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A MAGAZINE RESTORING PLAIN UNDERSTANDING



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A R T I C L E S

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The Battle for Earth Was Copenhagen Really the “Last Hope”?

At the climate summit in Denmark, United Nations members put aside recent debate over whether or not climate change is true, convening instead with the goal of securing “hope” for future generations. But their noble intentions and high expectations missed what is *truly* needed to save the world.

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PHOTO: ATTILA KISBENEDEK/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

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■ **FRONT COVER:** The Grand Place in Brussels, Belgium is juxtaposed against a picture of a statue symbolizing the “brotherhood” of the European Union that stands outside of the EU Parliament building complex in the Belgian capital.

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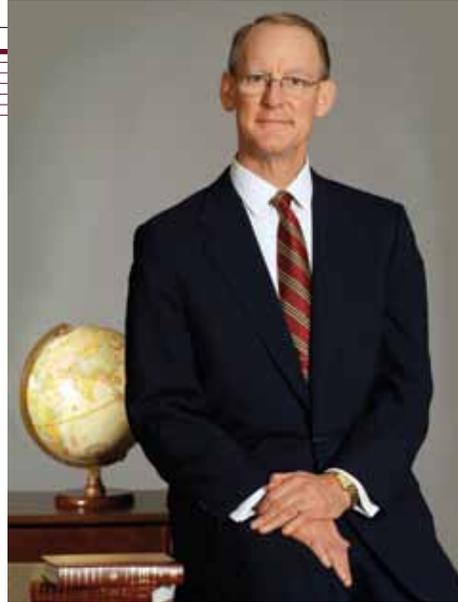
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PERSONAL FROM

David C. Fack



Did God Send Nostradamus?

NOSTRADAMUS HAS CAPTURED the world's attention since the 16th century. His mysterious, cryptic writings have been the subject of endless debate. Hailed by millions, and known the world over, this man is among the most famous people in history.

Many believe Nostradamus' writings hold the key to understanding the future's greatest events. To followers, he accurately predicted the French Revolution—the rise of Napoleon—and then Adolf Hitler—the assassination of United States President John F. Kennedy—and the bombing of the World Trade Center—among others.

Nostradamus is revered as a prophet. But was he a *true* prophet—one sent by God—or a fraud?

Nostradamus has been the subject of many books and films, including popular television programs. According to one scholar, "...Nostradamus is probably the only author who could claim that his work has never been out of print for over 400 years, apart from the Bible. The interest he generates is extraordinary" (Erika Cheetham, *The Prophecies of Nostradamus*).

In recent years, as millions of people seek to understand end-time prophecy, this interest has increased. Believing him inspired by God, some think his prophecies are on par with those in the Bible.

In light of the interest surrounding this man, we must ask: "Did God send Nostradamus?"

You *can* know. In fact, by the end of this article, you will.

God does not want His servants in doubt about those He sends. We should know whether Nostradamus—or any *other* man—was sent by God. You are about to learn things you never knew before.

From Doctor to Seer

First, let's examine Nostradamus' life. Michel De Notredame—or Nostredame—was born in southern France in 1503 to Jewish parents, who later converted to Catholicism. Europe had been undergoing the Renaissance. This was the time that produced Galileo, Copernicus, Michelangelo, Christopher Columbus and Leonardo da Vinci.

Son of a merchant and grandson of scholars, Nostradamus grew up in an environment of learning. As a young boy, he studied classical languages, astrology and possibly the occult. At 14, he left home to study in Avignon, an ecclesiastical and academic center in southern France. Later, he studied medicine at the prestigious University of Montpellier.

He became a physician. Early on, he traveled throughout France, caring for victims of the infamous Bubonic Plague, and gained a reputation as one who healed patients by innovative, but simple, methods.

Gravely ill people recovered, and then so did entire towns and villages. He became a celebrated figure in southern France.

In time, he returned to Montpellier for further study, eventually obtaining a medical doctorate. He married into a wealthy family and settled into the comfortable life of a doctor.

Soon after, the plague hit, killing his wife and two children. Unable to save his own family, his credibility was questioned. Compounding his troubles, a simple remark about a statue led to charges of heresy against the Catholic church. Summoned to stand trial, he chose to flee instead—and spent the next several years traveling in southern Europe. He eventually returned to France in 1544, re-established his practice, remarried and had six children.

A practicing Catholic, Nostradamus became heavily involved in astrology and the occult. He would sit for hours, deep into the night, meditating in a trance before a bowl of water.

Here is his description of this strange ritual: “Sitting alone at night in secret study; it [the bowl of water] is placed on the brass tripod. A slight flame comes out of the emptiness...The wand in the hand is placed in the middle of the tripod’s legs. With water he sprinkles both the hem of his garment and his foot [all of this is speaking about himself]. A voice, fear; he trembles in his robes. Divine splendor; *the God sits nearby*” (*The Prophecies of Nostradamus*, book I, verses 1-2, emphasis ours).

During these sessions, Nostradamus would have visions. After returning to his senses, he would record them. He began including them in his *Almanacs*. The first was published in 1550. These contained predictions for every month of the year. His *Almanacs* were so popular he produced them annually for the rest of his life.

Nostradamus’ fame grew. His services were now sought by the wealthy and powerful. In 1555, he began publishing a monumental project, a 10-part series of predictions called *The True Centuries* (*Les Vrayes Centuries*). Each consisted of 100 quatrains (four lines of rhyming verse) written in Latin, French, Greek, Italian and other languages—but in riddles difficult to understand so as to protect himself from accusations of witchcraft.

Nostradamus eventually attracted the attention of Catherine de Médicis, the French queen. She was so impressed she had him produce horoscopes for the royal family’s children. Later, he was appointed royal court physician.

Nostradamus died in 1566, allegedly stating the day before his death that he would live just one more day.

Growing Legend

After his death, the legend grew. Followers claimed he had predicted the death of King Henry II of France—and he was said to have predicted that a young monk Felice Peretti would become pope by addressing him as “Your Holiness.” Peretti did become Pope Sixtus V.

So great was Nostradamus’ influence that in the period following the bombing of the World Trade Center, his name was one of the top Google search terms.

People have always wanted to know what the future holds. They have also always consulted with soothsayers, fortune-tellers, clairvoyants, palm readers, so-called prophecy experts, prophetic texts—alongside the Bible—to learn it.

With world troubles multiplying, there is an explosion of interest in prophecy. Everyone wants to know what is coming. Books on prophecy are often instant bestsellers. Remember, Nostradamus is regarded by many as a prophet.

But again, did God send him?

How does God describe those who are *not* sent by Him? “And when they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep, and that mutter: should not a people seek unto their God? For the living to the dead? To the *law* and to the *testimony*: if they *speak not* according to *this word*, it is because there is *no light in them*” (Isa. 8:19-20).

There is no evidence whatsoever that Nostradamus ever based his prophecies on the Bible. They came solely from visions. He neither spoke, nor attempted to speak, according to God’s Word—or *Law*. Therefore, GOD says—not I—there is “*no light in him*.” Think of it this way. The man was *not* enlightened—he cannot *shed light* on the future. We will later learn why some of his predictions *did* come true.

It is widely acknowledged that many of Nostradamus’ prophecies failed. One author outlined five:

- (1) Venice would have great power and world influence by 1792. False.
- (2) The Catholic clergy would fall in 1609. False.
- (3) Persecution would arise against the Catholic church, also in 1792. False.
- (4) Astrologers would be persecuted in 1607. False.
- (5) And China would subdue the northern part of the world by 1700. False.

But *other* predictions never came true:

- (1) The Bourbon line of kings would be restored to the French throne.
- (2) French king Charles IX would live to 90—he died at 24.
- (3) A dramatic reduction in world population in the 18th century would occur due to famine and disease. Instead, population *exploded* during the 18th-century Industrial Revolution.

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THE BATTLE FOR EARTH

Was Copenhagen Really the “Last Hope”?

At the climate summit in Denmark, United Nations members put aside recent debate over whether or not climate change is true, convening instead with the goal of securing “hope” for future generations. But their noble intentions and high expectations missed what is *truly* needed to save the world.

AS DELEGATES representing 193 nations kicked off the 15th United Nations Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen, Denmark—considered by many leaders to be the “last chance” for planet Earth—the world waited breathlessly, hopeful for a future-altering outcome.

Though controversy regarding the credibility of climate change data has filled recent headlines, the conference, considered the most important summit since the end of World War II, proceeded as planned.

The Scandinavian city came to a standstill in preparation for the highly anticipated gathering, also

known as COP15, with more than 40,000 demonstrators clamoring to make their voices heard in hopes of saving the planet and its inhabitants from destruction at their own hands.

Buses could barely make their way through the bedlam of crowded streets as protestors’ voices echoed warn-

■ **DISCORD IN DENMARK:** A general view shows the plenary session at the Bella Center at the end of the COP15 UN Climate Change Conference (Dec. 19, 2009). Fury erupted among delegates at the climate talks over a draft accord agreed upon by a select group of leaders, with several poor nations saying it amounted to a coup d’etat against the United Nations.

PHOTO: OLIVIER MORIN/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

ings of Earth’s demise between the city’s 18th-century stone buildings. Wearing outlandish costumes, waving brightly colored banners and shouting catchy slogans, demonstrators voiced their opinions in the streets of what Denmark’s Prime Minister Lars Lokke Rasmussen and Copenhagen’s mayor, Ritt Bjerregaard, renamed “Hopenhagen” for the two-week summit.

Demonstrators, with heads shaved in protest of climate change, toted posters bearing the words, “System Change

Not Climate Change,” while others danced to club music from nearby DJ booths or formed conga lines.

Speakers, warning of what they believe is Earth’s imminent downfall, elicited wild cheers from their audiences. “We are peaceful, what are you?” a protestor standing on a platform shouted to a group of riot police, several of whom turned their backs and clutched their batons.

The raucous, Carnivale-like atmosphere surrounding the Bella Center, where the conference was held, includ-

ed a drumline following a Jewish man sounding a shofar—activists rolling a giant globe down the center of the road—a moment of silence in a mock cemetery dedicated to Earth—a crowd shouting, “One solution, trade pollution”—even dozens of out-of-place Iranian students loudly protesting against the re-election of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad.

The meeting was the fifth to convene regarding the 1997 signing of the Kyoto Protocol. This legally binding treaty aims to reduce greenhouse



■ **COMPETING INTERESTS:** Combo picture shows (pictured from top left) French President Nicolas Sarkozy, U.S. President Barack Obama, German Chancellor Angela Merkel, Chinese Prime Minister Wen Jiabao, British Prime Minister Gordon Brown, (from bottom left) South African President Jacob Zuma, Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi and Tuvalu Prime Minister Apisai Ielemia. World leaders attending the summit tried to reach a consensus on climate change action based on the needs of their individual nations.

PHOTO: STF/AFP/GETTY IMAGES



■ **TAKING A STAND:**

Top, environmental activists shave their heads in protest against the progress of the UN Climate Change Conference in the center of Copenhagen (Dec. 18, 2009). Left, protestors from Climate No Borders shout during a demonstration (Dec. 14, 2009).

PHOTOS: (T) JEFF J MITCHELL (L) LISELOTTE SABROE/AFP / GETTY IMAGES

gas emissions for industrialized nations (excluding most developing countries, such as China and India) by an average of five percent against 1990 levels over the five year period from 2008-2012.

The UN Framework on Climate Change (UNFCCC), a sector of the UN, which attempts to stabilize the level of harmful greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, supported the document, as did panelist recommendations from the UN-appointed Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

The panel's conclusions have led many policymakers to accept that manmade climate change is a scientific fact.

At its inception, the Kyoto Protocol was hailed as a historic step toward combating the possible effects of proposed manmade climate change. Since its signing, leaders have continued to work toward creating a more far-reaching solution.

As the protocol expires in 2012, countries which ratified the agreement have until that time to devise a new treaty, which includes a goal of keeping the global temperature increase below two degrees Celsius (3.6 degrees Fahrenheit) to prevent potential destructive climate patterns.

Whether or not climate change is real or imagined, conference leaders desired to positively impact Earth's future.

The gathering of heads of state and non-governmental organizations believed they could do just that—yet something was lacking.

