

NOVEMBER 2011

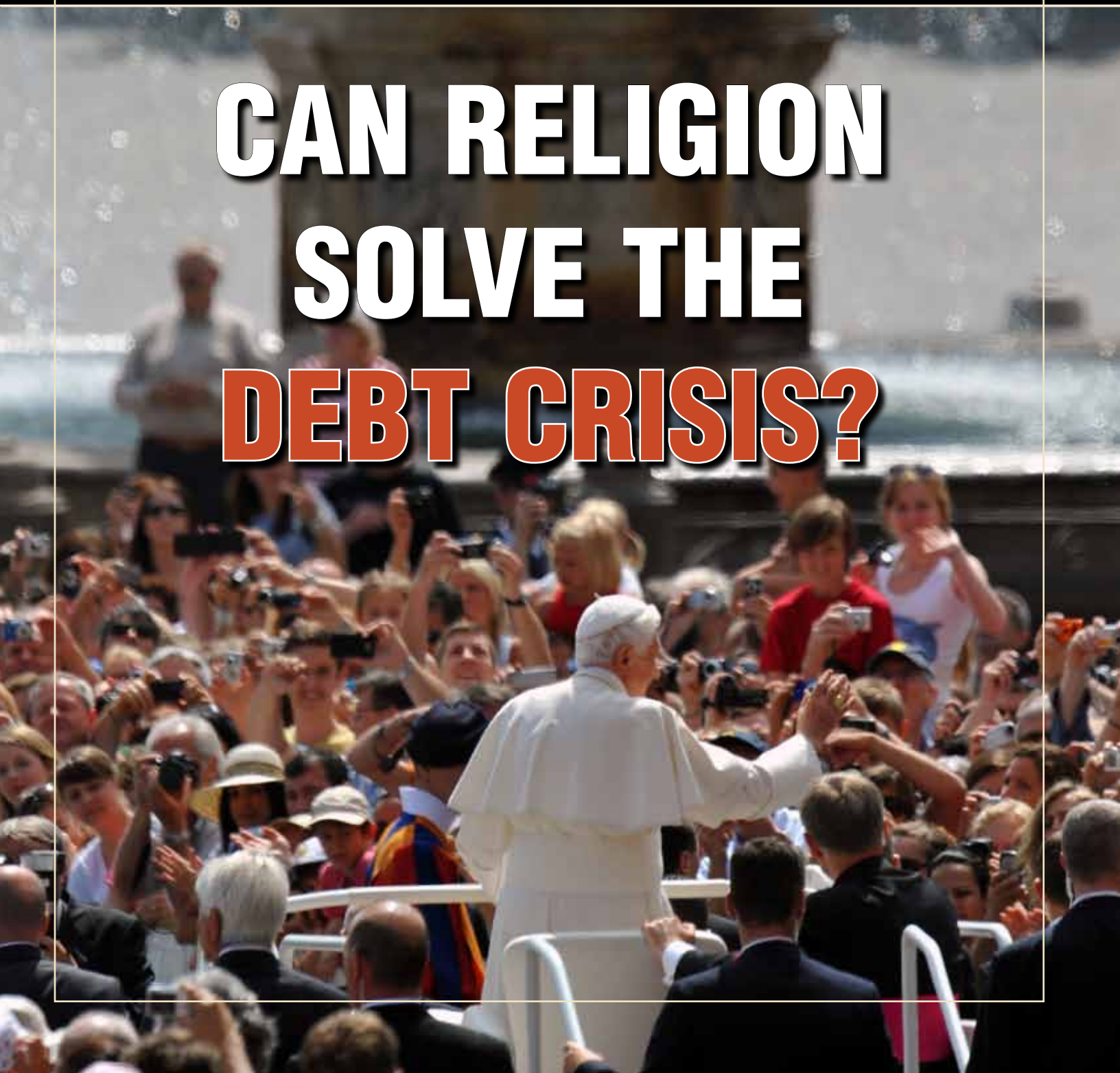
THE

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REAL TRUTH

A MAGAZINE RESTORING PLAIN UNDERSTANDING

CAN RELIGION SOLVE THE DEBT CRISIS?



THE REAL TRUTH

A MAGAZINE RESTORING PLAIN UNDERSTANDING

VOL. IX | NO. 9 | NOVEMBER 2011

ARTICLES

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■ **ANGER:** Occupy Oakland protesters march near city hall in Oakland, California (Oct. 25, 2011).

PHOTO: KIMIHIRO HOSHINO/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

The “Occupy” Movement: A Leaderless Democracy?

Economic uncertainty has inspired thousands of protesters globally to take a stance against capitalism. Their alternative is yet to be defined.

Page 12

FEATURES

Personal from David C. Pack 1
World News Desk 24

■ **FRONT COVER:** Pope Benedict XVI waves as he arrives for his weekly general audience at St. Peter’s Square at the Vatican (June 1, 2011).

PHOTO: ANDREAS SOLARO/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Arab Revolutions

Giving Way to a New Power Bloc

The death of Libya’s longtime ruler—the ouster of Egypt’s autocratic president—Tunisia’s first free elections after a popular uprising. The “Arab Spring” is ushering in a new form of government for the region.

Page 4

Can Religion Solve the Debt Crisis?

The Vatican has again called for closer ties between religion and politics—a move that should come as no surprise.

Page 7

Are You Stressed Out?

While stress is inseparable from daily life, how you deal with it can determine success or failure.

Page 10

Your Marriage Can Be Happy!

By following the Bible’s prescribed formula, you can have a successful marriage.

Page 16

King James Bible: 400 Years and Counting

What is the story behind the most widely distributed Bible translation?

Page 17

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The preparation and production of this magazine involved the work of editors, proofreaders, graphic artists, illustrators, writers, researchers and those who support the Work of God.

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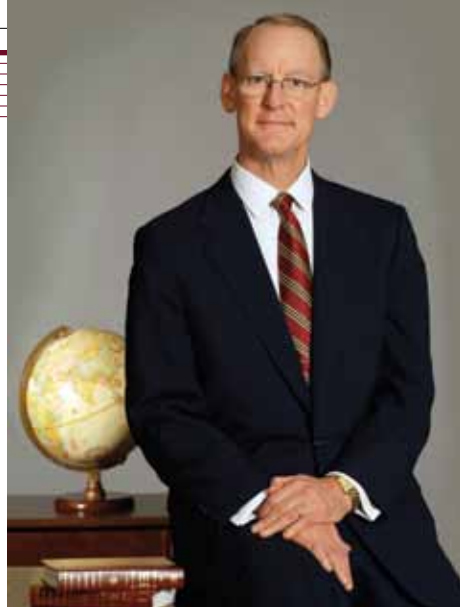
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PERSONAL FROM

David C. Fack



What Does It Mean to Be “Called”?

MOST BELIEVE that God is trying to save the world now! This thinking goes something like this: God and the devil are at war over the fate of mankind. This is seen as a desperate struggle between good and evil—God and Satan.

Let’s put this another way: Is today the only opportunity for all human beings to choose or to reject Christianity? Must all people, as it is often put, “decide now to accept Jesus as Lord and Savior?” Is this what *the Bible teaches*? The answer is an emphatic *no*! If it were YES, then God is failing miserably in His battle with the devil for control over the fate of all men. In other words, God is “calling” all of mankind, but most are NOT ANSWERING!

Consider! In 1920, when my father was born, there were well under two billion people on Earth. There are now over seven billion—and a half million more every day. Approximately 2.2 billion, or one-third, believe—to one degree or another—in the name of Jesus Christ. This represents a total that includes every conceivable brand of the over 2,000 *different forms* of professing Christianity. Approximately another one-third of mankind has *heard* of Jesus but has not accepted Him and does not *claim* to follow Him. Finally, the last third of all people on Earth know nothing about Jesus Christ. Many in India, Africa, Japan, China and parts of South America and Southeast Asia have never even heard of Him. Are they condemned to be lost, having never had an opportunity to understand what they missed or why—having no opportunity to be “called”?

When speaking of Jesus’ name, the Bible plainly says, “Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is *none other name under heaven* given among men, whereby we must be *saved*” (Acts 4:12). Further, Romans 10:13 states that men must call on *this name* to be saved.

Understand! It is obvious that all who have not yielded to the God of the Bible and not accepted Jesus Christ as their Savior are certainly *not* saved! Countless billions have died in this condition. Most have assumed the only other option for these is that they were lost to salvation, and that God long ago planned this for the vast majority who have ever lived.

If the war to win souls is as most supposed Christian ministers depict it, then the devil is much stronger, and much more effective, in his effort than God. This is the only other possibility—unless there is a third category containing the vast majority of people. But it must be a category that has not been recognized.

There is such a category!—God is simply not calling the masses of humanity today.

But He *is* calling a select few!

Called and Chosen of God

The Bible plainly speaks of those who have been called by God. Let’s read several passages. Here is what was written to the Thessalonians: “Faithful is He [God] that *calls* you” (I Thes. 5:24). As a warning to the Galatian congregation, who were losing sight of the true gospel, Paul wrote: “I marvel that you are so soon removed from Him that *called* you into the grace of Christ unto

another gospel” (Gal. 1:6), and he later added, “This persuasion comes not of Him that *calls* you” (5:8). To the Corinthians it says, “For you see your *calling*, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are *called*” (I Cor. 1:26).

Jesus Himself spoke on many occasions about the Christian calling. You may be familiar with this, “For many are *called*, but few are chosen,” found in both Matthew 22:14 and 20:16. Later, adding meaning to the second part of this phrase, He explained this to His disciples: “You have not chosen Me but I have *chosen* you” (John 15:16), and then, “But I have *chosen* you out of the world, therefore the world hates you” (vs. 19).

When placed together, these passages explain that God is calling a few people—actually a *very* few—out of the world for His Supreme Purpose. Those who respond to His calling are then “chosen,” having gone on to repentance, baptism and conversion.

What About You?

After reading articles from this magazine, many come to recognize that they have been brought in contact with extraordinary understanding. They find themselves learning things they have never heard before. They notice the Bible makes sense—that it is not as hard to understand as they had previously thought. Then, feeling a growing need to *act* on what they are learning, many wonder, “Am I being called by God?”

Sometimes this question takes the form of “Am I undergoing ‘conversion?’” or “Should I get baptized?” or even “Have I come in contact with God’s true Church?” At best, most are unsure of how to *answer* these basic questions, and many have absolutely no idea whatsoever how to even properly *address* them.

This Personal will make plain, from God’s Word, how to know if God is calling you. It will be kept simple, virtually impossible to misunderstand. After all, this question is one of the most important you will ever face. Properly understanding its answer is of PARAMOUNT IMPORTANCE to your life!

I first began learning God’s truth when I was 17 years old. Before God called me, I had not known a single one of the true doctrines of the Bible. The calling process for me began when I heard the voice of a man named Herbert W. Armstrong, being broadcast from Pasadena, California. (Read *Herbert W. Armstrong – His Life in Proper Perspective* at www.thecg.org to learn more.)

This was 1966, and it was immediately evident to me that I was hearing things from this man that I had NEVER heard before—and with plain scriptural PROOFS to back them up. I remember being astonished at how clear the Bible became—and how much fun it was to study. Prior to this—throughout the time I attended the well-known, respected denomination of my youth—I had always found the Bible boring and hard to understand.

People of all ages and backgrounds puzzle over just what a “calling” is. Many reduce it to little more than a particular *feeling* that comes over them, which they attribute to God. Millions in the world feel “called”—in some cases to the “church,” in other cases to the “ministry,” or “missionary work,” in still other cases to work with children, and in yet others to serve in the medical profession or even in the military. Ignorant of what God says, so many people are left to rely on mere *feelings*, assuming that their lives—and the paths they choose—are divinely inspired. They attribute this thought-to-be “inspiration” to being “called of God.” Sadly, most never learn that these sup-

posed “callings” have nothing to do with following the true God of the Bible—and how HE calls people.

A true calling from God is far more than a kind of *abstract feeling* that human reasoning concludes is from God!

