

MAY-JUNE 2014

THE

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# REAL TRUTH™

A MAGAZINE RESTORING PLAIN UNDERSTANDING



**“...Neither Shall They  
Learn War Anymore”**

**Brussels or Berlin  
Who Leads Europe?**

**Is Religion Dead  
in Australia?**

**Humans for Sale  
Slavery in the 21st Century**

**Is the Earth  
6,000 Years Old?**

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■ **SOUNDING AN ALARM:** People walk by a sign produced by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime near the UN building in New York City.

PHOTO: STACEY L. PALM/THE REAL TRUTH

**Humans for Sale**  
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**FRONT COVER:** A boy wearing army-style fatigues holds a gun during a demonstration against Israel in the Palestinian refugee camp of Ein el-Hilweh near the southern Lebanese city of Sidon (Nov. 16, 2012).

PHOTO: MAHMOUD ZAYYAT/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

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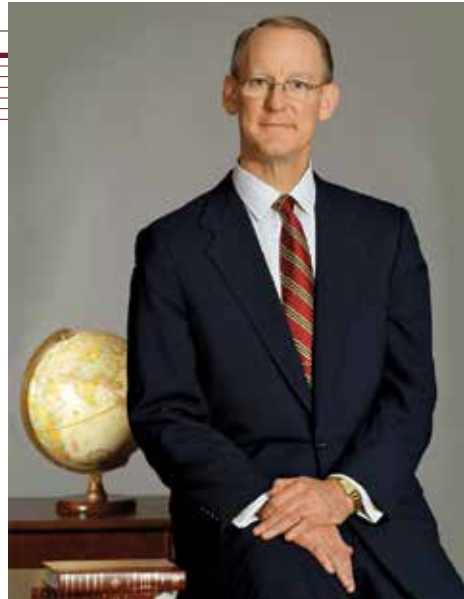
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## PERSONAL FROM

David C. Fack



# You CAN Overcome Sin!

**T**HROUGH THE YEARS, I have pastored thousands who have been called to God's Way. All struggled against the pulls of the flesh and the temptations of Satan and his world. Some overcame. Others did not.

So many seem trapped, unable to overcome—to grow in areas of weakness, fault and sin. Instead of overcoming and defeating their problems, most are overcome and defeated by their problems. This need not be! You *can* overcome. This Personal reveals how.

Jesus Christ said, "Enter you in at the *strait* [difficult] gate: for wide is the gate, and broad [easy] is the way, that leads to destruction, and *many* there be which go in thereat: because strait is the gate, and *narrow* is the way, which leads unto life, and *few* there be that find it" (Matt. 7:13-14). Most seek the easy, "broad" path.

Overcoming is hard—difficult—and a lifelong struggle. But it is possible. In fact, true Christians *must* overcome!

This world is drifting along, completely unaware of God's great purpose for man, which is to build character in this life. He is preparing a team who has qualified to help restore His government to Earth at Christ's Return.

### The Bible Pattern

The Bible is filled with accounts of God's greatest servants battling sin. In every case, they had to learn difficult, painful lessons. Examined collectively, Moses, Noah, David, Samuel, Peter, Paul and others are seen to have fought every problem known to man.

They struggled against sins, weaknesses, faults, attitudes and temptations of the flesh. David fought sins and wrong attitudes and overcame them. Moses lacked faith and confidence, and had a temper he had to overcome. Yet he will hold high office in God's kingdom. Both Job and Elijah fought discouragement and depression, to the point of wanting to die. But these men endured—they overcame. They slew their problems, rather than being slain by them!

These men were actively *trained* by God, and had to OVERCOME the temptations of Satan and his world, and the pulls of the flesh. A true Christian overcomes his problems, weaknesses, sins and wrong attitudes, rather than the other way around!

### To the Overcomer

Jesus said, "...He that OVERCOMES, and keeps My works unto the end, to him [no one else] will I give *power over*

*the nations*: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron” (Rev. 2:26-27), and added, “To him that OVERCOMES will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, *even as I also overcame*, and am set down with My Father in His throne” (3:21).

When Christ re-establishes God’s government over all nations of Earth, Christians will receive REAL POWER TO RULE. But first they must overcome.

Christians follow—they copy—Christ (I Pet. 2:21). What is the pattern He established for them?

Referencing His own struggle to remain free of sin and perfect in character, Jesus said, “...In the world you shall have tribulation [so very true!]: but be of good cheer; I HAVE OVERCOME THE WORLD” (John 16:33). Christ had overcome both the world and its god—Satan (II Cor. 4:4) and qualified to rule. Just as He qualified to replace Satan, so must all Christians!

Such enormous power to rule could never be given to people who are unprepared—who have not qualified to properly use it. God will not hand great authority to people who might rebel and revert to Satan’s ways. God’s servants must use this life to build His very character, so necessary for those holding offices of authority.

### Experienced in Sin

Understand! You have been yielding to the flesh and Satan’s way your entire life. You have probably become *very good* at both. Believe me, as you strive to overcome and resist the pulls at work within you, you will find that wrong patterns of conduct are “second nature” to you—more than you know! Left unchecked, human nature consists of vanity, jealousy, lust, greed, envy, resentment, hatred, anger, pride, rebellion, foolishness, deceit and hostility toward God. This is what you have been practicing—possibly for decades.

Overcoming will not be easy or happen overnight. It is a lifelong struggle against well-established attitudes and a former way of life the Christian has now rejected and turned from. The one who is walking God’s path is striv-

ing to curb and *withhold* himself wherever God’s Word instructs. He strives to *exercise* himself in all matters where God says to do so. When God gives instruction to do something, he strives to do it! When God instructs *not* to do something, he strives *not* to do it!

Learning this takes a lifetime. But remember: building character is why you were born. Your job is to put off the fleshly pulls of human nature, and to put on the character of God and Christ (Col. 3:8-13). Though not easy, the reward is great.

God looks on intent. It is your overall desire and motivation that is important to Him. He wants to know if, after you sin, you are sorry for it and are determined to do better. He understands the temptations that beset us even better than we do. He watches to see if we will be sober and vigilant as we root sin from our lives. Will we carelessly fall back into old patterns? Will we try to overcome on human strength alone?

### God’s Power at Conversion

A Christian is led by God’s Holy Spirit. Acts 2:38 shows it enters at repentance and baptism. It is this Spirit in a converted mind that empowers one with the strength to change what human steam alone cannot. Notice: “For God has not given us the spirit of fear; but of POWER, and of love, and of a sound mind” (II Tim. 1:7).

The Greek word for power is *dunamis*. It means “miraculous power” or “force.” At conversion, a Christian is given real power! This power establishes the righteousness of God within one’s character. One must draw upon the strength from God’s Spirit to successfully overcome. This strength is unlimited and sufficient to defeat any sin, problem or attitude—no matter how large and daunting such may appear!

But make no mistake! Christians do not build their *own righteousness*. This does not impress God. He sees it as so many “filthy rags” (Isa. 64:6). The apostle Paul wrote of his Christian hope to “be found in Him, *not having my own righteousness*, which is of the

law, but that which is *through the faith of Christ*, THE RIGHTEOUSNESS WHICH IS OF GOD BY FAITH” (Phil. 3:9).

### Role of Faith

Exactly what role does faith play? It does play a role, but how? Ephesians states, “For by grace are you saved *through faith*; and that [the faith] not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast” (2:8-9). The faith of Christ in us is a gift. And salvation comes as a gift, *by grace—through faith!* But even the faith must be a gift. Otherwise, it would be a work generated by human effort. (My booklet *What Is Real Faith?* available at [rcg.org/wirf](http://rcg.org/wirf) carefully explains this subject.)

It is the very faith of Christ that works in a Christian. But grasp this. It *does* assist in performing works in all those led by God’s Spirit. They expect God’s help.

Virtually all theologians, religionists and churchmen stop reading after Ephesians 2:8-9 and ignore the crucial verse 10: “For we are *His workmanship*, created in Christ Jesus *unto good works*, which God has before ordained that we should *walk in them*.”

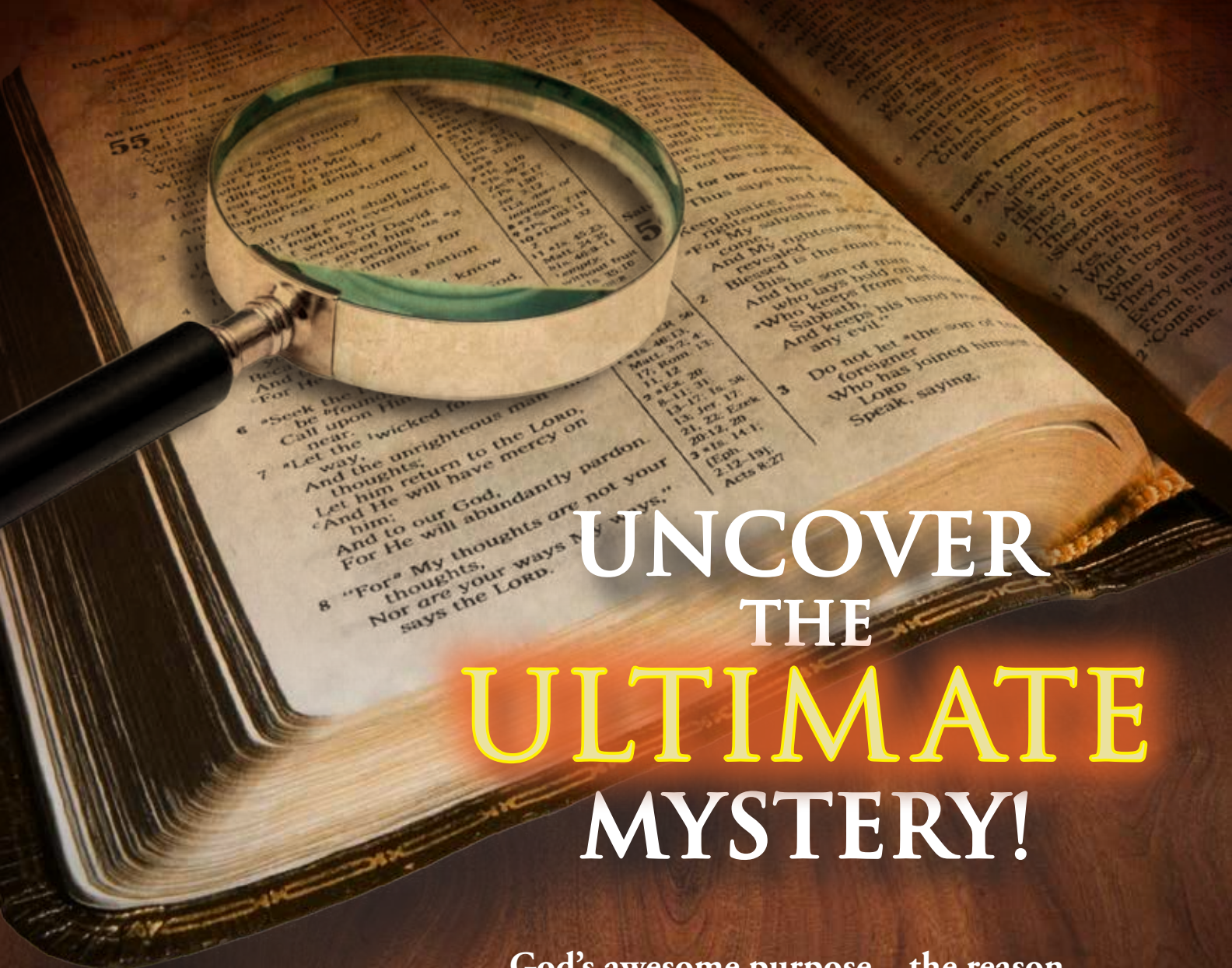
### Christ at Work

Quite literally, Jesus Christ lives His life in the Christian. Without His help, one will get nowhere—fast!

Jesus said to bring “forth much fruit,” and then, “...without Me you can do nothing” (John 15:5). Human power only helps a person overcome in *physical* areas. SPIRITUAL problems cannot be conquered through *physical* effort. Christ is the Vine and Christians are the branches (John 15:5)—branches must be *connected* to the Vine. This happens through God’s Spirit working in your mind.

Paul wrote, “...be strong in the LORD, and in the *power of His might*” (Eph. 6:10). Jesus also said, “...with God *all things are possible*” (Matt. 19:26). With God’s Spirit actively working and growing in you, this can also be true of you!

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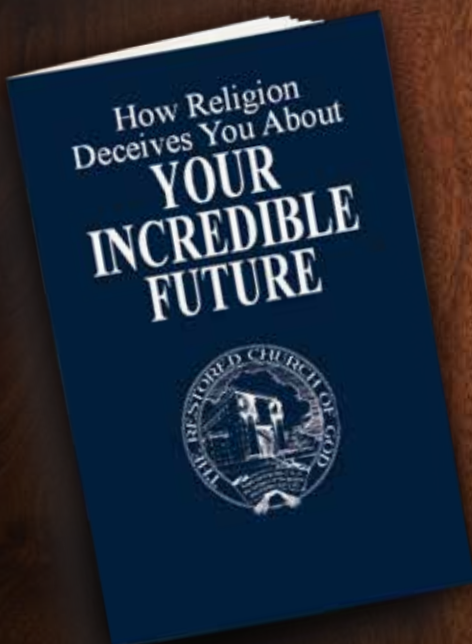


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# Brussels or Berlin:

## WHO LEADS EUROPE?

From the outside looking in, it can seem impossible to fully understand the European Union. Here is a plain English overview of how things work in the power bloc—which makes clear who is at the helm.

BY EDWARD L. WINKFIELD

**“THE WHOLE IS greater than the sum of its individual parts.”**

This phrase can be summarized in the term *gestalt* (pronounced ge-shtalt), which is borrowed from the German word for “figure, form or structure.”

Gestalt describes the European Union, which takes 28 disparate nations—some with deep problems—and creates an entity with the highest gross domestic product (GDP) on the globe. The World Bank lists it as having the largest economy on Earth, totaling around \$16.7 trillion.