Quiet Chaos

Despite the hype and unprecedented political momentum leading up to the conference, a dark cloud overshadowed "Hopenhagen" from the start: under UN rules for climate change talks, any agreement requires unanimous approval of all 193 nations. This tall order has

hindered nearly every climate talk since the Kyoto Protocol.

Yvo de Boer, the executive secretary of the UNFCCC, warned in the opening ceremony that delegates must act now as the "clock has ticked down to zero."

"The time for formal statements is over," he said. "The time for restating well-known positions is past."

The COP15 introductory video made this "last chance" all the more urgent: a little girl dreaming of a world

proposal included aid for developing nations hit by changing weather patterns. In addition, several developing countries insisted wealthier nations owed them climate reparations.

A few Western nations countered that large developing nations such as India and China must make cutbacks on carbon emissions for any agreement to be worthwhile.

Halfway through the conference, violence erupted at a rally attended by

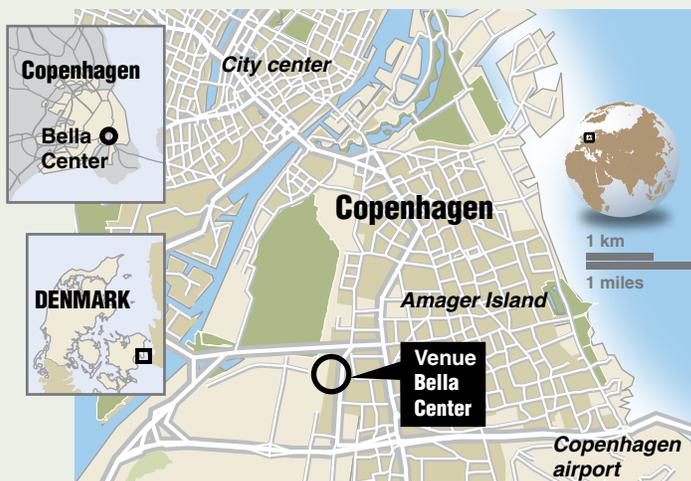
tens of thousands of protesters demanding a binding treaty. Nearly 1,000 people were detained after the windows of two historic buildings were smashed with cobblestones. Police also arrested several youth who violated Denmark's laws of either concealing their faces in public or carrying pocket knives.

It seemed the confusion outside was echoed in the quiet chaos inside, as the conference crumbled into a finger-pointing match, with China and the United States at the core of the debate. China rebuffed any international monitoring of its emissions levels; the U.S. rejected any agreement that did not allow transparency for China's actions.

China's top climate negotiator Xie Zhenhua stated, "Given the fact that developed countries have done nothing but empty talk, they have no right to make further requests" (*Forbes*).

America's response? "With respect to our emissions, it's true our emissions have gone up since 1990," U.S. Special Envoy for Climate Change Todd Stern said, adding, "the country whose emissions are going up, dramatically, really dramatically is China." He also said that without developing economies such as China (the world leader in carbon emissions) doing their part, talks were useless.

Copenhagen Climate Summit



Participants

- About 15,000 delegates from 193 nations attended the UN conference
- 110 world leaders, including U.S. President Barack Obama, arrived near the end of the meeting

Attempted Goals

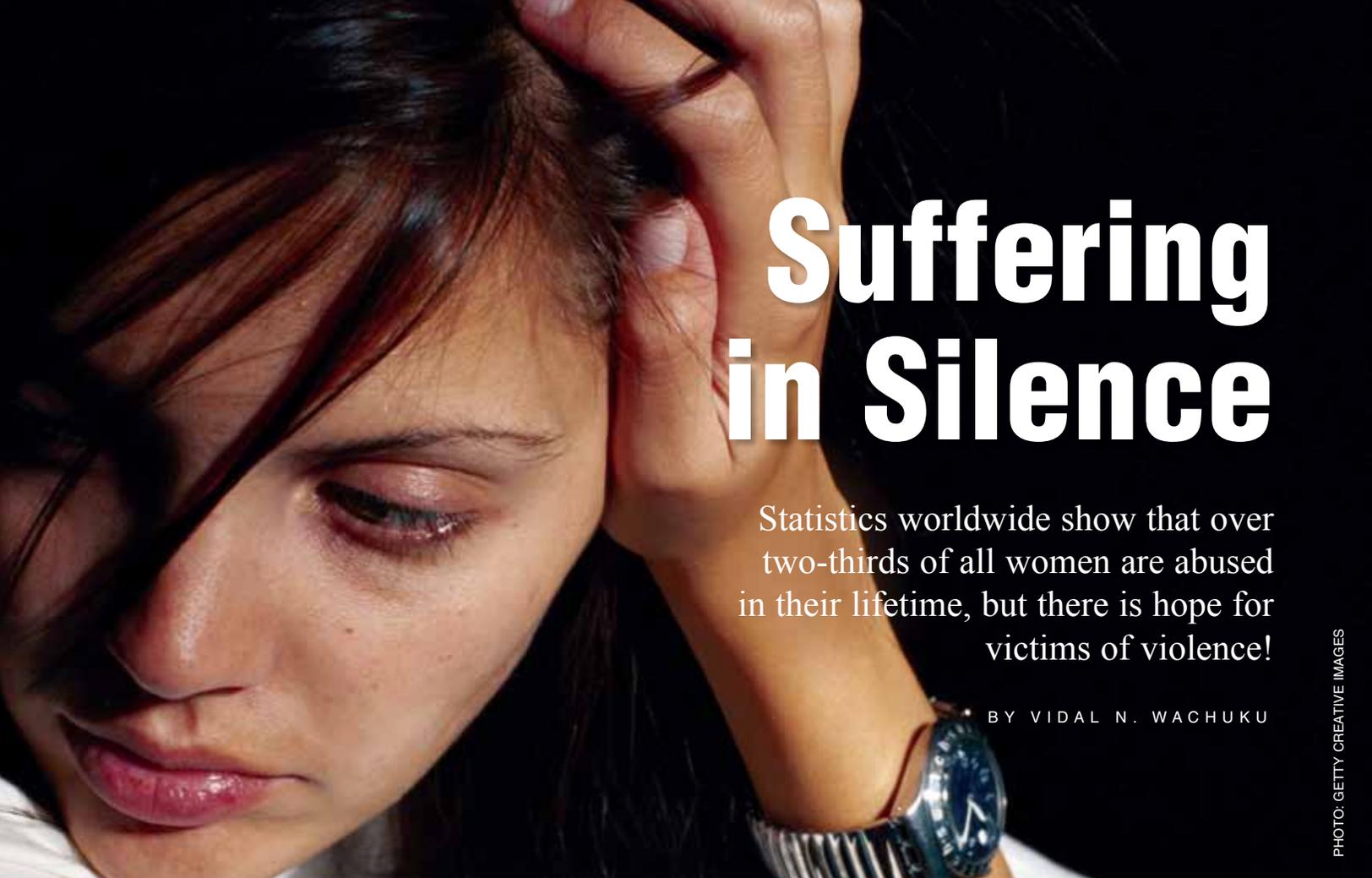
- To cut greenhouse gas emissions immediately
- To provide poor nations with financial aid and technology

© 2009 MCT
Source: AP, Reuters

overcome with meteorological torments quietly begs those attending the summit, "Please, help the world." The four-minute sequence ended with the phrase, "We have the power to save the world. Now."

But the reality of the democratic UN system soon set in. Delegates began, one by one, to deliver rhetoric-laden speeches, reiterating the well-known positions of their nations.

On day three, the talks heated up. A representative for the South Pacific island nation of Tuvalu called for an enforceable agreement instead of the non-binding "political agreement" that had been expected for weeks. His



Suffering in Silence

Statistics worldwide show that over two-thirds of all women are abused in their lifetime, but there is hope for victims of violence!

BY VIDAL N. WACHUKU

PHOTO: GETTY CREATIVE IMAGES

A PREGNANT WOMAN sits on a bed, sobbing softly and rubbing her stomach. Her face is marred with bruises and blood trickles from her nose.

As she hears a door slam below, a boy's small head peeks around her bedroom doorframe. *Is he gone?* he whispers. Her son rushes into her arms, and she holds him close, her whole body shaking. She did not think she would live to see her son again.

Three times before her husband threatened to kill her, but this time he almost made good on his promise.

Their relationship was not always this way. At first he had been kind, bringing her gifts, occasionally paying visits to her family or stopping by to enjoy a meal. Everyone believed he would make the perfect husband.

It was not until they married that he changed: what began with emotional abuse soon turned physical. His private rage became a way of life for

her. Ashamed and afraid, she quickly discovered how to hide the wounds inflicted from the times he hit, pushed, kicked or hurled items at her.

The first time he threatened her life, she finally worked up the courage to tell her family about the assaults, which they quickly dismissed as exaggeration, making her feel even more vulnerable. Without support from relatives, she has given up any hope of escape, nearly numb to the reality of her violent home life.

Yet every time she feels her husband's wrath, he later apologizes, tearfully begging her to stay, promising to "never do it again." And time and again, she naively believes his empty promises.

It's my fault, she thinks while patting her child's head. *I must try harder next time not to upset him for the sake of my children.*

The unnamed woman in the scenario depicted could be any one of millions of women who are not alone in their suffering.

From Argentina to Zimbabwe, the situation is similar, with statistics showing that over two-thirds of women worldwide are abused in their lifetime—some of whom suffer in silence until the abuser ultimately takes their life. Shame, humiliation, embarrassment, degradation, anxiety, fear of living alone, a custody battle, danger of escaping, and financial worries often outweigh these women's wishes to remove themselves and their children from abusive situations.

Worldwide Scourge

Violence against women, also known as gender-based violence, cuts across national boundaries as well as racial, class, religious, traditional and cultural barriers. It limits full participation of women in society.

In 1993, the international community acknowledged this kind of violence when the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women, which

defines violence against females as “any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life.”

The Platform for Action, an agenda for women’s empowerment, expanded this definition at the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995, during which rape in armed conflict was declared a war crime that could, under certain circumstances, be termed genocide. Several years later, November 25 was set aside as the International Day of Elimination of Violence Against Women.

Overwhelming Numbers

A World Health Organization study about women’s health and domestic violence across 10 countries, revealed the following:

■ Between 15 percent and 71 percent of women reported physical or sexual violence by a husband or partner. Many said their first sexual experience was not consensual while 4

percent to 12 percent reported being physically abused during pregnancy.

■ About 5,000 women annually are murdered worldwide by family members in the name of “honor.”

■ Up to one in five women (and one in 10 men) globally experience sexual abuse as children.

■ The practice of forced or child marriages occurs in many countries across Asia, the Middle East and sub-Saharan Africa.

According to the study, limited education of women or their partners, marital conflict, male dominance, economic stress, gender inequality, alcohol and drug use, and restrictive laws on divorce are contributing factors of abuse.

The psychological and emotional effects of abuse on women can be devastating. Women tend to be more empathetic and therefore try to understand the feelings of others, whereas men’s responses typically rely heavily on logic.

Often, this tendency works against women attempting to extricate themselves from a dangerous situation. Dr. Andrzej Urbanik, a researcher who studied the differing reactions of men

and women to danger, said, “...when confronted with dangerous situations, men are more likely than women to take action” (*BBC*).

Trapped in a Violent Cycle

Along with this tendency, women often choose to suffer in secret as they are afraid of the repercussions that such a revelation could bring upon them and their families.

A report by the London Abused Women’s Centre said that often it is when women try to escape the violence that they lose their lives.

“Women are at most risk of being killed by an abusive partner after separation. In Canada, intimate femicides account for between 61% and 78% of all killings of women where an offender is identified. Abusers may also kill the victim’s children, parents, relatives, friends or acquaintances. The perpetrator may also commit murder-suicide.”

In Wales, England, for example, domestic violence is the single biggest killer of women under 35, with reports of violence especially skyrocketing during the Christmas season.

In other societies, women are concerned that they will be ostracized by the community, as it is considered acceptable for a man to beat a woman.

A report issued by Amnesty International said that because Yemeni females are considered second-class citizens, they are less likely to come forward about domestic violence.

