

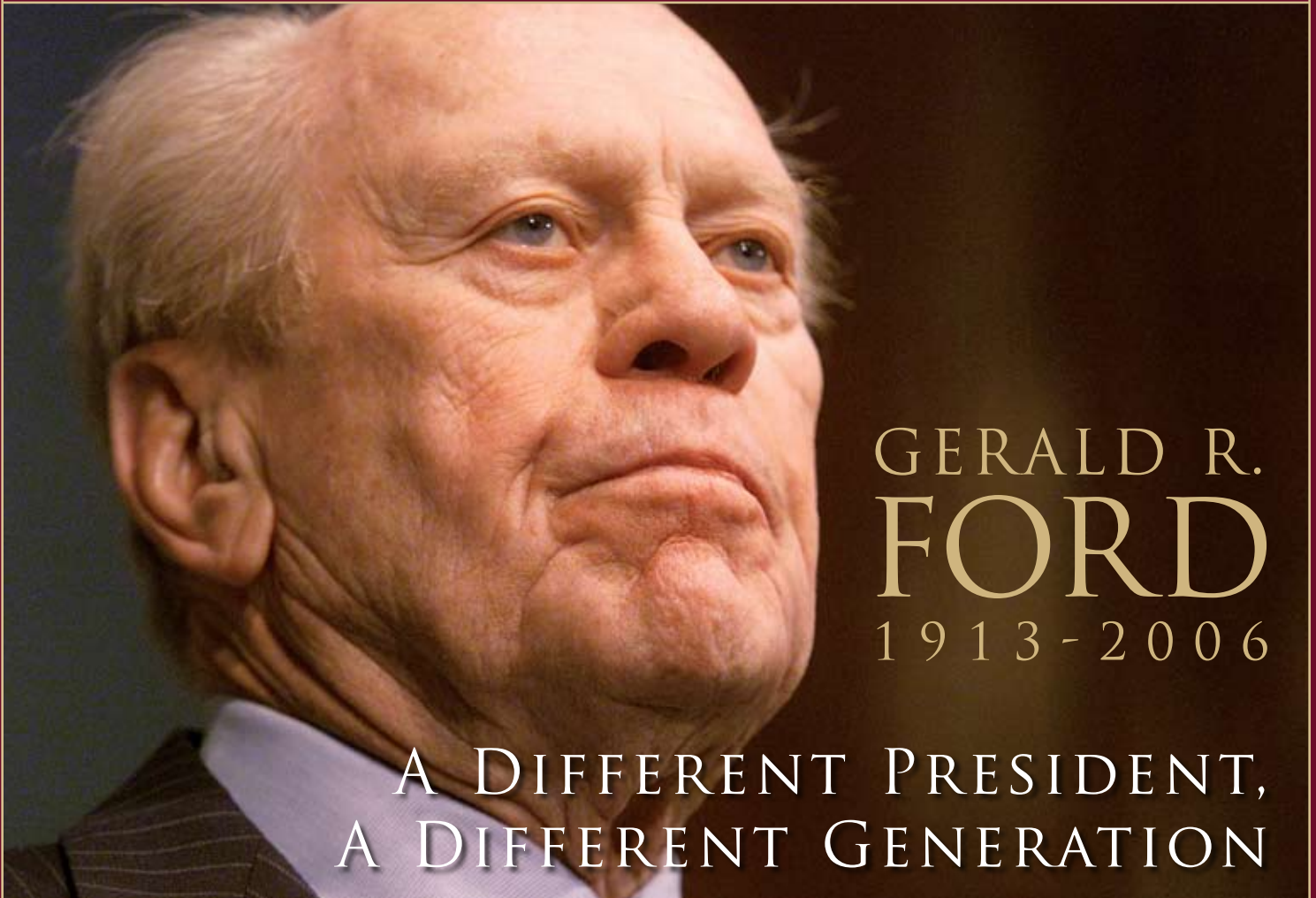
JANUARY 2007

THE

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REAL TRUTH

A MAGAZINE RESTORING PLAIN UNDERSTANDING



GERALD R.
FORD
1913 - 2006

A DIFFERENT PRESIDENT,
A DIFFERENT GENERATION



THE REAL TRUTH

A MAGAZINE RESTORING PLAIN UNDERSTANDING

VOL. V | NO. 1 | JANUARY 2007

ARTICLES

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WANTED: A Replacement Superpower – *America's Waning Strength Creates a Power Vacuum*
Page 3

Special Report:
A Different President, A Different Generation
The death of President Ford is a reminder that America is losing strong leaders from the past and is adrift without a moral compass, headed for an uncertain future.
Page 21

FEATURES

Personal from David C. Pack 1
World News Desk 24

PHOTO CREDITS: All photographs courtesy of ArtToday, Inc., unless noted otherwise.

Profile: Ban Ki-moon, UN Secretary General
As Kofi Annan's term as Secretary General of the United Nations ended, Ban Ki-moon, South Korea's Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade, was appointed to take the baton. What can be expected during his tenure?
Page 7

A Crushing Mountain of Debt
A surge in consumption has created the illusion of a recovering U.S. economy. Meanwhile, a huge debt burden is mounting.
Page 9

Society's Spreading Cancer – The Twisted, Perverse and Bizarre
Beginning with this issue, *The REAL TRUTH* will publish a series of articles examining the bizarre conduct that is becoming common throughout society. We will explain *why* this is spreading—and point to the *only* solution.
Page 13

What to Watch in 2007
As the world rings in a new year, what will the coming months bring?
Page 16

ABOUT OUR COVER: With the passing of Gerald Ford, the 38th President of the United States, an unusual leader is gone.
PHOTOS: MCT

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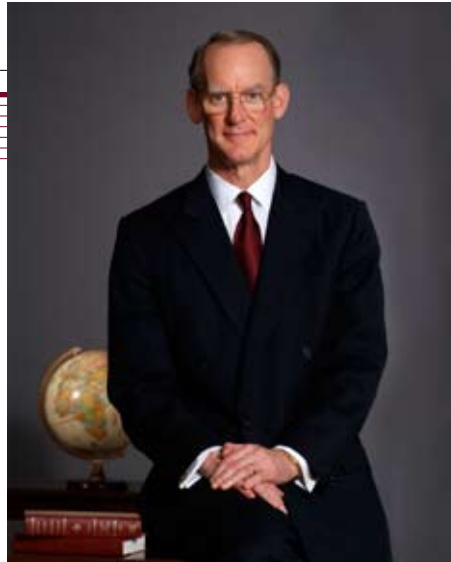
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PERSONAL FROM

David C. Fack



What is the Origin of Human Nature?

HUMAN TROUBLES and evils are prophesied to grow far worse in this age. Appalling violence, terrorism and war are escalating as human nature hurtles further out of control. After an infamous shooting where many lay slaughtered, a parent remarked, “I don’t understand this world any more.”

You *can* understand both this world and the *cause* of its troubles. Understanding human nature is the key.

All human beings possess human nature. The selfishness, rottenness, violence and terrible evils that spring from human nature have plagued the world for thousands of years. The apostle John said, “The *whole world* lies in *wickedness*” (I John 5:19). The cause of this condition lies directly at the feet of evil human nature.

Every “expert” has a different opinion about *what* human nature is and *where* it comes from. Yet none understands the answers to these questions or the question of *why* human nature exists. This is because they reject the **SOURCE** to understanding the answers to *all* of life’s greatest questions.

Consider the paradox! Think of all the wonderful things the human **MIND** is capable of producing. Its ingenuity and inventiveness are practically limitless. Yet it cannot solve the most basic of life’s greatest problems—poverty, ignorance, immorality, crime, war and misery. All of these problems—and many more—are byproducts of unbridled human nature!

No “Better Nature”

Many theologians and religionists teach that all humans are endowed with a “better nature” hiding inside, waiting to be tapped and used. This is untrue. The Bible says no such thing! Yet, millions subscribe to it.

This teaching comes from the long-held pagan doctrine of the *duality* of body and soul. It states that all people have a pure, pristine soul locked in an evil body that serves as a prison house until death, when the soul is freed. This idea is an attempt to explain the root of human nature without examining the truth of what God says. People do not have immortal souls—they *are* souls (Ezek. 18:4, 20; Matt. 10:28; Gen. 2:7)!

No “Original Sin”

Millions more believe the unbiblical doctrine of “original sin.” While Adam and Eve certainly *did* sin, the Bible teaches nothing about any “*original sin*” committed by them that is passed on, generation by generation, to every person. The term is found nowhere in Scripture and is a fiction of men.

Romans 3:23 states, “For *all* have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.” Every human being has sinned on his own account! All are responsible for and guilty of their *own* sins—not those of Adam and Eve or anyone else!

The sin of Adam and Eve brought the following consequences: (1) It cut mankind off from the Tree of Life and (2) brought the death penalty on all human beings (Gen. 2:17; Heb. 9:27; Rom. 6:23).

What Christ Taught

In Mark 7, Jesus Christ addressed those who thought they could be “defiled” by dirt they might ingest through eating food with unwashed hands. The Pharisees went to ridiculous extremes, continually washing their hands to avoid being “defiled,” and they asked Christ why His disciples did not do the same. Of course, Christ knew that accidentally ingesting a little bit of dirt on unwashed hands does not spiritually defile anyone.

His answer explained what DOES defile human beings: “And He said, That which *comes out* of the man, that defiles the man. For *from within, out of the heart* of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: all these evil things *come from within, and defile the man*” (vs. 20-23).

First, accept that Christ made the statement—and that it has to be true! This, in itself, is a staggering revelation. But the prophet Jeremiah added more: “The HEART is *deceitful* above all things, and *desperately wicked*: who can know it?” (17:9). Of course, most do *not* understand this about themselves, though they often readily see it in others. Further, the apostle Paul wrote, “The *carnal* [natural] mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, *neither indeed can be*” (Rom. 8:7).

These are incredible statements about the minds of *all* human beings. But how did the torrent of evil thoughts, which pour from all people, come to exist in them in the first place? How did it get there?

Does God infuse human nature into tiny babies at birth? Does an all-wise, all-powerful, loving God take innocent children and turn them toward terrible evil from the moment they are born? And, if God does not put this nature there, then where *does* it come from?

The Arch Broadcaster

Paul wrote the Ephesian Church about the life that God had called them out of when He revealed His truth to them. Chapter 2, verse 2 references the power of the devil and his influence upon the world: “Wherein in time past you walked according to the course of this world, according to the *prince of the POWER of the air*, the *spirit* that now works in the *children of disobedience*.”

This is an amazing passage. The phrase “children of disobedience” is also found in Ephesians 5:6 and Colossians 3:6. Let’s examine how these references relate to the phrase, “prince of the power of the air.”

Notice that verse 2 states Satan’s “*spirit...works* in the children of disobedience.” Do you see this? Did you grasp it? Satan has the *power* to use the “air” to broadcast, through his *spirit*, an attitude of disobedience! His spirit sends moods, feelings and attitudes of hostility into people’s minds. These “work” within people’s hearts and minds, bringing disobedience. This “air power” gives the devil tremendous INFLUENCE, allowing him to send thoughts of confusion, deceit, anger, pride, hate, foolishness, vanity, jealousy, lust, greed, envy, rebellion and much more directly into people’s thinking!

Think of it this way. The devil owns a most powerful radio station, broadcasting 24 hours a day. Revelation 12:9 states that he “deceives the whole world.” This mighty “station” reaches and deceives the entire world! Yet, his incredible cunning has been so seductive that he has even been able to convince most that he *does not exist!*

The devil is immensely more powerful than most realize. The Bible identifies him as this world’s god. Notice what Paul wrote to the Corinthians: “In whom the *god of this world* has blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light

of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them” (II Cor. 4:4).

