *gift* from God. It is not something we already inherently possess.

Believe God’s Word for what it says.

The Bible teaches that all of God’s faithful and righteous servants—His saints—David, Moses, Aaron, Sarah,

for example—are dead, “asleep in the grave,” awaiting the First Resurrection at the Second Coming of Jesus Christ (I Cor. 15:12-23, 50-54; I Thes. 4:13-17; Heb. 11:39-40). Mary will be resurrected among them. She is still in the grave and, contrary to what men may assert, she does not appear nor speak in vision to anyone. The Bible has long warned against being deceived by false miracles, dreams and demonic supernatural events (Jer. 14:13-14, 23:16-17, 21, 25-27, 30-32).

As we approach the end of Satan’s rule over Earth (II Cor. 4:4; I John 5:19; Rev. 12:9) and the Return of Jesus Christ, false miracles and visions will increase, deceiving an unsuspecting humanity (Matt. 24:24; II Thes. 2:9; Rev. 13:13).

Understand that Satan is a master counterfeiter. He counterfeits virtually every one of God’s true doctrines, pawning off his forgeries on humanity.

As the “god of this world” (II Cor. 4:4), he “deceives the whole world” (Rev. 12:9). It should be no surprise then that “Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light” and “his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness” (II Cor. 11:14-15), who then teach his counterfeit doctrines to the masses. Through his ministers, the devil has been able to take pagan religious practices, slightly repackage them with Christian-sounding names, and deceive most of mankind into observing them instead of God’s Holy Days.

Satan’s practice of counterfeiting the things of God includes counterfeiting Mary. It is the devil’s version of “Mary”—anciently called Ishtar or Ashtaroth—who is being worshipped by millions. And this Mary has her own pagan religious celebration—Easter!

The article “The Mary of Antiquity” (also found in this issue), makes this ancient connection plain. □

HAND

Continued from page 8

nerves (called Pacinian corpuscles) are embedded relatively deep (about two millimeters under your skin). Yet, our sense of touch is so refined that we can feel texture differences as small as the width of a human hair, about 200 micrometers. Scientists have wondered how deeply embedded nerves could detect the subtle vibrations involved in the perception of fine differences in textures.

Using robotic fingertips designed to detect tactile information, French scientists discovered that the small ridges on the surface of our fingers (fingerprints) amplify and filter vibrations, which help transmit them to the deeply embedded nerves.

How much do fingerprints enhance our ability to detect tactile differences? Do they double it? Triple it? Scientists found that the vibrations from a patterned fingertip were 100 times stronger than vibrations from a smooth fingertip.

Thanks to fingerprints, our sense of touch is 100 times better than it would

be if the surface of our fingers was smooth!

Researchers determined that fingerprints only do their vibration-filtering job when the finger is moving perpendicular (at right angles) to the fingerprint ridges. This means that if fingerprints all ran in one direction, filtering would only occur when fingers moved at right angles to the ridges. But because of the swirl and loop pattern of human fingerprints, every direction of movement activates filtering properties.

What about the fact that fingerprint patterns vary from person to person?

According to the leading researcher of the study, G. Debrégeas, “The nice thing is that pattern doesn’t matter. The distinctiveness of fingerprint patterns from one person to the next doesn’t seem to have an effect on filtering capabilities” (*Science*).

Problems with Evolution

The hand and its various functions provide much evidence in support of the belief that life was created by God. But is there evidence which is directly at

odds with the theory that life evolved by chance?

In his book *What Is Creation Science?* biologist Gary Parker writes, “Using descent from a common ancestor to explain similarities is probably the most logical and appealing idea that evolutionists have. Isaac Asimov, well known science fiction writer, is so pleased with the idea that he says our ability to classify plants and animals on a groups-within-groups hierarchical basis virtually forces scientists to treat evolution as ‘a fact.’ In his enthusiasm, Asimov apparently forgot that we can classify kitchen utensils on a groups-within-groups basis, but that hardly forces anyone to believe that knives evolved into spoons, spoons into forks, or saucers into cups and plates.”