“Their rights are routinely violated because Yemeni laws as well as tribal and customary practices treat them as second class citizens,” the report said. “Women are not free to marry who they want and some are forced to marry when they are children, sometimes as young as eight...Once married, a woman must obey her husband and obtain his permission just to leave the house. Women are valued as half the worth of men when they testify in court or when their families are compensated if they are murdered. They are also denied equal treatment when it comes to inheritance and are often denied it completely. Women are dealt with more harshly than men when accused

■ **SAFE HAVEN:** An Asian woman, eight months pregnant after allegedly being raped by a Malaysian volunteer security corps officer, sits on her bunk bed at a shelter for abused migrant maid workers in the compounds of the Indonesian embassy in downtown Kuala Lumpur (Nov. 14, 2007).

PHOTO: TENGKU BAHAR/AFP/GETTY IMAGES



of ‘immoral’ acts, and men are treated leniently when they murder female relatives in ‘honour killings.’ Such discriminatory laws and practices encourage and facilitate violence against women, which is rife in the home and in society at large.”

A Ugandan mother of eight, who was beaten often by her businessman husband, faced similar circumstances. Wife beating was so common in her neighborhood that she knew her friends were enduring it too, but none of them spoke about it.

“My husband would get quite violent with me if he was ever angry or if he didn’t have a good day at the market,” she says. “I would get very upset, but there was no option to leave him or to explain that he was hurting me. Women from my neighbourhood knew what was going on, but it was so regular that it was kind of accepted” (*The Guardian*).

Last year, Ugandan daily newspaper, *The New Vision* reported that at least 72 percent of women in Mubende District, which has a population of over 430,000, were sexually abused and another 28 percent were raped.

Some cultures even teach that women should feel unloved if their husbands do not beat them!

A Zambian actor’s wife recently spoke to *BBC News* about a time her husband beat her. Surprisingly, when she called the police, they urged her not to pursue the incident. She received the same reaction from her doctor and several of her friends.

Her husband said that the reason for the beating was a result of cultural traditions in Zambia.

“To be a man, you need to discipline a woman, give her a slap or two,” he said. “You know, in our culture, it’s OK because that’s how we feel we love our women” (*ibid.*).

Unbelievably, others agreed with him!

The article reported that “more than half of Zambian women have suffered domestic abuse but cases rarely come to light because of the stigma attached to speaking out. Young women are taught by their elders to accept punish-

ment from their husbands when they are disobedient. Even cooking a bad meal warrants a smack.”

But this attitude of violence is not only held in less developed nations—it is a global scourge that also affects the West, as exemplified in a story by Houston television news station *KHOU*.

“In March 2006, Arcely Gomez was pregnant with her fourth child, when her husband shot her in the face. The husband was angry because Gomez wanted to take the couple’s three children and leave, so he decided to kill her, then himself. But miraculously, Gomez survived.

“She gave birth to her fourth child and began working at carnivals around town to make ends meet.

“Then another tragedy struck.

“Six months ago Gomez’s cousin, Fortunada Cardenas, was murdered by her boyfriend. The boyfriend shot Cardenas, then committed suicide—all in front of the children who were suddenly left without a mother.”

According to the United States National Crime Victimization Survey, and the most recent statistics, 232,960 women in the U.S. were raped or sexually assaulted in 2006—more than 600 every day! In addition, the National Violence Against Women Survey reported that on average about 1.5 million American women are raped and/or physically assaulted by an intimate partner annually.

Human Effort

To combat this global pandemic, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon launched the Network of Men Leaders. It includes current and former politicians, activists, actors, and religious and community figures including Archbishop Desmond Tutu, the South African Nobel Peace Laureate.

Mr. Ban also issued two new reports. One focused on the intensification of efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women, including increased coordination and collaboration among entities of the United Nations and enhanced support for national efforts to address the issue, and the other deal-

ing specifically with violence against female migrant workers.

Additionally, on its site, the UN pledged by 2015 to:

- Adopt and enforce national laws to address and punish all forms of violence against women and girls.

- Implement multi-sectoral national action plans.

- Strengthen data collection on the prevalence of violence against women and girls.

- Increase public awareness and social mobilization.

- Address sexual violence in conflict.

“Our goal is clear,” Mr. Ban said during a speech on the International Day of Elimination of Violence Against Women in 2009, “an end to these inexcusable crimes—whether it is the use of rape as a weapon of war, domestic violence, sex trafficking, so-called ‘honour’ crimes or female genital mutilation/cutting. We must address the roots of this violence by eradicating discrimination and changing the mindsets that perpetuate it.”

But for women who live in constant danger, manmade efforts cannot provide a solution quickly enough.

As the mother described earlier tucks her little one into bed, she wonders, *Where is God in all of this?*

Biblical View

Some people believe that God—and His Word—support violence against women. This is absolutely false! He never intended for women to suffer violence.

Genesis 5:1-2 states, “In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made He him; male and female created He them; and blessed them.” *Both man and woman* were created in the image of God.

In Genesis 2:18, God reveals His intended role for a woman: she was created to complement man. This does not mean she is inferior, but signifies the role she was designed to fulfill—that of providing what a man lacks.

Please see **SUFFERING**, page 25

Ten Traits of a

VALUABLE EMPLOYEE



PHOTO: GETTY CREATIVE IMAGES

By becoming a better employee, you will have a greater chance of keeping your job!

BY JAMES F. TURCK

NOT SINCE LATE 1982, when United States unemployment reached 10.82 percent, has the number of jobless hit such highs as in today's "Great Recession."

By November 2009, the American unemployment rate had risen to 10 percent, representing 15.4 million out of work—a little more than double the percentage from December 2007. For three straight months, the U.S.

witnessed 135,000 job losses per month.

For those still employed, the future looks shaky. Many ask, "Will I have a job in six months?"

For others out of work, life has changed. Having worked at their occupations for years, long-time employees now find themselves lining up for unemployment benefits. As the weeks pass by, their benefits run out. And as money grows tight, the fear of losing homes, cars and other possessions becomes reality.

As a byproduct of this economic downturn, companies are learning to be more productive with fewer employees, a trend that is likely to continue. In such times, what can you do to increase the possibility of staying employed or gaining reemployment?

Though no job is entirely recession-proof, and at times there may be nothing you could have done to prevent a job loss, there are certain qualities that a person must have that lessen the possibility of being "let go"—especially when an employer is forced to make job cuts. The one who is most valuable to his employer stands the greatest chance of staying in his position.

Managers and companies desire certain key qualities in their workers. By knowing, practicing and incorporating them into your thinking, you will dramatically increase your worth to current and future employers.

(1) Character-driven

Character is the virtue of knowing right from wrong, turning from the wrong and doing what is right, even in the face of pressures and temptations. It is being honest and upright in everything you do. Sadly, good character is rapidly disappearing. Even the most cursory look at society makes this plain.

Put yourself in the place of an employer. As an employee, you represent a company. How you conduct and present yourself, interact with customers and fellow employees, and the quality of your work, reflects directly on it. If you had to choose between an employee who was upstanding,

trustworthy, honest and truthful in his dealings with others, one who goes above and beyond, and does excellent work—and one who lacks these qualities—which would you keep on the payroll?

The answer is obvious.

(2) Multi-skilled

Many years ago, I heard an instructor advise his students to “always increase the value of the real-estate.” He was not talking about land, property homes or buildings, but about the value of each individual as an employee.

As with a house when it is remodeled, its value and worth increases. So too will your value to an employer as you improve and upgrade yourself. This can be done in a variety of ways.

- Enhance and improve skills you already have.

- Strive to be the very best at what you do.

- Broaden the areas of different tasks you can perform.

- Have more than one skill set.

For example, the automotive technician who can repair anything on a car from bumper to bumper has more value than one who can do only routine maintenance tasks. Likewise, the carpenter who can not only do rough framing, but also siding and roofing, and install windows and doors, stands a better chance of holding on to his job when others with only one specialization are laid off.

The more you can do, the greater value you have to an employer, and the more job opportunities that will be open to you.

(3) Reliable

Nothing aggravates an employer more than a worker who does not carry out instructions. As a result, a company misses crucial deadlines, makes mistakes and produces faulty products, which result in unhappy customers. All of this because the worker either did not pay attention to instructions or did not care enough to carry them out.

You can avoid misunderstandings and miscommunications by simply applying the basic biblical instruction, “Let every man be swift to hear, [and]

slow to speak” (Jms. 1:19). Human nature tends to immediately speak and react, rather than patiently listen first.

Rare is the person who waits and listens, then carries out directives. But you can eliminate mistakes and prevent

“If your motto is
“that’s not my
job,” then you may
soon find yourself
out of a job!”

accidents by listening to instructions. It also shows respect for your superior, which will not go unnoticed. Your manager will see that you patiently listen without interrupting, which will assure him that you take your duties seriously and can handle further responsibility.

(4) Positive

On the job, individuals with positive attitudes are usually well-liked by their co-workers, who find them easy to get along with. Why? No one wants to be around someone who is unhappy. Pessimism and negativity breed more of the same.

Cheerful attitudes are “contagious.” They have a positive effect on the workplace.

Similar to everyday life, things can go wrong at work. Problems need solutions. Employers want workers who are able to identify problems and devise and implement solutions.

Consider. The purpose of every profession is to solve some type of problem. Wages offered in any industry are generally proportional to the degree of difficulty and complexity of the problems that employees must solve on a daily basis. The more problems you solve—large or small—the more valuable you will be to your employer.

Sadly, a common attitude that pervades today’s workforce is that people feel they are “above” a given task, and feel the need to voice their complaints. They fail to consider that if those tasks did not exist, they would not have a job!

Realize that in today’s employment climate, the “squeaky wheel” gets replaced. Instead, be the wheel that quietly and efficiently carries its load day after day.

Have the type of positive attitude about whatever you do spoken of by Martin Luther King, Jr.: “If it falls your lot to be a street sweeper, sweep streets like Michelangelo painted pictures, sweep streets like Beethoven composed music, sweep streets like Leontyne Price sings before the Metropolitan Opera. Sweep streets like Shakespeare wrote poetry” (*The Seattle Times*).

He continued that you should work in such a manner so that people can say, “Here lived a great street sweeper who swept his job well” (*ibid.*).

(5) Responsible

In the past, craftsmen used to take great pride in their work, pouring hours into everything they did.

Now, many employees barely do enough to earn a paycheck, which is reflected in the lack of quality in the goods and services produced today.

If you want to become a more valuable employee, understand your particular job responsibilities and attempt to go above and beyond what is required.

The more care you put into every detail of what you do, the more your manager will be able to focus his attention elsewhere. He will know he can depend on you to “get the job done,” which provides him peace of mind.

Realize that your job duties affect others. Your mistakes can cause more work for them. Understand that you can make your coworkers’ jobs more or less difficult.

When things go wrong, most people blame others. Yet a responsible employee is not afraid to admit his mistakes. An employer appreciates such honesty.



PHOTOS: GETTY CREATIVE IMAGES

(6) Proactive

There are two types of employees—those who wait to be told what to do and those who take initiative in finding innovative ways to be productive for the benefit of their employer. Managers notice a self-motivated worker and will seek him out for advancement.

There is an old saying: “If you want it done, give it to a busy person.” Those who productively use their time are more likely to be given increased responsibility, even a promotion.

(7) Dependable

Often, employers face workers who repeatedly arrive late, call in sick or do not show up at all. When a worker fails to show, the impact is felt companywide. Others must pick up the slack.

By your actions, show people that you can keep commitments. A dependably productive worker stays on the payroll.

(8) Diligent

Always strive to perform any given task with excellence.

Give your employer a *full* day’s work for the *full* day’s pay he is giving you.

In other words, “Whatsoever your hand finds to do, do it with your might” (Ecc. 9:10).

Soon you will be known as one who exercises diligence in whatever you do.

(9) Self-disciplined

A good employee is one who stays on track. He does not allow modern technology, such as the Internet or his cellphone to distract him. He focuses his attention on his work.

A valuable employee does not waste his employer’s time and money.

Instead, while at work, he *works!*

(10) Dedicated

A valuable employee shows his dedication by consistently *exceeding* his employers expectations and willingly taking on any task. If your motto is “that’s not my job,” then you may soon find yourself *out of a job!*

Notice what Jesus Christ said in the Bible about profitable servants: “But which of you, having a servant plowing or feeding cattle, will say unto him by and by, when he is come from the field, Go and sit down to meat? And will not rather say unto him, Make ready wherewith I may sup, and gird yourself, and serve me, till I have eaten and drunken; and afterward you shall eat and drink? Does he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded

him? I think not. So likewise you, when you shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do” (Luke 17:7-10).

