

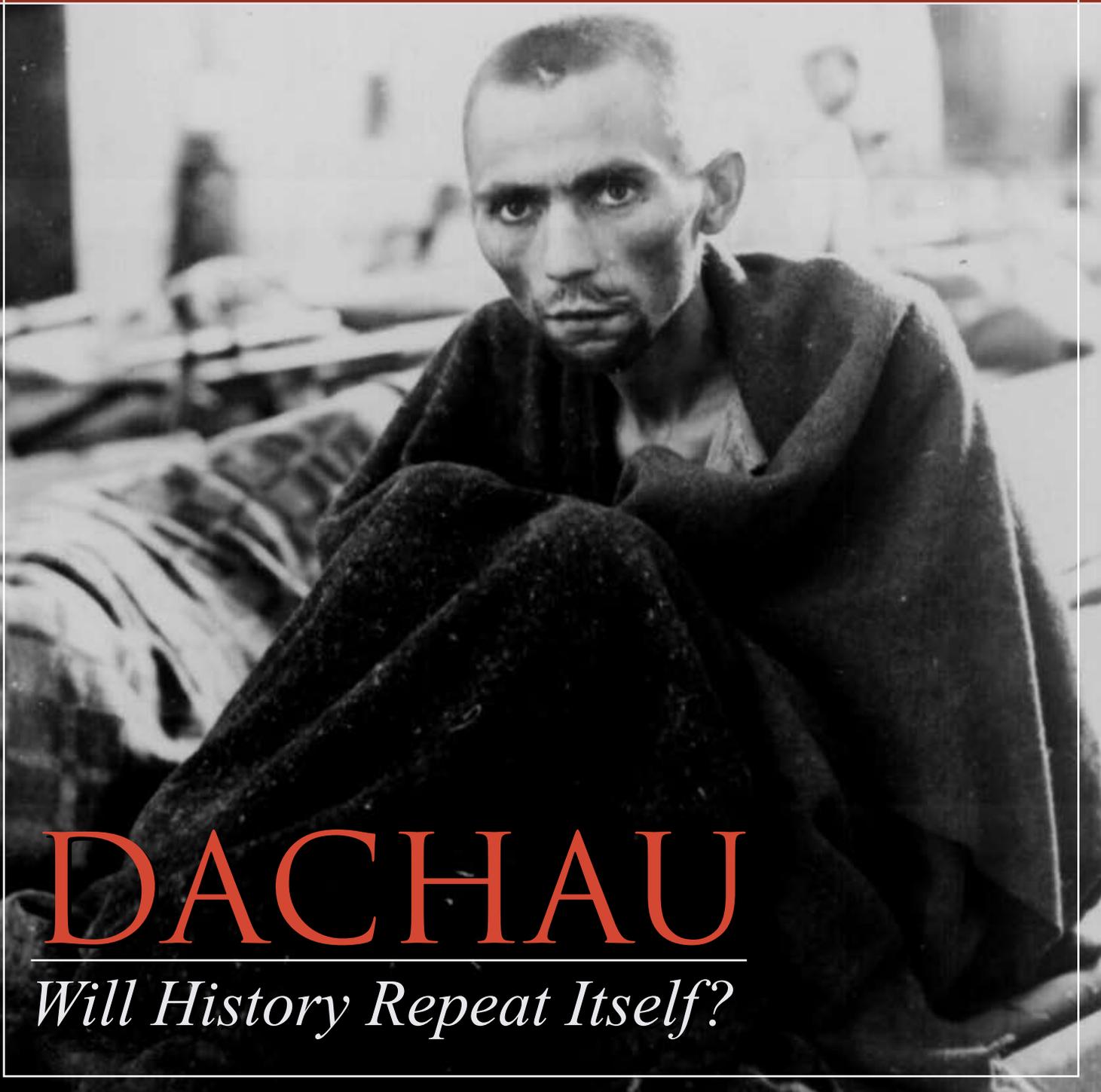
OCTOBER-NOVEMBER 2009

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REAL TRUTH

A MAGAZINE RESTORING PLAIN UNDERSTANDING



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Will History Repeat Itself?

THE REAL TRUTH

A MAGAZINE RESTORING PLAIN UNDERSTANDING

VOL. VII | NO. 9 | OCTOBER-NOVEMBER 2009

A R T I C L E S

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■ **COUNTLESS RELIGIONS:** A church building in Washington, D.C. (May 2008).

PHOTO: DARNITRA D. MAIDEN/THE REAL TRUTH

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■ **FRONT COVER:** A starving inmate of a Nazi concentration camp (May 12, 1945).

PHOTO: NATIONAL ARCHIVE

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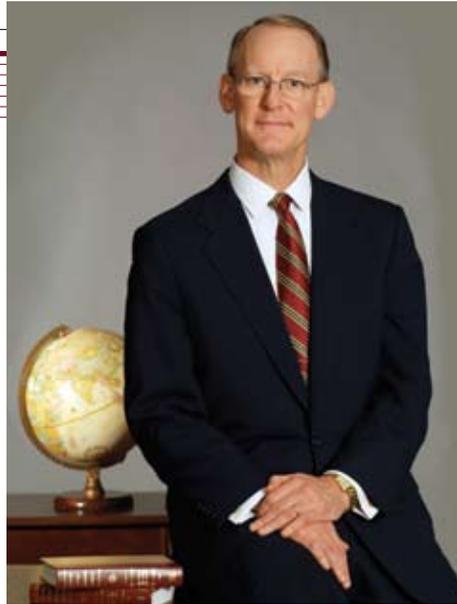
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PERSONAL FROM

David C. Fack



REVELATION 1-6

What Are the “Four Horsemen”?

STAGGERING EVENTS will soon shock the whole world! Great prophecies in the book of Revelation show *how* and *when* these catastrophic events will occur.

This “personal” begins vital understanding that will forever change your outlook on the *future*. You must have the *keys* that *unlock* what lies ahead—as well as the *entirety* of the book of Revelation.

This stunning book of prophecy is opened, revealed and explained—*at last!*

Understanding who is the actual *author* of the Revelation—and understanding the critically important *theme*, the centerpiece of the book, is vital. Without *these* keys, many have bogged down into either arguments about whether “the Lord’s Day” (Rev. 1:10) is a reference to Sunday—or whether John, instead of Christ, authored the book.

Why does almost everyone refer to this book as “The Revelation of St. John the Divine”? Nowhere does it refer to John as either divine or the Revelator. So the primary purpose of chapter 1 is to establish Jesus Christ as the book’s author.

Notice: “*The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto Him, to show unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass; and He sent and signified it*

by His angel unto His servant John: *Who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw*” (Rev. 1:1-2).

Did you notice that the book of Revelation contains *Jesus Christ’s* words, as the Revelator, not *John’s* words? John was merely a scribe—a kind of secretary taking dictation.

Anyone who carefully examines these verses will plainly see that the Revelation originated with God (the Father), who gave it to Christ. Christ sent and signified the Revelation by His angel, who then gave it to John, “Who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw.” John merely *recorded* these events, preserving them for the servants of Jesus Christ—His end-time Church. So, it came from the Father to Christ to an angel to John, and finally to Jesus’ servants—and no one else.

These are not my words, but the Bible’s.

A towering question overshadows the discussion here. If the world’s best minds cannot even discern the book’s correct *title*—and *Author*—how could they discern its *message*?

Christ used John to “bare record of”—write down—what He was revealing. In short, John wrote three things: (1) the Word of God, (2) the direct testimony (the words) of Christ, and (3) what he saw in vision.

The Theme

With this background, you now understand the introduction to the book.

Most reputable scholars generally agree, and admit, that the term “the Lord’s Day” is, in fact, a reference to God’s coming day of reckoning, or judgment upon the world—the *day of the Lord!*

Yet almost no one else understands this. Without this central point correct in one’s thinking, the entire book will make no sense. Reading Revelation becomes a fruitless exercise.

Now notice verse 10. It actually reveals the central focus or theme of the whole book. Understand that John lived over 1,900 years ago—long before the events of this book were to be fulfilled. He recorded, “I was in the Spirit on the *Lord’s day*, and heard behind Me a great voice, as of a trumpet” (Rev. 1:10).

Both the *Rotherham* translation and the *Concordant* version render this verse, “I came to be, *in Spirit, in the Lord’s Day.*”

Centuries of controversy have sprung from this reference, because people argue about which day of the week John is referring to. The presumption is that he is talking about Sunday, though the prophecy says nothing of the kind. This verse has nothing to do with Sunday—and is not a reference to any day of the week! The day of the week on which John may have received this prophecy is irrelevant.

The “Lord’s Day” is speaking of the time of God’s Wrath. Over 30 different Old Testament prophecies refer to “the great and the terrible *day of the LORD*” (Joel 2:31).

The prophet Joel speaks of it. Here is a small portion of how he describes the day, plainly referenced in other verses as lasting one whole year: “Blow you the *trumpet* in Zion, and sound an alarm in My holy mountain: let all the inhabit-

ants of the land tremble: for the *day of the LORD* comes, for it is near at hand; a *day* of darkness and of gloominess, a *day* of clouds and of thick darkness, as the morning spread upon the mountains: a great people and a strong; *there has not been ever the like* [this is the worst time in history], neither shall be any more after it, even to the years of many generations. A fire devours before them; and behind them a flame burns: the land is as the garden of Eden before them, and behind them a desolate wilderness; yes, and nothing shall escape them” (Joel 2:1-3).

The Day of the Lord is the really terrible time of God’s punishments, plagues and judgments at the culmination of 6,000 years of mankind’s *practice* of sin. Jesus Christ, through John, is revealing *to His servants* what occurs prior to—and through—His Return!

Ezekiel 8:3 gives some insight into *how* John could be transported 1,900 years into the future. Notice: “The spirit lifted me [Ezekiel] up between the earth and the heaven, and brought me *in the visions of God* to Jerusalem.” Like Ezekiel, John was *in vision*—“in the spirit”—from the Isle of Patmos, where he recorded the Revelation. In the past, God has projected His servants (through visions) into important future events so that they could record them.

We are in the time of the end, when God wants His servants to understand the last events preceding the Return of Christ.

The book of Revelation does not speak to unknown events in the distant past. It warns of colossal events that spring from world troubles affecting the masses of humanity alive *NOW*.

Grasp that the Day of the Lord is the towering centerpiece of the entire book.

The whole book of Revelation can be broken down, in detail. Chapter 1, verse 3, declares, “...he

that *reads*, and they that *hear* the words of this prophecy, and *keep* those things which are written” are “blessed.” What would be the point of this verse if God did *not* want the reader—the “hearer”—the “keeper” (the obeyer)—to understand it? This is an important statement to all who read Revelation. It includes you!

This entire book will be made clear—plain—understandable! Let’s begin. Verses 14-16 are a direct description of Jesus Christ, as He now exists in full glory—an awe-inspiring picture. Take a moment to meditate on how far it is from the well-known image of the popular, long-haired, sallow-complexioned, sad-faced, false “Christ” of this world: “His head and His hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and His eyes were as a *flame of fire*; And His feet like unto *fine brass*, as if they burned in a furnace; and His voice as the sound of many waters. And He had in His right hand *seven stars*: and out of His mouth went a sharp *two-edged sword*: and His countenance was *as the sun shines in [its] strength*” (Rev. 1:14-16).

There are two types of symbols used in Revelation. The first is found in verse 12, where John saw “seven golden candlesticks.” Also, in verse 16, he saw “seven stars” in Christ’s hand.

Understand one of the most important rules of Bible study—the Bible interprets itself!

The meaning of these candlesticks and stars is explained by simply continuing to read: “The mystery of the seven stars which you saw in My right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels [or messengers] of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which you saw are the seven churches” (vs. 20).

We have just introduced the subject of the next two chapters. Chapter 1, verse 3 explains that

Please see **PERSONAL**, page 21



HOSPITAL SUPERBUGS

When Antibiotics No Longer Work, What's Next?

A patient takes antibiotics for a bacterial infection. The bacterium adapts and becomes antibiotic-resistant. Scientists invent stronger drugs. The bacterium morphs to a still stronger strain. After repeating this cycle for over 80 years, is this the end of the antibiotic age? Where else can you turn?

BY SAMUEL C. BAXTER

IN A SMALL, dimly lit hospital chapel, behind the first of four bare wooden pews, a man in his early 30s kneels in front of a cross at the front of the room, head bowed.

After a long moment of silence he thinks, *How did we get here? It was supposed to be a routine procedure.*

For the first time since he was a child, he prays. *Why her?* he pleads.

His wife had come in for minor knee surgery. After the seemingly successful procedure, the area around her knee turned black and swollen.

Minutes pass and the man gets up to return to his wife's side.

Days later, he wheels his wife to the car, a bandage wrapped around the stub of a now amputated leg.

His prayer went unanswered.