Only one who has enormous power to influence—as a virtual “god” (Satan *is* this world’s god)—could blind and deceive on a scale so staggering. As a result, he has produced a world *filled* with disobedience—lawlessness!

On the other hand, a Christian follows God and obeys His Law. Paul recorded that God has a *spiritual* Law, and that it is *holy, just* and *good* (Rom. 7:12, 14)! Christians keep *it*. But how do they do this?

In Acts 5:32, the apostle Peter referred to “the Holy Spirit, [which] *God has given to them that obey Him*.” Christians understand and practice obedience to God. His Spirit is given upon repentance and baptism (Acts 2:38). *This* Spirit helps Christians obey the Ten Commandments! (Read our book *Should You Obey THE TEN COMMANDMENTS?*)

Before the invention of the radio, Satan’s power, as arch broadcaster and prince of the power of the air, could not be as easily understood. But now you can comprehend!

We can now better understand the “children of *disobedience*.” Like Christians with the Holy Spirit, these people are also inspired and guided by a spirit—that of this world’s god. Satan broadcasts a *spirit* of rebellion against God’s law—*disobedience*—through attitudes—into humanity. Ephesians 2:2 is plain. But a deceived world knows nothing of this understanding!

If you listen to the radio, you usually pick a station that plays what you want to hear. Today, people “surf” radio or television stations. Eventually, something interests them, and they stop and listen to a station of their choosing. In every case, stations are selected by choice. People have control over what they hear or watch.

Please see **PERSONAL**, page 20



WANTED: A REPLACEMENT SUPERPOWER

America's Waning Strength Creates a Power Vacuum

THE UNITED STATES has justifiably been described as a nation of optimists. The last century has seen triumphs for its people, such as recovery from the Great Depression and victory in World War II.

By the end of the Cold War, the U.S. stood as the world's only superpower—defined as a nation or group of nations with a robust economy and long-reaching military capabilities.

Even American feature films—a world-renown export—often revolve around the theme of a hero saving the

BY JEFFREY R. AMBROSE

day, snatching victory from the jaws of defeat. Everything works out in the end, thanks to American ingenuity and valor.

But to remain sensible even those with the sunniest dispositions must eventually acknowledge dark clouds on the horizon.

A chorus of voices inside and outside the U.S., growing louder and more insistent, labels the nation's military campaign in Iraq a failure. A frustrated President George W. Bush now weighs the likelihood of achieving his objectives, at home and abroad, during his last two years in the White House.

And a shaky long-term economic picture unfolds.

What are the implications of a declining America?

Iraq: America's Long Haul

The U.S.-led invasion of Iraq that began in March 2003 provoked immediate opposition from some, with several traditional allies refusing to join the coalition force. But the initial invasion, the overthrow of Saddam Hussein's Baathist regime and the establishment of a new government were relatively smooth and speedy operations. And Mr. Hussein's capture in December of that year was an important symbolic victory.

However, a military that was reconfigured in the 1990s—designed for short-term commitments—was not ready for a prolonged stay to combat terrorists. And U.S. leaders underestimated the deep roots of hostility between Iraq’s Sunnis, Shiites and Kurds. America has now been at war in Iraq longer than it was in the Second World War.

As the months pass, the death toll of soldiers and civilians mounts. For example, on November 23, as Americans traveled in record numbers for Thanksgiving, a “barrage of car bombs, mortar attacks, and missiles battered the Shiite Muslim slum of Sadr City...killing more than 160 people in the single deadliest assault on Iraqi civilians since the start of the US-led invasion.

“The capital was placed under curfew...after the highly orchestrated attack...which threatened to unleash yet another cycle of reprisal killings and push the country closer to all-out civil war.

“Plumes of black smoke, and anguished screams, rose above a cha-

otic landscape of flames and charred cars, witnesses said. Bodies lined the streets where relatives searched for their loved ones. Strangers helped the wounded reach hospitals overflowing with victims.

“Angry Shiite residents and militiamen from Sadr’s Mahdi Army, wielding guns and rocket-propelled grenades, roamed the streets...vowing revenge against Sunni Arabs.

“‘Our bellies are full of blood,’ declared Ibrahim Tabour, a resident. ‘We’re going to fight the terrorists until the last breath.’

“The attacks in Sadr City, Baghdad’s largest Shiite district, killed at least 161 people and wounded 257, according to an *Associated Press* tally. By nightfall, violence had spread to other Baghdad neighborhoods in retaliatory attacks across the city, even as politicians and senior religious clerics appealed for calm” (*Washington Post*).

The Gulf War of 1991, from the first Apache strike to the victory parade in Washington, lasted less than five months, and the fighting was

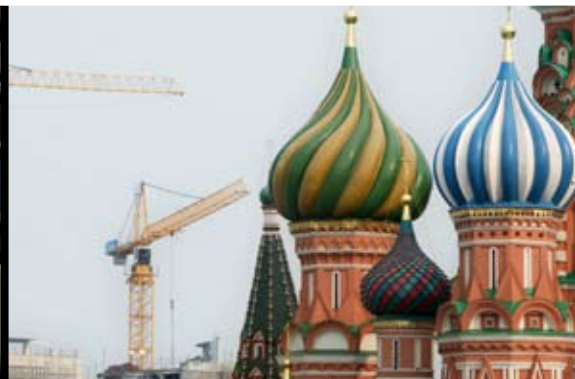
over in less than two months. It was an overwhelming victory both in the air and on the ground. Contrast this with the prolonged policing, multiple tours of duty for combat divisions and thousands of roadside bombs seen in Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Add to this the effect of a media that pursues headlines at all costs, and the political influence that accompanies them. Daily reports of military losses demoralize the nation. Imagine if this had occurred during WWII, in which more than 6,600 Americans perished in just one day at Normandy!

It appears the American people do not have the stomach, the patience or the attention span to tolerate this war for much longer.

But why does decisive victory elude the world’s second-largest military?

One huge reason is that American forces are now overcommitted and under-funded: “Gen. Peter J. Schoomaker, the Army chief of staff, in mid-August clearly signaled just how bad the situation has become when he refused to put an Army budget on the table.



■ **FILLING THE GAP:** While America appears to be faltering, other countries, including India, Russia, China and those in the EU, are strengthening their technological, political, military and economic presence in the world.
PHOTOS: MCT

Former “Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld had told Schoomaker that he had to come up with a spending plan that provided approximately \$114 billion for fiscal 2008 – a \$2 billion cut from 2007. Schoomaker’s response: ‘There is no sense in us submitting a budget that we cannot execute...a broken budget.’

“He said it would cost an additional \$17 billion just to work through the huge backlog of broken and worn out Army tanks and Bradleys and Humvees at Army repair depots.

“Meanwhile, the Army is so bogged down in Afghanistan and Iraq that only two or three of its combat brigades, fewer than 10,000 soldiers, are ready and able to deal with any new crisis elsewhere in the world.

“None of the other brigades that have returned from combat duty for a year at home are ready for combat: Some of them have only half their allotted number of troops and none of their fighting vehicles.

“Schoomaker has told the Pentagon and the White House that the Army needs \$138.8 billion in 2008, 41 percent more than the current budget of \$98.2 billion. So, either Congress ponies up the money or the administration will have to scale back demands on the force that’s carrying virtually all the load in Iraq and Afghanistan” (*The News Tribune*).

How did this come to be?

Debt and Deficits

America no longer has the will and unity of purpose to lead the world, and it no longer has the resources either. The nation still enjoys incredible prosperity, with the world’s largest economy in terms of gross domestic product and purchasing power. Its stock market continues to reach new heights. However, all is not well in the nation’s overall economic outlook.

The dollar’s value has been falling since 2002, and “may continue to decline for the next two to three years at an annual rate of about 10 per cent against the euro, pound and the Japanese yen. The dollar can’t rise because of the huge US trade defi-

cit...The statistics are a bit alarming. The US sent \$US218 billion...more abroad in the second quarter than it brought in from other countries. That current account deficit was just a little less than the record \$US223 billion deficit in the fourth quarter last year.

“Because Americans continue to import more than they export, and because foreigners stay willing to hold the dollars they earn this way, foreign holdings of US Treasury securities on September 30 totaled more than \$US2 trillion. Foreign investors are financing not only the US trade deficit but also the US budget deficit. The budget deficit in fiscal 2006 was \$US248 billion.

“The trade deficit might shrink but the budget deficit will climb because of recent tax cuts, war spending and shrinking government revenue from a slower-growing economy.

“In the worst case, foreigners would lose confidence in the dollar and start dumping it. A quick, steep drop in the US currency would be inflationary — increasing the cost of imports. The Fed would ratchet up interest rates to curb the rise in prices...the worst would happen only if the US did something to scare foreign investors, such as erecting barriers against increasing imports from China.

“For the time being, there’s nothing to worry about, as long as foreign investors remain as complacent about US spending habits as Americans are” (*Bloomberg*).

In addition to currency trade deficit, both the Congressional Budget Office and the General Accounting Office have acknowledged that America’s \$9 trillion national debt cannot be sustained for much longer. And the housing market—seen by many as the lone crutch propping up the economy—is cooling off. Whether this will end in a soft landing or a jarring crash remains to be seen.

The prosperity that America enjoys is made possible by its creditors in Japan, China, Taiwan, Germany, South Korea, etc.!

The following proverb will eventually reach the average American’s door in a more vivid, literal way than he can now imagine: “The rich rules over the poor, and the borrower is *servant* to the lender” (Prov. 22:7).

Loss of Respect

The outcomes and press coverage of recent U.S. conflicts—Bosnia, Rwanda and now Iraq—have been uncertain at best and humiliating at worst. This has America’s enemies smelling blood. The leaders of Iran, Venezuela and other nations feel emboldened to “stand up” to America. Witness Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad’s letter to the American people, in which he attempts to capitalize on the divided state of U.S. politics.

He and others recognize America’s vulnerabilities, in both hard and soft power: “The military reality on the ground in Iraq severely constrains U.S. options around the world. That, in turn, constrains U.S. diplomacy. Diplomacy without even the distant possibility of military action is impotent” (*Stratfor*).

Another vulnerability is the size of the armed forces relative to its tasks: “...Iraq is eating up...options by eating up the Army. This is the first major, extended ground war the United States has fought in a century without dramatically increasing the size of the Army. World War I, World War II, Korea and Vietnam all brought massive increases in military size, mostly through conscription. The Bush administration...maintained the force roughly as it started, and now that force is broken” (*ibid.*).

The world’s perception of Americans, filtered through the degenerate lens of Hollywood, does not generate goodwill among many nations—in fact, it hurts the cause. The media’s products and portrayals practically scream that the average American is mainly concerned with accumulating possessions, “keeping up with the Joneses” and being entertained. He does not particularly care about whether democracy spreads through the Middle East. After all, the war is not happening in his backyard.

But Americans cannot live in ignorant bliss indefinitely. The success of a superpower breeds comfort and softens the character of a nation. At the same time, it leads to envy and hatred among the less powerful, so that more and more of the wealth generated by that success must be spent to protect the nation from those who resent it.

This resentment now seethes in the hearts of avowed adversaries abroad—but resentment also grows among American citizens who hold the historical values of the nation in contempt. The president is the focus of venom and ridicule, and is shamelessly undermined even by others in public office.

As stated by columnist J.R. Nyquist, “If the country...cannot function without appeasing the empire of the perpetually resentful, then the country is finished” (*Financial Sense*).

The Coming Shift

The power vacuum in Iraq, which some pundits believe should be filled by NATO, Europe, Russia, China or India, is a microcosm of the global vacuum that is developing as the United States becomes increasingly ineffectual on a number of fronts. Difficulty in Iraq is one symptom of a larger problem: a general malaise in the United States—a decline of power, prestige, influence and resolve.