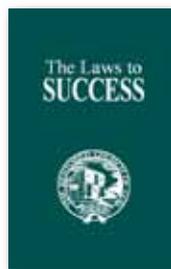
Be a worker who does more than is expected, not just the bare minimum.

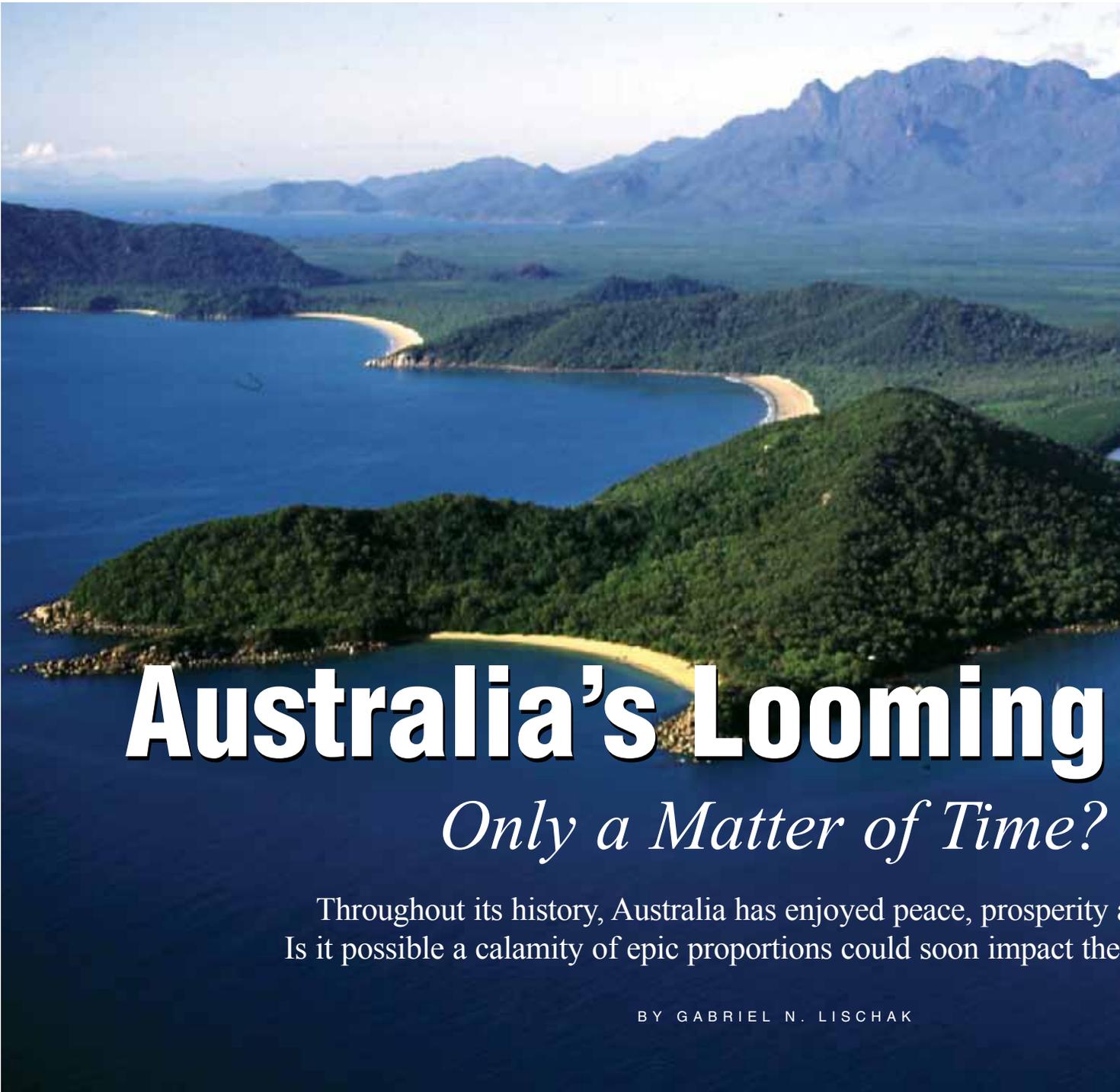
Employ the Laws of Success

There are seven laws of success, which every person, regardless of his or her position in life, should employ. They are: set the right goal, get an education, maintain good health, be driven, employ resourcefulness, persevere, and, most important, stay in close contact with God and seek His guidance.

David C. Pack’s booklet *The Laws to Success* provides insight into these often-overlooked laws. This publication clearly explains the keys to true and lasting success in all areas of life. If you want to be a more valuable employee, and a more effective person, be sure to read this booklet.

This article has shown some of the hallmarks of a valuable employee. By systematically and consistently applying these principles, you will increase your value in the job market and provide yourself greater job security in the future. □





Australia's Looming

Only a Matter of Time?

Throughout its history, Australia has enjoyed peace, prosperity and a high quality of life. Is it possible a calamity of epic proportions could soon impact the

BY GABRIEL N. LISCHAK

THE “LAND DOWN UNDER,” as Australia is often called, is unlike any other country. A vast continent, it is roughly the same size as America’s lower 48 states, yet is home to only 22 million people, and has the lowest population density in the world—only two people per square kilometer.

Australia’s coastline is nearly 31,000 miles and marked by over 10,000 beaches—more than any other

nation. As 85 percent of Australians live within about 30 miles of the ocean, beach-going is firmly entrenched in the “Aussie” lifestyle.

The largest coral ridge in the world, the Great Barrier Reef, roughly parallels the coast of Queensland for 1,600 miles. Thousands of visitors flock to the natural wonder each year to observe its pristine beauty. In addition, approximately 400 species of birds exist solely inside the country’s borders, and about 80 percent of its southern



Crisis

and abundance.
“lucky country”?

marine species can be found nowhere else.

Australia is quite wealthy. While other nations are drowning in a sea of debt, it has generally maintained a balanced budget.

Because of its abundant natural resources, ideal weather, unique history, and location that keeps it isolated from the world's troubles, Australia has

been dubbed the “lucky country.” *The Economist* ranked Melbourne the third most livable city worldwide. Perth and Sydney also rated in the top ten.

In light of these facts, many dream of visiting Australia at least once in their lifetime—and tens of thousands do so each year, with some remaining permanently. The Aussie lifestyle is perceived as relaxed and enjoyable, and the people friendly.

Yet, as surprising as it may seem, all is not well with the “lucky” country. A storm is brewing, one that will significantly impact the land down under—and much sooner than you would expect.

Unique Past

To many, Australia is merely an expenal colony, known mostly for kangaroos, koalas and crocodiles. But the continent's history dates back thousands of years, to when aboriginals inhabited the country's vast expanse. It was not until the 16th century, however, that Europeans began exploring the land. Portuguese, Dutch, British and French explorers all made landfall from the 1500s to 1700s, with Portugal considered the first to officially discover Australia. (Some historians believe that Chinese and Arab voyagers may have come in contact with Australia as early as the 15th century.)

Upon a second expedition of Australia's northern coast in 1644, the Netherlands named the landmass “New Holland.” The Dutch, though, decided not to continue further exploration of the area. England instead took the lead role.

During his second trip to New Holland, English buccaneer William Dampier explored the western coast, some 1,000 miles, from 1699 to 1700. He wrote extensively about his journeys, more than any previous explorer had done. But he was so critical of the people and land itself that England decided not to pursue additional voyages for some time.

In the mid-1700s, hope for commerce and wealth out of New Holland led to a renewed desire to explore the continent. Great Britain took the lead once again and embarked on several explorations. In 1770, English explorer Captain James Cook landed along the eastern coast of New Holland and named the area New South Wales (NSW) on August 23.

The first large-scale settlement of New Holland occurred in 1768, when the British sought to colonize New South Wales. The motivation behind this has been a source of debate. Many believe England settled the land with the intention of using it solely for prisoners, which by that time were no longer able to be sent to colonies in America. Convicts were among the first to settle New South Wales, and official statements confirm this as the chief reason for colonizing the area. Others, however, saw it as a move to establish fortified strongholds in the eastern seas and exert greater influence over the area.

More than 700 convicts and 250 free persons left England on May 13, 1787, to colonize New South Wales, on the southeast coast. The commander of the expedition, Arthur Philip, landed at Port Jackson on January 26, 1788, hoisted the British flag, and began to establish a government.

In the early 1800s, British Naval Officer Matthew Flinders circumnavigated the continent and recommended that the name change to “Australia.” In 1817, it became official: New Holland became Australia.

Throughout the early 1800s, settlements sprang up throughout New South Wales and pushed westward. Local governments formed, and economic development quickly flourished. Men of notable upbringing and wealth were encouraged to migrate to New South Wales and Tasmania. They received large plots of land and were instrumental in leading the way socially and economically.

■ **HINCHINBROOK ISLAND:** The island is about a mile off the Queensland coast and a part of the 1,600-mile-long Great Barrier Reef. It has been a national park since 1932.

PHOTO: AUSTRALIAN TOURIST COMMISSION / CHARLOTTE OBSERVER/MCT

Convicts also played a large role—both for good and bad. Many were urban thieves; others led decent lives. By 1830, there were roughly 58,000 in Australia. One could easily believe such a large population of convicts would lead to chaos, but this was not the case.

In January 1827, Edmund Lockyer established a permanent settlement at Albany, Western Australia, and stated that England now claimed *all* of Australia.

The decades of the 1830s to the 1860s were marked by great political and economic change. Colonies were given the ability to govern themselves—large deposits of minerals and gold were discovered—and it was learned that Australia was well suited for producing wool. Christian churches gave considerable financial aid for expansion. Adherents of Catholicism, Methodism, Congregationalism, Presbyterianism and, of course, the Church of England, which had the most converts, quickly populated the nation.

The Australian European population passed 50,000 in 1825, 450,000 in 1851, and 1.15 million in 1861. By 1901, it shot to 3.37 million. The remaining four of Australia's six colonies were created during this time: Western Australia, South Australia, Victoria and Queensland. But each remained independent of the other throughout the 1800s.

The colonies eventually united with the signing of a national constitution on January 1, 1901, giving birth to the Commonwealth of Australia. Each colony relinquished limited areas of power to the federal government, such as external affairs, defense, immigration, customs and marriage laws. A high court was established to interpret the constitution. The British monarch was—and still is—officially the

head of state, but Australia has been essentially independent since its formal inception.

With no war leading up to it—and none to follow thereafter—a nation was born. Australia all but stands alone with that distinction.

Economic Expansion

Fast-forward to the 1940s: Australia became involved in World War II, with soldiers and seamen fighting in fronts throughout the Mediterranean and North Africa, and eventually closer to home in New Guinea. This period forged a close bond between the U.S. and Australia, with the two fighting together against the Japanese at the Battle of the Coral Sea—a turning point of the war. Thereafter, the two nations fought side-by-side in a number of land battles. American soldiers became quite common in state capitals throughout Australia, with United States

Employment in cities was high, with many families having at least two members earning income—something previously unheard of. Between 1938 and 1939, and 1942 and 1943, the gross national product rose more than 50 percent. Many Australians began to enjoy wealth, even affluence.

Economic expansion continued through the 1970s, a period that has been called a golden age of sorts. Population and individual expenditures nearly doubled. Automobile ownership increased eight-fold. Manufacturing rose considerably, with output per worker increasing and work hours decreasing. Goods included iron and steel wares, electronic and electric items, and automobiles. Australia began producing its own car—Holden—in 1948.

Today, Australians overall enjoy a comfortable lifestyle and an abundance of modern conveniences. A 2000 United Nations survey ranked the nation *fourth* in terms of quality of life worldwide. In 2009, it jumped to number *two*—out of 174 countries. This ranking was based on a survey that evaluated social and economic welfare. Compared to other nationalities, Aussies enjoy easy access to education, long life expectancy and low crime levels.

But as is the case with any country, Australia has its share of problems, including a number of domestic and economic issues.

Debt and Vulnerability

Australia has long been thought of as a nation heavily dependent upon agriculture and foreign investment. This idea was certainly fitting in the early years of European settlement, as wool exports drove the economy. Wheat, beef, lamb, dairy and various irrigated crops were also crucial. But after World War II, the growth of the manufacturing sector lessened Australia's agricultural dependency.

