

THE PHILADELPHIA Trumpet

**America's nanny
state is ruining us**

**The welfare system
that works**

**How cheap gas is
changing the world**

**Three misconceptions
about Bible prophecy**

A close-up photograph of Barack Obama and Pope Francis. Obama is on the left, wearing a dark suit and blue tie, looking down and smiling slightly. Pope Francis is on the right, wearing his white papal attire and zucchetto, looking down with a serious expression, his hand near his mouth. The background is blurred.

The Dangerous Cuba Deal

STILL KICKING
America restoring
diplomatic ties
with Cuba throws a
lifeline to the Cuban
dictatorship run by
Fidel and Raúl Castro.

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U.S. President Barack Obama (left) normalized relations
with Cuba upon prodding from Pope Francis (right).

The Deadly Dangerous U.S.-Cuba Deal

Is the Roman Catholic Church trying to establish a strategic foothold 90 miles from American soil? And if so, why?

IN DECEMBER, U.S. PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA SURPRISED THE world by announcing that America would restore diplomatic ties with Cuba after 53 years of hostility. The terms of the deal completely favor Cuba. Cuba did not have to abandon communism or reform its dictatorial governance. The U.S. got *nothing* out of this deal.



GERALD FLURRY

Then why did the president make this deal? *Only* our booklet *America Under Attack* fully answers that question! (Request your free copy).

What is this all about? We could write quite a bit about the president bypassing Congress and using yet another executive action to make this deal. We could say a lot about the dangers of America appealing yet another regime that hates it. But the factor that is more significant than any of these issues is this: *The deal was largely the handiwork of the VATICAN.*

Pope Francis played a vital role in the president's decision. "Pope Francis issued a personal appeal to me, and to Cuba's President Raúl Castro," President Obama said as part of his landmark announcement about it.

In early summer of 2014, the pope appealed to both leaders by letter, urging them to exchange prisoners and improve relations. The Vatican later hosted a clandestine meeting between the two sides in Rome. However, it was actually Francis's predecessor who put the plan into motion. In 2012, Pope Benedict XVI began pressuring the United States to normalize relations with Cuba. Francis carried on Benedict's efforts. After months of working behind the scenes, the momentous deal was sealed. Its announcement surprised the world.

So America has opened itself up to an unsavory regime just a short boat ride away. But this is about much, much more than that, especially when you understand the history of the Catholic Church and Cuba.

Cuba and the Holy Roman Empire

The Catholic Church's history with Cuba dates back hundreds of years. In 1492, Christopher Columbus was the one who claimed the Caribbean islands, including Cuba, for Spain, the champion of Catholicism. Spain was ruled by Ferdinand II, the king who expelled or forcefully converted Jews and Muslims and who established the Spanish Inquisition—which is why you

find almost no Protestants in Spain today! Just one year later, Pope Alexander VI commanded Spain to conquer, colonize and catholicize the "pagans" of Cuba and the rest of the New World.

Meanwhile, Europe's Habsburg dynasty was becoming very powerful. Through marriage and inheritance, *the Habsburg Empire extended into Spain in 1516*. Soon, Spain was integrated into the empire. *IN THE EARLY 1500S, CHARLES V GAINED POWER over the Netherlands, Spain and Germany. IN ROME IN 1530, THE POPE CROWNED HIM EMPEROR. HE HEADED THE FOURTH RESURRECTION OF THE HOLY ROMAN EMPIRE.*

Charles continued to work closely with the popes, and the Roman church steered his empire. By the end of the 1500s, Spain had become the richest country in the world.

Much of this wealth and power came from Spain's conquest of the New World. Fleets of ships laden with billions of dollars in gold and silver crossed the Atlantic. *AND CUBA PLAYED A VITAL*

Modern Cuba is Communist, but it has only been so for about 50 years—less than a lifetime. It has been Catholic for almost 500 years.

ROLE IN ITS WEALTH. Havana, Cuba, was the primary port for shipping all the treasure Spain was confiscating and mining in the New World. Ships ferried tens of thousands of tons of silver and gold from North and South America to Havana and from Havana to Seville, Spain. There, the Spanish spent it on the Habsburg's struggle against the Ottoman Empire and its war with the major European powers of the day. It also helped to finance the Catholic Church's inquisitions as that church tried to extinguish all other religions in Europe.

For many years, not a single European power was strong enough to stop the mighty and wealthy Holy Roman Empire and its ambition to colonize and catholicize the New World. This is part of Cuba's heritage.

Modern Cuba is a Communist nation, but it has only been Communist for about 50 years—less than a lifetime. *IT HAS BEEN*

A CATHOLIC COUNTRY FOR ALMOST 500 YEARS! Today, between 60 and 65 percent of Cubans say they are Catholic, so it's clear that the church's influence remains deeply entrenched.

Fidel Castro is close to death. And Raúl Castro is quite old. So the political equation could change radically in the next few years—or even months.

If enormous changes occur, the Vatican could gain real power in Cuba.

Cuba's Strategic Value

Many do not think the Caribbean is strategically important, but that's because the United States has dominated it for many decades. FOR THE CATHOLIC SPANISH EMPIRE, CUBA WAS THE SINGLE STRATEGIC PORT THAT SERVED TWO ENTIRE CONTINENTS. FOR Napoleon, Haiti served as the basis of his empire in the New World. When he lost Haiti in a slave revolt, he gave up his ambition in the Western Hemisphere and sold off a massive chunk of territory in the Louisiana Purchase.

But there is a much more recent reminder of Cuba's strategic importance. If you are older, you probably remember late 1962, when the U.S. discovered that the Soviet Union was deploying missiles to Cuba. Sources told the Americans that some of the missiles were so big that the tractor trailers carrying them through Cuban towns had trouble making turns. The Soviets were fortifying Cuba with ballistic missiles equipped to carry nuclear warheads. And they were about to aim these deadly missiles at the American mainland from point-blank range.

Most authorities believe this was the closest the Cold War ever came to full-scale nuclear war.

The Soviets wanted to deploy and activate their missiles in Cuba without America finding out. With supersonic nuclear missiles only minutes away from America's cities, THE SOVIETS COULD EVADE AMERICA'S MISSILE WARNING SYSTEM AND LAUNCH A SURPRISE ATTACK. I BELIEVE THERE IS AMPLE EVIDENCE THAT THE SOVIET LEADER NIKITA KHRUSHCHEV WOULD HAVE ATTEMPTED TO DESTROY AMERICA AT THAT TIME. What if Khrushchev had achieved his secret plan to *surprise* America? He would probably never have had a better opportunity to conquer America—and he knew it! After all, he did say that the Soviets would “bury” us. At the very least, the Soviet Union would have had the U.S. at nuclear gunpoint. America's foreign policy would have been neutralized.

However, something happened in Cuba. The Americans began hearing reports that missiles were coming in. But they needed confirmation. It was difficult to fly over Cuba, a hostile nation, without getting shot down. But SOMEHOW, THE SOVIET PLAN GOT OUT OF PHASE. THE MISSILES ARRIVED AND WERE OUT IN THE OPEN BEFORE THE ANTI-AIRCRAFT BATTERIES WERE FULLY OPERATIONAL. American spy planes spotted the missiles and brought home photographic proof of Cuba's nuclear buildup.

The Cuban Missile Crisis turned out to be a victory for America, a victory that could have easily been a crushing defeat. But it proved how strategic the Cuban islands are for anyone who wants to harm the U.S. With modern weapons, how easily and quickly an enemy force can strike America's military and its cities.

Who Does the U.S.-Cuba Thaw Benefit?

Where does the Vatican factor into all of this? One thing this Cuba deal has accomplished is that it has displayed to the world

the kind of *power* Pope Francis has.

“Francis is a master of blending the spiritual with the political,” wrote National Public Radio's Rome-based senior Europe correspondent, Sylvia Poggioli. “[He] has embraced the bully pulpit of the papacy, emerging as a daring, independent broker on the global stage” (Dec. 25, 2014).

The Vatican claims the deal is “in the interest of the citizens of both countries.” Is that true?

What kinds of deals is Francis brokering? Who do they benefit? The Vatican claims that the U.S.-Cuba deal is “in the interest of the citizens of both countries.” Is that true?

First, look at whether it was good for the people of Cuba.

Critics of American foreign policy in general and of the U.S. embargo of Cuba tend to romanticize Cuba's ruling regime. That is a serious error! Under the Castros, the people of Cuba have suffered political terror and human rights abuses. Fidel and Raúl Castro have run the nation as a totalitarian police state, and they continue to model it after the Soviet Union. Cubans are the only people in the Western Hemisphere who haven't been able to elect a leader in more than 55 years.

When Russia and Venezuela, the main sponsors of the Castro regime, started suffering in the last few months due to falling oil prices, it looked as if the Castro government could finally collapse. That could have paved the way for democracy to finally prevail for Cubans. What the Castro brothers needed in order to survive was an *economic lifeline from their enemy, the United States*. And that is exactly what the pope and President Obama delivered. The deal also gave their criminal government international legitimacy.

Anybody familiar with the Castro regime's track record knows that legitimizing and propping it up is NOT in the interest of the people of Cuba! THE DEAL IS BASED ON HOPES OF SOME AMERICAN LEADERS THAT THE CUBAN GOVERNMENT WILL REFORM, BUT THEY REQUIRED NO CHANGE FROM IT. And it is extremely rare for dictators to voluntarily loosen their power.

The normalization of relations, according to Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, a Florida Republican, “will embolden the Castro regime to continue its illicit activities, trample on fundamental freedoms, and disregard democratic principles.”

This is a bad deal for the Cubans.

Was it good for the people of the United States? Under the Castro regime, Cuba has acted as one of the Western Hemisphere's major sponsors of terrorism and drug trafficking. Legitimizing it is a victory for those who want to see America fall. Giving in to that Communist regime emboldens America's enemies.

It is also important that, as part of the deal, Cuba released Alan Gross, an American citizen wrongfully imprisoned for five years, and the U.S. released three Cuban spies. To U.S. enemies, this sends a clear message: A surefire way to win policy concessions from Washington, or to rescue your friends captured by the U.S., is to take American citizens hostage and hold them as long as necessary.

This places America's weakness on display for the world to see. It also potentially endangers Americans by putting a price on their heads.

FOR AMERICA, THIS WAS A DISGRACEFUL SURRENDER. The president undid a strategy that the nation had been using for 53 years, a strategy that might have been on the verge of toppling one of the world's most renowned criminal regimes.

Florida Republican Sen. Marco Rubio said, "[T]he policy changes announced by President Obama will have far-reaching consequences for the American people. ... There can be no doubt that the regime in Tehran is watching closely, and it will try to exploit President Obama's naivety as the Iranian leaders pursue concessions from the U.S. in their quest to establish themselves as a nuclear power."

Many American leaders like Rubio didn't like that Cuban deal, but the pope was not fazed by that. Modern leaders would—and should—object to this kind of deal even more forcefully if they knew anything about the Holy Roman Empire. For many, the fact that the pope endorsed this deal made it *more* palatable! This shows that they really don't understand anything about that Vatican-guided empire. It looks so righteous, so *good*. But look at the history of the Catholic Church! Not only has it authored a lot of foreign-policy nightmares throughout the ages, but conservative estimates say it has presided over the deaths of more than 50 million people! Why do so many just forget all about that?

The German Role

Pope Francis is from Argentina, but we shouldn't forget that the Vatican got involved in this deal as early as March 2012, when the church was led by Pope Benedict. He is the German pope emeritus, and he has friends in high places in Germany. We need to watch this carefully, because Bible prophecy shows clearly that America, Britain and the Jewish nation are in grave danger and will be double-crossed by a reconstituted German-led Holy Roman Empire.

How will this happen? I think Cuba could be a significant part of the strategy. Nobody would suspect the pope of doing anything malicious or double-crossing us or anything like that, but if you look at what the Bible says about the organization he leads, you see that it is not what it appears to be. Study the history of every single time the Roman church started guiding European politics. You see a lot of blood spilled every time!

Look at the two men who were the main players of this deal: the pope, and the U.S. president. If you read our two booklets *Germany and the Holy Roman Empire* and *America Under Attack*, you will see that these two do not have the good of America in mind. Quite the opposite! And if they are working something out behind the scenes, like this Cuba thaw, then you have to believe there may be something really big going on.

Pope Francis has made clear that he wants to topple the global system of free-market capitalism. "[S]ome people continue to defend trickle-down theories which assume that economic growth, encouraged by a free market, will inevitably succeed in bringing about greater justice and inclusiveness in the world," he wrote in *Joy of the Gospel (Evangelii Gaudium)*, his November 2013 apostolic exhortation. "This opinion ... expresses a crude and naive trust in the goodness of those wielding economic power." History shows that our free market



For the Catholic Spanish Empire, Cuba was the single strategic port that served two entire continents.

has provided far more *goodness* than the Vatican has when it was powerful! FRANCIS CALLED FREE-MARKET GLOBAL CAPITALISM "A NEW TYRANNY" AND CONDEMNED IT AS "A FINANCIAL SYSTEM WHICH RULES RATHER THAN SERVES."

WHICH NATION IS THE MODEL OF FREE-MARKET GLOBAL CAPITALISM? THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

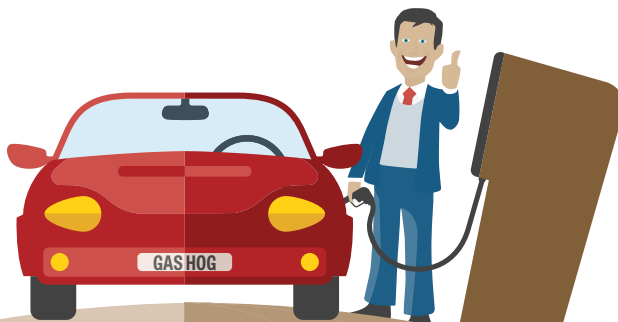
If Pope Francis is to be taken at his word, he could not possibly wish for the capitalist example nation to thrive, prosper and continue inflicting its "tyranny" on the world. If he is sincere in saying the capitalist system is a force of destruction, then he would feel not only justified, but *obligated* to use his influence to weaken it. And if decreasing U.S. power is among Francis's goals, he may have discovered that the current U.S. administration shares in it—to varying degrees on various policy points.

Bible prophecy discusses a massive double cross that the German-led European Union will commit against America. That double cross very well could include cyberattacks. It could knock out huge parts of our power grid and cause serious mayhem. That prophecy says those European nations are America's "lovers" right now, but that will not be the case for long!

Here is what Charles Krauthammer wrote January 1: "Vladimir Putin has repositioned Russia as America's leading geopolitical adversary and the Castros signed up for that coalition too. Cuba has reportedly agreed to reopen the Soviet-era Lourdes

How Cheap Gas Is CHANGING THE WORLD

The plunging price of oil is setting off more than grins at the gas station. It is having massive geopolitical effects that you need to know about. **BY ROBERT MORLEY**



PULLING UP TO A PUMP IS ALMOST a joy these days. For 113 consecutive sunshiny days, prices at the gasoline pump have fallen. For the past nine months, it has been almost nothing but blue sky and daffodils. In 18 states in the United States, sub-\$2-per-gallon gas is igniting smiles and optimism not experienced since the 2008 economic crash.

For a typical family, lower gasoline prices mean an extra \$1,150 per year to spend on, well, whatever the heart desires, according to Citigroup analysts. With 115 million households in the U.S., that is a lot of extra coin to go around.

The extra cash is an immediate boost for the American economy. And that is making a lot of people happy. The U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis reported that U.S. gross domestic product grew at a barn-burning 5 percent rate during the fourth quarter of 2014—the fastest growth since the economic crash in 2008.

Yet not all is sunshine and flowers. Yes, the extra money in your wallet is nice—but you need to understand the dramatic problems this trend is creating throughout the world around you.

American Economy

For starters, all these happy motorists are tooling around in an American economy under threat from risks that did not exist just a few years ago. Big ones.

You may not realize this, but in the years following the 2008 Wall Street meltdown, *shale oil* revolutionized America's economy. And last year, according to Bank of America analysts, the U.S. overtook both



Saudi Arabia and Russia to become the world's largest oil producer.

Shocked? Didn't realize that America was the world's biggest oil bigwig?

How is this possible? Fracking technology. This new tech, developed and pioneered in the U.S., allows companies to *extract oil from rock*. It also releases natural gas, which America became the world's largest producer of in 2010.

Massive amounts of previously inaccessible energy helped power America's economy after the 2008 crisis. *The shale oil and gas revolution has been the nation's biggest single creator of full-time, middle-class jobs since the 2008 economic crash*. As economic analyst John Mauldin pointed out, nearly 1 million Americans work directly in the oil and gas industry, along with another 10 million indirectly.

"The important takeaway is that, without new energy production, post-recession U.S. growth would have looked more like Europe's—tepid, to say the least. Job growth would have barely budged over the last five years," Mauldin wrote (Mauldin Economics, Dec. 16, 2014).

But America's energy boom was predicated on oil prices that no longer exist.

The average mid-cycle break-even price of a shale oil company operating in the North Dakota's Bakken field is \$69 per barrel, according to Scotiabank analysts. The break-even cost in the Permian Basin in Texas comes in at \$68 per barrel; the Niobrara, \$59; the Eagle-Ford, \$50.

Remember, these are mid-cycle break-even prices that don't factor in the upfront costs of acquiring land and infrastructure. You need to tack on \$5 to \$10 more per barrel for those costs.

Today, nobody wants to pay more than \$45 per barrel.

Houston, we have a problem.

The vast majority of America's newest oil production—the production that has powered so much of America's recent job growth—is uneconomical at current prices. Existing oil wells will continue to be pumped because companies have no other choice, but if prices remain low for more than a few months, future development will grind to a halt. Well permit applications were down 40 percent in November and did not recover in December. Layoffs at exploration and production companies are starting too.

Making matters worse, America's oil boom was financed by *extreme debt*. This may be the bigger danger for America.

"The reality is that the recent energy boom was financed by \$500 billion of credit extended to mostly 'subprime' oil companies, who issued what are politely termed high-yield bonds—to the point that 20 percent of the high-yield market is now energy-production-related," wrote Mauldin (*ibid*). "High yield" bonds is code for junk bonds.

We may be cruising straight into a "subprime" oil crisis. If so, shale oil companies and the banks that lent to them will be the first to be totaled. Your 401(k) or pension plan will get smashed next. And individuals and businesses throughout the economy will pile up one after another.

"Losses are going to cascade through the system," former CIA financial analyst Jim Rickards told RT. "There are unforeseen consequences and hidden losses. I am not so sanguine that this is going to work out so smoothly in the end This looks like the beginning of [a crisis]."

These wild swerves in the price of oil have real-world effects on national economies. Everyone in the sector—and a lot of people driving along nearby—is about to take some damage.

North and South of the Border

In Canada and Mexico, two more major oil-exporting nations, cheaper oil is also a mixed blessing.

In Canada, the oil sands have among the highest all-in-cost of production—even higher than U.S. shale oil. The advantage Canada has is that oil sands operations are conducted more like mining operations: Once the mines get built, they produce the oil relatively inexpensively for up to 30 years or more. So even with low prices, it's still profitable to keep the oil flowing to market. However, new projects will be put on hold. In contrast, shale oil wells produce about 90 percent of their oil their first year and run dry after three years. So if oil prices don't improve quickly, these U.S.-based competitors will be the first to go bust.

