

DECEMBER 2010

THE

WWW.REALTRUTH.ORG

REAL TRUTH

A MAGAZINE RESTORING PLAIN UNDERSTANDING



GERMANY'S RENEWED NATIONALISM

THE REAL TRUTH

A MAGAZINE RESTORING PLAIN UNDERSTANDING

VOL. VIII | NO. 10 | DECEMBER 2010

ARTICLES

WWW.REALTRUTH.ORG



PHOTO: STOCK.XCHNG

The Truth About Christmas

The word “Christmas” triggers fond memories of family, gift-giving, decorations, music, cherished traditions and sentiments of “peace and goodwill toward all.” Yet this holiday, with all its customs, predates Jesus’ birth by thousands of years!

Page 7

Germany’s Renewed Nationalism

The country’s resurgent pride is a relief for some and worrisome for others. Will Germany ever overcome the stigma of its past?

Page 3

Another Korean War?

For the past 60 years, North Korea has engaged in numerous border skirmishes with the South. But will the latest incident lead to all-out war?

Page 8

True Success!

What Holds You Back?

Many search for success, but never find it. What determines achievement or failure?

Page 12

How This Magazine Is Supported

In a world awash with a variety of sources of information, *The Real Truth* cuts through the opinions, ideas, theories and biases of individuals, bringing answers—and hope! Who produces this singular publication, and why?

Page 14

What Did Jesus Say About Evolution?

Did man evolve? Or is he a created being? This debate has raged for years, and has left many Bible readers confused. Yet God’s Word is clear on the subject.

Page 17

2010 Midterm Elections: America Votes for Change—But Is It the Right Kind?

Three times in relatively quick succession, United States voters sent its government a message: “We want change from the country’s current direction.” Each time, politicians and powerbrokers seemed to interpret the message to their own liking. Could the problem lie with *everyone* and *everything* involved: the senders, the recipients—and the message itself?

Page 20

FEATURES

Personal from David C. Pack 1
World News Desk 26

■ **FRONT COVER:** German Chancellor Angela Merkel (right) meets with Latvian youth from a German school in front of the Freedom Monument in Riga, Latvia (Sept. 7, 2010).

PHOTO: JANEK SKARZYNSKI/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

PUBLISHER/EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
DAVID C. PACK

SENIOR EDITORS
JEFFREY R. AMBROSE
WILLIAM H. BEHRER
KEVIN D. DENECE

MANAGING EDITOR
GABRIEL N. LISCHAK

ART/GRAPHICS EDITOR
BRUCE A. RITTER

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS
DAVID C. PACK
JEFFREY R. AMBROSE
SAMUEL C. BAXTER
WILLIAM H. BEHRER
ABDON V. BUENA
RYAN L. CASWELL
SCOTT A. CLARK
GERHARD J. COETZER
JEFFREY D. DAVIS
KEVIN D. DENECE
MARK P. DENECE
RYAN P. DENECE
JONATHAN A. DICEN
ROBERT R. FARRELL
BRIAN K. JACKSON
GREG E. KAIDANNEK
GABRIEL N. LISCHAK
H. CHRIS LOMAS
LARRY J. MCELROY
KENNETH M. OREL
JUSTIN T. PALM
BRUCE A. RITTER
JAMES RODRIGUEZ
BRADFORD G. SCHLEIFER
MARK A. SHARPE
JACOB C. TOEWS
JAMES F. TURCK
MICHAEL H. VENISH
F. JACO VILJOEN
VIDAL N. WACHUKU

ASSOCIATE EDITORS
SAMUEL C. BAXTER
STACEY L. PALM

ART/GRAPHICS
DARNITRA D. JACKSON
PAULA C. RONDEAU

INFORMATION SERVICES
BRADFORD G. SCHLEIFER
ANGELA K. BAXTER
JEFFREY D. DAVIS
JUSTIN M. FRAZIER

The Real Truth magazine is provided free of charge. This is made possible by the voluntary, freely given tithes and offerings of the members of The Restored Church of God, and by the offerings and donations of co-workers and donors. Contributions are gratefully welcomed and are tax-deductible in the U.S. and Canada. Those who wish to voluntarily aid and support the Work of God in preaching and publishing the gospel to all nations are gladly welcomed as co-workers. Contributions should be sent to the address below.

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

Copyright © 2010, The Restored Church of God. Printed in the USA. All rights reserved.

The Restored Church of God is not responsible for the return of unsolicited articles and photos.

Scriptures are quoted from the King James (or Authorized) Version of the Bible, unless otherwise noted.

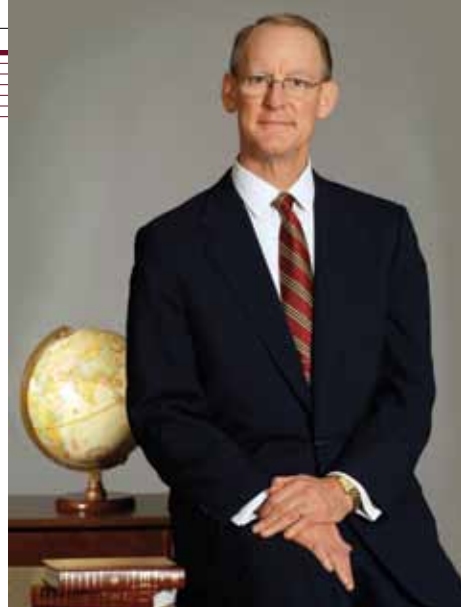
Contact *The Real Truth*:

P.O. Box 23295
Wadsworth, OH 44282

www.realtruth.org

PERSONAL FROM

David C. Fack



Is 2012 the End?

THE 2012 PHENOMENON has reached fever pitch. Alarm has spread like wildfire. Uncertainty, anxiety—and FEAR—have gripped many people. Literally, *millions* are panicking, wondering whether 2012 will be their last year. The end date is supposedly either December 21 or 23, 2012. Doomsday authors point to December 21, the winter solstice. But the Mayan calendar, on which the end-of-days theory is based, ends December 23.

Like the Y2K panic of 1999 about the year 2000, 2012 hysteria is all over the Internet—in endless books—and in a \$200 million movie, filled with the usual sensational Hollywood graphics. And so-called prophecy experts are weighing in on the subject.

People of all ages are asking if cataclysmic events will occur in late 2012 and bring the end of the world. Some are deeply concerned—truly frightened!—that they will not live into their teen years or enter adulthood. They desperately want lives beyond 2012—but fear this will not happen.

Incredibly, some teenagers, and even younger children, have asked if they should *end their own lives*—and some mothers have expressed thoughts of killing their children—and then themselves—rather than enduring “Earth ending” events!

No one predicts exactly what will happen in 2012, but according to some, it will be “*big!*”—“*Earth shat-*

tering!”—and “*civilization ending!*” There are concerns that the entire earth will be flooded, or burned up by solar flares. The North and South poles may suddenly reverse, wreaking untold havoc on electrical systems. Catastrophic earthquakes may rock the planet, destroying all buildings and opening huge holes in the earth’s crust. Chaos will reign. Mankind will come to the *brink* of annihilation... and on and on go the theories.

Source of Belief

The Mayan “Long Count” calendar tracks “Great Cycles” of time, and is one of at least three calendars that the ancient Mayans used. It is important to note that one particular calendar indicates that December 23, 2012, is the end of the current *cycle of time*—which began August 13, 3114 BC on the Gregorian calendar. The Mayan calendar itself states *nothing* of the world coming to an end, or of *any* cataclysmic events occurring. It states only that the current *time cycle* will end.

Many of the fantastic stories and much of the hype come from various *archaeological* and *astronomical* speculation, as well as mythology and numerological interpretation. Predictions of impending doom and destruction are *nowhere* to be found in Mayan accounts or in the Long Count calendar itself. To the modern Mayans, including those who study the ancient calendar, 2012 is actually inconsequential.

If you were to travel to any of the many present day Mayan communities and ask about 2012, and the end of civilization, you would see looks of *bewilderment*.

Modern Mayan sources explain that this calendar was *never* intended to suggest the world would end in 2012, or at any other time. They will also tell you that professing Christians have deliberately twisted their calendar to suit their own prophetic theories and timelines. Yet millions, with little or no understanding of the Mayan culture, attach civilization-ending significance to 2012. All but two ancient Mayan inscriptions are strictly historical. They make no prophetic declarations whatsoever. The two that supposedly do are unclear at best, and open to a wide array of speculation and interpretation.

Regardless of what the ancient Mayans *actually* predicted (the mere end of a time cycle!)—wild ideas about 2012 abound. The frenzy is worldwide and picking up steam, with no slowdown in sight. 2012 has also become big business, and many are cashing in on the uncertainty!

Will either the planet or civilization come to a *violent end* on December 21, 2012, as so many believe? Could the speculation still somehow be *true*? What does the Bible say? Does it in any way validate 2012 as the “end of all things”?

You will soon have no doubt of the correct answers. It is time to *prove* whether late December 2012 is the end.

Endless Speculation

The idea of the end of the world has been a subject of great speculation, ridicule, general discussion, fascination and fancy for 2,000 years—ever since Jesus Christ announced He would return to Earth. With opinions everywhere, there has been an *explosion* of literature presenting popular scenarios, ideas, theories, suppositions and interpretations of what will occur just before Christ’s Return.

For Christians, the 2012 question begins with what Jesus said about His Return: “Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor

the hour wherein the Son of man comes” (Matt. 25:13).

If people were reading even such basic verses, they would *never* worry about December 21 or 23, 2012 because no man knows the day of Christ’s Return. What a tragic commentary on the state of people who profess to be Christians—but cannot logically compute such rudimentary understanding. But then, most who profess to follow Christ study little or nothing of what He said.

Get this! Just this passage, and other similar ones, rule out this date—or *any* specific date—that might be suggested for Christ’s Return, or even for the end of all things.

Next read again Jesus’ Olivet prophecy: “The disciples came unto Him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? And what shall be the sign of Your coming, and of the *end of the world* [age]?” (Matt. 24:3). We saw His long answer began with: “Take heed that no man deceive you” (vs. 4).

Jesus goes straight to the biggest problem that would exist at the end. There is an unending and growing number of deceivers at work today. Are their followers taking heed? Ask again: how many are doing their own research regarding men postulating prophetic scenarios, such as 2012? This is only one theory. There are many others, and more appearing all the time.

The 2012 Impossibility

Now let’s examine whether it is even *possible*—prophetically—for 2012 to be the end. Follow carefully. We have to establish the *timing* of certain events.

Many are familiar with the term “Tribulation” or “Great Tribulation.” The Bible speaks of this event as one of terrible trouble and indescribable horror. Jesus referred to this time as unparalleled in history: “For then shall be *great tribulation*, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever

shall be” (Matt. 24:21). The prophet Daniel also speaks of this period in chapter 12, verse 1. Jeremiah references it in a similar way in chapter 30, verse 7.

The Bible reveals that a certain very specific amount of time must elapse between the start of the Great Tribulation and the Return of Jesus Christ—or “the end of the age.” So understand. If it can be proven that there are not enough years in God’s plainly revealed timeline for 2012 to be the end, then all the hysteria is for nothing!

Numerous passages explain that the Tribulation lasts 2½ years, followed by the year-long Day of the Lord. Together, these events last 3½ years, fulfilling 1,260 days before Christ’s Return.

Let’s understand the implications! If the Great Tribulation were to begin today, then there would not be enough time for December 21, 2012 to be the end. But it is also important to realize that certain *biblically described preconditions* that must lead up to the Tribulation are not, however close they now are, yet here.

So then, just the 1,260 days—again, were it to begin today—would greatly overshoot December 21, 2012. It is therefore **ABSOLUTELY IMPOSSIBLE** for this date to be the end of the world! All fear of it can disappear! None need be afraid of this fictional doomsday!

It is possible, however, that something of significance could happen in late 2012 because the demon world has a general idea of prophecy, and it does everything in its power to thwart God’s Master Purpose for mankind. It could pull some trick or stunt to confuse the gullible.

Will the World End?

But what about the Return of Christ? Will this usher in the end of planet

Please see PERSONAL, page 29



GERMANY'S RENEWED NATIONALISM

The country's resurgent pride is a relief for some and worrisome for others. Will Germany ever overcome the stigma of its past?

BY ROBERT R. FARRELL AND SAMUEL C. BAXTER

DECEMBER 2010

AS GERMANY MARCHED into the semifinals at the 2010 World Cup, the country's colors—black, gold and red—flooded the stadium. Pride filled the air, radiating from the faces of joyful fans singing the Deutschland national anthem.

Such a display of German patriotism would have been uncommon just a few decades ago, a time when flag-waving and chanting would have been viewed as potential birth pangs of war.

