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A MAGAZINE RESTORING PLAIN UNDERSTANDING



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THE REAL TRUTH

A MAGAZINE RESTORING PLAIN UNDERSTANDING

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■ **NATIONWIDE UNREST:** Anti-government protesters pray at Tahrir Square in Cairo, Egypt, during demonstrations against President Hosni Mubarak (Feb. 4, 2011).

PHOTO: PETER MACDIARMID/GETTY IMAGES

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PHOTO: JEWEL SAMAD/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

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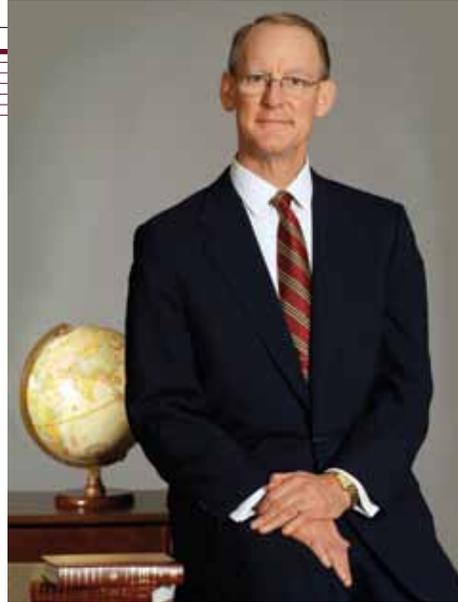
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PERSONAL FROM

David C. Fack



Childrearing—God’s Way

THE FAMILY UNIT is under assault from an ever-increasing array of forces, with children enduring the brunt of the attack.

Parents are now facing almost impossible odds against successfully rearing their children! This is not overstated.

Yet, God COMMANDS parents to, “Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it” (Prov. 22:6).

But how can parents—one alone or two working together—do this? What chance do they have of rearing balanced, moral children in today’s wild, *immoral world*? WHAT should children be taught? How should they be instructed? And can you be sure that what you teach your children will *stay* with them for life?

God’s Word addresses these and many related questions. You will be surprised at what and how much God instructs!

More and more thinking people recognize that civilization is out of control. New problems of every kind are appearing, with older ones growing worse seemingly every day. Today’s generation of leaders has utterly failed in its responsibility to improve the world—to make it better for the next generation. *Government leaders, business leaders, generals, scientists, doctors and medical science, philosophers and religious leaders* have all failed in bringing happiness, fulfillment, peace and true purpose to the lives of billions.

From today’s young people will come the leaders of the future. Of course, this first supposes there will even *be* a future for the world, and that there will also be a generation of qualified leaders to better guide civilization.

The evidence is not good that either of these will happen.

Spiritually Revealed Knowledge

The nations of the world possess a vast sum of knowledge—and it increases daily—but they are ignorant of the right *kind* of knowledge—SPIRITUALLY REVEALED KNOWLEDGE. This is because the modern system of education is morally and spiritually bankrupt! Deluded educators have been biased against God and His Word by having had the atheistic teaching of evolution poured into them from childhood. They have taught young people for decades—and these have become today’s parents and grandparents—that there are “no absolutes,” and that they must follow “situation ethics” in all circumstances. They have led the world into a kind of secular humanism—where people are driven by how they *feel* rather than clear definitions of *right* and *wrong*! But there *is* right and wrong in life—and the educators teaching today’s children have cut themselves off from this knowledge. (Carefully read Isaiah 59:1-2 and Jeremiah 5:25.) They cannot teach what they were never taught. And neither can parents who have been indoctrinated in their thinking!

Also, this world’s churches have kept parents and young people steeped in traditional pagan philosophies

and teachings that have deceived the world for millennia. All the world's religions have ignored the great spiritual principle of *cause* and *effect* that governs every aspect of life. They have all neglected to teach true *spiritual* values—that there is an inspired, vital INSTRUCTION BOOK from Almighty God that contains special knowledge. It explains that there is a great SPIRITUAL LAW that, when obeyed, brings all the good things every human being seeks.

This Personal strips away the confusion, division, competing traditions and ignorance that have shrouded the truth about childrearing God's Way. May God help you understand what you are about to read so you can teach your children to understand what has not been available until now!

The Modern Generation

Many children today are almost completely void of true values—and many are not even aware that they should *have* values. Their minds and emotions are invested in material things—physical possessions that are thought to define their lives. Society has now produced a generation in which some teenagers will actually kill to possess what others have—\$200 sneakers or jackets, for instance—because life has come to be about “status,” “getting respect,” conforming to peer pressure, and living almost exclusively for the moment. Many do not care about—or even think about—tomorrow, but rather only about what will happen to them today.

Here is a descriptive reference from the prophet Hosea foretelling the condition of today's generation of young people: “They have dealt treacherously against the LORD: for they have begotten STRANGE CHILDREN...” (5:7). This is more true than older generations can even begin to comprehend.

Children today are cynical, emotionally drained and carrying a kind of world-weary mentality. While many may seem tough and talk tough on the outside, most are morally weak and spiritually vacant inside. They have become a generation of emotionally stunted children. As a result, they lack empathy—they cannot feel for others, and can only barely feel for themselves. They lack the moral fiber or backbone to do the right thing, even when it's easy. Millions have stumbled into adulthood believing that “if it *feels* right, do it.”

All of the supposed “great religions” have failed to give parents the tools they need to properly rear their children into becoming responsible, productive adults. This includes *all* of the world's many brands of Christianity, which teach that God's spiritual laws—His Ten Commandments—were “kept for us by Christ” and “done away with,” and there is no longer a need to obey them. Therefore, morality has become a matter of personal taste: One man's *sin* is another man's *lifestyle*.

Modern theologians routinely substitute the righteousness of God—His Commandments (Psa. 119:172)—for the standards of righteousness established by men. They then call such standards “political correctness.” This adds to the confusion of what children see.

Notice that one of the Ten Commandments speaks directly to children: “Honor your father and your mother: that your days may be long upon the land which the LORD your God gives you” (Ex. 20:12). Almost an entire generation will have soon lost the meaning of this fifth command.

So many teenagers and even much younger children today are smug and generally smirk at all forms of authority, often making no attempt to hide rolling their eyes

because they think they already “know” what is right and wrong. Woe to those who try to teach them otherwise! So many today are unruly, unmanageable and ungovernable—and even violently so.

Proof that all Ten Commandments are still in force in the *New Testament*, and because of its importance, the fifth is repeated there: “Children, OBEY your parents in the Lord: for this is right. HONOR your father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise;) that it may be well with you, and you may live long on the earth” (Eph. 6:1-3).

Right Values No Longer Taught

Children must be taught to respect their parents. This does not come naturally. If followed, this commandment—and the application of *all* childrearing principles—will yield blessings.

Political correctness teaches young people that nothing is truly bad or wrong—except intolerance. But herein lies great hypocrisy—those who preach political correctness will *not* tolerate those who take a stand against sin.

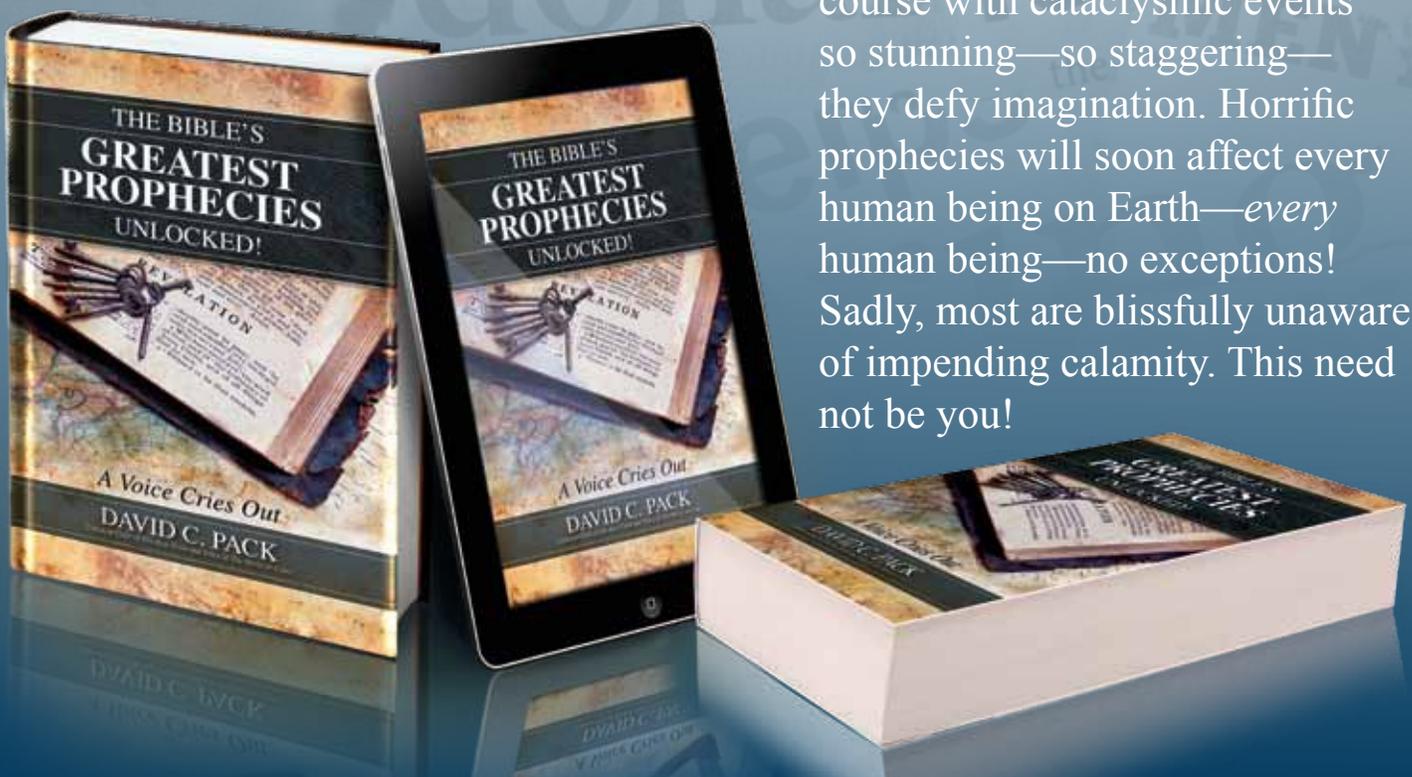
Such teaching is also lacking because so many parents no longer seem to know the difference between right and wrong—even on the basics. So many now embrace a world of “differing shades of gray,” where clear-cut rules of morality, ethics and integrity no longer exist.

Fifty years ago, if a child found a wallet containing a large sum of money, he would likely have *automatically* turned it over to the police. Today, such a child would be ridiculed—laughed to scorn—by his peers, and even by some adults! He would probably be written up in the local newspaper as a veritable hero, simply because practicing what was once considered a civic duty is now unheard of.

Please see PERSONAL, page 25

WHAT IS WRONG WITH THE WORLD?

Mankind is on a collision course with cataclysmic events so stunning—so staggering—they defy imagination. Horrific prophecies will soon affect every human being on Earth—*every* human being—no exceptions! Sadly, most are blissfully unaware of impending calamity. This need not be you!



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Making Sense of an Earth

Man murders wife over cold eggs—D.C. sniper kills 10—madman shoots congresswoman—11-year-old shoots his father’s pregnant fiancée with a shotgun, and leaves her body to be discovered by her four-year-old daughter.

