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Does religion misrepresent God?

Put down the smartphone and think!

THE PHILADELPHIA TRUMPET

APRIL 2014 | THETRUMPET.COM



ABOUT FACE

German leaders are ready to leave war guilt behind and lead the world

THE PHILADELPHIA
TRUMPET

APRIL 2014

Vol. 25, No. 4

Circ. 320,572

COVER STORY

Germany's Urgent and Dangerous Military Decision 2

'It's Time for Germany to Lead' 4

'Don't Hide Behind Your History' 7

The Lightweight 8

François Hollande's surrender makes Germany the undisputed head of a union capable of shaking the world.

FEATURES

Dirt Cheap 10

What modern farming is doing to our soil

Does Religion Misrepresent God? 12

The High Life? 14

Society is normalizing drug use—even as it destroys lives.

INFOGRAPHIC **Drugs: The Seduction and the Suffering 18**

Where We Are on Jesus's Timetable of Prophecy 20

In the most important prophecy He uttered, Jesus Christ made an interesting digression that relates directly to the recent deal Western nations made with Iran over its nuclear program!

DEPARTMENTS

FROM THE EDITOR **How the Trumpet Is Different 1**

INCREASE YOUR BIBLE IQ **What Is a Real Christian? 24**

WORLDWATCH **California's drought, China's missile, the shaking economy, Iran's nukes, etc. 26**

PRINCIPLES OF LIVING **What Does It Mean to Be a 'Son of God'? 31**

DISCUSSION BOARD **32**

SOCIETYWATCH **'Legal' child suicide, etc. 34**

COMMENTARY **Find Solitude in This Crazy World 35**

TELEVISION LOG **36**

Photo: Soldiers of Germany's 92nd Armored Infantry Battalion engage in training exercises.

Cover illustration: Gary Dorning/Trumpet





How the *Trumpet* Is Different

BY GERALD FLURRY

HOW DOES THE MAGAZINE YOU ARE READING DIFFER FROM other magazines? If you can understand that difference, it could be the greatest discovery of your life!

In a letter on Nov. 29, 1971, Herbert W. Armstrong wrote, “Two years ago, from our campus in England, I wrote a letter to all *Plain Truth* subscribers a few hours after watching, on television, a human foot step down on the moon for the third time. That started a train of thought. On the one hand I had to reflect on the question: How TREMENDOUSLY GREAT is the human mind? Not only can it devise and produce the means of flying to the moon and back—but also all the marvelous intricate mechanisms—such as the modern computer! Yet man has been unable to solve his own problems here on Earth! And today people are becoming more and more concerned over these problems and evils.

“People are bewildered!

“With such fantastic MIND-power ... with all the vast accumulation of KNOWLEDGE, man still has not brought world PEACE, happiness, universal abundant well-being.

“Science has not produced it—nor government, nor religion, nor education, nor sociology. As I wrote then, the crying need of this hour is a VOICE that can explain WHY—that can POINT THE WAY!”

And today the *Trumpet* magazine channels that voice!

Our magazine focuses on the most important issues of this age. And we show you *why* these subjects are so critical to your life.

The world’s number one problem is that of human survival. However, we show in many of our articles how humanity *is definitely* going to survive—but only after experiencing the worst suffering ever.

Our writers explain the profound *meaning* behind world news. The *Trumpet* shows you where world events are headed. We describe the inspiring outcome.

That means there is a VAST DIFFERENCE between our magazine and those you see on the newsstands. We hope you understand the difference. Our regular readers certainly do.

Here is another excerpt from Mr. Armstrong’s letter: “For every effect there has to be a CAUSE! Human civilization seems always to be ignoring the CAUSE and trying to eradicate the EFFECT. World War I was at the time called the war to END all wars. But wars do not abolish more wars.

“WORLD PEACE can come only by knowing the CAUSE of peace, and applying it!

“By the thousands, readers of the *Plain Truth* are beginning to understand some of the BASICS of right KNOWLEDGE—the CAUSES of peace, happiness, abundant well-being. They are learning THE

WAY that MAKES SENSE—that WORKS in their own lives. Lives are being turned right-side up. Lives are being enriched. They are finding the TRUE VALUES, discarding the false. They are learning HOW TO LIVE. They are doing better financially, learning how better to handle finances. They are finding the way to happiness!”

In the world today it seems almost no one is helping people to live better lives. The *Trumpet* magazine is a notable exception.

Here is the conclusion to Mr. Armstrong’s letter: “Our readers are unique among magazine readers! Their minds are on things that really count! The things that make life a JOY! They come to have UNDERSTANDING of world conditions—and their causes. Of world trends—not in a narrow or partisan political sense, but

Our magazine focuses on the most important issues of this age. And we show you why these subjects are so critical to your life. In the world today it seems almost no one is helping people to live better lives. The *Trumpet* magazine is a notable exception.

altogether ABOVE politics. And they come to face the future with CONFIDENCE. We are in a worldwide work of GIVING—with nothing to sell—but GIVING of the knowledge and the principles that make for better and happier living. And this activity is financed solely by those who, voluntarily and unsolicited, have become contributors—co-workers with us in freewill offerings—giving that we may GIVE.”

After Mr. Armstrong died, the powerful *Plain Truth* (it reached a circulation of 8 million) became like other magazines—only much worse than most. And today that magazine is virtually dead, as far as its circulation and impact are concerned.

However, the *Trumpet* is continuing in the tradition of the *Plain Truth* published by Herbert W. Armstrong.

We hope you have noticed how wonderfully different the *Trumpet* is.



LOCK AND LOAD
German leaders are ready to
blow the dust off of their military.

Germany's Urgent and Dangerous Military Decision

BY GERALD FLURRY

GERMANY'S FOREIGN POLICY has just been dramatically and historically transformed. The pivot occurred in January, and it was front-page news globally. However, few people truly grasped the magnitude of what they had just witnessed, and the catastrophic ramifications for Europe and the world. Many, especially in America, actually *embraced* the news!

Before we review what happened in Germany, we must consider the context of world events.

You are probably aware of the political and social upheaval that has recently unfolded in Ukraine. Even now, that country teeters on the brink of political and economic collapse, and possibly civil war. Why? In essence, it's because—as I wrote in the last issue of the *Trumpet*—Ukraine is being held hostage by Russia.

Many Ukrainians want their country to develop stronger ties with Europe. Until recently, Ukraine's government was moving in that direction and was working to sign a formal trade agreement with the European Union. But last

November, that agreement was destroyed when Russian strongman Vladimir Putin made it clear to Kiev that it had better not get any closer to Europe. Fearful of disobeying Putin, Ukraine's government gave in. This infuriated millions of Ukrainians. Many of them demonstrated on the streets, sending the nation into pandemonium.

Germany is monitoring events in Ukraine closely. There is a lot of bad blood between Germany and Russia. They were bitter enemies in World War II, and Berlin is fearfully watching Russia's forceful attempt to get control over Ukraine. As I explained in the February *Trumpet* edition, a confrontational and imperialist Vladimir Putin is certain to provoke Germany to TAKE ACTION!

That is the context of what happened in Germany in January. A large part of Germany's foreign policy shift is a DIRECT RESULT of Vladimir Putin's recent behavior, especially in Ukraine!

Viewed through the lens of Bible prophecy, *the prince of Rosh is awakening the Beast!* (I explained that prophecy in our February issue.)

The *Trumpet* and its predecessor, the *Plain Truth*, have been prophesying about

the end-time emergence of a German-led, Catholic-inspired beast power for more than 70 years! We delivered this warning even in 1945, when Germany and Europe were still smoldering after World War II. We prophesied it for decades before Germany's unification in 1989. Today this prophecy is being fulfilled before your eyes! It is obvious that Germany today dominates Europe politically and financially. Now Germany is revolutionizing its foreign policy. Keep watching: Very soon now, Germany will become a superpower even greater than America and Russia. IT IS PROPHESED!

You need to think about what this means for you individually. Are you concerned? YOU NEED TO BE! The Bible says the emergence of a German superpower is going to affect you directly!

So, what exactly has Germany done that is so alarming?

A More Assertive Foreign Policy

There's no way to know precisely when Germany made the change, but it appears a meeting on January 15 could have been significant. As *Spiegel* reported, this was the day Chancellor Angela Merkel met with her lieutenants—new Foreign



Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier and new Defense Minister Ursula von der Leyen—to discuss France’s military missions in Africa, whether Germany ought to provide more assistance, and Germany’s broader foreign policy.

Since then, the message coming from Germany—from Steinmeier and von der Leyen, from lower level government officials, from Germany’s media and from numerous German analysts and think tanks—has been loud and consistent: **THE TIME HAS COME TO PURSUE A MUCH STRONGER FOREIGN POLICY, BOTH MILITARILY AND POLITICALLY.**

Many people are unconcerned by the idea of a newly assertive Germany. Some even think it *positive* that this nation is willing to help out more. But we have to consider the historical context.

Consider what Stratfor CEO George Friedman and Marc Lanthemann wrote in February: “Since the end of World War II, Germany has pursued a relatively tame foreign policy. But over the past week, BERLIN APPEARED TO HAVE ACKNOWLEDGED THE NEED FOR A FAIRLY DRAMATIC CHANGE. German leaders, including the chancellor, the president, the foreign minister and the defense minister, *have called for a new framework that contravenes the restraint Germany has practiced for so long.* THEY WANT GERMANY TO ASSUME A GREATER INTERNATIONAL ROLE BY BECOMING MORE INVOLVED OUTSIDE ITS BORDERS POLITICALLY AND MILITARILY ...” (emphasis mine throughout).

Here’s how *Der Spiegel*, one of Germany’s largest and most popular news magazines, put it: “The new German government, inaugurated just a month ago, IS CHARTING A NEW COURSE IN FOREIGN POLICY. Steinmeier and Defense Minister Ursula von der Leyen believe that an economic powerhouse like Germany can’t continue to stand on the sidelines. THEY WANT TO SHOW GERMANY’S ALLIES THAT THE COUNTRY CAN BE RELIED UPON.”

The *New York Times* wrote: “German leaders are pushing a **VIGOROUS NEW CASE** that it is time for their nation to find a **MORE MUSCULAR VOICE IN FOREIGN AFFAIRS.**” The *Times* noted how, in response to multiplying global crises and a retreating U.S. superpower, “senior [German] officials are urging a rethinking of the country’s assumptions about its diplomatic and military role.” Again, all these

observations were written at the end of January, in response to a foreign policy shift that began around January 15-16.

Our booklet *He Was Right* explains the shocking step-by-step process of how we prophesied this change for many years—and what it means for America, Britain and the Jewish state. Request a copy and we will send it to you at no charge.

Why the Change?

In many respects, Germany’s decision to step up its involvement in world affairs makes sense.

Norbert Röttgen heads the foreign affairs committee of the German Parliament and is a member of Merkel’s conservative party. The *New York Times* quoted him saying that the change in Germany’s tone stems from “**A COINCIDENCE OF SEVERAL EVENTS THAT SHAKE YOU AWAKE**” (ibid). Germany’s leaders are watching, for example, what Russia is doing in the Middle East and Ukraine and other places—and they are being shaken into action!

These politicians are beginning to move because the nations are shaking! Instability is increasing, and the need for robust leadership is growing. More and more people view *Germany* as being the nation best suited to provide that leadership.

The *Trumpet* has been following this trend for some time. In our December 2013 cover story, “We’re All Falling in Love With Germany,” we described how leaders the world over have been calling upon Germany to be more dominant. Now, German leaders are joining the chorus and expressing their desire to do just that. In our January 2014 edition, we focused on how much of this is coming about as a result of America’s historic *abdication* of its leadership role!

Notice what George Friedman wrote about why Germany is making these changes: “[*Germany*] *has to adjust to the U.S. policy of global disengagement* and it must manage a complex, necessary and dangerous relationship with Russia.” He is exactly right. Can you see what is happening? German leaders have even admitted that their nation must rise because America is declining (“Don’t Hide Behind Your History,” page 7). America’s retreat has left a huge **VACUUM** in the world, and the Germans, Russians and others are filling it! We

will soon see that this is going to make our world far more dangerous than ever before.

German-Foreign-Policy.com wrote on January 27 about “The World’s Expectations” and how Germany’s leadership is getting bolder. “Germany must lead,” former Defense Minister Volker Rühle wrote in a recent newspaper column. Wolfgang Ischinger, who recently served as director for the Munich Security Conference, said Germany “must massively bring to bear its foreign policy in Europe.”

You need to understand what a *drastic change* this sort of language is! There is a **STRONG REASON** why Germany hasn’t been talking like this for many decades—and **WHY THESE STATEMENTS ARE SO ALARMING TODAY!**

Unlike most Western journalists, Friedman didn’t shy away from invoking historical reality. “Such a reconfiguration ... for Germany ... **IS A RADICAL POSITION,** given its experience in World War II. It has refrained from asserting a strong foreign policy and from promoting its national interest lest it revive fears of **GERMAN AGGRESSION AND GERMAN NATIONALISM**” (ibid). That is right: For years Germany has refrained from being too assertive because of its warmongering past. But now, it is casting off that restraint!

Look closely at what Germany has done in the past: It started World Wars I and II, as well as other wars! Germany is a great nation and the German people are a great

“German leaders are pushing a vigorous new case that it is time for their nation to find a more muscular voice in foreign affairs.” — NEW YORK TIMES

people, but they have been shaped and molded to a great extent by what is called the Holy Roman Empire, which they have been a part of off and on since A.D. 554—right up to the present!

“Either something new must be introduced into the European experiment or it might come undone,” that Stratfor article went on to say. “Berlin believes that holding the European Union together requires adding another dimension that it heretofore has withheld in its dealing with the bloc: **MILITARY-POLITICAL RELATIONS.**” They have to unify. They have to have a strong military. Where is this leading?

"I have to admit that while there are genuine pacifists in Germany, there are also people who use Germany's guilt for its past as a shield for laziness or a desire to disengage from the world."

JOACHIM GAUCK
GERMAN PRESIDENT



'It's Time for Germany to Lead'

The declaration of Germany's revamped foreign policy reached new heights at the 50th annual Munich Security Conference, which occurred the first weekend in February. This important conference brings together the world's most distinguished leaders, thinkers and politicians to discuss the most pressing challenges facing the international community. This year's participants explored, among other topics, the crises

and entire regions are arming themselves. In the Middle East, there is a danger that individual crises will converge and engulf the whole region. At this very moment, the world's only superpower [America] is reconsidering the scale and form of its global engagement" Germany must respond: "I don't believe that Germany can simply carry on as before in the face of these developments," Gauck said.

A Warning From Edward R. Murrow

Most authorities agree that Edward R. Murrow was the foremost American reporter in World War II. He was upset that the U.S. wouldn't join in and support Britain much earlier than it did. He said America didn't really choose to join Britain in that war—it was *bombed into it* by the Japanese at Pearl Harbor. Murrow condemned America for being very isolationist.

Murrow had a TV news program after World War II called *See It Now*. He traveled to Germany and visited all of the concentration camps—which he called "extermination camps"—and was *shocked* by what he saw! He became very ANGRY because of what the Germans had done. The radio broadcasts he produced were some of the most powerful this world has ever heard, and you can still access them today. Murrow was deeply convicted about the importance of what he reported. After broadcasting from those extermination camps, he said that if he had offended people he wasn't the least bit sorry.

When Murrow returned to London from Germany, he said, "I was impressed with *the absence*

of any feeling of guilt." Even after the nightmare of World War II, the Germans didn't seem to show any remorse for what they had done to other nations and peoples.

During a 1958 radio broadcast, Murrow said, "No one has yet produced a formula for ridding the German people of their appetite for war, their recurring desire to shoot people and to take their land and their homes." That is a serious accusation, but it is true. Murrow also warned about "the reemergence of Germany as a world power." It was his exposure to the nightmares of the Holocaust that made him deeply concerned about that.

The April 1952 *Good News* magazine wrote, "Does America dare arm Germany? ... Our leading generals in Europe ADAMANTLY warn that GERMANY IS A CALCULATED RISK"! What happened to those pragmatic voices? Nobody even *thinks* about that risk today. Nobody remembers that recent history. "Why will the diplomats think that today the hearts of the people in Germany are different from yesterday?" it continued. "EVERY ONE OF THOSE UNDEMOCRATIC NATIONS, WHEN ONCE ARMED, HAS TURNED UPON US."

in Syria and Ukraine, the U.S.-Europe relationship, and the future of European defense. Amid all the discussion, however, one theme threaded its way through the entire three-day conference.

This theme was established by Joachim Gauck, Germany's president, in a welcome address that centered on "Germany's role in the world." Gauck's speech, though contrite and altruistic in language and tone, made a compelling case for a stronger, more assertive Germany. The essence of his message was, *the world needs us; we'd be selfish not to help*. More than anything, Gauck's message was a sincere plea to 80 million Germans to shed their pacifism and get behind the German government as it unselfishly serves mankind.

"We Germans are advancing towards a form of responsibility that has not yet become routine for us," he stated. We live in a "world in which economic and political power is shifting

Do you really understand what is going on in Europe? Again, the German people are in many ways a great people. This is not a put-down of the German people. It is simply a statement of *facts*. This is *recent history!* We ought to know it. It teaches powerful lessons that we need to learn. Sadly, we don't seem to have an interest in history today; it is almost nonexistent in America's universities.

Our educational institutions, the media and many politicians have *caused* the Western world to be blind to the worst crisis ever, which is about to strike this planet!

Germany and the Holy Roman Empire

Revelation 17:10 contains this electrifying prophecy: "And there are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space."

This verse is loaded with important prophetic information. (My free booklet *Daniel Unlocks Revelation* explains it in detail.) It is talking about the seven resurrections of the Holy Roman Empire. History has already recorded six of them, and this prophecy is written from the perspective of when that sixth resurrection was on the



According to Gauck, Germany's ascension is inevitable. "Germany has already been traveling along the road towards becoming a GUARANTOR OF THE INTERNATIONAL ORDER and security for 24 years now," he said (emphasis added throughout).

President Gauck also questioned Berlin's presence in key global theaters—the implication being that Germany simply isn't doing enough. "Are we doing what we can to stabilize our neighborhood, both in the East and in Africa? Are we doing what we have to in order to counter the threat of terrorism? And, in cases where we have found convincing reasons to join our allies in taking even military action, are we willing to bear our fair share of the risks? ... What role do we want to play in the crises afflicting distant parts of the globe?"

Gauck's answer? "In my opinion, Germany should make a more substantial contribution, and it should make it earlier and more decisively if it is to be a good partner."

The president also boldly addressed the major cause of Germany's reluctance for greater military and political assertion: the shame and guilt some Germans still have for World War II. "I have to admit that while there are genuine pacifists in Germany, there are also people who use Germany's guilt for its past as a shield for laziness or a desire to disengage from the world." In other words, Germany must shed the guilt and stop hiding behind World War II!

He drove this point home further in his conclusion, once again addressing the German people specifically: "I would like to request that ... we too place our trust in this fundamentally reformed country of ours. The post-war generations had reasons to be distrustful—of the German state and of German society. But the time for such categorical distrust is past." Gauck believes Germany has fully repented and atoned for the Second World War, and that it's time the German public stopped dwelling on the past. We must

"have confidence in our abilities and should trust in ourselves," he stated.

Many considered Gauck's speech a landmark. Gunther Nonnenmacher, co-publisher of *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, wrote that Gauck "may well have spoken the authoritative word in the debate over German foreign and security policy."