Evolutionist William Fix explains in *The Bone Peddlers: Selling Evolution*: “The older text-books on evolution make much of the idea of homology, pointing out the obvious resemblances between the skeletons of the limbs of different animals. Thus the ‘pentadactyl’ limb pattern is found in the arm of a man, the wing of a bird, and the flipper of a whale, and this is held to

indicate their common origin. Now if these various structures were transmitted by the same gene-complex, varied from time to time by mutations and acted upon by environmental selection, the theory would make good sense. Unfortunately this is not the case. Homologous organs are now known to be produced by totally different gene complexes in the different species. The concept of homology in terms of similar genes handed on from a common ancestor has broken down.”

Thus, to believe in evolution, one would have to believe that separate gene complexes for each of these “similar” limbs all evolved independently by chance. The improbability of evolution is increased beyond comprehension, in light of the greater improbability that not one, but multiple separate gene complexes would have to have evolved independently.

Proteins and Evolution

The growth and functioning of muscles, including those that move the human hand, depend on proteins.

Did they evolve by chance?

A protein called titin (also known as connectin) is involved in the contraction of striated muscles, such as those in the human forearm which move fingers and generate grip strength. The diversity in the kind and function of proteins results from differences in the number and sequencing of amino acids. Like all proteins, titin is composed of a specific chain of amino acids. The average amino acid chain contains between 300 and 400 amino acids. Titin, the largest protein in the body, is made up of 34,350 amino acids.

Proteins must have the precise shape to accomplish their specific function or functions in the cell. A slight variation in the correct shape of the protein molecule type is detrimental for the cell.

Why should we think that these various amino acid chains did not just evolve?

The answer to that question is provided in part by Cambridge University educated Philosopher of Science, Dr.

Stephen C. Meyer in *Signature in the Cell: DNA and the Evidence for Intelligent Design*.

Dr. Meyer explains that to form a protein, amino acids must link together by forming a particular chemical bond known as a peptide bond. Otherwise, the amino acids will not fold into proteins. The probability of building a chain of 150 amino acids in which all linkages are peptide bonds is estimated to be 1 in 10 to the 45th power (for

“The hand and its various functions provide much evidence in support of the belief that life was created by God.”

the sake of perspective, 10 to the 2nd power is 100, 10 to the 3rd is 1000).

In nature, there are both “left-handed” (L-forms) and “right-handed” amino acids. Each of these two types is produced with roughly equal frequency. A protein will not function unless all of its amino acids are left-handed. The odds that all of the amino acids in a peptide bond chain of 150 amino acids will be “left-handed” are also about 1 in 10 to the 45th power. Thus, the chances of forming a 150 amino acid chain in which all of the bonds are peptide bonds and all of the amino acids are L-forms is roughly 1 chance in 10 to the 90th power.

Proteins will not function unless they fold into stable structures. Among all possible amino acid sequences of 150 amino-acids in length, only 1 in 10 to the 74th power is capable of folding into a stable structure. This means that a random process will result in a functional protein about one time in every 10 to the 74th attempts.

Taking all of this together, the odds of a 150-amino-acid compound randomly assembling into a functional protein in a prebiotic soup is equal to

the probability of having only peptide bonds (1 in 10 to the 45th), times the probability of only left-handed amino acids (1 in 10 to the 45th) times the probability of correct amino acid sequencing (1 in 10 to the 74th). The result is 1 in 10 to the 164th power, meaning that the odds of a 150-amino-acid compound randomly assembling into a functional protein in a prebiotic soup is 1 in 10 to the 164th power. How big is 10 to the 164th power?

Dr. Meyer says that the total number of all protons, neutrons and electrons in the entire observable universe is 1 in 10 to the 80th power! And if that is not unlikely enough to cast doubt on the evolution of protein, consider that the analysis above was for a protein chain containing 150 amino acids. By comparison, titin, comprised of 34,350 amino acids, is significantly more complex and thus far less likely to have formed by chance than the 150 amino-acid protein considered in the example.

To put this in perspective, the odds of being struck by lightning during your lifetime are 1 in 600,000 while your odds of being struck *twice* are 1 in 360 billion. Further, the likelihood of your house being hit by a meteor is 1 in 182 trillion—still a miniscule number compared to the chance that proteins evolved!