After decades of feeling ashamed of the past, Germans are slowly beginning to take pride in their history and long list of achievements. Its authors are celebrated, German songs are gaining popularity on the airwaves—and its economy is thriving as other nations struggle. An assertive and confident Germany is boldly speaking on the world stage—and others are looking to it for support.

Younger generations, having never experienced the country's more severe side, are optimistic about the future, adamant that their newfound sense of self-worth could never spark aggressive patriotism.

The Holocaust was generations ago, they think. This is the new Germany. One that is stable, giving, hardworking. One on which the world can rely.

Yet as national pride surges, some Germans are apprehensive about where this mindset will lead. After all, with its history mired in conflict, some fear a revival of the aggressive characteristics that have repeatedly led it into wars—often with devastating consequences—will quietly re-emerge and take its citizens by surprise.

Will Germany ever be able to escape its past?

■ **CHEERING THE HOME TEAM:** German football supporters watch the 2010 FIFA World Cup semifinal match between Germany and Spain viewed live on a large-screen monitor in Berlin, Germany (July 7, 2010).

PHOTO: MATTHIAS KERN/GETTY IMAGES

Unexpected Position

In 2009, during the 60th anniversary of the founding of the Federal Republic of Germany, which formed after World War II, thousands flocked to the Brandenburg Gate, waving flags in support of their homeland. Patriotism resurged later that year at the 20th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall, and again in 2010 when Germany became one of the final four teams in the South Africa World Cup.

These nationalistic expressions demonstrate that the guilt associated with the country's checkered past continues to dissipate and a sense of unity is emerging in its place. Germans once again take pride in their country and its successes: Germany is the fifth largest economy in the world by GDP and the largest in Europe. The world's second-largest exporter, the country generates an annual trade surplus of \$200 billion. Its brands—Mercedes Benz, Volkswagen, Porsche, BMW, Puma, Bayer, T-Mobile, DHL—span the world. “Made in Germany” is widely seen as a mark of excellence.

The country's financial prudence has positioned it as Europe's problem-solver. When the continent became economically ill, it was Germany that supported the trillion-dollar bailout package—taking responsibility for \$652 billion of it—which saved several countries from complete collapse.

And it is Germany that continues to spearhead the effort to prop up the failing economies of Greece, Portugal, Spain and Ireland—placing Deutschland among the most influential European powers.

Because of its fiscal stability and reputation as a nation that fomented ideals of peace and human dignity, the country was elected as a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council in 2010.

Clearly, Germany is ascendant, and many citizens and politicians believe its outlook is bright.

Rapid Recoveries

The German nation's revived optimistic attitude sharply divides those who want



■ **BERLIN, GERMANY:** Throngs of people celebrate at the Brandenburg Gate on the 20th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall (Nov. 9, 2009).

PHOTO: JEFF KRAVITZ/GETTY IMAGES

the country to be free from the shame of its tumultuous history, and those who never want to forget past mistakes—or else be in danger of repeating them.

During the 2010 World Cup, a Lebanese-born shopkeeper who fled to Germany 20 years ago hung a 70-foot German flag outside his store to support the national team. To his chagrin, instead of receiving support for his

actions, the flag was repeatedly torn down.

“Police suspect the culprits are members of Berlin's radical leftist scene,” *The Wall Street Journal* reported. “For them, the enormous flag is nothing less than a provocation, a repugnant display of German nationalism.”

Although Germany faces ideological challenges, the nation has never

been known to take anything sitting down. Throughout its history, it has met and overcome whatever hardships that have come its way with efficiency and forthrightness. This has repeatedly allowed the Deutsch people to recover from devastating circumstances.

In the 1920s, the economy slipped into depression after defeat in World War I, but by the late 1930s, the nation had rallied to again become a major power. After the second world war, when its cities lay in ruins and its shattered citizens queued in long lines for food rations, it was widely felt that Germany would not rise again for a long time, particularly since it was divided into two nations: democratic West Germany and Soviet-ruled East Germany. Yet within 20 years, West Germany underwent a stunning revival, with Berlin, Frankfurt, Munich and Bonn becoming prosperous modern cities with little evidence of previous destruction.

At the end of the Cold War in 1989, the nation faced the daunting prospect of reunification, with many assuming it would take many decades for it to reintegrate beleaguered communist East Germany. Once again, skeptics are being proven wrong, as the once-bankrupt East has not stopped the nation from becoming a major world player.

In every instance, the industrious and efficient Germans prevailed. Unlike other war-torn nations, the country quickly found itself back on its feet. Stores were re-established, restaurants reopened, factories restarted, and national pastimes reinstated.

Turning Tide?

Yet Germany's ability to bounce-back does not tell the whole story. In almost all instances, the reason the country was in shambles was due to conflicts it had started.

Throughout history, the nation has repeatedly clashed with others, frequently using questionable means to achieve its goals—especially in times of economic crisis.

After each war, Germany said, "Never again." And for the past nearly



■ **NATIONAL PRIDE:** German flags and postcards are displayed in Berlin during a celebration marking 20 years since the reunification of East and West Germany (Oct. 1, 2010).
PHOTO: SEAN GALLUP/GETTY IMAGES

70 years, it has carefully avoided any hint of repeating the events of WWII. But as financial turmoil grips Europe, the country is being forced to take a leading role—a move which has caused some to worry that trends from Germany's harsher past will begin to re-emerge.

While the nation assisted its European counterparts with billions in bailout funds, it led to growing resentment from Germans fed up with shouldering others' fiscal mismanagement, prompting German Chancellor Angela Merkel to suggest that financially irresponsible countries be removed from the eurozone.

Germans are also becoming more vocal about once-taboo subjects, with some openly expressing hostility toward immigrants in their nation, clamoring for its 7 million foreign-born citizens—4.3 million of which are Muslim—to return home.

According to a survey by the Frederick Ebert Foundation reported in *Der Spiegel*, one-third of Germans think the nation "is in serious danger of being overrun by foreigners." One-third believe that "foreigners have come to take advantage of the welfare state" and that when jobs are scarce, "foreigners should be sent back to their own country." One-sixth feel "Jews have too much influence,"

while more than half want the practice of Islam to be restricted, even though it would violate the country's constitution. The poll also found that more than one-tenth would like a "Führer" who would govern the country "with a firm hand"!

After years of grappling with immigration problems, Ms. Merkel recently said the concept of multiculturalism in Europe was dead, as printed in a *Daily Mail* article: "At the beginning of the 60s our country called the foreign workers to come to Germany and now they live in our country. We kidded ourselves a while, we said: 'They won't stay, sometime they will be gone.' But this isn't reality."

The article later stated, "The ratcheting up in the political tone, allied as it is with the fears of the population about unemployment and loss of identity, triggered a sharp warning from Jewish leaders in Germany that democracy is under threat."

Tensions further escalated after a board member of Germany's federal bank released a controversial book arguing that the failure of immigrants to integrate into society is dumbing down the country—meaning that an unwillingness to identify with German culture has caused a language and education barrier that hinders economic and cultural progress.

“His message has struck a chord among a middle class fearful of declining educational standards and among unskilled workers who are nervous about lower-paid immigrant competition,” *Foreign Policy* magazine reported, adding, “Since the World War II, xenophobic rhetoric has been barred, both by law and custom. Yet on the German street, resentment about foreigners smoldered, especially so during the Balkan wars of the 1990s when hundreds of thousands of Bosnians and Kosovars arrived in the country... Homegrown Germans, still reeling from the costs of unification, watched aghast, and some of their pent-up frustration is being vented now.” Polls indicate that if the book’s author formed a political party, it would get at least 15 percent of the vote.

Other politicians have entered the fray. Bavaria Premier Horst Seehofer called for an end to immigration, stating in the *Guardian* that Germany should “deal with the people who already live here” and “get tougher on those who refuse to integrate.”

Familiar Stance

Nationalism, tough talking, fringe groups calling for foreigners to be deported, intolerance and xenophobia have been frequent throughout the nation’s history. To address these and other social troubles, particularly during economic downturns, Germany often places trust in a strong leader to guide it.

Although this approach culminated in the Third Reich under Adolf Hitler, it has happened numerous times before in the nation’s past, including during the eighth century, when a powerful Franco-Germanic kingdom was established. Leaders of this empire considered themselves “defenders of the faith,” as they successfully stopped a Muslim incursion into the continent.

The empire gave way to the rise of Charles the Great—known to the French as Charlemagne and the Germans as Karl de Grosse. This powerful king immediately undertook several military campaigns, which united Western Europe.

Following Charles’ death, Europe fell into disarray and economic despair. After years of chaos, German Otto the Great came to power in AD 936. He was asked by Pope John XII to restore order and defend the church. For his efforts, the grateful pontiff crowned him “Holy Roman Emperor.” This officially united church and state, giving birth to “The Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation”—the First Reich—which officially lasted until the renunciation of the imperial title in 1806.

It was not until several decades before the first world war, when Germany and Italy united from 1871 to 1918, that the Second Reich occurred.

In Wolfgang Benz’s book *A Concise History of the Third Reich*, he states of this time, “The great power politics of Germany’s second Reich led to the First World War, which Germany entered with illusions of winning a glorious victory... The general goal was to weaken France enough to prevent it from rising again as a great power, and to push Russia far eastward. Other goals included annexation of large tracts of French and Belgian territory, France’s economic dependence on Germany, subordination of Belgium and the Netherlands to German rule, and annexation of Luxembourg.”

“The collapse of the empire in the revolution of November 1918 became a national trauma, characterized externally by territorial losses, oppressive reparations, a loss of status, and military impotence. At home Germans failed to understand the defeat, regarding it as a humiliation and national disgrace. The military defeat and its aftermath triggered the longing for new German greatness in a Third Reich.”

Following its defeat in WWI, Germany made its first attempt at democracy through the Weimar Republic. The system failed miserably, ultimately leaving a record 6 million people unemployed.

With its economy failing and its pride damaged, Germany’s Nazi party and chosen leader, Adolf Hitler, seized the reins of the country promising to establish a 1,000-year Third Reich of

peace and one world government. All hopes were dashed as the Nazis resorted to brutal means, sanctioning the deportation and execution of more than 6 million Jews, along with other “undesirables.” At the end of the war, the German fatherland was again brought to its knees.

Perplexing Nation

This gifted, talented country has been somewhat of an enigma. On one hand, it is a nation of intelligent, high-spirited individuals known for their festivals, quality engineering, unparalleled organization and musical heritage. On the other, it has perpetrated some of the most heinous acts of cruelty and barbarity the world has ever seen.

This peculiar paradox was noted by German writer Johann Wolfgang von Goethe: “I have often felt a bitter pain at the thought that the German people, so honourable as individuals, should be so miserable as a whole” (*The Life and Works of Goethe*).

It has also often been illustrated through motion pictures and books, as well as mused upon by various world leaders trying to understand the nation’s mentality.

In *The Germans: Double History of a Nation*, author Emil Ludwig writes, “The Romans no more than the Franks or the Italians—indeed, not a single neighbor of the Germans—could ever trust the Germans to remain peaceable. No matter how happy their condition, their restless passion would urge them on to ever more extreme demands.”

Even in the 1943 British film, “The Life and Death of Colonel Blimp,” one character, seeing WWI German officers in a prisoner-of-war camp quietly listening to orchestral music, observed, “I was thinking, how odd they are, queer. For years and years they are writing and dreaming of beautiful music and beautiful poetry. All of a sudden they start a war: they sink undefended ships, shoot innocent hostages, and bomb and destroy whole streets in London, killing little

Please see **GERMANY**, page 24

THE TRUTH ABOUT CHRISTMAS

The word “Christmas” triggers fond memories of family, gift-giving, decorations, music, cherished traditions and sentiments of “peace and goodwill toward all.” Yet this holiday, with all its customs, predates Jesus’ birth by thousands of years!

BY DAVID C. PACK

I GREW UP KEEPING Christmas, and it was a big event in our family every year. We left out none of the usual trimmings of this occasion. On Christmas Eve, excitement grew with every passing minute. After going to bed, I could neither sleep nor wait until morning to see all that “Santa” had brought me.

Christmas certainly *felt* wonderful to me. I trusted what my parents told me. I had no reason to doubt them. I was not taught to question where Christmas came from—or what *God* says about it.