How can one make sense of a world brimming with *senseless violence*?

BY SAMUEL C. BAXTER

SPRAWLED ON THE COUCH, Dad watches a knife plunge into the stomach of a gang member who coughs up blood as he dies. The man dozes in and out of sleep, bathed in the flickering blue light of the television.

Upstairs, his son clenches a video game controller. A Navy SEAL stealthily moves forward and dispatches an

unsuspecting guard by snapping his neck. His younger brother watches.

The next morning, Mom leans toward the bathroom mirror applying eyeliner. Her clock radio reports the news: *Single mother of three killed in burglary...children put in foster care...* For a fleeting moment, her heart goes out to the children left parentless by such a meaningless act, but she quickly finishes applying the makeup to stay on schedule.

■ **MIXED MAYHEM:** Protesters throw stones at police officers in a western Paris suburb (Oct. 20, 2010).

PHOTO: BERTRAND GUAY/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

She descends the stairs and crouches down to tie the laces of her daughter's shoes. By the time the girl finishes elementary school, she will have seen about 8,000 TV murders.

A bed-headed Dad sits at the kitchen table reading the daily newspaper over a bowl of cereal. He browses the headlines—"Machete Killing in Texas," "Man Arrested for 3 University Rapes," "Ivory Coast Unrest Increases after Failed Vote"—then turns to the sports section.

Even for such a family, violence is commonplace, though removed from the everyday. For much of the global population, however, violent acts play out daily:

A group of unruly Ohio teens pull a 73-year-old man out of his car and pummel him—fist and foot—after the elderly man demanded they stop loitering on his front lawn.

A husband stumbles through the front door after 2:00 a.m., with both wife and children still carrying bruises from his last drunken tirade.

A 14-year-old boy in Mexico is forced to the ground by five strong men, who proceed to kick and beat him as a

bine, September 11, the shooting of an Arizona congresswoman, a spate of deadly riots across Europe and Africa—and elicit the question: why is the earth *filled* with violence?

These events are often followed by a period of self-reflection and "soul searching." Then, amid the continuing onslaught of cruelty and viciousness, society again slowly becomes callous toward these acts and unwittingly falls into the jaded thinking that violence is a natural part of life.

Constant exposure to violence makes a person less sensitive to it, and can even lull one into thinking conditions are better than they really are.

Yet to truly make sense of a world saturated with violence, a person must shake himself awake from this slumber, and take a hard look at world conditions.

Animal Instinct?

In an attempt to explain the phenomena of violence, scientists draw the conclusion that aggression is an innate characteristic. Charles Darwin felt it was born out of an instinctual animal

a different way. Many churchgoers believe that deep down all people are essentially good and would obey God if given the chance. Yet these believe each person's supposedly good "immortal soul" is trapped in an evil "prison house" body.

To suppress what are seen as "animalistic urges" or actions of an "evil body," mankind has set up an intricate network of laws. In the West, much of this legislation is based on a Judeo-Christian code of morality: "Thou shalt not kill," "Thou shalt not steal," etc. From these simple statements come countless anti-violence laws on child abuse, rape, battery and disorderly conduct, with a law for every type of murder—first degree, second degree, manslaughter and wrongful death.

While much of this moral code is apparently pulled from the Bible, it ignores what the Book actually states about the inner workings of mankind.

Unknown to most, the Bible contains a complete map of human nature, and explains how and why widespread violence subsists today. These verses, when put together, reveal the true picture of mankind.

n FILLED WITH VIOLENCE

heavily tattooed leader slowly counts to 13. When the men finally relent, the boy—who is unconscious and his face a bloodied pulp—is now part of the gang.

A young female awakens to screams in Darfur, Sudan, and is dragged from her home by armed men. She and dozens of other girls are forced to walk three hours before being repeatedly raped. Those who do not comply are shot.

Tragically, every nation in the world is plagued with unbridled violence. The unending barrage of brutality and bloodshed can be numbing for everyone, whether they live in the war-torn Democratic Republic Congo or Suburbia, U.S.A.

From time to time events shake the collective consciousness—Colum-

trait needed for self-preservation. Sigmund Freud took it further, claiming aggression is one of two basic urges of mankind, along with sex, and that many of the urges occur at an unconscious level.

These ideas have seeped into public thinking. They are found in popular novels and feature films of today, which almost always rely on tired themes of sex and violence. Newspapers have long known that stories with violence attract the most attention, and even formulated the maxim, "If it bleeds it leads"—the story with the highest body count will make the front page.

Religionists also buy into the thinking that violence is intrinsic to the human condition, though in

Chapter 17 of the book of Jeremiah states, "The heart is *deceitful* above all things, and *desperately wicked*: who can know it?" (vs. 9). Take this verse at face value. Each person's heart is *deceitful above all things*—with all things meaning ALL things—and each person is *desperately* wicked.

The epistle of James begins to explain the motivations behind widespread violence. "From whence come *wars* and *fightings* among you? Come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members? You lust, and have not: you kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: you fight and war, yet you have not..." (4:1-2).

Human beings are driven by their lusts, what they want. They attempt to

satiate their lusts by whatever means, even if it means violence. In the end, however, their lives are left empty.

These verses paint a bleak picture, and leave little hope for mankind's future. Ask: is it really a surprise that Earth is filled with violence when deep down each person is *desperately* wicked?

Only Evil Continually

It can be difficult to take an honest look at mankind because the track record is never pretty. It is a tale of murder, rape, war and vicious brutality.

There have been peaks of violence of the worst sort—ash clouds pluming from Nazi concentration camp smokestacks—conqueror Genghis Khan stating that the “greatest pleasure” in life is to chase and kill an enemy, then rape his wife—execution pyres crackling with the bodies of “heretics” during the Middle Ages.

Modern society has again entered one of those times of peak violence, but most will not take notice.

This ensuing period of global violence was foretold long ago in the Bible, when Jesus Christ's disciples asked what the end of the age would look like. He responded, “Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and puts forth leaves, you know that summer is nigh: so likewise you, when you shall see all these things, know that it [the end of the age] is near, even at the doors” (Matt. 24:32-33).

Just as one can observe when the seasons are changing by looking at the trees, end-time trends and conditions outlined by Christ signal the time of the end.

In verse 37, Jesus describes one such signal: “But as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.”

Most people know the Bible story of Noah. He built an ark and entered it, along with his family and pairs of animals. Then, it rained 40 days and 40 nights...

Yet this common retelling misses a crucial element. During that time,

mankind reached one of its worst periods of violence. The book of Genesis records that before the flood, “God saw that the *wickedness* of man was great in the earth, and that *every* imagination of the thoughts of his heart *was only evil continually*” (6:5). Verse 11 states, “The earth also was corrupt before God, and *the earth was filled with violence.*”

In the days before Noah entered the ark, the entire earth was FILLED with violence, with evil having free reign over the land. Yet life continued “business as usual.”

Return to Matthew 24, where Jesus describes the common mindset during the time of Noah: “For as in the days that were before the flood they were *eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage*, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be” (vs. 38-39).

A parallel account in Luke adds, “They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all” (17:27).

The world was overrun with violence. How could no one think anything was wrong? People began to view violence as a fact of life. They believed conditions were better than they actually were.

Similar thinking prevails today.

Hidden Violence

Definitions of violence include exertion of physical force to injure—violent treatment—intense and furious destructive action—vehement expression. All these *fill* today's world.

Yet the dictionary definition misses a huge element of violence and reveals how truly pervasive it is.

The Bible alone completely defines this word. The Sixth Commandment states, “Thou shalt not kill.” But this command is amplified by the words of Jesus in the New Testament: “You have heard that it was said to the men of old, ‘You shall not kill; and whoever kills shall be

liable to judgment.’ But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother shall be liable to the council, and whoever says, ‘You fool!’ shall be liable to the hell of fire” (Matt. 5:21-22, Revised Standard Version).

In other words, anger toward another person without cause, even when it is unsaid, is a form of murder. With this added to the definition, the picture of an “earth filled with violence” comes into panoramic view.

Think. How many unreported murders occur every day? Husband against wife, brother against brother, neighbor against neighbor—all in a world where people fly off the handle without notice!

What the World Misses

This is an age of paradoxes. A suicide bomber explodes himself to kill and maim in the name of religion, and across the world a groom kisses his bride for the first time. A hotheaded brother dukes it out with his sibling over a girl, and elsewhere a father teaches his daughter to drive. A man harbors a bitter grudge against his neighbor for decades, and a twenty-something tosses his graduation cap into the air at a nearby university.

These *are* the proverbial “days of Noah,” and the earth is awash with violence of every imaginable form. As happened before the Flood, almost no one will take notice.

Manmade societies have attempted for millennia to solve the problems of violence—not realizing the “way of peace they know not; and there is no judgment in their goings...” (Isa. 59:8). Man will continue fruitlessly trying to manufacture peace, only to bring even worse hatred and cruelty.

How can violence end? It starts with individuals realizing the extent that violence pervades their lives, and beginning to understand there is another way to live.

Notice Christ's words in Matthew 5: “You have heard that it has been said, You shall love your neighbor, and hate your enemy. But I say unto



■ **UNDER ATTACK:** Riot police are attacked by petrol bombs during clashes in Athens, Greece (Dec. 15, 2010).

PHOTO: ARIS MESSINIS/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you” (vs. 43-44).

Yet this cannot be done on human steam, because “the carnal mind is enmity [hostile] against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be” (Rom. 8:7).

This violent, darkening age will soon lull each person into thinking there is just a little more time. That is, until it is too late—and a whirlwind of end-time events crash into his or her life.

Instead, “Awake you that sleep...” (Eph. 5:14). Do not think that escape

from a violence-filled Earth will come with the wave of a magic wand. It requires ACTION!

You must admit that you are naturally hostile toward God, and can only navigate this pitch-black age through following His Law.

“For the commandment is a lamp; and the law is light; and reproofs of instruction are the way of life” (Prov. 6:23).

Do not let the day-in-day-out barrage of brutality numb you to the realities of this world. Stay alert, watch world events, and begin to “sigh and cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof” (Ezek. 9:4).

You can know for certain *all* of the conditions that prove we are nearing the end of this age, which are outlined in David C. Pack’s booklet *Are These the Last Days?*

Realize that there is little time left for humanity. “See then that you walk circumspectly [live carefully], not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil” (Eph. 5:15-16).

The world was never meant to be filled with violence—and you can take comfort that it soon will not be.

To understand how God will ultimately bring peace to this violence-filled earth, read *How World Peace Will Come!* □



FOUR LESSONS

America Can Learn from Egypt's Riots

BY BRUCE A. RITTER

A HIGH-RANKING WHITE HOUSE official once said, “Rule one: Never allow a crisis to go to waste.” While he was referring to missing an opportunity to take political action, Egypt’s crisis should be instructive to citizens and leaders in the United States.

Egypt has been engulfed in a crisis of massive proportions, with upward of 2 million protesters rising up across the nation, looting and clashing with authorities.

“Egyptians poured into downtown Cairo demanding President Hosni Mubarak’s resignation as the turmoil trig-



■ **UNREST IN EGYPT:** Defying a government-sanctioned curfew, throngs of demonstrators gather in Tahrir Square in Cairo, Egypt, to protest (Jan. 31, 2011).

PHOTO: PETER MACDIARMID/GETTY IMAGES

gered by the fall of Tunisia's government threatened to end his 30-year reign over the region's most-populous nation," *Bloomberg* reported.