This type of story is all too frequent. During surgery, something is left behind—tiny spores of the bacteria called MRSA. This hard-to-cure superbug, which is an extreme staph infection, can infect a patient with sores on the skin, necrotizing pneumonia, and even lead to death. Worse, MRSA can be carried unknowingly on hands, clothes or even a “get well” card tied to a bouquet of flowers.

In past years, this hospital superbug killed more people in America than AIDS. Its cohort, *C. difficile*, killed about double that amount. For decades, these stubborn bacteria have plagued healthcare facilities. And for decades, physicians have countered with their favorite weapon: antibiotics.

But there is a problem: Each time a person takes antibiotics for these superbugs, the bacteria can mutate and “learn” to resist the powerful antidotes.

During the past 10 years, hospital superbugs have been rampant, with the death toll quietly rising in the very place people go to *regain* their health—local hospitals.

What are these hospital superbugs? Their scientific names are *Clostridium difficile* (*C. difficile*) and methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA, pronounced “mersa” for short).

As these bacteria become stronger, doctors use the strongest antibiotics to combat them. But the bacteria continue to adapt, and will soon overtake even the most powerful drugs. What happens when all antibiotic options run out?

Super Impact

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), “MRSA occurs most frequently among patients who undergo invasive medical procedures or who have weakened immune

■ **DRUG-RESISTANT AGE?:** A patient lies on a hospital bed with Tuberculosis (TB), one of the leading causes of mortality in India. Co-infection with HIV and MDR (MultiDrug Resistant) TB, caused by improper use of antibiotics in chemotherapy on drug-susceptible TB patients, pose major threats to the success of global TB control.

PHOTO: MARINE SIMON/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

systems and are being treated in hospitals and healthcare facilities such as nursing homes and dialysis centers. MRSA in healthcare settings commonly causes serious and potentially life-threatening infections, such as bloodstream infections, surgical site infections, or pneumonia.”

As resistance to antibiotics has increased, hospitals have had to turn to “the drug of last resort”—*vancomycin*—to combat MRSA.

Regarding *C. difficile*, the CDC describes it as “a bacterium that causes diarrhea and more serious intestinal conditions such as colitis.” Symptoms include at least three bowel movements per day for two or more days, fever, loss of appetite, nausea, and abdominal pain or tenderness.

An estimated 35,000 *C. difficile* infections occur per year in American hospitals, and tens of thousands more in nursing homes—with 15,000 to 20,000 killed annually.

The United Kingdom Department of Health recorded 36,674 deaths between 1997 and 2007 for the two infections (*C. difficile* claimed 26,208 and MRSA 10,466).

Researchers from the University of Nottingham reported, “Official figures show that 5000 people die from a healthcare-associated infection every year in the UK and tackling the super bugs costs the NHS £1bn a year. 1 in 12 of us will pick up an infection during a stay in hospital. There’s a 1 in 77 chance of contracting MRSA and a 1 in 50 chance of developing *C. diff.*”

An April 2008 CDC report showed that U.S. hospital patient infections doubled from 2001 to 2005. *The New York Times* reported, “Several years ago, the mortality rate from a *C. difficile* infection was around 1 to 2 percent. But today, various studies estimate that the death rate is 6 percent. The reason is that a hypervirulent strain has emerged that emits higher levels of toxins than earlier strains.”

More worrisome is that if you have a healthy immune system, you can carry these virulent superbugs and not even know it without a lab test. Doctors can take it into exam rooms, family

members can infect a patient they are visiting—even surgeons can carry it into the operating room. Again, these bacteria can sneak in on a nose or hand, and can infect through a wound the size of a mosquito bite.

Growing the Bugs

How did these near unstoppable bacteria grow to such formidable proportions? Through overusing antibiotics.

For each decade following the 1928 invention of penicillin, physicians prescribed antibiotics as a “cure-all” for just about everything: Have an earache? Take some *Amoxicillin*. Have bronchitis? Try *Zithromax*. Sinusitis? *Trimethoprim-sulfamethoxazole*. Won’t go away? Take *moxifloxacin*; it’s stronger.

Entire generations have been born and bred on this thinking. Nearly every trip to the doctor ends with a stop at the local drugstore—antibiotic prescription in hand.

Now the healthcare industry is reaping the effects of reckless antibiotic overuse. What was once a giant safety net against disease has created monstrous bacteria *Clostridium difficile* and methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*, among others.

After an *unwanted* bacterium is introduced to the body, the immune system fights back. Physicians typically prescribe antibiotics (any drug that either kills bacteria or hampers their growth) to aid the immune system.

However, with each use, bacteria can begin to “resist” the drug, using a number of tricks. Some make themselves less permeable and the antibiotic cannot be absorbed. Other bacteria change their structure so that antibiotics no longer recognize and destroy them.

In the worst case, researchers now document bacteria that produce an enzyme to dissolve the antibiotic, rendering it useless. In effect, the *hunter* antibiotic has become the *hunted*!

Another danger associated with the misuse of antibiotics is that they destroy bacteria indiscriminately. The body also has healthy bacteria that aid in digestion and help protect the body.

In the case of *C. difficile*, the bacterium can often survive the initial

antibiotics course. This means that once all other bacterial competition is killed off, it can grow and flourish. Often a person will be put on *another* round of *stronger* antibiotics—meaning that *C. difficile* can possibly grow stronger and more resistant as it spreads to new hosts.

Also, scientists are finding that after long courses of antibiotics, *C. difficile* patients pass the bacterium’s spores into the environment around them—even after treatment has ended and the patient appears symptom-free.

Researchers at the Wellcome Trust Sanger Institute created a “mouse hospital” to simulate the spread of *C. difficile* in a healthcare environment.

“We treated mice with short and longer courses of antibiotics,” says Professor Gordon Dougan, Head of Pathogen Genetics at the Sanger Institute and senior author on the study. “After a short course most mice had dropped back to normal spore shedding levels around two weeks after cessation of the treatment. But after long term exposure to antibiotics some of the mice remained in their ‘supershedder’ state for weeks or even longer after treatment was stopped. We should consider that patients still pose a considerable transmission threat some weeks after treatment is terminated even if they have not exhibited signs of *C. difficile* disease.”

Prevention Measures

The towering threat of drug-resistant superbugs has hospital, government and local officials in Britain, the United States and elsewhere scrambling for answers.

One solution is for medical facilities to test everyone for the bugs upon admission, and quarantine those infected. Yet many hospitals are wary of this, fearing potential lawsuits from patients who tested negative when they were admitted, but became infected during their stay.

While implementing more tests and isolating infected patients have shown promising results, the main problem in the superbug fight is the over-prescription of antibiotics. Although

researchers have noted a decline in ear infection antibiotic prescriptions, stronger antibiotic types are still regularly overused.

“There is good news about declining antibiotic use, since inappropriate use of antibiotics can result in bacteria that are resistant to these antibiotics,” said Dr. Marie R. Griffin, a professor of preventive medicine at Vanderbilt University Medical Center and a co-author of the study [published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*]. “However, overuse of powerful antibiotics remains a problem” (*U.S. News and World Report*).

But is it too little too late? Even as healthcare facilities work to quell growing outbreaks of MRSA and *C. difficile* within their walls—the virulent superbugs are increasingly turning up outside their walls in the community. Although researchers have yet to put an accurate number on superbug infections, newspapers regularly report outbreaks in gyms, public pools and high school locker rooms.

Also, as the flu season draws near, scientists fear community-acquired MRSA could team up with the swine flu virus to produce deadly results. Those whose immune systems are weakened by the H1N1 virus are highly susceptible to getting MRSA-induced necrotizing pneumonia.

An infections expert at the University of Nottingham, Professor Richard James told the *Telegraph*, “The threat from [community-acquired] MRSA in the US is a very serious concern, especially if there is an epidemic. It could trigger a large number of cases of necrotizing pneumonia, which has a mortality rate of 50 per cent in 72 hours.”

The Real Problem

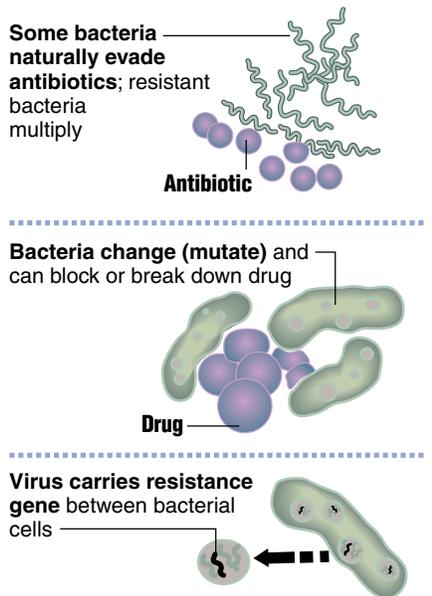
Antibiotics have been a pillar of Western medicine for nearly a century. In a sad twist of irony, the very drug created to defeat disease has formed bacteria poised to run rampant through nations of the West. Yet mankind thinks it will dig itself out of this trouble once again. *We have been through terrible times—even worse than this—before, man reasons.*

Nowhere are these attitudes as common as in the West—specifically America and the United Kingdom. These two countries have enjoyed relative protection from disease epidemics, and it seems easy to chock up this disease-free time to democracy, to the marvels of modern science—due to “our own ingenuity.”

This cannot be further from the truth! The blessings the American and British peoples have long enjoyed

Drug-resistant Bacteria

Antibiotic overuse sets the stage; the process by which bacteria become resistant to drugs can then follow three paths:



© 2008 MCT
Source: U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
Graphic: Sun-Sentinel

have nothing to do with “ingenuity.” Unknown to most, the U.S. and Britain are descended from ancient Israel. But what does this have to do with prosperity or disease outbreaks?

America and Britain were blessed with prosperity simply for being descendants of the biblical patriarch Abraham. God promised his descendants blessings for his obedience. (David C. Pack explains this in great detail in his book *America and Britain in Prophecy*.)

In Leviticus 26, God makes plain the cause-and-effect relationship

between obedience and disobedience. That is, as with any law—science or otherwise—laws will either keep you or break you. (Read Mr. Pack’s book *The Ten Commandments – “Nailed to the Cross” or Required for Salvation?* to learn more.)

The God of Abraham promised biblical-proportioned plagues for commandment-breaking: “But if you [Israel] will not hearken unto Me, and will not do all these commandments” (vs. 14), then...

■ “I will even appoint over you terror, *consumption* [wasting lung disease] and the burning ague [fever]” (vs. 16).

■ “I will bring seven times more *plagues* upon you according to your sins” (vs. 21).

■ “I will send the *pestilence* among you” (vs. 25).

Sound harsh? Consider the blessings for obedience: “If you walk in My statutes, and keep My commandments, and do them” (vs. 3), then...

■ “I will give you rain in due season” (vs. 4).

■ “I will give you peace in the land...and I will rid evil beasts out of the land, neither shall the sword go through your land” (vs. 6).

■ “I will have respect unto you, and make you fruitful, and multiply you” (vs. 9).

These blessings point to a Being who is far from “fiery” and vengeful. Instead, He is a God who wants to see people prosper and succeed.

In Exodus, God declares He is “the LORD that heals you” (15:26). This name is tied to obedience—doing what is right in the sight of God by keeping His Commandments and all His statutes.

This is *not* a God preached from the pulpits on Sunday. This is *not* a God who makes empty promises. Rather, He is the God who will hear heartfelt, contrite prayers of repentance—and heals those who “seek...first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness” (Matt. 6:33).

His promises for abundant health are outlined thoroughly in our booklets *The Truth About Healing* and *God’s Principles of Healthful Living*. □



Shopping for a Religion

Why do so many hop from church to church?

BY JAMES F. TURCK AND BRIAN K. JACKSON

DRIVING ON Interstate 71 in southern Ohio, south of Columbus, a motorist passes a billboard sign advertising a nearby church. It reads, “A Church for People Who Don’t Like Church.”

Quite a telling statement! It demonstrates that many churchgoers are dissatisfied with the status quo of “churchianity” (making church a religion rather than obeying God as a way of life). For them, life’s most important questions go unanswered.

Unsettled and unfulfilled, the restless parishioner begins to question the

teachings and practices of his church.

Are you among the growing numbers investigating—questioning—what you have been told?

Almost half (44 percent) of American adults surveyed by the Pew Research Center’s Forum on Religion & Public Life have changed “faiths” (the many differing religious organizations) from what they were taught as children. The study showed that most switched before age 24, many more than once.

Why?

Is it because there is not enough entertainment at church? Is it that the

message is not right, or the congregation does not “show enough love”? Maybe the church is too old-fashioned or too contemporary. Or it is simple dissatisfaction, and now there is an urge to seek something better—more appealing—something that feels right? *I have not found the right “one” for me yet*, others think, *so I must keep searching*.

This is why over 1 million people *each day* Google the word “church” looking for information. Another over 1.5 million type the word “Christianity” into search engines each day, no doubt for the same reason.