Think of it. Spain has 26 percent unemployment. Greece’s debt is 157 percent of its GDP. Germany is often maligned for being thrifty to a fault.

Geographically, the biggest single nation is Sweden, coming in at just 211,209 square miles—slightly larger than California. Together, all countries combined boast nearly two million square miles of territory. Apart, the most populous country is Germany at 81 million. Together, the EU is 500

million strong. If it were a nation, it would have the third-largest population on the globe.

Apart, each nation has its weaknesses. Together, they are strong. Of course, the EU has its problems, one of which is crippling bureaucracy. While the bloc carries tremendous importance and political weight, the complexities of its government make it difficult to understand.

Look at its governing bodies. There is the European Commission, the European Council, the Council of Ministers, the European Parliament, and so on. Keeping straight what each does can seem like an exercise in futility.

Perhaps most confusing is who is at the helm of Europe. While Brussels, Belgium, is the *de facto* EU capital, the news media and world leaders seem to look most often to Berlin, Germany.

Who is *really* calling the shots in the world’s largest economy?

For the full answer, one must take Europe apart and examine its individual parts. Once this is done, something becomes clear: a void in leadership is not an option.

### Simple Beginnings

With government offices headquartered in Brussels, the power bloc is a mixture of very old nations bound by a very young agreement. While it officially took on the name European Union nearly 21 years ago under the 1993 Maastricht Treaty, it first began shortly after World War II.

In 1951, the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) was established between the nations of Belgium, West Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, France and the Netherlands. These founding nations, known as the Inner Six, wanted to create a common market for coal and steel across their borders.

Choosing coal and steel was practical but also symbolic. Both are essential to warfare so integrating them created a deterrent to future military conflict. The ECSC was a success as the coal and steel trade for the Inner Six more than doubled within five years.

Economics soon emerged as a driving force for the alliance and led to an expanded agreement, called the European Economic Community in



1957. By 1986, less than 30 years later, six more nations joined the original six. This was followed by the Single European Act (SEA) of 1987, regarded as the most elaborate reform in the history of the agreement and what most led to today's EU.

SEA summarized a plan for a true common market for members. It expanded trade beyond natural resources, calling for the removal of virtually all barriers to the movement of goods, services, capital and people between member nations.

Trade between nations also became more efficient. Citizens were then able to freely travel between member states, which led to expanded employment and educational opportunities. Businesses had larger customer bases and could save money through relaxed border controls. (Prior to open borders, drivers transporting goods spent nearly *one third* of their time idling at checkpoints waiting to clear customs.)

Even governments benefited by procuring goods and services from firms beyond their borders. This led to more competition and better service. Competition also led to lower food prices since farmers could freely

trade with citizens and firms in other nations.

The last major step for true integration was the implementation of a common currency. This, along with the official name European Union, came with the passage of the Maastricht Treaty. By 2002, the euro became the official currency for much of Europe. The Lisbon Treaty, enacted in 2009, represents the most recent significant update to the EU and essentially completed the system seen today.

### Complex Structure

To implement the EU vision, a structure had to be developed. Numerous treaties, acts and agreements over the years led to its current form of governance. The bureaucratic structure is multifaceted (some would say convoluted), yet is a reflection of what some of the brightest political minds have to offer.

To ensure full member representation and proper oversight, the EU consists of seven separate institutions—most of them with headquarters or offices in Brussels. The following are the institutions most often discussed in the news.

■ **European Council:** This body was originally created in 1974 to provide a forum for the heads of state and/or governments of the member nations to convene. After the Lisbon Treaty, it is now viewed as the top political authority in the union. It can be described as a “collective head of state” for the power bloc.

The council is made up of the 28 individual heads of government (e.g., Chancellor of Germany, President of France, Prime Minister of Italy, etc.). Joining them is the president of the European Council—a position created with the Lisbon Treaty—and the president of the European Commission—a separate institution.

Members of the council appoint their own president and nominate the commission president. The council meets four times per year, twice every six months, and focuses on big-picture union matters. Mr. Herman Van Rompuy currently serves as council president and is in the second of two maximum terms.

■ **European Commission:** This governing body works along with the council to form what can be loosely compared to the executive branch

of the U.S. government. If the council can, as a group, be seen as the American president, the commission, as a group, can be seen as cabinet members.

The commission is mainly in charge of daily EU affairs and running the government. It consists of 28 members known as commissioners. They are in charge of areas of the government such as energy, transportation and food safety, to name a few.

Each commissioner is appointed by his home nation, however, he represents the entire union. Members are assigned a position by the president of the commission. Mr. Jose Manuel Barroso currently serves as commission president.

The Lisbon Treaty allows for combining the roles of council president and commission president, which would result in a position of enormous political power. But this has not happened thus far.

Another notable position on the commission is vice-president, which is combined with the post of representative for foreign affairs and security policy, similar to the U.S. secretary of state. This office is seen as the foreign representative for the EU to outside nations. This post is currently held by Ms. Catherine Ashton.

■ **European Parliament:** This body of 751 members or seats represents the citizens in each member nation. Parliament forms half of the legislative arm of the EU with a role similar to the U.S. House of Representatives, though there are key differences. While members are directly selected by the citizens of member nations, the proportion of representation for each nation is determined by treaty negotiations and not purely by population.

Parliament members also formally elect the commission president after they are nominated by the European

Council. Parliament members sit primarily according to political party instead of national affiliation.

■ **Council of the European Union:** Also known as the Council of Ministers, this group operates as the other half of the EU legislature.

The implementation of the Lisbon Treaty strengthened the power of the parliament, thereby somewhat diminishing the Council of Ministers' influence. The treaty made it so that the head of the Council of Ministers is no longer allowed to lead the European Council. Despite these changes, the Council of Ministers still remains a powerful entity. It has 28 national ministers and maintains the most control over the intergovernmental functions of the EU. The chair of the Council of Ministers rotates between member nations every six months.

The remaining three bodies of the total seven EU institutions consist of the Court of Justice of



■ **ALL TOGETHER:** Above, European Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso (left) and European Council President Herman Van Rompuy (right) welcome German Chancellor Angela Merkel before the fourth EU-Africa summit in Brussels (April 2, 2014).

PHOTO: GEORGES GOBET/AFP/GETTY IMAGES



the European Union—representing the judicial branch of the EU; the European Central Bank—tasked with implementing monetary policy for the power bloc; and the European Court of Auditors—in charge of auditing EU accounts to ensure legality. These all combine to make up the composite structure of the European Union.

Along with these institutions are scores of other offices, bureaus, agencies and sub-agencies that make up the inner workings of the immense EU power bloc. And this does not speak to all of the red tape within each individual member nation.

So many layers of government make efficient and effective politics and leadership nearly impossible.

### **Brussels or Berlin?**

One overarching reason for the EU's dense governing structure is that it straddles the fence between two forms of government—confederation and federation. The difference between the two is relatively simple.

A confederation has its sovereignty or control held by its member states. In a confederation, the federal government is subject or accountable to member states. Its central authority is purposely weak, allowing members to maintain autonomy.

A confederate form of government was pursued by southern states during the U.S. Civil War. They sought to separate from the Union in search of their own individual forms of government—with the federal government having limited power.

A federation, alternatively, maintains central authority at the federal level. The federal government is generally strong with member states being subordinate and therefore accountable to the top. The current U.S. form of government is a classic example of a federation, as the states are ultimately accountable to federal law in most cases.

For Europe, the question of *Brussels or Berlin* is actually a metaphor for this struggle between two governments. On the one hand, the EU operates partly as a confeder-

ation—represented best by Brussels, the current—and neutral—host of the bloc's main government. The country of Belgium also happens to have a confederate form of government, thereby strengthening the analogy.

Berlin, however, most represents the EU's characteristics as a federation. Though “just another member” of the union, it has found itself suddenly thrust into the leadership spotlight. And Germany happens to have a federal form of government.

Fully committing to one of these forms of government has proven difficult. EU member states want the freedom of a confederation while enjoying the benefits of a federation.

Their identity as separate, sovereign nations is cherished and hard to abandon.

A report from the European Council on Foreign Relations described this reluctance to let go of this “Brussels” ideology: “It is true that a visitor from Chile or China arriving at Place Schuman in Brussels may feel like they are visiting the capital of the ‘United States of Europe.’ Yet after a day or two they will realise that the EU is composed of 27 states [as of February 2013] that come to Brussels to bargain over their respective national interests with only occasional regard for the common European purpose.”

That said, the rewards of federalist unity are equally enticing. Open borders, a single economic market, and a common currency all bring great gains yet require a powerful overarching authority. The EU's current structure does not allow for this official leader. The power that does exist is spread among 28 woefully bureaucratic and competing nations.

But nature abhors a vacuum. The EU is too big and too important *not* to be directed by a strong leader.

Because of its success operating in the EU environment, Berlin is looked to as a central authority. The fact that Germany is not in charge of the EU in any formal way has not stopped others from looking to the nation for leadership.

An example of this is how the United States has interacted with the EU as a whole and Berlin in particular.

The *EUobserver* quoted Charles King Mallory IV, the head of American think tank Aspen Institute Germany as saying that the U.S. is “‘pragmatic’ enough to see where power resides in Europe.”

He continued, “We as Americans have a problem when we negotiate with Europe—there is the [European] Council, the commission, the parliament. It is very difficult. This is not meant to be a snub to Brussels, but Germany is the economic motor of Europe...”

In the same article, Carsten Brzeski, the chief economist at ING Bank, supported this belief: “Berlin is the centre of power in Europe.”

### **Leadership Revealed in Crisis**

Part of Germany's rise to prominence can be attributed to the environment born in the world financial crisis that began in 2008.

Finances, which were once seen as the major force behind the European Union's surge in prosperity, eventually revealed multiple chinks in its proverbial armor. Economics went from EU asset to liability in less than a decade.

One problem created by separate nations coming together was the formation of a monetary union without the simultaneous creation of an equal, and just as detailed, fiscal union.

Fiscal policies bring financial discipline. EU member states view money differently. Their individual national economies have existed on their own for centuries. These differences have not disappeared because of the introduction of the euro.

Note that only 18 of the 28 member states actually have implemented the common currency. For example, Britain and Poland use the pound and zloty, respectively. The group of nations that does use the euro are known as the eurozone.

The euro's introduction provided financial benefits, especially to those

with smaller economies. But it also temporarily covered up the poor fiscal habits of some member nations.

The effects of these habits came to the fore with the 2008 crash. As with a person with a C or D credit rating benefiting from rates reserved for those with A1 credit, fiscal discipline is what was needed most. Low borrowing costs and little to no regulations led to reckless spending. Loan terms to all member nations were nearly the same regardless of the economic strength of individual nations.

As the world financial crisis continued, certain members such as Greece tried different tactics to battle slow growth. One strategy was to sharply inflate the public payroll to employ those who could not find work in the private sector. Its goal was to boost the economy, but without sufficient tax income from the private sector, the strategy led to huge government budget deficits.

A notable reason for such behavior was the assumption that, since everyone shares one currency, the European Union as a whole would not allow the nation to fail. One cannot help but picture a free-wheeling teenager with a brand new credit card, spending uncontrollably, knowing Mom and Dad will come to the rescue.

It is keenly understood that all EU nations stand to suffer if the euro fails. And what has made this more difficult to swallow, especially for those in nations like Germany, is the fact that stronger nations could suffer by no fault of their own.

Greece, which was eventually bailed out by the union, only represented the front end of an emerging problem as other nations also began feeling the full brunt of the world financial crisis. By 2011, Ireland and Portugal received bailouts. Spain and Cyprus followed in 2012.

An additional difficulty with addressing the crisis has been that everyone has wanted to have their say (think Brussels). The delay has led to even more fiscal damage.

It is out of this debacle that Berlin has asserted itself. No longer willing

to stand idly by and become a victim of the process, Germany has begun to pave the way to a stronger leadership role.

### **A United States of Europe?**

The rationale of a united Europe seems to make the most sense. The benefits of coming together appear to far outweigh reasons to remain apart. To the east is a resource-rich yet increasingly volatile Middle East, a recently resurgent Russia, and a still powerful China. These are just a few motivators for Europe to present a unified front to the world.

Europe's leaders know this and have been striving to unite for over 60 years. Yet despite sincere efforts, they have found the path to a sound and functioning union to be littered with obstacles.

As time has passed, instead of becoming closer, member states actually seem to be growing apart.

This amalgamation of very old and unique nation states can be compared to Frankenstein's monster. The EU is a patchwork of nations—similar to body parts being sutured together to form a disjointed creation. You can almost picture a lumbering monster trying to keep its balance. This hardly compares to a body that starts young, grows up, and maintains its original parts.

Philosopher Andre Glucksmann articulated this idea in a *Der Spiegel* interview titled "A Dark Vision of the Future of Europe." The interviewer, noting Europe's mutual cultural qualities, asked whether there is a "European spirit." Mr. Glucksmann replied: "European nations are not alike, which is why they can't be merged together. What unites them is not a community but a societal model..."

Later he added, "Europe is a unity in its division or a division in its unity. Whichever way you put it, though, it's clearly not a community in terms of religion, language or morals."

When asked about the effects of nations pursuing individual interests to the detriment of the EU, Mr.

Glucksmann continued: "[This is a] grim example of cacophony because it shows that the member states are no longer willing and able to form a united front against external threats and Europe's challenges in the globalized world...And it makes things easy for Russia under (President Vladimir) Putin. Despite all the weakness of that giant of natural resources, its capacity to cause damage remains considerable and is something its president likes to use. Recklessness and forgetfulness create the conditions for new catastrophes in both the economy and politics."

The "Brussels" model of leadership is an extension of deep-seated cultural differences. The natural proclivity for leaders to play politics and engage in self-preservation threatens the entire alliance.

As currently configured, the vast majority of EU nations can agree on a course of action but may then be stymied by the minority of remaining partners.

No superpower can continue to be "super" operating this way.