Undeniable Proof

The human hand attests to the existence of the God who created heaven and Earth, and to His love for mankind. Each and every aspect of the hand serves a purpose, and each of its parts work in concert to produce what modern science cannot—an incredible combination of fluidity, strength, sensitivity and dexterity. The progress of science brings greater awareness of an extraordinary complexity that random processes did not—and could never—produce. To say otherwise is to deny the dictates of common sense and rob God of the glory that is His due.

To learn more, read our seven-part article series, “Evolution Exposed: Deconstructing False Science.” □

PERSONAL

Continued from page 2

and were handsomely paid for their efforts. The subprime mortgage market became a ticking bomb, waiting to explode.

Two developments have played a significant role in the onset of the current crisis. The first was deregulation of the U.S. financial services industry with the 1999 repeal of the Glass-Steagall Act. Carefully crafted during the Great Depression to control stock market speculation, Glass-Steagall prevented retail and investment banks, and insurance companies, from owning each other.

With the repeal, huge financial services conglomerates rapidly formed, combining these types of financial institutions. Industry behemoths such as Citigroup and JP Morgan were born. This meant that retail banks seeking ever-higher profits could dive into high-risk speculative ventures through ownership of—or being owned *by*—investment banks. This brought disaster in 1929.

A Culture of Greed

The second change was the low interest rate policy pursued by the Federal Reserve. These rates encouraged banks to target subprime customers with variable rate mortgages. They offered initially low “teaser” rates that would reset upwards in two or three years. With home prices rising, customers took the bait, believing that when the reset arrived they could refinance at affordable rates.

Many mortgage brokers misrepresented terms and conditions to eager customers who were themselves providing fraudulent information. Many banks did not bother to check the information. “Predatory lending” invited “predatory borrowing!”

Banks then sold risky bonds as safe investments to unsuspecting investors.

Rating agencies, paid by the banks, rated these bonds (those with subprime components) as safe—even giving some the highest rating.

With big, steady, annual increases in real estate prices, builders nationwide went on a building spree. This created a sense of “easy money”—“something for nothing.” In their greed, many “scammed the system.” This does not count the many others who were outright corrupt—and scammed people in the usual ways.

“With moral values disintegrating nationwide, many lack the fiscal responsibility—the character!—of previous generations.”

And of course predatory lawyers are now having a field day *at every turn*.

Crisis Strikes and Spreads

The crisis began slowly in mid-2007. Due to a glut of homes for sale, housing prices fell moderately. But the scales were tipped—as the first round of rate resets was coming due. Faced with exploding payments, falling prices and inability to refinance mortgages, millions defaulted. Confronted with higher payments, and on mortgages *greater* than the home’s value, owners began abandoning their mortgages—many simply turning in keys.

Rising numbers now feel no moral obligation to fulfill what they promised to repay, believing it better to just walk away. This is in stark contrast to years ago when borrowers felt an obligation—a *duty*!—to pay off loans. With moral values disintegrating nationwide, many lack the fiscal responsibility—the character!—of previous generations.

As the crisis intensifies, mortgage defaults are multiplying. And everyone

is on the hook. “Monoline” insurance companies have suddenly become liable for multiple billions of debt. Investors have been left holding bonds that will never be repaid. Banks are finding it difficult to sell additional bonds as investors have backed out of the market, leery of poor investments. The banks’ fee income has dried up—leaving them with massive capital deficiencies.

Thus, banks have sharply reduced lending to each other, and to the public, fearful that loans will not be repaid.

Evidence is clear that shockwaves from the crisis are being felt in other sectors of the economy. Liquidity is drying up and less money is available to finance commercial loans.

The credit crunch has pushed beyond retail banking, and now affects major business deals and commercial real estate. Municipal bonds (that fund cities, colleges and hospitals)—once considered safe investments—can no longer easily find buyers.

As more loans reach interest rate resets, more defaults will occur. The crisis will deepen.

A fast-moving FINANCIAL TSUNAMI now approaches the shores of the world economy! I repeat: It IS coming.

Identifying the True Source of the Problem

The main motivating factors behind the crisis were *greed* and *covetousness*. Human nature has been accurately described as vanity, jealousy, lust and GREED. Understand. Banks were greedy for ever-higher profits. So were investors who took foolish risks for higher return on investment. And greedy individuals sought loans they could not repay to purchase material goods they coveted, but did not need—and could not afford!