The following scenarios play out daily across America in the lives of

■ **LINING UP FOR PRAYER:** Onlookers in New York City await the arrival of Pope Benedict XVI for a prayer service with family members of some who were killed on 9/11 at Ground Zero (April 20, 2008).

PHOTO: SPENCER PLATT/GETTY IMAGES

millions looking for something they cannot find from their church: Mary stopped attending because of the bad attitudes of people in the congregation. John left through the “back door” of his church because he was tired of the same old “healing and grace” sermon week after week. The Jones family dropped out because of the pastor’s hypocrisy: teaching from the Bible, but living diametrically opposite from what it says to do.

Most children grew up following their parents’ religious beliefs. Now, having reached adulthood, they no longer share these same views. Instead, they search for something else, something that agrees with their own thinking.

What is the primary motivation for wanting to change religions?

Switching From Church to Church

Change is part of everyday life. You change your clothes for work, the lane in which you drive your vehicle, your baby’s diapers—you even change your work schedule for unexpected situations that suddenly crop up. People in the West take such changes for granted, a mindset that has carried over to religion.

However, should your church affiliation change when it no longer fits your lifestyle, such as getting married to a person of another faith or relocating to another community?

With tens of thousands of different “Christian” churches to pick from in the U.S., it should not be surprising that there are at least this many reasons people want to change from one religion to another.

“According to the 2007 Landscape Survey, 16% of American adults say they are currently unaffiliated with any particular religion, compared with only 7% who were raised unaffiliated,” revealed the Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life (“Faith in Flux: Changes in Religious Affiliation in the U.S.”).

People surveyed said some of the reasons they became unaffiliated were because “they think of religious people as hypocritical, judgmental or insincere...religious organizations focus

too much on rules and not enough on spirituality, or that religious leaders are too focused on money and power rather than truth and spirituality. Another reason cited by many people who are now unaffiliated is the belief that many religions are partly true but no single religion is completely true” (ibid.).

Another survey of the same topic, given a year later, revealed that 74 percent of those who chose to join a particular church did so because they were attracted to the worship services; 51 percent wanted spiritual fulfillment that was lacking in their life; and 55 percent felt they were being called by God. About 40 percent of this latter group said religion was somewhat important in their lives.

With a 68 percent retention rate of childhood members, the Catholic Church has the greatest net loss compared to other major groups. Those who leave outnumber those who join, almost four to one. About half leave to become evangelical Protestants or unaffiliated; 62 percent of former Catholics say they left because they stopped believing in Catholic teachings; and 55 percent felt uncomfortable with how the Bible was taught.

One of the most common answers given as to why nearly 71 percent of former Catholics and Protestants abandoned their childhood religion: They slowly drifted away.

The survey found “majorities of those who have changed affiliations within Protestantism say they left their childhood faith in part because they found another religion that is preferable (58%) or because they were spiritually unfulfilled in their former faith (51%)” (ibid.).

Unwilling to Commit

People’s dissatisfaction with churches lies in the “supermarket mentality.” Churches with the “open door” policy of “come one, come all, no commitment necessary,” follow the same consumer outlook.

Clients can go to the store of their choice, walk in, grab a shopping cart, and select from among the numerous

BROAD AND EASY —OR NARROW AND STRAIGHT?

This world’s “Christianity” can only offer a broad, easy, and often “come as you are” way. The Bible describes that way as having a wide entrance leading to destruction. The true way is straight and narrow and only a few are finding it (Matt. 7:13-14).

There are thousands of supposed “Christian” churches. There is a flavor of “Christianity” for all the tastes a person might have. Millions feel they have heard about and know the true Jesus Christ. By just “believing in” and “professing” Christ, all consider themselves Christian.

Yet in real Christianity, being a *true* Christian goes far beyond simple belief. It is much more than just knowing about Jesus, or believing that He existed. It is not just believing in a set of doctrines. It is actually living daily the Bible’s Truth. It is a way of life founded on the Ten Commandments and all the laws of God.

Most of the world looks at God’s Law as bondage. However, the love that God has for us is shown in His Commandments, and we receive blessings for obeying them (1 John 5:3). God’s Law is a Law of liberty; when we keep it, it frees us from the bondage of the hurtful and destructive ways of this world (Jms. 2:8, 12).

A person who is really living the Christian way of life shows their love for God by keeping His laws—all of them (John 14:15).

When a person lives this way of life, he stands out as being different. God does not want His people to be conformed to the ways of this world (Rom. 12:2), but wants them to be transformed by the renewing of their minds by His Word. With His Spirit in them, it is possible for them to change.

Still, true Christians are not perfect, but are striving to be. Perfect people are not the criteria for identifying the true Church. Its teachings are. □

goods for sale what they want to take home. The same thing happens in most churches today, which allow anyone to come in and “check things out,” no matter their beliefs.

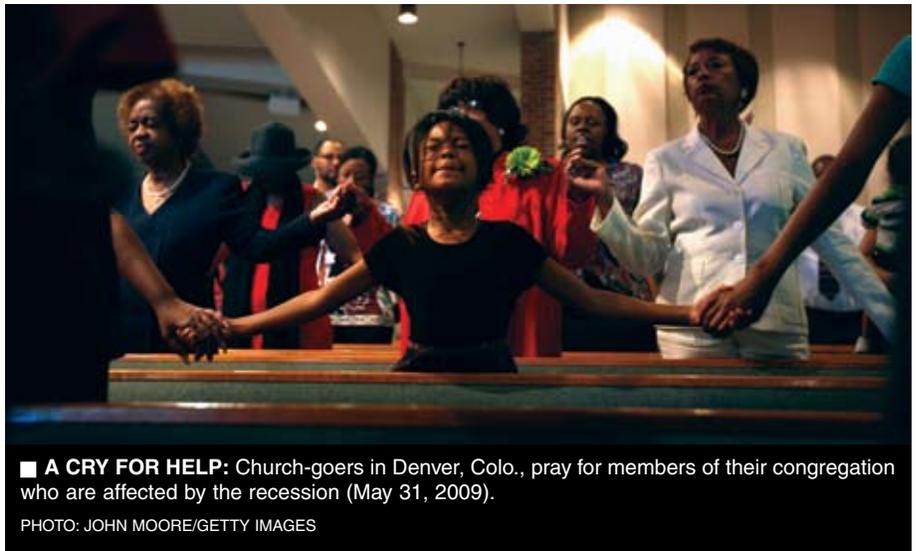
Generally, most stores advertise their goods so that the consumer knows in advance what to expect. Yet with most churches, the prospective “buyer” is in the dark as to what the church teaches (its “goods”) until he enters and stays awhile. It may or may not be the kind of “store” for which he is looking. After sampling the merchandise only to find it is not what he wants, the unsatisfied customer walks out the door.

A pattern has developed in those who consider themselves religious, having easily found a way to hop around from church to church, never able to trust the organization or the congregation—and, most important, the doctrines taught.

Buyer Beware

Traditions fill the world of Christendom. Billions believe the view that “If you give your heart to the Lord, you’re a part of the collective body of believers all over the world,” no matter with whom you are affiliated or what you believe. Such thinking ties to the belief that “there are many paths to salvation.”

This is a false teaching devised by men who reject God’s Commandments so they may keep their own traditions (Matt. 15:9; Mark 7:9). NOWHERE is this taught in your Bible!



■ **A CRY FOR HELP:** Church-goers in Denver, Colo., pray for members of their congregation who are affected by the recession (May 31, 2009).

PHOTO: JOHN MOORE/GETTY IMAGES

The Church Jesus Christ built—which is His Body (Eph. 4:15-16) and Temple (Eph. 2:19-21)—is not composed of many disagreeing groups, fellowships, denominations, organizations or “communities of believers.”

In the book of Matthew, Jesus stated, “I will build *My Church*” (16:18). This speaks of a single Church, not many churches. He continued, “And the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” God promises that His Church will never be destroyed.

The Church of God is a type of Christ’s own Body with many members (I Cor. 12:12-14). As its Head (Col. 1:18; Eph. 1:22-23), Jesus governs, directs, builds and adds to His Body. It is unified in both doctrinal truth and love, and demonstrates that the entire Church (“whole body” and

“every part”) must walk together in complete doctrinal agreement under Jesus Christ’s authority. And He works through His true ministers to keep the Church from drifting into “every wind of doctrine” (Eph. 4:11-16).

Is it possible to find this ONE true Church? How can you identify it?

It is unified through God’s Word—all members of Christ’s Body believe the same thing, enabling them to walk together in spiritual unity and doctrine.

It carries His name: Church of *God* (I Cor. 1:2; 10:32; 11:22; 15:9).

It is a “little flock” persecuted by this world (Luke 12:32; John 15:20).

It obeys Christ’s instruction to “teach all nations...to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you” (Matt. 28:19-20), and preaches the GOOD NEWS of the soon-coming kingdom of God: “And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come” (Matt. 24:14). In this end-time Work, this Church publishes to all peoples and nations “a magazine restoring plain understanding”—*The Real Truth*.

You have come in contact with the one true Church. It can be thoroughly “checked out” by studying our literature with an open Bible and proving all things for yourself. To learn more about this unified Body, read David C. Pack’s book *Where Is the True Church? – and Its Incredible History!* □



■ **PRAYER AND POLITICS:** Worshippers pray during a sermon at “The Call, Fast and Prayer Service” at Qualcomm Stadium in San Diego, Calif. (Nov. 1, 2008). The rally promoted family values and called for supporting California Proposition 8, which now bans homosexual marriage.

PHOTO: SANDY HUFFAKER/GETTY IMAGES



What “Plan B” Happens When **FAILS?**

The prevailing mindset of “This is my body—I can do whatever I want with it” often has deadly consequences.

BY MICHAEL H. VENISH

ONE OF THE most exciting moments in a young woman’s life is her wedding day, and next is giving herself to her husband on the wedding night. What a wonderful moment for a couple in love to experience.

But this may seem an unattainable ideal against the sexual norms of the new millennium.

As such, pain, suffering and misery afflict millions of women worldwide on

a daily basis. Much of this is usually the result of a lack of knowledge regarding the proper use of sex. This ignorance has led to disease, unwanted pregnancies, unwanted children, abortions and all kinds of sexual perversion, which in turn produce mixed-up families.

We live in a promiscuous world. “Free love” and sexual abandon have taken root in the psyche of society. Out of the sexual revolution of the 1960s and 70s has risen a culture of, “I’ll do what I want to do sexually, with whom-

ever I want, and whenever I want.” This attitude brought about the production of a pill, designed to remove the consequences of an unwanted pregnancy.

Think about it: Life begins with conception during a woman’s ovulation, which begins with an action—sexual intercourse. Often, this occurs with no thought of producing life, just experiencing momentary pleasure. Regardless, the effect is the egg in the woman’s fallopian tube fertilized by one of millions of microscopic sperm from her sex partner. After fertilization, the egg divides into two cells, then four, eight, until the process eventually ends up in billions of cells becoming a newborn baby.

How marvelous is the process that leads to the birth of a human being—yet how easy it is to simply snuff out that life.

Does “Plan B” Really Work?

Most women who discover they are pregnant are thrilled. They know that within nine months they will become a mother.

There are millions who do not want to be pregnant. Shocked to discover they have missed a monthly period, they take a pregnancy test, learn the results, and conclude, “I have a problem.” They then consider their options.

Many millions of pregnancies are aborted worldwide daily, some few because they were the result of rape or incest; others were simply unwanted. Some women feel that being pregnant would interrupt their lifestyle.

For others, there are financial concerns of having another mouth to feed. Bringing another life into the world “would be too much,” so they feel they have no choice but to abort. There are also mothers who choose to end the pregnancy fearing it would endanger their lives.

Some couples practice wise family planning and use some form of contraception. However, many millions of women, as well as teenage girls, use what is commonly called a “morning after pill,” or “Plan B,” after sexual intercourse. According to the Mayo Clinic, “The morning-after pill—a form

of emergency birth control—is used to prevent a woman from becoming pregnant after she has had unprotected sex...

“Here’s how the morning-after pill works. Human conception rarely occurs immediately after intercourse. Instead, it occurs as long as several days later, after ovulation. During the time between intercourse and conception, sperm continue to travel through the fallopian tube until the egg appears. So taking emergency birth control the ‘morning after’ isn’t too late to prevent pregnancy.”

But does the drug really work?

In the U.S., conservative legislators and advocacy groups oppose the promotion of the “morning after” pill, especially toward developing teens. “They questioned the drug’s safety and argued that easier availability could encourage sexual activity and make it easier for men to have sex with underage girls. They also maintain the pill can cause the equivalent of an abortion” (*Washington Post*).

Taking a morning-after pill is not as successful as one might think. Notice this report by J. Margaret Datiles, staff counsel for Americans United for Life: “Plan B became available over the counter in Sweden seven years ago. However, the abortion rate did not decline in Sweden; rather, statistics show that from 2000 to 2007, the abortion rate in Sweden increased by 17 percent. In Sweden’s capital city, Stockholm, sales for Plan B have tripled since 2000. Despite this dramatic increase in sales, the abortion rate in Stockholm has risen significantly. In just a single year, from 2006-2007, the abortion rate in Stockholm rose by 6.9 percent.”

