

JULY 2007

THE

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# REAL TRUTH

A MAGAZINE RESTORING PLAIN UNDERSTANDING



**AHEAD!** THE FINAL  
4TH OF JULY

# THE REAL TRUTH

A MAGAZINE RESTORING PLAIN UNDERSTANDING

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A R T I C L E S

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## The Philippines – Searching for Solutions

After centuries of colony status, has this nation's independence met expectations?

Page 12

## F E A T U R E S

Personal from David C. Pack	1
Reader Comments	20
World News Desk	24

**ABOUT OUR COVER:** The United States of America is a blessed nation with many freedoms. But will these privileges and rights that many take for granted last?

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## Making the Most of Family Time

Time is our greatest resource. Are you spending enough of it with your family?

Page 3

*Persecution. Invasion. Forced conversions. Terrorism. Censorship.*

## Is Religion the Problem—or the Solution?

Page 5

## Muslims in Britain: at the Crossroads

British Muslims are facing a growing radical element in their midst. Moderate Muslims and non-Muslims are alarmed. What does this mean for Britain?

Page 8

## Ahead! The Final 4th of July

Despite all the trials, troubles and problems this great nation has endured, the United States has survived. But at what price? And for how much longer?

Page 16

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## PERSONAL FROM

David C. Fack



# Has Your Life Been Predetermined?

I GREW UP IN a well-known, mainstream Protestant church. The main difference between this church and other Protestant denominations was its belief in the “predestination” of all human beings. I learned of this central teaching at an early age.

We were generally taught to believe that our entire lives had been laid out in advance by God. Supposedly, this all happened before we were born. But I was later forced to question whether the Bible says this.

### My Mother’s Choice

This was the church of my mother’s youth. My father grew up in a different denomination. Though my parents required me, my brother and my sister to attend, neither parent accompanied us very often. When I was about thirteen or fourteen, I decided to ask my mother why. Her answer was direct and revealing.

She explained that she could not accept the doctrine of predestination as taught by her church. She went on to explain to me, through an analogy of a man with a heart condition, why she was troubled by this doctrine. She depicted the man as being aware of his condition and yet choosing to ignore it, as he rushed up and down the stairs of his house carrying boxes of books.

My mother refused to believe that such a man could suffer a heart attack without being responsible for

having made the decision to ignore good judgment, thereby *putting himself* at risk. I will never forget this conversation, because we were standing at the bottom of our staircase as she described her belief. She went on to tell me that she believed that everything she decided in her life was, in fact, something that *she* decided. She felt that one who would *deliberately jeopardize* his health, while well aware of his condition, was mocking God with his action. This was a *choice* the person made. On the other hand, if such a man really did not have control over his actions, in the case she described, then God was mocking this man—and all men—because He has left people powerless to take action in the face of apparent danger.

My mother made a point, and I have never forgotten it. However, it was not until four or five years later that I came to understand the Bible truth about the matter of predestination.

### Just the “Lost” and the “Saved”?

Think of it. If my mother was *incorrect*, it means that human beings do not really possess free moral agency. They cannot truly make their own choices or decide their own fate. It means that all people are simply playing a *predetermined role* in every matter that they face—even when they think that they are making their own decisions. In effect, the entire world is God’s stage and all human beings are nothing more than actors playing a scripted part!

Is this true? Is this what the Bible actually teaches when it makes reference to predestination? Did God actually pre-plan every sin, every act of immorality and every crime that has ever been committed? Is God the author of every war—every act of civil disobedience—every divorce—every suicide—every murder? Did God pre-plan every rape—every act of child abuse—every lie ever told—every time one chooses to cheat on his income taxes? Understand. If God has already charted the course, in advance of everything that will ever happen, all acts of sin and unrighteousness cannot be excluded.

Now turn the coin over. Has God predetermined which people *will* obey Him? Has He decided in advance who will be *righteous*—and thus who will become Christians and ultimately be *saved*? If this is true, we must at the same time consider whether He has also decided who will be lost. And can the “lost” not choose to repent and be saved? Can the saved not fall back into, by *choice*, the way of life that will cause them to be lost? These are important questions.

Is anything missing? Yes, a great deal has been completely overlooked from the pages of the Bible. The doctrine of predestination has been shrouded in ignorance, confusion and misunderstanding for far too long.

We must ask some basic questions. What *is* the plan of God? What exactly *is* God doing with mankind? Is He trying to save all men *now*? Are all men in the category of either “lost” or “saved”? Are there any *other* categories that must be understood to properly grasp God’s plan? Where, then, does the truth of predestination fit?

These are enormous questions. Not understanding their correct answer has caused millions to grieve needlessly about relatives who may have died in a supposed “lost” state

because they never accepted Christ as their Savior.

Do not ever *assume* the accuracy of any purported understanding about a biblical matter unless you can *prove* it from scripture. On the matter of predestination, people have made two common assumptions—neither of which is correct. They have *assumed* that every human being who has ever lived is predetermined to be either “lost” or “saved”—*or* they have correctly recognized that people have the power to choose their own fate but have *assumed* that all people fall into one of only these two possible categories.

These positions are both wrong. They are based on false assumptions. Most have assumed that God is trying to save the world *now*. Most have assumed that the role—the mission—of the Church is to “get the world saved.” Most have also been led to believe that God and the devil are in a great wrestling match over the fate of the world. It is as though God is desperately trying to save people from the clutches of the devil, and the devil is, just as desperately, striving to thwart God’s plan of salvation at every turn. Of course, the devil certainly *is* striving to deceive the whole world (Rev. 12:9). He is now the god of this world, seeking to blind people to the wonderful truth of the plan of God and the true gospel (II Cor. 4:4). However, this does not mean that God’s plan is, on the one hand, out of His control—being lost to the devil—or, on the other hand, that His control means predetermining the fate of every human being.

### **Is Today the Only Day of Salvation?**

Is today the *only* opportunity for all to choose or reject Christianity? Must all people “decide now” to accept Jesus as Lord and Savior? Is this what the Bible teaches? The answer is an emphatic NO! If it were yes, then God is failing miserably in

His struggle with the devil for control over the fate of humanity.

Consider! In 1920, when my father was born, there were about 2 billion people on earth. There are now well over 6 billion—and more every day. Approximately 2 billion, or one-third, believe in the name of Jesus Christ. This represents a total that includes every conceivable *brand* of the over 2,000 *different forms* of professing Christianity. Approximately another one-third of mankind has *heard* of Christ but has not accepted Him and does not even claim to follow Him. Finally, the last one-third of all people on earth know nothing about Christ. Many in India, Africa, Japan, China and parts of South America and Southeast Asia have never even heard of Christ, let alone know who He was, what He did, what He taught, etc. Are they condemned to be lost, having never had an opportunity to understand what they missed or why?

When speaking of Christ’s name, the Bible clearly says, “Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved” (Acts 4:12). Further, Romans 10:13 states that men must call on *this name* to be saved. Understand! All those who have not yielded to the God of the Bible and accepted Jesus as their Savior are certainly not saved! Countless billions have died in this condition. Most have assumed that the only other option for them is that they were lost to salvation and that God long ago predestined this for the vast majority who have ever lived.

On the other hand, if the war to win souls is as most professing Christian ministers depict it, then the devil is far stronger—and far more effective—in his effort than God is. Be honest and admit that this is the

*Please see PERSONAL, page 22*



# MAKING THE MOST OF FAMILY TIME

Time is our greatest resource. Are you spending enough of it with your family?

BY RYAN P. DENEÉ

**S**UMMERTIME IS HERE! School is out for the next few months, vacation time is near, with plans being made to travel, to spend time with friends and family, to do some home improvements or long overdue renovations.

Plans often include children signing up for summer camp, Little

League baseball, soccer, horseback riding lessons, swimming lessons or other activities.

We look forward to summer because the days are longer and the weather is more enjoyable (especially after enduring a long, cold winter). More time is available to catch up on all the projects that have been left undone.

One of the areas often overlooked in our busy schedules is spending time

with our children. Summer provides many opportunities for this!

## Summers Past

As I was growing up in a family of four siblings, my parents worked hard to make time for us. They owned and operated a small garden center business, which was a time-consuming 24/7 operation. Somehow my parents managed to run a successful enterprise while rearing four children.

During summer vacations from school, we joined my father on his weekly trips to the flower and plant auction. This meant waking up at 4 a.m. and driving for over an hour and a half to arrive before the market opened so we would be ready to purchase goods for the business. After the auction was finished, Dad often treated us to breakfast at a diner—this was a special event! Looking back, these were some of my fondest memories of time spent with my father.

Did he have to take us along? Was he not busy enough with running a business, especially as it struggled through its beginning years? Would it not have been better for us to stay home? Though my father was a busy man, he found a way to make room for us in his schedule.

Now I am an adult with young children of my own. I am at a similar point in my life as my dad—finding ways to make time for my family.

Are you making time for yours? Or are other things getting in the way, crowding too much of your free time—careers, bills (making sure you can meet the mortgage, making car payments, etc.), watching television, browsing the Internet and playing video games?

## The Current Picture

Recent reports and statistics paint a bleak picture of today's families. According to Playing for Keeps, a non-profit organization that promotes the importance of constructive play for children, family dinners have decreased by 33% over the past 20 years. Dinner time is extremely important for families. Second to these are family vaca-

tions, which have decreased by 28%, reducing even more time spent with our children.

Here are some items Playing for Keeps (*playingforkeeps.org*) mentions that are obstructing family time:

- The average two-year-old spends more than four hours a day in front of a television screen.

- One in six two-year-olds has a TV set in the bedroom.

- The average American home with a toddler has the TV on six hours a day.

A recent study by Statistics Canada reveals some shocking trends. The average worker spends 45 minutes less each day with his family than he did two decades ago. Calculating that for an entire work year, the loss in family time is equal to almost five full weeks of work. One of the causes for this is spending more time at work than 20 years ago. We are working harder, but have less free time for the important things in life.

These statistics indicate that we are in an uphill battle! The job of a parent is much harder today. However, the benefits of spending more time with our children and making the most of that time is still worth far more than the effort!

### **What Can Parents Do?**

There are more distractions than ever to keep our time occupied: cable and satellite TV—with more channels than necessary—on-demand movies, high-tech video game consoles, high-speed Internet—to waste away hours endlessly surfing the World Wide Web.

Yet parents have been given children as a gift from God, which He calls rewards and blessings: “Lo, children are an heritage of the LORD: and the fruit of the womb is His reward” (Psa. 127:3)—they are given to us as a stewardship. A steward is someone who manages property and other affairs for someone else.