Defining a True Calling

In John’s gospel account, Jesus stated, “No man can come to Me, except the Father which has sent Me *draw* him” (John 6:44). Twenty-one verses later, He repeated to His audience, “Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto Me, except it were *given* unto him of My Father” (vs. 65). Notice the next verse, “From that time many of His disciples went back, and walked no more with Him” (vs. 66).

Many who heard Jesus simply could not understand that God has to “draw” people and that a calling is something “given” to them. While many today appear to understand they must in some fashion be called, they do not seek to understand—from the Bible—how to know for certain that it is God who is calling—drawing—giving to—them whatever it is they are to receive.

Let’s consider a few scriptures that make plain what it is Christians are “given” when they are called. We must clear up all possible confusion.

Jesus’ disciples asked Him, “Why speak You unto them [the multitudes who heard Him] in parables?” (Matt. 13:10). His answer summarizes how, and with what, God calls: “He answered and said unto them, Because it is *given* unto you to *know the mysteries of the kingdom* of heaven [the kingdom of God], but to them it is *not given*” (vs. 11). The next several verses amplify what He meant, explaining how many in the world can hear the truths of God (the “mysteries of the kingdom”) but not grasp them. Since the overwhelming majority of

Please see **PERSONAL**, page 21



David C. Pack

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ARAB REVOLUTIONS

Giving Way to a New Power Bloc

The death of Libya's longtime ruler—the ouster of Egypt's autocratic president—Tunisia's first free elections after a popular uprising. The “Arab Spring” is ushering in a new form of government for the region.

BY NESTOR A. TORO

“**I** SHOT HIM twice...” a war-frenzied, self-proclaimed revolutionary proudly declared. Not satisfied with the prospect of keeping the dictator alive for trial, the young fighter decided to take matters into his own hands.

Though exact details of how it happened are unclear, Moammar Gadhafi's death marked an end to the longest dictatorship in post colonial African history. Immediately, Libyans turned to a new blank page in their story, one it seems they can write themselves.

World leaders responded with optimism, sighs of relief, and high hopes for a new democratic ally in the region.

British Prime Minister David Cameron stated: “We should also remember the many, many Libyans who died at the hands of this brutal

dictator and his regime...People in Libya today have an even greater chance, after this news, of building themselves a strong and democratic future” (*BBC*).

The news outlet also quoted French Foreign Minister Alain Juppe: “It's an historic event. It's the beginning of a new period, of a democracy, freedom and the rebuilding of the country.”

Russian President Dmitry Medvedev stated: “We hope that there will be peace in Libya, and that all those who are governing the state, different representatives of Libyan tribes, will reach a final agreement on the configuration of power and Libya will be a modern democratic state” (*ibid.*).

Soon after the dictator was buried, however, clouds of uncertainty began to gather.

“Euphoria over Gaddafi's death on October 20 was already giving way to new anxieties and frictions, and, behind the facade of celebration and fireworks, many Libyans are worried about the future while others are optimistic differences can be resolved,” *Reuters* reported.

Libya is also quickly being reminded of age-old internal struggles.

“Tribal rivalries, an east-west divide, a rebel leadership lacking coherence, a shattered economy and the absence of a ‘civil society’—these are just a few of the challenges that a post-Gadhafi Libya will face,” a *CNN* article stated.

The rebel forces that fought against Gadhafi desire a new, brighter Libya. The average Libyan civilian likely desires a peaceful existence. And Western nations desire to fashion Libya's democracy in their own way.

Government Transition

Libya's chapter in the Arab Spring developed much differently from that of their neighbor Egypt, where longtime leader Hosni Mubarak stepped aside after continued demonstrations in Tahrir Square. Libyan rebels, aided by NATO forces, had to fight for months before toppling the Gadhafi regime.

■ **GOVERNMENT CHANGE:** Libyans wave flags as they celebrate the country's official liberation in the eastern city of Benghazi (Oct. 23, 2011).

PHOTO: ABDULLAH DOMA/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Despite these differences, post-revolution events seem to be unfolding similarly for both nations.

In Egypt, the majority party Muslim Brotherhood says it does not intend to apply Koran-inspired Shariah law, *BBC* reported, but it also added that some are questioning its true motives.

“Critics of the Muslim Brotherhood...claim that they do really harbour the goal of an Islamic state but are cloaking this ambition in ambiguity as a matter of political expediency.”

Only days after Gadhafi’s death, rumors of a similar pattern emerged from Libya.

The Telegraph stated that the nation’s current leader “already declared that Libyan laws in future would have Sharia, the Islamic code, as its ‘basic source.’” The paper also added that the chairman immediately lifted a Gadhafi-era law that banned polygamy.

Islamic law also seems to be gaining ground in Tunisia, where the regional rebellion saw its inception. There, the Islamic political party Ennahda already dominated a historic post-revolution election.

“Secularists, women’s groups and other critics accuse Ennahda of being moderate in public and radical in the mosques,” *Agence France-Presse* stated. “Ennahda founder Rachid Ghannouchi in the 1970s called for the strict application of sharia law in Tunisia but he has toned down his demands in recent years.”

“There’s good reason to suspect that Tunisia’s electoral outcome will be repeated in an Egyptian poll: The main political contest there may turn out to be the one between the Muslim Brotherhood and its more radical Salafist challengers than between the Brotherhood and the secular liberals,” *Time* magazine stated.

The article concludes: “What... Tunisia elections and Libya ‘liberation’ celebrations make clear, however, is that anyone seeking to deny or evade the fact of the centrality of political Islam is likely to be left on the sidelines by the democratization of the Arab world.”

An April 2011 Pew research poll showed Egyptian views on the role of Islamic law: “About six-in-ten (62%) think laws should strictly follow the teachings of the Quran. However, only 31% of Egyptian Muslims say they sympathize with Islamic fundamentalists, while nearly the same number (30%) say they sympathize with those who disagree with the fundamentalists, and 26% have mixed views on this question.”

Anti-Semitic Rhetoric

No one is more closely watching the formation of these fledgling governments than Israel—the lone standard bearer for Western-style democracy in the region. The same Pew study also probed feelings on Egypt-Israel relations: “Those who disagree with fundamentalists are almost evenly divided on whether the treaty with Israel should be annulled, while others favor ending the pact by a goodly margin.”

According to *New York Daily News*, “The Israeli-Egyptian peace is in jeopardy and so is the cordial rapport Israel once had with Turkey. Along with Iran and Ethiopia, Turkey comprised the ‘strategy of the periphery’ that Israel’s founding prime minister, David Ben-Gurion, established with non-Arab nations. But Iran now is Israel’s mortal enemy, Ethiopia hardly matters and Turkey is bristling with hostility...”

The article continued, “Israel’s dilemma is that the Middle East, for all the talk of revolution, is slipping backward. Turkey is possibly evolving into an Islamic republic and even if this is not the case, it is reasserting its historical role as a regional power. Iran toppled its Westernizing shah with his pro-Israel proclivities and, in 1979, became a theocracy. And Egypt, long the leader of the Arab world, may find it cannot lead its own people. The peace with Israel has little support among the populace. It’s not just that Israel is not loved, it’s that Jews are hated.”

Many long for unity in the Arab world, but they generally want it under the banner of democracy. While

this may soon be achieved, Western politicians—and Israel—may have to accept it as a byproduct of a collection of governments heavily influenced by Islam.

Some warn that a rise of Islam in government could rather provide grounds for a more focused, organized coalition that could further promote the spread of Islam. Many fear this could be the rebirth of a multinational “Islamic caliphate,” and a safe haven for terrorists.

“It is true that the dream of a caliphate is held dear by several categories of Muslim,” *The Economist* stated. “They include followers of al-Qaeda, bent on war with the ‘Jews and crusaders’ of the Western world; many supporters of the Muslim Brotherhood, who believe in active participation in politics but still see Islamic governance as a long-term goal; and Hizb ut-Tahrir (Party of Liberation) which, in places that range from British universities to Uzbek slums, propagates the idea that secular elections are sacrilege.”

“But is the caliphate a religious doctrine—something central to Islam—or just a detail, however important, of history? In all readings of Islam, especially the ones that now dominate in the Middle East, there is huge reverence for the first four caliphs who succeeded Muhammad as leaders of the emerging Muslim community. All subsequent Muslim empires had caliphs and the abolition of the last caliphate—by Turkey’s new rulers in 1924—sent shock waves through the world of Islam.”

What kind of effect would an oil-rich, Islamic power bloc trigger in today’s world, and particularly in neighboring Israel? While pondering the possibilities, take into account the words of Islamic Jihad’s Ramadan Shallah quoted in *Haaretz*: “Israel will not bring peace to the region, it will only bring war and destruction and therefore, the slogan of all should be that Israel must be wiped out of existence.”

A more recent example: “A member of Saudi Arabia’s royal family increased to \$1 million a reward offered by a Saudi cleric to anyone who captures an Israeli

soldier to swap him for Palestinian prisoners,” *The Associated Press* reported. “The Saudi offers follow in the wake of the release of Israeli soldier Sgt. Gilad Schalit, who was held by Hamas in Gaza for more than five years. Israel has agreed to free over 1,000 prisoners in exchange... In Israel, extremists have offered two rewards of \$100,000 to anyone who kills a Palestinian released in the Schalit deal if the Palestinian killed Israelis.”

Ancient Tensions

Even in the 21st century, ancient tensions are in play in these developing governments—that of Islam versus Christianity. Anyone can see that Shariah-based law comes from the Muslim faith. What most tend to ignore is that democratic societies are largely rooted in traditional Christianity.

History proves these two religions, and the cultures based upon them, do not get along.

In a forum sponsored by Pew Research, Bernard Lewis, Professor Emeritus of Near Eastern Studies at Princeton University, said the source of the Islam and Christendom conflict comes not from the two religions’ differences but from their *similarities*.

“These two religions, and as far as I am aware, no others in the world, believe that their truths are not only universal but also exclusive,” Mr. Lewis said. “They believe that they are the fortunate recipients of God’s final message to humanity, which it is their duty not to keep selfishly to themselves...but to bring to the rest of mankind, removing whatever barriers there may be in the way.”

Because both believe they hold the key to human salvation, Mr. Lewis said tensions between Christendom and Islam occur because each have “aspired to the same role”—bringing God’s message to the whole world—“each seeing it as a divinely ordained mission.”

Mr. Lewis continued, “In order to understand what is going on, one has to see the ongoing struggle within this larger perspective of the millennial struggle between the rival religions...”

The scars from the competing religions can be found most easily on Jerusalem’s Temple Mount, which switched hands repeatedly during the Crusades. Muslims took the mount in AD 700 and built a wooden Al-Aqsa Mosque on the foundation of a Roman temple. Christian crusaders then violently seized the Holy Land and, in the early 12th century, reconstructed an earthquake-damaged Al-Aqsa Mosque as the Temple Solomonis and the Dome of the Rock, renamed the Temple Domini. Crusaders revamped both buildings, adding altars, icons, new mosaics, and Christian inscriptions—crosses replaced all crescent moons. Muslims recaptured the area in 1187, reclaiming the mount’s two mosques. Islamic followers purged the Catholic icons and renovated the marble mosaics and inscriptions. These two mosques remain standing today.

During that time, Christian Europe clashed with the Islamic caliphate, constantly shifting control of the land. The caliphate, an Islamic empire established after Muhammad’s death and ruled by a caliph, clashed with the Byzantine Empire, the Holy Roman Empire, and then Western European empires. It was not until 1924, when the creation of the Turkish Empire deposed the last caliph, that this religious rivalry faded from view.

Since that time, entire generations of children in the West have grown up not understanding the constant battles that once took place between the two belief systems. Also, modern conventional wisdom believes mankind has grown past these differences. And it is a pleasant ideal: widespread tolerance and peace.

History in Advance

Yet the rivalry between traditional Christianity and Islam goes back even further. Both belief systems can be traced to the same man—Abraham of the Old Testament. This biblical patriarch had two sons, Isaac (by his wife, Sarah) and Ishmael (by her handmaid Hagar). The descendants of Isaac gave rise to both Judaism and Christianity, and Ishmael to Islam.