Gauck was not the only German leader endorsing a foreign-policy transformation. Defense Minister Ursula von der Leyen took the stage next and continued where he left off. She stressed the need for greater integration among European nations in security and military. She also recalled some of the many global crises, in Syria, Libya and Africa, before stating: "To sit and wait is not an option. If we have means, if we have capabilities, we have the obligation and we have the responsibility to engage."

Frank-Walter Steinmeier, Germany's foreign minister, also spoke, and he too stressed the urgent need for a more assertive foreign policy. "Germany is too big to merely comment on world affairs from the sidelines," he stated. He outlined seven practical propositions for Germany. One stated, "Germany must be ready for earlier, more decisive and more substantive engagement in the foreign and security policy sphere." Another included the promise that Germany must provide "concrete" assistance to global issues, and not just "rhetorical outrage." In another, he stated that Germany was "keen" to give input and leadership in negotiations for a common "European foreign, security and defense policy." In another, Steinmeier criticized Germany's "culture of restraint" and suggested Berlin needed to show itself more prepared and willing to act militarily when called upon.

These are dramatic statements, and they're coming from Germany's highest leaders. They ought to have received far more serious attention!

BRAD MACDONALD

scene. That empire was the Hitler-Mussolini axis of World War II. At that time, Herbert W. Armstrong came along (when "one is"), and he prophesied what would happen in Germany and Europe. Everything he prophesied is coming to pass *today!* These are facts; I'm not telling you anything that you can't prove from your own Bible.

NOTICE THAT THE SCRIPTURE SAYS ONE "IS NOT YET COME." WHEN MR. ARMSTRONG WAS AROUND, THAT SEVENTH RESURRECTION WAS "NOT YET COME." BUT NOW, SOME YEARS LATER, IT IS COME! IT IS RIGHT THERE BEFORE OUR EYES! IT IS FORMING, AND GERMANY HAS EVERYTHING TO DO WITH FORMING IT. Germany will lead it, according to your Bible. Isaiah 10:7 and many other scriptures make that clear. THAT IS WHERE WE ARE RIGHT NOW IN BIBLE PROPHECY—most of which is for this end time. What is happening in Europe and to the military inside Germany is prophesied over and over in your Bible.

Otto von Habsburg, once a member of the European Parliament, said this 25 years ago: "The European Community is living largely by the heritage of the Holy Roman Empire, though the great majority

of the people who live by it don't know by what heritage they live." The Holy Roman Empire is their heritage.

Habsburg went on to say, "We possess a European symbol which belongs to all nations of Europe equally. This is the crown of the Holy Roman Empire, which embodies the tradition of Charlemagne." That empire began in A.D. 554 with Justinian. Then came Charlemagne, the second of seven iterations of this Holy Roman power. Charlemagne *waded through rivers of blood* to bring people under subjection to that empire. At that time it was called the *First Reich*. Adolf Hitler was the sixth resurrection, and he called his the *Third Reich*. How many people know what that means? You need to understand about the Holy Roman Empire; even the people in Europe need to understand it better.

If you study the biblical prophecies about the seventh and last resurrection of that empire—which is to rise *just before* Jesus Christ's Second Coming—then several details of what is happening in Europe today become far more striking.

For example, Defense Minister von der Leyen told *Spiegel*, "Europe must speak



SEEING POTENTIAL
New German Defense Minister Ursula von der Leyen reviews soldiers of the Bundeswehr.

with a SINGLE VOICE in the future when it comes to security policy" (op. cit.). Right now, with 28 nations in the European Union, it *cannot* speak with one voice, and this creates serious problems. To be able to speak in a more unified way, you can be sure they will have to pare down the number of nations in the Union.

This points toward the prophecy in Revelation 13 and 17 that this European empire is

going to consist of “ten kings”—probably 10 nations. Once that occurs, *then* Europe will speak with one voice.

We can also take note of the prophecy in Daniel 2, which pictures this end-time empire as being part of a great statue. The legs on this statue, made of iron, prophetically portray the Roman Empire, which had

that this individual will be able to take advantage of. What does Germany do when it gets a strong military? DO YOU DARE READ ITS HISTORY AND SEE? Once that military is in place, IT WILL BE PUT TO USE! This world doesn't comprehend that because it doesn't understand history and Bible prophecy. We just have to look at the truth to understand

that is foretold in dozens of biblical prophecies. That nightmare is just ahead of us!

In 1957, when Germany was a pile of rubble, Mr. Armstrong said, “Germany is going to rise again with great power.” He said the same thing in 1970. In 1980, Mr. Armstrong wrote, “I have been forecasting this revived Roman Empire publicly since February 1934. Now, it may go together suddenly, rapidly.” It is doing just that today! In 1983, he said, “The Bible prophesies of this coming United States of Europe, a new united superpower, perhaps more powerful than either the Soviet Union or the United States.” He went on to say that WE DON'T REALIZE THE THOROUGHNESS OF THE GERMANS, AND THAT THEY ARE GOING TO CARRY THROUGH WHAT THEY STARTED IN WORLD WARS I AND II IN ANOTHER WORLD WAR—WORLD WAR III.

He said that in 1957!

In the Second World War, Mussolini's son-in-law was speaking with the German foreign minister, and he asked: “What do you Germans want? Do you want Danzig? Do you want the corridor?” The German foreign minister said: “WE WANT WAR!”

Winston Churchill said, “The history of MAN is the history of WAR!” The Western world has had relative peace for so long that we have allowed ourselves to forget the vital lessons of history.

Thankfully, however, this last resurrection of the Holy Roman Empire is tied directly to the coming of the Messiah. Notice how Daniel's prophecy of this end-time Roman emperor concludes in verse 25: “... he shall also stand up against the Prince of princes; but he shall be BROKEN WITHOUT HAND.” That means he will be broken by GOD HIMSELF! The Messiah is going to BREAK that man, that empire and all of its power—destroy it completely! And then, the Bible promises, He is going to bring real peace and joy to this world forever! ■

This change in Germany's military policy is creating a framework that this individual will be able to take advantage of.

two capitals—one in the east and one in the west, Constantinople and Rome. The *last resurrection* of this empire is pictured by two feet, made of an unstable mixture of iron and clay (Daniel 2:31-33, 40-43). Is there a more apt description of Europe today? It is an unstable mixture of iron and clay!

In August 2005, I wrote, “There is some real tension between Russia and Germany over Ukraine” (*Royal Vision*). I wrote that *nearly nine years ago*—because of this prophecy in Daniel. “It's all about the eastern leg of the Holy Roman Empire taking shape,” I wrote. If you know anything about the Daniel 2 image, you can see what I'm talking about. (We have more explanation about that image in our booklet *Germany and the Holy Roman Empire*; request your free copy.)

A European Strongman

Here is another prophecy we need to watch in light of what is happening in Germany and Europe today: “And in the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors are come to the full, a king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences, shall stand up” (Daniel 8:23). The book of Daniel is prophecy for the end time (Daniel 12:4, 9). This is talking about the fact that sometime soon, this European empire will be led by a strongman—as it has been so many times in the past.

This man is also described in Daniel 11:21: “And in his estate shall stand up a vile person, to whom they shall not give the honour of the kingdom: but he shall come in peaceably, and *obtain the kingdom by flatteries*”—in other words, it strongly indicates that this “vile person” will not be voted in. Watch Europe for this strongman!

He is about to come on the scene.

This change in Germany's military policy is creating a framework

what we're dealing with. Everything is moving at lightning speed.

Chancellor Merkel has yet to weigh in on the use of the military. She is known as a very cautious lady—and that could actually lead to her downfall. *Spiegel* wrote, “In her eight years in office thus far, Merkel has lost faith in the notion that military intervention can bring about improvements. She was particularly disillusioned by the German Army's mission in Afghanistan” (op. cit.). Other German leaders, like former Defense Minister Karl-Theodor zu Guttenberg, certainly disagree with her on that issue. It appears she is out of step with many of the elite in Germany. When that strongman comes along, he is going to handle things very differently than the current chancellor. That is what Bible prophecy tells us.

Daniel 8 continues: “And his power shall be mighty, but *not by his own power*”—this leader is going to have help from an *evil spirit*—“and he shall destroy wonderfully, and shall prosper, and practise, and shall destroy the mighty and the holy people. And through his policy also he shall cause craft to prosper in his hand; and he shall magnify himself in his heart, and by peace shall destroy many ...” (verses 24-25). This is describing the terrible Great Tribulation





HISTORICAL AMNESIA

U.S. President Barack Obama speaks in Berlin.

'Don't Hide Behind Your History'

In January, German leaders lined up to proclaim a dramatic shift in foreign policy. The president, foreign minister and defense minister all came out to say that Germany's period of self-restraint after World War II is over; the nation's history should no longer be an excuse for inaction. That the German military should act like any other: It should be prepared to get involved in foreign conflicts just like France, Britain and the United States.

One important reason for this shift is obvious: America is in retreat, and is pushing Europe and Germany to take its place.

In recent years, Washington has consistently urged Europe and Germany to exercise more power abroad. At the 2013 Munich Security Conference, U.S. Vice President Joe Biden counseled Europe to resist "the ever present temptation to back away from commitments on defense spending." He also said, "Europe is the cornerstone of our engagement with the rest of the world."

Almost every time NATO gets together, America uses the opportunity to push Europe for more military commitments. At a speech in Brussels last September, NATO Secretary-General Anders Fogh Rasmussen said, "I believe that European nations can, and should, do more to match America's commitment."

U.S. President Barack Obama has called for Germany in particular to step up. In 2011, he awarded German Chancellor Angela Merkel the Presidential Medal of Freedom. "Don't hide behind your history, said the president. Act in accordance with your importance," *Die Zeit* reported at the time. *Der Tagesspiegel* paraphrased President Obama's view this way: "The world today does not fear a strong Germany. It is, rather, disappointed when Germany is too reserved."

Europe and Germany are getting the message. For around a year now, leaders and think tanks in Europe have focused on *the decline of America as one of the biggest global changes that the EU must adapt to*.

In October, EU Foreign Minister Catherine Ashton said that America's "renewed emphasis" on Asia "means that Europe must assume greater responsibility for its own security and that of its neighborhood."

Around the same time, the German Marshall Fund of the United States and the Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik (SWP), a think tank that advises the German Parliament on military and security matters, produced a paper titled "New Power, New Responsibility: Elements of a German Foreign and Security Policy for a Changing World." The analysts noted that "the United States—conscious

of its reduced resources—is sending clear signals that their engagement in the world will be more selective in future, and that its expectations of partners will be correspondingly higher. This means that Europe, and Germany in particular, will have to take on a lot more tasks and responsibilities."

These are just two examples among many. Almost every time a European think tank or leader talks about the future of European security, it is predicated on this fact: The U.S. is reducing its influence in the world, and Europe must pick up the slack.

As Germany's leaders unveiled their new vision for a guilt-free Germany at the Munich Security Conference this year, they also referenced America's role in pushing them to act. "At this very moment, the world's only superpower is reconsidering the scale and form of its global engagement," German President Joachim Gauck noted. This was the first of two reasons he listed that meant Germany can no longer "simply carry on as before." The second reason was Europe's "navel gazing." In other words, America's retreat from the world is *the number one reason* why Germany needs to become more militaristic, according to Mr. Gauck.

What was America's response? To reinforce the need for Germany to follow through on its promised changes. "Leading, I say respectfully, does not mean meeting in Munich for good discussions," U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry said. "It means committing resources even in a difficult time."

Yet, quite bizarrely, when asked if the U.S. was withdrawing from the world, Kerry said that the idea "is flat wrong and it is belied by every single fact of what we are doing everywhere in the world." He further said, "I can't think of a place in the world that we are retreating, not one."

Yet it is this widely recognized, widely reported retreat that has convinced Germany to change its strategy. America, in its weakness, actually wants Germany to forget about the two world wars it started and to amass military power once more.

Herbert W. Armstrong spoke out as America began this policy roughly 50 years ago. "In America we are prone to see only one enemy at a time," he wrote in the August 1959 *Plain Truth*. "For the past 13 or 14 years, the only enemy that we have been able to see is *Russia*. During World War II, the only enemy we could see was Germany, and, of course, the ally of Germany at that time, Japan. Russia was then, we thought, our ally.

The U.S. wants a German-led Europe to be its replacement—at least in the Middle East and North Africa.

"But now that Russia is our enemy and we see that enemy, we seem to think that Germany, Japan and the nations that we fought in World War II are now our allies." This observation is all the more true today: Americans struggle to see any enemies beyond al Qaeda (and even with these radical Islamists, they think they can sit down and negotiate).

After World War II, America built up Germany in order for it to serve as a counterbalance to the rising Soviet empire, even *freeing Nazi war criminals* so they could help rebuild German industry. Now the U.S. is taking the process even further: Washington doesn't just want Germany to be its ally; the U.S. wants a German-led Europe to be its *replacement*—at least in the Middle East and North Africa.

How will this end? We answered exactly that question in the January issue when we examined "life in the post-American world." To see what the world will look like when Europe takes America's place, read "The World's Next Superpower" (theTrumpet.com/go/11139).

RICHARD PALMER

**BALANCE
OF POWER**
Hollande (right) and
Merkel last May



Light ~~The Counterweight~~

François Hollande's surrender makes Germany the undisputed head of a union capable of shaking the world. **BY RICHARD PALMER**

FRANCE MIGHT BE THE MOST UNDER-estimated power in the world. For decades after World War II, it was the leader of Europe, then co-leader with Germany as the latter rose in power. Its former empire, while less famous than Britain's, still affords Paris a global system of military bases. France has been a nuclear power since 1960 and is one of only five nations with a permanent seat at the United Nations Security Council.

Now, however, France's time of co-leadership with Germany is over. At a little-noticed press conference in January, it effectively surrendered that leadership to Berlin. And Germany, by bringing France to heel, *massively* extended its own power.

That conference finalized a fundamental shift in the Franco-German relationship that has been taking place for some time. It has been clear for years that Germany is the major power in Europe.

A French Rebellion

Former President Nicolas Sarkozy worked hard to make France look like Germany's equal. During his tenure, the party line was that France wasn't surrendering to Germany—the two nations just happened to agree on everything. Sarkozy worked so closely with German Chancellor Angela Merkel that

the two became known as “Merkozy.”

When François Hollande was elected in 2012, he destroyed that partnership, threatening war against Germany—fought not on the battlefields, but in the conference rooms. Hollande was Europe's anti-austerity champion, the antidote to Merkel's draconian spending cuts. For a while, it looked like Hollande might lead southern Europe in an uprising against German dominance. After all, France was the only EU nation with enough power to challenge Germany.

Now, less than two years later, the promise of a French counterweight to Germany seems like a distant memory. Hollande never really fought in earnest. The southern European confederation didn't materialize. And at a press conference on January 14, Hollande waved the white flag.

In that press conference, Hollande acquiesced to the German way of doing things, promising to cut taxes and spending. He told the world that Germany's austere leadership was what Europe needed after all. Whether or not Hollande adopts Berlin-style austere economic policies, that press conference marked his relinquishing of his role as the anti-German champion.

Hollande went on to discuss German-France military relations, again making a U-turn from his previous speeches and promising to increase his country's

cooperation with Germany. “This Franco-German momentum will enable us, if we are able, as I believe we are, to revitalize the European ideal,” he said.

Hollande has now joined a new Franco-German partnership—and his country is clearly the *junior* partner, doing what Germany tells it to do.

How did this happen? Despite all its power, France has a major weakness: its fragile economy. And one of the major triggers for this capitulation—if not *the* major trigger—was events in central Africa.

The Fight for Africa

Soon after taking office in May 2012, Hollande launched an offensive in Mali. Germany backed him; after all, radical Islam was an urgent threat, and the potential of a terrorist breeding ground in the heart of North Africa was too serious to use as a pawn in a political game with France.

Then, in December 2013, Paris sent its military into the Central African Republic (CAR)—alone, without taking the matter to the EU. This was fatal. France's economy was already weak, probably on the road to requiring a bailout of its own. With the government budget stretched close to its limit, the nation now bore the burden of two extra—and quite substantial—military deployments. These military commitments were unsustainable without help.

Hollande then turned to the EU for support, desperate for money as much as for EU troops. Angela Merkel said no. France could not just launch a military mission, she said, and then turn around and ask for a check.

It was right after this that Hollande gave in to Germany at that January 14 press conference. And less than a week later, Merkel changed her mind. On January 20, twenty EU foreign ministers announced that they would send up to 1,000 soldiers.

Did Germany initially refuse to allow the EU to support France in order to force Hollande's surrender?

Even though the Germans have now removed their roadblock to France receiving help, they still refuse to give any meaningful support to the CAR mission themselves—a move that also seems designed to keep France in check.

Historically France has been the dominant colonial power in central Africa. Even now, many of the countries in this region speak French as their main language.



France maintains military bases in many of its former colonies and has a high level of involvement in their governments.

Yet despite those advantages, France is losing its economic connection to the region. In 1960, around 17 percent of sub-Saharan Africa's trade was with France—second only to the UK. As recently as the year 2000, France was the main exporter to sub-Saharan Africa. Now it is in fifth place, behind China, America, India and Germany.

Germany is not content to let France manage North Africa on Europe's behalf. It has its own separate interests in the region. And it is worried that France will try to use its military operations to regain the influence it has been losing to Germany, among others. So instead of sending troops to the CAR, Germany has offered to increase its presence in Mali—freeing up France to send more to the CAR. Rather than being France's lackey, Germany is concentrating its limited resources in one place so it can maximize its own influence in Africa.

A Staging Ground for Germany

Germany is already doing well in Mali. When Malian President Ibrahim Boubacar Keïta traveled to Europe, he hailed Germany as Mali's "most important partner" and, on "the international level," its "main partner country." That statement is a bit shocking, considering that the nation that put him in power was *France*.

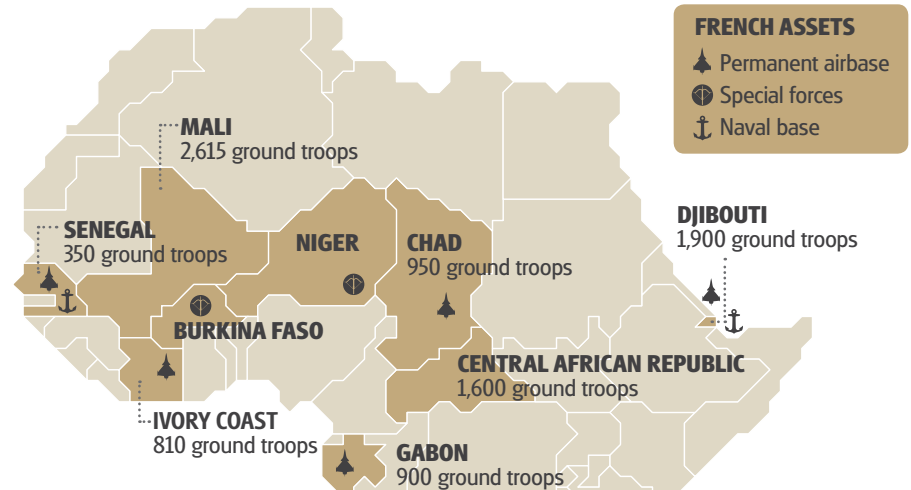
But German ambitions stretch further. Writing for the *Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik*, a think tank that advises the German Parliament and government on foreign policy, research group leader for the Middle East and Africa Dr. Annette Weber wrote, "For the long-term development [of the CAR], France is the wrong partner." France's knowledge and history of the country makes it the most suitable leader of a quick military intervention, she said. But "[i]n the long-term stabilization and support of political actors ... France should hold back just because of its past" (Dec. 12, 2013).