Few professing Christians are aware that nearly all aspects of Christmas observance have their roots in Roman custom and religion. Notice the following admission from a large American newspaper, *The Buffalo News*: “The earliest reference to Christmas being marked on Dec. 25 comes from the second century after Jesus’ birth. It is considered likely the first Christmas celebrations *were in reaction to the Roman Saturnalia*, a harvest festival that marked the winter solstice—the return of the sun—and honored Saturn, the god of sowing. Saturnalia was a rowdy time, *much opposed by the more austere leaders among the still-minority Christian sect*. Christmas developed, one scholar says, as a means of replacing worship of the *sun* with worship of the *Son*. By AD 529, after Christianity had become the official state religion of the Roman Empire, *Emperor Justinian* made Christmas a civic holiday.” It continues, “The celebration of Christmas reached its peak—some would say its worst moments—in the medieval period when it became a time for conspicuous consumption and unequaled revelry” (emphasis added throughout article).

Think. It was *300 years* after Christ when the *Roman church* began keeping Christmas!—and not until hundreds of years after this that it was mandated to be kept throughout the empire as an official festival honoring “Christ.”

Consider these admissions from the *Catholic Encyclopedia*, under “Christmas”: “Christmas was *not* among the earliest festivals of the Church...the first evidence of the feast is *from Egypt*.” Further, “Pagan customs centering around the January calends [the early days of each month] gravitated to Christmas.” Under the topic “Natal Day,” Origen, an early Catholic writer, admitted, “...In the Scriptures, no one is recorded to have kept a feast or held a

great banquet on his birthday. It is *only sinners* (like Pharaoh and Herod) who make great rejoicings over the day in which they were *born* into this world.”

The *Encyclopedia Americana* reveals, “Christmas...was not observed in the first centuries of the Christian church, since the Christian usage in general was to celebrate the *death* of remarkable persons rather than their *birth*...a feast was established in memory of this event [Christ’s birth] *in the fourth century*. In the fifth century the Western Church *ordered* the feast to be celebrated *forever* on the *day of the Mithraic rites of the birth of the sun and at the close of the Saturnalia*, as no certain knowledge of the day of Christ’s birth existed.”

Stunning information! I ask: do you care?

Most aspects of Christmas are not referred to in the Bible. Of course, the reason is that they are not from God—they are not part of the way He wants people to worship Him. The Christmas tree, however, *is* mentioned in the Bible! Take a moment to read Jeremiah 10, verses 2-5. This description of the modern Christmas tree is plain. God directly refers to it as “the way of the heathen.” Just as directly, He commands His people to, “Learn not the way of the heathen,” calling these customs “*vain*.”

The most common justification one will hear regarding Christmas is that people have *replaced* old pagan intents and customs by asserting that they are now “focusing on Jesus.” I have heard many say they are “honoring Christ” in their Christmas-keeping. The problem is that *God* does not say this is acceptable to Him! *He plainly commands against it!* Keeping Christmas *dishonors* Christ! He considers everything about it to be an abomination.

Jesus made a stunning statement in Matthew: “But in *vain* they do worship Me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men” (15:9). Christmas is not a command of God—it is a tradition of men!

God plainly commands, “Learn not the way of the heathen.” But most people do not fear God, and He allows them to make their own decisions. Human beings are free moral agents—free to learn or not learn what God instructs—free to obey or disobey Him!

To learn more sobering facts about the origin of Christmas, watch *The World to Come* broadcast “Christmas Unveiled—What God Says!” at www.worldtocome.org. □



ANOTHER KOREAN WAR?

ON NOV. 23, 2010, NORTH KOREA fired artillery upon Yeonpyeong Island in the Yellow Sea, just 75 miles west of Seoul, shelling a marine base and a civilian village, setting several houses ablaze, injuring 18 troops and three civilians, and killing two South Korean marines and two civilians. A day earlier, Seoul had refused North Korea's demand to halt military exercises in the area.

BBC News reported, "Pyongyang claims that it returned fire after South Korean marines on the island opened fire first, refusing to cease even when the North protested via telephone (itself, an unusual step)."

Despite a mutually declared ceasefire in 1953, North and South Korea remain technically at war.

Der Spiegel described this latest incident: "The most serious flare-up of violence since the end of Korean hostilities in 1953 has set Western teeth on edge and spurred a round of

diplomatic head-scratching." The editorial then asked, "What does North Korea want?"

Pyongyang remains defiant, warning that joint United States-South Korean military exercises, such as those that took place 70 miles from the latest bombing, could push the Korean Peninsula to the brink of war.

Eight months earlier, in late March, a South Korean warship traveling near disputed waters mysteriously split in two and sank, killing 46 sailors. An international investigation concluded that a North Korean submarine had torpedoed the ship, which Pyongyang vehemently denied. South Korea petitioned the United Nations to condemn North Korea. The UN Security Council condemned the sinking, but did not blame the North Korean government. It is believed that China blocked attempts to blame Pyongyang.

Lately, relations had begun to improve between the North and South, with Pyongyang allowing South Koreans to meet with family members living in the North, and Seoul sending rice to its northern neighbor for the first time in two years.

■ **SEEKING REVENGE:** Members of the South Korean Marine Corps Veterans Association burn a North Korean flag during a rally in Seoul commemorating the two marines killed in a North Korean artillery barrage four days earlier on Yeonpyeong Island (Nov. 27, 2010).

PHOTO: CHUNG SUNG-JUN/GETTY IMAGES

Washington, Seoul React

The White House is calling on the international community to pressure North Korea. U.S. President Barack Obama told Barbara Walters of *ABC News*, “We strongly condemn the attack and we are rallying the international community to put pressure on North Korea.”

According to *The Associated Press*, South Korea said it would strengthen its forces in the disputed waters, while Pyongyang warned of more military strikes if the South encroached on the maritime border by “even 0.001 millimeter.”

Germany reaffirmed its support of South Korea and condemned North Korea’s shelling “in the strongest possible terms” (*Der Spiegel*). A spokesman for German Chancellor Angela Merkel told reporters, “North Korea is endangering peace in the region with these attacks.”

The United Kingdom also publicly condemned North Korea.

Elsewhere, China’s Foreign Ministry spokesman Hong Lei expressed concern, urging both Pyongyang and Seoul to “do more to contribute to peace and stability in the region” (*BBC News*).

Past Border Incidents

In the last 10 years, the North Korean government has intruded upon the North-South border and engaged in numerous other controversial incidents, as documented in the *Congressional Research Service*:

■ **Feb. 1, 2000:** In Yanbian, China, two North Korean agents kidnap a South Korean-American citizen, according to South Korea’s National Intelligence Service.

■ **Oct. 2000:** Pyongyang warns that if Seoul attempts to brand the North as sponsoring terrorism in regard to the 1983 terrorist bombing in Rangoon, Myanmar, this would amount to a provocation against North Korea.

■ **April 9, 2001:** North Korean patrol boats briefly enter South Korean waters, and retreat after being challenged by the South Korean Navy. Another border breach is repeated

the next day. Similar breaches occur February 5 and March 3.

■ **May 27, 2001:** Breaching the contested Northern Limit Line (NLL) northwest of Paekryung Island in the Yellow Sea, a North Korean patrol boat stays for 47 minutes before returning to the North.

“North Korea does not recognize the western maritime border drawn unilaterally by the U.N. at the close of the conflict, and the Koreans have fought three bloody skirmishes there in recent years. But this clash follows months in which tensions have steadily risen to their worst levels since the late 1980s, when a confessed agent for North Korea bombed a South Korean jetliner, killing all 115 people aboard” (*AP*).

To prevent naval clashes off the Korean Peninsula’s west and east coasts, UN Command drew a maritime border—the NLL—at the end of the 1950-53 Korean War, weeks after the armistice between the communist North and democratic South was signed. The truce did not directly mention sea borders. North Korea took issue with the NLL in 1973, when it began violating the sea border in dispute of its validity. A 1991 agreement reaffirmed non-aggression and recognized the political sovereignty of both North and South.

In the 1990s, Pyongyang once again disputing the NLL, claimed its border should lie far south. A North Korean patrol boat violated the NLL in 1999 by as much as six miles, returning home after a deadly gunfight. South Korea says that the violation took place as

Military Forces

The majority of North and South Korea’s active-duty forces are stationed within 40 mi. (65 km) of the demilitarized zone (DMZ).

PERSONNEL	North Korea	South Korea
Active duty	1.1 million	692,000
Army	950,000	560,000
Navy	46,000	68,000
Air Force	110,000	64,000
Reserves	4.6 million	3.0 million
EQUIPMENT		
Tanks	3,500	2,310
Submarines	26	14
Fighter planes	525	430
Missiles	About 50	310

Source: Global Security

© 2010 MCT

North Korea cracked down on Chinese fishing boats operating nearby.

■ **June 4, 2001:** The *Korea Herald* reports that three North Korean cargo vessels crossed into South Korea’s territorial waters, returning to international waters the next day after being challenged by South Korean naval vessels.

■ **July 6, 2001:** A North Korean patrol boat crosses the NLL by two nautical miles and stays for some 40 minutes before returning to territory.

■ **Sept. 17, 2001:** During Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi’s summit in Pyongyang with Kim Jong Il, the North Korean leader apologizes for his country having kidnapped 11 Japanese citizens in the 1970s and 80s.

■ **Nov. 18, 2001:** A North Korean patrol boat crosses the NLL, intruding almost two nautical miles into South Korean waters for 36 minutes.

■ **Nov. 27, 2001:** North Korean soldiers fire three rounds at a South Korean guard post, leading soldiers from the South to respond with gunfire. No one is injured.

■ **Dec. 22, 2001:** Japan’s Coast Guard chases and exchanges gunfire with a North Korean vessel—reportedly a “spy ship”—after it ignores a warning to stay out of Japan’s 200 nautical mile exclusive economic zone.

■ **Jan. 5, 2002:** A North Korean patrol boat briefly infiltrates South Korean waters off Yeonpyeong island.

■ **March 13, 2002:** The Guinea-Bissau Navy discovers a stash of sub-machine guns and ammunition aboard the North Korean ship Golden Like, which manages to escape.

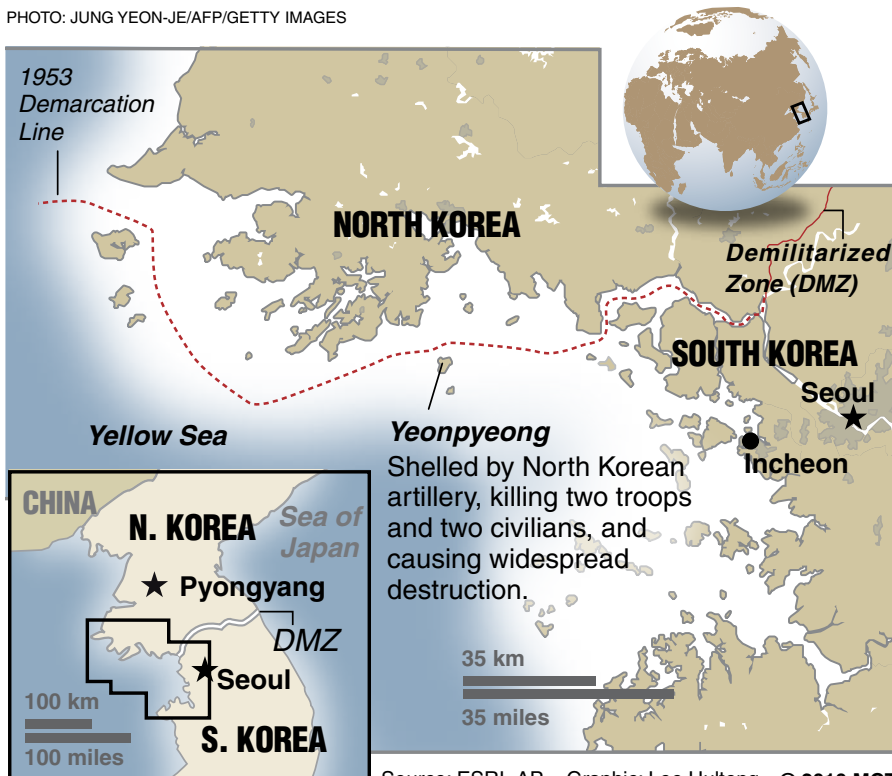
■ **June 29, 2002:** North Korean patrol boats cross the NLL and fire upon a South Korean patrol boat. Four South Koreans and an undetermined number of North Koreans are killed.

■ **Oct. 17, 2002:** The U.S. State Department reveals that during meetings in Pyongyang, the North Korean government admitted its pursuit of a nuclear weapons development program.

■ **Oct. 22, 2002:** Under pressure to scrap its nuclear weapons program, Pyongyang warns the U.S. that North



■ **IRE RAISED:** Former South Korean marines wave national flags during a rally in downtown Seoul denouncing North Korea's attack on Yeonpyeong island (Nov. 27, 2010).
PHOTO: JUNG YEON-JE/AFP/GETTY IMAGES



Korea will take unspecified “tougher counteraction” if Washington does not accept talks on the issue.

