

MAY 2015

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A MAGAZINE RESTORING PLAIN UNDERSTANDING



## COPYING THE GENIUS IN NATURE

*What Biomimicry Reveals*

**Making the Most  
of Family Time!**

A Cacophony of Beliefs  
*Is This What God Intended?*

**Leader Profile:**  
*King Abdullah II of Jordan*

Southeast Asia  
in Prophecy!

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VOL. XIII | NO. 3 | MAY 2015

A R T I C L E S

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■ **CHURCH SERVICE:** A congregation of Serbian Orthodox Christians celebrates the Nativity of Christ liturgy at Lazarica church in Birmingham, England (Jan. 7, 2015).

PHOTO: CHRISTOPHER FURLONG/GETTY IMAGES

## **A Cacophony of Beliefs Is This What God Intended?**

Billions of professing Christians. Thousands of denominations. Nations impacted across the world. An eye-opening analysis of today's "Christianity" begs the question: Did Christ mean for it to be this way?  
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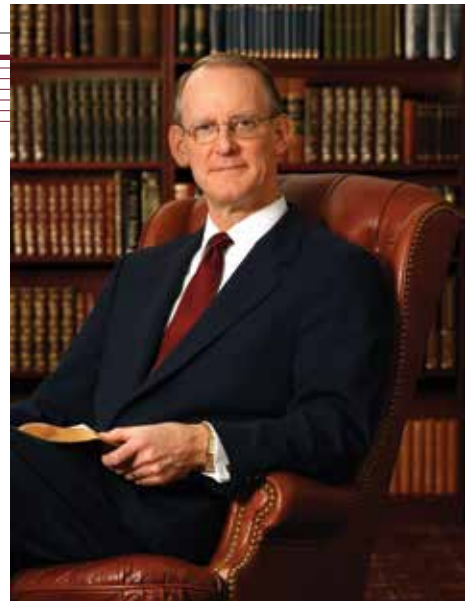
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## PERSONAL FROM

David C. Fack



# Are We in the Last Days?

**E**VERYONE WANTS to know what the future holds. With world trends and conditions growing more grim, what lies ahead for all nations has become the very greatest concern today. Millions are searching—wondering about the course of daily events.

Jesus' disciples asked Him about the "end of the world [meaning, the age]" (Matt. 24:3). The prophet Daniel spoke of "the time of the end" (Dan. 12:4). The apostle Peter foretold: "...there shall come in the last days *scoffers*..." (II Pet. 3:3). And the apostle Paul warned, "...in the *last days perilous times* shall come" (II Tim. 3:1). This phrase makes the subject more serious.

Has this final interval in world history arrived? Can you be sure? Many sense or even firmly believe that we are in the last days. We hear from them daily. But these have rarely sought to prove this. They should know whether we are. And so should you. You can know—in fact, God expects you to!

### **This Present World**

It has become painfully obvious that this world is in terrible trouble. Let's pull back and look at the big picture.

Mankind is overwhelmed with every kind of trouble, evil and ill—war, terrorism, violence of every kind, famine, disease, pollution, overpopulation, political upheaval, religious confusion, and tremendous economic turmoil and decline that threaten to make the Great Depression look like child's play. Then there are the hundreds of millions who live in abject poverty, ignorance and oppression. Now add rampant and worsening immorality and perversion in every Western nation—growing hatred, unrest and the never-ending cycle of war in the Middle East—deteriorating conditions throughout Africa—frightening weather patterns across many parts of the world—devastating fires, earthquakes, tornadoes, hurricanes, drought and floods occurring with greater frequency and intensity—and headlines screaming of murder, rape, robbery and crimes of every kind. These mushrooming problems now threaten all nations.

Is all of this really only a little *temporary* worsening of what is otherwise "business as usual" for planet Earth? Many—and much louder!—are the voices that say time is running out to solve the really big problems facing the world. More and more world leaders are expressing pessimism about the rise of troubles within and between nations. So are educators, military planners, sociologists and scientists. Yet, because this is also an age of religious sundowners and doomsayers,

most will not pay real—serious!—attention.

How long until Jesus Christ returns? For those who believe He will, no question is bigger. But there are other questions, some big, that must be answered *first*. This Personal will look at perhaps the second biggest question.

The Bible speaks of the period preceding Jesus' Return as "the last days"—"the time of the end"—"the end of the age"—"the end of these things"—"the end of the days"—and of a time when the course of human history (as we know it), Daniel wrote, "shall be finished" (Dan. 12:7).

Of course, many professing Christians do not believe in a literal return to Earth by Christ. Of those who do, most think that it could be decades or even hundreds of years away. Some believe it could be "a thousand years away." Others feel time may be short, but see no way to know.

What do you believe?

### **Original Apostles Misunderstood**

The original apostles thought for a time that Jesus would return in their lifetimes. Paul spoke of the resurrection of the dead at Christ's Second Coming, and twice used the phrase "we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord" (I Thes. 4:15, 17) because he expected to still be alive when this happened.

Paul later came to realize that he had misunderstood the timing of specific events that must *precede* Christ's Return. In fact, he had to warn of those who would deceive others about *when* this would occur. He wrote about "the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" and that brethren should be careful to "let no man deceive you by any means..." (II Thes. 2:1, 3).

Could you be deceived about this all-important timing?

### **Christ's Second Coming**

So then—have we entered the last days? Do you and I live at the time of the end? If so, how can you know for sure?

Jesus told His disciples, "I will *come again*" (John 14:3). Forty days later, as He was ascending to heaven, two angels added, "...this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as you have seen Him go into heaven" (Acts 1:11). Matthew records Christ's words: "For as the lightning comes...so shall also the *coming* of the Son of man be" (24:27). Seven times just in this chapter, Jesus spoke of His Coming *again*, and the need to watch for key *events, trends* and *conditions* preceding it.

Is the world nearing Christ's Return? Again, can we know?

Make no mistake! The Bible is *plain* about the Return of Jesus Christ. Many verses speak of His Second Coming to Earth. It *will* happen—and it does not hinge on the opinions of men—yours or mine! But in the period leading to this climactic event, many things are foretold to happen—some, in fact most of them, *catastrophic*! Can you afford to be in the dark?

The idea of the end of the world has been a subject of speculation, ridicule, discussion, fascination and fancy for almost 2,000 years. Sadly, most do not realize how much the Bible shows *can* be known about this time.

### **"Day and Hour"**

In Matthew 24, the disciples asked Jesus, "Tell us, when shall these things be? And what shall be the sign of Your coming, and of the *end of the world*?" (vs. 3). After a detailed answer, Jesus added, "But of that *day* and *hour* knows no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but My Father only" (vs. 36).

Does this mean we cannot know the general time of Christ's Second Coming?—and then also about the last days before it? Many think so—and therefore shrug off any need to be concerned with either. Then what does the next passage mean? "The lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looks not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, and shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites..." (vs. 50-51). Most will simply not be looking for Jesus' Return at the *right time*. Worse,

many will not be looking for Him at all. But Christ's indictment shows they will have no excuse.

Why will so many be unable to recognize the onset of such an awesome, world-altering event as Christ's Return?

In this same chapter, Jesus included a parable that helps answer the question: "Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When [its] branch is yet tender, and puts forth leaves, you know that summer is near: so likewise you, when you shall see all these things, know that [He] is near, *even at the doors*" (vs. 32-33). Since this could only apply to those alive at the end, Jesus states we—"you"—can know the "season" of His Return, or when He is "at the doors."

Do not be willing to settle for less than what the Bible reveals!

Years ago, a catchy tune called "A Sign of the Times" became popular. You may remember it. The title actually came from a verse in Matthew. Religious leaders had confronted Jesus, desiring a sign. He called them hypocrites, adding, "You can discern the face of the sky; but can you not discern the *signs of the times*?" (Matt. 16:3).

While the intent of their question was to get a sign that Jesus was the Messiah (read Matthew 12:38-40), His point was that they were unable to discern events they were witnessing all around them—or the "signs of the times"—and in that case, the "signs of their times" regarding Jesus' first coming!

Can you discern the signs of *OUR* times?

Jesus told His disciples, "When these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draws near" (Luke 21:28). The "these things" He referred to include a whole series of events foretold to occur for the first time in history! They are happening—and intensifying—now!

A closer look helps to see the "signs of the times."

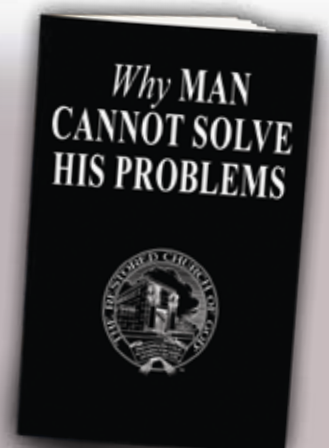
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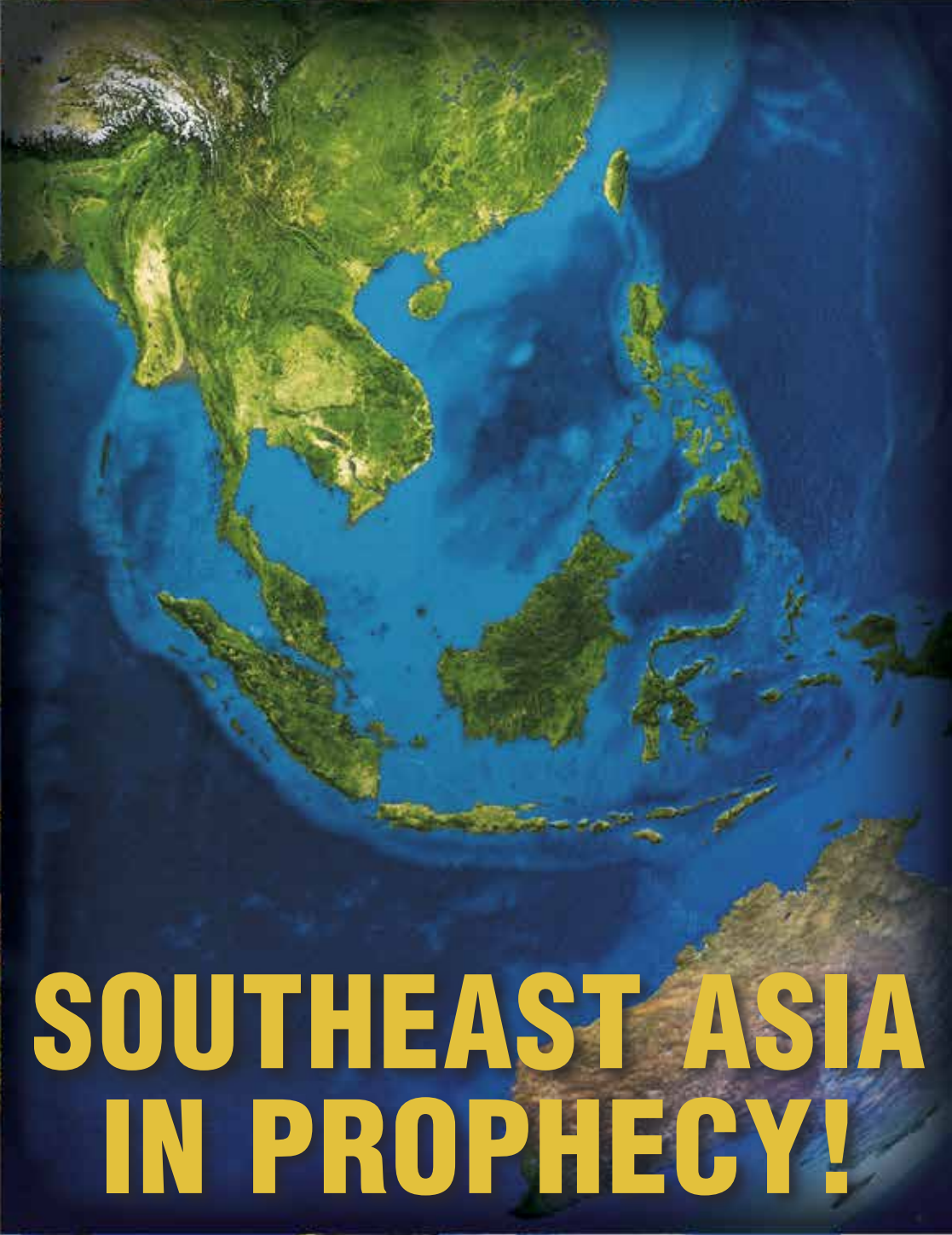
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WEATHER, AND MORE.**



## **How do you make sense of it all?**

The constant whirlwind of bad news that fills today's headlines can leave you reeling. Yet there is a reason *WHY* the same troubles, evils and ills continue to beset the Earth. To understand the *true causes* of these worsening trends—and how they will ultimately be resolved—order your free copy of *Why Man Cannot Solve His Problems* at [rcg.org/uun](http://rcg.org/uun).