There has been a sibling rivalry ever since.

The Bible, however, does more than reveal the source of Middle East tensions. While the Book is filled with historical accounts, about one-third of it is prophecy, which can be likened to history written *in advance*. For instance, Ishmael was foretold to become “a great nation” (Gen. 17:20) and that “his hand will be against every man, and every man’s hand against him; and he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren.”

Nations descended from Ishmael tend to stick together, especially when concerning the creation of confederations such as caliphates. This is just one example of history proving the Bible’s validity.

In addition, the Bible is specific on how the vast majority of “Arab Spring” governments will turn out. Its pages describe the formation of a renewed version of the Islamic caliphate. Psalm 83 describes a confederation of nations (vs. 5) that specifically includes the “Ishmaelites” (vs. 6-8).

While many immediately dismiss the notion of Bible prophecy, God intends this history written in advance to serve as proof. Prophecies that have already been fulfilled validate other foretold events.

Notice: “I am God, and there is none like Me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure” (Isa. 46:9-10).

In other words, God says certain events will happen, then He works to bring them to pass. This is summarized in the next verse: “I have spoken it, I *will* also bring it to pass; I have purposed it, I *will* also do it” (Isa. 46:11).

The book of Daniel includes the longest unbroken prophecy in the Bible. In it lies the future of the Middle East—including what will occur in the likes of Libya and Egypt.

To PROVE the accuracy of what the Bible foretells and understand what will be the ultimate outcome of the Arab Spring, read David C. Pack’s *The Mid-East in Bible Prophecy*. □

CAN RELIGION SOLVE THE DEBT CRISIS?

The Vatican has again called for closer ties between religion and politics—a move that should come as no surprise.

BY SAMUEL C. BAXTER

A POTENT COCKTAIL of causes formed the current global financial downturn. Depending on whom you ask, however, you will likely receive wildly different answers as to the core issue.

Financial Crisis Inquiry Commission: “The official U.S. government report on what caused the financial crisis casts blame on Goldman Sachs for fueling the sub-prime mortgage bubble, Merrill Lynch for not telling investors about the true state of its financial condition and the Federal Reserve for failing to stop dangerous lending practices,” the *Washington Post* summarized the findings of the Congress-appointed committee.

Conservative politician: “Rather, this crisis, with its ensuing international recession and near-meltdown of our

financial system, had as its root cause the social-justice agenda of Congress,” a former governor and senator wrote in an editorial for *The Hill*.

Occupy Wall Street protesters: “Our nation, our species and our world are in crisis...we can no longer afford to let corporate greed and corrupt politics set the policies of our nation,” the movement’s “unofficial *de facto*” website states.

The Vatican, however, sees a different cause: the loss of ethics and morals in society. This is what the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace stated in the report “Towards Reforming the International Financial and Monetary Systems in the Context of Global Public Authority.”

The council noted that “between 1900 and 2000 the world population increased almost fourfold and the wealth produced worldwide grew much more rapidly, resulting in a significant rise of average per capita

income.” Yet it continues, “...the distribution of wealth did not become fairer but in many cases worsened.”

According to the 18-page report, called a “note,” the financial “crisis has revealed behaviours like selfishness, collective greed and the hoarding of goods on a great scale.” To curb these problems, the pontifical council called for the creation of a “public Authority with universal jurisdiction” that is “rich in solidarity...and geared to the universal common good.”

The note states that “the primacy of the spiritual and of ethics needs to be restored and, with them, the primacy of politics—which is responsible for the common good—over the economy and finance.”

In other words, the world needs a global financial authority that considers moral and spiritual implications when making political decisions. Simplified further, religion needs to have a bigger role in global affairs.

■ **PAPAL MASS:** Pope Benedict XVI conducts mass at St. Peter's Basilica in the Vatican (Oct. 16, 2011).

PHOTO: TIZIANA FABI/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

While a monetary crisis cripples Europe and has a stranglehold on the United States, both of which threaten to pull the world down with them, the pontifical council released their note when they knew it would receive maximum media coverage. The world is looking for answers, and the Vatican has become increasingly vocal on how to revamp global governance.

For now, the church at Rome is only offering its report to spur discussion. Yet the report is markedly bold: “We should not be afraid to propose new ideas, even if they might destabilize pre-existing balances of power that prevail over the weakest.”

In the Wake of the Downturn

To understand the statement from the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, one must return to 2009. In the midst of a widespread financial meltdown, Pope Benedict XVI released the encyclical “Charity in Truth,” which advocated “the responsibility to protect” poorer nations and give them an “effective voice in shared decision-making”—that is, a prominent seat at the table of international affairs.

The stated goal: “To manage the global economy; to revive economies hit by the crisis; to avoid any deterioration of the present crisis and the greater imbalances that would result; to bring about integral and timely disarmament, food security and peace; to guarantee the protection of the environment and to regulate migration.”

The pontifical council researches ways to apply this teaching from the pope. “Charity in Truth” and encyclicals from previous popes were the basis for the recent note on global finances.

For Pope Benedict, the loss of morals has long been a concern. In his book *Without Roots: The West, Relativism, Christianity, Islam*, written while he was known as Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, he described Europe as having denied its religious and moral foundation. He lamented a continent overtaken by secularism and materialism, a Europe that had slipped into immorality, cultural confusion, and irreligiosity.

The pope’s 2009 encyclical called for a world political authority to manage the global economy, disarm nations, guarantee the protection of the environment, and regulate migration. Such an authority, backed by a *moral* authority, would have the power to enforce compliance with its decisions.

To those born and raised under governments with strict separation of church and state, these statements seem strange—especially coming from a religious organization. Yet, when placed in the context of history, it should come as no surprise. The Vatican has a long history of working with and within civil governments.

Track Record

The Catholic church’s hand in European politics began with Roman Emperor Constantine’s (born about AD 285; died 337) conversion to Christianity. The emperor worked to unify Christian doctrines and beliefs, and to build a powerful Christian empire. Constantine also invited Pope Sylvester I to take part in the Council of Nicaea, an important move to legitimize the religious authority of the papacy.

Yet this was only the start of the symbiotic relationship between the Catholic church and European politics.

Recalling the successes of Constantine, Byzantine Emperor Justin I (AD 450-527) used his reign to heal the schism between the churches at Rome and Constantinople. Later in his life, Justin allowed the pope to crown him emperor.

Justin’s nephew Justinian I (AD 483-564) also saw political and religious policy as inextricably linked. *Encyclopaedia Britannica* states: “In the Byzantine Empire, church and state were indissolubly linked as essential aspects of a single Christian empire that was thought of as the terrestrial counterpart of the heavenly polity. It was therefore the duty of Justinian, as it was for later Byzantine emperors, to promote the good government of the church and to uphold orthodox teaching. This explains why so many of his laws deal in detail with religious problems.”

According to *Britannica*, “Justinian, like succeeding Byzantine emperors, regarded himself as the viceregent of [or ruling for] Christ, and the Eastern Roman Empire knew no such clear-cut distinction between church and state as developed in Latin Christendom.”

Later, Pepin the Short (AD 714-768) gained the throne and thought of himself as *gratia Dei rex*, “king by the grace of God.”

Charlemagne, or Charles the Great, (born about AD 747; died 814) furthered the church-empire relationship. The *Catholic Encyclopedia* states, “During the pontifical Mass celebrated by the pope, as the king [Charlemagne] knelt in prayer before the high altar... the pope approached him, placed upon his head the imperial crown, did him formal reverence after the ancient manner, saluted him as Emperor and Augustus and anointed him, while the Romans present burst out with the acclamation, thrice repeated: ‘To Carolus Augustus crowned by God, mighty and pacific emperor, be life and victory’...” The emperor considered himself the “devoted defender and humble helper of Holy Church.”

The book *Charlemagne: Empire and Society* records that the emperor’s bishops dubbed him a “New Constantine” and Bishop Paulinus of Aquileia compared Charlemagne to a “king and priest.”

After German King Otto I (AD 912-973) came to the aid of Pope John XII in AD 962, he was quickly crowned emperor. A treaty from Otto confirmed and expanded the power of the papacy, which would lead to the beginnings of the *Sacrum Romanum Imperium Nationis Germanicae*—the HOLY Roman Empire of the German Nation.

His son, Otto III (AD 980-1002) “assumed the titles ‘the servant of Jesus Christ,’ ‘the servant of the apostles,’ and ‘emperor of the world’ and saw himself as the leader of world Christianity” (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*).

During his reign, Otto III installed his childhood tutor Gerbert of Aurillac as pope, who took the name

Sylvester II, after the pontiff contemporary to Constantine. The two men longed to restore the unity seen under Constantine.

This link between religion and government continued on and off from that time, notably during the Habsburg dynasty, which included the reign of Charles V (AD 1500-1558). Napoleon Bonaparte was also crowned emperor by the pope in 1805.

Constantine's Contribution

Throughout the history of the Roman and Holy Roman empires, a few points stand out. Church and state used one another to acquire power and legitimacy. Also, the two entities consistently endeavored to regain the grandeur of the empire under Constantine.

Here is why. Constantine united the people under one religion and ruled as an unchallenged emperor. Under his watch, the empire enjoyed continual wealth and abundance. Edward Gibbon's *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* describes the empire at that time, when the capital, Constantinople, "enjoyed, within their spacious enclosure, every production which could supply the wants or gratify the luxury of its numerous inhabitants. The sea-coasts of Thrace and Bithynia... still exhibit a rich prospect of vineyards, of gardens, and of plentiful harvests; and the Propontis has ever been renowned for an inexhaustible store of the most exquisite fish, that are taken in their stated seasons, without skill, and almost without labor."

With Constantine, and under a unified religion, the people had anything they wanted to gratify their desires. This prosperity brought widespread support for the causes of both the emperor and the Catholic church.

This is the "winning" formula that the Vatican is again espousing, although not yet explicitly. If one reads between the lines, the ideas endorsed by Rome become very bold and ambitious. Due to globalization and the spread of Catholicism to virtually every corner on Earth, the

Vatican is now suggesting that the historical model be modernized and applied to the ENTIRE WORLD!

The question remains: would this work?

Whose Ethics?

Look back on the terms that fill both the pope's 2009 encyclical and the note from the Pontifical Council of Justice and Peace: "common good," "ethics," "solidarity," "moral communion," "spiritual," "universal brotherhood," "charity" and "truth."

All of these terms are subject to interpretation. Ask 10 people on the street what each means and you will likely get 10 different answers. Whose definition of *common good* will be used by the proposed global financial authority? Who decides what *morals* will be used? What is meant by *spiritual*?

Most important, whose TRUTH will influence political decisions?

When one considers that this proposal comes from a church, with theological opinions on all of these points, one does not have to wonder for long.

Yet there is a gaping problem in attempting to use religion to influence political decisions. The human element. The record of history is against any attempt to enact a perfect manmade government.

While the historical "Christian empire" did enjoy years of peace and prosperity, in between were periods of chaos (notably in the Dark Ages).

The fact remains, uniting religions and kingdoms, both ruled by men, is *always* doomed to fail. While church-state governments may have brought a few years of seeming success in the past, it has never lasted—and could never last.

The problem goes back to what is *truly* ethical and moral—what is right and wrong.

Final Unification

Any Christian empire would purportedly take its standards from the Bible. Yet this Book's text soundly refutes the notion that man is capable

of effectively governing himself: "O LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walks to direct his steps" (Jer. 10:23).

Man CANNOT rule himself! Taking into account the record of history, this should not be a shock. Where man is involved, there are always the same problems: war, poverty, famine, disease, unhappiness.

Proponents of close ties between religion and government may counter, "But what if we apply biblical principles and laws to governmental systems?"

Reading the Old Testament, a towering lesson emerges: even by using a set of laws—both religious and civil—ancient Israel could never achieve permanent peace and universal prosperity. Even though God *Himself* wrote the laws for this nation, the "human element" caused it to fail!