In the “Parable of the Pounds” (Luke 19:11-17), Jesus taught that all God’s true servants will give an account of every aspect of their lives—including how well they have as par-

ents wisely used their time to properly train their children.

With the summer ahead of us, let’s make good use of our time and make our families the exception to the trend.

Creativity is the key. There are countless ways to create time for the family. Since it is summer, the evenings are longer, so enjoy that extra sunlight. If you have a long commute from work, consider pushing back dinner time so you can enjoy the meal with the entire family. If the weather is pleasant, make it a point to eat outside. When the whole family is sitting down for dinner, turn off the TV and radio, or play soft, non-intrusive music. MP3 players and similar devices should not be brought to the table—cellphones should be turned off.

Now for the difficult part: breaking the ice, building and creating an environment for good conversation. Let each family member share his or her highlights of the day, and let the conversation develop from there. Perhaps discuss something heard on the news or read on the Internet. Talk about a lesson someone learned that day; begin with something you learned at work.

Use *every* possible opportunity to teach. If you are eating dinner outside, there are topics of conversation all around you. Trees, wind, sun, shadows, flowers, plants and any animal, even a squirrel or a bird, can provide a source of conversation.

When was the last time you took your son or daughter for a leisurely stroll through the neighborhood? Enjoy the surroundings. Talk with your children and encourage them to share their thoughts.

Vacations are an excellent way to slow down and enjoy time with the family. All too easily we can plan a getaway that has an agenda longer than what would easily fit into the time frame. Amusement parks, sightseeing, traveling by either car or plane can be some of the most exciting family trips. But remember to be balanced; leave time for a canoe trip on a calm lake, or a day of building sand castles at the

beach, or the simple activity of shell hunting. You can enjoy the company of your children without the glitz of society.

If vacation time is not possible, what about the nearly endless summer weekends? They might not seem never-ending to us, but they do to our children! Again, take your family away from electronic devices and enjoy the natural world—it does not have to cost a fortune. Imagine an afternoon flying a kite at a park. Think of all the things you can teach your child: patience, agility, physics, etc. Or take a short ride into the country and show where the food on the table originates. In nearly every locale, there are parks and sites to explore *if* you look for them.

Even the simple act of reading books together can bond a parent and a child. Enjoy reading an adventure and guessing what will occur next.

Once we focus our minds on the activities that can increase and make the most of our family time, we should never run out of possibilities.

That said, goals need to be set. For example, eat dinner together five times a week. Share two walks in the neighborhood a week. Every Sunday afternoon go on a family outing. Set goals and meet them!

### **Our Stewardship**

Imagine being given one million dollars. What would you do with it in 18 or 20 years? Would you make sure the amount grew, so that at the end of those years you would have significantly increased its value? To be counted a good steward you would need to.

The value of each child—his or her ultimate potential—is far greater than many millions of dollars. God has placed your children into your care. As a parent, are you using your time to the best of your ability—making every minute count? If so, when they reach adulthood, your children will have benefited from your many hours of teaching and sharing your time with them. And you will have prepared them to lead successful lives! □



Persecution. Invasion. Forced conversions. Terrorism. Censorship.

# Is Religion the Problem —or the Solution?

**S**TUDY THE HISTORY of war and you will discover that, to one degree or another, religion has played an influential role, even shaping the course of entire civilizations.

Religion was at the heart of the ancient world. It established socioeconomic epicenters in which grand temples were erected, pagan worshippers practiced their mystical arts under the influence of narcotics, temple prostitution thrived, and human sacrifices were common.

The religions of men have censored scientific discoveries. For example, opposing anything that contradicted the religious beliefs of the day, the 15th-century church at Rome ordered astronomer Galileo not to “hold or defend” the idea that the earth revolves around the sun.

Religions have sparked military and persecution campaigns that have brought terror, misery, destruction, poverty, torture, forced confessions, compulsory conversions and countless deaths.

Religion—after dangling before their eyes the promise of entering “paradise”—has deceived zealots into

slaughtering throngs of unsuspecting victims.

Even those who profess to worship the same God have been at odds with each other, often to the point of spilling blood. Such has been the case between Northern Ireland’s Protestants and Catholics for generations.

And atheism—a godless “religion”—has influenced Marxist governments to persecute citizens for their beliefs.

On the surface, it appears the religions of men have been the catalyst for many of the world’s troubles. Why? Is religion the problem—or is it the solution?

## Religion, the Crusades and War

In A.D. 554, the Roman Empire became known as the “Holy Roman Empire.” Historians universally acknowledge that the pope’s crowning of Justinian after he defeated the Ostrogoths signaled this change. Periodically, new rulers appeared: Charlemagne (A.D. 800), Otto the Great, (A.D. 962), Charles V (1520), which in turn was followed by Napoleon’s reign (1805).

During these years, the Vatican’s influence was the glue that held the Holy Roman Empire together. The popes held considerable power and gave their blessing to secular leaders.

Unity was forced upon subjects of the Roman Empire, with secret police and the military executing numbers of Muslims (as well as Jews and Protestants) during the Crusades. During the Inquisition, this powerful influence was responsible for widespread execution and torture, with millions of forced conversions.

Islamists took control of the Holy Land in A.D. 632. For a time, Christian leaders were allowed to retain the positions of power in Jerusalem, and some were even given titles by the Islamic rulers. For example, Charlemagne was given the title “protector of the Christians in Jerusalem” by the Muslim leader Harun al-Rashid.

However, Christendom did not tolerate Islam’s rule of the Holy Land for long. During the Middle Ages the Catholic Church made repeated attempts to reclaim Jerusalem—known as the Crusades. The pope’s call for all Christians to expel Islam from the Holy Land brought Europe more firmly under the power of the Vatican and deepened the roots of Catholicism in the continent. It also sowed the seeds of religious tensions that remain between Christianity and Islam to this day.

This is an example of war waged between peoples who supposedly believe in God, and believe He endorses converting others by the sword. This thinking has been responsible for the death of millions.

Yet, could a loving, merciful God

be behind such religious confusion, violence and evil?

## Losing Credibility

Many blame today’s organized religions for mankind’s problems. Others believe religion has failed to answer the vital questions regarding the purpose for human life: What is man, and why are we here on earth?

Modern civilization has achieved awesome advancements in technology, science and knowledge. Ironically, humanity is experiencing a rapid moral decline, and is ignorant of the answers that would solve this world’s multiplying evils.

With thousands of religious figures proclaiming that their brand of religion should be followed, which message is correct? Rank religious confusion is everywhere! Could this be part of God’s plan?

God says through His Word, the Bible, that He “is NOT the author of confusion, but of peace” (I Cor. 14:33). As a matter of fact, God teaches that where there is confusion, evil is involved: “For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work” (Jms. 3:16). This can apply to any family, team, business, government or religious organization.

This religious confusion, along with doctrinal disagreement, has been the central cause of numerous church splits throughout the ages. The end result is not surprising. Millions of believers are on the verge of giving up on religion altogether. Some go it alone as independents, thinking that traditional religion has failed them. Many believe professing Christianity has lost credibility.

Hypocritical religious leaders throughout the 20th century have contributed to this lack of credibility. The mere mention of certain televangelists brings to mind sex scandals, fiscal corruption, deceit, hypocrisy and false prophetic predictions. Even the Catholic Church is not without its scandals.

Such scandals have led to widespread distrust among believers, causing congregations and denominations to become divided and confused.

Nearly 2,000 years ago, Jesus Christ said that we would be able to identify true religious teachers not by their outward appearance, but by their “fruits,” or results (Matt. 7:16). Speaking of the scribes and Pharisees—and essentially all false religionists—Christ also said, “Even so you also outwardly *appear* righteous unto men, but within you are full of hypocrisy and iniquity” (Matt. 23:28).

Witnessing mass hypocrisy and scandal, many conclude, “A government void of religion would stamp out all war and evil! Religion is the problem!”

Again, is religion the cause of this world’s woes?

## Is a Secular World the Answer?

In the last 20 years secularism has greatly influenced and shaped contemporary thinking. Great scientific and technological breakthroughs and greater reliance on human reasoning have replaced the influence religious orders once held. Many believe a secular world—void of any notion of God—is the answer.

But is it?

*Webster’s Dictionary* defines secularism as: (1) “A worldly spirit, a worldly view; a system of doctrine or practices that disregards or rejects any form of religious faith and worship”; (2) “The belief that god and/or religious affairs should not enter the functions of the state.”

Secularism means embracing the material rewards and the affairs of this world above faith in an unseen deity. Secularists advocate attention to the planet, with emphasis on individual rights. They generally believe that all of man’s worries, woes and wars are due to the “primitive superstitious religious thinking of our ancestors.”

Secularism is sweeping the nations, and has itself become a religion!

Lyrics to the popular song “Imagine,” written decades ago, offered an idealistic solution to the world’s problems. Essentially (according to the song), if people removed religion from their lives (“*Imagine there’s no heaven, It’s easy if you try, No hell below us, Above us only sky...*”), did away with national



governments and borders (“*Imagine there’s no countries, It isn’t hard to do, Nothing to kill or die for, No religion too...*”), and gave up all personal possessions (“*Imagine no possessions, I wonder if you can, No need for greed or hunger, A brotherhood of man...*”), a utopia would somehow emerge, with “*all the people living life in peace... Sharing all the world...*”

A secular-minded person may be sincere in his or her desire to do away with violence, ignorance, poverty and disease, but would a world without religion make this dream become reality? Can secular leaders, free of religious influences, usher in a world of lasting peace and harmony?

### **The Results of Atheist Leadership**

In 1949, Mao Zedong, an avowed atheist and communist, took control of China, ruling over the most populous nation on earth for 27 years. Critics blame Mao’s policies for causing severe damage to China’s culture, society and foreign relations.

The book *Mao: The Untold Story* asserts that Mao caused the death of more than 70 million Chinese during peacetime, and that he deliberately chose to starve to death almost 38 million during the Great Leap Forward in the late 1950s.

While his people suffered the worst famine in history, Mao exported food to the Soviet Union and its satellite nations in exchange for weapons and to expand his influence. The Cultural Revolution in the 1960s also killed millions and virtually destroyed China’s spirit.

“From the beginning,” the authors write, “Mao employed terror, torture, slave labor, humiliation, brainwashing, public executions and the destruction of trust so he could advance himself.”

Consider another example. Beginning in 1929, Joseph Stalin declared the “liquidation of the kulaks as a class.” The kulaks, a group of peasants who were singled out as the cause of problems in society, were taken from their farms and transported to remote regions. During this “liquidation” millions were executed or forced to work in labor camps, with

some casualty estimates totaling well over 20 million lives.