# SOUTHEAST ASIA IN PROPHECY!





## Diminished involvement from the United States has left a void in the region. How it is being filled is clearly explained in the Bible.

BY EDWARD L. WINKFIELD

**A** MAP OF SOUTHEAST Asia after World War I looks utterly different from today. On it, you would find the Dutch East Indies (modern-day Indonesia) and French Indochina (now Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia). In addition, Singapore, Malaysia and Burma (today's Myanmar) were all under the British crown. Many other island nations and major seaports were also under European control.

While most Western nations pulled out of the region soon after WWII, the United States still had a presence there through its alliance with the Philippines.

In the following decades, the collection of 11 Southeast Asian nations located between China and Australia found itself in the Cold War between the United States and Soviet Union, with both powers vying for influence.

After the collapse of the USSR, the U.S. pulled back as there was no major reason to continue heavy-handed involvement there.

From the 1990s on, Southeast Asia found itself free from European control as well. Of course, life went on. Yet the loss of Western economic, military and political support pushed countries in the region to look for help closer to home.

While other nations in the area such as Japan and South Korea have helped fill the void left by the U.S., it is increased ties with China that have been most notable. Given past icy rela-

tions between the nations of Southeast Asia and their neighbor to the north, the recent level of cooperation has been unforeseen.

A report from *The Asia Pacific Journal* discussed China's rising profile in the area: "Particularly since the turn of the century, China's economic success has enabled it to pursue a greater role on the international stage, backing up its claims to regional and global leadership with growing economic and military might. Nowhere is China's presence more keenly felt than within Southeast Asia, where increasing Chinese activism is met with a combination of both enthusiasm and significant trepidation."

Beijing's influence in Southeast Asia has sparked a reaction from Washington. In 2013, the White House announced a pivot to Asia—with the aim to shift economic, diplomatic and military resources back to the region from other parts of the world.

But China, Japan and South Korea have already filled the power void. While the U.S. clearly wants back in, it may be too late—a new Asia is emerging.

The *Business Standard* described how the entire region is reinventing itself: "Strategically, traditional US roles and habits are being altered compared to, say, 10 years ago. And the Asia that is likely to emerge 10 years from now will be very different from that with which Americans have grown comfortable."

What will Southeast Asia's role be in this new Asia? Does its growing

relationship with China and others have implications?

The answer to these questions are more important than you may realize.

### **Southern Ocean**

The motives for foreign interest in Southeast Asia—which includes Brunei, Cambodia, East Timor, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar (aka Burma), the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam—are obvious. Together, it has a gross domestic product of more than \$2.2 trillion and a total population of 620 million. Its vast territory covers five million square miles of land and sea.

Most of these nations appear in headlines alone and are rarely seen as a collective unit. While China refers to the region as Nanyang (Chinese for "Southern Ocean"), they clearly are not just a collection of obscure, tiny island countries.

Take Indonesia, Southeast Asia's largest nation and home to the world's largest population of Muslims in one country. Its territory would stretch beyond the west-east borders of the U.S. if superimposed on top of it. Laos is comparable in size to the United Kingdom and Myanmar is larger than France.

Even Southeast Asia's smaller countries make a sizeable impact. Singapore, which is about 3.5 times the size of Washington, D.C., is quite prosperous. The former British territory is a high-tech, urbanized commercial hub with glittering skyscrapers and a thriving port. It is one of



four “Asian Tigers” (with the others being Hong Kong, South Korea, and Taiwan), which are all states or territories that have developed into advanced or high-income economies.

The nation of Brunei, which is about the size of the U.S. state of Delaware, is an oil and natural-gas-rich country. Despite some financial setbacks, Brunei still has one of the highest standards of living in the world. It and Singapore boast the two highest Human Development Indices—a measure of human development based on life-expectancy, education and income—in all of Southeast Asia. The two also rank highly in this category among all nations of the world. (Singapore is ninth and Brunei 30th.)

The Philippines is another prominent nation in the region, in large part because it is one of the few places in Southeast Asia where the relationship

with the United States has remained strong. America provides significant financial and security support in exchange for a U.S. military presence in the region.

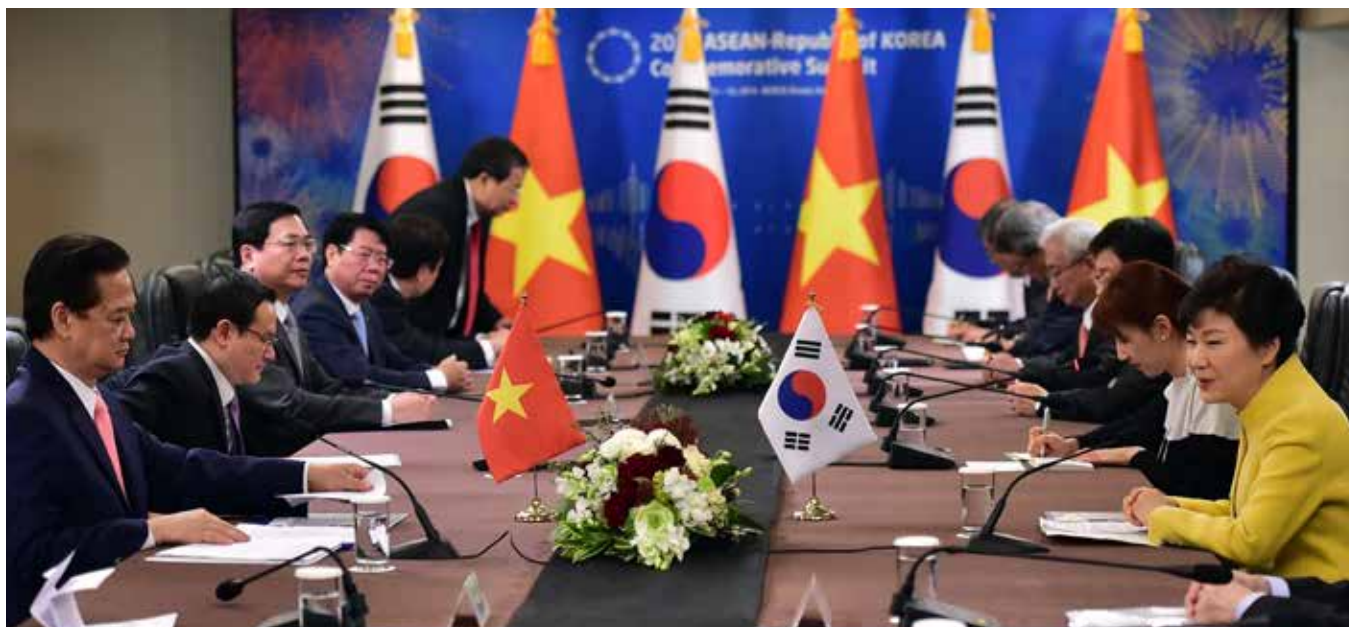
Yet Southeast Asia’s most important asset is its location. Its mainland is a peninsula wedged between India and China—making the area among the most densely populated in the world. The remaining portion of the territory is a string of large island chains. They create a gateway between East Asia—consisting of Japan, Korea and many of China’s most populous cities—and Africa and Europe to the west.

Given these geostrategic qualities, the region’s assets include a large consumer base and labor pool as well as an economical means for goods to traverse in and throughout the area.

Yet these strengths come at a price. Southeast Asia must rely on others for

economic prosperity. Eighty percent of the area’s trade is done with nations outside the region and industries that employ their citizens are mostly foreign owned.

As a thoroughfare for cargo bound for various parts of the globe, the region’s economy thrives when there are products to ship. It is estimated that a quarter of the world’s goods pass through Southeast Asian waterways, including the Strait of Malacca, a narrow, 500-mile shipping lane connecting the Indian Ocean to the South China Sea. One-third of the world’s global crude oil and over half of its liquefied natural gas pass through the area, according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration. The entire region is heavily reliant on global demand, which means its prosperity is inherently dependent on others.



■ **ASIAN UNITY:** South Korean President Park Geun-Hye, far right, talks with Vietnamese Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung, far left, during a meeting ahead of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations-Republic of Korea Commemorative Summit in Busan, South Korea (Dec. 10, 2014).

PHOTO: JUNG YEON-JE/AFP/GETTY IMAGES



The territory also looks to others militarily. Proximity to the surrounding nations of Pakistan, India, China, North Korea and Russia—five of the world’s nine total nuclear states—increases the region’s strategic military importance. As a result, many Southeast Asian countries are supported by the more powerful militaries of the world seeking to establish a presence there. For instance, the U.S. has numerous military bases and installations scattered throughout it.

Southeast Asia’s inherent need for outside support is the reason it has been extremely susceptible to governance from the outside. Therefore, to ensure their nations are not taken advantage of, leaders in the region have often banded together.

### Stepping Stone to Unity

In the late 1960s, the major nations of the region formed an alliance known as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations or ASEAN (pronounced AH-see-ahn). It looked to foster regional integration similar to the European Union and the African Union.

Two main goals of ASEAN are increased integration among its 10 member states (East Timor did not join) and to encourage citizens to embrace a regional identity. The idea was to present themselves as a united region to carry more clout when negotiating with more powerful nations.

Over its tenure, ASEAN has had some successes, including effectively engaging more powerful neighbors such as China, Japan and Korea. Yet Southeast Asia has not been able to forge a clear-cut regional identity—in fact, the group has never clearly defined what the term “regional identity” even means.

Such difficulties are typical when Asian nations come together. They may see the clear benefits of increased coop-

eration, but deep-seated historical tensions ultimately keep the nations at arm’s length.

The Council on Foreign Relations explained how Asian nations see the benefits of working together, yet find it incredibly difficult. A longer quote from the report stated: “...Asians have formed redundant group after redundant group, often with the same membership, closely overlapping agendas, and precious little effect on regional or global problems. Senior officials meet regularly through these institutions, and that is a good thing. But none of them has taken collective action in the face of Asia’s most recent urgent problems. In the tsunami of 2004, the East Timor crisis of 2006, the avian influenza epidemic of 2007, and the Myanmar cyclone of 2008, regional institutions were overshadowed by ad hoc international responses, frequently led by the United States.

“One of the ironies of modern Asia is that Southeast Asians built most regional groups, even though the region’s economic, military, and diplomatic power resides overwhelmingly in Northeast Asia...How did this mismatch come about? How did the part of East Asia with so much less economic, technological, and military capacity become the principal architect of nearly every recent effort to pool Asian power and capacity?

“It is in part an accident of history. At the end of the Cold War, many Asians worried the United States, which had underpinned security in East Asia since 1945, would declare victory and simply go home. ASEAN—a collection of less powerful, Southeast Asian states—called for dialogues to keep the major players, including the United States, engaged in the region.”

“In fact, creating such a balance in their relations with major powers was

precisely what ASEAN states had in mind. For ASEAN, balancing the role of great powers to the north—China and Japan—had long provided an important impetus to regional community building. And concern about China, in particular, helped drive the transformation of ASEAN after the end of the Vietnam War.”

“Thus, as China sought to ‘cherry-pick’ the region—dealing with issues bilaterally, so its size and power might tilt the playing field in its favor—ASEAN countries sought to foster greater balance by discussing issues with China collectively. And in some areas, such as the South China Sea, China accommodated their concerns, bolstering ASEAN’s faith in its strategy.”

To summarize, nations such as Japan and China—which are bitter historical rivals—are being pushed to work together because of Southeast Asia. To put things in perspective, a 2014 article in *The National Interest* magazine called relations between the two powers “The World’s Most Dangerous Rivalry.” Clearly, there remain many hurdles to overcome before full cooperation can be reached throughout all of Asia. Many of the disputes between its nations go back hundreds, if not thousands, of years and cannot be easily resolved.

For example, the general animosity between Beijing and Tokyo stems from past wartime actions and disputes over territory. Yet they have both separately been able to form fairly strong relations with Southeast Asia. This indirect relationship is forcing a more direct one between the two.

*Want China Times* expounded on this situation: “Despite icy relations between China and Japan and Japan and South Korea on the political front, talks on an economic free trade



zone between the three countries continues to make gradual progress...”

For these nations, even *gradual* process is big news!

The newspaper stated that “ties between the three countries can be largely attributed to their relationship with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)...”

While some relationships on the world’s largest continent are forming quickly and others are taking more time, what cannot be denied is that Asia is in the midst of a transformation. Relationships between nations are gradually becoming less confrontational and more accommodating so that each can meet its needs.

Is Asia working together the result of the randomness of world affairs or is it part of something bigger—something that should come as no surprise?

### Common Origin

More and more, Asia as a whole is functioning less as an eclectic group of nations and more like a people of like mind. Notice, “Gradually, but inexorably, the region is becoming more Asian than ‘Asia-Pacific’, especially in its economic and financial arrangements; more continental than subcontinental, as East and South Asia become more closely intertwined; and more Central Asian than Eurasian, as China develops its western regions and five former Soviet countries rediscover their Asian roots” (*Business Standard*).