Despite this, support for a kingdom with a close-linked church and state CAN be found in the Bible. Throughout the Old and New testaments, Jesus Christ is called "King of kings" and "Lord of lords." Notice Revelation 19:16: "And He"—a *returning* Christ—"has on His vesture and on His thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS."

Only Christ returning as *both* KING (a civil ruler) and LORD (a religious ruler) will solve the problems of mankind.

At that time, financial regulation will be fair and just. This soon-coming SUPERGOVERNMENT will ensure prosperity for all: "But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree; and none shall make them afraid..." (Mic. 4:4).

This form of peace and abundance could never happen by modifying *any* of the current governments on Earth. Christ knows this, and is patiently allowing mankind to learn the lesson that it cannot rule itself. Upon His Return, the first order of business will be to depose *every* government in place.

Daniel 2:44 states: "And in the days of these kings shall the God of

Please see **RELIGION**, page 20

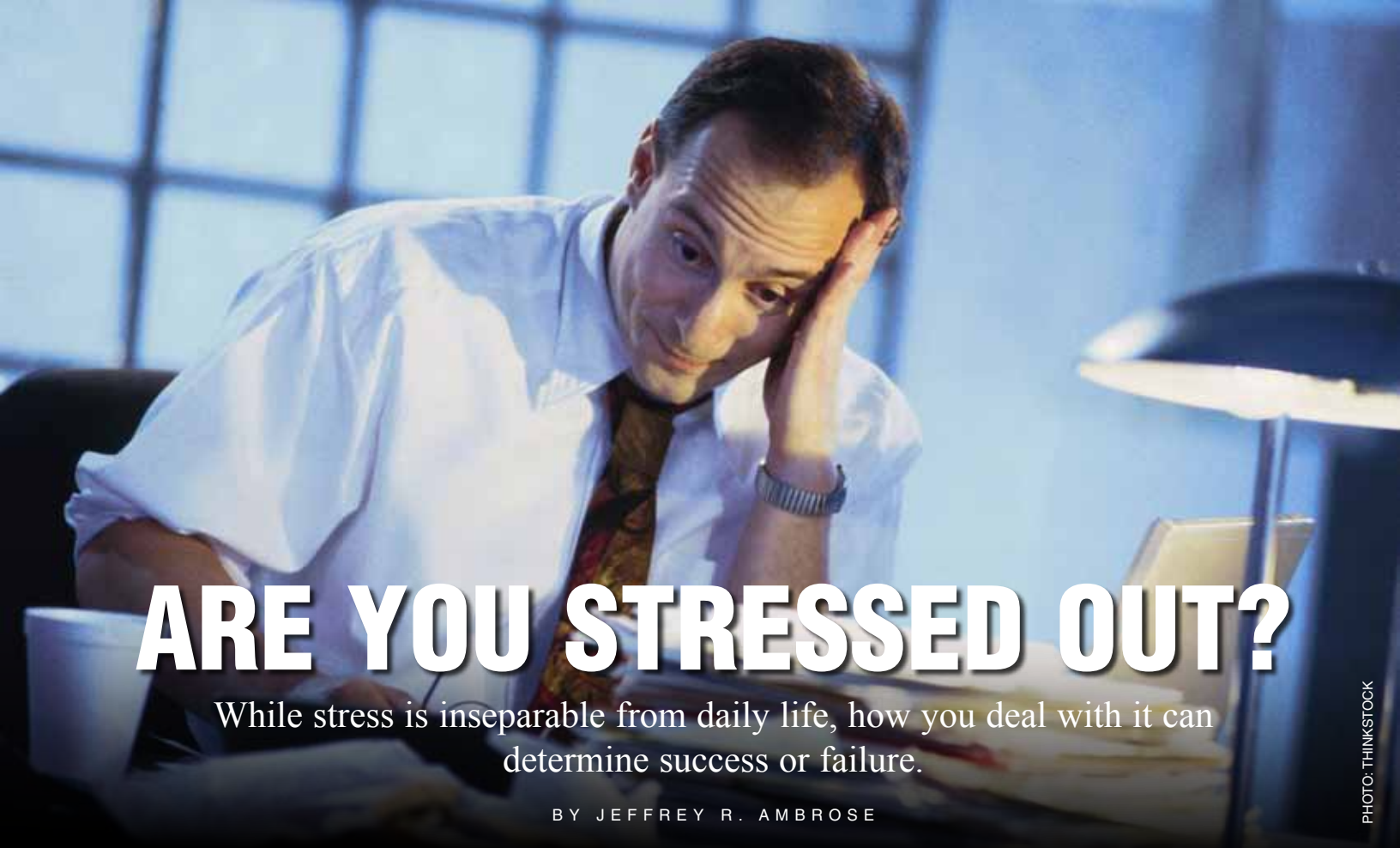


PHOTO: THINKSTOCK

ARE YOU STRESSED OUT?

While stress is inseparable from daily life, how you deal with it can determine success or failure.

BY JEFFREY R. AMBROSE

HOW MANY times have you had a coworker approach you, wearing an exasperated expression, eyelids heavy with fatigue, and say, “I am stressed out!”

Have similar expressions ever left your lips? Have you ever felt overwhelmed by all you need to accomplish in a given day, week or month?

You are far from alone. We live in an age when stress can be very intense. Life in the 21st century, while boasting conveniences and comforts unknown to previous eras, also has new and different pressures. And some are finding themselves pushed to the edge.

Causes and Effects

The most commonly reported causes of stress are the areas of life that one would expect to be cited: job and workplace requirements, financial difficulties, personal relationships, the emotional and time investments of childrearing, and simply being *too busy*.

The modern, hurry-up age presents a paradox: technology allows us to be more informed and connected to each other than ever before, which can greatly increase efficiency and productivity. But this can reach a point of diminishing returns. The nonstop barrage of information flowing from all directions is another form of stress that is unique to the age in which we live. Emails, text messages, television, radio, phone calls (landline and mobile), post mail, ever-expanding advertising venues—all of these sources of input equate to many interruptions and distractions throughout the day, competing for our attention and draining our time. (Some corporate executives and senior managers report they receive hundreds of emails each *hour!*)

A person’s living environment also plays a role. Those who live in crowded metropolitan areas, battling traffic jams, spending many hours in a long commute each week, and living at a fast pace, are among the most likely candidates for being stressed out.

Many people are overscheduled and overcommitted, spending hours each week on unprofitable pursuits. In some cases, the activities are worthwhile and valuable, but there are simply too many—all simultaneously demanding a person’s attention and energy.

Chronic stress has considerable effects on the mind and body: headaches, sleep disturbances, cardiovascular disease, digestive problems, a depressed immune system, reproductive disorders and many other maladies are all linked to it.

Part of Life

Though we might wish otherwise, stress is inseparable from everyday life. And a degree of stress is necessary—without it, progress and growth could not occur.

Some research supports the notion that stress is actually good for our health—in reasonable amounts, as reported by *MSNBC*: “Moderate amounts of stress—the kind of short-term buzz we get from a sudden burst of hormones—can help people per-

form tasks more efficiently and can improve memory. Good stress is the type of emotional challenge where a person feels in control and provides some sense of accomplishment. It can improve heart function and make the body resistant to infection, experts say. Far from being something we need to eliminate from our lives, good stress stimulates us.

“Think about your daily life—when do you get things done?” asks Janet DiPietro, a developmental psychologist at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health in Baltimore. “When you have a deadline, when you have to perform. You want some stress to help you do your best.”

The effects of stress can be greatly affected by our mental approach. Viewing stress as a challenge to be met and overcome, rather than an unexpected crisis or unfair burden, can have positive effects on our outlook and health. Accepting it as part of life, rather than complaining, will in itself reduce stress—and conserve time and energy in the process.

Changing your outlook is vital, and looking for positives that you may take for granted can go a long way toward this goal. Is your job stressful? Be thankful that you are employed, especially in a shaky global economy. Do your children sometimes give you headaches? Remember how much you would miss them if they were gone!

There are a number of other ways to manage and minimize stress. Regular moderate exercise, a balanced, healthy diet, and taking some time for relaxation and recreation are key.

Recognize that poor time management can unnecessarily magnify stress. Undisciplined television viewing or Internet surfing can vacuum up many hours each week, forcing important tasks to be crammed into unrealistic timeframes. And a cluttered, disorganized office or home can also slow down the completion of tasks, and thereby increase deadline pressure.

Beware! Stress can be turned into “a handy ready-made excuse for all sorts of bad behaviors, from being grumpy to making a mistake,” a separate *MSNBC* article reported. “You are so frazzled you only got four hours of sleep, after all. Wearing stress as a badge of honor can also serve as [a] defense mechanism. When you show the world you are totally stressed out you’re sending out a signal: Don’t give me any more stuff to do.”

The ultimate goal is to manage stress and avoid becoming *over-stressed*.

Instruction Manual

Why must stress and difficulty be a part of human existence? While many will not even entertain the idea of human life having been created by a Supreme Being, those who are willing and able to prove the existence of a Creator God can be led to truths that are life-changing.

We were created to live a certain way, and the Creator provided an Instruction Manual most will not take seriously. The Bible describes—for the willing student—the path to an abundant and happy life. It provides principles designed to guide man, including ways to properly handle stress.

Life involves stress—this is how God designed it. After the first human beings made foolish choices, He told them, “Cursed is the ground *for your sake*; in sorrow shall you eat of it all the days of your life; thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to you; and you shall eat the herb of the field; in the sweat of your face shall you eat bread, till you return unto the ground; for out of it were you taken: for dust you are, and unto dust shall you return” (Gen. 3:17-19).

History has shown that prosperous societies with relatively little stress and an overabundance of leisure time inevitably become decadent, and collapse. Some hardship is necessary to counteract the excesses of human nature.

Though the word “stress” is not found in the Bible, a similar term—“adversity”—is mentioned a number

of times. Again, it is part of God’s design: “In the day of prosperity be joyful, but in the day of adversity consider: God also has set the one over against the other” (Ecc. 7:14).

God also throws down a challenge: “If you faint in the day of adversity, your strength is small” (Prov. 24:10). It is His intent that we are strengthened by stress; for this to occur, we must continue battling, and never give up!

Weekly Stress Relief

Scripture also contains a law that will automatically reduce stress, one of the Ten Commandments: “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shall you labor, and do all your work: but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the LORD your God: in it you shall not do any work, you, nor your son, nor your daughter, your manservant, nor your maidservant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger that is within your gates: For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it” (Ex. 20:8-11).

This weekly day of rest, set apart by God, is a chance to be rejuvenated physically, spiritually and in all other ways. Far from being a “Jewish tradition,” as many assume, the Fourth Commandment is a law that is in force today. The apostle Paul, decades after the New Covenant came into effect with Jesus Christ’s death, wrote, “There remains therefore a rest [Greek: *sabbatismos*, “a keeping of the Sabbath”] to the people of God” (Heb. 4:9).

Taking a broader view, living in harmony with *all* of the elements in the Instruction Manual called the Bible leads to lower stress in many areas of life. While this does not mean a complete absence of pressure or stress, the God of the Bible states, “Beloved, I wish above all things that you may prosper and be in health” (III John 2).

Does this sound like the kind of life you would like to have? To learn more, watch *The World to Come* broadcast “How to Live the Abundant Life!” at www.worldtocome.org. □



THE "OCCUPY" MOVEMENT



A Leaderless Democracy?

Economic uncertainty has inspired thousands of protesters globally to take a stance against capitalism. Their alternative is yet to be defined.

THE SIGNS say it all. “Housing is a human right.” “Capitalism is a kind of slavery with fake golden chains.” “The London Stock Exchange: Britain’s Biggest Casino Since 1801.” “Turn Wall Street into Tahrir Square.” “Eat the Rich.”

Protesters are angry. They want change. And they want it NOW.

Given headlines—“14 Million Jobless,” “Unemployment Adds 9 Million Uninsured” and “One Out of Every 15 People Lives in Extreme Poverty”—their frustration seems warranted.