### **No Turning Back**

It would be catastrophic and some would argue virtually impossible to undo the current union. The idea of reverting back to old currencies, closing borders, deporting citizens with established lives back to their home nations, and dismantling political and business alliances is not viable. A divorce is unlikely.

So, despite what has been referred to as "union fatigue," the nations of the EU must remain committed to staying together. Inaction with the hope that everything will take care of itself is unacceptable. The current realities demand a renewed approach.

A "nation" of the EU's size and overall global impact must be led!

Enter Berlin. Initially, Germany was apprehensive about taking the lead, especially considering its track record of being at the center of two world wars. Also, as one of the original Inner Six nations that pushed

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# HUMANS FOR SALE

## *Slavery in the 21st Century*

Why does a society that believes it has advanced still practice forms of slavery?

**I**N THE ACADEMY Award-winning film “12 Years a Slave,” American Solomon Northrup, a free black violinist and carpenter in the 1800s, is introduced to two men who convince him to work with a traveling circus. They meet up in Washington, D.C., an area of the country that supported slavery at the time, and wine, dine and drug him. He wakes up in a slave pen in New Orleans, only to spend the next 12 years enslaved on various cotton plantations, enduring beatings that shred the skin on his back and threaten his will to live. Eventually, he befriends a Canadian carpenter who contacts his family and then is set free.

What makes Northrup’s story unique is that he was born free, but his status as a black man living in the pre-Civil War United States made him vulnerable to predators.

In this day and age, a repeat of Northrup’s story can seem far-fetched. More than 150 years after slavery

has been abolished worldwide, society has moved past such barbaric practices as selling fellow citizens, keeping them in cells, and mutilating their bodies—right?

Flash-forward to Washington, D.C., in 2013. A report on human trafficking in the United States highlights the story of a South American woman who signs an employment contract to work as a nanny for a vice president of a multinational company. She is supposed to receive wages, but instead is forced to work long hours taking care of the house and family—without pay. She sleeps on a box spring in the basement, is prohibited from leaving the home, and her employer routinely threatens to deport her. Eventually a neighbor recognizes she is being exploited and helps her.

Remarkably, the kind of enslavement that Northrup and others like him endured in the 1800s *does* happen today. And for many, it is no less brutal. In fact, three out of every 1,000

people are enslaved through labor or sex trafficking, according to the Polaris Project, an organization fighting to end human trafficking.

In modern times, slavery “is tied with the illegal arms industry as the second-largest racket in the world, after drug-dealing,” Aaron Cohen stated in his book *Slave Hunter: Freeing Victims of Human Trafficking*. “There may be as many as 27 million people enslaved today—double the number taken from Africa during the three and a half centuries the trade thrived there—with approximately 800,000 new victims trafficked across international borders each year. At least 17,000 of those victims are brought



■ **EXPLOITED INNOCENCE:** A girl held captive by human traffickers and forced to beg is seen at a rescue station after being freed by police in Guiyang, China (Feb. 13, 2011).

PHOTO: CHINAFOTOPRESS/GETTY IMAGES

annually into the United States and forced to work against their will, for nothing more than subsistence.”

Stories abound of those tricked into jobs by the promise of good money. Others are kidnapped and sold into forced labor because of a debt or because a family member peddles them into the sex trade. Still others are lured by those who appear friendly but then exploit that individual’s trust for nefarious purposes.

“The parallels to slavery today are striking,” Bradley Myles, CEO of the Polaris Project, wrote in a piece for *CNN*. “The control mechanisms used by [Northup’s] recruiters and captors are the same tactics and stories we hear about daily from the people who reach out to us for help on the National Human Trafficking Resource Center hotline, which Polaris Project operates.”

The concept of someone placing a price tag on another human being paints a picture of one of the ultimate forms of evil. How can it be that in a society that believes it has advanced beyond the barbaric practices of the past, modern-day slavery still affects upwards of 27 million people?

### Global Picture

Unlike early America when plantations were filled with dark-skinned men, women and children stooped over cot-

ton plants, gingerly pulling fluffy fiber from between hostile thorns, slaves today are not as easily recognizable. Those who currently buy and sell them have been forced underground.

In her book *Slavery*, photographer Lisa Kristine documented those enslaved across the globe, as reported by the *San Francisco Chronicle*.

“Escorted by local representatives from Free the Slaves, she found children in the Himalayas lugging slabs of slate heavier than themselves down the mountains, via crude harnesses attached to their foreheads made from sticks, rope and torn cloth.

“At a brick kiln in Nepal, she photographed workers in 130-degree heat and choking dust, stacking 18 bricks on their head at a time and walking the loads to waiting trucks...She saw trafficked children in tattered shirts reeling in 1,000-pound fishing nets on the shore of Lake Volta in Ghana, freezing in the early dawn after all-night fishing expeditions.”

The very people the world should most protect—children and the disadvantaged—are often subjected to the worst forms of bondage. Nowhere is this more evident than in the satellite nations that splintered after the Soviet Union’s collapse. Citizens who had relied on government aid for over 50

years were forced to fend for themselves as corruption and greed replaced law and order.

According to Victor Malarek in his book, *The Natashas: Inside the New Global Sex Trade*, the once-impenetrable Iron Curtain became overrun with organized crime syndicates, which realized that they could make a large fortune—with little consequences—selling girls from the region as slaves.

“With the social structure in disarray, families broke down. Children were abandoned in the street. Husbands sought solace in the bottle and alcoholism became an epidemic. Violence against women and children soared. And through it all, the women were left to pick up the pieces...Even young girls with no families yet of their own went searching for jobs to feed younger siblings and parents...With the stench of desperation in the air, they made perfect targets.”

More than 30 percent of all sex trafficking victims are Eastern European women. Throughout the past 20 years, 400,000 Moldovans, 400,000 Ukrainians, and 15,000 Bulgarians have been taken from their homelands. The numbers are difficult to determine, however, as less than 5 percent of victims ever find their way back home.



■ **ONGOING SCOURGE:** Left, people walk through the Red Light District in Amsterdam, Netherlands (Oct. 13, 2011). An Indian human-trafficking victim (right) is hugged by her sister after being rescued from a village in Karnal, India (Sept. 16, 2013).

PHOTOS: KOEN VAN WEEL/ (LEFT); MANAN VATSYAYANA/ (RIGHT); AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Pause for moment. These women were daughters, mothers and sisters trying to provide for their families. Many were lured by promising jobs as waitresses, nannies, housekeepers and models, only to be seized by traffickers who brought them to countries where, in some cases, prostitution is legal. Throughout the infamous Red Light District in Amsterdam, the dialects of women sex workers reveal that they are not from the Netherlands, but from Moldova, Bulgaria, Russia and Ukraine, among others—with many brought under false pretenses.

In an effort to highlight this fact, the nonprofit Stop the Traffik organized a choreographed display at one of the Red Light District hot spots in which scantily clad women danced in the windows of a supposed brothel. At the end of the spectacle, a sign appeared that read: “Every year, thousands of women are promised a dance career in Western Europe. Sadly, they end up here.”

While men who had stopped to watch at first started dancing and videotaping the event on their cellphones, they walked away miffed after realizing they had been had—perhaps knowing their attitudes have played a part in such statistics.

“Germany and the Netherlands purport that [legalizing prostitution] is an ideal way to deal with trafficking. They maintain that legalization will better protect the rights of the women entering the trade—an argument that is nothing short of specious. The only tangible effect of such legalization is that the state effectively becomes another pimp, living off the avails of the women in prostitution through taxation, and reaping huge benefits from increased foreign sex tourism,” Mr. Malarek wrote.

He later stated: “Virtually every city, town and village in Eastern and Central Europe has seen some of its girls and women disappear. Incredibly, they weren’t lost to illness or war or to the tragedy of famine or natural disaster. On the contrary, they have become expendable pawns in the burgeoning business of money, lust and sex. What is most disturbing is that trafficking is a manmade disaster that can be prevented. Yet the world continues to ignore the plight of these women and girls.”

### Virtually Everywhere

Well-off Western countries, such as Britain, are not immune to modern-day slavery. Consider the case of Mende Nazer: after being taken from her home in war-torn Sudan by marauders

and shipped to Khartoum to work as a servant for a wealthy Arab family for eight years, she was sent to a suburban London brickstone home where she was physically and sexually abused as a domestic slave. And she was just one of 5,000 others being held against her will in Britain, according to the non-profit organization Unseen.

Even in the U.S., the treatment of modern-day slaves is often no less brutal than it was in the 1800s.

“I was involved in [sex] trafficking for more than six months,” a survivor recounted on the NY Anti-trafficking State Coalition website. “I compare that time to being held hostage in a timeless existence where my mind engaged itself in disassociation with my soul. This mental state was the only way in which I could keep any sanity. Repeatedly, I witnessed the beatings, rapes and murders of innocent women.”

In another instance, a 14-year-old foster child in a precarious family situation was forced into prostitution after a 24-year-old she met promised he would take care of her. Since she was so young, she did not realize she would become one of his pawns. He brought her to Cleveland, Ohio, where she thought she would meet his family, but instead he forced her into prostitu-



■ **MODERN-DAY SLAVERY:** Left, during a conference on human trafficking, Russian father Nikolai Rantchev holds up a portrait of his late daughter Oxana whom he believes was forced into sex slavery (Nov. 20, 2008). Right, Burmese immigrants fleeing conflict in their home country consider commercial fishing in Thailand as a way to a better life, but often fall prey to traffickers who sell them to ship captains.

PHOTOS: STEFANOS KOURATZIS/AFP/Getty Images (LEFT); KAY CHERNUSH/ U.S. STATE DEPARTMENT (RIGHT)

tion. When she did not make enough money, he beat her and broke her arm with a baseball bat. She escaped after a few years and now runs a house for victims of sex slavery.

Such stories are hard to believe. Slavery still occurring in the United States and Britain? Yet even in nations typically considered well-off, the threat of enslavement is just a few steps away.

“Human trafficking victims have been identified in cities, suburbs, and rural areas in all 50 states and in Washington, D.C.,” the Polaris Project stated. “They are forced to work or provide commercial sex against their will in legal and legitimate business settings as well as underground markets. Some victims are hidden behind locked doors in brothels and factories. In other cases, victims are in plain view and may interact with community members...”

Today, the danger is even greater. Predators can go online through social media sites and know exactly how to target their young victims, who may be upset about a parent grounding them and voice it on Facebook, or see a naive teenager eyeing a particular item at a busy mall, gain her trust by buying it for her, and later use his power over her to enslave her.

Brianna was a friendly 17-year-old who worked at a diner in a small Washington town. Unknown to her, a middle-aged man who often came in with a woman he called his wife was actually a veteran sex-trafficker. While there, the two would casually ask about her family, what kinds of boys she liked, and her dreams for the future. One day, the man came in, declared he was divorced, and asked her to hang out with him. Alarmed that an older man would want to spend time with a high school student, she said no.

A short time later, a man matching the description of her “perfect” boyfriend visited the diner. She was smitten. He invited her to visit him in Seattle, where he convinced her to work a few days in a strip club for extra cash, painting it as harmless. He also asked her to take a trip with him to Arizona (where she would have likely

been sold), but she refused, saying she had to go home to return her parents’ car. During the ordeal, a friend recognized the situation and contacted her parents. She could not believe she had almost been duped.

“There is no stereotype of a girl in sex trafficking,” she told *MSN Causes*. “It doesn’t matter how rich or poor, if she’s white or black, fat or thin, a pimp can look at any girl and find a vulnerability that he can exploit. He might tell a girl that he will hurt her family if she runs. Or he might rape her and videotape it, and threaten to show it to her whole school.”

Even in Nevada, where operating brothels is legal, slavery can be found. One woman working in a legal bordello said she was sold into the trade by her mother when she was 16.

Remarkably, Brianna and many of the other women mentioned escaped. But most of those pulled into the dark underworld of pimps, prostitution and forced servitude never do. How is it that human beings can commit such atrocities?

The answer is simple: the almighty dollar.

### **By the Numbers**

The United Nation’s International Labor Organization (ILO) statistics place the number of human trafficking victims at almost 21 million. About 11.4 million, or 55 percent, of those victims are women and girls. Men and boys make up the remaining 45 percent at 9.5 million. The private sector, either individuals or enterprises, exploit 90 percent of the victims, 22 percent of whom are forced to work in the sex trade. Sixty-eight percent are forced to work in agriculture, construction, domestic work, and manufacturing, and the remaining 10 percent are in “state-imposed forms” of forced labor such as prisons or rebel armies.

The ILO estimates that illegal profits from forced labor equate to more than \$44 billion, with individual slaves costing anywhere from \$100 to \$10,000.

“According to the international police organization Interpol, a [sexually] trafficked woman can bring in

anywhere from \$75,000 to \$250,000 a year,” Mr. Malarek stated. “From a profit-making perspective, it’s the perfect business. Returns are incredible. The goods are plentiful and cheap. And once a woman is spent or no longer in demand, she’s discarded and replaced by a younger, fresher face.”

The number of enslaved people is spread across the globe. The Middle East has the least amount of forced laborers at an estimated 600,000, or 3 percent of the 21 million. The U.S. accounts for 1.5 million, the EU for 1.6 million, and South America for 1.8 million. The number of victims nearly doubles at 3.7 million in Africa. Yet it is the Asia-Pacific region that accounts for more than half the total number of forced laborers at 11.7 million. It is there, in places like Cambodia, where people are so desperate that they sell *their own* daughters into the sex trade.

The Global Slavery Index reported that the “countries with the highest numbers of enslaved people, accounting for 76 percent of the global total were India, China, Pakistan, Nigeria, Ethiopia, Russia, Thailand, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Myanmar and Bangladesh,” according to *International Business Times*.

War-torn countries are prime targets for human trafficking. The non-profit organization Fight Slavery Now stated, “In Sudan, slavery is making a comeback as the result of a war waged over the past twelve years by the Muslim north against the Christians and Animists in the south.”