"The unrest has left about 300 dead, according to a preliminary United Nations toll, and roiled international stock, bond and oil markets, with investors concerned they may spread to nearby countries or lead to the closure of the Suez Canal."

Looking past the violence and politicking reveals there is much to be gained—if one is willing to grasp the lessons from these events, and not

allow them to "go to waste."

(1) Riots are contagious: In Tunisia, a man set himself ablaze, sparking riots that led to removal of the nation's government. The Tunisian riots inspired the masses in Egypt to protest, riot, call for million-man marches, and resist government-ordered curfews.

Defiant actions such as these are driven by the intoxicating desire for power, which spurs normally docile people to attempt to right wrongs by any means necessary—even violence.

In Egypt, organized vigilante groups have had to fill the void of missing police patrols and business owners have had to guard their businesses overnight from potential looters.

Regardless of sincere intentions for positive change, riots have a way of getting out of control and leading people to do things they will later regret—usually when it is too late, and damage has been done.

The God of the Bible understands riots appeal to human nature. This is why He ordered His people, "You shall not follow a multitude to do evil; neither shall you speak in a cause to decline after many to wrest judgment" (Ex. 23:2).

No riots, no impromptu lynch mobs. Justice must be rendered with a calm state of mind, with a peaceful spirit.

Riots, by their nature, reveal man's raw character. And it is ugly. For instance, vandals ransacked Cairo's Egyptian Museum, ripping off the

heads of two mummies, smashing showcases and damaging artifacts. Already 300 people have died in clashes with police, and more than 3,000 have been injured.

(2) America is running out of "lovers": That is, foreign governments friendly to U.S. interests overseas. Washington seemingly no longer values the special relationship it has long nurtured and enjoyed with Britain and Israel. Instead, its focus has shifted to wooing governments with questionable track records.

Now, Washington fears that Egypt will go the way of Iran, and become another anti-U.S. theocracy. This could mean losing access to the Suez Canal, a major artery for shipping oil to other nations.

While Mr. Mubarak promised to not run for re-election next fall, "blood" has already been drawn. It remains to be seen if this move will diminish mounting pressure from protesters.

Countries among the international community have tacitly expressed their support to him, while carefully striving to not be seen by the Egyptian public as explicitly endorsing his office. No one wants to bear the wrath of a replacement government—particularly one guided by anti-West philosophies, such as the Muslim Brotherhood, a transnational and political opposition group.

Will America, in times of need (such as a disaster exceeding the scale of a Hurricane Katrina), one day find itself cut off from the affections of former "lovers" (Ezek. 16:37)?

(3) It could happen in the U.S.: While Egyptians have taken to the streets to protest social injustices, their discontent is also due to their deteriorating standard of living. Unemployment is high. Many with jobs subsist on just a few dollars a day. Foodstuffs are scarce.

Desperate times inspire people to do desperate things. For years, America has enjoyed an unprecedented standard of living. Even those who make minimum wage live far better than people in most parts of the world.

But America's age of prosperity is winding down, with the federal deficit time bomb ticking in the background, waiting to explode.

The U.S. dollar is currently the world's reserve currency—but not for much longer. China understands this. So do other nations, which are already preparing for this to change.

When it happens, America's standard of living will change overnight—out of control gas prices, food shortages, hyperinflation, mass joblessness. The lifestyles to which Americans have grown accustomed—have taken for granted—will disappear for the mass majority. As in Egypt, restlessness and discontent will give way to anger, fear, frustration and hopelessness.

Unless America takes drastic and necessary actions to solve its debt problems, the future looks bleak.

(4) Leaders must lead—regardless of the risk: U.S. politicians on both the right and left waver over taking charge and making drastic, but necessary, budget cuts to avoid the same crisis as Egypt. Each side is afraid of taking the lead, fearing that the other will stir up public sympathy and score political points.

But leaders—true leaders—make hard calls and put the needs of their constituents above any personal desires to stay in office come next election. They know it is painful to make budget cuts and deny one's own wants.

Many resort to the easy route of blaming elected leaders when the

public essentially says, "Let's cut everything—except for [insert favorite entitlement here]!" Gone are the days of World War II, when the government could call on citizens to make sacrifices—and the people accepted it as their patriotic duty to follow through.

Certainly, the riots in Egypt bring lessons. But who will learn?

To better understand the true nature of riots—despite whatever sincere intentions are said to be behind them—read "Making Sense of an Earth Filled with Violence," on page four of this magazine issue.

Further, to learn what lies ahead for Egypt and the Middle East, read David C. Pack's booklet *The Middle East in Bible Prophecy*. □

■ **DEFIANCE IN CAIRO:** A protester stands on an army tank in Tahrir Square as the headquarters of the ruling National Democratic Party burns in the background (Jan. 29, 2011).

PHOTO: PETER MACDIARMID/GETTY IMAGES





Why Conspiracy Theories?

BY JEFFREY R. AMBROSE

THE MOON LANDING of 1969? It was filmed on a Hollywood soundstage...That building down the road—the one with the manufacturing sign out front? It is actually a United Nations-run prison camp...You don't really think that NASA has a Mars lander, do you? That's all done with computer-generated special effects...Did you know the most recent hurricane to hit the coast was engineered by government scientists?

To most, such statements are nothing more than bad jokes. But for others, their lives revolve around these ideas.

As technology continues to connect like-minded people in new and more efficient ways, conspiracy theories are spread-

ing as never before. And they are here to stay. But are they worth exploring?

Seeds of Distrust

Conspiracy theories have a long history—even in a nation as young as the United States.

“American pamphleteers in the 1790s warned of a plot by atheist, libertine Illuminati and Freemasons to concoct an abortion-inducing tea and ‘a method for filling a bedchamber with pestilential vapours.’ The bestselling book of the 1830s was a racy confession by a repentant nun detailing a scheme by Catholics to undermine Protestant morals. At around the same time, Samuel Morse, better known as the inventor of Morse Code, exposed an Austrian plan to install a Hapsburg prince as emperor of the United States” (*The Economist*).

■ **MOON LANDING A HOAX?:** Astronaut David Scott salutes while standing beside the U.S. flag on the moon during the Apollo 15 mission (July 30, 1971).

PHOTO: NASA/LIAISON

The most well-known theory involves the assassination of U.S. president John F. Kennedy in 1963. The lone-gunner theory endorsed by the investigating Warren Commission was received with widespread skepticism, which released a flood of conjecture that persists to this day. Other well-known theories include:

- The condensed water vapor left behind jet engines are chemtrails, or chemical agents sprayed into the air to purposely affect human beings.

- The HIV virus was created by a government agency as a genocidal weapon.

- The UN monitors Americans with black helicopters.

- Groups such as the Bilderbergers and Illuminati are re-engineering global systems into a New World Order.

- The 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami was caused by an Indian-Israeli-American nuclear test.

- Fluoridation of water is part of a plot to control the population's behavior.

- The global Jewish community secretly controls most of the world, as set forth in the (fraudulent) *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* document.

- The U.S. military has the remains of extraterrestrials and their spacecrafts stored at a southwest Air Force base.

Countless others exist, with a new round bursting forth after every high-profile event. For example, the recent Deepwater Horizon oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico has become a new favorite target, as many distrust information provided by official sources, whether corporate or governmental.

Powerful Drug

The obsession with conspiracy theories has been compared to an addiction. Once one has delved deeply into this mindset, recovery—a return to balanced, sound thinking—is rare. What motivates a person to immerse himself in them in the first place?

Conspiracy theories are a powerful source of pride and a wellspring of intellectual vanity. The theorist comes to see himself as thinking on a higher plane than the ignorant masses around

him. He walks the fringes of society, watching his surroundings with suspicion. *No one realizes what's going on*, he thinks.

If speaking his mind on conspiracies causes others to recoil, he simply dismisses them as “dumb sheep” who cannot see what he sees. Every episode like this further reaffirms how special this inside information makes him.

While many conspiracy enthusiasts lack education, the supposed inside knowledge they gain makes them feel superior—one of the elite, enlightened few. “Besides, who needs schools? They're just brainwashing centers run by ‘the machine,’” right?

Many of these individuals enjoy the thrill of perceived danger that comes along with having supposedly top-secret knowledge, feeling as though they have a lead role in a secret-agent film—except they are not in a movie!

If a reasonable person attempts to point out serious flaws in a theory's logic, there is a standard response: *The conspirators purposely do certain things that appear to counter their goals, just to keep investigators off the trail.* Once this idea is accepted, *any* facts—whether or not they appear to fit the supposed covert scheme—reinforce the theorist's central idea that “things are not as they seem.”

Fueled by Technology

This mindset has found a new outlet with the Internet. A Google search for “conspiracy theory” returns about 5.5 million results. Websites and online forums (along with television shows) about the subject are multiplying.

A single popular online forum devoted to this subject currently has discussions on nearly 120,000 separate topics—and it is growing. Sample topics include: “Egyptian Statues on Mars?” “Dead Celebrities That Are Now Alive,” “Mermaid Caught Swimming,” and “Strange Snake Creature with Human Face and Blonde Hair Killed.”

Those who are drawn to this strain of thinking once relied on a scant selection of special-order books, a magazine subscription or two, and their own imaginations to fuel the obsession.

Now, these birds of a feather can cross-pollinate ideas across the world via the Internet.

This results in a large online community of theorists who validate and feed one another's delusions. Meanwhile, in the real world, the theorists become isolated from friends, family and co-workers who will not join them in a fantasy world.

One columnist wrote of this online community: “After all, thanks to Google we can find ‘evidence’ in support of practically any belief. If you can imagine the conspiracy theory, there is a website out there ardently promoting it, and a clan of fellow believers who share your peculiar obsession with fluoridated drinking water and the New World Order. The end result is that we never have to recant. We can always find another link to ‘prove’ that the government is trying to ‘zombify’ us, or that aliens are going to destroy the earth at midnight” (*Wired*).

Despising Government

A common thread of many theories is the idea that “the government” is responsible for terrible calamities, and is generally deceiving its citizens. For example, some believe the United States turned a blind eye to advance knowledge of the 9/11 attacks—or even directly perpetrated them—and now uses doctored videos and media manipulation as part of the cover-up.

This approach plays to an aspect of human nature that the apostle Paul wrote of nearly two millennia ago, describing those who “despise government” (II Pet. 2:10).

Increasingly, the average citizen has less respect for law or authority of any kind. Extreme examples are found in some conspiracy theorists who see themselves as above any and all law.

But this reveals the hypocrisy of many conspiracy buffs. The majority of First World governments now provide more benefits and services for their citizens than those of any other time in history. Medical coverage, food aid, unemployment benefits, welfare, defense, travel infrastructure...the list goes on. How many theorists decline

the generosity of the governments they rail against?

Can You Know?

Make no mistake: There *are* conspiracies on planet Earth. Anyone with basic knowledge of human nature understands that some groups are perfectly willing to commit covert crimes to gain advantage, power or wealth.

However, the idea of well-known international organizations, with widely varied and often conflicting interests, somehow working together behind the scenes over decades—always conspiring, but never quite achieving their secret goals—becomes silly when examined in the light of reason. This is perhaps most true with theories that involve groups such as the United Nations, which have bureaucracies that make meeting even their *publicly stated* goals difficult, never mind covert agendas.

Is there any way to know what is true?