Nature abhors a vacuum, and the balance of power between nations is not a zero-sum game. One nation’s strategic, tactical and diplomatic losses are another’s gain. Make no mistake: A new superpower—or superpowers—will arise. It is only a matter of when—and who.

There is a Being who is sovereign

over these events, and who knows where they will lead. The God who inspired the Bible declares within its pages, “I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like Me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure” (Isa. 46:9-10). Here the Eternal makes plain that He brings His prophecies to pass. In one of these prophecies, referring to the United States and certain other nations, He states, “I will BREAK THE PRIDE OF YOUR POWER” (Lev. 26:19). This punishment is the result of these peoples’ stubborn dismissal of His spiritual laws, the core of which is the Ten Commandments.

Keep reading this magazine for forecasts and reports proving that God’s counsel “shall stand”! □

The ULTIMATE SUPERPOWER—Soon to Come!

As America gradually slips from its position as the world’s lone superpower, other nations are preparing to take its place. Yet these, as with all governments of men, will eventually meet their downfall.

Nonetheless, the world will soon see the arrival of the ultimate superpower—one that will never decline nor disappear into the pages of history. Its strength and effectiveness will be witnessed on every level.

■ **Government:** Led by an executive branch that will remain free of bureaucratic red tape, this future SUPERGOVERNMENT will administer decisions without any political maneuvering. Government leaders will not have to run for office—which means no more abusive attack campaigns, “pork barrel” lawmaking, filibustering, or courting by lobbyists.

Instead of creating laws in an attempt to legislate every minute aspect of people’s lives, all laws, statutes and ordinances will be universally founded upon the way of GIVE.

With corruption among judges nonexistent, all judgments will be carefully rendered with fairness and equity—and without personal or political biases.

■ **Education:** Illiteracy will be a thing of the past, and language bar-

riers will be brought down. Education will be free for everyone, as all school systems will receive equal funding and teachers will receive fair wages while meeting high standards of excellence.

■ **Housing:** Homelessness will no longer exist. Instead of overcrowded cities of row homes and cramped apartments, each family will have homes with enough land to provide for their basic needs.

■ **Defense:** This future superpower will be protected by an invincible military—utterly loyal to the government it will serve. Thus, coups will never be a threat.

■ **Economy:** No more recessions, depressions, skyrocketing inflation or dramatically fluctuating unemployment rates. Third and fourth generations of families receiving welfare assistance will be unheard of, and everyone—from blue collar laborers to chief executive officers—will be taxed across the board at the same rate: 10%. Imagine, no more complicated government tax forms to fill out!

■ **Law and Order:** No more backed-up court systems or frivolous lawsuits. Since prisons will not be needed, criminals will no longer live year after year at

taxpayers’ expense. Sentences will be rendered quickly, but fairly, and never again will the innocent go to prison for a crime they did not commit.

■ **Environment:** Smog, disappearing wetlands and forests, urban sprawl, superfund sites, global warming, endangered species—these and all other environmental problems will be solved from the very start.

■ **Health:** All foods will be pure, free of pesticides, hormones and steroids. Instead of farmlands being worked year after year without a break, they will receive a rest every seventh year, a great benefit to the soil.

Also, prescription and over-the-counter drugs will no longer be regulated—since these will no longer be needed! Instead, the true principles of health will be widely taught and applied!

Considering that all the troubling matters other nations face will be solved by this soon-coming superpower, it’s only natural to ask: How will this happen—and when?

To learn more about this incredible world-ruling supergovernment, read our book *TOMORROW’S WONDERFUL WORLD – An Inside View!* □

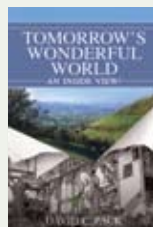




PHOTO: MCT

BAN KI-MOON

UN SECRETARY GENERAL

As Kofi Annan's term as Secretary General of the United Nations ended, Ban Ki-moon, South Korea's Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade, was appointed to take the baton. What can be expected during his tenure?

BY JAMES F. TURCK

THROUGH FOUR informal straw polls, Ban Ki-moon (pronounced *pan gi mun*) quickly moved to the head of the candidates vying to succeed Kofi Annan as Secretary General of the United Nations. With the other six possibilities quickly withdrawing from the race, approval of Mr. Ban's nomination was almost guaranteed.

His appointment is a capstone on his 35 years of service to his native South Korea, the seeds of which began in the early 1960s. As a high school student he

decided to pursue a career as a diplomat after meeting U.S. President John F. Kennedy in Washington, D.C. This was a benefit of winning an English language competition organized by the American Red Cross.

Mr. Ban went on to receive a bachelor's degree in international relations from Seoul National University in 1970. In 1985, he earned a Master of Public Administration from John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University.

Married to his childhood sweetheart, and father of two daughters and a son, Mr. Ban is said to be fluent in English and French, the crucial languages of diplomacy. Indeed, part of his acceptance speech before the general assembly was given in French, perhaps to underscore his diplomatic abilities.

He has also received numerous awards, including the Order of Service Merit in 1975, 1986 and 2006 for service to his country, the Grand Decoration of Honor from the Republic of Austria (2001) and the Grand Cross of Rio Branco (2002) from the government of Brazil.

Having served in various capacities beginning in May 1970 when he joined the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the 62-year-old brings decades of experience to his new appointment. New Delhi, India, was his first overseas post, after which he worked in the United Nations Division at the foreign ministry's headquarters. Mr. Ban has also served as First Secretary at South Korea's Permanent Observer Mission to the UN in New York City, and then assumed the post of Director of the United Nations Division. He was twice posted to the Republic of Korea (ROK) Embassy in Washington, D.C., serving in between as Director-General for American Affairs in 1990-1992. He was promoted to the position of Deputy Minister for Policy Planning and International Organizations in 1995. The following year saw his appointment as National Security Advisor to the President, followed by assuming the office of Vice Minister in 2000. He recently served as Foreign Policy Advisor to South Korean President Noh Moo-hyun.

In 1999, Ban Ki-moon was elected Chairman of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization. During this time, he also served as Ambassador to Austria. In 2001, he worked as Chef de Cabinet of the President of the General Assembly during the ROK's Presidency of the 56th Session of the UN General Assembly.

Issues relating to inter-Korean relationships have long seen his involvement. In 1992, while serving as Special Advisor to the Foreign Minister, he served as Vice Chairman of the South-North Joint Nuclear Control Commission. This was following the adoption by South and North Korea of the Joint Declaration of the Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. As Foreign

Minister, he had an important role in diplomatic efforts to adopt the Joint Statement on resolving the North Korean nuclear issue at the Six-Party Talks held in Beijing in September 2005.

During an October 9, 2006 press conference, this issue weighed heavily on his mind, even after learning of his selection: “This should be a moment of joy. But instead, I stand here with a very heavy heart. Despite the concerted warning from the international community, North Korea has gone ahead with a nuclear test.”

Up to the Task?

Mr. Ban feels he is up to the job. “I may look very soft from the outside but I have an inner strength when it’s really necessary. I’ve always been very decisive,” he said commenting on the perception some have that he is not able to handle this difficult post. He went on to say, “In Asian countries humility is regarded as a virtue” and noted that “soft speaking should in no way be regarded as a lack of leadership or commitment.” Ko Ki-Seok, a spokesperson for the foreign ministry said, “Minister Ban is a kind of iron-hand-in-the-velvet-glove person at work,” also indicating that Mr. Ban is a “people person” who takes staff welfare seriously.

His work day is characterized as a “killing work schedule that divides each day into a schedule of five minutes at a time,” one in which “he never fails.”

During an Oct. 13, 2006 press conference given at United Nations headquarters, Mr. Ban described the challenges waiting for him: “I am well aware of the enormous challenges awaiting the next Secretary General. I see three areas where concerted action is needed.” He went on to explain them: “The first is to rebuild trust among all stakeholders...the second is to stay the course with ongoing reform of the Secretariat management” with the intent to “keep up the reform momentum so that we may build the twenty-first-century Secretariat for a twenty-first-century Organization. The third is to enhance coherence and coordination” aimed at “streamlin[ing] work for greater efficiency and better use of resources and better service delivery.”

In his acceptance speech, Mr. Ban stated, in regard to the UN, “We should be more modest in our words, but not in our performance. The true measure of success for the UN is not how much we promise, but how much we deliver for those who need us most.”

In an earlier press conference he said, “The UN needs to promise less and deliver more.”

The major players of the United Nations see Mr. Ban as someone they can work with—someone who can

guide the UN in the needed direction. He has pledged, “As Secretary-General, I intend to fully mobilize all of my experience, all the network of friends and colleagues I have forged during the past four decades in the diplomatic service of a country with uniquely difficult foreign policy challenges, to do my utmost in dealing with these tasks.”

Yet Ban Ki-moon is not without his critics. Some see him as a “yes man who will shrink from standing up to the big powers and driving overdue reforms through the world body.” He has at times been labeled by the South Korean press corps as “slippery,” while others worry about his religious beliefs.

Perhaps these two concerns are best illustrated by these questions posed by a reporter: “Do you believe in God? And to what degree does God or that religious



■ **THE SUDAN CRISIS:** Refugees in Darfur wait for food from the UN World Food Program. Seemingly insoluble crises such as this are among those that Ban Ki-moon will have to address as the new UN Secretary General.

belief inform your decisions?” His answer: “As Secretary General, it will not be appropriate at this time to talk about my own belief in any particular religion or God. So maybe we will have some other time to talk about personal matters.”

The Big Question

Will Ban Ki-moon’s tenure as Secretary General bring the needed reforms to the United Nations, thus making it an effective problem-solving body to which the international community can look? Will he transform the UN in such a way that it will effectively deal with the issues preventing peace among the nations? And will the UN be able to solve the myriad of world problems?

Perhaps Mr. Ban will effect some changes that will allow it to do all this—however, Bible prophecy reveals that man’s solutions to humanity’s problems or his efforts to bring world peace will be at best short-lived. □



A Crushing Mountain of

Debt

WITH ANOTHER Christmas shopping season ended, many people find themselves entering 2007 with the daunting prospect of digging out from under a pile of consumer debt brought on by frenzied buying. Once again, their December binge has turned into a throbbing January hangover!

Earlier in the season, the U.S. National Retail Federation projected that 2006 holiday sales would hit \$457.4 billion, or a 5% increase

over 2005—much of that paid with high-interest credit cards.

A survey conducted November 9-12 on behalf of the Consumer Federation of America and Credit Union National Association showed that concern about paying off credit card debt caused by holiday spending rose to 33% in 2006, from 25% in 2005. Worries about meeting monthly payments on all kinds of debt were even higher—43%.

With the U.S. population exceeding 300 million, each American citizen's share of debt is about \$28,680. Since September 29, 2006, the national debt

has increased roughly \$2 billion per day!

F. William Engdahl, an economist and author, sounds an alarm about the shocking levels of American consumer debt and their implications. A surge in consumption has created the illusion of a recovering economy, he notes, but meanwhile a huge debt burden has mounted.

“Since 1997, the total of home mortgage debt for Americans has risen more than 94% to a colossal \$7.4 trillion, a debt of some \$120,000 for a family of four.” This is growing far faster than personal income per capita, or larger than the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of most nations! “Bank loans for real estate purchases have risen since 1997 by 200%, to \$2.4 trillion.” To put this mind-boggling debt in perspective, \$1 trillion equals \$1,000 billion, or \$1,000,000,000,000!

