

SEPTEMBER 2014

THE

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REAL TRUTH™

A MAGAZINE RESTORING PLAIN UNDERSTANDING



THE CATHOLIC CHURCH, INC.

An Executive Leadership Rebrand for the Vatican

AMERICA AND IRAN
Unlikely Partners? (Part 2)

Why Can't I Understand
the Bible?

FACTORY FARMS
Are They Good for Consumers?

Why America Cannot Solve Its
Illegal Immigration Crisis

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REAL TRUTH[™]
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VOL. XII | NO. 8 | SEPTEMBER 2014

A R T I C L E S

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■ **CROWDED CONDITIONS:** Broiler chickens are fed at a poultry farm in Tipitapa, about 12 miles north of Managua, Nicaragua (Aug. 4, 2011).

PHOTO: ELMER MARTINEZ/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Factory Farms Are They Good for Consumers?

Do you know how the food you eat is produced? The answer may surprise you.

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FRONT COVER: Pope Francis addresses a crowd gathered in front of the headquarters of the charitable organization Community of Sant'Egidio in Rome, Italy (June 15, 2014).

PHOTO: FILIPPO MONTEFORTE/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

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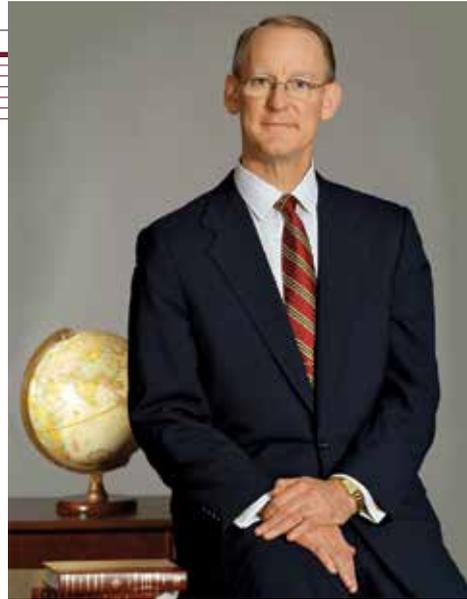
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PERSONAL FROM

David C. Fack



What Is “Armageddon”?

NEARLY EVERYONE has heard of *Armageddon*! Hundreds of authors have written books on the subject, and dozens of movies have been produced depicting the “final battle between good and evil.” Generals, scientists and world leaders also use the term, generally to reference the possible annihilation of mankind through nuclear, chemical or biological means.

Some thought Armageddon would be the final battle of World War I. They were *wrong*! Others thought World War II would end with this battle. They were also *wrong*! More recently, during the Gulf War, thought-to-be Bible experts were announcing, “Armageddon is here!” Again, they were *wrong*!—as have been *many* other scenarios.

What exactly *is* Armageddon? Is it a place or an event? Who will take part in it? What does the Bible *really* say?

Over 1,900 years ago, while exiled on an island off the Greek coast, the apostle John recorded what would happen—culminating in *our time*! In vision, he was thrust forward in time into the “Lord’s Day” or “Day of the Lord” (Rev. 1:10) and was given messages regarding “...things which are, and things which shall be hereafter” (vs. 19).

Most of what John saw in vision was foreign to him. He had to record things in a way that could be understood. For instance, how would someone from the first century describe a helicopter gunship? What about a jet—or nuclear explosion? Jesus would have inspired him to use symbols or items familiar to him.

Important History

A certain amount of historical background on the subject of Armageddon must precede proper understanding of this improperly understood subject.

Surprisingly, the Bible mentions Armageddon in only *one* verse: “And He [God] gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon” (Rev. 16:16). Though the New Testament was written in Greek, Armageddon is not a Greek word. It comes from two *Hebrew* words—“har” and “megiddo.” *Har* means hill—or sometimes figuratively hill country.

Megiddo, or Megiddon, was a royal city of the Canaanites until Joshua captured it (Josh. 17:11). Located on the southern edge of the great plain of Issachar (also known as the Plain of Esdraelon and Valley of Jezreel) (Josh. 17:16), it was given to the Israelite tribe of Manasseh (1 Chron. 7:29). Megiddo was a fortified city that guarded the strategic passes around Mt. Carmel.

Now for two of several vital points. Grasp them. (1) God brings certain people (armies) to Megiddo, and (2) the Bible says Armageddon is a *gathering place*, not an *EVENT*—and not a *BATTLE* (Rev. 16:16). When the Bible speaks of Armageddon, it is *not* referring to either the end of the world *or* the final battle between “good and evil,” as so many believe. This is critical to understand—and it will soon be obvious.

The site of Megiddo is within the borders of the modern state of Israel, about 60 miles north of Jerusalem and about 20 miles east of the port city of Haifa. The location of up to 30 different cities over thousands of years, Megiddo is today little more than a 15-acre pile of rubble on a hilltop.

In ancient times, this area included a main highway between Africa and Asia. It provided a natural gathering place due to the flatness of the surrounding topography. Archaeology shows evidence of frequent, extremely heavy defense facilities there through the centuries, and involving many periods of development. I have carefully walked the area, and seen this.

Megiddo is a famous setting for several great slaughters throughout history. The first was when Joshua overthrew it in the 1400s BC. Later, when Deborah was judging Israel, she ordered Barak into battle there against the Canaanites, led by Sisera. Every soldier in Sisera’s

army was killed. (This story is in Judges 4 and 5.)

The well-known defeat and slaughter of 120,000 Midianite soldiers by the army of Gideon *may* have also taken place near Armageddon. Judges 7 describes how God first reduced Gideon’s army from 32,000 to 300 prior to this battle.

I Kings 9 describes how King Solomon turned Megiddo into a fortified stronghold that housed hundreds of horses for his fleet of chariots. The foundation of his enormous stable is still visible today. I have also walked through and studied these.

When Jehu, king of Israel, wounded Judah’s King Ahaziah in battle, Ahaziah fled to Megiddo, where he died.

The Egyptian king Pharaohnechah came to the aid of the Assyrians and defeated the Israelites led by Josiah at Megiddo—where Josiah died (II Kings 23:29-30).

This valley has also seen military conflict in *modern* times. On September 19, 1918, British General Edmund Allenby won a decisive battle there in World War I, defeating the Ottoman Turks. This led directly to the birth in 1948 of today’s nation of Israel.

Because Megiddo is identified as a place of historic conflicts, and because more battles have been fought there than at any other place in the world, it has

become emblematic—like Waterloo, Gettysburg or Normandy.

More Background

The Bible foretells a period of seven trumpets blown, each heralding its own terrible event. Throughout history, trumpet blasts have been used as warnings of imminent danger, such as war or another calamity (Zeph. 1:16; Jer. 4:19; Ezek. 33:2-6).

However, the seventh (or last) trumpet will announce to the world that Jesus Christ is coming to establish God’s rule on Earth. Man’s way of governance is ending. Also heralded by this final trumpet are the seven *last plagues* (also bowls or vials of wrath) God will use to punish a *rebellious* mankind. Revelation describes seven angels who “pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth” (16:1).

When the first vial is poured out, “there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast” (vs. 2). These belong to the great, false church-state system. (More on this in a moment.)

The *second* plague mirrors what the Egyptians suffered before the Exodus: “The second angel poured out his vial upon the sea; and it became as the blood of a dead man: and *every living soul* died in the sea” (vs. 3).

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■ **REPEATED BATTLEGROUND:** The ancient city of Megiddo is located in the Jezreel Valley, which is pictured here from the top of Mount Carmel in Israel. Many historical battles have taken place in the region and the Bible identifies it as a military staging area for the climactic military clash at Christ’s Second Coming (Rev. 16:16).

PHOTO: STACEY L. PALM/THE REAL TRUTH

Why America Cannot Solve Its Illegal Immigration Crisis



■ **MIGRATING POPULATIONS:** Top left, Mexican children born in the United States and deported to Mexico take part in a protest in front of the U.S. embassy in Mexico City (May 2, 2013). Top right, U.S. Border Patrol agents look for immigrants crossing the Rio Grande from Mexico near Mission, Texas (July 24, 2014). Bottom, Central American immigrants ride the so-called La Bestia, The Beast, cargo train in Arriaga, Mexico, in an attempt to reach the U.S. border (July 16, 2014).

PHOTOS: YURI CORTEZ/AFP/GETTY IMAGES (TOP LEFT); JOHN MOORE/GETTY IMAGES (TOP RIGHT); ELIZABETH RUIZ/AFP/GETTY IMAGES (BOTTOM)

For the United States to address its immigration problems, it must get to the core of the issue.

AMERICA IS A nation of “rights.” In the past 50 years, the United States has seen virtually every rights movement imaginable: civil rights, students’ rights, abortion rights, disabilities rights, gun ownership rights, women’s rights, victims’ rights.

And for some time now, immigrants’ rights.

An increase of illegal entries across the U.S.-Mexico border—many children from Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala—has reignited the debate: “The Rio Grande Valley is now the hottest spot for illegal crossings of the 2,000-mile border between the United States and Mexico. And an increasing number of border-jumpers are children travelling without their parents. The number of unaccompanied children caught crossing has surged to about 52,000 so far this fiscal year, which started in October [2013], up from 15,700 in fiscal 2011.”

“The sudden influx of children into the United States has nearly overwhelmed the agencies that must deal with it. Detention facilities for children who cross the border illegally are horribly overcrowded. On June 5th *Breitbart Texas*, a conservative news site, published leaked photos showing dozens of children crammed into bare rooms. Barack Obama speaks of an ‘urgent humanitarian situation’.

“The White House blames the influx on instability in Central America. A report by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees in March, based on interviews with around 300 Central American under-age detainees in the United States, put gang violence and domestic abuse high among the causes of flight—along with a desire to be

reunited with relatives in America” (*The Economist*).

It is estimated by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security that between 11 and 12 million foreigners live and work in the U.S. illegally, with roughly 500,000 aliens migrating to America every year. Largely fleeing from poverty, unemployment and sometimes violence in their native countries, many are poorly educated and work menial, low-paying jobs that most native-born Americans will not accept.

Emerging from this underground workforce is a collective voice that is demanding its “rights”—the right to amnesty—the right to pay in-state college tuition rates—the right to citizenship.

Opposing Views

Illegal immigration is a controversial issue that is being hotly debated between—and within—the ranks of Republicans and Democrats. Politicians expect it to be a key issue in the November 2014 midterm elections.

Most Republicans seeking re-election must play to their conservative

base and call for stronger immigration laws. Yet this will be at the risk of losing Hispanic voters, a key demographic.

Republicans also realize that enacting tougher immigration reforms could diminish the support of businesses. With fewer workers available to take on low-paying jobs, wages will go up, and profit margins will go down.

Democrats must also perform a political balancing act. Will they risk aligning themselves with the president, who advocates certain incentives for illegal immigrants—and miss an opportunity to set themselves apart from the current administration, which is struggling against historically low approval ratings?

U.S. congressional lawmakers are divided between two opposing camps, with some liberals and conservatives finding unlikely agreement on this issue. Yet, even among those who agree, proposals vary regarding how to resolve the problem.

On one side of the debate are those who support reforms that benefit undocumented workers. Plans range from opposing any immigration restrictions—to amnesty for illegal aliens (or

for employers willing to sponsor them) and for their spouses and children—to temporary guest-worker programs—to allowing additional “temporary workers” and their families into the country—to legalizing the millions of illegals already living in the U.S.—to giving illegal students amnesty and free college educations.

(Ironically, some activists protest the use of the word “amnesty” because it denotes that a crime has been committed. Others would argue that when one lives and works in a country illegally, a crime has been committed—the law has been broken.)

The DREAM (Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors) Act, rejected by Congress in 2012, largely revolved around these sorts of concessions for young illegals. President Obama then initiated the DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals), which critics contend serves as an incentive for children to make their way into the U.S.

The new influx of youth coming through Mexico has led to heated confrontations at the border, with citizens’

■ **CONTROVERSIAL ISSUE:** Left, an anti-immigration activist sings patriotic songs while waiting for buses carrying illegal immigrants in Oracle, Arizona (July 15, 2014). Right, U.S. President Barack Obama is joined by Texas Governor Rick Perry, far left, during a meeting in Dallas, Texas, to discuss the humanitarian crisis on the border (July 9, 2014).

PHOTOS: SANDY HUFFAKER/GETTY IMAGES (LEFT); JEWEL SAMAD/AFP/GETTY IMAGES (RIGHT)



groups forming human blockades to stop buses full of children being transported to processing centers.

Some have charged that any deterrent against illegal entry amounts to racism. Yet many immigrants who have come to the U.S. legally have joined the ranks of citizens calling for tougher immigration measures.

Government leaders who advocate cracking down on illegal immigration offer a wide range of proposals:

- Opposing any guest-worker program
- Increased funding for the U.S. Border Patrol and adding more federal agents
- Enabling local law enforcement to protect citizens from illegal immigration
- Requiring foreign countries to quickly accept their citizens back
- Denying “birthright citizenship” to newborn children of illegals
- Ending welfare benefits for illegal immigrants
- Prohibiting in-state education for children of illegals
- Requiring certain businesses to verify, via a computerized system, an employee’s Social Security number

■ Enforcing laws that forbid localities from preventing police from reporting immigration information

■ Implementing a national exit-entry tracking system for all aliens (as mandated by the 1996 Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act)

■ Enacting stiffer penalties for alien smugglers

■ Cracking down on the construction or financing of tunnels into the U.S.

■ Authorizing the use of armed forces on the border

■ Preventing driver’s licenses issued to illegal immigrants from being used for federal purposes, such as boarding a plane

Many Americans do not favor the prospect of illegal immigrants instantly receiving U.S. citizenship—including the right to vote.

Politicians are left with making decisions that will ultimately please almost no one, and will anger most.

A Look Back

There is a reason America is grappling with its ever-growing immigration problem. There is a reason com-

mentators, politicians, bureaucrats and think tanks cannot agree on a solution. The country is feeling the effects of physical symptoms that have spiritual causes.