Since the Occupy Wall Street (OWS) movement first encamped in New York City’s financial district in mid-September, the group has gained worldwide traction.

“From Seattle to Sydney, protesters have taken to the streets,” *The Economist* reported. “Whether they are inspired by the Occupy Wall Street movement in New York or by the indignados in Madrid, they burn with dissatisfaction about the state of the economy, about the unfair way that the poor are paying for the sins of rich bankers, and in some cases about capitalism itself.”

The movement, a copy of Egypt’s and Tunisia’s uprisings, maintains it is dedicated to the “power of the people.” It considers itself a “leaderless democracy,” stating on its website, “Decisions are made democratically, without voting, by general assent.”

Yet it claims to uphold what they call a fundamental principle of anarchism: “...that in the same way human beings treated like children will tend to act like children, the way to encourage human beings to act like mature and responsible adults is to treat them as if they already are.”

While some consider it a big party, advocates are optimistic its ideals about “world revolution” will spread globally. What exactly those ideals are, however, has yet to be determined, as another *Economist* article noted.

“The protests that have mushroomed in over 900 cities in 80-plus countries over the past few days have voiced few practical demands, and in some cases they actually avoid making any. Participants favour the general over the specific. They think need matters more than greed. They like decisions by consensus, distrust elites and feel that capitalism’s pains and gains are unfairly shared. Beyond that, the horizon clouds.”

Yet one thing *is* certain. Supporters of OWS are angry, disillusioned and desire a solution that can provide the results they demand. And, it appears, they will not stop until they find one.

Opposite Sides

Occupy protests are complex, with many interacting players. There are Wall Street businessmen, Washington politicians, unemployed, police attempting to keep peace, idealistic university students, stay-at-home mothers, those drowning in debt, and those indifferent to the whole cause. Each side has its own story.

For the most part, protesters—who call themselves the “99 percent”—are against “corporate greed” and the “1 percent” of Americans who they claim hold almost 50 percent of wealth. Bankers are often painted as money-grubbing, private-jet-hopping, uncaring businessmen who do nothing but laugh about their millions while playing golf.

Demonstrators in the United States, for example, complain that big corporations fund politicians, which works to hurt, not serve, the electorate. After being elected, the argument goes, these same politicians then cater to the com-

panies who funded them and neglect those who cast ballots for them.

Others feel frustrated by the rich-poor gap. They ask why over 20 percent of new college graduates are unemployed and buried in student-loan debt. They question the need for the high cost of national defense given that about 16 percent of Americans live below the poverty line.

In Europe, protesters are angry that tax money has bailed out big banks, yet CEOs received big bonuses, all while their countries face austerity measures.

“Spain, like Greece and Italy, faces huge public deficits,” *The Christian Science Monitor* reported. “The government has been cutting outlays for basic services like schools, health care, and social welfare. While college attendance in Spain is a success story, youth unemployment has risen to a horrific 44 percent.”

Because of its Robin-Hoodesque message, “*Take more from the rich!*” increasing numbers seek safety in OWS’s ranks.

“We are all living in dire times,” one of the movement’s key architects told *Forbes*. He later added, “When your future is on the line, when your kids’ future is on the line, people will fight for what they want.”

In contrast, many of the wealthy “1 percent,” made up of those who earn \$343,927 per year or more, according to the latest IRS data, consider protesters hoodlums with nothing better to do than live communally in parks, behave promiscuously, do drugs, beat on drums, and wander around collecting handouts. They see the Wall Street encampment providing toiletries, Internet access, three meals a day, and free medical services, and wonder why those protesting should not have to work as they do to earn their keep. Some of them had to incur large debts, working long hours for little or no pay at the start of their careers, to become successful on Wall Street.

Plainly, this is a type of class warfare—a battle of the “haves” versus the “have-nots.”

■ **SPREADING RAGE:** Top, Occupy Wall Street supporters call for universal healthcare in New York City (Oct. 26, 2011). Bottom left, an Oakland police officer takes photographs of the remains of the Occupy Oakland camp after police shut it down (Oct. 25, 2011). Bottom middle, police clash with Occupy Melbourne protesters in Australia (Oct. 21, 2011). Bottom right, demonstrators protest in Zuccotti Park in New York City (Oct. 23, 2011).

PHOTOS: EMMANUEL DUNAND/AFP/ (TOP); JUSTIN SULLIVAN/ (BOTTOM LEFT); MARK DADSWELL/ (BOTTOM MIDDLE); TIMOTHY A. CLARY/AFP/ (BOTTOM RIGHT) GETTY IMAGES



■ **TENT CITIES:** Top, a protester walks among tents and placards placed under HSBC's banking headquarters in Hong Kong (Oct. 21, 2011). Middle, activists of the Occupy Frankfurt movement camp in front of the European Central Bank headquarters in Frankfurt, Germany (Oct. 22, 2011). Bottom, tents are set up in Freedom Plaza on Pennsylvania Avenue between the White House and the U.S. Capitol in Washington, D.C. (Oct. 28, 2011).

PHOTOS: LAURENT FIEVET/AFP/ (TOP); RALPH ORLOWSKI/ (MIDDLE) GETTY IMAGES; OLIVIER DOULIERY/ABACA PRESS/MCT (BOTTOM)

Real Cost

Anger about the widening economic gap has led to unrest, placing a heavier burden on a floundering economy.

"The cost to already struggling municipalities, which must protect and clean up after the protesters, is soaring," *ABC News* stated. "We know for a fact we've crossed the \$300,000 threshold in terms of money spent so far for this

operation," said Atlanta Mayor Kasim Reed."

The article continues, "In San Francisco, the bill is more than \$100,000...Across the country, the figures are growing. In New York City, overtime costs are \$3.4 million. In Minneapolis, the sheriff's department reports spending \$200,000. And in Boston, the tally is \$2 million and counting."

Yet the cost to Wall Street's "one percent" so far? Little or nothing. Tax money pays for any damages incurred, adding further insult to injury to the economy.

Since the start of the protests, thousands have been arrested, and several police injured. Many businesses have closed, relocated or laid off staff due to poor sales revenue.

Reports of internal harm among fellow "occupationistas," as the protesters label themselves, such as sexual assaults inside tent cities, continue to be reported. As of this writing, several weeks into the protests, four people had died, one from a suspected drug overdose.

The need for police to focus on maintaining order at protest sites, as opposed to dealing with real crime across the city, has also caused violence to increase. *New York Post* reported that the "number of people shot surged 154 percent" in two weeks in New York City.

In Oakland, California, thousands of protesters determined to "halt capitalism's flow" by shutting down the nation's fifth busiest port. The city's school district reported a \$60,000 loss in personal day costs from teachers who joined the rally. Port authorities and local businesses were forced to end operations early and send home approximately 73,000 port employees.

Oakland's City Administrator Deanna Santana reminded dissidents during a news conference that to maintain order "we need no fires, we need no vandalism, no throwing bottles, or rocks, or human waste at police officers. Police officers need to be allowed to enforce traffic..."

But the advice fell on deaf ears, and more violence occurred.

"Protests...were largely peaceful until around midnight local time... when some of the protesters reportedly lit a barricade on fire," *BBC News* reported. "Afterwards, police fired tear gas and 'flash bang' grenades near the main plaza, where Occupy Wall Street protesters have been camping."

YouTube videos of Oakland's riots showed mobs of youth banging their heads on luxury cars passing through crowded streets, or dancing on top of tractor trailers trying to bypass blockades.

Are these the actions of "mature and responsible" adults?

Just days after California's rampage, more violent protests erupted in Washington, D.C., in which a horde of demonstrators used children to blockade convention center exits so that attendees of a meeting they did not agree with would not be able to leave the building. In the melee, a 78-year-old woman was pushed down a flight of stairs and had to be taken to the hospital.

European "occupy" participants have proved akin to their American counterparts.

"Clad in black with their faces covered, protesters threw rocks, bottles and incendiary devices at banks and Rome police in riot gear," *The Associated Press* reported. "With clubs and hammers, they destroyed bank ATMs, set trash bins on fire and assaulted at least two news crews from Sky Italia. Riot police charged the protesters repeatedly, firing water cannons and tear gas. Around 70 people were injured, according to news reports, including one man who tried to stop the protesters from throwing bottles."

Some argue that violent acts are perpetrated by a minority of the group. According to organizers, the movement is actively trying to maintain order and peace within their encampments.

"In less than four weeks, Occupy Wall Street managed to erect what looks and functions like a cross between a high-tech folk festival and a Canadian logging camp," *The Wall Street Journal* stated. "At least for now, there's a lend-



■ **ACTING OUT:** Left, protesters face a burning trash container during a demonstration in downtown Rome, Italy (Oct. 15, 2011). Right, Iranian men shout slogans during a protest in support of the Occupy Wall Street movement in Tehran (Oct. 22, 2011).

PHOTOS: ALBERTO PIZZOLI/AFP/ (LEFT); ATTA KENARE/AFP/ (RIGHT) GETTY IMAGES

ing library on one end and a man doling out cigarettes on the other. There are stations for first aid, phone charging and poster-making. There's even a guy who walks around handing out, yes, free money."

How is it all funded? Dependence on others.

The article adds, "The whole operation runs on donations, of course. More than \$5,000 in cash comes in every day through the park's contribution boxes, and supplies flow in from around the country."

How long can such a "leaderless" movement in which people of all ideologies—from anarchists to right-wing libertarians—who do not have a solid source of income other than donations really sustain itself?

Gaining Momentum

One striking aspect of occupy protests is the speed at which they have spread. Occupy Wall Street rapidly became Occupy Boston...Oakland...Tokyo...Berlin—all in a matter of weeks. This speaks volumes about the general mood across the United States and the world: people are discontented and yearning for solutions.

Middle- and lower-class citizens feel powerless. Many are jobless and hopelessly in debt. With the occupy protests, they at least feel they

are "doing something" and "have a voice."

While the movement prides itself on being "leaderless" and "consensus-based," how far can such a society really go? It may appear to work in a small-scale tent camp, but what would happen if it was applied to a metropolis of millions, an entire nation—or the world? Such a government would quickly become unwieldy and utterly unusable.

But consider: Is Occupy Wall Street really leaderless? Who is communicating with companies donating goods to the cause? Who decides how to distribute goods? And who ultimately decides what to post on the group's "unofficial" website?

As history shows, there is inherent danger in a self-proclaimed "leaderless" group without a succinct purpose. *The Economist* wrote, "Populist anger, especially if it has no coherent agenda, can go anywhere in times of want. The 1930s provided the most terrifying example."

Widespread discontent coupled with a leaderless mentality often gives rise to the worst kinds of leaders, ranging from WWII-era Germany to the numerous "presidents for life" ruling today.

Like it or not, those who are discontented always find a leader. History proves this. Human nature

proves this. When someone stands up with a solid solution to bring back economic security and "the American Dream"—the vast majority will accept the new government, and its promised prosperity, with open arms. In the end, they want a government that can deliver the "good life."

Occupy groups are providing this kind of life on a small scale now. Until recently, have you ever heard of a protest against "capitalist greed" where you can obtain gourmet organic meals, yoga mats, access to top-shelf computer products, and designer high-heel shoes?

OWS maintains that it desires to be sustainable and more "earth-friendly," yet its actions prove those of the movement yearn to live a life of relative luxury—where smartphones, name-brand clothes, and high-speed Internet access are considered necessities. How much is this different from life in America now, where many of those below the poverty line lead lives of relative plenty?

According to a 2011 study by conservative think tank Heritage Foundation, among poor households, 80 percent have air conditioning—31 percent have two or more automobiles—almost two-thirds cable or sat-

Please see **OCCUPY**, page 21

Your Marriage Can Be Happy!

By following the Bible's prescribed formula, you can have a successful marriage.

BY DAVID C. PACK

HOW MANY *really* happy married couples do you know?—and are you even sure of *these*? Is your marriage truly happy? Are you enjoying the life that you anticipated? Statistics suggest the answer is probably “No.”