Oil-producing provinces like Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Newfoundland will be hit hardest. Provincial collections will be smaller than expected.

On a federal level, the value of the Canadian dollar is falling with the

price of oil. This will give a short-term boost to the manufacturing export sector. Ontario, a large oil consumer and home to Canada's industrial heartland, will benefit from low oil prices the most. Since the U.S. economy is more diversified, the U.S. dollar is not falling with the oil price. The relatively stronger U.S. dollar will make Canadian-manufactured goods cheaper than domestically produced ones. American manufacturers will lose market shares and jobs.

In Mexico, the low oil price could hit with a devastating punch. The energy sector accounts for a full 13 percent of Mexico's economy. Much of Mexico's oil production is Gulf oil, which comes from aging oil fields and is costly to produce. The longer prices stay low, the greater the threat that these fields will become uneconomical. Additionally, oil accounts for 32 percent of government revenue, and the Mexican government has based its 2015 budget on an average of \$79 a barrel. Mexicans are going to lose some jobs as well as government spending. This could lead to more social instability.

But as important as oil is to North America, taken together, Canada, Mexico and the U.S. are not only close to energy-self-sufficient, but they are also close allies. The same cannot be said about the rest of the world. Plunging oil prices, while an economic blessing to some nations, threaten to collapse others.

Falling oil prices might even mean war.

Here is a summary of the most important considerations from several oil-related tension points around the world.

English-Speaking Ally in Europe

The United Kingdom's North Sea oil fields, once the envy of the world, are "close to collapse," Robin Allan, chairman of the independent explorers' association Brindex, told the BBC in December—when oil was still in the mid-\$60s.

The North Sea oil fields are especially vulnerable because they are old and expensive to develop. Production peaked in 1999 and has since fallen sharply. According to Allen, *no new projects in the North Sea are profitable* with oil below \$60 per barrel. "It's a huge crisis," he said.

It may be a crisis in terms of jobs, employment and revenue—but from a geopolitical perspective, it has the potential to be a *total disaster*.

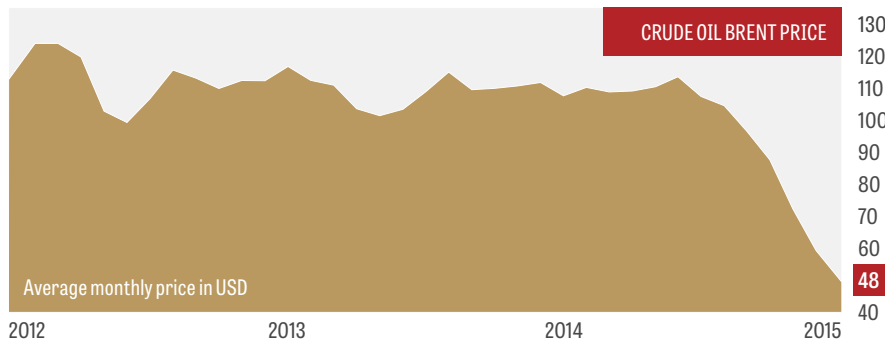
North Sea oil made Britain energy self-sufficient. Until 2007, it was not reliant on other nations for its energy supply. Since then, Britain has had to import increasing amounts of oil and gas.

In a world of sub-\$60 oil, the UK could soon come to rely heavily on imported fuel. And the list of fuel suppliers ranges from unsavory to outright hostile.

But while Britain faces the loss of its oil supply, other nations are slip-sliding to happy days and big bank accounts.

The Biggest Winner Is?

For every dollar the price of oil falls, China saves \$2.1 billion per year. Do the math. That is a \$200 billion-per-year boost to China's economy, courtesy of oil falling from \$140 per barrel. This massive economic stimulus could hardly have come at a better time.



The lower price of oil and gas also gave China the additional leverage it needed to finalize two massive pipeline deals with Russia. Worth close to \$800 billion and characterized as the biggest pipeline construction projects in history, these lines will soon make Russia into China's most important energy supplier.

So China gets the world's biggest oil-price subsidy and decades' worth of oil and gas delivered right to its doorstep.

Second place goes to the Europeans. Continental Europe imports 70 percent of its oil and gas supplies. Again, lower fuel costs equals an economic boost. With many countries locked in recession, lower petrol prices are a welcome respite.

But it will be temporary relief. Much of Europe's oil and gas comes from Russia, and as we will see, that means trouble.

The Biggest Loser Is?

You can't discuss oil prices without considering the world's premier oil cartel. And it is a cartel in chaos.

Saudi Arabia's powerful oil minister, Ali al-Naimi, made a shocking comment on December 22. He told the Middle East Economic Survey that it was "not in the interest of OPEC producers to cut their production, *whatever the price is*" (emphasis added). "Whether it goes down to \$20 a barrel, \$40, \$50, \$60, it is irrelevant," he said.

His odd comments came as the price of oil hits multiyear lows. Since June, U.S. crude has cascaded from \$107 per barrel to \$44 per barrel. The sell-off in Brent crude, the oil purchased by Europe and Asia, is even steeper. It has plummeted from \$112 per barrel to \$46. Just a few years ago, oil traded for \$140 per barrel.

It is the second-sharpest decline in history, yet *the Saudis seem to want it to go even lower*. This is strange because the Organization of the Petroleum

Exporting Countries (OPEC) cartel was founded to do just the opposite—keep oil prices high by limiting supply.

So what are the Saudis up to?

For several OPEC member nations, oil is a matter of life and death. The International Monetary Fund in October analyzed the oil prices various governments need to balance their budgets. The nations on the Arabian Peninsula (Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates and Qatar) can survive with \$70-per-barrel oil. These nations also tend to be the ones with the largest financial reserves. According to one estimate, Saudi Arabia could survive for two years at current prices with minor difficulty. These low-cost OPEC producers may even benefit in the longer term from lower oil prices.

Depressed prices shake out the competition. If oil prices stay low long enough, production from old, less profitable fields and new, expensive fields may be shuttered. Once closed, the costs to reopen can require much higher oil

prices to be economical. Additionally, low oil prices will begin to suppress alternative energy sources as well. When companies go bankrupt, plants and equipment get neglected, supply chains break down, and it becomes more difficult for industries to start back up again.

Some analysts have speculated that the Saudis' desire to drive prices lower was targeted at U.S. fracking companies, *which are responsible for almost the entire increase in global oil production over the past five years*. On November 3, the *Wall Street Journal* quoted Saudi sources saying they would sell oil to America for less than their Asian customers pay. So it is possible that U.S. production was a target, but it is more likely the sheiks had other targets in their sights.

Consider which OPEC nations are the big losers.

"Saudi Arabia, U.A.E. and Qatar can live with relatively lower oil prices for a while, but this isn't the case for Iran, Iraq, Nigeria, Venezuela, Algeria and Angola," said Marie-Claire Aoun, director of the energy center at the Institute for International Relations in Paris. "Strong demographic pressure is feeding their energy and budgetary requirements. The price of crude is paramount for their economies because they have failed to diversify" (Bloomberg, Dec. 1, 2014).

Iraq, Nigeria, Venezuela, Algeria, Angola and Libya are all considered Iran's OPEC allies. And bitter enemies of the Saudis. These nations all need \$100-per-barrel oil or higher to balance their budgets. And of these nations, it is thought that *Iran* is the most vulnerable to falling prices. A 2009 estimate put Iran's break-even cost of its oil production at \$90 per barrel.

It is likely that *Iran* is a target of the Saudis' move to depress oil prices. If this is the case, one of the biggest impacts of Saudi Arabia's decision to keep pumping oil *may be the fracturing of OPEC*. Divisions between the low-cost oil producing nations led by Saudi Arabia and the high-cost producing nations led by Iran will become increasingly stark.

Budget pressures in Iran, Libya and Algeria could soon lead to crisis situations. For a preview of what may await the people of these nations, just look at Venezuela, where social welfare spending is being slashed, inflation

is destroying people's savings, store shelves are empty, violent rioting is widespread, and revolution may be in the air.

Expect falling oil prices to also empower the radicals.

In Nigeria, for example, a weakened government will be less able to resist Muslim Boko Haram terrorists pushing toward its city centers. Expect more #BringBackOurGirls hashtags.

In Libya, watch for the civil war to heat up again as various terrorist groups fight to maintain their share of shrinking oil revenues. The southern portions of Libya especially will be a hotbed for extremists, potentially destabilizing neighboring countries.

Most importantly, watch Iran, the regional kingpin and world's worst terrorist-sponsoring nation. Iran has one of the Middle East's toughest armies, its biggest economy, and its second-largest population. It is also locked in a game of nuclear chicken with the U.S. and Europe. What will it do to cope with lower oil prices? Will Tehran stir up trouble in the Strait of Hormuz, the strategic choke point through which 30 percent of all seaborne oil passes? What will it do with Iraq's oil fields, as it battles the Islamic State for influence in the country? Will Iran activate its agents within the local Shiite population in Bahrain, which is adjacent to Saudi Arabia's most important oil fields? Or will it take some other radical action to boost oil prices?

Although Saudi Arabia seems to hold oil prices hostage for now, that could completely change if Iran blockaded the Persian Gulf or obtained nuclear weapons.

A desperate Iran will be a dangerous and unpredictable Iran. Don't be surprised if it lashes out and reminds the world who the region's supreme leader is.

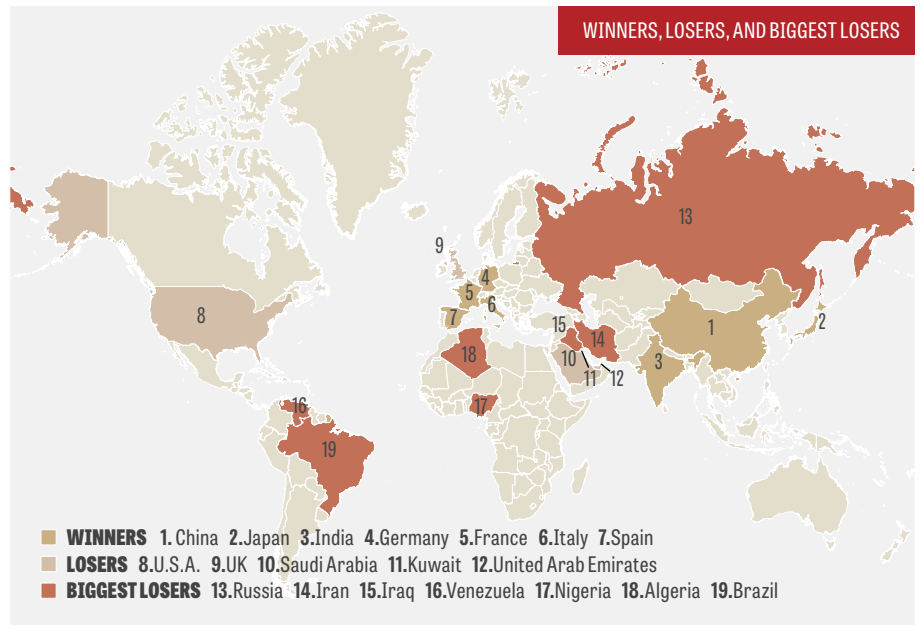
The nations may not be worrying about low oil prices for long.

Russia: The Bigger Question

Perhaps the biggest question facing the world right now is, what will Russian President Vladimir Putin do?

The International Energy Agency estimates that oil and gas account for 68 percent of Russia's exports and 50 percent of its federal budget.

Remember how the U.S. recently experienced government gridlock and



shutdown over minuscule proposed cuts to spending? Imagine if the government had to immediately cut its budget by 25 to 30 percent to pay the bills—while seeing the value of the dollar evaporate by 60 percent over a matter of months. This is the situation facing Russia. And it comes as Russia's economy is also being battered by the West's economic sanctions.

So what will Putin do?

Some analysts, like the *New York Times*' Thomas Friedman, have suggested that Saudi Arabia is working in conjunction with the U.S. to drive oil prices down in an effort to bankrupt both Iran and Russia. This is a theme that Putin has also highlighted. In an interview with Chinese media ahead of the November Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit, Putin said this when asked about cheap oil: "[A] political component is always present in oil prices. ... [D]erivatives greatly increasing the volatility of oil prices are being actively used. Unfortunately, such a situation creates the conditions for speculative activity and, as a consequence, for manipulating the prices in someone's interests."

On December 18, in his annual speech, Putin said Russia's existence was on the line: "Sometimes I think, maybe it would be better for our bear to sit quiet, rather than chasing around the forest after piglets. To sit eating berries and honey instead. Maybe they will leave it in peace. They will not. Because they will always try to put him on a chain, and as soon as they succeed in doing so they tear out his

fangs and his claws. ... Once they've taken out his claws and his fangs, then the bear is no longer necessary. He'll become a stuffed animal. The issue is not Crimea, the issue is that we are protecting our sovereignty and our right to exist."

This does not sound like a man ready to concede defeat. IT SOUNDS MORE LIKE A MAN PREPARING HIS NATION FOR ACTION.

The capacity of the Russian people to endure suffering is probably among the world's greatest. The West grossly underestimates the determination and morale of the typical Russian (article, page 24).

So what will Putin do? What he is already doing: *He will tighten his embrace of China.*

On September 10, China's state-run *People's Daily Online* announced that China had agreed to help Russia construct one of the largest ports in Northeast Asia on Russia's Sea of Japan coast. The seaport will be built to handle about 66 million tons of cargo a year, making it as big as Britain and France's largest ports.

Then there were the two aforementioned massive pipeline construction deals Putin and China have agreed to. Once these pipelines are complete, Putin will be able to turn off the energy taps to Europe without losing access to customers and their bank accounts.

As dangerous as Europe's energy dependence on Russia is, *it will be many times worse in just a few years* when those pipelines are finished. This scares

Depend

How the nanny state
is ruining America
BY ROBERT MORLEY

WHEN YOU MEET SOMEBODY NEW, inevitably the question arises: “So, what do you do?”

For many people, what they do characterizes who they are—at least a big part of it. After all, a person’s career is what they spend around eight hours doing—maybe even 10, 12 or more—every day. It is far more than just how they earn a living. It *defines* them. You are what you do.

What if you asked your national government that same question? What does it do? What does it spend the majority of its time, effort and resources on? It is an important question because the answer *defines* what kind of nation it is.

When it comes to America today, the answer to that question might surprise you.

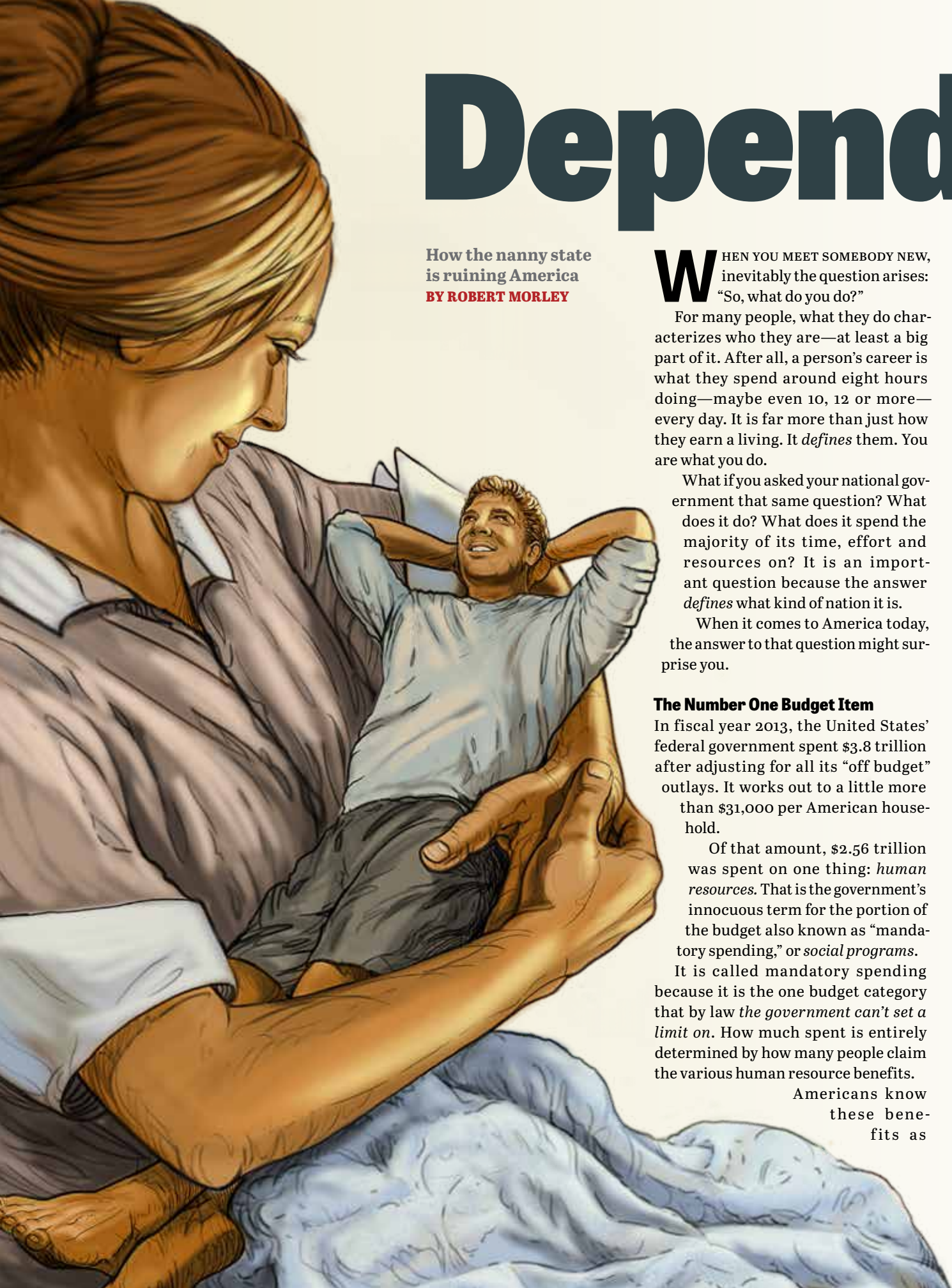
The Number One Budget Item

In fiscal year 2013, the United States’ federal government spent \$3.8 trillion after adjusting for all its “off budget” outlays. It works out to a little more than \$31,000 per American household.

Of that amount, \$2.56 trillion was spent on one thing: *human resources*. That is the government’s innocuous term for the portion of the budget also known as “mandatory spending,” or *social programs*.

It is called mandatory spending because it is the one budget category that by law *the government can’t set a limit on*. How much spent is entirely determined by how many people claim the various human resource benefits.

Americans know these benefits as



ent

Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security. And yes, they are benefits. People pay into them, but they get out far more than they put in.

But the list of benefits certain Americans are entitled to includes a cornucopia of other human resource programs that provide cash or near-cash assistance. They include housing, nutrition and utility assistance to individuals, and benefits to various retirees, people with disabilities, and the unemployed. They also include unemployment insurance, Trade Adjustment Assistance income support, food stamps, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, and foster care.