And the answers to spiritual causes are found in Scripture. Yet sadly, very few, including leading scholars, thinkers and leaders of traditional Christianity, are aware of this.

For a better understanding of America’s immigration headaches, it is important to first understand that, even since ancient times, nations and kingdoms have had to address growing populations of foreigners living among them.

Consider the beginning of the ancient nation of Israel. Even those who possess little biblical knowledge are familiar with the story of Joseph and his brothers, the family of Israel, coming to live in Egypt. At first, they were welcome. But after some years had passed—and as the Israelites began to reproduce faster than the Egyptians—the rulers of Egypt began to see them as a threat. This fear led to Israel’s enslavement.

While most are familiar with the biblical account of God eventually

■ **BORDER SECURITY:** Left, an agent keeps watch outside a U.S. Border Patrol facility during an anti-immigration protest in Murrieta, California (July 7, 2014). Right, Central American immigrants await transportation to a U.S. Border Patrol processing center after crossing the Rio Grande from Mexico into Texas (July 24, 2014).

PHOTOS: ROBYN BECK/AFP/GETTY IMAGES (LEFT); ELIZABETH RUIZ/AFP/GETTY IMAGES (RIGHT)



Unaccompanied Minors

During midsummer, a photographer visited the U.S. Customs and Border Protection Nogales Placement Center in Arizona. Hundreds of immigrant children—ranging from toddlers to teenagers who were sent by themselves to the American border—were temporarily housed at the site. The images he captured revealed the many difficulties caused by the situation.

Sleeping arrangements were mattresses with metallic-looking emergency blankets or simply blankets piled on the floor. Much of the time was spent waiting: for medical checkups, to make phone calls, and ultimately to see whether they will be able to stay in the country or escorted home.

To pass the time, the children watched World Cup soccer matches on televisions that hung from the ceiling or played basketball on makeshift basketball hoops.

Government officials worked to keep each person at the site for 72 hours or less before placing them in the care of the Department of Health and Human Services. *USA Today* wrote, "By year's end, 70,000 to 90,000 unaccompanied children are expected to cross the border compared to only 24,000 in 2013." □

PHOTOS: ROSS D. FRANKLIN-POOL/GETTY IMAGES





delivering them from slavery, few understand Israel was actually comprised of 12 tribes, which eventually divided into two distinct kingdoms: the house of Israel (led by the half-tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh) and the house of Judah (with parts of Levi, Benjamin and Simeon).

oath which He had sworn unto your fathers, has the LORD brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt” (vs. 7-8).

God is not a “respector of persons” (Acts 10:34; Rom. 2:11). He

these statutes, and say, Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people. For what nation is there so great, who has God so near unto them, as the LORD our God is in all things that we call upon Him for? And what nation is there so great, that has statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day?” (Deut. 4:5-8).

If ancient Israel had faithfully obeyed God, diligently turning to Him as their Ruler and Lawgiver, they would have reaped the wonderful blessings of national peace and prosperity. Also, their shining example would have led the surrounding nations—and ultimately all nations (Gen. 18:18)—to learn God’s laws, and reap the subsequent blessings of practicing His way of life.

Among these laws were statutes and precepts that governed the welfare and conduct of foreigners who were allowed to live among the Israelites (Ex. 12:37-38). God declares that He loves the “stranger” (Deut. 10:17-18) and expected Israel to do the same: “And if a stranger [foreigner] sojourn with you in your land, you shall not vex him. But the stranger that dwells with you shall be unto you as one born among you, and you shall love him as yourself; for you were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God” (Lev. 19:33-34).

“Strangers” (or foreigners) were protected from oppression: “You shall neither vex a stranger, nor oppress him: for you were strangers in the land of Egypt” (Ex. 22:21). “Also you shall not oppress a stranger: for you know the heart of a stranger, seeing you were strangers in the land of Egypt” (23:9).

Foreigners were to receive the same standard of judgment and fairness that was rendered to the Israelites (Lev. 24:19-22, 19:34-35; Deut. 24:17-18, 27:19).

God picked Israel to be His chosen people, “holy” and “special... above all people that are upon the face of the earth” (Deut. 7:6). But was this because they were inherently superior to everyone else? Notice: “The LORD did not set His love upon you, nor choose you, because you were more in number than any people; for you were the fewest of all people: but because the LORD loved you, and because He would keep the

rescued the Israelites from their meager existence and gave them His commandments, statutes and judgments so they would become a *model* nation: “Behold, I have taught you statutes and judgments, even as the LORD my God commanded me, that you should do so in the land where you go to possess it. Keep therefore and do them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations, which shall hear all



■ **KEEPING WATCH:** A U.S. Border Patrol agent looks for tracks along the U.S.-Mexico border fence in Calexico, California. The fence separates the large Mexican city of Mexicali and Calexico, California. The spot is a frequent illegal crossing point for immigrant smugglers (Nov. 15, 2013).

PHOTO: JOHN MOORE/GETTY IMAGES

But to live among the Israelites, immigrants had to keep the same commandments, statutes and judgments that God's people were commanded to keep. This included observing God's weekly Sabbath (Ex. 20:8-10, 23:12) and annual Holy Days (Exodus 12:18-19; Lev. 16:29-31). They were required to abstain from pagan sexual practices described in Leviticus 18: "You shall therefore keep My statutes and My judgments, and shall not commit any of these abominations; neither any of your own nation, nor any stranger that sojourns among you: (For all these abominations have the men of the land done, which were before you, and the land is defiled)" (vs. 26-27).

God divided the Promised Land among the clans and families of the 12 tribes. These properties—which were vital to the Israelites' livelihood—were to be inherited from generation to generation. They were not allowed to be sold to non-Israelites.

But God did not forget those who were without property or who suffered hardship. He established a financial assistance program to provide for the Levites (who did not receive a land inheritance), the fatherless, widows and for "the stranger" (Deut. 26:12). However, the poor were expected to do their part. For example, while God instructed His people to leave some crops behind for the underprivileged when harvesting, the poor had to glean the food. This required work!

Yes, Israel's Deliverer looked out for the immigrants among His people. However, He also set a difference between the "stranger" and the Israelite. There were certain things that only His people were allowed to do. For instance, foreigners were forbidden to eat the Passover meal (Ex. 12:43-47)—that is, unless they became full citizens (vs. 48-49).

Modern Problem, Ancient Roots

While God instructed His people to treat foreigners among them with fairness, He also expected Israel to lead the way—His Way—in how to live, rather than allowing "strangers" to dictate the course of the nation.

But ancient Israel rejected God and His Law. As they continually rebelled against their Deliverer and rejected His guiding hand, the kingdom gradually fell into a downward spiral toward national depravity. Despite multiple warnings from His faithful servants, God had to remove His blessings, replacing them with severe droughts, famines, diseases, humiliating military defeats, and other national curses. Also among these was the fulfillment of God's warning: "The stranger that is within you shall get up above you very high; and you shall come down very low. He shall lend to you, and you shall not lend to him: he shall be the head, and you shall be the tail" (Deut. 28:43-44).

Verse 45 explains that "all these curses shall come upon you, and shall pursue you, and overtake you, till you be destroyed; because you listened not unto the voice of the LORD your God, to keep His commandments and His statutes which He commanded you."

When God delivered Israel out of Egypt and led them to the Promised Land, He had intended to fulfill His promise to the patriarch Abraham (Gen. 12:3, 18:18, 22:17-18).

Yet both houses were taken away into national captivity. The people of Judah (today known as the Jews) returned to the Holy Land, and retained their ancient identity to this very day. But the house of Israel "disappeared" into the pages of history, and lost knowledge of their origins. Today, their descendants are largely oblivious to their biblical identity.

Because of this, the national birthright promise to Abraham's seed had to be fulfilled at another time. God did this through blessing the greatest "nation and a company of nations" (Gen. 35:10-12) in man's history—the United States of America (Manasseh) and the former British Empire (Ephraim). Their meteoric rise to prominence was unprecedented.

But like their ancestors before them, Israel's modern-day descendants have rejected their Lawgiver. They have thrown out His laws—which were to be their "wisdom" and "understand-

ing in the sight of the nations" (Deut. 4:6)—to live by their own laws, their own rules of conduct.

Look at the result. Without God's laws as the standard for wisdom and rendering good judgment, men cannot agree on right and wrong. They are forced to pass new laws—new codes—new regulations—year after year, as society's values change with each successive generation.

This is reflected in America's struggle to find a solution to aliens living and working in the country illegally. The American people cannot even agree on whether to call them "illegal immigrants" or "undocumented workers."

Consider. Millions of Americans, even most who claim to be Christian, consider the Law of God burdensome and that it restricts individual freedoms. Yet God's Law, contained in the pages of the Bible, can be held in one hand—while men produce vast libraries of laws, codes, rulings and regulations that attempt to address virtually every miniscule detail of life.

And what has this yielded? Mass bureaucracy—inconsistent and unjust court renderings—abuses in interpreting the law—legal chaos and confusion! This is freedom?

The U.S. already has laws in place that address the rise of illegal immigration—yet people lack the will to enforce them. Lawmakers are at a crossroads: if they do nothing, the problem will not go away; it will only grow worse. On the other hand, no matter what proposals are passed and enforced, a large segment of the voting populace will be upset—and they will show their anger at the ballot box.

Without the Law of God as their guiding light (Prov. 6:23), the people of the United States—modern Manasseh—are entering dark times. For a clear picture of what the Bible declares is ahead for America, read David C. Pack's eye-opening book *America and Britain in Prophecy* at rcg.org/aabibp. It explains the problems facing this and other nations—as well as the causes and solutions. □

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH, INC.

An Executive Leadership Rebrand for the Vatican

Three business principles could vault the Vatican to the next level.

BY JUSTIN T. PALM

IN EARLY 2011, technology giant Nokia gained a new CEO, Stephen Elop. Inheriting a company rife with problems, Mr. Elop penned an internal memo (later posted on *The Wall Street Journal* website) that announced sweeping changes in the company's strategic course.

He wrote: "There is a pertinent story about a man who was working on an oil platform in the North Sea. He woke up one night from a loud explosion, which suddenly set his entire oil platform on fire. In mere moments, he was surrounded by flames. Through the smoke and heat, he barely made his way out of the chaos to the platform's edge. When he looked down over the edge, all he could see were the dark, cold, foreboding Atlantic waters.

"As the fire approached him, the man had mere seconds to react. He could stand on the platform, and inevitably be consumed by the burning flames. Or, he could plunge 30 meters in to the freezing waters. The man was standing upon a 'burning platform,' and he needed to make a choice.

"He decided to jump. It was unexpected. In ordinary circumstances, the

man would never consider plunging into icy waters. But these were not ordinary times—his platform was on fire. The man survived the fall and the waters. After he was rescued, he noted that a 'burning platform' caused a radical change in his behaviour.

"We too, are standing on a 'burning platform,' and we must decide how we are going to change our behaviour.

"Over the past few months, I've shared with you what I've heard from our shareholders, operators, developers, suppliers and from you. Today, I'm going to share what I've learned and what I have come to believe.

"I have learned that we are standing on a burning platform.

"And, we have more than one explosion—we have multiple points of scorching heat that are fuelling a blazing fire around us."

The memo went on to describe a new direction for Nokia.

The Catholic Church could also be likened to the man on the burning platform, staring down at the dark, cold, foreboding Atlantic waters as a fire rages behind it. For decades, it has attempted without success to put out multiple proverbial fires: widespread sex scandals, nepotism, cover ups, leaked documents, financial corruption, division and a global identity crisis.



But then came the stunning resignation of Pope Benedict XVI (a first in over 600 years), and the election of Cardinal Jorge Bergoglio, who took the name Pope Francis, on March 13, 2013.

Francis seems to recognize that a radical approach must be brought to the Vatican's problems. As with a company, there are certain qualities that the pope is exhibiting as its "CEO" that could bring it back from the brink.

Catholic Church, Inc.

The Vatican is a complex and multifaceted institution, with the pope filling many different roles. First, the Catholic Church considers itself to be the world's oldest church, tracing its roots back to the early centuries of established Christianity. Pope Francis is the pastor of 1.2 billion Catholics around the world.

Also, the Vatican is a sovereign nation, so in this way the pope is a head of state who maintains diplomatic relations with numerous countries. The Vatican City State's official website says this about the tiny nation's popu-



■ **ON THE MOVE:** Pope Francis arrives for his weekly address at St. Peter's square in the Vatican (June 18, 2014).

PHOTO: FILIPPO MONTEFORTE/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

lation and size: "The population of Vatican City is about 800 people, of whom over 450 have Vatican citizenship, while the rest have permission to reside there, either temporarily or permanently, without the benefit of citizenship."

The website also stated: "Vatican City covers a territory of 0.44 square kilometres, that is 44 hectares (roughly 100 acres). It is partly surrounded by walls and stretches into St Peter's Square...Because Vatican City is so small, several Departments and offices belonging to the Holy See are situated in buildings around Rome...According to the Lateran Treaty, these buildings enjoy the same status, recognized by international law, as embassies and foreign diplomatic missions abroad."

The church can also be considered a *corporation*—one that Pope Francis is urgently trying to repair.

If the Catholic Church were a company, it would be the world's largest. A *National Post* article concluded that

its total assets cannot even be calculated: "It is impossible to calculate the wealth of the Roman Catholic Church. In truth, the church itself likely could not answer that question, even if it wished to.

"Its investments and spending are kept secret. Its real estate and art have not been properly evaluated, since the church would never sell them.

"There is no doubt, however, that between the church's priceless art, land, gold and investments across the globe, it is one of the wealthiest institutions on Earth."

All of the above roles pull the pope in different directions, but strong evidence shows a top priority is strengthening the church as a corporation.

Inherited Problems

The organization Pope Francis inherited was in dire need of radical changes. *The Economist* magazine summarized the situation this way: "Business schools regularly teach their students

about great 'turnaround CEOs' who breathe new life into dying organisations: figures such as IBM's Lou Gerstner, Fiat's Sergio Marchionne and Apple's Steve Jobs. Now Harvard Business School needs to add another case study: Jorge Bergoglio, the man who has rebranded [the Catholic Church] in barely a year.