Do any mourn the death of these unwanted children?

Mankind does not understand the purpose of sex. Humanity is ignorant

of the principle of cause and effect. David C. Pack, in his book *Sex – Its Unknown Dimension*, wrote, “The result has been untold pain and suffering for the masses! This misery—now epidemic—is measured in disease, new kinds of perversion, unwanted pregnancies yielding abortions, illegitimate children or unwanted children in marriage, skyrocketing divorce rates, which in turn produce corresponding numbers

[Britain’s National Health Service] released new data showing 26.3% of Scottish women who had abortions in 2007 had at least one prior abortion” (*Washington Post*).

We need to ask: *Is there such a thing as a guilt-free abortion?*

Cause and Effect

Life is precious! If people understood this, they would realize that sex out of wedlock is wrong. How many really understand the true purpose of sex?

Sex between husband and wife should depict the deep love they have for each other. This love eventually results in the beginning of another human life, which is a blessing. Yet how many have been taught, as well as understand, the sanctity of marriage?

Few understand the purpose of marriage because, “This world’s churches have kept humanity 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—and that there is a vital, inspired INSTRUCTION BOOK [the Bible] from Almighty God that contains special knowledge, unat-

tainable anywhere else. This largely ignored book explains that there is a great SPIRITUAL LAW that, when obeyed, brings all the good things that every human being seeks” (*Sex – Its Unknown Dimension*).

The right use of sex is within the constraints of marriage. This is a marvelous gift given to a loving, caring couple. When it is besmirched as something cheap, and used simply for quick satisfaction, the consequences of those actions are evidenced in millions of unaccounted deaths.

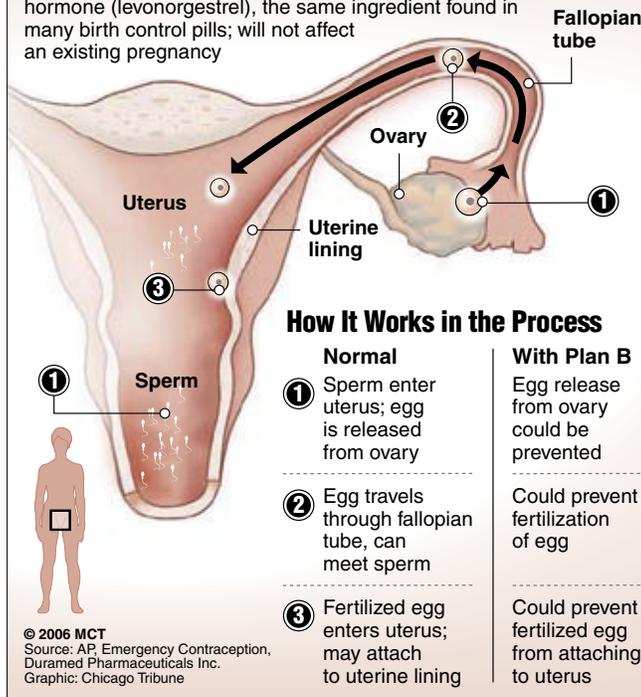
Do not succumb to this mindset. □

The “Morning After” Pill

The FDA ruled that women 18 and older can buy Plan B without a prescription; those 17 and younger still will need a doctor’s note.

What is Plan B?

■ Pill contains an elevated dose of a progesterone-like hormone (levonorgestrel), the same ingredient found in many birth control pills; will not affect an existing pregnancy



How It Works in the Process

Normal

- ① Sperm enter uterus; egg is released from ovary
- ② Egg travels through fallopian tube, can meet sperm
- ③ Fertilized egg enters uterus; may attach to uterine lining

With Plan B

- Egg release from ovary could be prevented
- Could prevent fertilization of egg
- Could prevent fertilized egg from attaching to uterus

© 2006 MCT
Source: AP, Emergency Contraception, Duramed Pharmaceuticals Inc.
Graphic: Chicago Tribune

of jumbled families, bankruptcies, court battles and even crime.” It is no wonder some women search for a way to get rid of an unwanted pregnancy!

“Recent statistics demonstrate that Plan B has resulted in a sharp rise in the number of women having repeat abortions. Persuaded by Plan B campaign jargon that the morning after pill is effective, will result in fewer unplanned pregnancies, and will make abortions rare, women have increased their use of Plan B, only to find themselves pregnant and in need of an abortion once again. The NHS

The quality of information exchanged through emails, text messages and other personal communication is in a downward spiral. Why?



CORRUPTION of COMMUNICATION

BY BRADFORD G. SCHLEIFER

PICTURE A TIME when written communication only occurred through handwritten letters—an era before word processors, spell-check or grammar correction. Letters had to be written by people who could form in the mind complex thoughts of sentences and paragraphs, penning them accurately and precisely. If they made a mistake, they had to start the entire page again. In effect, people composed entire letters in their minds before pen touched paper.

Through the wonders of technology, we are more easily able to communicate whatever thoughts come to mind. Software corrects spelling and grammar, and

even formats letters automatically, allowing us to pour our unedited thoughts into emails and correct them later. Such freedom was unheard of for most of mankind's existence.

Regrettably, this freedom has come with a cost. Since we are no longer forced to construct complex sentences in our thoughts, the "mind muscle"—the brain—has become lazy in the correct use of language.

Certain technologies perpetuate laziness. One example is the cellphone, whose users operate with a language all its own. Termed "text-speak," since it originated with mobile phone text messages, this corruption of English is characterized by short, often abbreviated messages that most people need a translator to understand. This is a particularly popular form of communication among young people.

But text-speak is not isolated to cellphones. It is now common in many other forms of digital communication. Online instant messages and emails are riddled with this strange dialect (otherwise known as poor spelling and grammar).

Because the quality of *oral* communication naturally mirrors the *written*, most are simply unable to express their thoughts without slang or expletives. Ask yourself: When was the last time you had a conversation in which the other party completely avoided slang or other such "lazy" speech?

For many, language has transformed from the method man uses to

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■ **ONLINE SOCIALIZING:** Above, a woman browses the popular social networking site Facebook.

PHOTO-ILLUSTRATION: CHRIS JACKSON/GETTY IMAGES

DACHAU

Have We Learned From History?

A recent trip to the former Nazi concentration camp is a sobering reminder of how inhumanely man can treat fellow man. Will we forget the atrocities of decades past?

BY KEVIN D. DENECE

H EADLINE: *Savage Horror Of Dachau Will Never Be Forgotten*

“DACHAU, Germany, May 1, 1945 (AP)—Every soldier, officer and war correspondent attached to the 42d (Rainbow) Division of the U.S. Seventh Army today had one word seared into his soul—‘Dachau.’

“It represents the last word in savagery, depravity, sadism and inhumanity. Here human beings were experimented on as though they were guinea pigs, were eliminated by slow starvation and their bodies burned wholesale in a gigantic crematory” (*The Free Lance-Star*).

On Sept. 2, 2009, my wife and I visited the memorial site of the Dachau Concentration Camp. It was one of the most sobering experiences of my life. The phrase quoted in one of the following news articles may have said it all: “a super-hell of horrors.”

Headline: *Organized Nazi Brutality Found in Camps by Editors*

May 6, 1945: “PARIS—(AP)—A commission of American newspaper editors reported yesterday it had reached the ‘ines-

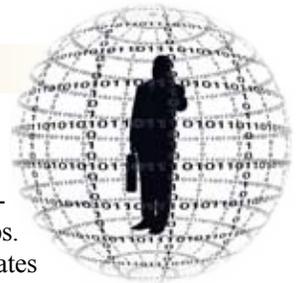
capable’ conclusion after personal investigation that German political prison camps [including Dachau] were operated on a ‘master plan of calculated and organized brutality.’

“The 18 editors signing the report declared they had ‘convincing proof’ that ‘sadistic tortures too horrible and too perverted to be publicly described’ were embraced in the Nazi ‘system’ of operating these camps, and that ‘murder was a commonplace’ in the camps” (*St. Petersburg Times*).

The suffering that people experienced at Dachau, and so many camps like it, is nearly forgotten in the fast-paced, “live in the moment” 21st century, when people no longer make time to simply stop and think. Billions today were not alive to read the headlines and stories of 1945. So many have learned little about the millions exterminated during World

■ **LIBERATION:** Weak and ill survivors of the Nazi concentration camp in Buchenwald march toward the infirmary after Allied troops liberated the camp (April 1945). Between 239,000 and 250,000 people had been imprisoned there, and about 56,000 died, among whom 11,000 were Jews. The Nazis had evacuated a few thousand Russian and Hungarian Jews, along with gypsies, from Buchenwald to camps such as Dachau.

PHOTO: ERIC SCHWAB/AFP/GETTY IMAGES



War II—and those who do are often limited to a short, general segment on the Holocaust covered in a high school history class.

Headline: *Foreign News: Dachau*

May 7, 1945: “When all other German prison camps are forgotten the name of Dachau will still be infamous. It was the first concentration camp set up for Hitler, and its mere name was a whispered word of terror through all Germany from the earliest days of Nazi control.”

“Beside the highway into Dachau there runs a spur line off the Munich railroad. Here a soldier stopped us and said: ‘I think you better take a look at these box-cars.’ The cars were filled with dead men. Most of them were naked. On their bony, emaciated backs and rumps were whip marks. Most of the cars were open-top cars like American coal cars...”

“Skeleton Stacks. We went on, and the great size of the establishment of Dachau began to open before us. Buildings and barracks spread on and on. Outside one building, half covered by a brown tarpaulin, was a stack about five feet high and about 20 feet wide of naked dead bodies, all of them emaciated.”

“Each of these pitiful, happy, starved, hysterical men wanted to tell us his home country, his home city, and ask us news and beg for cigarets [sic]. The eyes of these men defy my powers of description. They are the eyes of men who have lived in a super-hell of horrors for many years, and are now driven half-crazy by the liberation they have prayed so hopelessly for” (*Time*).

A concentration camp such as Dachau represents the worst of humanity. Such sickening and repulsive savagery inflicted on one human being by another should never be forgotten. My personal journey into examining the past resulted in seeing undeniable evidence, which is seared into my memory, vividly and permanently. Permit this article, through words and photos, to do the same with you.

Historian George Santayana famously wrote, “Those who cannot remember

the past are condemned to repeat it.” What has mankind learned?

First Impression

Nestled in the picturesque state of Bavaria, the former camp is just north-east of Dachau, a town that is about 12 miles (20 km) northwest of Munich. The contrast between the beautiful, clean countryside surrounding Munich—including the majestic Alps to the south, and medieval cities such as Salzburg and Augsburg to the east and to the west—could not be more striking. In the midst of this stunning area of the world lies a gray and somber place. A site where murder was commonplace, inhumane experiments the norm and suffering redefined.

Before arriving at the former concentration camp, our drive was like any other through the suburbs of a larger European city: traffic, construction, stoplights, gas stations, grocery stores, industry and suburbs. As we approached, we did not know how close we were. But within just a few seconds, the camp came into view. Missing the turn into the parking lot, we drove past the length of the prisoner camp, just outside its walls.

I will never forget the feeling I had as we reached the memorial site. Craning our necks to the left, the guard towers loomed over the seemingly impenetrable wall, the very sight of them almost inducing fear. Knowing their purpose suddenly made them seem more intimidating than the largest skyscraper. In a few seconds, the emotions of personal accounts I had previously read flooded up inside, resulting in a sickening feeling in the pit of my stomach.

Welcome to Dachau.

Hundreds of Thousands Imprisoned—Tens of Thousands Dead

After picking up a map and a self-guided audio guide, we proceeded toward the camp’s entrance. Here we found the “Jourhaus,” the prisoner entry station, with its wrought iron gate—the same gate where tens of thousands had entered, many en route to their deaths.

The German phrase “ARBEIT MACHT FREI” was on the gate, words

placed on many of the entrances to Nazi concentration and work camps.

The phrase translates into “WORK SETS YOU FREE.” One could not help but think of the condescension dripping from those words directed toward the masses who lost their lives in Dachau—who walked through and read those very words, but who experienced the opposite of freedom, no matter the “work” performed.

Dachau opened its doors in March 1933, soon after Adolf Hitler came to power. It was the first concentration camp to be created under the auspices of a “work” camp. The compound began as a place to hold political prisoners, those who opposed the Nazi party. It was designed and established by Heinrich Himmler, chief of the Munich police at the time. Himmler became one of the most powerful men in Nazi Germany, and was in part responsible for the deaths of millions. He became Hitler’s head of the SS and the Gestapo, and one of the masterminds behind the concentration camp system. Dachau was the longest-running camp under the Nazi regime, a model for others built through the war.

Approximately 200,000 people from 34 nations were imprisoned in Dachau, and over 30,000 lost their lives there. The exact number will never be known because many deaths were undocumented. Unlike Sobibor, Auschwitz and Treblinka, Dachau was not an extermination camp; rather, it was a work camp, and therefore (relatively speaking) experienced fewer casualties.