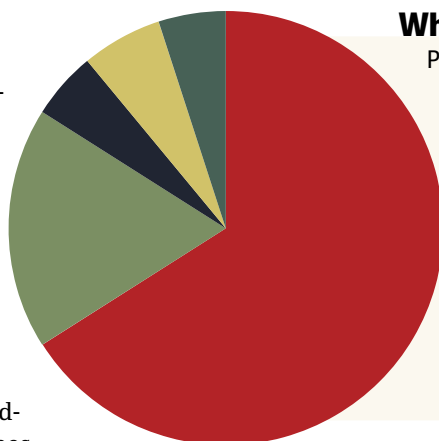
And people are claiming these benefits like never before. According to the most recent census data, more than 153 million people—almost half of Americans—receive some form of government benefit.

This is a shocking statistic considering that America has historically stood for freedom, liberty and limited government.

With so many Americans taking benefits, two thirds of every dollar the government spends goes to these mandatory social programs. That is an incredible proportion. And a telling one.

The scale of these mandatory social programs is better highlighted by putting them in context of how much money the government actually *brings in* (as opposed to spends). In fiscal year 2013, the federal government borrowed almost \$580 billion to cover expenses. So it really only collected around \$3.22 trillion.

That means that these *social programs actually consume almost 80 percent of all non-borrowed money*. Four dollars out of five that Americans pay in taxes goes to pay for these programs. That leaves only 20 percent to cover *every other function of government*.



Where does America's money go?

Percent of federal outlays for fiscal 2013 by category

HUMAN RESOURCES \$2.563 trillion
Primarily Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid

DEFENSE \$0.702 trillion

PHYSICAL RESOURCES \$0.179 trillion
Department of Energy, Natural Resources and Environment, Transportation, Community and Regional Development

INTEREST \$0.247 trillion

OTHER \$0.207 trillion
International Affairs, Science, Space and Technology, Agriculture, Justice, General Government

Everybody's Doing It

Here are some enlightening statistics.

68 million people receive Medicaid

49 million receive Medicare

55 million receive Social Security

5 million receive Supplemental Security Income

46.6 million people are on food stamps

109 million receive at least one means-tested welfare program

184 means-tested federal welfare programs exist

3.5 million receive Temporary Assistance for Needy Families

1/2 of schoolchildren receive subsidized or free meals

In 2012, the Heritage Foundation estimated how much assistance the average welfare recipient received. It found that on average, Americans who depend on federal assistance got the equivalent of \$32,748 in annual benefits. That was

more than the average American worker makes in a year. The median net wage in America in 2013 was \$28,031.

That some people can make more money on welfare than they can working a minimum wage job shows how different America is today from when President Roosevelt enacted his New Deal.

The Rise of Social Spending

So what does the government do? What defines America?

The rise of the social state can be compared to the relentlessness of compound interest. What seems like a small increase can, over time, become a massive liability. Each year, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) produces tables outlining government spending. Its 360-plus-page annual report provides meticulous data chronicling the power of social welfare compounding.

During the 1940s, the government spent 19.1 percent of its budget on social programs. During the next 20 years it slowly crept up. During the 1960s it averaged 31.6 percent of the budget. The 1970s saw social spending as a percent of the budget soar to 54.8 percent. The 1980s were a little different. Although social spending continued to rise relentlessly, the budget grew even faster, so as a percent, it slightly receded. But by the 1990s the race was on again.

During 2015, the government expects

to spend 70 percent of its budget on social programs.

How long can the trend continue?

Social spending's share of the total economy is soaring too. During the 1940s it averaged 2.8 percent of GDP. This year the OMB estimates it will take up an astounding 15.8 percent.

America was once admired around the world for being a nation of producers and doers.

By every conceivable measure—percent of budget, percent of GDP, benefits per capita, benefits per capita adjusted for inflation—social spending is soaring.

What kind of nation is America? Seventy percent of the federal budget is social spending; four out of five tax dollars go to social programs. *You are what you do.*

Only Getting Started

How much social spending is enough? If you think we're hitting peak demand, think again. Vote-hungry politicians are phenomenally creative at inventing new ways to demonstrate their generosity with other people's money.

On January 9, President Obama proposed free two-year community college for every American. "Community college should be free for those willing to work for it," he told a cheering crowd of students at Pellissippi State Community College. The White House estimates 9 million students could participate in the program, saving them an average of \$3,800 in tuition per year. The federal

government would pick up 75 percent of the \$60 billion cost, with states covering the rest.

Add \$35 billion or so to the human resource tab.

In his 2013 State of the Union address, the president proposed *free preschool* for all 4-year-olds. He also advocated gov-

(Chrysler), Boeing and Alcoa. But there were government grants too, especially to favored sectors like green energy.

\$110 billion per year may not seem like much in a world of \$2.56 trillion-per-year social spending, and cutting it off wouldn't come close to closing the debt gap—but it is still \$110 billion!

The Significance

America was once famed for its industry and independence. The nation was admired worldwide for being a nation of producers and doers.

That ideal has been discarded. Socialist-influenced thinking, entitlements and the rise of the welfare state have fundamentally transformed America.

Today, the federal government—which sets the tone for its people and largely defines the country—would probably be unrecognizable by its citizens just one or two generations removed. Looking from the outside, they would see a nation increasingly composed of takers and dependents.

"Until 1960 the accepted task of the federal government, in keeping with its constitutional charge, was governing," wrote social scientist Nicholas Eberstadt. "In a very real sense, entitlements have turned American governance upside-down" (Aug. 31, 2012).

Should we be surprised at what America has become? In its day-to-day operations, America's government devotes more attention and resources to the redistribution of money, goods and services to individual citizens than to anything else.

You are what you do. As Jesus Christ said in Matthew 7:20, "By their fruits you shall know them." ■

ernment grants to create a new "early head start" and child-care system for newborns through to toddlers age 3.

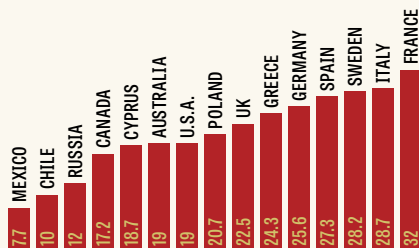
Now there is a renewed push for a guaranteed basic income scheme. Under this program, every American would be entitled to a base income provided by the government. Each person 21 years of age or older would receive a government stipend equal to the poverty line—approximately \$12,000 per year. Some political conservatives embrace it as a way to simplify and replace various inefficient and duplicative federal social programs.

Conservatives love to criticize the rise of the social welfare state. But what about corporate welfare, which they tend to support? It too is thriving.

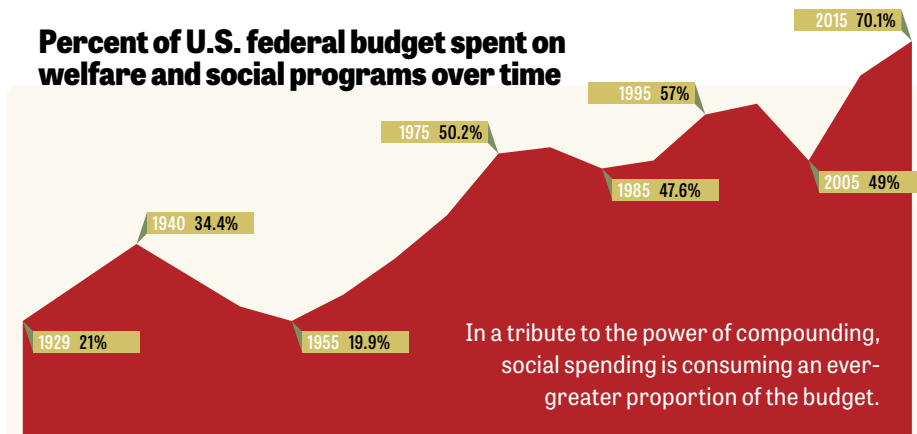
The Good Jobs First report, "Subsidizing the Corporate One Percent," released February 2014 found that subsidies given to corporations in the preceding year equaled \$110 billion. The liberal advocacy group said most of the welfare came in the form of tax breaks and tax loopholes for large manufacturers like Ford, General Motors, Fiat

Who spends the most on social programs?

Federal and state spending on social programs as a percent of GDP in 2013



Percent of U.S. federal budget spent on welfare and social programs over time



Living on Triple-Crème Gourmet Government Cheese



Many Americans abuse welfare. That's bad for taxpayers, but it's even worse for the abusers. **BY JEREMIAH JACQUES**

ONCE UPON A TIME, WITHIN THE ART-adorned walls of a lakeside mansion in Deephaven, Minnesota, there lived a lord and a lady. That's what Colin and Andrea Chisholm often called themselves, anyway. The Chisholms' total assets amounted to \$97 million, including some \$3 million in cash. The "lord and lady" spent lavishly on traveling, upscale restaurants, entertaining guests, massages, original works of art, a collection of purebred dogs and even a million-dollar yacht. In April 2011 alone, they shelled out more than \$23,000 just on travel and luxury items.

But there were some expenses—like groceries and health services—which they avoided paying for. They didn't pay for the bread and milk or the trips to the wellness center—American taxpayers did.

For more than seven years, the Chisholms lied to authorities and falsified documents about their income and home address. By the time they were caught, they had collected more than \$167,420 in food stamps, cash assistance and health benefits from the state of Minnesota, and an as yet undisclosed amount from Florida. Court documents showed that they spent more than \$60,000 of health assistance funds on massages and other services at an upscale spa in their hometown.

Though extreme, the Chisholm case shows how easily—and to what grandiose

extent—America's welfare system can be exploited. And every day, shocking numbers of people are doing just that.

The Big Porous Picture

The program with the *lowest* reported fraud levels is Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), which gives cash assistance to needy families with children. TANF fraud happens when a recipient claims to be a single parent when the other parent is actually living at home; collects assistance from multiple states; or receives payment for a child not living in the house or for a fictitious child. Reports say fraud accounts for a little less than 2 percent of TANF collections. That would mean \$665 million goes to TANF scammers each year.

For unemployment benefits, the Department of Labor says that in 2011 roughly 3 percent of claims were fraudulent. That amounts to \$3.3 billion—not exactly chump change. Some of it went to prisoners and dead people, with family members cashing the checks. Most of it went to individuals who were employed and earning wages. Almost half a billion dollars went to workers earning yearly wages of \$46,800 or more. About \$80 million went to households earning more than \$1 million per year.

Then there is the food stamp program, which is now called the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

(SNAP). Over the last decade, participation in SNAP has increased dramatically. In 2013, more than 47 million Americans received SNAP assistance, a 70 percent increase over 2008. That year, food stamps cost taxpayers \$76.4 billion. The officially reported rate of SNAP enrollment fraud is just over 2 percent, or \$1.67 billion per year.

Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) each shell out an estimated 10 percent of their payments toward fraudulent claims, adding another \$20 billion in annual fraud.

Medicare and Medicaid both suffer massive levels of fraud. Authorities estimate that each pays out between \$60 and \$90 billion in "improper payments" every year. Most Medicare/Medicaid fraud is on the part of dishonest clinics or doctors who bill for procedures their patients never received or never needed. But a significant part is committed by patients.

According to these reported figures, total welfare fraud costs the U.S. about \$210 billion a year, which is about 6 percent of the country's total federal budget.

But is that the entire picture?

'More Common Than We Think'

Some of those reported numbers are eye-popping, but the full extent of the problem is even greater than they reveal. "It's hard to know what we don't know," said Jerry Kerber, the inspector general with Minnesota's Department of Human Services. "It's hard to know what might be going on under the radar."

Rep. Steve Drazkowski, a Minnesota Republican, said he is convinced that fraud is "more common than we think it is."

One act of fraud that's as easy to commit as it is difficult to catch is food stamp trafficking. Most families enrolled in SNAP receive \$300 to \$500 per month in benefits. The program distributes these funds in the form of EBT cards. The cards look and function like debit cards,

“Between 1983 and 2012, the population increased by almost 83 million—and people accepting means-tested benefits increased by 67 million. So, for every 100-person increase in the population there was an 80-person increase in the recipients of means-tested payments. Food stamp recipients increased from 19 million to 51 million — more than the combined populations of 24 states.”

—GEORGE WILL, *Washington Post*, January 21

except that the allotted funds *only* work to buy uncooked staple foods to be eaten at home. The cards won't allow cash withdrawals or purchase of alcohol, cigarettes, pharmaceuticals, cooked food, pet food, fuel, toiletries or anything else.

With food stamp trafficking, a person receiving food assistance offers to buy another individual's groceries with the funds on his or her card in exchange for cash. To give the other person extra incentive, the cardholder usually offers to buy \$2 worth of groceries for each dollar of cash. Many shoppers pounce on the opportunity to give the cardholder a \$20 bill in exchange for \$40 worth of groceries. Cash in hand, the welfare recipient now buys whatever he wants: alcohol, cigarettes, restaurant meals, recreation—all thanks to taxpayer money.

It is also common for convenience store workers to buy an entire EBT card from a welfare recipient at a fraction of the value. All EBT purchases are tax-free, so store owners can use the cards to buy food to stock their shelves tax-free. Or he can create bogus grocery purchases to channel the EBT funds into his store's bank account. A few hundred dollars here and there adds up fast for some store owners. In 2012, brothers who owned a pair of convenience stores in Louisiana were convicted of defrauding SNAP of \$2.7 million.

Watchdog.org says that in many parts of the country, food stamp trafficking is so prevalent that the EBT cards have become “street currency.” The trafficking is not traceable, and it is rare to catch perpetrators, so it isn't factored into the reported fraud rates for SNAP.

Some feel that food stamp trafficking is *justifiable*: “[T]hey are stressed—because they are poor, because they are in painful life transitions,” a commenter wrote in response to an online article on welfare fraud. “I don't begrudge such a parent a few smokes or a drink. I know that's not the point of food stamps, but food stamps are just assets to the folks getting them. ...

Why should we expect poor people to live outside our cultural norms?”

Food stamp trafficking isn't the only type of fraud that generally goes unreported. Many welfare recipients also have jobs that pay them off the books. They work as baby-sitters, house cleaners, etc. and get paid in cash. If they obeyed the law and reported their income, they would not qualify for welfare. But they don't, so they still collect. Kerber said there is nothing “in place to go check people's lifestyle and see whether or not their lifestyle really does match what they're claiming in income.”

Reported fraud rates are also artificially low because many welfare programs rely almost entirely on tips to catch scammers. Agencies advertise hotlines and websites, and encourage anyone with information to report suspected fraud or abuse so that they can investigate. The trouble is, some areas are so full of people scamming the system and so dominated by anti-establishment attitudes and feelings of entitlement that reporting is scanty at best.

Government agencies also tend to downplay fraud rates. In SNAP, for example, the official enrollment fraud rate is 2.18 percent, or around \$1.67 billion. But independent investigations always unearth higher numbers. In 2011, for example, the *Washington Examiner* estimated that the actual rate is 3.86 percent, which would project out to some \$3 billion. Of course, SNAP administrators are not eager to publicize fraud; they don't want to invite additional scrutiny or risk losing funding.

All of these figures, official or otherwise, concern actual illegal fraud. But how much *completely legal* opportunistic behavior do welfare programs permit and even encourage?

A Steady Diet of Government Triple-Crème Cheese

As part of the 2009 stimulus package, the federal government relaxed restrictions

on able-bodied adults without dependents who seek food assistance. The change made hundreds of thousands of young singles around the nation eligible for SNAP for the first time, and many wasted no time signing up.

In 2010, *Salon* published the article “Hipsters on Food Stamps” explaining the trend: “Twenty- and 30-somethings with college degrees and foodie standards are shaking off old taboos about who should get government assistance and discovering that government benefits can indeed be used for just about anything edible, including wild-caught fish, organic asparagus and triple-crème cheese,” the article said.

The author interviewed a 30-year-old art school graduate who applied for SNAP after having trouble finding work in her field of study. “I'm eating better than I ever have before,” the graduate said. Among the foods she typically bought with government money: raw local honey and fresh-squeezed juices.

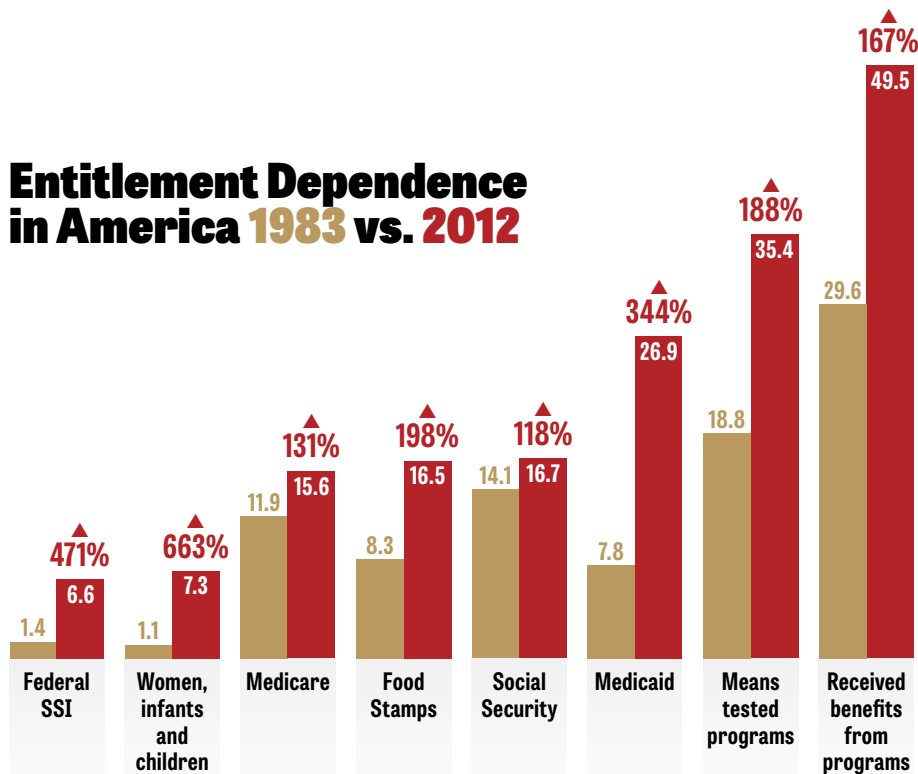
Salon also spoke with a 31-year-old University of Chicago graduate working part time as a blogger and collecting food stamps. “I'm sort of a foodie,” he said, “and I'm not going to do the ‘living off ramen’ thing. ... I used to think that you could only get processed food and government cheese on food stamps, but it's great that you can get anything.” Among the recent meals the blogger had prepared for himself: gourmet roasted rabbit with butter, tarragon and sweet potatoes.

Salon is strongly in favor of the trend, saying, “They're young, they're broke, and they pay for organic salmon with government subsidies. Got a problem with that?”

There is no problem with buying nutritious foods for people truly in need until they can return to self-sufficiency. But these programs allow and even encourage able-bodied young adults to “get anything” and to eat “better than [they] ever have before.” And they offer no incentive to try to graduate from the program. Students with no compunction about

Entitlement Dependence in America 1983 vs. 2012

Percentage of U.S. population



claiming government benefits could be encouraged to remain in their unemployed or underemployed situation as long as possible—living high on the hare.

Who Gets Hurt?

It is impossible to tally the full scope of the fraud, abuse and misuse in the alphabet soup of America’s 70-plus welfare programs. But it is clear that *great numbers* of people are scamming the system, stealing from their fellow Americans who pay for it.