"When Pope Francis celebrated his first Easter as CEO, just after being appointed, the world's oldest multinational was in crisis. Pentecostal competitors were stealing market share in the emerging world, including in Latin America, where Francis ran the Argentine office. In its traditional markets, scandals were scaring off customers and demoralising the salesforce. Recruitment was difficult, despite the offer of lifetime employment in a tough economy. The firm's finances were also a mess. Leaked documents revealed the Vatican bank as a vortex of corruption and incompetence. The board was divided and weak. Francis's predecessor, Benedict XVI, was the first pope to resign for 600 years..."

Even the name Francis is significant, and speaks to repairing the Roman church, as noted by *Wall Street Journal* columnist Peggy Noonan: "The meaning of the name he chose should not be underestimated. Cardinal Bergoglio is a Jesuit and the Jesuits were founded by St. Ignatius Loyola, who said he wanted to be like St. Francis of Assisi.

"One of the most famous moments in St. Francis's life is the day he was passing by the church of St. Damiano. It was old and near collapse. From St. Bonaventure's 'Life of Francis of Assisi': 'Inspired by the Spirit, he went inside to pray. Kneeling before an image of the Crucified, he was filled with great fervor and consolation... While his tear-filled eyes were gazing at the Lord's cross, he heard with his bodily ears a voice coming from the cross, telling him three times: 'Francis, go and repair my house which, as you see, is falling into ruin.'" Francis was amazed 'at the sound of this astonishing voice, since he was alone in the church.' He set himself to obeying the command.

“Go and repair my house, which is falling into ruin. Could the new pope’s intentions be any clearer? The Catholic Church in 2013 is falling into ruin. It has been damaged by scandal and the scandals arose from arrogance, conceit, clubbiness and an assumption that the special can act in particular ways, that they may make mistakes but it’s understandable, and if it causes problems the church will take care of it.”

Pope Francis has recognized these issues, and is taking extreme measures to strengthen his nearly 2,000-year-old church. He seems determined to turn the ship around, redirecting its course and pulling the Roman Catholic Church back from the precipice of irrelevancy in this modern world.

In doing so, the pope is employing three business principles that will help repair the Catholic Church and push it to the next level.

(1) Restructuring Management

The first business approach being used in the Vatican is a major restructuring of leadership. The top man in the Catholic Church has shown his willingness to revamp key elements of the Vatican hierarchy, even bringing in outside management consultants to help clean house. Sweeping changes are being enacted. The status quo is being broken up.

The *Catholic News Service* reported this in late 2013 about the pope’s decision to bring in a high-powered management team to assess the church’s situation: “In an effort to streamline and modernize its communications structures and bring its accounting practices in line with international standards, the Vatican hired two international consulting agencies.

“The global management-consulting firm McKinsey & Company and the Netherlands-based financial and administrative consultation firm KPMG were hired...”

“The new partnerships were initiatives of the Pontifical Commission for Reference on the Organization of the economic-administrative structure of the Holy See, a panel of business and legal experts Pope Francis created in

July to help the Vatican simplify and better coordinate its scattered resources, budgets, properties and assets.

“McKinsey & Company was hired to provide recommendations for an ‘integrated plan’ that would help make the Holy See’s communications’ outlets more ‘efficient and modern,’ the Vatican statement said.”

In a late 2013 interview, Francis told the Italian magazine *La Repubblica* the kinds of systemic issues he will strive to correct (emphasis added): “Heads of the Church have often been narcissists, flattered and thrilled by their courtiers. The court is the leprosy of the papacy...there are sometimes courtiers in the curia, but the curia as a whole is another thing. It is what in an army is called the quartermaster’s office, it manages the services that serve the Holy See. But it has one defect: it is Vatican-centric. It sees and looks after the interests of the Vatican, which are still, for the most part, temporal interests. This Vatican-centric view neglects the world around us. I do not share this view and *I’ll do everything I can to change it.*”

(2) Humble Yet Determined

The pope’s determined approach has also come with an appearance of humility, which has befuddled news commentators and analysts. On the surface, it appears paradoxical. Is he humble, or authoritative and demanding? Most have preferred to focus on his modest approach to the office. Note this longer excerpt from Ms. Noonan’s article: “I’ll tell you how it looks: like one big unexpected gift for the church and the world.

“Everything about Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio’s election was a surprise—his age, the name he took, his mien as he was presented to the world. He was plainly dressed, a simple white cassock, no regalia, no finery. He stood there on the balcony like a straight soft pillar and looked out at the crowd...”

“Then the telling moment about the prayer. Before he gave a blessing he asked for a blessing: He asked the crowd to pray for him. He bent his head down and the raucous, cheer-

ing square suddenly became silent, as everyone prayed. I thought, ‘...he’s humble.’”

“He loves the poor and not in an abstract way. He gave the cardinal’s palace in Buenos Aires to a missionary order with no money. He lives in an apartment, cooks his own food, rides the bus. He rejects pomposity. He does not feel superior. He is a fellow soul. He had booked a flight back to Argentina when the conclave ended.”

While millions have embraced this style as a breath of fresh air, others question Francis’s sincerity in light of his hard-charging management approach.

Yet these qualities are not necessarily in opposition to one another. Author Jim Collins found while researching and writing his classic business book, *Good to Great*, that these are the very qualities needed for companies to take the next step in their progression. He labeled them as attributes of a “Level 5 leader” and defined the term as one who “builds enduring greatness through a paradoxical blend of personal humility and professional will.”

Mr. Collins expanded on these qualities: “We found leaders of this type at the helm of every good-to-great company during the transition era... they were self-effacing individuals who displayed the fierce resolve to do whatever needed to be done to make the company great.

“Level 5 leaders channel their ego needs away from themselves and into the larger goal of building a great company. It’s not that Level 5 leaders have no ego or self-interest. Indeed, they are incredibly ambitious—but their ambition is first and foremost for the institution, not themselves...”

“Level 5 leaders are a study in duality: modest and willful, humble and fearless.”

The author showed that when these qualities exist, successful results soon follow.

(3) “Mingling Among the Troops”

The third quality being seen in the new leadership is a focus on being in touch

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AMERICA AND IRAN

UNLIKELY PARTNERS?

PART 2



In developments unthinkable a few years ago, the two powers continue to negotiate the nuclear issue and appear willing to work together to resolve the crisis in Iraq.

BY DANIEL A. QUIMBY AND SAMUEL C. BAXTER

IRAN'S TRUE INTENTIONS have long been a tiny, fast-moving target for the United States. Washington has rarely hit the mark. Complicating matters are the seemingly wild swings in Tehran's approaches to foreign policy.

■ **TALKING POINTS:** Iran's Foreign Minister Javad Zarif (left) attends a bilateral meeting in Vienna, Austria, with United States Secretary of State John Kerry (right) on the second straight day of talks over Tehran's nuclear program (July 14, 2014).

PHOTO: JIM BOURG/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Take the nation's last two presidents, for instance. From 2005-2013, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad held the reins of the Iranian nation and effectively alienated it from the U.S. and the rest of the world. Mr. Ahmadinejad did not let his disdain for the West go unnoticed and was

quick to criticize America at every turn.

His tenure brimmed with inflammatory rhetoric. During a United Nations conference held in New York in 2010, he blasted the U.S. with a continuous stream of hate-filled speech. *CNN* reported at the time: "Though incendiary statements from Ahmadinejad are nothing new, tension in the hall grew as the Iranian leader recounted various conspiracy theories about the September 11 attacks.



■ **CURRENT UNREST:** Left, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani waves after holding a press conference in Tehran (June 14, 2014). Iran may consider cooperating with the United States in fighting Sunni extremist fighters in Iraq if Washington decides to act against them, Mr. Rouhani told journalists. Right, a picture shows the reactor building at the Russian-built Bushehr nuclear power plant in southern Iran (Aug. 21, 2010).

PHOTOS: ATTA KENARE/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

“Some segments within the U.S. government orchestrated the attack,” Ahmadinejad told the General Assembly.

“He followed with the claim that the attacks were aimed at reversing ‘the declining American economy and its scripts on the Middle East in order to save the Zionist regime. The majority of the American people, as well as most nations and politicians around the world, agree with this view.’”

During Mr. Ahmadinejad’s time in office, he constantly flaunted Iran’s nuclear ambitions. This move brought strong international sanctions that severely affected quality of life for the nation—and plummeted relations between it and the U.S.

In June 2013, Iran was ready for a change and voiced that opinion in the presidential election. Citizens voted in Hassan Rouhani, who campaigned with a pledge of “reconciliation and peace.”

His inaugural speech demonstrated his drastically different approach. *The Guardian* reported: “‘People want change,’ said the new president, who described himself as the representative of all Iranian people and not only those who voted for him in the election. ‘People want to live better, to have dignity as well as a stable life. They

also want to recapture their deserving position among nations,’ he said.”

Mr. Rouhani has stood in stark contrast with his predecessor at every turn. Soon after his election in June 2013, *CNN* described him as having “all-round credentials in Iran’s institutions that include senior cleric, former commander of Iranian air defenses and [as] an intellectual with three law degrees, including from a university in Scotland. He has a reputation for shunning extreme positions and bridging differences.”

The new president took no time to positively engage the U.S. Within a few months, he shared a 15-minute phone call with U.S. President Barack Obama—the first direct conversation between the top leaders of the two nations since the 1979 Islamic revolution.

The historic call came after a visit by Mr. Rouhani to New York for a United Nations General Assembly in which he called America a “great nation,” *The Guardian* stated.

Choosing the words “great nation” further separated Mr. Rouhani from Mr. Ahmadinejad who regularly referred to the U.S. as the “great Satan.”

In December 2013, Mr. Rouhani signed an agreement with the West to negotiate a plan for Iran’s nuclear

program. “The agreement, which was finalized in Geneva and will endure for six months while international negotiators seek a more comprehensive, long-term settlement, provides Iran modest relief from the sanctions that have dealt a heavy blow to its economy in exchange for a series of steps to prevent the Iranians from weaponizing nuclear technology,” *CBS News* reported. On July 20, both sides agreed to extend the deadline another four months.

Mr. Rouhani’s positive approach has continued since the agreement. At an annual Iranian parade in April 2014, *Reuters* quoted the president as saying: “We told the world during the (nuclear) talks and we repeat that we don’t support any aggression... We support dialogue.”

A few years ago, such dialogue would have been unthinkable. Equally unexpected is that events in the Middle East are pushing Iran and the U.S. to pursue common goals. Can the two nations *really* work together—as unlikely partners—or is America reading the situation all wrong?

Common Ground?

In January 2014, Iran and the United States gained a surprising mutual interest with the emergence of terrorist



■ **PAST AND PRESENT:** Left, Iran's former President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad waves from his office in Tehran, Iran (June 25, 2005). Right, Iraqis living in Iran hold posters bearing portraits of Shiite Muslim spiritual leader Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani and Iraqi flags during a demonstration in southern Tehran against the ongoing offensive by Sunni Arab jihadists that has occupied a vast swath of northern and north-central Iraq (June 20, 2014).

PHOTOS: GETTY IMAGES (LEFT); STR/AFP/GETTY IMAGES (RIGHT)

organization Islamic State (previously known as ISIS), which has taken over parts of Iraq. The group is a split-off jihadist group that formed from members of al-Qaida and has brashly claimed the beginning of a new caliphate (an Islamic state) in Iraq under the leadership of self-proclaimed caliph Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi.

The Council on Foreign Relations wrote: "ISIS now controls a volume of resources and territory unmatched in the history of extremist organizations. It possesses the means to threaten its neighbors on multiple fronts, demonstrating a military effectiveness much greater than many observers expected. Should ISIS continue this pattern of consolidation and expansion, this terrorist 'army' will eventually be able to exert a destabilizing influence far beyond the immediate area."

Notably, the Islamic State is a radical sect of Sunni Islam, while Iran and the ruling party in Iraq are rival Shia.

Iran does not want to see its Shia neighbor fall into the hands of Sunni radicals. The United States does not want to see Iraq fall into the hands of extremists. Because of this, the situation provides a common interest for Tehran and Washington. Again, this was all completely unimaginable a few years ago.

Misreading the Middle East

Yet Middle East politics have always been an enigma for the United States. A central reason for this confusion is *time*. This is definitely the case with seeking to understand Iranians (who historically have been known as Persians). For instance, American citizens live in a nation that turned 238 this year. Persians, on the other hand, have *thousands of years* of attachments to their homeland. Put another way, America turned 200 in 1976. By contrast, in 1972, Iran celebrated the 2,500th anniversary of Cyrus the Great starting the Achaemenid Empire.

For the region as a whole, though, a top confusing feature is the Shia-Sunni divide in Islam. To Western eyes, the differences between the two sects of this religion seem superficial. After all, they share the same prayers, view the Koran as holy, and lead similar lives.

Yet, while Sunnis and Shias have many of the same beliefs, they have had nearly 1,400 years to build separate cultural and religious identities. In other words, this divide runs deep. For many, this sectarianism *defines* them—it is their identity.

It all started after the death of the founder of Islam, Mohammed, in AD 632. A dispute arose among his fol-

lowers about who would succeed him as leader of the religion. Those who would come to be known as Sunnis thought that anyone could be elected to top positions as long as they were devout and qualified Muslims. The soon-to-be Shia felt that only those of Mohammed's bloodline should be in charge.

There are other differences in beliefs, but the main point is that the disagreement has been ongoing for almost 1,400 years. It is not something that can be solved with a mutual apology and a firm handshake.

The Shia-Sunni divide drives the bitter rivalry between Iran (Shia) and Saudi Arabia (Sunni); the ongoing clashes between the Syrian regime of Bashar al-Assad (an offshoot of Shia) and rebel forces (Sunni); and again the growing civil war between Iraq's government (majority Shia) and the militant group Islamic State (radical Sunni).