If its actions are an indication, Berlin sees the situation the same way. Germany will allow and even support France as it confronts radical Islam in Africa. But it won't allow France to use these missions to rebuild its influence in its former colonies.

North Africa used to be France's backyard. Now, it seems, the French can't

What's at Stake?

France has a huge military presence in North Africa, probably larger than even the United States. This robust French presence is a powerful tool for Europe as it confronts the spread of radical Islam.



launch an engagement without getting German permission.

By initially refusing Hollande's request for help from the EU, Merkel made an important point. France can't afford to go it alone anymore. And if it wants help, it had better coordinate with Berlin *right from the start*. Not only is Germany leading France in Europe, but it is using that dominance to establish veto power over France's missions in Africa too.

As German leaders began calling for a more aggressive military earlier this year (article, page 2), North Africa was one of their main focuses. "Germany wants and will provide a catalyst for a common European foreign, security and defense policy," said German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier at the Munich Security Conference on February 1. "Only when we throw our weight together ... in the south and the east, will Europe's foreign policy be more than the sum of many small parts. In this spirit, we are now considering how we can support militarily, specifically the stabilization of fragile states in Africa, especially in Mali."

At the same event, Germany's President Joachim Gauck asked, "Are we doing what we could do to stabilize our neighborhood, both in the East and in Africa?"

Last April, *Trumpet* editor in chief Gerald Flurry wrote, "Northern Africa is turning into a battleground with enormously important prophetic implications." He noted that Iranian-backed terrorists

were spreading throughout the region. "But Iran isn't the only one interested in Africa," he wrote. "Germany is making strong inroads as well. Both of these powers are racing to get as much control of North Africa as they can."

No Western nation has a greater presence in North Africa than France. America claims only one base in the region (though its clandestine presence is significant and hard to quantify), while France has thousands of troops in about half a dozen major bases.

But Germany is using its dominance in Europe to give itself major leverage in France's African policy. As the EU moves toward a combined military, France's bases will become more European in nature.

If French power is often underestimated, then so too is the combined power of France and Germany. The EU may be bureaucratic, inefficient and fractious, but it brings together the economic strength of Germany, the military reach of France, and the wealth, resources, experiences and reach of many other nations that are powerful in their own right. There are some huge obstacles to be overcome before they all work together effectively. But the potential for power is huge.

And at the head of this conglomerate is Germany. Now that it has made it clear that France is the junior partner, German power will only grow.

One of the first places we will see that power projected is into strategically vital North Africa! ■

Dirt Cheap



What modern farming is doing to our soil—and why you should care **BY RICHARD PALMER**

LAST YEAR A GROUP OF SCIENTISTS gave an unusual warning about the collapse of global civilization. The threat wasn't global warming, an asteroid impact or even nuclear war. Their warnings revolved around something much more mundane: *dirt*.

Except, as those scientists are discovering, dirt isn't really boring at all. In just a cupful of healthy soil, there are more living organisms than there are stars in our galaxy. More different *types* of organisms live in that cup of dirt than in the whole of the Amazon rainforest.

An incredible world lies hidden beneath our feet. But this subject is of much more than simply academic interest. Our *survival* relies on the health of that soil.

This is a world we are only just beginning to explore, let alone understand. But modern farming practices, such as our widespread use of fertilizer, are destroying those amazing and critical organisms.

What we have been doing to our soil is the equivalent of strip-mining the Amazon rainforest. And we have little idea what the results of that destruction could be.

The Wonders of Dirt

"We know more about the movement of celestial bodies than about the soil underfoot," said Leonardo da Vinci. Modern scientists say that remains the case today. But we are starting to get a glimpse into that world.

One of the most recent discoveries revolves around something called *mycorrhizae*. These are filaments of fungus that grow on plant roots. These fungi act as extensions to a plant's root network, allowing it to draw nutrients from a much larger area.

That in itself is amazing—plant and fungus working together to their mutual benefit. But last summer, researchers from the UK found that these mycorrhizae link up, creating a sort of underground Internet, connecting different plants together.

Perhaps a telegraph system would be a better analogy. The researchers found that when one plant was attacked by aphids, it would send a signal through the mycorrhizal filaments warning the other plants. These plants would have an early warning to go into defense mode, producing chemicals to repel aphids and even call for reinforcements by secreting a chemical designed to attract wasps, which eat aphids. The

mycorrhizae help plants defend against disease in the same way, with sick plants using the network to get out an early warning.

All this is from just one type of fungus. Yet dirt holds many more potential wonders.

Destroying the Rainforest

Modern farming, however, is destroying these living organisms. Our use of chemical fertilizer has radically changed the soil we farm, according to a recent study of the American prairie conducted by scientists at the University of Colorado. The soil's fertility could collapse because of the damage done to the range of microbes that play a vital but little-studied role in soil fertility, they concluded.

"The soils currently found throughout the region bear little resemblance to their pre-agricultural state," concluded the study, conducted under associate professor of microbial ecology Noah Fierer. "We really know very little about one of the most productive soils on the planet, but we do know that soil microbes play a key role, and we can't just keep adding fertilizers."

The study showed that uncultivated soils contain minute living organisms that put

nutrients back into the soil. These bacteria are not present where fertilizers have been used, which means that this kind of fertilized soil has no way of replacing lost nutrients except through the use of more fertilizer.

This study looked specifically at the soil of the American prairie, but others have shown that it applies more generally. Fertilizers and synthetic pesticides destroy microbial activity. They stop the growth of mycorrhizae, for example, causing the network to break down and plants to draw in fewer nutrients.

How serious is this problem? The study, published in the November 1 edition of *Science* magazine, was accompanied by another piece warning of the threat that a collapse in soil fertility poses to civilization.

The Lesson of the Dust Bowl

“In the past, great civilizations have fallen because they failed to prevent the degradation of the soils on which they were founded,” wrote Mary Scholes of the University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa, and Robert Scholes of the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research, also in South Africa. “The modern world could suffer the same fate at a global scale.”

“The inherent productivity of many lands has been dramatically reduced as a result of soil erosion, accumulation of salinity and nutrient depletion. Although improved technology—including the unsustainably high use of fertilizers, irrigation and plowing—provides a false sense of security, about 1 percent of global land area is degraded every year” (ibid).

Citing Fierer’s study, the authors warn: “We have forgotten the lesson of the Dust Bowl: Even in advanced economies, human wellbeing depends on looking after the soil.”

The authors say that the perception of soil as merely a kind of container for nutrients has led to “an unprecedented increase in food production”—and a huge amount of pollution and environmental destruction.

Scholes and Scholes dismiss a “dynamically ‘organic’” approach as impractical, but admit that “feeding the world and keeping it habitable” will require some major changes in agriculture.

Coming Famine?

Robert Scholes warns that governments eventually reach a point where, in order to feed people, they destroy the long-term

A Simple Concept

God provided a simple way for us to maintain our soil’s fertility. If farmers would observe God’s land rest, this simple seven-year cycle would ensure no one goes hungry.



health of their land. “We’re running out of new agricultural frontiers, and we don’t have the freedom to make errors any more,” he said. “We are using up our nutrient capital and face a looming food crisis over the next 30 to 40 years. There is a risk that we are going to paint ourselves into a corner. Famine is a very real possibility.” The Scholes point to past civilizations that have overexploited the land to the point where it cannot be rehabilitated. The effects on society can be devastating.

The *Telegraph*’s international business editor, Ambrose Evans-Pritchard, wrote, “Cautionary stories abound. The east side of Madagascar has been destroyed by slash-and-burn deforestation, perhaps irreversibly in any human time horizon. Iceland’s Norse settlers turned their green and partly forested island into a Nordic desert in the 10th century. They have yet to restore the fragile soil a thousand years later, despite careful husbandry,” (Nov. 27, 2013).

Evans-Pritchard concluded with the following warning: “We are becoming complacent again. The blunt truth is that the world cannot afford to lose one hectare of land a year, let alone 12 million hectares. The added discovery that we’re doing even more damage than feared to the soil microbia should bring us to our senses. We argue too much about global warming, which may or may not be caused by man’s actions, and may or may not catch us this century.

“The global land crisis is almost entirely our own doing. It is closing in on us right now. It can be reversed if world leaders choose to reverse it.”

There is a tremendous lesson in this trend—if only people had the humility to acknowledge it.

Keeping the Law

The entire material creation—this Earth, the universe and everything in it—operates according to laws, both physical and

spiritual. These laws regulate human behavior: Keep them, and you’ll be happy. They apply to health: Keep them, and you’ll be healthy. And they apply to agriculture: Keep them, and you won’t starve. Whenever we suffer problems and curses, whether we realize it or not we are experiencing the effects of breaking these laws.

What is happening to soil microbes is a familiar story. Human beings believe that, no matter what the law, they can find some way to get around it if they want to. Sometimes it seems we have done exactly that—but then comes the sickening realization that we didn’t see the full picture.

In trying to circumvent the law, we are actually rebelling against the Lawgiver.

While scientists and the rest of mankind must respect certain physical laws that govern our daily lives, many people view the laws revealed in the Bible—governing civil life, morality and personal conduct, and religious life—with scorn and contempt. However, defying those laws leads to trouble just as surely as breaking the physical laws does.

One law in the Old Testament that critics ridicule is the land sabbath. God commanded that every seven years, the land be allowed to rest—there was no pruning or planting (for commercial harvesting), and nothing was to be harvested except what people picked for their own personal consumption (Leviticus 25:2-7, 18-22). To many, this law seems obsolete: Modern farmers can get around resting the land by using fertilizers.

But scientists are now beginning to learn that there is no getting around this law. The use of fertilizers to avoid letting the land rest is a shortcut that wrecks considerable damage to the land in the long run.

God’s law doesn’t give us *all* the details we need to be successful farmers. But without keeping these laws, we cannot maintain healthy and productive

See **DIRT** page 36 ►

Does Religion Misrepresent God?

Why you—and your children—need to know the truth **BY DENNIS LEAP**

ATHEISM IS ON THE RISE WORLDWIDE. The Pew Research Center reckons that atheism and its shadowy second cousin, agnosticism, have grown rapidly in America in the last five years. In 2013, one in five Americans were unable to say that they believe in God.

Social scientists claim there are two main reasons people are embracing “non-belief.” First is the religious right’s political activism. Second is the blatant hypocrisy in modern Christianity exemplified by Catholic priests’ sexual abuse of boys and the Catholic Church’s massive cover-up. *Huffington Post* also suggests that the trend can be credited to a movement named New Atheism. The only thing *new* about it is that atheists and agnostics are no longer satisfied to disbelieve in God *personally*—now they don’t want *anyone* to believe in God. The movement is an intellectual offensive against religion.

The Atheist Mission

With the help of a left-leaning media, modern atheist leaders like Richard Dawkins, Daniel Dennett, Sam Harris and Ayaan Hirsi Ali are working diligently to spread their doctrine with a religious-like zeal. Those disillusioned or hurt by religion are listening, joining ranks, organizing rallies, establishing weekly meetings and setting out to attack all religious groups.

Here is a recent example.

On CNN’s religious news and views blog, Belief, atheist blogger Deborah Mitchell wrote this: “When my son was around 3 years old, he used to ask me a lot of questions about heaven. Where is it? How do people walk without a body? How will I find you? You know the questions kids ask. For over a year, I lied to him and made up stories

that I didn’t believe about heaven” (January 15). Notice her strategy. Nothing gets people’s attention like discussing kids’ questions about God.

She continued, “But the trade-off was that I would have to make stuff up, and I would have to brainwash him into believing stories that didn’t make sense, stories I didn’t believe either. ... One day he would know this, and he would not trust my judgment. He would know that I built an elaborate tale—not unlike the one we tell children about Santa—to explain the inconsistent and illogical legend of God.” Saying that God is an inconsistent and illogical legend was just her first slice of the knife against believers.

Mitchell wrote, “And so I thought it was only right to be honest with my children. I am a non-believer, and for years I’ve been on the fringe in my community. As a blogger, though, I’ve found that there are many other parents out there like me. We are creating the next generation of kids, and there is a wave of young agnostics, atheists, free thinkers and humanists rising up through the ranks who will, hopefully, lower our nation’s religious fever.”

That is the current atheist mission: to make Americans less religious.

Why Pick on God?

Ms. Mitchell’s article, “Why I Raise My Children Without God,” went viral and drew the most comments ever on CNN’s *iReport*, which allows people worldwide to post news stories and photos.

While the opening remarks in her article were disturbing, the body of her article was blatantly blasphemous. She explained, “Here are a few of the reasons why I am raising my children without God.” Then she spelled out her seven specific problems with God: “God is a bad parent and

role model. ... God is not logical. ... God is not fair. ... God does not protect the innocent. ... God is not present. ... God does not teach children to be good. ... God teaches narcissism.” Mitchell claimed that God allows His children to inflict horrible harm upon each other; condones violence and abuse; does not protect the innocent; is not fair because He answers the silly prayers of some yet lets the serious prayers go unanswered; is not bodily present on Earth and is therefore a product of human imagination.

Like Ms. Mitchell, most atheists validate their belief that God does not exist because of the evils running rampant in our world. Is that logical reasoning? Is it God’s fault that children are physically and sexually abused, kidnapped or murdered? Is it God’s fault that innocent people suffer tragedy? Is it God’s fault that our world has terrorism, starvation and war? Do all of these terrible things happen because God doesn’t care, exist or have the power to stop it? Atheists point out these horrible evils and claim, *A loving, benevolent God would never allow such evils to happen. Therefore, God does not exist.* Does this logic prove that God does not exist? Never.

Some of the brightest, most intelligent people in the world are atheists and agnostics. However, they miss the crux of their problem with God and religion. Atheists have the right to point out the errors in modern religions—the hypocrisies, fallacies and unreasonable, wacky beliefs. Looking at Ms. Mitchell’s article objectively, it is obvious that religion has failed her. But she and people like her have made a wrong assumption. They assume that God is behind or in control of modern religion. So they lash out at God. This is a huge mistake.

For a while, Ms. Mitchell made up religious-sounding stories to help her son feel safe, loved and full of hope. Unfortunately, men have been doing this under the guise of religion for centuries. Yet, in the end, modern religion's fables and fallacies do not satisfy and cannot answer the whys of life's problems and difficulties.

People in our modern world have been brainwashed with false religion. Some see the fatal errors in religion, but instead of searching out the truth, they take it out on God. In Mitchell's case, she has consciously decided to not educate her children about God and is proclaiming that to the world apparently in the hopes that other parents will do the same. That is also a serious form of child abuse. There is a better solution.

Rejecting God Got Us Here

One of the most important theologians of the 20th century, Herbert W. Armstrong, *asked those hard questions*. Discussing the evils present in our modern world, he asked, "What has gone wrong with government, with religion, with higher education?—and WHY are more than half the world's people illiterate, poverty-stricken—many actually starving—living in filth and squalor?" (*The Incredible Human Potential*). Not many people think deeply enough to ask these vitally important questions.

It is undeniable: Our human governments, our systems of higher education, even our *religions* have indeed gone *terribly wrong*. Who is to blame? Mr. Armstrong did not point a finger at God. He didn't ask what had gone wrong with God. Nor did he conjecture that because we have evil, God does not exist. Instead, he challenged everyone, atheist *and* religious, to think differently by getting to the *real cause* of today's world evils. The problem is not God—it is HUMANITY!

"But it should be clear, at this point, what is the cause of today's world evils. The presence of Satan, and his invisible, subtle, yet super-powerful sway ... over mankind is the basic CAUSE," continued Mr. Armstrong. "The WAY OF LIFE Satan has injected into human minds—the way of vanity, lust and greed—of jealousy and envy—of competition and strife—of rebellion and deceit—these things we generally term 'human nature' are the direct and

specific *cause*. And all humanity has suffered the *effect!*"

Where did Herbert Armstrong get this information? Did he just make it up to make us feel safe? No. What he teaches here is based squarely on the Bible.

The Bible is the most maligned, misunderstood, misquoted book in human history. Yet, it is the only truthful source that accurately explains why our world is the way it is.

The second and third chapters of this miraculous book, Genesis 2 and 3, reveal that our first parents, Adam and Eve, forsook God and rejected the knowledge He provided them. They believed Satan and his lies, literally following Satan as their god. As a result, God sentenced them, and the rest of humanity born from them, to be *cut off* from Him. (However, God determined to call and use a few men and women throughout human history to advance His plan to save all mankind.) Read and study these two chapters. They contain information that contemporary religion, education and science cannot reveal to you.

Who is the real ruler of this world? At the time of Christ and the apostles, it was not God but *Satan!* (2 Corinthians 4:4). And it still is today. Satan is feverishly working to keep people blind to God's

It is undeniable: Our human governments, our systems of higher education, even our religions have indeed gone terribly wrong.

incredible truth. In fact, the devil has successfully deceived all of humanity through the many humanly devised religions—even modern Christianity (Revelation 12:9). God gave human beings the choice to follow Him or to follow Satan. The overwhelming majority have unknowingly followed Satan! This is vital information that few people understand.

Any person willing to put in the effort can easily prove that much of modern Christianity is not based on the Bible. This world's largest Christian organization, boasting over 1 billion followers, admits candidly that the Bible is not the sole source of authority for its religious practice. Few of its members have actually read or studied the book directly inspired by God (2 Timothy 3:16). Most of the rest

of traditional Christianity admits to only following what is written in the New Testament and Psalms.

This is why modern Christianity cannot provide true answers to life's most important questions or explain why the world is the way it is!

Do You Believe Fables?

Not teaching children the truth about God is as abusive as teaching children God does not exist. Teaching a child about God is one of the most important responsibilities God places upon parents. However, there is no value in teaching children fables or "made-up stuff." Parents must learn the truth first, and then teach only that truth. Parents must ensure that their sons and daughters grow up with a healthy, positive and true picture of God.

Are you sure you have a true picture of God and His ways? Before you dismiss God, prove for yourself whether the God of the *Bible* is real—not the God of men's traditions. Be sure to examine your personal beliefs about God before you begin to teach your child about Him. So many adults have wacky, outlandish and just plain *false* ideas about who and what God is and what His plans for man are.

For example, this April, most of Christianity will celebrate what it considers to

be its chief holiday, Easter. Prior to this day, many will have observed 40 days of Lent and then a "Holy Week" culminating in Good Friday, the supposed day of Christ's crucifixion. Prior to Easter, people will color hard-boiled eggs, buy hot cross buns, and purchase candy to be stuffed into Easter baskets. Families will dress in their best clothes and go to church, likely for a sunrise service. Children will be taught that Jesus Christ was raised from the dead on Easter Sunday morning.

Most people suppose that Jesus Christ sanctions these Easter customs. But all these customs are based on fable—"made-up stuff" from the imaginations of men.

Jesus Christ and His apostles and disciples never celebrated

See **RELIGION** page 23 ➤

actor
Philip Seymour Hoffman

1967–2014
Died from
heroin overdose

The High Life?

Voices from Hollywood to the White House are normalizing drug use—even as it destroys more lives than ever. **BY JEREMIAH JACQUES**

PHILIP SEYMOUR HOFFMAN, one of the most ambitious and respected actors of his generation, was found dead in his Manhattan apartment on February 2 with a heroin needle still sticking out of his arm. He left behind his three children, ages 10, 7 and 5.