This is not a coincidence. The people of Asia have more in common than just geography.

*The Encyclopaedia Britannica* stated: “Modern scholarship increasingly has yielded evidence of broad commonalities uniting the peoples of the region across time. Studies in historical linguistics, for example,

have suggested that the vast majority of Southeast Asian languages—even many of those previously considered to have separate origins—either sprang from common roots or have been long and inseparably intertwined. Despite inevitable variation among societies, common views of gender, family structure, and social hierarchy and mobility may be discerned throughout mainland and insular Southeast Asia, and a broadly common commercial and cultural inheritance has continued to affect the entire region for several millennia.”

Though the nations of the world can seem very different, they all have at least one thing in common—they are the result of families grown large. Starting with our modern time, it is possible to look back at previous generations. People do this all the time as they study their own ancestry or learn more about past cultures.

Imagine you are able to look back without being hindered by the constraints of accurate record keeping. As you go back in time, you of course would notice that the number of people on Earth was decreasing. You would discover that great nations were once just a collection of cities, cities a collection of villages, and villages a collection of families.

If you counted back far enough, you would come to a unique time. A time when only eight people lived on the entire planet. It was immediately after a worldwide flood, and Noah and his family were the only survivors. Going back to this point presents the perfect opportunity to now go forward in time and track the origin of nations.

God knew the importance of studying generations and therefore inspired the recording of Genesis 10, known as the Table of Nations. The

long list of offspring ends by showing that the nations of the world sprang from Noah’s three sons, Shem, Ham and Japheth: “These are the families of the sons of Noah, after their generations, in their nations: and by these were the nations divided in the earth after the flood” (vs. 32).

From the three sons of Noah sprang 16 sons. These sons had sons, and their sons had sons, and eventually all of them spread throughout Earth. Some families in Genesis 10 have more generations listed than others, but Noah’s 16 grandsons are the most important for tracing ancestry.

When counting forward, genealogical evidence makes clear that the people of Asia, including those living in modern Russia, East and Southeast Asia, all descended from Japheth. A detailed chronology proving this is beyond the scope of this article, but there are a couple points of note that are helpful to identifying modern nations using Scripture.

In many cases, the modern names for nations or certain cities within them are variations of family names listed in the Bible. For instance, of Japheth’s sons, Tubal and Meshech can be tied to Russia. Their names are phonetically similar to Tobolsk and Moscow where their descendants settled.

Another consideration when making modern biblical connections are certain characteristics the Bible describe that are recognizable today. This latter factor is also helpful with connecting Japheth to the modern peoples of Asia.

God, through Noah, revealed a prophecy concerning Japheth. Noah said in Genesis 9:27, “God shall enlarge Japheth.” This was a descrip-

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# Abdullah II bin al-Hussein

## KING OF JORDAN

A key player in broker- ing peace in the Middle East, King Abdullah faces more challenges now than ever before.

BY ANDREW J. HOLCOMBE

**D**RESSED IN A black suit and traditional Arab head- dress, King Abdullah II stood before a painting of his late father, King Hussein. Muffled sobs echoed throughout Jordan's Parliament chamber as he was sworn in as the nation's new leader just a few hours after the funeral of one of the Middle East's longest-serving leaders.

A mere 14 days prior, King Hussein had returned home from battling cancer and shocked the nation by demoting his brother, then Crown Prince Hassan, and decree- ing his eldest son heir to the throne.

The young monarch understood he had big shoes to fill. King Hussein had been admired and respected not only by his country for his strength of character, but also by leaders and nations globally.

It did not take long for King Abdullah, a father of four, to win the loyalty of his countrymen. Following in the footsteps of King Hussein, the new monarch connected with Jordanians on a personal level through his interest in sports, motorcycles and racing and the fact that his wife, Queen Rania, was a commoner and Palestinian.



■ **DIPLOMATIC KING:** Jordan's King Abdullah II stands at attention during a welcome ceremony with Morocco's King Mohammed VI at the Royal Palace in Casablanca, Morocco (March 11, 2015).

PHOTO: FADEL SENNA/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

As with others in the Middle East, King Abdullah had been exposed to violence in his country. At five years old, he had been introduced to the conflict between Palestinians and Israelis, with several attacks striking close to home. To remove him from the line of fire, his parents sent him to St. Edmund's Prep School in England. A few years later, he was transferred to Deerfield Academy, an American preparatory school in Massachusetts.

Following his schooling, he continued his education at The Royal Military Academy Sandhurst in the United Kingdom and enlisted for a time in the British Army.

From there, Prince Abdullah returned to his homeland to serve in the armed forces. He rose through the ranks, ultimately receiving the status of Major General in the Jordanian Special Forces.

Upon taking office, he used his Western education, which also included time at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C., and Pembroke College in Oxford, England, to bring modernity to his country. He focused on boosting the faltering economy and addressing social issues such as poverty.

His main goal, however, has always been to help bring peace to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Ten years after taking office, King Abdullah expressed his aspirations in his book *Our Last Best Chance – The Pursuit of Peace in a Time of Peril*, in which he stated, “Two years ago, when I started writing this book, I hoped it would reveal the inner workings of how, against great odds, the United States, Israel, and the Arab and Muslim world had brokered peace in the Middle East. As I write these words, however, I can only say this is a story about how peace has continued to elude our grasp. And yet, in my region, where optimism is even more precious than water, we cannot afford to give up hope.”

For over 15 years as the leader of Jordan, King Abdullah has not stopped working to broker peace in the Middle East. His methods, however, have been untraditional. He has typically had a behind-the-scenes role, often supporting countries such as Egypt and Saudi Arabia, while striving to deftly navigate the rocky waters of international relations.

This was evident at the March 2015 Arab League summit, in which mem-

ber nations formally announced for the first time in 65 years that they would form a joint military force to combat the threat of the Islamic State and Iran-backed militants in the region. Jordan was one of the nations that voluntarily agreed to contribute troops.

With Islamic State's territory spreading, Syria's internal conflagration still burning, Iran pressing for greater nuclear capability, and Islamic terrorists threatening countries in the region, all eyes are on the Middle East—including one of the most prominent proponents of unity in the region—King Abdullah.

### National Reforms

Throughout his time as Jordan's leader, King Abdullah has used his Western education to advance what he believes is the nation's greatest asset—its people. He modeled the country's first boarding school, King's Academy, after Deerfield, following the American Advanced Placement curriculum. All of the first graduating class in 2010 went on to universities around the world, including Harvard, Cornell, Yale and Stanford. There are now 33 public and private universities as well as 51 community colleges in



■ **MIDDLE EAST MEDIATOR:** Jordan's King Abdullah II greets his Bahraini counterpart King Hamad bin Issa al-Khalifa upon his arrival to the Jordanian capital of Amman (Feb. 9, 2015).

PHOTO: KHALIL MAZRAAWI/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Jordan, which are attended by thousands of students.

Alongside educational reforms, King Abdullah has taken strides to strengthen the nation's economy.

Upon taking office, King Abdullah also took the bold step of seeking membership in the World Trade Organization—an unprecedented move in the Arab world. Within one year, the progressive nation was accepted. In September 2001, Jordan became the first Arab nation to be granted a free trade agreement with the United States, which was hoped would boost the economy through increased exports and lowered tariffs.

Although Jordan's natural resources are limited, over the last 16 years, up to 6 percent of the world's uranium supply has been found under Jordanian soil. Tapping into these deposits has opened the door to nuclear energy and reduced the nation's reliance on foreign oil and gas imports.

In addition, King Abdullah has focused on creating jobs for Jordan's rapidly growing population. The country is the only Arab nation taking extensive measures to bring stability to the lives of refugees and the nation's economy alike.

So far, thousands of refugees have been incorporated into Jordanian society, making many of them legal citizens. There are over two million registered Palestinian refugees alone and 1.5 million have flooded over the borders as a result of the Syrian conflict.

### Religion and Politics

King Abdullah understands the important role religion plays in politics. As the administrative authority over the Temple Mount in Jerusalem, a devout moderate Muslim, and a direct descendant of the religion's founder, Mohammed, he holds a unique position in seeking peace between the three main monotheistic religions of the world: Christianity, Judaism and Islam.

In May 2014, King Abdullah welcomed Pope Francis to Amman, where they spoke about the need for coexistence and religious peace.

While speaking to the leader of the Catholic Church, King Abdullah stated: "Indeed, the world is rich with people of good will, who seek to uphold human dignity and peaceful coexistence. Let me acknowledge, with gratitude, your leadership in this cause. You have committed yourself

to dialogue, especially with Islam. Muslims everywhere appreciate your messages of esteem and friendship" (Royal Hashemite Court).

He still maintains what he told the United Nations in 2008: "There must be a new and global dialogue among people of different faiths and civilizations. Such a dialogue is essential, to reveal the commonalities that unite humanity...It teaches people to respect their differences. It opens eyes and hearts to the beauty of diversity. It helps disentangle fact from fiction. And it exposes the fraudulence of extremist teachings."

King Abdullah is staunchly opposed to radical forms of Islam and denies any affiliation terrorists have to the religion.

This issue came to the fore when the burning of the captured Jordanian pilot invoked worldwide outrage and strong action from King Abdullah. In a private meeting with U.S. lawmakers following the release of the graphic video, King Abdullah pledged to avenge the pilot's death.

The threat of the Islamic State crossing into Jordan's borders from the east and north is of mounting concern. Immediately after the pilot was



■ **CELEBRATION:** Jordan's King Abdullah II and Queen Rania wave to the crowd during an official ceremony in Amman to mark the 10th anniversary of his accession to the throne. King Abdullah succeeded his father, the late King Hussein bin Talal, in 1999 (June 9, 2009).

PHOTO: MAHMOUD SHAWKAT/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

burned, Jordan launched an airstrike on IS training centers in Syria.

Iran's increasing influence in the region is also troubling to the king.

"The Jordanian king has voiced concerns in the past over Iranian regional designs, and years ago issued a famous warning against the danger of the 'Shi'a Crescent' to the security and stability of the region," the newspaper *Algemeiner* reported.

Adding to the pressure from IS, *Al-Hayat* reported, "Iran's Revolutionary Guard along with Hezbollah operatives have...begun deploying [10,000-15,000 troops] along the Syrian-Jordanian border."

This unexpected move has left Jordanians unsettled about Tehran's motives.

Uzi Rabi, director of the Moshe Dayan Center at Tel Aviv University in Israel, said, "We are on a journey to an unknown chapter in the Middle East. Now, with no single group in control, there's an ongoing bloody struggle for Syria, Libya, Lebanon, Yemen and Iraq."

### Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

While there are troubles on many fronts in the Middle East, King Abdullah continues to see only one end to the Gordian knot of confusion—a peace deal between Israel and Palestine.

The Israeli-Palestinian contention originates from their fundamental disagreement of religious beliefs and rights to land that stem from the Six-Day War in 1967, which was won by the Israelis. This gave Israel control over regions commonly known as the West Bank, Golan Heights, Gaza Strip, Sinai Peninsula, and the Old City of Jerusalem—known as Haram al-Sharif to Muslims. Monumental in significance to both religions, these territories are still contested to this day.

In his book, King Abdullah described the core issue in the Middle East as the world's failure to "defend Palestinian rights."

Further, he stated: "Many in the West, when they look at our region, view it as a series of separate challenges...But the truth is that all of these

are inter-connected. The thread that links them is the Israeli-Palestinian conflict."

Recognizing the longstanding relationship the United States has held with Israel, King Abdullah regularly visits America, striving to breathe life back into the stalled peace process.

During a joint meeting with the U.S. Congress, he stressed the importance of America's role in bringing a solution. According to a statement by the Royal Hashemite Court, he exhorted them to "work together [with Israel] to restore Palestine, a nation in despair and without hope. We must work together to restore peace, hope and opportunity to the Palestinian people. And in so doing, we will begin a process of building peace, not only throughout the region, but throughout the world..."

Since Israel is an ally, though, Jordan must walk a delicate line between what it wants and what Israel will agree to do. Both Israel and Jordan have the same desire for an Iran without nuclear weapons, terrorism put to an end in the Middle East, and a resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The differences lie in *how* to achieve this desired outcome.

"Israel, in some ways, is Jordan's most important ally," a reporter for *The Atlantic* stated in a 2013 profile of the king. "As the guarantor of quiet on Israel's eastern front, and as the defender of the peace treaty that King Hussein forged with Yitzhak Rabin in 1994, Abdullah's Jordan is essential to the Israelis. Jordan and Israel are also working together to prevent the chaos of Syria from spilling into their countries. The king would not talk about joint Jordanian-Israeli operations, but several sources in Amman and Tel Aviv told me that Israeli drones are monitoring the Jordan-Syria border on Jordan's behalf, and that military and intelligence officials from the two countries are in constant contact, planning for post-Bashar al-Assad chaos.