There are ultimately three positions one can hold on these theories: First, they are all true—and who

could believe this?—but if so, there is nothing you can do about them. Second, they are all false, and obviously should not demand your time and energy. Third, they are a mixture of both, and we cannot know which is which. If this is the case, then what is the point of delving into them?

One disastrous result of these ideas is that untold hours of human energy and attention, which theorists might otherwise have put toward productive and positive ends, vanish in a cloud of smoke.

But aside from wasted time, such theories can hold other dangers: “In extreme cases, conspiracy theories can cost lives. Osama bin Laden genuinely seems to think he is fighting a Zionist-Christian-materialist assault on Islam. Adolf Hitler sincerely believed he was ridding the world of a Jewish menace. Many Serbs were convinced that the Muslims of ex-Yugoslavia were out to annihilate them. And many Rwandan Hutus, informed by their leaders that the Tutsis were planning to kill them, were happy to follow orders to preempt this threat” (*The Economist*).

The most unbalanced members of a society, when exposed to these ideas, can be driven to commit terrible acts, including assault and mass murder.

The Real Conspiracy

Despite most conspiracy theories being wild speculation and fiction, you may be surprised to learn there *is* a very real conspiracy of a different kind playing out on Earth. It has affected mankind for thousands of years. It involves figures of profound evil who operate on a level that is invisible to most. In fact, many are convinced these figures do not exist!

This plot has plagued *all* peoples on *every* continent. We have *all* played a mostly unwitting role in it. Yet the culprits are neither the usual suspects that conspiracy theorists blame, nor the supposed scapegoats they defend.

The good news is that this conspiracy can and will be stopped, but only after its architects unleash their worst attacks.

To learn more, read David C. Pack’s booklet *A World in Captivity*. □



■ **HOVERING IN THE SKY:** Some people believe that black helicopters, such as the one pictured above, are involved in government conspiracies. PHOTO: YURI CORTEZ/AFP/GETTY IMAGES



CHINA

The New Lone Superpower?

China’s presidential visit to the United States revealed an apparent reversal of roles, with financially burdened Washington having to cater to rising superpower Beijing.

AS CHINESE PRESIDENT Hu Jintao stepped out of a black limousine onto the White House’s South Lawn for his January state visit, it was clear something in the relationship between the two countries had changed.

With a warm smile and slight head bow, United States President Barack Obama, joined by the first

lady, extended his hand to Mr. Hu, and escorted him to meet the vice president and several heads of state. A 21-gun military salute and official ceremony, including the anthems of both nations, followed the meet-and-greet.

Later, Mr. Hu was treated to a black-tie state dinner—the first formal event held for a Chinese official in more than 13 years—and was even presented with a 68-by-86-inch

painting to represent the symbiotic relationship between East and West. It was the third official state visit conducted since the start of Mr. Obama’s presidency, following Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh in 2009, and Mexican President Felipe Calderon in May 2010.

The red-carpet treatment was a far cry from Mr. Hu’s less ceremonious 2006 visit, during which he briefly met with the U.S. president and several other leaders over lunch.

■ **GRAND VISIT:** Chinese President Hu Jintao escorts U.S. President Barack Obama past an honor guard during a welcoming ceremony at the Great Hall of the People prior to meetings in Beijing (Nov. 17, 2009).

PHOTO: SAUL LOEB/AFP/GETTY IMAGES



“Analysts have called Hu’s state visit the most significant by a Chinese leader in 30 years given China’s growing military and diplomatic clout,” *Reuters* reported.

But the visit was not all roses for the United States. International newspapers repeatedly printed stories detailing China’s increasing role on the world scene—and America’s decline. Headlines declared, “World Faces Chinese Dawn as Sun Sets on U.S. Economic Leadership” and “America Meets the New Superpower”—forcing Washington to realize it no longer solely holds the reins of influence. Adding fuel to the fire, during the visit, a Chinese pianist played the tune of an anti-American ballad to a White House audience.

China’s economic clout is a large part of why the U.S.—once the world’s lone superpower—desires to show the utmost fanfare to its number-one trading partner, especially in the midst of the Western nation’s worst financial crisis in decades. With economists speculating that the yuan could replace the dollar in the next 20 years, the fading nation naturally desires to affirm its relationship with the rising Asian force.

While the developing nation gains international prominence, Europe and the United States appear to be grasping for the last vestiges of their diminishing power.

As with any transfer of power, however, China’s rise has implications. What does the nation’s newly acknowledged superpower status mean for the average American—and the rest of the world?

Newfound Friendship

While the U.S. president has met with several leaders during his term in office, not every visiting official has been treated with the same grandeur accorded Mr. Hu.

Take, for example, the visit of United Kingdom Prime Minister Gordon Brown in March 2009. After being denied the usual formalities given a British premier, such as a welcome ceremony, formal press conference with the U.S. president, and state dinner—Mr. Brown was presented with a case

of 25 movie DVDs as a formal gift. This was a shocking move given the UK has been the United States’ most-important ally and has shared a special relationship with the Oval Office for decades.

French President Nicolas Sarkozy’s reception was similar, although the White House announced that the two men had a “shared commitment to solving problems.”

According to the Pew Research Center, almost half of all Americans believe that U.S. trade interests should focus on the Asian region in general—and China in particular.

“Nearly half (47%) say Asia is most important, compared with just 37% who say Europe, home to many of America’s closest traditional allies,” Pew revealed.

The report also stated, “This shift reflects changing perceptions about the economic balance of power in the world. Almost half (47%) of Americans say China is the world’s leading economic power, while just 31% name the U.S.”

A similar *ABC News* poll revealed that more than 60 percent of Americans consider China an imminent economic threat.

China’s latest visit seemingly evidences that Washington views Beijing as more of a crucial economic partner than either the United Kingdom or France. Yet the U.S. is not necessarily viewed the same way by the ascendant Asian country, as reported by *Der Spiegel*:

“When US President Barack Obama took office two years ago, among the many hopes riding on him was an improvement in US relations with China. There was much talk of the ‘Group of 2’ (G-2) that the two countries would form, which would supposedly shape the new world order.

“But instead of a new era of harmony between the major powers, the opposite has happened. US-Chinese relations are currently tenser than they have been in years. Chief among the many bones of contention is bilateral trade. American politicians accuse China of keeping its currency undervalued against the dollar to make its exports artificially cheap. Meanwhile

Beijing, which has huge foreign currency reserves, has been flexing its burgeoning economic might by buying up European sovereign debt, ostensibly to help the euro zone overcome its current woes. Observers believe that China is keen to diversify its investments as a result of economic trouble in the US; it already owns massive amounts of American debt.

“Washington is also eyeing China’s ongoing military expansion with concern. Beijing’s recent unveiling of a new stealth plane was just the latest sign that China’s armed forces are becoming increasingly powerful. America’s ally Taiwan, which Beijing considers a breakaway province, also remains a contentious issue between the two countries.”

During his stay in Washington, the Chinese president consistently stressed what his country had done for the U.S.

“In 1979, when we firmly established diplomatic ties, our two-way trade was less than \$2.5 billion U.S.,” President Hu said while attending a roundtable discussion with business leaders. “But the figure for last year was \$380 billion U.S., which is more than 150-fold increase. Our mutual investment also started from virtually nothing to an accumulation of \$70 billion... According to figures, our total trade has brought about \$60 billion U.S. of benefits to U.S. consumers.”

Throughout Mr. Hu’s visit, this theme was repeated, sending a clear message: America needs China in order to move ahead economically, but China does not necessarily need America.

U.S. Dominance Soon Gone

Economists agree with Mr. Hu’s rhetoric.

“In the long run, the United States must face up to inevitably being overtaken by China as the world’s largest economy,” *Reuters* reported. “And it may have missed a chance to rein in its largest financial institutions, many of whom remain too big to fail and are getting bigger.”

The news agency quoted Harvard economics professor Dale Jorgenson, who said that by 2020, the Chinese



economy will be on a par with the United States.

“The United States will need to come to terms with the fact that its prevalence in the world is fated to come to an end,” *Reuters* stated, paraphrasing Mr. Jorgenson. “This will be difficult for many Americans to swallow and the United States should brace for social unrest amid blame over who was responsible for squandering global primacy...”

“MIT’s Simon Johnson put it more bluntly, saying the damage from the financial crisis and its aftermath have dealt U.S. prominence a permanent blow.

“The age of American predominance is over,” he told a panel. “The (Chinese) Yuan will be the world’s reserve currency within two decades” (*ibid.*).

While U.S. exports to China have been growing, they pale in comparison to what the U.S. imports from the more populous nation.

In his address during Mr. Hu’s visit, Mr. Obama said that currently \$100 billion a year in goods and services is exported to China, supporting more than half a million U.S. jobs. The White House announced that dozens of deals to increase the amount of U.S. exports to China by more than \$45 billion had been cemented and China agreed to increase investments in the U.S. by several billion dollars.

But widespread skepticism still exists about China’s actual *need* of American exports.

“Over the past decade real GDP growth averaged 10.5% a year in China and 1.7% in America; inflation averaged 3.8% and 2.2% respectively,” *The Economist* reported. “Since Beijing scrapped its dollar peg in 2005, the yuan has risen by an annual average of 4.2%.”

In addition, China’s ties to other continents with more natural resources, such as Africa and South America, has allowed the nation to become less dependent on the United States’ market.

In December 2010, China’s Information Office of the State Council released a report that stated that in the first 11 months of 2010, China’s trade

with Africa rose to \$114.81 billion. This is compared to a bilateral trade volume of \$22.4 million in 1950.

Beijing, which is the continent’s largest-trading partner, also signed agreements with 45 African countries.

And even though both President Hu and Mr. Obama stated during diplomatic discourse that both countries’ cooperative relationship was good for the United States, Mr. Hu himself has stated the dollar system is “a product of the past.”

Fallen Economy

As China finds its footing as the next superpower and its currency becomes more widespread, what does it mean for the U.S. and its historic allies, Great Britain, Canada, New Zealand and Australia?

Consider the example of Ecuador, which dollarized its economy in January 2000 in hopes of dragging itself out of high inflation and the devaluation of its currency, the sucre.

Although the move helped the economy, the country faced certain foreign relations challenges.

“Dollarization was largely responsible for the debt renegotiations, the renewal of official flows of loans, and new foreign investment projects,” the *Journal of Economic Issues* reported three years after the switch.

The country did, however, face certain policy changes, which put it at the whim of the nation whose currency it held.

“When Ecuador dollarized its economy, it essentially accepted the monetary policy of the Federal Reserve,” Robert Carbaugh wrote in his book, *International Economics*.

If the world were to accept another currency, it would experience many of the same effects. In the case of the yuan, its holders would be answerable to China’s national bank—and certain of the communist country’s policies.

This could have the effect of dramatically altering the lives of those who hold the new currency!

Although Ecuador never experienced the same standard of living as certain Western nations, Great Britain,

which declined in the 1900s after the U.S. snatched away its reins of power, is an example of a country that experienced—and continues to experience—a decline in its status since losing its title as world superpower.

“Even in the decades after it lost its empire, Britain strode the world like a pocket superpower,” a *Newsweek* editorial stated. “Its economic strength and cultural heft, its nuclear-backed military might, its extraordinary relationship with America—all these things helped this small island nation to punch well above its weight class. Now all that is changing as the bills come due on Britain’s role in last year’s financial meltdown, the rescue of the banks, and the ensuing recession. Suddenly, the sun that once never set on the British Empire is casting long shadows over what’s left of Britain’s imperial ambitions, and the country is having to rethink its role in the world—perhaps as Little Britain, certainly as a lesser Britain.”