The tragedy comes in the midst of a nationwide surge in heroin overdoses.

Many media voices have blamed Hoffman's death and the overall increase of such stories not on the users—but on U.S. laws that *criminalize drugs*. "Would he have OD'd if drugs were regulated, controlled and professionally administered?" asked comedian/actor Russell Brand in the *Guardian*. "Legal pot isn't enough," social worker Jeff Deeney wrote in the *Atlantic*. "If Philip Seymour Hoffman had taken his last bags to a legal injecting space, would he still be alive?" "The drug war has failed," Mike Adams of *Natural News* wrote. "If street drugs like heroin could be decriminalized, regulated, controlled and distributed in a

medical context along with serious addiction treatment protocols, those who choose to abuse the drug would, at the very least, be able to count on consistent dosing and drug composition. ... Hoffman's untimely and tragic death is yet another urgent reminder that our current drug policies in America ... must urgently change."

A look at the results of America's war on drugs confirms that it has failed. Despite spending \$1.5 trillion in the four decades since President Nixon declared that war, illicit drugs today are easier than ever to obtain, potencies are far greater, and drug use and overdose rates are soaring to unprecedented heights.

From 1980 to 2008, the number of America's drug poisoning deaths increased *sixfold*. Since then, it has continued to skyrocket. Heroin deaths have gone up about 45 percent in the last five years. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reported that in 2009, drug overdoses surpassed car accidents to become the *leading cause* of accidental deaths in the United States.

"The death toll is equivalent to a

hundred 757s crashing and killing everybody on board every year," said Dan Bigg of the Chicago Recovery Alliance. "But this doesn't make the news." It takes a death by someone of Hoffman's prestige to force the media to acknowledge the pandemic, however fleetingly.

It's clear that America's vaunted war on drugs has utterly failed. But do this failure and Hoffman's death show that the U.S. should hoist up the white flag on the drug war? Is the solution to the rising number of lawbreakers to abolish the laws?

Prescription for Addiction

Some of the arguments for legalization may sound compelling at first listen. But the increasing numbers who cry out for "an end to drug prohibition" seem to forget that *60 percent of all drug overdoses are from pharmaceuticals that are already legal and regulated*.

And deaths are only the tip of the needle. For each person who dies from legal drug overdose, 10 more are so damaged that they require long-term abuse treatment, 32 more need emergency medical



singer
Justin Bieber

1994–
Famous for using
marijuana and legal
pharmaceuticals



singer/actress
Miley Cyrus

1992–
Famous for
marijuana
and MDMA use



rapper/actor
Snoop Dogg

1971–
Famous for using
marijuana and
multiple arrests

Some of entertainment's brightest stars have tarnished their reputations, but also glamorized drugs, through drug use. Here are a few: ↑

care, 130 more are drug-dependent, and 825 more are using them illegally. So each death represents about a thousand people abusing or misusing pharmaceuticals to some degree.

All these rates—death, addiction, abuse and misuse—have gone up as doctors have issued an increasing number of prescriptions. According to IMS Health, pharmacies dispensed more than \$9 billion in prescription opioid painkillers in 2011, which was more than twice the amount a decade earlier. Today, one in five Americans have at least one psychiatric medication prescription.

Legal pharmaceuticals are also proven to lead hordes of people on to illicit drugs. “When you talk to people who are using heroin today,” said Dr. Andrew Kolodny, chief medical officer for the Phoenix House Foundation, “almost all of them will tell you that their opioid addiction began with exposure to painkillers. ... It’s not easy to get the opioid genie back into the bottle.”

These users become hooked on legal prescription opioids and then discover that illicit heroin is easier to obtain, less expensive and more potent than the prescription med. Many make the switch. The end result, too often, is what happened with Hoffman.

No matter how carefully regulated and controlled, if we legalized street drugs, the U.S. drug plague would only worsen. So, the failure of the war on drugs isn’t a result of the laws that ban narcotics. For the real cause, you have to look for something else. Something that is hiding in vivid, high-definition, plain sight.

Glamorizing Gomorrah

“Life imitates art far more than art imitates life,” Oscar Wilde said. Human minds—especially younger ones—are often highly susceptible to the influence of music, movies, magazines and other media and art. What we see in movies and hear in songs, we’re often inclined to imitate.

So much of our drug problem is created by an entertainment industry that glamorizes drug culture. Take Justin Bieber, for example. He travels the world smoking cannabis, sometimes dodging arrest and sometimes not, yet he remains one of pop culture’s most iconic figures, with millions of die-hard “Beliebers” practically reverencing him as a god. Then there’s Miley Cyrus, who often smokes pot on stage to the cheers of thousands of young fans because, in her words, it’s “really funny.” She sings songs about her love of illicit drugs and openly discusses her experiences using peyote, cocaine, marijuana and molly. In a *Rolling Stone* interview, she called the last two her “happy drugs.” It’s a similar situation with Lil Wayne, Justin Timberlake, Seth Rogen, Snoop Dogg, Dave Chapel and many, many others. Hollywood often depicts drug use as the hallmark of trendiness. It should come as no surprise when young people who adore these celebrities decide to experiment with recreational narcotics.

Sometimes, though, entertainment is more subtle.

For example, the TV show *Breaking Bad* recounted the exploits of a mild-mannered high school chemistry teacher who turns to a life of crime, cooking and selling extremely potent, blue methamphetamine. The gritty show was a smash hit and is regarded as one of the greatest television series of all time.

But in 2010, two years into the series, a new strain of blue crystal meth—dyed to look like the show’s signature drug—began to appear on the streets of Kansas

City. Then in 2012, a real-life chemistry teacher in Texas was arrested for selling homemade meth at the school where he taught. In 2013, a month after the show’s ultra-hyped series finale, Oklahoma police seized 40 pounds of crystal meth dyed “Breaking Bad blue.” It was one of the largest meth busts in history. In January of this year, another strain of blue meth began appearing in New Mexico, Arizona, Utah and Colorado. Also in January, one of *Breaking Bad*’s biggest fans (who had previously won a high-profile contest to watch the final episode with the stars of the show) was arrested for possession of more than \$1 million of synthetic drugs.

Some may argue that *Breaking Bad* didn’t glamorize crystal meth use, but it certainly did *normalize* the idea of making, dealing and using drugs in the minds of many of its viewers. And for a portion of the audience, it validated and sensationalized their existing destructive drug habits. For others, it appears to have inspired them to “break bad” themselves, and turn to lives of criminal behavior.

This is just one example of the power pop culture has on the populace. *Breaking Bad* is far from the only drug-themed production in pop culture.

Movies about illicit drug use have been rising sharply for years. In the 1950s, only 16 such films were produced. That number grew to 23 for the 1960s, and then to 61 for the 1970s. The climb continued, reaching 77 for the 1980s and 139 for the 1990s. For the 2000s, the number almost doubled to 276. The current decade is on pace to smash that record. In more ways than one, we are entertaining ourselves with drugs.

The same pattern has been underway with popular music. Just a few decades ago, drug-themed songs were fairly rare, but in 2005, the American Public Health Association examined the bestselling songs of several genres and found that *one third* of them referenced



actor
Robert Downey Jr.

1965–
Famous for
cocaine and
heroin use



singer/actress
Whitney Houston

1963–2012
Died from an overdose
of cocaine and legal
pharmaceuticals



actor
Heath Ledger

1979–2008
Died from a cocktail
of six legal
pharmaceuticals

illicit drug use. A separate study found that, in the rap genre, more than 60 percent of songs referred to using illegal drugs.

Not so long ago, drug arrests of famous people were relatively rare. They were viewed as shameful and often resulted in boycotts and protests. Now such occurrences seem to happen weekly, and the public cheers on celeb-stoners and practically applauds them for their abuse.

his use of recreational drugs. In fact, he said taking LSD was “one of the most important things” in his life, and credited the drug with opening his mind and enabling him to become the innovator he was.

And consider this story: Once there was a teenage boy who enjoyed some of the edgier aspects of American youth culture. He was in a type of gang, he regularly smoked marijuana and even used cocaine

move for such a person in the most highly regarded position in this country.”

Whether the president likes it or not, he plays a key role in setting the moral tone of the United States. His decision to wade into this controversial topic and flip-pantly undercut U.S. law is intensifying the nation’s appetite for drugs and lawlessness.

Want evidence? Back in 1969, when Gallup conducted the first poll on the topic, 12 percent of Americans were in favor of legalizing marijuana. Over the next 40 years, the public responded to pop culture’s suggestions, and that number *gradually and slowly* climbed 28 percentage points by the time President Obama was elected. During his time in office, the climb has rapidly accelerated, *gaining 18 percentage points in just 5 years*. It now stands at 58 percent. For the first time in history, the *majority* of Americans favor legalizing pot.

How could we expect the war on drugs to succeed when U.S. pop culture is dripping with drug glamorization? How could it be anything but a spectacular failure when leaders—including the president himself—routinely downplay the dangers of narcotics?

To solve America’s drug addiction, the nation would have to stop talking out of both sides of its mouth. Entertainment would need to stop aggressively pushing such destructive themes, politicians would need to stand in solidarity with anti-narcotic efforts, and laws would need to be consistently enforced. Yet, even if Washington somehow implemented all these drastic measures, much of the *demand* for drugs—which is the central problem—would remain.

A Complete Solution

The only way to completely rehabilitate America’s addiction would be to totally snuff out every individual’s demand for drugs. To the pragmatist, this may sound like a non-solution—like saying, “Let’s just



★ FROM THE TOP

“It’s important for [legalization of marijuana] to go forward” because smoking it is no more than “a bad habit and a vice, not very different from the cigarettes that I smoked as a young person up through a big chunk of my adult life. I don’t think it is more dangerous than alcohol.”

Some movies, shows and songs that mention drugs don’t promote smoking cocaine any more than *Schindler’s List* promotes Nazism. But a stupefying number *do* glorify narcotics. Song after song and film after film talks down the dangers of drugs, removes their stigma, and whispers to the people of the nation: *Dealing is glamorous, excess is poetic, getting high is normal.*

Puzzlingly, all of this pro-narcotic propaganda is multiplying at *the same time* as Washington injects billion after billion into the tattered arteries of the drug war. The U.S. is talking out of both sides of its mouth—and the side many Americans are listening to is the one with a joint hanging casually from it.

Beyond Entertainment

Sadly, those who glamorize drug use and minimize its dangers are no longer confined to the world of art and entertainment. Leading business moguls, affluent scientists and even *America’s highest authority* are now singing the praises of an occasional—or habitual—hit on narcotics.

The late Steve Jobs, one of the most influential entrepreneurs in history, made no attempt to hide

from time to time. Then he ended that chapter of his life, worked his way into the political sphere and ended up as the president of the United States of America!

That is the way Barack Obama seems to want his story to be understood. He chooses his words carefully when discussing his drug use, and he doesn’t want the world to forget it. Using pot and cocaine was a rite of passage for him—a part of his journey toward success. It was a vital part of his “path to enlightenment.”

That narrative blends smoothly with pop culture’s increasing embrace, celebration and glamorization of illicit drug use.

In January, the president said: “It’s important for [legalization of marijuana] to go forward” because smoking the drug is no more than “a bad habit and a vice, not very different from the cigarettes that I smoked as a young person up through a big chunk of my adult life. I don’t think it is more dangerous than alcohol.”

The Drug-Free America Foundation said the president’s comments show that he is either “seriously ill-informed about the issue or is completely ignoring warnings from his highly esteemed advisers.” The foundation said it was “an irresponsible



singer
Bruno Mars

1985–
Famous for
cocaine use



singer/songwriter
Willie Nelson

1933–
Famous for
marijuana use



rapper
Lil Wayne

1982–
Famous for using
marijuana, crack cocaine,
legal pharmaceuticals,
multiple arrests

wave a wand that magically makes everyone healthy, happy, productive, reliable, rational, stable and loving, toward themselves and others.”

But there really is a way to *remove all demand*.

Why do so many crave a substance that will alter their mind, dull their pain, satiate their appetite and make them forget themselves? *Because they feel empty*. They have been duped into believing unimportant things are meaningful, and that meaningful things are unimportant.

Addiction is complex, and there is a tendency among some prohibitionists to sometimes oversimplify it. Nevertheless, how could someone like Hoffman—with three beautiful, young children, the admiration of millions and a comfortable life—trade it all in for a needle?

Russell Brand’s *Guardian* piece offers an answer: “[I]n spite of all the praise and accolades, in spite of all the loving friends and family, there is a predominant voice in the mind of an addict that supersedes all reason, and that voice wants you dead. This voice is the unrelenting echo of an unfulfillable void.”

This “void” is actually not just inside addicts, but *all people*. The Creator God made human beings so that, without Him in our lives, we are incomplete. Without His Holy Spirit in and completing us, a deep emptiness nags at all men and women.

Mankind’s Creator planted within us a deep longing for something beyond ourselves. We crave a purpose, a connection with others, a cause, to be part of something bigger than ourselves. But more than that, we actually need a relationship with *the true God*. And a relationship with the Creator is *the only thing* that can fill this God-shaped void in our lives.

The majority of people try to fill this void with devotion to man-made gods like Allah, Vishnu, Buddha, Krishna, Mary or a false Jesus. But it doesn’t work. Many try to fill it with devotion to friends or family, which can be healthy but doesn’t fit into that God-shaped hole. Some try to fill it with a pious devotion to knowledge or career. That doesn’t work either. Some turn to illicit sex. Others try to fill it with substance abuse.

Mind-altering drugs can make a person feel like he has filled that emptiness! *But only for as long as the high lasts*. Then the emptiness returns—this time a little deeper, a little more urgent, a little sharper. A user reaches for the pipe, pills or needle again, and often discovers that he requires more than before to obtain the same feeling of satiety—and thus a downward spiral results whose name is addiction.

Solomon understood the void in mankind, in part because he had experienced some of the emptiness that spurs some people to use drugs. As one of the richest men on the planet at the time, he determined to perform a perilous experiment in which he sampled almost every pleasure known to man. Solomon drank liberally, planted extraordinary gardens, constructed magnificent buildings, assembled orchestras to play at his command, and surrounded himself with all kinds of pleasures and beautiful women. “Anything I wanted,” he said, “I would take” (Ecclesiastes 2:1-10; New Living Translation).

Yet, God was not first in his life, so he *still* found himself unfulfilled. At the end of this experiment, he said, “[I]t was all so meaningless—like chasing the wind. There was nothing really worthwhile anywhere” (verse 11; NLT).

All that extravagance took him beyond mere listlessness, and into misery: “So I

came to hate life because everything done here under the sun is so troubling. Everything is meaningless . . .” (verse 17; NLT).

At the time that Mr. Hoffman injected the fatal dose of heroin into his arm, his three children—whom he is said to have loved exceedingly—were waiting for him at a playground just a block from his apartment. *But by that time, his addiction was too vicious and powerful*. The void in his life was too dark, urgent and jagged.

Russell Brand said the void is “unfulfillable.” But Solomon learned that a close relationship with the true God CAN PERFECTLY FILL THAT EMPTINESS! “Here now is my final conclusion,” Solomon said at the end of his social experiment: “Fear God, and keep His commands, for this is the whole of man” (Ecclesiastes 12:13; New Living, Young’s Literal).

People have been deceived into believing that deeply meaningful things—like keeping God’s commandments and living His way of life—are unimportant. But these things are actually “the whole of man”!

If every person cultivates a close relationship with the Creator of mankind—loving and fearing Him in the correct way and following His perfect law in every aspect of life—then demand for narcotics will become a hazy memory.

Scripture reveals that, at present, mankind as a whole is *cut off* from access to God, with very few exceptions. (This truth is explained in our free book *Mystery of the Ages*.) However, the good news is that, very soon, the true Jesus Christ will return to Earth. When He does, lasting healing and relapse-proof rehabilitation will begin for all of mankind’s problems. All people will be devoted to building close, fulfilling relationships with their Creator. And the void in every man’s life will be perfectly, joyously filled. ■

Fearing God and keeping His commandments is the whole duty of man. Learn the laws that will make your life whole, order our free booklet **The Ten Commandments**.



DRUGS The Seduction

365

(projected total for the current decade)

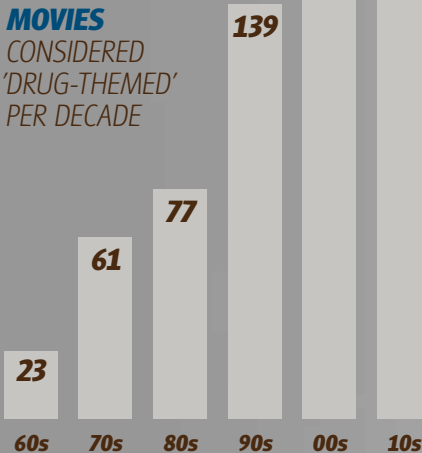
GLAMOR

Ironically, members of the entertainment industry suffer from the very substances they glamorize. Yet the supply of drug-related movies and music continues to grow.

276

MOVIES

CONSIDERED 'DRUG-THEMED' PER DECADE



MUSIC REFERENCING ILLICIT DRUG USE

One third of best-selling songs in several genres sing about illicit drug use.



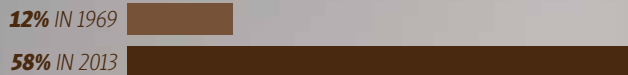
60 percent of rap songs sing about illicit drug use.



Marijuana, cocaine, heroin and other illegal and legal drugs are now an essential part of American culture, no matter how you measure it. From the junkie on the street to the presidency, Americans are changing how they treat mind-altering drugs. But the drugs are not returning the favor.

★ MARIJUANA

In October 2013, for the first time in history, the majority of Americans said they favored legalizing marijuana.



📺 'LEGAL' HIGHS

In 2010, more than 12 million people reported using prescription painkillers non-medically (without a prescription or for "recreation").

THEN AND NOW

Street drugs are becoming less expensive. For \$50, this is how many times you can get high:

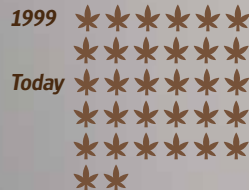
Cocaine



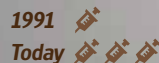
Heroin



Marijuana



Meth

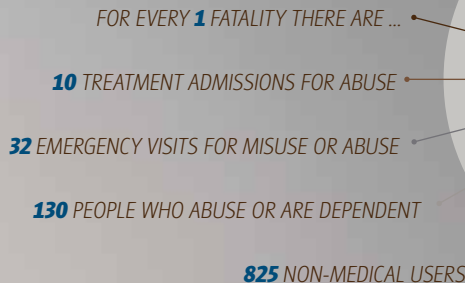


and the Suffering

FOR EVERY DEATH ... For every fatal overdose, the drug trap snares 1,000 other lives to some degree.

★ **DRUG 'TRAFFICKING'**

In the last decade, the number of fatal car crashes caused by drivers high on marijuana has tripled. Drugged driving now accounts for more than 28 percent of traffic deaths.



OVERDOSING

Number of the people in the U.S. who died from drug overdoses



"The death toll is equivalent to a hundred 757s crashing and killing everybody on board every year, but this doesn't make the news. So many people have died, and we just don't care."

—DAN BIGG, CHICAGO RECOVERY ALLIANCE

LEADING CAUSE

In 2009, drug overdoses surpassed car accidents to become the leading cause of accidental deaths in the United States.