"Even as Abdullah envisions ceding more of his power, he draws one red line: 'I don't want a government

to come in and say, 'We repudiate the peace treaty with Israel.'" He is cautious when speaking about the Israeli prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, with whom he is reportedly in regular communication. He would say only that his relationship with Netanyahu is "very strong. Our discussions have really improved."

"Though he acknowledges the role Netanyahu plays in maintaining Jordanian stability, he is not optimistic about Israel's future. King Abdullah is known as an advocate of two states for two peoples—Israel secure in its pre-1967 borders, Palestine to be established in Gaza and the West Bank—but when I asked him...how much time he thought was left to implement this idea, his answer surprised me. 'It could be too late already for the two-state solution,' he said. 'I don't know. Part of me is worried that is already past us.'"

King Abdullah reiterated his concerns about the process at the March 2015 Arab League summit: "This summit takes place while our Arab nation faces its most difficult challenges and circumstances. Achieving our common security and ensuring a safe future for all our people demand cooperation, coordination and collective pan-Arab efforts to achieve a comprehensive Arab strategy to address the growing dangers of terrorism and sectarian and political violence, which aim to distort the true image of our faith and its message of peace."

During the meeting, he admonished Muslims and Arabs to unite in a coalition to beat terrorism: "...because this war is our war, we, Muslims and Arabs, must unite our efforts and lead an Arab-Muslim coalition to face terrorism and confront all forms of Islamophobia, which feed religious extremism."

As the Arab League summit made clear, the now-seasoned king is between a rock and a hard place in an area considered a hotbed of instability. It remains to be seen how the conflict will play out—and how Jordan's role will affect the future of the region. □



# A Cacophony of Beliefs

## Is This What God Intended?

Billions of professing Christians. Thousands of denominations. Nations impacted across the world. An eye-opening analysis of today's "Christianity" begs the question: Did Christ mean for it to be this way?

BY KEVIN D. DENEE

**T**RAVELING ON A plane presents opportunities to talk to people you may otherwise never meet. In a sense, plane flights, especially international ones, are cross-sections of the world where strangers from entirely different walks of life can interact.

Some years ago, a trip to Kenya allowed me to have unique discussions with three fellow passengers during my flight.

The first conversation was with a sweet, pious, middle-aged lady who wore a perpetual smile revealing her pleasant disposition. We talked through the entirety of the first leg of the trip.

We learned a lot about each other. She asked what I was going to do in

Kenya, and I asked about her travels. I learned she was born in America, but moved to Germany, remained single, and joined a small religious Christian group there. She had taken part in various "missions," including traveling to Hong Kong to smuggle Bibles into communist China. I thought to myself, *This person is dedicated; she believes in her cause.*

The second conversation occurred on my flight from Amsterdam to Nairobi. I decided to stretch my legs and walk to the back of the Boeing 747. Near the rear was a small open area where passengers could look out of the window (in this case, at the never-ending, sun-scorched Sahara Desert) and stand for a few moments.

While there, I met an American preacher. He and his wife were planning to go into the heart of Kenya for several

weeks. He explained that he had a few hundred people there ready for baptism. This was not his first trip, but it was all part of his mission to, as he put it, "turn hearts to Jesus, glory be to God."

Again I concluded, *Here is another person working at his cause.*

Finally, on the way back from Kenya on a flight to Amsterdam, I sat beside a pleasant woman from the state of Wisconsin. She was returning from a mission sponsored by her church. She had been in Goma, a town in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, where civil war had ravaged the area and thousands of people were displaced. Being a registered nurse, she spent her time in a medical facility helping doctors mend bullet wounds, treat the sick, work with women and girls who were raped, and much more.

After showing me some 400 pictures on her digital camera, we discussed our beliefs. She explained that she was reared in a disciplined Christian denomination, but was now in a more contemporary group, which at times made her somewhat doctrinally uncomfortable. Our conversation turned to questions she had about who should preach in church, predestination and baptism. She seemed genuinely interested in hearing my viewpoint on whether she was a converted Christian. She listened intently to any insight I provided. As the discussion came to a close, I again noted, *Here is another individual trying to do good and who is concerned about her place in the Christian landscape.*

Three very different people. Three very different missions. Three unique sets of beliefs. And these were just three of the almost 2.4 billion people who are considered Christians.

### Impacting Our World

Throughout time, there have been people and institutions that have affected the course of the planet: presidents, prime ministers, monarchs, despots, generals, educators, national governments, international coalitions, universities, research centers, religions, etc. The influence of such people and institutions varies widely. A president or prime minister can change the course of his nation. A monarch can represent his or her country in a way that either helps or hurts its image. Institutions can also impact nations and the world at large.

Religions and schools of thought have also had a considerable impact on civilization. Ancient Greek scholars such as Plato and Socrates form the foundation of much of our modern world. Yesterday's paganism and polytheism is today intertwined in almost every facet of life. Islam has impacted the Middle East for centuries, and is increasingly affecting other regions of the world. Hinduism and Buddhism have also influenced hundreds of millions of lives.

An argument could be made, though, that the religion that has

had the greatest impact is traditional Christianity.

### Profile of Christianity

The number of professing Christians continues to increase. There are about 41,000 different denominations who all consider themselves followers of Jesus of Nazareth, according to Pew Forum.

Over the past century, Christendom has undergone significant changes. Polls indicate the number of independents and independent groups is rising sharply. Some of the more historic or dominant denominations are becoming less popular.

*The Telegraph* reported on data from a Pew Research poll that stated, "...more than one third of Americans aged 18 to 29 now say they have 'no religious affiliation', compared with less than 10 per cent of their grandparents' generation.

"While America still remains outwardly far more religious than Europe, the sudden rise of the 'nones', as they were dubbed by the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, has raised

the question of whether the US is on the cusp of a dramatic sea-change in attitude towards religion in public life."

Evangelicals in America, however, are still considered a force to be reckoned with. U.S. politicians give much consideration to this group because they have a great impact on who is voted into office. Evangelical educational institutions have been created to train young people to become "Christian" lawyers and politicians. They are concerned with the morality of America and will do all they can to fight those in opposition.

Battles are being waged in U.S. courts over how much religion should be involved in governing the people. Morality has been the center of debate for decades.

The Christian world has long tried to evangelize the rest of the world, often by peaceful means; sometimes otherwise. It is reported that hundreds of millions of Bibles are in non-Christian nations. In some regards, Christianity has reached further into remote regions than any other aspect of civilization. For example, in west-



■ **EASTER IN IRAQ:** Christians attend an Easter mass at a church in Baghdad, Iraq (March 5, 2015).

PHOTO: SABAH ARAR/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

ern Kenya, where there are few signs of modern civilization, churches exist, most of them professing to be Christian.

From a purely physical point of view, the impact that Jesus Christ has had upon this world is like none other. Billions who claim to follow Him constitute the biggest segment of society.

### Every Shape, Size, Flavor and Color

Today's Christianity offers something for everyone. There are Catholics, Anglicans, Pentecostals, Presbyterians, Methodists, Lutherans and independents of every sort. There are megachurches filled with people wanting to learn about the "prosperity gospel." There are ever-popular televangelists proclaiming their message to listeners at home. There are associations and conglomerations of every type.

The concept of participatory theology is becoming more popular. This allows the younger generation to become more involved and create their own type of Christianity. This is especially appealing since many want a voice, and do not want the dos and don'ts of traditional Christianity.

Describing America's diverse religious landscape in a speech, former U.S. presidential candidate Mitt Romney said, "...in every faith I have come to know, there are features I wish were in my own: I love the profound ceremony of the Catholic Mass, the approachability of God in the prayers of the Evangelicals, the tenderness of spirit among the Pentecostals, the confident independence of the Lutherans..."

He continued, "And so it is for hundreds of millions of our countrymen: we do not insist on a single strain of religion—rather, we welcome our nation's *symphony* of faith."

The question must be asked: Do billions of professing Christians form a *symphony* of faith—a united, orchestrated, melodic masterpiece? Or is it something else?

In reality, every denomination has its own beliefs and doctrines—every-

one disagrees! Is this what the Creator of human beings intended?

### Founder's Point of View

Every professing Christian group and individual believes in some fashion that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and that He is the founder of Christianity.

What if He came back today and analyzed the 41,000 different Christian groups? Would He be pleased?

Billions claim to follow Jesus, but all have a different understanding of who and what He is—and what He taught. They do not all walk together in the same faith. One website claims that "Jesus is becoming clearer" because there are 175,000 books written about Him. But is this clarity—or confusion?

Every professing Christian, those who claim to be *followers* of Christ, must ask what Jesus' reaction would be to today's Christendom. Would He approve of the disunity? Would He accept every shape, size, flavor and color of belief? Would He accept the confusing message that is sent from the thousands of Christian denominations?

The Word of God declares, "For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches [congregations] of the saints" (I Cor. 14:33).

Jesus also stated, "I will build My Church"—*not* "churches" (Matt. 16:18), and that His Church was a "little flock" (Luke 12:32).

How does this fit with today's Christian landscape?

### What About You?

Many believe they have committed their lives to Jesus Christ. Those who feel they have done this should ask, "What if Christ came and spoke with *me* and examined my life? Would He be pleased?"

As an individual, you could dedicate your entire life—over 600,000-plus hours—but still be entirely off track. Do not believe this article; believe Christ's words: "Not every

one that says unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that does the will of My Father which is in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name? And in Your name have cast out devils? And in Your name done many wonderful works?" (Matt. 7:21-22).

Reasonable questions, are they not?

Read the answer and end-result for some: "And then will I profess unto them, *I never knew you: depart from Me, you that work iniquity*. Therefore whosoever hears these sayings of Mine, and *does them*, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock" (vs. 23-24).

Wonderful works are not enough—one must hear Christ's words—and *do* them!

The real truth is that professing Christianity is not a *symphony* of faith—it is a *CACOPHONY* of beliefs. If one understands the Bible, the instruction manual that Jesus Christ left us, then he understands that God is not the author of this world's divided Christendom.

Of the vast majority today, Christ said: "Howbeit in *vain* do they worship Me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. For laying aside the commandment of God, you hold the tradition of men..." (Mark 7:7-8). Christianity—whether traditional or contemporary—worships Christ in vain!

Where do you fit in? Could you be worshipping Jesus in vain? Again, do not believe me; believe your Bible. Read our online article series "14 Statements of Jesus Almost No One Believes—And Your Minister Doesn't Want You to Understand!" at [realtruth.org](http://realtruth.org).

You must ask yourself: If Christ sat down with me today, would He say, "I never knew you: depart from Me?" (Matt. 7:23) or "Well done, you good and faithful servant"? (Matt. 25:21).

Tough questions. You owe it to yourself to get PLAIN ANSWERS. □



# COPYING THE GENIUS

## *What Biomimicry Can Do for Us*

Scientists, engineers and architects are looking to the natural world to solve problems in their fields—and it is yielding astounding results.

BY GREGORY E. K Aidannek

**H**UMPBACK WHALES IMPROVE wind power. Birds silence bullet trains. Sharks stop deadly bacteria. On the surface, these statements seem strange and unrelated. Yet these odd-couple pairings are becoming commonplace in everyday life through the design philosophy known as biomimicry.

When faced with a problem—such as how to improve energy

efficiency in a home or desalinate water—biomimicry advocates examine how these same issues are addressed in nature. The Biomimicry Institute website calls it “an approach to innovation that seeks sustainable solutions to human challenges by emulating nature’s time-tested patterns and strategies.”

One such example is improving wind turbines by modeling them after the pectoral fins of humpback whales. These creatures’ fins are uniquely

shaped for lift and maneuverability. They are equipped with specialized bumps on the front edges called tubercles. *Bloomberg* reported that adding rows of similar bumps to turbine blades reduced drag and noise, and boosted the power harnessed by 20 percent.

Nature also inspired Japan’s iconic Shinkansen bullet train. The vehicle’s early design—which had a bluntly rounded nose like that of a bullet—was capable of reaching incredibly high speeds, but it encountered a problem.

# GENIUS IN NATURE

## *Biomimicry Reveals*



Every time it would enter a tunnel, it would compress the air in the confined space and create a loud boom when it exited the other side. The nation's strict sound pollution laws threatened to stop the train in its tracks.

A team member on the project found an unlikely source of inspiration: the kingfisher. The bird has a specialized beak that enables it to dive into water with virtually no splash. Modeling the front end of the train after the kingfisher beak not only reduced the problem of excessive train

noise, but it also decreased energy usage by over 10 percent.

Colorado-based Sharklet Technologies looked to sharkskin to help healthcare facilities fight the spread of aggressive antibiotic-resistant infections such as MRSA. Sharks are the only slow-moving marine animal that does not facilitate algae growth on its skin. The company mimicked the diamond-shaped pattern evident from a magnified image of the creature's skin and placed it on textured plastic.