“Britain’s bout of reflection on its last gasps of empire comes at a natural point in its history,” the editorial continued. “The Great Recession came as a surprise and has accelerated the trend, but the rise of China, India, and Brazil, and the changing ties to a declining America, have been visible for many years. As America turns to building new ties with the advancing powers of Asia and Latin America—even sending its top envoys to promise its creditors in China that the U.S. will handle its debts responsibly—Britain can only feel less special. The nation is in the totally predictable grip of the ennui and general grumpiness that accompany the end of a political era.”

This too will one day happen to America. Yet there is a *reason* this will take place, as well as a *reason* the country’s current standard of living will be *dramatically* affected—all in *your* lifetime!

To learn why America rose to great prominence, but is now sharply declining—and what coming government will ultimately gain superpower status—read David C. Pack’s book *America and Britain in Prophecy*. □

The background of the page features a silhouette of two men standing against a bright, glowing sunset or sunrise. The man on the left is gesturing with his right hand, while the man on the right stands with his hands behind his back. The overall color palette is dominated by warm tones of orange, red, and yellow.

The Final Antichrist

—Who and What

The Bible teaches that a powerful antichrist will soon arise to rule the world. But what does the word “antichrist” mean? You can know—and comprehend!—the Bible answers to the most important questions about the antichrist!

BY DAVID G. PACK

A FINAL, GREAT ANTICHRIST IS coming. You *must* understand what this means—and how the Bible makes plain that the *last* antichrist is far from the *only* one to avoid.

Prophecy watchers, popular preachers and authors, and other so-called experts butcher the truth about the coming antichrist. Some *reduce* this prophecy, others badly *twist* it, still others declare it *already fulfilled*, and another group *dismisses* it entirely. On top of this, many so-called Bible authorities speak with competing, disagreeing voices about the subject, and thus add to the confusion.

The appalling IGNORANCE of these voices—ALL of them—is painful to hear.

Satan counterfeits every doctrine of the Bible. The antichrist would hardly be an exception. While generally understood to be a figure of horrific evil and a threat to all mankind, the antichrist is today seen by most to be largely focused against the *Jewish people*. Based on a completely wrong understanding of Daniel 9:27, tens of millions believe that this world-deceiver will make a “7-year covenant” with the modern nation of Israel, before breaking the agreement halfway through, thus introducing the Great Tribulation for the last 3½ years of his “reign.” It is commonly believed that *at this point* he will throw off his cloak and reveal his true colors.

This entire belief is *wrong*! Daniel 9:27 simply *does not say this*. But this thinking is having an effect on great numbers of people who have come, largely over the last 150 years, to believe this idea.

Here is the great irony. Due to misunderstanding, one school of rapturists is even eagerly awaiting the antichrist’s arrival—practically salivating over it in anticipation because of what they have been told it means for *them*. Tragically, these are completely unprepared for his coming—in fact, for *their* coming, because there will be in effect *two* FINAL antichrists, called the Beast and the False

Prophet. A *religious* arch-deceiver will point to and underscore the Beast’s authority with powerful, spell-binding miracles. In almost all of the modern scenarios, however, most confuse the antichrist—the Beast—with verses talking about the False Prophet, such as II Thessalonians 2:9 and Daniel 7:8.

Almost all have no idea where to look—for what *system*—in fact, the *only* system—that could spawn these final deceivers. This is in part because they are not looking, and do not really care. They are busy trusting in a fictional RAPTURE, *nowhere* taught in God’s Word. They expect to be snatched away—so why worry? Many others *unnecessarily* fear that they will be “left behind” after the supposed coming rapture.

Hollywood has added to the interest in prophecy and the rapture fiction through imaginative graphics, coupled with actors depicting popular ideas. Silly artwork and bad actors have only hindered correct understanding.

The most basic prophetic understanding reveals that the final antichrist must be alive today—so must the False Prophet—simply because of the obvious shortness of remaining time in this age. This monstrous final deceiver is not a historical figure, such as Nero, Saladin, George III, Napoleon Bonaparte, Saddam Hussein or Adolf Hitler—who, it could be said, was certainly a type of the antichrist. Neither is he Vladimir Putin, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad or any one of several American presidents who have been suggested.

In all of this, *everyone* is looking in ALL THE WRONG PLACES!

If you cannot understand what *is* an antichrist—what they *are*, and what they *do*—and that they are all around you *now*!—you will *never* recognize the *final* antichrist. You must know what to look for—and avoid. You must be able to understand the setting—and gravity—of what is now being spawned in Europe.

To learn much more about the term “antichrist,” watch *The World to Come* broadcast “The Final Antichrist – Who and What” at www.worldtocome.org □

The War That *Will* End All Wars



Part 1: Grand Adventure Becomes Grisly Nightmare

History evidences that the first world war was inevitable. It was not a matter of *if* nations would engage in global warfare, but *when* it would happen and *how* it would come about.

BY BRUCE A. RITTER

STRUGGLING TO FIND MEANING in the aftermath of World War I, man declared this long conflict, “The War to End All Wars.” WWI was so horrific—in number of casualties, shattered families and divided nations—that humanity resolved to never again allow global warfare to threaten civilization.

Yet there were men who did not learn from the destructive lesson of the first world war, also called “The Great War.” Swelling with pride and inspired by visions of global domination, men lusted for power and thirsted for revenge. They dreamed of establishing a utopia fashioned after their own vision and values of genetic superiority—

■ **GROUND SIEGE:** French soldiers move to attack from their trench during the battle of Verdun in eastern France.

PHOTO: ARCHIVES/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

and desired to impose their will on the rest of humanity.

Human beings, having forgotten—or perhaps having grown morally numb to—the horrors and gruesome realities of the first global war, have engaged in localized skirmishes, bloody revolutions and coup d'états, military police actions, and preemptive strikes in the nearly 100 years since the War to End All Wars.

Think of how many lives have been damaged and stolen. Think of how many families and marriages have been ripped apart. The grisly nature of war—senseless acts of murder, rape, irreversible injuries, looting, missing loved ones—have left deep scars on humanity, changing the course of nations.

Earth has witnessed two world wars; does anyone doubt it will experience yet another? The Bible reveals that man will reach the brink of utter destruction—of erasing himself from the face of the planet!—before he is finally ready to learn the way of everlasting peace.

This three-part series examines *how* and *why*.

Pre-WWI Mindset

At the turn of the 20th century, the United States represented the “New World,” a young and promising national power on the rise. Its material prosperity and freedoms of democracy drew to its shores millions of immigrants, particularly from Europe, who sought to establish new lives and participate in the American Dream.

Meanwhile, “Old World” nations of Europe were either influenced or led by monarchies. Through imperialism, nations carved up and colonized foreign lands (Africa, India, parts of Asia) and established global empires. Great Britain, for example, acquired so many colonies around the world it could boast that the sun never set on the British Empire. France, Spain, Germany and other European nations raced to establish their own global empires.

This contributed to an atmosphere of fierce competition, heated rhetoric,

espionage and military action, as no power could gain territory except at the expense of another.

Rival European nations engaged in an ever-escalating arms race, with each country striving to keep up with—or even top—others in amassing weaponry and warships. Governments drew up battle plans—“just in case”—and established military treaties with each other. If a country was attacked, its allies were politically obligated to defend it. This would eventually create a domino effect in which Europe and its colonies around the world would soon find themselves at war.

On June 28, 1914, the heir to the Austria-Hungary throne, Archduke Franz Ferdinand, and his wife were assassinated by a Serb nationalist. Germany influenced an enraged Austria-Hungary to declare war on the kingdom of Serbia. Defending its Serbian ally, Russia declared war on Austria-Hungary and mobilized troops. Germany rushed to Austria-Hungary's defense and declared war on Russia. France, which was undergoing a cultural “love affair” with Russia, was drawn into the war against Germany and Austria-Hungary. When Germany invaded neutral Belgium to knock out France, Britain declared war to defend its French ally.

With most of Europe engulfed in war, its colonies were also engaged. Thus, the first world war debuted on the global stage.

“Glamour” of War

Domestic industrialization put mass-produced mechanized 20th-century weapons into the hands of soldiers and officers with 19th-century mindsets. War was promoted as a grand adventure, a means to gain honor while defending one's country.

The fervor and pride of nationalism deceived virtually all involved into believing that the war would be over in a matter of months. Governments, soldiers and civilians soon learned they were horribly mistaken.

Weapons now had the capacity to cut down thousands of lives in a matter of minutes. But the Allied powers

(Britain, France, Italy, Japan, Russia, Belgium, Romania, Serbia, Portugal, Greece, Montenegro and later the United States) and the Central powers (Austria-Hungary, Germany, Turkey's Ottoman Empire, and the kingdom of Bulgaria) were both armed with these weapons, often resulting in stalemates. No one nation could easily gain the upper hand in battle.

World War I experienced many innovations: flame throwers, steel helmets, chemical weapons and gas masks, warplanes, aircraft carriers and tanks. During the war, the United Kingdom used 2,636 tanks, France employed 3,870, the U.S. fought with less than 100, and Germany had only 20 in operation.

Life in the Trenches

World War I is known for trench warfare, in which troops from opposing sides inhabited long lines of trenches dug in mud and sand. In between lay the flat “No Man's Land,” where soldiers were often mowed down by machine-gun fire or snipers.

According to information obtained from Spartacus Educational, a website produced by author and historian John Simkin-Toulouse, trench life was a defining characteristic of World War I.

The German army dug trenches as a line of defense from advancing Allied troops. When the Allies realized they could not easily break through enemy lines, they also dug trenches. With both sides relatively protected, they fired artillery shells upon each other daily.

■ **Wet, muddy environment:** Soldiers dug trenches barely a few feet above sea level, and often struck water while digging. As sandy or clay soil did not allow adequate drainage in times of heavy rain, the trenches created muddy, waterlogged living conditions. Craters created by enemy bombardments would also fill with rainwater and pour into the trenches, creating an even more uncomfortable living environment for soldiers.

■ **Dysentery and lice:** The poor sanitary conditions of trench latrines often led to dysentery, which caused inflammation of the lining of the large



■ **AWAITING ATTACK:** A typical rear-guard trench, where Russian troops wait for German soldiers to attack (1917).

PHOTO: PUBLIC DOMAIN

intestine, leading to stomach pain, diarrhea, vomiting and fever. Dysentery occurred as a result of contaminated food or water, and its symptoms resulted in severe dehydration, which often proved fatal for soldiers. In addition, troops surviving in the trenches had to

contend with disease-carrying lice that infected men with a nonfatal illness called “trench fever.”

■ **Trench foot:** Standing for hours in unsanitary, waterlogged conditions while wearing wet socks and boots caused trench foot, an infection similar

to frostbite that made soldiers’ feet numb and resulted in painful blisters. If untreated, trench foot turned gangrenous—which meant a soldier’s foot would need to be amputated. More than 75,000 British troops suffered from trench foot throughout the course of the war. To prevent it, soldiers were instructed to keep their feet dry—an often impossible task in the trenches during times of battle or rain—and change socks throughout the day.

■ **Rats:** Soldiers also had to contend with an enemy from within the trenches—rats—which sometimes fought each other over decomposing soldiers’ body parts. It was not uncommon for wounded troops to have to struggle to defend themselves from rats trying to eat them alive. Food scraps, as well as decomposing bodies, attracted swarms of these rodents, which were often the size of house cats.