'LEGAL' OVERDOSES

Of the estimated 78,000 deaths worldwide in 2010 because of illegal drug use, more than half were from painkiller addictions.

LEGALIZATION

The increasing number of "experts" who argue for legalization ignore the fact that the drugs that are already legal and regulated account for an astonishing 60 percent of overdoses.

ACCIDENTAL

Accidental deaths in the U.S. by drug type



105

Americans dying from overdoses every day

6,748

Americans treated in emergency departments daily for drug misuse or abuse

90

Percentage of poisoning deaths caused by drugs

Where We Are on Jesus's Timetable of Prophecy

In the most important prophecy He uttered, Jesus Christ made an interesting digression that relates directly to the recent deal Western nations made with Iran over its nuclear program! **BY GERALD FLURRY**

THE BOOK OF REVELATION IS THE most misunderstood book in the Bible. But it was revealed by God the Father “to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass” (Revelation 1:1). The Greek word for Revelation is *apocalypse*—which means a *revealing*, an uncovering or disclosure, to enlighten or give light! God actually wants Revelation to *reveal* and *enlighten* us about events that are about to happen!

However, we can only comprehend this prophecy if God opens our minds to it—and He only performs that miracle for “babes,” or people with childlike, humble, teachable minds (e.g. Matthew 11:25). Is God able to reveal His truth to *you*?

The greatest gift on Earth is being able to understand your Bible. It is a *living* book, and fulfilled prophecy is irrefutable **PROOF** that God exists. God **LIVES**, and He has a lot to tell us about what is coming.

In Revelation 5, we see depicted a book in God's hand that is **SEALED WITH SEVEN SEALS**. No one is able to *unseal* that book and make its meaning plain except “the Lion of the tribe of Judah”—Jesus Christ! No *man* can interpret God's revelation. No one but *Christ* can reveal the meaning of the prophecies in this most important book of prophecy in the Bible.

In the next chapter, Christ opens the first six of the seven seals of this book one at a time. In each case, that unsealing introduces a momentous end-time event that will occur in the time leading up to the greatest event of all: the Second Coming! However, these prophetic events are all described *in symbol*. These symbols have confused readers ever since the Apostle John recorded them in the first century A.D.! God wants His people to understand, but He used symbols to keep the world—those who won't submit to Him—from understanding (Matthew 11:25).

An all-important key to understanding these prophecies lies in recognizing that *Christ alone* can explain them. So we must look **ELSEWHERE IN SCRIPTURE** to find where He explained the meaning of these symbols. Thankfully, Christ *did* explain them, in plain language! He gave us the **KEY** to the book of Revelation. He described precisely the events that would occur just before His return to Earth—in a prophecy He gave directly to His disciples. It is called the Olivet prophecy, recorded in Matthew 24, Mark 13 and Luke 21.

Within that explanation about these seals, **CHRIST MADE AN IMPORTANT DIGRESSION WITH TREMENDOUS PROPHETIC SIGNIFICANCE**.

The Seven Seals

Let's quickly look at the seven seals in Revelation. The first four seals are popularly called “the four horsemen of the apocalypse” (Revelation 6:1-8). Jesus Christ disclosed the meaning of these mysterious horsemen in Matthew 24:4-8.

The first seal is a white horse whose rider has a bow (Revelation 6:1-2). This first seal is an *imitation* of Jesus Christ—false religion. The second seal is a red horse. This represents wars and killing people in this end time (verses 3-4). The third seal is a black horse, picturing famine (verses 5-6). The fourth seal is a pale horse; it's about pestilence, disease and suffering (verses 7-8). If you want a thorough breakdown of how this prophecy is *already* being fulfilled *in our day*, request a free copy of our booklet *The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse*.

Continuing in Revelation, verses 9 through 11 describe the fifth seal, or the Great Tribulation, the worst time of suffering ever on Earth. The sixth seal is the heavenly signs (verses 12-16). God will give these signs to *shake* this world into realizing that He *does* exist!

The last seal is about the coming Day of the Lord (verse 17). Revelation 6 describes the first six seals, and then the rest of the chapters of Revelation apply to the seventh seal, which involves seven trumpets. (You can request a free copy of my booklet *Unveiled at Last: The Royal Book of Revelation* for more information.)

If you follow Christ's explanation of these seals in Matthew 24, you notice something. After Jesus explained the first four seals, He *digressed away* from the main subject of the **END TIME**—the time just before His Second Coming. A digression is just temporarily turning from your subject matter to something else. Instead of continuing with the end-time prophecy about the fifth seal—which is the Great Tribulation (Matthew 24:21-22; Revelation 6:9-11)—He stopped and began speaking about what Jerusalem could expect in A.D. 70—just a *few decades* into the future.

Why would He do that? Christ used it to teach us an important lesson.

A Peace Deal That Will Lead to War

This is one of the main digressions in the Bible. It is a digression, yet it is still part of the seven seals of Revelation. There is a lesson in what happened to Jerusalem in A.D. 70 that we need to learn, and it tells you **SPECIFICALLY** what is happening in this end time. I believe this is one of the most precise prophecies in the Bible to show us what is happening on Earth *right now!*

Recently, the U.S. and the Western world made a nuclear deal with Iran that is supposed to slow down Iran's nuclear program. But it isn't going to do that. Both of America's political parties are very weak against Iran in spite of the fact that Iran has **LIED** and **CHEATED** in every agreement it has made with the United Nations—more than 20 times! Now this latest deal is somehow supposed to be the one that will bring peace.

But if you understand Christ's digression in Matthew 24, you realize it's going to do the exact opposite: It is going to lead to war!

We have already experienced two world wars, but the Bible teaches in *many* places that there is coming a *third* world war. Iran is prophesied to set the stage for *World War III*, and you can prove that from your own Bible! Yet people think that somehow a deal with Iran will bring peace. They used the same approach in the 1930s against Adolf Hitler and Germany, and it produced *WAR!* That's a lesson we ought to have learned from World War II in the 1930s, but as Winston Churchill said, we have thrown all of those lessons away.

Events occurring right now are leading directly to the pinnacle of Bible prophecy in this end time. Events are moving very fast, and there is nothing we can do to slow them down. The drama is truly **OUTSTANDING**, and it all ends with the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. How exciting!

THIS MATTHEW 24 DIGRESSION IS ABOUT RIGHT NOW, TODAY! It even ties to this Iranian nuclear deal and shows us where it will soon lead! Christ laid out these prophecies *so we could understand.* He is speaking to any individual who will pay attention to world events. Anyone with common sense is concerned about what is happening in this world. Christ's digression shows how it concerns **YOU** in a very direct way, which you couldn't even imagine if you didn't understand Bible prophecy.

The Digression

"And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world [or *age*]? And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many" (Matthew 24:3-5). That is speaking of the first seal, or the first horseman of the apocalypse.

Once one of these seals opens, events continue right down to the Second Coming of Christ. Verse 6 talks about "wars and rumours of wars"; that is the second seal. In verse 7, Christ spoke about famines, which is the third seal, followed by pestilences, the fourth seal. He then said, "All these are the **BEGINNING** of sorrows" (verse 8). So you have four things here: false



Christianity, wars, famine and pestilence. This is all about our time.

After Christ talked about the beginning of sorrows, *then* He digressed to take us to A.D. 70.

"When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:)" (verse 15).

Take special note! This is a specific reference to what was to happen in A.D. 70. It was prophecy when Christ said it—but it is now *history* that we need to be aware of in order to take Christ's warning seriously!

"**THE HOLY PLACE**" is Jerusalem. In A.D. 70, that city underwent one of the most nightmarish chapters in its history. First, the Roman army put a choke hold on the inhabitants, causing widespread famine and suffering, and some marauding among the Jews. Flavius Josephus, the first-century eyewitness and historian, said there was no place "in the city that had no dead bodies in it, but what was entirely covered with those that were killed either by the famine or the rebellion; and all was full of dead bodies of such as had perished either by the sedition or by that famine." Then the Romans surrounded the city with three legions of soldiers. Finally that massive army razed the city, killed virtually all the inhabitants, and destroyed the temple.

This history contains a lesson God wants us to grasp. The way Jerusalem was destroyed is very revealing for us today because it was a **TYPE** and a **FORERUNNER** of what is going to happen in this end time! We are getting extremely close to that time.

The destruction of Jerusalem anciently will happen on a *massive scale* to three nations of Israel in this end time (as we

explain in our free book *The United States and Britain in Prophecy*). The nightmare of A.D. 70 will happen again, but it's going to be **FAR WORSE** in this end time.

This leads *right into* what Christ described in the fifth seal. It is about weapons of mass destruction and nuclear warfare. That is what the Great Tribulation is all about: It is a **NUCLEAR** tribulation—a time when *no living creatures would survive* if God didn't intervene! (verses 21-22).

God wants us to avoid that suffering and be protected from it. Anciently, *just before Jerusalem was destroyed*, God's people had to be taken to a place of protection. Once again, God is going to have to protect His people. Just as there was an abomination that stood in the holy place anciently, *another* abomination in this end time will stand in the holy place. This is a sign for God's people to *flee*, just as it was in A.D. 70.

Luke 21:20 explains what this abomination is: **EUROPEAN ARMIES SURROUNDING JERUSALEM.** The Roman army that surrounded Jerusalem anciently was actually an ancestor to the *Holy Roman Empire* now rising up before our eyes! (You can read more about this in our free booklet *Germany and the Holy Roman Empire*.) When those modern armies encircle the Holy City, it truly will be an *abomination*. But it is actually only a *type* of what is happening to *all of the nations of Israel!*

Putting this prophecy together with other prophecies gives us a more complete picture. When these armies surround Jerusalem, do you know who they have just defeated? *Iran*—the king of the south! (Daniel 11:40).

We need to see the connection between *this prophecy* and the

nuclear deal with Iran! This is the world's number one terrorist-sponsoring nation—it exports terrorism around the globe. All those terrorist attacks are acts of war, but the West is too weak to deal with them. Our leaders act like we can negotiate and make a deal with Iran's leaders, even as they lie and break every promise they make about their nuclear program. If you think Iran is belligerent now, imagine what it will be like when it gets nuclear weapons! Iran's radical leaders have some of the most bizarre religious beliefs of anybody on Earth. Even most *Arabs* reject what they teach about their version of the Messiah coming: that the more violence and killing there is, the quicker he will return. NO NATION ON EARTH THAT HAS NUCLEAR BOMBS THINKS LIKE THAT!

WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT THE NUCLEAR BOMBS IN THAT FIFTH SEAL, YOU HAD BETTER THINK ABOUT IRAN!

Jesus gave this prophecy so you could recognize events leading up to the Great Tribulation and know what to do to be protected by God.

If you look at this passage of Scripture closely, and you understand duality, you can see a tiny time frame of where we are in Bible prophecy.

Matthew 24 is the most important prophecy Jesus gave while He was on this Earth. He gave this so you could recognize events that are leading up to the Great Tribulation and know what you need to do to be protected by the great God. That's how important this is! *Nothing* could be more important at this time!

A Pushy Nation

“And at the time of the end shall the king of the south *push* at him [Iran pushes all the time with its exported terrorism]; and the king of the north shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, and with horsemen, and with many ships; and he shall enter into the countries, and shall overflow and pass over” (Daniel 11:40). This prophecy is about Iran versus Germany (which we prove in our free booklet *The King of the South*). This German-led European power enters Jerusalem (verse 41). That European army in Jerusalem is what Christ

referred to as the abomination of desolation that Daniel talked about (verse 31).

During the 1930s, Hitler kept making more and more demands—and Britain, under Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain, kept making more and more concessions. It kept *surrendering* to Hitler in that sense, and that emboldened him all the more. To their shame, the British went so far as to pressure Czechoslovakia to give the Sudetenland to Germany, and Chamberlain came back with a piece of paper, shouting, “Peace for our time!” Almost *immediately* after, Germany decided it wanted the *rest* of Czechoslovakia. Then Hitler stormed into Poland, and within months, World War II began.

After the recent nuclear deal, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani said, *The West surrendered to us. We got what we wanted! Those crippling sanctions were taken away!*

And now we can storm ahead with our nuclear program. That is what the Iranians are saying. This nuclear deal will only *speed up* the process!

That is just what Christ was talking about! That is why He digressed: to let us know what we are really dealing with in this end time!

Before World War II, almost all the media, politicians and educators opposed Winston Churchill when he warned that Britain's concessions would hasten war! He said that only standing up to Hitler would stop it! The same is true with Iran today, but the leaders of America and Britain don't believe that—just as they didn't believe Winston Churchill's warning about Germany in the 1930s.

At the end of the war, Churchill said that something much worse was coming upon the world, and that we had better learn a lesson. He wrote in his book *The Second World War* (the best history of World War II) that we did *not* learn the lesson. He discussed the follies and idiocy of many of the West's policies and how they *caused* World War II. That is the second

seal: wars and rumors of wars. After the two world wars, we have had rumors and rumors and rumors of war. War is often in the news.

The Iranians are going to push and keep pushing. That is their nature! Their pushing is going to spark a war. They're going to push at Germany, and then Germany will conquer them. Then Germany will proceed from there to start World War III, just like it started World Wars I and II. That is what your Bible says. That is where this nuclear deal with Iran is leading!

How It All Ends

Notice the sixth seal: “Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken” (Matthew 24:29). God is going to shake the heavens! He's going to awaken this world to His existence, and to His tremendous POWER! He says the nations are only a drop in a bucket to Him! Who believes in *that* God?

But then see the wonderful outcome at the conclusion of the seventh seal: “And then shall appear THE SIGN OF THE SON OF MAN IN HEAVEN; and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see THE SON OF MAN COMING IN THE CLOUDS OF HEAVEN WITH POWER AND GREAT GLORY” (verse 30). Could anything be more wonderful, thrilling and inspiring?

God warns us how events are building toward tremendous suffering, which is coming upon this world because of our *sins*! But God wants to protect *any individual* who will turn to Him. Most are not turning to Him, but they are not lost spiritually. God is going to save most of the people in this world—even though, in the short term, they are going to have to SUFFER first!

Jesus Christ is going to return, and He is preparing for that event even today. You can see events building to His Second Coming. What could be more wonderful? Christ is going to come back to rule with a rod of iron. He's going to teach His way of life and stop all this madness and suffering, and give mankind the peace and abundance that we all desire. ■



► **RELIGION** from page 13

Easter. The early New Testament Church never celebrated this holiday either. It is well known in atheist, secular and religious circles that Easter customs and religious beliefs come directly from paganism. “The name ‘Easter,’ which is merely the slightly changed English spelling of the ancient Assyrian and Babylonian goddess Ishtar, comes to us from old Teutonic mythology where it is known as Ostern. The Phoenician name of this goddess was Astarte, consort of Baal, the sun god, whose worship is denounced by the Almighty in the Bible as the most abominable of all pagan idolatry,” wrote Herbert Armstrong in 1957 (*The Plain Truth About Easter*).

Contemporary Christian groups understand this fact, but keep the festival anyway. “The name ‘Easter’ has its roots in ancient polytheistic religions (paganism). On this, all scholars agree,” writes ChristianAnswers.net. “This name is never used in the original Scriptures, nor is it ever associated biblically with the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. For these reasons, we prefer to use the term ‘Resurrection Sunday’ rather than ‘Easter’ when referring to the annual Christian remembrance of Christ’s resurrection.” Even this group that recognizes the pagan origin of Easter still celebrates the day—it just gives it a different name.

It is this kind of hypocrisy that causes atheists and agnostics to point a finger at God.

Live by Every Word

God specifically commanded that His people not absorb the religious practices of pagan peoples. Referring to the nations surrounding them, Moses, under God’s inspiration, commanded Israel, “Take heed to thyself that thou be not snared by following them, after that they be destroyed from before thee; and that thou enquire not after their gods, saying, How did these nations serve their gods? even so will I do likewise. Thou shalt not do so unto the Lord thy God: for every abomination to the Lord, which he hateth, have they done unto their gods; for even their sons and their daughters they have burnt in the fire to their gods. What

thing soever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it” (Deuteronomy 12:30-32).

God does not want to be worshiped or honored with pagan customs. Yet, most Christians dismiss this teaching because it is taken from the Old Testament.

Christians are supposedly people who follow Jesus Christ. Yet Christ *condemned* the practice of picking and choosing which scriptures to follow. He defeated Satan’s titanic temptation by quoting another scripture from this book: “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by *every word* that proceedeth out of the mouth of God” (Matthew 4:4; Deuteronomy 8:3).

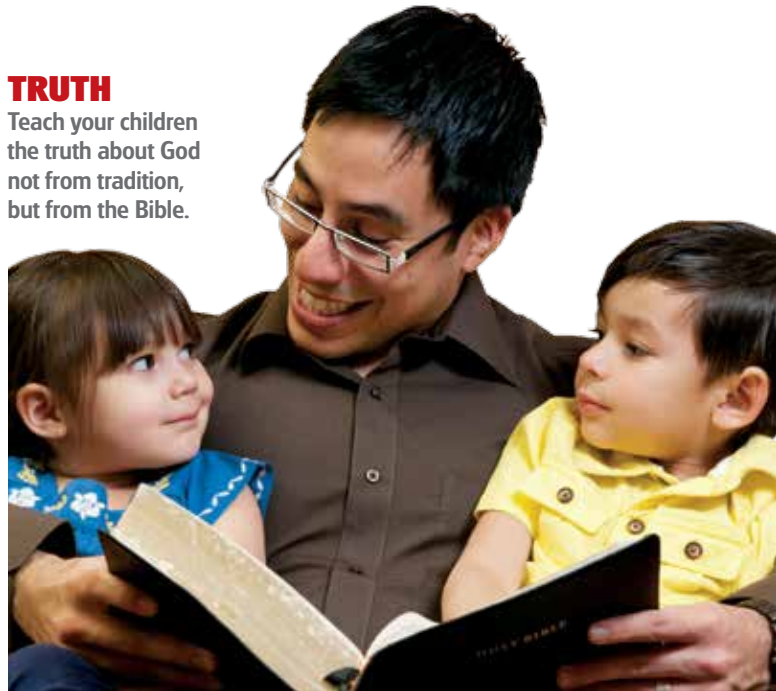
Here is a life-altering, deeply religious truth. God commands all Christians to keep only His religious festivals listed in Leviticus 23. These days open up vistas of knowledge about God’s plans for all mankind. Not keeping these days blinds a person to why God acts the way He does, and why He created man—the purpose for human life.

Live by Truth

Mr. Armstrong explained, “God Almighty commanded His people to observe the Passover forever! (Exodus 12:24). This command was given while the Israelites were still in Egypt, prior to the Old Covenant, or the law of Moses! It pictured, before the crucifixion, Christ’s death for the remission of our sins, as a type looking forward to it. At His last Passover, Jesus *changed* the emblems used from the blood of a lamb and eating its roasted body to the bread and wine” (op. cit.).

TRUTH

Teach your children the truth about God not from tradition, but from the Bible.



The Bible clearly commands all Christians to have a church service to remember Christ’s *death*, not His resurrection! Few obey this simple-to-understand command, and the results for our world have been disastrous. Our world is chock-full of evils because human beings refuse to obey God, and they literally teach children to disobey God. Until this problem—human rejection of God and His way—is fixed, our world will remain full of evil.

Is there hope? Absolutely.