However, since it was one of the first camps liberated by Allied forces, Dachau provided many of the initial accounts of Nazi atrocities. As a result, its horrors have been forever etched into the memories and consciences of many.

The camp’s size was small, considering the number of prisoners it ultimately held, initially built to handle perhaps a few thousand at a time. (The overall camp was much larger in 1945 due to other wartime functions it served; today, only the prisoner sec-



■ **DOORWAY TO DEATH:** Translated in English as “WORK SETS YOU FREE,” the German phrase shown above—“ARBEIT MACHT FREI”—was on the gate entrances to many of the Nazi concentration and work camps.

PHOTO: KEVIN D. DENEE/THE REAL TRUTH

tion remains open.) The memorial site showed the walls and prison grounds that would have been the home for inmates, some for years. Put in perspective, it probably was not much larger than the size of an American superstore and its parking lot.

As the war raged, overcrowding became the norm, and some 2,000 people were often crowded into a barrack designed to house 200. In November 1944, typhus broke out because of these conditions, killing thousands.

Liberation

On April 29, 1945, two U.S. units liberated 32,000 Dachau prisoners. Here are some excerpts from the internal report written by James W. Creasman, who was part of the 42d Rainbow Division. (The report was obtained by another soldier in the division.) The descriptive language could not be more chilling, and will likely bring tears to readers’ eyes:

“Dachau is no longer a name of terror for hunted men. 32,000 of them have been freed by the 42d Rainbow Division. The crimes done behind the walls of this worst of Nazi concentration camps now live only to haunt the memories of the Rainbowmen who tore open its gates and first saw its misery, and to accuse its SS keepers of one of the worst crimes in all history.”

“But no human imagination fed with the most fantastic of the tales that have leaked out from the earliest and most notorious of all Nazi concentration camps, could have been prepared for what they did see there.”

“Seasoned as they were by long acquaintanceship with stark reality, those trained observers gazed at freight cars full of piled cadavers no more than bones covered with skin and they could not believe what they saw with their own eyes.

“Riflemen accustomed to witnessing death had no stomach for rooms stacked almost ceiling-high with tangled human bodies adjoining the cremation furnaces, looking like some maniac’s woodpile.

“And when an officer pressed thru mobs of the forgotten men of all nations inside the electric barbed wire enclosure and entered a room where lay the dying survivors of the horror train, he wept unashamedly as limp ghosts under filthy blankets, lying in human excrement, tried to salute him with broom-stick arms, falling back in deathly stupor from which most would never rouse.

“Ten days before the arrival of the Rainbow Division fifty carloads of prisoners arrived at Dachau from the Buchenwald concentration camp in a starving condition after 27 days without

food. When Buchenwald was threatened by advancing American troops the Nazi hurriedly crowded about 4,000 of their prisoners into the open flatcars unfit even for cattle. 27 days later—days of exposure to freezing weather without anything to eat, a trainload of human suffering arrived at Dachau only to be left to die in the railyard leading in to this extermination camp.

“In these stinking cars were soon the bodies of those prisoners too weak even to get out. A few tried, and they made a bloody heap in the door of one of the cars. They had been machine gunned by the SS. A little girl was in that car.

“In another car, sitting on the bodies of his comrades, his face contorted with pain frozen by death, was the body of one who completed the amputation of his gangrenous leg with his own hands and covered the stump with paper. Underneath was one with a crushed skull. ‘He’s better off now’ was the comment of one newsman. Close by was one who had been beaten until his entrails protruded from his back.

“But most of them had simply died in the attitudes of absolute exhaustion that only starving men can assume. Curled up with their faces resting in fingers, tipped with blue nails. With naked buttocks angling up to pivot on a skeletal pelvis. Or twisted over to show an abdomen stretched drum-tight against the spine with ribs making an overhanging bulge.

“Some of the cars had been emptied and the bodies carted to the crematory. In one room adjoining the furnace room on the left they were neatly stacked. The stripped corpses were very straight. But in the room on the right they were piled in complete disorder, still clothed.”

“It was incredible that such things could happen today, but there was the visible proof.”

“Those tortured dead can only be avenged when our world is aroused so much by what the 42d uncovered at Dachau and by what others have found at all the other Dachaus scattered throughout Germany, that never again will any party, any government, any

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COMMUNICATION

Continued from page 11

express thoughts and ideas, to shallow banter about inane subjects. Much of this shift is because people frequently discuss their favorite topic: themselves!

Have you allowed this to happen to you?

Digital World

During the last three decades, personal communication has undergone a revolution. Rarely does one hear of receiving—never mind writing—an actual letter with paper and pen. Yet this was the primary form of long-distance communication for millennia. If not by letter, communication was face-to-face. It was that simple. If one wanted to record thoughts, concepts or ideas, he needed to physically write them down.

Times have dramatically changed! Telephones, email, instant messages, text messages and other “instant” services have largely replaced handwritten letters, allowing man to communicate with a speed and efficiency once unheard of. No matter your age, these tools impact your life. It is not uncommon for people, from preteens to adults, to send text messages.

Take a look at email. The Pew Research Center reports that in the United States, 57 percent of those online use email daily. This translates to nearly 130 million email users per day! Taking into account all of the other forms of digital communication, it becomes clear how much the digital world affects our lives.

Again, technology has allowed unprecedented access to communication—but has our ability to harness language and convey ideas also improved?

No matter where you live, it is possible to communicate with someone on the opposite side of the planet. Geographical boundaries have disappeared. We have reached an age in which there is unlimited access to communication.

In addition to international *reach*, digital interaction nearly happens in *real-time*—instantaneously. This high-paced back and forth means much less time is spent thinking *about* the content of the message and more time focused on the *speed* of communication.

Then there are the social networks—*Friendster*, *MySpace*, *Facebook* and *Twitter*—which allow for a continuous connection to friends and family, updated any minute of any day. Friendships should be able to blossom and families

It could be said that with the communication tools now available we have reached a golden age. Conversely, *personal* interaction has reached an all-time low. Statistics show that teens prefer to text friends than talk in person.

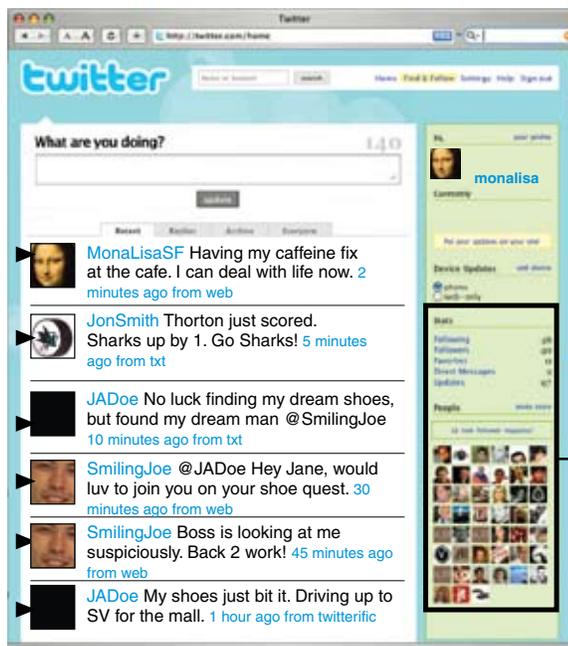
What about you? Do you spend nearly as much time interacting through a computer as you do in real life?

Digital Relationships

Growing numbers turn to digital communication because they are not interested in actual personal, human

The World of Twitter

Twitter is a free social networking service that allows users to keep in touch with others without the formalities of other electronic communication such as e-mail or blogs. Users post to Twitter, where friends and anyone else (if the account is not restricted) can read them.



Source: Twitter
Graphic: San Jose Mercury News

© 2008 MCT

MonaLisaSF



How It Works

- 1 After setting up a free account, “MonaLisaSF” can begin to post text messages up to 140 characters long via the *Twitter* site, cellphone, Blackberry or third-party services such as *Facebook*
- 2 Mona’s postings or “tweets” appear on her homepage in chronological order along with those from her friends that she chooses to follow (See to the left)
- 3 Those who are following Mona’s “tweets” are listed here; other details also are listed
- 4 For security purposes, Mona can restrict her messages to only friends she’s invited; she also can block individuals

should grow closer with such unprecedented access. In addition, people are now much better able to reach those of like mind and similar interests unlike any other time in history.

Communication has come a long way from the days in which a handwritten letter took weeks to reach its recipient. Of course, people still converse face-to-face, but written communication largely drives the language of oral communication.

contact. A popular cellular phone company recently ran an advertisement in which family members, while sitting only a few feet from each other, communicated entirely through *Twitter* and *Facebook*.

This satire speaks volumes to how far real families—and society—have gone in interpersonal communication. Friends and acquaintances have become nothing more than a name on a screen. Eye contact, gestures and body

language have disappeared. While sitting at a computer, one can converse with many people at one time, or even completely walk away from a conversation without the other party knowing. Technology means that one never needs to commit their entire *focus* to a conversation.

Try to picture a similar situation when speaking face-to-face. Right in the middle of a conversation you turn to another person and begin talking. Time passes and you turn back to the original conversation and continue where you left off. As silly as this may sound, this is how instant messaging works.

While there are benefits to multi-tasking, it becomes easy to form poor communication habits. Those who frequently use digital communication may have a hard time focusing on a physical conversation.

But human beings are designed to interact. As we slowly drift away from frequent personal contact, the result has been that people become distant and turn inward.

Such an approach speaks to a focus on self. Through using such technologies in an improper way, one is saying, "I only want to communicate when I feel like it, on *my* terms and according to *my* interests." When one's drive is to fulfill his own needs, wants and desires, care and concern for others fades.

Over time, self-desire trumps everything else. Compassion for fellow man is replaced by a drive to fulfill and serve only the self. A desire for basic, interpersonal communication disappears. One's connection to the outside world becomes almost entirely online. Millions stare at their computer screens, living their lives in an instant message window, or waiting to give or hear the latest *Twitter* updates.

What is the result of technology being widely misused? Interaction has become curt and abbreviated. Instead of exchanging pleasantries and actually caring about others, communication has been transformed into a search for raw information.

The English language (the same could be said for any language) is con-

tinually degrading into a more corrupt state. Language is being reduced to the exchange of information—data—instead of conversation.

In fact, organizations have been formed to save languages. As early as the year 2000, linguists predicted that nearly half of the world's approximately 6,000 languages would disappear by 2050. The study did not even attempt to measure the degree of corruption of remaining languages.

Many have said it is inevitable that man will eventually need to communicate only in one language. Did you know that a single tongue was foretold thousands of years ago?

Notice how it is described in a prophecy found in the Old Testament of the Bible: "For then will I turn to the people a *pure language*, that they may all call upon the name of the LORD, to serve Him with one consent" (Zeph. 3:9).

This future "pure language" will replace all others. Imagine a time when the entire world shares a single language. No more misinterpretation or confusion among languages or dialects. The quality of this divinely instituted language will be maintained and will never degrade or disappear.

Only the implementation of an entirely new language worldwide will end the slide into a lingual cesspool. That time, however, has not yet arrived, so language and communication continue to degrade.

Against the Current

Why does communication and language matter? Why should you care? Perhaps you may have recognized that some of these characteristics have crept into your communication. Maybe, now and again, you abbreviate words or drop punctuation. If you are honest, you may need to admit there are some areas in which you have become lax.

Do you find yourself losing interest in physical interaction with others? Do you often become bored with conversation? To be any other way in an instant-access digital world is to swim upstream.

Again, people were designed to interact with each other. As we slip into digital thinking, we risk the danger of becoming cold and distant like the lifeless computer systems we use to communicate. When our peers become nothing more to us than sources of information—not living, breathing human beings—we automatically focus more on the self. *Self-focus*, *self-esteem*, *self-promotion*, *self-preservation* and, ultimately, *self-fulfillment* become our only goal.

Think. No matter one's background, education or upbringing, a society filled with self-centered individuals will FAIL!

You cannot control the actions of others, but you *can* establish within yourself a desire to avoid such a destructive focus. The first step for change is to acknowledge there is a problem. Use technology effectively; strive to keep your thinking and communication pure.

Most would never think to look to the Bible as a source for understanding technology and its application today. However, Scripture contains over 750,000 words refined by the Creator of the universe *seven times* (Psa. 12:6). God's Word says what it means, and means what it says. Its wording is detailed and precise—and filled with countless lessons!

Do not allow corrupt communication to permeate your thinking. If you remain on the lookout and actively direct your thoughts, you will be different from those around you.

Notice the apostle Paul's admonition: "Whatsoever things are TRUE, whatsoever things are HONEST, whatsoever things are JUST, whatsoever things are PURE, whatsoever things are LOVELY, whatsoever things are of GOOD REPORT; if there be any VIRTUE, and if there be any PRAISE, *think on these things*" (Phil. 4:8).