The first Sharklet prototype reduced algae settlement by 85 percent compared to a chemically identical smooth surface. Similar results were found when it was tested against bacterial colonies. When applied to high-touch zones throughout hospitals and medical labs and devices, the new surface greatly reduced the risk of spreading infection—and the need for the use of toxic chemicals, antibiotics and antimicrobials to keep such areas clean.

The idea of biomimicry is nothing new. In the 1940s, nature inspired

Velcro, a familiar fastener, which was fashioned after the common burdock burr. Centuries earlier, Leonardo da Vinci said, “Those who are inspired by a model other than nature...are laboring in vain” (*Leonardo: The Artist and the Man*). While he was referring to painting, nature did inspire many of the designs for his inventions.

Even though the idea of copying nature has been around for centuries, it is truly coming into its own today—opening up incredible possibilities for the future.

### **Biological Benefits**

Often, applying principles seen in nature results in products and structures that require fewer raw materials to build and create less waste in the long run. This contemporary approach becomes more important when considering that while man has generally been successful at creating solutions to problems, there are usually negative side effects as a result. Solving one problem inevitably creates another.

Biomimicry can be used to break this endless cycle. One of the most promising ways to do this is to copy nature’s closed-loop sustainability. Instead of using and abusing Earth’s resources, we can copy natural ecosystems that were designed to sustain themselves.

Architect Michael Pawlyn explained this approach in a lecture delivered at a TED conference in London: “The way we tend to use resources is we extract them, we turn them into short-life products and then dispose of them. Nature works very differently. In ecosystems, the waste from one organism becomes the nutrient for something else in that system. And there are some examples of projects that have deliberately tried to mimic ecosystems.”

For instance, a project called Seawater Greenhouse was inspired by the African fog-basking darkling beetle. The Biomimicry Institute stated that the insect “lives in one of the driest deserts in the world, the Namib on the southwest coast of Africa, but obtains all of the water it needs from

ocean fog due to the unique surface of its back.” Each morning, the creature aims microscopic bumps on its back, which are designed to attract water, toward the oncoming fog. The water then flows into its mouth.

Mr. Pawlyn explained the success of the greenhouse: “This is a greenhouse designed for arid coastal regions, and the way it works is that you have this whole wall of evaporator grills, and you trickle seawater over that so that wind blows through, it picks up a lot of moisture and is cooled in the process. So inside it’s cool and humid, which means the plants need less water to grow. And then at the back of the greenhouse, it condenses a lot of that humidity as freshwater in a process that is effectively identical to the beetle.”

Upon completion, Mr. Pawlyn stated that the first Seawater Greenhouse “was producing slightly more freshwater than it needed for the plants inside.” He stated that this excess water was spread on the surrounding area, which soon greened up a section of desert area and turned “barren land back into biologically productive land.”

Allowing man to positively impact nature—while also more fully enjoying its benefits—is perhaps the greatest advantage of biomimicry. It becomes a testament to the completeness of the entire system that surrounds us. Each time the natural world is used as a blueprint for solving man’s problems, the benefits are astonishing.

### **What Nature Reveals**

Take a step back in your mind. For manmade objects, design implies there is a mind behind it. Your favorite armchair, the car you use for your daily commute, and the watch on your wrist all had teams of designers working on them. They labored to answer a series of questions: What material will make this the most comfortable? How can we make this more energy efficient? How can this be made more stylish, durable, useful, etc.?

These and many similar problems were all thought through using brainpower and critical thinking. Clearly,

every chair, car and watch has a mind behind it. In addition, all of the biomimicry products mentioned earlier also had scientists, architects and engineers behind them.

It should come as no surprise, therefore, that there is also a mind behind natural wonders.

The Bible plainly identifies this mind: “Because that which may be known of God is manifest [obvious] in them; for God has showed it unto them. For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are *clearly seen*, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse” (Rom. 1:19-20).

This passage reveals that God can be known through things that are created and seen. By studying the natural world, we can better understand His mind.

The Moffatt translation of the Bible makes this verse even plainer: “...for ever since the world was created, His invisible nature, His everlasting power and divine being, have been quite perceptible in what He has made. So they have no excuse.”

Every elegant “design solution” found in nature **CLEARLY** points to a Creator.

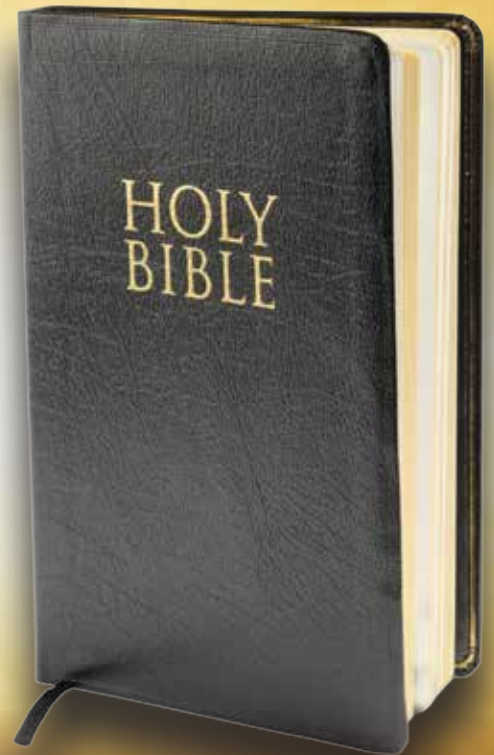
In ancient Israel, King David knew this as well. He wrote: “The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament [the sky] shows His handiwork” (Psa. 19:1). The king looked to Creation to understand the scientific laws governing the universe and the Designer who made it all.

Verses 2-3 expand on this: “Day unto day utters speech, and night unto night shows knowledge. There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard.”

David watched both day and night to learn everything he could about planetary orbits. Verses 4-6 state: “Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them has He set a tabernacle [place] for the sun, which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoices as a strong man to run a race. His [the sun’s] going forth is from the end of the heaven, and his circuit [rev-

# Science and the Bible

## *Can They Ever Agree?*



**M**ost people believe that God's Word conflicts with the age of the universe, the origin of species, and other facts about the physical world. In reality, however, the Bible contains many scientific truths—many of which were recorded long before modern biologists, astronomers and physicists officially discovered them.

*The Real Truth* magazine regularly publishes articles about this topic including:

- Science Confirms the "Give Way of Life!"
- Is the Earth 6,000 Years Old?
- Evolution Exposed: Deconstructing False Science—Part 1
- Designed for Discovery—Part 1: Why the Earth is Unique
- Archaeology Validates the Bible!
- How Man Will Conquer Space!
- Human Mind vs. Animal Brain—Why So Different?
- Proof of God in the Palm of Your Hand!
- Seeing Clearly—The Story of the Human Eye

**Visit [realtruth.org](http://realtruth.org) for proof that science and the Bible agree!**



■ **COPYING NATURE:** Above left, darkling beetles survive in African deserts by harvesting water from fog that rolls in from coastal waters. The creature is able to capture 40 percent of its body weight in water in one sitting. Above right, a great white shark swims in the ocean. The pattern of sharkskin naturally inhibits bacterial growth. Below, a worker checks a model of a high-speed train on display at the China International Rail Transit Exhibition in Shanghai (Aug. 23, 2011).

PHOTOS: THINKSTOCK (ABOVE LEFT AND RIGHT); STR/AFP/GETTY IMAGES (BELOW)



olution] unto the ends of it: and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof.”

These verses—along with many other Old Testament scriptures—indicate that David would have known the Earth was rotating. He poetically explained its 24-hour cycle by detailing the unbreakable relationship between day and night. He also understood that periods of light change with the four seasons. The king knew that there was no escaping the laws God set in motion.

For David, the vastness of the atmosphere and space—in all of its

beauty, order and precision—were clear signs of an incredible Being working behind the scenes. The entire system works together with multiple processes all complementing each other. This is why he was inspired to state twice that “the fool has said in his heart [mind], there is no God” (Psa. 14:1; 53:1).

#### Crucial Connection

The foolishness of refusing to believe in God has grown over the years. With increased understanding of the order and complexity of the universe comes

more and more proof there is a Creator at the helm.

A 2014 *Wall Street Journal* article reported: “Today there are more than 200 known parameters necessary for a planet to support life—every single one of which must be perfectly met, or the whole thing falls apart.”

The need for a God grows when one looks at the universe itself. The article continued: “The fine-tuning necessary for life to exist on a planet is nothing compared with the fine-tuning required for the universe to exist at all. For example, astrophysicists now know

that the values of the four fundamental forces—gravity, the electromagnetic force, and the ‘strong’ and ‘weak’ nuclear forces—were determined less than one millionth of a second after the big bang. Alter any one value and the universe could not exist. For instance, if the ratio between the nuclear strong force and the electromagnetic force had been off by the tiniest fraction of the tiniest fraction—by even one part in 100,000,000,000,000,000—then no stars could have ever formed at all.”

Proof of God continues to mount. Professor of mathematics Dr. John Lennox of the University of Oxford wrote that “the more we get to know about our universe, the more the hypothesis, that there is a Creator God, who designed the universe for a purpose, gains in credibility as the best explanation of why we are here” (*God’s Undertaker: Has Science Buried God?*).

This evidence, coupled with the endless wonders seen in nature, all point to God. His Creation allows man to better understand His mind—how He thinks. It shows He is a God of order, simplicity and elegance. Just as man thinks through design problems, the Creator did the same.

Yet God solving “design problems” in nature was really just Him creatively employing the laws of science—physical laws He laid out from the beginning.

Physical laws that govern time and space, such as gravity, were set in order since Creation. Everything we do in our physical existence must operate within their confines.

These are immutable laws. For example, if you attempt to “break” the law of gravity by jumping off a tall building, it will not end well. From an early age, skinned knees, bruises and even broken bones teach us to abide by this *physical* law.

Yet, unknown to most, God also made *spiritual* laws governing how to live. This is why Psalm 19 talks about the physical world and neatly transitions into the spiritual. Recall that in verses 1-6, King David wrote about the heavens, day, night, sun, and Earth.

Then in verses 7-8, he stated: “The *law* of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul [keeping the law is life-changing]: the *testimony* of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple [you can count on what God says]. The *statutes* of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart [keeping them brings joy]: the *commandment* of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes [keeping them opens a person’s eyes to see their ultimate purpose].”

God’s perfect laws, statutes, commandments and testimonies were put into place *for us*. They were made for our benefit! Following them yields positive effects—ensuring we lead happy, healthy, productive lives.

### God’s Mind and Laws

These all-important laws are meant to teach us to govern how we think and behave. The eternal God who was there from the beginning (John 1:1) describes Himself as love (I John 4:8).

Yet the same Being also inspired the apostle Paul to record that love is the fulfilling of the Law (Rom. 13:10).

Paul was not talking about the laws associated with the four fundamental forces of nature—gravity, electromagnetics, strong force or weak force—he was referring to the fundamental LAWS OF GOD!

The Ten Commandments over-arch all of God’s laws. They provide a blueprint for how humans should govern their thoughts and actions. (See Exodus 20 and Matthew 22:36-40.) The first four, which start with, “You shall have no other gods before Me,” can be summarized as how we should manage our relationship with God. The remaining six teach us how to behave in relationships with our fellow man—including directives to honor parents and avoid adultery, murder and stealing.

Together, the Ten Commandments describe how we should practice love toward God *and* man. These are the foundational guide to *all* other laws mentioned throughout Scripture. Put another way, every other rule or guideline fits into these 10 *by design*.

These spiritual laws have been in place since man drew his first breath. Romans 7:12 states, “Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment, holy, and just, and good.” Verse 14 adds that it is “spiritual.” Just as man can understand God’s mind and character through physical laws, he can also understand the Creator through spiritual laws. In other words, God is holy, just, good and spiritual. He is also eternal (Psa. 111) and perfect (19:7).

Again, these laws reveal the character and mind of the One who created them and put them into motion. By applying them in your life, you can better understand your Creator—and become more like Him.

### Getting to Know God

The beginning of the Bible reveals that man was fashioned after God’s image and likeness (Gen. 1:26). Yet we were made incomplete—again, by design!

Humanity is on a totally different wavelength than God when it comes to spiritual matters (Eph. 2:2). We continually attempt to solve our biggest problems through our *own* analysis and experimentation within Creation while denying the God who made it in the first place. As a result of not following His Law, man has experienced countless negative consequences over millennia (Rom. 6:23). This has also led many to completely miss out on understanding the reason for their existence (Isa. 59:1-2).

Yet you can know why you were born. It begins with recognizing a fundamental principle of human nature. God summarizes this in Isaiah 55:8-9: “For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways...For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.”

Without turning to God, we cannot understand the right way to live! The physical side of this can be seen in man’s record of pollution and destruc-

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# Making the Most of Family Time!

Time is our greatest resource. Are you spending enough of it with your family?

BY RYAN P. DENEE



**S**UMMERTIME IS ALMOST here! School will be out in the next few months, vacation time is near. Many will travel, spend time with friends and family, and do home improvements or overdue renovations.