■ **Injured combatants:** If shot, a soldier was expected to treat his own wounds, as his fellow brothers in arms were forbidden from stopping to help. Many of the wounded dragged themselves into shell-holes—at the risk of sinking into the mud and drowning—as they waited for stretcher-bearers to carry them away to safety. It usually took only two stretcher-bearers to carry a soldier, but muddy fields caused by heavy rains sometimes made it necessary for four men to usher a wounded fighter to safety.

■ **Desperate measures:** Weary of their daily circumstances, some troops gave themselves self-inflicted gunshot wounds in the hope of being transferred away from the frontlines. Several soldiers were even desperate enough to commit suicide by standing up in the trenches—thus making themselves easy targets for enemy snipers—to escape the miserable living conditions.

■ **Shell shock:** A growing segment of soldiers evidenced psychological symptoms of “shell shock,” including headaches, strange episodes of giddiness and irritation, and loss of concentration. Some physicians suspected the cause of these mental breakdowns to be the constant enemy artillery bombardment: shells that burst would create a

vacuum, allowing air to rush in, which disrupted the cerebrospinal fluid within the brain, adversely affecting how the mind functioned.

■ **Chemical warfare:** The German army fired chemical-filled shells and chlorine gas cylinders against enemy troops. These destroyed the opposition's respiratory organs, resulting in death by asphyxiation. To neutralize the poisonous gases, Allied troops wore masks of urine-soaked cotton pads.

■ **Daily rations:** At the start of the war, British soldiers survived on daily rations of 10 ounces of meat and 8 ounces of vegetables. Toward the war's end, however, this was reduced to 6 ounces of meat. Soldiers fighting from the trenches ate canned corned beef, bread, biscuits made with dried ground turnips for flour, and pea soup cooked with horse meat.

After the War

Because of the collapse of government bureaucracies in Russia, Germany, Austria-Hungary and Turkey, the precise number of war-related deaths is difficult to measure. Estimates range from 8.5 to 10 million.

Most soldiers died during major offensives. For example, 21,300 died on the first day of the Battle of the Somme, and more than 50 percent were wounded.

The war officially ended November 11, 1918, with Germany signing an armistice with the Allies. The end of the Great War saw national borders change and monarchies fade or be dismantled entirely.

■ Russia's government radically changed. Its monarchy was executed and replaced with a new form of government: communism. The Russian Empire became the Soviet Union.

■ Germany's Kaiser Wilhelm II abdicated. Blamed for instigating the war, the victors weighed down the

German nation with extreme financial burdens, which created severe national inflation.

■ Austria-Hungary was divided into separate countries, exiling the Habsburg monarchy. The regions of Bohemia, Moravia, Opava-Silesia and the western part of Duchy of Cieszyn, Slovakia and Carpathian Ruthenia became Czechoslovakia. The regions of Galicia, the eastern part of Duchy of Cieszyn, the northern county of Orava and northern Spisz were transferred to Poland. Bolzano-Bozen and



■ **READY FOR WAR:** A ration party of the Royal Irish Rifles in a communication trench during the Battle of the Somme. The date is believed to be July 1, 1916, the first day of the battle. The unit is possibly the 1st Battalion, Royal Irish Rifles (25th Brigade, 8th Division).

PHOTO: PUBLIC DOMAIN

Trieste were transferred to Italy. Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia-Slavonia, Dalmatia, Slovenia, and Vojvodina ultimately became Yugoslavia. And Transylvania and Bukovina merged with Romania.

■ Turkey's Ottoman Empire came to an end, as did its control over Jerusalem.

The optimism generally felt in the early 1900s was no more. A "Lost Generation" of authors, musicians and artists emerged after the war, whose works reflected the stark reality that man had experienced.

Writers such as Ernest Hemingway, who served in the war as an American Red Cross ambulance driver, rose to prominence with sparse, lean writing

styles that immediately grabbed attention and reflected the nations' bleak post-war mentality.

While on duty, Hemingway had been injured by mortar fire. The incident was described in a letter he sent home, which was quoted by the U.S. National Archives magazine, *Prologue*: "Then there was a flash, as when a blast-furnace door is swung open, and a roar that started white and went red."

While struggling to carry an injured Italian soldier to safety, the already-wounded Hemingway was hit by machine-gun fire. He recuperated in a Milan hospital for six months.

Writing of his battle experience some years later in his book *Men at War*, Hemingway stated, "When you go to war as a boy you have a great illusion of immortality. Other people get killed; not you... Then when you are badly wounded the first time you lose that illusion and you know it can happen to you."

Yet the stark, life-and-death reality of war—the senseless destruction, the low value placed on life—did not only affect Ernest Hemingway's writing style and subjects

he undertook. Society as a whole was changed by the brutalities of war.

While visiting a battlefield, the protagonist in F. Scott Fitzgerald's post World War I novel *Tender Is the Night* stated, "All my beautiful lovely safe world blew itself up here..." Composers such as Samuel Barber wrote haunting musical pieces inspired by the despair of battle.

Having allowed pride, jealousy, lust and greed to sway him into a war never before seen, man established a League of Nations to prevent military conflicts.

But did humanity truly learn the lesson of war? Do not miss part two of this series in the March-April issue of *The Real Truth*. □



What's Wrong with Valentine's Day?

The trappings and customs of this holiday reveal that true love is not the real reason for it.

BY VIDAL N. WACHUKU

MISTING COLOGNE into the air, a husband grins in the mirror with satisfaction. Everything has been set: a bundle of roses adorns the dining room table, tea light candles glimmer in the entryway, and tucked inside his pocket is an ivory gift box with a diamond bracelet for his wife. He straightens his tie, confident it will be the perfect Valentine's Day.

Down the street, a club is packed with partiers guzzling specialty

drinks and gyrating to the *thud, thud, thud* of overcharged bass. At the bar, a muscled male exchanges seductive glances with a green-eyed brunette, until they end up on the dance floor together.

Ten blocks away, a third-grader sits at home, holding a card given to her by a boy in her class earlier that day. While students had munched on chalky candy hearts and colored pictures of cupid, the teacher told them about the day's origins.

Across the world, people consider Valentine's Day a time to celebrate

what is called love, in any form. It is a day for grandparents to show affection to grandchildren, husbands to wives, brothers to sisters, boyfriends to girlfriends.

In the Philippines, thousands of couples participate in the world's largest kissing event. In Nigeria, husbands and wives dine at restaurants with family. In Brazil, concerts featuring romantic samba music occur nationwide.

While wearing hearts, being "in love," and showing a "special someone" how much you care by gifting a teddy bear, chocolates or flowers

may *seem* perfectly innocent, there is another side to this “Day for Lovers” most fail to consider.

Modern-day Look

Valentine’s Day is a booming multimillion-dollar industry. The Greeting Card Association says approximately 190 million Valentine’s Day cards are sent each year, excluding the hundreds of millions that schoolchildren exchange. Also, it is the number one holiday for florists, with more than 198 million roses produced for it in 2010.

According to the National Retail Survey, men routinely spend double the amount on Valentine’s Day than women do. “The average man plans to shell out \$135.35 to impress the people in his life while women only expect to spend \$72.28,” it stated.

But where did the holiday originate—and how did cards, the heart symbol and cupid come to be associated with it?

One legend purports Valentine was a Roman priest: “It is believed that the young priest rose to distinction after betraying Emperor Claudius in 270 AD by conducting illegitimate wedding ceremonies in the capital,” *BBC* reported. “Emperor Claudius claimed that married men made poor soldiers and consequently decreed that all marriages of younger citizens would be outlawed. Bishop Valentine, however, maintained that marriage was part of God’s plan and purpose for the world. He continued to conduct marriages in secret between young people, sometimes as young as twelve, in the name of love.

“His success gained him unwelcome notoriety, which became Bishop Valentine’s downfall. He was jailed and ultimately beheaded, but not before he fell in love with the jailer’s daughter. It is thought that on the evening of his execution the bishop passed her a note which read ‘from your Valentine’. This story has blossomed into the defining tradition of Valentine’s Day” (ibid.).

But the customs related to this day began much earlier than AD 270. Since ancient times, mid-February has always been linked to sex and fer-

tility. Ancient Athenians celebrated February as the month of Gamelion to commemorate the marriage of the Greek god Zeus to Hera—the goddess of women, marriage and childbirth.

“More than a Hallmark holiday, Valentine’s Day, like Halloween, is rooted in pagan partying,” *National Geographic* reported.

“The lovers’ holiday traces its roots to raucous annual Roman festivals where men stripped naked, grabbed goat- or dog-skin whips, and spanked young maidens in hopes of increasing their fertility, said classics professor Noel Lenski of the University of Colorado at Boulder.

“The annual pagan celebration, called Lupercalia, was held every year on February 15 and remained wildly popular well into the fifth century A.D.—at least 150 years after Constantine made Christianity the official religion of the Roman Empire.”

On the eve of Lupercalia, February 14, a holiday in honor of Juno, queen of the gods and patroness of marriage, was held. As part of the celebration, a “love lottery” took place, in which the city’s bachelors drew a young maiden’s name from a jar and became paired with her for the duration of the festival. The new couples were then often sexual partners for the rest of the year.

According to *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Pope Gelasius I incorporated a form of the festival as the Feast of the Purification in AD 494. Yet it was not until 1415 that the custom started to become widespread—when Charles, the Duke of Orleans, sent the oldest-known recorded Valentine message to his wife while he was imprisoned at the Tower of London.

As the Catholic Church gained influence throughout Rome, the pagan custom of finding a sexual companion by lottery was abrogated. Despite the ban, the mid-February holiday in honor of St. Valentine was still used by Roman men to seek the affection of women. A tradition for the men to give loved ones handwritten messages of affection containing Valentine’s name was born.

The church attempted to “Christianize” Lupercalia even further. Instead of putting the names of girls into a box, the names of “saints” were drawn by both boys and girls. It was then each person’s duty to emulate the life of the saint whose name he or she had drawn.

Innocence Lost

Today, the holiday continues as a time to promote manufactured love—filled with trite greeting cards and ubiquitous heart-shaped candies. Many people feel obligated by societal expectations to buy gifts and send Valentine cards to loved ones. Others mark the day by indulging in casual sex.

Condom sales skyrocket before the “day for lovers.” The *Indo-Asian News Service* reported that the director of an online retail service said sales of condoms “increase up to 10-20 percent during Valentine’s week.”

The effects linger during the following months. The Nielsen Company revealed that in the second, third and fourth weeks of March, spending on at-home pregnancy and infertility tests exceeds \$15 million.

The sexual side of Valentine’s Day shows its face even in the seemingly harmless parts of the day.

A common symbol of this day is Cupid, often pictured as a chubby, winged baby that shoots arrows to make people fall in love. This Roman god’s name derives from the Latin word *cupido*, meaning “desire.”

Today, Cupid’s arrow has become an accepted symbol of love. His name and image are frequently associated with Valentine’s Day cards, romantic gifts and dating services, as well as is the heart symbol, which is said to be the seat of emotion.

But is this really the case?

Of cupid’s arrow piercing the heart symbol, Jack Santino wrote in the book *All Around The Year: Holidays and Celebrations in American Life*, “It can also be seen as a symbolic representation of the male and female principles, the round and open heart shape indicating the female, the arrow through it a phallic male symbol. The heart and arrow would then represent

the union of these two forces in sexual coition.”