■ **Dec. 11, 2002:** Allied forces stop a North Korean ship in the

Persian Gulf en route to Yemen and find it to be secretly carrying Scud missiles. The ship is released after Yemen confirms the missiles are for its army.

■ **Dec. 26, 2002:** North Korea moves 1,000 nuclear fuel rods into the Yongbyon nuclear power plant.

■ **Jan. 10, 2003:** North Korea announces it will immediately withdraw from the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty because the United States “most seriously threatened” the country.

■ **Jan. 11, 2003:** The North Korean Ambassador to China says Pyongyang no longer feels bound by the 1999 missile test moratorium.

■ **Feb. 5, 2003:** North Korea announces it reactivated its five-mega-watt nuclear reactor at Yongbyon, enabling it to produce enough material for a nuclear bomb in a year.

■ **Feb. 18, 2003:** Claiming a blockade against it would violate Article 15 of the armistice, North Korea accuses the U.S. of plotting an attack against it, and threatens to abandon the 1953 armistice if Washington imposes trade sanctions.

■ **Feb. 19, 2003:** A North Korean fighter jet briefly crosses seven miles into South Korean airspace. In response, the South Korean air force sends six fighter planes and puts ground-to-air missiles on alert.

■ **Feb. 24, 2003:** North Korea test fires a short-range anti-ship missile into the Sea of Japan just a few hours before a ceremony inaugurating South Korea's newly elected president.

■ **March 2, 2003:** In international airspace over the Sea of Japan, four North Korean fighter jets intercept a U.S. Air Force reconnaissance plane.

■ **March 10, 2003:** North Korea fires a Silkworm ground-to-ship non-ballistic missile into the Sea of Japan.

■ **April 10, 2003:** North Korea withdraws from the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

■ **May 29, 2003:** A U.S. lawmaker reports that during his visit to North Korea, leaders there “admitted to having nuclear capability” as well as trying to “expand their nuclear production program.”

■ **July 8, 2003:** While meeting in New York, the North Korean Ambassador to the United Nation tells the U.S. State Department's envoy for North Korean affairs that Pyongyang



■ **WAR GAMES:** U.S. Navy crew members work while an F-18 Super Hornet strike fighter plane takes off from the USS George Washington aircraft carrier during joint U.S.-South Korea military exercises off the west coast of the Korean Peninsula (Nov. 29, 2010).

PHOTO: LEE JONG-GEUN-KOREA-POOL/GETTY IMAGES

finished reprocessing all 8,000 spent nuclear fuel rods stored at its Yongbyon complex.

■ **July 17, 2003:** North and South Korean soldiers exchange gunfire in the demilitarized zone (DMZ).

■ **Aug. 23, 2003:** The South Korean Navy fires warning shots after a North Korean naval vessel crosses the NLL.

■ **Oct. 3, 2003:** The North's *Korean Central News Agency* reports that all of the communist nation's nuclear facilities are fully operational, adding that "all the technological matters have been solved fully in the process of making a switch-over in the use of plutonium."

■ **Oct. 10, 2003:** According to a spokesman for South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff, North Korea test fired a surface-to-ship missile as part of its annual military exercises.

■ **Nov. 24, 2003:** South Korean naval vessels fire five warning shots when a North Korean patrol boat breaches the NLL.

■ **May 23, 2004:** *The New York Times* reports that inspectors for the International Atomic Energy Agency discovered evidence of North Korea selling nearly two tons of uranium hexafluoride—a necessary element for making an atomic bomb—to Libya in 2001.

■ **Aug. 8, 2004:** North Korean agents operating along the Chinese border kidnap a former North Korean

refugee who also held a South Korean passport.

■ **Sept. 12, 2004:** Sources in Seoul and Beijing report seeing a huge mushroom cloud in North Korea on the anniversary of the founding of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Claiming the cloud resulted from a detonation associated with a hydroelectric dam, North Korea transports foreign ambassadors to the area for a visual inspection. However, they are brought to a site 60 miles away from where the cloud was reported. South Korean authorities later say the incident may have been a cloud formation.

■ **Nov. 1, 2004:** South Korean patrol boats fire warning shots at three North Korean patrol boats that twice breach the NLL.

■ **Feb. 10, 2005:** The North Korean Foreign Ministry releases a statement confirming that North Korea has "manufactured nuclear weapons for self-defense" and will "suspend participation in the Six-Party Talks for an indefinite period."

■ **April 21, 2005:** South Korea sentences an ethnic Korean from China, allegedly a North Korean agent, to 10 years in prison for his role in abducting a missionary who had worked with North Korean refugees there.

■ **May 1, 2005:** North Korea test fires a short-range missile into the Sea of Japan.

■ **June 5, 2005:** According to the *San Jose Mercury News*, a Stanford University professor returning from his 11th trip to North Korea says that senior North Korean officials told him Washington is trying to goad them into a nuclear test to sour their ties with China and South Korea, and that North Korea has restarted construction of its 50-megawatt and 200-megawatt reactors, which had been suspended under a 1994 treaty between North Korea and the U.S.

■ **June 30, 2005:** A newspaper reports that North Korea returned to constructing a 50,000-kilowatt reactor in Yongbyon and a 200,000-kilowatt reactor in Taechon, violating a 1994 agreement with the U.S.

■ **March 10, 2006:** North Korea test fires two short-range missiles.

■ **July 4, 2006:** Defying international pressure, North Korea test fires six missiles into the Sea of Japan, including a long-range missile capable of reaching the continental U.S.

■ **July 5, 2006:** North Korea launches yet another missile.

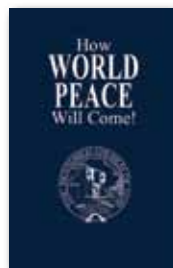
Establishing True and Lasting Peace

The absence of war does not mean peace, as seen by decades-long hostility between the two Koreas. To settle the grievances between the peoples of these nations, something must change.

American General Douglas MacArthur, who presided over the troops at the start of the Korean War, realized that modern warfare could never bring peace. While attending the signing of Japan's surrender in 1945, he stated, "Men since the beginning of time have sought peace" but have always failed. He concluded that to truly solve the problems of war, man would have to change human nature itself.

He was more right than he could ever know.

To learn why, read David C. Pack's booklet *How World Peace Will Come!* □



TRUE SUCCESS!

What Holds You Back?

**Many search for success, but never find it.
What determines achievement or failure?**

BY GREG E. KAIDANNEK

PEOPLE OFTEN FIND it difficult to push themselves to achieve short-term goals, let alone lifelong dreams. Perhaps it is learning a new skill, such as woodworking, speaking a second language or sewing. Or using the skates, skis or snowboard that sit idly in the house alongside unfinished projects. Not to mention the treadmill bought last winter that collects dust in the basement, while dreams of six-pack abdominal muscles and a marathon-race physique fade with the personal fitness goals that accompany them.

Whether it is a job, athletics or a personal hobby, many never reach the goals they set out to achieve. Disheartened and unfulfilled, they become disinterested and allow modern distractions to kidnap their focus. Attempting to explain the cause of unrealized health goals, McMaster University exercise psychology professor Kathleen Martin Ginis said that people “often start for the wrong reasons, and never found a good reason to continue” (*Maclean’s*).

This concept can also apply to other goals left unachieved throughout a lifetime. *The Miami Herald* reported that as many as 45 percent of people

use New Year’s Day to make resolutions and set goals—yet 97 percent never reach them. Of the 45 percent, research shows that 75 percent continue with their resolutions beyond the first week; of that number, only 46 percent make it past six months.

In an age in which opportunities abound, and there is access to near-limitless knowledge and technological advancement, what holds people back?

On the Job

An examination of the workplace reveals underlying problems: lack of motivation and unwillingness of employees to apply themselves wholeheartedly.

This is evidenced by the number of workers who mindlessly surf the Web or conduct personal business, via computer, during office hours. A 2005 Websense Inc. study reported that workplace Internet misuse cost American companies “more than \$178 billion annually in lost productivity.” According to the study, most of this time was spent reading news, checking personal email, completing online banking, exploring travel sites and shopping.

In addition, a 2009 *Telegraph* survey revealed that approximately \$2.25 billion are wasted yearly in Britain because of employee time on social networking sites, such as Twitter and Facebook. More than half of those surveyed spent an average of 40 minutes daily on these sites at work—a total of one week per employee, per year! When added together, this

amounts to over one-tenth of all employee time and salaries being stolen by those who cannot remain focused on the very jobs for which they are being paid!

“We are a kind of a generation who takes the easy way out unless it’s something we are really working towards,” one graduating Canadian student told her university newspaper, *The Daily Planet*. “For instance, I’m more likely to slack at my part time job where it’s just temporary, and apply myself whole heartedly when it matters, like my current internship.”

Some experts believe this thinking can be defeated by self-control.

“Learning self-control produces a wide range of positive outcomes,” Florida State University psychology professor Roy Baumeister said in *The New York Times*. “Kids do better in school, people do better at work. Look at just about any major category of problem that people are suffering from and odds are pretty good that self-control is implicated in some way.”

If the problem is self-control, do people today have less of it than years ago?

“There is research that shows people still have the same self-control as in decades past, but we are bombarded more and more with temptations,” University of Minnesota professor Kathleen Vohs stated in an editorial titled “Pumping Up the Self-Control in the Age of Temptations.” “Our psychological system is not set up to deal with all the potential immediate gratification.”

Destined for Success?

Others suggest that some people are just “born to be great” and therefore possess the ability to accomplish their goals, while others do not. Is this true?

In 1879, John D. Rockefeller, at the age of 40, controlled 90 percent of the world’s oil refining industry. Later, he founded Standard Oil, one of the world’s largest oil companies before the United States Supreme Court mandated its dissolution in 1911. By the time of his death, in 1937, Rockefeller’s estimated net worth was approximately \$1.4 billion—which would be about \$21 billion today.

Alexander Graham Bell invented the first telephone by age 29, in 1876, and later formed Bell Telephone Company. His scientific interest drove him to tackle other projects for airplanes, artificial respiration, desalinization and water distillation.

Pitching great Nolan Ryan wowed Major League Baseball fans with his blistering 100-mph fastball for a record 27 seasons. A World Series champion by age 22, he still holds the record for being the all-time leader in strikeouts and no-hitters.

Are such men genetically “destined for success”—or is there something more in their character that pushes them toward achievement?

Several researchers attempted to discover the answer. After studying the lives of 210 graduates from Hunter College Elementary School, an institution for intellectually gifted children, Rena Subotnik noticed that by “middle age they had become happy, prosperous, community-minded citizens. But they hadn’t aspired to achieve great things.” She concluded, “If we do want greatness, IQ is clearly not sufficient” (*Maclean’s*).

According to Daniel Goleman’s book *Emotional Intelligence*, by the time Harvard students from the 1940s reached middle age, “...the men with the highest test scores in college were not particularly successful compared to their lower-scoring peers in terms of salary, productivity, or status in their field. Nor did they have the greatest life satisfaction, nor the most happiness with friendships, family, and romantic relationships.”

Researchers have also discovered that success is not tied to natural talent. The results of a broad-based study that appeared in *Fortune* magazine covering topics ranging from athletics to music showed, “The evidence we have surveyed...does not support the [notion that] excelling is a consequence of possessing innate gifts.”

If not raw ability or natural intelligence, then what essential trait leads to success?

All-important Willpower

Accomplishing goals means being motivated beyond a desire to simply achieve. It requires developing the *will* to do it—and the character necessary to carry them out.

Consider. It is *willpower* that propels one to go to the gym after a full day’s work, or to get up every morning before sunrise and run two miles. It takes real inner strength to extinguish a highly addictive smoking habit.

Without drive, there would be no Nolan Ryans, Alexander Graham Bells, or John D. Rockefellers.

Yet willpower—drive—does not develop on its own. Similar to a muscle, willpower will atrophy and deteriorate if left unused. It must be exercised regularly to increase its strength. As with training a muscle, one cannot start by lifting heavy weights. Instead, he must gradually build up strength little by little through various exercises.

John D. Rockefeller stated in his book *Random Reminiscences of Men and Events*, “The man who starts out simply with the idea of getting rich won’t succeed; you must have a larger ambition.” He realized that succeeding in his goals could only happen through good old-fashioned hard work and a focused, burning desire to learn, grow and achieve—which requires drive.

What is drive? *Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary* defines it as “an impelling culturally acquired concern, interest, or longing.” Any individual who wants to achieve success must *drive* himself forward and never give up.

But if drive is so crucial to achieving success, where can one turn to learn how to develop such a powerful force?

The majority of people are unaware that there is a specific formula for success—and an instruction manual that teaches it—the Bible. Those willing to read it reap a wealth of information about how to achieve true, lasting success.