Perhaps the most disturbing part of the picture is that those who should know better are willing participants in the system. Across the world, people who understand they are contributing to human trafficking still frequent bars, brothels and “Red Light” districts. Professors, businessmen and so-called family men willingly visit countries where prostitution is rampant, knowing that the young girls they seek for “companionship,” whose ages are masked by makeup and who are often drugged, could be as young as 8 years old. Well-

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“...Neither Shall They Learn

WAR

Anytime”



Imagine if mankind turned from destructive pursuits to focus on positive achievements. This day *is* coming!

BY JUSTIN T. PALM

**W**AR IS AS old as history. Like a virus filling its host, it has consumed mankind. Humans have had a murderous streak since Cain killed Abel. No deterrent—military, political or economic—has prevented it from breaking out. New weapons are constantly being developed, billions of dollars spent on artillery and forces, and endless man-hours wasted on learning how to destroy other human beings.

In a televised speech titled “The Chance for Peace” on April 16, 1953, United States President Dwight Eisenhower summarized war’s terrible cost, which still rings true today: “Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired signifies, in the final sense, a theft from those who hunger and

are not fed, those who are cold and are not clothed. This world in arms is not spending money alone.

“It is spending the sweat of its laborers, the genius of its scientists, the hopes of its children.

“The cost of one modern heavy bomber is this: a modern brick school in more than 30 cities.

“It is two electric power plants, each serving a town of 60,000 population.

“It is two fine, fully equipped hospitals. It is some 50 miles of concrete highway.

“We pay for a single fighter plane with a half million bushels of wheat.

“We pay for a single destroyer with new homes that could have housed more than 8,000 people.”

Over six decades later, Eisenhower’s words echo with even greater meaning and urgency. Unprecedented resources are spent on war preparations, with nations scrambling to win the arms race—not realizing that no one wins

in war. A warning often attributed to philosopher and historian Bertrand Russell has fallen on deaf ears: “War does not determine who is right—only who is left.”

Each successive generation has passed its addiction to bloodshed on to the next. This has been done wittingly or unwittingly by parents, through military academies, by glorifying war heroes, and through the most powerful teacher of all—example.

But one generation *will* break war’s vicious cycle.

#### **Wasted Resources**

For 6,000 years, mankind’s most precious assets—time, human life, and money—have been poured into the black hole of the global war machine.

Consider time. A statistician in the 1960s found that more than 14,000 separate conflicts took place throughout man’s history. In these conflicts, billions of people spent an incalculable number of hours, days, weeks, months,

years and decades thinking, planning and carrying out violent acts. And this does not include the thousands of conflicts that were never recorded or those that occurred *since* the 1960s.

Think about what could have been achieved if the world's greatest leaders had not been distracted by war. What if Abraham Lincoln governed in peacetime? What if the brightest minds who assembled to create the atom bomb for the Manhattan Project—including Enrico Fermi, J. Robert Oppenheimer, and Albert Einstein—had tackled *world hunger* or *clean energy*? Instead of hundreds of physicists, mathematicians and engineers creating nuclear weapons that resulted in the deaths of 185,000 people in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan, consider what could have been done toward productive pursuits. The

time civilization has spent on war is mind-boggling—and tragic!

And what do we have to show for it? A more peaceful, stable world? No! The modern, “advanced” time in which we live is more dangerous and tumultuous than ever.

Heads of state do little else but ponder wars and *potential* wars. They spend sleepless nights worrying about terrorism. Administrations are filled with military planners who have devoted their entire lives to the topic. Giant war-related divisions of governments exist. The U.S. alone has the Department of Defense, the Central Intelligence Agency, the Defense Intelligence Agency, and the National Security Agency, to name a few.

Armed conflict showcases man's creative abilities, but to what end? Take Iraq in 2004, for example. The

U.S. military faced a new threat as insurgents developed a low-tech way to stop the best fighting force in history: shoot at fuel tankers, then light the gas on fire. The Pentagon urgently sought a solution.

Finally, a company in Salem, Oregon, called High Impact Technology offered up a new “smart material” coating called Battle Jacket. Incredibly, after the product is sprayed on tankers, any bullet hole *self-heals*—leaving little or no trace that ammunition passed through!

*Forbes* magazine explained the ingenious solution: “When a fast moving bullet hits the coating, its hyper-elastic property lets the bullet through and snaps back to its original shape within in a split-second...a [special super-absorbent polymer] coating with additives gives it this property.”

The Battle Jacket technology immediately thwarted the tactic of setting tanks on fire. But think of the human capital used up in this invention. What could have been accomplished if this company had focused on health advancements instead? Or other useful manufacturing?

Yet adults are not the only ones wasting their time on war. While child soldiers are a tragic problem, there is another way today's youth are trained to be killers: video games.

Although not *actual* warfare, these games are not harmless fun. Children and teenagers learn how to kill and maim in “virtual reality.” One study of over 3,000 schoolchildren in Singapore found that “youths who play video games are more likely to think and act in aggressive ways” (*Agence France-Presse*).

The amount of time eaten up by these virtual battles is astonishing. The company Activision estimates that in just six years gamers collectively spent 2.85 million man-years playing its popular video game series *Call of Duty*.

Note that this is not man-hours, but man-YEARS. Millions of years *wasted* stabbing, shooting and blowing up virtual opponents—in just one game series! This is time that children, teenagers and college students *could* have



■ **CONSTANT STRUGGLE:** Above, women mourn after a grenade is thrown at a market in the Central African Republic (Jan. 5, 2014). Below, Israeli security forces gather during clashes in front of Jerusalem's Damascus Gate leading into the Old City (March 16, 2014).

PHOTOS: MIGUEL MEDINA/ (ABOVE); AHMAD GHARABLI/ (BELOW); AFP/GETTY IMAGES





spent on fruitful endeavors—learning about the world around them, mastering a musical instrument, or building skills for a future career.

So much time spent on violence has led to NO positive end.

### Lives Cut Short

Next consider loss of life. As the world commemorates the centennial of World War I (which began in July 1914), what did this first “war to end all wars” leave in its wake?

The total mobilized forces of the Allied nations (the U.S., the British Empire, France, Italy, Russia and six other countries) was over *42 million*. An estimated *five million* were killed, with total casualties (those either killed or injured) amounting to 22 million—52.3 percent of the total forces of the Allied nations.

The forces of the Central powers (Germany, Austria-Hungary, Turkey and Bulgaria) were around *23 million*. Over *three million* lost their lives.

*American Forces Press Service* stated: “A generation of men died in battle on the fields of France. The Somme, Verdun, Ypres and Meuse-Argonne became killing grounds. On the Eastern Front, millions of Germans, Austrians and Russians battled. Overall, about 16.5 million people [when civilian deaths are included] were killed in the war.”

World War II proved deadlier. An estimated 59 million soldiers and civilians were slaughtered. Poland lost nearly 17 percent of its entire population!

One of the longest, deadliest battles took place in Stalingrad, Russia. This clash between Russians and Germans lasted from July 1942 until February 1943.

“The Battle of Stalingrad was one of the bloodiest battles in history, with combined military and civilian casualties of nearly 2 million,” *History.com* recounted.

*All from just one battle!*

### Innocence Lost

One of the worst consequences of fighting is the impact on children. War

robs young people of their innocence. Children around the world are taught to murder. Numerous accounts reveal the tragic results of young kids who are taught to hate their enemies.

*A Long Way Gone – Memoirs of a Boy Soldier* by Ishmael Beah chronicles the sad picture of war’s impact on children in Africa. A description from the book’s website stated: “There may be as many as 300,000 child soldiers, hopped-up on drugs and wielding AK-47s, in more than fifty conflicts around the world. Ishmael Beah used to be one of them. He is one of the first to tell his story in his own words.

“In *A LONG WAY GONE*, Beah, now twenty-six years old, tells a riveting story. At the age of twelve, he fled attacking rebels and wandered a land rendered unrecognizable by violence. By thirteen, he’d been picked up by the

government army, and Beah, at heart a gentle boy, found that he was capable of truly terrible acts. Eventually released by the army and sent to a UNICEF rehabilitation center, he struggled to regain his humanity and to reenter the world of civilians, who viewed him with fear and suspicion. This is, at last, a story of redemption and hope.”

Ishmael Beah’s story is an exception to the rule. Most children ensnared in war’s vicious cycle do not escape.

Next consider the long-running Syrian civil war. The war-torn country is now one of the most dangerous places on Earth for children: “The number of children affected by the civil war in Syria has more than doubled over the past year, with hundreds of thousands of young Syrians trapped in besieged parts of the country, the United Nations Children’s Fund said...”



■ **UNSOLVABLE PROBLEMS:** Above, U.S. soldiers look for enemy movement during a patrol near Kandahar, Afghanistan (March 1, 2014). Below, a Syrian man evacuates a child found in the rubble of a building after a helicopter bombing (March 18, 2014).

PHOTOS: SCOTT OLSON/ (ABOVE); KHALED KHATIB/AFP/ (BELOW); GETTY IMAGES





■ **WAR GAMES:** Top left, replica missiles are displayed during a parade in New Delhi, India, that celebrates the nation's military might, progress and cultural diversity (Jan. 26, 2009). Middle left, an Mi-17 helicopter simulator is part of a United States military mentoring program to the Afghan National Army Air Corps (Oct. 21, 2009). Center, a Honduran child points an army machine gun on display in Tegucigalpa (Feb. 22, 2014). Top right, Russian troops march in Moscow's Red Square during a Victory Day parade, which commemorates its World War II victory over Nazi Germany (May 9, 2013). Middle right, a military scientist operates a laser. Bottom right, child soldiers sit on a pickup truck near the presidential palace in Bangui, Central African Republic (March 25, 2013).

PHOTOS: DANIEL BEREHULAK/ (TOP LEFT); PAULA BRONSTEIN/ (MIDDLE LEFT); GETTY IMAGES/THINKSTOCK (TOP RIGHT); ORLANDO SIERRA/ (CENTER); ALEXEY DRUZHININ/ (TOP RIGHT); SIA KAMBOU/(BOTTOM RIGHT); AFP/GETTY IMAGES US AIRFORCE/WIKIMEDIA COMMONS (MIDDLE RIGHT)

Humanity  
has spent much  
of its human  
capital—its  
very best  
minds—on the  
art of war.



“After three years of conflict and turmoil, Syria is now one of the most dangerous places on earth to be a child,” said the UNICEF report. ‘In their thousands, children have lost lives and limbs, along with virtually every aspect of their childhood.’

“They have lost classrooms and teachers, brothers and sisters, friends, caregivers, homes and stability,’ it said. ‘Instead of learning and playing, many have been forced into the workplace, are being recruited to fight, or subjected to enforced idleness.’

“UNICEF said the child casualty rates were the highest recorded in any recent conflict in the region. It cited U.N. figures that at least 10,000 children have been killed in the Syrian war but noted that the real number is probably higher...”

“‘The dangers for children go beyond death and injury,’ UNICEF said. ‘Boys as young as 12 have been recruited to support the fighting, some in actual combat, others to work as informers, guards, or arms smugglers.’

“The number of children displaced inside Syria has risen to nearly 3 million from 920,000 a year ago. Meanwhile, UNICEF said the number of child refugees has grown to 1.2 million from 260,000 since last year—425,000 of them under 5 years old” (*Reuters*).

These heart-rending statistics make even the coldest hearts cry out for peace!

### **Economic Price**

Finally, there is the loss of money due to conflict. For the Allies, the price of World War I was \$195 billion. This amounts to about \$3 trillion in today’s dollars! The cost for the Axis powers was over \$86 billion—or around \$1.3 trillion today. To further understand the size of these figures, Germany finally paid off its debt from the *first* world war in September 2010.

World War II resulted in even greater costs. *Encyclopaedia Britannica* recorded, “There can be no real statistical measurement of the human and material cost of World War II. The money cost to governments involved

has been estimated at more than \$1,000,000,000,000 [\$1 trillion] but this figure cannot represent the human misery, deprivation, and suffering, the dislocation of peoples and of economic life, or the sheer physical destruction of property that the war involved.”

U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt once said, “...I discovered that over ninety percent of all national deficits from 1921 to 1939 were caused by payments for past, present, and future wars” (*Franklin D. Roosevelt and the Search for Victory*).

Today, man is still addicted to war-spending. *The New York Times* reported that China is ramping up its military budget (emphasis added): “China is causing new anxieties in Asia with a defense budget for 2014 that totals \$132 billion, up 12.2 percent over the previous year. These numbers should not be used as an excuse to ratchet up America’s military spending. But they do raise legitimate concerns about China’s motives that Beijing should seek to dispel, especially at a time when regional tensions are rising.

“Although China’s overall economic growth rate has declined, the new defense budget reflects the *biggest increase in three years* and continues a several-decades-long trend of *double-digit increases*. *Many experts assume that the real total is higher*. Even so, the budget is far below that of the United States, which was \$526.8 billion for fiscal year 2014 and finances the world’s largest, most expensive and advanced military program.”

Imagine if the world’s wealth was instead earmarked for productive uses. Recall Eisenhower’s words. How many starving mouths could be fed? How many people’s thirst could be satisfied by clean, drinkable water? How many educational programs could be financed with these funds? How many cures for debilitating diseases could be discovered?

Imagine the possibilities...

### **“Neither Shall They Learn War”**

An oft-quoted passage from the Bible discusses the end of war. The book of Isaiah foretells what will happen at

Jesus Christ’s Second Coming: “And He [Christ] shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, *neither shall they learn war any more*” (Isa. 2:4).

This prophecy has been adopted by the United Nations to represent the organization’s goal. In fact, Isaiah 2:4 is inscribed into a wall across from its headquarters in New York City. A statue of a man beating his sword into a plowshare also stands at the UN complex.

A description of the bronze man reads, “This is called ‘Let Us Beat Swords into Plowshares’ and...represents the figure of a man holding a hammer in one hand and, in the other, a sword which he is making into a plowshare, symbolizing man’s desire to put an end to war and convert the means of destruction into creative tools for the benefit of all mankind.”

Although this scripture is well-known, how many actually believe it?