2009 Australian Wildfires

Worst affected

- Shoalhaven**—2,000 hectares (4,942 acres)
- Beechworth**—20,000 hectares (49,421 acres)
- Kilmore**—210,000 hectares (518,921 acres)
- Bega Valley**—2,000 hectares (4,942 acres)

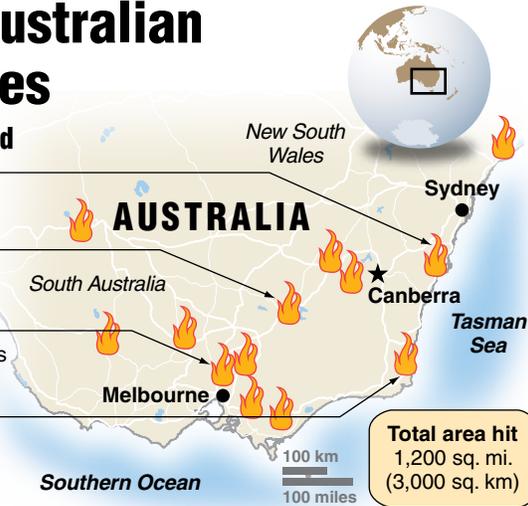
Fire history

- 1939 “Black Friday” fires in Victoria; 71 dead, 700 homes destroyed
- 1967 62 killed, 1,300 homes destroyed in Hobart, Tasmania
- 1983 “Ash Wednesday”; 75 dead, 2,500 homes destroyed in southern Australia

Source: AP, Guardian, BBC Graphic: Jutta Scheibe, Junie Bro-Jorgensen © 2009 MCT

General Douglas McArthur establishing his headquarters in Melbourne and Brisbane. To this day, the U.S. and Australia remain close allies.

The war sparked Australia's economy and led to prosperity for many of its citizens. Industrialization reached new levels. War-related goods, such as ammunition, planes and machine tools, drove the economic upswing.



Total area hit
1,200 sq. mi.
(3,000 sq. km)

The nation still relies on foreign investment and is vulnerable to world market fluctuations. Australia's economy is dominated by outside interests, including those of the UK, U.S., Japan and various large corporations. In light of its rapidly expanding manufacturing segment, China recently invested considerable capital in securing raw materials in Australia.

China is the nation's largest trading partner and has been a major factor as to why Australia has thus far avoided the recession plaguing other economic powerhouses. The Asian giant's buying spree of coal and iron ore made Australia the only major world economy to record export growth during the financial crisis.

But there is a risk to this partnership. If prices begin to rise, China could stop buying raw materials and instead tap into its large stockpiles—and there are indications that this is beginning to occur. If prolonged, the results could be catastrophic for the Australian economy.

Australia is also battling increasing national debt. Though not nearly as steep as other Western powers, it is forecasted to reach AUD \$70 billion (USD \$61.8) by 2012. This is troublesome to a nation that has rarely been in the red. But the economic slowdown has led to increased borrowing to avoid a collapse.

Scorched Land

Australia has long been a bastion of extreme heat and dry conditions. Recent months have proven no different. Record temperatures swept across much of southeastern Australia in late 2009, with September and November being the warmest in Sydney in 150 years. November was the warmest on record in much of southeastern Australia. The unprecedented heat, coupled with high winds and a prolonged period of drought, led to an unusually high number of bushfires across the region. In February 2009, nearly 200 residents in the state of Victoria were killed in a bout of bushfires that raged for several days.



■ **LETTING LOOSE:** Graduating students party during the first Schoolies celebrations after their final exams at Surfer's Paradise Beach on the Gold Coast, in Australia (Nov. 18, 2007). This year a new fence was erected for the night-time celebrations in an effort to stop gate crashers and non-graduating revelers from joining the celebration.

PHOTO: SERGIO DIONISIO/GETTY IMAGES



As of late November, 73.6 percent of New South Wales was in a state of drought, with only 1.9 percent of the state considered "satisfactory."

The Primary Industries Minister said, "These figures illustrate the tough conditions in country NSW, with almost the entire state now feeling the effects of this relentless dry. Not even coastal areas of NSW have escaped—they are either drought-declared or suffering marginal conditions" (*The Sydney Morning Herald*).

Not surprisingly, these conditions have adversely affected the state's cot-

ton and wheat crops, in addition to farmers who raise sheep and cattle. As of this writing, forecasters are predicting a warmer and drier than average summer, raising even more fears about the effects.

Awash with Vice

Like other nations of the West, Australia is awash with immorality of all kinds. Premarital sex, drunkenness, drug use, pornography, and other vices plague the country—yet few seem to mind. Today's young people seem to believe they were put on Earth for one rea-

son—to party night and day. Perhaps no Australian event epitomizes this more than “Schoolies.”

Schoolies is an annual, week-long celebration—or more aptly, *debauchery*—seen as a rite of passage for those who just graduated high school. It came to fruition in the 1970s at Broadbeach, a coastal town just outside Brisbane. Since the 1970s, thousands of high school graduates have celebrated it at coastal areas throughout the country. Many youths consider Schoolies the most significant event of the year.

But where young people gather in mass, there is almost always violence and immorality at its worst. Schoolies is widely considered a weeklong binge-drinking party, filled with violence, rampant casual sex, rape, sexual assault and downright debauchery. As many as 75 percent who attend get drunk every night—and many every day *and* night. Drugs are widely available, with as many as 25 percent of party-goers high on marijuana for most of the week. The hallucinogenic stimulant Ecstasy is also a popular choice for young thrill-seekers.

It should come as no surprise that sales of the morning-after pill spike during the celebration.

With so much drunkenness and drug use, violence is a big issue. Large fights of intoxicated men and women erupt on the street nearly every night, and vandalism of hotel rooms and private property are commonplace. In response, police greatly increase their presence on the streets during Schoolies.

This behavior is not limited to one week only at the end of the school year. Drunkenness and resulting violence are commonplace in Australia throughout the year.

In late spring 2009, authorities initiated a campaign called “Operation Unite” to combat alcohol-related weekend violence throughout Australia and New Zealand. During the first Friday night of the operation, 516 charges were levied against 333 people in New South Wales alone. Offenses ranged from assault to robbery to drug possession. There were 142 arrests in Western Australia and 98 in Victoria that same

night. In Queensland, police visited 867 establishments that served alcohol. They found 101 infractions and doled out 156 liquor law infringements. Seventy-three people were arrested for driving under the influence of alcohol.

Looming Crisis?

Many Australian citizens have enjoyed a prosperous life—and continue to do so today. Given its relatively peaceful history and that it was not founded by violent revolution, it has managed to avoid large-scale internal and external unrest.

Australia does have its share of issues though—droughts and bushfires, economic pressures, alcohol-related violence and immorality. But compared to the scope of problems facing other affluent nations of the West, Australia’s appear relatively minor. Therefore, it is easy for most to remain complacent and assume no serious harm could come its way.

Yet *SERIOUS* trouble *is* headed the nation’s way—and hardly any discuss or are even aware of it.

Australia’s looming crisis was foretold long ago in a book few any longer take the time to read. Hardly any seek guidance from it, change their ways and obey the God who inspired it. And fewer yet comprehend the sheer scope of the coming *calamity*.

The Bible is God’s recorded revelation of His purpose for mankind. It is the written record of how He intends to work with all humanity—all people who have ever lived. This Master Plan directly collides with the plans of modern Australia, America, Britain, Canada, New Zealand and certain other Western countries—who are actually the descendants of ancient Israel.

Grasp this! *AWESOME*, *EARTH-SHATTERING* events are prophesied for Australia in the near future! A crisis that defies imagination *IS* coming upon this country!

Invariably, though, religious leaders explain that Australia, America, Britain, Canada and New Zealand are merely Gentile nations, thus believing that end-time prophecy disregards these great nations. Deceived, they usually focus

on prophecies describing the Jewish people, while remaining completely ignorant of the enormous understanding available to those who know where and how to find pivotal knowledge, missing in today’s world, about the identity of the Anglo-Saxon peoples of the West. These “leaders” simply do not know where, how—or what—to look for. Therefore, the answers remain elusive.

The income and standard of living for most Australians and other Westerners is far higher than those residing in most other industrialized nations. But these citizens have forgotten where such blessings originated! Only God’s promises to Abraham kept these Western nations from joining the Third World’s “brotherhood of poverty.”

Now, God is turning Himself from them. And He is removing the wonderful blessings bestowed on them through Abraham’s obedience. Recent world developments evidence their decline—at least to those who are closely watching.

Nations of the West—Australia included—have forgotten God. They have dealt falsely with Him—no longer recognizing that He is the great Provider.

Due to this national rebellion and ingratitude, He is withdrawing His incredible, prophesied blessings from us—the modern nations of Israel. Soon He will cause our peoples (Australia, America, Britain, Israel, Canada, New Zealand and certain Western European nations) to suffer horrible national punishment.

The very blessings now taken for granted by us will be completely stripped away. We are already witnessing this, albeit in a limited fashion right now. But this will change. Soon, the entire country—and world—will be caught in a snare (Luke 21:35)—caught *completely* off guard by the terror to come.

What about you? Will you heed God’s warning?

To learn much more about the future of Australia and other Western nations, read David C. Pack’s book *America and Britain in Prophecy*. □

AMID FIREWORKS, pomp and celebration, the European Union has finally taken a giant step toward full political integration. After a decade of mis-starts, political wrangling, failed referendums and several modifications, the Lisbon Treaty took effect on December 1, 2009, streamlining the European bloc's decision-making process.

Upon coming into force, news media and world leaders assumed that the next steps of filling the positions created by the Lisbon Treaty would proceed slowly. But with a sudden flurry of events, the European Commission elected a two-and-a-half-year-term president and chose a high representative for foreign affairs—the equivalent of an ambassador acting on behalf of all 27 member-states of the EU in global matters.

The continent has come a long way—from six countries of several million people who formed a simple economic trade union in 1951, to a superstate of 27 countries consisting of 490 million people, and a GDP in 2008 of over \$14.94 trillion.

More than ever, Europe is moving toward an identity as one unified superpower state rather than a fragmented continent, hindered by each country's competing interests.

The decades-old European dream of becoming a kind of “United States of Europe” is fast becoming a reality, leaving many to wonder: what does the EU's future hold?

Plucked from Obscurity?

On November 19, 2009, the European Council, the EU's primary decision-making body, selected Herman Van Rompuy of Belgium as their first full-time president and Catherine Ashton of the United Kingdom as the new high representative for foreign affairs and security policy and vice president of the European Commission.



New Face *of the* EU

What Does the Future Hold?

With the passage of the Lisbon Treaty and a leader at its helm, the European Union is poised to emerge on the international scene as a newly streamlined superstate.

BY MARK P. DENEÉ

■ **MEETING OF THE MINDS:** From left to right, Herman Van Rompuy, the European Council's first president, Swedish Prime Minister Fredrik Reinfeldt, European Commission President José Manuel Barroso and Catherine Ashton, EU high representative for foreign affairs and security policy, pose at a European Union summit at the European Council headquarters in Brussels (Nov. 19, 2009).

PHOTO: GEORGES GOBET/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

The *EUobserver* said the “posts are supposed to give coherence to the bloc's external policy and supply it with a stronger voice on the world stage.”

Mr. Van Rompuy was educated at the Jesuit Sint-Jan Berchmans College in Brussels, and studied

philosophy and economics at the Catholic University of Leuven. He is described as “a man of profound faith and a firm believer in Catholic doctrine. He often goes on religious retreats to the Abbey of Affligem” (*Flanders News*).

While presenting a calm tenacity, Mr. Van Rompuy has effectively guided Belgium through some difficult political times for about a year as its prime minister. Seemingly plucked from obscurity, Mr. Van Rompuy was considered to be the “most consensual” figure for the European Council position. *The Economist* reported that the Council felt Mr. Van Rompuy would chair EU summits without overshadowing them.

Lady Ashton was selected because she is “capable” and “gets on with colleagues” (ibid.). She has limited experience, as she has never held an elected office, and has no real diplomatic practice.