Plans also include signing children up for summer camp, Little League baseball, soccer, horseback-riding lessons, swimming instruction, or other activities.

Everyone looks forward to summer because the days are longer and the weather is more enjoyable. More time is available to catch up on projects that have accumulated over the winter.

One of the areas often overlooked in these busy schedules is spending time with our children. Summer provides many opportunities for this!

### Quality Time

While growing up in a family of four siblings, my parents worked hard to make time for us. They owned and operated a small garden center business in eastern Canada, which was a 24/7 operation. Somehow they managed to run a successful enterprise while rearing children.

During summer vacations, we joined my father on his weekly trips to the flower and plant auction. This required waking up at 4:00 a.m. and driving over an hour and a half to arrive before the market opened so we could purchase goods for the business.

After the auction finished, Dad took us to breakfast at a diner, which was considered a special treat. Looking back, these were some of my fondest memories of time spent with my father.

Did he have to take us along? Was he not busy enough running a business, especially as it struggled through its beginning years? Would it not have been better for us to stay home? Though my father was a busy man, he found a way to make room for us in his schedule.

Now I am an adult with three young children of my own. I am at a similar point in my life as my father—and am

striving to find creative ways to make time for my family.

Are you making time for yours? Or are other things getting in the way, crowding too much of your free time—careers, bills (paying the mortgage, making car payments, etc.), leisure activities, watching television, playing video games, or browsing the Internet?

### Current Picture

Recent reports and statistics show families spend little time together. A poll of 2,000 parents conducted by Virgin Holidays and Universal Orlando Resort found that families spend about 36 minutes per weekday together. Even when families do get together, it is often in silence in front of a television. Per week, families spend less than eight hours together on average.

American parents are also working more hours and spending less vacation time with their families. A “study sponsored by Alamo Rent A Car reconfirmed previous stats: 40 percent of American workers who received paid vacation as a job benefit did not use all of their available paid vacation days,” *St. Louis Dispatch* reported.

“Plus we are likely to work even while away: Half (50 percent) did not unplug while on vacation, with one in four reporting they worked every day of their vacations, according to this survey,” the media outlet continued.

“The most common reason for not using all their vacation? Most (47 percent) reported they were too busy at work.

“Nearly 20 percent reported five days or more of paid vacation went unused in 2014.

“Parents tend to take shorter vacations than non-parents, with 37 percent reporting their family vacation lasted five days or less (vs. 26 percent of non-parents).”

According to New York University School of Medicine, family time is also being obstructed by devices. Each day, children and teens ages 8 to 18 spend:

- Four hours in front of a television screen
- One hour in front of a computer screen

■ 50 minutes playing video games  
This amounts to children spending 44.5 hours per week using media!

In a survey of 1,300 educators conducted by the Association of Teachers and Lecturers, a union for educational professionals in England, approximately 61 percent said children and parents spent less time together in 2014 than in 2012. The teachers blamed technology use and parents working longer hours.

“In response to the survey, one primary school teacher in Kent said: ‘Many of our parents are commuters into London and therefore work long hours.

‘We have children as young as four who are at school 8am-6pm, eating breakfast, lunch and dinner,’” *BBC* reported.

“A teacher at a secondary school... said: ‘The pressures on family time have grown considerably and work-life balance for many parents is an increasingly difficult area. The necessity to stay in work means time spent with children isn’t always a priority.’”

These reports indicate that parents have an uphill battle! Yet while there are more distractions than ever before that keep our time occupied, the benefits of spending more time with our children and making the most of that time is well worth the effort.

### What Can Be Done?

During the summer, it is important to use time wisely and make our families an exception to the trend.

Creativity is key. There are countless ways to create time for the family. In the summer, evenings are longer, so take time to enjoy the extra sunlight. If you have a long commute from work, consider pushing back dinner time so you can enjoy a meal with the entire family. If the weather is pleasant, make it a point to eat outside. When the whole family is sitting down for dinner, turn off the television and consider playing soft, non-intrusive music that still allows for conversation. Smartphones and similar devices should not be brought to the table.

Now for the difficult part: breaking the ice, building and creating an envi-

ronment for good conversation. Each family member should share his or her highlights of the day. From there, the conversation can develop naturally. Perhaps discuss something heard on the news or read on the Internet. Talk about a lesson someone learned that day; begin with something you learned at work.

Use *every* possible opportunity to TEACH. If you are eating dinner outside, there are topics of conversation all around you. Trees, wind, sun, shadows, flowers, plants and animals, such as a squirrel or a bird, can provide a source of conversation.

When was the last time you took your son or daughter for a leisurely stroll through the neighborhood? Enjoy the surroundings. Talk with your children and encourage them to share their thoughts.

Vacations are an excellent way to slow down and enjoy time with the family. All too easily we can plan a getaway that has an agenda longer than what would easily fit into the time frame. Amusement parks, sight-

seeing, and traveling by either car or plane can be some of the most exciting family trips.

Remember to be balanced. Leave time for a canoe trip on a calm lake, or a day of building sandcastles at the beach, or the simple activity of shell hunting. You can enjoy the company of your children without the glitz of society.

If vacation time is not possible, what about the nearly endless summer weekends? They might not seem never-ending to us, but they do to our children!

Again, take your family away from electronic devices and enjoy the natural world—it does not have to cost a fortune.

Spend the afternoon flying a kite at a park with your child and think of all the things you could teach him: patience, agility, physics, etc. Or take a short ride into the country with your children and show where the food on the table originates. In nearly every locale, there are parks and sites to explore *if* you look for them.

Even the simple act of reading books together can bond a parent and child. Enjoy reading an adventure and guessing what will occur next. Better yet, create one of your own in which your child is the main character.

Once we focus our minds on the activities that can increase and make the most of our family time, we should never run out of possibilities.

That said, goals need to be set. For example, eat dinner together five times a week. Share two walks in the neighborhood each week. Every Sunday afternoon, go on a family outing.

Setting your mind to achieve simple goals will pay dividends.

### **Our Stewardship**

Parents have been given children as a gift from God, which He calls a reward and a blessing: “Lo, children are a heritage of the LORD: and the fruit of the womb is His reward” (Psa. 127:3)—they are given to us as a stewardship. A steward is someone who manages property and other affairs for someone else.

In the parable of the pounds (Luke 19:11-17), Jesus taught that all God’s true servants will give an account of every aspect of their lives—including how well they have wisely used their time to properly train their children.

Imagine being given one million dollars. What would you do with it in 18 or 20 years? Would you make sure the amount grew, so that at the end of those years you would have significantly increased its value? To be counted a good steward, you would need to do so.

The value of each child—his or her ultimate potential—is far greater than many millions of dollars.

God has placed your children into your care. As a parent, are you using your time to the best of your ability—making every minute count? If so, when they reach adulthood, your children will have benefited from your many hours of teaching and sharing your time with them.

And you will have prepared them to lead successful lives! □





## ASIA

*Continued from page 8*

tion of the number of Japheth's descendants.

Think. What nations today fit the description of being large or numerous in population? Those located in Asia fit this description precisely. Of the 4.4 billion on the entire continent, about two billion reside in the regions of East and Southeast Asia. This Bible verse obviously came to pass!

Genesis 9:27 is just one proof of the validity of Bible prophecy, but Scripture—which is one-third prophecy—has much more to reveal, espe-

cially about what the future holds for Southeast Asia.

### Power Blocs

Prophecy is history written in advance. Therefore the Bible not only gives us a look back, but also a look forward. By understanding Bible prophecy, we can understand future world events—many of them just over the horizon.

To fully appreciate Asia's future, one must first understand the function and relationship of powerful governments. The importance of world governments should not be surprising. Any news media source worth its salt has numerous sections dedicated to the major governments of the world:

the United States, Germany, China, etc.

What happens in these various places drives world affairs. God has always demonstrated an interest in world affairs. Did you know that God even selects leaders of nations? (Read Daniel 2:21, 4:17, and Proverbs 8:15-16.) God cares about the nations of the world, and discusses them throughout Scripture. With help, all nations can be identified in the Bible and their futures understood.

The connections between modern nations and many end-time events is greatly simplified when world ruling powers are understood in terms of geography. God identifies power



■ **PROGRESS AND CONSOLIDATION:** Left, Russia's Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev speaks with China's Premier Li Keqiang during a meeting in Moscow (Oct. 13, 2014). Right, a worker watches a production line of a new Coca-Cola plant in Cikedokan, Indonesia. The facility has become the biggest plant in the Asia-Pacific region with a total investment worth \$500 million (March 31, 2015).

PHOTOS: ALEXANDER ZEMLIANICHENKO/AFP/GETTY IMAGES (LEFT); BAY ISMOYO/AFP/GETTY IMAGES (RIGHT)



blocs based on one of four directions in relation to Jerusalem in Israel. The Bible—which often refers to governments as “kings”—lists two of these blocs in Daniel chapter 11. They are labeled “king of the north” and “king of the south” in a series of verses detailing past and future events. These two kings are a collection of nations led by a leader and located north and south of the Holy Land. The north is a revived Holy Roman Empire in Europe. The south is a Muslim military power.

With north and south addressed, this leaves east and west. The Bible refers to the “kings of the east” in Revelation 16:12. (You will notice that “kings” is plural. More on this later.)

This only leaves west. You can probably guess what nation or nations make up powers from this direction. In fact, we still use the term “the West” to describe the United States and nations with similar values and policies—namely those of Western Europe.

Yet the Bible never mentions any “king of the west.” This is due to a drastic decline in U.S. influence on world affairs, which has already begun. In fact, the U.S. does not play a significant political role in end-time events the same way that nations from the other three directions do. (For more on America’s future, read David C. Pack’s book *America and Britain in Prophecy* at [rcg.org/aabibp](http://rcg.org/aabibp).)

The books of Daniel and Revelation show that the king of the north will lead a powerful end-time empire. Prophecy reveals this final kingdom will be led by a powerful civil leader who will work in tandem with a religious leader. They will represent one of the three power blocs competing for world dominance.

### Tidings Out of the East

Understanding the king of the north, king of the south, and the kings of the east makes it much easier to comprehend what part Southeast Asia and the entire Asian continent play in end-time events. Prophecy reveals that the king of the north will attempt to establish a capital and religious headquarters in the “glorious land” known as the Holy Land or Jerusalem (Dan. 11:41).

During this conquest, however, Daniel 11:44 says that “tidings out of the east and out of the north shall trouble him...” Sticking with our understanding of how God uses Jerusalem as a geographical reference point, the nations of Asia including Russia and China fit the bill for the kings of the east.

Why is the king of the north troubled?

In Revelation 9:16 an angel revealed to John in a vision that an army numbering “two hundred thousand thousand” or 200 million would be formed. The book explains that a way will be prepared for the army led by “the kings of the east” to come against the king of the north (Rev. 16:12). This immense force is an alliance between Russia, China and other nations of Asia aligned with them.

As mentioned previously, unlike the “king of the north” or the “king of the south,” the “kings of the east” is plural. The reason for this is important.

The use of “kings” implies a coalition of nations that cooperate based on common interests, but that never actually come together

under one ruler. This is not difficult to understand given past relations between Russia, China, Japan and leaders from other Asian nations. These leaders have shown themselves willing to cooperate—but only to a point. (The “men of the east,” another reference to the end-time army mentioned in Ezekiel 25:4-10, reinforces this concept.)

The kings of the east, all descended from Japheth, will coalesce to come against or “trouble” the king of the north. With the king of the north dominating the world, these “kings of the east” will likely be forced to cooperate to ensure their own survival and access to vital resources such as food, water and oil.

Southeast Asia, long ago controlled by colonial forces and then influenced by the United States during the Cold War, is now looking toward its Asian neighbors. Old disagreements are gradually disappearing and relations that would have seemed far-fetched even a few decades ago are becoming reality. Understanding these events through the lens of Scripture—specifically Bible prophecy—can make what seems confusing much clearer.

With all this in mind, we can know what is in store for Southeast Asia, why the West is diminishing, and why eastern nations are cooperating as never before.

To comprehend even more about what is to come, read David C. Pack’s book *The Bible’s Greatest Prophecies Unlocked! – A Voice Cries Out* at [rcg.org/tbgpu](http://rcg.org/tbgpu). It reveals—in crystal clear detail—what is in store for the world in the years ahead. □



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## NATURE

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tion of this planet. Yet by turning to God's Creation through principles such as biomimicry, man is discovering that God's Way leads us to live more sustainably.

The same is true spiritually. Without God's Law, man's record is one of war, hatred, vanity, jealousy, lust and greed. No good thing comes from these motivations!

Yet imagine if everyone sought out God's Way in their lives. If they followed Jesus Christ's instruction in Matthew 22:37 and Mark 12:30, the first four Commandments—love toward God—would become commonplace. As a result, everyone would understand the Family of God and their place in it. There would be no other forms of religion or accompanying hatred between them. Foul language would never be heard again. People everywhere would come together in peace and safety to worship God on His chosen day.