Throughout the centuries, there have been historical clashes between these two groups, yet much of the time they have lived relatively peaceably.

So what is different today? The two sects tend to come to blows when there are power vacuums. And since the start

Please see **IRAN** page 24



FACTO

Are They C

Do you know how the food

BY ROB

WHEN SHOPPING for groceries, have you ever thought about where the food you buy comes from—and how it is produced?

Many advertisements depict food as grown on small family farms. They picture cows grazing in pastures, chickens hopping around a barnyard, and farmers planting small acreages of crops such as corn, wheat, potatoes, soybeans and barley.

But the reality is quite different. Today's cows are often bred in dirt feedlots, with the only grass seen *outside* the farm along the highway. Instead of wading through knee-high clover, cows are cloistered together and fed a noxious mix of additives to fatten them faster. In place of chickens picking at bugs on the ground or resting peacefully in a sunny, hay-strewn coup, are birds that gather around plastic tubing to peck at feed or are simply cage-bound their entire lives, with nothing but an area less than the size of a piece of paper on which to nest. Lush fields are instead pesticide-laden grounds, which do not possess nutritious soil for plants to develop necessary minerals and vitamins.

In fact, most of the food in supermarkets comes from large industrial operations—factory farms—that contain vast quantities of livestock or crops. These industrial farms, many of

DRY FARMS

Good for Consumers?

Food you eat is produced? The answer may surprise you.

BY GERT R. FARRELL WITH STACEY L. PALM

which are called AFOs (Animal Feeding Operations) and CAFOs (Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations), produce food in a manner drastically different from the past when most was grown by small, family-owned properties.

With more people moving from rural areas to cities, the concept of large-scale farming to feed a global population of more than seven billion people has become increasingly popular. More mouths require more food worldwide, which means that large quantities must be produced faster—and if possible, cheaper.

“Upton Sinclair’s *The Jungle*, written almost a century ago when the United States lacked many food-safety and labor regulations, described the appalling conditions of slaughterhouses in Chicago in the early 20th century and was a shocking expose of meat production and the conditions inflicted on both animals and humans by the industry,” research firm Worldwatch Institute reported in an article titled “Factory Farming in the Developing World.” “Workers were treated much like animals themselves, forced to labor long hours for very little pay under dangerous conditions, and with no job security.

“If *The Jungle* were written today, however, it might not be set in the American Midwest. Today, developing nations like the Philippines are becom-

ing the centers of large-scale livestock production and processing to feed the world’s growing appetite for cheap meat and other animal products. But the problems Sinclair pointed to a century ago, including hazardous working conditions, unsanitary processing methods, and environmental contamination, still exist. Many have become even worse. And as environmental regulations in the European Union and the United States become stronger, large agribusinesses are moving their animal production operations to nations with less stringent enforcement of environmental laws.

“These intensive and environmentally destructive production methods are spreading all over the globe, to Mexico, India, the former Soviet Union, and most rapidly throughout Asia. Wherever they crop up, they create a web of related food safety, animal welfare, and environmental problems.”

Since most of our food comes from factory farms, it begs the question: is the food they produce just as healthy as if it had been grown naturally on a small farm?

Large-scale Agriculture

A factory farm produces huge volumes of food through industrial means. These food “factories” typically cover as many as several thousand acres. If it has livestock, it generally has sev-

eral thousand animals confined in the same area. Because factory farms are so large, they achieve “economies of scale,” producing much more food at cheaper prices than smaller farms.

Often, these farms are owned by giant corporations and operate purely to gain profit, which maximizes benefits for their shareholders. Unlike small family farms, they usually do not have close connections to the communities in which they operate. Much of their produce is sold hundreds or even thousands of miles away.

In developed nations, factory farms have expanded rapidly since their origins in the early 20th century. Now only 3 percent of farms in the United States generate an astonishing 62 percent of its agricultural output! In fact, they have so consolidated the agricultural sector that only five food retailers (Kroger, Albertson’s, Wal-Mart, Safeway and Ahold USA) account for a whopping 42 percent of all retail food sales in the U.S.

“In the 1970s, the top five beef packers controlled only about 25 percent of the market,” investigative journalist Eric Schlosser stated in the documentary “*Food, Inc.*” “Today the top four control more than 80 percent of the market... You look at the labels and you see farmer this, farmer that. It is really just three or four companies controlling the meat. We’ve never had food companies this big and this powerful in our history.”

These industrial farms control all aspects of production, including animal rearing, feeding, slaughtering, packaging and distribution—a process known as “vertical integration.” While they often contract small farms to grow their produce or tend animals they supply, companies establish strict guidelines about how to grow crops and house livestock, as well as which seeds to use and what pesticides or antibiotics to apply during the process.

Because they are able to grow food cheaper, larger farms are forcing mid-size and small farms out of business.

■ **MODERN FARMING:** Top, a feeding robot automatically feeds Prim’Holstein dairy cows in Erbrée, western France (Feb. 18, 2014). Middle, attendees look at a model of Japanese computer giant Fujitsu’s lettuce cultivation factory during an exhibition in Tokyo, Japan (May 13, 2014). Bottom, turkeys crowd in a barn in Sonoma, California (Nov. 26, 2013).

PHOTOS: JEAN-FRANCOIS MONIER/AFP/GETTY IMAGES (TOP); YOSHIKAZU TSUNO/AFP/GETTY IMAGES (MIDDLE); SASCHA SCHUERMAN/GETTY IMAGES (BOTTOM)

According to conservation agency American Farmland Trust (AFT), the most recent Census of Agriculture study demonstrated “a nationwide drop in land devoted to agricultural production from 922 million acres in 2007 to less than 915 million acres. This reduction continues a downward trend that has resulted in a 72 million acre decrease of land in agriculture since 1982.”

Good Business?

Because factory farms wield tremendous power, they have become a highly controversial topic, with many questioning whether they are beneficial for society and the environment as a whole. Those who support them point out that they provide multiple benefits.

■ **Cheap food production:** Due to technology and economies of scale, factory farms can produce food at less cost than smaller farms, which enables customers to save money on food purchases.

■ **Efficiency:** Large-scale farms have the ability to quickly produce and distribute huge quantities of food to sustain large cities.

A spokesperson for the National Chicken Council explained in “Food, Inc.”: “The chicken industry has really set a model for the integration of production and processing and marketing their products that other industries are now following because they see that we have achieved tremendous economies. In a way, we are not producing chickens, we are producing food. It’s all highly mechanized, so all the birds coming off those farms have to be almost exactly the same size. What the system of intensive production accomplishes is to produce a lot of food, in a small amount of land, at a very affordable price.”

■ **Employment:** Factory farms provide employment to nearby communities and companies that use local people. In addition, supporters argue

that they *do* invest in the communities in which they operate.

“In some countries, governments give tax breaks to companies that source locally, allowing them to pass on the lower cost to consumers,” *Financial Times* reported. “Price can be decisive in wooing low-income consumers to try branded products.”

Bad Results

On the other hand, opponents of factory farming contend that the negatives that come along with factory farming far outweigh the positives.

■ **Animal conditions:** Typically, large numbers of animals are kept in close confinement on such farms, having little room to maneuver. This overcrowding frequently causes stress, frustration and joint pains. In addition, animals are given growth hormones to cause them to grow abnormally large in shorter periods of time, which often renders them unable to walk and greatly affects their quality of life.

■ **Diseases:** Raising large numbers of animals in cramped conditions in which they are also slaughtered leads to disease. Many animals in feedlots are forced to stand in their own manure as there are minimal systems in place to dispose of it. Ammonia, the potent substance it exudes, can lead to blindness in chickens, or sickness in other animals.

The book *Animal Factory* stated: “Each dairy cow produces 120 pounds of wet manure a day—the equivalent of what twenty to forty people would generate. In a pasture-fed system, a farmer budgets up to 1.5 acres per cow. The land acts as a free-range toilet that can absorb the excrement. A confinement dairy does not have that option.”

According to Iowa’s Department of Natural Resources, this can result in unintended consequences: “Unlike livestock on pasture, animals in AFOs are kept in small areas where feed

and manure become more concentrated. Animal manure and urine contain nitrogen (nitrate and ammonia), phosphorus, organic matter, sediments, pathogens, and heavy metals—all of which are potential pollutants if they are concentrated in a small area. Some of these substances can pose threats to human health or impair drinking water. When excess nutrients reach our waters, they can cause low levels of dissolved oxygen, algal blooms and, in extreme cases, fish kills.”

To ward off diseases, animals are injected with antibiotics, many of which are given to humans, which makes pathogens even more antibiotic resistant and causes humans to become sick.

Consider this editorial published in *The New York Times*: “If you walk into a farm-supply store today, you’re likely to find a bag of antibiotic powder that claims to boost the growth of poultry and livestock. That’s because decades of agricultural research has shown that antibiotics seem to flip a switch in young animals’ bodies, helping them pack on pounds. Manufacturers brag about the miraculous effects of feeding antibiotics to chicks and nursing calves. Dusty agricultural journals attest to the ways in which the drugs can act like a kind of superfood to produce cheap meat.

“But what if that meat is us? Recently, a group of medical investigators have begun to wonder whether antibiotics might cause the same growth promotion in humans. New evidence shows that America’s obesity epidemic may be connected to our high consumption of these drugs.”

Another popular additive that has resulted in problems is corn, a substance cows were never meant to eat.

“So we feed corn to cattle,” Michael Pollan explained in the documentary “Food, Inc.” “And E coli, which is a very common bug evolves...And a strain called the E coli 0157H7 appears

■ **MANUFACTURING FOOD:** Top, an employee holds a bunch of FW13 tomatoes, a variety artificially developed by global Swiss agribusiness Syngenta AG that does not rot, but softens (June 24, 2014). Middle, advanced seed-chipping machines operate inside Monsanto’s agribusiness headquarters in St. Louis, Missouri. The process allows scientists to more quickly genetically engineer new seed types (May 21, 2009). Bottom, meat is displayed in a case at a grocery store in Miami, Florida (July 8, 2014).

PHOTOS: SANDRA LAFFONT/AFP/GETTY IMAGES (TOP); BRENT STIRTON/GETTY IMAGES (MIDDLE); JOE RAEDLE/GETTY IMAGES (BOTTOM)

on the world stage. And it's a product of the diet we're feeding cattle on feedlots and it's a product of feedlot life. The animals stand ankle deep in their manure all day long, so that if one cow has it, the other cows can get it. When they get to the slaughterhouse, their hides are caked with manure. And if the slaughterhouse is slaughtering 400 animals an hour, how do you keep that manure from getting on to those carcasses? And that is how the manure gets in the meat. And now this thing that wasn't in the world, gets in the food system."

The E coli-filled manure can then run into surrounding agricultural land, which causes contamination of crops, such as spinach and lettuce, and can result in death.

■ **Pollution:** Factory farms produce large quantities of waste that is difficult to dispose of. This waste leaks into lakes, rivers and ground water, putting entire communities at risk.

"When manure is applied too frequently or in too large a quantity to an area, nutrients overwhelm the absorptive capacity of the soil, and either run off or are leached into the groundwater," the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention stated in a publication about large-scale livestock operations. "Storage units can break or become faulty, or rainwater can cause holding lagoons to overflow. While CAFOs are required to have permits that limit the levels of manure discharge, handling the large amounts of manure inevitably causes accidental releases which have the ability to potentially impact humans...Emissions from degrading manure and livestock digestive processes produce air pollutants that often affect ambient air quality in communities surrounding CAFOs."

■ **Monoculture:** Factory farming typically devastates the ecosystem in an area by wiping out large tracts of land by producing one crop year after year.

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WHY CAN'T I UNDERSTAND THE BIBLE?

The Keys to Piecing It All Together



The Holy Scriptures have perplexed most over the centuries. Why does a book read by so many remain such a mystery?

BY EDWARD L. WINKFIELD

LONG BEFORE television, computer games and modern gadgets absorbed excessive amounts of people's time, assembling jigsaw puzzles was *the* popular form of entertainment. Folks from all walks of life—whether young, old, rich or poor—were captivated by the search for and assembly of scattered, interlocking puzzle pieces.

The first puzzles, developed over 250 years ago, were an engaging way to teach children geography. The task of locating and fitting tiny, disjointed pieces of land to form an entire map, was a stimulating way for youngsters to learn about the world in which they lived.

Eventually the pastime caught on with adults and the illustrations expanded beyond maps to images such as nature scenes, works of art, and sometimes abstract images intended to present more of a challenge to assemble.

Completing the most difficult puzzles requires patience and a steady resolve to see it through.

Experienced puzzlers, however, will tell you that willpower alone is not always enough. It is beneficial to also have a guide to aid you through the process. This assistance often comes in the form of a completed image. With the final image in mind, a puzzle maker can confidently form a strategy for taking what can be thousands of separate parts and putting them in their proper places.

The combination of determination, guidance and a workable strat-

egy is what leads to eventual success. Lacking one or more of the three is usually what causes the would-be puzzler to give up in exasperation.

Most people naturally think of a jigsaw puzzle when discussing the topic, but there is a puzzle that is much older. As with the most difficult of puzzles, it has left people confused. It is thousands of years old and has baffled many who have attempted in vain to piece it all together. It is the Bible.

Read this seemingly obscure yet remarkable statement found in the Old Testament: “For precept [commandment] must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little...” (Isa. 28:10). Simply put, elements of Scripture are scattered “here a little, and there a little” throughout the entire Bible like pieces of a puzzle. True understanding of this Book comes down to finding these pieces and connecting them to form a complete picture.

Most people find God's Word difficult to understand. Some have given

up studying it altogether. But this does not have to be you. You *can* piece it all together. You *can* understand the Bible!

Most Owned, Least Read

A popular goal is to read the Bible cover to cover. No doubt the aim is to gain understanding. Perhaps this is something you have attempted in the past. Many start out with much zeal in Genesis only to eventually lose steam by the time they hit the seemingly endless “begats” and difficult sounding names that can appear out of place in the overall text. While some do succeed in making it all the way to the last book, Revelation, they usually do so not fully understanding what they may have spent the last several months reading. Most, though, throw their hands up in frustration and abandon the process.