Of course, used cautiously and sensibly, credit is not wrong. It can permit the purchase of a car, home—or an education.

Simple lack of self-control drives many into bankruptcy. Impulse buying has turned the loan industry into a thriving business. Credit is now used for luxuries, leaving little to show for it except the monthly bill.

Obsession with material goods is fueling—in fact, *supercharging*—the mounting debt crisis. People now routinely spend more than they make. They want the best clothes, newest gadgets and fanciest cars. “Keeping up with the Joneses” and “Everyone else is doing it!” drives them.

Jesus warned, “Beware of *covetousness*: for a man’s life consists *not* in the abundance of the things which he possesses” (Luke 12:15).

Do ANY still believe this?

When unhappy or discouraged, many go shopping until they feel better. Ironically, existing debt often brought the unhappiness. So the cycle continues. The result? Governments, financial institutions and millions of citizens are *all* sliding toward bankruptcy.

The present generation is very different from those of the past. Many, in fact most, now live solely for pleasure, comfort, gain and entertainment. Personal responsibility and character-building have almost disappeared. So many reflect—“I *want*”—“I want a *lot*”—and “I want it *now!*”

The apostle Paul foretold all that is happening. Notice: “This know also, that in the last days *perilous* times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful...false accusers...fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a *form* of godliness [there is plenty of religion around], but denying the *POWER* thereof: from such turn away” (II Tim. 3:1-5).

Make no mistake. As trends and conditions degenerate, violence will ensue—and in a big way. Uprisings, riots and tumults will increase in number and severity—so will violent crime, as the increasing number of desperate people take des-

perate action in an attempt to save THEMSELVES—at all costs. With this, the confusion of people asking, “What do we do?”—“Where do we go?”—“Who do we listen to?”—will grow beyond anything ever before seen.

The cacophony of fearful uncertainty will be *deafening!*

Take Charge of Your Finances!

Now back to the subject of finances. Differing opinions on why the personal debt crisis—and how to take control of your finances—fill newspapers, magazines, books and radio talk shows. But financial counselors offer advice that misses the crux of the problem.

With so many “experts” presenting theories (so often contrary to what other “experts” say), whose advice should be followed? Where can people find real solutions to real problems?

The answer is the Bible—God’s *Instruction Manual* for mankind! Just

as manuals exist for how to operate complex machines, the Creator God included a Manual for the most complex creation ever made—human beings.

Only by carefully following its guidelines—the immutable LAWS—in this Manual, can humanity achieve success.

Think of the following. God has created laws to govern every aspect of His Creation. Just as the laws of gravity and inertia govern portions of it, God has ordained laws that govern all aspects of money matters. By following them, people can ensure financial security.

Most just do not understand that laws govern every action in life. The law of CAUSE and EFFECT—where actions always bring REactions—applies to finances. There is a way—a direct path!—to financial freedom.

Jesus explains this. Notice: “I am come that they might have life, and

■ **THE HOUSING MARKET:** Rafael Aponte (left), who lost his job and his home in foreclosure, protests outside the National Constitution Center in Philadelphia, Penn., where a congressional panel met to look into homeowner-rescue programs (Sept. 24, 2009).

PHOTO: CHARLES FOX/PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER/MCT





■ **HOW MANY CHOOSE FRUGALITY?:** Shoppers wait in long lines at a Target store in Madison Heights, Mich., as they take advantage of holiday sales on Black Friday (Nov. 27, 2009).

PHOTO: ERIC SEALS/DETROIT FREE PRESS/MCT

that they might have it more *abundantly*” (John 10:10).

Before entering this path, a choice must be made. Almighty God revealed this choice to ancient Israel: “I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore CHOOSE life, that both you and your seed may live” (Deut. 30:19). God will not force anyone to follow His ways. The choice is simple: Obeying Him leads to blessings and happiness—disobedience leads to misery and unhappiness. Like the Israelites, many refuse God’s warnings. They ignore the fact that by not following His laws, bad effects will come. Through man’s rebellion, unhappy lives result, with none having any idea WHY. The same is true with God’s financial laws.