All that fraud hurts the U.S. economy and taxpayers. If those hundreds of billions of dollars weren’t being illegally siphoned off each year, that money could be put to much more productive use—particularly if it were simply returned to its original owners in the form of lower taxes.

But as harmful as welfare fraud is to America’s taxpayers, it is even more injurious to the swindlers committing it, making a living off deceit and thievery.

Individuals gaming the system often believe their craftiness is getting them ahead. Some openly brag about their exploitation. “Taxpayers are the fools,” said a confessor of abuse who telephoned KLBJ News Radio in Austin, Texas, in 2013. “[C]an you really blame us? I get

to sit around all day, visit my friends, smoke weed ... and we are still going to get paid, on time every month.”

Such defrauders may *feel* they benefit from what they take; human nature is happy to take a free lunch. But breaking the law does not benefit them. In fact, their grifting handicaps them and makes them miserable. “Getting treasures by a lying tongue is the fleeting fantasy of those who seek death,” says Proverbs 21:6 (New King James Version). Though cheaters may believe they’re getting something for nothing, their deceit actually comes at a high cost. Lawlessness always invites problems and curses, and proves self-destructive in the end (e.g. Proverbs 10:2; 13:11; Jeremiah 17:11).

Individuals who bilk the system—suckling the teat of the nanny state when they could be building job skills, contributing to society and providing for themselves—suffer loss of self-respect, self-sufficiency and independence, peace of mind and inner joy. They turn from men into mice. They become professional parasites.

On Dec. 7, 2012, liberal *New York Times* columnist Nicholas Kristof offered an unexpected concession: “This is painful for a liberal to admit, but ... America’s safety net can sometimes entangle

people in a soul-crushing dependency. Our poverty programs do rescue many people, but other times they backfire.”

This truth would be self-evident to Bible readers: Unneeded welfare, the way the government offers it—even if taken “lawfully”—impedes character growth. Poverty programs “backfire” on scammers because they deprive them of a vital part of prosperous living: work.

God wants people to live prosperous lives. He inspired the Apostle John to write: “Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth” (3 John 2). In order to achieve prosperity—spiritually, mentally, physically, emotionally, financially—God expects everyone to work if they are able. There are around 790 Bible passages that mention work and labor. The Bible makes plain that work is a key part of developing godly character.

The epic scale of welfare fraud is also *prophetically* significant because it provides a glimpse of how deeply woven immorality and lawlessness are in the fabric of modern American society. The nation is suffering a broadscale breakdown of morality, strength of families, and individual responsibility. The history of such civilizations as the ancient Greeks and the Romans shows that such breakdowns bring empires to their knees. Bible prophecy makes plain that they will be a key factor in the collapse of the United States. “As a cage is full of birds, so are their houses full of deceit: therefore they are become great, and waxen rich. They are waxen fat, they shine: yea, they overpass the deeds of the wicked Shall I not visit for these things? saith the Lord: shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?” (Jeremiah 5:27-29).

In a society that sees more and more people going the route of “Lord and Lady” Chisholm, many are left wondering what the big-picture solution to such a complex issue would be. For the answer, read “The Welfare System That Works” on page 20.



HAS AMERICA BEEN INFLUENCED BY COMMUNISM?

Many today ridicule prior generations' concern over Communist infiltration. But current trends are bringing that concern back into focus.

BY ANDREW MILLER

IMAGINE THE UNITED STATES allying with Russia. If you were alive when Nazi Germany was rampaging across Europe during World War II, you didn't have to imagine it. You saw it: The world's greatest capitalist nation forged a "strange alliance" with the world's greatest Communist state, the Soviet Union.

When this happened, a peculiar phenomenon surged across America: a wave of popular emotional fervor for the Soviets.

Influential men and media fawned over Joseph Stalin. President Franklin Roosevelt released Communist Party-U.S.A. leader Earl Browder from prison to promote "national unity" between American Communists and the general public.

Yet even during this trying and confusing time, one strong voice cried out a warning against not only the imminent fascist threat from Germany, but the less-understood Communist threat from the Soviet Union.

America emerged from World War II victorious. It enjoyed economic, political and military dominance and assumed leadership of the free world. It was rivaled only by the Soviet Union.

But even at America's pinnacle, Herbert W. Armstrong boldly warned that the nation would eventually be invaded by a revived Holy Roman Empire led by Germany. And before that, America's rejection of God would allow communism to weaken the nation so that it *could be invaded*.

"Communism is a worldwide POLITICAL MOVEMENT, organized inside *many* countries," Mr. Armstrong wrote in the April-May 1944 *Plain Truth*. "From official Communist literature anyone can learn, if he wishes to know the TRUTH, that communism is a plan, *in action*, for the violent overthrow of capitalism and the capitalistic governments. And capitalism *means* democracy, since it is the democracies who *control* more than two thirds of the world's capital."

During and after the Second World War, Mr. Armstrong boldly proclaimed the biblical truth that Russia would *not* go to war with America militarily. However, he said, Russia *would* wage *psychological* warfare: propaganda, infiltration, subversion and demoralization. The

Communist Russians would attack “our minds, our moral and spiritual values, rather than our bodies and our earthly possessions,” he said.

“What we fail to grasp, in the struggle with Russia, is this: We are not fighting a single nation in a military war, but a gigantic worldwide, plain-clothes army, masquerading as a political party, seeking to conquer the world with an entirely *new kind* of warfare,” Mr. Armstrong wrote in 1956. “It’s a kind of warfare we don’t understand, or know how to cope with. It uses every diabolical means to weaken us, *from within*, sapping our strength, perverting our morals, sabotaging our educational system, wrecking our social structure, destroying our spiritual and religious life, weakening our industrial and economic power, demoralizing our armed forces, and finally, after such infiltration, overthrowing our government by force and violence! All this, cleverly disguised as a harmless political party! COMMUNISM is worldwide psychological WARFARE!”

In the 1940s and 1950s, many Americans found that warning to ring true. But as time went on, many dismissed it as a Communist scare that never quite appeared. By the new millennium, such a notion seemed outdated.

Today, however, many are starting to wonder what has happened to America and the West—and if this invisible Communist threat was real after all.

Mr. Armstrong never wavered. He exposed communism’s cultural incursion and told the world what the real threat to America was. Why was he so sure? Because his message didn’t come from popular opinion, statistical trends or covert intelligence. It came from the Bible.

Mr. Armstrong directed his readers and listeners to Scripture, which says that end-time Israel would become “mixed up” ideologically “with foreigners.” In particular, he pointed to Hosea 7:8-13 (Moffatt translation), which warns that Britain and America would “seek

alliances with foreign nations, forsaking God”—foreign alliances that would “eat away” America’s strength “unknown to him” (ibid).

Was Mr. Armstrong right after all? Did this happen? Did communism infiltrate America? Did it cause America’s now-obvious decline from the inside out? Did the Bible prophesy that this would happen?

The First Stage of Subversion

Thirty-six years after Mr. Armstrong first warned American radio audiences about communism in 1934, KGB agent Yuri Bezmenov defected from the Soviet Union and eventually escaped to Canada. He warned America that it was AT WAR with communism.

Bezmenov said that subverting foreign nations was so important to the KGB that *most* of its resources were allocated to it. “Only about 15 percent of time, money and manpower is spent on espionage as such,” he explained in an inter-

view with G. Edward Griffin in 1985. “The other 85 percent is a slow process which we call either ideological subversion or ‘active measures.’”

Ideological subversion, Bezmenov said, is a long-term process involving four stages: 1) demoralization, 2) destabilization, 3) crisis and 4) normalization.

The first state, demoralization, is now an eerily familiar concept among Americans. Many who recognize it think it occurred accidentally, naturally or even fortunately. But former KGB agents, said Bezmenov, recognize it as an intentional ideological attack aimed to “change the perception of reality of every American to such an extent that despite the abundance of information, no one is able to come to sensible conclusions in the interest of defending themselves, their families, their community and their country.”

“It takes about 15 to 20 years to demoralize a nation,” Bezmenov wrote in his book, *Love Letter to America*. “Why that many (or few)? Simple: this is the minimum number of years needed to ‘educate’ ONE GENERATION of students in a

target country (America, for example) and expose them to the ideology of the subverter.”

Such Soviet reeducation methods took deep root in America during the 1960s and ’70s. Bezmenov warned that KGB agents and their socialistic “fellow travelers” would use abstract art, perverted music, pornographic images, homosexual rights, racist politics, pacifist foreign policy and socialist economics to demoralize America.

Whether you believe Bezmenov or not, you have to ask yourself: Does any of this sound familiar?

Mr. Armstrong also warned of this infiltration of America. In a 1980 edition of the *Worldwide News*, he wrote, “I was saying over the air, and writing, back in 1934, that the Communist[s] unwavering strategy was, as a first offensive toward world domination, propaganda. They began sowing the seeds of their Communist atheistic education all over the United States—especially among college professors and students.”

“They invaded American university campuses, full force,” he continued, “and the U.S. universities trustingly let them in.”

In practice, communism has never been the grassroots movement Karl Marx predicted. It has been driven by small groups of intellectuals and elites who seize power. Hence the targeting of the American intelligentsia—present and future.

Mr. Armstrong understood this—and he saw a much bigger picture. He warned that demoralization tactics originated from a source beyond Marx, the KGB or the Soviet Union. That warning also explains the effectiveness of the demoralization process: “Communism is *the devil’s* effort, through his demon-inspired human tools, to take from us this greatest national and economic blessing God ever conferred on any people,” he wrote in 1949.

Even though the Soviet Union fell before it could take advantage of the “destabilization” and “crisis” stages of its subversion, the demoralization virus it had inflicted continued to multiply inside its host. Something much more powerful was at work here than Soviet initiatives. Something more powerful than even communism itself.



Which modern nations descended from Israel? To prove the answer from world events and the pages of your Bible, request *The United States and Britain in Prophecy*, by Herbert W. Armstrong.

Corruption of Modern Education

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Soviet archives revealed the Communist Party-U.S.A. (an organization that is still alive and well today) received \$2 to \$3 million a year from the Kremlin to further its subversion activities.

Most of the efforts of the Kremlin, the Communist Party-U.S.A. and their “fellow travelers” went not toward traditional espionage, but toward infiltrating American education. According to Bezmenov, the Soviets’ main methods of demoralization were: exchanging students with Moscow; flooding college campuses with Marxist literature; participating in international seminars; infiltrating universities with radical leftists (often unknowingly under the



‘Useful Idiots’

Attributed to Vladimir Lenin, the term refers to those who embrace and advance the ideology of communism without understanding the means by which it is implemented. Bezmenov said the KGB often avoided giving such pawns too much power, because they would inevitably become disillusioned and would have to be dealt with, even executed, by the state.

guidance of KGB subverters); establishing Communist-staffed news media; and organizing “study groups” to disseminate Communist propaganda.

“Before World War II the Communist Party in the United States was making great headway,” Mr. Armstrong wrote in the April 1980 *Plain Truth*. “They began infiltrating the colleges and universities. If they could not ‘convert’ professors, they worked on students who would become teachers later. Thus they were recruiting TEACHERS to teach their doctrine all over the United States.”

According to a former staff director of a Senate investigations subcommittee,

in the years between 1935 and 1953, the Communist Party “enlisted the support of at least 3,500 professors—many of them as dues-paying members, many others as fellow travelers, some as out-and-out espionage agents, some as adherents of the party line in varying degrees, and some as the unwitting dupes of subversion” (J.B. Matthews, “Communism and the Colleges,” *American Mercury*, May 1953).

The ultimate goal of communism is a “utopian” society where every individual is completely reliant on society (as the Communist Party). This is why Marxist-Leninist education emphasizes “mass character” and “collectivism” over “individual abilities.” For a collectivist society to truly succeed, it needs more than just a generation of people who don’t want to support themselves: It needs a generation of people who CAN’T support themselves!

This is the direction America is going. In the words of Bezmenov, “The American romance with state-run education as encouraged by KGB subverters has already produced generations of graduates who cannot spell, cannot find Nicaragua on a world map, cannot THINK creatively and independently. I wonder if Albert Einstein would have arrived at his theory of relativity if he had been educated in one of today’s American public schools. Most likely he would have ‘discovered’ marijuana and variant methods of sexual intercourse instead.”

Wrecking the Economy

As Mr. Armstrong wrote, it is important to understand what communism is. It sees itself not as a mere alternative or competitor to capitalism, but as a global movement in harmony with the fact that human history revolves around the production of material. It renders culture, art, ethics, philosophy, religion, family and even the individual as secondary, superfluous or dangerous. After workers around the globe violently overthrow those who possess capital, the ideology purports, humanity will ultimately achieve this inevitable “utopian” future. The property—and everything else—pertaining to an individual will be abolished, and each person will simply become a cog in the giant, glorious machinery of the global utopian state.

“Communism, of course, is many things,” Mr. Armstrong wrote in the February 1962 *Plain Truth*. “It is a doctrine. ... It is a revolutionary program. It is relentless class war. It is a radical philosophy of history. It is a radical philosophy of society. It is a social system. It is an economic system. It is a political strategy. It is a world conspiracy.”

As an economic system, communism pits the larger, poorer groups against the smaller, more wealthy groups. It calls for that wealth to be removed from those who have it and spread evenly among everyone. To accomplish this re-distribution of wealth, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels wrote in *The Communist Manifesto* that private land ownership must be abolished, a heavily progressive income tax must be instituted, and all factories and financial institutions must be nationalized.

Regarding the troublesome matter of people (both wealthy and poor) who resist the program, Marx favored violence over reform. The only way to speed the march to his new society was “revolutionary terror,” he wrote.

The mantra of Marxist economics is: “From each according to his ability, to each according to his need.” The value produced by those with more “ability” must be redistributed to those with more “need.” This philosophy directly contradicts Jesus Christ’s teaching, represented in the parable of the pounds (Luke 19:12-27), in which each of Christ’s servants is rewarded differently based on how much he actually produced with what he was given.

The main reason Marxism doesn’t work is that when human beings don’t receive the full benefits of their labor, they lack incentive to work. The Soviet Union fell because of Russia’s enthusiastic embrace of Marxist-Leninist economics. As Russian economist Grigory Yavlinsky, an adviser to Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev, once said: “The Soviet system is not working because the workers are not working.”

Despite the economic disaster that befell the Soviet Union, and the consistent failures of economies that follow Communist ideals, a shocking number of American economists still cling to the socialist movement and Marxist thought.

Communism has survived. And despite the cautionary plight of tens of

millions who have recently suffered and died under Communist regimes, it has thrived—even inside the government of its sworn enemy, the United States. America's current political environment exalts many Communist ideals. There is even compelling evidence connecting the current president to some of the biggest names in America's Communist history.

Herbert Armstrong warned that Communist economics would sap America's strength and weaken its economic power. "Satan is not a visible red devil with tail, horns and a pitchfork," he wrote in the October 1951 *Plain Truth*. "The real Satan is invisible. The world doesn't see him or recognize his works. ... It doesn't grasp the diabolical deception of communism—Satan's economic delusion, employing propaganda based on false economies as its first arm of attack"

The Plot to Abolish the Family

Herbert W. Armstrong warned that Communist subversion would use "every diabolical means" to pervert "our morals," wreck "our social structure," and destroy "our spiritual and religious life."

Perhaps the *most* diabolical of these means is the Marxist plot to destroy the family. *The Communist Manifesto* calls the family a capitalist institution based "on private gain." Marriage, it says, is but the "hypocritical" concealment of private prostitution. The authors hoped and predicted that both "bourgeois family" and "bourgeois marriage" would disappear with the vanishing of private capital.

Throughout the 1960s and into the '70s, Soviet front groups worked throughout America to destroy marriage. Federal Bureau of Investigation informant Larry Grathwohl penetrated the revolutionary Communist group Weather Underground. After palling around with Bill Ayers, Bernardine Dohrn and their crew for months, Grathwohl wrote his report, "Bringing Down America: An FBI Informer With the Weathermen." The report revealed that the Weather Underground network was determined to abolish monogamous marriage, which they viewed as a repressive remnant of male and white supremacy.

In his book *The Naked Communist*, author Willard Cleon Skousen identified 45 Communist goals for the ideological subversion of America. These goals were

read on the floor of Congress on Jan. 10, 1963. Among them are: discrediting the family as an institution; encouraging promiscuity and easy divorce; emphasizing the need to raise children away from the negative influence of parents; promoting pornography; and presenting homosexuality as "normal, natural, healthy."

Under the influence of Marxist philosophy and Soviet subversion tactics, American educators have spent decades trumpeting sexual liberation, militant feminism and homosexual rights. All

"If the United States gets divided too much between the idea of freedom and the idea of communism," he said, "this country could not stand."

America may not have replaced the stars on its flag with hammers and sickles, but it is by now undeniable that it is divided between the idea of freedom and that of communism. The American people long ago rejected God and allowed Satan-inspired Communist philosophy to infiltrate, subvert and divide the nation. God will allow this experience to

"The American romance with state-run education as encouraged by KGB subverters has already produced generations of graduates who cannot spell, cannot find Nicaragua on a world map, cannot think"

Yuri Bezmenov
FORMER KGB AGENT

this has been done under the banner of freedom, but the truth is that these movements have served as Trojan horses in the assault on marriage.

In Karl Marx's words: "Communism abolishes eternal truths, it abolishes all religion, and all morality, instead of constituting them on a new basis; it therefore acts in contradiction to all past historical experience."

Or, in Herbert W. Armstrong's words, "Communism is the VULTURE of decadent, dying politics, religion, and society" (*Plain Truth* subscriber letter, Nov. 24, 1967).

Mr. Armstrong elaborated in a 1979 *World Tomorrow* television broadcast where he again reiterated the biblical truth that Satan actively and invisibly rules the world (2 Corinthians 4:4; Ephesians 2:2). He then quoted a statement by Jesus Christ that becomes very troubling in the light of American society in 2014.

teach America the natural consequences of broken law.

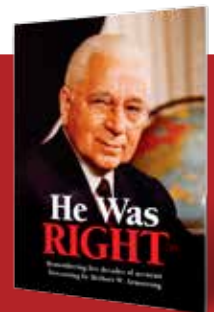
Talk of equality sounds noble, but as Mr. Armstrong warned, the Communist version of "equality" is only a means to an end. "As fostered by the Soviet Union," he wrote in 1949, "communism is launched as a worldwide class struggle, pitting the poorer class against those who have been economically more successful, arousing class prejudice, stirring up race hatreds. While they pretend to stand for peace, they engender only strife, and they feed like a vulture on poverty, discontent, discouragement, confusion and chaos."

He warned, "Communism is the devil's effort, through his demon-inspired human tools, to take from us this greatest national and economic blessing God ever conferred on any people."

Looking at America today, you have to admit that *Mr. Armstrong was right.* ■

Herbert W. Armstrong was right about a whole lot more than communism.

Request our **FREE** booklet *He Was Right* to see all the Bible prophecies he highlighted that are being fulfilled now.



Blessed Union

Marriage has been in decline for decades, yet it still remains the best, happiest, healthiest relationship—not only for the adults but also for the children they create. Check the facts.