Bewilderment over the Bible has become so mainstream that those who claim to understand it and accept it at face value are seen as “unusual.” Confusion has become the norm. Speaking about modern times, author J.B. Phillips famously stated in his book *The Young Church in Action*, “... it is perfectly respectable to be abysmally ignorant of the Christian faith.”

Just as most in our instant-gratification society no longer have the patience to piece together an actual jigsaw puzzle, they now lack the stamina to search the Bible for spiritual understanding.

Yet this lack of knowledge of the scriptures is not due to lack of access. According to a 2007 article in *The Economist* detailing Bible statistics, “... over 100m [million] copies of the Bible are sold or given away every year. Annual Bible sales in America are worth between \$425m and \$650m; Gideon’s International gives away a Bible every second. The Bible is available all or in part in 2,426 languages, covering 95% of the world’s population.”

These and other similar findings have led to the Bible being referred to as the “most owned, least read book in history.” And this paradox is likely because the Bible is so often misunderstood. Society seems to have given

up on making all the pieces fit. It is as if they are perfectly willing to own the puzzle but are unwilling to open the box!

Additional Considerations

Along with the Bible being written “here a little, and there a little,” two additional characteristics of Scripture can cause a reader to stumble.

First is that the Bible is actually a compilation of multiple books. This means the text is not necessarily meant to be read and studied in the order the books appear—from the first page to the last page—as you would a common text book. In this way, the Bible could be viewed as more of a reference book that allows a reader to locate information by subject matter as opposed to chronological order. This arrangement helps reinforce that scriptures must be understood in the context of the writer and the time period which they were written.

Related to this division is the inclusion of chapter and verse numbers that were added after the original text was written. This was done to make it easier to locate text in a volume consisting of more than three quarters of a million words. Imagine trying to find a certain sentence or phrase without this valuable tool!

That said, as helpful as these sections can be, sometimes they break up complete thoughts, which leads to confusion. This separation can make something meant to be related appear unrelated and vice versa. Those who study the Bible should consider this possibility and, when necessary, study the words as if the chapter and verse breaks were not there.

The second key principle is to realize that unless you are reading the Old Testament in its original Hebrew or the New Testament in its original Aramaic or Greek text, you are likely reading either a word-for-word or a thought-for-thought translation.

As any skilled language translator will tell you, when transferring one language to another, there can be gaps in translation. This is either because certain words or phrases are unique

and do not have a corresponding rendition in the new language or because the interpreter can (adventently or inadvertently) interject his own view into the original thought.

Word-for-word Bible translations tend to have fewer gaps and are more trustworthy since each word is converted to the new language. This is the ideal kind to use as your main Bible. The overall best and most reliable English translation is the *King James Version*.

Because of the technical nature of word-for-word translations, however, the original thought meant to be conveyed can be lost. This explains why certain Bible verses are difficult to understand when reading the translated words alone.

This is where a thought-for-thought translation as a supplement can come in handy. With this tool, a translator attempts to state the original thought he believes was meant to be conveyed by the original text.

Yet the danger is that the interpreter may “misinterpret” the original meaning by adding or deleting certain information. Therefore, these types of translations should be used with caution and again in conjunction with a word-for-word translation and other Bible tools. (For more information on the origin of the Bible, including which translations are best, request our free booklet titled *How We Got the Bible – Which Translations Are Best?* at rcg.org/hwgtb. It is a go-to resource for those seeking basic understanding of how we ended up with the Bible as it currently stands as well as how to navigate among so many different translations and interpretations.)

Making It Fit

Seeing the Bible as a jigsaw puzzle with parts that must be assembled has the potential to completely change your view of Scripture.

Many claim they do not read the Bible because it “contradicts itself.” Admittedly, viewing its parts as separate pieces *can* falsely lead a person to this conclusion. Imagine having two separate jigsaw puzzle pieces in your

Twelve Rules of Bible Study

There are a dozen basic rules for effective Bible study. These points are briefly detailed below. For more information, read the article “The Rules of Effective Bible Study” at rcg.org/troebbs.

(1) Ask God for Guidance: Before beginning your Bible study, ask God to open your mind to better understand the Bible’s spiritual principles. By asking God to open our minds, we can understand the Bible and receive the messages within.

(2) Study the Bible for Correction: The second rule is closely related to the first. Sincerely petition God to correct you through your Bible study. The Bible will show us when and where we err and what to do about it.

(3) “Prove All Things”: The word prove means to “put to the test.” Read I Thessalonians 5:21: “Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.” To prove all things means to get to the truth of the matter—and to accept that truth with positive assurance.

(4) God’s Word Never Contradicts Itself: Most theologians and Bible critics believe the Bible “contradicts itself” and should not be taken literally. What does the Bible reveal about God’s consistency and rationality? See Hebrews 13:8: “Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and for ever.” We can trust in this sound statement.

(5) Find Out What the Bible Really Says: Applying this rule of Bible study often resolves misunderstandings. Many misconceptions result because the world is blind to the plain truth of God’s Word. The next rule on the list helps solve this problem.

(6) Examine the Context: Context simply means “with text.” Checking the context involves reading the text before and after the issue in question. False teachers deceive peo-

ple who are unaware of deceptive practices such as taking verses out of context and misapplying their meaning.

(7) “Here a little, there a little”: No single scripture can be used to establish doctrine. We must take all the scriptures on a given subject and weigh them in order to gain knowledge and understand doctrine. To do this fully requires being led by God’s Spirit.

(8) The Bible Interprets Itself: II Peter 1:20 talks of scripture not being “of any private interpretation” meaning we must let the Bible interpret itself. If a Bible concept or term is not immediately explained, continue to search because an explanation is likely nearby or in another part of the Bible.

(9) Start with Clear Scriptures: Never attempt to establish doctrine with unclear scriptures. Some people specialize in quoting and creatively interpreting vague scriptures. They do this because it gives them room to speculate and invent new doctrines.

(10) Use More Than One Translation: When you come to a questionable or vague scripture, cross-referencing other translations usually clears up questions. An example is using the *New King James Version*, which has more modern language, to clarify the original *King James Version* that was translated more than 400 years ago.

(11) Do Not Use Bible Helps to Establish Doctrine: Bible helps can supplement our understanding of historical and grammatical details. However, they should never be relied upon to establish doctrine. We are not to lean upon their interpretation of the Bible.

(12) Make Notes in Your Bible: Making notations in your Bible helps amplify and reinforce God’s message. It is satisfying to open the Bible to a difficult scripture and understand it by looking at your notes. □

hand. On the surface, they are very different because no two puzzle pieces are exactly the same. Once you put the pieces together, however, you then realize that their apparent differences actually *complement* each other.

This analogy has a direct connection to biblical understanding. What can appear to be a contradiction is actually a complement or supplement once *all* scriptures on that given subject are combined. Because of this, no single scripture can or should be used to establish a doctrine or overall understanding.

Here is an example that clearly demonstrates the need to combine verses on a subject. The following are four different verses that Bible detractors claim are contradictions. They are related to what was written on the stake where Christ was crucified.

■ Matthew 27:37: “And set up over His head His accusation written, THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS.”

■ Mark 15:26: “And the superscription of His accusation was written over, THE KING OF THE JEWS.”

■ Luke 23:38: “And a superscription also was written over Him in letters of Greek, and Latin, and Hebrew, THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS.”

■ John 19:19: “And Pilate wrote a title, and put it on the cross. And the writing was, JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS.”

Together, these verses show that Pilate did the writing, and that three versions were written in three different languages.

Reading these four contributions from four different authors give us a complete account of what occurred.

Rather than these four scriptures contradicting each other, when we assemble the “precept upon precept and line upon line,” we can see the full picture.

This is a small example and one related only to the gospels. Under the “here a little, and there a little” principle, “pieces” are scattered all throughout the Bible, between the Old and New Testaments. In some cases, they were written thousands of years apart! So many doctrines become clear once they are understood in the context of other verses.

Can you now see the importance of knowing the Bible must be studied in its entirety?

Why So Many Pieces?

With certain subjects in the Bible being disconnected and dispersed, one could

wonder why God's Word is written in a way that leads to such confusion. Why not write it in a way that could easily be understood by anyone?

Soon after the verse in Isaiah 28, we are offered a clue. It relates to one of the necessary components of being able to solve a puzzle.

We clearly saw in verse 10 that "here a little, and there a little" shows scripture must be studied together and in its entirety to be fully understood. Verse 13 repeats this and then goes on to detail a major reason the Bible is written this way: "But the word of the LORD was unto them precept upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little; *that they might go, and fall backward, and be broken, and snared, and taken.*"

Understand. One big reason the Bible is so difficult to understand is because it was *designed* to be that way!

As surprising as this may sound, Jesus Christ repeated this concept in the New Testament—think "here a little, and there a little"—prior to interpreting a parable for His disciples.

Astonishingly, He told them, "Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables: that seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand; lest at any time they should be converted, and their sins should be forgiven them" (Mark 4:11-12).

These verses show that the Word of God is written in a way to conceal or hide the true meaning so only those God is working with or *guiding* at a given point in time understand. With

God, through the power of His Holy Spirit, it becomes possible to solve the puzzle that is the Bible.

Unknown Purpose

Most professing Christians believe their current mission is to "save every man's soul" and "turn every heart to Jesus." Therefore, they preach on street corners, go on mission trips, and give away Bibles in an effort to convert the masses now.

While The Restored Church of God, the producer of this magazine, does preach the gospel to the world, just as the living Christ did when He walked the Earth, we do so as a *witness* unto all nations (Matt. 24:14)—not to *convert* all nations at this time. There is a huge difference and it has everything to do with God's overall Plan for working with mankind.

Vital to God's Plan is the knowledge that the Bible is a "coded" book. It is intentionally veiled only to be revealed and understood fully by those with whom God is currently working. This is the same God who said He calls man to Himself: "No man can come to Me [Christ], except the Father which has sent Me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day...And

He [Christ] said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto Me, except it were given unto him of My Father" (John 6:44, 65).

While certain people can pick up the Bible and glean *partial* understanding, it is only through the guiding of God's Spirit that a person can implement the *strategy* necessary to put *all* the pieces of His Word together and form a complete and accurate picture. (For more on this correct strategy, see the inset titled "Twelve Rules of Bible Study" on the previous page.)

The majority of humanity is not being called at this time, but they *will* receive a chance in the future.

God is calling relatively few in this age. However, because He does the calling does not mean you do not bear any responsibility for what you are reading. In fact, if you are a frequent reader of this magazine and find that you follow along with many of the concepts we cover—and agree with and understand them—there is a possibility that God could be beginning to open your mind to His truth.

To know for sure whether you are being drawn by God, continue to read *The Real Truth* magazine along with the free literature featured. You can

also learn specifically about the calling process, including exactly what it means and whether it is happening to you, by accessing our thorough article on the subject titled "Are You Being Called?" at rcg.org/aybc. This is a topic you certainly do not want to misunderstand.

The Bible is a complex and extensive puzzle, yet with God's help and patience on your part, you CAN put it all together. □



IRAN

Continued from page 15

of the Arab Spring in 2010, there have been plenty.

Iran also stokes Shia-Sunni tensions. Since the seventh century, when Muslims waged a successful conquest in the region, the majority of the Iranians (then known as Persians) have adhered to the Koran. With the rise of the ayatollahs after the Iranian Revolution in 1979, the nation has been majority Shia—with a main goal to export their revolution to other nations.

The Council on Foreign Relations explained part of the motivation for Iran's actions: "Shia identity is rooted in victimhood over the killing of Husayn, the Prophet Mohammed's grandson [whom the Shia felt should rightfully lead Islam], in the seventh century, and a long history of marginalization by the Sunni majority. Islam's dominant sect, which roughly 85 percent of the world's 1.6 billion Muslims follow, viewed Shia Islam with suspicion, and extremist Sunnis have portrayed Shias as heretics and apostates."

While the Shia-Sunni divide begins to explain some of the complications Washington has in working with Tehran, it is not the sole factor.

Richard N. Haass, former director of policy planning for the U.S. State Department, wrote in an article submitted to *Project Syndicate* that the Middle East's problems run much deeper than sectarianism: "It is a region wracked by religious struggle between competing traditions of the faith. But the conflict is also between militants and moderates, fueled by neighboring rulers seeking to defend their interests and increase their influence. Conflicts take place within and between states; civil wars and proxy wars become impossible to distinguish. Governments often forfeit control to smaller groups—militias and the like—operating within and across borders. The loss of life is devastating, and millions are rendered homeless."

In this quote, Mr. Haass was comparing the Middle East to 17th century Europe, but it still succinctly explains the complexities of the region today.

His feelings for the Mideast? "For now and for the foreseeable future—until a new local order emerges or exhaustion sets in—the Middle East will be less a problem to be solved than a condition to be managed."

With the continuing wave of government upsets and civil wars, the United States can bank on continuing Shia-Sunni clashes.

Historical Alliances

Islam is just one side of Iran's complex cultural identity. The other is much more ancient: that of Persia's imperial past. The greatest example of this is Cyrus the Great, who lived from about 590 to 529 BC. The Iran Chamber Society described him as "upright, a great leader of men, generous and benevolent."

Cyrus treated his subjects well and he even received a favorable report from the ancient Israelites in the Old Testament of the Bible: "Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia... he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying, Thus says Cyrus king of Persia, All the kingdoms of the earth has the LORD God of heaven given me; and He has charged me to build Him a house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Who is there among you of all His people? The LORD his God be with him, and let him go up" (II Chron. 36:22-23).

King Cyrus ushered in a golden age, but it was short-lived.