The elements in this verse form the ultimate list for those seeking the real power of positive thinking. If you keep your mind on the positive and actively seek to communicate with proper language, you will avoid the self-destructive pitfalls of corrupt communication. □



FINLAND

A Nation Caught in the Middle

BY RYAN P. DENEÉ

PHOTO: GETTY CREATIVE IMAGES

INTERNATIONALLY CONSIDERED the “Switzerland of Scandinavia,” Finland is a country molded by its geographical location. With Russia to the east, and Sweden and the rest of Europe to the west, Finland has always had to perform a diplomatic balancing act throughout its past.

This balancing act continues at present and will into the future.

During the Middle Ages, Finland was a battleground between its two closest neighbors, Russia and Sweden. From the 12th century until 1809, it was largely under Swedish rule, which today continues to influence its culture, government and laws. During this time, Finland was considered only a group of provinces, with little sense of a national entity.

Not until the war of 1809 (which Sweden lost to Russia) did Finland become an autonomous Grand Duchy, under the control of the Russian emperor, as Grand Duke, whom the Governor General represented. Under this new governmental structure, the senate (filled with Finnish leaders) was the highest governing body and presented domestic issues directly to the emperor, leaving out other Russian authorities. These new freedoms of self-rule enabled much of the past Swedish influence to hold ground: Swedish (along with

Finnish) remains the official language and the Lutheran Church retains its position.

Nationalism gained momentum as the Grand Duchy remained part of the Russian empire while enjoying extensive privileges, virtually making Finland a state within a state. Privileges included its own legislative assembly, and the power to elect local officials and maintain an army, currency, postage stamps—and even its own official border.

This was a sore point for Russian chauvinists (nationalists), who pushed for the Russification of Finland. This led to the “first era of oppression” (1899-1905), continued by a second era of oppression (1909-1917).

Finland had a brief respite during the Russian revolution of 1905, and a new legislative body replaced the former assemblies the following year—a pivotal point in Finnish history. This changed it from a four-estate diet to a unicameral parliament with universal suffrage. Finnish women were the first in Europe to gain the right to vote.

The new parliament approved its own declaration of independence on Dec. 6, 1917. A brief civil war followed as a breach between liberal and conservative parties became irreconcilable. Finland became a republic in the summer of 1919, and quickly developed during the 1920s, healing the wounds of the civil war. Public sentiment moved Finland away from communism, which

took root in Russia. The Nordic nation initially pursued a foreign policy based on cooperation through the League of Nations. Yet the League's inability to ensure world peace became evident in the 1930s, and Finland retreated to focus on Scandinavian-based policies.

Finland played a delicate balancing act between communist Russia and Nazi Germany during World War II. First, Russia attacked Finland in 1939—the “Winter War,” in which Finnish troops used the weather to their advantage and employed guerilla-war tactics to inflict massive casualties. Hostilities led to signing a peace treaty in the spring of 1940, with Finland losing part of its southeastern region to the Soviets. Shortly after Adolf Hitler's “Operation Barbarossa” invasion against the Soviets, Finland entered the war allied with Russia. With great prowess, the Finns used their nation's resources and geographical position to remain one of the few major European countries not occupied during the war.

After the Cold War began, Finland was once again caught between two great world powers: the East (the Soviet Union and its satellite nations) and the West (the United States and Western Europe). Finland maintained a neutral stance, which helped its international position grow stronger. It focused on diplomacy by joining the United Nations and Nordic Council in 1955.

Today, the Scandinavian nation continues to participate in worldwide diplomatic efforts.

Modern-day Finland

Feudalism was never a part of Finland's history, and the working class always retained its personal freedoms. These factors, along with early Swedish domination having had a strong influence in Finland's legal and social systems, laid the groundwork for the liberal, democratic society Finns enjoy today.

The Finnish state has a mixed presidential/parliament system, with executive power divided between the president and prime minister. The parliament consists of a 200-member body of elected leaders that holds supreme authority; it can alter the constitution and bring about the resignation of the cabinet. Members of parliament are elected by proportional representation, which encourages a multitude of political parties, resulting in many coalition governments.

The Nordic nation is, for the most part, ethnically homogenous. Even though immigration has significantly increased over the past decade, foreign-born citizens constitute only 2.2 percent of the total population, a percentage much lower than any other member-state of the European Union. As a result, Finland has little ethnic tension, and the majority of Finns are Lutheran, a holdover from Swedish influence centuries ago.

The Finnish economy is largely free-market based,

with a GDP similar to the United Kingdom, France and Germany. Key sectors of the economy are manufacturing, natural resources (primarily wood, metals and mining), engineering, telecommunications and electronics. Trade is crucial, and exports account for nearly two-thirds of the Nordic nation's GDP.

Two decades after the collapse of the Berlin Wall, Finland still mandates universal male conscription, under which all men serve in the military for at least six to 12 months. Defense forces consist of 35,000 troops on active duty and 490,000 reserve personnel. With its long history of being positioned between two world powers, the country relies upon its military for survival.

Current Challenges

Finland's foreign agenda promotes effective multilateral institutions—the EU, UN, global economic forms, etc.—in which the most powerful nations are constrained by a rules-based world. Finland's strategy during the last decade has been to maximize its international sphere of influence by securing seats at the right tables, such as joining the European Union. This has given the country a forum to sway European and global politics.

Nevertheless, Finland finds itself between the interests of the EU and a resurgent Russia—with both seeking to dominate world affairs. Despite its EU membership, Finland's voice has become less certain within the now larger pan-European organization, no longer the tight-knit club of the original member-states.

Despite its current sociopolitical drift toward the West, Finland knows it cannot become complacent about Russia, which it now sees more as an opportunity than a threat.

However, these concerns cannot be left unaddressed. Finland currently focuses on a twofold strategy of not provoking Moscow (staying out of NATO), while supporting demographic reform among the Russians. Driven by the theory that liberal democracies do not fight wars against each other, Finland hopes to nullify any future threat from the East.

What the Future May Hold

Descended from one of the tribes of ancient Israel, Finland was foretold in the Bible to be caught in the middle: “Issachar is a strong ass couching down between two burdens” (Gen. 49:14). There has never been a point in history in which the nation has not been wedged between two “burdens” (nations or powers).

As both Russia and the European Union grow stronger and exert themselves on the world stage, Finland will face tough choices. Only time will tell if it can keep its neutrality and maintain its image as the “Switzerland of Scandinavia.” □

READER COMMENTS

From online subscribers of our weekly updates of The Real Truth and World to Come

All recommended books and booklets can be read and downloaded—free of charge—from our website, www.thercg.org, while our magazine articles are archived and freely accessible at www.realtruth.org.

■ “I like the type of very interesting articles you feature in this magazine, especially those about Africa.”

■ “I would like to know more about the true Church of God.”

Australia

Recommended book: *Where Is the True Church? – and Its Incredible History!*

■ “I am a student at a Pentecostal Bible college and I have been exploring possibilities by reading excellent information you are providing through your website. Your [World to Come] presentation is very convincing.”

Denmark

■ “Thank you for this opportunity to learn more about what David C. Pack has been talking about—I am looking forward to reading this magazine.”

England

■ “The articles in this magazine are really good. To be precise, they focus on [the] in-depth view of a problem.”

■ “I was searching the answer for this question: ‘Give at least one Bible verse which proves that Christ or anyone of His disciples sanctioned the transfer of holy Sabbath from Saturday to Sunday,’ and I got this web page.”

India

Recommended book: *Saturday or Sunday – Which Is the Sabbath?*

■ “I am a former member of WCG. I am now on my own and gathering any available material helpful to my faith. I have also received your books on doctrinal changes, which were very informative.”

Kenya

■ “I really value the prophetic and real-life content in *The Real Truth*. Please keep up the good work.”

Malawi

■ “Expose more about the world we are living in and how short the time is. You guys are doing a great job.”

Nigeria

■ “Thank you very much for the booklets that I have already received. They were informative and interesting to read.”

■ “What I have read has really helped me to understand areas that previously confused me. I am very excited to study this information and thank God for all of the hard labor in the study of God’s Word.”

South Africa

■ “I am anxious to read your articles. Recently I quit a Pentecostal church that I became very bonded with, [because] all of a sudden the facts didn’t ring right with me nor did their preaching.”

California, U.S.

■ “I am very much interested in learning about the annual feasts and holy days.”

District of Columbia, U.S.

Recommended booklet: *God’s Holy Days or Pagan Holidays?*

■ “I am a pastor, and I love your article ‘Do the Saved Go to Heaven?’ I knew this as true, and it goes against what many people teach. It gave me answers to those scriptures that people try to prove that you go to heaven when you die.”

■ “Your teachings have opened my eyes, and I’m interested in learning more. Thank you so much for your dedication to truth of the Bible.”

Florida, U.S.

■ “I was baptized in the WCG in 1987 and stopped attending around 1993. I am inquiring about The Restored Church of God because I think I belong where I started.”

Georgia, U.S.

■ “You gave a great [World to Come] presentation, which gave me more insight. Thank you.”

Iowa, U.S.

■ “...this publication...is the best reading I have ever seen.”

Ohio, U.S.

■ “Thanks for all the great insight!!!”

■ “Are you affiliated with Herbert W. Armstrong?”

Michigan, U.S.

Editor’s note: From 1934 to his death in early 1986, Mr. Armstrong was the publisher and editor-in-chief of *The Plain Truth*, “a magazine of plain understanding.” Its successor is *The Real Truth*—“a magazine restoring plain understanding.”

■ “Where is the true Church of God? The Seventh-day Adventists claim it.”

New Jersey, U.S.

Recommended literature: *Where Is God’s Church?* and “We Are NOT Jehovah’s Witnesses or Seventh-day Adventists”

■ “I have just become interested with the end-times and prophecy. Wanting to learn more.”

■ “I would like to receive the booklet *Revelation Explained at Last!* Mr. Pack explained it to perfection, and now I have a clearer...understanding of that heretofore unfathomable book. Well done!”

New York, U.S.

■ “Your website is positive teaching. Thank You.”

North Carolina, U.S.

■ “I am in the midst of your *Bible Introduction Course* and several books. I believe I am being called—what a privilege.”

Oklahoma, U.S.

■ “Thanks to your *Bible Introduction Course*, I now understand some of the things that I failed to see before.”

■ “I am really seeking God in my life and want my children to get involved as much as possible.”

Tennessee, U.S.

Recommended literature: *The Story of the Bible* series and the *Children’s Bible Lessons*

DACHAU

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people be allowed to mar the face of the earth with such inhumanity.”

Such powerful, sobering language. Person after person experienced some of the worst acts of atrocity known to man. The situation was so bad that over 2,000 died *after* liberation, unable to recover.

Personal Observations

As we walked through the prisoner camp, listening to the audio tour, each area of the memorial seemed to bring out a host of thoughts, observations and emotions.

As we approached one corner of the camp (near the entrance to the crematoria area), the guide noted the 10-meter-wide strip of grass encompassing the grounds before reaching the barbed wire, electrical fence—the “death strip.” If anyone so much as stepped on the lawn, SS guards from the guard towers would immediately mow them down with machine guns. Some, as the situation got increasingly desperate, would choose to throw themselves onto the death strip, putting themselves out of their misery.

The crematorium, with its imposing smokestack, was perhaps the most chilling aspect of the entire memorial. One still stands today, built in 1942-43, called “Barrack X.” When the Americans liberated Dachau, it was here where they found bodies piled to the ceiling. To stand there made our visit so real—far beyond the academic. To walk up to the ovens where lifeless body after body was burned was beyond words. To know that people met their deaths by being hanged from the large hooks directly above the ovens brought a nauseating feeling.

The audio guide commented that one should respect the area, reminding listeners that they were standing in a cemetery. You could not disagree.

Another unsettling and distressing room was the gas chamber found within Barrack X. Disguised as a shower, it was a fairly dark room, with a hole

on one end so those who conducted the gassing could see when the gas had done its job. Early reports concluded this was where mass killings occurred.

However, the guide explained there was no evidence that this particular gas chamber/shower was ever used for its intended purpose of mass extermination. Instead, it was used only on a limited, experimental basis. To walk through the chamber—knowing its sole purpose was the extinction of human life, and knowing that many

Dachau. He was an older gentleman. I saw him several times in different locations on the grounds. Since we were all giving our own self-guided tours, my wife and I occasionally crossed paths with him. I saw hundreds of people that day, but he stood out.

The first time I saw him, I noted something different. He was twice, probably three times the age of the average person there. He appeared to be in his 80s, possibly late-80s or early 90s, and he was alone. He walked slowly, but deliberately.



■ **SLAUGHTERHOUSE:** Barrack X, where each oven burned two or three corpses at a time.

PHOTO: KEVIN D. DENEE/THE REAL TRUTH

others in camps across Germany and Poland were used for similar deadly atrocities—chilled me to the bone.