The atheistic ideology of Mao and Stalin was presented as a new and better answer to vital questions pertaining to the meaning of human existence.

Yet the brutal practices of these men did not do away with—but rather resulted in—fear, misery and mass murder. Removing religion did not eliminate problems and evils in these nations.

### **Why the Confusion?**

So we come back to the question: Is religion the problem? History demonstrates that the religious teachings and traditions of men have contributed to, or in some cases even caused, humanity’s problems.

During His earthly ministry 2,000 years ago, Jesus Christ said this of the scribes and Pharisees, self-righteous religious leaders who opposed Him at every turn: “Howbeit in vain do they worship Me, *teaching for doctrines the commandments of men*. For laying aside the commandment of God, *you hold the tradition of men...* Full well you REJECT the commandment of God, *that you may keep your own tradition*” (Mark 7:7-9).

The scribes and Pharisees needlessly added humanly devised ordinances to God’s laws—which, without aid from men, are already “perfect,” “sure,” “right,” “pure,” “clean,” “true and righteous altogether” (Psa. 19:7-9). In effect, these religious teachers caused people to view God’s commandments, statutes and judgments as a *burden* instead of a delight (Psa. 1:1-2).

Christ said of these false teachers, “For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men’s shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers... Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithe of mint and anise and cumin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought you to have done, and not to leave the other undone. You blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel” (Matt. 23:4, 23-24).

Similarly, traditional Christianity has

blurred the laws and truths of the Bible in the eyes of followers. For centuries, churches have initiated or endorsed wars, influenced civil governments and their laws, even FORCED people into religious compliance, unwittingly fulfilling the warning Jesus gave to His disciples: “Yes, the time comes, that whosoever kills you will think that he does God service” (John 16:2).

It was the “mother” of traditional Christianity that changed Sabbath observance from the seventh day of the week to the first—that attempted to add non-canonical, non-inspired books to Holy Scripture—that forbade commoners from owning or even reading a Bible—that wrongly emphasized works over grace, essentially using penance as a tool to “earn” salvation.

It was her “daughters” that ignored James 2:14-26 and emphasized grace over works, which degenerated into license to sin. The history of Protestantism serves as a lesson in never-ending division and splintering denominations, caused by watering down biblical doctrines. The result? Today, women are allowed in the clergy and homosexuality is seldom taught as being a sin—despite what the apostle Paul taught (see I Corinthians 14:34, I Timothy 2:11-12 and Romans 1:24-27).

Why do men add to God’s Law, making it seem strict and void of mercy? Why do others liberalize the Holy Scriptures, teaching people to take God’s grace and mercy for granted? Why do ministers selectively choose which doctrines they will teach—and which ones they will reject or ignore?

#### *Why such religious confusion?*

The traditions and doctrines of men spring from the carnal mind, whose nature God states “is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked” (Jer. 17:9), “is enmity [hostile] against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be” (Rom. 8:7) and is incapable of directing its own steps in life: “The way of man is not in himself:

*Please see RELIGION, page 21*

# MUSLIMS in BRITAIN

## AT THE CROSSROADS



**British Muslims are facing a growing radical element in their midst. Moderate Muslims and non-Muslims are alarmed. What does this mean for Britain?**

BY ROBERT R. FARRELL

**O**N APRIL 30, 2007, five young men were sentenced to life imprisonment for conspiring to construct and detonate massive “fertilizer bombs” in Britain. The plot, had it been successful, would have resulted in the largest mass murder in the nation’s history. U.S. military tests estimated that the loss of life would have numbered in several hundred dead, possibly thousands.

Targets included a large shopping center, a gas utilities network, a popular nightclub and a football stadium. The conspirators bought 600 kilograms (approximately 1,323 lbs.) of ammonium nitrate fertilizer, also used in the Bali and Oklahoma City bombings.

The terrorist plot, known as “Operation Crevice,” led to one of the largest and most complex terrorism trials in British history. The investigation revealed disturbing evidence of links connecting the five conspirators, al-Qaeda and a massive terror network linking Europe, the Americas, Pakistan and Afghanistan, where some of the conspirators trained with the Taliban. Some had met with two of the suicide bombers who perpetrated the 2005 London 7/7 bombings.

The year-long trials focused media attention on the British Muslim community. As the shocking details emerged, soul-searching followed in the government, news media and general public. Many are struggling to come to grips with the reality that their fellow citizens born and bred in the United Kingdom desire to destroy their own country.

Several questions arise: Why are young British Muslims angry? Why are some turning to violence—even mass murder? What is the attraction to radical Islam? And what do these increasing acts of terrorism mean for Britain?

### Troubled Times

The majority of Britain’s 1.6 million Muslims are civic-minded people who

love their country, obey its laws and make significant contributions in all walks of life. Indeed, British Muslims have risen to prominence in government, business, the arts, science, education, sports, healthcare and many other fields.

However, in spite of this, Britain’s Islamic community has come under increasing scrutiny due to several acts of terrorism perpetrated by radical elements.

■ In 2001, Richard Reid, a convert to Islam, attempted to blow up an

estimated that up to 4,000 terrorist suspects are active in the nation. He has warned that al-Qaeda is trying to infiltrate the police and security services—dozens have been weeded out. Additionally, both Scotland Yard and MI5 are aware of at least 30 terrorist cells operating in Britain.

### Seeds of Anger

Muslims have lived in Britain for hundreds of years in relatively small numbers. After the Second World War, their numbers surged as immigrants



■ **LONDON BOMBING SUSPECTS:** Four suicide bombers enter London’s Luton Rail Station about 90 minutes before the explosions. Authorities believed the bombs were carried in their backpacks.

PHOTO: MCT

American Airlines plane by igniting explosives placed in his shoes.

■ British-born mujahedeen have been found fighting for the Taliban in Afghanistan.

■ In 2003, two British Muslims blew themselves up in a Tel Aviv bar, murdering three people and wounding 55.

■ In 2005’s infamous 7/7 bombings, suicide bombers killed more than 50 people in the London transit system.

■ In 2006, 24 young Muslims were arrested for a massive plot to simultaneously blow out of the sky as many as 12 U.S.-bound airliners.

Despite heightened security measures, the potential for acts of terrorism still exists. In 2002, British military intelligence found a list of 1,192 names of British citizens, all Muslims, who had trained with al-Qaeda in Afghanistan. Even more worrisome is that according to the *Daily Telegraph*, former London Police Commissioner Lord Stevens has

from all walks of life arrived from the former English colonies of India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. These were later joined by arrivals from Africa and the Caribbean.

Many immigrants were poor and uneducated. Some migrated to northern towns such as Bradford, Blackburn and Oldham to work in the textile industry. Others journeyed to London and Birmingham, often working in low-paying jobs others did not want. Because of language, cultural and religious differences, they tended to live together in large clusters. To this day, in several cities across the United Kingdom, Muslims live in segregated communities with separate cultural, educational and social networks.

Because of this, whole generations have come of age isolated from non-Muslims. Many of these Muslims believe they have not been accepted into British society—that they have been rejected by Britain, the land of

their birth. They view fellow Muslims at home and abroad as being victims of racism, discrimination and injustice. Many are upset with British foreign policy, negative coverage of Islamic believers in the media, and increasing “Islamophobia”—a growing fear and hatred of Muslims.

These views have led to frustration and anger, particularly among youth, many of whom see only a bleak future for themselves in the UK. They believe their parents and grandparents are too passive, and that Muslim leaders are failing to address their concerns. Therefore, a growing number of young people are embracing radical Islam, and, believing they have no other alternative, are turning to violence as a means of “fighting for their rights.” In some instances extremists are being accepted as the true voice of Islam, “holy warriors” standing up for Muslims and fighting for the religion.

In the wake of the 2005 London bombings, a survey in *The Daily Telegraph* gauged the views of the British Muslim community. The results were revealing.

- 6% felt that the bombings were fully justified.

- 24%, while not condoning the attacks, sympathized with the suicide bombers.

- 56% indicated they could understand why some people might behave that way.

- 18% felt little or no loyalty to Britain.

- 32% believe Western society is decadent and immoral, and that Muslims should seek to bring it to an end.

- 52% believe political leaders do not mean it when they talk about equality.

- 50% believe the main party leaders are insincere when they say they respect Islam and want to cooperate with Muslim communities.

Another study by British think tank Policy Exchange compared the growing radicalization of young Muslims to their parents and grandparents:

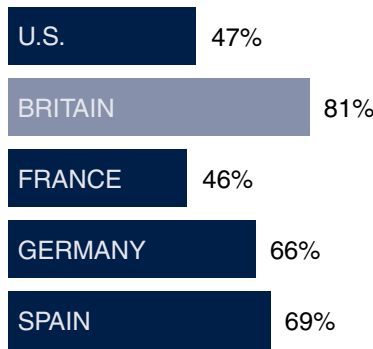
- 40% of Muslims between ages 16 and 24 prefer to live under Sharia

Law, which is based on the Koran, compared to only 17% of those over age 55. (Punishments under Sharia law include beheadings, stoning, beatings and the severing of limbs.)

- One in eight young Muslims said they admired radical groups such as al-Qaeda, who are prepared to “fight the West.”

## SENSE OF IDENTITY

The percentage of those who consider themselves Muslim first, not American, British, French, German or Spanish:



SOURCE: Pew Research Center

- 36% believed any Muslim who converts to another religion should be put to death; only 19% among those over age 55 believe this.

- Three-quarters of young Muslims believe that women should wear veils, compared to only one-quarter of those over 55.

- 40% of younger Muslims would want their children to attend Islamic schools, compared to 20% for over 55.

- Britain’s foreign policy was also a sore spot, with 58% blaming the world’s problems on “arrogant Western attitudes.”

Additionally, in a March 2004 survey by ICM Research, 66% of Muslims believed the American- and British-led “War on Terror” was a war on Islam; 45% said they would send their children to Muslim-only schools if they could; and 13% felt that future al-Qaeda attacks on the United States were justified (*Seattle Times*).

## Radical Islamic Influence

The alienation, disillusionment and anger felt among Islamic youth are providing fertile soil for radical Islam to flourish within the Muslim community. Extremist clerics regularly condemn Britain in mosques around the country. They indoctrinate young adherents with the belief that killing “infidels” (non-believers) will bring rewards in paradise. They point to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan as evidence of crimes against Muslims, and to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict as an example of their humiliation. And they label the UK as being complicit in these and other “atrocities” against Muslims.