Mr. Engdahl states, “The aim has been to inflate a housing speculation market in order to keep the economy rolling. The cost has been staggering new debt levels. Because it was created from record low interest rates, when rates again rise, millions of Americans will suddenly find the burden impossible, especially as unemployment rises. When the housing bubble collapses, a new banking crisis is pre-programmed as well.”

“Families are agreeing to longer debt payments for basics like homes or cars. The length of new car loans now averages 60.7 months, the amount of car debt financed increased to \$27,920, and the average new home costs \$243,000.” For the first time in history, Americans owe more than they take home in after-tax income.

“We’re in hock for a record \$2 trillion of consumer debt. That includes bank loans, car financing and credit-card debt. Real estate-related borrowing adds another \$7 trillion...Result: unprecedented levels of consumer debt and personal bankruptcies,” Gerald J. Swanson writes in his 2004 book, *America the Broke*.

While, the United States isn’t the only nation in the West burdened

with debt, no other country closely approaches the size of America's crushing mountain of debt—at the personal, corporate, municipal, state and federal levels. The outstanding public U.S. debt exceeds \$9 trillion! The federal budget had a surplus of \$128 billion in 2001, but that slid into a deficit of \$412 billion in 2004—the largest annual U.S. shortfall ever. Never in history has a nation or empire been so deeply, *perilously* drowning in red ink.

From Baby Boom to Bust?

Many economists warn that the U.S. is heading for a disastrous financial train wreck, threatening to derail the entire global economy, dragging down other countries with it. Yet America's leaders continue to stoke the locomotive's engine so red hot with deficit spending that its rivets are ready to blow apart!

"That the United States of America can literally go broke is no longer a fantasy but a likelihood—unless we stop the train now speeding us to Armageddon," Mr. Swanson warns. "If we do not get our financial house in order, and soon, I am convinced our great nation will collapse in a very short time under the weight of its financial obligations."

Participating in a cross country "Fiscal Wake-Up Tour," U.S. Comptroller David Walker warns, "America is a great country, but we suffer from two serious afflictions: Short-sightedness and self-centeredness. We have a fiscal cancer growing in the body of this nation that has been diagnosed and is not being treated, and if it's not treated soon, it will have serious consequences for our children and their children."

Mr. Walker heads the U.S. Government Accountability Office, which audits various federal agencies and programs. He notes that the nation's estimated liabilities from Social Security and Medicare exploded from \$20 trillion in 2000 to \$46 trillion in 2005.

"The United States' fiscal condition is worse than advertised," he says. "I am desperately trying to get people to understand the significance of this for

our country, our children, our grandchildren. How this is resolved could affect not only our economic security, but our national security. We're heading to a future where we'll have to double federal taxes or cut federal spending by 50%."

Mr. Walker notes that the typical American household's debt burden is nine times its annual income. This includes "estimates of publicly held debt and government-employee pensions of \$9.9 billion; future Social Security benefits of \$5.7 billion; and future Medicare benefits of nearly \$30 billion. The Medicare estimate has tripled in the past five years thanks to rising health care costs and the 2003 creation of the program's drug benefit" (*Rocky Mountain News*).

"Washington politicians are mortgaging our economic future and forcing this generation and the next to ultimately pay a painful financial price," television commentator and former congressman Joe Scarborough writes in *Rome Wasn't Burnt in a Day*.

The Concord Coalition, a non-partisan organization founded in 1992, estimates Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid—combined with net interest payments—"will absorb almost three quarters of government revenue by 2016 from 57 percent in 2005...By 2030, those items will require more revenue as a percentage of gross domestic product than the government currently spends on its entire budget" (*Bloomberg*).

Mr. Walker warns that a demographic tidal wave threatens to swamp U.S. finances. According to *USAToday*, "The 'Greatest Generation' and its baby-boom children have promised themselves benefits unprecedented in size and scope"—yet have contributed little to financing them.

"When the government set 65 as the retirement age in the 1930s, most people didn't live that long. But life expectancy for women has increased from 66 to 80 since 1940 and for men from 61 to 75. Meanwhile, the birth rate has dropped from 25 births per 1,000 residents in the 1950s to just 15 today. The lower birth rate ultimately

means fewer workers paying taxes to finance Social Security and Medicare benefits for the rapidly growing population of people 65 and over" (*ibid.*).

The intractable U.S. fiscal dilemma is worsened by the approaching retirement of 77 million "baby boomers" born between 1946 and 1964.

"The first baby boomers will become eligible for Social Security in 2008 and for Medicare in 2011, inflating the costs of those already-expensive programs..."

"Over the next 25 years, the number of Americans aged 65 and up is expected to nearly double, and the ratio of workers paying into Social Security and Medicare relative to the number of beneficiaries will fall by roughly one-third.

"Medicare...already costs four times as much as it did in 1970, as a percentage of the gross domestic product. It accounts for 13 percent of federal spending.

"Medicaid...will cost 166 percent of its current price by 2030, compared with a growth of only 72 percent in gross domestic product."

"Boston University economist Lawrence Kotlikoff has found that eliminating those programs' deficits would require either an immediate doubling of personal and corporate income taxes, a two-thirds cut in Social Security and Medicare benefits, or some combination of the two" (*Seattle Post-Intelligencer*).

In an October 22nd *Philadelphia Inquirer* column titled "Drifting to Future Bankruptcy," Mr. Kotlikoff wrote that U.S. "policies are driving the country to fiscal, financial and economic ruin. The only question is when the crash will occur and which households and businesses will be in the passenger seats." A plunge in the national savings rate from 12% of personal income in the 1960s to below 2% now reflects typical U.S. fiscal excesses.

"The baby boomers and the Greatest Generation are delivering an economic disaster to their children. We should be ashamed of ourselves." In a *Fortune* magazine article, he observes, "The

U.S. government is effectively bankrupt.”

The Beleaguered Dollar

Many economists say that failing to solve the nation's debt problem will only postpone the inevitable. Speaking at a November dinner hosted by the Concord Coalition, former Federal Reserve Chairman Paul Volcker and former Treasury Secretary Robert Rubin warned that the U.S. government's inability to shrink its huge budget deficit may soon trigger a “dollar crisis” by frightening central banks, hedge funds and others who have been buying Treasury notes.

“It's incredible people have gone on so long holding dollars. At some point, you will get a situation where people have had enough,” said Mr. Volcker, who predicts the United States faces a 75% chance of a financial crisis in five years.

Mr. Rubin added, “It seems almost inconceivable that this will continue indefinitely.”

He pointed out that the U.S. government is only five years away from “rapid acceleration” of spending on the nation's entitlement programs as millions of baby boomers start to retire. Therefore, he said, it is urgent that the government address the budget crisis now.

It is becoming increasingly obvious that the government cannot borrow money fast enough to keep up with its exploding expenses! The U.S. relies heavily on foreign investment to finance its spending. Foreign investors own about half of the \$4.3 trillion in outstanding Treasuries. If they were to stop buying dollars—or much worse, start selling dollars—the U.S. economy would grind to a halt—if not collapse!

“Once foreign as well as American bondholders get a real whiff of America's true financial straits, they will dump their bonds,” Mr. Kotlikoff stated. “They will do so with the knowledge that countries that cannot pay their bills end up defaulting on their debt either explicitly or implicitly by printing money.”

“The U.S. currency has fallen in recent years, in part because of concern America will fail to attract enough capital to finance its borrowing. The Federal Reserve's dollar index has declined 27 percent since December 2001” (*Bloomberg*).

The dollar started to drop sharply on currency exchange markets at the end of November 2006, hitting a 20-month low in December against the euro, a 14-year low against the British pound sterling and a three-month low against the Japanese yen. The six-day rout that began on Thanksgiving Day knocked 2.7% off the dollar. Between October and December, the dollar fell 4% against both the euro and the yen.

“What we really should focus on is the fact that the Americans were on holiday, and foreigners decided to sell,” said Axel Merk, manager of the Merk Hard Currency Fund. “Given the extent to which we're dependent on foreigners to prop up the dollar because of our current account deficit, that's worrisome. A dollar decline is in nobody's interest, but it's highly overdue and will happen at some point.”

China's announcement during the Thanksgiving holiday that its central bank planned to diversify away from the dollar its \$1 trillion in foreign exchange holdings triggered the greenback's selloff at that time. *The Financial Times* reported on December 10, 2006, that oil producing countries have reduced their exposure to the dollar to the lowest level in two years, shifting oil income into euros, yen and pounds.

Russia and the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) cut their dollar holdings from 67% in the first quarter of 2006 to 65% in the second, but increased their holdings of euros from 20% to 22%. Qatar and Iran cut their dollar holdings by \$2.4 billion and \$4 billion, respectively. “The revelation...confirms market speculation about a move out of dollars and could put new pressure on the ailing U.S. currency” (*ibid.*).

It has been reported that a visit to China on December 14-15 by the

Bush administration's economic “A-team”—five Cabinet members headed by Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson and Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke—was designed to coordinate the dollar's devaluation to be a slow decline rather than a collapse.

John Williams, an econometrician who tracks the broadest measure of U.S. money supply (M3) after the Federal Reserve stopped reporting it in March 2006, told *World Net Daily*, “You're dealing with mass psychology here. The central bankers around the world know they are going [to] take a hit on their dollar holdings. None of the central bankers want to start a dollar panic, but none of the central bankers want to be the last out of the dollar, either.”

Mr. Williams said the M3 is growing at a 9.6% rate and trending higher as opposed to an 8% rate earlier in the year. The Federal Reserve, meanwhile, is in a bind. “Raising rates would kill any chance of avoiding a recession, but in terms of the dollar, we can't raise rates fast enough when the dollar starts to slip quickly,” he said.

Growing expectations that the U.S. economy is slowing enough for the Federal Reserve to lower interest rates helped drive down the dollar's value. Higher interest rates tend to strengthen a currency by making investments in it more attractive. Conversely, lower rates devalue a currency.

The U.S. factory sector's unexpected contraction in November for the first time in more than three years raised fears the economy is headed for a sharp slowdown or hard landing. “This is the first time that we are hearing the recessionary bells ring, and the market is not taking this well,” said Kathy Lien, Forex Capital Markets' chief strategist.

MarketWatch reports, “The U.S. currency has been under fire...on growing worries that the Federal Reserve will lower its interest rates to spur economic growth, while the European Central Bank and the Bank of England will continue to lift rates to curb inflationary pressures.” Some investors now expect the Federal Reserve to begin

aggressively cutting interest rates in the first half of 2007.

“The dollar is losing support,” says Naomi Fink, BNP Paribas Securities SA’s chief North American currency strategist in New York. She adds that foreign banks may be deciding that the United States is becoming too risky because the U.S. economy does not look as attractive with sluggish growth ahead.

“Germany said that its unemployment rate dropped unexpectedly to 9.6 percent in November as the number of people out of work fell below 4 million for the first time since October 2002—the latest evidence of a gathering recovery.”

“The euro has risen from below the \$1.30 mark...amid expectations that the European Central Bank will continue to raise interest rates, while the Federal Reserve holds, or eventually cuts, rates” (*Associated Press*).

“Combine faltering U.S. growth with a robust European economy, diverging monetary policy outlooks for the two regions, and maybe you have an explanation for the dollar’s precipitous decline,” says Mark Gilbert, a *Bloomberg* financial analyst.

He added that this is the first time since the euro’s 1999 introduction that borrowing costs in Europe are heading higher while U.S. rates may be poised to decline. The U.S. dollar has declined more than 30% against the euro in the past five years.

If the Federal Reserve were to lower rates, money could exit U.S. bonds in favor of euro-dominated ones with higher yields. “That would push the dollar even lower, perhaps leading to late-’70s style stagflation,” Mr. Birger says. The issue is even more pressing given the fact the U.S. dollar has been falling for more than a year, decimating returns for foreigners who invest in U.S. bonds.