Married life has been the brunt of endless jokes, where traditional conduct and the roles of husbands and wives are ridiculed—and depicted as a bondage only the foolish enter. Great numbers have come to equate marriage with surrendering “freedom” to a lesser, unhappy state of existence.

Religion, education, science and society do not know the true purpose of marriage. They do not even know if marriage *has* a purpose. And many couples do reflect that they are together with no purpose.

In addition, most married people are *unhappy*—with many a virtual study in misery. They have no idea what to *do* about it, or where to turn for answers. Millions stumble along, bouncing from one marital problem to another, never knowing *how* to address them—let alone solve them!

Others choose to marry, sincerely believing they will find perfect bliss—will “live on love”—only to discover that true happiness is far from automatic. Some even conclude—often within days—that marriage was the worst decision of their lives.

Sadly, so many enter marriage with no understanding, no preparation, no training and no idea of how to

achieve a lifetime of happiness with their chosen partner.

Most couples spend more time planning for a one-day *wedding* than for the lifelong *marriage* that should follow. As a result, half of all marriages fail, ending in divorce, often with former partners becoming *mortal enemies*! Other couples are just as unhappy, but perhaps cannot afford a divorce, or stay together only because of the children or other social or business reasons.

How tragic! And how completely unnecessary!

Why do so few understand there are great principles—transcendent spiritual LAWS—governing what most think is merely a *civil agreement*? How many recognize that men and women have separate, different, God-ordained roles that must be understood for marriage to succeed? How many couples have been actively taught the real *purpose* of marriage? Most no longer even know the origin of marriage, let alone the vital answers to these and other important related questions.

The answers involve *revealed* knowledge—knowledge men *cannot themselves discern*. God must reveal it.

In place of revealed truth, modern education has taught the great evolutionary lie—that life is continually evolving to a higher state. Scoffers, preferring to believe that human beings are a product of dumb luck, dismiss the biblical account that God supernaturally created two actual people—Adam and Eve—and then identified them as history's first married couple.

Of course, those who believe the unproven, and in fact, easily disproven,

fiction of evolution must also believe that, at some point, *men* devised the marriage institution. Believing otherwise is incompatible with evolution. One cannot have it both ways. Either God created marriage—or men did.

But human beings did *not* create marriage! Therefore, apart from God, they cannot know its true purpose—or the KEYS to decades of happiness with the *same person*. It is not our purpose here to prove God exists or that the Bible is His inspired Word. The organization that funds *The Real Truth* has several booklets, brochures and articles that address these subjects. We start with the fact that the Almighty God, who designed and made the heavens and the earth, also designed and created marriage.

Though marriage appears to be merely a physical union, starting with a wedding ceremony performed by a man, it is actually a *divine institution*. As the true Author of marriage, God understands what makes it succeed, bringing supreme happiness and joy—or fail, bringing divorce and broken lives.

The Creator God designed marriage to be a source of great happiness, something everyone yearns for. You can have an exciting, happy, successful marriage—but only if you follow God's prescribed formula. There are basic principles, unknown to all but a very few who are willing to truly study and believe God's Word to see what He instructs.

To learn more, watch *The World to Come* broadcast “Your Marriage Can Be Happy!” at www.worldtocome.org. □



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THE
NEW TESTAMENT

OF
OUR LORD AND SAVIOUR
JESUS CHRIST
Translated out of the original Greek and
with the former translations diligently
compared and revised by
His Majesty's special command

APPOINTED TO BE READ
IN CHURCHES

Authorised
King James Version

King James Bible 400 Years and Counting

What is the story behind the most widely distributed Bible translation?

BY JACOB C. TOEWS

IT IS FOUND at churches, motels, prisons, courthouses, battlefields, weddings and funerals. Its words have inspired writers from William Shakespeare to Walt Whitman, while its scientific principles about wind and water cycles are understood by meteorologists and oceanographers.

Sailors heed its advice to predict the probability of storms, while musicians from George Frederick Handel to 20th-century pop groups have used its passages to create hits. It has even accompanied astronauts to outer space and Hollywood personalities to the grave.

While some believe it is God's divinely inspired Word, others assume it is merely a collection of poetry, fables, battle accounts, and platitudes, often employing its sayings without realizing it—telling someone to be “bold as a lion” or “cunning as a serpent,” or that he will “reap what he sows.” Even those who do not believe the Book's authenticity can recite, “money is the root of all evil” (actually a misquote), “time and chance happen to all,” and there is “nothing new under the sun.”

Undisputedly, the Bible has influenced people across the globe for millennia—whether one is religious- or secular-minded.

One particular translation, however, has withstood the test of time—the

King James (or Authorized) Version (KJV). Surveys reveal that one third of all Bible versions across the world are King James. In all, more than six billion copies have been published—just over one billion in the United States alone.

The year 2011 marked the 400th anniversary of what has been called a “timeless literary masterpiece.” Celebrations took place around the world, conferences on its creation were held, and numerous movies and books were produced detailing its inception.

“According to Google Insights, a service that compares search volume patterns, the phrase ‘King James Bible’ was searched 9 percent more this year compared to the previous seven-year average...keyword phrases that included either ‘King James Bible’ or ‘King James Version’ were searched more than 2 million times per month,” a press release by *king-jamesbibleonline.org* stated.

How did this version of the scriptures come into existence—and more important, what significance does it hold today?

Work Begins

The KJV's origins can be traced to Britain in 1604, where religious strife

between Catholics, Anglicans and Puritans caused King James I to order the production of a new Bible translation. He hoped it would settle the groups' differences and bring peace. He invited scholars, professors and theologians from all sides to participate.

Until that time, the Bible was primarily accessible to clergymen in its original languages (Greek and Hebrew) or Latin. Therefore, lay members who wanted to hear God's Word had to listen to it being read at churches in Latin, a language most did not understand.

Many Bible translations, such as the *Catholic Latin Vulgate* and John Calvin's *Geneva Bible*, also contained strong theological and political leanings, with opinion-based commentaries. Some who tried to produce their own copies, such as William Tyndale, who created one of the first unofficial English versions, were burned at the stake!

The translation commissioned by King James was intended to make the Bible accessible not only to those who understood Latin, but also to the general English-speaking populace.

On July 22, 1607, work commenced on the KJV. Fifty-seven of the best scholars were chosen for the task. The new work was to be a "literal" word-for-word translation using only the original Hebrew (Masoretic) text and Greek (Byzantine/Revived/Antiochian text) manuscripts.

Scholars were divided into six groups. Three translated the Old Testament, two the New Testament, and another the Apocrypha, which was later discarded.

After each group completed a section, it was submitted to another group of 12 men for review. These individuals added certain words to ensure the text flowed smoothly in the English language. But the words they added were not in the original text, and in some instances, only muddled certain passages. These words remain italicized in print copies today.

Translators worked hard to ensure the KJV could be read in churches, and that those who heard it would

understand it. This meant they avoided scholarly language and colloquialisms.

"The translators were instructed to follow strict 'rules of translation,'... approved by James, designed to minimize the risk of producing a Bible that might give added credibility to Puritanism, Presbyterianism, or Roman Catholicism. The deliberate exclusion of any form of marginal annotations or notes was regarded as a matter of special importance..." author Alister McGrath wrote in his book, *In the Beginning: The Story of the King James Bible and How It Changed a Nation, a Language, and a Culture*.

The translation took two years to complete and another nine months to review for accuracy by yet another group of selected scholars. At its completion, it was considered one of mankind's most amazing mental feats. Its completion signaled the beginning of a chapter in history in which global citizens could, for the first time, live without fear of being killed for simply desiring to read the Bible.

It is believed that a similar effort today could never rival what the more than 50 translators accomplished then—without the help of modern technology. Indeed, in the beginning of the Bible, the translators themselves declared in the preface, "Great and manifold were the blessings...which Almighty God...bestowed upon us the people of England...But among all our joys, there was no one that more filled our hearts, than the blessed continuance of the preaching of God's sacred Word among us; which is that inestimable treasure, which excelleth all the riches of the earth; because the fruit thereof extendeth itself, not only to the time spent in this transitory world, but directeth and disposeth men unto that eternal happiness which is above in heaven."

But not everyone was happy about King James I's efforts. During the translation process, he survived an assassination attempt called the Gunpowder Plot.

Finally, in 1611, the KJV was completed. It was designated 95 percent accurate.

Since that time, only minor modifications have been made, many which involved spelling. In the *New King James* version, "thou," "thee," "thine" and "thy" have been replaced with "you," "your," "their" and "they."

In most instances, however, these versions are not as popular: "Not everyone prefers a God who talks like a pal or a guidance counselor," a *New York Times* editorial stated.

"The great achievement of the King James translators is to have arrived at a language that is both ordinary and heightened, that rings in the ear and lingers in the mind. And that all 54 of them were able to agree on every phrase, every comma...is little short of amazing..."

Scripture Spreads

Originally, the newly translated Bible was very large—approximately 17 inches tall by 30 inches wide when opened and weighed 30 pounds. Churches that could afford one kept it chained to the front of the pulpit to prevent it from being stolen. According to kingjamesbibleonline.org, about 169 of the original 1611 versions of what is often called "the greatest English Bible ever produced" are still in existence.

As years passed, the KJV became more popular. Exploration led colonizing English-speaking countries to expose other nations to the scriptures.

"Refugees from England, fleeing religious persecution in the seventeenth century, brought copies with them," author Alister McGrath wrote. "It would be their encouragement on the long and dangerous voyage to the Americas, and their guide as they settled in the New World. Prisoners in English jails found solace in reciting biblical verses they had learned by heart, in the words chosen by the translators assembled by King James. The King James Bible became part of the everyday world of generations of English-speaking peoples, spread across the world. It can be argued that, until the end of the First World War, the King James Bible was seen, not simply as the most important English translation of the Bible, but as one of

the finest literary works in the English language.”

Not only is the King James Version regarded as the most accurate translation from the original Hebrew, Greek and Aramaic texts, it also helped propel the British Empire and the English language to global dominance.

“...the triumph of the King James Bible was not limited to Great Britain... The expansion of British economic and military influence in the later eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was preceded and accompanied by missionary work, based on the King James Bible.”

By the early 1700s and 1800s, nearly every household in America and Great Britain possessed one. British naval explorers, including those who worked for the East India Company, took it with them on voyages to Africa, Australia and New Zealand and introduced it to the natives. The 16th president of the United States, Abraham Lincoln, used it to learn to read. It influenced him so much that author A. E. Elmore determined in *Lincoln's Gettysburg Address: Echoes of the Bible and Book of Common Prayer* that all but three words of his 10-sentence, 272-word message could be traced in some form to the KJV.

Yet the *King James Bible* did more for society than simply spread God's Word—it shaped all English-speaking peoples and those who learned English from it, providing individuals from all walks of life a way to understand the world around them. It defied race, class and religion as never before. Today, it is estimated that the KJV has been translated from English into 2,454 of the world's 6,500 languages.

Not 100 Percent Accurate

Given the intricate methodology and potential miracles that may have occurred to ensure the KJV could be produced, the question is often asked: is it an infallible translation? This is often followed by, “Was it divinely inspired in the first place or is it, (as some say), only ‘platitudes of the ancients’?”

While the theologians and scholars

of this undertaking were not inspired in the same way it is believed those who recorded the Bible were, the translators were highly dedicated and educated individuals who did the best they could with what they were given.

No translation from one language to another is 100 percent accurate. The KJV, however, is the most reliable and therefore recommended as one's main study Bible. Other more modern translations may be somewhat helpful in clarifying certain verses, but they often contain doctrinal errors because they are based on personal interpretations.

A few translation errors that can be found in the KJV are worth noting. One is use of the term “Holy Ghost,” also translated “Holy Spirit.”

During the King James era, both renderings meant the same thing. Inconsistency with using both terms, however, has led many to believe they are two different spirits. “Ghost” is an archaic translation of the Greek word *pneuma* which means “breath” and is properly translated “spirit” in Luke 11:13, Ephesians 1:13, and Ephesians 4:30.