Be honest. Admit you spend much time thinking and talking about MONEY. For most, the “money struggle” is constant. The pressure can seem

unbearable. Just the stress can drive away the happiness and peace everyone seeks.

Biblical Principles of Stewardship

The Bible contains many practical, helpful points about finances. Some mistakenly assume God believes money is evil, and that Christians should be poor. They associate prosperity with the lustful, sinful lifestyles of the wealthy, holding the belief that “humble Christians” must go without to demonstrate “true” Christianity.

This is wrong thinking! III John 2 ALSO reveals that God wants His people to live a prosperous, healthy life. Unless one’s finances are in order, and well managed, this is impossible.

God has appointed you steward of your finances—or your family’s—and COMMANDS that you do this correctly! The Bible contains valuable lessons that help one practice successful stewardship.

King Solomon, the wisest man ever, said, “Whatsoever your hand finds to do, do it with your *might*...” (Ecc. 9:10). Work hard!

But diligence must accompany hard work. Solomon also wrote, “See you a man diligent in his business? He shall stand before kings...” (Prov. 22:29). This is an amazing verse. Could you ever believe this might be you? Then remember this: “The desire accomplished [through diligent hard work] is sweet to the soul” (Prov. 13:19).

Everyone enjoys completing tasks. This IS “sweet to the soul.”

Building certain principles into your character will ensure you function at your peak managing your finances.

Many now face the fearful reality of losing their job. The majority of these still do not budget and save. As spending and standards of living rise, family saving has dropped—drastically! The result? Millions are on

the brink of financial disaster, only a couple paychecks from the street.

Before a purchase, ask: Do I *need* this—or do I just *want* it? Can I do without it?

Impulsive spending is the product of a generation lacking in strength and character, and is the accelerant bringing the mountain of debt now burying so many! Successful businesses run on budgets. So do successful households!

Most never discover they are spending unwisely. They constantly spend and waste, without knowing where their money went—or what purpose was served.

Read our helpful booklet—*Taking Charge of Your Finances*. It offers instruction from God’s Word, as well as practical, common-sense advice you can use.

Now for the greatest key to financial prosperity.

The Best Business Partner

While consumer, corporate and national debt are now monumental, another *far greater* debt has been ignored! This one is toward God. Mankind has been stealing from Him for 6,000 years.

God declares: “The silver is Mine, and the gold is Mine” (Hag. 2:8) and “The earth is the LORD’S, and the fullness thereof” (Psa. 24:1). God owns everything—so says your Bible! He designed, created and maintains all things. This sets the stage for vitally important knowledge.

Everything people take for granted as theirs really belongs to God! But He has permitted man to use His planet and His resources. He allows us to be His stewards. All will one day give account of how they managed what was never theirs. God commands that we not steal from Him. Yet most do.

How? Notice: “Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed Me. But you say, Wherein have we robbed You? [God’s answer] In tithes and offerings. You are cursed...for you have robbed Me, even this whole nation. Bring you all the tithes into the storehouse...and prove Me now...if I will not open

you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it” (Mal. 3:8-10).

God asks only for a tithe—10 percent—of what one makes (plus “offerings”)—and lets you keep the remaining 90 percent, although that still belongs to Him! He challenges skeptics to “prove” His promise of blessing the tithpayer.

Again, most Western nations are staggering under impossible debt. There is a reason. So are millions of people. There is a reason. Terrible, national punishment now lies just ahead for the world’s greatest nations because hundreds of millions of individuals have stolen from God—every day.

Understand. *The Real Truth* magazine does not *ever* take political positions. Enough others do that. This is not our purpose—and we never do it.

Paul wrote that God’s people do not “entangle [themselves] in the affairs of this life” (II Tim. 2:4). This includes the ineffective governments of men. Voting for *better politicians* is not going to solve what are insoluble problems. These national and individual troubles are consequences of nations and peoples disobeying God, not of merely bad politicians or wrong government policies. Do not be among those who blame the government instead of human nature—including your own.

But some argue, “I can’t afford to tithe.”

God says otherwise. You cannot afford NOT to tithe! He also blesses generous givers. No one has the power to give as God does. While many search for ways to stretch their income, the most unlikely way is the only way to do this.

Thousands are learning God’s tithing system WORKS. In force for millennia, this system *works* and *brings success*.