In addition, terror organizations are actively recruiting young minds in mosques and universities. According to the Brunel University’s Centre for Intelligence and Security Studies, at least 25 campuses have been infiltrated by radical Islamists actively recruiting for “jihad,” or holy war.

Radical Islam’s message is simple: Supporters see the world as being controlled by Americans and Jews, and supported by Europeans. It believes the “War on Terror” is an attack on Islam, and that the West is oppressing Muslims. It sees Western civilization as decadent and immoral (many professing Christians would reluctantly admit to this claim), and seeks to convert all non-believers to Islam. Radical Islam’s goal is to restore the power of previous Muslim empires, and to firmly establish Islam as the dominant force on the world stage.

This message is resonating among the discontented.

## Growing Suspicion

The increasing number of Islamic terrorist acts and plots are being viewed with growing alarm by non-Muslims. According to a *Guardian*/ICM poll, only 22% of Britons believe Muslims have done what is required to fit into British society. More than half (57%) feel Muslims need to do more to integrate.

Some fear that instead of being content to live according to established

## BRITAIN'S FUTURE REVEALED!

**B**ritain's sudden rise as the greatest empire in history—with colonies and territories spanning the globe—was not an accident. Anglo-Saxon-Celtic Britons have been the recipients of fascinating, stupendous promises, made millennia ago, that enabled them to become the dominant world power.

Today this is no longer the case—why?

As Britain struggles to overcome ever-worsening internal problems, what lies ahead for this once “Great” nation?

The United Kingdom, the United States, Canada, France, Australia, South Africa and certain other countries of the West share a common heritage—and a prophetic future. The current prosperity, coming fall and promising future of these nations were foretold long ago.

In the Bible, God promises blessings for national obedience—and curses for disobedience (Leviticus 26). Britain's

national problems will only grow worse. The nation will eventually hit rock bottom.

However, there is good news on the horizon! Britons will one day turn to the One who gave them world preeminence. In that day terrorism, suspicion, hatred and division will no longer plague the nation. All will worship the same God (Zechariah 14:9)—who will establish universal justice, equity, peace and prosperity. All Britons, along with all nations, will reap the endless benefits of living according to God's harmonious ways in joy and unity—a *truly wonderful picture!*

For a more in-depth look at Britain's ancient past and incredible future, read David C. Pack's *AMERICA AND BRITAIN IN PROPHECY*.

You can know. There is a SOURCE that reveals Britain's future! □

cultural norms, Muslims are attempting to impose their religion and culture on society. For instance, former British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw set off a firestorm of controversy when he suggested that the full burqa, a veil worn by traditional Muslim women, was “a visible statement of separation and difference.” While numerous non-Muslims supported his statement, many Muslims were deeply offended.

Another area of contention is the desire among fundamentalist Muslims for their affairs to be adjudicated by Islamic Sharia law, in place of British law. A 2006 report by the BBC Radio 4 program *Law in Action* produced evidence that Sharia law is already being used by some Muslims as an alternative to English criminal law.

It then went on to quote Patrick Sookhdeo, director of the Institute for the Study of Islam and Christianity, as stating, “Sharia courts now operate in most larger cities, with different sectarian and ethnic groups operating their own courts that cater to their specific needs according to their traditions.”

It also recorded a principal of an Islamic university as predicting there would be a formal network of Muslim courts within a decade.

Adding to the tension is the growing anger with Britain's liberal immigration laws, which have led to an increase in the nation's Muslim populace over the past 40 years. Islam is now the nation's fastest-growing reli-

gion, with nearly two million adherents and more than 1,000 mosques.

Followers of Islam tend to produce larger families than the national average. If the growth trend continues, Muslims will eventually have greater power to effect national change.

### Clash of Civilizations

All of the above has led to fear and anger among non-Muslims, some of whom believe that the traditional British way of life is under threat of extinction. This has sparked violence against Muslims—particularly by white youth—and has led to political gains by the far-right, especially the British National Party, which campaigns on an anti-immigration platform.

Muslim youth have not taken these matters lightly. Grieved by attacks against fellow Muslims, and incensed by what they perceive as slurs and insults against Islam by the media and public, they have also turned to violence. Strong feelings on both sides have led to clashes between Muslims and whites, the most violent being the 2001 race riots in northern England. This has served to further alienate young British Muslims, more of whom are identifying with radical Islam.

### Reaching Out

In reaching out to the youth and working to repair damage to the community, many mosques now hold interfaith discussions, organize youth groups, and

work with local police to promote goodwill. Mosques are also transforming themselves into community centers in an attempt to reduce feelings of alienation among their young people. Muslim leaders supported a government initiative to impose an English test on foreign imams (Muslim clerics) seeking work permits.

The government is also trying to reach out. For years it has poured money into state-run Muslim schools, community centers and local programs, but has had little success in winning the hearts of increasingly skeptical Islamic followers. One of the major barriers to success is Muslim discontent with British foreign policy—particularly as it relates to Afghanistan and the Middle East. Another obstacle is that Muslim leaders whom the government engages are viewed with mistrust by elements in their community, especially among the young.

Despite the best efforts of many, Muslim and non-Muslim communities continue to be separated. Suspicion of each other remains. Radical Islam continues to gain converts. And British Muslims remain at the crossroads of moderation versus the radical element within their community.

The situation will continue to worsen, though it *will* ultimately be resolved—but not as most think. To learn more, read our article “Is Religion the Problem—or the Solution?”, which is published in this issue. □



# THE PHILIPPINES

## SEARCHING FOR SOLUTIONS

After centuries of colony status, has this nation's independence m

BY JEFFREY R. AMBROSE

**M**ANILA, PHILIPPINES — Arriving at Ninoy Aquino International Airport in the capital of the Philippines, a visitor from North America cannot help but notice its clean, but dated, interior. Its lobbies, concourses and service areas appear to have not been updated since construction in 1981, and a new terminal that was started in 1997 remains incomplete, much to the consternation of taxpayers. Although there are air conditioning vents in the ceiling, they appear not to be functioning. On a late night in May the temperature at the baggage claim felt to be around 27°C (80°F), accompanied by clinging humidity.

The 20-minute taxi ride to Makati City, the burgeoning financial district of Metro Manila, takes passengers past stores and restaurants with simple hand-painted signs, many housed in raw, unadorned concrete walls and corrugated metal.

Arriving in Makati, a stark disparity emerges. High-rise luxury condominiums and five-star hotels tower above trendy eateries. Shopping complexes rival those of American or European cities, with exclusive brand names such as Prada and Burberry lining the storefronts. However, even in these upscale surroundings, when entering a hotel lobby all visitors pass through a metal detector under the eye of several armed guards.

This short journey encapsulates many aspects of the Philippines today: the wide gap between upper and lower classes—a chronic frustration with government inefficiency—concerns with terrorism—a blend of cultural influences—and a level of progress that, while not on par with the poorest of nations, still lags behind a number of Asian countries.

So what is the current state of the Philippines? And will the near future be an echo of the past—or are new and better chapters ahead?

### **A Distinctive Nation**

A roughly triangular archipelago of more than 7,000 islands, most unin-

habited, the Republic of the Philippines has a population of about 90 million that is concentrated in urban areas and growing fast, with the highest birthrate in Asia. The lush beauty of its spectacular mountains, lakes and beaches bordering crystal blue seas draws millions of tourists each year. It is also renowned for its biodiversity, with an incredible range of plants and animals on land and at sea.

The nation is a mixture of Asian, Latin, European and American elements. Though most Filipinos come from Malay heritage (as do many living in Southeast Asia), others have mixed descent (referred to as “Filipino Mestizo”), including Chinese, English and Spanish ancestors.

It is the most Westernized country in the Far East, with English as an official language (alongside the native tongue, Pilipino) and a steady stream of American and European popular culture influences, especially among the youth. Cellphone use is prevalent, and the Philippines has been named the “text messaging capital of the world.” Its population is more than 80% Roman Catholic, in addition to other Catholic offshoots and Protestant groups.



RCG Panoramic Photo of the Greater Manila Area compiled from three separate images.

## net expectations?

More than 300 years of colonization by the Spanish, beginning in 1521, has left a lasting mark. The nation is named for Spain's King Philip II, and many city and town names are Spanish, along with common surnames. This period also saw extensive Catholic missionary activity, hence the still-strong influence of Rome. For example, many shopping malls incorporate cathedrals at which shoppers break for Mass. In 1995, Pope John Paul II spoke before a crowd estimated at four to five million, the largest papal audience in history.

The next colonizing power to arrive in the Philippines was the United States. The American influence is seen in the school system, as well as the President/Senate/House of Representatives political structure. There is a tendency to emulate and admire the United States. Seeing its prosperity and comparative stability, some citizens recall America's \$20 million purchase of the islands from Spain in the 1898 Treaty of Paris, and wistfully yearn to be taken under the superpower's wing again.

The outstanding hospitality for which the Philippine people are known has earned the country the nickname

“the smile of Asia.” I and a fellow *REAL TRUTH* writer experienced this in the form of a helping hand and easy conversation from complete strangers on an airplane, and in our exchanges with staff in most business establishments. Normal customer service here has a level of attentiveness, decorum and respect that is at first almost startling to a Westerner.

### **The Diaspora Economy**

Maintaining strong trade connections with Japan and the U.S., the Philippines has considerable natural resources and exports, including electronic equipment, clothing and agricultural products, such as pineapples and coconuts.

However, much of the money in the Philippines comes from elsewhere, either in the form of foreign investment or wages sent from the “Diaspora”—millions of expatriate workers spread around the globe, with large groups in the Middle East, United States, Canada, Hong Kong and elsewhere.

“If the gross national product is edging up, as reported, it's largely on the strength of more than US\$14 billion in remittances poured into the

country over the past year—the earnings of about 8 million Filipinos, one-tenth of the population, who now work overseas” (*Asia Times*).

Those who have relatives who can send money home enjoy a standard of living that is out of reach to most, especially those far from urban centers.

Purchasing power for Western visitors or transplants is impressive; for example, small but luxurious condominiums can be rented for as little as \$300 USD per month. But the peso's value is rising, making the currency coming in from the Diaspora less valuable.

Sharp divisions between classes have long characterized the Philippines. Five or ten minutes from the most affluent neighborhoods in Manila, such as Bel Air Village and Forbes Park, sit the kind of slums that are found throughout the Third World. Families live on sidewalks and panhandle, bathing their children in the open using a grimy bucket, hanging wet clothes from the rails on a freeway overpass. In rural areas surrounding the capital, new subdivisions with immaculate Spanish-style houses are within shouting distance of clustered plywood shanties.