Vijay Shankar, a retired Indian navy vice admiral, wrote about Iran's historical motivations in an essay on his website "Strategic Dialogues on Geopolitics, Security and Strategy": "The golden period of Cyrus the Great was followed by a cycle of continuous turmoil when Persia was overrun frequently and had its territorial contours ravaged and reshaped through the centuries. Invaded and occupied by Greeks, Parthians, Sassanids, Ottomans, Arabs, Mongols and often drawn into and distressed by the affairs and struggles of great powers, Persia

has tenuously held on to its past and its civilizational identity."

While Persia "tenuously" held onto its identity, it *did* still hold on to it. Islam is the most obvious characteristic of Iran today, but its imperial identity has remained under the surface.

Recall Mr. Rouhani's inaugural address: "People want to live better, to have dignity as well as a stable life. They also want to recapture their deserving position among nations."

Recapture their deserving position among nations. This is not speaking of Islam. Rather, it is clearly harkening to the model of preeminence started by Cyrus.

Mr. Shankar continued by explaining Iran's dual national character. He stated that the Islamic conquest of AD 635-656 created an "abiding tension between the deep rooted Persian distinctiveness and the new Islamic identity; this stimulus is most apparent in its dealings with other nations and remains to this day."

This two-sided identity is a core reason the United States has long found it difficult to read Iran's intentions. The nation is pulled in two very different directions: to the west are the Arab states governed by the tenants of Islam. To the east are Asia and Russia.

Historically, Persia had strong ties to its neighbors China, Russia and Mongolia. For example, Russians (as the Medes) were part of the Medo-Persian (or Achaemenid) Empire. Also, China used to ship goods through Persia as part of the Silk Road. There is a rich history of economic, military and governmental collaboration.

These bonds are still in place today and are being rapidly strengthened.

For instance, President Rouhani stated: "Not only is Russia a neighbor with a long-standing history of relations with Iran, but also the expansion of cooperation and partnership between the two countries will certainly pave the ground for creation of a secure region" (*Tasnim News Agency*).

Some Russians hope to get more out of the nuclear negotiations with Iran than disarmament. The *Fars News Agency* quoted a prominent Russian

Sunnis and Shias: Two forms of Islam

Iraq's most senior Shia cleric has issued a call to arms, as Sunni-led Islamic State (formerly known as ISIS) threatens southern Iraq, which is predominantly Shia Muslim. Although Shias make up about 60 percent of the country, they constitute only about 10 to 20 percent of Muslims worldwide. Neighboring Iran has the world's largest Shia population.

Origin of the schism

After the Prophet Mohammed's death in 632, a disagreement arose over who should succeed him as leader of Islam. Two main factions emerged, creating a rift that remains almost 14 centuries later.

Shias believe that Mohammed's cousin and son-in-law, Ali, was his rightful successor, and that Ali's descendants are the true leaders of Islam.

Sunnis believe that Mohammed's most pious companions were his rightful successors, and that the leaders of Islam may be chosen by consensus.

■ Shia areas ■ Sunni areas
Iraq Iran



Other differences

- Shia clerics generally have more authority among their followers than Sunni clerics do among theirs.
- Most Shias reject the idea of predestination (that God has decided who is saved and who is not), which Sunnis accept.
- Shias allow temporary marriages and have different inheritance laws.

Source: Chicago Tribune, University of Texas Library Online

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businessman: “We hope the positive and constructive approach seen in the negotiations will leave positive effects on the economic ties between Iran and Russia.”

Iran is also becoming an increasingly important source of oil for China, and Tehran has called on Beijing to argue its case at the nuclear talks. In response, the Chinese ambassador to Iran stated that “I ensure that we will back Iran’s stance in the upcoming negotiations...” (*The Diplomat*).

Closer collaboration between Iran, Russia and China emphasizes America’s continued decline from its position as lone superpower. *CBS News* wrote: “China’s president called...for the creation of a new Asian structure for security cooperation based on a regional group that includes Russia and Iran and excludes the United States.”

Which Way?

As events heat up in the Middle East and globally, what the U.S. needs to know is what part of Iran’s personality will be dominant. Will it be the

Shia Islamic side or its Persian cultural identity? Will it swing more to the Arab Middle East or the Asiatic East?

Unknown to most, the Bible details both Iran’s past (as seen earlier with the passage about Cyrus) and also its future through prophecy.

Bible prophecy—which can be likened to history written in advance—makes up a full one-third of its pages. Its purpose is twofold: to allow diligent readers of the Bible to know what events will befall the Earth, but also to PROVE the Book’s authority as the Word of God.

An example of the latter relates to Persia and can be found in the biblical book of Daniel. *Real Truth* Editor-in-Chief David C. Pack detailed this proof in his two-part article series “The Mideast in Prophecy,” which is available at realtruth.org.

He wrote: “Chapter 11 verse 2 begins covering persons and events that immediately lose the average Bible reader who would have no clue what they mean. But you can understand. History is our constant guide. Read verses 2

and 3: ‘Behold, there shall stand up yet three kings in Persia; and the fourth shall be far richer than they all: and by his strength through his riches he shall stir up all against the realm of Grecia. And a mighty king shall stand up, that shall rule with great dominion, and do according to his will.’

“Who are these four kings—where the fourth is greater than the first three? And who is the ‘mighty king’? Daniel was speaking of kings Cambyses, Smerdis and Darius of Persia as the first three, with Xerxes being historically the greatest and richest of the four. History shows it was Xerxes who did ‘stir up’ war with Greece.”

God’s Word is filled with such proofs of its validity. To learn more, read Mr. Pack’s booklet *Bible Authority...Can It Be Proven?* at rcg.org/bac-ibp.

But the other side of prophecy is to detail events that are still in the future. Much of what is written in the Bible’s pages applies to today—and the *next few years*. Notably, it describes three power blocs that will dominate the world stage. Two of these coalitions are known as the “king of the north” and “king of the south” (both described in Daniel 11). Psalm 83 also describes a moderate Muslim confederation that will align with the king of the north.

Persia is nowhere to be found in the descriptions for these power blocs. From all indications, this means Iran will be part of the “kings of the east,” which are mentioned in Revelation 16:12. This will be an alliance of Asian nations, with China and Russia working together.

How does all of this play into relations between Tehran and the U.S.? The two may work together for a short time and in small ways. But news headlines—and Bible prophecy—indicate Iran will turn to Russia and China as America’s global role diminishes. □

POPE

Continued from page 12

with what is happening on the ground with those in lower level positions. This technique makes people feel they are being understood, and gives leaders a better perspective of the issues facing the organization.

In Donald T. Phillips' book *Lincoln on Leadership*, the author explains how "getting out of the office and circulating among the troops" is a key quality of any executive leader: "During his four years as president Abraham Lincoln spent most of his time among the troops. They were number one to him; they were the people who were going to get the job done. He virtually lived at the War Department's telegraph office so he could gain access to key information for quick, timely decisions..."

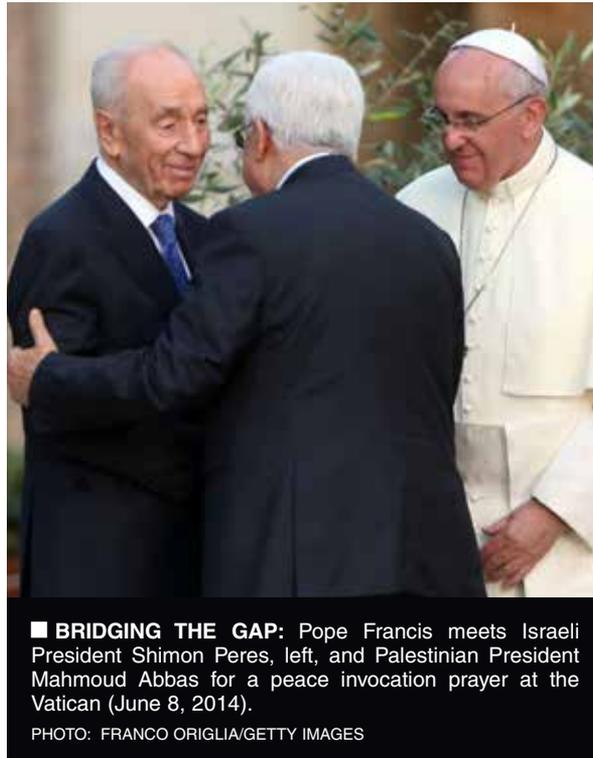
"In a letter to General Hunter, written shortly before relieving Fremont, Lincoln summarized his view of the situation. 'He [General Fremont] is losing the confidence of men near him, whose support any man in his position must have to be successful,' said Lincoln. 'His cardinal mistake is that he isolates himself, and allows nobody to see him; and by which he does not know what is going on in the very matter he is dealing with.'"

"...with this letter Lincoln revealed the cornerstone of his own personal leadership philosophy, an approach that would become part of a revolution in modern leadership thinking 100 years later when it was dubbed MBWA (Managing by Wandering Around) by Tom Peters and Robert Waterman in their 1982 book *In Search of Excellence*. It has been referred to by other names and phrases, such as: 'roving leadership,' 'being in touch,' or 'getting out of the ivory tower.' Whatever the label, it's simply the process of stepping out

and interacting with people, of establishing *human contact*."

A *Telegraph* article showed how this principle is being used in the Vatican's top office: "Since his election last year, Pope Francis has personally met 12,000 people after his morning masses, read 50 letters a day from the public and has racked up 150 hours greeting people from the pope mobile in St Peter's Square..."

"Instead of taking off Tuesdays, as popes traditionally do, Francis uses the day to clear his backlog of meetings, wrote *La Stampa*...This week-



■ **BRIDGING THE GAP:** Pope Francis meets Israeli President Shimon Peres, left, and Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas for a peace invocation prayer at the Vatican (June 8, 2014).

PHOTO: FRANCO ORIGLIA/GETTY IMAGES

end he will visit the Italian region of Molise following his recent trip to Calabria, where he got out of his car to bless a sick man who was wheeled up to his motorcade on a stretcher."

When *Time* magazine named the pope the 2013 "Person of the Year," the article covered this aspect of Francis's personality: "His vision is of a pastoral—not a doctrinaire—church, and that will shift the Holy See's energies away from demanding long-distance homage and toward ministry to and embrace of the poor, the spiritually broken and the

lonely. He expanded on this idea in a 288-section apostolic exhortation called 'Evangelii Gaudium,' or 'The Joy of the Gospel.' 'I prefer a Church which is bruised, hurting and dirty because it has been out on the streets, rather than a Church which is unhealthy from being confined and from clinging to its own security,' he wrote."

With a restructured head office, a new leader with a modest but fearless approach, and an understanding of what the people want, the Catholic Church is poised to experience unprecedented growth.

Wider Net

One other aspect of Pope Francis's personality is his inclusiveness. Since taking office, he has consistently reached out to Protestants, Muslims, Jews and homosexuals. Regarding atheists, he even stated that one does not need to believe in God to be saved. For Rome to maintain its relevancy in today's world, Pope Francis seems to recognize that a broad "come as you are" call is needed. This will especially yield results within the melting pot that is Europe and the Arab world.

Francis is casting his net wider than any previous pope, and it is resulting in a surge of popularity that has given him a platform to comment on world affairs. He has issued authoritative statements about the widening gap between rich and poor, the conflict between Israel and Palestine, and American immigration reform.

The vast changes occurring inside the Vatican walls are setting the stage for a burst of growth for this organization. In fact, the Bible foretells that it will rise to even greater levels of influence in the near future. Prophecy reveals that increasing numbers will soon find themselves being brought into the Catholic Church's expanding orbit. □

FACTORY FARMS

Continued from page 19

“Industrially produced food appears to be inexpensive, but the price tag doesn’t reflect the actual costs that we taxpayers bear,” agricultural think tank Sustainable Table stated on their website. “Monocultures and factory farms pollute communities and adversely affect public health, thereby increasing medical costs for those living near such farms—costs that are often shouldered by public budgets. Taxpayers fund government subsidies which go primarily to large industrial farms. Jobs are lost and wages driven down as corporate consolidation bankrupts small businesses and factory farms pay unethically low wages for dangerous, undesirable work.”

■ **Inferior food:** Food produced by factory farming has lower nutritional value than food produced by organic farming, which employs natural methods that help the Earth, rather than harm it. Organic food also contains higher levels of minerals, vitamins, antioxidants and nutrients.

A study published in the *British Journal of Nutrition* “...found substantially higher levels of antioxidants and lower levels of pesticides in organic fruits, vegetables and grains compared with conventionally grown produce,” *The New York Times* reported.

National Public Radio cited one instance in which farmers must routinely spray pesticides on tomatoes grown in nutrient-less beach sand in Florida—a state with a humid climate that attracts bugs—just to get them to grow.

“Florida applies more than eight times the amount of pesticide and herbicides as does California, the next leading tomato grower in the country. Part of this has to do with the fact that California processes tomatoes that are used for canning—and therefore don’t have to look as good as their Florida counterparts. But part of this also has to do with consumers.

“It’s the price we pay for insisting we have food out of season and

not local,” *Tomatoland* author Barry Estabrook stated in the *NPR* article. “We foodies and people in the sustainable food movement chant these mantras, ‘local, seasonable, organic, fair-trade, sustainable,’ and they almost become meaningless because they’re said so often and you see them in so many places. If you strip all those away, they do mean something, and what they mean is that you end up with something like a Florida tomato in the winter—which is tasteless.”

Other Options?

A touted alternative to factory farming is “sustainable farming.” With this type of farming, crops are often grown organically (e.g., without synthetic pesticides) on smaller farms, routine crop rotation is practiced, and the produce is sold in the local communities. Animals are pasture-raised, well-treated and live in conditions that are suited to their normal behaviors.

Supporters of sustainable farming claim it is more harmonious with the environment, and that the food produced is healthier and more nutritious.

Soil and agriculture expert Dale L. Schurter, author of *Mounting Worldwide Crisis in Agriculture* (available for free at rcg.org/mwcia), stated that farmers should look to the insects and weeds that they are trying to destroy. Unknown to most, these “pests” are indicators of poor husbandry.

“Actually, they are guardians of soil, plant, animal and human health,” he said. “If we truly have eyes to see and ears to hear what they are telling us.”