Maclean’s magazine reports the following: “Stephen Roach, chief economist at Morgan Stanley, is an outspoken critic of U.S. fiscal policy and has long warned that America’s increasing reliance on foreign lending puts it at risk of a major economic shock. A sudden

drop in the dollar could trigger, among other things, a stock market crash, a plunge in the real estate market, a deep recession, or all of the above. ‘There’s nothing stable about America’s dependence on the kindness of strangers,’ [Mr. Roach] wrote in a report last summer. ‘The funding of America is an accident waiting to happen.’

“At a recent meeting with fund managers in Boston, Roach said he believes there is a 90% chance the country’s rampant borrowing will eventually lead to a disaster for the economy.”

A Monstrous Curse

How has the United States gotten itself into such a mess that threatens the stability of the entire global economy? Basic laws of finance explained in the Holy Bible have been violated by millions of Americans and their political leaders. As a result, the United States is teetering on the brink of absolute economic catastrophe!

King Solomon in his wisdom wrote, “The rich rules over the poor, and *the borrower is servant [or slave] to the lender*” (Prov. 22:7; NKJV throughout). By borrowing \$2 billion a day from foreigners to finance their spending addiction, Americans are finding themselves beholden and virtually enslaved to other nations, reaping a myriad of troubles. The magnitude of U.S. economic woes defies description.

In Deuteronomy 28, Moses told the Israelites that if they diligently obeyed God and carefully observed His commandments they would receive blessings and be established as the leading nation on earth (vs. 1-2).

However, he warned that, if they disobeyed they would heap devastating curses on themselves (vs. 15). The United States now suffers from overwhelming federal budget and trade deficits under which the nation is buckling and wobbling.

America’s incredibly mounting debt has raised anxiety levels of countries throughout the world to the point the superpower has “become troublesome to all the kingdoms of the earth” (Deut. 28:25). Meanwhile, political leaders are

at a loss at what to do. “You shall grope at noonday, as a blind man gropes in darkness; *you shall not prosper in your ways*; you shall be only oppressed and plundered continually, and no one shall save you...and you shall be only oppressed and *crushed* continually” (vs. 25, 29, 33).

“And you shall become an astonishment [a thing of horror], a proverb, and a byword among all nations where the LORD will drive you...The alien [foreigner] who is among you shall rise higher and higher above you, and you shall come down lower and lower. *He shall lend to you, but you shall not lend to him*; he shall be the head, and you shall be the tail. Moreover all these curses shall come upon you and pursue and overtake you, until you are destroyed, because you did not obey the voice of the LORD your God, to keep His commandments and statutes which He commanded you” (vs. 37, 43-45).

Yes, by borrowing prodigious sums of money from foreign investors to fuel its economy, the United States is enslaving itself to those lenders. The Bible shows that the U.S. will ultimately go into abject national slavery when all these curses converge to drop even the mightiest nation on earth to its knees.

The United States has been tremendously blessed with wealth and abundance like no other nation in history. Yet Americans spend literally hundreds of billions of dollars each year during the Christmas season, which is steeped in pagan traditions dating back to Baal worship in ancient Babylon. They are spending outrageous sums of money they do not have on merchandise they do not need!

Notice God’s attitude toward this idolatrous, materialistic practice: “For she did not know that I gave her grain, new wine, and oil, and multiplied her silver and gold—*which they prepared for Baal*...I will also cause all her mirth to cease, her feast days, her New Moons, her Sabbaths—all her appointed feasts...I will punish her for the

Please see DEBT, page 23



The Twisted, Perverse and **BIZARR**

Why This Series: Twisted and odd behavior is on the rise. Perverse trends are increasing. Beginning with this issue, *The REAL TRUTH* will publish a series of articles examining the bizarre conduct that is becoming common throughout society. We will explain *why* this is spreading—and point to the *only* solution.

■ **TROUBLED YOUTH:** Above left, students talk with each other at a new MPS charter school for alternative students. Right, a female student ponders a question from another student between classes.

PHOTOS: MCT

BY KEVIN D. DENEK

“FATHER JAILED for U.S. mutilation”—
“Swakop Man Sets Himself On Fire”—
“Man dismembers girlfriend in Quarter;
cooks body parts”—“Tomato diet model dies”—
“Cattle mutilation stuns ranchers”—“Man held for
German ‘cannibal killing’”—“Police: Man Hides In
Bathrooms, Drinks Boys’ Urine”—“Teens Turning
to Mutilation.”

These are real headlines found in newspapers around the world. More and more, the everyday reader is confronted with odd and bizarre behavior. Things unheard of a decade or two ago are becoming commonplace. How many times have you found yourself saying, “Sick! I have *never* heard of *that* before!”?

What have become twisted minds throughout society are exhibiting some of the most perverse behavior. This series

will reveal that what was once deep in the sewer of mankind's conduct is now beginning to boil over onto the streets. Through the Internet, the most degenerate human beings now have a forum—people they relate to, and people who can relate to them.

Bizarre behavior and actions among all age groups are on the rise. What you will read will stun you, and leave you wondering, “What’s next?” and “What is the solution to this nightmare?”

Advancement—and Degeneration

The world continues its scientific and technological advancement. Each day, technology improves, information exchange speeds up, cities expand. Beautiful large houses are found all over the planet. Luxuries of every type are available. New devices promising to make life more efficient and entertaining are released daily.

Taking a superficial, skin-deep look at society, it would seem that mankind is doing well. But with all the advancements in technology, science and other areas of civilization, is the human race truly improving? Are man's institutions able to clean up and prevent bizarre actions and behavior? The track record of history answers this clearly: Humanity cannot solve these problems! Leaders are helpless to curb an ever-worsening, sick society. People cannot control their lives, thoughts and emotions. Bizarre behavior and trends continue to come to the fore.

In some regards, the general public is gravitating toward these extremes. True life stories of the weird, odd and bizarre are extremely popular. Now *Reuters* has devoted a whole section of its website to odd news reports. And readers are mesmerized and engrossed by the outlandish things people do. In years past, circus “freak shows” were a popular means of entertainment. Today, these shows are out in the open and seemingly everywhere.

The proverbial envelope of decency and taste is being continually stretched. Things that are displayed in public would never have been discussed in ages past. It is as if any type of standard

one holds is doomed to be attacked and thrown away.

The term “alternative” has become fashionable. “Alternative lifestyles” of every shape, flavor and color are now discussed openly and accepted generally. The line drawn between what is acceptable and what is not is blurring and quickly disappearing. Decency, propriety and normalcy have become relative terms. What was once fringe and extreme is now mainstream.

A Preview

This series, *Society's Spreading Cancer – The Twisted, Perverse and Bizarre*, will address various areas of society that are moving toward the strange and extreme. Of course, there is a reasonable and natural limit to such a topic, but below are some of the subjects that will be discussed.



■ INTO THE MAINSTREAM: A mother shows off her tattoos as her children mill about.

PHOTO: MCT

■ **Appearances:** What people choose to wear and what they are doing to their bodies, often solely for “shock value.”

■ **Media:** Movies, television shows, popular music and other media continually push the social, ethical and moral boundaries, twisting the fringe into the norm in pop culture.

■ **Sexual perversions:** While our report *The IMMORALITY EXPLOSION!* thoroughly addresses this topic, this series of articles would not be complete without highlighting the growing acceptance of sexual perversions.

■ **Bizarre crimes:** The current explosion of odd and weird crimes, and the resulting court decisions and lawsuits that are often just as ridiculous and bizarre.

■ **Religion:** The beliefs many hold are gravitating toward the extreme—even to the unimaginable.

Understand. The very worst of the nauseating aspects of human nature and its twisted byproducts cannot be discussed in this article series. The Holy Bible explains that “it is a shame [Greek root: filthy] even to *speak* of those things which are done of them in secret” (Eph. 5:12). Therefore, this report barely skims the surface of what could be reported. Many stories literally cannot be told because a line God established would be crossed.

At the outset, understand that this is not intended to attack any individual. It is meant to paint a picture of the strange things now being done by human beings.

Over the coming months, as you read this series, consider the following points:

- What has happened to the natural order of things?
- Will these bizarre trends end—or grow worse?
- Are there *any* standards in life, or can anyone do whatever he wants? Does a free society mean that *anything* can, and should, be done?
- Are there *any* limits? Are there lines that should never be crossed? If so, who defines them?
- What are the consequences—and how will all this conclude?

This series will paint a stunning, but sickening, picture of a new kind of cancer spreading throughout society.

A Dangerous Tool

Realize that the spread of the bizarre has been made worse because of a tool that literally defines our age: the Internet. Its international reach has played a significant role in spreading what could only be called *spiritual cancer*. Never has it been easier to find information for every perversion under the sun. For those seeking the bizarre, grotesque and perverse, the Internet provides every sick idea men could devise—and with just a simple search.

The problem lies in the fact that twisted, bizarre desires and behavior

now have a place to coalesce. With the Internet, people who hold weird ideas discover there are others who have similar ideas. These are then circulated among others who are interested. In time, people become curious and look for more. Of course, they do not have to look far, and essentially a “snowball effect” has been created.

To illustrate, the darkest depths of man’s thinking are interlocked, creating an efficient system that everyone can instantly access.

Part One: Appearance and Body Modification

The word *bizarre* means “Markedly unusual in appearance, style, or general character and often involving incongruous or unexpected elements; outrageously or whimsically strange; odd” (*Random House Unabridged Dictionary*). This is what many people are now proud of.

All sorts of looks are becoming more common. There is the Goth culture, in which people wear entirely black, including a lot of black makeup, hair dyed black, etc. Many high schools in Western culture have this style. Often, these types are depressed and angry—you can see it on their faces.

Then there is the gang style. Thousands of students want to appear as if they are in a street gang, even when they are not. Entire media outlets push this style. Young people look up to “artists” who promote the “thug” look, in which a person wears pants twice his size, hanging near his knees. In such a scenario, this person literally has to change his walk so that his pants stay up. Incredibly, this impractical and nonsensical—and lewd—trend is viewed as “cool.”

Where is the balance—the common sense?

Then there is a style derived from alternative rock music. This can be described as the unkempt, messy look. Some people go out of their way—and this means real extreme—to look like a mess.

The *metrosexual* style essentially has heterosexual men wearing feminine

clothing. Alongside this is a subculture within the homosexual community in which people wear clothing that can only be described as outrageous. For example, two men will walk down the street with everything on their bodies purple or lavender, or wearing color combinations that assault the eyes.

Then there is the *punk* group. These often have odd hairstyles, including Mohawks, brightly dyed hair and endless body piercings.

Often the attitudes behind all these styles are worse than the styles themselves. Many who fall into these cultures are unhappy, angry with life or wish to be seen as nonconformists.

And then there is the ever more bizarre fashion industry, which leads society’s fashion trends. Models walk down runways in grossly impractical and weird outfits, to say the least—sometimes wearing only underwear and lingerie, which leaves little to the imagination. In the early 21st century, one trend is to wear outer clothing that looks like lingerie.

Related to this, people spend ridiculous amounts of money on clothing—for example, one company sells jeans for \$350 or more! In a world where *purses* can literally cost up to \$35,000, women can now *rent* expensive purses for special events or daily use!

Defacing One’s Body

Bizarre appearances are not just due to clothing or makeup choices. Piercings, tattoos and body disfigurements are popular today. You can walk down any small town street and see people who have done all these things *and more* to their bodies. Literally, the circus is now on the streets of every city.