In Acts 12:4, the word “Easter” was used in a subtle attempt to sanction the ancient pagan festival: “And when he had apprehended him, he put him in prison, and delivered him to four quaternions of soldiers to keep him; intending after *Easter* to bring him forth to the people.”

The Greek word translated Easter is *pascha*, and is derived from the Hebrew word for “Passover.” *Pascha* always means Passover—never Easter. Some translations, such as the *Revised Standard Version* translate this correctly as Passover. (For a more detailed explanation, read *The True Origin of Easter*.)

Another error is found in I John 5:7-8: “For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one.”

The Critical and Experimental Commentary states that this verse was not found in the Latin Vulgate until

the eighth century. *Adam Clarke's Commentary* concludes, “...it is likely that this verse is not genuine.” (To learn why, read *The Trinity – Is God Three-in-One?*)

Although these and a few other minor discrepancies are found in the KJV, it is still useful for study since many Bible tools such as *Strong's Concordance*, *Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon*, and others are based on the KJV, and can help uncover such errors.

Given these facts, then, is the Bible, including the KJV, really the word of God—and if so, how can one be sure?

This most important question is tied to the equally relevant question, “Is there a Creator God?”

A World Without the KJV?

Clearly, the scriptures cannot be valid unless a Divine Being inspired them. The booklet *Does God Exist?* explains this in detail and leaves no doubt that there is indeed a Creator.

Equally verifiable is the Bible. But how can one know for sure that books recorded by men are inspired by God? One of the greatest proofs revolves around the production of the most popular version of the Book itself.

Stop and consider the impact the King James Version has had over the centuries. It has influenced great civilizations in aspects of art, culture, literature, politics and religion. It has taught about “the powers that be,” “the blind leading the blind,” the “eye of a needle” and the “salt of the earth,” among many other concepts.

Without the assistance of the KJV, Martin Luther King could not have given such a powerful speech, Abraham Lincoln may not have been able to unite a country as successfully, and many schoolchildren might not have as many literary classics, including *Robinson Crusoe* and *Jane Eyre*, to read today.

In fact, without the production of the *King James Bible*, there may never have been a way for the public at large to read God's Word. The influence of state-sanctioned religion over politics

may have maintained such a tight grip on the original biblical text that people would not have been able to experience the religious freedom they do now.

Before King James I ordered a new translation, printing the Bible in any other tongue than Latin was punishable by death. Yet, following the Book's printing, the Bible became accessible to clergy *and* lay members.

Because people could read for themselves—instead of relying on established religion—they yearned to worship as they pleased. This led to the founding principle in the first amendment of the United States constitution, “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion.”

The New World's religious freedom was no accident. It paved the way to fulfill Scripture itself, as evidenced by Christ's own words. In Matthew 24:14, He stated that God's Word would go to the whole world: “And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in ALL the world for a *witness* unto all nations; and then shall the end come.”

Many who read the Bible consider the stories contained within it, starting with the Creation account, to be helpful fables. Others see it as a book about the life and death of Jesus, whom, if they believe on, will allow them to go to heaven. The books of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes, on the other hand, are considered to be full of practical wisdom and morals, which if adhered to and applied, can greatly assist a reader's life.

While God's Word is a historical record of ancient times and contains

wisdom about how one should conduct himself, it also holds the greatest message of hope for humanity—that Christ is coming to establish a kingdom on Earth to be ruled by those who learn His ways and obey Him *now*. This is the gospel that He preached. (See Matthew 4:23 and 9:35, and Mark 1:15.)

While people had bibles they could read for themselves, controversy over the exact definition of the gospel resulted in much confusion. Why?

More Than a “Good Book”

In *Which Is the True Gospel?* David C. Pack writes, “Jesus commanded, ‘Repent you, and believe the gospel’ (Mark 1:15). But exactly what is it that we—YOU—are supposed to believe? Just what *is* the true gospel? Do you know? Are you certain? Be careful of assumptions.”

“The vast majority of professing Christians do not know the vital—ALL-IMPORTANT—answers to these most basic questions, and many others related to the true gospel of the Bible! This is because the knowledge of what the gospel really is has been hidden from the world for centuries!

“Christ, at His First Coming, came as a first-century NEWSCASTER, bringing advance GOOD NEWS of staggering events to occur just beyond the horizon, and all the *bad news* occurring throughout today's world. This climactic news involves *you*—and eventually every human being on Earth!”

Did you realize this?

The production of the King James translation first made the ability for all English-speaking people to read the

Bible possible. Since that time, God's servants throughout the years have been using it to preach the same good news that He did.

Yet most people do not believe what His inspired Book says. Another publication by Mr. Pack *Bible Authority... Can It Be Proven?* speaks to this misconception.

“Everyone wants to know what the future holds. In ever-increasing numbers, people are seeking psychics, ‘channelers,’ tarot card and palm readers, fortunetellers, crystal ball gazers and every other medium to tell them what is going to happen. And they pay for this ‘service.’ Yet, few go to the one infallible source, which foretells all the important events that will soon come upon the entire world.

“Few understand that *nearly one-third* of the Bible is *prophecy*—that it is a history book written *in advance* of the history that it records.”

Mr. Pack further states, “Fulfilled prophecy proves the divine authority of the Bible. No human can foretell events, let alone in great detail, to occur hundreds or thousands of years beyond his own lifetime. No *person* can affect the course of cities, states or kingdoms for centuries to come. For this reason, it has been said that prophecy is the challenge that the skeptics dare not accept!”

Do you dare take God's challenge to prove the Bible—now available to you in your own language through the King James Version—and live what you learn?

To more fully confirm the validity of the Bible for yourself, read *Bible Authority... Can It Be Proven?* □

RELIGION

Continued from page 9

heaven set up a kingdom”—one ruled by the *true* King and Priest—“which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom *shall not be left to other people*, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever.”

Notice that verse 44 begins with the phrase “in the days of these

kings.” Soon, there *will* be an attempt to unite religion and government one last time. It *will* overhaul financial and world governmental structures. It *will* even bring a period of apparent peace and prosperity. (To understand this coming unification of church and state, watch *The World to Come* broadcast “Europe and The Vatican – What Is Coming!”)

This “Christian empire,” however, will never bring lasting peace. Upon

His Return, Christ will end this system and set up a new kingdom, not controlled by the ideas, morals and ethics of men. Ushering in an era of unrivaled peace and prosperity, Christ will set up a kingdom that will “not be left to other people” and “shall STAND FOREVER.”

Read *Tomorrow's Wonderful World – An Inside View!* for a fuller picture of how the world will look under Jesus Christ's reign. □

OCCUPY

Continued from page 15

ellite television—43 percent have Internet access—and one-third a wide-screen plasma or LCD TV.

Now think. What is life like for the 84 percent *not* in poverty?

Driving Force

While OWS has yet to come to a consensus on even *one demand*, there is an unstated core demand. The group blames the wealthy 1 percent, yet there have been billionaires for decades. Blame is also placed on mega corporations, while these have been around—and dodging taxes—for decades as well.

Ask: why were there not mass protests against the 1 percent in the 1980s or the 1990s?

The answer: few were concerned with greedy business practices when economic times were good and the rank-and-file were unaffected.

The unbridled desire to get more, whether power or money, is the *real* reason people are camped near Wall Street, in front of leading banks, and in cities across the world. But the protesters are not the only ones. This attitude runs deeper: *everyone*, from out-of-work single mothers drowning in bills to CEOs of Fortune 500 companies, is driven by some form of covetousness.

Until *every* person comes to this realization, there will never be true economic prosperity under a fair system. Admitting covetousness is a motivating factor would mean mankind would have to acknowledge that it does not have all the answers,

and that no amount of philosophy or political theory can change that fact.

This would also mean seeking out often-overlooked sources of knowledge—especially those that can truly explain human nature. The best and most-ignored source for this sort of wisdom is the Bible. It explains what should be the operating assumption for trying to understand any economic problem.

The Old Testament book of Jeremiah hits the problem on the nose: “For from the least of them even unto the greatest of them EVERY ONE is given to covetousness...” (6:13).

How true! Politicians covet their positions of power and promise the populace whatever their hearts desire, and citizens come to expect the government to provide for them—demanding more and more each time. It is a system that is doomed to fail as the prophet Jeremiah explains, “It is not in man that walks to direct his steps...” (Jer. 10:23).

Just these two passages show manmade governments, no matter the ideals they are based upon, will fail. Why? Because they are based upon a desire to GET.

Look at the lives of Americans and other prosperous nations of the West. Even those who are buried in unpaid student loans, are unemployed or underemployed, or have had to give up their cellphone and Internet access due to economic hardship, still have it better than the *vast* majority of the world.

If it is *these* conditions that can cause a supposed peaceful protest to turn wildly violent, what happens when grocery stores do not have food on the shelves? Or when

the government stops paying Social Security or Medicare due to lack of funds?

The Bible also paints a picture of character breakdown in these times: “For men shall be lovers of their own selves, *covetous*, boasters, *proud*, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, *unthankful*, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, *incontinent* [unrestrained], *fierce*, despisers of those that are good” (II Tim. 3:2-3).

This is a startlingly accurate picture of today—and the world is only on the *front edge* of coming hard times! Yet fiscal mismanagement is just one factor in the current economic downturn. There are also weather upsets causing farmers to lose their crops, earthquakes destroying technology factories in Japan that push back the release of the latest gadget, and billions of dollars that could be spent on the economic recovery being sunk into national defense as a result of terrorism. The list could go on.

Modern trends are thoroughly explained throughout the Bible, which also details the only solution to these problems. It also reveals what sort of leader will spring forth from the economic climate that has birthed the Occupy Wall Street protests.

The Bible is often avoided because properly reading and understanding it can seem daunting. Yet it can be PLAINLY understood, and help you make sense of the hard times—and beyond that, the very best time—ahead.

Read David C. Pack’s *The Bible’s Greatest Prophecies Unlocked! – A Voice Cries Out* to learn more. You do not have to be uncertain about your future! □

PERSONAL

Continued from page 2

mankind are not being drawn by the power of God’s Spirit, they have not been given the ability to comprehend God’s Word.

How does this apply to you? The answer directly explains how to know if God is calling you: in the simplest terms, a calling is understanding the truths of God when you see, read or hear them.

Ask yourself: “Do I understand Bible teachings and truths when I hear

them? Do the scriptures about the gospel of the kingdom of God—the plan of salvation and the purpose of human existence—climactic, soon-coming prophesied events—God’s warning message to His people—His Law, including the Sabbath command—the annual Holy Days—tithing—proper

baptism—the one true Church—and many other teachings make sense to me?”

When you read or hear these things or others in our magazines, books, booklets, articles and *The World to Come* broadcasts, do they have meaning to you? Are you grasping them? Are they *plain* to your understanding? Do you see them as SPECIAL KNOWLEDGE others do not have? Do you feel tempted to pinch yourself in disbelief that you could be shown things of which the masses have no idea?

If the answers to these questions are “yes,” then God *is* calling—“drawing”—you! The mysteries of the kingdom of God *are* being given to YOU!

Responsible for Knowledge Given

Babies are born knowing nothing. They do not know even the basics of right and wrong. They have to be taught virtually *everything*. Similarly, the world does not know the things of God—*spiritual* right from *spiritual* wrong. But with the knowledge of these things comes the responsibility to act on them.

Two Bible passages demonstrate that God holds people accountable for what they understand. Notice James 4:17: “Therefore to him that *knows to do good*, and does it not, to him it is sin,” and Hebrews 10:26, “For if we sin willfully after that we have received the *knowledge of the truth*, there remains no more sacrifice for sins.”

Let’s understand. Each time you learn more of God’s truth (what is “good”), and it makes sense to you—you at least generally understand it—you are being *given* extraordinary spiritual *knowledge* for which God holds you accountable.