Then there were the appalling experiments. The audio tour reported an eyewitness account of these medical experiments: “SS doctors committed them on defenseless prisoners, abused them for their so-called medical experiments. Here prisoners were placed in ice cold water until they went completely numb, often for many hours, in order to determine the average time after which it no longer made sense to search the channel for shot down parachute jumpers. Experiments with bone transplants, phlegmon and hypothermia also were done in these barracks and led, after horrendous suffering, to an agonizing death.”

Connection to the Past

What will remain in my mind for the rest of my life was a man I observed in

But it was his face that stood out the most, particularly the look in his eyes, which I will not forget. It was evident he had some connection to all that occurred there. There was a depth to his solemnity that I did not see elsewhere. There was deep reverence in his face mixed with thoughtfulness and sadness that was beyond the simple, quiet respect that others who were there exhibited. His reflection seemed to be personal in a way that my wife’s or mine could not be.

By his physical age alone, I knew he would have greater appreciation and depth than the scores of high school aged children on field trips. But more than his age, I could see that there was some sort of history. For someone who did not experience WWII, did not live through it, this had a profound impact.

Many questions arose: *Who was this man? What side was he on? Why is he visiting now? Is he coming to be at*

peace with his past? What did he experience during the war? What suffering? What horror? Evil? Inhumanity?

Seemingly, the Second World War changed this man forever. And, in a small way, observing him changed me.

Never Again...?

In one area of the camp there was a large plaque. In several different languages, it stated, "Never Again."

Another inscription read, "May the example of those who were exterminated here between 1933 and 1945 because they resisted Nazism help to unite the living for the defense of peace and freedom and in respect for their fellow men."

Yet so many have already forgotten what occurred in places like Dachau. Perhaps worse, many more never fully learned it in the first place.

Even more tragic, some—even leaders of nations—deny the Holocaust ever occurred, with growing numbers believing them.

For most living in the 21st century, 65 years ago may as well be four centuries ago, just one more historical factoid to be academically memorized for the next exam. In some regards, it's hard to believe it until you are standing on the same earth where blood was spilled, where thousands lost their lives.

How could those who can barely imagine such horrors believe that it could happen again?

If man would only repent, turn to his Creator and obey Him, then horrors such as this would not happen. It starts with repentance—in other words, turning from disobedience and beginning to adhere to God's laws.

If individuals and nations do not turn to God, then atrocities such as these (the "killing fields" of Cambodia, the massacres in Rwanda) will occur again.

In fact, prophecy reveals this will happen. Your Bible foretells a coming great captivity on the modern descendants of ancient Israel, far worse than what occurred in WWII.

Headlines from 1945 will pale in comparison to the ones in the near future: "Concentration Camp System Revived" — "Mass Deportation into Slave Camps" — "War Machine Fueled by Captives" — "Millions Exterminated."

America and Britain in Prophecy, written by David C. Pack, explains the horrors knocking on the doors of unsuspecting nations. For those who will heed God's warning, there is a way of escape. □

PERSONAL

Continued from page 2

Revelation is written to God's servants—those of His Church through the ages.

Chapters 2 and 3: The Seven Church Messages

Chapters 2 and 3 contain Christ's messages to seven different churches in Asia Minor—today's western Turkey. Combined, these messages represent the first overall message of the book. They are directed to the seven successive eras, or stages, of God's Church, and span the entire New Testament period—from when Jesus *built* the true Church in A.D. 31, until His Second Coming!

God has chosen to work with His Church through sequential eras. Each message contains Christ's brief *description* of the spiritual condition of these consecutive eras. They are not spoken to any of the well-known, respected denominations of this world's professing Christianity. They are directed to God's *one true Church*. Men have never understood the messages, because they have never recognized how to identify *God's Church*.

Most eras are described as having their own unique doctrinal and spiritual problems that eventually lead to Christ raising up a new leader to establish the next era. These eras are known as *Ephesus* (Rev. 2:1), *Smyrna* (2:8), *Pergamos* (2:12), *Thyatira* (2:18), *Sardis* (3:1), *Philadelphia* (3:7) and *Laodicea* (3:14).

These were actually seven cities lying close together (in this order) on a mail route in Asia Minor. God knew each city would reflect a corresponding attitude existing in the era it represents. Christ was able to use them to show a *pattern* that would span the 2,000-year history of His Church.

History demonstrates that most people do not heed Christ's warnings. This is never truer than at the end of the age. The most faithful brethren in the Church of God today are a remnant of the sixth, or Philadelphia era. They remain separate from the lukewarm seventh era. (You will want to read our book, titled *Where Is the True Church? – and Its Incredible History!*)

Chapter 4: Before God's Throne and the 24 Elders

The 4th and 5th chapters present the setting for the central part of the Revelation that follows. They set the

stage for unveiling the great prophecies and theme of the book.

In chapter 4, verse 1, John describes a door opening in heaven and an invitation from a great voice to "come up" to be shown things "which must be hereafter." Understand that John was actually on a small island (Patmos) in the northeastern Mediterranean Sea, and all of what he saw was occurring in vision. He was not literally in heaven.

In verse 2, John saw the Father on His throne, and a magnificent picture of the setting in which God exists. Surrounding Him are 24 more "seats" (lesser thrones), occupied by "24 elders."

It is important to study this chapter with chapter 5, because they present a descriptive picture of four "beasts" (or living creatures), as well as the 24 elders—and Jesus Christ, as the Lamb of God (Rev. 5:6), standing before God's throne.

This awe-inspiring picture is of the environment—*atmosphere*—*magnificent beauty*—of God's throne. The description is simply stunning!

Chapter 5: Christ Unseals the Prophecy

Chapter 5, verse 1 pictures the Father holding the book of Revelation (with

seven seals on it) in His right hand. At this point, the book (actually a scroll or parchment) is still unopened—sealed—*locked!* Notice: “And I saw in the right hand of Him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the backside, *sealed with seven seals.*”

“Seven” is God’s number of completeness—and, of course, the book was also completely sealed. This means the meaning of the prophecy has remained hidden from view—*unavailable* to mankind! It has not even been possible previously to read it correctly in proper sequence, let alone understand it.

Here is the description: “And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof? And *no man* in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, *was able to open the book*, neither to look thereon. And I wept much, because *no man was found worthy to open* and to read the book, neither to look thereon” (Rev. 5:2-3).

The account reveals that no *man* is qualified to open the book. If only men would simply believe God, there would not have been so many *men*, over the centuries, giving *their* interpretations of a prophecy that cannot possibly be understood. Like Daniel, who recorded a prophecy he did not understand, John was also unable to comprehend this prophecy. He actually cried in verse 5 because he did not see any way to open it.

It is at this point that Christ, and Christ alone (not any *human being*), is deemed “worthy” to UNSEAL THE BOOK!

Do not be confused about who can open this book to correct understanding. Daniel’s book is a companion to all the main prophecies of Revelation, and his book was “*sealed till the time of the end*” (Dan. 12:9). Christ opens them for His servants—those of His one Church—to read. He reveals the meaning of these prophecies: “and He came and took the book out of the right hand of Him that sat upon the throne” (Rev. 5:7).

The 24 Elders Explained

Let’s read something else about the 24 elders—and clear up a wrong understanding about who and what they are. Notice: “And when He had taken the book, the four beasts and *four and twenty elders* fell down before the Lamb, having everyone of them harps, and golden vials full of odors, which are the prayers of the saints. And they sung a new song, saying, You are worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for You were slain, and have redeemed *us* [them] to God by the blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; And have made *us* [them] unto our God kings and priests: and *we* [they] shall reign *on the earth*” (Rev. 5:8-10).

Some claim the 24 elders are taken from saved human beings. This idea comes from a mistranslation of the italicized words. They should be replaced by the words in brackets. See the Revised Standard Version, and also the margin of the New King James Version. Both render them correctly.

These elders are spirit beings created by God to be His counselors. They were probably created before the physical creation, along with the cherubim (Michael, Gabriel and Lucifer—who became Satan), the four living creatures and the billions of other angels that serve God.

Chapter 6: The Seals Are Opened

Now for critically important chapter 6—and the beginning of Christ’s one-by-one removal of each of the *seven seals*.

Understand that, beginning with chapter 6, unsealing the seven seals spans all but the last two chapters of the book. But since chapter 6 explains six of the seven seals, obviously they do not individually receive a large amount of space. The seventh seal is *so* important—and *so* multifaceted—that God devotes much space to its complete explanation.

Most of the remainder of the book is devoted to just the seventh seal!

This is another *key* to understanding the whole book.

The world sees the *Apocalypse* as a mystic, cryptic message of *doom!* The first four seals are represented by four riders, on four different-colored horses. Of course, much has been said and written about them. But “the four horsemen of the Apocalypse,” as they are commonly referred to, are still viewed as mysterious, *UNEXPLAINED* horrors to be unleashed upon the world without warning.

To clearly understand the *first seal* of Revelation 6:2, we must accept a basic fact. The Greek term *apocalypse* simply means “revelation.” So let’s now *explain the seven seals* to be revealed.

We will read the description of each seal before discussing it.

The First Seal—FALSE CHRISTS

Here is the *first*: “And I saw when the Lamb opened *one of the seals*, and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts saying, Come and see. And I saw, and behold a *white horse*: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer” (Rev. 6:1-2).

What John records is written in *symbols*, not plain language. It is impossible to understand these symbols by merely re-reading Revelation 6 over and over until their correct *meaning* sort of “pops into your head.”

It is critical to recognize a long list of *human* interpretations is available for what this horse and the others represent. But, once again, the Bible interprets the Bible. *We must permit Christ to explain what He is unsealing!* No one else has any authority to speak for what God gave to *Christ*—and authorized *Him* to reveal!

Christ reveals the meaning of the *white horse*. His disciples once asked Him, “...when shall these things [the destruction of the Temple] be? and what shall be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the world?” (Matt. 24:3).

Understand it is Christ speaking in *both* Matthew 24 and Revelation 6. He is addressing the very same questions in both chapters. He answers by listing, *in time sequence and order*, the

events and trends that precede the end of the age—and thus His Coming.

Notice the exact parallel between Revelation 6:1-2 and Matthew 24:4-5: “And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in My name, saying, I am Christ [that Christ *is* Christ]; and shall deceive *many*.” That’s right! Jesus warned that the *many* will be deceived by those claiming to represent Him—not the *few*.

The *white horse* that John described represents *false* “christ.” Here’s proof. The one on this horse is a *counterfeit* of the true Christ and a *counterfeit* of His Second Coming, described in Revelation 19:11-16. There the *real* Christ wields a sharp two-edged *sword*, while the *false* christ is represented as carrying a *bow*. Do not miss this critical difference!

Here is a partial description of the *true* Christ returning in power and glory. While He is riding a white horse, the rest of the description is very different: “And I saw heaven opened, and behold a *white horse*; and He that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness *He does judge and make war*...And out of His mouth goes a *sharp sword*, that with it He should smite the nations: and He shall *rule them* with a rod of iron: and He treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God” (Rev. 19:11, 15).

Consider. Most who study Revelation believe the white horse of the first seal pictures the *true* Christ coming *before* war, famine, and disease strike the earth. That is ridiculous! Such ignorance and misunderstanding has clouded the timing of the glorious Return of Jesus Christ described in Revelation 19:11-16. This is but one more way false religion—the *other* white horse—has deceived professing Christianity.

The Second Seal—WAR

When the *second seal* opens, a *red horse* appears: “And when He had opened the *second seal*, I heard the second beast say, Come and see. And there went out another *horse that was red*: and power was given to him that sat thereon to

take peace from the earth, and that they should *kill* one another: and there was given unto him a *great sword*” (Rev. 6:3-4). As with Christ in Revelation 19, the sword here is depicted as an instrument of war and killing.

This horse and rider “take peace from the earth.” The opposite of peace is war. When peace is removed, war is what remains. This pictures the “wars and rumors of wars” Jesus referenced in Matthew 24:6.

Wars have continued and grown steadily worse since Christ’s prophecy. But this part of John’s astounding vision has the gravest implications for all alive on Earth today.

This horseman represents the dreadful destruction caused by world war. In the Matthew 24 parallel, *war* immediately follows *false religion*. By the end of the age, the potential for devastation in war has become so great it holds the power to take peace not just from *two or more nations*, but now “from the earth,” as it says.

Only in the modern age have such terrible weapons of mass destruction been available. The 20th century saw the two most devastating wars in history, with the Second World War far more destructive than the first.

We are now in the last recess—or intermission—preceding the time of the truly greatest war, prophesied to exceed anything in the last century. A sinning, rebellious humanity will soon reach the end of its rope. We have reached a time when war’s potential cannot grow worse, and can now erase *all* life from Earth in one final blast of complete destruction—*IF* Christ did not intervene and cut events “short” (Matt. 24:22). (Our booklet *And You Shall Hear of Wars* explains more thoroughly what Christ meant by this warning.)

The pattern of history is that *famine* always follows war. This is why famine (the third seal) follows on the heels of war.