At one point, piercing the ear was enough. Now, it is popular to pierce anything that is thin enough to put a sharp piece of metal through. Studies reveal that one in seven has pierced something other than his earlobes. One person commented that some in society today, with dozens of piercings, look as if they fell face first into a fishing tackle box. How true! (Of course, many contract infections or diseases because of the strange areas they pierce. In one

instance, a newspaper reported that a young girl’s piercing became so infected she had to have her breast removed.)

Then there are tattoos; 24% of Americans ages 18 to 50 and 36% of those 18 to 29 have tattoos, with the number accelerating. There are several television shows that document the culture of people who love to get one tattoo after another until their whole bodies are covered. Often the pictures, painted under the skin, are perverse and morbid.

To make it even worse and more bizarre, there is an entire *body modification culture* with body modification “artists,” in which customers pay for their bodies to be permanently mutilated. *Scarification* is where people are cut repeatedly until there is a permanent scar in the design of choice. There is *branding* as well. This is no longer something found just among livestock. There are also *sub-dermal implants*, where people literally put things under the skin to deform their shape. One man, inspired by the popular television show *Star Trek*, now has large ridges in his forehead—essentially jewelry that is implanted under the skin to make different shapes.

How much more extreme can society get?

When it comes to tattoos and marking the flesh, mankind has no regard for what the Creator of life said thousands of years ago. Notice what the Holy Bible says: “You shall not make any *cuttings* in your flesh for the dead, nor *print any marks* upon you: I am the LORD...They shall not make baldness upon their head...nor make any *cuttings* in their flesh” (Lev. 19:28; 21:5).

A Rotting World

Realize that we have barely begun to scratch the surface of the bizarre. By the end of this series of articles, you will clearly see the rot (Jer. 2:21, CEV) that results from the way many choose to live. The world *is* rotting—dying from every form of spiritual cancer—and the bizarre behavior and conduct of human beings demonstrate this.

(This series will continue next issue.) □

WHAT TO WATCH IN 2007



AS THE WORLD RINGS IN A NEW YEAR...

BY BRUCE A. RITTER AND JUSTIN T. PALM

IT IS THE YEAR the European Union turns 50. America commemorates the 400th anniversary of its first settlement in Jamestown, Virginia. Finland hands the EU presidency to Germany for six months. The League of Arab States gathers in Cairo for its annual summit in March, and, as of January 1, Romania and Bulgaria are official members of the EU.

The year 2007 promises to be an eventful one. But what lies ahead? Human beings are not capable of telling or predicting the future—but there is a SOURCE that can!

Nearly 2,000 years ago, Jesus Christ came as a newscaster, bringing advance news of future events. In the Bible, He describes trends, problems and world conditions of our time now—just prior to His Return: “When you shall see all these things, know that it [Christ’s Second Coming] is near, even at the doors” (Matt. 24:33).

Religious Confusion

As a newscaster of future events, Jesus said that religious deception would grow worse. Notice: “Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in My name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many” (Matt. 24:4-5). While there have been false Christs throughout the

centuries, this verse also applies to the many who falsely claim to speak on Christ’s *authority*. Thousands, even millions, are falling prey to this religious deception—and this will only continue.

Some Protestant churches now allow women in the ministry; others do not. Others permit homosexuality among their leaders and members; some allow this to varying degrees. Many churches and denominations foster a “come as you are” attitude, allowing people to attend religious services wearing just about anything; other churches are stricter. Of the countless denominations, churches, groups and religious organizations professing to be “Christian,” how can these divided and competing churches all speak for Christ? Is Christ divided among them?



WHAT WILL THE COMING MONTHS BRING?

As the Protestant world grapples with changing standards and megachurches continue to grow, the Catholic Church is working to unite professing Christianity under its lead. Recently, Pope Benedict XVI traveled to Turkey to meet with various religious and political figures to ease relations between the Vatican and Islam, as well as Rome's relationship with Orthodox Christians. Will the Orthodox and Catholic churches reunite?

Wars and Rumors of Wars

Continuing in Matthew 24, Jesus Christ addresses growing levels of violence in this age: "And you shall hear of *wars* and *rumors of wars*...For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom" (vs. 6-7). In a parallel account in Luke 21, He

stated, "But when you shall hear of wars and commotions, be not terrified: for these things must first come to pass" (vs. 9).

When a suicide bomber blows himself up in a crowd, it could easily be described as a "commotion." Terrorism will become more common!

Although war has always existed in man's history, Jesus forecasted that violence would increase just before His Return. Thus, the world will not be safer in 2007. Wars—genocide—terrorist acts—crime—riots—these will all increase. Nuclear programs and militaries are expanding. Iran and North Korea show no sign of discon-

tinuing their nuclear ambitions. Iran is gearing up for war against Israel, as its president frequently calls for the Jewish nation's destruction.

The year will not see worldwide violence diminish.

Government Conflicts

Recall Jesus' statement, "For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom" (Matt. 24:7). This is happening around the world. Governments and world leaders continue to make threats of war. Some world leaders openly threaten the annihilation of other nations. Nations are rising against nations.

■ **POLITICS, WAR AND RELIGION:** Congresswoman Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) will be sworn in as the first female Speaker of the House of Representatives on January 4 (far left). In Baghdad, Iraq, the violence continues (middle). In Houston, Texas, more than 30,000 people worship at Lakewood Church each weekend, the nation's largest congregation (right).

PHOTOS: MCT



■ **CONTROVERSY, POVERTY AND DISEASE:** Pope Benedict XVI, German Chancellor Angela Merkel and Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad will all play a role in 2007. In addition, AIDS, violence and poverty will continue to ravage parts of the world.

PHOTOS: MCT

Conflicts in the Middle East will only grow worse. A solution for peace will not be found—at least not by the hands of men. With a full-scale civil war looming in Iraq, the region is racked with violence and almost daily insurgent attacks. The Western-backed democracy in Lebanon teeters on the brink as the terrorist group Hezbollah threatens a coup.

Jesus continues: “And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another...And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold” (vs. 10-12).

With the dramatic political shift resulting from the 2006 midterm elections, America is more politically polarized than ever. Many who ran for office revealed they were more than willing to slander, attack and backbite their opponents at virtually any cost.

How will this affect American foreign policy and the way the U.S. is viewed by its allies and enemies? With anti-Americanism on the rise, will it fuel more hatred for America? Or will America be able to come together with other nations for the “common good”?

No longer viewed as the military power it once was, the United States is gradually losing its status as the world’s lone superpower. Who will fill the void? China?—Russia?—India?—or will a rising united Europe take the lead?

A German-led Europe

In 2007, the European Union welcomes two new member states—Romania and Bulgaria. The list of potential EU members includes Croatia and Turkey, although Turkey’s accession process is being delayed due to its majority Muslim population, and the fact that it does not recognize Cyprus, another EU member state.

With the European Union celebrating in Berlin its 50th anniversary of the signing of the Treaty of Rome, 2007 looks to be a year when Europe is steered mostly by Germany. The once divided nation is set to take control of the EU presidency in January, as well as the presidency of the G8 summit, held in Heiligendamm, Germany, this June. Ms. Angela Merkel, Germany’s Chancellor, will use her EU Presidency to attempt to resurrect the stalled constitution.

Will Germany be able to overcome the political gridlock now plaguing the EU? What lies in Europe’s future? And with a German pope leading the Catholic Church, what role will Germany play in dealing with Europe’s integration of millions of Muslims?

Weather, Disease and Famine

Jesus Christ also warned, “...and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in [various] places” (Matt. 24:7). Earthquakes *are* increasing—and occurring in strange places. Storms are becoming more violent and happening more frequently. Reports of flooding are common. Violent tornadoes are increasing, and occurring

at unusual times of the year. Drought is already seen in prosperous nations of the West, such as Australia and the United States.

“Pestilences,” or diseases, will grow worse and spread. For instance, AIDS is predicted to become the third-leading cause of death worldwide.

Drought leads to widespread food shortages, which will lead to global famine. Millions around the world are already starving from lack of food. Despite man’s best efforts, relief agencies will not be able to halt the prevalent starvation foretold to occur.

Breakdown of Character

Jesus Christ said that our time would match the rampant immorality that existed in Noah’s day, just prior to the Great Flood (Matt. 24:37). This is described in Genesis 6: “And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually” (vs. 5).

This could only be described as a time of great depravity and moral corruption—and it is now happening again! The family unit—the nucleus of any stable and thriving society—is breaking down and being redefined, as same-sex couples are becoming increasingly accepted as the norm. Immorality is increasing. The killing of unborn children is socially accepted and widely practiced. Illegitimate children are left to be raised by single parents, often due to divorce or being born out of wedlock. In the U.S., 9 out of 10 singles in their twenties are no longer virgins. Also, the number of people divorced is higher than those who are married, often the result of adultery.

Sadly, the rampant immorality and degeneration of character seen around the world is prophesied to continue. Where will all this lead?

Hope on the Horizon

The future of the world looks grim and hopeless. Religious confusion, violence, global famines, deadly diseases, wars and commotions will increase; 2007 will bring more of the same.

However, there is hope!

Along with outlining the conditions, trends, troubles and problems of this age, Jesus Christ added this: “And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations” (Matt. 24:14). The word “gospel” means “good news.” At His Return, Christ will set up a divine supergovernment that will usher in lasting peace and prosperity throughout the world: “Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end” (Isa. 9:7)! Every nation, territory, city, town, suburb and household will benefit!

As world events unfold, this magazine—*The REAL TRUTH* and its website (www.RealTruth.org)—will continue to analyze news, trends and conditions from a unique, biblical perspective, as it announces the good news of the soon-coming kingdom of God. □

JANUARY 2007



■ **WAR, DROUGHT AND NATURAL DISASTERS:** Like the war in Lebanon in August 2006, conflicts will continue in the coming year. Floods will continue to damage the land, while, in other areas, drought will devastate agriculture.

PHOTOS: MCT

PERSONAL

Continued from page 2

It is not the same with Satan's station. The world—and you—do not *decide* to tune into the devil's broadcast. And no one ever sets out to be deceived. But every human being on earth is automatically tuned to Satan's wavelength! His wickedness, hostility, rebellion, deceit and selfishness are continually "on the air."

Therefore, it is really SATAN'S NATURE that is being labeled as HUMAN NATURE. In fact, once it is injected into people, Satan's nature becomes *natural* to them. It becomes *their* nature—now, *human* nature.

Though you cannot see it any more than you can see radio waves or television signals, the air around you is literally charged and "crackles" with the power and energy of Satan's broadcast.

It is absolutely critical to see how this spirit works in people. It is the single most important key to understanding exactly how Satan can deceive and manipulate over *six billion people*.

An Important Illustration

Before further examining the devil's role and how he came to be as he is, consider this illustration. It demonstrates how Satan can influence and sway humanity through his broadcast.

The setting involves King Cyrus of Persia. God wanted him to return to Jerusalem and build a second temple to replace Solomon's, which had been destroyed. Here is how God communicated to Cyrus: "Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the LORD *stirred up the spirit* of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing" (Ezra 1:1).

God was able to communicate with Cyrus through (by "stirring up") his *spirit*.

Satan does the same thing. Just as God can lead a human being toward a

right purpose, Satan's spirit influences people toward hate, anger, selfishness, violence, competition, vanity, jealousy, lust, greed, murder and deceit. (Read our booklet *What Science Will Never Discover About YOUR MIND* to understand more about the spirit in man.)

Of course, when Satan injects his attitudes into an unsuspecting mankind, it has no idea that he is doing it. The devil does not announce his intentions in advance or speak aloud in an audible voice.

“And no one ever sets out to be deceived. But every human being on earth is automatically tuned to Satan's wavelength!”

Murder, Lies and Destruction

Just as God the Father has children, the god of this world is also a father with his own children! Consider this proof:

On one occasion, Paul addressed a sorcerer named Bar-jesus, who was trying to hinder Paul's preaching and ministry. Paul directly labeled this man: "O full of all subtlety and all mischief, *you child of the devil*, you enemy of all righteousness, will you not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?" (Acts 13:10).

Besides identifying him as a "child of the devil," Paul teaches that the devil's children are enemies of "all *righteousness*" and "the ways of God." This is what being children of the devil means!

But what is righteousness? Psalm 119:172 defines it: "All Your [God's] COMMANDMENTS ARE RIGHTEOUSNESS."

Satan's children hate, and are enemies of, the laws of God—His commandments! Remember, they are "children of *disobedience*."

Revelation 9:11 describes Satan as "a destroyer." The Hebrew word referenced there, *Abaddon*, means "Satan." The Greek word used there, *Apollyon*, means "a destroyer." This understanding sets the stage for the next scripture.

A confrontation between Christ and people who professed to "believe on Him" occurred in John 8:30-31. You should read the entire account, but here is a summary. Those who professed belief in Christ actually sought to kill Him moments later (vs. 37)!

Christ said, "But you seek to KILL Me, because My *word* has no place in you." He further added, "But now you seek to kill Me, a Man that has told you the truth" (vs. 40). Many *say* they want to hear the truth—but not if it means being told that they are wrong, particularly about cherished ideas.

This story comes to a remarkable climax in verses 43-44. Jesus asked, "Why do you not understand My speech?" He answers His own question with, "...because you *cannot* hear My word." What could possibly cause people standing right beside Christ to "not hear His word"? Verse 44 answers, "You are of *your father the devil*, and the lusts of *your father* you will do. He was a *murderer* from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks of his own: for he is a *liar*, and the *father* of it." Christ plainly said, "You are not of God" (vs. 47), and these devil-inspired religious leaders immediately accused *Him* of "having a demon" (vs. 48)! Many today who *profess* to "believe on Christ" are no different than those described here.

This is a powerful, instructive statement. The devil is a *father* who murders, lies and destroys. As the author of killing, deceit and destruction, he broadcasts these attitudes to his children around the world!

To continue learning about the subject of human nature, read our booklet *Did God Create HUMAN NATURE?* □



A DIFFERENT PRESIDENT, A DIFFERENT GENERATION

The death of President Ford is a reminder that America is losing strong leaders from the past and is adrift without a moral compass, headed for an uncertain future.



PHOTO: MCT

BY BRUCE A. RITTER

HE TOOK ON responsibilities he did not seek, accepting an office whose image was tarnished. He put the needs of the country before personal interests, sacrificing his political future. In return, he was attacked, ridiculed and largely unappreciated.

Only now, upon his death, has Gerald R. Ford, 38th President of the United States, received the high praise and appreciation that was missing during his brief term in office.

An unusual leader is gone.

Mr. Ford was born into a bad marriage, which quickly ended in divorce. His mother remarried, providing Mr. Ford a stepfather he came to call “a magnificent person.” Born July 14, 1913, in Omaha, Nebraska, Mr. Ford spent most of his childhood in Grand Rapids, Michigan, where he was reared with Midwestern values.

There he joined the Boy Scouts, rising to its highest rank, Eagle Scout, which he considered one of his greatest accomplishments, even after he had become President.

A star athlete in high school and college, Mr. Ford attended the University of Michigan, playing football for a team that achieved undefeated seasons and national titles. He turned down NFL offers from the Detroit Lions and Green Bay Packers to further his education at Yale Law School, graduating in 1941.

Joining the U.S. Naval Reserve the following year at the rank of Ensign, he served in the South Pacific during World War II, and later rose to Lieutenant Commander. Serving aboard the *U.S.S. Monterey*, an aircraft carrier, as director of physical training, gunnery officer and assistant navigator, he survived a typhoon that sank three other ships and killed hundreds of U.S. soldiers.

He returned to civilian life after the war, practicing law and, in October 1948, married Elizabeth (“Betty”) Bloomer Warren. The Fords went on to have four children: Michael, John, Steven and Susan.

Making Tough Decisions

Gerald Ford’s political career began with his election to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1948. For the next 24 years, he rose in prominence, receiving congressional appointments to the House Appropriation Committee and the

Defense Appropriation Subcommittee. In addition, he served on the Warren Commission, which investigated the 1963 assassination of President John F. Kennedy. In 1965, Mr. Ford became the House Minority Leader, putting him on the path to fulfilling his goal of becoming House Speaker.

However, his career path took an unexpected turn. On October 10, 1973, Vice-President Spiro Agnew was forced to resign from office due to impending criminal charges of tax evasion and money laundering. This prompted the first time the 25th Amendment was invoked to fill a Vice-Presidential vacancy. Two days later, President Richard M. Nixon nominated Gerald Ford to assume the office. Mr. Ford—whose reputation for integrity was highly regarded among Republicans and Democrats alike—was confirmed by the U.S. Senate (92-3) on November 27, and was confirmed by the House (387-35) on December 6. During the years he served as Minority Leader, Mr. Ford gained many friends due to his leadership and gentle personality, which no doubt contributed to his overwhelming bipartisan support.

Several months later, Vice-President Ford experienced his next great unexpected course-change when, on August 9, 1974, Mr. Nixon resigned from the presidency as a result of the Watergate Scandal. Gerald R. Ford became the first person to become President of the United States without having been elected into the Oval Office.

Taking on a position he did not seek, President Ford inherited daunting issues from the previous administration that carried international, national and even personal implications:

■ In the wake of the Yom Kippur War, Arab nations initiated an embargo of oil imports to nations that had supported Israel. This sent economic shockwaves across the West. The U.S. economy grappled with severe inflation—a result of the 1973 oil crisis causing businesses to raise prices, which in turn led to a recession. Jobs were lost at a time when the cost of living increased.

■ Throughout the 1960s and early

70s, America fought an unpopular war in Vietnam. Countless deaths among soldiers and civilians—demoralizing nightly news reports—a venomous and growing chorus of protest movements—ill-fated military strategies devised through political maneuvering—these and other factors contributed to America’s disgraceful exit from Vietnam, culminating in the infamous Fall of Saigon on April 30, 1975.

■ Continuing what started under the Nixon administration, Mr. Ford sought to relax international tensions with the USSR and China through détente—a difficult task, considering that the communist nations were emboldened by America’s humiliating defeat in Southeast Asia. Also, Mr. Ford suffered attacks from his own political party among those who feared he was too conciliatory.

■ Mr. Ford narrowly escaped two assassination attempts only a few weeks apart.

■ The President also suffered in private alongside his wife as she battled breast cancer and her addiction to alcohol and painkillers, which was connected to her severe neck pain. (After her recovery she established the Betty Ford Center for drug and alcohol rehabilitation.)

The escalating conflict in Southeast Asia, the assassinations of national leaders, mounting White House scandals and other issues gave birth to the cynical 70s—a time when the public image of the U.S. Presidency was forever tarnished. National morale was at an all-time low. But with President Nixon’s departure from the White House, civic leaders, citizens and the press initially saw the Ford Presidency as a breath of fresh air. All looked forward to a new beginning.

President Ford attempted to answer the call to heal the nation of its emotional wounds. Yet, despite restructuring a new administration (which included rising leaders such as Richard Cheney and Donald Rumsfeld), Mr. Ford made a historic—and widely controversial—decision to pardon Mr. Nixon. Many believe it was this that ended his run for the Presidency in 1976. Detractors

claimed the pardon was a *quid pro quo* deal. Mr. Ford was even attacked by lawmakers in his own party because the pardon came just before the 1974 mid-term elections—resulting in an overwhelming political victory for the Democrats. Though he was able to veto 66 bills during his brief term, the Democrat-led Congress overturned 12 of Mr. Ford’s vetoes—more than any president since Andrew Johnson.

The “Accidental President”

Few at that time could grasp or accept that the President made a courageous decision that put his nation before his own personal interests. His desire to heal the nation trumped his political aspirations. And no wonder, for Mr. Ford came from a different generation, one that had survived the Great Depression and the horrors of the Second World War, and the subsequent rise of anti-Western communist regimes and socialist governments. His was a generation that had learned the meaning of sacrifice and making tough, even very unpopular, decisions. Mr. Ford represented an era when people took personal responsibility, an age when leaders stood up for principle, regardless of how the outcome would affect them personally.

How many such leaders exist today?

Mr. Ford took on the mantle of leadership as the Baby Boomers came into their own—the decade of the “Me Generation,” which focused on the self. Reared on the idealism of the “Great Society,” it was this generation that first began to view the office of the President as a father figure that saw to the needs of the American citizenry, from “the womb to the tomb.” Future administrations arose from this generation that made important national decisions through opinion polls rather than with courage.

Mr. Ford was derisively called “the accidental President,” partly because of the manner in which he assumed the highest office in the nation—and partly due to a few occasions when he accidentally fell or stumbled, televised for all to see. The public did not understand that a nagging knee injury from

his football years may have contributed to his imbalance. He became the butt of mean-spirited “jokes,” a caricature to be lampooned. His presidency was largely unappreciated and underrated.

A Nation Adrift

Yet today Gerald R. Ford is hailed as a man who “brought us together,” a “uniter” who stepped out in courage, a man of “Midwestern values” of “warmth,” “leadership” and “integrity.” He titled his memoirs *A Time to Heal*—but after 30 years America is not healing. On the contrary, the nation has become increasingly polarized, suffering from festering wounds that can never be healed by human hands.

Today, calls for sacrifice fall on deaf ears. Leaders who dare to stand on principle are crushed under relentless criticism, toppled over by the weight of

public opinion, and pushed aside when their services are deemed no longer needed. The result? A vacuum in character and strong, moral leadership.

Nature abhors a vacuum. Over the years, values such as courage, self-sacrifice and taking personal responsibility have been replaced by situational ethics. For the avid Bible student, this should be of no surprise since this was foretold of our age long ago.

Notice: “In you have they taken gifts to shed blood; you have taken usury and increase, and you have greedily gained of your neighbors by extortion, and have forgotten Me, says the Lord GOD” (Ezek. 22:12). How many times have we seen government and industry leaders financially profit at the expense of the average citizen?

“The people of the land have used oppression, and exercised robbery, and

have vexed the poor and needy: yes, they have oppressed the stranger [alien] wrongfully” (vs. 29). How many times have we seen the rich and powerful use the law to their personal advantage at the expense of the poor and helpless?

Of America and her sister nations of the West, God laments, “And I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge, and *stand in the gap* before Me for the land, that I should not destroy it: *but I found none*” (vs. 29-30).

Where are such leaders today?

President Gerald R. Ford was a *different president*, from a very *different generation*, with *different* character. His death, alongside the deaths of President Ronald Reagan and other statesmen, is yet another reminder that America is adrift without a moral compass, headed for an uncertain future... □

DEBT

Continued from page 12

days of the Baals to which she burned incense. She *decked herself* with her earrings and jewelry, and went after her lovers. Then she forgot Me,’ says the LORD” (Hos. 2:8, 11, 13).

By contrast, the outlandish sums spent on exchanging Christmas gifts eclipse what is spent on the worship of the true God who has blessed the nation. By failing to apply God’s tithing and other financial laws, the United States and many other nations are bringing profound economic curses upon themselves.

“Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed Me. But you say, Wherein have we robbed You? *In tithes and offerings. You are cursed with a curse: for you have robbed Me, even this whole nation. Bring you all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in My house, and prove Me now herewith, says the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it*” (Mal. 3:8-10; KJV).

Most people do not like to be told that their nation is steaming toward

disaster like the majestic Titanic, or that cracks are forming in its economy that could burst suddenly like an earthen dam collapsing, unleashing a torrent of destructive water. They prefer to remain blissfully ignorant and oblivious to the danger.

“Now go, write it before them on a tablet, and note it on a scroll, *that it may be for time to come*, forever and ever: that this is a rebellious people, lying children, children who will not hear the law of the LORD; who say to the seers, ‘Do not see,’ and to the prophets, ‘Do not prophesy to us right things; speak to us smooth things, prophesy deceits’” (Isa. 30:8-10).

“Therefore this iniquity [lawlessness] shall be to you like a breach ready to fall, a bulge in a high wall, *whose breaking comes suddenly, in an instant*” (vs. 13).

Like a modern Paul Revere who warned fledgling American colonies of an impending British invasion, Peter G. Peterson—co-founder of the Concord Coalition, a prominent investment banker, former U.S. Commerce secretary and prolific author—warns of an impending economic calamity coming on the United States if drastic measures aren’t taken.

In his latest book, *Running on*

Empty: How the Democratic and Republican Parties Are Bankrupting Our Future and What Americans Can Do About It, Mr. Peterson writes, “Buried deep in the financial pages, telltale signs are appearing that suggest America may well be headed for a financial meltdown.”

The Bible reveals that the 10th and final resurrection of the Roman Empire will suddenly emerge upon the world stage as a powerful economic, military, political and religious force of overwhelming might. Tremendous prosperity will result under this future global economic system.

Could a collapse of the U.S. economy plunge the entire world into another Great Depression, leaving a tremendous void that will be filled by this rising European superpower?

Ultimately, all of man’s governments will be suddenly destroyed—crushed and shattered at the spectacular Return of Jesus Christ! Beyond today’s bad news will be a WONDERFUL WORLD TOMORROW where God’s financial laws will be enforced. Universal prosperity will abound. Debts will be forgiven. Happiness will prevail. That will occur when Christ establishes the kingdom of God on earth. That day is soon to come! □

SOCIETY & LIFESTYLES



Increasing Sports Violence

Professional basketball sank to a new low when a December 16, 2006 game at New York City's Madison Square Garden ignited into a violent melee between players from the New York Knicks and the Denver Nuggets.

Ten players were ejected from the game—seven (four from the Knicks, three from the Nuggets) were suspended, with the scoring leader of the National Basketball Association (NBA) banned for 15 games—both teams were fined \$500,000 each.

The Knicks coach was suspected of instigating the brawl. *The New York Times* reported that a video tape seemed to show him issuing a veiled threat to a Nuggets player.

Minutes later, a Knicks player committed a hard foul against his opponent, grabbing him by the neck and tackling

him to the floor. This sparked an on-court clash between both teams, which spilled into the front row of the stands.

Referring to his issuing penalties totaling \$1 million in fines and a 47-game suspension, NBA commissioner David Stern stated, "It's a more general message that I'm going to start to [sic] holding our teams accountable" (*AP*).

This was the first major fight involving NBA players since the infamous November 19, 2004 brawl involving the Indiana Pacers, Detroit Pistons and sports fans. This embarrassment to professional basketball, which yielded a total of 156 game suspensions, led to efforts to rebuild the NBA's public image. But enforcing dress codes and requiring players to be courteous to referees cannot change the root CAUSE of the problem—which we addressed

in our Jan.-Feb. 2005 article "What's All the Rage About?":

"Sports writers, columnists and others have offered their opinions as to why the sudden burst of violence in sports. But have you considered that sports rage is a mirror of today's society? There was a time when road rage did not exist. There was a time when the phenomenon known as 'going postal' was unheard of. These, along with sports rage, are symptoms of a society that is becoming increasingly violent.

"A brief look at our world reveals that people are consumed with material possessions. The image and idea of *self* is all-important. Many allow their thinking to be ruled by envy, greed, and the lust for power. People are so accustomed to the comforts of 'the good life' that if these were taken away, they would not know how to continue living. Most would resort to any means necessary to ensure that they get what *they* want."

"The natural result of valuing privileges (blessings) above principles (or laws) is that people will cease to be concerned about the needs and welfare of others."

The violence long associated with professional hockey and soccer is spreading to other sports. Yet these are merely *symptoms* mirroring the mindset of an increasingly violent society that constantly seeks to be entertained.

To learn more, read our booklet *Did God Create HUMAN NATURE?* □

To read "What's All the Rage About?," visit: www.realtruth.org/articles/318-watra.html

Poll: Kids Think Celebrity Life Is "Best Thing"

In a British survey, 2,500 children under age ten were asked, "What do you think is the very best thing in the world?"

The number one answer was "Money and getting rich," followed by "Being famous." "God" was number ten.

The poll, conducted by Luton First, sponsors and organizers of Britain's second annual National Kids' Day

celebration, was carried out through schools and online questionnaires. The survey asked other questions, such as "If you were king or queen of the world, what rules would you make?," "How much money do you think you will need to be rich?," and "Who is the most famous person in all the world?"

A spokesman for Luton First stated, "The idea of the special Kids' Day is to give pre-teens a national voice for their

views and opinions in a very simple format," adding, "This particular age group has some very clear ideas of how the world could be changed for the better."

Our article "America's Idols – Why the Obsession With the Rich and Famous?" explains why millions are virtually hypnotized by celebrity lifestyles. □

To read "America's Idols," visit: www.realtruth.org/articles/465-ai.html

RELIGION

Historic Catholic-Orthodox Meeting

A historic event occurred in December 2006 when the Orthodox archbishop of Greece made a trip to Rome to visit Pope Benedict XVI. This marked a change in attitude between both parties after years of drifting apart.

“The archbishop said his visit offered the opportunity ‘to undertake a new stage on the common path of our Churches to address the problems of the present-day world’” (*Zenit*).

“‘We come,’ the Orthodox leader said, ‘to visit the eminent theologian and university professor, the assiduous researcher of ancient Greek thought and of the Greek Fathers of the East; but also the visionary of Christian unity and cooperation of religions to ensure the peace of the whole world’” (*ibid.*).

Pope Benedict’s comments about

the meeting were equally positive: “‘Catholics and Orthodox are called to offer their cultural and, above all, their spiritual contribution...They have the duty to defend the Christian roots of the Continent, which have forged it in the course of the centuries, and thus allow Christian tradition to continue manifesting itself and operating with all its forces to safeguard the dignity of the human person, respect of minorities, being careful to avoid a cultural uniformity that would run the risk of losing immense riches of civilization’” (*ibid.*).

The pope considers the unity of Christianity central to the promotion and future of civilization. In part, this means protecting Europe. The unification of Eastern and Western churches would mean more clout in influencing “Christian” recognition in the upcoming EU constitution.

In our article “The Ecumenical Movement – A Family Reunion?” we discuss steps to unification that began long before the December 2006 meeting. In Vatican II, “Catholic leaders encouraged contact with Protestants, and slightly softened their exclusivist language and their opposition to ‘freedom of conscience’ in matters of religion.” Rome has been quietly modifying some of its doctrines—as has the Greek Orthodox church. Both branches’ teachings have aligned more than most would imagine.

Setting aside a few doctrinal differences, these organizations are nearing the unification both have desired for decades. The potential implications of this unification are profound. □

To read “Ecumenical Movement,” visit: www.realtruth.org/articles/352-temafr.html

THE MIDDLE EAST

President Abbas Calls for New Palestinian Elections

“I have decided to call for early presidential and legislative elections.” With these words, Mahmoud Abbas, president of the Palestinian Authority and leader of the political party Fatah, addressed a cheering crowd in a much anticipated speech given December 16.

Mr. Abbas called for the new elections to disrupt the standoff between Fatah and Hamas, the two competing political powers in the Palestinian territories. Israel and the West label Hamas a terrorist group.

The signal comes at a time of increased violence in the region. Fatah and Hamas recently renewed hostilities after suspected Hamas gunmen killed three children of a senior Palestinian Authorities intelligence official on December 11. Two days later, unidentified gunmen killed Hamas commander Bassam Al Fara, who also served as a judge in the Islamic civil court.

Then on December 14, Fatah and Hamas gunmen clashed as General Intelligence (GI) officers arrested a commander of the Hamas-aligned Popular Resistance Committees, Hisham Mukhaimar.

Within hours, Hamas abducted a GI officer, Maj. Mohammed Abu Siyam.

The fighting continued when the entourage of Hamas’s foreign minister was attacked; one of Mr. Abbas’s security officers was killed; and the President’s office came under mortar attack.

“Nobody is interested in a civil war, and nobody is preparing for a civil war, but things might deteriorate and these factions might lose control, and then you have it without preparing for it,” stated Said Zeidani, a Ramallah-based political analyst. “This is something

that needs to be taken into account seriously.”

Mr. Zeidani went on to say the options to avert war are the same ones that Mr. Abbas presented to Hamas: elections or a power-sharing “unity” government.

Fatah leader and chief Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erekat said an early election is the only way out of the chaos. Yet Hamas leaders said their party would not participate in early elections, claiming that any elections held now would be illegal. After winning a majority

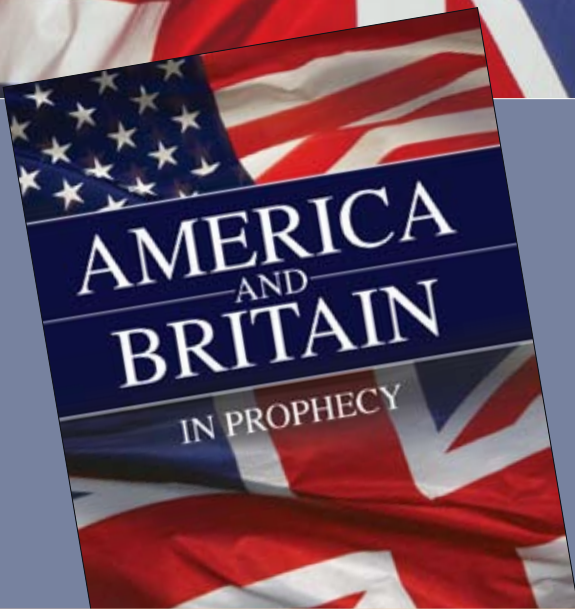
vote in last year’s free election, recent polls show Hamas would likely win both the presidency and parliament.

To gain a prophetic picture of how events will ultimately unravel in the region, read our booklet *The MIDDLE EAST in Bible Prophecy*. □

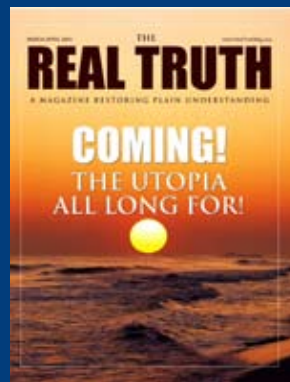
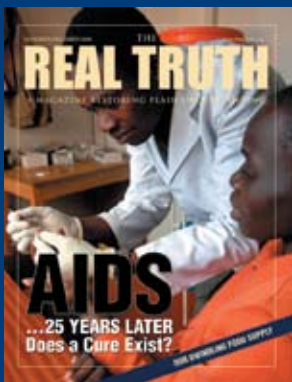


What lies ahead for America and Britain?

All nations are rushing toward the grand smash conclusion to occur in the “last days.” Humanity plunges ahead—blind, pleasure-crazed and detached from important world events occurring daily. American, British, Canadian and other Western leaders would take action, if they only knew what lies ahead. Great prophetic truths, revealing amazing—indeed ASTONISHING—climactic changes soon to stagger all civilization, go unrecognized. But Western leaders, with the rest of the world, remain in ignorance—WHY? Now you can learn what others have not understood!



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