Contrary to what most believe the Bible explains that a day is coming when human beings will no longer “learn war.” Each generation will not pass their “war habits” to the next. At Christ’s Return, a world-ruling SUPER-GOVERNMENT will be established. Countries will be taught to not “lift up” their swords—or militaries—against other countries! Nations will no longer compete against one another for money and resources. The spirit of selfishness that has long existed will be replaced with one of selflessness. Peace will break out across all nations. Mankind will seek the knowledge of the right way to live.

Lethal weapons (“swords” and “spears”) will be forged into productive tools (“plowshares” and “pruninghooks”). These instruments will then be used to provide food through a vast worldwide agricultural program. World hunger will end. Amos 9:13 describes the resulting abundance of food: “Behold, the days come, says the LORD, that the plowman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes

him that sows seed; and the mountains shall drop sweet wine...”

In fact, as part of the new anti-war policy, *all* weapons will be destroyed. Ezekiel 39 provides one example of what will be done during Christ’s reign: “And they that dwell in the cities of Israel shall go forth, and shall set on fire and *burn the weapons*, both the shields and the bucklers, the bows and the arrows, and the handstaves, and the spears, and they shall *burn them with fire seven years*: so that they shall take no wood out of the field, neither cut down any out of the forests; for they shall *burn the weapons with fire...*” (vs. 9-10).

Think of the project to destroy Syria’s *chemical* weapons, but on a GLOBAL scale!

### **Darkest Before Dawn**

Isaiah 2:2-3 explains more about *when* this will happen: “And it shall come to pass *in the last days*, that the mountain of the LORD’s house shall be established in the top of the mountains [the kingdom of God], and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come you, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and *He will teach us of His ways*, and *we will walk in His paths*: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.”

This is the GOOD NEWS from God’s Word!

Yet prophecy records that in the last days—our time now!—war will grow worse before it can be banned forever. As the saying goes, the darkest hour is just before dawn.

Jesus said of the time immediately before His Return: “And you shall hear of wars and rumors of wars...for nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom...For then shall be *great tribulation*, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved...” (Matt. 24:6-7, 21-22).

To learn more about this next and final world war, visit our website to request our eye-opening booklet *The Red Horse – “You Shall Hear of Wars...”* ([rcg.org/ews-w](http://rcg.org/ews-w)) and our article “What Is Armageddon?” ([rcg.org/wia](http://rcg.org/wia)). Those who survive the final catastrophic events of the end-time will be so war-weary that they will be willing to submit to God’s ways and choose peace.

### **“Way of Peace”**

During this prophesied time, mankind will replace its failed ways with *God’s* ways. The world will at last discover what God calls the “way of peace” in Isaiah: “The way of peace they know not; and there is no judgment in their goings: they have made them crooked paths: whosoever goes therein shall not know peace” (59:8).

The apostle Paul quoted Isaiah 59 in Romans 3:17: “And the way of peace have they not known.”

The context of this verse brings more insight into how God views man’s ways: “As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: there is none that understands, there is none that seeks after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that does good, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulcher; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: their feet are *swift to shed blood* [how true of man’s nature]: *destruction and misery* are in their ways: and *the way of peace have they not known*: there is no fear of God before their eyes” (vs. 10-18).

This *way of peace* has not been taught in the classrooms or institutions of the world. Instead, we have learned hatred toward our fellow man. Mankind, cut off from its Creator, and never coming to the revealed knowledge of how to live, has disobeyed God and reaped bad fruits. But bitter hatred will soon be replaced with love and concern for one another. Romans 13 explains how true, godly love is the ultimate solution to war: “Love works no ill [the Greek can also mean “harm”

or “evil”] to his neighbor: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law” (vs. 10).

The Creator in numerous places is called the “God of *peace*” (Rom. 15:33; 16:20; Phil. 4:9; I Thes. 5:23; Heb. 13:20). His Son, Jesus Christ, is called the “Prince of *peace*” (Isa. 9:6). God will force peace on a mankind that will need to be taught the only right way to live—and will start with one generation.

### **Better World Ahead**

Once war is removed, never-before-seen progress will occur in all areas. Man’s God-given creative genius will be channeled toward productive and positive means.

Vast resources will be unlocked. Human ingenuity—guided by God’s Spirit—will be a thrilling sight to see! The world’s best minds will be put to work fixing problems. Cities will be cleaned up. Earth will be filled with the knowledge of the right way to live (Isa. 11:9). New and better farming programs will be created. Effective and right educational systems will be instituted.

Think of the possibilities. The incredible brain drain that is war will FINALLY be gone!

Besides exciting productivity breaking out in all nations, universal happiness will exist. As the Psalmist wrote, “They that sow in tears shall reap in joy” (Psa. 126:5). The prophet Zechariah records: “Thus says the LORD of hosts; There shall yet old men and old women dwell in the streets of Jerusalem, and every man with his staff in his hand for very age. And the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in the streets thereof” (8:4-5).

To learn more about how man will finally find lasting peace, request our free booklet *How World Peace Will Come!* at [rcg.org/hwpwc](http://rcg.org/hwpwc). It brings the big picture—and the TRUTH!—about how war will soon be abolished.

Although hundreds of generations have been addicted to war, one will soon raise the banner of peace for all future generations.

God speed that day! □



# IS RELIGION DEAD IN AUSTRALIA?

A rapidly growing number of the continent's citizens claim they have "no religion." Sociologists, theologians and the nation itself are struggling to grasp what this means.

BY SAMUEL C. BAXTER

**"C**AN GOD SURVIVE in Australia?" A best-selling book in the 1980s used this question for its title, but the query still sparks heated debate today.

The book's author, Bruce Wilson, defined the titular question: "It means: can God survive in the hearts and minds of Australians living in a technological, industrial society? Or, more to the point: can Australians now get along all right without God, or do they just think they can?"

Australia in the 80s was no longer heavily influenced by the Church of England (glibly referred to as the "C of E"). Instead, it had moved steadily toward secular modernism. The author noted that religion was increasingly extraneous in politics, society and individual lives, stating that God had

become "as irrelevant as ice-chests in a world that has invented the refrigerator."

The 1981 census reported that 10.8 percent of citizens responded they had "no religion"—a number that had been just 0.8 percent in 1966. At the time, 76.4 percent of Australians identified themselves as Christian.

Nearly 30 years later, the "no religion" camp continues to grow, with 22.3 percent choosing the category in 2011. Christian belief is now claimed by only 61.1 percent.

*Herald Sun* reported: "In the past 100 years, the number of Australians reporting on the national census that they have 'no religion' has jumped from one in 250 in 1911 to more than one in five in 2011."

Read that again. *More than one in five* Australians claim no religion, which amounts to 4.9 million, or 22 percent of the entire popula-

tion. By comparison, 25 percent are Catholic and 17 percent are Anglican. A further 8.6 percent of census respondents declined to answer the religion question. Other non-Christian religions, such as Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism, saw increases.

In 2012, a WIN-Gallup International poll asked the question, "Irrespective of whether you attend a place of worship or not, would you say you are a religious person, not a religious person or a convinced atheist?"

Just 37 percent of Australian respondents said they were religious, 48 percent said not religious, 10 percent were convinced atheists, and 5 percent fell under the category "don't know/no response."

Given the decades-long trend, many interpret the data by declaring that religion is on its deathbed, with the vast majority of traditional Christianity merely running on fumes.

Has Australia really lost its religion—or is there something deeper going on?

### Not So Easy

The popular quote, “Facts are stubborn, but statistics are more pliable,” certainly fits when attempting to determine what the “no religion” contingent means for the nation. The biggest problem is the lack of a clear definition of what religion is—it is up to the individual to decide what the term means.

Because of this, the data can be viewed in many different ways.

Atheist groups generally consider the 22 percent a win. The Atheist Foundation of Australia funded an advertising campaign leading up to the latest census. Their ads stated: “Census 2011: Not religious now? Mark ‘No religion’ and take religion out of politics.”

So was the 22 percent all atheists? Or was the increase also due to people genuinely feeling religion should be left out of politics? Remember that Gallup International found that only 10 percent of the nation was convinced there was no God.

Similarly, it is doubtful that everyone who said they were Anglican or Catholic are actively involved.

In addition, “religion” is often seen as a dirty word in Australia. Many look at the history of what has been done by those in religious organizations—wars, genocide, child abuse, oppression—and do not want to be a part of any of them. Coming off this, some Aussies identify themselves as *spiritual* but not religious.

Having watched the situation grow and change over the years, Bruce Wilson amended his outlook for the nation in 1996, as a *Sydney Morning Herald* piece detailed: “Back then, in 1983, he argued that on the back of technology and economic growth people believed they could manage and deal with life without God. Although this clearly remains true for many people, Wilson now argues that behind this public secularism there has developed a ‘private spirituality.’

“In an internal sense people are very spiritual,” he says. “It does not

necessarily mean they believe in God in the way that traditional Christianity expresses that belief. What people are saying is, “I do not belong to any institutional form of religion.” They are not saying they are not spiritual.”

Other theologians continue to agree with Mr. Wilson today.

So who is right? It seems that everyone is partly correct: atheism is growing, but so is “private spirituality.” Other groups, such as Islam or evangelical mega-churches, are also gaining ground. Catholicism is still holding strong with 25.3 percent of the nation and, despite losses, the Anglican church still has 17.1 percent of Aussies.

While hard and fast conclusions cannot be drawn from the statistics alone, one thing is certain: a seismic shift is occurring with religious belief in Australia. This dramatic change reveals a search for national identity—one that offers a clear path to a hopeful future.

Until now, everything Australians have tried, religiously speaking, has not worked. Widespread attachment to traditional Christianity has not brought true prosperity and contentment. Wholesale secularism has also failed to deliver.

Clearly the nation is looking for something else. For now, it is taking the shape of a distinctly “multi-faith” society.

### Historical Pattern

To understand religion in the nation, one must examine its history. For those in Europe, or even the United States, it is easy to forget that Australia only achieved independence from the British Empire in 1901. Compared to other Western nations, it is relatively young and still finding its footing.

In his book *Australian Soul: Religion and Spirituality in the 21st Century*, author and sociologist Gary Bouma examined the nation’s history to identify the motivation for its ongoing religious shift.

He described Australian society as “post-empire, post-colonial, post-modern, post-ecumenical, post-secular and post-family. As a result of this unique social structure and culture Australians

experience religion and express spirituality in distinct ways.”

Yet as the nation moves forward, its past has left indelible marks—especially its time as a penal colony under the British crown.

A series of quotes from Mr. Bouma frames the situation: “While Americans seem to have an immediate sense of the presence of God, for Australians, God is more distant—I suppose, at least as far away as London is from Sydney. The centre of imperial authority was a long way away and only partially effective in exercising control, providing the necessities of life and observing the behaviour of convict and colonist alike.”

In other words, being ruled by a king half a world away colored Australia’s view of God.

Mr. Bouma noted that Australians often see God as “distant, able to be got around and, while useful for desperate last-minute appeals, not quite relevant to daily life.” He also has seen that there is a “low-expectation relationship” with God that is “characteristic of Australia’s religious and spiritual life.”

The book further described the historical backdrop that has built the country’s national character: “Since World War II Australia has had to confront its abandonment by Britain. Moves towards a republic are only a symptom of a late dawning of awareness of this abandonment. Do Australians feel abandoned by God? Are Australians seeking to become independent of God? Or are Australians seeking replacements? Australia has courted involvement with the USA...But can Australia count on the USA to come to its aid? Uncertainty continues to characterise our global situation.

“With abandonment can come maturity and self-reliance. We are on our own in the Asia Pacific. Our location in the world is not secure, our ties no longer bind and we are adrift, alone on the globe. What is worse, we are responsible for ourselves. Some would just love to pin the Stolen Generation [a time between 1909 and 1969 when the Australian government and church groups forcibly removed children from

Aboriginal tribes] on the British. But it cannot be done. We did it. Would not it be wonderful if...xenophobia and political movements promoting harsh treatment of refugees were US imports? But they are not. They too flow from a dark corner of the soul of Australia...”

Despite decades of independence, the “post-empire, post-colonial, post-modern, post-ecumenical, post-secular and post-family” Australia is still twisting in the wind—desperately wanting to have two feet firmly planted on the ground.

### Deeper Connection

The nation’s identity crisis has a specific reason, and it again relates to its history. Australia’s historical ties to Britain and the U.S. seem rather simple: these nations come from Anglo-Saxon heritage. Yet their ties are *much* older and run *much* deeper. One clue lies in Christianity being the dominant religion in all three countries.

Consider: why do all of these nations have an attachment to the Bible? The King James Version traveled far and wide on British ships and was prevalent in the empire’s colonies. The U.S. prints “In God We Trust” on its money. And Australia’s constitution begins by stating that the nation was formed while “humbly relying on the blessing of Almighty God.”

Regular readers of *The Real Truth* already know the biblical identities of the U.S. and British Commonwealth nations, which includes Australia. They are the Israelitish tribes of Ephraim (the UK and related territories) and Manasseh (America). David C. Pack’s *America and Britain in Prophecy* ([reg.org/aabibp](http://reg.org/aabibp)) provides detailed proof of this. Using the Bible and historical accounts, this book reveals the true origins of these brother nations and shows beyond a doubt that they are part of what are commonly referred to as the Ten Lost Tribes of Israel.

One proof of Australia’s ties to the Israelitish tribe of Ephraim lies in its vital sea ports.

The Bible shows that the patriarch Abraham was one of the forefa-

thers of the Israelite peoples, and the great-great grandfather of Ephraim and Manasseh. He was given a promise from God for his obedience: “That in blessing I will bless you, and in multiplying I will multiply your seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; *and your seed shall possess the gate* [sea gates] of his enemies; and in your seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed;

“ Despite decades of independence, the ‘post-empire, post-colonial, post-modern, post-ecumenical, post-secular and post-family’ Australia is still twisting in the wind—desperately wanting to have two feet firmly planted on the ground.”

because you have obeyed My voice” (Gen. 22:17-18).