This is part of the calling process—and is actually central to it. Further, it makes understanding how God calls one much more serious than most have believed. Recognize that God will only call each human being *once*. Therefore, you are responsible NOW for the knowledge you are being given. If one does *not* act on what he

is learning, God will take that understanding away, and such a person is in a grave spiritual condition. “For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the *doers* of the law shall be justified” (Rom. 2:13) and, “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that *do* His commandments” (Psa. 111:10).

Greatest Freedom

God’s truth is most exciting to understand. It is the path to all the wonderful, good things in life—things God wants you to have. It is also the path to the greatest *freedom* that there is! Jesus told certain Jews professing to believe on Him: “If you continue in My word [the truth—see John 17:17], then are you My disciples indeed; and you shall KNOW THE TRUTH, and THE TRUTH SHALL MAKE YOU FREE” (John 8:31-32). You must be willing to “continue” in your studies of God’s Word, learning ever more of His truth, which Christ explains will “set you free” from a world cut off from God and held captive by Satan. Even *this* understanding is precious knowledge.

Your associates in the world probably understand none of these things. Neither do your relatives. Without God’s calling, they have *no possible way* of enjoying *now* what is being offered to YOU—*IF* you are understanding AND acting upon God’s truth.

It is also vital that you make certain in your mind the things you are learning. You should find yourself wanting to PROVE the doctrines of God. Paul also told the Thessalonians, “PROVE all things; hold fast that which is good” (I Thes. 5:21). If you know God is calling you, take time to *prove* that He exists. Then prove that the Bible is truly His inspired Word for mankind.

Finally, *prove* the identity of God’s Church. Remove all doubt, leaving no room for confusion. There are many counterfeit churches—many spiritual “look-a-likes” in the world. Do not be fooled by any of them. Jesus promised, “I will build MY Church” (Matt. 16:18). Determine to know for certain if you have come in contact with it.

At the same time you are proving these things, pray fervently about what you are learning. When you are unclear on a matter, remember that Christ taught, “ASK, and it shall be given you; SEEK, and you shall find; KNOCK, and it shall be opened unto you” (Matt. 7:7).

John 14:17 explains how those coming toward conversion begin to find that they can see clearly the things of God. Notice what Jesus said when speaking to His disciples about the Holy Spirit they were soon to receive: “Even the *Spirit of truth*; [which] the world cannot receive, because it sees [it] not, neither knows [it]: but you know [it]; for [it] dwells WITH you, and shall be IN you.” The pronouns are corrected in this passage because the Holy Spirit is *not* a person, the supposed third member of a trinity, an unbiblical idea nowhere taught in the Bible. (To learn more, read *The Trinity – Is God Three-In-One?*)

At this point, the disciples were much like many today—perhaps like you, too. They were seeing many spiritual truths in part, but did not yet *fully* grasp the enormous importance of learning God’s Plan and way of life. Through the Holy Spirit working WITH them, God was revealing certain things they would only understand in a greater way once it was IN them, beginning at conversion.

Ultimately, to fully understand *all* the things of God—ALL the mysteries of the kingdom of God—one must be begotten of the Holy Spirit. This occurs when it enters directly into the mind! Lacking baptism and the vital receiving of God’s Spirit, it is completely impossible for *anyone* to *truly* understand even a *single* biblical truth!

God’s Master Plan

Before discussing how this happens, let’s look at the big picture.

There is a great reason God is only calling a few now.

The core of God’s Plan encompasses 7,000 years. Few have understood this. Many *have* correctly understood at least some of the verses describing Jesus Christ’s 1,000-year reign on

Earth, which will begin at the time of His *Return* to Earth in great power and glory to rule with the saints. And while most know little more than this, they know NOTHING of the fact that God has allotted 6,000 years, or six millennial days of a *seven-day week*, to man's rule, prior to the seventh 1,000-year "day." The sixth "day" is about to draw to a close. Satan is soon to be bound. (Take time to read Revelation 20:2.)

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

God is not losing any supposed wrestling match over which He would clearly have complete control. He knows *exactly* what He is doing, and the beauty of His Plan *can* be known.

Be assured that no true God would ever choose to condemn the vast majority who have ever lived without giving them a *full opportunity* for salvation. Such a God would not be worth following. He would be an unjust *monster* whose primary purpose is the business of *condemnation!*

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

This is a fascinating verse.

Man has been given six days, or 6,000 years, to try his own ways, gov-

ernments, religions, value systems, philosophies and forms of education. Under Satan's sway, he has practiced sin—DISOBEDIENCE to God's commands—for nearly 6,000 years. Man has then tried to treat all the ill *effects* instead of treating the *cause* of having broken God's laws. This includes the invention of many religions that merely teach the hollow IDEAS OF MEN in place of the wonderful TRUTHS OF GOD.

God is allowing man to learn bitter lessons. The vast majority, who have never known the precious truth of God, are having to learn that their own ways do not work! Just before humanity is about to erase itself from the earth, through a combination of weapons of mass destruction and the irreversible pollution of a planet that has limits to how much it can withstand, Jesus Christ will intervene and save mankind from itself!

Now continue with II Peter 3, verse 9: "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise...but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that *any* should perish, but that *all* should come to repentance." Did you notice that God wants to save *everyone*? Now read this: "[God] will have *all* men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth" (I Tim. 2:4). This scripture is plain. God is not, and never has been, in the "mass condemnation" business.

But He is calling and training a *tiny SELECT few* who will rule with Christ at His Return, and the setting up of His glorious world-ruling kingdom.

Remember. Satan has proliferated many forms of false religion all over the earth. He counterfeits the truth in endless ways, and God's calling process is no exception. He is a MASTER DECEIVER and the fruits of his efforts are everywhere.

Your Path to Conversion

The Bible states, "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, THEY are the sons of God" (Rom. 8:14), and, "Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His" (vs. 9). These two passages reveal just what a

Christian is—one who has and is led by the Holy Spirit of God. This Spirit is received upon repentance and baptism. (Read Acts 2:38.)

If the truth is becoming clear—really PLAIN—to you, set the goal of repentance, baptism, and the receiving of God's Holy Spirit—the moment TRUE CONVERSION begins!

While you are preparing for conversion, focus on examining all the wrong habits and attitudes that you can. There are certain *physical* changes you can make before baptism. Understand. Conversion is entirely about *changing, growing, overcoming—and developing the character of God*. This involves getting into the habit of regular *prayer, Bible study, meditation* and even periodic *fasting*, going without food and water.

Be sure to take time to study all of our books, booklets and articles dealing with *faith, conversion, baptism, your human potential*, and the proofs of *God's existence, His Word and His Church*.

Be sure to read *Where Is the True Church? – and Its Incredible History!* And also read *The Awesome Potential of Man*. Much—actually *everything*—is at *stake* for you if God is calling you *now*.

Take each step carefully. Follow the timing that is right for you. But do not unnecessarily delay, merely because you have not asked fervently or often enough for the "gift" of repentance. (See II Timothy 2:25 and Acts 11:18.) Be careful that you do not follow the pattern of the world, falling into waiting for a magical FEELING that "*now is the time*."

The Bible teaches that "*repentance is toward God*" and that "*faith is toward...Jesus Christ*" (Acts 20:21). Conversion is a personal private matter between the Father and Christ, and each individual. The apostle Peter wrote, "Make your calling and election sure" (II Pet. 1:10). If God *is truly calling you*, make certain of your calling. It is most precious!

This is the only way to approach the marvelous gift you are being given! □

WEATHER & ENVIRONMENT

Devastating 7.2 Earthquake Hits Turkey

■ **RESCUE:** Above, a worker takes part in an operation to save people from a collapsed building following an earthquake in Van, Turkey (Oct. 25, 2011). Below, homeless survivors shiver in sub-zero temperatures as they receive aid after the temblor (Oct. 26, 2011).

PHOTOS: MUSTAFA OZER/AFP/ (ABOVE); DIMITAR DILKOFF/AFP/ (BELOW) GETTY IMAGES



A powerful 7.2-magnitude earthquake—Turkey’s worst in a decade—killed more than 600 people and injured at least 4,100.

“We heard cries and groaning from underneath the debris, we are waiting for the rescue teams to arrive,” a survivor told *Reuters* “as he stood beside the ruins of [a] building that had collapsed before his eyes.”

The earthquake toppled approximately 3,700 buildings, and left debris piles from multiple-story structures strewn across the area.

“At one of these, firefighters from the south-eastern city of Diyarbakir tried to reach four children believed trapped deep inside the remains of an apartment block,” *Guardian* reported. “At another site, onlookers watched as rescuers tried to calm a 10-year-

old boy whom they were attempting to free from beneath a concrete slab.”

More than 500 aftershocks have exacerbated the situation and hindered rescue efforts.

“Authorities have warned survivors in the mainly Kurdish area not to enter damaged buildings and thousands were preparing to spend a third night outdoors, in cars or tents,” *CBS News* reported. “Temperatures at night have been close to freezing.”

Authorities expect the number of casualties to rise in the country’s hard-hit eastern region, in part, due to the cold temperatures.

“Hypothermia is an added risk to those trapped in debris and those left homeless following the 7.2-magnitude quake,” *Accuweather* reported. □

U.S. and China at Risk of Trade War

A United States bill, known as the Oversight Reform Act of 2011, has prompted a bitter response from Chinese officials. Critics warn that it could trigger a trade war between the two nations.

“This particular bill calls for U.S. tariffs on imports from countries with undervalued currencies, a deliberate nod towards China. Those in favor of the bill argue it will help level the playing field and bring jobs back to America,” investment company Kapital reported.

U.S. President Barack Obama showed his support for the act in a White House press conference: “China has been very aggressive in gaming the trading system to its advantage and to the disadvantage of other countries, particularly the United States...And currency manipulation is one example of it, or at least intervening in the currency markets in ways that have led their currency to be valued lower than the market would normally dictate.”

Mr. Obama continued by explaining that currency manipulation from China makes “their exports cheaper,” and “our exports to them more expensive.”

While the bill passed in the Senate, it must also make its way through the House of Representatives, where it is facing tough opposition from the Republican majority.

“The Emergency Committee for American Trade called the bill ‘a highly damaging unilateral approach that will undermine broader efforts to address China’s currency undervaluation,’” *MSNBC* reported. “It also said the bill was unlikely to pass muster at the World Trade Organization and would open the door to Chinese retaliation ‘to the detriment of U.S. exports and jobs.’” □

■ **ANNOUNCEMENT:** U.S. Trade Representative Ron Kirk details a trade enforcement action in Washington, D.C. (Sept. 20, 2011).

PHOTO: ALEX WONG/GETTY IMAGES

HEALTH ISSUES

Report: Four Suicides Per Hour in United States

United States suicide rates between 2008 and 2009 amounted to one death every 15 minutes, based on Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) data. The first-of-its-kind, state-by-state report also showed that approximately eight million people nationwide contemplate taking their own lives each year.

“For suicide attempts, the range goes from 1 in 1000 adults in Delaware and Georgia (0.1 percent) to 1 in 67 in Rhode Island (1.5 percent),” according to a CDC statement.

One percent of American adults admitted making suicide plans last year, while “serious suicidal thoughts, suicide planning, and suicide attempts was significantly higher among young adults aged 18-29 years than it was among adults aged 30 years or older.”

The study also found that “adults in the Midwest and West were more likely to have thoughts of suicide than those in the Northeast and South. Adults in the Midwest were more likely to have made suicide plans than those in the South, and suicide attempts did not vary by region.”

Further, the report found that the “prevalence of serious suicidal thoughts was significantly higher among females than it was among males.”

“Suicide is a tragedy for individuals, families, and communities,” CDC Director Dr. Thomas Frieden said in a statement. “This report highlights that we have opportunities to intervene before someone dies by suicide.”

He later added, “Most people are uncomfortable talking about suicide, but this is not a problem to shroud in secrecy.” □



WHERE DID CHRISTMAS COME FROM?

What is behind mistletoe—Santa Claus—Christmas trees—holly wreaths—and the custom of exchanging gifts? Learn the stunning answer!



Visit www.thercg.org to find the true meaning of Christmas.