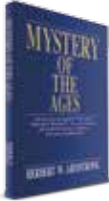
You as an individual can turn things around for yourself and your family. You can get to know the true, almighty, loving and living God. You can pass this incredible revelation on to your children. God reveals Himself and His plan for all mankind in the pages of His greatest gift to mankind, the Holy Bible. Are you a student of the Bible? Are you willing to let it be your authority, your guide for life?

If you are ready to do this, become a student of the *Herbert W. Armstrong College Bible Correspondence Course*. This exciting 36-lesson series will make the Bible relevant to your life as no other course can. You will learn

that the Bible is a contemporary book with insight and solutions to today’s world problems. And it will help you teach the truth about God to your son or daughter. ■

Request our free booklet **Pagan Holidays—or God’s Holy Days—Which?** for a thorough explanation of this important subject.

No dodging, fudging or lying. Just the answers to life’s greatest questions. Order our free book **Mystery of the Ages**.



MATTHEW FRIESEN/TRUMPET



What Is a Real Christian?

The Philadelphia Trumpet, in conjunction with the Herbert W. Armstrong College Bible Correspondence Course, presents this brief excursion into the fascinating study of the Bible. Simply turn to and read in your Bible each verse given in answer to the questions. You will be amazed at the new understanding gained from this short study!

MANY PEOPLE CALL THEMSELVES CHRISTIAN! Nearly *one third* of people on Earth say they are Christian—about 2.18 billion out of about 7 billion. And the number is growing.

But what exactly does that mean? Do all those people conform to the criteria described in the book that forms the foundation of Christian beliefs, the Bible?

The book of Acts is the history of the early New Testament Church of God. It covers the major events in briefest summary form. This book attests to the fact that to live a Christian life is to live a certain *way*—to do certain things—to conform to certain standards.

One of the early Christians was a man named Apollos. He was an excellent speaker and well versed in the Old Testament Scriptures. He preached boldly. However, Apollos needed more understanding. A dedicated couple in the Church of God gave him further instruction. Notice the account in Acts 18:26: "... whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the *way of God* more perfectly."

Real Christianity, as described in the Bible, is a "way" of life—*God's way!* But what exactly *is* that "way" that a Christian is supposed to live?

How Does a Christian Live?

The word *Christian*, derived from *Christ*, in a literal sense refers to one who follows Jesus Christ. Jesus described the very basis of real Christianity in what is commonly called the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7). This "sermon" actually started out as a private lesson for His disciples (students or learners). Jesus pointed out those characteristics that would clearly identify His true followers.

Before we focus on several of these Christian characteristics, you should first read all of Matthew 5, 6 and 7. This passage describes several aspects of the Christian way of life.

1. What did Jesus say about the "poor in spirit"? Matthew 5:3. Did He mean they would be lacking the Spirit of God? Romans 8:9.

If someone doesn't possess the Holy Spirit, "he is none of his"—he is *not* a Christian! A *real* Christian is one who is led by the indwelling Spirit of God (verse 14), which provides the power to *live* God's way. By "poor in spirit," Jesus was not suggesting that they would lack God's Spirit. Rather, He went on to show that those who are truly *humble* will be blessed because they will be in God's Kingdom.

2. What will the meek inherit? Matthew 5:5. Was Jesus meek? Matthew 11:29. Will a Christian exhibit

meekness in his daily life? Ephesians 4:1-2.

There is a difference between being meek and being weak. Jesus was meek, but not weak! He endured abuse and injury with patience and without resentment. A meek person will not try to justify himself when he is wrong. Neither does he feel superior to others. He will not try to get even with others, nor try to get revenge.

3. What will a true follower of Christ "thirst" for? Matthew 5:6. How does the Bible define righteousness? Psalm 119:172.

To "hunger and thirst" for righteousness is to be deeply motivated to obey God—to keep His laws, which He gave to us in loving concern for our own good.

Those who truly hunger and thirst for righteousness will be studying God's Word for true understanding. They will be willing to *change* when they see they've been wrong, admitting their wrong beliefs, mistakes and sins. "Study to shew thyself approved unto God" (2 Timothy 2:15), wrote Paul. "Prove all things," he also said (1 Thessalonians 5:21).

4. Who did Paul say are justified before God? Romans 2:13. Paul made it plain that the unmerited pardon of our sins is by the *grace* of God through faith in Christ's sacrifice. Nevertheless, a Christian is still required to keep God's law. Read Romans 3:31 and all of chapter 6.

5. Who did Jesus say will enter the Kingdom of God? Matthew 7:21. What did the Apostle Paul plainly say was *most important* for a Christian to be doing? 1 Corinthians 7:19.

Notice that in order to enter God's Kingdom, there is **DOING** required—not just the confession of Christ as our Savior. God is very concerned about our spiritual "works" after we become Christians. He makes it plain that we cannot enter the Kingdom of God just by thinking Christ has done it all for us.

6. Unless one has the love of God, can he really be a Christian? Read 1 Corinthians 13:1-8, 13 (the word *charity* in the King James Version means *godly love*). What are we if we lack the love of God? Verse 2.

7. Will God's love, which He imparts through His Spirit, lead one to keep the Ten Commandments—all 10 of them? Romans 13:8-10. In what way did God inspire John to confirm Paul's statement—what is the Bible definition of God's love? 1 John 5:2-3. How is God's love perfected in a Christian? 1 John 2:5.

A Christian 'Walks' With God

1. Is a real Christian one who strives to follow Christ—to imitate His example—to "walk" with Him? 1 John 2:6; 1 Peter 2:21.

2. Who was one of the first men in the Bible who "walked" with God? Genesis 5:22-24.

3. What other great patriarch walked with God and found grace in God's sight? Genesis 6:8-9. Was Noah clearly a faithful and righteous man who pleased God? Hebrews 11:7.

4. What was God's command to Abraham? Genesis

17:1. Why could it be said that he did indeed walk with God? Genesis 26:5; Hebrews 11:8-10.

5. Was God also Abraham's *friend* and companion? 2 Chronicles 20:7; Isaiah 41:8; James 2:23. Did God talk with Abraham as a close friend would? Genesis 18:17-19, 23-33.

6. Did God also talk to Moses as with a close friend? Exodus 33:11; Numbers 12:7-8; Deuteronomy 34:10.

7. How can we become Jesus Christ's friends? John 15:14-15.

True friends walk together and talk together freely, without fear or embarrassment. They think much alike and are in agreement, or else they are not real friends.

8. Did God specifically command His Church in the wilderness (Acts 7:38)—the ancient nation of Israel—to walk in His ways; that is, to keep His laws? Deuteronomy 5:32-33; 8:6; 10:12-13; 11:22; 13:4; 26:17; 28:9.

9. Did God promise to walk with His people if they would walk with Him? Leviticus 26:3, 12. Would He greatly bless them if they walked with Him? Verses 4-11.

10. But if the people of Israel chose to walk *contrary* to God, what did God say would happen to them? Leviticus 26:14-39.

To "walk with God" clearly means to keep His commandments and laws, and to do what is pleasing in His sight. It is the only way to be a real Christian!

Relations With the World

1. What will a real Christian's attitude be toward the sinning society around him? 1 John 2:15-17; 1 Peter 4:1-4; Revelation 18:4. What will he be striving to live by? Matthew 4:4.

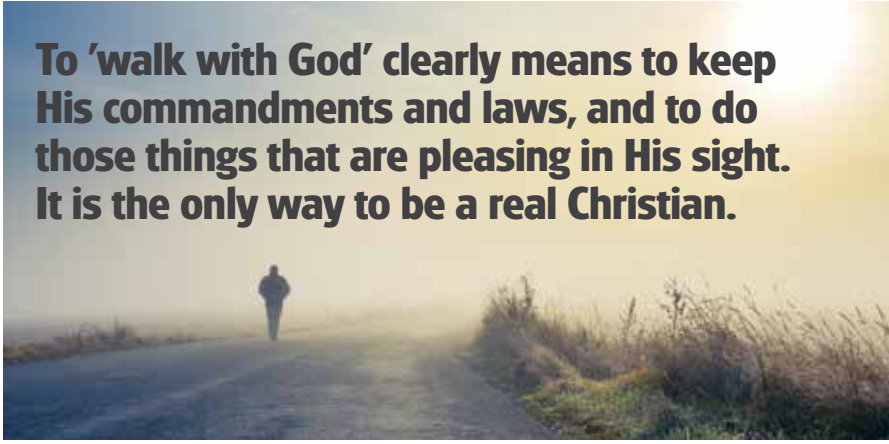
A real Christian will no longer follow all the customs and practices of the society around him. Where he formerly "went along with the crowd," thoughtlessly participating in various social activities and business practices, he will now begin to question his lifestyle. He will begin asking: "What is God's will? How does God say I should live?" He will begin saying, with Christ, "Nevertheless not *my* will, but *thine*, be done." And he will begin to diligently search the Word of God to learn the will of God, and *follow* it.

Of course, God's people must live in this world (John 17:15-16). And while striving to fully obey God, not being conformed to this world's ways (Romans 12:1-2), they should strive to "live peaceably with all men" (verse 18). If a Christian has to disagree because of a biblical teaching, he does so without being disagreeable or self-righteous about it.

2. What further responsibility do Christians have toward the world? Matthew 5:14-16.

While not "of the world" in the sense that Christ meant in John 17:16, those men and women of God who have the Holy Spirit and knowledge of God's truth and abundant way of life have a responsibility to be bright "lights" in the world. They should exhibit the "fruit," or characteristics, of God's Holy Spirit in their

daily lives. They should strive to be friendly, helpful and kind toward their neighbors and those they come in contact with every day. People not yet called of God will be encouraged as they see a little of the mind and character of God in action through the living example set by individual Christians.



To 'walk with God' clearly means to keep His commandments and laws, and to do those things that are pleasing in His sight. It is the only way to be a real Christian.

3. What steps has a Christian already taken to be recognized by God as one of His children? Acts 2:38. What has God bestowed upon him as a free and unearned gift because of his obedience? Same verse and Acts 5:32. ("Holy Ghost" is an archaic rendering in the King James Version. It should be translated "Holy Spirit.")

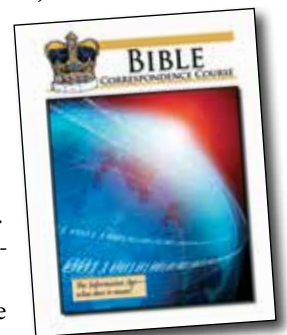
A Christian has been conquered by God. His carnal, antagonistic attitude toward God (Romans 8:7-8) is broken. He has come to realize he has sinned against God, having broken His holy, righteous law (1 John 3:4). Therefore he cried out to God and asked His forgiveness for those sins through the sacrifice of Christ, and for a lifting of the death penalty, which every sin incurs (Romans 6:23). Then he obeyed the command to be baptized, indicating to God his deep sincerity.

As a result of his repentance, baptism and the laying on of hands, he was given the Spirit of the Father, becoming a Spirit-begotten child of God. It was then that he became a real Christian!

4. Can one be a Christian without having the Spirit of God? Romans 8:9-10.

5. What does God call the person who claims to "know" Christ, but refuses to *walk* in His ways—refuses to keep His commandments? 1 John 2:4. What will the one who says he is a Christian actually be doing? Verses 3, 5-6.

A Christian has sincerely repented of his sins and is striving, with the help of God's Holy Spirit, to *LIVE* by his Savior's teachings. He is seeking to do God's will in every aspect of his life as it is revealed in the Bible. And he is becoming a recipient of the happiness and blessings that come from being obedient to God! ■



This short study is a sample of the method employed in each lesson of the free **Herbert W. Armstrong College Bible Correspondence Course**. Over 100,000 people have enrolled in this exciting, dynamic course. Ordering information is on the back cover of this magazine.

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You can read previous articles in this series online at trmpt.co/bcc

25



Californians are trying to ease the drought in the Golden State.

Epic drought turning California into a cursed state

FOR THREE STRAIGHT YEARS, a punishing drought has devastated California and much of America's West and Southwest.

President Barack Obama visited California on February 14 to assess the severity of the drought. "California is our biggest economy [and] our biggest agricultural producer, so what happens here matters to every working American," he said, "right down to the cost of food that you put on your table."

2013 was officially California's driest year in 119 years of record-keeping. According to Prof. B. Lynn Ingram of the University of California–Berkeley, it represented the most devastating drought in 500 years.

According to the U.S. Drought Monitor, almost 99 percent of California is

"abnormally dry." At least 60 percent of the state is experiencing "extreme drought," and nearly 10 percent is experiencing "exceptional drought." Fire risk is high in many parts of the state. Seasonal firefighters worked all year round in 2013 because of this risk. As a consequence, camping has been essentially outlawed.

For the first time in 54 years, the State Water Project, California's main municipal water distribution system, announced that it would not be able to supplement water supplies to local agencies, including farmers. About 40,000 residents of 17 rural communities may run out of water by mid-June.

Through billboards on California highways and other means, the state is asking Californians to drastically reduce

their water usage voluntarily by taking "stop-start-stop-start" showers, not watering lawns and gardens during the day, sweeping driveways instead of hosing them down, flushing toilets less frequently and not refilling swimming pools.

Sacramento and Folsom residents have been mandated to reduce their water consumption by 20 percent. Santa Cruz restaurants have been asked not to offer water unless customers request it.

State-wide mandatory conservation measures have not yet been enforced; however, they are likely options, as Gov. Jerry Brown indicated when he declared a water emergency on January 17.

The fact that California has not mandated more drastic measures state-wide does not mean the drought is not severe. Such measures are politically charged. Water districts, for example, would lose revenue. The Santa Clara Valley Water District estimates that it would lose \$20 million from enforcing a 10 percent reduction in water consumption. The Los Angeles Metropolitan District says it would lose \$150 million from a 20 percent reduction. "We want to save the big hammer for when we know it's really bad," one water district general manager said. But delaying conservation efforts now may make the rationing much worse later if the drought doesn't break.

Conditions are already bad in California. Aquatic life has been hit hard. Fishing has been banned in most of the state to protect endangered aquatic species like salmon. Ranchers struggling to feed their livestock have been forced to cull or sell their herds en masse. The U.S. relies heavily on California for much of its food; dwindling production will seriously impact food availability

and prices nationwide.

About 80 percent of California's freshwater supply is used for agriculture. Farmers of annual crops are reducing the acreage of crops they are planting to match the available water supplies. Such an option, however, is not available for fruit tree farmers, whose trees and vines continue from year to year and, this year, are dying. In 2009, Ken Shackel, a tree crop expert at the University of California–Davis, observed a 50 percent reduction in yield if trees were not watered for a year. A year of normal irrigation the next year only improved yield by 10 percent. After another year of normal irrigation, yields finally returned to normal. "However bad this year [is], it will be worse next [year]" for farmers, Shackel surmised. "Really bad this year means really, really bad next year."

When President Obama visited California, he announced that the federal government would give the state \$160 million in aid, including \$100 million for a controversial farm bill. After blaming California's drought on human-caused global warming, the president also announced his plan to have Congress provide \$1 billion for a "climate resiliency" program. The program, if passed, will fund research and infrastructure that would help in preparation for climate disasters.

However, California's climate problems are too big for money to solve. That state has enjoyed some of the choicest blessings on Earth. Our free book *The United States and Britain in Prophecy* explains why those blessings are being replaced by curses. Request your free copy to understand the real "human activity" that has caused California's curses. And watch the *Trumpet Daily* episode on the subject (theTrumpet.com/go/TD1400). ■

A 'game changer' hypersonic missile

China CONDUCTED A SUCCESSFUL test flight of a hypersonic missile system on January 9. The **United States** military detected an object flying over China at 10 times the speed of sound. Some say the missile may be capable of delivering nuclear warheads at speeds too fast for defense systems to block. "Such a weapon has long been seen as a game changer by security experts as it can hit a target before any of the existing missile defense systems can react," Stephen Chen explained in the *South China Morning Post* (January 15).

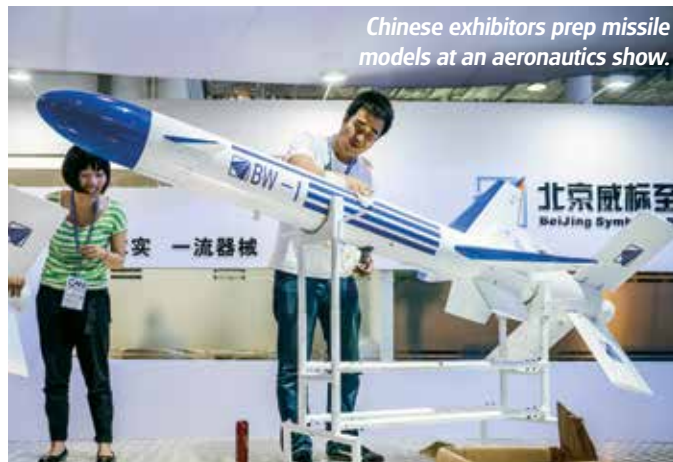
Russia, India and China have been trying to develop hypersonic missile capability for some time, yet for years the United States remained the

only power that had successfully tested the technology. That has now changed.

For a missile to be considered hypersonic, it must travel between Mach 5 and Mach 10—3,840 to 7,680 miles per hour. To understand how insanely fast that is, compare it to modern cruise missiles, which travel about 600 miles per hour.

Though few details have been released about China's test and how it compares to American military innovations, three members of the U.S. Congress have said that it means the Chinese "appear to be leaping ahead of [the United States]" in military technology development.

Meanwhile, a report



Chinese exhibitors prep missile models at an aeronautics show.

published in January shows that China is developing its military air power faster than any other nation on the globe, particularly new jet fighters and special mission aircraft. Beijing is also currently developing the world's largest amphibious plane and is set to become the world's number one missile producer this year.

House Armed Services

Committee members **Howard McKeon, Randy Forbes** and **Mike Rogers** issued a joint statement expressing their concerns over the implications of the hypersonic missile test: "While round after round of defense cuts have knocked America's technological advantage on its back, the Chinese and other competitor nations push toward military parity with the United States; in some cases, as in this one, they appear to be leaping ahead of us. ... We have dithered for three decades now, delaying badly needed replacement equipment for our troops, relying on hardware that was built during the Reagan years."

The U.S. is indeed "dithering" in key security areas. It is rapidly succumbing to its moral and economic diseases, and is appealing the growing number of governments demanding that Washington stop "policing" the rest of the world.

Bible prophecy confirms that U.S. power will increasingly collapse, and Asian nations will rise. Scripture specifically says that several Asian juggernauts will pool their resources and form a military force of proportions the world has never seen. For more details on the Bible's forecasts for China and Asia, request your free copy of *Russia and China in Prophecy* (theTrumpet.com/go/RCP).



LEAPFROGGING AMERICA IN WORLD TRADE

China overtook the **United States** in 2013 to become the world's biggest trading nation according to data released by the two countries. The year marked the end of America's decades-long trade dominance. China's total exports and imports of goods hit \$4.16 trillion. Final figures for the U.S. have not yet been published, but they are expected to fall well below \$4 trillion. Since China's exports and imports are growing considerably faster than those of the U.S., the gap between the two nations is likely to widen this year.

In 2009, China overtook Germany to become the world's largest exporter. In 2010, it eclipsed the U.S. as the world's thirstiest consumer of energy, a sign of China's extraordinary economic growth and its increasing industrial clout.