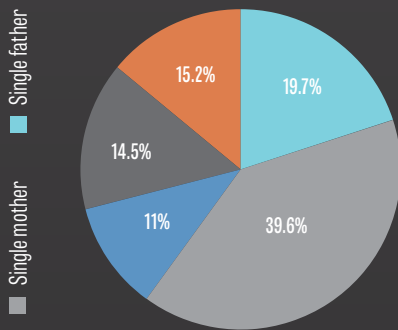
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MARRIAGE BRINGS HAPPINESS

“Married people overall do better on virtually every indicator of health and well-being,” says sociology professor Robin Simon. The facts show that husbands and wives share the intimacy, trust and commitment that leads to stability, self-worth and lasting happiness.

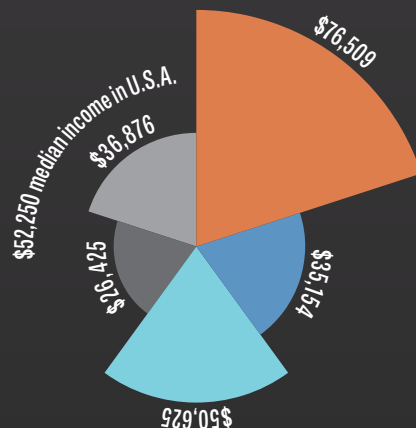
IT BUILDS PROSPERITY

On average, couples who remain together enjoy more financial stability. According to U.S. Census Bureau data, the income gap is not only significant, but over the past four decades, it has increased.



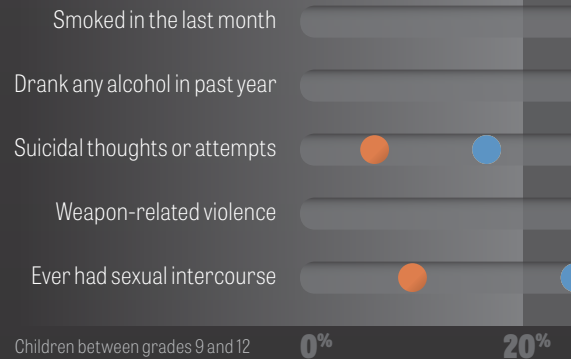
Living in poverty
Divorce and unwed childbearing increase poverty for both mothers and children. On average, married couples build more wealth than singles. Married men earn higher incomes than single men with similar educations and job histories.

Median income
In 2013, the median income for a married couple was more than double that of single men and nearly triple that of single women. Even single-income married families enjoyed higher median family incomes than those of unmarried individuals.

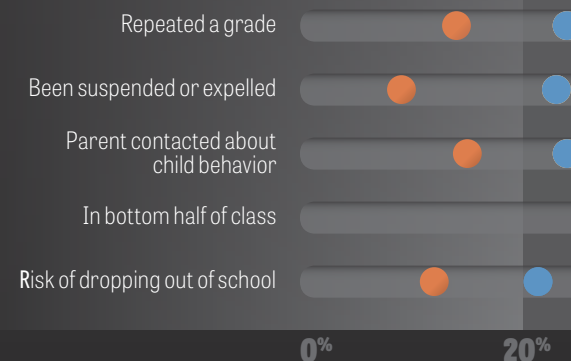


IT BENEFITS CHILDREN

Adolescent high-risk behavior



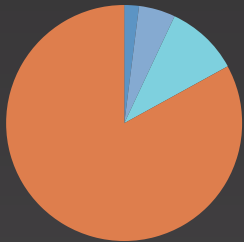
Child's education



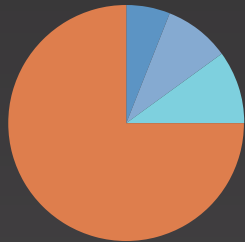
Marriage lowers depression

In a study of 1,805 people living in Ontario, Canada, those who were married experienced less severe depression than their unmarried peers.

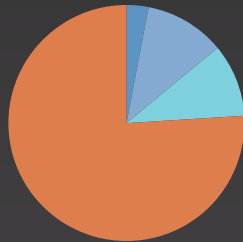
- Mildly depressed
- Moderately depressed
- Severely depressed
- Not depressed



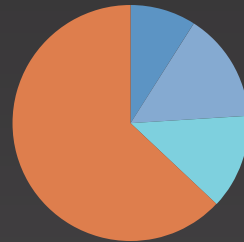
MARRIED MEN



SINGLE MEN

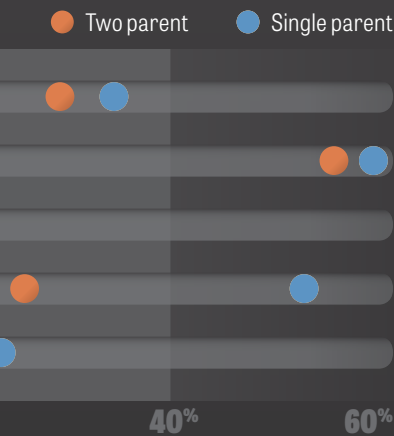


MARRIED WOMEN

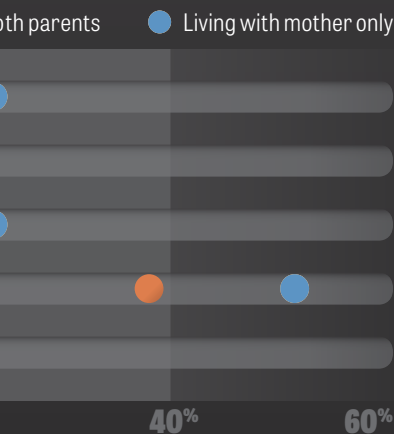
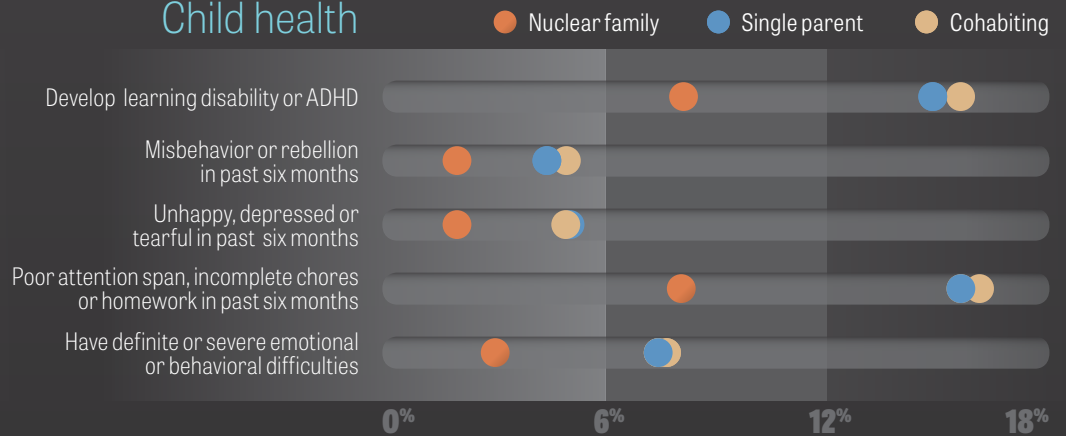


SINGLE WOMEN

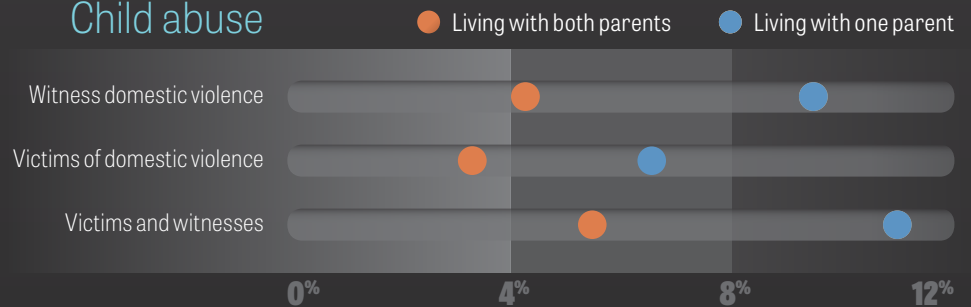
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Child health



Child abuse





The Welfare System That Works

What real compassion for the poor looks like **BY JOEL HILLIKER**

COMPASSION FOR THE POOR IS A DRIVING political issue. Politicians count on winning votes by appealing to voters' desire to end poverty—their own or that of others. And who doesn't want to end this scourge?

Everyone wants to, but no one has done it. Governments have enacted enormous welfare programs to try to feed, clothe, shelter, educate and transport their citizens and even to put cell phones in their hands. In the United States, for example, the welfare state has grown to consume nearly a third of the government's annual budget. In 1965, President Lyndon Johnson launched a massive spending program to eradicate poverty in the world's richest nation. But the program didn't defeat poverty. Instead, it created welfare dependency, laziness and opportunity for fraud.

The American households in the bottom 20 percent of income tell us how the war on poverty is going. In 1960, nearly two thirds of these heads of households worked. But by 1991, only one third of them worked, and only 11 percent worked full-time, year-round.

This helps explain why 45 million Americans (14.5 percent) are still living

below the poverty line. That's down from 19 percent in 1964, but still far from the goal of zero.

What did it cost to reduce the poverty rate by 5.5 percent in the U.S.? The U.S. spends about \$1 trillion a year on close to 200 federal and state welfare programs. Based on Census Bureau data, that amounts to \$16,800 per person in poverty, or over \$50,000 for a family of three. In other words, America spends enough *in cash* to buy every poor person out of poverty!

But openly taking cash from hard-working people and handing it to their neighbors would only create a cycle of dependence and laziness. And modern welfare programs are basically one step removed from that—while adding in a few layers of well-paid government bureaucracy and administration. Even non-government-sponsored welfare programs such as Christian charities can feed this cycle of dependency. Though the generosity is admirable, programs and charities that focus only on the effects are *feeding* the very problem they're trying to eliminate.

The U.S. is far from being alone in its misguided welfare system. The United

Kingdom spends 23 percent of its budget on welfare. On average, the European Union spends a third of its GDP on welfare. The results? The EU poverty rate is 16.4 percent, slightly higher than the rate in the U.S.

So what kind of welfare program would *work* for solving poverty? What kind of program actually helps people without encouraging laziness and dependency? What kind of program addresses the *causes* of poverty? What kind of program can *win* the war on poverty?

God's program.

God has *tremendous* compassion for the poor. He created a detailed and complete welfare system to help those who are needy. It doesn't just get you through the month, it gets you back on your feet, back into work, back into productivity and back into an honorable and respectable role in society. He revealed this system when He directly governed the ancient nation of Israel, and its wisdom still holds true today.

God's welfare laws contrast starkly against those used by our national governments. Most today ignore His laws; many claim them to be unjust, primitive and harsh. But an honest and deeper look shows otherwise. This system reveals fundamental flaws in how human beings concoct welfare apart from God's perfect wisdom. It's a program that *works*.

If You Want to Eat ...

Today's welfare recipients get checks and subsidies in their mailboxes. But God's welfare program encourages the poor to *work*. The Apostle Paul wrote that "if any would not work, neither should he eat" (2 Thessalonians 3:10). This principle is demonstrated in God's instruction to a poor person on how to attain what he needs.

Read God's command in Deuteronomy 23:24-25. God's law stipulates that a needy individual is legally permitted to eat his fill in any of his neighbor's vineyards or fields. He can't harvest anything to take home, but he can eat enough to fill his empty belly. This provided for Israel's poor—*without* any government subsidies or welfare programs.

This principle constantly reminded those of means to keep the poor in mind. God told property-owning Israelites to leave the corners of the field alone; to

leave the ears that fell to the ground while reaping; to leave the imperfect fruits or clusters. These were for the poor and the foreigners who couldn't possess land in Israel. Thus, every time the Israelites reaped their fields, they had to remember their responsibility to the poor (Leviticus 19:9-10).

God doesn't command that we set up soup kitchens, give handouts or issue unemployment checks. He commands the poor to get out and work. If you want a meal, you are welcome to it—but you have to go into the field and pick it yourself.

Modern welfare laws break this law. They take the responsibility away from the neighbor and place it on a vote-hungry government that uses taxation and debt to put—and keep—people on government paychecks, vouchers and subsidies. These policies encourage laziness, welfare dependency and fraud (article, page 11).

Paying for Immorality

Common sense says you get what you pay for. If you subsidize law-breaking, you will end up with more law-breaking. Man's welfare legislation falls into this trap by *rewarding* the poor for breaking God's other laws—on sexual morality, for example. Young men fornicate and procreate without taking responsibility for providing for, loving or even knowing their children. Young women are now financially motivated to bear illegitimate children because they know the state will send checks to take care of them. Unsurprisingly, single mothers are among the biggest recipients of welfare.

Anything that breaks down family increases welfare dependency. Fornication, adultery, no-fault divorce, single motherhood—this law-breaking hurts people financially and creates needier people. Simply keeping God's moral law, which forbids this type of behavior—let alone His economic and welfare laws—drastically decreases the amount of welfare needed in the first place.

Helping Those in Need

DEBT is often what makes poverty absolutely crushing. Here is God's simple solution to this problem: *zero-interest loans*. "If thou lend money to any of my people that is poor by thee, thou shalt

not be to him as an usurer, neither shalt thou lay upon him usury" (Exodus 22:25).

In man's system, debt is big business. Banks give loans primarily to benefit the *bank*. In God's system, loans exist to benefit the *poor*. No one makes money off someone else's debt. Loans are a form of welfare. God wants people to lend to the needy not to *profit* from them, but to *help* them.

In God's system, you cannot earn interest on money you are not using. So you might as well use that extra money to give out small, interest-free loans to those in need. "A culture which has interest-bearing loans encourages a selfish spirit and encourages the hoarding of money where we can make more money from interest.... [A] culture which has zero-interest loans encourages generosity to the poor and a giving spirit" (David James King, *Creating a Nation Under God*).

God's welfare system also includes a safety net to help those who have fallen into poverty get back on their feet. The law in Leviticus 25:35-38 says that if a brother or even a stranger or sojourner "*becomes poor, and falls into poverty,*" then he should be relieved, maintained and strengthened (New King James Version). The law gives two ways to do so: First is the no-interest loan; second is the provision that the poor can buy food "at cost." God's law forbids *making a profit* from selling food to the poor. These laws do much to put a poor person on the road to quick recovery.

In God's system, *children*—not the government or a welfare program—are responsible for caring for their aging parents. Read, for example, the Apostle Paul's discussion about widows in 1 Timothy 5:1-16. A woman's family members—not the church or the government—are responsible before God to provide for her.

"If any one does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his own family, he has disowned the faith and is worse than an unbeliever" (verse 8; Revised Standard Version). Widows without family support are given extra legal protection if they need to borrow money. God commanded His nation to give special attention to the widow and forbade people from taking advantage of her (e.g. Exodus 22:22-24; Deuteronomy 24:17; 27:19).

Encouraging Compassion

What would happen if we kept God's welfare laws? Look at God's promise to the landowner who follows His command in Deuteronomy 24:19: "When thou cuttest down thine harvest in thy field, and hast forgot a sheaf in the field, thou shalt not go again to fetch it: it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow: that *the Lord thy God may bless thee* in all the work of thine hands."

We tend to think that the more we hold on to for ourselves, the more we'll have. But God says it is always more blessed to give than to receive. If you live the way of give, you're setting a spiritual dynamic in motion that will produce more blessings and prosperity. As Solomon wrote, "He that giveth unto the poor shall not lack" and that the "liberal soul shall be made fat: and he that watereth shall be watered also himself" (Proverbs 28:27; 11:25).

Notice the REASON God gave for all these acts of generosity and benevolence in Deuteronomy 24:22. This law aims to build *compassion* in us. God told Israel to remember the agonies of their captivity—so they would have compassion toward those who *remain* in captivity. God wants us to remember our own trials so we have more empathy for others in trial.

These commands show that it is *wrong* to spend every last cent we earn

Little-known laws that could change the world

God gave the nation of Israel a law system that works. It covers crime, tort, labor, health, defense, family, finance and welfare. Read the jurisprudence of humankind's Creator and how it can work in your life.

Request our **FREE** e-book **O How Love I Thy Law**.



on ourselves. God wants us to think about the poor. Christ said the poor would always be among us, and would need help. Keeping these laws helps our society in three ways:

1) *It teaches us to love our neighbor as ourselves.* We must not overlook the person who is in want, or say, *Too bad for them, or, I'll leave their care to the federal government.* We treat them the way we would want to be treated if we fell on hard times.

2) *It keeps the burden of welfare off the state.* Notice that *none* of these welfare laws involve the government. They help the poor without requiring a single penny in taxes for a federal program.

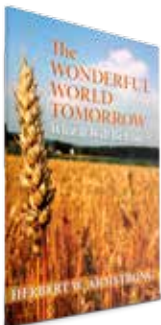
3) *It binds the nation closer together.* In God's system, welfare doesn't funnel through a faceless bureaucracy. God's way forms bonds between the people who give the charity and those who receive it. This benefits both parties.

Think about all of these specific, practical ways God laid down for His nation to care for the poor in its midst. This is a welfare program that works! These laws alone do not eliminate all poverty, but they eliminate much of it, along with the worst of its oppressive nature. They prevent the poor from slipping through the cracks in society.

Also, consider that the government had absolutely no part in any of those laws. In God's system, the *people themselves* take care of their poor! And that creates a much healthier situation—for the poor, and the people, and the government!

Thankfully, this is a system *you* will have the opportunity to see implemented! God promises to reestablish His government and laws on Earth—not just within a single nation, but *worldwide*. The resulting civilization that is built on His moral, religious,

civil and even economic laws will be blessed and prosperous—and will ultimately *win* the war on poverty! To learn more about that fantastic world, soon to come, request a free copy of *The Wonderful World Tomorrow—What It Will Be Like*. ■



Three Misconceptions About Bible Prophecy

Do you believe any of them? **BY DAVID VEJIL**

THROUGHOUT THE AGES, A LOT OF people have said they believe the Bible. Are you part of that group? Did you know *one third* of this holy book consists of prophecy?

The most-read book in world history is largely *prophecy*, a concept you might associate more with apocalyptic movies, mystical books and crazy street preachers, and not with serious thought.

Consider the Bible's table of contents. Out of the 66 books, 18 are named after prophets. Other books contain numerous prophecies. Matthew, for example, contains the Olivet prophecy, which talks about the four horsemen. Genesis contains prophecies about Israel inheriting the Promised Land. 1 Samuel contains prophecies of Jesus Christ and His reign over the Earth. And who can forget the book of Revelation, which is essentially a book about prophecy?

A lot of intelligent people believe in God. Many of them even give the Bible a serious reading. But when this book claims to predict the future, many people reject it outright or skip over to the part about the love of Jesus.

But Jesus Himself was a prophet. So any honest reading of the Holy Bible *has* to answer this unavoidable question: Is Bible prophecy real?

This magazine takes the whole Bible, including prophecy, and applies it to world events. Few other media use Bible prophecy as a criterion for anything. That sounds outlandish to them.

Have *you* ever looked into Bible prophecy? Really studied it? *If* this Book of books predicts that a certain nation will be ruled by a certain administration and will experience a certain fate—and then all of those things *happen*—that changes everything. If Bible prophecy is true, especially if it's true time after time after time without a miss, then an objective mind has to admit: Someone with God-level powers must have inspired the Holy Bible.

Fulfilled prophecy proves that the Bible is God's Word. The only question is, has Bible prophecy been fulfilled?

You need to take an honest look at all the facts and prove whether Bible prophecy is real or if it's a strange collection of wild ideas.