This passage talks of national blessings, but these were withheld until the British Empire and America suddenly emerged on the world scene starting in the 1800s. After that time, these two great powers began to take control of every major sea gate: the Suez and Panama canals, the straits of Gibraltar and Hormuz, Singapore, Cape Horn, Malta, Cape of Good Hope, Hong Kong, etc.

Australia could never have survived without these vital trade routes.

Further details of these blessings arise when God passed the promise to Abraham’s grandson Jacob (who was later renamed Israel): “I am God Almighty...a nation and a company of nations shall be of you...” (Gen. 35:11).

Later, Jacob passed on the birth-right blessings directly to his grandsons Ephraim and Manasseh and said: “He [Manasseh] also *shall become a people*, and he also *shall be great*: but truly his younger brother [Ephraim] shall be greater than he, and his seed *shall become a multitude of nations*” (48:19).

Undoubtedly, America has been the single most powerful nation of all time and the British Commonwealth countries were part of the greatest empire—multitude of nations—in all of history!

Yet the Bible says even more about the locations of Britain and Australia, namely that they will live on island nations. Psalm 89 states: “I will set his [the people of Israel’s] hand also in the sea, and his right hand in the rivers” (vs. 25).

Isaiah adds to this: “Listen, O ISLES, unto Me; and hearken, you people, from far...” (49:1). Verse 3 shows whom God is addressing: “And said unto me, You are My servant, O ISRAEL, in whom I will be glorified.”

Ephraimites often live on islands! Those in Britain and New Zealand certainly do. While Australia is technically a continent, it could also be seen as a massive island.

Verse 12 shows where Ephraim would reside relative to Jerusalem: “Behold, these shall come from far: and, lo, these from the NORTH and from the WEST; and these from the land of Sinim.”

Look at a map. Northwest from Jerusalem are the British Isles! In addition, the “land of Sinim” is generally understood to be Australia.

These are just a few places where commonwealth nations are described in the Bible. There are countless more.

Yet, with such a rich and important history, how could Ephraim and Manasseh forget who they are? After witnessing an almighty God freeing them from ancient Egypt and power-



fully taking them into the Promised Land, how could Australia reduce Him to a faraway Being that is little more than a fuzzy idea?

The answer is found in Deuteronomy 4. Moses addressed the tribes of ancient Israel: “Now therefore hearken, O Israel, unto the statutes and unto the judgments, which I teach you, for to do them, that you may live, and go in and possess the land which the LORD God of your fathers gives you” (vs. 1).

Verses 5 and 6 show the national benefits of living God’s Way: “Behold, I [Moses] have taught you statutes and judgments, even as the LORD my God commanded me...Keep therefore and do them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations, which shall hear all these statutes, and say, Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.”

The passage continues showing what others would think of an obedient Israel: “For what nation is there so great, who has God so nigh [near] unto them, as the LORD our God is in all things that we call upon Him for?” (vs. 7).

Obedience to God’s commands meant He would remain NEAR unto the nation!

Yet Moses also issued a warning: “Only take heed to yourself, and keep your soul diligently, lest you forget the things which your eyes have seen, and

lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life: but teach them your sons, and your sons’ sons” (vs. 9).

Clearly Israel did not listen or teach these things to their offspring. In turn, they forgot and were all but lost to history.

### Social Sickness

God sees the pitiful condition of His forgetful people and cries out to them today through the pages of the Bible: “The ox knows his owner, and the ass his master’s crib: but Israel does not know, My people does not consider” (Isa. 1:3).

The modern nations descended from ancient Israel smugly see nothing wrong with the way they are living. Despite countless problems, they refuse to consider their ways.

Continuing, the Creator states: “Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters: they have forsaken the LORD, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward. Why should you be stricken anymore? You will revolt more and more: the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint” (vs. 4-5).

God sees Aussies struggling with various social ills. Toward the top of the list are alcoholism and fornication, most often in the form of casual

sex. The *International Business Times Australia* reported one of the results of heavy drinking: “A study published in *Lancet* medical journal found that 16 per cent of women, over the age of fifteen, from Australia and New Zealand experienced sexual violence from strangers. In fact, Australia and New Zealand had been found to have the highest rates of reported sexual violence compared to 56 countries in the world. In Australia alone, one in six women has been victims of random sexual violence.”

The title of the article says it all: “16% of OZ and Kiwi Women Raped by Random Strangers, Study Finds.” This is *double* the global average.

Then there is Australia’s favorite vice, gambling. Statistics from the Australian government reveal the extent of this problem:

■ “Australians spent more than \$19 billion on gambling in 2008-09; around \$12 billion of which was spent playing the pokies [slot machines].”

■ “The actions of one problem gambler negatively impacts the lives of between five and 10 others. This means there are up to five million Australians who could be affected by problem gambling each year, including friends, family and employers of people with a gambling problem.”

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■ **CHANGING TIMES:** Left, students stand outside a nightclub in Kuta, Indonesia, during Australian “Schoolies Week” celebrations (Nov. 25, 2013). Right, the Archbishop of Perth speaks during a consecration service for the nation’s first female bishop in Perth, Australia (May 22, 2008).

PHOTOS: AGUNG PARAMESWARA/ (LEFT); PAUL KANE/ (RIGHT); GETTY IMAGES

# Is the Earth 6,000 Yea

When was Earth formed? When did man appear? Does the Bible contradict science in answering these questions?

BY BRADFORD G. SCHLEIFER

**E**VOLUTIONISTS BELIEVE mankind, Earth and the entire cosmos are the result of the forces of evolution that began with a single event—the Big Bang—occurring billions of years ago.

On the other hand, many evangelicals, some Jewish religionists, and others believe that the universe, our solar system, Earth and all the plants, animals and even mankind was fully created in a single event occurring 6,000 years ago.

Is either view correct?

If you are a regular reader of *The Real Truth*, then you may have read our seven-part series on the theory of evolution, “Evolution Exposed – Deconstructing False Science.”

Where does the idea of a 6,000-year-old Earth originate? Is it possible to use the Bible to ascertain details of events obviously scientific in nature? Does God’s Word demonstrate the creation event occurring millions of years ago or a mere 6,000 years?

## Framing the Argument

While certain details about the subject of creation differ, the general concept is that an intelligent force brought about physical matter, including the trillions of stars, billions of galaxies, our solar system, Earth and everything in it. Most believe it started with a single event.

“Young Earth” creationists interpret the Genesis account to mean that the

universe was created 6,000 years ago. This age is determined by counting the generations of biblical figures recorded throughout the Bible, starting with Adam in the Garden of Eden.

These creationists believe that any evidence not supporting their theory is incorrectly applied, or that data is misinterpreted. Their view is that the Bible is the only source that should be examined to prove creation, and the events recorded in it should be taken as *they* interpret them.

Young Earth proponent Henry Morris stated, “Either...believe God’s Word all the way, or not at all” (*The Long War Against God*).

## Only the Bible?

Notice Romans chapter 1: “For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead” (vs. 20).

Now tie this with II Timothy 3:16: “All scripture is given by *inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine...*”

The original Greek word translated “doctrine” means “learning” or “teaching.” From these two passages we can see that Scripture, which is inspired by God, can be used to learn about His eternal power and Godhead.

Young Earth creationists *are* correct to deduce that the Bible can be used as the starting point for any investigation of creation. In fact, evidence is found throughout “all Scripture.”

Let’s start in the book of beginnings, Genesis: “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters” (Gen. 1:1-2).

Verse 1 describes an event (“in the beginning”) when God created everything. The passage is straightforward, and nearly all translations render it the same way.

Before looking at verse 2, consider that the God of the universe is a *perfect* Being and He always creates for a purpose. Consider further His description of the moment when the heavens and Earth were created: “For thus says the LORD that created the heavens; God Himself that formed the earth and made it; He has established it, He created it not in VAIN, He formed it to be inhabited...” (Isa. 45:18).

The Hebrew word translated “vain” can also be rendered “a desolation, desert; a worthless thing; without form, nothing, waste, wilderness.” The Earth was created to be inhabited from its very first moment—obviously not “a worthless thing without form”!

In fact, the creation event described in verse 1 was so magnificent that “the morning stars [angels] sang together, and all the sons of God [angels] shouted for joy...” (Job 38:7).

Now let’s examine Genesis 1:2. The phrase “without form” comes from the Hebrew word *tohu*—the same word translated as “vain” in Isaiah 45:18.

The word “void” comes from *bohu*, meaning “a vacuity (a total emptiness of matter, a vacuum), an undistinguishable ruin.”

This is *exactly* what God said He did NOT create! He “is *not* the author of confusion...” (I Cor. 14:33)—rather,

# rs Old?

everything God does is “done *decently* and *in order*” (vs. 40).

The Hebrew word *hayah* makes this crystal clear. It was incorrectly translated “was” in Genesis 1:2. A more proper rendering is “became” or “came to be.” With all of this information, a more accurate translation of the beginning of this verse could be: “And the earth BECAME DESOLATE, a WORTHLESS THING and an UNDISTINGUISHABLE RUIN...”

These verses describe completely different events! This is not an interpretation by any man; it is the clear, direct interpretation of the Bible *by the Bible*.

The Bible can be described as a spiritual “jigsaw puzzle.” The principle of Isaiah 28:10—“For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little”—teaches that one must search the scriptures and put together separate verses to get the fullest picture of any doctrine.

Few people—including most Bible students—understand that *millions of years* passed between the events of Genesis 1:1 and verse 2. It is not the Bible’s purpose to give every last detail of history. For example, God’s Word covers the first 2,000 years of humanity’s existence on Earth in only six chapters (Gen. 1-6).

## How Earth Became Desolate

How did our planet go from being beautiful and perfect at creation to a desolate desert and wilderness, a worthless thing without form? Who or what caused this?

Isaiah 14:12-14 tells a remarkable story containing many clues. Read carefully, noticing key phrases: “How are you fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How are you *cut down to the ground*, which did weaken the nations! For you have said in your heart,

*I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God...I will be like the Most High.*”

Ezekiel 28:12-17 parallels and reinforces Isaiah 14. When properly understood, the one called the “king of Tyrus” is obviously the devil. The passage speaks of one who “*seals up* the sum, *full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty*,” who had also “been in Eden the garden of God.”

No human being has ever been perfect. Also, it was the devil—the serpent—who beguiled Eve in the garden. Verse 13 states, “you were created.” Satan is a created being. Verse 14 calls him “the cherub that covers.” No earthly king fits this description.

The latter part of verse 14 says that this “king” was “on the holy mountain of God” and “walked...in the midst of the stones of fire.” This describes the area around God’s throne.

Verse 15 declares, “iniquity [lawlessness] was found in you” and verse 16 describes this cherub as having been “cast...out of” heaven. God also said He would “destroy” (the Hebrew means “expel”) Lucifer from heaven. Verse 17 concludes with God “casting him down to the ground.”

Clearly Satan attacked God when he sought to ascend from his own throne to take over God’s throne in heaven. While the ensuing destruction from this battle would have been colossal (as evidenced in Genesis 1:2), the devil’s attack failed miserably and he was cast back to Earth.

This is what the Bible reveals!

Finally, Isaiah 14:17 ties everything together. Notice: “That [speaking of Satan] made the world as a wilderness...” The word “wilderness” can also be translated “desert.” Recall that the word *tohu* in Genesis 1:2 can also mean wilderness and desert.

In effect, Satan’s rebellion caused the Earth to become desolate. God later sent His Spirit to re-create—“renew”—the planet: “You send forth Your Spirit... and You *renewed* the face of the earth” (Psa. 104:30).

Genesis 1:1 describes the original creation of the entire universe. Satan’s rebellion took place at some point between the accounts of verses 1 and 2. And verse 2 describes the *re-creation* of the Earth that Young Earth creationists correctly date to approximately 6,000 years ago.

## Scientific Proof

Christians should not run from science. While scientists do not always interpret the data correctly, certain concepts and fundamental laws mesh with the creation. Scientific laws man has discovered and defined were created by the God of the universe.

Let’s look at one scientific proof supporting all we have covered. The speed of light is one of the more constant variables in the universe, with a speed of approximately 186,000 miles per second. This means that if you were 186,000 miles away from a person who turned on a bright light, it would take one second before that light reached you.

No doubt, you have probably experienced this “delay” with sound. Since light travels faster than sound, if a person on an opposite side of a football field clashed cymbals, you would see the action before the sound reached your ears.

The only difference is that light travels so fast that enormous distances are required for a “delay” to be realized. The only place with enough space to demonstrate this effect is outer space. Because of the size of the cosmos, distances are often measured in *light-years*,

the distance light can travel in one year. What does this have to do with the age of our universe?

If Earth and the universe were only 6,000 years old, we would only be able to see stars with a maximum distance of 6,000 light-years. Otherwise the light would not have had time to reach us.

Let's put this in context.

The Milky Way galaxy is approximately 100,000 light-years across, with our solar system about 28,000 light-years from the center. This puts us about 22,000 light-years from our galaxy's

outer edge. If the universe were only 6,000 years old, we would see only a fraction of the 200 billion stars in just OUR galaxy since light from others would not have had enough time to reach us!

Of course, you have seen countless pictures of stars near Earth. There are amazing images of some of the estimated 125 billion galaxies. Of these, 3,000 are visible and can be anywhere from 80,000 to billions of light-years away. Light from the most distant galaxies had to have traveled for billions of

years before it reached Earth. Of course, for light to travel billions of years there had to have been a universe for billions of years!

Earth has existed for billions of years. And it was only *very recently* that God renewed—recreated—the Earth to prepare it for the first human beings, Adam and Eve!

When one allows the Bible to interpret itself, and uses that knowledge to properly interpret scientific data, the truth of creation is not only accurate, but magnificent and awe-inspiring! □

## PERSONAL

*Continued from page 2*

Remember! Deep conversion does not occur overnight. Paul wrote that some were “babes [babies] in Christ” (I Cor. 3:1). He described how they required spiritual “milk,” instead of “meat” (vs. 2). The brand new Christian is much like an infant. By analogy, he first learns to roll over, then crawl, before walking (and, at first, in an unsteady, toddling fashion). Only later does he finally learn to run (spiritually).