Though the U.S. economy is still almost double the size of China's—with a gross domestic product in 2012 of about \$15.2 trillion, compared to China's \$8.4 trillion—these trends confirm a historic geo-economic shift.

China's explosive economic might now threatens to unsettle regional trading blocs as it becomes

the most important commercial partner for Asia, Europe and even distant countries like **Brazil**, where Chinese trade eclipsed American trade in 2009.

For most of the past century, America has been the world's single greatest guarantor of global stability, and the main force maintaining the system of open trade. But now other nations like China are overtaking and outperforming the Americans. These governments do not prioritize global stability or mutually beneficial trade the same way Washington long did. To understand what to expect in the wake of America's decline, read the January 2014 cover story, "What Happens After a Superpower Dies?"—also available on theTrumpet.com (theTrumpet.com/go/11137).



A Chinese container ship at port in Qingdao



The global economy is shaking

A STARTLING FACT HAS become clear: The global financial system is propped up by **United States** Federal Reserve money-printing. And now that the Fed is slowing its stimulus, chaos is engulfing a world dependent on easy money.

“The crisis is imminent,” says EuroPacific Capital’s Peter Schiff. “I don’t think **Obama** is going to finish his second term without the bottom dropping out. And stock market investors are oblivious to the problems.” Schiff says the only way to mitigate the global wreckage will be for the Fed to reverse course and dramatically increase its monetary stimulus. Doing so might postpone the crisis and buy some time.

But what will the Fed do? It refuses to acknowledge any responsibility. Its posture resembles what U.S. Treasury Secretary **John Connally** said to foreign finance ministers in 1971: “The dollar is our currency, but it’s your problem.”

In December, the Fed announced it would start to wind down its unprecedented stimulus programs. Since Federal Reserve money printing is the biggest factor keeping interest rates low and debt “affordable” for consumers, it didn’t take long before tremors began to be felt.

28 Within days, markets began to tumble, and

volatility surged. By the beginning of February, the Dow Jones Index and Nasdaq were both down 7 percent from their highs; the S&P 500 was down 5 percent. The Royal Bank of **Scotland** warned on February 4 that the world is staring into the face of a “market bloodbath” unless the Fed halts its tapering.

The “blood in the streets” won’t be confined to Wall Street. Factory orders in the U.S. suffered their sharpest fall in 33 years this January. The ISM manufacturing index sustained its biggest one-month decline since the Lehman crisis.

Compounding the problem, the U.S. money supply growth rate has been slowing for months. Now that the Fed is reducing stimulus, money supply growth may soon disappear altogether. In a debt-based

economy that mathematically requires ever greater amounts of money to cover principal and interest payments, even a reduced money supply can turn deadly.

But so far, the bigger effect has been overseas. Foreign investors are fleeing emerging markets. Since the Fed’s December announcement, the Brazilian real has tumbled 4 percent against the dollar; **Russia**’s ruble has cascaded 8 percent; **India**’s rupee is down 1.2 percent; and **South Africa**’s rand has dropped about 7 percent. These are massive distortions for currencies that usually move fractions of a percent.

Bond markets are under pressure too. Credit default swaps—measurements of a nation’s ability to repay debt—among virtually all emerging markets are widening. Both **Russia** and **Brazil** have been forced to cancel government debt auctions.

To stop foreign capital flight, these countries are jacking up interest rates. This threatens to cripple their banking sectors and push their economies into recession.

Turkey once bragged about avoiding the 2008 economic meltdown. But on January 29, its central bank doubled its interest rate to protect the lira.

The Turks have seen 10 percent of their currency’s value disappear since the Fed announced its tapering. Protesters are already standing down water cannons in the streets of Istanbul over government corruption and Internet monitoring. Violent, Greek-like protests may be next.

Argentina’s hyperinflation and soaring unemployment is not the Federal Reserve’s fault—it is a socialist tragedy years in the making. Yet the Fed’s policy may have pushed **Argentina** over the edge. In January, Argentina devalued the peso by 19 percent. It then promptly restricted all businesses from raising prices—under threat of prosecution. As a result, businesses are closing and unemployment is rising.

The Fed gives and the Fed takes away. To combat the 2008 crisis, it ignited an artificial boom that spread around the globe. Now it is bringing a bust. But the Fed was always a false god. It could never have healed the world’s debt-addicted financial systems. It cannot re-create the global economy. It can’t even mend the economic fault lines tearing apart America’s own economy.

If the money printing really is ending, be ready for big economic shaking. ■

PUTIN: NOW IT’S THE WEST THAT IS GODLESS

During the Cold War era, American leaders labeled the atheist **Soviet Union** a “godless nation.” Twenty-five years on, the tables have turned. On January 28, Russian President **Vladimir Putin** said that, under President **Barack Obama**, it’s the West that is now godless.

“Many Euro-Atlantic countries have moved away from their roots, including Christian values,” Putin said without specifically naming America. “Policies are being pursued that place on the same level a multi-child family and a same-sex partnership, a faith in God and a belief in Satan. This is the path to degradation.”

President Putin’s statements about the West were

echoed by **Patriarch Kirill I**, the leader of **Russia**’s Orthodox Church. Kirill

said Western leaders are engaging in the “spiritual disarmament” of their people. “The general political direction of the [Western political] elite bears, without doubt, an anti-Christian and anti-religious character,” he said. “We have been through an epoch of atheism, and we know what it is to live without God. We want to shout to the whole world, ‘Stop!’”





Getting swallowed by the EU

Serbia BEGAN NEGOTIATING its entry into the European Union on January 21, marking the “most important moment for Serbia since the end of World War II,” according to Serbian Prime Minister **Ivica Dacic**. Dacic, who led the Serbian

delegation in Brussels, said that Serbia aims to finish the negotiations by 2018, though that goal is considered quite ambitious.

Serbia had to accept many EU conditions ahead of the meeting, including a

compromise on the status of its breakaway province, **Kosovo**. Its formal commencement of the accession process expands Serbia’s access to EU funds.



DACIC

Dacic does not overestimate the importance of the moment. **Germany** pushed the Western world to go to war to break up **Yugoslavia** so Europe could gain a strategic advantage in the **Balkans**. Now that Serbia is officially negotiating to join the EU, that process is almost complete.

For more information on this history, see the recent *Trumpet Daily* documentary, “Germany’s Conquest of Europe” (theTrumpet.com/go/TD1404) and request our free booklet *Germany’s Conquest of the Balkans*. ■

Where are the jobs?

THE U.S. BUREAU OF LABOR Statistics February 7 jobs report found that 113,000 jobs were created during January. That was better than December, when only 75,000 jobs were added—far lower than the 200,000 hoped for. The trouble is, America’s economy needs to produce around 150,000 jobs per month just to keep up with population growth.

More than five years into the worst recovery since the Great Depression, the American economy is stumbling once again.

The latest numbers were bothersome for several reasons. Employment is still about 2 million below where it was when the recession started in 2008. December was particularly bad because it is typically a month of strong hiring due to the holiday season—and over half the jobs were temporary employment. January’s weak numbers confirm that it probably wasn’t an aberration.

Over the past year, the U.S. population rose by more than 2 million, yet the labor force fell by about a quarter of a million. The labor participation rate hit a 35-year low in December.

Meanwhile, political bickering continues on Capitol Hill. Democrats say the dismal employment reports show the need for the federal government to extend unemployment benefits. Republicans are using the same figures to say that the welfare state is why America’s workforce participation rate is falling.

While the arguments continue, the economy stumbles toward the abyss. ■

DESPERATE POLICE HIRE VIGILANTES

Overwhelmed by a drug war that has claimed more than 80,000 lives since 2006, **Mexico’s** law enforcement authorities have integrated once-illegal, Michoacán state vigilante groups into their ranks.

Announcement of the policy change came on January 27, at the same time the government issued a statement about the arrest of one of the bosses of the Knights Templar—a mystic, quasi-religious drug cartel that has dominated the western state of Michoacán for years.

The “autodefensa” vigilante groups launched their most offensive attacks yet against the Knights Templar in early January and threatened to take one of Michoacán’s cities by force. This reinforced tension between Mexican soldiers and the vigilantes, resulting in heavy clashes.

Now, however, vigilantes are cooperating with law enforcement officials, who are relying on the self-defense groups’ familiarity with Michoacán’s rural towns. This development is largely seen as a sign of



Citizens of a self-defense group in the Antunez community, Mexico

the Mexican government’s helplessness in curbing the drug war. The Knights Templar cartel has ruthlessly terrorized civilians through killings, kidnappings and extorting money from local farmers and businesses. And it is only the third-most powerful cartel in Mexico.

Former Secretary of State **Hillary Clinton** addressed the crux of Mexico’s drug woes in 2009: “[The United States] insatiable demand for illegal drugs fuels the drug trade.” The remark of 19th-century Mexican President **Porfirio Diaz** is even more true today: “Poor Mexico, so far from God and so close to the United States.”

Iran's defiant nuclear program

Iran's push for nuclear weapons constitutes "a major threat to the security of the **United States**, deployed troops and allies," according to Director of National Intelligence **James Clapper**. Clapper's evaluation came in an annual U.S. intelligence assessment on Capitol Hill on January 29.

According to Clapper's report, "Iran's overarching strategic goals of enhancing its security, prestige and regional influence have led it to pursue capabilities to meet its civilian goals and give it the ability to build missile-deliverable nuclear weapons, if it chooses to do so." The report highlighted three factors that play in to Iran obtaining a missile-capable nuclear weapon.

The first is the delivery system: Iran developed ballistic missiles capable of carrying nuclear payloads years ago. The second is highly enriched uranium. According to the report, despite being burdened with sanctions, Iran has not stopped developing its nuclear facilities to increase its uranium enrichment capabilities.

The third factor Clapper cited for Iran to produce a nuclear weapon is "its political will to do so"—the right leader. Clapper and the administration apparently view Iranian President **Hassan Rouhani** as a man to help curb Iran's nuclear aspirations. They overlook the fact that Rouhani is only ruling at the supreme leader's behest.

Tehran now has everything it needs to construct a nuclear device in the near future: delivery technology, nuclear industrial capability and sufficiently ambitious leadership. On the

flip side, the world lacks the discernment to see where

Iran is headed. Even Clapper, after presenting overwhelming information in the report, said, "We do not know if Iran will eventually decide to build nuclear weapons."

The White House also appears to believe it can stop Iran's nuclear advancements through talks like the negotiations in Geneva in November. There, the Joint Plan of Action was signed, whereby Iran would supposedly halt its progression toward creating a nuclear bomb while still being allowed to have nuclear energy. It wasn't long, however, before ample evidence showed how little the Iranians care for the promises they made.

In the deal, Iran promised to cap its enrichment at 5 percent. Shortly thereafter,



Iranian Parliament Speaker Gholam Ali Haddad-Adel (center) visits the Bushehr nuclear power plant in 2006.

Iranian Foreign Affairs Minister **Mohammad Javad Zarif** told students in Tehran that "The structure of our nuclear program has been maintained and the 20 percent enrichment can be resumed in less than 24 hours." So if Iran wants to disregard the Geneva deal, it claims it will take less than a day to do so.

Iran also plans on keeping up work on its plutonium reactor, despite President **Barack Obama** saying that work would halt at the site. Finally, the Iranians will

continue to install new centrifuges, despite saying they would cease in the Geneva deal.

Iran's nuclear program is more advanced than ever, and Iran's leaders defy the international community with more audacity every day. Soft words around a negotiating table cannot hope to undo what Iran has been forging toward for decades. Iran wants a nuclear bomb. And in a world of weak leadership and appeasement policies, what Iran wants, Iran gets. ■

WHERE THE TALIBAN AND POPPIES GROW TOGETHER

Opium is the lifeblood of the Taliban. If the **United States** were to have any hopes of leaving **Afghanistan** without the Taliban immediately filling the vacuum with well-trained and well-funded militias, it needed to end opium production. But the opposite is happening.

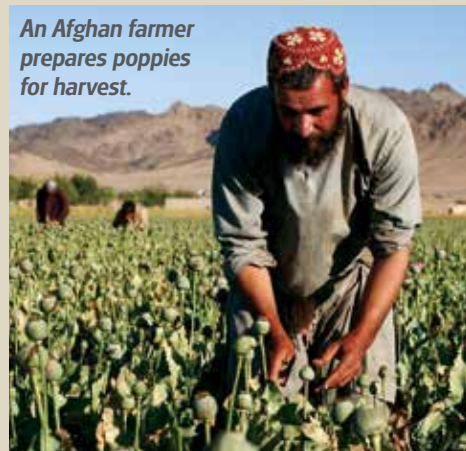
The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) has released its Afghanistan opium survey for 2013, and it says that "opium poppy cultivation in Afghanistan reached a sobering record high in 2013." The 2013 Afghanistan Opium Survey revealed a 36 percent increase over 2012 in land devoted to the crop.

Every province saw poppy cultivation growth, and two provinces previously considered "poppy-free" lost that status. Production of opium also increased in most provinces. "All in all, opium production in 2013 went up to some 5,500 tons, a 49 percent increase over 2012," the report said. Not only has there been more poppy planting, but the yield has also increased: Production per acre was 11 percent higher in 2013 than in 2012. The higher yield helped lower the price of opium to \$172 per kilogram—but that is still four times the profit made from the same quantity of wheat in Afghanistan.

The gross value of opium to the Afghan economy is estimated to be \$3.1 billion—an increase of \$1.1 billion over 2012.

This trend testifies of the resurgence of the Taliban

An Afghan farmer prepares poppies for harvest.



and the diminishing impact of the United States—in Afghanistan and the Middle East as a whole. The truth is that where security is weaker, terrorists are stronger, and where the terrorists are stronger, the opium industry flourishes. And a booming opium market makes defeating the Taliban increasingly unlikely.

The *Trumpet* has warned of America's decline in this region for over a decade. As we wrote in 2006, "With the U.S. gaining little traction against the Taliban, we can expect the rugged Afghan hills to be filled with opium poppies—the dangerous crop that puts dollars in Taliban pockets—for some time to come."



What Does It Mean to Be a 'Son of God'?

Jesus Christ has that title. But He's not the only one. **BY STEPHEN FLURRY**

MARK INTRODUCES HIS GOSPEL ACCOUNT WITH THESE words: "The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God." Christ was the Son of God. He had a FAMILY relationship with God the Father. And He came in the flesh to DECLARE THE FATHER (John 1:18). Why? The answer is astounding.

"[N]otice God calls these humans His own children," Herbert W. Armstrong emphasized in *Mystery of the Ages*. "Many people say, 'God just doesn't seem real to me.' God is a great mystery to them. Their own human fathers don't seem like a mystery. They seem real. ... I hope we will help make God as real to you as your own human father."

Scripture repeatedly reveals that God is a *literal* Father, and we are His *literal* children! The word *son* appears 422 times in the New Testament, at least half the time referring to Jesus Christ. The word *father* in the New Testament usually refers to God the Father. The Bible says God is a Father and Christ is His Son: God is a FAMILY!

John 1 talks about "the Word," translated from the Greek *logos*, meaning *spokesman*, *word* or *revelatory thought*. Who is this *Logos*? Verse 14 says, "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth." The Being who was the Word BECAME the Son! At this point, He was the BEGOTTEN Son of God, not yet born. Notice Luke 1:35: "... that holy thing which shall be born of thee SHALL BE CALLED THE SON OF GOD." When the Word *became* the Son, God *became* the Father! Hebrews 7:3 says the Word was "*made* like unto the Son of God." The *Word* had no beginning, but the *Son* did! The Word was *made* the Son when He was begotten by God of the virgin Mary and later resurrected as the firstborn Son of God. The Word *became* the Son, and God *became* the Father!

Romans 1:4 says Christ was "declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead." This proves that being born again occurs *at the resurrection*, not at baptism. Jesus Christ was not the first to be born as a human—but He was first to be born of divine Holy Spirit *at His resurrection*.

Verses 3 and 4 compare two births: when Christ was born as a human being and then as the Son of God at His resurrection.

It is by this same method that *we too* can be *born* sons of God! Romans 8:14 says, "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." God's Holy Spirit must lead us—and if it does, look at what that makes us! The Holy Spirit impregnates us with God life, whereby we can call God our Father (verse 15), and we become His children (verse 16).

How plain! The Kingdom of God is the *Family* of God!

Mr. Armstrong wrote, "If we are Christ's—IF His Spirit dwells in us—IF we are following where His Spirit leads—we are now His

children, but now only heirs. Not yet inheritors. But Jesus Christ then becomes our elder brother. He is the firstborn of many brethren. We are His brethren and co-heirs. He has now been born of God—and He is God! Notice it!" (*Tomorrow's World*, August 1969).

Christ, the firstborn Son of God, is the first to be born among *many brethren* (verse 29). Those who have God's Holy Spirit are heirs of God and *joint heirs* with Christ (verse 17). When Christ became a human being who died and was then resurrected to eternal life, He became the FIRST human to be literally born into the Family of God. Christ was born into the Family FROM THE DEAD (Colossians 1:18). And, He is only the first of MANY to be born!

"For it was fitting that he, for whom and by whom all things exist, in bringing many sons to glory, should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through suffering" (Hebrews 2:10; Revised Standard Version). Christ pioneered the way. For who? For us!

1 John 3:2 says, "[N]ow are we the sons of God." This is not

Scripture repeatedly reveals that God is a literal Father, and we are His literal children.

only what we are called—it is *who we are*. Just as a tiny embryo, no larger than a pinpoint in the mother's womb, is already the son or daughter of the human father even before it is born, so is a begotten Christian even now a SON OF GOD, though not yet born.

Verse 2 continues, "it doth not yet appear what we shall be" We are begotten sons of God right now—but we are still flesh. Yet when Christ appears, we will *become* something different; we will be God's *born* children. We will become God as God is God. We will be able to see Jesus Christ just like He really is (verse 2). And not only that, we shall be like Him!

When God says in Genesis 1:26, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness," HE MEANS WHAT HE SAYS! And just as Jesus Christ *became* the Son of God, so too can the rest of mankind!



Learn the true nature of God—order our free booklet **God Is a Family**.



The pope's plan

I just started to read your articles and it amazes me how much information I missed in the Bible ("Much More Than an Economic Plan," March). I now have a deep understanding here. I read aloud to my spouse and he said, "Don't let the Internet put fear in your trust in God." I said, "I know, but this website is honest and true." I used to be Catholic and my spouse is still a faithful baptized member today. I asked my spouse how we are going to survive when we say no to the mark of the beast, but he couldn't answer.

Pat C.

FEEDBACK



Bravo for exposing the hidden agenda in Pope Francis's plan. It is patently obvious to me, after reading your article, that the mark of the beast—that no man might buy or sell unless he has it—is almost here. Yes, it is exciting, because all of this is leading to the return of Jesus Christ, and an economic system that will be beneficent to all of mankind, where abundance and prosperity will abound for everyone. I can hardly wait.