Highways in Manila's suburbs are also lined with these ramshackle dwellings, with no running water or electricity.

Perhaps half of all Filipinos live in poverty. Probably the most heart-breaking example I witnessed was that of three boys, perhaps 7 to 12 years old, swimming in the debris-ridden, putrid-smelling Pasig River, retrieving plastic bottles to redeem for money, while calling out to passersby, "Give me money! Coins! Coins!"

**Government—A Regime Rollercoaster**

Of course, many economic woes are linked to government decisions in recent decades. The nation has seen more than its share of crises since achieving full independence on July 4, 1946. Uprisings, coups d'état, martial law, contested elections, a decades-long Communist opposition movement, and other upheavals have rocked the islands time and again.

The most infamous administration was that of the late Ferdinand Marcos. During his 20-year rule, foreign debt expanded dramatically, and by his ouster in 1986 the economy had sunk from relative stability into shambles. He and his associates were accused of siphoning billions of dollars into personal bank accounts. Nearly \$2 billion has been recovered, but much of the rest is still the object of lawsuits. Add to this Marcos-mandated projects such as the Bataan nuclear power plant—completed in 1984 at a cost of \$2.3 billion USD, but never activated due to its location on a fault line and its vicinity near a volcano—and you have a figure who embodies corruption and incompetence.

Today, an estate and grounds built by the dictator on a high ridge in the Tagaytay region is known as the "People's Park in the Sky" (pictured bottom left), with incredible panoramic views. But far from being a well-maintained museum, it is an abandoned mansion in a state of disrepair, the grounds occupied only by a few craft booths and food vendors. A cell-phone tower and a Catholic shrine rest atop the crumbling concrete home.

It is an unintentional monument—a symbol of the country's contempt for the late president, who spent his final years in exile.

The Philippines' political system is a complicated tangle of hordes of candidates organized into a raft of parties and party lines. Candidates have largely been elected on the basis of personality rather than any kind of platform. Though some believe this is changing, in the weeks preceding the May 2007 election, colorful posters obscured walls, fluttered in the wind on power lines, and littered the ground both in cities and rural barangays (villages). Most of these featured only a candidate's face and name. Some newspaper ads for a candidate did not even contain his picture, but rather a photo of fetchingly posed female models.

This year's election was controversial, with widespread allegations of fraud, vote-buying, vote-shaving, vote-padding and other mischief. Many candidates employ their own private militias, and there were reportedly well over 100 election-related killings in the run-up to the contest.

The current president, Mrs. Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, has weathered a number of failed coups—the most recent occurring in 2004—and two impeachment attempts. The Senate continues to be held by the opposition party, threatening American-style legislative gridlock. Among opponents of Mrs. Arroyo voted into office this year are two former leaders of failed coups against a former president, Corazon Aquino. This will likely not bode well for her remaining years in office.

**Challenges Ahead**

Any leader of this nation is faced with serious problems. Despite the outgoing friendliness and upbeat demeanor of the Philippine people, they battle real and unrelenting obstacles to personal happiness and collective success.

Politically-motivated violence and murder persists in news headlines. According to *The Economist*, "Those



who criticize or ask awkward questions about powerful people are quite likely to be killed,” with victims including “outspoken priests, activists, journalists and other dissidents.”

There is a dark side of the Diaspora windfall. Fathers or mothers can be away for years at a time, leaving a single parent situation in their wake, devastating families.

Additionally, illegal sex trade flourishes in the islands. A *CBC* program estimated that 375,000 women and girls are involved in prostitution, some only 9 or 10 years old. An increasing number of these are HIV-positive.

During our trip, on a Saturday evening in the lobby of a fine hotel in Makati City, guests included a steady stream of middle-aged Western visitors heading to and from rooms with companions-for-hire. While their appearance is not as blatantly provocative as women who work red-light districts in the Netherlands or the United States, a number of them appeared to be teenagers. Tens of thousands of Filipinas are also lured—or forced—into prostitution in other nations of Asia, most notably Japan.

On another front, certain adherents of a religion that arrived in the Philippines before Catholicism—Islam—are involved in a violent conflict in the southern region of Mindanao. As this article was being written, the U.S. government awarded a \$10 million USD bounty to four men who assisted the Philippine army in tracking down and killing two leaders of the militant faction Abu Sayyaf.

Finally, the environment itself presents constant danger from typhoons and volcanoes, endangering not only the property and lives of residents, but also the agricultural business that provides the largest percentage of the nation’s jobs.

### A People Waiting for a New Era

During the colonial period, Filipinos were often treated as an inferior people by occupying

powers. But they have maintained a strong national identity and nationalism nonetheless. The most prominent advocate of Philippine nationalism, José Rizal (1861-1896), is still called “our hero and martyr” by Filipinos. In his last poem, written shortly before his execution by the Spaniards, he called these islands “my adored Land, region of the sun caressed, Pearl of the Orient Sea.” This remarkable man longed for the day that his compatriots would be free and prosperous.

What will bring his dream to pass?

The progress of any group, and certainly any nation, turns on the decisions of its leaders. A successful government will encourage prosperity for its people. The converse is also true.

The Western world seems to promote democratic leadership as a near-panacea. But as Winston Churchill once stated, “It has been said that democracy is the worst form of government except all the others that have been tried.” While this form of government allows many freedoms and has many advantages, it is inherently flawed—as flawed as the human beings in whose hands the power rests.

According to Bible prophecy, the years ahead will see dramatic shifts of power among nations and continents. The Philippines may be part of a future Asian power bloc that will take shape. However, even this will not lead to ultimate success.

But those who call the Pearl of the Orient Sea home *will* one day enjoy a government that will help its people to achieve all that they long for—financial stability and prosperity, peace, opportunities for all to succeed. It will be a government that truly has the best interest of its citizens in mind.

Yet it will not arrive in the way most expect!

To learn more about what is in store for the Philippines—and all other nations—read *TOMORROW’S WONDERFUL WORLD – AN INSIDE VIEW!* □

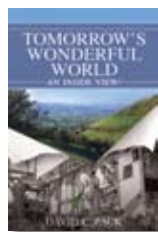




PHOTO: MCT



PHOTO: MCT

# **AHEAD!** THE FINAL 4TH OF JULY

**DESPITE ALL THE TRIALS, TROUBLES AND PROBLEMS THIS GREAT NATION HAS ENDURED, THE UNITED STATES HAS SURVIVED. BUT AT WHAT PRICE? AND FOR HOW MUCH LONGER?**

**T**HE NEAR FUTURE. Another Fourth of July arrives. People assemble at a park, setting up lawn chairs, conversations flowing, kids playing and laughing, everyone getting ready for the fireworks to come.

Then the final rays of the sun fade away, replaced by a dark, starry expanse. A fever of anticipation grows among the crowd as it anxiously waits...waits...waits... until the first flare of light shoots into the night. It explodes into multiple colors spread across the indigo-black canvas above. The fireworks have finally begun.

Onlookers cheer and clap. A brass ensemble plays the “Star Spangled Banner.” The people hold their hands to their hearts in patriotic reverence.

This scenario describes the last Fourth of July.

Despite numerous signs to the contrary, the average American citizen takes for granted that his way of life will continue. He is convinced there will be many more July Fourths to come. But he is wrong.

For well over 200 years, this mighty nation called the United States of America has experienced a blessed existence. It has overcome the Great Depression, two world wars, a civil war, pandemics and devastating earthquakes, hurricanes, tornadoes, floods and firestorms. It has resolved the issue of slavery in a land where all men are said to be free. It has had to juggle religious freedoms with the “right” to eject God from public schools and government facilities. It has had to grapple with abortion, capital punishment, illegal immigration, same-sex marriage and other “sensitive” hot-button topics that have gone unresolved.

But, despite all the difficulties—despite all the marches, riots, lynchings, assassinations, military campaigns, ever-widening political polarization and national soul-searching—this great

nation has survived.

But at what price? And for how much longer?

One day in the future, America *will* celebrate its final Independence Day as a free nation. Imagine that day was right now: As citizens throughout every state in the union gazed up at the fireworks and listened to patriotic hymns, what would they be thinking?

### Thoughts of Pride

Surely thoughts of pride would well up in the minds of most. Though U.S. troops are currently bogged down in Iraq and Afghanistan, and under relentless criticism from the international community, America’s military power retains some bite in its teeth. The current President may have many critics, both at home and abroad, but no one doubts his tenacity in fighting the “War on Terror.”

Yet, America’s enemies are increasingly emboldened. They recognize that the U.S. armed forces are overstretched, actively engaged in two war-fronts while elsewhere racing to contain hotspot situations before they reach a volatile stage. No matter how great, no matter how powerful, a nation can only do so much. It cannot police the world.

Other thoughts of pride center on the economy and the fact that America continues to be the “land of opportunity.” Citizens and immigrants alike can still rise above humble beginnings and achieve phenomenal success. They can become leaders in government—local, state and federal. They can start their own businesses and guide them to Fortune 500 status. They can reside in palatial homes, drive gas-guzzling, impractical vehicles, accumulate vast financial portfolios, graduate from elite universities and colleges, and pursue virtually any career.

If there is one thing Americans are most proud of it is their way of life, democracy and the liberties it brings.

For instance, freedom of expression—to create works of art, to publish one’s thoughts and beliefs, to criticize, to denounce prominent leaders without

fear of retribution. With this “freedom” comes human nature’s proclivity to “push the envelope,” to see how far past the boundaries of good taste one can go before society declares, “Enough!”

Sadly, these moral boundaries—which were once clear to all—have eroded, faded. Soon they will no longer exist. Even sadder, few people will care.

Americans have the freedom to vote presidents, governors and legislators into office and decide which judges should sit on the bench. However, when such monumental decisions are made, soundness of character is seldom a consideration.

Consider the example of the administrative law judge who tried to sue a small, family-owned dry cleaner for \$54 million for losing a pair of his dress pants. *Pants!* An attorney for the dry cleaners said the owners made three settlement offers, but the plaintiff was not satisfied. Instead, he increased his demands, which included money for renting a car so he could drive to another dry cleaner.

Consider the Nevada judge who has a reputation for throwing pencils to the ground and ordering the bailiff to pick them up. The same judge who orders the bailiff to rub her feet and massage her back. Who calls the court clerk “the evil one” and “the anti-Christ.” And who makes statements revealing her bias against lawyers, especially those who did not contribute to her election campaign.

Such judges are actually being allowed to render life-altering decisions!