Love, Not So Trivial

The harm of the day runs deeper than ancient pagan sex-rites. Minds sucked into this “mandated” celebration often grow up with a wrong understanding of love.

In the book *Sex – Its Unknown Dimension*, David C. Pack explained this widespread misconception.

“Most in the modern age have been sold a false concept of love. This concept is perpetuated in literature, film and music, with endless intoning of lyrics about ‘love’—‘I love you, You are my one and only love, Let’s make ‘love,’ I want to love you tonight,’ etc. Love has been mistakenly equated with romantic feelings, physical attraction or sexual desire—and illicit sexual relations. It is invariably confused with simple LUST!

“All forms of lust are *selfishly* motivated. It is a desire to ‘have’ another person sexually, in order to gratify one’s own senses.

“This is the opposite of TRUE love!

“The language of the New Testament, Greek, includes three distinct words that may be translated ‘love.’ We will briefly examine each of these words.

“*Agape* is spiritual love. This is the word used in Scripture to describe the love of God. It is pure, completely selfless love, which can only enter the human mind through God’s Spirit (Rom. 5:5). When God says that He is love, He is speaking of *agape*.

“*Philia* or *Philadelphia* can be translated as ‘brotherly love.’ This is natural human love between family members or friends.

“*Eros* is sexual love, as intended by God to exist within the confines of marriage. This is love that is expressed by the *physical* means of affection and sex. However, this is not the same as lust, which is expressed by different Greek words.

“True, mature love can be defined as genuine concern that is directed *outwardly* toward another. Love is unselfish. It is not focused on getting or

taking, but rather is interested in the welfare of others, and is centered on the desire to *give*.

“Those motivated by love believe Christ’s statement, ‘It is more blessed to GIVE than to receive.’ Though many have heard or read these words, very few actually apply them. To do so is contrary to human nature, which is essentially selfish.”

Valentine’s Day has always focused on GETTING: from *getting* a sex partner for the year in ancient times to *getting* affection, *getting* love—*getting* SEX—today!

No matter how hard a person tries, or how sincere one is, the lust-filled pagan origins of Valentine’s Day cannot be ignored. God does not—and

would never—condone such a holiday. Notice: “Thus says the LORD, Learn not the way of the heathen...For the customs of the people are vain...” (Jer. 10:2-3).

True love cannot be expressed once a year as part of a superficial holiday. Nor can it be found in a one-day affair of free sex that so often results in unwanted pregnancies, abortions, STDs, pain, depression or suicide. Instead, true love is focused on continually GIVING another person what he or she needs with no ulterior motives—in the way God commands (Rom. 13:9-10).

To learn more, read the books *Sex – Its Unknown Dimension* and *Dating and Courtship – God’s Way*. □

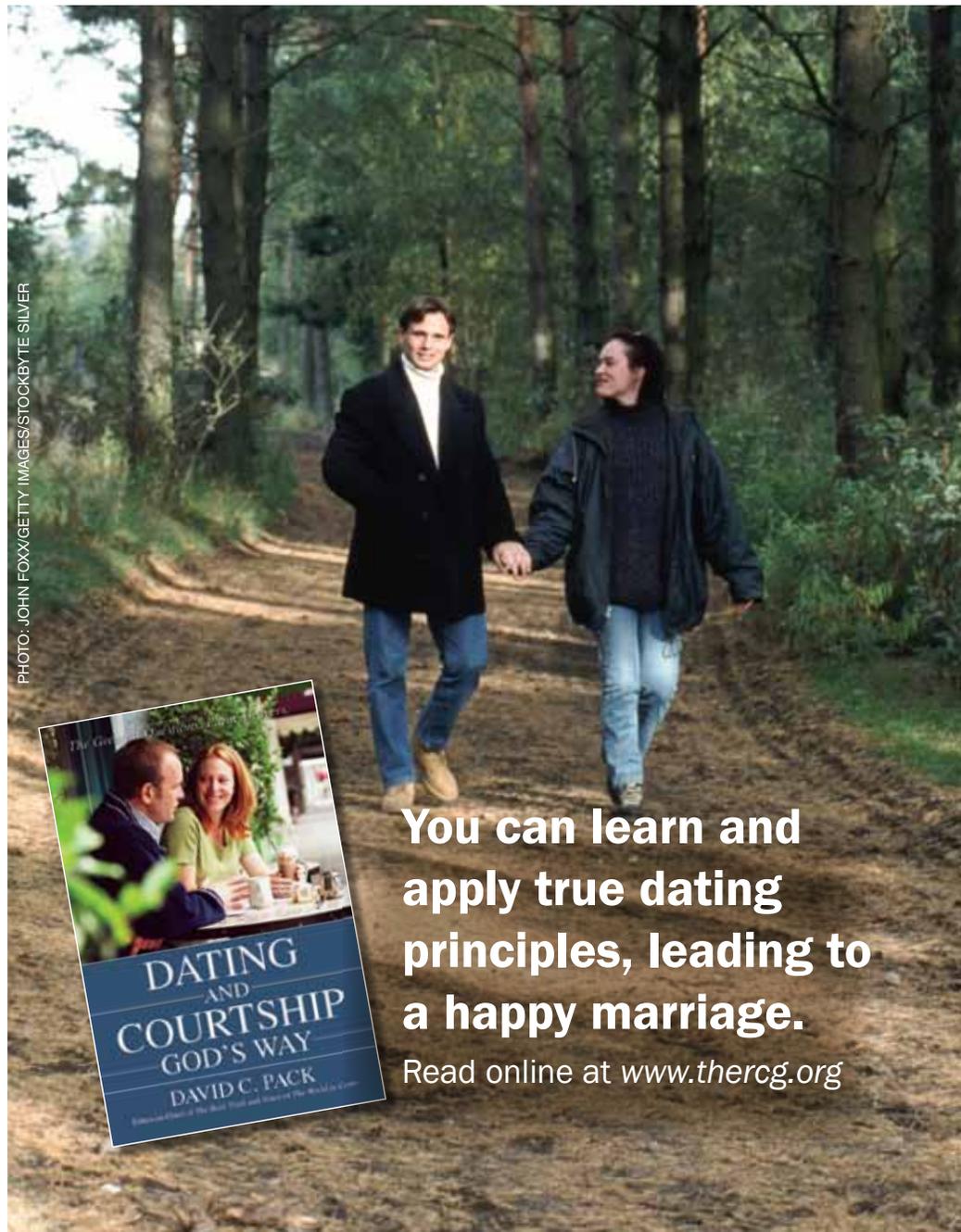
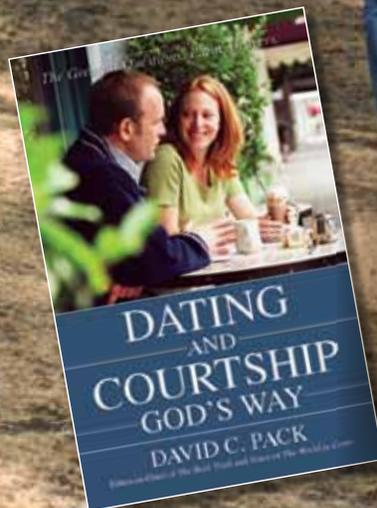


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PERSONAL

Continued from page 2

With the full picture in mind, how can parents hope to effectively rear a child? In such a morally and spiritually upside-down world—in today’s PERFECT STORM of problems converging around parents—what chance do they—do YOU—have to train a child God’s Way so he can become a successful, productive, obedient, happy and emotionally, physically and spiritually mature adult?

There *is* hope. Truths in this Personal begin to show the way—but you must first see, and then be willing to meet, the enormous challenge that lies before you! This involves much more than you now realize. But you *can* succeed—and you should proceed *as though you will!*

God’s Word the Only Source

Most people view childrearing as a matter of personal opinion. With no idea there is a right way—and many wrong ways!—to rear children, they either make up their own rules, repeat the methods used by their parents, or listen to confused, disagreeing “experts.” In effect, anything goes.

So many have come to think like the following 19-year-old superstar professional basketball player, who, upon the birth of his son—born out of wedlock—said this about why he would not seek advice from available good role model parents offering help: “You can’t teach someone to be a father. There are no tips like playing basketball. You have to raise your own kids.” Such ignorance is astonishing. But this is to be expected when children have children—and no one has taught them what they are getting into.

Now notice what the prophet Isaiah foretold of the final age before Christ returns, “As for my people, children are their oppressors, and women rule over them” (Isa. 3:12). It is the sad experience of millions of parents today that their children have virtual mastery over them, running them ragged, with parents having no idea what to do

about it or even that it should be any other way. Modernists have coined the phrase “*childcentric* families” to describe millions of today’s homes.

How did the terrible state of today’s children come to be?

In what has been called “a vast family management meltdown,” great numbers do not know where to turn or that God gives instruction in such matters. Millions of parents, forced to rely on themselves or on the misguided opinions of supposed experts, have no way of knowing what to do when it comes to properly rearing children. For instance, they have *no idea how*, or *when*, or even *whether*, as well as in *what fashion*, *how often*, and to *what degree*, they should discipline their children. In all ways, they need help, not recognizing the problems that they are facing are spiritual, not physical. They need to turn to the only source of true spiritual understanding—the Bible—God’s Word!

Let’s notice God’s instruction to fathers regarding their children: “Fathers, *provoke not* your children to anger, lest they be discouraged” (Col. 3:21), and “fathers, *provoke not* your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord” (Eph. 6:4).

These passages contain a great deal to consider, and more than can be explained in this Personal.

Again, most do not recognize that childrearing involves teaching from God—like faith, grace, law, sin, baptism, salvation, tithing, Sabbath-keeping and God’s annual Holy Days—and every other teaching God reveals.

When God’s servants, those truly carrying His authority, teach the only way to properly rear children, most people would see it as meddling, not biblical instruction. This is because it hits close to home and becomes personal. And, like children, many simply do not want anyone—including *God!*—telling them what to do, even when they have no idea themselves.

This Personal is for those who recognize they do not have all the answers.

Wrong Foundation

Within the Church that Christ built, the Eternal God has established His ministry to teach His Way of life in all points—the Way that mankind has rejected since Adam and Eve’s fateful decision to rebel against God’s rule over them. But God is calling a very few out of this world’s customs, values, traditions, false teachings—and erroneous thinking of supposed experts—to understand and live His spiritual laws. These few are reaping the spiritual benefits.

This can include you. But only if you can recognize that all forms of childrearing fall into two categories:

(1) God’s one Way, revealed in the Bible.

(2) The world’s many ways, as influenced by the “god of this world” (II Cor. 4:4)—Satan the devil.

Anything contrary to God’s teachings—His doctrines—is error. The Bible warns, “a little leaven leavens the whole lump” (I Cor. 5:6). Error, like leavening, spreads. Wrong principles of childrearing are no exception. Childrearing as practiced today stands on a completely wrong foundation. What started out wrong has grown much, *much* worse!

Authorities in society, and some parents, do teach certain good things concerning the rearing of children. But this means that they are teaching a mixture of good and evil. This is the lesson of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in the Garden of Eden, which God told Adam to reject. Only God’s Way is pure, with no hidden “downside.”

If you want to rear your children to lead successful, abundant lives, God’s Master Instruction Book will guide you. Revealing the many hidden shoals in a dangerous world that threatens your child, the Bible is filled with correct teachings and spiritual principles that always yield positive results for those who faithfully practice them. But you must deeply desire to learn God’s way of childrearing, and then diligently apply it without compromise—and for many years!