What if everyone kept the other six commandments and showed love toward his neighbor? Children would follow the rules while living with happily married, faithful parents. War and

terrorism would be a thing of the past. Never again would anyone's home be broken into, nor would we ever hear government propaganda. False advertising would become ancient history. People would be content and satisfied, never again feeling compelled to "keep up with the Jones's."

To most, the above scenarios seem idealistic and impossible. Yet think: If God created laws for His Creation to follow, it must be possible. Therefore, so would be the resultant effects.

While you were created incomplete, however, you need not remain this way! With God's help, you can discover the final missing design element.

To do so, you must be willing to put aside ways that *seem* right and admit that they only produce bad results (Prov. 14:12). This means following the blueprints crafted by the original Designer and getting to know Him.

The apostle John explained exactly how to do this, "And hereby we do know that we know Him, if we KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS" (I John 2:3). Plainly stated, to know God we must keep His Law!

God is calling some and revealing His wonderful truth to a few now (John 6:44). Some are being given the

opportunity to understand the Mind that created them. These are now living the way of peace, happiness, prosperity and abundant living!

Our Creator wants us to know His will—His thoughts! Eventually, He will "have all men to be saved, and come unto the knowledge of the truth" (I Tim. 2:4).

Every day, we experience the wonderful results of physical Creation, and are governed by its laws. Increasingly, man is discovering the keys to perfect design and function and putting them to work through biomimicry. We study nature, copy it, and harness its powerful blueprints to solve our most challenging physical problems—all in hopes of enhancing our existence. Yet the big picture is completely overlooked.

The only way we will ever solve our worst problems—which are spiritual in nature—is to start seeing the "forest for the trees." We must study, copy and put God's ultimate *spiritual* Law to the test. We must determine to get to know the Mind that designed and created everything.

To learn more, watch the three-part *World to Come™ with David C. Pack* series "What If the World Obeyed the 10 Commandments?" at [worldtocome.org](http://worldtocome.org). □

# WHAT IF THE WORLD KEPT GOD'S LAW?



Visit [www.worldtocome.org](http://www.worldtocome.org) today!

## PERSONAL

Continued from page 2

First know this. The apostle John recorded the words of Christ that open the book of Revelation (realize this book is Christ's revealing of things to come, not John's): "The Revelation of Jesus Christ...to show [meaning *reveal, open up*] unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass...blessed is he that reads, and they that *hear* the words of this prophecy, and *keep* those things which are written therein: for the *time is at hand*" (1:1, 3). Revelation concludes with this emphasis: "...Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the *time is at hand*" (22:10).

Two thousand years later, how much more—today!—has the time for understanding colossal prophecies come! You can comprehend the message they bring, if you are determined to obey God—if you are determined to become one of His servants—and this begins with if you are willing to research these prophecies.

But time is short.

God has allotted man 6,000 years to try his own governments, philosophies, religions, values and forms of education. But humanly devised ideas do not and *could never* solve the world's truly big problems. They always fail in the end. In the last 200 years or so, the world has changed dramatically—and rapidly. Events are speeding up in a way that has never been seen before! The 6,000 years are almost up.

### The 21st-century World

Everyone is familiar with sign-carrying kooks on street corners saying, "Repent! The end is near!" Hollywood has depicted many. For the most part, these people are not taken seriously—and should *not* be. But times have changed, and, I repeat, now many are the voices who report, for those who will listen, that something is terribly wrong! This has caused the idea of one world government, designed to save the planet and mankind from itself, to be heard more often. I read articles calling for this. However, no one seems to

know how to create such a government and then acquire the cooperation of everyone necessary to make it succeed!

Look all around. What do you see?

As a whole, the world was a much more stable place until the early 19th century. At that time, technological advancements gave birth to the Industrial Age. It was not until about a century ago that men began to drive cars and fly, and civilization went from the Industrial Age to the Nuclear Age, on to the Space Age, and then to the Information Age—all in a little more than 70 years.

The arrival of new inventions, at the fastest rate in history, is changing life daily. Just think of the impact of the printing press and you can appreciate how dramatically a single invention can change the whole world. Computers have done the same—and there is no turning back from the huge impact, good and bad, of just this one invention. Remember, jet travel arrived just over 60 years ago.

Although estimates vary, it is believed that mankind's total fund of knowledge is doubling every few years. Some think this could soon accelerate to every six months!

In the early 1970s, a book appeared titled *Future Shock*. I read it. It described a certain psychological stunning or shock effect on minds due to the high speed of changes in society. And that was over 40 years ago. The author demonstrated that these changes began in the 1970s at such a rate that people could no longer properly process them. Society as a whole began to go into what was described as mental overload—or "shock"—explained as the "future" slamming into the "present" so fast that people were "short-circuiting" in a way never seen before. The picture was not good, and has only grown worse! Sometime after, he wrote a sequel describing this worsening.

With all man's supposed "advancement," his problems have never seemed greater or more *insoluble*!

The HIV/AIDS epidemic continues to wipe out over a million children and adults per year in Africa. With about a

million people becoming newly infected annually, entire sections of Africa's population could be wiped out in a few years by this single, awful disease.

Earth's population of over seven billion people is rising steadily at 1.1 percent each year. This means it will reach 9.5 billion by 2050—if time were to permit, and it will not! This is despite the fact that disease and starvation are worst in the *fastest-growing* parts of the world! High fertility rates in less-developed parts of the world have already brought these increases right on schedule.

### End-time Prophecies

Let's look at some passages that describe other crucial, end-time prophecies!

We explained that Paul came to realize he did *not* live in the age when Jesus would return. However, God did use him to record what conditions would be like when that time finally came. Consider this description of the widespread degeneration of attitudes and character just before Christ's Return: "This know also, that in the *last days perilous times shall come*. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness but denying the power thereof: from such turn away" (II Tim. 3:1-5).

This is a graphic picture. It describes a complete breakdown of character in the last days. This time has come!—and these conditions grow worse daily! Again, look around. People's conduct is rapidly changing—always for the worse. More authority figures are sounding the alarm that human nature is running wild—and conditions are exploding out of control!

No thinking person could disagree.

The degeneration of people's attitudes and behavior is stark when



■ **INCREASING PROBLEMS:** Left, nearly 10,000 people are left homeless after a fire breaks out in a slum in Manila, Philippines. Blazes are common in these areas due to overcrowding, light building materials, and lack of precaution exercised by the slums' impoverished residents (March 3, 2015). Right, hungry children gather grain that spilled from bags following a food drop in South Sudan (Feb. 24, 2015).

PHOTOS: JAY DIRECTO/AFP/GETTY IMAGES (LEFT); TONY KARUMBA/AFP/GETTY IMAGES (RIGHT)

compared to only one generation ago. There have always been acts of violence but now they come more often, and are more depraved. There have always been liars but now deceit is more pervasive. There has always been adultery but the percentage of people who commit it is now epidemic. There has always been divorce but today it is much more common. There have always been disrespectful young people, but soon an entire generation will have forgotten the Fifth Commandment, "Honor your father and mother." There have always been thievery and fraud, but statistics show these are exploding—particularly in the most affluent countries, where people have a lot, but covet more.

Much more could be said of each term used in Paul's prophecy. And we have not talked about pornography, child abuse, crime and trends in perverted sex, drug abuse, hatred, war and others! All these conditions have combined to create an age correctly described as "perilous"—or *dangerous!*

They become another powerful indicator that *these are the last days!*

### Christ's Great Olivet Prophecy

Matthew 24, Luke 21, and Mark 13 contain Jesus' Olivet Prophecy. We saw Matthew's account begins with His disciples asking about events that would precede the "end of the world"—the end of civilized society as we know it. They had originally believed this would occur in their lifetimes because they misunderstood Christ and tied it to the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem. While the temple was *destroyed* by the Romans in AD 70, Christ knew that His Second Coming would be almost 20 centuries after. He prophesied certain *other*, much later events would precede it.

Jesus also described the breakdown of character. He warned that conditions would mirror the days of Noah, which Genesis 6 describes this way: "The earth also was corrupt before God, and...filled with violence. And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for

all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth" (vs. 11-12).

*Corruption* is mentioned *three* times in this one short passage. But this description is at the same time highly specific and speaks of men as having individually *and* collectively degenerated into *absolute* corruption—with civilization "filled with violence." God uses both the singular "his" and the collective "all" to drive this point home!

Consider how often acts of mass violence now occur in schools, restaurants, campuses, malls and workplaces in ways unheard of until recent years! The terms serial snipers and suicide bombers were unheard of 20 years ago. And the still relatively new phenomenon of terrorism has become global in nature. Just think of how often you hear about it.

Jesus also compared conditions before His Return to those in Sodom and Gomorrah. He leads in with Noah again. Notice: "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 [society looked like it would go on], until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all. Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; but the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all” (Luke 17:26-29).

Genesis 18 and 19 show that these two cities were so rotten—so evil—that, before God destroyed them, only four people were deemed worthy to escape—Lot, his two daughters, and wife, who later turned to salt. Only eight people were allowed to enter the Ark before God flooded the world.

Let’s ask: How much longer before conditions cannot grow worse?

### Genesis Validated

An aside at this point that has much to do with whether you will believe Christ is necessary. Many have been told that the early chapters of Genesis do not describe real people and real events. This is to accommodate the nonsensical fiction of evolution in place of a literal Adam and Eve. But had you realized Jesus Christ said that Noah, the ark and the flood existed?—and that so did Sodom and Gomorrah, including its destruction?

Those who dismiss these and related Genesis accounts seem unaware that Christ validated this first book of the Bible. They also forget—or willingly ignore—Jesus’ and Paul’s references to Adam, and how this validated the Creation account. (Most simply do not know that, while man has been here for only 6,000 years, Earth has existed for billions of years. The key to this is understanding what happened between Genesis 1:1 and the very next verse 2. I explain it in my book *The Awesome Potential of Man* at [rcg.org/tapom](http://rcg.org/tapom).)

We are left to ask: How many will believe and act on Christ’s warning about oncoming events—when He compared these future events to Bible parallels that most do not accept as true?—as having *ever happened*?

### Stark Warning

This Personal opened referencing scoffers in the last days. Let’s now read the verse containing it and continue reading through a warning for us today: “Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts” (II Pet. 3:3)—people choosing and following the course of human nature, as in Sodom and Gomorrah, and Noah’s time.

Now verse 4: “And saying, Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.” So many are unwilling to believe that serious times—the last days!—could actually *come*.

God declares, “For this they willingly are ignorant...” (vs. 5)—this speaks for itself! Now verse 6: “Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water [the Flood], perished”—remember, Christ supported the Noachian account and signified its warning for us. Peter—who wrote this verse—also believed the events in Genesis actually occurred.

Verse 9: “The Lord is not slack concerning His promise...but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.”

Sadly, of course, most *will not do this*.

Next comes a stark warning to those who are not looking: “The day of the Lord [the time of God’s wrath upon a sin-sick world] will come as a thief in the night...” (vs. 10), followed by, “Seeing then... what manner of persons ought you to be in all holy conversation [conduct] and godliness” (vs. 11). The Bible also states, “Looking for and hastening unto the coming of the day of God...” (vs. 12), and, “...seeing that you look for such things, be diligent that you may be found of [Christ] in peace, without spot, and blameless” (vs. 14).

Finally comes the very personal verse 17: “You therefore...seeing you know these things before[hand], beware lest you also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness.”

Now a caution: Be careful you are neither among the pooh-poohing, unbelieving scoffers—nor one of those who will not seek and obey God while there is still time.

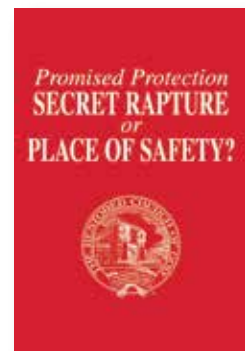
The Bible promises that those who are faithful and obedient will be protected through the worst calamities that could fall upon an unsuspecting world. While the last days certainly are perilous—or dangerous—this is just the run-up period prior to the infinitely worse final three and a half years to follow before the good news of the gospel is fulfilled in Christ’s coming.

While much of Christendom accepts the false *rapture* theory—nowhere taught in Scripture!—God promises a special place of divine protection for the faithful in His Church. Another booklet you may wish to read is *Promised Protection – Secret Rapture or Place of Safety?* at [rcg.org/gpp](http://rcg.org/gpp). You do not need to fear the future. But neither should you listen to people who do not understand either events that are playing out now, or how God will protect His people from this greatest time of world trouble.

There is more to know about prophecy. I urge you to read *Are These the Last Days?* for extended proof. This booklet answers the question more thoroughly than can be done in this Personal. □



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SOCIETY & LIFESTYLES

# Heroin Deaths Spike as Painkiller Addicts Flock to the Drug

Deaths caused by heroin use have rapidly increased since 2010 as those who abuse prescription painkillers have turned to it instead of more strictly regulated medical opioids such as oxycodone.