Return to God a small portion of what is actually His. He agrees to bless you more than you can imagine. Do not wait for financial ruin. Learn to be a steward, and obey God’s financial laws! Let God’s promise work for you.

Another booklet you need is *End All Your Financial Worries*. You will be so very glad you read it.

Coming – The Ultimate New World Order

There is an entire Church that God is blessing because it knows and obeys His tithing laws—as well as all the other laws and truths in His Word. You can write us to learn more about it. It is, in fact, tithes and offerings that make it possible for you and millions of others to read this magazine and the kind of free literature referenced here.

Financial collapse will come for the West only *after* the Work of this Church—preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God to all nations—is complete! God’s true servants will then be protected from the horrible punishment that will follow.

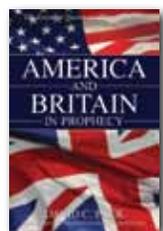
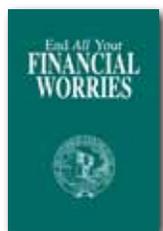
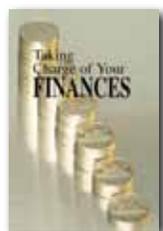
After the punishment, the corrupt governments and economies of men will be replaced by the perfect, marvelous government of God. This *ultimate* new world order will not only teach individuals how to manage their personal finances—but also their entire lives.

Do not become activists by marching on the Capitol or by writing your representative about today’s mushrooming political and social problems. Your efforts will be in vain—and in fact these *fight* God’s Purpose—which is to teach all peoples that they should have obeyed Him! You will find our booklet *Should Christians Vote?* eye-opening.

Finally, to better understand what is soon going to happen, and *why*, read our extensive book *America and Britain in Prophecy*.

I urge YOU: Obey God’s tithing command—and practice GOOD financial stewardship.

Then reap the benefits! □



EUROPE

NEW EU LEADER SELECTED

European Union leaders elected Belgian Prime Minister Herman Van Rompuy as the first permanent president of the European Council, an office created by the passage of the Lisbon Treaty.

Mr. Van Rompuy, 62, a Christian-Democrat politician and former economist, has been Belgium's premier for almost a year. He has been credited with stabilizing the nation by mediating tensions between the French- and Flemish-speaking peoples.

The new two-and-a-half-year presidency will replace the EU's six-month rotating presidential term, in which a member-state presides over EU meetings.

Yves Leterme, a Flemish Christian Democrat, will replace Mr. Van Rompuy as Belgium's prime minister.

According to the European Union's official website, Mr. "Van Rompuy's core responsibilities will include chairing council meetings and representing EU leaders on the global stage. He will also represent the council in relations with other EU institutions."

During the same election, the council also appointed United Kingdom Labour Party member Catherine Ashton to be the EU's high representative for foreign affairs and security policy. The newly created position combines the previous job of the high-representative for common foreign and security policy and the commissioner for external relations into one post.

The two positions are intended to "enhance the EU's role in world affairs and streamline its decision-making" (ibid.).

Both leaders are relatively unknown in their respective countries—let alone on the world stage. Mr. Van Rompuy was considered an obscure political figure until he was nominated as a candidate by



■ HISTORY IN THE MAKING:

Top, European Council President Herman Van Rompuy (left) and EU's new foreign affairs minister Catherine Ashton attend a European Union summit at the European Council headquarters in Brussels (Nov. 19, 2009). Right, Yves Leterme and King Albert of Belgium arrive at Laeken Castle in Brussels, Belgium (Nov. 25, 2009).

PHOTO: (TOP) GEORGES GOBET/AFP/GETTY IMAGES; (RIGHT) MARK RENDERS/GETTY IMAGES



German Chancellor Angela Merkel and French President Nicolas Sarkozy at a Brussels summit. Ms. Ashton, the current EU trade commissioner, has never held an elected office.

The Guardian reported that Mr. Van Rompuy often prefers to remain in the shadows of politics. "He has been a fixture in Roman Catholic and Christian Democratic politics for decades, but he shuns the limelight, appears ascetic and austere, and prefers to conduct his politics away from public gaze."