You must be prepared to throw away the intellectual nonsense taught by people who have “credentials,” but who reject God’s authority over this and all other matters in life. You must also be prepared to put God’s Way into practice as you learn it.

Preparing Your Children for Success

God has permitted you to have children as a gift of stewardship. True Christians, those called out of the world and led by the Holy Spirit, know that children could one day experience the same. At the end of your stewardship, God will take back your children. When it becomes time to offer them salvation, and for them to receive His Spirit, following repentance and conversion, your record will have largely been written. The efforts of your stewardship—your childrearing *today*—will have made God’s job *tomorrow* either harder or easier.

Grasp this. You hold far more authority in this process than you know!

Jesus explained that the Christian walk is difficult. Here is what He told His disciples to expect: “Enter you in at the *strait* [difficult] gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leads to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: because *strait* [again, hard] is the gate, and *narrow* is the way, which leads unto life, and *few* there be that find it” (Matt. 7:13-14).

The living Jesus Christ has high standards. It is the Christian parent’s task to sow a bountiful crop—it is Christ’s plan to reap it in their children.

Perhaps the single, most powerful tool to teach your children is your example—the way *you* live.

All children, but particularly small ones, automatically look up to parents. For younger children, you are the center of their expanding world, and your example affects them more deeply than anything you could teach them.

Will you apply the laws of success in *your* life? Will you live the way of “give” and follow what you are learning about the true God of the Bible?

The success of your children hinges on your answers!

Do you want your children to regularly pray and study God’s Word? Then show them how—study and pray *with* them. Do you want them to save and spend money wisely? Then do the same. Do you want them to spend less time watching television and to pursue worthwhile things—books, hobbies, sports, etc.? Set the example. Too many parents, in effect, unconsciously tell their children, “Do as I *say*, not as I *do*.” Be careful. Your children might be unable to hear what you are *saying* because of what you are *doing*.

All-important Character

Think for a moment about all the things that people pursue in search of success and happiness—money, possessions, power, fame, education, skills, beauty, youth and strength. None of these eternally benefit the person who has them. Literally, there is not one of them that “you can take with you.” Those who obtain any or even all of these are doomed to see them fade even before death, with no possibility of taking them past the grave.

Now, if you were told that there is one thing that you can teach your children that is spiritual—therefore eternal, indestructible and perfect—what would you say it is? The answer is CHARACTER, once referred to as *virtue*, the term used in the Bible. Almost no one today values or even talks about character. Yet, this topic speaks to the supreme purpose for which every human being who has ever lived was born. Sadly, it is also true that very few have any idea *why* they exist—*why* God gave them life and put them on Earth. (Read my book *The Awesome Potential of Man* to understand truths beyond your imagination. Find out why you were born. You will find that whole new vistas of understanding lie before you.)

You must come to understand—to deeply grasp—*why* you exist—*why* you are here—or you will never be able to teach this supreme truth to

your children. Once this is clear in your mind, two things will happen: Not only will you find it easier to teach them, but you will also be more eager to fulfill this duty!

The best definition for character I have ever heard comes from Herbert W. Armstrong, the man who taught me much of what I teach you now: “What is perfect character? It is the ability, in a separate entity with free moral agency, to come to the KNOWLEDGE of the right from the wrong—the true from the false—and to choose the right, and possess the WILL to enforce self-discipline to DO the right and resist the wrong” (*The Incredible Human Potential*).

It is your responsibility—your DUTY—to teach your children the absolutely vital, all-important, life-long pursuit of CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT. Character forms the greatest defense a human being can have against every conceivable pitfall, threat, roadblock and hurdle that life can throw at him.

An entire book on the subject of character could not reveal and explain everything a parent must know and teach regarding it.

Future Leaders

Before entering any major endeavor, prudent people want to know what is at stake. They want to know what it *means* if they succeed or what it *means* if they fail in their effort. In other words, what are the consequences—either way?

Consider! Invariably, the most successful people, the most effective role models for others, the wisest parents, the best husbands and wives, and THE GREATEST LEADERS, were all exposed to *great teachers* who taught them in their formative years.

Not everyone can be a leader now, in this life, but everyone should be striving to qualify for future leadership—in fact, FUTURE RULERSHIP. Without strong leadership from you as parents—which is centered in your ability to be effective teachers—your children have little chance to be anything but *followers*—and probably

poor ones at that if you have not done your part *at all*.

When properly understood, your children are actually also in training from an early age to become future members of the coming, world-ruling kingdom, or Family of God—soon to arrive on Earth as a SUPERGOVERNMENT led by Jesus Christ, ruling with all the saints of past ages over all cities throughout the nations of the world. Christ has been carefully preparing His team of co-rulers for 6,000 years, beginning with what was offered to Adam. If God has called you, you already know that you are in training for this rulership. But so are your children—NOW!

Teach Your Children Constantly!

Parents, do not allow your children to merely stumble into adulthood. Just as God teaches you, so you must

TEACH *them*. This has been God's Way from the very beginning: "And these words, which I command you this day, shall be in your heart: and you shall TEACH them *diligently* unto your children, and shall TALK of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise up" (Deut. 6:6-7).

Be prepared to teach your children *all* the time—on every occasion—the proverbial morning, noon and night. Your responsibility is to instruct them in all the values they need in order to succeed. God designed children to be like sponges—they were literally *created to learn*. Your children are unconsciously looking to you to teach them how to navigate the increasingly complex maze of today's world—again, of its PERFECT STORM of factors and conditions arrayed against them.

As parents, you possess immense power. You have the authority—coupled with a tremendous amount of REVEALED SPIRITUAL KNOWLEDGE—to give your children the maximum opportunity to discover their strengths, to achieve right goals, to learn about the true God and to build *His* righteous character, to develop their extraordinary human potential, and to lead lives filled with success, productivity, and service to others, which will lead to the supreme happiness and joy that all long for.

Seek God and ask for the crucial wisdom and constant guidance that you need. Then go fulfill your potential as parents by helping your children fulfill theirs.

They are counting on you!

(To learn more, read—and study—my thorough book, *Train Your Children God's Way*.) □

CHILDREARING— GOD'S WAY



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ECONOMY & PERSONAL FINANCE

Extreme Weather a Factor in Record Global Food Prices

According to the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), world food prices for basic commodities—wheat, corn, dairy products, meat and sugar—hit record highs in 2010, and continue to rise.

The FAO's food price index rose from 213.5 points in June 2008 to 214.7 in December 2010. The *Gulf News* wrote, "In 2010, low-income for deficit countries' import requirements were around 89 million tonnes of cereals...Of this, African countries imported 43 million and Asian countries 44 million tonnes."

The Independent reported, "Global food price has risen for the sixth month in succession. Wheat has almost doubled since June, sugar is at a 30-year high, and pork is up by a quarter since the beginning of 2010."

Rising oil and fuel costs, increasing use of corn-based biofuels, severe weather, and environmental conditions (drought, heat, wildfires, extensive rainfall, floods) have contributed to soaring food prices around the world.

The Chinese regions of Pucheng and Kuandian, recorded 25.61 inches of rain in June and 34.57 inches in August,



■ **INUNDATED:** An aerial photo shows the flooded Depot Hill area south of Rockhampton, Queensland (Jan. 6, 2011).

PHOTO: PATRICK HAMILTON/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

respectively, which greatly affected farmlands. North Korea, another severely affected country, is expected to have a food shortage of nearly half a million tons, despite a 3 percent increase in staple food production.

Meanwhile, Australia experienced heavy rains last December. Three cities in the state of Queensland—Rockhampton, Brisbane and Mackay—saw at least three inches of rainfall, which

affected wheat and sugar production.

Elsewhere, Russia experienced its worst drought in 50 years, with temperatures averaging 11 degrees Fahrenheit above the normal July climate. At the same time, rainfall was below average, creating dry conditions that sparked wildfires later that month.

Having suffered a summer drought, Ukraine (as did Russia) limited the export of wheat. In 2009, Ukraine harvested 50.7 million tons; the nation harvested 7.7 million tons less the following year.

In addition, Russia suffered severe summer temperatures in 2010, with Saint Petersburg seeing an average of nearly 12 degrees above normal. Moscow, the nation's capital, set a temperature record of 92 F. The drought and extreme summer heat destroyed 22 million acres of planted land.

The UN fears the current crisis could lead to food riots, increased tensions between competing nations, continued price inflation, and growing hunger, particularly among the world's poorest populations. □

SOCIETY & LIFESTYLES

Broken Marriages Impact Half of U.S. Teens

Up to 55 percent of American teenagers live in broken homes, a Family Research Council (FRC) study found. The report examined the number of teenagers who have been raised in an intact family, which the FRC defines as a household in which both birth mother and biological father have been married to each other since before or around the time of a child's birth.

Using United States Census Bureau data from 2008, the study revealed that 62 percent of Asian-Americans live in two-parent households, compared to 54 percent of whites, 41 percent of multi-

racial background, 40 percent of Hispanics, 24 percent of American Indians or Alaskan Natives, and 17 percent of African-Americans.

"Increased rates of divorce and childbearing outside of marriage have turned growing up in a stable, two-parent family into an exception, rather than the rule, for young Americans," the report found.

Regionally, southern states recorded the highest percentage of broken homes—59 percent.

The study's author, Dr. Patrick Fagan, concluded that a decrease in

strong families has negative consequences for a country.

"The decrease of strong families in the United States has major implications for the nation, and by extension, the rest of the world," he said. "A nation is only as strong as its citizens, and a lack of strong families weakens human, social, and moral capital, which in turn directly affects the financial (and thus indirectly the military and foreign policy strength) of the United States. A great nation depends on great families, but weak families will build a weak nation." □

AUSTRALIA & SOUTH PACIFIC

Australian Floods: Costliest Disaster in Nation's History



■ **FLOOD DEBRIS:** Volunteers remove flood debris from houses in Fairfield, a suburb of Brisbane, Australia's third-largest city (Jan. 16, 2011).

PHOTO: MARK RALSTON/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Following three weeks of flooding in central and southern Queensland, Australia, government authorities are tallying the devastating effects: at least 28 people dead, more than 30,000 homes and businesses swamped, and an estimated \$9.8 billion in damages.

Floods, which began in December 2010, engulfed 75 percent of Queensland—an area larger than Texas and California combined. A combination of heavy rainfall due to tropical cyclone Tasha, as well as La Nina-related weather patterns, caused

the region's worst flooding in over 100 years.

Australia's treasurer and deputy prime minister, Wayne Swan, said the disaster could be the most costly in the country's history.

"This is very big," Mr. Swan told the *Australian Broadcasting Corporation*. "It's not just something which is going to occupy our time for the next few months. It will be a question of years as we go through the rebuilding."

The *Daily Telegraph* reported that the state's premier, Anna Bligh, told

reporters in Brisbane, "Queensland is reeling...from the worst natural disaster in our history and possibly in the history of our nation...As we look across our state we've seen three-quarters of our state having experienced the devastation of raging flood waters and we now face a reconstruction task of post-war proportions."

After abating in Queensland, floodwaters rose in the state of Victoria, destroying 1,400 homes in 43 towns.

Meteorologists predict additional widespread flooding in Australia during the coming months. □



The White Horse



The Red Horse



The Black Horse



The Pale Horse



The Four Horsemen

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