Ross Freeman—Georgia

The Catholic Church is well known for its crafty approach to matters that are of vital importance to its institution. Its canny acts are always

elusive. Thank God Almighty for granting us the opportunity to be pre-informed of its nature, at this last time of human rule. A new world order is all mankind needs. *Lucky Omogo—Nigeria*

How crafty Satan is. His counterfeit is almost a copy of what God's true government will be, with its king and priest—state and church. The greatest difference is Jesus Christ will be King of kings and Lord of lords, as well as the most High Priest, of a truly righteous and benevolent empire. Thank you for this warning to watch and discern this Third Way. *Susan Garcia—Texas*

Church meets state

Spot on ("Church + State," March). This is a country divided, and the church is more than culpable in this. And the comment about the Muslims and Jews being either thrown out or put in the service of the "superior" Catholics is as relevant as the events before and during the Civil War. The connections between the Partido Popular, Catholic Church and the dictatorship are not to be underestimated. *Spain*

Coming true

I just want to thank you, sir, for this astonishing prophecy! ("The Ukraine Crisis Was Prophesied!" March). Everything you predicted in the past is all coming true. It is just so amazing that it cannot be denied where the true work of God is. I believe that what happened in Ukraine was prophesied. And the two men you mentioned, Putin and Guttenberg, are both intriguing and exciting to watch!

Elsie Agustin—Philippines

Family discussion

Our entire family sat down, read and discussed

RESPONSES FOR "TOMORROW'S WONDERFUL WORLD ECONOMY!"

"God's way of life will be an exact antithesis of this world's current way of getting, stealing and lording it over others."

"We can start applying these principles today and enjoy their benefits now. You don't need to wait. This works!"

"I yearn for God's wonderful World Tomorrow that will burst the shackles this Satan-inspired society has on us."

"Tomorrow's wonderful world economy will be one that works for all!"

"What a beautiful way to share how things will be one day."



this article together (“No Kidding—Peace Is Possible in Your Home,” March). I was encouraged that we are on the right track in some areas, but I also realized we are off-track in others. I am excited to begin implementing these strategies and even more excited for immediate results and the long-term fruits! As always, thank you for your service.

Cole March—Missouri

Warring in vain

Excellent, excellent article! (“Spent in Vain,” March). It’s the type of information I keep hoping to find something of on the news—but to no avail! You’d think that in these dire times someone would be speaking out forcefully. But instead it’s all about the Super Bowl, a cute dog story, or petty local events or, at the very least, all the serious news is after the fact—whether it’s a weather disaster or shooting in a school. They never get to the root causes of things or even seem to try. Yes, sadly, as scriptures say, truly in the last days people will be lovers of themselves, eating and drinking, and going about with their own affairs.

Carol Risen—Oregon

The U.S. has been fighting wars in Iraq and Afghanistan for nearly a quarter of a century without a clear definition of who the enemy is and what determines a victorious outcome. We heard from our previous President George W. Bush, that “we are fighting a war on terror.” But what does that mean? Who are we really fighting? And secondly, how do we know when we have won the war? In 2013 President Obama declared, “Global war on terror is over.” Seriously, does anyone believe that to be true?

Theodore Trecker—Florida

Germany’s comeback kid

The way world history is charging along at the moment, it appears that the main players in the end-time drama are already taking up their positions (“The Brilliance of Karl-Theodor zu Guttenberg,” March). It is also very obvious that most are unaware of where all this is heading.


Colin Jurd—Australia

I think the West will push Mr. Guttenberg toward European politics as an opponent to Putin. He will be the strongman to stand up to Russia.

CORRECTION

In “Tomorrow’s Wonderful World Economy” in our March issue, the author referred to the Seventh Commandment on page 13. The reference should have been to the Eighth Commandment.

THE KEY OF DAVID



NEW SET SAME GREAT ANALYSIS

Watch presenter Gerald Flurry explain world events through the lens of Bible prophecy every week on *The Key of David*.
Visit www.keyof david.com.

Unfortunately, the West and American leadership won’t understand exactly who Guttenberg is until it is too late. It’s like watching a horror movie with a plot that unfolds with great evil at the climax of a terrible story—that ultimately has a glorious ending!

Bill Moylan—United Kingdom

All in for God

This is surely the most beautiful writing of truth I’ve read from another human being in a long time (“Follow God With Your Whole Heart,” March). Surely this is beautiful, and it is the truth all in a nutshell—simply beautiful.

Deborah Hall

You grabbed me with your opening line: How far are you willing to go for God? Taking drastic measures is what I’ve had to do. I recently cut all social media out of my life because some of it was getting in the way. I’ve been told that I’m extreme, and I admit, at times I am. But why not be extreme for God? It’s different if it’s something like a diet or being extreme about fitness or something physical. But when it’s about a relationship with God, again, why not be extreme? And it’s not about penance—that’s no good. It’s about sacrifice, and as you said, “If we hold back, we might lose out entirely!” Thanks for this article. It has been strong encouragement for me to go the distance! This is just what I needed. Like your article mentions, it’s not easy to do these things, so to have the encouragement is comforting and it keeps me pushing on.

Sarah Bonnell—Tennessee

“Real spiritual growth comes when you are totally wrapped up in God’s work.” That is so true, and studying recent history has undoubtedly proven this fact. God help us all to wholeheart-

edly support the work of God. Thanks again for reminding us about this crucial element of our going with God.

Seedo Odinga—Suriname


This is the kind of work I want to do. Thank you for this piece of writing. It is by far the best and most inspiring piece of writing I’ve read. May all Christians who seek to hear from God read and abide by this and they will see the wonderful hand of God in their lives. The Bible says I will make you rich so you can be generous at all times. As Christians we must live a Christ-like life, which differentiates true Christian believers from just churchgoers.

Cassandra

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Belgian children are now legally eligible for suicide.

'Legal' child suicide

BELGIUM HAS BECOME THE first nation in the world to remove an age limit for euthanasia—legalized suicide. On February 13, a bill passed the Belgian Parliament with relative ease granting children, regardless of age, the right to demand their own death.

The law states that the child must be terminally ill and facing tremendous suffering, and must ask repeatedly to die before

euthanasia can be considered.

One of the law's supporters, Dr. Jan Bernheim from the Free University of Brussels, claims that children with terminal illness are mature enough to demand their own deaths. "They're not as young as the calendar says. They are in fact psychologically much older and more mature than their calendar age would suggest" (Deutsche Welle,

February 13). This is an example of the reasoning that helped bring the new law to fruition.

Legalized killing is not new to Belgium. Medically aided deaths have been law for 11 years. In 2012, there were over 1,400 people legally killed.

Evidence that such a law cheapens life surfaced soon after the adult euthanasia law was passed. That law was originally created so people suffering from intense physical pain could be "relieved." However, the idea of what constitutes "pain" has been watered down over the years. Today, the definition has come to include *psychological* pain.

A woman who underwent a failed sex change was legally killed in October last year, not because her life was in danger, but because she said her mental suffering after the failed

procedure was "unbearable." An inmate in a Belgian prison is currently awaiting legalized euthanasia after saying that he had suffered incredible psychological trauma while in prison and could not bear to live with it.

Killing for psychological reasons is becoming more prevalent in Belgian society. According to Dr. Bernheim, 30 percent of people who demand to be killed are denied.

Now that the age limit on euthanasia has been removed, even immature children with few life experiences will make the decision to end their own lives. In Belgium, you can't buy alcohol or cigarettes until you are 16, you can't drive until you are 18, but you can choose to die as long as there is enough mental "agony."

Proponents of the new law might say that it will only be used in extreme circumstances, but history has proved that over time, restraints weaken.

How does God look at euthanasia? To God, euthanasia—which is really suicide—is not brave, courageous or romantic. Euthanasia is not self-deliverance. It is murder!

The Bible forbids this evil act, but few today live according to the Bible. Our loving and living God calls euthanasia a sin—a violation of the Sixth Commandment—which not only brings a life to a tragic end, but also causes indescribable suffering for those left behind.

There is way of life that produces true happiness, peace and lasting success. There is a way of life that teaches us how to face and overcome problems rather than resorting to suicide. ■

Facebook adds more than 50 'custom gender' options

Facebook added 56 custom gender options on February 13 for users of the website that do not identify themselves simply as "male" or "female."

Users who wish for their Facebook friends to know that they consider themselves to be "bigender," "gender fluid," "two-spirit" or something else can now convey that conveniently right on their profile page. The list also includes descriptions such as, "gender nonconforming," "gender questioning," "gender-queer," "pangender," "intersex," and "non-binary."

Users are now also given a choice of "preferred pronoun," so instead of alerting a user's friends to wish "him" a happy birthday, it would remind those friends to send the regards to

"her" or "them."

The offensive to reshape society in even more radical ways pushes forward.

An effort is gaining ground to create a world where not just "sexual orientation," but sex itself, is a choice. Where boys can be girls and girls can be boys, or something in between. Where people are expected to ignore the biological reality of sex so that all people coexist androgynously, or according to whatever gender suits them at the moment. Where everyone pretends that gender confusion is normal, if not desirable, and anyone who doesn't play along can be punished and silenced.

This demonstrates unprecedented contempt for reality and common sense, let alone morality and God's law. ■



CHILDREN IGNORANT ABOUT THE BIBLE

British children hear and read so little about the Bible that they confuse myth, modern fiction and Bible stories, according to a report published in February by the Bible Society. One in three did not know where the story of Christ's birth came from, or that of the Good Samaritan. One in five did not know that Noah's Ark and Adam and Eve came from the Bible. Even adults confused plot lines from the Bible with story lines from popular fiction such as *Harry Potter* or *The Hunger Games*. Bible ignorance is rampant throughout all of society. For more on the importance of getting to know this book, read our article "The Best Seller Nobody Reads" (theTrumpet.com/go/8447).

To learn more, read our February 2013 cover story, "The Truth About Suicide" (theTrumpet.com/go/10215).

Find Solitude in This Crazy World

Want to be a better thinker? Then learn to love solitude. **BY BRAD MACDONALD**

IN A 2010 STUDY, THE UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND ASKED 200 students to refrain from using electronic media for a day. After the exercise, one student commented: “Texting and IM-ing my friends gives me a constant feeling of comfort. When I did not have those two luxuries, *I felt quite alone and secluded from my life.*” Not being able to communicate via technology, he complained, “*was almost unbearable*” (emphasis added throughout).

What a sorry state of mind. This young man was tethered so tightly to gadgets—and the perpetually connected world they open up—*he feared being alone.* His existence was defined by his place in the crowd. Solitude was his enemy.

In his international bestseller *The Art of Thinking*, Ernest Dimnet wrote that the art of thinking “is the *art of being one’s self*, and this art can only be learned if one is by one’s self.” Deep, strong, independent thinkers, he wrote, love being alone—they crave and create moments of solitude.

Great thinkers—or as Dimnet called them, “people possessed of a *mastering purpose* leaving no room for inferior occupations”—stand apart for the “directness of their intellectual vision.” The mind of the weak thinker, on the other hand, has a “*fatal capacity for letting in extraneous thoughts or mental parasites.*”

To engage in deep, single-focused thinking, we must create an environment devoid of distractions. We must love solitude.

This is not easy. These days, if we carry a cell phone or iPod, we are not alone. If we’re logged into Facebook or Googling, we are not alone. If we’re sitting in a silent room pecking away at the computer but have e-mail or instant messenger open, we are not alone.

Creating the solitude needed for thinking requires flicking the off switch on every screen in our lives! Here are some other tips for creating solitude in our lives.

Whether using a gadget or creating space for serious thought, *budget your time.* Put a limit on your recreational Internet use. When you’re on the computer, set the timer so you don’t lose track of time. Limit the number of texts you (and your teenager) send each day. Force yourself to only check your e-mail once an hour, or once a night. Turn the television off after the specified maximum time each day or week. Carve out blocks during the evening when all cell phones, or all gadgets, are off.

By exerting more self-discipline—both with our time as well as our use of gadgets—most of us could quite easily create the nooks of solitude required for quality thinking.

In *Hamlet’s Blackberry*, William Powers explains the value of what he terms the “Internet sabbath.” A few years ago, he and his wife began turning off the modem on Friday night and not switching it on until Monday morning. For the entire weekend, the family was disconnected from the Internet and the digital crowd. It wasn’t easy at first. But as time passed, the impact was noticeable and welcomed.

On the weekends, Powers writes, the house became a “kind of island away from the madness.” Instead of each family member retiring to a room with a gadget, they gathered for board games and conversation. Naturally, the family grew closer. During the day they spent more time outdoors and grew to love nature. They got to know their neighbors.

Why not consider following Powers’s example and instituting a rest day from the Internet, or even *all* gadgets in your household? If switching off gadgets for an entire day isn’t practical, then carve out time—perhaps during dinner and for an hour afterward—when all screens must be off.

Here’s another idea: Create within your home nooks of solitude—areas where family members can go to be free of noise, distractions and screens. Teach the family to respect these as places where the stressed can unwind and read a book or poem, or simply reflect and contemplate.

Realize, though, we can be isolated in a silent environment and *still be* plagued by thought-destroying noise and bustle *within*. The mind that is overloaded, filled with commotion and unorganized, unfiled information, is incapable of in-depth, concentrated thought.

To engage in deep, single-focused thinking, we must create an environment devoid of distractions. We must love solitude.



To think and reflect, we must also strive to create *interior* solitude. This means switching off any extraneous programs running in our minds. It means removing mental distractions, obstacles to focused concentration. If you’re distracted because you haven’t paid a bill, pay it. Forget about the TV show you might be missing. When you sit down to read a book, switch the computer off so its alluring glow won’t entice you. Switch off your cell phone too. Do whatever it takes to purge the distractions from your mind.

“[T]o lead happy, productive lives in a connected world,” writes Powers, “we need to *master the art of disconnecting.*” This will certainly go a long way to creating an environment conducive to deep, independent thought. But, alone, it won’t result in our leading “happy, productive lives.” If we want our lives to be happy and positive, productive and forward-moving, we need more than just peaceful solitude. And we need more than just the ability to think deeply.

To attain the heights of happiness, our minds, as the Apostle Paul wrote in Romans 12, need to be “transformed” by the truth and Spirit of God. Fact is, the way to possessing the ultimately satisfied mind is to immerse oneself in truth, law and obedience. To learn more about this ultimate mental and spiritual transformation, read *The Incredible Human Potential*. ■

► **DIRT** from page 11

soils. This land sabbath was probably a time to allow plants that put nitrogen back into the soil to grow, and let animals fertilize the land with their microbe-rich manure. The soil even benefits from just being left still. The microbes can grow much faster without the physical disruption that comes from plowing the fields and sowing seeds.

Because of these biblical laws, the *Plain Truth*, the *Trumpet's* predecessor, was warning about the dangers posed by the loss of soil microbes decades ago. At the time, these warnings were far from mainstream. Today, some of the recent papers coming from the world's experts sound remarkably similar to those *Plain Truth* articles. The *Plain Truth* was ahead of its time because it relied on the Bible.

The Scholeses' paper dismisses a return to this kind of farming as impractical. They are correct in saying that it wouldn't be easy. In fact, keeping the land sabbath God's way would require a complete reordering of society. It would require a society that trusts in God to provide a bumper crop of food in the sixth year of harvest. It may require most families to have a garden of their own. It may mean that some of the world's deserts have to be reclaimed for use as agricultural land—something which, as Evans-Pritchard points out, is possible, but is ignored because of the expense.

But as all these experts acknowledge, our current way of farming *is not working*. If we keep trying to do it this way—and we will—it will bring famine. The land sabbath, as well as God's other laws, are the changes we need.

Scientists are now ready to admit, "We really know very little about one of the most productive soils on the planet." The problem is that they're not yet ready to admit that the God of the Bible knows all about these soils—and a lot more besides. After

all, He created that soil, with all its vast complexity. Sadly, it will take the complete failure of man's civilization before he acknowledges this.

Once mankind admits that God knows bet-

ter than they do—on all subjects from family life to international relations and even agriculture, the blessings will flow. We probably won't completely understand how great the blessings that come from laws like the land sabbath are until the whole of society is keeping them and able to experience those blessings.

But we can still get a sneak peak. Our free booklet *The Wonderful World Tomorrow—What It Will Be Like* describes that complete change that God's laws and resulting blessings will bring to the Earth. By studying and thinking on the many prophecies of this coming time of abundance, we can get a glimpse

of the blessings that come once man admits that he just doesn't know best, and the whole planet starts obeying God.



A way that works

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WGN, Chan. 307, 8:00 ET, Sun

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WGN, Chan. 239, 8:00 ET, Sun

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WVUA 1:00 p.m., Sun

Dothan WTVY-DT 8:30, Sun
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Fairbanks KATN-DT 8:30, Sun

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8:00, Sun

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Hawaii, Hawaii Na Leo Chan. 54 6:30,
Sun; 8:30, Wed

Kauai Ho'ike Chan. 52 9:30, Tue

Maui/Lanai/Molokai/Niihau/Akaku
Chan. 52 6:30 pm, Sun; 3:30, Mon

Oahu Focus Chan. 49 7:00 am Sat (Olelo)
Chan. 27 5:00 am, Fri KPXO
Chan. 333 3:30 am, Sun The Discovery
Channel

Idaho, Idaho Falls KPFI/KBEO 10:30, Sun

Pocatello KPFB 10:30, Sun

Twin Falls KMVT-DT/KTWT-LP 10:30, Sun

Illinois, Bloomington WHOI-DT 8:30, Sun

Chicago WCUU 7:00, Mon-Fri; WCIU
9:30, Sun; WCPX 5:00, Fri

Peoria WHOI-DT 8:30, Sun

Rockford WREX-DT 8:30, Sun

Indiana, Fort Wayne WPTA-DT 12.2
9:30, Sun

Indianapolis WIPX 6:00, Fri

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Cedar Rapids KPXR 5:00, Fri

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Kansas, Topeka KSNT 8:30, Sun

Kentucky, Bowling Green WBKO 8:30, Sun

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Louisiana, Alexandria KBCA 8:30, Sun

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Maine, Bangor WABI-DT 9:30, Sun

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Detroit WPXD 6:00, Fri; WADL 10:00, Sun

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Greenwood WBWD 8:30, Sun

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Laurel WBH 8:30, Sun

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North Carolina, Durham WRPX 6:00, Fri; 9:00 am, Sun
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Raleigh WRPX 6:00, Fri; 9:00 am, Sun
Washington WNCT-DT 9:30, Sun
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Fargo WDAY-DT 8:30, Sun
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Oklahoma City KOPX 5:00, Fri
Tulsa KTPX 5:00, Fri
Oregon, Bend KTVZ-DT 9:30, Sun
Klamath Falls KMFD 9:30, Sun
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South Carolina, Charleston WCBD-DT 9:30, Sun
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Utah, Salt Lake City KUPX 5:00, Fri

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Seattle-Tacoma KWFX 6:00, Fri
Seattle KCQO 7:00, Sun
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THE PHILADELPHIA TRUMPET (ISSN 10706348) is published monthly (except bimonthly May-June and October-November issues) by the Philadelphia Church of God, 14400 S. Bryant Ave, Edmond, OK 73034. Periodicals postage paid at Edmond, OK, and additional mailing offices. **POSTMASTER:** Send address changes to: THE PHILADELPHIA TRUMPET, P.O. Box 3700, Edmond, OK 73083. **U.S. HOW YOUR SUBSCRIPTION HAS BEEN PAID:** The *Trumpet* has no subscription price—it is free. This is made possible by the tithes and offerings of the membership of the Philadelphia Church of God and others. Contributions are welcomed, however, and are tax-deductible in the United States, Canada and New Zealand. Those who wish to voluntarily support this worldwide work of God are gladly welcomed as co-workers. ©2014 Philadelphia Church of God. All rights reserved. PRINTED IN THE U.S.A. Unless otherwise noted, scriptures are quoted from the King James Version of the Holy Bible.

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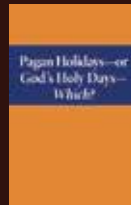


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