Have you come to believe any of these ideas about prophecy?

A Message for Today

Prophecy is a more serious and reasoned subject than you might initially perceive. Although the Bible encodes it rather than listing it out like a textbook, it is designed to be understood by those to whom God reveals it.

Bible prophecy was written in ancient lifetimes using ancient names for the predecessors of modern nations. One of these ancient identities unlocks prophecy, because every Old and New Testament prophecy revolves around it in some way: the nation of Israel. You can examine the modern identity of ancient Israel by requesting a free copy of our book *The United States and Britain in Prophecy* (or read our article "America's Lost Identity" online at theTrumpet.com/go/11893).

If God is real, and if the Bible is His Word, and if God preserved numerous prophecies for us today, then there is definitely a message in those prophecies we need to understand. And God *does* make that understanding available!

If you want to prove Bible prophecy for yourself, request a free copy of *History and Prophecy of the Middle East*, or download it at theTrumpet.com/go/hpme. This booklet proves one of the most detailed and wide-ranging prophecies in the Bible. It's completely free; you have nothing to lose. ■



ONE Prophets are crazy

Just the word “prophecy” evokes images of doomsday quacks and conspiracy theorists or, at best, shamans who can mysteriously predict or control the future through a blend of practicing mystical arts, studying the stars and/or divining the secrets of ancient books.

But read the Bible, and you’ll see what the prophets were like. They weren’t charlatans, nor were they born into some prophet caste. Many of them didn’t even want the job. “For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy [Spirit]” (2 Peter 1:21).

Moses and Isaiah both protested being used as prophets. Ezekiel was a slave; Daniel was a captive-turned-high-official; Jeremiah was a young priest;

Amos was a herdsman. Jonah outright ran away from the job at first. The one common factor among the dozens of prophets in the Bible is that God drafted them and commissioned them to deliver a message.

The Old Testament word for prophet is *nabi*, which means “one who announces or brings a message from God.” Biblical prophets often delivered unpopular messages drawing significant persecution. Sometimes it even cost them their lives.

Is Bible prophecy true? If it was invented by an assortment of street-corner doomsday preachers—or even by the most intelligent men in history—you could dismiss the concept entirely. No human being can predict the future. But if it was delivered by a range of individuals whose only significant commonality was that they obeyed a higher power, then the subject bears more scrutiny.



TWO Bible prophecy is for old times

According to the Bible, prophets received messages from God and then delivered those messages orally or recorded them—often both. But if they finished the job by delivering the message, why write it down? Why have those messages been preserved for millennia?

It’s not just because these are historical case studies in which inspired men said that something would happen and then it did. There’s another, much more important reason these books were preserved.

A closer look at some of the prophets shows that their prophecies were aimed at a later period, far beyond their lifetimes. For example, the Bible says God gave Ezekiel prophecies about the house of Israel. But Israel had

already been conquered and carried away captive by Assyria over 100 years prior. Ezekiel himself was a Jewish captive in Babylon. He never delivered his message to Israel. Why did God give him the message then?

The Bible provides the answer: It is because the prophecy remains to be fulfilled. This would mean God wrote and preserved advance news not only for the ancients, but for *current* world news! Revelation 1:1 claims that this is exactly the case. Daniel 12:9 specifically says that prophecy is for “the time of the end.” If the Bible is true, *many* prophecies are so much more than ancient predictions that have come and gone. If you piece them all together, the picture that emerges is that they are, in fact, advance warnings of what will happen in *our* lifetimes!



THREE Bible prophecy equals doomsday prophecy

The third misconception is the one that pops immediately to many people’s minds when they hear the word *prophecy*. They envision the state of affairs when prophecies actually do come true: mass destruction. There is a reason for this—but is a heads-up for doomsday the only reason for Bible prophecy?

The Bible predicts the rise and fall of nations and empires. It does specify that many of these falls have been and will be catastrophic. The God of the Bible also prophesies that people will experience terrible personal and national punishments for disobeying and sinning against Him. And yes, Armageddon is in the Bible.

But *even Armageddon* is part of a larger prophecy. When you read what the Bible actually says, you find that the greatest prophecy of all is the advance news of the soon-coming Kingdom of God! God will govern a civilization of peace, happiness, joy and prosperity for those who embrace a relationship with their Creator. Even the events surrounding Armageddon are corrective steps to save humanity from satanic sinfulness and self-destruction.

The Bible actually presents prophecy as an advance chronicle of a great plan God is working out. Although it involves discipline and punishment, the purpose of that plan is ultimately to bring humanity peace and joy so it can reach its fullest potential.



BEARING IT
Russian soldiers in
between hardships

The Amazing Durability of the Russians

The ruble is collapsing. The people are hurting. Western analysts predict another sea change. What does history say? **BY JEREMIAH JACQUES**

AS THE VALUE OF RUSSIA'S RUBLE falters and its economy groans, many Westerners speculate that the discomfort the Russian people feel will become too much for them to withstand. Many say the sliding standard of living will become unbearable, and that it could cause the Russians to turn on President Vladimir Putin.

"[Putin is] facing a full-blown currency crisis that could weaken his iron grip on power," Reuters wrote on December 17. "It looks all over for Putin," Forbes said on December 18, adding that his "days are numbered." Such predictions are popping up all over the Western press.

Will Russia's economic discomfort become more than its people can bear? Will this lead to the end for Putin?

For the answers, let's look back through the annals of Russian history.

From Bleak to Bleaker

It has been said that the history of the Russians can be summarized in five words: "And then it got worse."

Beginning in the 11th century, the majority of Russians lived as serfs in a dreary and oppressive feudal society. They eked out a living in a severe climate, forbidden to own any property or to leave the estates they worked. Many were essentially slaves owned by a slender minority of landowners. Historian Richard Hellie said they "raised and made most of what they had, and had few resources left after paying rent and taxes to buy anything" (*The Economy and Material Culture of Russia, 1600-1725*). Hellie says that, for many years, up to 90 percent of Russia's population lived this punishing existence.

After Czar Alexander II abolished serfdom in 1861, life for the average Russian took a turn ... for the worse.

Serfs hadn't owned land, but most of them only needed to meet a certain quota and then were permitted to keep the remaining crop yields. But after serfdom was abolished, the masses became wage laborers. Everything they grew or produced belonged to the property

owner, and they were compensated with a few kopecks a day. They could barely buy the food they had grown with the wages they'd been paid to grow it.

Alexander had abolished serfdom to assuage the Russian masses and prevent a revolution. But the circumstances created by that abolition only increased revolutionary pressure. In 1905, the pressure exploded into a revolution against Czar Nicholas II. However, because of infighting among the revolutionaries, the czar's power strengthened. Russian nights grew longer, darker and colder.

When it looked as if things couldn't get much worse, World War I broke out.

The Russian Army, large but poorly armed, took the offensive against the German-led Axis. Russian soldiers were often sent to the front lines unarmed and instructed to fight with whatever weapons they could find on the battlefield. Russia lost more people in the Great War than any other nation, but its ill-equipped yet strong-willed soldiers managed to tie down great numbers of enemy troops.

While the Russian soldiers loyal to the czar were fighting at the front, whispers of revolution within the country grew into cries of upheaval. The people had had enough of Russia's gross social inequality, discouraging war losses, deepening economic crises, rampant starvation and monarchy scandals. In 1917, revolutionaries toppled the czarist system.

But the overthrow did not result in a power-to-the-people ending, as had the French and other revolutions. Instead, after five years of savage civil war, the Soviets took power.

Russia then entered a chapter bleaker perhaps than any it had known before.

Joseph Stalin and other leaders orchestrated what is sometimes called "the other holocaust of the 20th century"—the imprisonment, debasement and murder of tens of millions by their own government. Communists herded millions of poorer Russians into collective farms, effectively reintroducing serfdom.

In the midst of this dark Soviet chapter came an even darker inset: World War II.

Russian losses in this largest war ever fought are perhaps best summarized with one tragic statistic: 80 percent of all Soviet males born in 1923 were dead by the end of World War II.

Once again, the Russians lacked enough weapons for all of their soldiers. Many units had only one rifle for every 10 men. The unarmed man trailed the armed one, waited for him to be shot down, then grabbed his gun and fought on. Russian soldiers were known to sometimes clear minefields by marching over them. Upon witnessing these tactics, one German soldier reportedly said he was convinced that the tough-as-nails Russians would win the war.

It was not only soldiers who suffered. In the infamous Siege of Leningrad, Nazi forces surrounded Russia's second-largest city and choked it off in order to starve its residents. For 872 days, shelling was constant; starvation and disease pandemic. After all rats, pets and other animals in the city had been eaten, more than 2,000 starving residents resorted to cannibalism. With more than 1 million dead, it was one of the worst sieges in mankind's strife-ridden history.

The Soviet Union's total number of war dead for World War II exceeded 25 million, once again higher than the losses for any other nation.

After the war ended, Stalin and the other Soviet rulers returned to inflicting the "other holocaust" on the people of the USSR. Historian I.G. Dyadkin estimated that 56 to 62 million people died "unnatural deaths" from 1928 to 1954, and that excludes wartime casualties. Stalin himself admitted to destroying 10 million.

Stalin died in 1953, but the grinding Russian conditions lived on. For decades, the Soviet Union endured the Era of Stagnation, languishing under the yoke of communism and the ice of the Cold War.

Revolution broke out again in 1989, leading to the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Then things got worse.

In the decade following the USSR's collapse, rates of poverty and economic inequality skyrocketed. In the late Soviet era, about 1.5 percent of the population lived in poverty (which means they were earning less than \$25 per month). By the mid-'90s, this number jumped to somewhere between 39 and 49 percent of the population. Russia's economy sank into a deep depression, which, in terms of gross domestic product, was more severe than the Great Depression in the United States. Russia's 1998 financial crisis further exacerbated the difficulties.

Meanwhile, a small class of kleptocratic oligarchs rose up and became obscenely wealthy. In many ways, Russia was again a serf-like state.

In the minds of many Russians, the turmoil and poverty of the 1990s gave democracy a bad name. A large percentage of Russians today agree with President Putin's belief that the fall of the Soviet Union was the "greatest geopolitical catastrophe of the century."

“Russians’ strength is that they can endure things that would break other nations.”

George Friedman
CEO, Stratfor Global Intelligence

The Russians' Strength

Falling oil prices and Western sanctions against Russia for its aggression on Ukraine have pounded the value of the ruble. Russians are suffering. But Russian history shows that its people are no strangers to terrible suffering. For most of them, prosperous times have been the exception, and suffering the norm.

After a recent trip to Moscow, Stratfor's George Friedman said, "There is always the expectation that prosperity will end and the normal constrictions of Russian poverty return. ... Russians' strength is that they can endure things that would break other nations" (Dec. 16, 2014).

One of the few times Russia has enjoyed a reprieve from the "and then it got worse" historical pattern was when Vladimir Putin came to power. From 2001 to 2007, the Russian economy grew by 7 percent per year, and its nominal GDP increased sixfold. In 2005, Russia repaid the last of the Soviet Union's debts. By 2007, Russia had totally overcome the devastating losses of the 1998 financial crisis and the preceding recession in the 1990s.

Under Putin, for the first time in their lives, many Russians owned cars and vacationed abroad. The gains continued for the most part up until the Ukraine crisis over this past year.

Because of the last decade and a half, Russians are fiercely loyal to Putin. Instead of seeing him as the cause of the current troubles, they continue to view him as the solution. A December 18 Associated Press poll found that a staggering

81 percent of Russians still support their president. "The most important event of [2014] has been the regressive transformation of Russian society," the *Moscow Times* wrote on January 14. "The Crimean adventure has driven Russians into a narrow corridor of 'renewed loyalty' to the authorities."

This soaring popularity and renewed loyalty comes in part because Putin has convinced Russians to view their setbacks as noble sacrifices made in the name of the war effort. In December, one Moscow resident told the *Trumpet* that, although Russians are suffering, "The current mood is: 'It'll be fun and scary!'"

People in such a "mood" sacrifice willingly, endure tough times bravely, and are sometimes even willing to march through minefields to clear them out for their comrades following behind.

The Westerners who think the current discomfort will be too much for Russians have made a mistake: They have assumed that the Russian capacity to endure suffering and sacrifice in the name of the nation is roughly equal to that of the average Westerner. In fact, it is far greater. ■

Trumpet editor in chief Gerald Flurry has identified Vladimir Putin as the biblically prophesied "prince of Russia." An in-depth study of the numerous scriptures about this mighty ruler shows that he will very likely survive the current turmoil in Russia and emerge from it even more powerful. To prove this astounding truth for yourself, order our free article "The Prophetic Significance of the Ukraine Crisis," or read it online at theTrumpet.com/go/ukraine.

Making Right Decisions

Using the power of choice

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!

A LOT OF PEOPLE ARE OUT OF WORK THESE days, floundering and unsure of what direction life should take. Many have given up looking for work. One in seven 24-to-34-year-olds in America lives with his parents; and of those, a quarter are *college graduates*—and half don't have full-time work.

Many in this situation admit they feel trapped. They don't want to live at home with Dad and Mom for the rest of their adult lives. They know they don't want to work a minimum-wage job indefinitely. So they remain indecisive. They simply hope for the best, and halfheartedly expect the "perfect opportunities" to eventually seek them out.

What about you? Are you stuck in a dead-end job, but don't know what to do to better yourself?

Know this: Life is filled with decisions—some big, some small. Wrong choices, especially in the more important decisions of life, can cause a great deal of unhappiness and frustration and can sometimes take years to straighten out. If you make **RIGHT** decisions, your life will be happier and you'll have fewer worries and more peace of mind.

But making right choices and wise decisions is not a matter of "luck." It is a matter of knowing and applying the keys to successful decision-making. Few realize that the Bible contains the all-important guidelines we need in order to make wise decisions!

God's Word on Right Decisions

1. What key does the Bible give for making wise decisions? Proverbs 3:5-6. Will God grant wisdom, knowledge and understanding to those who seek them? Proverbs 2:1-6.

God cannot lie, and He never breaks His promises. God will give us wisdom, provided we are seeking to please Him (Psalm 119:99-100).

2. How did Solomon obtain his wisdom? 1 Kings 4:29. (Read also 1 Kings 3:5-13.) Did he compile the book of Proverbs? Proverbs 1:1.

Solomon was the wisest man who ever lived (1 Kings 4:29-34) besides Jesus Christ. Solomon probably became king of Israel at about 18 years of age; yet he recognized the challenges of leadership. He knew he needed wisdom above all else, so he asked for it. God answered his request and gave Solomon wisdom in abundance. Wisdom allowed Solomon to make right decisions for his nation.

3. To what did Solomon compare the essential knowledge, guidance and wisdom contained in God's Word? Proverbs 3:13-15; 8:10-11.

The Bible is much more valuable than all the gold, silver and precious gems in the whole world! It contains principles that can help us make right decisions in all areas of life. God inspired the Bible to be written for our benefit (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

The book of Proverbs is especially full of gold nuggets of understanding. It contains valuable wisdom that can guide us in making decisions that will lead to lifelong success and happiness, including good health, a challenging career, a great marriage, well-balanced children and lasting friendships.

Learn to make right decisions by filling your mind with the Word of God. It is a complete book touching on every facet of human life and conduct. It contains truths and principles that answer nearly any problem you may encounter. The more of God's Word you have mastered, the more apt you will be to make the right decision. The key is to deeply study God's Word so when called on to make a decision, the appropriate scriptures will leap into your mind.

4. Is it important to avoid making reckless or rushed decisions? Notice the principles in Proverbs 4:26; 14:15; 21:5.

A hasty or rash decision can create unnecessary difficulty because you've not really understood the facts. Take time to carefully think about the situation and get all the facts. Analyze the situation from every angle and consider the end result of the various alternatives you might have.

Beware letting others rush you or pressure you into a decision you may regret. They may not always have your best interests in mind.

Realize that from time to time you may be forced into making an emergency decision. In such a circumstance, your only safe stand is to ask, "What would Christ do?" Jesus Christ lived by every word of God (see Matthew 4:4), and that enabled Him to always make wise, Bible-based decisions. He set the perfect example in all things; we should follow His steps (1 Peter 2:21).

Learn From Others

1. Before making major decisions, is it smart to seek advice and counsel from others with knowledge and experience? Proverbs 11:14; 12:15; 15:22; 19:20.

Seeking the input and advice of others can be very helpful in solving a problem or making a big decision. Advice from experienced or knowledgeable people can often guide us in the right direction by giving us ideas we would not think of ourselves. They can often help us recognize the pros and cons of a given decision.

Sometimes what we think would be a right choice or wise decision may not necessarily be the best. That is why counsel is so important. Often others who have gone through similar life experiences and are more than willing to give us guidance to make the right decisions. They want to help us avoid making mistakes that could prove costly and cause many headaches.

2. Is it beneficial to befriend and associate with those who are wise? Proverbs 13:20; 27:17.

A person who has learned to make right decisions seeks friends who are known for their wisdom and good judgment. Such friends can sharpen your understanding and help you make better decisions.

You can also learn vicariously how to make smart decisions by reading autobiographies and biographies of successful men and women. You can glean from their experiences important traits and ways of doing things that you can apply in your life.

3. Did God also have the lives of Old and New Testament personalities recorded so we could benefit from their experiences? Romans 15:4; 1 Corinthians 10:6, 11.

By reading about the lives of the great men and women of the Bible—men such as Noah, Abraham, Moses, David and Christ, and women like Ruth, Rahab, Esther, Hannah and Sarah—we can learn valuable lessons and principles that will help us in making decisions.

‘Count the Cost’

1. Should you carefully “look before you leap” to be sure you are able to follow through with a decision? Proverbs 27:12; Luke 14:28-30.

In making choices such as whether to buy a car or a house, whether to further your education by attending trade school or a university, which career path to follow, whether to marry or whom, whether to have children, and other major life decisions, be sure to sit down to “count the cost” as Jesus said. Consider whether your plans might be premature, financially unwise or beyond your ability to achieve. This is a basic principle of making wise decisions. Don’t plunge in headfirst before testing the waters. The sure road to failure and bad decisions is to rush in ill-equipped and unprepared. Sometimes it is best to hold off on a certain course of action and wait until conditions are more favorable.

2. Has God promised to give us the wisdom we need to make wise decisions if we ask Him? James 1:5-6.



God, the supreme source of wisdom, will guide you as you apply the basic keys to making right decisions, which are revealed throughout the pages of the Bible. He will steer us in the right direction *if* we ASK Him for that help!

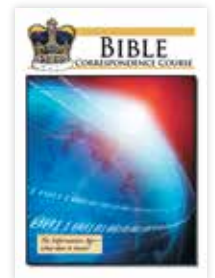
Follow the example of Jesus of Nazareth and make “Thy will be done” a constant way of life (see Luke 11:2). In truly seeking God’s will in all your endeavors, you must pray and ask Him to guide and direct you. Your chances of making wise choices are multiplied many times over when you earnestly look to Him to show you what is right. If you delight yourself in God, commit your life to Him and trust in Him for everything, He WILL give you all the “desires of your heart” (Psalm 37:4-5).

Though we may try our best to follow the keys discussed in this study, we still sometimes will make a bad or unwise decision because of unforeseen circumstances or other factors beyond our control.