In his book, he wrote: “Average farmers, ranchers, landscapers, horticulturists, lawn keepers, and home flower and vegetable gardeners continue to desperately look to chemical fertilizers, pesticides and herbicides—rather than to good husbandry practices that rebuild, restore and sustain true soil fertility, and crop, animal and human health. The Fertilizer Institute estimates that more than 50 million tons of chemical pesticides are being applied *every year* on food-produc-

ing land just in the United States of America, plus over 180 million are used on a combined much greater acreage in the rest of the world. It should be a ‘no brainer’ that 230 million TONS of *poison* (toxic chemicals) are incredibly harmful... This practice truly does support and promote other practices that kill and destroy. The costs are *much* higher than paying more for health-supporting, mineral-rich *nontoxic* foods.”

Later in the book, he admonishes agriculturists to find their roots and return to proven practices that have worked throughout time—that emphasize building up, rather than tearing down, man’s health and his environment.

“Man needs to change his *attitude* toward the soil. Instead of only taking from it, we need to GIVE BACK to it by replacing and building up the supply of humus.

“Basically, this can be done through good management of cropping, tillage, fertilization and resting the land. Growing cover crops and returning other organic material such as crop residues, animal manures, etc., to the soil should be included—and we must STOP poisoning it!

“We need to put technology to work to help us fertilize soil in a scientific, balanced way. Soil balancing through proper fertilization should be a major goal. Fertilization should not exceed the soil’s capacity to hold added nutrients on its colloidal system. To fertilize beyond this, remember, causes pollution problems, and wastes one’s hard-earned money.

“Based on the most recent estimates, every year, 1.37 billion tons of solid animal waste is produced, which ‘is 130 times greater than the amount of human waste—a total of [3.75] tons for every human being in the country’ (Pew Commission on Industrial Farm Animal Production). ‘Waste,’ however, is not the right word, for these byproducts of the life process should not be wasted but carefully used in maintaining soil fertility. Manure used to be carefully collected, composted and put on land.

Today its disposal is one of the livestock industry's biggest headaches. Instead of being a pollutant, as it has become in many instances, it should be considered an asset and returned to the soil.

"We need to make efficient use of all organic refuse. Why pollute our rivers and lakes with organic wastes when such material could be used to enrich the land?"

Two Ways

From a logical perspective, those who employ large farming practices are obviously doing something wrong. Consider. To yield the end results, they have to cut off cows' tails—to keep them from swatting one another in a confined space—and chickens' beaks—to keep them from pecking one another because they are overcrowded and lack trace minerals, which they then look for in the blood of fellow chickens.

These shortsighted tactics fail to correct the real causes of the problems. They are driven by greed and a lack of proper husbandry knowledge. Likewise, food crops grown by using enormous amounts of pesticides to kill bugs and weeds is detrimental to the soil. Animals and crops raised in such conditions of duress will

naturally not do well—as evidenced by the decreased amount of nutrients they each produce.

Yet there is more to it than just what it does to people's health and the environment. The concept of a large farm is not in and of itself wrong, but the methods employed by those who operate them go against preset laws of nature that were designed to provide healthy, happy, abundant lives for everyone in society.

When crops and animals are healthier, better food is produced. After all, that is why they were created! Otherwise, everyone would end up sick—which is exactly what is routinely seen now.

The difference between the two ways of farming that have been presented represent two basic ways of life: the way of GIVE and the way of GET. The way of give is the way of outflowing love. It is based on what is best for others, helping and serving them, and looking out for their best interests.

On the other hand, the way of get is based on selfishness. It is not concerned with what is best for others.

You may be surprised that agriculture is extensively discussed in the Bible through God's laws, statutes and principles, which regulate the

care of animals, agriculture, property and ultimately one's concern for his fellow man. In addition, it also shows how man should live, including principles of healthful living that were designed to help him achieve an abundant life full of joy and happiness. To learn about these, read *God's Principles of Healthful Living* at reg.org/glohl.

God's Way is to produce food that is nutritious for others while simultaneously keeping the environment healthy. It shows love and kindness to mankind and animals alike. It is not the "profit at all cost" approach.

Man's greed in placing profit above all else has resulted in environmental damage, sickness and disease, and in the production of inferior food that weakens rather than strengthens the body.

"Today's farmlands are tired, overworked and being depleted," Mr. Schurter wrote in his book. "In man's husbandry of the soil, his impulse is to take the simple, fast, cheap, easy way—either ignoring or not recognizing the real causes of the problem. Too often, agriculturists see only the effects, while the actual causes of the crisis grow worse and more complicated.

"If we are to preserve the well-being of the soil for our sake, and for the sake of our children, and children's children, a major reform in modern agriculture is a MUST. We must recognize our agricultural problems—their causes—and CORRECT THEM."

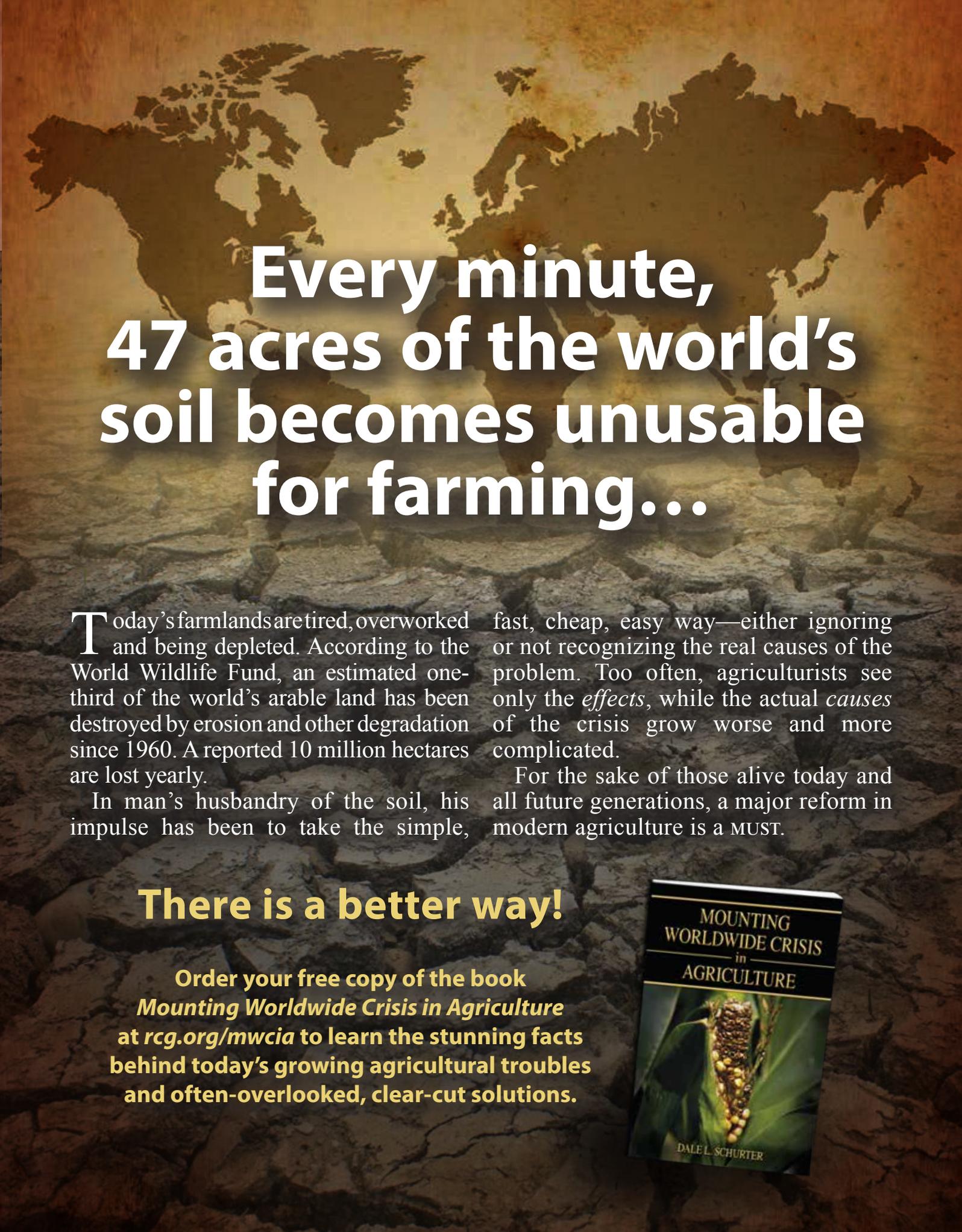
There is a way to do this, but it is not the easy route most follow. It involves respecting the natural processes that God established from the creation of the Earth. This is the only way to stop the cycle of greed leading to poor husbandry and agriculture practices, which in turn leads to depleted food, compromised immune systems, and widespread disease and misery—for animals and humans alike.

It can be done. But we must realize that we are wrong, and take steps to make it happen. □



■ **ORGANIC FARMING:** A French farmer holds organic eggs at a farm in Le Houga, France (Oct. 22, 2013).

PHOTO: REMY GABALDA/AFP/GETTY IMAGES



Every minute, 47 acres of the world's soil becomes unusable for farming...

Today's farmlands are tired, overworked and being depleted. According to the World Wildlife Fund, an estimated one-third of the world's arable land has been destroyed by erosion and other degradation since 1960. A reported 10 million hectares are lost yearly.

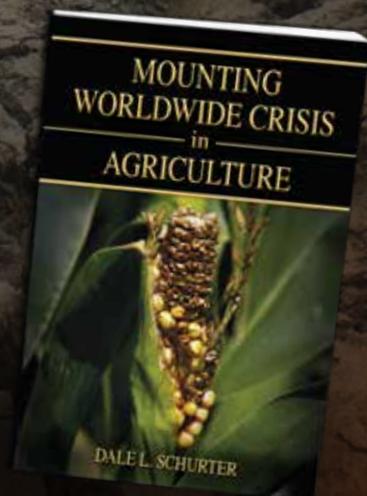
In man's husbandry of the soil, his impulse has been to take the simple,

fast, cheap, easy way—either ignoring or not recognizing the real causes of the problem. Too often, agriculturists see only the *effects*, while the actual *causes* of the crisis grow worse and more complicated.

For the sake of those alive today and all future generations, a major reform in modern agriculture is a MUST.

There is a better way!

Order your free copy of the book *Mounting Worldwide Crisis in Agriculture* at rcg.org/mwcia to learn the stunning facts behind today's growing agricultural troubles and often-overlooked, clear-cut solutions.



PERSONAL

Continued from page 2

The next three plagues involve the rivers and fountains turning to *blood*, the sun becoming so hot it *scorches* people, and darkness and pain becoming unbearable. After all these plagues, men will continue to “blaspheme the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and *repent not* of their deeds” (vs. 11).

The last generation before Jesus’ Return is so vile, corrupt and contemptuous that God will subject them to the *worst punishment possible*—and they still will not repent.

Important Sixth Plague

The sixth of the *last* plagues sets the stage for the final battle to resist Christ at His Return. Forces of spiritual wickedness—demons—are released to gather armies to bring about destruction and devastation on the inhabitants of Earth. Notice how these armies are able to gather: “The sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the *kings of the east* might be prepared” (Rev. 16:12).

The Euphrates River originates in Turkey and flows southeast through Syria and Iraq, finally reaching the Persian Gulf. God will cause this river to dry up, enabling, it says, the “kings of the east” to easily cross into the Holy Land. But this is just a prelude—the setting of the stage for even *more* significant events to come.

Verse 13 continues, “I saw three *unclean spirits* like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon [Rev. 12:9—the devil], and out of the mouth of the beast [the civil end-time ruler possessed by the devil], and out of the mouth of the false prophet [the also possessed religious leader with the Beast].” We saw Revelation 17:5 calls this Babylon the Great.

Whose Battle Is It?

Revelation 16:14 states, “For they are the spirits of devils [demons], work-

ing miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to *gather* them to *The Battle of That Great Day of God Almighty*.” So then this is GOD’s battle! These “spirits of devils” are fallen angels who followed Lucifer (now Satan) in rebellion against the Creator long ago (Isa. 14:12-14; Ezek. 28:12-17; Rev. 12:4).

Now let’s read Revelation 9:11 as we continue to understand events building toward Armageddon: “And they [the final revival of the Holy Roman Empire] had a *king* [a supreme ruler] over them, which is the *angel* of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue has his name Apollyon.”

The aforementioned leader will be accompanied by a *religious* leader who, with the power and influence of the devil, will perform mesmerizing, *counterfeit* miracles. When peoples of the Earth witness these, they will be deceived into thinking that this false system is of God—and will fight what we saw they will think to be *invaders from outer space!* The Beast and False Prophet will drive their religious-political-economic-military system toward final confrontation.

The World Scene

Let’s understand what will then be the world scene. By that time, the revived Holy Roman Empire—the Beast of Revelation—will have already conquered some parts of the Middle East. It will have established a foothold in Jerusalem. This “king of the north” (Dan. 11:40)—the same as the fourth beast of Daniel 7—will invade the Middle East under the *pretense* of bringing peace. *Oil* will also likely be a factor in prompting the Beast system into seeking control of the region.

Notice what Daniel says: “But tidings out of the *east* and out of the *north* shall trouble him [the Beast]...” (11:44). The Bible reckons these directions from Jerusalem. While the Beast’s army is in the holy land—*other* military giants will move in to oppose it.

What big countries today are *east* and *north* of Jerusalem? Russia,

China, India and Japan! It is likely that these, with possibly other nations in the region, will compose the massive *200-million-man* army mentioned in Revelation 9:16. Read this verse. Again, all indications are that oil will be a key factor for this war machine from the East. Ezekiel 25:4 and 10 call this army the “men of the east.”

The world will have come to the point in world events that Jesus referred to: “And except those days should be *shortened*, there should no flesh be saved [left *alive*]...” (Matt. 24:22).

Thought-to-be Enemy

As these armies position for war, an unlikely “enemy” arrives on the scene—Christ. Mankind will see Christ this way! And here is why: “The seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our LORD, and of His Christ; and He shall reign forever and ever” (Rev. 11:15).