European Commission President José Manuel Barroso “promoted Lady Ashton because, as a serving commissioner, she ought to be more loyal than a newcomer” (ibid.).

Although most were surprised by the relative no-name status of these two selections, it seems fitting that Europe would prefer less-polarizing figures for the first term.

Author Paul Belien, who has been acquainted with Mr. Van Rompuy since the 1980s, wrote in the *Daily Mail* that Mr. Van Rompuy’s “sole political ideal is the creation of a federal superstate, destroying national identities across Europe.” Mr. Belien has expressed dismay over a Europe based on the Belgian model, which in

his view “lacks democracy, respect for the rule of law, and political morality.”

Although Mr. Van Rompuy has a reputation for being a peacemaker, he has fiercely defended Europe’s need to maintain its roots. In 2004, regarding Turkey’s possible entry into the EU, he said in a speech at the Belgian Parliament, “Turkey is not a part of Europe and will never be part of Europe...An expansion of the EU to include Turkey cannot be considered as just another expansion as in the past. The universal values which are in force in Europe, and which are also fundamental values of Christianity, will lose vigour with the entry of a large Islamic country such as Turkey.”

As the first president of the European Council, Mr. Van Rompuy faces a challenging job of balancing power and appeasing all EU nations. The new president will have to work with the leader of the country holding the rotating presidency, as that position does not disappear under the Lisbon Treaty, as well as the president of the European Commission (currently Mr. Barroso).

Ultimately, Mr. Van Rompuy will be as strong as the 27 leaders behind him make or want him to be. This new position paves the way for the “one voice” Europe has lacked on international issues that could rival the power of the United States president—especially since no provisions are made

to stop the European Commission president from being elected president of the Council, effectively combining two leading positions into one.

According to the EU website, current bylaws do “not prevent the President of the European Council from holding another mandate at the same time within another European institution. This allows for the possibility, in [the] future, of combining the functions of President of the European Council with those of the President of the Commission, if the Member States so wish.”

Government Overhaul

New political faces are not the only change to the EU. Much of its decision-making process outlined by the Lisbon Treaty has been overhauled.

Under the treaty, the balance of power between the European Commission and European Parliament will be nearly equal. (The European Parliament, or EP, consists of members elected by EU citizens, passes laws for the EU, and controls its annual budget.)

“The Treaty gives a huge boost to the powers of the European Parliament,” EP President Jerzy Buzek said in a statement. “The rise in legislative powers for the European Parliament represents almost a doubling in power.”

The EU website details the changes to the European Parliament and how it will affect the citizens of all 27 member-states.

Road to the Lisbon Treaty

During the last few decades, as the EU expanded, member-states negotiated and signed various treaties that modified aspects of their governing institutions:

- Single European Act, which entered into force on July 1, 1987, introduced the procedure of “qualified majority voting,” meaning that each member was given multiple votes, the number of which depended on national population. Approval of legislation required roughly two-thirds of the votes of all members. In addition, proposed legislation rejected by the Parliament could still become law, but only by the unanimous vote of the council.

- The Maastricht Treaty, which entered into force on November 1, 1993, broadened the range of policies subject to qualified majority voting in the Council. It also endowed the Parliament with a limited right of rejection over legislation

in most of the areas subject to qualified majority voting.

- The Treaty of Amsterdam, which entered into force on May 1, 1999, gave Parliament veto power over a broad range of policies as well as the power to reject the Council’s nominee for president of the Commission.

- The Treaty of Nice, which entered into force on February 1, 2003, contained major reforms. The maximum number of seats on the Commission was set at 27 (one for each member-state), and the president of the Commission was given greater independence from national governments. In addition, qualified majority voting in the Council was extended to several new areas, and approval of legislation by qualified voting required the support of members representing at least 62 percent of the EU population and the support of a majority of members. □

SOURCE: ENCYCLOPAEDIA BRITANNICA

Under the Lisbon Treaty, the EP will:

■ **Be better equipped for today's challenges:** “The Lisbon Treaty improves the ability of the EU and its Parliament to act and deliver. At a time when both Europe and the rest of the world are faced with new challenges like globalisation, demographic shifts, climate change, energy security and terrorism, no single state can effectively deal with them alone. Only by working together, in a more efficient, accountable, transparent and coherent way and speaking with one voice, can Europe respond to its citizens' concerns.”

■ **Be more involved in defining Europe:** “With the Lisbon Treaty, the European Parliament will have more power in shaping Europe than ever before. With its full legislative power extending to over 40 new fields, Parliament becomes a truly equal lawmaker with the Council of Ministers, representing member states governments. Agriculture, energy security, legal immigration, justice and home affairs, public health and structural funds...Its decisions will have an ever stronger impact on your everyday life.”

■ **Maintain tighter control over the EU budget:** “From now on, the Parliament will decide on the entire EU budget together with the Council of Ministers. Until now, it did not have the final word on ‘compulsory expenditure’ (around 45% of the EU budget) such as spending relating to agriculture or international agreements. This changes as the Parliament becomes responsible for the entire EU budget, together with EU governments. Your Parliament will not only have a decisive say on overall spending priorities, but will also have a tighter hold on the EU's purse strings.”

■ **Have a greater say on who runs the EU:** “In the Lisbon era, the Parliament will not only decide what is done and how money is spent, it will also have a greater say on which men and women run the EU. The Parliament will elect the President of the European Commission, on the

basis of the EU heads of state and government's pre-selection, which must take into account the results of European elections—and your choice. Also, Parliament's consent is needed in the appointment of the EU's new voice in the world and foreign policy chief, the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, who will also be a Commission Vice-President.”

■ **Exercise a stronger voice for Europe's citizens:** “As the only directly-elected EU institution, the Parliament will have new tools to give a stronger voice to the 500 million citizens it represents and to hold the EU accountable to them. The Parliament will be the guardian of EU citizens' new catalogue of civil, political, economic

“New political faces are not the only change to the EU. Much of its decision-making process outlined by the Lisbon Treaty has been overhauled.”

and social rights—the Charter of Fundamental Rights—embedded in the Lisbon Treaty, as well as their new right of citizens' initiative, which will allow people to call for new policy proposals if supported by 1 million signatures.”

Concerning the changes, European Commission President José Manuel Barroso wrote in an editorial that the Treaty will positively affect the future of the EU.

“As the Lisbon Treaty comes into force, The European Union (EU) is, I believe, uniquely suited to take on its leadership responsibilities,” he wrote, later stating, “The European Union's commitment to the multilateral system

of global governance through the UN and other bodies is clear. We already speak with conviction and clarity on the major challenges that face us. The Lisbon Treaty allows us to achieve a greater coherence and gives us a much greater capacity to act. It will allow diplomacy, crisis management and an emerging European defence capability to be used hand in hand with more traditional policies such as trade and development” (*Project Syndicate*).

Increased Role

While Europe has taken a great step forward, it continues to face many challenges. Consider relations with Russia, vis-à-vis energy supply, trade with emerging-global-power China, relations with the United States, and the continued threat of domestic terrorism.

But as Europe gains more international political clout, it has begun taking more vocal positions in international affairs.

The *EUobserver* reported, “The EU has attempted to breathe new life into Middle East peace talks by calling for Israelis and Palestinians to share the sacred city of Jerusalem. ‘If there is to be a genuine peace, a way must be found through negotiations to resolve the status of Jerusalem as the future capital of two states,’ EU foreign ministers said in a joint statement.”

“Swedish foreign minister Carl Bildt said it was an encouraging sign of the EU's political importance in the region. ‘It's demonstrated that the voice of Europe does count,’ he said. ‘That our voice carries greater weight than we were perhaps aware of’” (*ibid.*).

Throughout Europe's history, the continent has repeatedly united, sometimes under a single leader, as with Charlemagne, Otto the Great, even Napoleon. Also, during the Middle Ages, Europe aligned to preserve its shared ideals.

Gradually, Europe is again moving toward unification. With each additional amendment, the European Union has for 50 years piled treaty upon treaty. Finally, we have arrived

at the quasi-constitution Lisbon Treaty.

A *Brussels Journal* article summed up this process as “Europe’s Slow-Moving Coup d’État,” also stating, “The history of European integration is a textbook case in how a simple economic treaty can be gradually transformed into an all-encompassing non-democratic supranational federal leviathan.”

Europe will ultimately reach great heights—and current events are creat-

ing a more unified European people who will soon be led by one powerful “voice” supported by another powerful—and *empowering*—religious voice.

As for how the Lisbon Treaty will affect Europe, news media, political analysts, and even EU representatives simply say, “We must wait and see.”

But with an increasingly multicultural Europe—with the Lisbon Treaty allowing for a future dual president of the European Commission and Parliament—with the continent leading

the global economic recovery—Europe is poised to take the forefront on world affairs.

While exact details cannot be known, the broad strokes of Europe’s future are outlined for those who will listen.

To learn just what the next few years will bring for the rising European superstate, read our article series “The European Counterweight” “Part 1: A Leaderless Superpower” and “Part 2: Will a Strongman Fill the Void?” □

PERSONAL

Continued from page 2

These events clearly did not happen. Based on number and size of failures, Nostradamus is a particularly poor prophet. Among false prophets, he falls into *extra* false.

Now ask: Could the God of the Bible inspire prophecies that did not come to pass? What about even one? No. If so, He becomes a liar. Read what He says: “...I am God, and there is *none like Me*, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are *not yet done*, saying, *My counsel* shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure” (Isa. 46:9-10).

Only God can declare the future. And Hebrews 6:18 says it is impossible for Him to lie. His Word is certain. What He foretells—God does not predict—will come to pass. Even *one* failed prophecy means one was *not sent by God*.

Earmarks of False Prophets

Nostradamus was known to be involved in the occult, having a large occult library. In a book dedicated to his son, who carried on after him, he wrote: “Dreading what might happen in the future, after reading them [his occult books], I presented them to Vulcan [the pagan Roman god of fire], and as the fire kindled them, the flame... shot forth an unaccustomed brightness, clearer than the light is of natural flame, resembling more the explosion of powder, casting a subtle illumina-

tion over the house...” (Nostradamus, *Preface a Mon Fils*). Very strange!

God utterly condemns the occult. Notice: “There shall not be found among you any one...that uses *divination*, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or witch, or charmer, or consulter with familiar spirits, or wizard, or a necromancer [one who supposedly can reach the dead]. For *all* that do these things are an *abomination* unto the LORD...” (Deut. 18:10-12).

How many know that this early psychic consulted the dead? Ask: would God send someone who is involved in practices He condemns? Of course not.

Either one *believes* such verses or he does *not*.

False prophets prey on people’s *natural fascination* with the future. The apostle John warned of them. Let’s read: “Believe not every spirit, but try the spirits *whether they are of God*: because *MANY false prophets* are gone out into the world” (I John 4:1). Jesus added this warning: “And *MANY false prophets* shall arise, and *deceive many*” (Matt. 24:11). Now ask: how many worry about being deceived? Most ignore these passages. But that comes with a price.

Understand. God calls such possessors of “enlightened” knowledge “angels of light” (II Cor. 11:13-14)—I would add—who are only too willing to share their “knowledge.”

Jesus stated, “Beware of *false prophets*, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves” (Matt. 7:15).

It is not always easy to detect these deceivers. None of them wear signs exposing who they are. They are smooth operators, but their teachings tear people’s understanding as wolves rip prey.

How can you tell a false prophet? Let Christ answer: “You shall know them by their fruits...” (Matt. 7:16). And then, “By their fruits you shall know them” (Matt. 7:20). The key to knowing whether a prophet is true or false is by fruits—good or bad. Nostradamus did weird, strange things—followed practices God *condemns*—and did not otherwise practice obedience to God’s laws. While possibly sincere, he was deceived and false.

Remember, most of Nostradamus’ prophecies failed. And again, this could not occur with a prophet of God. Let’s see: “We [Christians] have also a more *sure word of prophecy*; whereunto you do well that you take heed, as unto a light that shines in a dark place...” (II Pet. 1:19). God’s prophecies are *sure*. They *never* miss. *Not one!* And they *do* shed light in dark places.