Others claim he has a different agenda. Author Paul Belien, who

has been acquainted with Mr. Van Rompuy since the 1980s, said in the *Daily Mail* that Mr. Van Rompuy is largely unattached to his home country. "His sole political ideal is the creation of a federal superstate, destroying national identities across Europe," he wrote.

Mr. Van Rompuy also supports taxing European financial transactions to fund the EU and opposes Turkey's induction to the European Union because, as "he has warned, it is an Islamic country and would dilute Europe's Christian heritage" (*Daily Telegraph*). □

CRIME & PUNISHMENT

UK: MORE CHILDREN REPORT SEXUAL ASSAULTS BY FEMALES

Nearly two-thirds of all sexual assaults perpetrated by a female reported to ChildLine, a children's helpline based in Swansea, South Wales, were by mothers, according to new figures by the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC).

Of the 2,142 young people sexually abused by women that the charity counseled last year, 1,311 admitted "they had been abused by their mother."

The report found that during the

past five years, there has been a 132 percent rise in reported sexual abuse by females. In contrast, sexual abuse by males during the same period rose only 27 percent.

ChildLine President Esther Rantzen said that this statistic is partly attributed to more boys calling the helpline than in years past—not necessarily more females abusing males.

Ms. Rantzen also said that "by listening to the direct and authentic voices of abused children," her organization has broken the myth that

sexual abuse not only happens to girls, but boys too.

"Mothers can sometimes sexually abuse their sons," she said. "And the report found that when girls are sexually abused, by far the most common perpetrator is not a stepfather, as many believe, but the biological father."

"Many would find it shocking that any woman—let alone a mother—can sexually assault a child," head of ChildLine Sue Minto said. "But they do." □

ENVIRONMENT

RAW SEWAGE SEEPING INTO CITY WATER SOURCES



■ **DEADLY WATERS:** Thousands of fish died when about 661,000 tons of raw sewage were discharged into the Thames River in London after thunderstorms left the city's Victorian sewer system overwhelmed in 2004.

PHOTOS: ALESSANDRO ABBONIZIO/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

New York City's 14 wastewater treatment plants, which handle 1.3 billion gallons of wastewater a day, often send raw sewage into the city's main waterways when it rains heavily, a report by *The New York Times* revealed.

"In the last three years alone, more than 9,400 of the nation's 25,000 sewage systems—including those in major cities—have reported violating the law by dumping untreated or partially treated human waste, chemicals and other hazardous materials into

ivers and lakes and elsewhere..." the newspaper reported.

"As cities have grown rapidly across the nation, many have neglected infrastructure projects and paved over green spaces that once absorbed rainwater. That has contributed to sewage backups into more than 400,000 basements and spills into thousands of streets, according to data collected by state and federal officials. Sometimes, waste has overflowed just upstream from drinking water intake points or near public beaches" (ibid.).

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that 250 food-borne illnesses across the United States breed 76 million cases of food-borne diseases each year—some of which are directly caused by contaminated water. This amounts to 325,000 hospitalizations and 5,000 deaths because of tainted water.

"The public has no clue how important these sewage plants are," said [Bob] Connaughton of the Brooklyn [Owls Head Water Pollution Control Plant]. "Waterborne disease was the scourge of mankind for centuries. These plants stopped that. We're doing everything we can to clean as much sewage as possible, but sometimes, that isn't enough" (*The New York Times*).

Government officials say that during the next 10 years as much as \$400 billion will be needed to renovate the U.S. sewer system.

New York City is not the only metropolis with this problem.

Aging infrastructure combined with heavy autumn rains in Britain this year have caused more than 9.3 million tons of raw sewage to be dumped into the Thames River (*London Evening Standard*). □



“Tis the Season”?

Where did Christmas originate? From the Bible or paganism? What is the real origin of Santa Claus—mistletoe—Christmas trees—holly wreaths—and the custom of exchanging gifts? Many are concerned about putting “Christ back into Christmas.” Was He ever there? Here are the stunning answers!



WHERE is the world going? Why is it filled with problems, troubles, evils and ills, and so much unhappiness, uncertainty, and misery of every kind? In an age of fear, confusion and hopelessness, *The World to Come* program is a voice of plain truth, proclaiming humanity's only hope—and in terms heard nowhere else!



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