According to a study from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, heroin-related deaths nearly tripled from 2010 to 2013 in the United States, from 3,094 to 8,257. The number of heroin users nearly doubled from 2007 to 2013, from 373,000 to 681,000.

During the same period, however, deaths caused by prescription painkillers began to decrease.

The shift is the result of many factors. Heroin is now cheaper and easier to access than prescription painkillers, which are used by record numbers across the country.

*Time* reported: “This rise in cheaper, purer and more readily available heroin has coincided with a law enforcement crack down on illegal prescription pill providers. Some 6.8 million Americans abuse prescription pills, according to SAMHSA’s [Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration] 2012

National Survey on Drug Use and Health, and popular opiates like OxyContin, Percocet, and Vicodin have become increasingly hard and costly to obtain on the black market in recent years. In 2010, OxyContin changed its formula to make the pill harder to crush and dissolve, and, therefore, abuse.”

Since heroin and many prescription painkillers derive from opium, they have similar psychological effects. A SAMHSA study in 2012 revealed that individuals who abused painkillers were 19 times more likely to try heroin than those who had not.

In response to greater demand, Latin American cartels have begun distributing higher-quality heroin deeper into the U.S., especially in Midwestern states. This has made it more palatable for those who would not normally use it.

“When heroin was cut with so much filler, it required a user to inject it into their body to achieve the desired high,” *Time* reported. “The purer versions currently available can be smoked or snorted, which make them more appealing to teenagers, the college-educated and ‘people who

normally wouldn’t come near it for fear of the needle,’ says [Jack] Riley [a special agent in charge of the Drug Enforcement Administration’s Chicago Field Division]. ‘That’s why it is spreading.’”

Officials also attribute the increased number of heroin deaths to the fact that the illicit substance is being manufactured differently. The DEA correlated the greater number of heroin-related deaths to the presence of potent additives such as fentanyl, which augments the effects of heroin up to 50 times.

“[In 2014], law enforcement [officials across the United States] found 3,344 samples of drugs containing fentanyl, more than triple the total in 2013,” *The Wall Street Journal* reported.

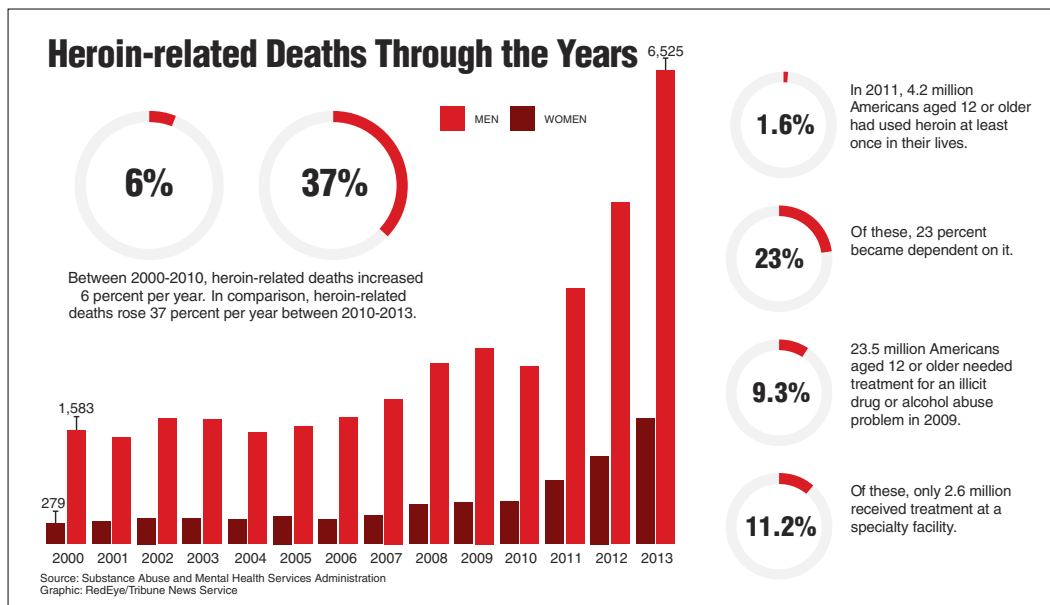
“At a Senate hearing... [Administrator of the DEA] Ms. [Michele] Leonhart pointed to fentanyl as a key driver of a doubling in the number of heroin-related deaths in Maryland last year.

“We’re looking at those deaths, and we’re finding that a number of them are actually fentanyl-laced heroin overdoses,” she said.

“Hundreds of deaths in Pennsylvania over the past two years have also been linked to fentanyl, with users in some cases injecting pure forms of the drug.”

In addition, some heroin buyers used to abusing the less potent product more easily overdose, which can lead to death.

Although post-2013 national figures have not yet been compiled, the heroin death rate appears to show no sign of slowing down. □





**Unintended Consequences**

An increasing number of children have developed allergies to antibiotics used on fruits and vegetables. Farmers place antibiotics on their crops to protect them from bacteria and fungi, yet traces remain on the produce after they are sold in markets. The discovery comes after an influx of people claimed to be allergic to fruit. Tests for fruit allergies would always come up negative, but tests for allergic reactions to the pesticides were almost always positive. □



**Assisted Suicide**

More states are advocating for assisted suicide. Legislation would allow mentally stable individuals over 18 years old who were given a certain number of months to live to choose medically assisted death. Though only Oregon currently allows this practice, California and the District of Columbia have submitted proposals. □



■ **SYNAGOGUE:** Men stand outside the Lauderdale Road Sephardic Synagogue in London, England (May 17, 2014).  
PHOTO: CC BY 3.0/HAM/WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

**Anti-Semitic Actions**

Violence against Jewish citizens in Britain has reached an all-time high, with 1,168 recorded incidences in 2014. Most were acts of abuse, physical assault, or property damage. This figure is more than double the number of occurrences that took place in 2013. □



**Locust Plight**

Though rain finally came for several drought-plagued areas in Australia, it also brought with it a grasshopper infestation. The grasshoppers emerged from dormant eggs in the ground that hatched when the land received rain. *ABC* reported: “Millions of yellow-winged grasshoppers have infested properties...destroying crops and shredding grass.”

This presents a problem for the area’s cattle ranchers, whose cattle are already struggling to find grass because of previous droughts. □

**Malaria Comeback**

A drug-resistant strain of malaria is spreading in several Asian countries. The disease is resistant to artemisinin, the antibiotic that has prevented malaria from killing millions of people. According to the *BBC*, malaria, which takes the lives of over 580,000 people a year worldwide, is “on the verge of entering India” from Myanmar, which could result in a major disaster for the nation of 1.25 billion. □

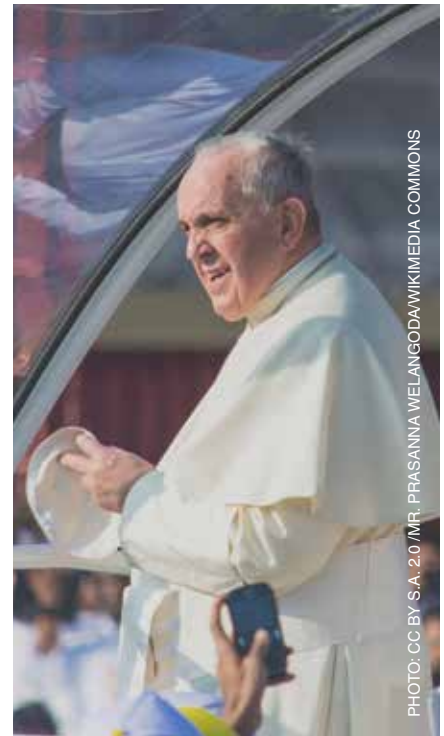


PHOTO: CC BY SA. 2.0 /MR. PRASANNA WELANGODA/WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

**Popular Pope**

After just over two years in office, Pope Francis has reached his highest level of favor among Americans. According to a Pew Research Poll, 95 percent of regularly attending Catholics in the U.S. and two-thirds of those not practicing religion favor the pope.

His popularity among atheists and agnostics has skyrocketed since entering office in March 2013 mostly because of his “common touch and plain-spokenness,” according to *NBC*. Back then, regardless of religious background, only 4 in 10 Americans who took the poll favored the newly elected pope. □

## Cold War Tensions

More than ever before, Russians are expressing anti-American sentiments. According to the Levada Center, a non-governmental Russian social research organization, 81 percent of Russians have a negative view of the U.S., the highest since the organization began keeping statistics in 1998. Those who expressed negative views feel the U.S. has consistently worked against their interests on all fronts, especially in Ukraine. Russian lawmakers have cut cultural inroads by ending exchange programs and Western artists do not often perform there. □

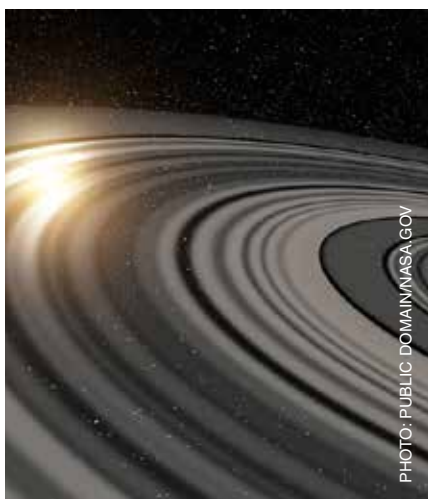


PHOTO: PUBLIC DOMAIN NASA GOV

## Super Planet Discovered

A planet larger than Jupiter and having as many as 37 rings—over five times as many as Saturn—has been found in the Milky Way Galaxy. Astronomers detected the planet, J1407b, while gathering data from a dimming star. □

## Water Shortage

Lack of potable water and poor sanitation are bigger killers in Nigeria than Boko Haram, the terror group that claimed over 4,000 Nigerian lives in 2014. According to WaterAid, a non-profit charity organization based in London, lack of clean running water led to the deaths of about 73,000 last year. As the nation experiences urban growth, its government is unable to keep up with increasing infrastructure needs. □

# Monarchs at Risk

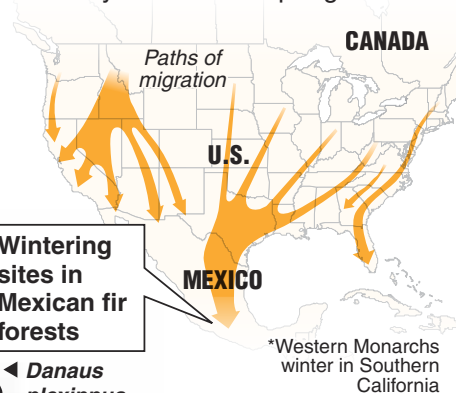
*The monarch butterfly population has declined 43 percent since the 2013-2014 winter. It is now in danger of becoming extinct.*

## Main threats

- Breeding habitat loss from increased herbicide use in U.S. and Canada, at least 100 million acres (40 million hectares) lost since 1997
- Weather extremes
- Deforestation at wintering sites in Mexico
- Protozoan parasites, first detected in 2002

## Marathon migration

Hundreds of millions of monarchs make the winter migration of up to 3,000 miles (4,800 km) to Mexico\* then fly north in the spring.



## It is all about milkweed:

Milkweed plants, which grow wild in fields and along roadsides, are key to a monarch's lifecycle.

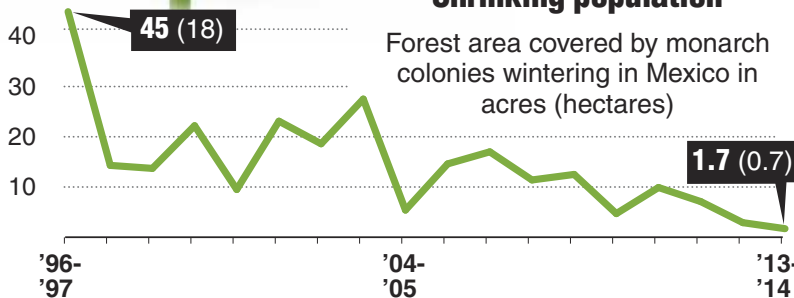
**Female** monarchs only lay eggs on milkweed leaves.

**Monarch larvae** eat only milkweed leaves before they transform into butterflies.

**Toxins** in milkweed plants make monarchs taste bad to predators.

**Milkweed** has been killed by widespread herbicide use.

## Shrinking population



Source: Monarch Watch, MCT Photo Service, World Wildlife Fund-Mexico, Monarch Butterfly Biosphere Reserve

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# *Where Is God's Church Today?*

Jesus Christ declared, "I will build My Church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matthew 16:18). If He promised His Church would never be destroyed, where is it today? Jesus gave identifying signs in the Bible to locate it. He said His Church would:

- Be a little flock
- Teach the truth
- Be separate from the world
- Be set apart by its beliefs
- Be identified by its biblical name
- Not mingle truth with error
- Be structured
- Not be divided

**Locate the Church Jesus  
Built!**

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