Here is God’s command regarding prophets: “And if you [ask] in your heart, How shall we *know* the word which the LORD has not spoken? [God’s answer] When a prophet speaks in the name of the LORD, if the thing *follow not, nor come to pass*, that is the thing which the LORD has not spoken, but the prophet has spoken it *presumptuously*: you shall not be afraid of him” (Deut. 18:21-22). This states that men can *presume* to speak for God. This is very serious to God. It should also

be serious to you. You must know if God sent a man—or if the man sent himself.

The true prophet Ezekiel recorded, “Son of man [Ezekiel], prophesy against the prophets of Israel...and say you unto them that prophesy out of *their own hearts*, Hear you the word of the LORD; thus says the Lord GOD; woe unto the foolish prophets, that follow their *own spirit*, and have seen nothing” (Ezek. 13:2-3).

Think of the worldwide fear that Nostradamus’ presumptuous prophecies have engendered. But God declares, “you shall not be afraid of him” (Deut. 18:22). What was the Old Testament punishment for false prophets?: “But the prophet, which shall presume to speak a word in My name [meaning, by GOD’S authority], which I have not commanded him to speak...*even that prophet shall die*” (Deut. 18:20).

Again, this is SERIOUS to God—and it should be to *you!*

But what if a prophecy is correct? Some of Nostradamus’ seemed to be: “If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams [one who sees visions, like Nostradamus], and gives you a sign or a wonder, and the sign or the wonder come to pass...you shall not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: for the LORD your God proves you, to *know* whether you love the LORD your God with all your heart...You shall walk after...and fear HIM, and keep HIS commandments, and obey His voice [How many preachers teach that all 10 of God’s Commandments, including the Sabbath day, must be kept? Almost none!], and you shall serve Him, and cleave unto Him. *And that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams* [here it is again], *shall be put to death*...So shall you put the evil away from the midst of you” (Deut. 13:1-5).

Of course, this cannot be done today. The point is: get away from the evil.

All Bad News

Another point. Nostradamus’ prophecies are interpreted *after* events pass, not before. What is the value of this?

Nothing! One author admitted, “As far as is known, Nostradamus did not leave a ‘key’ to his predictions...If he did, it has certainly been lost in the dust of the centuries. The need of having to interpret his predictions without the help of such an aid has led to some curious and widely varied versions of his quatrains” (Rene Noorbergen, *Nostradamus Predicts the End of the World*).

Prophecies—and *true prophets*—present events before they occur, *never afterward*. That’s what *historians* do.

Nostradamus was also an astrologer. In short, stemming from the natural tendency toward superstition within human nature, this is one who seeks guidance from the stars. God also condemns *this* practice: “Thus says the LORD, Learn not the way of the heathen, and be not dismayed at the signs of heaven; for the heathen [or pagans] are dismayed at them” (Jer. 10:2).

Get this. Nostradamus literally produced the horoscopes that God condemns. In total disobedience to God’s command, millions today are also fascinated with their *daily horoscopes*.

In addition, Nostradamus never recorded good news. All of his writings involve bad news—assassination, war, famine, dictators—never anything good.

The Bible is a Book filled with *good* news about the future. In fact, it contains the *best* news human ears could hear, that of the coming kingdom of God—a soon-to-appear super-government that will bring joy, happiness, peace and prosperity to a sick and suffering world.

Make yourself confront the source of Nostradamus’ prophecies—where they actually came from: “Whether the majority of his visions came...from a psychic inspiration, necromancy, tarot cards or a refined form of witchcraft, we will probably never learn. We might conclude, however, that his hidden source of knowledge knew much of the course history would take, and possibly had the power to control or at least influence some of the major future historical developments” (ibid.).

What could be this hidden source? The Bible describes the existence of a spirit world. On the one side are God, Christ and righteous angels. In opposition are Satan and fallen angels. Earlier we saw Nostradamus spoke of a “god that sits nearby.” Who is this god? The Bible describes Satan as the “god of this world” (II Cor. 4:4).

Satan and his demons are the true authors of Nostradamus’ visions and writings—not the man himself, and certainly not God. Understand. Demons have a certain partial, but always twisted, knowledge of how God’s Master Plan will play out. This allows them to predict the future through humans. I have seen this many times.

The Bible records a story of the apostle Paul encountering a demon-possessed girl: “And it came to pass, as we went to prayer, a certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination met us, which brought her masters much gain by soothsaying [fortune-telling]: the same followed Paul and us, and cried, saying, These men are the servants of the most high God [yes, demons will sometimes acknowledge God if it benefits them], which show unto us the way of salvation. And this did she many days. But Paul, being grieved, turned and said to the spirit [not the girl], I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And he came out the same hour” (Acts 16:16-18).

Nostradamus was almost certainly demon-possessed. Having also cast out demons, I know.

How many search God’s Word for instruction about astrologers, palm readers and psychics? Most do not care what God says, and besides, it is too much work. They enjoy the fascination, but ignore the danger, of toying with powerful, destructive spirits who want people looking to *them*, not God.

Understand. Satan and his demons want to destroy mankind, and will stop at nothing to achieve their goal. This includes using phony visions to confuse man’s understanding of God’s plan of salvation. Nostradamus was

simply a tool of Satan, the father of lies. Read John 8:44.

Now notice: “Regard not them that have familiar spirits, neither seek after wizards, to be defiled by them...” (Lev. 19:31).

The apostle Peter compared false prophets in the Old Testament to false teachers in the New. Notice: “But there were false PROPHETS also among the people, even as there shall be false TEACHERS among you...” (II Pet. 2:1).

False ministers come in many shapes and sizes. Some specialize, particularly today, in confusing, incomplete, deceitful theories of how the future will play out. The utter nonsense of these conflicting scenarios is almost without end.

No “Private Interpretation”

While the most famous, Nostradamus is but one of many who have sought to interpret the future. Other well-known ones include Edgar Cayce and Jeanne Dixon. Astrologers, psychics, wizards, seers and fortune-tellers have *exploded* in number all over the world in recent years. So have supposed experts on end-time Bible prophecy.

All of these bring their *own* interpretations—NONE of them correct. The Bible warns that “no prophecy of the scripture is of any *private* interpretation” (II Pet. 1:20). God works through His chosen servants—and no one else. Ephesians 4:11 and I Corinthians 12:28 show that He does occasionally send a prophet, but this would *only* be within His Church. In fact, Revelation 11 reveals that two final prophets will arise at the very end.

Understand. God does not—and would *never*—send *different* people to say *different* things—private interpretations—about the SAME events. In fact, this is one of the greatest ways you know that the many disagreeing prophecy writers so popular today cannot be of God. I repeat: God’s servants speak with *one unified voice*. Read I Corinthians 1:10.

Over the years, many have predicted that monumental events will happen on certain dates. Today, the craze is December 21, 2012—the Mayan cal-

endar date when supposed cataclysmic, end-of-the-world events will occur. Large numbers visit our websites having “googled” 2012. And millions rushed to the movie of this title.

Many set dates, with most focusing on when Christ will return. But He said, “Of that day and hour knows *no man*, no, not the angels of heaven, but My Father only” (Matt. 24:36).

The only way to know the future is to have God’s *keys* to understanding prophecy. Let’s notice: “Whom shall He teach knowledge? And whom shall He make to understand doctrine? Them that are weaned from the milk... For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little” (Isa. 28:9-10).

The Bible is a jigsaw puzzle. One must assemble all related verses to understand a doctrine—any doctrine. Prophecy is no different.

So then, who can understand prophecy? Notice: “Surely the Lord GOD will do nothing, but He [first] reveals His secret unto His servants the prophets” (Amos 3:7). Only God can reveal what lies ahead—and He does this.

Next notice: “For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man [men’s own ideas]: but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit” (II Pet. 1:21).

Prophecy was meant to be understood. Why else would God make one full third of the Bible such history written in advance?

You Can Know

Here is why most will never comprehend future events—any of them. The first step to understanding prophecy (Psa. 111:10) is literally to stop sinning (I John 3:4)—to obey God. Most will not do this. They want to be titillated by special prophetic knowledge more than they want to obey their Creator.

Understanding true conversion and obedience to God opens the door. Read Acts 2:38 and 5:32, among many other verses. Without God’s Spirit, which is given only to those who truly repent and obey God, one cannot understand

the Bible, which means he will never correctly understand—beyond misapplied bits and fragments—what the future holds.

You have come in contact with the only Church on the face of the earth that truly understands prophecy. On *The World to Come* program, we teach the meaning of today’s events, and what lies ahead for the world—and do so in detail.

Behind the scenes, enormous events are taking shape. Prophecy will soon culminate in events terrifying beyond description. These will shake every nation on Earth. Vast numbers will perish. But this has never meant the end of the world. Nostradamus was a false prophet. Give him not one more second of your time.

NEVER fear this world’s seers—including all the phony prophecy writers and supposed prophecy scholars. They are wrong. They do not know what they are talking about. God *did not send them*. They do not speak according to His Law—or almost any other of the plain truths of His Word. They are FALSE! And on God’s authority I tell you—reject them! They will only confuse you.

And follow Paul’s instruction to *prove* what I say. Compare it with your own Bible. I am not afraid to say that. You will see what we teach is *right*. Keep reading *The Real Truth*. You will understand we let the Bible interpret itself on all matters of prophecy.

You CAN know what the future holds. Here are just some of the many books and booklets we offer about prophecy: *Revelation Explained at Last!—Are These the Last Days?—America and Britain in Prophecy—The Antichrist – Who, What and When!—The Mid-East in Bible Prophecy—Tomorrow’s Wonderful World – An Inside View!—Who or What Is the Beast of Revelation?—The Four Horsemen series*—and finally, *Promised Protection – Secret Rapture or Place of Safety?* Read all of these materials beside—and compare them to—your Bible! Then decide if I am God’s servant and speak the truth of what He says! □

BATTLE

Continued from page 5

On the second Monday, poorer nations staged a walkout protest, demanding more aid from the developed world to combat climate change, a move that temporarily shut down discussions.

Lumumba Di-Aping, chief negotiator for the G77, a group of developing nations, explained reasons for the walkout to *BBC Radio 4*. "It has become clear that the Danish presidency—in the most undemocratic fashion—is advancing the interests of the developed countries at the expense of the balance of obligations between developed and developing countries."

By the start of week two, as world leaders began gathering in the Danish capital, progress was minimal.

"There is no time left for posturing or blaming," United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said in a New York City press conference, before leaving for Copenhagen. "If everything is left to leaders to resolve at the last minute, we risk having a weak deal or no deal at all, and this will be a failure of potentially catastrophic consequences."

Consensus Out of Confusion

Upon arrival, world leaders inherited a mess from a week of political infighting, disunity and blame-shifting—with only four days to turn the summit around.

But a few days later, hope seemed to return to "Hopenhagen." Leaders felt they *had* to reach an agreement.

Working overtime, meetings went nonstop: official speeches, closed-door negotiations and lunchtime discussions took place, but to no avail.

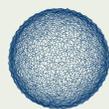
On the final day of the conference, *The New York Times* declared, "Confusion reigns at the summit." The paper described the scene: "Versions of draft negotiating texts are flying around the Bella Center. With only minimal information trickling out of the leaders' meetings, rumors are rul-

ing the conference. Aid groups wondered if China and India had walked out. The London *Guardian* passed on speculation that U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon had asked leaders to stay until tomorrow to secure a deal, but U.N. spokeswoman Marie Okabe said it is untrue."

At the last minute, the conference produced the Copenhagen Accord—a bare-bones three-page document.

Some of the stipulations of the non-binding accord agreed upon by the U.S., China, India, Brazil and South Africa included: (1) stabiliz-

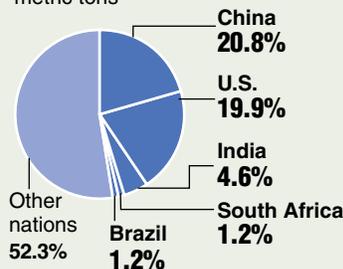
Climate Accord Countries



The five nations that signed a deal to curb greenhouse gases produce almost half of the world's carbon dioxide emissions.

Carbon dioxide emissions

Global total of energy-related emissions, 2007: 28.9 billion metric tons



Source: International Energy Agency
Graphic: Judy Treible
© 2009 MCT

ing greenhouse gas concentrations by limiting any manmade global temperature rise to below two degrees Celsius, (2) enhancing long-term cooperative action to combat climate change, and (3) giving \$30 billion in aid to developing nations during the next three years to help poor countries combat the effects of climate change.