Paul compares conversion to running a race (I Cor. 9:24). At some point, the runner must develop speed because Paul says, “run, that you may obtain [win].” Such is the Christian way. Slow, steady growth, through daily practice, produces progress in the life of the person copying Christ. The new Christian sincerely strives, from the heart, to be different—to turn around and go the other way, the Way of God, for the rest of his life! Be ready to apply yourself—to push to grow and overcome. Do not expect it to be easy, like falling off a log. Grow in knowledge as well (II Pet. 3:18).

### Resisting Temptation

Jesus taught His disciples to understand the pulls of human nature at work within them. Notice: “...that which comes out of the man, that defiles the man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, cov-

etousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness” (Mark 7:20-22).

These same attitudes, pulls of the flesh, and wrong patterns of conduct also work within you and me. They leave us fertile for temptation by Satan. Therefore, many kinds of temptations will be thrown at you all through life. You must successfully resist them. They will often come when you least expect them. The devil will try to strike where you are weakest—most vulnerable—least prepared. You must be on guard—ready! Do not assume you are stronger or more prepared than you are. Consider: “Wherefore let him that thinks he stands take heed lest he fall” (I Cor. 10:12).

Now notice how temptation can turn into sin: “But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust has conceived, it brings forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, brings forth death” (Jms. 1:14-15). Put out wrong thoughts. Do not ease up or assume victory before they are gone!

The apostle Peter added, “Be sober, be *vigilant*; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walks about, seeking whom he may devour” (I Pet. 5:8). And James instructed, “*Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you*” (4:7). Peter further instructed, “Whom RESIST steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished *in your brethren that are in the world*” (I Pet. 5:9).

This verse offers encouragement: You are not alone in your struggle to overcome sin. All human beings face the same problems. Understand! “For all have sinned” (Rom. 3:23) and “... sin is the transgression of the law” (I John 3:4). God promises, “For sin shall *not* have dominion over you...” (Rom. 6:14).

Here is how Paul explained forces at work within him: “For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I... the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do” (Rom. 7:15, 19).

This pictures what we all face after conversion. When you feel like this, battle! Resist! Use God's power within you. Call out to Him for help and always remember that you must, “Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double minded” (Jms. 4:8). Fulfilling this verse is not an overnight process. It takes *time* and much effort.

Seek God through earnest, regular, believing prayer. Commune with God daily. Pray without ceasing (I Thes. 5:17-18). Study your Bible (Matt. 4:4). Drink it in as God talking to you personally in the same way prayer is you talking personally to Him!

### Christ Qualified to Replace Satan

Resisting the temptation of the devil was central to Jesus overcoming sin. Matthew 4 contains the account. The devil repeatedly *tempted* Christ, and

in various ways. Read the account. At the end of several attempts by Satan to break Christ's will, the account climaxes.

After being offered all kingdoms of the world, Christ rebuked Satan, stating, "Get you hence, Satan" (vs. 10). Jesus told the devil to "get out." At this point, the temptation ended and the devil departed. Christ had successfully resisted!

Be prepared to tell Satan to get out of your life as often as you have to. Resist him by submitting to God in all things!

Jesus passed a very real test! He overcame the world, His flesh, and the devil in overcoming sin and qualifying to pay for the sins of the world. You can overcome in the same way Christ did.

### Seven Steps to Permanent Change

Applying the following seven basic steps will help you overcome any problem. They represent principles that will work in the process of overcoming no matter the size of your problem or problems.

If you diligently apply them, they will be a formula that will help you to permanently overcome in your life.

**(1) Honestly face the problem.** Many people will not do this. They hide their eyes from reality. Notice: "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" (Jer. 17:9). Most willingly deceive themselves about their problems. Look your problems right in the eye and see them for what they are.

**(2) Do not get discouraged.** It is very easy to get disheartened—discouraged—upon acknowledging your problems. This is natural. Paul wrote of those "troubled on every side, yet not distressed...perplexed, but not in despair" (II Cor. 4:8). You may feel this way facing your problems, but do not get discouraged. Move to the next step.

**(3) Set your will.** Absolutely determine that you are going to defeat each particular problem and that each will *not defeat you!* Take a do-or-die approach. It has been said that the hardest battle is the *first* battle. Set

your will to address each sin successfully. Tell yourself you are going to defeat it—you are going to rip it from your character. But again recognize you cannot fight the battle on your own. This leads to step 4.

**(4) Form a partnership with God.** If you set out to overcome on human strength alone, you will fail. Paul wrote, "I can do *all things through Christ* which strengthens me" (Phil. 4:13). Jesus said, "I can of My own self do nothing..." (John 5:30). On another occasion, when speaking to His disciples about those with certain things to overcome, Jesus said, "With men this is impossible; but WITH GOD ALL THINGS ARE POSSIBLE" (Matt. 19:26). Believe Jesus' words. If He could do nothing on His own, neither can you. Be sure you have formed a partnership with God—that you are not working on your own.

**(5) Start right where you are.** Admit the problem is whatever size it is. Neither overstate nor understate it. If it is a BIG problem, admit it! This is part of honestly facing the problem. If you are trying to overcome any pull of the flesh or temptation that has existed for a long time—that has been part of you for many years—admit the size of the problem. It has been said, "The longest journey begins with a single step." That is true for the Christian. No matter how long it takes, or where you are when you start, begin wherever you find yourself. If you have wasted time before addressing the problem, admit it and "redeem the time" (Eph. 5:16).

**(6) Be willing to pay the price.** The Bible describes some who grow weary and "faint in the day of adversity" (Prov. 24:10) and that "their strength is small." Notice: "And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not" (Gal. 6:9). Everything of value in life comes at a cost—a price. Sometimes this involves pain, suffering. Pay the price. Even Christ, the Bible says, learned "obedience by the things which He suffered" (Heb. 5:8). No one enjoys pain, but sometimes it is inescapable in the overcoming process.

**(7) Do not give up before you have succeeded.** Solomon wrote, "For a just man falls seven times [the Hebrew actually means many times], and rises up again..." (Prov. 24:16). Do not give up. NEVER quit! Wrestle, battle and struggle until you have completely overcome whatever obstacle, weakness, sin or problem you are facing!

Follow these points, always employing one step at a time. They have helped many win the war of overcoming!

### A Lifelong Battle

Jesus also taught that he who *endures* to the end shall be *SAVED* (Matt. 24:13). A life of growing and overcoming is a constant, daily struggle against fleshly temptation. But Christians are now being judged: "For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that *obey not* the gospel of God? And *if the righteous scarcely be saved*, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?" (I Pet. 4:17-18).

Paul knew he was being judged. Let's read: "...Know you not [of course most do not] that they which run in a RACE run all, but *one* receives the prize? So *run*, that you may obtain [win]. And every man that strives for the mastery [championship or victory] is temperate in all things. Now they [non-Christians] do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we [Christians] an incorruptible. I therefore so RUN, not as uncertainly; so FIGHT I...lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway [failure or loser]" (I Cor. 9:23-27), and "...let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which does so easily beset us, and let us RUN WITH PATIENCE the RACE that is set before us" (Heb. 12:1).

Paul fought mightily against sin. He saw two opposing forces at work within his mind. Notice the intensity he brought to the struggle: "For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwells no good thing: for *to will is present with me*; but how to perform that which is good I find not...I find then a law,

that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members” (Rom. 7:18, 21-23).

Paul saw Christianity as “wrestling” (Eph. 6:11-12) against the wiles of the devil and said to, “PRESS toward the mark for the *prize* of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 3:14). He knew it takes great effort to win a long race.

Paul represents a classic example of how one of God’s greatest servants fought to overcome sin. At the end, he could say that he had “fought a good fight” and had “finished his course” knowing a “crown” awaited him (II Tim. 4:7-8). But this did not happen without much running, wrestling, pressing, fighting and warring against the human nature he strove to overcome.

He also knew his race was a marathon, not a sprint.

### What About You?

Humans require 15 to 20 years just to reach their full height. This long, physical growth process probably included a number of “growing pains.” No doubt, you fell and skinned your knee or bloodied your nose many times before reaching adulthood. *Christianity is no different!* Do not become discouraged and quit growing, any more than a child should quit life simply because

he may have fallen or skinned a knee. When your child falls, you tell him to get up—this is part of life. *Christianity is no different!*

Children always want to grow up faster than life’s timetable permits. Though childhood is wonderful, it seems most young people cannot wait for adulthood. *Christianity is no different!* But full, mature Christian adulthood only comes after a long period of practicing the right way.

Perfection is a goal that carries with it a way of life that governs one’s every thought, action and word. God looks on the heart, the intent of a person who is yielded to Him. As long as he is spiritually growing and overcoming—and led by God’s Spirit—he remains a converted, begotten son of God.

It is only through regular prayer, Bible study, meditation and even fasting (going without food and water for a period) that the Christian can overcome the three foes—self, society and Satan—lying in wait for him every day of his life.

The Restored Church of God, which publishes this magazine, has ministers available to answer any questions you might have regarding the truth of conversion and overcoming. But they will not call on you. You must request it. God does not pressure, persuade, beg, cajole or force anyone to obey Him. He has made all human beings free moral agents. This includes you. The all-knowing, all-wise, loving Creator has given

men the choice, and ability, to decide for themselves. He leaves it up to us to act on knowledge given. Thus, we never pressure people into joining us. But you may freely contact us.

You will find these two pieces of literature very helpful: *What Is True Conversion?* available at [rcg.org/witc](http://rcg.org/witc) and “You Can Overcome and Prevent Sin!” at [rcg.org/ycoaps](http://rcg.org/ycoaps).

Eventually, all peoples will sit before Jesus Christ. Some will have qualified to rule and some will not. Notice: “When the Son of Man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit *upon the throne of His glory*: and before Him shall be gathered *all nations*: and He shall separate them one from another...and He shall set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on His right hand, Come, you blessed of My Father, **INHERIT THE KINGDOM** prepared for you [all who have overcome] from the foundation of the world” (Matt. 25:31-34).

The GOVERNMENT of God will soon be restored to Earth. All who prepared themselves will “inherit the kingdom.” Only the *overcomers*, those who successfully submitted to God and resisted Satan throughout their lives, shall take part in this glorious future: “He that **OVERCOMES** shall *inherit all things*; and I will be his God, and he shall be My son” (Rev. 21:7).

Will you start down the path to overcome sin and *inherit all things*? □

## EUROPE

Continued from page 8

for European unity, Berlin being the strongest voice fights the original purpose of a union. An article in *The Economist* reported, “Germany envisions a more integrated Europe, with more national powers passed to the European level.”

Yet the same article noted a shift in thinking: “Post-war Germany’s two

strongest commitments have been to democracy and European integration. It was always assumed that these ideals could be pursued in harmony. Of late, however, concern has grown that the euro crisis demands measures that bring democracy and ‘Europe’ into conflict.”

The current brand of EU democracy often runs counter to the version Germany has in mind. German citizens do not like having little say over how their funds are used to bail out struggling nations.

Because of this, the rest of the continent must often give in to a corrupted version of the Golden Rule: “He who has the most gold makes the rules.”

### Keep Watching

How have the Germans been able to prosper? As a founding member of the coalition they clearly saw the advantages of tapping into the resources of their neighbors. For them, opening their borders never equated to dropping their high standards.

Germans are an industrious people. They are known for their precision, discipline and austerity. They do not exhibit these qualities in an effort to lead—it is just who they are.

An article in the *Guardian* spoke to Berlin's history with finances: "With Europe slumped in an existential crisis, looking both desperately and fearfully to Germany to supply the leadership and the money to match its clout as the EU's central power and biggest economy, it is often forgotten that Berlin is a past master at financial bailouts. Which is why it is also weary of them."

In further describing the German mindset and their fatigue with financial rescue packages, the article continued: "Germans have piggy bank genes, they save like mad...The fear of hyperinflation is what makes the idea of printing money horrific to Germans." It also reinforces the allergy to bailouts and the growing disenchantment with the euro."

For the most part, Berlin has tried to resist taking control.

"Germans are very, very reluctantly dealing with the idea that they are the default leaders of Europe, that we're the ones that everyone's looking to for salvation," Constanze Stelzenmuller, of the German Marshall Fund in Berlin told the *Guardian*.

And some appreciate this reluctance: "I think it's very good that Germany is hesitant to have a leading role," said Margot Kassmann, former head of a Protestant churches' federation. "The history of the last century has proven that was usually the wrong path to go down" (ibid.).

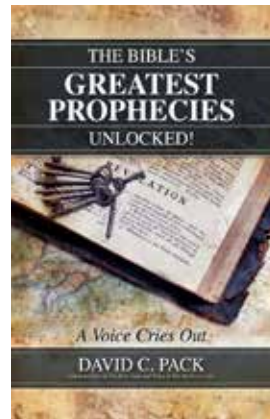
Yet due to constant prodding from others and the fact that their financial well-being is inextricably tied into the success of the EU, Berlin has begun to take a more assertive role.

Countries desperate for help are left with little choice. The shift

of power from Brussels to Berlin is well underway. It is only a matter of time before it becomes official.

Those interested in world events must keep their eyes on Europe and Germany as they will play a crucial role in global politics. *The Real Truth* magazine—which is politically neutral—analyzes such news about the continent through the dual lenses of the Bible and history. It brings a unique perspective found nowhere else on Earth.

For a comprehensive biblical explanation of current global trends, read *The Bible's Greatest Prophecies Unlocked! – A Voice Cries Out*. Written by *Real Truth* Editor-in-Chief David C. Pack, this extraordinary book reveals the significance of Europe's coming role on the world stage. □



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## SLAVERY

*Continued from page 12*

off diplomats exploit people from other countries and force them to serve in their homes for no pay.

"With few exceptions, most governments and police forces view trafficking in human beings as a far less serious crime than trafficking in guns or drugs," Mr. Malarek stated. "Most approach it primarily as an illegal immigration issue...Better someone else's daughters, the thinking goes; at least whoever's frequenting them isn't out raping our own...How can we ever expect to stem this odious trade if we think it's acceptable to buy, sell and rape any human being?"