When this happens, don’t get discouraged. Chalk it up to experience and learn whatever lessons you can from it. Realize that possibly you didn’t have all the facts and judged the situation prematurely. Perhaps emotions or personal drive, ambition and desire influenced you. Whatever the reason for your wrong decision, glean wisdom from the experience and profit from it.

Remember to study the Bible and ask God for wisdom and help in making right choices. Avoid making rash decisions. Count the cost and be sure to get the facts. Seek counsel and advice from qualified experts. Study the examples of others and learn to emulate their positive traits of character. And remember to make God’s will *your* will in everything.

Abide by the all-important keys outlined in this study and begin to experience the happy, productive and successful life God wants you to have! ■



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.

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



Palestinian Authority leader Mahmoud Abbas speaks about his attempt to obtain recognition of a Palestinian state from the International Criminal Court.

Seeking control of East Jerusalem

HE HAS LITTLE TO SHOW frustrated Palestinians for the 10 years he has led the Palestinian Authority, but Mahmoud Abbas looked to change that on Dec. 29, 2014: He pressed the United Nations Security Council to pass a resolution leading to the establishment of a Palestinian state, and more.

The resolution—the second of its kind—set a strict timetable for negotiations and a one-year deadline to reach a peace deal, demanded Israel’s return to its pre-1967 borders by the end of 2017, called for the establishment of a state of Palestine with East Jerusalem as its capital, and petitioned for an end to settlement building in the West Bank and East Jerusalem.

The resolution won only eight out of the nine Security Council votes needed.

“We didn’t fail,” Abbas told officials at a cultural conference in Ramallah. “[T]he UN Security Council failed us. We’ll go again to the Security Council, why not?” He pledged to “study this with our allies and especially

Jordan ... to submit the resolution again, a third time or even a fourth time.”

The day after the Security Council vote, Abbas signed 20 international conventions, including one regarding the International Criminal Court (ICC). On January 6, the United Nations announced its

acceptance of the Palestinian Authority’s request to join the ICC, which will officially occur on April 1.

Recognition by the ICC will allow Palestinians to pursue war crimes charges against Israel.

Israeli Foreign Ministry spokesman Emmanuel Nahshon called the move “legal warfare, which is not useful to peace.” Noting the Palestinian Authority’s troubling association with the internationally recognized terrorist organization Hamas, Nahshon warned that the PA might find itself as the defendant before the ICC.

Be it via the Palestinian Authority and/or Hamas, Bible prophecy informs us that the Palestinians will violently gain control of East Jerusalem soon (Zechariah 14:2—this is explained in our free booklet *Jerusalem in Prophecy*). Mahmoud Abbas’s efforts are bringing the Middle East closer to that crisis.

Taliban massacres in Afghanistan, Pakistan

JUST WEEKS BEFORE THE United States’ officially ended its combat mission in Afghanistan, a defiant Taliban sent a blood-soaked message mocking the last 13 years of war waged by the U.S.-led coalition against the terrorist group.

On December 13, the Taliban coordinated multiple attacks throughout Afghanistan: A suicide bomber detonated his explosives on a bus packed with soldiers, killing seven; and gunmen mowed down a Supreme Court judge as he went to work, killed 12 minesweepers, and

murdered two American soldiers in an attack near Bagram Airbase.

The worst of the murders came three days later, across Afghanistan’s porous eastern border. Taliban militants stormed a school attended by children of some of the Pakistani soldiers at the Peshawar outpost. The gunmen went from classroom to classroom, murdering nine staff members and 132 children.

During the peak of the war in Afghanistan, about 100,000 U.S. soldiers were

Netanyahu asks for Europe’s help

“ISRAEL IS BEING attacked by the very same forces that attack Europe. Israel stands with Europe. Europe must stand with Israel,” Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu stated on January 8, just after terrorist attacks in France had left 17 people dead over a three-day period.

On January 11, Netanyahu participated in the biggest march in French history to honor the victims of the attacks. He joined about 40 world leaders and over 4 million people.

As Israel’s relationship with the United States grows cold, Netanyahu is looking to Europe for support. This call to Europe could lead to the fulfillment of Hosea 5:13, which prophesies of an alliance between Israel and Germany. But biblical prophecy says this alliance will not bring Israel the peace it seeks, but the opposite.



The horrifying murder scene at a Pakistani school

deployed, but that number is down to 10,600 and will be reduced by about half that number by the end of the year. But the Taliban is making it clear that the American military did not complete its mission.

For more information, read our January 2015 article “Buried in Afghanistan” at theTrumpet.com/go/12250.



Bundeswehr honor guard soldiers prepare to welcome Georgia's defense minister in October.

Germany wants European army

ONE OF GERMANY'S MAIN governing coalition partners has declared it wants to be the "driving force in Europe of a parliamentary-controlled European army," German-Foreign-Policy.com reported December 8. According to the report, military experts of the Social Democratic Party (SPD) group in the Bundestag, Germany's parliament, have produced a position paper calling for a European Union military academy and a permanent military headquarters.

The authors of the paper recognize Germany as an international powerhouse economically, but decry its foreign and military policies. These policies, said the SPD's defense policy spokesman Rainer Arnold, are "urgently in need of improvement."

Germany already is independently involved in bilateral and multilateral projects with other European militaries. Brigades from national armies are joining with the Bundeswehr and coming under the command of the German Army. "Never before has a state renounced this elementary and integral part of its sovereignty," wrote *Die Welt's* political editor, Thorsten Jungholt.

The Germans also want to consolidate the defense

industry. In an October 8 speech to the German Council on Foreign Relations, the German minister of the economy requested an EU armament industry based primarily in Germany, but stipulated that the main requirement is that the armament industry be independent of the United States.

Greek exit possible, euro dives, Germany unfazed

F EARS OF THE "GREXIT"—Greece's exit from the eurozone—triggered a drop in the value of the euro to a nine-year low on January 5. But not everyone is panicking.

Since 2010, Greece has submitted to severe budget cuts in order to receive more than €100 billion (US\$115.5 billion) in bailout funds from the eurozone, the European Central Bank and the International Monetary Fund. But some Greeks are increasingly expressing their resentment toward austerity. Greece's anti-austerity party, Syriza, has surged in popularity. It is possible that Greece will choose to, or be pressured to, leave the eurozone.

Were Greece to leave the euro and default on its bailout debt, Germany—Greece's biggest

lender—could lose about €66 billion. But German Chancellor Angela Merkel no longer thinks a Grexit would be too risky for the 19-member eurozone after all, according to unnamed officials referenced by *Der Spiegel*. It appears a Greek exit would benefit Germany in some ways. If Greece leaves the eurozone, it could throw the currency bloc into turmoil as investors wonder if the euro project might disintegrate. If investors flee, the value of the euro would plummet relative to other currencies. A lower euro valuation makes European exports less expensive for foreigners, allowing European manufacturers to sell more products around the world. And the European country that is by

more responsibility around the world."

German Vice President of the European Parliament Alexander Graf Lambsdorff said that "only a European approach" to military issues can keep the "economic giant" that is Germany from remaining "a political dwarf, when it involves seriously defending Western values and interests."

Germany's dream of a European super-army controlled from Berlin and independent of America is now beginning to become a reality, and should startle Western policymakers. The last time Germany attempted to exert its influence upon the world, all did not go well.



far the largest manufacturer and exporter is Germany.

After Merkel's alleged comment became public, Berlin said it hadn't changed policy and that it still expects Greece to fulfill its obligations to the European Union.

Much of the reporting about the possible Grexit revolves around its economic effects. But the *Trumpet* notes that the most significant factor is not the billions of euros saved or lost, but the effect of the financial crisis on politics. The faltering eurozone could lead to a radical change in the political landscape of Europe.



Russia's Putin (left) and China's Xi meet in Beijing in November at an APEC summit.

With a friend like China, who needs the IMF?

PARIAH NATIONS FACING economic turmoil no longer need to bow to Western demands in order to access loans and capital markets. Now they can instead turn to China.

Recent currency-swap deals between China and economically isolated nations like Russia, Argentina and Venezuela demonstrate that China is presenting itself as a viable alternative to the West and its International Monetary Fund (IMF).

On December 20, Chinese authorities announced they would expand a \$24 billion, three-year currency-swap deal Beijing had signed with Moscow in October. The deal allows Russia to borrow the Chinese yuan and lend its faltering ruble. Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi said Russia possesses “the capability and the wisdom to overcome the existing hardship in the economic situation.” But he added, “If the Russian side needs, we will provide necessary assistance within our capacity.”

China is eager to help Russia in part because it views its neighbor to the north as something of a kindred spirit.

Jin Canrong, the associate dean of the School of International Studies at Renmin University in Beijing, said, “Many Chinese people still view Russia as the big brother, and the two countries are strategically important to each other” (Bloomberg News, Dec. 22, 2014). Back in May,

the two nations signed the largest business transaction in human history—a 30-year, \$400 billion gas deal. Other massive deals have followed.

China can afford to give such support because it is the world’s largest economy, according to the IMF’s latest purchasing-power parity calculations. It has amassed \$3.89 trillion worth of foreign exchange reserves, also the largest on the planet. Lending this type of aid to enemies of the West is a symbol of China’s power. It gives China an opportunity to practice “big-country diplomacy,” as President Xi Jinping said in November. China is eager to augment its political clout because it will help it challenge the West, particularly the United States.

China has similarly helped Argentina with \$2.3 billion worth of currency-swap deals since October.

The South American nation has been internationally isolated for reneging on its financial obligations in 2001, and it has found China an alternative to the IMF. Economically sanctioned Venezuela has enjoyed \$4 billion of credit from China since November.

Obviously, China is not in the charity business. In exchange for its assistance, it receives vital natural resources to feed its economy. By helping Russia and Venezuela, China gains cheap natural gas and crude oil.

But more significantly, helping pariah nations gives China critical alliances that will ultimately undermine the U.S. and even challenge a resurging Europe. For more information about where these developments are leading, read our January 2015 article “[The Russia-China Axis Is Here.](#)”

Japan insists on constitutional revision

SHINZO ABE WAS reelected as Japan’s prime minister on December 24 and reiterated his pledge to rewrite the country’s pacifist constitution. The issue of constitutional revision has divided the Japanese public, but more than 80 percent of the nation’s parliament now favors it. Constitutional revision, Abe said, is his most “cherished wish.”

Is it a noble wish? Japan’s pacifist constitution was written by American leaders just after World War II. Japan had just committed some of the worst brutality

in human history. The fanaticism was fueled largely by Japan’s belief that Emperor Hirohito was a god destined to rule the world. State Shinto became the national religion, promoting an ideology of Japanese racial superiority and the notion that



Shinzo Abe

Hirohito was a divinity.

After the war, America wanted to ensure that such fanaticism would not rise again, so it wrote the post-war constitution to include Article 9, a clause outlawing war as a means for Japan to settle international disputes. It also outlawed

emperor worship and disbanded State Shinto.

Abe is part of the Shinto Association of Spiritual Leadership and the Nippon Kaigi. Besides working to scrap Article 9, these groups also want to blur the separation of religion and state and restore lost Japanese values. Last October, Abe became the first Japanese prime minister since World War II to attend a ceremony at the Ise Shrine that celebrated the emperor’s divine ancestry. If Abe’s “cherished wish” comes true, it could revive the intoxicating combination of nationalism, Shinto myth and militarism among this great—and potentially dangerous—people.

Traditional families declining

TRADITIONAL FAMILIES IN America continue to decline, according to a December 2014 Pew Research Center survey.

In 1960, 73 percent of children lived with both biological parents, while 9 percent lived with a single parent. By 2013, children living with both biological parents dropped to 46 percent, and children in single-parent homes increased to 34 percent. Less than half of American children know what it is like to live with both Dad and Mom.

Having children out



of wedlock is becoming increasingly popular. Since 1960, the percentage of children born to unmarried parents has jumped from 5 to 41 percent.

Traditional families positively affect the development and education of children. Children of married couples are better off economically, more stable mentally, more successful academically, and even healthier—even throughout adulthood (infographic, page 18).

“The empirical claim that no notable differences exist must go,” Mark Regnerus, an associate sociology professor at the University of Texas at Austin, said in his controversial 2012 study in *Social Science Research*. “[C]hildren appear most apt to succeed well as adults when they spend their entire childhood with their married mother and father, and especially when the parents remain married to the present day.”

As “Marriage From a Child’s Perspective,” a June 2002 Child Trends research paper, said, “[I]t is not simply the presence of two parents, as some have assumed, but the presence of two biological parents that seems to support children’s development.”

The traditional family is under threat in America—and other Western nations—and as a consequence, so is the strength of the nation. Strong family is the foundation on which strong countries are built. Once we start chipping away at that foundation, we seriously undermine the nation’s strength. To learn more about the profound ramifications of this trend, request a free copy of our booklet *Redefining Family*.



One small emergency away from the street

MOST AMERICANS ARE only one paycheck away from the street, according to a survey reported by MarketWatch on January 10. The survey of 1,000 adults found that approximately 62 percent of Americans have no emergency savings for things such as a \$1,000 emergency room visit or a \$500 car repair.

A 2014 U.S. Federal Reserve survey involving more than 4,000 adults made similar discoveries. “Savings are depleted for many households after the recession,” it found; 57 percent of household had used up some or all of their savings during and after the recession. Only 39 percent

said they had enough money in a rainy day fund to cover three months of expenses. Furthermore, more than half of the respondents said they could not finance a hypothetical emergency expense costing \$400 unless they sold something or borrowed the money.

Andrew Meadows, the producer of *Broken Eggs*, a documentary about retirement, found that one of the biggest reasons people aren’t saving is because they’re in debt from the 2007 recession. “People are still feeling the heat from the Great Recession,” he said.

Pew Research Center released a report in December 2014 that calculated

the net worth of American families—that is, their total assets minus their liabilities—since the recession began. In 2007 it was \$135,700, but by 2013 it had dropped 40 percent to \$81,400.

Most Americans still keep a household budget though. The Bankrate survey showed that in 2012, 60 percent of Americans had a budget. Now that figure has jumped to 82 percent. Claes Bell, a banking analyst at Bankrate, said this is good, but he also pointed out that “too few have the ability to cover expenses outside their



budget without going into debt or turning to family and friends for help.” This means a critical element of their budget is missing—an emergency fund.

However, there is an even more important element in successful budgeting that almost everybody misses. To find out what that is, request a free copy of our booklet *Solve Your Money Troubles!*

Europe's leaders. We could see influential Europeans push to repair relations with Russia. Remember, sanctions are a two-way street. And it is Europe, not America, that is bearing the brunt of the Russian sanction pain.

Russia will also continue its asymmetrical warfare against America. On December 20, China and Russia agreed to a \$24 billion currency-swap program, which will help Russia mitigate the West's sanctions.

Perhaps more threateningly, Russia has also announced the creation of a money-transfer system outside of the U.S.-controlled SWIFT electronic payment system. *This is an attack on the dollar's status as the world's reserve currency.*

SWIFT is the method by which banks transfer money and convert it to dollars for payment. Without access to this system, nations essentially have to revert to barter. In August, British Prime Minister David Cameron publicly asked for Russia to be kicked out of the system. Russian Deputy Finance Minister Alexey Moiseev promptly responded by saying Russia's own alternative system would go

live in May 2015 if Europe and America followed through. If China, the world's number one exporting nation, could be convinced to use the Russian system, this could reduce demand for dollars.

The West's sanctions, coupled with the falling oil price, is driving Russia and China together in a way that otherwise would probably have been impossible. Geopolitically, this is a game changer.

The last time the world had to deal with a Russia whose eastern flank was secure was the outbreak of World War II.

A Russia with a secure eastern frontier makes Putin a very dangerous man.

America's war on Russia may seem to be working today—but it is actually backfiring. Far from defanging Russia, it is more akin to poking it with a stick. Once the Ukrainian crisis blows over, Putin will be free to get far more involved in European relations.

Keep Your Eyes Open

2015 is off to an explosive start. And prophetically, it may be a world-changing year. Some of the most dramatic prophecies in the Bible appear to be coming to fruition at race-car velocities, *accelerated*

by plunging oil prices. Longtime *Trumpet* readers will recognize them.

The “kings of the east” are cooperating in unprecedented fashion as oil prices and sanctions push Russia and China into each other's arms. A desperate Russia, led by a dictatorial strongman (known in the Bible as the “prince of Rosh”), is frightening Europe. The “king of the north,” a prophesied European superpower composed of 10 nations or groups of nations, is coalescing around Germany for defense. The Bible says these kings will be led by a strongman (from Germany) who will lead Europe to world war once again.

Meanwhile, the Middle East is fracturing into its two prophesied power blocs. The first group is composed of Arab nations, including Saudi Arabia, that will ally with Germany. The second is the “king of the south,” which the *Trumpet* has identified as Iran leading the radical Islamic camp. Low oil prices are devastating Iran's economy. Will Iran attempt something radical to drive oil prices back up—perhaps launch a nuclear weapon? High oil prices strike directly at the economies of Europe. Daniel 11:40 says the king of the south will “push” at the king of the north, who will respond like a whirlwind. How much will oil as a weapon play in this push?

(You can prove all of these prophecies by requesting free copies of our article “The Ukraine Crisis Was Prophesied” and our booklets *Russia and China in Prophecy*, *Germany and the Holy Roman Empire* and *The King of the South*.)

Low gas prices may give some people happy feelings, but beneath the surface is a world of cut-throat geopolitics in which nations are fighting for power and survival. Over the long term, supply and demand do drive price. But right now we are in a world in which oil production is a weapon of war—a tool to batter enemies into submission. Enjoy the \$2-per-gallon gas while it lasts. ■

What to watch for in ...



UNITED STATES Low oil prices will help the economy, but many oil companies will be pushed toward bankruptcy. This could lead to banking crisis.



CHINA Unmitigated winner. Low oil prices will help shore up its economy. Politically, Russia will crave Chinese support in order to survive.



EUROPE Cheap oil gives a significant economic boost—but sanctions are hurting European businesses, especially those with large operations in Russia. Watch for Europe to try to reach a compromise with Putin. Also watch for a core of European nations to bolt themselves onto Germany for protection from Russia.



SAUDI CLAN Low oil prices are making big enemies in Iran and Russia and may cause nations like Venezuela and Nigeria to default on debt. This could cause investors to reconsider investments in other emerging markets. If they pull out, borrowing costs could jump, igniting debt crises in vulnerable countries. Debt crises have a tendency to spread.



IRAN Danger levels are shooting up. What will Iran do to boost oil prices? In the face of Western hostility, watch for Russia to support Iran, and even offer diplomatic cover for radical action. Cheap oil may spur Iran to go nuclear more quickly.



RUSSIA Putin is a wild card. It makes sense for him to de-escalate tensions with Europe to buy time to expand ties with China and secure Russia's eastern flank. But the ruble has lost value, sanctions are hurting the economy, and Russia could descend into severe recession. Sometimes desperate situations lead to dramatic actions.

Stay on top of the trends

Visit theTrumpet.com and get the news analysis you need to understand your world.

A Secret to Happiness

Learn not just to cope with frustrations, but to actually appreciate them.

LIFE CAN BE FRUSTRATING. BUT GOD WANTS YOU TO BE HAPPY. Yes, He wants you to learn and grow, and sometimes that requires allowing you to struggle and to exercise patience. But God can give you contentment, even *as you struggle*.