Then there is the freedom to believe—or not to believe. To worship the deity of your choice—or to reject religion altogether. America is said to have been founded on Judeo-Christian beliefs. Today, this has been replaced by the religion of secularism—moral relativism—situation ethics—political correctness. Its “gospel” is evolution (a theory taught as fact), a message that proclaims human beings are on the same level as animals. Therefore, there is no such thing as right and wrong; no one moral compass by which people



■ **OVER INDULGENCE:** So much food is wasted every year due to the abundance of the U.S. While many are willing to eat fast food, they often do not consider the consequences.

PHOTOS: MCT

should live; no single standard by which behaviors should be judged. Thus, each individual decides for himself how to live.

Fornication, especially among teens?—"Everybody does it."

Adultery?—"As long as it's between consenting adults."

Sexual experimentation?—"Who are you to judge?"

No wonder then the family unit—the basic building block of civilization—has crumbled—has been redefined—shelved. And forgotten.

Then there are those who profess to be religious, who are proud to confess their faith, proud to "witness for Jesus."

But few religionists wonder why their ministers focus on preaching, "Here's what God can do for you!" instead of teaching what God expects from those who claim to love Him: obedience to His Law (I John 3:18, 22). Even fewer wonder why their religious leaders preach endlessly about the *Messenger* (Jesus Christ) but do not announce or explain His *message*—the all-important *kingdom of God* (Mark 1:14-15).

The issues of this life of which most people are proud are like a house built on sand: It is only a matter of

time until the foundation will collapse, and the house will crash to the ground (Matt. 7:24-27).

### Fullness of Bread

On this final July Fourth celebration another proud thought would be on the minds of most: America's boundless wealth and natural resources, perhaps best symbolized by the country's flowing abundance of food.

Decades ago, when refugees from the Soviet Union or some other totalitarian state escaped to the U.S., they were amazed by the nation's supermarkets—the limitless variety of fruits and vegetables, grown domestically and imported from all over the world, the varying qualities and choices of meats, the sheer number of grocery stores found in every city, town and suburb.

America's wealth of food is clearly evident in its diversity of restaurants: Italian, Mexican, French, Chinese, Thai, Korean, Japanese, Indian, Ethiopian, Middle Eastern, steak house, seafood, gourmet, family-style, all-you-can-eat buffet, fast food, take-out, breakfast, brunch, lunch, dinner, 24/7—so many choices, so little time.

And when people aren't dining out, they are watching television programs—even entire TV networks—

devoted to food: how to cook it, how to shop for it, how to serve it. Yesterday's obscure restaurant chef is today's cooking guru elevated to rock star celebrity status.

America's abundant and vast selection of foods is the envy of the world. In light of the meager existence most people endure in Third World nations, the amount of food the U.S. populace throws away daily is appalling. More than 50 million tons of food are thrown away in the U.S. per year. Each American household throws away 1.2 lbs. of food a day, not including scraps. This translates into \$43 billion worth of food a year.

So much to be thankful for, so little appreciation given.

As with almost all decisions in life, when it comes to diet most people choose what is pleasurable—what *tastes* good—over what *is* good for them. Enriched (in reality, worthless) flour; white sugar; soda and other artificial drinks; manmade ingredients the average consumer cannot pronounce; virtually everything overly processed, artificially preserved and fried—the typical American meal for breakfast, lunch and dinner.

No wonder obesity is so common. *Someone* is eating those "billions and



billions served”! No wonder high blood pressure, diabetes, heart disease and cancer are so prevalent! The annual estimated cost for treating obesity in the U.S. is \$100 billion.

*Yet the people are not to blame*, the voices of political correctness tell us. *It's the fast food restaurants that are at fault!*, say the lawyers with dollar signs in their eyes. Welcome to an age when overeating is considered a “disease”; when choosing to clog one’s arteries with fried foods rather than regularly eating green, leafy vegetables is considered a “genetic predisposition.”

Whatever happened to exercising character? Instead of eating to live, millions are living to eat, accumulating a “promissory note” that will one day be “paid” in wretched health—for themselves and their children. And who will they blame? The healthcare providers!

### **Abundance of Idleness**

Another thought might cross the minds of some who gather for that eventual final Fourth of July: the abundance of recreational distractions.

In times past, people went for walks. Family get-togethers and reunions were common. Family members sitting together for dinner and taking part in lively discussions were routine.

During summer vacation, children played outside, running, jump-

ing, swimming, riding bicycles, flying kites, playing football, baseball and basketball seemingly all day.

Or they read books, expanding their fund of knowledge and inspiring their imaginations. They learned how to THINK, to SOLVE, to see the “big picture.” And television viewing was limited (in some households, it was intentionally nonexistent).

But not today. The only walks many children take now are from the refrigerator to the microwave to the TV set, where they can snack on something greasy while wasting the day surfing through 500 cable channels or playing the latest blood-splattering video game.

Or they can log on to their computer and venture through the virtual highways and back alleys of the Internet. With millions of websites to choose from, young minds have access to online encyclopedias, news reports from every nation on earth, and other educational resources—yet are also just a few clicks away from every twisted perversion imaginable!

With so many distractions available, the minds and bodies of children and adults alike are deteriorating. This microwave, power windows, air conditioned, high-speed Internet age has produced an unprecedented era of conveniences. In its wake, a lifestyle of shallow recreational pursuits, shallow

news reporting, shallow leadership in government and shallow family relations have become the norm.

America’s abundance of idleness is its national curse.

### **The End Result**

Pride. Fullness of bread. Abundance of idleness. The ingratitude, arrogance, irreverence and depravity that spring from these three are indicators of a nation in decline. The problems, ills and troubles plaguing America—as well as the rest of the world—are physical symptoms of a *spiritual* condition.

Manmade solutions merely serve as dressing for a festering wound that is cancerous to its core. Savvy politicians, prominent social thinkers, educators, news pundits and other authorities cannot “heal” it. This world’s religious experts are even ignorant of how to address it.

However, there is a SOURCE—much maligned by secular thinkers and terribly misunderstood by millions of professing believers—that identifies the ROOT CAUSE and provides true solutions.

The rise of the United States (as well as the British Empire) was foretold millennia ago in an ancient promise God made to the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, to be fulfilled through the modern-day descendants of Israel:

primarily the American and British peoples. (The book *AMERICA AND BRITAIN IN PROPHECY*, written by David C. Pack, publisher and editor-in-chief of *The REAL TRUTH* magazine, explains this in astounding detail.)

As occurred in ancient Israel, the blessings and opportunities that were given to America have been taken for granted—and, in effect, despised, spat upon by an increasingly secular people. Prophetically called “the house of Israel,” God describes the U.S. and Britain as a “rebellious nation that has rebelled against Me” and “impudent children and stiff-hearted” (Ezek. 2:3-4)—peoples He spiritually calls Sodom



■ **GAMING ADDICTIONS:** Many children today spend more time indoors playing video games and surfing the Internet than playing and exercising outside.

PHOTO: MCT

and Gomorrah (Isa. 1:10) because of their moral corruption and religious hypocrisy (vs. 3, 10-15).

Notice: “The show of their countenance does witness against them; and they declare their sin as Sodom, they hide it not. Woe unto their soul! For they have rewarded [brought] evil unto themselves” (Isa. 3:9).

The modern “house of Israel” has no shame for its immoral behavior. Take, for instance, a news report of an Oregon bus driver who, at the request of an offended passenger, removed from his bus two 14-year-old girls who were kissing each other. The driver was reprimanded. His employers apologized to the girls and their families, adding that the driver “will be disciplined.” The mother of one of the girls hoped his punishment would not “be just a slap on the wrist,” and is even mulling over whether to sue for damages.

Incredible! A real-life scenario that was unthinkable 20 years ago—but no longer. Where is the moral outrage? Where is the shame?

Since God likens the American and British peoples to Sodom—declaring His people have gone even further than that ancient perverted city!—what made that city’s spiritual condition so corrupt, so vile? Notice: “Behold, this was the iniquity of your sister Sodom, PRIDE, FULLNESS OF BREAD, and ABUNDANCE OF IDLENESS” (Ezek. 16:49).

Sound familiar?

The laws of God, which were intended to be ancient and modern Israel’s “wisdom and...understanding

in the sight of the nations” (Deut. 4:6), have been banned from public display in the halls of government and in public schools. Apparently, leaders are not to be mindful of them in making executive, legislative and judicial decisions, and school children are to remain ignorant of the spiritual values God’s laws would bring to their young, impressionable minds.

No wonder, then, today’s generation of leaders was foretold to be morally bankrupt “wolves ravaging the prey, to shed blood, and to destroy souls, to get dishonest gain” (Ezek. 22:27).

And no wonder a new generation is coming of age—one that “curses their father, and does not bless their mother...that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness...whose teeth are as swords, and their jaw teeth as knives, to devour the poor from off the earth, and the needy from among men” (Prov. 30:11-14). A new generation that will become tomorrow’s leaders.

Pride. Fullness of bread. Abundance of idleness. These sins were evident in Sodom thousands of years ago, and they are prevalent today.

So the final Fourth of July draws near, and some time afterward national punishment will be administered. It is no longer a matter of “if”—but “when.”

Thankfully, the One who in righteous indignation declares to the nation, “Prepare to meet your God, O Israel” (Amos 4:12) also offers individuals a way of escape! □

## READER COMMENTS

### ARUBA

■ “Great coverage.”

### AUSTRALIA

■ “I used to listen to *The World Tomorrow* program on radio some years ago, also used to receive *The Plain Truth* magazine, which I appreciated but sadly lost contact with it in the last few years.”

■ “I have read several of your articles and liked them.”

### AUSTRIA

■ “Looks very good.”

### CANADA

■ “Very interesting information on what is happening in the world.”

■ “I am very interested

in learning all I can about God. I like the Bible verses explained to me.”

### GERMANY

■ “I’m actually impressed by the in-depth analysis of the messages I’ve been opportune to read so far. I want to receive more of your resources for further studies of [God’s] Word.”

### GHANA

■ “I would like to learn much from you.”

### INDIA

■ “Some of your analysis is intense, deep and full of information and thought provoking.”

■ “Very much informative and useful information. It gives us a chance to see

# RELIGION

Continued from page 7

it is not in man that walks to direct his steps” (Jer. 10:23).

The theologians and religionists of this world—not just traditional Christianity, but ALL RELIGIONS OF MEN—do not understand this, and therefore they do not teach it! They cannot or will not accept that human nature is naturally deceptive—that, despite a minister’s best intentions, human reasoning will take him down the wrong path every time: “There is a way which seems right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of DEATH” (Prov. 14:12).