### Slavery's Long Shadow

Slavery did not start in the Americas, nor did it end there. The use and abuse of human chattel started long before the transatlantic slave trade. It has been

around as long as civilization, when cheap and free labor helped build burgeoning empires. And the cruelty with which it was carried out was not unique to America.

During the Roman Empire, slavery was common. Unlike early American slavery, however, it was not based on race. Slaves blended into society so well that the Roman Senate once considered a plan to make slaves wear special clothing to tell them apart from the rest of the citizenry, according to the *PBS* feature presentation "The Roman Empire: In the First Century."

Romans acquired slaves through the spoils of war, by buying captured sailors from pirates, or bringing them from outside Roman territory. Much like their counterparts in early America, slave owners relished the power they held over the weak and vulnerable. They were routinely whipped and branded, and reminded that their owners could kill them at any time.

The region that has the most slaves today has deep roots in the practice. In Asia, slavery can be traced back to the Shang Dynasty in 18th to 12th century BC China. Up through the 20th century, China practiced self-sale into slavery, selling women and children to satisfy debts, and peddling relatives of executed criminals, according to the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*.

Today's brand of slavery is hidden behind the name human trafficking. Nowadays, slaves can be farmworkers, factory workers, nannies or even street children trying to sell trinkets to passersby. In California, migrant workers from Mexico, often making meager wages, harvest fruits and vegetables. Asian immigrants make about 24 cents a garment in sweatshops that slip under the radar of the U.S. Department of Labor. The half-clothed woman serving a drink at a strip club may not be there of her own will.

## Supply and Demand

At the heart of the problem is the fact that there is a demand worldwide—either for cheap labor or a way to fulfill sexual desires. Whether realizing it or not, those participating in such behavior are part of the demand that fuels the kind of slavery that occurs globally.

And if there is demand, there are always those willing to force others to supply it.

“Many government leaders choose instead to blame the sending countries, as if it’s their fault that these ‘loose women’ are staining their reputations. But the trade is driven by the lust of *their* men; it is fueled by the bars, brothels and bordellos dotting *their* streets; and it thrives because of *their* complacency and inaction,” Mr. Malarek said of sex trafficking.

In certain areas, such as in Bangladesh and India, paying for sex with 10- and 11-year-old girls is even considered a cure for boredom. How could *child rape* become a mere distraction?

Knowingly or unknowingly, many from the general public help perpetuate the trade. Bachelor parties frequently take place at seedy strip clubs, men are busted for using the services of escorts, and college students throw money away at clubs that are fronts for drug trafficking rings, which often employ child labor to produce their products.

Then there are others who glamorize the concept of prostitution through hip-hop songs, promoting a promiscuous lifestyle, or talking about how they are going to “act like a pimp” as though it is a good thing to be. Recall the stories of the women in just this article: how could “being a pimp” ever be something to be admired?

In addition, Hollywood routinely glorifies overt sexual excess. Celebrities do not help, flaunting themselves and pushing the envelope through barely there outfits and videos filled with eroticized images, which lead many to think that acting and dressing a certain way is acceptable—and at ever younger ages.

Yet any open-minded person can see through this “glamour.” The major-

ity of the women who enter the trade or are trafficked into it usually have a history of sexual abuse, starting as children, or often are trafficked because they are runaways. It is rare that one chooses this life without being incredibly desperate.

Ask: why are panic buttons required near the beds in the Netherlands Red Light District? The answer is that nearly 80 percent of sex workers there have experienced some form of violence at the hands of their “johns.”

Additionally, who are the men who seek out those kinds of experiences instead of a loving relationship in which they do not pay for such services? Why do they not respect their wives, girlfriends or children enough to refrain from such entertainment?

Then there are the slave owners who thrive on the mental and physical dominance of others. This power trip leads to a disregard for fellow human beings, which allows them to enslave someone who may be at a vulnerable place in his or her life.

Tragically, history demonstrates that such trends are poised to grow.

“In many ways, it looks to me as though we are on the verge of the greatest enslavement of all time,” Mr. Cohen warned in his book. “The crisis in the financial markets and many other sectors draws inevitable comparisons to history, when widespread shortage of staple commodities led to lands being seized and masses of people being subjugated. Globalization and the Internet have made some of us freer, but have also made it easier for criminal networks to further exploit and victimize the youngest, weakest, and the poorest members of our expanding global community.”

In short, the whole system is broken—from the roles of men and women—to views on sex—to the concept of marriage and the family—to the meaning of true happiness—to the understanding about the

incredible potential of every human being born on this Earth!

Man cannot fix the problem of human bondage because he does not know how he is supposed to live. He fails to understand that he cannot because he himself is held captive in a world that is not his own.

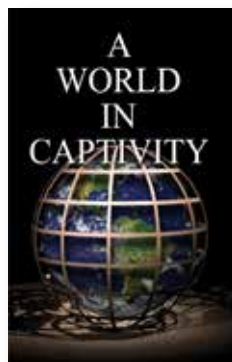
This concept is expanded on in the booklet *A World in Captivity*, in which David C. Pack writes, “Advances in knowledge have brought awesome progress, while immorality and human degeneration have never been worse. *WHY?* An unseen *KIDNAPPER* holds humanity hostage and has convinced his captives that he is a benefactor. Yet, events of staggering magnitude will soon shock the world—changing everything! Happiness, abundance, world peace—and *DELIVERANCE*—lie just ahead.”

Only at that time will 10-year-old boys no longer be forced to carry back-breaking loads, or generations of families be servants to a cruel master for an \$18 debt. No more will an 8-year-old child cry for her mother after being raped by a man four times her age, or a 16-year-old runaway abused by a family member sell her body when she needs food and shelter. Instead, men and women will learn the right way to live and to treat all humans with the same respect with which they would want to be treated.

A time is coming when every man, woman and child will have the opportunity to live a life filled with the kind of happy memories of which they have always dreamed—in a world

where the real cause behind humans enslaving one another for millennia—is revealed and addressed.

No more will any human being be subject to hurt, pain and suffering. At this time, every man, woman and child will be able to live freely as they were intended—and mankind will finally be able to put a stop to the evils of human slavery once and for all. □

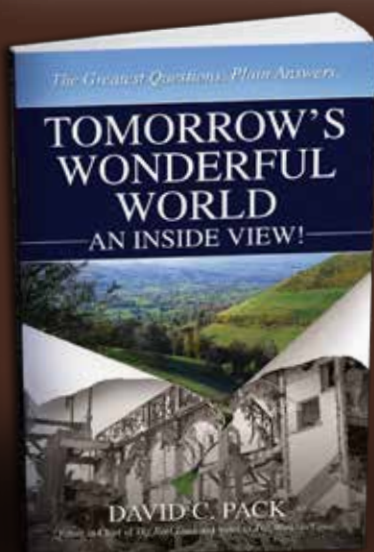


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# THE MODERN WORLD IS A CONDEMNED BUILDING!



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## AUSTRALIA

Continued from page 23

■ “Problem gamblers lose around \$21,000 each year. That’s one third of the average Australian salary.”

■ “Problem gamblers are six times more likely to be divorced than non problem gamblers...”

■ “Problem gamblers are four times more likely to have problems with alcohol and four times as likely to smoke daily than non problem gamblers...”

■ “Children with parents who are problem gamblers are up to 10 times more likely to become problem gamblers themselves than children with non gambling parents...”

■ “Only around 15 per cent of problem gamblers seek help.”

But blatant immorality and vice are not the only things forcing God to remain at a distance from Australia.

While the Bible strongly condemns manmade religious practices, this is exactly what the overwhelming majority have done—individuals and organizations alike. They *appear* religious (or spiritual), but it is in vain.

God addresses this in Isaiah 1: “To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? Says the LORD: I am *full of* the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he goats” (vs. 11).

While there is not widespread sacrificing of animals in Australia, this verse uses poetic language to make its point. The Creator is “full of”—SICK OF—manmade religious ceremonies: “Bring no more *vain* oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity...*Your* new moons and *your* appointed feasts My soul hates: they are a trouble unto Me; I am weary to bear them” (vs. 13-14).

Instead of keeping the Holy Days ordained by God, many ascribe to pagan-based holidays. The same applies to religious practices and

beliefs. Request *God’s Holy Days or Pagan Holidays?* at [rcg.org/ghdoph](http://rcg.org/ghdoph) to learn more.

Even though it may seem implausible, take God at His word. He says that the VAST majority of religious actions in Australia are done in vain. Why? Because they were created by the ideas of men (“YOUR new moons” and “YOUR appointed feasts”) rather than what the Bible actually commands.

God explains the result of this: “And when you spread forth your hands, I will hide My eyes from you: yes, when you make many prayers, I will not hear...” (vs. 15).

Isaiah 59 reiterates this point: “But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid His face from you, that He will not hear” (vs. 2).

### Australia Must Remember!

A loving God will not allow a nation to wallow in this state. He longs to restore a close relationship with His people. The first step to making this happen is to show the modern nations of Israel their wretched condition—and He pulls no punches.

Isaiah 28 describes the British people, including Australia: “Woe to the crown of pride, to the drunkards of Ephraim, whose glorious beauty is a fading flower, which are on the head of the fat valleys of them that are overcome with wine!” (vs. 1).

Think of how often citizens of Israelitish nations—recipients of God’s awesome blessings—brag about their drunken escapades!

Hosea also describes the modern descendants of ancient Israel: “Hear the word of the LORD, you children of Israel: for the LORD has a controversy with the inhabitants of the land, because there is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land. By *swearing*, and *lying*, and *killing*, and *stealing*, and *committing adultery*, they break out, and blood touches blood” (4:1-2).

With each passing generation, these nations have drifted further from God’s Way. Verse 6 continues: “*My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge:*

because you have rejected knowledge, I will also reject you...seeing you have forgotten the law of your God...”

Without national repentance, Australia and its brother nations are on a track for NATIONAL punishment.

Ezekiel 5 details what this chastisement will entail, and how it will be on such a scale that it will become global news: “So it [the punishment] shall be a reproach and a taunt, an instruction and an astonishment unto the nations that are round about you...” (vs. 15).

Yet the Creator will not utterly destroy His people, He simply intends them to learn the error of their ways. As a loving God, He not only warns and offers a way of escape now, but also during the coming time of trouble (Jer. 30:7).

Jeremiah 31 states: “And there is hope in your end, says the LORD...” (vs. 17).

The account continues: “I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself thus; You have chastised me, and I was chastised, as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke: turn You me, and I shall be turned; for You are the LORD my God.

“Surely after that I was turned, I repented; and after that I was instructed...I was ashamed, yea, even confounded, because I did bear the reproach of my youth” (vs. 18-19).

In verse 20, God calls repentant Ephraim his “dear son” and promises to “have mercy upon him.”

This type of deep repentance can happen on an individual level now! Any modern Ephraimite *can* change his ways.

But there is a soon-coming time when God will hide Himself from modern Israelitish nations so that they learn lessons. They will go “to seek the LORD; but they shall not find Him” because “He has withdrawn himself from them” (Hos. 5:6).

All in Australia must consider their ways and take to heart the words of Isaiah 55: “Seek you the LORD while He may be found, call you upon Him while He is near” (vs. 6). □

## MIDDLE EAST

## Arab League Summit Reveals Continued Signs of Disunity

Leaders of 22 Arab nations met in Kuwait in early spring for the annual Arab League Summit. The two-day meeting highlighted the growing number of disputes in the region.

*BBC News* Middle East analyst Gerald Butt noted: “In four decades of covering the Middle East I cannot remember the Arab world being as multilaterally fractured as it is today. Arabs are trapped under a dense and complex cat’s cradle of ideological and sectarian differences.”

Long-standing regional issues, which include Israel-Palestinian relations, disparate wealth distribution, youth unemployment, and a troubled education system, have increasingly become overshadowed by new challenges. These include lingering effects from the Arab Spring uprisings, the civil war in Syria, and the sustained rise of the Muslim Brotherhood.

A main reason for the disagreement is the leadership vacuum created by Egypt’s ongoing turmoil. Traditionally seen as the Arab League’s chief nation, Egypt has been focused on internal issues instead of those associated with its neighbors. No other nation has stepped in to fill the void. □

■ **IN DISAGREEMENT:** Prince Saud Al-Faisal bin Abdulaziz al-Saud attends the closing session of the 25th Arab League Summit in Kuwait (March 26, 2014).

PHOTOS: ANADOLU AGENCY/AFP/GETTY IMAGES



## WEATHER &amp; ENVIRONMENT

## Rootworm Beetle Can Now Eat GMO Corn Designed to Kill It

Western corn rootworm beetles in the United States have grown immune to biotech crops that were originally designed to target the pests. The genetically modified organism (GMO) seeds, often referred to as Bt corn, were introduced in 1996—yet the rapid pace at which the insect has grown resistant has scientists and farmers worried.

*Wired* magazine explained the situation: “Until Bt corn was genetically altered to be poisonous to the pests, rootworms used to cause billions of dollars in damage to U.S. crops. Named for the pesticidal toxin-producing *Bacillus thuringiensis* gene it contains, Bt corn

now accounts for three-quarters of the U.S. corn crop. The vulnerability of this corn could be disastrous for farmers and the environment.”

Scientists believe the immunity was brought on more quickly due to short-sighted agricultural practices.

*The Associated Press* wrote: “Researchers believe that rootworms are more likely to develop resistance to Bt corn when farmers plant the same hybrid in a field year after year, said Lance Meinke, an entomologist at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

“Most farmers rotate corn with other crops in a practice long used to curb the spread of pests, but some

abandoned rotation to cash in on corn prices that stayed high for several years or because they needed more grain for livestock.

“But even with crop rotation, the beetles may be finding a way to thrive. Researchers are investigating reports that some corn rootworms in central Illinois found a way around crop rotation by laying eggs in soybean fields.”

The *Lincoln Journal Star* reported that there have been confirmed cases of Bt resistance in Nebraska, Iowa, Illinois, South Dakota, and Minnesota. Because rootworms have wings, the problem is expected to spread. □

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