Solomon, the wisest and perhaps wealthiest man who ever lived, recorded many verses in the Bible about drive. If applied, these will yield lasting results.

Proverbs 10:4 states, “He becomes poor that deals with a slack hand: but the hand of the diligent makes rich.” No one would ever accuse John Rockefeller of being lazy. After all, how many self-made rich men increased their wealth without getting sweat on their brows?

Consider another: “See you a man diligent in his business? He shall stand before kings...” (Prov. 22:29). After his long illustrious career, Nolan Ryan was personally invited to join the U.S. president’s council on fitness and sports. His hard work caused others to take notice.

“The desire accomplished is sweet to the soul...” (Prov. 13:19). Imagine how Alexander Bell felt when he heard a voice come through a telephone receiver for the first time. Certainly, the feeling of accomplishment must have been sweet.

Press Forward

No doubt, achieving success is hard work. It takes willpower and motivation to accomplish goals.

Ecclesiastes 9:10 states, “Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, where you go.”

Take time now to make the most of each opportunity. Determine to stay focused. Whether in a career, a personal hobby, or simply fixing a broken sink handle, true success can be achieved!

Even though drive is essential, it is just one of *seven* principles needed to have true success.

To learn the other six—including the one overarching principle upon which the others are founded—read the booklet *The Laws to Success*. □



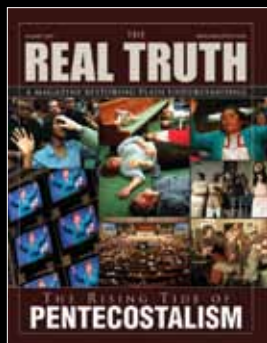
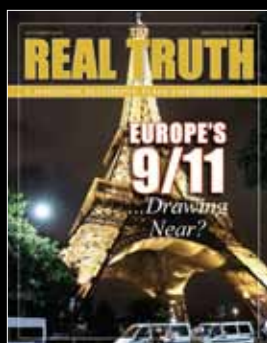
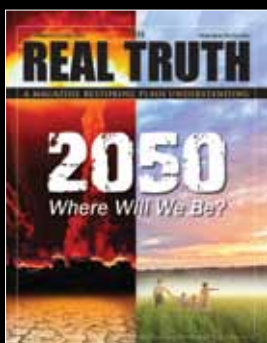
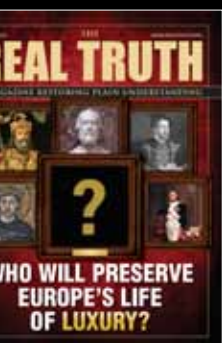
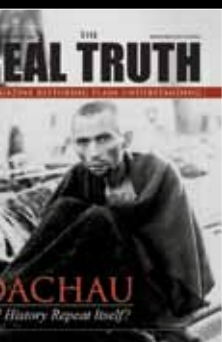
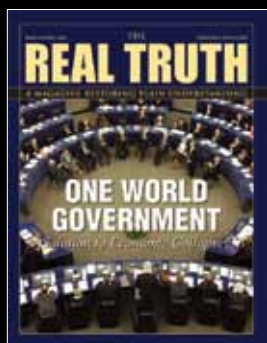
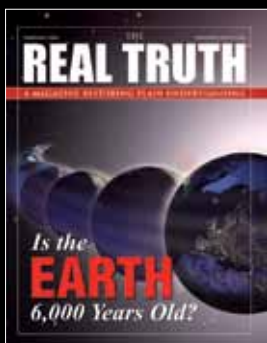
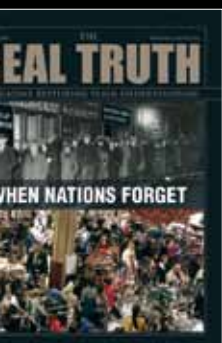
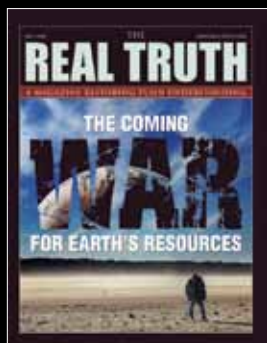
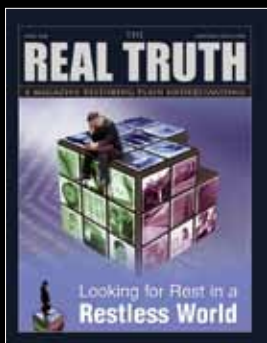
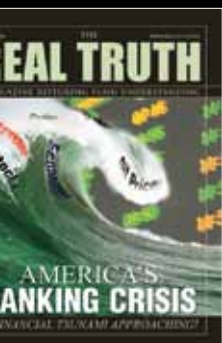
How This Magazine Is Sup

In a world awash with a variety of sources of information, *The Real Truth* cuts through the noise and biases of individuals, bringing answers—and hope! Who produces this singular



Supported

the opinions, ideas, theological publication, and why?



OFTEN LETTERS filled with questions find themselves on the desks of *The Real Truth* (RT) staff: *What is this magazine? What is its angle? Who supports it? How can it all be free? What is the catch?*

The RT not only details society's rampant problems, it also explains the solutions. Using the Bible as a lens to view world events is a perspective many find odd, spurring questions such as, *What does the Bible have to do with my life?*

Each issue of *The Real Truth* provides answers to today's troubles—and points to a time when mankind will enjoy great peace, abundance and prosperity, which gives this publication a purpose—and drive!—like no other.

In addition to its relevant content, this magazine is backed by a history of quality and excellence, as well as a loyal group of financial supporters.

World Events Explained

Bad news, as well as trivial *escapism* “news,” fill television screens and publications the world over. *The Real Truth* stands apart, bringing to light important issues of the day and explaining the *solutions* to these problems—how and why change will happen.

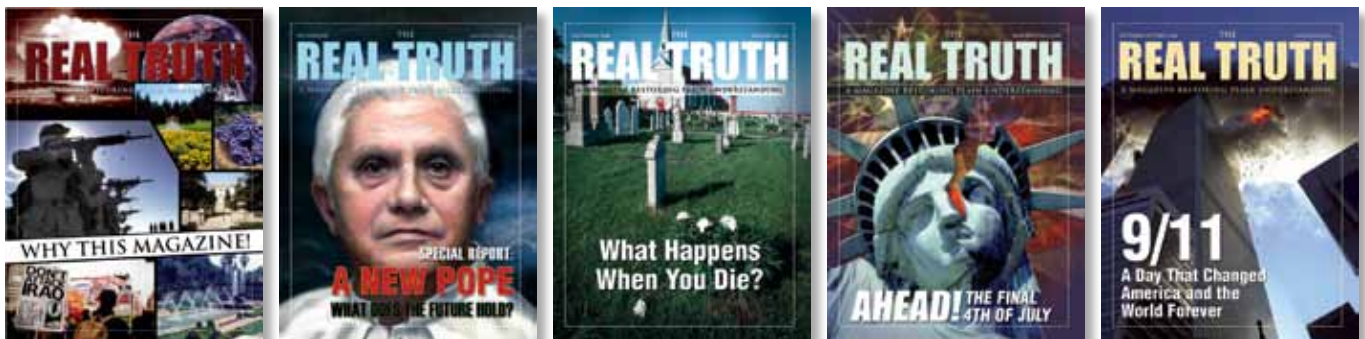
In addition, *The Real Truth* contains information on how to lead a more successful and fulfilling life.

Each issue covers a broad range of topics—articles explaining the *root cause* of war, what is wrong with the weather, what will come of events in Europe, why earth-

quakes are increasing, why science has failed to bring the utopia all long for, how and why racism and bigotry will soon disappear, where the world economy is going, what lies ahead for all nations, the value of right ethics, the definition of true character, the real cause of the moral crisis in the West, what is wrong with modern education, why so many seek escape and pleasure, the definition of true success, and much more.

In addition to addressing world trends, troubles and events, *The Real Truth* gives practical solutions to problems involving the family unit and how to properly rear children.

Other articles explain how the worldwide void of great leaders will be filled and how peace will come in our time, how to end all your financial worries, why new diseases are appearing and older ones are reappearing, and whether the



United Nations is the ultimate answer to the problems plaguing mankind.

The *RT* brings plain understanding and points to the lasting peace of a coming world, just over the horizon. We explain why there are thousands of differing, and disagreeing, forms of “Christianity,” and why religion has failed to solve the world’s great troubles.

The successor to *The Plain Truth* magazine, *The Real Truth* continues to tackle seemingly unanswerable topics, providing answers and solutions from a spiritual perspective.

How Can This Be Free?

The Real Truth magazine, which provides quality articles and up-to-date news briefs and analyses, is produced by The Restored Church of God (www.thercg.org), a non-profit organization devoted to practicing God’s way of life—the way of GIVE, of outgoing concern for others—versus the world’s way of GET, looking out for self first. The Restored Church of God (RCG) is dedicated to teaching Jesus Christ’s gospel—the good news of the kingdom of God (Mark 1:14-15)—to “all the world for a witness unto all nations” (Matt. 24:14).

This is how it is being accomplished:

- *The Real Truth* (with past issues accessible 24/7 at www.realtruth.org).

- *The World to Come* program (www.worldtocome.org), presented by David C. Pack, answers crucial ques-

tions facing mankind: Where is the world going?—Why is it filled with problems, troubles, evils and ills, causing unhappiness, confusion and misery of every kind?—What lies ahead?

- As the largest biblically based website on Earth, www.thercg.org offers a vast array of tools to guide people seeking plain answers to the greatest questions.

Following Christ’s instruction, “Freely you have received, freely give,” we offer everything free of charge.

Also, unlike other religious organizations, The Restored Church of God never solicits the public for financial support. Dedicated members, co-workers and donors voluntarily support this Work of preaching the gospel through tithes, offerings and donations. They recognize the abundant blessings promised by God to all who obey His financial law of tithing: “Bring you all the tithes into the storehouse,

that there may be meat in My house, and prove Me now herewith, says the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it” (Mal. 3:10; also read verses 8-9).

This magazine, through the publishing power of the Internet and other means, is spreading the gospel at a rate and efficiency the world has never seen. Every week, thousands of people now learn as much as they want, *when* they want. Every nation and territory has access to learning sound, proven principles, helping many to lead happier lives.

Christ commanded His disciples to “teach all nations... to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you” (Matt. 28:19-20). The RCG understands the need to spread a clear, *plain* and real message—to reach out to a struggling, suffering world. This magazine delivers that message!—the GOOD NEWS of the soon-coming kingdom of God—even to hard-to-reach nations such as Zimbabwe, Somalia, North Korea and others.

This age of competition, greed and strife will soon give way to the wonderful world tomorrow, which will be ruled by the government of God at Christ’s Return. This is the GOOD NEWS *The Real Truth* magazine is delivering month after month, and it is this message that a dedicated number of people are financially supporting.

To learn more, read *Here Is The Restored Church of God* and *Which Is the True Gospel?* □

What Did Jesus Say About Evolution?

Did man evolve? Or is he a created being? This debate has raged for years, and has left many Bible readers confused. Yet God's Word is clear on the subject.

BY JAMES F. TURCK

MEET ARDI. She was featured on the July 2010 *National Geographic* cover. According to scientists, this 4-million-year-old female, *Ardipithecus ramidus* (Ardi for short), is the oldest hominid skeleton—a look back in time along mankind's "evolutionary road." The previous year, the magazine published an article on Ardi that boasted, "Move over, Lucy. And kiss the missing link goodbye."

At the time, *Science* magazine proclaimed the find the "Breakthrough of the Year." Other publications produced detailed drawings of Ardi, how she looked and might have lived.

But there is disagreement in the scientific community. Was Ardi an early human or just an extinct ape? Primatologist Esteban Sarmiento questioned Ardi as a human ancestor in a comment in *Science*: "Molecular and anatomical studies rather suggest that [Ardi] predates the human/African ape divergence"—which supposedly occurred 3 to 5 million years ago.

Creationists bring even more criticism, reasoning there is not a complete skeleton of the hominid, and what has been found does not give enough detail to create artistic illustrations and extrapolations by scientists about how the

creature lived. Thus, they claim, the scientific community is grasping at evolutionary straws to fit their hypothesis Ardi is the missing link.

Adding a Link?

Scientists believe they discovered the oldest prehuman ancestor found to date, nicknamed "Ardi."