Because of this, wars, terrorist attacks, acts of “heavenly deception,” church-sanctioned campaigns of forced conversion, and mixing with secular governments are supposedly committed in the “name of God.” Regarding those who claim to do this with “divine authority,” God declares, “I have not sent these prophets [religious leaders], yet they ran: I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied [preached]. But if they had stood in My counsel, and had caused My people to hear My words, then they should have turned them from their evil way, and from the evil of their doings” (Jer. 23:21-22).

Yes, RELIGIONS OF MEN are the problem. But true religion—which is NOT based on human reasoning or emotion, nor influenced by carnal

greed or thirst for power—IS the solution to humanity’s ills!

Jesus taught that a true Christian should live by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God (Matt. 4:4), and not trust in organizations of men or depend on men’s words or ideas.

The Bible is God’s “instruction book” to mankind and answers life’s greatest questions: *Who are we? What is the ultimate purpose for our existence?*

God’s Word states that the returning Jesus Christ will head both state and Church—a single world government and religion: “For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace” (Isa. 9:6).

All executive, legislative and judicial decisions will be rendered fairly, justly, without partiality. All laws, from the smallest to the greatest, will be founded on outgoing concern for others, first toward God, then toward neighbor. Notice the true Christian’s role in this government: “And has made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth” (Rev. 5:10).

This true religion will bring worldwide religious order and end all war, poverty and religious confusion. A new world of peace, radiant health and worldwide prosperity will burst forth on the scene!

Notice Isaiah 2: “It shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain

[government] of the LORD’s house shall be established in the top of the mountains [lesser governments], and shall be exalted above the hills, and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come all, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of HIS ways [His one true religion], and we will walk in HIS paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem” (vs. 2-3).

This soon-coming pure religious system will dispel chaos and confusion, replacing these with order, structure and peace. “And He shall judge [rule] among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore” (vs. 4).

Men cannot establish this kind of government. Only Jesus Christ is capable of doing so.

This is the gospel—literally “good news”—the returning Christ wants this dying world to hear and to heed! He announced the coming of this divine governmental religious order nearly 2,000 years ago (Mark 1:14-15). It will be this system that will re-educate a world that has been deceived since the Garden of Eden (Gen. 3; Rev. 12:9).

Your incredible human potential is part of this plan! (To learn more about this subject, read *The AWESOME POTENTIAL of Man.*) □

the future of society in the right perspective.”

■ “I really liked your articles; they are thought provoking.”

■ “Really full of facts and analysis covering all aspects with clear view points and data with accurate knowledgeable information.”

■ “Real good and helpful in day to day life for all age groups.”

## INDONESIA

■ “I have just read one of your articles—great! I want to read them all if time allows. Thank you.”

## ISRAEL

■ “I like your reports! The reasons are: (1) You don’t waste my time—they are concise; (2) good integration of information; (3) neutrality and matter-of-fact style.”

## SOUTH AFRICA

■ “*RealTruth.org* is a very exciting site to visit. The teachings are completely biblical based. I think all the people need to know about this website.”

## UNITED KINGDOM

■ “I have a strong interest in world news. The UK dailies rarely cover your type of information.”

## UNITED STATES

■ “I need more information on the ‘lost ten tribes’ of Israel.”

■ “I spent an hour perusing your varied articles. I found your work interesting.”

■ “Thank you for making this publication available.”

■ “I love what I have read so far.”

## PERSONAL

Continued from page 2

only other possibility, unless there is a third category containing the vast majority of people. But it must be a category that has not been recognized!

Is God a monster who would doom the great majority without offering them an opportunity for salvation? This is, however unwittingly believed, what most have concluded. They have assumed that only a relative few have been chosen to receive an opportunity to enter the kingdom of God. (To learn more about God's kingdom, read the booklet *What is the KINGDOM OF GOD?*)

### Seven Millennial Days

The core of God's plan encompasses 7,000 years. Few have understood this. Many *have* correctly understood at least some of the verses describing Christ's 1,000-year reign, which will begin at the time of His Return to earth in great power and glory to rule with the saints (Rev. 20:4-6). And while most know little more than this, they know *nothing* of the fact that God has allotted 6,000 years, or six millennial days of a "seven-day week," to man's rule, prior to the seventh 1,000-year "day." The sixth "day" is about to draw to a close. Satan is soon to be bound (Rev. 20:2).

However, he has *not yet* been bound. When Christ qualified to replace him (Matt. 4:1-11; Luke 4:1-13) as the "god of this world," having overcome sin, He assured that Satan will soon no longer be present to deceive and confuse mankind (Rev. 12:9; I Cor. 14:33). But, once again, we must understand that he has *not yet* been bound and he seeks to do everything, within the great power that he does possess, to thwart God's plan. He has certainly deceived his ministers (II Cor. 11:13-15) into believing that God has failed terribly in His plan to save the vast majority. But it is only by God's permission that Satan holds sway over this "present evil world" (Gal. 1:4).

God is not losing a wrestling match over which He clearly has full control. He knows exactly what He is doing, and the beauty of His plan *can* be known. Be assured that no true God would ever choose to condemn the vast majority who have ever lived without giving them a full opportunity for salvation. Such a God would not be worth following—He would be an unjust monster whose primary business is condemnation.

We must understand! The Bible states, "But, beloved, *be not ignorant* of this one thing, that *one day* is with the Lord *as a thousand years*, and a thousand years as one day" (II Pet. 3:8). Of course, most people *are* "ignorant" of not just this "one thing," but almost everything that the Bible teaches.

Yet, this is a fascinating verse.

Man (under the unseen direction of Satan) has been given six days, or 6,000 years, to try his own ways, governments, religions, philosophies, value systems and forms of education. He has practiced sin—disobedience to God's commands—for nearly 6,000 years, under the sway of Satan. He has then tried to treat all of the ill *effects* instead of treating the *cause* of having broken God's laws.

God is allowing man to learn bitter lessons. The vast majority, who have never known the precious truth of God, are having to learn that their own ways do not work! (Read the booklet *WHY MANKIND CANNOT SOLVE HIS PROBLEMS – Unknown Until Now.*)

Just before mankind is about to erase himself from the earth, through a combination of weapons of mass destruction and the irreversible pollution of a planet that has limits to how much it can withstand, Christ will intervene and save mankind from itself!

Now continue with II Peter. Notice verse 9: "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise...but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that *any* should perish, but that *all* should come to repentance." Did you notice that God wants to save *everyone*? Paul, when

speaking of God (Christ) states, "Who will have *all* men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth" (I Tim. 2:4). That is the plain truth of this verse. God is not, and never has been, in the "mass condemnation" business.

Satan has proliferated many forms of false religion all over the earth. He counterfeits the truth in endless ways. He is a master deceiver and the fruit of his efforts lies all around us. However, there is coming a 1,000-year "Sabbath rest." Mankind will rest from sin and from the relentless deceit of the devil. His time will soon be up. He is angrier now than ever before.

Mark 2:28 states, "...the Son of man is Lord also of the Sabbath." Satan will be bound during this millennial Sabbath. It is vitally important to understand this tremendous truth. Satan's dominion will come to an end and the entire world will *rest* from sin when Christ comes as King of kings and Lord of lords.

### II Corinthians 6:2—Terribly Misunderstood!

One verse is often cited to prove that *now* is the only opportunity for all mankind to achieve salvation. Let's read this almost universally misunderstood verse: "For He says, I have heard you in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured you: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation" (II Cor. 6:2).

It is critical to understand that the word "the," in the King James Version, is not found in the original Greek or Hebrew text. Translators have added it thinking that they have amplified the meaning of the verse. Instead, they have clouded and confused it.

The apostle Paul is actually quoting Isaiah 49:8: "Thus says the LORD, In *an* acceptable time have I heard you, and in *a* day of salvation have I helped you..." Neither the Greek of II Corinthians 6:2 nor the Hebrew of Isaiah 49:8 contains the definite article "the."

The Knox translation most accurately reflects the Greek meaning of



the first part of II Corinthians 6:2: “I have answered your prayer, He says, in a [not *the* only one] time of pardon, I have brought you help in a [not *the*] day of salvation.”

Those who misread this verse have not considered that if salvation was only open during the time of Paul, *then it is not opened to anyone now—including you and me!* Just as Paul lived over nineteen centuries before our time, do not forget that he also was quoting a verse that was recorded many centuries before his time. To which age should these two references to the verse be assigned?

It is certainly true that today *is* the only day of salvation for all those who have been called, having their minds opened to God’s truth. There is no escaping that all such people are having their opportunity for salvation *now!* Once people understand the truth (Jms. 4:17; Heb. 10:26), there is no turning back. If God is revealing His truth to you at this time—then you must now ACT on it! This is, then, “a” day of salvation for all those being called today. There will be no second opportunity for people who reject God’s truth.

### The Gospel Preached as a Witness

Nowhere in the Bible did Christ or anyone else say that the gospel of the kingdom was to be preached by His servants for the purpose of converting the entire world now. Try to find such verses. You will see that there are none.

Notice Matthew 24:14: “And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world *for a witness* unto all nations; and then shall the end come.” This was part of Christ’s answer to a question in verse 3 of the same chapter. It is actually a prophecy of one of many great events that would precede His Second Coming. The reference to “and then shall the end come” means the end of the age of man’s rule under the sway of the devil. But do not miss the phrase “for a witness” in Christ’s words. He did not say the gospel would be preached “for the purpose of converting all mankind” or

any similar thing. It is this Church—The Restored Church of God—that is fulfilling Matthew 24:14.

Few will heed and respond to God’s wonderful truth, made available to them in this age. You have been blessed to read it now. Most will ignore the opportunity to qualify to rule with Christ over the nations (Rev. 5:10; Matt. 5:5; Luke 19:11-27). Reading the truth contained in this article will prove to be little more than “for a witness” for many, because they will not grasp the tremendous significance of God’s plan and their potential role in it.

### Few Now Given Understanding

As stated, very few are being given true understanding in this age. Because most have assumed that they understand God’s purpose, they remain totally *blind* to the great truth of what it is!

I ask you a question. All who know anything of the Bible recognize that Christ spoke many principles, points and truths through the use of parables. Why do you suppose that He did this? Have you not been led to believe that He did it to *illustrate* His purpose? This is what I was taught—and, like most, I swallowed it hook, line and sinker! This theory is false. It is *not* what the Bible says—it is *WRONG!* More importantly, the correct answer reveals a vital truth.

Christ’s disciples asked Him this very question. Notice: “And the disciples came, and said unto Him, *Why speak You unto them in parables?* He answered and said unto them, Because it is *given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom* of heaven, but to them it is *not* given. For whosoever has, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever has not, from him shall be taken away even that he has. Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand” (Matt. 13:10-13).