In the end, the UN itself decided it would "take note" of the accord—meaning it would merely acknowledge its existence—but not adopt it.

Following the difficult talks, many concluded that they would "take what they could get," with the *The Economist* stating the common senti-

ment that it was better to reach "a sub-optimal deal rather than none at all."

Just 12 days after the opening film declared: "We have the power to change the world," the world was left disenchanted.

Dashed Hopes

For those convinced that global warming exists, is manmade and is a present threat to the planet, the summit was considered Earth's "last chance." Yet world leaders were unable to devise a viable solution. Governments were powerless to stop what some have termed the greatest crisis of our time.

With disappointment resulting from the Copenhagen summit, should man give up?

Many feel the UN climate change conference system itself is at fault, saying there needs to be a stronger core governmental system to address the potential problem.

"The flawed Copenhagen outcome demonstrated the 'underlying weakness' in the United Nations climate process, said Andrew Light, coordinator of international climate policy at the Center for American Progress. 'We need to start investigating other options, or at a minimum start using some alternative forums,' he said, suggesting the G20 and the Major Economies Forum" (*Reuters*).

Last Chance?

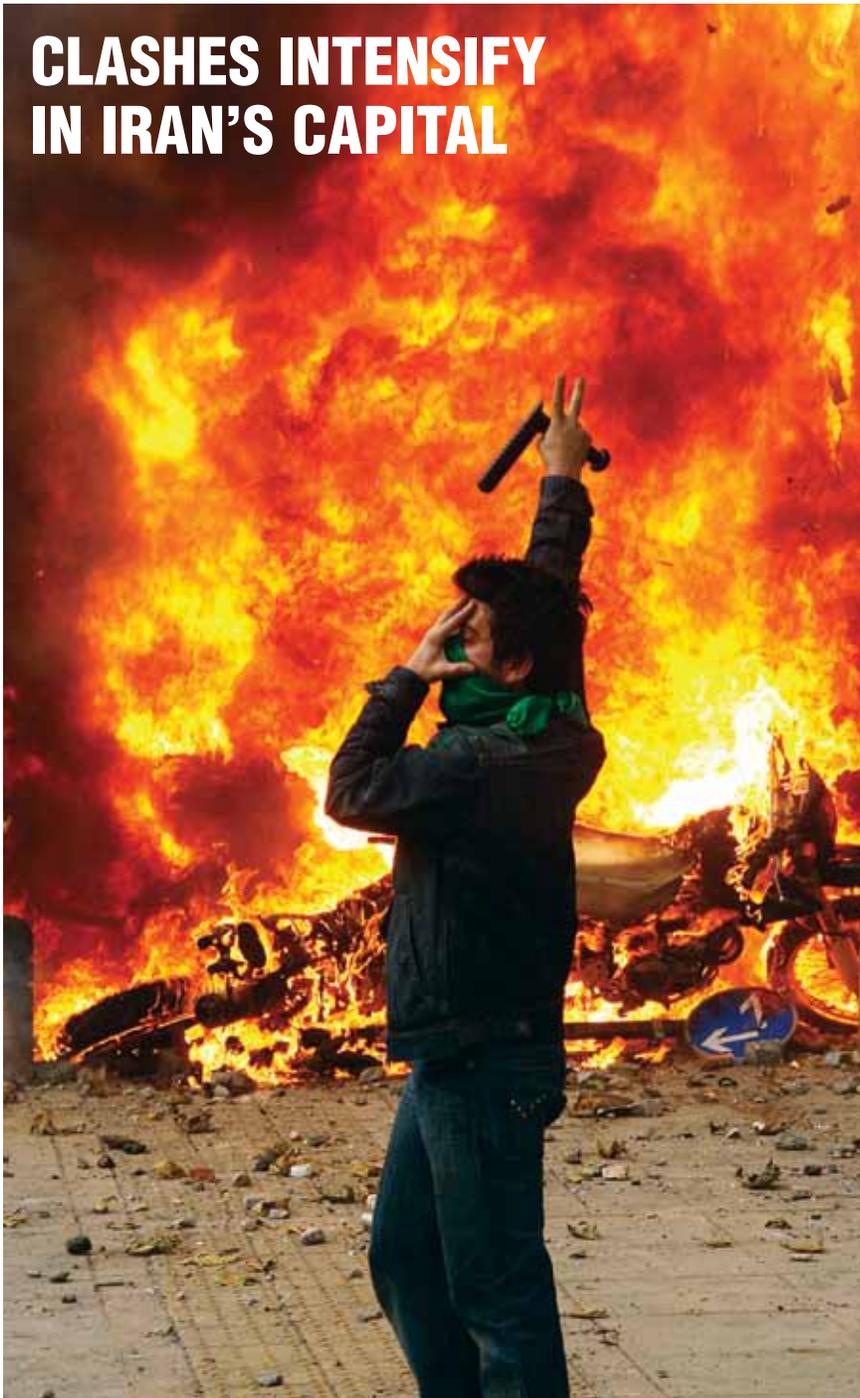
All people yearn for a governmental system that can "solve every problem related to overpopulation, pollution, and production, procurement and distribution of food and water."

A government that "will involve a complete change in entire weather patterns around the earth," in which "clear water will be available—and in abundance—in all parts of the world."

This soon-coming SUPERGOVERNMENT, as detailed above from David C. Pack's book *Tomorrow's Wonderful World – An Inside View!*, will come to pass! Read this book to understand the effects of this government—and the hope it offers to a world that has had its "last chance." □

MIDDLE EAST

CLASHES INTENSIFY IN IRAN'S CAPITAL



■ **TUMULT IN TEHRAN:** An Iranian opposition supporter gestures next to a burning police motorcycle set on fire during clashes with security forces in Tehran (Dec. 27, 2009). At least five protesters were killed in clashes with security forces in central Tehran after the opposition used a Shiite mourning event to stage anti-government protests.

PHOTO: AMIR SADEGHI/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Violence rocked the streets of Tehran, Iran, as the government attempted to quell lingering

protests stemming from the hotly contested June 12 re-election of President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad.

Opposition leader Mir Hossein Mousavi, who lost to Mr. Ahmadinejad in the summer election, said the nation was in “serious crisis” (*The New York Times*).

The renewed violence, considered Iran’s worst internal crisis in the Islamic Republic’s 30-year history, began during a protest on the Shiite Muslim holy day of Ashura—leaving eight people dead, including Mr. Mousavi’s nephew.

The *Los Angeles Times* described the scene: “Across the capital, witnesses described scenes of pandemonium. One described Tehran as a war zone.”

“Black plumes of smoke could be seen rising from downtown Tehran. Video posted online showed protesters beating up pro-government militiamen as their motorcycles burned in the background” (*ibid.*).

Iranian Parliament Speaker Ali Larijani called the demonstrators “blasphemers and counter-revolutionaries” who deserve harsh punishment for opposing the government (*UPI*). Thousands of Iranians took to the streets of Tehran to show their support of the current administration.

One video shows protesters flooding a street, some walking in locked arms and chanting. After a pop of gunfire, the crowd scatters in fear.

Western nations have near-unanimously condemned the crackdown.

“The position of me and the United Nations is that the genuine will of the Iranian people should be fully respected,” UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon told reporters.

Since Mr. Ahmadinejad’s June election, ongoing protests have divided the nation, with Mr. Mousavi’s supporters claiming the vote was fraudulent.

Continued unrest has led to a reported 70 deaths since June and more than 2,000 arrests. □

SOCIETY

REPORT: ALCOHOL MAY KILL OVER 90,000 BY 2019

Alcohol-related deaths could reach 90,800 in Britain by 2019 if current trends continue, according to a recent report conducted by the University of the West of England and the United Kingdom charity Alcohol Concern.

In the UK, alcohol-related deaths tripled from 3,054 in 1984 to 8,999 in 2008. Professor Marin Plant, lead author of the report, stated, "The UK has been experiencing an epidemic of alcohol-related health and social problems that is remarkable by international standards" (*SkyNews*).

The steepest rise in alcohol-related deaths was between ages 55 to 74.

In Scotland, over 3,000 deaths per year are related to alcohol. The costs of alcohol abuse were estimated at \$3.75 billion a year (*Bloomberg*).

Binge drinking is also a serious problem in the UK, especially among women. British women on average now drink twice the amount of their foreign counterparts.

Medical expert Professor Ian Gilmore said, "Being drunk is now socially acceptable. We are more than double our nearest rivals when it comes to women binge-drinking" (*SkyNews*).

The UK is not alone in dealing with the evils of alcohol abuse.

The Australian Department of Health and Ageing reports that 3,000 deaths and 65,000 hospitalizations every year are attributed to alcohol; in an average week, 70 Australians are hospitalized due to alcohol-related assault.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in the United States, the annual mortality rate attributed to alcohol in America, excluding accidents and homicides, was 22,073.

The World Health Organization estimates that each year, alcohol causes 1.8 million deaths worldwide. □

SUFFERING

Continued from page 8

When they sinned, God punished them both. But this did not reduce women to second-class status, nor did it authorize men to treat them harshly.

The Old Testament is filled with examples of women such as Miriam, Rebekah, Rahab, Rachel, Deborah, Esther, Hannah, Ruth and Sarah among others, who played decisive roles in ancient Israel's history.

Men were intended to exercise leadership in their family and the community. But by no stretch does this mean that they should mistreat women.

Galatians 3:26-29 clearly states, "For you are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is *neither male nor female*, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you be Christ's, then are you Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."

Put simply, God offers salvation to all, both women and men.

In the New Testament, women such as Mary, Dorcas, Lydia, Phoebe,

Tryphena and Tryphosa, Priscilla and a host of others played roles in the Church. The fact that Jesus first appeared to women after His Resurrection is further evidence that God holds women in high esteem. (See Matthew 28:1, 5-10; Acts 1:13-14, 9:36, 16:14; Romans 16:1-16.)

When man discriminates or commits any act of violence against a woman, he is acting contrary to the Word of God.

What God Says

In His Word, God instructs husbands to love their wives—not treat them as slaves. "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it... So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. *He that loves his wife loves himself*. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourishes and cherishes it, even as the Lord the church" (Eph. 5:23-29).

Men are to honor their wives (I Pet. 3:7). This means to show high respect or esteem. "Likewise, you husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honor unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel... that your prayers be not hindered."

God's Word is plain. He does not even listen to the prayers of an abusive husband!

In addition, the Bible instructs: "Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them" (Col. 3:19).

Honoring one's wife excludes and forbids humiliation or physical or emotional violence. This applies to every female—including all mothers, daughters, wives and sisters.

These words should comfort women trapped in the relentless cycle of violence.

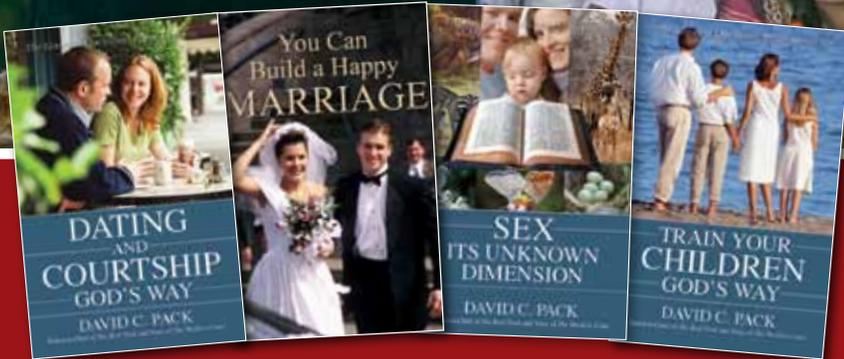
Help lines, shelters, non-profit programs, safe houses, support groups and government agencies can only do so much. Although well-intentioned, these efforts—as well as the laws of *men*—will never erase the problem and the underlying attitude behind the violence.

Scriptures outlining the correct roles for men and women are not just suggestions. They are God's laws, which, if applied, will bring happiness, productivity and peace. But they are not just words on a page—they must be applied!

Only then can the cry of abused women cease.

Under God's Law, a husband and wife can truly lead happy lives and form a productive team, ready to tackle life's problems. To learn more read David C. Pack's booklet *You Can Build a Happy Marriage*. □

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