Theories on *Ardipithecus ramidus*

- Hominid species, a prehuman primate
- Lived 4.4 million years ago
- First fossils found in 1992; has taken 17 years to assess their significance

Opposable thumbs

No arched feet
Could not walk or run for long distances

110 lb. (50 kg)
4 ft. (120 cm)

Middle Awash study area

■ *Ardipithecus*

Bouri Peninsula
Yardi Lake

Source: Science. Illustrations by J.H. Matternes © 2009 MCT Graphic: Melina Yingling

Caught in the midst of this battle are Christians. They pick up their bibles and understand the account in Genesis: six days of Creation, and on the seventh, God rested. Yet leading scientific minds say mankind evolved—with this idea almost universally accepted, with numerous scientific articles having been written to support it.

So which is it? Does the Bible support a literal seven-day Creation or an evolutionary record?

Happy Medium?

In an effort to satisfy both sides of the debate, some try to merge the theory of evolution with the existence of a Creator God—devising a kind of “happy medium” position. This is often termed theistic evolution.

The book *The Creation-Evolution Controversy* defines this thinking: “... theistic evolution contends that abiogenesis (the spontaneous formation of life from chemicals) and evolution (amoeba to man through eons) have occurred, but a creator was instrumental in forming the initial matter and laws, and more or less guided the whole process.”

Theistic evolutionists believe God created the physical universe and all life found within it, but that biological evolution is a natural process within that creation. Simply put, they believe the God of the Bible did not create man *directly*, but rather created the matter and then *guided* the process of traditional evolution.

According to this view, the fossil record is proof of evolution—yet, since life is too complicated to have happened by itself, God must be behind it all. In a sense, it teaches that evolution is simply a tool God used to *develop* single-cell organisms into complex human life.

On the surface, this sounds plausible. One might even reason, *God is infinitely powerful. Why couldn't He use evolution if He wished or wanted?*

The best way to address this question is by examining the text of the Bible to see what God Himself has to say on the matter.

In the Beginning

The book of Genesis states, “In the beginning God created the heaven[s] and the earth” (1:1).

In another place the Bible declares, “By the Word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth... Let all the earth fear the Lord... For He spoke, and it was done; He commanded, and it [the earth] stood fast” (Psa. 33:6, 8-9).

Genesis states God created all life on Earth—plant, animal and human. He created sea creatures after their kind, birds after their kind and land animals after their kind (Gen. 1:20-25).

The Bible also records, “God *created* man in His own image, in the image of God created He him; male and female *created* He them” (Gen. 1:27) and, “The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul” (2:7).

Taken at face value, this account shows man did not evolve from lower life forms—he is a created being, made in the image and likeness of his Creator. He did not come from some primate that gradually “evolved” into man over eons of time. Rather, Genesis 1:31 states God created him at a *specific point in time*—within the finite period of the sixth day.

Here lies the problem with any form of theistic evolution. If the Creation account of Genesis—including Adam and Eve’s creation—was not a *literal* event that actually occurred—then it must be merely a metaphor, allegory or nice story. If this is true, then how many other biblical accounts are similarly fictional—including accounts of Jesus’ own life?

Proof Within

For some, the only way to settle this matter conclusively would be for Jesus Christ to appear and set the record straight. While this is not possible now, realize the Bible is filled with three-quarters of a million of God’s words, which each demonstrate His thinking on a host of subjects.

While the word *evolution* is not found anywhere in the Bible, a careful reader can understand the mind of God on the matter. In fact, during His ministry on Earth, Christ *did* comment on the authenticity of the Genesis Creation account.

Some 4,000 years after the recorded events of Genesis, Jesus stated of God, “Your Word is truth” (John 17:17). This is a reference to the books of the Old Testament, including Genesis. He called that record true—the truth!

Notice: “In the beginning was the Word [Jesus Christ], and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made (John 1:1-3).

Read the last part again: “All things”—including Adam and Eve—“were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made.”

God’s Word is either true or it is not!

Jesus confirmed the Genesis account in a confrontation with the Pharisees, the established religious leaders of the time, and certain other leading Jews. The Pharisees claimed they descended from Abraham—and Jesus did not disagree, saying, “I know that you are Abraham’s seed” (John 8:37). Christ acknowledged that this patriarch *did* exist, and by extension that his life story, recorded in Genesis, was not just a metaphor.

But Jesus went further. Although He recognized the Pharisees descended from Abraham, Christ stated that they did not do the “works of Abraham” (John 8:39), but were of “their father, the devil.” The account states, “You are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father you will do. He was a murderer *from the beginning...*” (vs. 44). Lost to most Bible readers is that Christ is actually validating the Creation account in His reference to Satan.

Jesus’ reference to Satan being a murderer *from the beginning* describes an event that happened

in the Garden of Eden very shortly after Adam and Eve's creation. Satan, in the guise of a serpent, deceived Eve into eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Gen. 3:1-6). Adam followed Eve and ate also. God had told Adam and Eve that if they ate from it, they would die (Gen. 2:17)—and they did (Gen. 5:5).

With this cunning act, Satan in a sense murdered the first human beings—making him a murderer from the *beginning*. Jesus was not confused or in doubt as to whether this event happened. He used it in declaring the source of the motives of those who sought to kill Him (John 8:40, 59).

In Matthew, Jesus Christ's genealogy is traced to Abraham: "The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham... So all the generations from *Abraham* to David are fourteen generations; and from David until the carrying away into Babylon are fourteen generations; and from the carrying away into Babylon unto *Christ* are fourteen generations" (1:1,17).

Luke records Jesus' genealogy *back to Adam*: "Jesus Himself began to be about thirty years of age, being (as was supposed) the son of Joseph, which was the son of Heli... the *son of Adam*, which was the *son of God*" (3:23, 38).

Think. Why would one of God's first-century servants have recorded this genealogy if Adam was never created, but had evolved? Also note that Adam was referred to as the "son of God," meaning he was "formed." Remember, God's Word is true (John 17:17).

What about other people recorded in Genesis? Did Jesus reference—validate—them?

First, notice Abel—Adam and Eve's second son: "That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous *Abel* unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias" (Matt. 23:35).

Jesus also mentioned Noah: "And as it was in the days of *Noah*, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man.

They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that *Noah* entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all" (Luke 17:26-27). Also see Matthew 24:37-39.

Additionally, note this reference to Lot: "Likewise also as it was in the days of *Lot*; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they built; but the same day that *Lot* went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all" (Luke 17:28-29).

New Testament Validates Genesis

The apostles Peter, Paul, John and Jude all reference events from the book of Genesis. Did they stretch the truth to prove a point, using fictional stories or allegories? Or did they hearken back to real people and events recorded in the inspired Word of God?

Peter referenced Noah, Lot, Sodom and Gomorrah—which are all people and places recorded in Genesis! Notice: "Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of *Noah*, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water" (I Pet. 3:20).

He mentioned them again in II Peter 2:5-7: "And spared not the *old world* [the ancient world in which Adam, Eve, Cain, Abel, Enoch and others lived], but saved *Noah* the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly; and turning the cities of *Sodom and Gomorrah* into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly; and delivered just *Lot*, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked."

Paul directly mentions Adam throughout his epistles: "For *Adam* was first formed, then Eve" (I Tim. 2:13-15). "Nevertheless death reigned from *Adam* to *Moses*" (Rom. 5:14). "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive" (I Cor. 15:22). These verses plainly endorse the Creation account!

In Hebrews 11, Paul references Adam's son Abel (vs. 4), Enoch (vs. 5), Noah (vs. 7), Abraham (vs. 8, 17), Sarah (vs. 11), Isaac (vs. 20), Jacob (vs. 20), and Joseph (vs. 22). Would he have mentioned these Bible figures if he did not believe the record of Genesis?

John wrote of Cain and Abel: "Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother [Abel]. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous" (I John 3:12).

Jude, Jesus Christ's brother, also confirmed the existence of Cain, Enoch (Noah's great grandfather) and Adam: "Woe unto them! For they have gone in the way of *Cain*" (Jude 11), and "*Enoch* also, the seventh from *Adam*, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints" (vs. 14). Here yet again is a *New Testament* servant referring to—and thereby *validating*—events of the Old Testament!

Two Options

When presented with proof of the validity of Genesis and of the Creation—not by evolutionary processes, but by a God who brought mankind into existence as wholly complete human beings—you must either accept the Bible for what it says or reject it completely.

King Solomon recorded in Proverbs that "*every Word* of God is pure..." (30:5). Christ further taught that man should live by "... *every Word* that proceeds out of the mouth of God" (Matt. 4:4). "Every Word"—Old Testament or New—means *every* word, including those of the book of Genesis.

This is an all or nothing proposition—there is no middle ground to stand on. Either you believe every word, or you might as well throw out the entire Bible!

The position that God did not create Adam—that he did not exist—makes Paul, John, Peter, Jude, even Jesus Christ, into liars.

You are left with a choice. Will you believe the biblical record? □



2010 MIDTERM ELECTIONS

AMERICA VOTES for CHANGE

But Is It the Right Kind?

Three times in relatively quick succession, United States voters sent its government a message: “We want change from the country’s current direction.” Each time, politicians and power-brokers seemed to interpret the message to their own liking. Could the problem lie with *everyone* and *everything* involved: the senders, the recipients—*and* the message itself?

BY BRUCE A. RITTER

MIDTERM ELECTION 2006: Having grown tired of politicians focusing almost exclusively on the war on terror, the American people voted and changed the leadership of Congress.

Two years later, the nation still appeared to be dissatisfied.

Presidential campaign 2008: When the harsh reality of the country’s economic woes—the U.S. was on the brink of fiscal meltdown—came to light just before the election, a majority of voters cleaved to the message of “hope and change.”



■ **WASHINGTON, D.C.:** The day after winning the midterm election, Republicans stand ready to take control of the House of Representatives (Nov. 3, 2010).

PHOTO: WIN MCNAMEE/GETTY IMAGES

After two years of high jobless rates and dire economic conditions, the nation remained frustrated.

Midterm Election 2010: After seeing politicians pass controversial legislation that roughly half the country either did not want or wanted more time to study, America voted for change yet again.

A Republican tsunami swept through the House of Representatives, changed the monopoly of power in the Senate, and seized gubernatorial state legislature seats. The political

map of the United States changed to right-wing red overnight, spotted with Democratic blue strongholds, mainly along the East and West coasts.

But is this the kind of change America truly needs?

Bleak Present

Over the past two years, America has passed several stimulus bills, believing it would keep the rising unemployment rate from soaring past 8 percent. Yet official unemployment shot to 10 percent—not counting those who have given up on finding a job. The actual jobless rate is much higher.

At street corners and highway on-ramps and off-ramps, panhandlers carry makeshift cardboard signs begging for money, food or work. This is not new. It is apparent by their ragged, world-weary appearance that most were down and out long before the Great Recession. Today, however, street beggars are far more noticeable, particularly in midsized cities, than 10 or even five years ago.

Among this growing tide of panhandlers is a new phenomenon: thirtyish and fortyish women, resembling soccer moms whose worlds have been turned upside down, holding homemade signs, which read “Lost Job, Need to Feed Kids!”—“Must Pay Rent!”—“Need help! About to Lose Home!” They shield their faces behind the signs, clearly embarrassed, perhaps wondering, *How did life come to this?*

Then there are the underemployed, those who have jobs, but barely earn enough to make ends meet. They work long hours for little pay, or only part-time because more hours are not available. And they survive on food stamps due to meager incomes.

Meanwhile, America tries to spend itself out of fiscal calamity. The balanced budget of the 1990s is a distant memory. In its place are trillions of dollars of national debt, government-owned car manufacturers, and “cash for clunkers” stimulus deals that essentially served as Band-Aids on cancer. And soaring inflation is appearing on the horizon. Think Greece. Think Zimbabwe. Think *disastrous future*.

Bleak Outlook

Despite voting for a change, 2010 midterm election exit polls revealed Americans are pessimistic the country’s situation will improve: “Voters expressed great unhappiness with national conditions and with the performance of the federal government,” Pew Research Center reported. “Half (50%) said they were very worried about economic conditions and another 36% were somewhat worried; most (62%) said the country was on the wrong track.”

A Rasmussen Reports exit poll offered similar figures: “Sixty-three percent (63%) of those who voted today are at least somewhat angry at the current policies of the federal government. That includes 42% who are Very Angry.”

In addition, the poll showed, “59% of Likely U.S. Voters think it is at least somewhat likely that most voters will be disappointed with Republicans in Congress before the next national elections. That includes 38% who say it is Very Likely.”

Yes, American voters are angry, frustrated, troubled—and scared. *Angry* because they feel no one is listening to them. *Frustrated* because the “hope and change” promised has failed to quickly materialize. *Troubled* because it is obvious to all, both within the nation and overseas, that the United States has reached its peak and is now sliding down from its pedestal as the world’s lone superpower. Millions wonder what this ultimately means for a nation long accustomed to being number one. And *scared* because with disappearing businesses, disappearing jobs, disappearing banks, home foreclosures, pressured employee buyouts, forced retirements, trillions of dollars in national debt, and runaway inflation hovering over the horizon—all while the economies of China and Europe are looking up—America’s future looks bleak.