This is an amazing verse. The implications are stunning!

Christ stated that He actually spoke in parables to *hide the meaning* of what He was saying. He explained that the “mysteries” of God’s kingdom were “given” to some and “not given” to others. This can only mean that some are called now and others remain blind. Yet, God is perfect. In many verses, He describes His justice and fairness with all mankind, in every matter. And we have seen that He is “not willing that *any* should perish” and would “have *all* men to be saved.”

Consider Paul’s instruction to the Corinthians: “But unto them *which are called*, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God...For you see *your calling*, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, *are called*” (I Cor. 1:24, 26).

Several times Paul speaks of a “calling.” There are those who are called and those who are not. He explains that those called now are generally not the “wise, mighty and noble.” Most of those people would not listen to what God tells them because they do not think they need Him. For now, God is willing to let them have their way and learn bitter lessons that will later help them grow and learn faster, when He *does* call them.

In John 6:44, and 65, Christ stated, “No man can come to Me, except the Father which has sent Me *draw him*: and I will raise him up at the last day” and “...no man can come to Me, except it were *given unto him* of My Father.” Only through God’s Spirit can one be drawn into and be given God’s truth. Without this calling, “drawing” or giving of the truth to a person, “no man *can*” come to the truth. It is that simple. □



**SUGGESTED READING:** What does *predestination* mean? Has the course of your life already been decided? Has God determined the fate of all men in advance? What about free moral agency? The Bible teaching is plain—easy to understand. Here is the amazing truth about God’s plan and predestination!

## SOCIETY &amp; LIFESTYLES

**Abortion: Big Business**

The 2005-2006 fiscal year was Planned Parenthood's most successful since the organization's beginnings, despite a decrease in private donations and other sources of income.

A primary reason for the group's banner year was government grants. Totalling over \$305 million USD, the grants are causing anti-abortion groups to take notice. Members of these organizations feel their tax dollars are being wrongfully spent on

procedures and programs they adamantly oppose.

Planned Parenthood Federation of America reported an annual profit of \$55.8 million for 2005-2006, with a record 264,943 abortions performed—9,000 more than the previous year.

In addition, the organization reported it distributed 1,245,506 emergency contraception kits, with some including the controversial "morning after pill" Plan-B. □

**“Marriage” and “Family Values”—Hate Speech?**

If a Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals ruling is allowed to stand, municipal employees who express phrases such as “natural family,” “family values” or even “marriage” at the workplace could be found guilty of promoting hate speech.

According to a late-2002 lawsuit brought before a district court by the Pro-Family Law Center (PFLC) on behalf of two city employees of Oakland, California, top city officials and employees belonging to left-leaning groups were allowed to use the municipality's email and bulletin boards systems to attack the Bible, denounce Christian values and call Bible believers “hateful.”

In reaction, the plaintiffs created the “Good News Employees Association” (GNEA) and attempted to announce its formation to all employees through the city's email system.

Titled “Preserve Our Workplace With Integrity,” the message stated the association “is a forum for people of Faith to express their views on the contemporary issues of the day. With respect for the Natural Family, Marriage and Family Values. If you would like to be a part of preserving

integrity in the Workplace, call...”

The email administrators refused to distribute the GNEA email, but instead sent it to the City Attorney's office, where the message was officially rejected.

According to the PFLC, “a staff attorney complained that she was personally offended by it.”

However, other sociopolitical and religious email announcements were permitted to be published, including:

- An invitation to view an “altar exhibition” for the “Day of the Dead”

- The promotion of “National Coming Out Day”

- An invitation to the “First Annual Holiday Mixer” for Oakland's Gay-Straight Employee Alliance.

- An invitation, sent by an Oakland City Councilmember, to participate in “the first anti-Iraq War teach-in sponsored by a city government anywhere in the U.S.”

The plaintiffs also posted a flyer bearing the same announcement on an employee bulletin board, where it was displayed among various messages promoting an assortment of ideological views.

Management took down the GNEA flyer and then sent an employee-wide memo, stating that the flyer was “homophobic” and amounted to “sexual-orientation-based harassment.” Management added (according to the PFLC) threats of “disciplinary action and even possible firing for any future malefactor.”

The Pro-Family Law Center filed a suit against the City of Oakland for suppressing the First Amendment rights of the two employees.

In March 2007, the Ninth Circuit—the largest of the 13 U.S. courts of appeals—ruled against the plaintiffs.

The court's opinion stated, “Public employers are permitted to curtail employee speech as long as their ‘legitimate administrative interests’ outweigh the employee's interest in freedom of speech”—also affirming that “the district court appropriately described their speech interest as ‘vanishingly small.’”

Challenging the ruling, the PFLC has filed a brief with the U.S. Supreme Court. If allowed to stand, the legal ramifications would be felt throughout generations to come. □

## Deadly Summer Temperatures Engulf Europe

**A**s Europeans begin their summer holidays, forecasters are warning that this season could bring scorching temperatures to the region, sparking fear among authorities that this summer's hot spell could match the heat wave that occurred three years ago, which caused the death of more than 30,000 people across the continent.

Along the Mediterranean Sea, coastlines have already begun to sizzle, with temperatures hitting 115°F (46°C) in Greece, considered the highest ever recorded for the country in the month of June.

In Romania, the health ministry reported that 30 people have already died as a result of breathing problems due to the blistering heat, which topped 106°F (41°C).

And in Turkey, where temperatures soared to 111°F (44°C), a man died after collapsing on a beach.

Not only have the scorching temperatures put Europeans' health in danger, they have also sparked wildfires and power blackouts in various countries. In

Greece, the excessive heat was responsible for igniting 95 wildfires across the nation, and continuous air-conditioning use caused blackouts across the country. Citizens in Italy were also forced to battle wildfires, with temperatures in Southern Italy and the island of Sicily topping 113°F (45°C).

In an effort to conserve energy and prevent further blackouts, European authorities have taken measures to assure protection for its residents. Across the heat-heavy Balkans, workers and children were sent home, and Greek officials warned against unnecessary travel. Local Romanian authorities provided bread and water for the elderly.

Experts are unsure if the heat wave is a result of global warming, but they are certain the increased consumption of fossil fuels used for traveling and augmented use of appliances has played a role in the torrid summer temperatures in Europe during the past decade—and will continue to do so if lifestyle changes are not practiced

throughout the world within the next few years.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), which investigates global warming worldwide, recently issued a report warning that the earth will continue this trend, unless consumption is not reduced drastically within the next 50 years. However possible it is to achieve such a goal, IPCC Chairman Rajendra Pachauri said at a conference in Bangkok that it is important society as a whole take responsibility for its own actions in order to impact global warming and combat the possibility of increasing summer temperatures throughout the world in years to come.

“What is an extremely powerful message in this report is the need for human society as a whole to start looking at changing lifestyles and consumption patterns,” Mr. Pachauri said.

With a heat wave continuing to plague the continent, it is certain that Europeans will be forced to do just the opposite to keep cool this summer. □

### AMERICAS

## California: Moths May Devour Millions

**T**he Bay Area in California is battling an invasion of the Australian Light Brown Apple Moth. If the insect takes a firm hold in the state, it may cause an estimated \$100 million in damages.

From its plain appearance one would not think that, when in the caterpillar stage, the moths feed on nearly every fruit, flower and leafy plant in its path. Its voracious appetite has caused some to dub it the “everything moth” (referring to its diet).

Government programs are being implemented, at both state and county levels, in an attempt to address

the problems caused by the moth. Massive efforts to spray both crops and neighborhoods are underway and quarantine zones have been set up to limit the moths from being transported from one area to another.

But the moths could exist at small, undetected levels for years before their population booms—making eradication difficult.

Since it was first observed in February of this year, 3,600 moths have found.

Also at risk are Napa Valley's vineyards, which are a large part of the state's \$38 billion agricultural industry.

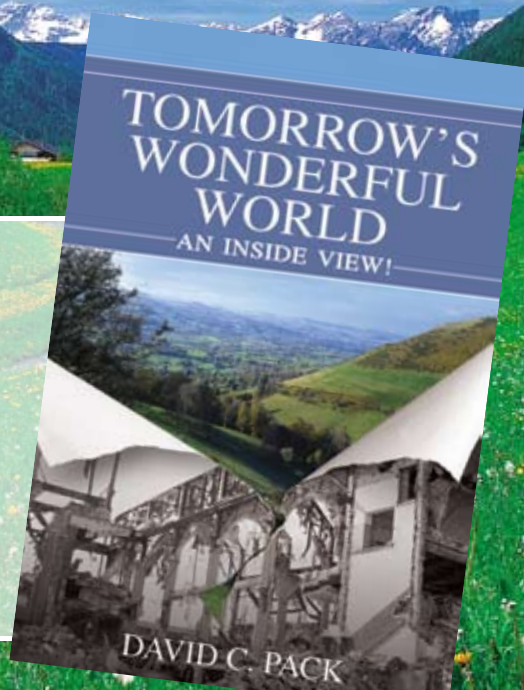


Because California has a different mix of natural predators than Australia, the Light Brown Apple Moth may thrive in the state. If even a small number make it through this early effort to exterminate them, they could make the state a permanent home—joining other imported pests such as the Mediterranean fruit fly, the glassy-winged sharpshooter and the Red Imported Fire Ant. □

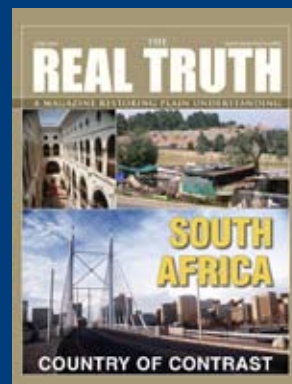
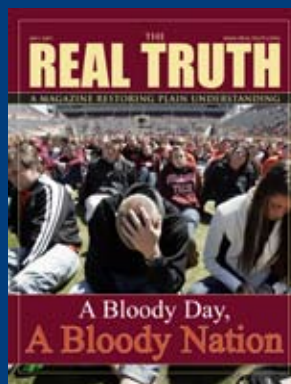
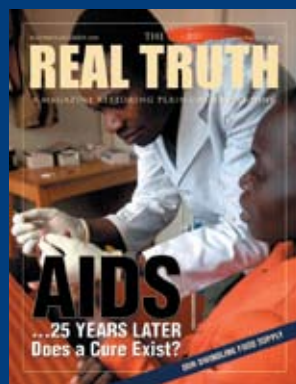


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