Christ appropriates for God the nations’ governments and lands without asking permission!

Now realize this! There is no battle foretold at Armageddon! What happens is called THE BATTLE OF THAT GREAT DAY OF GOD ALMIGHTY! Again, this is GOD’s battle! This last great clash will be fought by armies that will have *already gathered* at Armageddon. These two major forces will obviously see Christ coming out of the clouds. Considering *Him* a threat, they will join forces, forming an alliance to fight their common adversary. These men will be angry. They will not submit to God’s government. Repeating for crucial emphasis, these will think JESUS Christ is in fact the “ANTI-christ.” The result? They will “make war with the Lamb” (17:14).

Christ’s feet will rest on the Mount of Olives just outside Jerusalem. Notice Zechariah: “Behold, the day of the LORD comes...For *I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle* [not Megiddo]; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go

forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city. Then shall the LORD go forth, and *fight against those nations*, as when He fought in the day of battle. And His feet shall stand *in that day* upon the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the Mount shall cleave in the midst thereof..." (14:1-4).

Again, where will this battle of the Lord take place? Let's read from Joel: "Proclaim you this *among the Gentiles*; prepare war, wake up the mighty men, let all the men of war draw near; let them come up: beat your *plowshares into swords*, and your *pruninghooks into spears* [the opposite of the famous Millennial prophecy in Micah and Isaiah]: let the weak say, I am strong. *Assemble* yourselves, and *come* [from Megiddo], all you heathen, and *gather* yourselves together round about: there [outside Jerusalem] cause Your mighty ones to come down, O LORD. Let the heathen be wakened, and come up [again, from Megiddo] to the *Valley of Jehoshaphat*: for there [outside Jerusalem] will I sit to judge all the heathen round about. Put you in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe: come, get you down; for the press is full, the fats overflow [great slaughter is coming]; for their wickedness is great. Multitudes, multitudes in the *valley of decision*: for the Day of the LORD is near in the *valley of decision*" (Joel 3:9-14). Compare this with Revelation 14:19-20.

Valley of Decision

The Valley of Jehoshaphat is also known as the "valley of decision." This valley lies *just east* of Jerusalem, between the city and the Mount of Olives—not 60 miles north at Har Megiddo. I know. I have also been there and walked *this* valley. Today, the Jews use this area, called the Kidron Valley, as a burial ground.

Jehoshaphat means "the Eternal judges" or the "valley of the judgment of the Eternal." King Jehoshaphat overthrew the people of Moab, Ammon and Mt. Seir when they came against Jerusalem. God fought without Jehoshaphat lifting a finger. Let's read:

"You shall not need to fight in this battle: set yourselves, stand you still, and see the salvation of the LORD with you, O Judah and Jerusalem: fear not, nor be dismayed; tomorrow go out against them: for the LORD will be with you" (II Chron. 20:17).

When "tomorrow" came, *every one* of the enemy was *dead*! God had done the fighting and wiped them all out!

What about this last battle? What will be the final outcome? Let's continue in Zechariah 14: "And this shall be the plague wherewith the LORD will smite all the people that have fought against Jerusalem; their flesh shall consume away while they stand upon their feet, and their eyes shall consume away in their holes, and their tongue shall consume away in their mouth" (vs. 12).

The God of the Bible pulls no punches in choice of language!

Graphic Picture

Revelation 19 says much more—and it is graphic: "And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and He that sat upon him was called Faithful and True [Jesus Christ], and in righteousness He does judge and *make war*... And out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should *smite* the nations: and He shall rule them with a rod of iron... And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to *all the fowls that fly* in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the *supper* of the great God; that you may *eat the flesh* of *kings*, and the flesh of *captains*, and the flesh of *mighty men*, and the flesh of *horses*, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great... I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him that sat on the horse [Jesus Christ], and against His army" (vs. 11, 15, 17-19).

So then, let's understand! Vast millions will actually *fight against Jesus Christ*! They will *not* view His Return as reason to rejoice, because, many of them serving a different Christ—"another Jesus"—they will not recognize the *true* Christ.

Grasp this! Puny human beings, who think they can oppose God because they have man's most advanced weapons of war, will be *utterly destroyed* by Him. What happens will be quick and decisive, with the armies left in complete destruction.

Note what happens first: "And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone... [Now what happens to the army?] And the remnant were slain with the sword of Him [Christ] that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of His mouth: and all the fowls were *filled* with their flesh" (19:20-21).

This description is truly horrible. While many dismiss it as allegory or impossible-to-understand symbolism, its message is *real*—and the events it describes are real!

We have seen that the final battle to end man's rule on Earth is *not* named after Armageddon. Nor will this battle be fought there. Rather, it happens outside Jerusalem. Christ is not going to bring the battle to the individual nations—the battle will *come to Him*. The armies of the world will literally march 60 miles south to be executed by Christ as He arrives on the Mount of Olives—"in that day." Now recognize all these events will take place in *our lifetimes*—and *SOONER* than you think!

You have learned the TRUTH about the battle *at Jerusalem*, only *thought* to be at Armageddon. Consider. There will be two sides. On one will be the men of the east and all who took the mark of the Beast. On the other are Jesus Christ and His armies of angels.

All who *truly* want to follow and obey God still have time to qualify to join Christ in what only *begins* with a terrible battle.

This Personal touched on a very small portion of all there is to know about the last book of the Bible. For a fuller picture, read my booklet *Revelation Explained at Last!* at reg.org/real. □

HEALTH ISSUES

West Africa Ebola Outbreak “Totally Out of Control”

The Ebola epidemic in West Africa continues to spread. As *The Real Truth* goes to print, the hemorrhagic fever strain has killed at least 961 in Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone—and it shows no signs of slowing.

Aid groups are struggling to cope. Doctors Without Borders staff have called the outbreak “unprecedented” and “totally out of control.” Budget cuts for the World Health Organization (WHO) have crippled its ability to respond, *Los Angeles Times* reported.

The newspaper quoted Scott Dowell, director of disease detection and emergency response at the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: “In my view, there’s no way that WHO can respond in a way that we need it to.”

In addition, non-government organizations are also combating rampant misinformation about the virus. *The Washington Post* reported: “Some say you can contract Ebola from a motorcycle helmet. Others say you can cure

the deadly virus by drinking Nescafe mixed with cocoa and sugar—or with two large onions.” Others in the region, according to the paper, do not even believe that Ebola exists.

At this point, the only tools doctors have to combat the disease are to quarantine the sick, speedily remove corpses, and increase hygiene awareness throughout affected areas. All of these measures are nearly impossible in the impoverished regions hit hardest.

There is no vaccine for the virus. □

INTERNATIONAL

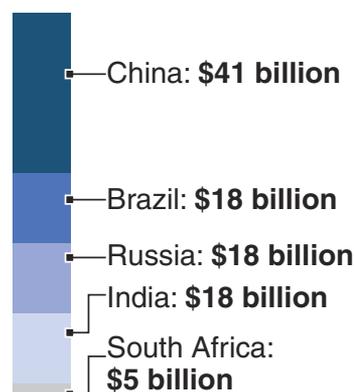
BRICS Create Own Monetary Fund

BRICS—the emerging nations coalition of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa—have banded together to create the New Development Bank, a \$100 billion development bank and an emergency reserve fund designed to replace the Western-led International Monetary Fund and World Bank.

“The new Brics bank, which will fund infrastructure projects, will have initial capital of \$50bn and maximum allowable capital of \$100bn,” *Financial Times* reported. “Each country will pay in \$10bn, giving them a theoretically equal say. The bank will be based in Shanghai, a sop to Beijing, which clearly intends to wield influence. Yet the presidency will be rotated, starting with India. China will not have a turn until 2021.”

“The Brics were prompted to seek coordinated action after an exodus of capital from emerging markets last year, triggered by the scaling back of US monetary stimulus,” *The Guardian* reported.

“The new bank reflects the growing influence of the Brics, which account for almost half the world’s population and about a fifth of global economic output.” □

Contributions to the BRICS Currency Reserve by Nation

Source: BRICS
Graphic: Tyler Davis

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WEATHER & ENVIRONMENT

Oklahoma Exceeds California in Earthquakes

The state of Oklahoma, which on average records two earthquakes per year of 3.0 magnitude or greater, has already recorded 207 quakes of at least this size as of June 2014, according to the U.S. Geological Society (USGS). This is well ahead of the 140 quakes of this size or greater recorded in the state of California during this same period.

The trend of more earthquakes began in the state in 2009. Nearly every year since, they have increased. “Earthquakes are going to be a normal part of everyday life in Oklahoma,” meteorologist Chad Myers said. “They are going to become more and more a part of life there” (*CNN*).

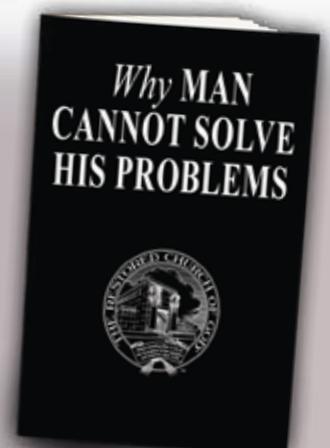
Scientists are worried what the trend may mean for the future. USGS geophysicist Rob Williams told *CNN*, “Given the rate of earthquakes over the last six months, it’s concerning enough to be worried about a larger, damaging earthquake happening.” □

**HUMAN SUFFERING, VIOLENCE,
WAR, CRIME, DISEASE, TERROR,
FAMINE, POVERTY, RELIGIOUS
CONFUSION, POLLUTION, FLOODS,
UNREST, POLITICAL UPHEAVAL,
FIRE, VULCANOES, DROUGHT,
ILLITERACY,
INVERSION,
WEATHER,
MAKES**

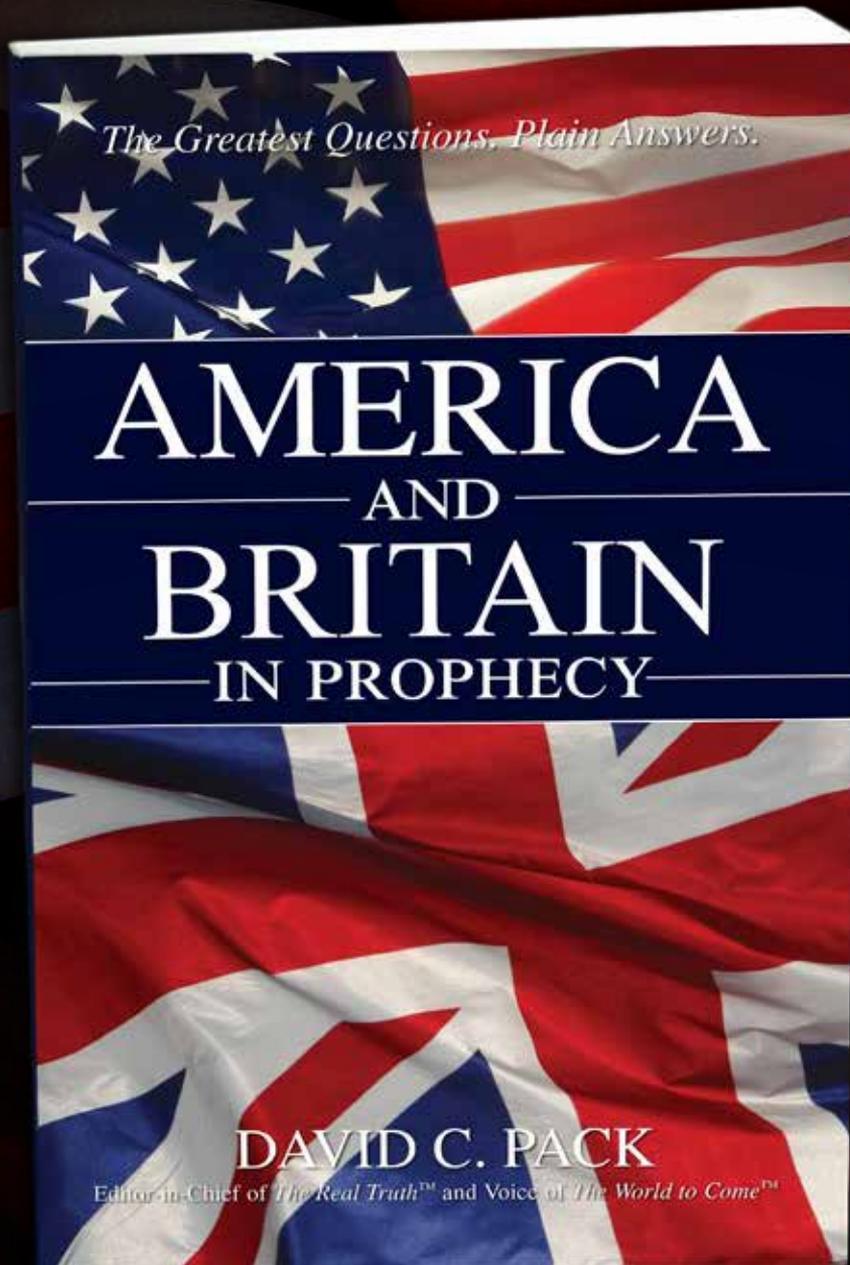


How do you make sense of it all?

The constant whirlwind of bad news that fills today's headlines can leave you reeling. Yet there is a reason *WHY* the same troubles, evils and ills continue to beset the Earth. To understand the *true causes* of these worsening trends—and how they will ultimately be resolved—order your free copy of *Why Man Cannot Solve His Problems* at rcg.org/uun.



What Does the Future Hold?



The most prosperous and influential civilizations have come and gone with no exceptions. Will America and Britain's future be the same? The answer to this question is key to understanding what the world will look like in just the next few years.

Unknown to most, the Bible speaks volumes about these two nations. Using history and prophecy as a guide, the book *America and Britain in Prophecy* explains exactly what is in store for these two superpowers. Order your free copy at rcg.org/aabibp.