People want *real* leaders with *real, lasting* solutions. Instead, what they see are politicians jockeying



■ **ELECTION DAY:** People cheer election results of the Republican Party gaining the majority vote in the U.S. House of Representatives at the Hyatt Regency Washington on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C. (Nov. 2, 2010).

PHOTO: ROD LAMKEY/GETTY IMAGES

for positions, each trying to prevent the other from gaining the upper hand. None address America’s underlying problems.

Missing Component

For the past 6,000 years, humanity has tried nearly every form of government imaginable: monarchies, communism, socialism, dictatorships, democracies, republics—and all have failed. Why?

Winston Churchill said in a 1947 House of Commons speech, “No one pretends that democracy is perfect or all-wise. Indeed, it has been said that democracy is the worst form of Government except all those other forms that have been tried from time to time...”

The United States was established as a democratic republic with checks and balances among three branches

of government: executive, legislative and judicial. For the American people, democracy ensures liberties for individuals. Each can choose for himself whether to pursue religion, any kind of religious belief—or reject it altogether. Democracies guarantee free choice.

This includes the pursuit—even to the extreme—of whatever titillates the five senses. Sadly, this is an age when virtually all bow down to an internal “god”: human nature. Many people think it is ludicrous to believe that God exists. And if He does exist, they do not want Him prying into *their* business.

Except, of course, when one learns that he has cancer and only six months to live—or when he is let go from a comfortable salary and has a family to feed and clothe, and a mortgage to pay. Then suddenly many become fervent “believers” (if only temporary). They

seek religion to know what God can do for *them*...not bothering to ask what He requires.

In his book *America and Britain in Prophecy*, David C. Pack, publisher and editor-in-chief of *The Real Truth* magazine and voice of *The World to Come* program, wrote, “Most people will not seek God unless forced to—unless severe trials or other circumstances *drive* them to God. During good times, most are happy to trust in their own strength, crediting themselves for their successes and achievements, when they may have had little to do with blessings that came to them. On the other hand, these same people generally *blame* God when things go wrong in their lives.

“But understand this. God does not and has never *owed* blessings to anyone. He may *choose* to bless abundance and a generous portion of God’s bounty.

“So it is with the peoples of America and Britain. God has bestowed to



■ **RALLYING SUPPORT:** U.S. President Barack Obama appears at a rally in Los Angeles, Calif., in an effort to boost enthusiasm among Democratic voters (Oct. 22, 2010).

PHOTO: DAVID MCNEW/GETTY IMAGES



■ **CASTING BALLOTS:** Nevadans cast ballots at South Reno Athletic Club in Reno to decide who they will elect to the U.S. Senate: GOP candidate Sharron Angle or Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (Nov. 2, 2010).

PHOTO: MAX WHITTAKER/GETTY IMAGES

them astonishing, unparalleled blessings beyond what any nation has ever enjoyed.

“But our peoples have neither been grateful for these birthright blessings, nor sought God, repenting of our national sins!”

Eager to seek a divine solution to their problems, most listen to ministers preaching, “God loves you” and, “Just give your heart to the Lord.”

Notice how God describes such religious leaders: “Her priests have *violated* My law, and have *profaned* My holy things: they have put no difference between the holy and profane, neither have they showed difference between the unclean and the clean, and have hid their eyes from My sabbaths, and I am profaned among them” (Ezek. 22:26).

Such false ministers teach traditions and commandments devised by

men (Mark 7:6-7, 9). They embrace religious holidays and celebrations of their own making, not God’s (Isa. 1:11-14).

Meanwhile, the secular mind, in its “wisdom,” worships at the altar of its own intellect, firmly believing that it can work out its own solutions.

Atheists, agnostics, sincere believers of humanly devised religions—all are deceived into thinking that they know how to live. Yet they are all wrong.

Human beings were created incomplete, lacking a vital, life-changing component. Science cannot discover it. This world’s many religions do not understand it. Yet, without this missing component, “it is not in man that walks to direct his steps” (Jer. 10:23)—and, “There is a way which seems right unto a man, but the end thereof

are the ways of death” (Prov. 14:12). Humanity gropes about for solutions in vain, because most will only listen to what they *want* to hear—not what they *need* to hear.

This spiritual blindness and self-deception permeates America, as well as the rest of the world. It fills the pages of human history. It is the reason that governments of men—along with manmade solutions to save them—are failing...and always will.

Thousands of years of man trying his own systems of government should have taught us this. Tragically, it has not.

There is only one government that will ultimately succeed—now just over the horizon!

Read *Why Man Cannot Solve His Problems* and *America and Britain in Prophecy* to learn more. □

GERMANY

Continued from page 6

children. And then they sit down in the same butcher's uniform and listen to Mendelssohn and Schubert."

No doubt, history reveals that Germany has two personalities—one congenial, the other warlike and aggressive—which have alternated throughout time. What makes the country so capable of incredible ingenuity, yet so prone to destruction?

Why the paradox?

"Germani"

How neighboring nations have viewed Germany begins to reveal the underlying character of its people.

Throughout the Roman Empire, a number of disunited Germanic tribes terrorized Europe with tactics of raiding and pillaging. Julius Caesar led multiple military campaigns to bring them under subjection. He was the first to label this people "Germani."

In time, the Vandals, the Heruli and the Ostrogoths—all Germanic tribes—would rule Europe.

By AD 455, the Vandals swept through Northern Africa, and eventually attacked and defeated the city of Rome. Their efficient use of piracy, raiding and pillaging still lives on today in the word "vandalize," which is derived from the tribe's name.

Twenty-one years later, the Heruli officially occupied Rome—making 476 the official date of the Roman Empire's fall.

The kingdom of the Ostrogoths (AD 493 to 554), a subset of the Goth peoples, replaced the Heruli.

Many etymology dictionaries trace the word "Germani" to Gaulish origins, claiming it means "neighbor" or "to cry" as in, "one who shouts in battle." Others note that the most used weapon of these peoples was the spear, and attest that the term comes from the Old High German word for spear, "ger," which put together means "spear-man."

The book *Surnames of the United Kingdom: A Concise Etymological Dictionary* promotes the idea that

Germani is probably from the Old High German *heri-man*, which literally means "army-man."

Other than "neighbor," these definitions—one who shouts in battle—spear men—army men—can be summed up into one word: *war-men*.

Yet it appears that no tribe used this name to describe the whole of Germania, and instead used either Teuton or Deutsch—both generally meaning "people." To truly understand the German nation, one must dig deeper into the past.

Footnotes of History

British lexicographer Sir William Smith (1813-1893) described the early Germans "as a people of high stature and of great bodily strength, with fair complexions, blue eyes, and yellow or red hair [the Celts were likely living among them at the time]...their chief offensive weapon was the *framea*, a long spear with a narrow iron point..."

He continues, "Their men found their chief delight in the perils and excitement of war. In peace they passed their lives in listless indolence, only varied by deep gaming and excessive drinking."

Most historians believe the Germans originated in Europe along the Baltic Sea, but are unclear as to where their peoples derive their ancient roots. Therefore, it is necessary to rely on the footnotes of the past to continue delving into the history of this nation.

Smith reveals a clue to their origin: "The Germans regarded themselves as indigenous in the country; but there can be no doubt that they were a branch of the great Indo-Germanic race, who, along with the Celts, migrated into Europe from the Caucasus and the countries around the Black and Caspian seas [modern-day Turkey], at a period long anterior to historical records."

Anthropologist Sir Leonard Woolley records in his book *The Sumerians* a strikingly similar tribe living in the same region: "To the north east of them, in the Zagros hills and across the plain to the Tigris, there lived a people of very different stock, fair-haired and speaking a 'Caucasian' tongue, a hill-

people akin to the Guti..." (Some historians equate the Guti with the Goths.)

Woolley continues, stating that after an attempt to take over the Tigris River valley, they "remained in what was afterwards Assyria..."

British ethnologist James Cowl Prichard found that the Greek historian Strabo recorded the same people living south of the Black Sea, whom he labeled the Cappadocians.

"'The Cappadocians,' [Strabo] says, 'of both nations,' meaning the people dwelling on Mount Taurus under that name, as well as the Cappadocians near Pontus, 'are termed to the present day Leuco-Syri, or White Syrians, by which term they are distinguished from other Syrians, who are of swarthy complexion [darker skin], dwelling to the southward of Mount Taurus.'"

Greek historian Apollonius called these people Assyrians, saying that they lived near the Halys River (modern-day Kizilirmak River), just south of the Black Sea.

In light of this link, to understand Germany's national character—and its future—one must then look to the ancient Assyrians.

Past Meets Present

While historical evidence offers competing theories on the origins of the Germans, the Assyria-Germany connection can be furthered by examining this early people's accomplishments, character and culture. While reading, think of how each could apply to the modern-day Teutonic nation.

■ The 1911 edition of *Encyclopaedia Britannica* states: "The Assyrian forces became a standing army, which, by successive improvements and careful discipline, was moulded into an irresistible fighting machine, and Assyrian policy was directed towards the definite object of reducing the whole civilized world into a single empire and thereby throwing its trade and wealth into Assyrian hands." Note the words "irresistible fighting machine" aimed at "reducing the whole civilized world into a *single empire*."

■ James McCabe's *The Pictorial History of the World* thorough-

ly describes the Assyrians, revealing more similarities to the modern Germans. They were “a fierce, treacherous race, delighting in the dangers of the chase in war. The Assyrian troops were notably among the most formidable of ancient warriors...”

■ “They never kept faith when it was to their interest to break treaties, and were regarded with suspicion by their neighbors in consequence of this characteristic” (ibid.). In 1939, Nazi Germany entered into a non-aggression treaty with Soviet Russia—WWII began a month later. Also, Poland had a standing non-aggression pact with Germany when it was invaded by Hitler’s army.

■ “In the organization and equipment of their troops, and in their system of attack and defence and their method of reducing fortified places, the Assyrians manifested a superiority to the nations by which they were surrounded” (ibid.). The design and engineering of German tanks and aircraft surpassed the allied troops in WWII. They pioneered missiles and the jet engine. Today, they continue to be on the front edge of weapons technology.

■ In the book *The Course of Civilization Volume I*, Joseph Strayer describes Assyria: “They enforced their rule by a deliberate policy of frightfulness, enslaving and deporting whole peoples, and torturing and killing thousands of captives.” This statement could have easily been written about Germany in the early 1940s.

■ Carl Engel’s *The Music of the Most Ancient Nations* points out that “the music of the Assyrians...appears to have attained to a degree of perfection which it could have reached only after a long period of cultivation.” Perfection in music. Think of Bach, Beethoven, Wagner and Brahms.

■ *The Dictionary of the Ancient Near East* states, “Assyrians excelled in road construction and maintenance. Their provincial system was built on good communication, and good roads enabled the Assyrian high command to send infantry and cavalry over long distances to promote stability or conquer new territories.” Germans are also

highly skilled engineers, as demonstrated by the world-famous Autobahn.

■ *Ancient Mesopotamia: Portrait of a Dead Civilization* reveals, “In Assyria there was a strong sense of participating in a common and native way of life which repeatedly proved persistent enough to survive military defeats and foreign domination. Who the carriers were who kept the political and cultural tradition and the Assyrian language alive through the eclipses of political power is extremely difficult to say. The right answer would reveal to us the very fountainhead of Assyrian strength and staying power.”

Just as Assyria’s resiliency perplexes historians, so too does the origin of Germany’s mindset.

Key to the Paradox

Crucial early history of the Assyrian people, preserved in the Bible, sheds light on their national character. The book of Genesis records Asshur, father of the Assyrians, in the list of Noah’s descendants (Gen. 10:22).

The Assyrians repeatedly clashed with Israel. For instance, Assyrian King Tiglath-Pileser III (Pul) forced the nation to pay tribute to him (II Kings 15:19-20). The same king returned to take captives (I Kings 15:29; I Chron. 5:6). Later, Assyrian King Shalmaneser captured and imprisoned Israelite political conspirators who had switched allegiances to the king of Egypt (II Kings 17:1-6). The Bible records that Assyrian kings Sennacherib and Esarhaddon also attacked Israel (II Kings 18:13; II Chron. 33:11).

In the book of Isaiah, the Assyrian—German—national psyche is laid bare. Chapter 10 states: “For he [the Assyrian nation] says, By the *strength* of my hand I have done it, and by my *wisdom*; for I am *prudent*” (vs. 13).