The Apostle Paul set an admirable example in this regard. He had an agonizing ongoing physical ailment (2 Corinthians 12:7). He desperately desired God to remove it (verse 8). God's answer to his earnest plea was, "My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness" (verse 9). *Don't worry about your weakness*, God said. *Focus on MY strength!*



STEPHEN FLURRY

How did Paul respond? "Most gladly therefore will I rather *glory in my infirmities*, that the power of Christ may rest upon me," he said. "Therefore *I take pleasure in infirmities*, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for *when I am weak, then am I strong*" (verses 9-10).

To those who spend their lives trying to avoid every discomfort, this outlook seems impossible—or crazy. But it isn't. Paul accepted that he would have to live with this weakness. Once he acknowledged that, his whole attitude changed. He viewed the trial as an opportunity for God to work things out. He appreciated that it would keep him humble. When Paul saw God's power at work, he actually became *grateful* for his infirmity.

Can you view your weaknesses as opportunities, the way Paul did?

Paul encouraged us to always think on the positive (Philippians 4:8). He set the example in doing so (verse 9). He explained, "I have learned, *in whatsoever state I am*, therewith to be content" (verse 11).

Contentment was something Paul *learned*. For a long time, he woke up day after day—maybe year after year—with the same affliction, and was frustrated and discouraged. But over time, he learned how to cope with it, even to the point of *rejoicing* in it!

"I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound; in any and all circumstances I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and want" (verse 12; Revised Standard Version). This is the secret! This is how to face your circumstance, whatever it is: Learn how to be content.

Note the element of *time* involved in this formula. It takes time to ripen this fruit of contentment. "Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him" (Psalm 37:7). "[T]hose that wait upon the Lord, they shall inherit the earth ... and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace" (verses 9, 11). That is where true contentment leads. Godliness *with contentment* is great gain (1 Timothy 6:6).



Whether abased or abounding, Paul learned to thank God. Our human nature is the opposite. Whether abased or abounding, it always wants to *get*. It frets and strives and agonizes to get more for *self*. If and when we get it, we want *more*. And we want it all *right now*.

We want the best job, the fancy car, the nice home, the passionate romance. But unbridled desire only spirals into endless frustration and failure. Discontentment with your savings account, your location, your education, your health, your singlehood or anything else actually dishonors God and betrays a lack of faith. It also leads to impatience and frustration that cause you to make terrible life decisions.

Live by God's Word instead: "Delight thyself also in the Lord; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart. Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass" (Psalm 37:4-5).

Day after day, month after month, trust in God. Rest assured that continually putting yourself in God's hands will yield good results in the end. "For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not" (Galatians 6:8-9). Don't allow yourself to get overanxious for a quick return. Let patience work its perfect work (James 1:4).

"Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee" (Hebrews 13:5). Put God first, and then be content with what He provides.

We often think, *If I could just change this one circumstance, if I could just get this one thing I really want right now, my life would be fine and I would be content*. But if and when you get the new device, the promotion, the respect, or whatever it is that you crave, you find that the discontentment has followed you right into your new circumstance!

Learn to *be content* in your present state. Delight in God, commit your way to Him, trust in Him—and He will give you the desires of your heart!



“I am thrilled that you are taking your work to England. ... I am so grateful that I found you. God speed!”

Gail

The February *Trumpet* focused on Britain, a power that once ruled one quarter of Earth's land surface and one out of every five human beings. Since the Bible consists of approximately one third prophecy, it would be curious for Scripture to ignore that empire's rise (and fall). But it doesn't. The *Trumpet's* recent expansion into England (above) is largely about telling the amazing story of the British people and broadcasting the message of *The United States and Britain in Prophecy*. To get your copy, go to theTrumpet.com/go/USBP.



The Trumpet Weekly—Optimized

The week's most important news, anywhere you go
theTrumpet.com/go/TWsubscribe

What's so important about Britain?

Thank you for this article (“Why ‘the Britain Issue,’” theTrumpet.com/go/12318). I read it as a monologue from you to the people of British descent wherever they reside. It is very emotional. As I read, the tears swelled up as they did when I first read Mr. Armstrong's first little booklet *The United States and Britain in Prophecy* in 1966. I am trusting this message will reach more and more people in the British Isles.

Graham Beck
 Australia

I highly recommend reading and re-reading *The United States and Britain in Prophecy* book. When I first read it some years ago it literally changed my life

Aria Turner
 Louisiana

To be British

It is so painful to see the way the thinking has changed (“To Be or Not to Be ... British,” theTrumpet.com/go/12321). I grew up with people I knew and television shows or movies, cartoons and songs praising the history of Great Britain and full of love of our own country. I was so proud and admired all this glorious history. Now I see such a turn in thinking. The world now only praises other cultures and criticizes the American and British. Why don't we love all the wonderful things these two nations have done for the world? It's nice to learn what is behind that.

Becky Diesner
 California

What a wonderful article. I've read *The United States*

and Britain in Prophecy, and although it has many bad things waiting for the British people because of their sins to God, it is filled with the most wonderful news for the British people. ... I'm from the UK, and I tell people of what is going to happen, but they just laugh or say, “It couldn't happen to us.” I pray for them all.

Mike
 United Kingdom

Detect self-deception

It seems that if we just do what God says, it becomes easier to do even more (“Are You Deceiving Yourself?,” theTrumpet.com/go/12328). ... Now I want to do even more. I am happier as an individual, no longer just hearing, but doing the work that God would have me do. I heard aspects of these scriptural admonitions in another study and found I can no longer sit this one out on the fence. Doing what God says is an acquired taste. Once you get enough, your appetite for the good things He fills you with, your taste and habits change for the better as well.

Arthur Ward

Thank you for this direct, straightforward solution. The message was straight to the point, blunt, and so easy to understand. We must obey and follow God's Word by being not only hearers, but doers. If we just obey and do, God will reward us and will rain down blessings on us. Thank you for this corrective and awesome article. May God bless you for warning us. I will read this often to help me not deceive myself. What a great, simple test we can use on a daily basis.

Michelle Montgomery
 Virginia

Choose: Hard Work? Or Comfy Gratification?



reward single mothers more than intact families. And since they subsidize it, they get more of it: Britain's wel-

Why the counterintuitive choice is the right one

AMERICA, 1860S. ON HIS FAMILY'S FARM IN UPSTATE NEW York, 9-year-old Almanzo Wilder grows up—working. He embraces considerable responsibility, and he yearns for more. Then the boy receives an offer of apprenticeship from the owner of the wagon shop in town.

Almanzo's father explains to him the benefits of the shop job versus farming: an easier life, shelter from the weather, fewer worries, plenty to eat, money in the bank. "But there's the other side, too, Almanzo," James Wilder says. "You'd have to depend

on other folks, son, in town. Everything you got, you'd get from other folks. A farmer depends on himself, and the land and the weather. If you're a farmer, you raise what you eat, you raise what you wear, and you keep warm with wood out of your own timber. You work hard, but you work as you please, and no man can tell you to go or come. You'll be free and independent, son, on a farm."



JOEL HILLIKER

That comes from Laura Ingalls Wilder's biographical book *Farmer Boy*. I got somewhat emotional reading it to my children the other day. Partly because of the touching interchange between a manly father and his son. And partly because of how foreign, how remote from life today.

There was a time in "the land of the free" when *this* was freedom. Being free to work, to provide for your family, free from dependence on others. Today, "freedom" has come to mean nearly the opposite. People seek freedom from responsibility. Freedom from consequences for inaction and failure. Freedom from having to work, provide, contribute, give or serve. The country that ascended the mountain to greatness has been transformed from rugged, moral and hard-working into soft and decadent. A 9-year-old is way ahead if he is responsible enough to make his own bed.

And the wagon shop apprentice is a self-sustaining stalwart compared to our extreme dependency. Folks in town who make things people need are the *least* dependent among us; they're generating wealth in the private sector. Beside them America has millions of people on federal, state and local government payrolls, comprising the biggest sector of the national economy. Additional millions are even more dependent, living on handouts from myriad government social programs, welfare, continuous unemployment benefits, nationalized retirement funds and health-care entitlements. Even our once free and independent farmers live off federal subsidies.

In Britain the millstone of socialist entitlements is even heavier. And evidence shows these programs create as many problems as they purport to solve. Misguided welfare policies

reward single mothers more than intact families. And since they subsidize it, they get more of it: Britain's welfare system has patently created a surge in broken homes. Britain pays 2.6 million people for being sick and incapable; over half a million of them are thought to be *able* to work, but unwilling. A hundred thousand on sick benefit are between ages 16 and 24. Three fourths of these youngsters are suspected of faking their sicknesses. And 20 percent of them have been receiving this money for at least five years. Unsurprisingly, the nation is also suffering an exploding epidemic of 16-to-24-year-olds who aren't going to school and aren't working—and a simultaneous epidemic of youth antisocial and even criminal behavior. If he could have paused from his labor and peered into this future, Almanzo Wilder would have been incredulous.

Government tends to create dependents in order to justify and amplify its own existence. It promises the kind of freedoms Anglo-Americans have come to crave—freedom from responsibility, from work, from consequences. But the more we depend on government, the more we surrender our *actual* freedom—and compromise our character, and shrink within the confines of childhood in the shadow of the nanny state. This is one reason we have legions of grown men less capable, trustworthy and productive than the 9-year-old farmer boys of yesteryear.

Behold this regrettable manifestation of a pack of lies we promote and believe today: that honest work is a curse and idleness a blessing; that happiness comes from materialism; that luxuries are a birthright; that redistributing wealth is only fair; that it is more blessed to receive than to give. Now, one in five Americans say the *most practical way* to amass wealth and the *best hope* of financial security is to *win the lottery*. Among those who make less than \$25,000 per year, it's two in five. Not to work hard, or save, or invest soundly, or contribute a useful product or service to the free market—but to flush money down a whirlpool of impossibility and cross your fingers.

Nonsense. Don't believe the propaganda that life gets better only when it gets easier. Return to the Bible-based wisdom that helped build our nations. Give honest labor for honest wages. Turn down unnecessary handouts; shun get-rich-quick schemes (Proverbs 28:19-20, 22). Curb materialistic covetousness; live within your means. Apply yourself, be diligent and industrious (Proverbs 10:4). Commit to principled business conduct: fair transactions that benefit both buyer and seller. Take responsibility for your own (1 Timothy 5:8). Make God your partner, obey His laws, and give Him His tithe (Psalm 1:1-3; Malachi 3:10).

This is the most practical way to build wealth, the best hope of financial security. Follow this wisdom, and you'll enjoy a considerable measure of *actual* freedom. And God promises in Joshua 1:8, "then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success."

espionage facility, a massive listening post for intercepting communications.”

THAT “MASSIVE LISTENING POST,” SO CLOSE TO THE U.S., COULD MAKE THE CYBERWAR FAR MORE DANGEROUS!

When you consider what the Vatican is doing, you see how the Holy Roman Empire could also get control of that espionage facility.

Hackers recently attacked the U.S. Central Command Twitter page. This prompted Ron Fournier of the *National Journal* to say, “We can be brought to our knees over the Internet”!

Ezekiel 7:14 is an end-time prophecy indicating that will happen! Can you imagine America, the great superpower, being attacked, and not even responding?

Here is a critical point that most people overlook. George Friedman wrote in Stratfor’s *Geopolitical Weekly* Dec. 23, 2014: “After the Soviet Union tried to deploy intermediate range ballistic missiles there, a new layer was created in which Cuba was a potential threat to the American mainland, as well as to trade routes.”

The Bible prophesies of a deadly economic *siege* that is going to strike America. It is one third of the terrifying damage that will be suffered in the Great Tribulation. THAT SIEGE IS ABOUT SOMEBODY CONTROLLING “TRADE ROUTES”—SO IT IS NOT DIFFICULT TO SEE HOW CUBA COULD PLAY A STRATEGIC ROLE IN THAT. Our booklet *He Was Right* explains this in detail. (See the back cover of this magazine for more details. All of our literature is free.)

The German-led European Union is the seventh and final resurrection of the Holy Roman Empire—that same Holy Roman Empire which, centuries ago, used Cuba so powerfully to fuel its wars. If the present resurrection were to move into Cuba again, it would be well positioned to make these kinds of attacks happen. The advantage is that it could do it in the cloak of secrecy, since Cuba is essentially a police state with tight controls on information. Think of the control that it could have. Think of how valuable Cuba has been to America’s enemies in the past! You need to watch what is happening in Cuba.

Jeremiah 30 prophesies about God bringing the Great Tribulation on end-time Israel, which is modern-day America and Britain and other countries. (To prove this, request our free book *The United States and Britain in Prophecy*.)

The Bible shows that this will all happen quickly. And we are getting so close to this time!

The seventh resurrection of the Holy Roman Empire is apt to burst on the world scene in 2015 or 2016. It will have similar ambitions to what Charles V and the fourth resurrection had, and all its other resurrections. And that includes the sixth one under the political rule of Adolf Hitler!

The seventh head will cause many problems in this world. BUT IT ALSO USHERS IN THE BEST NEWS THIS WORLD HAS EVER HEARD!

That empire is going to fight Jesus Christ when He returns. Christ will destroy the Holy Roman Empire and usher in world peace, prosperity and joy forever. MANY Bible prophecies tell us of this wonderful event! ■



Philadelphia Trumpet editor in chief
Gerald Flurry appears each week on *The Key of David* explaining the meaning behind world events and teaching the inspiring truths of the Bible. The program is also available at keyof david.com.



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 UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED

UNITED STATES

Nationwide Satellite

Galaxy 3 Trans. 17 11:30 ET, Tue/Thu

Galaxy 3 Trans. 21 11:30 ET, Tue/Thu

Direct TV

CW Plus, Chan. 34, 9:30 ET/PT, Sun

Discovery, Chan. 278, 6:30 ET/PT, Sun

ION, Chan. 305, 6:00 ET, Fri

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

Dish Network

Discovery, Chan. 182, 6:30 ET/PT, Sun

ION, Chan. 216, 6:00 ET, Fri

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

Nationwide Cable

CW Plus, 9:30 ET/PT, Sun

Discovery, 6:30 ET/PT, Sun

ION, 6:00 ET, Fri

WGN, 8:00 ET, Sun

Alabama, Birmingham WPMH 5:00, Fri;

WVUA 1:00 p.m., Sun

Dothan WTVY-DT 8:30, Sun

Mobile WFGX 7:30, Sun

Montgomery WBMM-DT/WVCF-DT 8:30, Sun

Alaska, Anchorage KYUR-DT 8:30, Sun

Fairbanks KATN-DT 8:30, Sun

Juneau KJUD-DT 8:30, Sun

Arizona, Phoenix KPPX 5:00, Fri;

KAZT 8:00, Sun

Yuma KEYC-DT 8:30, Sun

Arkansas, El Dorado KNOE-DT 8:30, Sun

Fayetteville KHBS-DT/KHOG-DT 8:30, Sun

Fort Smith KHBS-DT/KHOG-DT 8:30, Sun

Jonesboro KJOS 8:30, Sun

Rogers KHBS-DT/KHOG-DT 8:30, Sun

Springdale KHBS-DT/KHOG-DT 8:30, Sun

California, Bakersfield KGET-DT 9:30, Sun

Chico KHSL-DT 9:30, Sun; KRCR 9:00, Sun

El Centro KEYC-DT 8:30, Sun

Eureka KUVU-LP/KVIQ-DT 9:30, Sun

Los Angeles KPXM 6:00, Fri;

TVCLT-Bilingual, 7:30 Sun

Monterey KION 9:30, Sun

Palm Springs KCWQ/KESQ-DT 9:30, Sun

Redding KHSL-DT 9:30, Sun;

KRCR 9:00, Sun

Sacramento KSPX 6:00, Fri;

TVCLT-Bilingual, 7:30 Sun

Salinas KION 9:30, Sun

San Diego TVCLT-Bilingual, 7:30 Sun

San Francisco KKPX 6:00, Fri

Santa Barbara-Santa Maria KSBY-DT

9:30, Sun

Sun City-Menifee TVCLT-Bilingual,

7:30 Sun

Colorado, Denver KPXC 5:00, Fri

Grand Junction KJCT-DT 8:30, Sun

Montrose KJCT-DT 8:30, Sun

Connecticut, Hartford WHPX 6:00, Fri

Florida, Gainesville WCJB-DT 9:30, Sun

Jacksonville WPXC/WPXJ-LP 6:00, Fri

Miami WPXM 6:00, Fri

Orlando WOPX 6:00, Fri

Panama City WJHG-DT 8:30, Sun

Pensacola WFGX 7:30, Sun

Tallahassee WTXL 7:30, Sun; WTLF/

WTLH-DT 9:30, Sun

Tampa WXPX 6:00, Fri

West Palm Beach WPXP 6:00, Fri

Georgia, Albany WSWG-DT 9:30, Sun

Atlanta WPXA 6:00, Fri

Augusta-Aiken WAGT-DT 9:30, Sun

Brunswick WPXC 6:00, Fri

Columbus WLTZ-DT 9:30, Sun

Macon WMAZ-DT 9:30, Sun

Savannah WGSB-DT 9:30, Sun

Thomasville WTLF/WTLH-DT 9:30, Sun

Hawaii, Hawaii Na Leo Chan. 54 6:30,

Sun; 8:30, Wed

Kauai Ho’Ike Chan. 52 9:30, Tue

Maui/Lanai/Molokai/Niihau/Aka-

ku Chan. 52 6:30 pm, Sun; 3:30, Mon

Oahu Focus Chan. 49 7:00 am, Sat

Chan. 27 5:00 am, Fri KPXO

Idaho, Boise KYUU-LP/KBOI-DT 8:30, Sun

Idaho Falls KIFI-DT 8:30, Sun

Pocatello KIFI-DT 8:30, Sun

Twin Falls KMVT-DT 8:30, 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
Quincy WGEM-DT 8:30, Sun
Indiana, Fort Wayne WPTA-DT 21.29:30, Sun
Indianapolis WIPX 6:00, Fri
Terre Haute WBI 9:30, Sun
Iowa, Cedar Rapids KPRX 5:00, Fri
Des Moines KFAX 5:00, Fri
Keokuk WGEM-DT 8:30, Sun
Mason City KTTC-DT 8:30, Sun
Ottumwa KWOT 8:30, Sun
Sioux City KTIV-DT 8:30, Sun
Kansas, Topeka KTKA-DT 8:30, Sun
Pittsburg KSXF 8:30, Sun
Kentucky, Bowling Green WBKO-DT 8:30, Sun
Lexington WUPX 6:00, Fri
Louisiana, Alexandria KBCA-DT 8:30, Sun
Monroe KNOE-DT 8:30, Sun
Lafayette KADN 7:30, Sun; KATC-DT 8:30, Sun
Lake Charles KVHP-DT 8:30, Sun
New Orleans WPXL 5:00, Fri
Maine, Bangor WABI-DT 9:30, Sun
Portland WPME 7:30, Sun; 7:00, Mon-Fri
Presque Isle WPBQ 9:30, Sun
Maryland, Salisbury WMDT-DT 9:30, Sun
Massachusetts, Holyoke WBQT 9:30, Sun
Springfield WBQT 9:30, Sun
Michigan, Alpena WBAE 9:30, Sun
Cadillac WBVC 9:30, Sun
Detroit WPX 6:00, