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THE

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REAL TRUTH

A MAGAZINE RESTORING PLAIN UNDERSTANDING

A photograph showing two individuals from behind, wearing full-body blue protective suits, including hoods and gloves. They are running down a brightly lit hallway. The person in the foreground is carrying a blue rolling bin. The background shows a typical hospital or laboratory setting with a metal cart and a doorway.

SWINE FLU: BEHIND THE PANDEMIC OF FEAR

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VOL. VII | NO. 4 | MAY 2009

A R T I C L E S

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Who's Right About Stem Cell Research?

Stem cells: Two words that spark fierce debate. Proponents declare that embryonic stem cell research is a potential medical savior. Others decry it as the murder of innocent children. Whom should you believe?

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PHOTO: TOSHIFUMI KITAMURA/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

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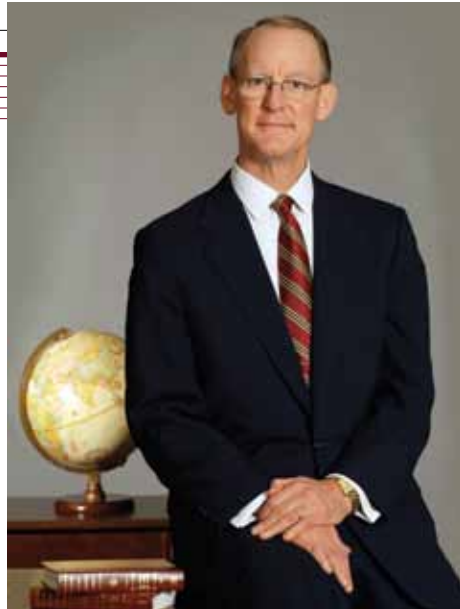
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PERSONAL FROM

David C. Fack



Great Prophecies Unlocked!

THERE IS GNAWING, growing concern on the minds of millions about the course of human events. As world trends and conditions grow worse, and ever more confusing and complex, there is also increasing *uncertainty*—and rapidly deepening *worry*—about what lies ahead for all mankind.

Towering questions loom over every nation!

Approximately one-third of the Bible is prophecy—history written in advance. Over three-quarters of this future history is yet to be fulfilled. Tragically, most Bible readers are completely unaware of awesome, impending world events, soon to stagger all nations—focusing first on the *greatest* nations. Vast sections of Scripture are hidden from them, and remain lost to their understanding. The result is that most simply have no idea what the future holds. Even those who are interested in learning remain tangled in a Gordian knot of disjointed, confusing, competing—and PLAIN WRONG!—popular ideas and opinions. They remain *ignorant* of fascinating, incredible—and truly vital!—knowledge, *life-changing* knowledge.

Spiraling Problems

Wars, disease, poverty, illiteracy, disasters of every kind, violence, religious division and confusion, governments collapsing or under siege, shortages of food and drinking

water, shallow, pleasure-driven, immoral entertainment, breakdown of family values—and of virtually all *other* values held sacred for generations—fill the headlines of newspapers and newscasts.

Then there are the stunning events and conditions throughout the financial world that are affecting every nation. One development after another—virtually all of them bad!—are impacting both Wall Street and Main Street. The effects are seen in tight credit, global stock markets, banks and all kinds of lending institutions, rapidly rising unemployment, declining retirement and pension funds, fuel prices, fallen home prices, frozen business and home equity lines, corporate bankruptcies and bailouts—as well as the projected budget deficits of city, state and federal governments, here and in many other countries. These also have a rippling effect through every level of politics, in every Western or democratic nation. The entire global economy is being revisited, reviewed and revised, with many acknowledging they simply do not know what to do next.

Where is it all going?

Everyone desires to know what the future holds. In fact, the question of what lies ahead for the whole world has become the very greatest question today. Millions are searching—wondering about the course of events. More and more world leaders are expressing pessimism about the rise of troubles, evils, ills and woes both within and

between nations, including those that are the most powerful. So are educators, military planners, sociologists and scientists.

All the nations of Earth are increasingly overwhelmed by a complicated and worsening array of difficulties confronting and challenging them. The greatest thinkers are being employed to find answers—solutions.

The problem? There are *no* solutions to any of the world's *biggest problems* anywhere on the horizon, but rather only new ideas that never seem to work!

Countless Ideas—One Authority!

This has caused a growing percentage of thinking people to ask whether the answers lie in the realm of biblical prophecy. We hear from such people every day, and from all over the world. In effect, a “market” has developed for “information.” With opinions everywhere, books about prophecy now abound. Just count the number of volumes about this subject within the also rapidly expanding “Christianity” section of any major bookstore. There has been an explosion of books presenting popular scenarios, ideas, theories, suppositions and interpretations of “how it will all play out.”

Again, the problem? They are all WRONG! Why? Because none knows *how* to understand—either how to use, or even that there are, KEYS to unlocking climactic Bible prophecies that will soon affect the life of *every* human being on Earth!

This has not prevented many supposed experts from setting themselves up as authorities on Bible prophecy. There are fiction writers, history-based writers, technical commentators, “mathematicians” and “code experts,” as well as a nearly endless stream of outright false prophets, phony prognosticators, crystal ball gazers and self-proclaimed “seers” and “psychics” spewing little more than ignorant

confusion on unwitting, but willing, listeners and readers.

But who IS an AUTHORITY? Who really *knows*?—who really *understands* what the future holds as outlined in the Bible? While religion should hold the answers, it has not even figured out the *questions*—and, when understood, is seen to be the biggest part of the problem. However sincere at least some preachers and religionists may be, all of their publications merely *add* to the confusion long offered to those desperately seeking answers in all the wrong places.

The Keys to Understanding

Further, most who write about the Bible do not realize the Bible interprets itself, that if a symbol is mentioned within a prophecy—*any* prophecy!—and virtually every prophecy involves symbols—the Author of this greatest of books would not leave the most crucial questions, those involving all humanity, subject to human interpretation. He would provide *clues*—necessary VITAL KEYS!—to understanding the large portions of His Word devoted to future events. He would also make known that He IS the Author of the Bible. And He would make absolutely clear that the Bible is a book backed by *His* authority—that it is His divinely revealed INSTRUCTION BOOK—and that this need not merely be “accepted on faith.”

He would provide PROOF of all the things He says!

The Bible commands its readers: “*Prove* all things; hold fast that which is good” (I Thes. 5:21). This certainly applies to prophecy—and to the things you will read in *Real Truth* articles. You will find that what is explained here *can* be PROVEN, that it is not mere opinion from one more ill-informed, self-appointed “expert.”

Tragically, most who read the Bible *remain* in near complete ignorance of its meaning, completely unable to recognize the *speed, sequence* and *seriousness*—

and the AWESOME MAGNITUDE!—of certain onrushing prophecies. And this is *on top* of not truly comprehending what any of them actually MEANS!

So many just cannot untangle the maze of *what* happens *when*, and *why*, as well as *where* and *to whom*.

Many Bible Prophecies

Here are but a few examples: Many wonder if the world has entered what is called the “end time” or the “last days.” How can you know if this time has come, and if so, what does this mean?—for you and the rest of the world?

Then there is the Middle East, the region prophesied thousands of years ago to lie at the center of the very biggest—the most planet-rattling—and *shattering*!—events ever to occur on Earth! While most Bible students seem to know at least this much, they do not know in any detail *what* these events are, or *why* they will come.

Of course, the book of Revelation evokes an endless stream of questions about its meaning and purpose. The last book of the Bible stands shrouded in mystery to almost all who read it. Seen as filled with terms—metaphors, symbols and descriptive language—that seem impossible to decipher, many lose hope that they will ever understand even its most basic messages.

Within Revelation is the often talked about, but almost universally misunderstood, mysterious “beast.” Who or what is this multi-headed, strange and fierce-looking beast?—and who (or what) is the “woman” that rides it? Then, what is the dreaded “MARK of the beast”? The beast of Revelation is a topic of countless speculative books promoting popular theories—and, I repeat, they are all terribly, and even disastrously, WRONG!

Please see **PERSONAL**, page 25



MISSING: Shame, Guilt and Remorse

*Signs of a Society That
Can No Longer Blush*

BY BRUCE A. RITTER

AFRICA, deep in the Third World: No one hears the screams of a nine-year-old girl suffering at the merciless hand of ragtag “soldiers.” The assault is violent—brutal—unthinkable—yet commonplace in a land without hope, a world in which the helpless suffer and the remorseless roam free.

Evening, the parking lot of an out-of-the-way restaurant infamous for adulterous rendezvous: Surrounded by floodlights and a television crew, a husband lunges at his wife and threatens to harm her as she cowers behind the host of a TV reality show. The host asks, “Why are you cheating on your wife?”

The husband feels no shame, no sense of guilt or remorse, only “righteous” indignation over being caught—and on camera. He blames his wife for not understanding the affair meant nothing to him. “You know I always come home to you.”

A nursing home where loved ones rarely visit: Caregivers taunt, slap, shake, push, punch, beat and spit on elderly residents suffering from Alzheimer’s disease and dementia.

A prominent cable television news program: Horrified viewers watch CCTV footage of a car speeding away after it hits a jaywalking pedestrian. Onlookers on the street hesitate. Some call 911, others draw closer to gawk at the unconscious man; all wait before offering assistance.

From the Third World to First World “civilization,” people from all walks of life either commit vile acts without remorse or think only of themselves when others need help.

Teachers, convinced they have “fallen in love,” prey upon students for sexual encounters, stealing their innocence, in effect, sentencing young minds to a lifetime of mental and emotional anguish.

Teens and pre-teens see nothing wrong with “sexting”—sending risqué, even nude, digital images of them-

selves to their peers. They fail (perhaps refuse) to comprehend that, despite all efforts to push “delete,” anything sent electronically will exist in cyberspace for many years to come—and could lead to being charged with a crime.

A Wall Street con artist swindles family, “friends” and colleagues out of untold millions of dollars.

A paranoid and delusional dictator strikes fear in the international community as he test fires a costly, state-of-the-art weapon—the price of which could have fed millions of his starving citizens and prevented needless deaths.

In the 21st century—the age of instant communication, instant travel and instant pleasures—shame lies on its deathbed, remorse gasps its last breath, and personal guilt is fast-becoming extinct. It’s time to understand why.

Changing Standards

The Victorian Era was a glorious time for the world-spanning British Empire. Yet it was also a period of extreme sexual prudery. The subject of sex was taboo, viewed as shameful, despite being a God-ordained blessing for husband and wife.

With the nightmarish horrors of World War I came the apathy of the disillusioned “Lost Generation,” the Roaring Twenties and the cynicism of “eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die.”

The Great Depression and then the Second World War ushered in an era of harsh and desperate times, leading mankind teetering on the brink of destruction. Out of it, America emerged as a world superpower, with calls of patriotism and “doing your part.” Citizens, embracing the importance of the nuclear family, advocated conservative, middle class values.

But the 1950s, the decade of “country and family first—don’t question authority,” gave way to the 1960s, the decade of “question everything” and “don’t trust anyone over age 30,” along with political assassinations and the sexual revolution.

With the laidback, “go with the flow” 1970s came oil embargoes, high gas prices, high unemployment rates, the rise of two-income families, the abuse of government powers, and embarrassing U.S. losses in the Cold War.

The “Morning in America” 1980s brought a hollow morality, leading to the situation ethics of the tattooed, body-pierced, “hooking up” 1990s, and the polarizing of the secularism versus evangelical “righteousness” of the 21st century.

Each generation thought it knew better than the previous one. Things people felt shame and remorse over in the 1950s they questioned in the 60s, tolerated in the 70s, and embraced in the 1980s and beyond.

Foundation of Civilization

God created the first man and woman, Adam and Eve, and gave them plain instructions: “Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, you shall not eat of it: for in the day that you eat thereof you shall surely die” (Gen. 2:16-17).

Eating the fruit of the Tree of Life symbolized choosing to follow God’s will, allowing Him to determine how man should live. Eating the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil represented choosing to make decisions based on one’s own understanding.

Adam and Eve ate of the wrong tree.

When they heard God’s presence draw near, they hid from Him because *they* had decided to be ashamed for being naked. They did not wait for their Creator to tell them when or in what circumstances they should feel embarrassment.

And that was the problem: Instead of being humble, teachable, ready to let God instruct them in making successful decisions, Adam and Eve became their own judges. They decided for themselves that they should feel embarrassed for being naked.

Sadly, civilization was founded on man’s natural inclination to judge for himself how to live, how to make life decisions, how to direct his own steps.

Yet God’s Word declares, “It is not in man that walks to direct his steps” (Jer. 10:23) and “There is a way that *seems* right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of DEATH” (Prov. 16:25).

No One Standard

Approximately one in every three people on Earth claim to worship the same God and hold sacred the same Bible—yet the world’s 2.1 billion professing Christians are divided among competing and disagreeing churches, denominations and sects. Catholics, Protestants, evangelicals—none walk together in absolute doctrinal agreement.



“Things people felt shame and remorse over in the 1950s they questioned in the 60s, tolerated in the 70s, and embraced in the 1980s and beyond.”

Others assert that the Bible is still in effect, yet they have added (unnecessarily) humanly devised traditions and manmade codes of conduct that have turned the Law of God into a heavy burden.

Many professing Christians claim God's Law is "done away." Notice a prophecy about today's religious leaders: "Her priests [this world's religious leaders] have violated My law, and have profaned My holy things: they have put no difference between the holy and profane, neither have they showed difference between the unclean and the clean, and have hid their eyes from My Sabbaths, and I am profaned among them" (Ezek. 22:26).

If there is no Law, then sin does not exist, for "Whosoever commits sin transgresses [breaks, violates] also the law: *for sin is the transgression of the law*" (I John 3:4). And if there is no sin, then there is no reason to feel remorse.


Ours is an age of changing moralities: Man conducts himself according to what "seems right in his own eyes." Religions cannot agree to one standard of belief. Governments are the same, with politicians changing sides whenever the winds of public opinion change direction.

People feel shame and remorse for their actions when they believe in a standard of right and wrong. But in this modern world, standards deteriorate with every passing generation.

Humanity is fast approaching a time Jesus Christ warned would come, a period that would mirror Noah's final days in the Pre-Flood World. People will—as they did prior to the Great Flood—continue daily life as though nothing is wrong (Luke 17:26), all while ignoring God's warning, "until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all."

Except for Noah and his family members, God took the life of every human being—but why?

Notice Genesis 6: "And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was GREAT [abundant] in the earth, and that EVERY imagination [purpose] of the thoughts of his heart was only evil CONTINUALLY.



“People feel shame and remorse for their actions when they believe in a standard of right and wrong. But in this modern world, standards deteriorate with every passing generation.”

PHOTO: GETTY CREATIVE IMAGES

And it repented [regretted] the LORD that He had made man on the earth, and it grieved Him at His heart" (vs. 5-6).

Jesus foretold the perverse spiritual conditions of the final days before His imminent Return to replace the governments of men with the kingdom of God: "And because iniquity [lawlessness] shall abound, the love of many shall wax [grow] cold" (Matt. 24:12).

Genuine outgoing concern for others will "wax cold" because sin—hatred, malice, selfishness and insincerity—will abound!

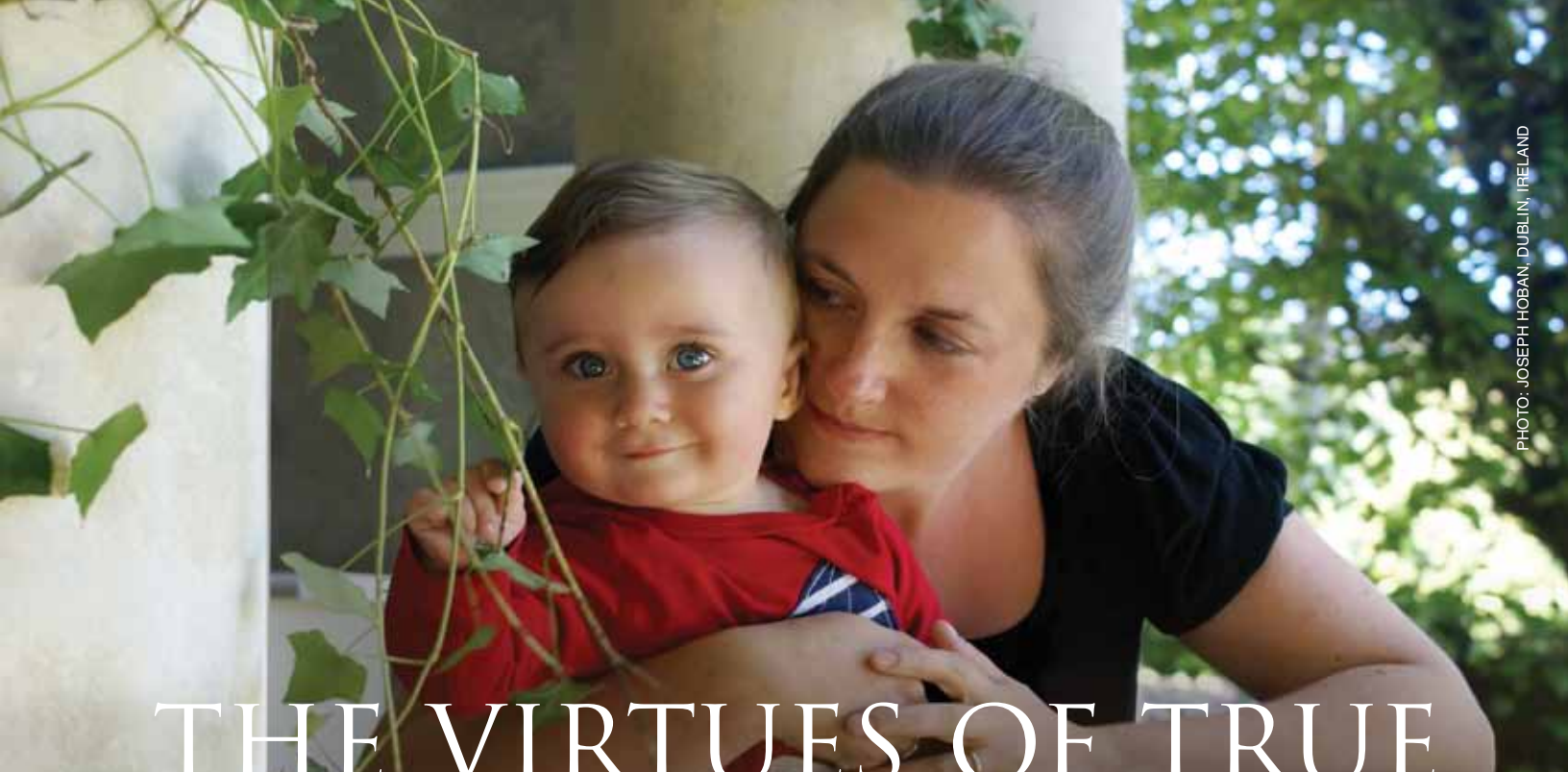
Darker times are ahead—especially for the American and British peoples. Describing the United States, Britain and their sister nations of the West, the Bible states, "For from the least of them even unto the greatest of them *every one is given to covetousness*; and from the prophet even unto the priest

every one deals falsely. They have healed also the hurt of the daughter of My people slightly, saying, Peace, peace; when there is no peace.

"Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? *No, they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush*: therefore they shall fall among them that fall: at the time that I visit them they shall be cast down, says the LORD.

"Thus says the LORD, Stand you in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and you shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk therein" (Jer. 6:15-16).

Read *America and Britain in Prophecy*, by David C. Pack, and discover why the peoples of these nations "were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush." □



THE VIRTUES OF TRUE MOTHERHOOD

BY MICHAEL H. VENISH

“MY MOTHER was the most beautiful woman I ever saw. All I am I owe to my mother. I attribute all my success in life to the moral, intellectual and physical education I received from her.”

This quote is from George Washington—statesman, military leader and first president of the United States.

It is a mother’s dream to have such a positive impact on her child. But it is not an easy job. Without proper focus, motherhood can become tedious, boring and repetitive, and can bring additional stress for mothers who work outside the home, whether due to having chosen a career or because of financial circumstances.

The view of mothers has drastically changed since the 1700s. Up to the early 19th century, society expected women to exemplify virtues in every sense. While men went to work, a woman’s domain was her home; she created a

“heaven on earth” for her children and husband. Most women cherished their stewardship as homemakers and educators of the next generation.

Bronislaw Malinowski, a pioneer anthropologist, stated that “the nuclear family had to be universal because it filled a basic biological need—caring for and protecting infants and young children.”

“No culture could survive,” he asserted, “unless the birth of children was linked to both mother and father in legally based parenthood.”

Though this is an ideal lifestyle, in 21st-century society, it is ridiculed. Mothers are construed as old-fashioned, out-of-date, and certainly not “cool.”

What caused Washington to write, “All I am I owe to my mother”?

This small statement presents a wonderful challenge for mothers, as this unique role has a principle influence on children’s lives: The mother bears them, nurtures them; their primary education begins with her. Essentially, mothers are the positive

force that shapes every new generation.

Developing a Bond

“All I am” includes both personality and character. This challenge is set before mothers who want to instill in their children all that they will become.

Developing the whole child begins in the womb. As a fetus develops and grows into a baby, a mother considers how she cares for herself. She knows that her health and wellbeing will have either a positive or negative effect on the yet unborn human being. She carefully investigates and comes to understand what effect smoking, alcohol and illicit drugs would have on her child. She considers the stress placed on her if she is a working mother. She is thoughtful of the type of environment in which she lives.

What is her home life like? Her relationship with her husband is of paramount importance because a loving, caring marital relationship encourages a stress-free home. This attitude

of love and concern for the future child continues during the months of pregnancy. Mother and baby begin to bond; perhaps she sings or talks to her baby while performing her daily chores. The child is comforted and recognizes his mother's voice. This is the primitive beginnings of its personality.

The environment in which a child grows up is important. In today's society, many children live in single-parent households. While many mothers have to work outside the home, most children are left at daycare centers. This robs the child of important bonding time in his or her formative years.

"All My Success in Life"

There is a saying about true motherhood: "Real mothers know that a child's growth is not measured by height or years or grade—it is marked by the progression of Mommy, to Mom, to Mother."

The progression mentioned here is a sign of respect, as the child learns to respond to and appreciate a mother's teaching and correction.

To enable children to grow up and be successful, certain principles of conduct must be taught. The first great gift a mother gives her child is her love. That love is expressed in the enduring amount of energy and time she spends teaching and nurturing her children as they grow.

Anne Morrow Lindbergh, the widow of famous aviator Charles Lindbergh, wrote, "By and large, mothers and housewives are the only workers who do not have regular time off. They are the great vacationless class."

Why is this?

Put simply, a true mother is too busy teaching the principles that lead to a successful life, such as proper hygiene, eating and sleeping habits,

manners, and appropriate behavior such as practicing honesty, telling the truth, and maintaining self-control. She teaches her children virtue and industry.

True Motherhood

Being a mother is a wonderful profession. The primary parent who molds future generations, she begins the process of instilling *right* information—*right* principles of living—in her children. She guides them away from being fearful, idle or deceptive. As they grow toward adulthood, she teaches them about moderation, steer-

ing them away from the pitfalls of drunkenness and illicit drugs.

President Washington said, "My mother was the most beautiful woman I ever saw."

What he saw was not the beauty of her clothes, the way she brushed her hair, or other physical attributes. The beauty he saw was in her eyes, the doorway to her heart—her inner being. He saw the true beauty of a mother who lovingly cared for him and gave herself in selfless service.

What about you? To learn more about motherhood and its vital role in



PHOTOS: GETTY CREATIVE IMAGES

ing them away from the pitfalls of drunkenness and illicit drugs.

A true mother looks ahead and foresees the need to fulfill her children's intellectual requirements and their schooling. She encourages their pursuit of true religion, teaching them from the Word of God, the Bible. Her

rearing children, read our book *Train Your Children God's Way*.

What will your children see in you? Will it be the inner beauty of a loving, caring mother? Will that beauty affect them so much that they will someday be able to attribute all their success in life to you? □

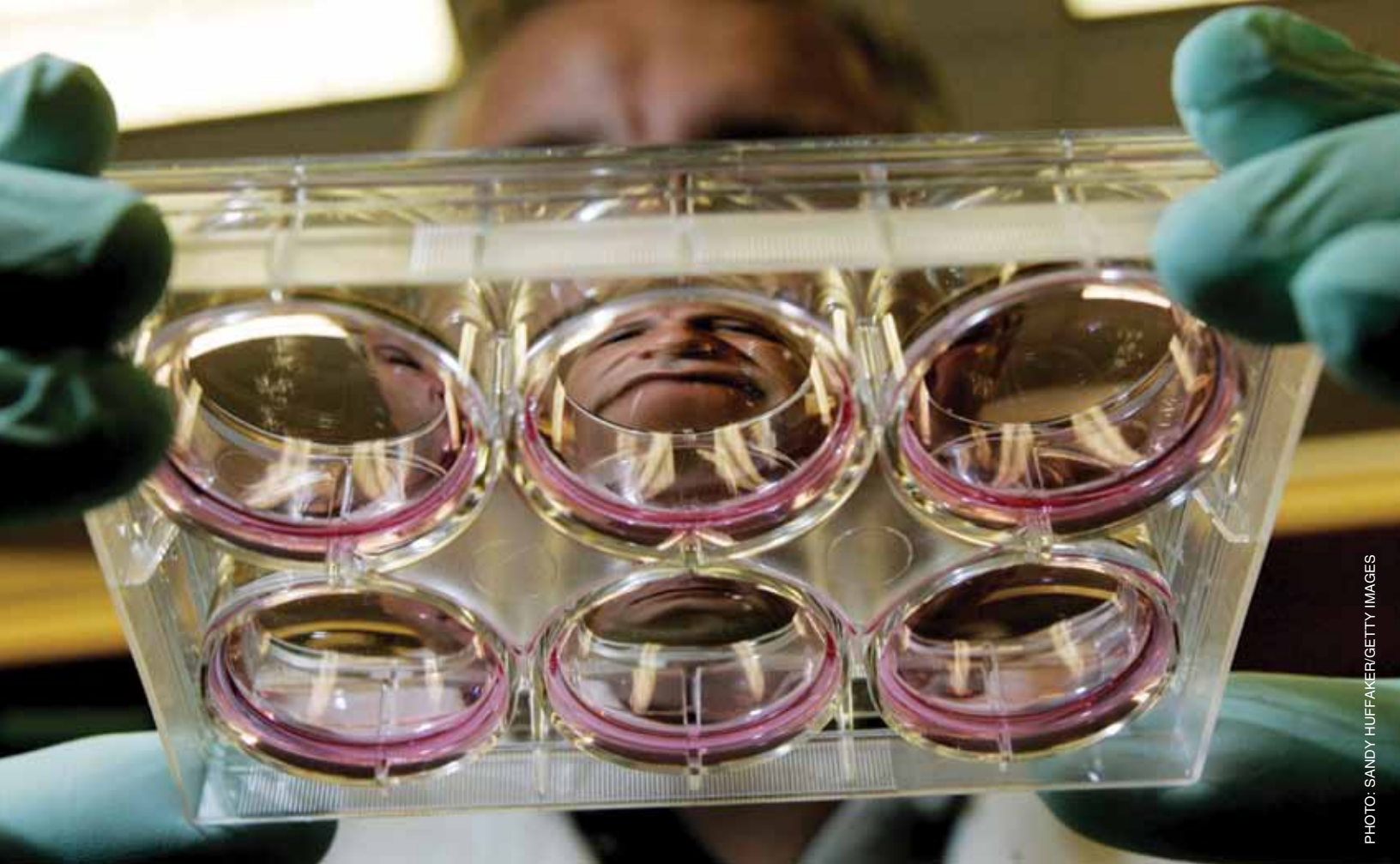


PHOTO: SANDY HUFFAKER/GETTY IMAGES

WHO'S RIGHT ABOUT STEM CELL RESEARCH?

Stem cells: Two words that spark fierce debate. Proponents declare that embryonic stem cell research is a potential medical savior. Others decry it as the murder of innocent children. Whom should you believe?

BY SAMUEL C. BAXTER

IN THE DARKNESS of a fallopian tube, thousands of sperm race toward an egg, swimming over one another to their goal. Many reach the egg, but only one sperm burrows into the egg wall.

Within hours, the fertilized human egg divides into two embryonic stem (ES) cells, which have the ability to become any part of the body.

During the following days, additional divisions take place, with the ES cells retaining their pluripotent properties (the ability to form into nearly any type of human tissue). About the fourth day, the cells, now called a blastocyst, begin to specialize and lose their broad adaptive properties.

Many scientists yearn to harness the power of these cells. If successful, researchers would be able to create any healthy tissue in the human body: grow organs for transplant, mend severed spinal cords, cure diabetes or Parkinson's disease, Lou Gehrig's disease—you name it.

Touting its seemingly endless applications, ES cell research advocates push hard for funding. At first glance, it seems they have a point: *Why not use these cells if they can so broadly aid mankind?*

It is not so easy.

The reason? Researchers can only obtain human embryonic stem cells from bioethical "gray areas," namely embryos left from in vitro fertilization (IVF)—the process of fertilizing eggs in a laboratory setting and later implanting some in a woman's uterus, with a number generally left over. The research process destroys the embryos.

Stem cells used for research can also come from the tissue of aborted fetuses, cells from umbilical cords, or somatic cell nuclear transfer (the basis of cloning).

Enter religionists and philosophers, asking, "Are embryos human? When does a human life begin—at conception? Or later?"

Can anyone answer these basic questions of existence? Who has the authority to answer them?

To ease concerns of leftover IVF embryos, some scientists do not classify a fertilized egg as a human embryo until it attaches to the uterine wall.

However, the use of these additional IVF embryos is the main battleground for the embryonic stem cell debate. At the core of the issue: *When does an embryo become a human being?*

This debate is most prevalent in the United States. While president, George W. Bush signed an executive order

restricting federal funding on ES cell research. Upon taking office in 2009, President Barack Obama lifted those restrictions.

The controversy has divided the American people. A 2007 Pew Research Center poll found that 51 percent of Americans thought it was most important to conduct ES cell research, while 35 percent said it was most important to "not destroy embryos"; 14 percent were unsure.

of humanity," extracting ES "cells from living human embryos raises ethical questions of the highest order."

To the Catholic, life begins at conception and IVF "involves the destruction of human beings." Thus, IVF and embryonic stem cell research are "morally illicit" or sin.

■ **Protestantism:** Many Protestant groups follow a line of thinking similar to Catholicism. A report from the Commission on Theology and Church

relations for the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod stated, "Human embryos, beginning with conception, are set on a course of development that leads continuously to an unfolding of unique human life."

The report concluded, "In the absence of decisive arguments, pre-implantation embryonic life should be afforded the benefit of the doubt and the benefit of life."

In other words, since we cannot know when life begins, it is safest to believe it is at conception.

However, this is the position of a small part of only one denomination. Pentecostals, Methodists, non-denominational groups and others hold differing stances.

■ **Judaism:** The general consensus among rabbis is that ES cell research is an important step for science.

According to an essay printed in *Jewish Action* magazine, adherents of Judaism are required to in a sense "play God"—a "concept of emulating God is implicit in the mandate to heal and provide effective medical relief wherever possible."

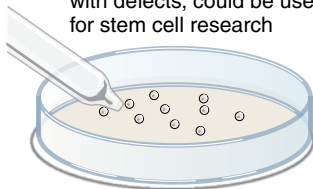
The essay continues: "Normative Jewish law sanctions—nay, encourages—medical intervention to correct both congenital and acquired defects, and makes no distinction between stem and somatic (body) cell tissues."

Stem Cell Cultures

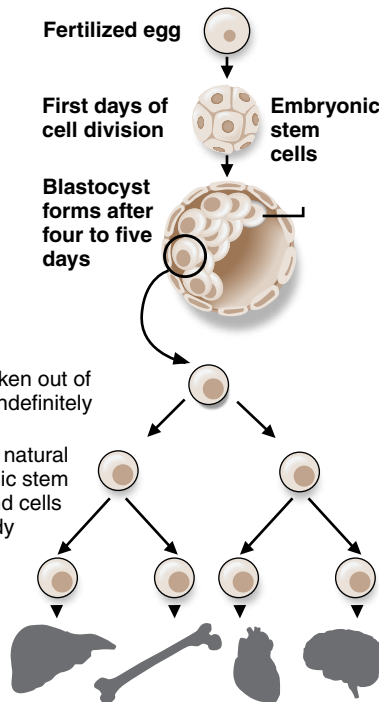
Researchers say embryonic stem cells could unlock secrets of disease and lead to cures for illnesses such as Alzheimer's and diabetes.

Making an embryonic stem cell culture

- 1 Several eggs are fertilized at once during in vitro fertilization; after genetic testing, healthiest embryos are implanted in womb; remaining embryos, some with defects, could be used for stem cell research



- 2 Embryonic stem cells are taken out of blastocyst; cells can divide indefinitely
- 3 Chemical agents that mimic natural processes turn the embryonic stem cells into adult stem cells and cells found everywhere in the body
- 4 Adult stem cells form
- 5 Researchers study cells, with the hope of repairing damaged organs



Graphic: Detroit Free Press

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Source: University of Michigan

Religious Disagreement

While there is some contention among scientists on the ethics of stem cell research, the controversy generally falls to the world's religions. They each bring surprisingly different beliefs.

■ **Catholicism:** Rome holds a strong position against ES cell research. In documents posted on its website, the Vatican states that while it "is convinced of the need to support and promote scientific research for the benefit



■ **CONTROVERSIAL PROCESS:** With cell transplantation, doctors select and implant an embryo with certain characteristics, namely resistance to a genetic disease. After birth, umbilical stem cells can be therapeutically transplanted to a patient suffering from such a condition. Critics fear this procedure will lead to “designer babies”—pre-screening for traits such as eye color or intelligence.

PHOTO: GETTY IMAGES

However, Jewish law forbids one to tamper with, or attempt to improve, creation.

Many Jewish rabbis cite the Talmudic tradition that life begins after 40 days of gestation, before then it is “mere water” and of lesser human status. Therefore, using frozen embryos from IVF is acceptable and nearly obligatory, given the mandate to “play God.” Additionally, some rabbis believe embryos developed in a lab setting cannot develop into a fetus, and are therefore not alive.

■ **Islam:** Muslims do not have a central religious authority that mandates a firm belief on stem cell research. Islam does differentiate the first 40 days of a pregnancy from thereafter. Many Muslims agree embryonic stem cell research is within the bounds of their religion, with some stipulations.

An essay by Dr. Muzammil Siddiqi, director of California’s Islamic Society of Orange County, makes three recommendations for ES cell research within Shari’ah law:

(1) Because stem cell research “has great potential to relieve human disease and suffering...it is obligatory...to pursue this research”

(2) Limit the embryonic stem cell

use to embryos from “in vitro fertilization and [that] would otherwise have been destroyed”

(3) Pursue “further research on the use of adult stem cells, to the point where it will be unnecessary to use embryos” (*Pakistan Link*).

■ **Buddhism:** During a conference at the Mind Life Institute (the transcript reprinted in *Mandala*), the Dalai Lama gave his thoughts on “when an embryo becomes sentient from the Buddhist point of view.”

According to the Abhidharma texts, “consciousness enters the embryo through the meeting of the regenerative substances of the father and mother, and at that point it becomes a sentient being...From the classical Buddhist standpoint, it has become a sentient being and extermination of that would be morally equivalent, almost, to killing a human being.”

However, the Dalai Lama admitted that knowing when an embryo becomes conscious is problematic: “A fetus, which is becoming a human is already a sentient being. But a fertilized egg may actually bifurcate into 8, 16, 32, 64 cells and become an embryo, and yet be naturally aborted and never become a human being. This

is why I feel that for the formation of life, for something to actually become a human, something more is needed than simply a fertilized egg.”

Among all the religions above, we find dissenting opinions.

Final Authority

Examining various religious viewpoints does not clear up the issue. In fact, it does just the opposite, with each new idea, opinion and theological interpretation fueling the confusion.

However, the litany of stem cell theology leaves out one voice—a voice that does not dabble in differing and disagreeing opinions of bioethics and religion. Although sacred texts were referenced in the quotes above, each failed to say *exactly why* God opposes or condones embryonic stem cell experimentation.

God’s stance on embryonic stem cell research reveals His purpose for mankind. This is what is missing in all other beliefs. To understand it properly, one must look to where life began.

The first man was Adam, whom God created from the dust of the ground. The first book of the Bible, Genesis, records that God made man in His “likeness” (Gen. 1:26). While God is *Spirit*, He formed Adam *physical*, after His image.

God creates in dualities. Man was first created a *physical being*, with the second step in his creation to be born as a righteous *spirit being*—a child of God. Human life begins when a sperm fertilizes an egg—and after gestation, a baby is born. Mankind reproduces himself *physically*, which then supplies minds that God can beget with His Spirit to reproduce Himself *spiritually*.

The Creator’s ultimate purpose is to reproduce Himself—through man! But how?

Man has “dominion over” the animal kingdom (Gen. 1:26). His creative output proves this. While the human brain is only slightly more complex than any animal, each person has an additional element that

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A New Beginning for **EUROPE AND AMERICA?**

BY GABRIEL N. LISCHAK

IN HIS FIRST European trip as president of the United States, Barack Obama traveled to Strasbourg, France, in early April 2009. His goal was to improve his nation's reputation abroad, which has been heavily damaged in recent years. He sought to engage European leaders in mending the economic woes plaguing the world and obtain Europe's support for a new strategy in fighting terrorism in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

During his 25-minute speech to a crowd of 4,000 French and German

citizens, the president discussed some of the central, hot-button issues affecting European-American relations, outlining a number of his administration's new policies. He introduced a dramatic goal of "a world without nuclear weapons," stating that the United States would reduce its stockpile; vowed that the U.S. would adequately address cli-

mate change; and expounded his decision to permanently close the prison camp at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, adding, "Without equivocation that the United States does not and will not torture."

Each point received enthusiastic applause from the European audience.

Pacing the stage, Mr. Obama said, "We must be honest with ourselves. In

■ **NATO SUMMIT:** British Prime Minister Gordon Brown (left), U.S. President Barack Obama (center), French President Nicholas Sarkozy (third from right), German Chancellor Angela Merkel (second from right) and other NATO leaders walk together after posing for a photo in Strasbourg, France, on April 4, 2009, during the NATO summit. The summit, which marked the organization's 60th anniversary, occurred on April 3 and 4, 2009, in Strasbourg and the neighboring German cities of Baden-Baden and Kehl.

PHOTO: SAUL LOEB/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

recent years, we've allowed our alliance to drift." He said the world united following the attacks on 9/11, but then "we got sidetracked by Iraq."

The president blames both sides for the schism.

"In America, there's a failure to appreciate Europe's leading role in the world," and "there have been times where America has shown arrogance and been dismissive, even derisive."

"But in Europe, there is an anti-Americanism that is at once casual, but can also be insidious," Mr. Obama said. "Instead of recognizing the good that America so often does in the world, there have been times where Europeans choose to blame America for much of what's bad."

The president added, "On both sides of the Atlantic, these attitudes have become all too common. They are not wise. They do not represent the truth. They threaten to widen the divide across the Atlantic and leave us both more isolated. They fail to acknowledge the fundamental truth that America cannot confront the challenges of this century alone, but that Europe cannot confront them without America."

Perhaps best summarizing the purpose of his trip to France, President Obama said, "So I've come to Europe this week to renew our partnership, one in which America listens and learns from our friends and allies, but where our friends and allies bear their share of the burden. Together, we must forge common solutions to our common problems."

America has been called the "melting pot of the world," and many of its "ingredients" have come from Europe. The foundation of the U.S. population emigrated from Europe, beginning in the late 1700s. Since then, the two "nations" have had much in common and have worked together to achieve common goals.

Recently, however, relations have taken a turn for the worse, prompting Mr. Obama's trip abroad.

Can the U.S. and Europe renew their relationship? Or will deep-seated differences be too much to overcome—and eventually lead to the unthinkable?

A Bond Forms

The close relationship between the United States and Europe began in the early to mid-20th century, when America dramatically intervened and saved the continent from obliteration and economic meltdown. During that time, Europe was battered by two devastating wars. World War II brought the most destruction, with fighting having occurred throughout most of the continent.

The majority of large cities sustained enormous damage from daily aerial bombardment, and industrial zones were hit especially hard. Transportation infrastructure—roads,

Established in July 1947, the European Recover Program (the "Marshall Plan") was an aggressive attempt by the U.S. to rebuild and bring stability to Western Europe. Over the next four years, America gave \$13 billion in assistance, resulting in the fastest period of growth in the history of Europe.

Historians debate how much should be credited to the Marshall Plan; nonetheless, during the next two decades, agricultural production surpassed pre-war levels, industrial production rose 35 percent, starvation disappeared, and the average European's standard of living surpassed anything previously seen.

Perhaps just as important were the political effects of the Marshall Plan. Food rationing and other austerity measures were scaled back, which reduced discontent among the continent's citizens. Communist influence diminished

greatly in Western Europe. Trade relations improved and led to the formation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in 1949. NATO would later bind the U.S. and Europe together during the Cold War against a common enemy—the communist Soviet Union.

A new form of European integration began to take shape. Both America and Europe realized the importance of European nations coming together to secure peace and prosperity. Each

nation, left to its own devices, could accomplish only so much. But cooperation among many brought great economic power to the region. The underpinnings were laid for the eventual formation of the European Union decades later.

U.S.-European relations remained relatively stable, even with the breakup of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s. Some wondered whether the absence of America's and Europe's common enemy would strain relations, but it did not. Rather, instability resulting from the dissolving of Yugoslavia provided NATO with a clear reason to remain

Following the 9/11 World Trade Center attacks, the relationship between the United States and Europe grew even stronger. Nations around the world extended an outpouring of sympathy.

bridges and railways—were also highly targeted. Warsaw and Berlin lay in absolute ruin, while London and Rotterdam fared only slightly better. Europe's economic situation was dire, with small towns left isolated and millions of people homeless.

The problems were grand and numerous. Many countries were unable to remedy the situation, as the war effort had drained their treasuries of the funds necessary to bring back economic stability.

Enter the United States of America and the plan of Secretary of State George Marshall.

unified. It engaged in its first war in Kosovo in 1999.

In the late 1990s, with the Cold War a thing of the past, NATO found opportunities to expand its influence and bring economic and political benefits, as well as security, to nations in Eastern Europe. Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic aligned with the organization in 1999, with a number of others joining in 2004 and beyond.

The only real tension during this time was Europe's concern that the U.S. might return to isolationism, and America's irritation that Europe did not invest enough in defense. But in all, both held a favorable view of each other.

Old Allies Divide

Following the 9/11 World Trade Center attacks, the relationship between the United States and Europe grew even stronger. Nations around the world extended an outpouring of sympathy. Europe, which lost citizens in the attack, was outraged and stood firmly behind America. For the first time in its history, on Sept. 12, 2001, NATO invoked Article V, which states that an attack on one is an attack on all.

When the U.S. decided to track down Osama bin Laden and associated terrorists in Afghanistan, all of Europe agreed. European nations viewed the response as appropriate and constrained. After all, it was well-known that al-Qaeda was training its followers in camps throughout the country, and that the Taliban government supported bin Laden. Both powers recognized a very real threat emanating from Afghanistan and were determined to fully cooperate in dealing with it.

Then, in early 2003, America decided to invade Iraq, on the basis of ridding the rogue nation of weapons of mass destruction. (Of course, it was later discovered that Iraq did not possess such an arsenal.)

However, a number of European nations disapproved of the military action, namely France, Germany and Belgium, who wanted to allow the inspection process to run its due course.

Britain, though, sided with the U.S. After failing to receive unanimous support from other nations on the UN Security Council, the two powers decided to use previous resolutions on Iraq as authority to go to war. There was strong support from a handful of other European nations. At the end of 2003, Spain, Italy, Denmark, Portugal, Hungary, the Czech Republic and Poland signed a joint document expressing their agreement with the war.

Still, a failure to achieve *unanimous* support from the European Union was diplomatically costly for the United States in terms of transatlantic relations. It was the beginning of much tension and division.

Recently, U.S. foreign policy has become offensive to many Europeans because of what they believe is America's unnecessary use of raw, preemptive power. Many have viewed the U.S. as thumbing its nose on international agreements, namely the Kyoto Protocol, the International Court, the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty and the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

In the aftermath of 9/11, the U.S. coined the war against terrorism the "war on terror," a phrase that has been oft repeated. Europeans grew to firmly dislike the term and the offensive operations conducted within it. They became increasingly concerned with the direction and actions of the most powerful nation in the world. America's new strategy to preemptively strike what it deems to be terrorist threats anywhere in the world flew in the face of Europe's idea of international norms, the importance of exhausting all diplomatic options before military intervention and the necessity of the global community reaching decisions collectively, rather than single nations acting unilaterally as they see fit. (Since entering office, Mr. Obama has dropped the term.)

Overall, following the end of both World Wars, Europe has moved toward a position of diplomacy and a willingness to live with threats. Its combined defense budget is hundreds of billions of dollars less than that of the United States.

On the other hand, America has become more militaristic in its approach to engage what are perceived as threats to its national and economic security. The superpower is often thought of as a "big brother," policing the world and protecting nations that are incapable of warding off enemies.

In his book *The European Dream: How Europe's Vision of the Future is Quietly Eclipsing the American Dream*, Jeremy Rifkin writes, "The American Dream is wedded to love of country and patriotism. The European Dream is more cosmopolitan and less territorial. Americans are more willing to employ military force in the world, if necessary, to protect what we perceive to be our vital self-interests. Europeans are more reluctant to use military force, and, instead, they favor diplomacy, economic assistance, and aid to avert conflict and prefer peace-keeping operations to maintain order."

"Mars and Venus"

Robert Kagan, a U.S. historian and prominent scholar on European-American relations, believes the two powers share nearly polar opposite values and world views. In his June 2002 *Policy Review* essay, titled "Power and Weakness," Mr. Kagan wrote, "It is time to stop pretending that Europeans and Americans share a common view of the world, or even that they occupy the same world."

Mr. Kagan explains that "on major strategic and international questions today, Americans are from Mars and Europeans are from Venus: They agree on little and understand one another less and less...European intellectuals are nearly unanimous in the conviction that Americans and Europeans no longer share a common "strategic culture"...The United States, they argue, resorts to force more quickly, and compared with Europe, is less patient with diplomacy. Americans generally see the world divided between good and evil, between friends and enemies, while Europeans see a more complex picture."

*Please see **NEW BEGINNING**, page 20*



— SWINE FLU —
BEHIND THE PANDEMIC



PHOTOS: GETTY IMAGES

A COUGH, a runny nose, fatigue become a fever, leading to extreme illness—and for some people, death.

Concern turns into worry, which gives way to fear, which morphs into panic.

As cases of a previously unseen—and sometimes deadly—strain of swine flu cross the border from Mexico into the United States and beyond, fear of a worldwide pandemic sweeps the nations. Health officials, government leaders and average citizens wonder if this could be a repeat of the 1918-19 Spanish flu pandemic, which infected up to 500 million people and caused as many as 50 million deaths.

According to a study from the University of Southern California, news and information today are delivered so fast and so frequently, via news websites, social networking, blogs, etc., that people do not have time to process the emotional impact of what they have read—leading them to feel indifferent to human suffering. Reports such as 5,200 people dying in a flash storm in some faraway country, or UN peacekeepers discovering 250 rotting corpses in a remote, war-ravaged region, become blurred. “After all,” the mind reasons, “it didn’t happen here.”

But the new swine flu outbreak is different. What happened “over there” is now “here”—leaving many to wonder, “Could I be next?”

Concern Turning Into Alarm

The World Health Organization (WHO) states that this new strain of swine influenza A/H1N1 virus, which contains a never-before-seen combination of pig, bird and human genes, initially struck people who had prolonged, close contact with infected pigs.

The *Wall Street Journal* reported that when the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) did preliminary testing on samples from 14 patients from Mexico, seven samples appeared to match the strain circulating in the United States.

Unlike other viruses that have taken the lives of the very young, weak and

U: EMIC OF FEAR

elderly, this particular strain has primarily killed people ages 25 to 45.

The Mexican government shut down schools, museums, movie theaters, stadiums, libraries and eateries in Mexico City and surrounding areas until further notice. Local citizens now wear surgical masks when in public and Mexico has made available a million doses of antiviral medicine.

Local governments in the United States have also closed schools and other public facilities as cases of swine flu continue to appear on the scene.

U.S. President Barack Obama addressed the public, attempting to put fears to rest. He stated, "This is obviously a cause for concern and requires a heightened state of alert," and assured that the situation was "not a cause for alarm" (*NBC News*).

Yet alarm is spreading, as the virus spreads to Scotland, France, Spain, Germany, Austria, Israel, New Zealand and other countries.

A bar manager in Mexico City said of reaction to the outbreak, "It's a panic, a psychosis, and it's hurting the country economically" (*USAToday*).

In Mexico, one taxi cab driver said his business has dropped by 50 percent since the flu hit. "People don't even want to leave their houses. It was bad enough with the economic situation, and now it's even worse" (*Bloomberg*).

The epidemic, which claimed at least 10 lives in the first week it gained worldwide media attention, threatens to push the nation's already struggling economy past its breaking point, during a time when the number of U.S. imports from Mexico is decreasing. "The Mexican economy shrank 1.6 percent in the fourth quarter and probably contracted another 4.2 percent in the first three months of this year, according to a central bank survey of 32

economists published April 1" (*ibid.*).

In New York City, Mayor Michael Bloomberg said that while the number of hospital visits in New York has increased, the number of cases has not. He commented that there are more

this virus could cause a new influenza pandemic. It could be mild in its effect or potentially be severe" (*AFP*). He also said, "We don't know yet which way it will go but we are concerned that in Mexico most of those who died were young and healthy adults."

In Germany, Health Minister Ulla Schmidt detailed a 100-page contingency flu plan, which she described as "the script of a disaster movie" (*Der Spiegel*). "The plan assumes that a full-blown outbreak of a flu such as swine flu could cause up to 103,000 deaths in Germany alone within eight weeks, with 13 million people visiting doctors and 370,000 being referred to hospitals. Around 30 percent of the population would be infected, the report estimates."

The German plan maintains that it would take three months or more to develop a vaccine that could immunize the entire population. "Essential staff needed for maintaining public order would be first in line to be

vaccinated—doctors and nurses, police, fire brigade, army and officials and members of crisis management teams" (*ibid.*).

A pandemic of fear is evident, leading several countries to install travel security measures, even travel bans, and numerous travel companies to suspend services to Mexico.

Japan said it would no longer issue Mexican travelers visas upon entering the country, and health officials have been patrolling Japan's airports, checking passengers arriving from Mexico, the U.S. and Canada. The health minister said that those suspected of having the virus would be quarantined (*The New York Times*).

Elsewhere, Asian countries such as China, Hong Kong and Taiwan are checking airline passengers, and

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Swine Flu

Swine flu is a respiratory disease which infects pigs but also people, typically those who have been in contact with pigs.

Symptoms in humans

Person-to-person transmission is through coughing, sneezing

The virus

Influenza A subtypes: H1N1, H1N2, H3N1, H3N2, H2N3

New "reassortant" virus

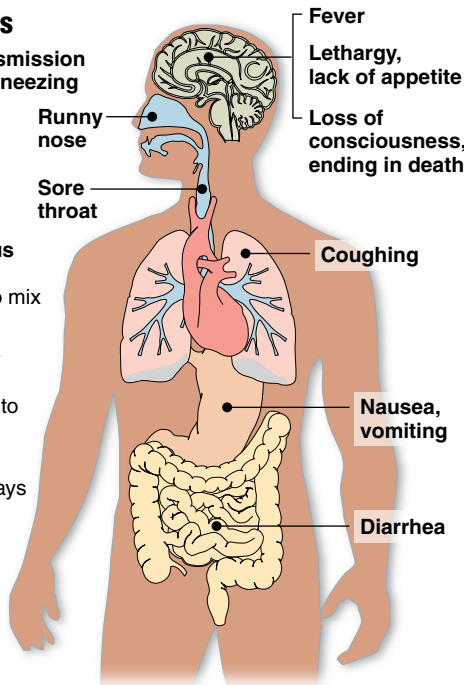
Forms when genes from different viruses begin to mix

When flu spreads

person-to-person, rather than from animals to humans, it can continue to mutate, making it harder to treat or fight off

Incubation time 5-10 days

There are no vaccines that contain current swine flu virus causing illness in humans.



Source: World Health Organization Graphic: Jutta Scheibe, Junie Bro-Jorgensen © 2009 MCT

people worried about the virus than there are actual cases.

"Tourism is one of the first things impacted; it is a fragile industry, because people get scared," says Hailin Qu, director of the Center for Hospitality and Tourism Research at Oklahoma State University. He says that tourism industries in Asian nations impacted by SARS took between one and two years to rebound" (*Christian Science Monitor*).

Elsewhere, Russia declared it would ban raw and cooked meat products from Mexico and some U.S. states, and a top European Union health official urged Europeans to forgo nonessential travel to parts of the United States and Mexico.

Like a "Disaster Movie"?

United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki Moon stated, "We are concerned that

LATIN AMERICA

Looks East

Where Does This Leave the United States?

Central and South American nations are increasingly seeking economic security and military ties with eastern countries, radically changing their decades-old relationship with the U.S.

BY ROBERT W. PACK



PHOTO: ADALBERTO ROQUE/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

CHINA INVESTING billions of dollars of infrastructure across South America. Venezuela and Cuba offering land to Russia for the construction of military bases as Russian warships dock on Cuban shores. Brazil and Iran making oil deals, and Chile and Russia promising renewed relations.

With the deepening global economic crisis, Latin American nations are seeking economic security. This security no longer comes primarily from the United States, but also from the growing—and apparently more stable—powers of the East.

What affect will this paradigm shift have on the relationship with the United States and the nations with which it shares the Western Hemisphere?

United States' Waning Influence

Evidence of diminishing U.S. influence in Latin America became evident with its exclusion from the Rio Group summit in 2008. The purpose of the annual meeting is to address regional issues impacting Latin American and Caribbean countries. Summit leaders invited Cuba, but excluded the United States, Portugal and Spain for the first time since the founding of the meeting.

The United States hoped to rekindle relations with many South and Central American nations at the fifth Summit of the Americas held in April 2009.

As 34 leaders from the Caribbean and Central, South and North America gathered to discuss the future of the region, U.S. President Barack Obama promised a fresh approach to diplomacy for the hemisphere in his opening address: “There’s no senior partner and junior partner in our relations. There’s simply engagement based on mutual respect, and common interests, and shared values. So I’m here to launch a new chapter of engagement...”

Mr. Obama also extended an olive branch to longtime political rival Cuba in hope of a “new beginning.” In doing so, the U.S. president endured criticism from socialist presidents Hugo Chávez of Venezuela, and Daniel Ortega of Nicaragua, who delivered a fiery speech at the summit in which he condemned Washington’s terroristic aggression in Central America and its isolation of Cuba’s Communist government.

Miguel Tinker-Salas, professor of Latin American history at Pomona College in Claremont, Calif., said that the waning influence of the U.S. has recently begun to manifest itself. “The last 10 years have produced dramatic changes in Latin America,” he said, “and one of the most striking is the loss of the United States’ formerly towering dominance in a wide range of areas” (*Christian Science Monitor*).

President Obama indicated a desire for a “new beginning,” but Latin American nations may already have found a new beginning—with growing superpowers of Asia.

Looking for New Economic Partners

Weeks before the Summit of the Americas, Hugo Chávez attempted to strengthen economic and political ties with several Asian countries by visiting China, Iran and Japan.

In February, China’s Vice President Xi Jinping visited Mexico, Jamaica, Colombia, Venezuela and Brazil to seek stronger ties with the five countries. The following week, Vice Premier Hui Liangyu stopped in Argentina, Ecuador, Barbados and the Bahamas to offer Chinese aid to those nations.

Visits to the Caribbean and Latin America by U.S. delegations seem meager in comparison. Thus far, three U.S. leaders—the secretary of state, attorney general and head of homeland security—have made trips to Mexico, and President Barack Obama visited with Mexican President Felipe Calderón on his way to the Summit of the Americas in Trinidad and Tobago. In addition, Vice President Joe Biden met with leaders in Chile and Costa Rica.

“While Venezuela now exports 60 percent of its oil to the US, the agreements between Beijing and Caracas could change that. Venezuela aims to triple its exports to China to one million barrels a day by 2013.”

Although the United States is still Latin America’s largest trading partner, U.S. trade with Latin America fell to \$35.3 billion in February 2009—a 28.9 percent drop from the same month last year. “The falling trade is mainly due to weak demand in the United States, although the leading trade partners in Latin America are also buying fewer

products from U.S. companies” (*Latin Business Chronicle*).

As Washington struggles to contain its own financial troubles, Caribbean and Latin American nations are looking eastward, with delegates from China and Russia making regular visits to these nations to offer economic assistance and increase bilateral trade talks, including military development.

China’s Emergence as a Global Trade Force

The New York Times reported that in light of apparent U.S. disengagement and increasing economic uncertainty, China offered to provide the struggling region with necessary financial assistance. In contrast to rapidly diminishing trade with the United States,

Bloomberg reported that Chinese Central Bank Governor Xiaochuan Zhou said China’s trade with Latin America has grown from \$15 billion in 2001 to \$140 billion in 2008.

“In recent weeks, China has been negotiating deals to double a development fund in Venezuela to \$12 billion, lend Ecuador at least \$1 billion to build a hydroelectric plant, provide Argentina with access to more than \$10 billion in Chinese currency and lend Brazil’s national oil company \$10 billion. The deals largely focus on China locking in natural resources like oil for years to come” (*The New York Times*).

A report published by the *International Committee of the Fourth International* said that Venezuela is angling to increase its export ratio to China. “While Venezuela now exports 60 percent of its oil to the US, the agreements between Beijing and Caracas could change that. Venezuela aims to triple its exports to China to one million barrels a day by 2013. (Today, the US consumes 1.5 million barrels a day of Venezuelan oil.)”

In a 2008 multibillion-dollar deal, China’s Chinalco Corporation purchased the Peruvian Toromocho

Mountain, securing a virtual monopoly on copper production in Peru. In the past, this type of deal would likely have been made with an American corporation.

But not now.

This transaction shows the diminishing influence of the United States in its own hemisphere—and China's growing need for natural resources and the great lengths to which it will go to get them. As the *Christian Science Monitor* stated, "The U.S. is no longer the only game in town."

The New York Times reported that "just one of China's planned loans, the \$10 billion for Brazil's national oil company, is almost as much as the \$11.2 billion in all approved financing by the Inter-American Bank in 2008. Brazil is expected to use the loan for offshore exploration, while agreeing to export as much as 100,000 barrels of oil a day to China, according to the oil company."

China's interest in Brazil comes on the heels of Brazilian President Luiz Ignacio Lula da Silva's call for an economic new world order. In a telling statement about where many Latin American heads-of-state place blame for the economic situation, the popular leader blamed "white people with blue eyes" for the current global financial mess. He said this during a meeting with British Prime Minister Gordon Brown, and repeated it publicly in weeks to come.

Even Jamaica, heavily indebted and confronting growing unemployment, turned to China after failing to secure credit from the U.S. or Britain. The Caribbean island nation negotiated \$138 million in loan packages from Beijing, turning China into its principal financial partner overnight.

Searching for Like-minded Partners

In addition to increasing economic ties, many Latin American countries relate to eastern countries who share the same political goals. This includes the development of a socialist state. A 2008 Gallup poll revealed that of 19 countries polled in Latin America, all but Mexico primarily consider them-

selves socialists, rather than capitalists.

Professor Tinker-Salas said there has been a shift of mentality in America's southern neighbors. "The region has undergone a political transformation beyond US control that was unimaginable a generation ago. It began with the election of Venezuela's leftist-populist (and anti-gringo) President Hugo Chávez in 1998, and has culminated with the victory in March of Mauricio Funes, El Salvador's first leftist president" (*Christian Science Monitor*).

China and Russia have strongly advocated for increased reform of the international economic system and regulation of financial markets. Further, China confirmed its position in January as a member of the Inter-American Development Bank, which helps finance long-term projects in the region.

President Hugo Chávez stated that Venezuela is relying on China to get them through this economic crisis.

"This is how the balance of power shifts quietly during times of crisis," said David Rothkopf, a former Commerce Department official in the Clinton administration. "The loans are an example of the checkbook power in the world moving to new places, with the Chinese becoming more active" (*The New York Times*).

"Currently, China is the biggest motor driving the world amidst this crisis of international capitalism," Mr. Chávez said, before meeting with Hu Jintao, China's president and Communist Party leader. Later, addressing the president, he said, "No one can be ignorant that the center of gravity of the world has moved to Beijing" (*Associated Press*).

During his recent two-day trip to China, Mr. Chávez said the two countries, along with others, were working to create "a new world order." This realignment is at the expense of capitalism, with many nations and their leaders clamoring for a more stable economic system and form of governance.

In times of great political upheaval and economic uncertainty, some believe the answer is socialism.

Russia and Iran Assert Themselves

It is not just China that is capitalizing on opportunities in the Western hemisphere. Russian and Iranian ties and support for Latin America have also been growing.

Last month, Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin met with socialist-leaning Chilean President Michelle Bachelet, promising to step up cooperation with the nation.

"We are satisfied with the development of our relations, including regular contacts and trends in trade and economic relations," [Mr.] Putin said. "Yet bilateral trade is rather modest so far. It is necessary to think about diversification" (*Itar-Tass*).

"For Russia, its Caribbean naval jaunt is a symbolic riposte to America's plan to place missile batteries in Poland and to its dispatch of naval vessels to distribute aid in Georgia after Russia's incursion in August. The same goes for its recent revival of ties with Cuba... But Mr Medvedev's main purpose in Latin America is business. Mr Chávez has already bought arms worth \$4.4 billion from Russia—including a Kalashnikov factory due to start producing 50,000 rifles a year in 2010. Russia was reported this month to have signed a contract to sell Venezuela portable air-defence missiles" (*The Economist*).

In light of these developments, it must be considered that Russia's goals may not be so economically singular.

Russian warships docked on Cuban shores, just 90 miles off the U.S. border, for the first time since the end of the Cold War. There was a time when the United States would have viewed this with heightened alarm. But in this age of "new beginnings," and as President Obama distances the U.S. from the "diplomacy of the past," it is not. Everything seems to be business as usual.

For a variety of reasons, Latin America has been of increasing interest to Iran as well. Not only has Iran identified the same economic opportunities in the region as China and Russia, but it recognizes Latin America, specifically Venezuela's anti-American President

Hugo Chávez, as a like-minded diplomatic partner.

“The motive for Iran’s recent interest in Latin America seems to be a desire to add to its small stock of diplomatic friends around the world, and to score propaganda points against the United States. Mr. Chávez has signed no fewer than 200 co-operation agreements with Iran. Venezuelan officials say that Iran has invested more than \$7 billion in their country—in plants to assemble cars, tractors, farm machinery and bicycles, as well as oil—and that bilateral trade has reached \$4.6 billion” (*The Economist*).

Recently, Brazil’s foreign minister visited Iran and invited Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad to visit Brazil.

Additionally, Iran has promised \$1.1 billion in investments to develop Bolivia’s natural gas industry (*ibid.*).

With growing concern from the United States, Iran has also been in ongoing talks with Nicaragua and its former Marxist guerrilla-turned-president, Daniel Ortega. The talks have focused on pursuing the construction of a \$350 million Caribbean port

financed by Iran to alleviate the ongoing energy crisis in the small Central American nation.

Redefining Relationships

Latin American trade with the United States has been decreasing at such an alarming rate, while Asian trade skyrockets, that some believe this is an organized effort to remove the United States influence from the region.

Professor Tinker-Salas disagrees. “This doesn’t mean there is a united left in Latin America somehow threatening the US, as some have suggested. But it does mean there is a much more independent foreign policy vis-à-vis the US and more nationalistic perspectives on economic matters. It’s no longer the backyard where, either through benign neglect or direct intervention, the US could more or less freely act to achieve its goals” (*Christian Science Monitor*).

It is not only larger Latin American nations that have helped redefine the relationship between the region and Asian nations. In 2007, Ecuador signed an arms deal with China. That same year, Costa Rica became the first

Central American country to establish diplomatic relations with China (*La Nación*).

What Lies Ahead?

Aristotle said that “nature abhors a vacuum.” This is true in regard to Latin America. As the United States struggles to regain its balance economically, the region is not waiting—and the growing powers of the East are more than willing to fill the empty space.

“The unipolar world [of America] has collapsed,” Mr. Chávez said. “The power of the U.S. empire has collapsed...Everyday, the new poles of world power are becoming stronger. Beijing, Tokyo, Tehran...it’s moving toward the East and toward the South” (*Associated Press*).

As billions of dollars travel between Latin America and Asia, and the United States watches economic opportunities with its neighbors evaporate, it remains to be seen whether this apparent shift and Eastern incursion into America’s backyard will be received with warmth—or will be met with revived Cold War sentiments. □

NEW BEGINNING

Continued from page 13

“On the all-important question of power—the efficacy of power, the morality of power, the desirability of power—American and European perspectives are diverging. Europe is turning away from power, or to put it a little differently, into a self-contained world of laws and rules and transnational negotiation and cooperation.”

Mr. Kagan continues: “Today’s transatlantic problem, in short, is...a power problem. American military strength has produced a propensity to use that strength. Europe’s military weakness has produced a perfectly understandable aversion to the exercise of military power. Indeed, it has produced a powerful European interest in inhabiting a world where strength doesn’t matter, where international law and institutions predominate, where unilateral action by

powerful nations is forbidden, where all nations regardless of their strength have equal rights and are equally protected by commonly agreed-upon international rules of behavior...This natural and historic disagreement between the stronger and the weaker manifests itself in today’s transatlantic dispute over the question of unilateralism.”

In the book *The End of the West? – Crisis and Change in the Atlantic Order*, foreign policy expert Charles Kupchan states, “A Europe at peace and a deeper and wider European Union (EU) have diminished European dependence on US power.”

“Europeans have accordingly grown more ready to assert their autonomy and chart their own course, upon occasion breaking with the United States on key policy issues.”

New Beginning?

The U.S. is hopeful that President Obama’s trip to Strasbourg, France,

will signal a shift in transatlantic relations, and that the decades-old allies can reunite to address the monumental global issues of our time. With a new president at the helm, and a new foreign policy, America is optimistic that the two powers can return to a similar relationship of the 20th century.

Yet signs point toward Europe continuing its march toward self-sufficiency and reliance on its own rapidly increasing economic and political power.

Could an unthinkable scenario develop in the not too distant future? Could it be possible that a military confrontation looms over the horizon? Many scoff at the idea, especially in light of Europe’s view of military action. Yet, a source long ago foretold of such a scenario. To learn more about how this could unfold, read our two-part series, “The European Counterweight”—“Part I: A Leaderless Superpower” and “Part II: Will a Strongman Fill the Void?” □



PHOTO: GEOFF CADDICK/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

FELIPE CALDERÓN

PRESIDENT OF MEXICO

Will his six-year term in office determine a new direction for Mexico?

BY H. CHRIS LOMAS

IN DECEMBER 2006, Felipe de Jesús Calderón Fournier became Mexico's 20th president since the constitution of 1917, and the 16th president of the National Action Party (PAN). Of the three major parties in Mexico, PAN is the most conservative.

Mr. Calderón inherited many challenges upon taking office, namely the nation's growing influence of drug cartels.

Many saw his road to the presidency as filled with irregularities, accusing Mr. Calderón of vote-rigging because of software contracts he granted to Hildebrando, a company in which he was a minority shareholder. His brother-in-law also founded the

company, which was responsible for writing the vote-counting software in the controversial election.

Political Background

The youngest of five brothers, Felipe Calderón grew up in Mordelia, Michoacan, one of Mexico's 31 states. He was a brilliant student, and, after school, he moved to Mexico City, where he obtained a bachelor's degree in law. Mr. Calderón later received a master's degree in economics from the Instituto Tecnológico Autónomo de México. He also studied at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, in Massachusetts, where he obtained a master's degree in public administration.

After his studies, Mr. Calderón spent most of his life working and promoting PAN, which his father co-founded. After serving as national chairman from 1996 to 1999, Mr. Calderón was elected president of PAN in December 2005, and held several important positions. He was the director of the state-owned bank, Bonabros, as well as Secretary of Energy. In January 2006, he began campaigning to become president of Mexico.

Family Life

While working in the PAN, Mr. Calderón met his wife, Margarita Zavala, who served in the Congress as a federal deputy. The married couple had three children and lived in the southern suburbs of Mexico City before he became president of the country.

Coming from a strong Catholic background, President Calderón strongly opposes homosexual marriage, abortion and euthanasia. He is also against contraception education, as Catholic theology teaches it is intrinsically wrong to use contraception to prevent new human beings from coming into existence.

In his approach to the challenges facing him as president, Felipe Calderón declared that the way forward was not a matter of being left or right, but rather making the right choices between the past and the future. He said the past represents nationalization, in which industry and private businesses were state operated and controlled, while the future means privatizing state-owned businesses, providing greater political freedom (an emphasis on human rights and freedom of speech and religion).

His aim is to remove Mexico's reputation as a gangster haven, and he has taken measures that reflect this during his tenure in office.

War Against Drug Cartels

On his first day as president, Felipe Calderón announced his government would cap salaries for high-ranking government officials and increase the salaries of federal and military police.

He then began to clampdown on the drug trade, systematically reducing the production of drugs on Mexican



■ **ANTI-NARCOTICS PATROL:** Mexican Federal Police personnel patrol the streets of Ciudad Juarez. President Felipe Calderón has acknowledged the country's drug war is bloodier and tougher than he thought when he first took office in 2006, but vowed to eradicate the "cancer" that is consuming Mexico. He deployed 5,000 military troops and 1,000 police to Mexico's drug-ravaged northern border.

PHOTO: GETTY IMAGES

soil. This process made it increasingly difficult for drug runners who used Mexico as a transit zone for drugs coming from South America to be exported into the U.S. and Canada. His efforts dealt a substantial blow to the drug lords, with losses estimated in billions of dollars.

In merely four months, law enforcement authorities arrested more than 1,000 drug dealers and confiscated guns, planes and boats. The raids shut down tens of thousands of marijuana, cocaine, heroin and opium farms, and almost 1,000 drug production camps. The secretary of defense issued a report on the progress of the war on the drug trade, estimating that government efforts prevented more than a half a billion people from illegal drug use.

Defying the government, drug

lords have stepped up violence throughout the country. During the first quarter of 2009, drug-related violence increased 41 percent above the same period last year.

World Acceptance

Together with China, India and Brazil, Mexico is rated as one of the largest emerging economies in the world.

Although Mr. Calderón received worldwide recognition for his war against Mexico's drug cartels, his visit to Europe was met with opposition due to the human rights violations that occurred during the Oaxaca uprisings (an annual peaceful teachers' strike that encountered excessive violence from government troops). There were also protests against the alleged irregularities surrounding his presidential election.

Mr. Calderón met with European leaders, including Chancellor Angela Merkel of Germany, in a bid to attract investment to Mexico. Ms. Merkel said, "Germany is Mexico's most important economic partner within the European Union" (*El Universal*).

President Calderón pledged his full support in ensuring that human rights were respected in his country. Mexico is to be "a state where all people can live in the knowledge that they are secure and where they can trust in the justice system" (*The Herald*, Mexico edition).

Due to the president's aggressive approach to the drug industry and his efforts to crack down on cross-border drug activities, Felipe Calderón led Mexico to forge closer ties with the U.S. and Canada. □

READER COMMENTS

From online subscribers of our weekly news updates

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

■ “I am enthralled by Mr. Pack’s broadcast (downloaded in two parts) on the approaching end of this age. I am now keen to learn all you teach... Sincere thanks once again.”

Merseyside, UK

■ “There are a lot of different organizations claiming to be the true church of God. I prefer to remain indifferent. It is my belief that the church is scattered and not a recognizable source. I would however like to hear from you.”

Morayshire, UK

Recommended booklet: *Where Is the True Church?*

■ “...I find your magazine very informative and interesting...I’m so grateful to those people who produce the articles in your magazine.”

Cebu, Philippines

■ “I am so pleased that I can access this information online. I used to pick up *The Plain Truth* from the newsstands in San Francisco back in the 1980s, and was a regular viewer of the Sunday television broadcast of *The World Tomorrow*. I have missed reading the publications—I still have copies of the old publications that are over 25 years old! It is a blessing to read and learn!”

California, U.S.

Editor’s note: *The Real Truth* magazine and *The World to Come* program continue the same message as their predecessors.

■ “Awesome site! I cannot read enough! I am tired of the greed, blasphemy, and lies of ‘Christian’ churches.”

Wisconsin, U.S.

Recommended article: “Seven Questions Your Minister Does NOT Want You to Ask”

■ “I watched a program on the history channel on “God vs. Satan,” and that is how I happened upon this site. I would hope that this magazine, *The Real Truth*, is based on the Bible’s teachings and not man’s theory.”

Georgia, U.S.

■ “I can’t read your books fast enough. Were they not free, I wouldn’t be able to acquire them. Thank you so very much.”

New Hampshire, U.S.

■ “By searching the web for a question relative to ‘Passover,’ I found your website just yesterday, and I am pleased to subscribe to your magazine *The Real Truth*. This reminds me of the name of the magazine published by Herbert W. Armstrong a long time ago!”

Analamanga, Madagascar

■ “Mr. David Pack’s talk [a *World to Come* broadcast] was very inspiring and compels one to think seriously about the present day events and their references in the revelation, which truly frighten the daylights out of us.”

Australia

■ “I had been a subscriber of *The Plain Truth* magazine since the late 70s, but have been distracted and stumbled on this website [www.realtruth.org].”

Colorado, U.S.

■ “Your magazine, aside from being lavishly illustrated, is highly informative and enlightening. Keep up the good work.”

Philippines

■ “I am researching the true origins of religious festivals/easter/lent/christmas/sunday/saints days/etc.”

Queensland, Australia

■ “Thank you so much for all your very hard work that has gone into your website; it is by far the best I have ever read.”

Michigan, U.S.

■ “I would like to know more about end-times and Christ’s second coming.”

Tamil Nadu, India

■ “I am looking to be informed with what is going on in this world—the real truth (pardon the pun).”

California, U.S.

■ “Today was the first time I heard about The Restored Church of God and its teachings. I’m very impressed by the wealth of information you offer to the public for free. Thank you for all your work. I definitely want to learn more about God, the Bible and your Church.”

Bayern, Germany

■ “What organization are you affiliated with?”

Arkansas, U.S.

Recommended booklet: *Here Is The Restored Church of God*

■ “I’ve been a subscriber 20 years ago, but I haven’t continued my subscription with *The Plain Truth* and never heard since. I like you books and magazine.”

Philippines

■ “Thank you for teaching the truth. So many are misguided as was I for a very long time. Time is too short.”

Georgia, U.S.

■ “I am interested in keeping current on breaking news and your expertise on how it relates to the end times. I am very concerned about all the violence recently and natural disasters.”

Kansas, U.S.

■ “I have found your magazine as an eye-opener, to understand the Bible.”

South Africa

■ “I love your magazine; it is very informative regarding present issues. And issues that are very relevant in the teaching of the Bible. Thank you.”

Philippines

■ “I have enjoyed listening to you on the Internet. I believe as you do about many things, and your materials will be so much help to me to teach others the truth.”

Virginia, U.S.

■ “From *The Real Truth*, I’m enhancing my knowledge.”

Virginia, U.S.

SWINE FLU

Continued from page 16

Indonesia has banned all pork products from Canada, the U.S. and Mexico. However, Indonesian Health Minister Siti Fadilla Supari said the government “would not issue any travel warning to prevent Indonesians from going to countries where swine flu has been detected” (*The Jakarta Post*).

The British Foreign and Commonwealth Office warned on its website “against all but essential travel to Mexico.” Canada has done the same.

India’s government said that passengers entering from “affected countries will be scanned daily for flu-like symptoms, while efforts are on to track people who have already entered from infected countries over the past 10 days” (*Bharat Chronicle*).

Meanwhile, U.S. airports have taken action. Los Angeles International Airport and LA/Ontario International installed close to 200 dispensers of hand sanitizer on the walls and counters in the customs arrival halls in five international terminals, three of which receive passengers from Mexico. Sacramento International, with masks at the ready, has urged custodial staff to wear them when cleaning in the international section of the airport, and it is increasing the number of times it changes air filters. In Texas, officials at the Austin-Bergstrom International changed the terminal where incoming flights from Mexico normally land, to a smaller, secondary terminal several hundred yards away.

Some U.S., Canadian and Mexican airlines have posted notices waiving change fees for passengers traveling on flights to and from Mexico.

Reacting to the WHO raising its alert to Phase 5—one step short of declaring a global pandemic—Egypt’s government ordered a nationwide slaughter of its estimated 300,000 pigs,

before the virus was even discovered in the country.

While cause for concern is understandable, health officials and government leaders warn the public to remain calm. The WHO recommends avoiding people who appear ill, are feverish and have a cough; to frequently and thoroughly wash hands with soap and water; and to practice good health habits (sufficient sleep, consuming nutritious foods, and regular physical exercise).



■ **AIRPORT SCARE:** Travelers wear surgical masks at Mexico City International Airport as a preventive measure against the new swine flu virus (April 27, 2009). Since the first reported case, travel to Mexico has dramatically declined and the government has canceled more than 500 cultural and athletic events, including a massive Cinco de Mayo celebration.

PHOTO: RONALDO SCHEMIDT/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

A Grim Scenario

What fuels this global pandemic of fear? Why does it exist? Where will it lead?

The world is changing. The times are insecure. In an age of 24/7 news, instant information, and mass communication and travel, the world—now a truly globalized “village”—is smaller, an ocean that is now a lake, with greater rippling effects reaching every continent.

Since the start of the 21st century, humanity wakes up every new morning never knowing what to expect. Terrorists topple New York’s Twin

Towers, America’s symbol of wealth and financial stability—oil prices soar, doubling, even tripling, then dropping (until another price cycle begins)—a hurricane renders a U.S. destination spot into a citywide refugee camp—a worldwide economic crisis shuts down banks, businesses, even governments, and everyday workers lose their retirement, their jobs, their homes...their direction.

From the ashes of World War II, America rose to become a superpower, a kind of knight in shining armor, a hero grown accustomed to being adored by lesser nations. Today, the international community sees America as a lone wolf vigilante—a necessary evil to be tolerated, humored, but also despised.

Rogue nations no longer fear standing up to Washington. While America promotes democracy—government in which the people rule—in lands where the rule of strong men has long been the norm, the rise of China causes many to take notice: “Communism plus capitalism actually works?”

And then there is the powerlessness of man’s religions. Despite public professions of devotion to God and faithfulness to tradition, injustices, out-of-control diseases, ongoing civil wars, and nightmarish atrocities still exist—in fact, they are burgeoning. Many ask, “Where is God?”

Governments see that the United States has passed its prime, slipping down from its status of superpower. Nations are ripe for a new power—a counterweight—to step in. A government that will bring stability to these unstable times, that will calm the masses through strength of will (and, if necessary, by show of force).

The pandemic of fear now spreading from nation to nation is symptomatic of a world in which shattering, life-changing events strike daily—events that prompt mankind to ask, “Where are we headed?” □

PERSONAL

Continued from page 2

What about the meaning and timing of the infamous battle of Armageddon—and the lead-up of events surrounding it—as well as the Abomination of Desolation, the four horsemen, the seven seals, the Great Tribulation, the Day of the Lord, the 144,000 and the Great Multitude...and so many other topics mentioned either in Revelation or by various prophets of the Old Testament?

The Last Days—and a Way of Escape

Jesus Christ foretold that immediately preceding His Return these and other prophecies would slam into a completely unsuspecting, unprepared world (Luke 21:34-36). Notice what He told His disciples in Luke's version of the Olivet Prophecy:

We begin in chapter 21, verse 34: "And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares." And verse 35, "For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth."

These are truly stunning words. Yet, most do not concern themselves with conditions and events that Christ plainly states will affect everyone on the entirety of the planet—"all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth"—and that these things are to occur without notice or warning, as with any snare.

Jesus continued with this all-important instruction—again—for those who are listening: "Watch you therefore, and pray always, that you may be accounted worthy to ESCAPE all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man" (vs. 36).

Are you concerned about a prophecy of such magnitude?—one with so much at stake for every man, woman and child alive today? You can escape what lies ahead. You need not fear—IF you are obeying God and doing what He requires.

The Sign of Christ's Coming

In Matthew's account of this same prophecy, found in chapter 24, the disciples were concerned. Notice their discussion with Christ, beginning in verse 3 with their question to Him: "And as He sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto Him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? And what shall be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the world?"

In verse 4, "Jesus answered and said unto them, *Take heed* that no man deceive you." Christ goes straight to the problem that would exist at the end of the age and about which I am speaking. There *are* many, many deceivers at work today. How many people are doing what Christ said, and *taking heed* about this? How many are carefully doing their homework regarding men claiming to represent God?

What *specific indicators* does Scripture present—for those who are willing to accept them!—about the timing and appearance of the events and conditions of which Jesus is speaking? He went on in Matthew 24 to spend the rest of that chapter *and the whole next chapter*—all the way through chapter 25—explaining in detail exactly what would occur—what the careful Bible student should be looking for and *expect*—before His Coming.

So then, naturally following this is the most central, all-important question that should be on the minds of nearly all who care about these prophecies—"Can I *escape* what is coming, and if so *how*?" Many believe the Bible teaches that a "secret rapture" to heaven is coming to spare the saints from the fulfillment of devastating prophecies. Is this true? What does the Bible *actually* reveal? The truth is that Christ promises something very, very different for those who will escape. Related to this—and this is, in fact, another prophecy—is the reference in *verse 14* of Matthew 24 that "this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached for a witness unto all nations, and then shall the end come."

May God help you understand that you have come directly in contact

with—through *The Real Truth* magazine—the very fulfillment of this prophecy! Soon coming to Earth is a world-ruling kingdom—or divine supergovernment—administered by Christ and the true saints.

Good News Ahead!

But there is another group in all of this who, not knowing God's *supreme purpose*—His MASTER PLAN—believe that the meaning of these gigantic prophecies is *permanently sealed*. These seem to think that God would inspire a host of very specific prophecies, large and small, and have them recorded—but never intend anyone actually know their meaning. Isaiah 29, verses 11-12, is actually its own prophecy of—first—how some would say that all prophecy is *sealed*, and—second—how others would openly profess themselves *ignorant*, and therefore unable to learn God's intended meaning. Take time to read what was foretold.

However ridiculous, these are positions held by MANY MILLIONS! Obviously, these would be little concerned with escaping that which they neither know nor understand—nor think can be understood.

But you *can* know the PLAIN TRUTH ANSWERS to all these questions—in fact, you *should*! And they are all laid out right there on the pages of your Bible! Like so many pieces of a large puzzle that only make sense when fully assembled, each of these questions and others represent a part of a bigger picture, one that is shocking far beyond the imagination of those who think they know the meaning of Bible prophecy.

However, you must come to recognize that this picture not only speaks to the *bad news* of the near future, but also to the incredible, marvelous GOOD NEWS beyond in store for a world desperately in *need* of this news. It is the awe-inspiring *hidden knowledge* presented within the *true* gospel—the *real* message that Jesus Christ the Messenger brought! This understanding overarches everything you will hear and read in all of our programs and literature.

Sealed—Until Now!

Now understand this! The translation of the Greek word *apocalypse* has produced the better known English equivalent—“revelation.” Not a difficult word, it means to *reveal*—not to *conceal*, *hide*, *veil* or *close up*. The dictionary definition of *revelation* is easy to grasp. Here it is: “The act of *revealing* or *disclosing*; something *revealed*, especially a dramatic *disclosure* of something not previously known or realized.”

But, it is also imperative you recognize that the very beginning of Revelation states that it was written for those who would be *God’s servants* at the end of the age.

The apostle John begins recording Christ’s words with, “The Revelation of Jesus Christ...TO SHOW *unto His servants* things which must shortly come to pass...blessed is he that reads, and they that *hear* the words of this prophecy, and *keep* those things which are written therein: for the *time is at hand*” (Rev. 1:1, 3). At the end of the book it

states this for emphasis: “SEAL NOT the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the *time is at hand*” (22:10).

How many have noticed this? Then, even more important, is how many have concerned themselves with whether or not they *are* God’s servants? And do not be so sure you know who is and is not.

The Bible’s very biggest prophecies are on the threshold of fulfillment, with the front edge of some already underway. They will soon crash and explode with a force completely beyond what *anyone* anticipates, including “prophecy watchers” who think themselves in the know and on God’s inside track!

The time for understanding these colossal prophecies *has come!* You CAN comprehend the message they bring. If you read regularly, you *will* comprehend—IF you are resolved to obey God, IF you are determined to become one of His servants.

Foretold by the prophet Daniel to be “*closed up and sealed TILL THE TIME OF THE END*” (Dan. 12:9), but now finally—in the late 20th century—hav-

ing been *revealed* and *explained*, the Bible’s greatest prophecies now thunder a POWERFUL WARNING to all who will hear—and heed!

In this brief personal, you have learned more about the truth of Bible prophecy than most will ever know. But this is only an introduction to the subject. Again, prophecy involves one full third of the Bible, and therefore is a topic that requires many articles and broadcasts. I repeat: You will read and hear prophecy made clear—the very biggest and most crucial elements of it made easy to understand.

Be sure to regularly visit *The Real Truth* website and watch *The World to Come* program. These are unlike anything else you will encounter. We speak plainly. No guesswork is necessary. This is because GOD is plain. Also, where He fills in details, so do we. And we speak with *authority*. Here, in *this* magazine—and none other!—you will learn the plain truth about many subjects—always straight from the Bible. □

STEM CELL

Continued from page 10

sets him apart from the beasts of the earth—the human spirit (I Cor. 2:11; Job 32:8).

When God imparts His Spirit into a human mind, God’s Spirit combines with the human spirit, and the person becomes a spirit being in embryo. This fertilization of Spirit and mind is immediate—there is no lag or grey area during which the person is not on his way to being born a child of God.

One must have God’s Spirit to be a son of God (Rom. 8:9, 14). During the rest of his life, that person is to grow—or gestate—spiritually in “grace and knowledge” (II Pet. 3:18), allowing God to develop His holy, righteous and perfect character within him over a lifetime.

God the Father calls all spiritually begotten persons “sons of God” (I John 3:1). However, these persons do “not yet appear what [they] shall be,” but upon Christ’s Return—and

their spiritual birth—“they will be like Him” (vs. 2).

Physical gestation is a direct type of spiritual gestation. Embryonic stem cell research muddles the physical type of God’s Plan and hinders his Supreme Purpose!

Read the book *The Awesome Potential of Man* to more fully understand the purpose of human life.

Why the Bible?

“*Right*,” the skeptic retorts, “Prove it.” And rightfully so. Why believe anything supposed “from God” if it cannot be proven?

The Bible declares, “All scripture is given by inspiration of God” and is useful for instruction in righteousness (II Tim. 3:16). In other words, *every* word is from God and *every* word can apply to one’s life.

Again, the skeptic replies, “Prove it.”

Truly, if the Bible can be proven, *all* of it should be followed. If not, it should be tossed aside or used as fuel for fire.

Another passage says to “Prove *all things*; hold fast that which is good” (I Thes. 5:21). We must take this instruction at face value. God says to “Prove all things.” Elsewhere, He says to “Prove Me now herewith” (Mal. 3:10).

This is a challenge. Our booklet *Bible Authority...Can It Be Proven?* proves the validity of the Bible as the Word of God and its relevancy to your life.

Any topic that affects the lives of human beings—embryonic stem cell research or otherwise—must be viewed through the lens of God’s Word. This alone allows you to discern right and wrong, rather than the muddled philosophies and theologies of men. God’s Word is clear—you need not be confused.

Embryonic stem cell research skews the purpose of God’s Plan—to build a spiritual family. It should not be performed.

This is God’s view on stem cell research. It is up to you to prove it. □

ECONOMY & PERSONAL FINANCES

Women May Outnumber Men in the U.S. Labor Force

With the present trend of increasing mass lay-offs of male workers across the United States, women may soon outnumber men in the workforce for the first time since unemployment records began in 1948. According to the U.S. Department of Labor, the global economic crisis has pushed a greater number of men into unemployment—8.8 percent of men as opposed to 7 percent of women.

Seventy two million (59.5 percent) of 121 million U.S. women ages 16 and over now comprise 46.5 percent of the total labor force, and two-thirds of 25 million part-time workers in the country. The Bureau of Labor Statistics projected that women will account for 49 percent of the increase in total labor force growth between now and 2016.

In March 2009, the number of unemployed increased to 13.2 million, up from 694,000 in 2008. Approximately 80 percent of all layoffs were male workers.

One reason for the unemployment gap is that construction and manufacturing—fields dominated by men—have been two of the hardest hit workforce sectors. Nine in 10 male construction laborers lost their jobs, as did 7 in 10 male workers in the manufacturing sector. Almost 2.5 million jobs were lost in these two sectors alone (*Financial Times*).

In contrast, women workers overwhelming outnumber men in health-care and edu-



■ **JOBLESSNESS:** Above, Unemployed people talk with prospective employers during a Job Fair at the Convention Center in Los Angeles (April 1, 2009). Left, a job seeker browses job listings in San Francisco (April 3, 2009).

PHOTOS: JUSTIN SULLIVAN (ABOVE), OLI SCARFF (BELOW)/GETTY IMAGES

cation, two fields considered recession-proof, which has allowed them to hold onto their jobs. Women account for 51 percent of all workers in high-paying professional and management positions, and make up the majority of medical and health services managers, school administrators, teachers, physical therapists and registered nurses, among other professions.

Given that women statistically earn less than men, this trend could inflict

ECONOMY & PERSONAL FINANCES

Australian PM Confirms Country's Looming Financial Danger

Australia's Prime Minister Kevin Rudd admitted for the first time that his country will most likely be unable to withstand the current worldwide recession.

"The worst global economic recession in 75 years means it's inevitable that Australia too will be dragged into recession."

Mr. Rudd's comments followed those by Australian Reserve Bank Governor Glenn Stevens, who said

Australia's financial situation depends on how well overseas economies can recover (*ABC News*).

Last month, the nation's unemployment rate increased more than it has since 1991. □

GEOPOLITICS

Iran Remains Global Flashpoint

Relations among world powers remain fragile after Iran's President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad gave a speech—laced with pointed remarks against Israel and the United States—at the United Nations-sponsored World Conference Against Racism, in Geneva, Switzerland, prompting several European envoys to walk out of the room.

Other prominent Western nations boycotted the conference altogether, due to Mr. Ahmadinejad's name on the speaking bill.

In his speech, Mr. Ahmadinejad called Israel “the most aggressive, racist country in another territory, i.e. Palestine” and that “global Zionism is the complete symbol of racism.”

At the conference, the Iranian leader also commented that the U.S. was to blame for the current global economic crisis. He questioned the motives of the “previous ruling government of America” (the Bush administration) and attempted to show how the U.S. has utterly failed in the Iraq and Afghanistan wars.

Reaction to President Ahmadinejad's comments frames the ongoing controversy surrounding Iran on the world stage—and could affect Iran's national election, scheduled to take place in May 2009.

In lieu of international intervention, Israel—its military readying itself to strike—continues to say it is prepared to retaliate against Iran.

A senior Israeli defense official told *The Times* (London), “Israel wants to know that if its forces were given the green light they could strike at Iran in a matter of days, even hours. They are making preparations on every level for this eventuality. The message to Iran is that the threat is not just words.”

Arriving home, President Ahmadinejad received what Tehran described as a “warm welcome” (*The Guardian*).

Next month, though, the president faces an election, which *Esquire* magazine called the world's “most important election of the year.” While the incumbent is the favorite, the outcome is not set in stone—exemplified by Mr. Ahmadinejad's upset victory in 2005. □

TRENDS

Economic Recession Partly to Blame for Nationwide Gun Shortage

The rising demand for guns by people concerned that recent cutbacks of law enforcement officers will fuel a crime wave is contributing to alarming shortages of firearms and ammunition nationwide.

The increasing amount of first-time gun owners has caused a more than 40-50 percent boost in the demand for ammunition and guns compared to last year, and has spurred a bullet shortage, which in turn, has doubled prices on these items.

In November last year alone, the FBI recorded 7 million people who applied for background checks to buy firearms, excluding states that require no prior check, such as Virginia. About 80 percent of these consumers were first-and second-time gun buyers.

Gun shop owners say a number of factors have caused the shortage, among them: worry about the economy, gun owners stockpiling ammunition, and those concerned about the imposition of a weapons assault ban, which could prevent them from pur-



■ **LOCKED AND LOADED:** A man fires his 40mm pistol at the Pembroke Gun & Range shop (April 9, 2009) in Pembroke Park, Fla.

PHOTO: JOE RAEDLE/GETTY IMAGES

chasing guns or ammunition in the future.

“People are panicking and buying,” one Texas gun shop assistant manager said. “The crime rate is high, and they are flat scared of what is going to happen in the next few years with the economy and the country. Manufacturers weren't prepared for this” (*Star-Telegram*).

Another woman, a Michigan mother studying criminal justice, bought her first shotgun for that purpose. “The economy played a large part in my decision,” she said. “When people don't

have jobs, they might go breaking into people's homes. I want to be safe in my home” (*Time*).

The New York Times reported, “...police officers in many American cities are confronting what they describe as a surge in property crime. At the same time, many are being forced to improvise and make do with less: The recession is shrinking the finances of local governments, limiting the resources of police departments.”

Certain crimes have increased since the beginning of the recession. In South Carolina, which has the second highest unemployment rate in the country, property crimes rose at least 14 percent last year.

South Carolina officials have also reported higher levels of home burglaries, with thieves stealing anything they can pawn.

“When people get desperate, they're going to feed their family,” said South Carolina Sheriff Leon Lott, who “has noticed a pronounced increase in insurance fraud and credit card scams” (*ibid.*). □

China Parades Its Naval Power



■ **SHOW OF STRENGTH:** Navy submarines dock at Qingdao Port in Qingdao of Shandong Province, China (April 22, 2009). The submarine was part of an international fleet review held to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the founding of the People's Liberation Army Navy. PHOTO: GUANG NIU/POOL/GETTY IMAGES

From the eastern port city of Qingdao, Beijing celebrated the 60th anniversary (April 23) of the founding of the People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN).

China's President Hu Jintao stood on the bridge of a destroyer and waved to a maritime parade of 21 Chinese warships and naval aircraft, which 14 foreign navies accompanied, including the U.S.S. Fitzgerald, a guide-missile destroyer.

Assuring that his country would always be a force for preserving world peace, Mr. Hu said, "China will not engage in military expansionism nor an arms race, and will never constitute a military threat to any other nation" (*Reuters*).

Vice Admiral Ding Yiping, deputy commander of China's navy, said that PLAN does not pose a threat to other nations. "The PLA Navy will

continue to make contributions to maintain world, regional and maritime peace," he said (*Xinhua*).

Shi Yinhong, a professor of international relations at Renmin University in Beijing said, "China does need a stronger navy to project its power. Even if we can't surpass the United States, a stronger navy can help to counter that influence and protect China's own interests" (*Reuters*).

Professor Shi added, "Showing the country's military strength is also popular with the public. This parade is also meant to consolidate domestic support for greater spending on the navy."

China publicly displayed two nuclear submarines for the first time—Long March subs, which can fire ballistic missiles to areas far from China's shores. PLAN has 250,000

sailors, submariners and airmen, and operates up to 10 nuclear-powered and 60 diesel-electric subs.

Nations in the region of the South China Sea—Japan, South Korea, Vietnam, the Philippines and others—worry China may be developing its first aircraft carrier.

Admiral Gary Roughead, U.S. chief of Naval Operations, said, "If it is not clear what the intent is of the use of an aircraft carrier, I would say that it may cause concern with some of the regional navies and nations" (*Associated Press*).

A Chinese aircraft carrier could help Beijing defend vital sea lanes, securing trade routes and access to faraway natural resources.

But governments worry that an aircraft carrier might also embolden China in settling sea boundary disputes. □

Redesigned Website—More Features!

The new *Real Truth* website has been launched! This new, state-of-the-art redesign features many improvements, including the following:

- Every page presents a more streamlined, user-friendly and attractive layout.
- It assigns a category to every item, thus allowing visitors to more easily search, group or research particular subjects—and quickly access related topics.
- Videos, articles, “Personals” (editorials from the publisher/editor-in-chief), and full PDF issues of the magazine are featured on their own pages and offer users a wide and precise array of options.
- The size of *The World to Come* video player has been expanded, enabling most users to watch broadcasts without needing to use the full screen.
- Articles now feature much larger and more detailed images.

This is but the briefest glimpse of the dramatic changes. Be sure to visit the new site today!



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