Assyria and Germany have a long list of successes and accomplishments, which has led to an ingrained nationalistic pride. (Interestingly, the Hebrew root word for “Asshur” means *success*.) Look at Germany today: it is strong enough to carry Europe, and other nations come to it for answers because of its financial prudence.

The account in Isaiah 10 continues, revealing the nation’s love for war and tendency to conquer surrounding lands: “...I have removed the bounds of the people, and have robbed their treasures, and I have put down the inhabitants like a valiant man: and my hand has found as a nest the riches of the people: and as one gathers eggs that are left, have I gathered all the earth...” (vs. 13-14).

But why is the German nation wired this way? The answer is found in verse 5, where God reveals His purpose for the nation: “O Assyrian, the ROD of My anger, and the STAFF in their hand is My indignation.” As seen above with ancient Israel, the Assyrian people have long been used by God as a means of punishment for rebellious nations.

Herein lies the paradoxical thinking of the German people: “Howbeit he means not so, neither does his heart think so; but it is in his heart to *destroy* and *cut off* nations not a few” (vs. 7). Certainly, while its past is filled with war and violence, Germany “means not so, neither does [its] heart think so.”

Yet the European nation, which is experiencing a renewed sense of nationalism, is not doomed to repeat the cycle of war for all time. The Bible reveals a bright future for it, but the country and its people must first learn valuable lessons, and lay aside deeply ingrained pride and stubbornness. The “rod” used to punish must itself be punished (Zech. 10:11).

Only after this time will Germany be at peace with all other countries and be able to achieve true success as one of the world’s greatest nations. Isaiah 19:24-25 states: “In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt and with Assyria”—one of the top three nations!—“*even a blessing* in the midst of the land: whom the LORD of hosts shall bless, saying, Blessed be Egypt My people, and Assyria the work of My hands, and Israel My inheritance.”

It is at this time that the German nation will be able to *truly* declare, “Never again!” □

ECONOMY & PERSONAL FINANCE

Rising U.S. Home Foreclosures Heighten Uncertainty

The number of homes lost to foreclosure is at the highest level since the crisis began, signaling that the trend is worsening. “Millions of foreclosures are expected to pour onto the market in the coming years. That’s likely to force prices down and hurt even cities that had begun to rebound,” stated *The Associated Press*.

“The foreclosure crisis intensified across a majority of large U.S. metropolitan areas this summer, with Chicago and Seattle—cities outside of the states that have shouldered the worst of the housing downturn—seeing a sharp increase in foreclosure warnings,” a separate *AP* article stated.

“The Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue metro area registered the sharpest annual increase: 71 percent. One in every 129 households received a foreclosure filing” (ibid.).

Additional jitters for homeowners are surfacing. As the value of their homes drop—the threat of tax increases on January 1, 2011, looms large. “Not knowing what tax rates



■ **FORECLOSURE RATE INCREASE:** A house under foreclosure, which has become bank-owned, in the Spring Valley area of Las Vegas, Nev. (Oct. 15, 2010).

PHOTO: MARK RALSTON/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

will be just a few months from now adds to the collective nervousness,” Mark Zandi, Moody’s Analytics’ chief economist, wrote in a *New York Times* editorial.

The reasons for the ongoing foreclosure problems are numerous: the subprime debacles, concerns over possible fraud by some lending institutions, continuing job losses, increas-

ing medical costs, divorce and family crisis.

Although some of the problems are unavoidable, homeowners are being urged to take whatever steps are necessary to lessen foreclosure possibilities—including negotiating with their lenders, selling assets they can live without and learning to become financially responsible. □

HEALTH ISSUES

India: Mysterious Disease Kills Over 250

Doctors are struggling to identify the sudden outbreak of “a mysterious viral infection” that has so far killed 256 people in India.

The mystery disease strikes mainly children and the elderly, with symptoms that include vomiting, headaches and high fever before killing its victims. Children are most vulnerable due to poor nutrition causing an inferior immune response to infections.

“The disease started from Ahrauli Sheikh village in Amraudha block and within a month’s time spread to 48 villages, housing 3,000 families. It was also learnt that the infants who fell victims to the disease were suffering from acute malnutrition. ‘The infants were suffering from malnutrition and that made some of them vulnerable to

the killer virus,’ said [a] district nodal officer...” (*The Times of India*).

Doctors and microbiologists are performing detailed tests on blood samples at the National Institute for Communicable Diseases in New Delhi, but remain puzzled by the virus, speculating whether it could be a mutant form of dengue fever or malaria.

A separate *Times of India* article, titled “7 kids die of mystery fever in Moradabad,” stated, “According to information gathered by State Infectious Disease Cell, the complication started with sore throat followed by fever. In some patients, fever resulted in swelling of tonsils while in some, it caused encephalitis (inflammation of brain due to virus) or meningitis (inflammation of the membranes that cover brain).”

Unhygienic living conditions have been blamed for the outbreak in Lucknow, a north Indian city with a population of more than 5 million inhabitants, where another 340 cases of the mystery disease have been reported.

Fever-related deaths from malaria, dengue, H1N1 (swine flu) and measles are common in parts of India, where many live in filthy neighborhoods and do not have access to clean running water, sanitation or adequate healthcare. The water supply in these areas consists of dirty, polluted rivers or tap water unfit for drinking and cooking.

With basic healthcare unavailable for most citizens, an easily treatable disease can become life-threatening, causing many preventable deaths. □

UK Student Tuition Protest Turns Violent



■ **STREET RIOTS:** A student protestor faces riot police outside the besieged entrance to Millbank Tower, home of Conservative Party headquarters in London, England (Nov. 10, 2010).

PHOTO: PETER MACDIARMID/GETTY IMAGES

A protest of 50,000 people against the British government's proposed tripling of university tuition costs escalated into chaos when some demonstrators began breaking windows, throwing eggs and even dropping a fire extinguisher on police. At least 14 people were injured, half of whom were police officers, and over 32 were arrested.

Hundreds of workers had to be evacuated from Millbank Tower in London, England, the Conservative Party headquarters, after rioters overpowered security officers.

"Inside the building, demonstrators wearing police hats danced on tables. A protestor ripped a security camera

from the ceiling and danced in triumph, slogans were spray-painted on walls," *BBC News* reported, adding, "A few yards away, in surreal calm, guests carried on eating in the adjacent Pizza Express."

Journalists also recorded other instances of seemingly apathetic reactions to the violence.

One protestor who did not agree with the violence told *Sky News*, "We were standing there...and a riot policeman came out with his arms round two female police officers, not in riot gear, both of them bleeding from the head. One of the women had duct tape across the cut on her head—not even a

bandage—and, at that point, we turned around and walked away."

The *Telegraph* reported that as the violence subsided, "A thick line of riot police surrounded the remaining 25 or so students detained in the lobby of Millbank Tower.

"The students, who had earlier been shouting as they stood feet from officers, fell largely silent but remained cheerful.

"A young woman did her make-up just a few feet away from a uniformed riot officer."

Similar tuition protests nationwide have since led to additional riots and arrests. □

WEATHER & ENVIRONMENT

Indonesian Volcano Death Toll Tops 300

More than 340 people have died since Mount Merapi began volcanic blasts in October, and the death toll is still rising. Hundreds of thousands have fled, with children being left behind in the chaos.

“Photos taken by a disaster management team afterward showed bodies frozen in their last moments, covered in a thick charcoal-like ash,” *The Associated Press* reported. “Several showed bodies welded together, as mothers and fathers clutched their children.”

Over 300,000 refugees have flooded emergency shelters, raising concerns about the lack of space, poor sanitation, and access to clean water.

“Merapi’s third eruption comes as Indonesian disaster officials are struggling to deliver aid to the remote Mentawai islands in Sumatra province, where a 7.5 magnitude quake triggered a tsunami last week,” *Reuters* reported.

A hospital senior official told *AP* that patients had burns on up to 95 percent of their bodies and supplies were low due to airports being closed. Nursing students had to use hand-operated respirators, normally reserved for short ambulance rides, as a shipment of electric machines was unable to be delivered.



■ **ONGOING ERUPTIONS:** Clouds of ash spew out of Mount Merapi, Indonesia’s most active volcano, after a series of major eruptions (Nov. 12, 2010).

PHOTO: ROSLAN RAHMAN/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Besides respiratory infections, burns and other physical ailments, many refugees are suffering anxiety, distress and severe depression, as well as experiencing various physiological disorders.

The Code River, which flows into Yogyakarta, a city of 400,000 people, has since become a conduit for volcanic material. Heavy rains have produced devastating mudflows, forcing hundreds of citizens to flee. □

Desperate for Food, Wild Bears Dig Up Graves

Russia’s hottest summer on record, which wiped out most of the natural habitat and food supply of its animal population, has resulted in a gruesome new trend: bears digging up human corpses for food.

Two cemetery visitors in a northern republic of Komi village described seeing “a figure they thought was wearing a fur coat leaning over a grave,” the *Daily Mail* reported. “But when they approached, they realised it was a bear eating a human body and discovered the victims’ clothes thrown across other graves.”

The director of the International Fund for Animal Welfare told the *Guardian* that a bear learned how to

open a coffin and taught other bears to do the same. “They are pretty quick learners,” she said.

She also told the newspaper, “The story is horrible. Nobody wants to think about having a much loved member of their family eaten by a bear.”

Officials are concerned that wild bears are developing a taste for live human flesh, with rising attacks already occurring. *The Associated Press* reported that “a man in his 20s barely escaped with his life when he was mauled by an aggressive bear in early September on the fringes of the regional capital city,” adding, “In the most notorious incident, in 2008 a pack of up to 30 Kamchatka bears—which

are similar to grizzlies—prowled around two mines of a local platinum mining company where they killed the two guards and laid siege to workers inside company premises.”

Russia is not the only country experiencing bear aggression. The Environment Ministry in Japan reported that 84 bear attacks occurred between April and September 2010, resulting in four deaths and surpassing 64 incidents in the previous year.

“The attacks [in Japan] have drawn national attention and TV news broadcasts have shown bears walking down residential streets or climbing trees near houses” (*The Associated Press*). □

PERSONAL

Continued from page 2

Earth sometime *after* 2012? In other words, will *all people* alive today die in the fulfillment of end-time prophecies—as so many seem to almost assume? The answer is a resounding NO! And here is proof.

When Jesus described world conditions leading to His Return, He stated, “Except those days should be shortened [cut short], there should no flesh be saved” (Matt. 24:22).

Some religionists believe the phrase “no flesh be saved” refers to *spiritual salvation*. But that is *not* what Jesus is talking about. Rather, that unless God cuts the Tribulation short, no human beings—“no *flesh*”—would survive. The human race would become extinct *if* Christ did not return. The implication is that He will return *before* this happens. For those who believe God, this is further proof that 2012 could not possibly end human existence.

Other prophecy writers speak of the “end of the world”—that the earth it-

self will supposedly be destroyed. This could not be further from the truth. This idea often stems from a misunderstanding of Christ’s disciples asking Him for a sign of the “end of the world.” The Greek word translated *world* means “age.” The disciples were asking when the period of man’s rule would end—and the kingdom of God would be established. They well understood the many Old Testament prophecies that speak of the Messiah setting up the kingdom of God on Earth.

But beyond all the bad news is the very greatest possible *good news!* Yet few speak of this! Most talk only about disaster, calamity and the possible annihilation of all people. This is because they are largely unaware of the most positive elements of prophecy—and of the *true* gospel!

Unraveling the Myth

God’s servants understand the basic framework of His overall prophetic timetable and plan. They are not confused about “what happens next,” once certain prophecies begin to take place. Many prophecies

involve a tremendous amount of understanding that God makes available, and with all necessary details. They understand exactly what lies ahead for all mankind, and for themselves—if they are faithful. Those of Christ’s one Church—the one He promised to build (Matt. 16:18) almost 2,000 years ago—have heeded the Bible’s many warnings about what lies ahead.

December 21, 2012, is NOT the end! Do not fear this date! Human beings will never be wiped out. All the hysteria is for NOTHING! In fact, at a certain point this Personal will be available *after* 2012 has come and gone!

Countless verses could have been cited to disprove the 2012 deception. Scripture makes plain that 2012 does *not* mark the “end of the world,” and that such ideas are preposterous to the point of almost humorous—were it not for the fear and confusion they spawn.

But whether we are in the last days is a big question. To learn more about the last days, read my booklet *Are These the Last Days?* online at www.thercg.org. □



IS 2012 THE END?

Watch *The World to Come* broadcast on this topic at www.worldtocome.org



The White Horse



The Red Horse



The Black Horse



The Pale Horse



The Four Horsemen

The FOUR HORSEMEN of REVELATION EXPLAINED AT LAST!

Watch *The World to Come* broadcast series at www.worldtocome.org