The Third Seal—FAMINE

The *third seal* opens and a *black horse*, a symbol of famine, appears: “And when He had

opened the *third seal*, I heard the third beast say, Come and see. And I beheld, and lo a *black horse*; and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand. And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and see you hurt not the oil and the wine” (Rev. 6:5-6).

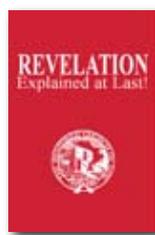
This pictures extreme worldwide famine, beyond anything civilization has ever seen. This devouring condition is seizing the entire world in an extraordinary way, and is *now* far worse than most imagine. (You will want to read our extensive booklet *And There Shall Be Famines*.)

The Fourth Seal—DISEASE

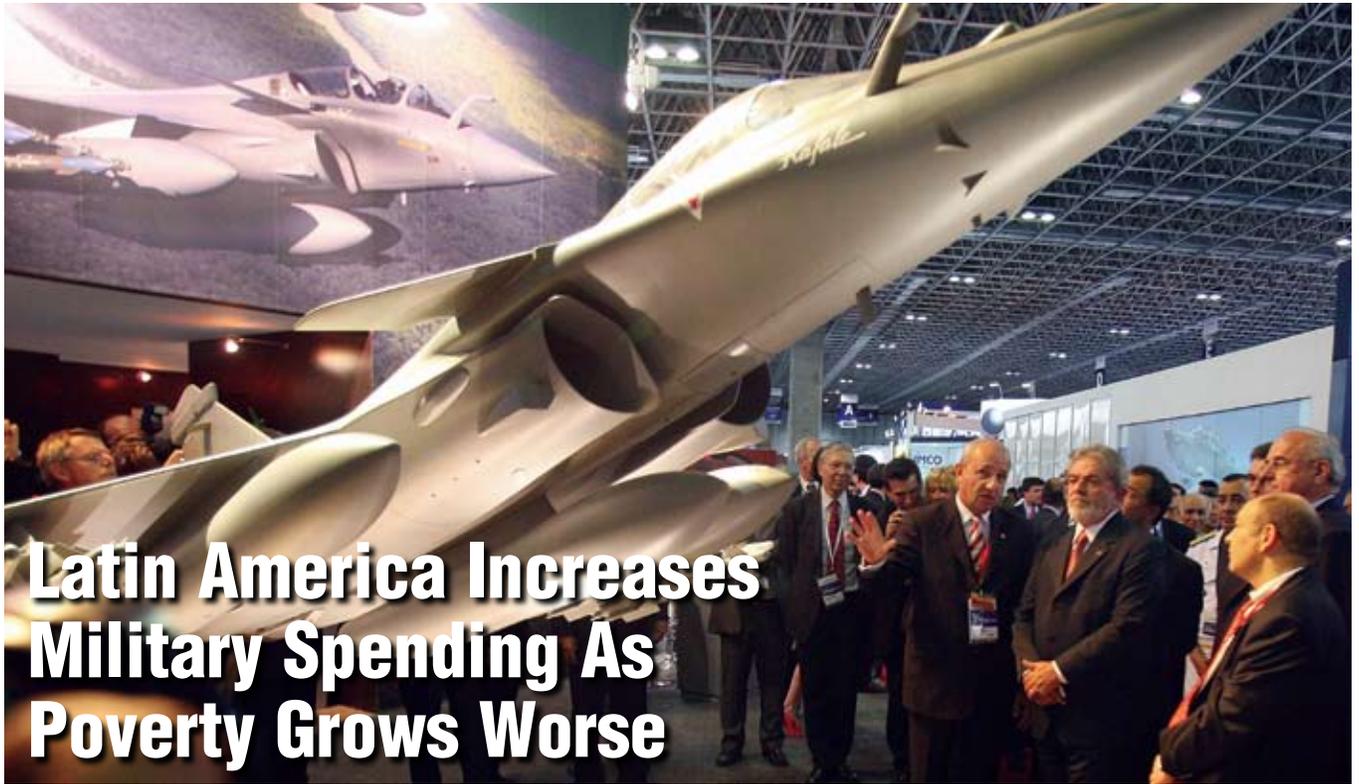
The opening of the *fourth seal* reveals a *pale horse*, which represents pestilence or disease: “And when He had opened the *fourth seal*, I heard the voice of the fourth beast say, Come and see. And I looked, and behold a *pale horse*: and his name that sat on him was Death—and Hell [meaning, the grave] followed with him. And power was given unto them over *the fourth part of the earth* [one in every four people], to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth” (Rev. 6:7-8).

This horse is depicted as *pale* because it is *sickly*. It obviously represents disease—*pestilence*! Invariably, war leads to famine—and resulting malnutrition leads to disease. New diseases, or old ones grown worse, are appearing almost daily. The death toll from disease around the world is staggering—now over a quarter million die *every day*! As with the fulfillment of the other seals, there is far more information available about disease than could begin to fit in this article. (Our well-researched booklet, *And There Shall Be Pestilences*, explains more about the growing worldwide suffering brought by the pale horse.)

There is much more to understand in the book of Revelation! To learn more, read my booklet *Revelation Explained at Last!* □



AMERICAS



Latin America Increases Military Spending As Poverty Grows Worse

■ **MILITARY SPENDING:** Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva (third right) looks at a model of a fighter from French-maker Rafale International during the Latin American Aerospace & Defense Fair, in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (April 14, 2009).

PHOTO: VANDERLEI ALMEIDA/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Leaders of Latin American nations have embarked on record military spending, while their citizens face the worst level of poverty in years.

Tension between neighboring countries and the Colombian government's decision to forge closer ties with the United States in its fight against drugs have fueled what some are calling an arms race.

"This trend is worrisome," said Peruvian Foreign Minister José Antonio García Belaunde. "It's hard to understand why countries are spending so much on arms purchases because this has traditionally been a peaceful region" (*Miami Herald*).

Massive arms spending includes an air defense system, combat aircraft and tanks for Venezuela, as well as military aircraft for Chile and Ecuador. Other countries in the region have also increased their military budget.

"In 2008 the 12 South American countries together channeled more than \$50 billion into military expenditures, about 30 percent more than in 2007.



■ **SHOPPING FOR ARMS:** Venezuela's President Hugo Chávez holds a model of a helicopter during his June 2007 visit to a helicopter plant in Rostov-on-Don, Russia. During his tour, Mr. Chávez discussed possible purchases of submarines and other defense equipment from Russia, arguing these were needed to defend his oil-rich country against the United States.

PHOTO: STRINGER/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Most prominent among countries where arms buying went up are Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela" (*UPI*).

As governments purchase expensive weaponry, many of their citizens are living below the poverty line.

The *SOS Children's Village*—which describes itself as "an international non-governmental social development organization"—reported that thousands of families in Guatemala are in a desperate situation as the global downturn triggers serious food shortages. It further said that some 54,000 families are already going hungry, while 400,000 others are at risk of running out of food; 50 children have died of chronic malnutrition this year.

"The tragedy for the region, in addition to the fact that countries should use much of that money to help reduce poverty at home, is that each nation's arms purchases makes its neighbors nervous—and moves them to buy weapons themselves" (*Miami Herald*). □

British Unemployment Highest in 14 Years

Study Reveals 585,000 American Jobs at Risk

British unemployment reached 2.47 million in July, its highest level since 1994, as 210,000 more people lost their jobs in the second quarter of 2009, according to the Office of National Statistics.

Britain's jobless rate grew to 7.9 percent from March to May 2009, up 0.8 percent over the previous quarter. In July 2008, unemployment was at 5.6 percent, an annual rise of 2.3 percent.

"Claims for unemployment benefit in August grew by 24,400 from July to 1.61 million, the highest since May 1997. And one in five people aged between 16 and 24 is now looking for work, the highest on record, the data showed. The number of jobless in this age group rose from 928,000 to 947,000—edging closer to the landmark of one million and adding to fears of a new 'lost generation' of young people" (BBC).

Joblessness is expected to reach three million in 2010, possibly higher, according to economist Howard Archer at Global Insight, a world-leading economics organization.

In related news, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce recently released a study revealing the loss of American jobs. The report, "Trade Action—or Inaction: The Cost for American Workers," showed that the United States could suffer a net loss of 383,400 jobs if Washington

fails to implement its pending free trade agreements with Colombia and South Korea. Meanwhile, the European Union and Canada move ahead with their agreements between their governments.

The study also found that implementing "Buy American" provisions in America's Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 will result in the net loss

of 176,800 jobs if foreign governments retaliate with their own "buy national" policies.

In addition, U.S. failure to implement the trucking provisions of NAFTA, coupled with subsequent retaliation from Mexico, may equal 25,600 jobs lost.

Ultimately, America could lose an estimated 585,800 jobs. □

U.S. Jobless Surveyed

Selected results of a survey of more than 1,200 unemployed workers:

Employment Situation

Percent surveyed who ...

... are unemployed for the first time **52%**

... had worked full time **74%**

... were hourly workers **72%**

... had worked at that job two years or less **60%**

... were offered severance, other pay **15%**

... got advance notice **37%**

Life Without Work

Percent surveyed who ...

... have cut overall spending **93%**

... worry jobless benefits will run out before they find work **83%**

... put off vacation, other plans **70%**

... have used savings/retirement money to make ends meet **63%**

... borrowed money from family, friends **56%**

... have health insurance **47%**

... think they will find work within six months **36%**

Source: Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy, Rutgers University, survey of 1,202 jobless U.S. adults; margin of error: +/- 5.1 percentage points
Graphic: Pat Carr

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Study: "Should Sweden Join the Euro?"

A study from the University of Oxford advocates that Sweden, a European Union member since 1995, should adopt the euro in place of the Swedish krona.

In a 2003 referendum, 56 percent of Swedish voters rejected adopting the euro. The August 2009 study ("Too Much to Lose, or More to Gain? Should Sweden Join the Euro?") stated this was due to "the

popular perception...that to join the euro would involve relinquishing monetary policy independence to a pan-European body."

While the paper conceded that in "joining the euro, Sweden would give up monetary sovereignty," it stated that "the cost in terms of a loss of monetary policy autonomy would be negligible."

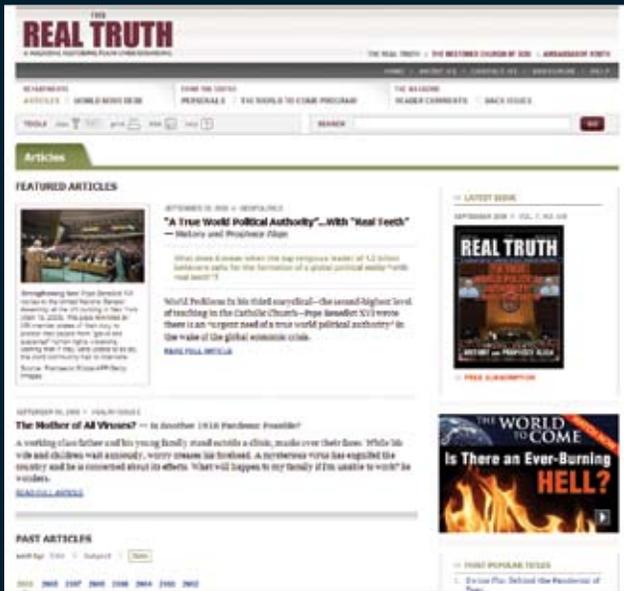
The EU expects all mem-

ber nations to join the European Economic Monetary Union and agree to share a single currency. Yet the United Kingdom and Denmark have negotiated an opt-out clause.

The Oxford economics paper concluded, "We hence believe that the answer to the question of whether Sweden should join the euro...should be answered with an unqualified 'yes.'" □

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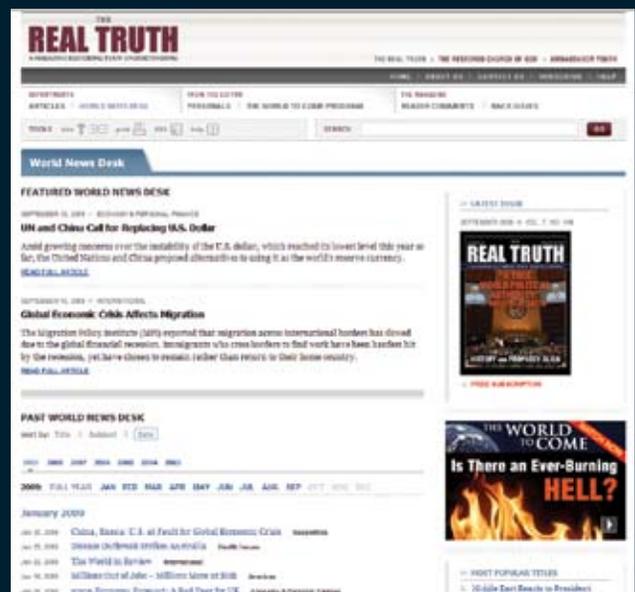
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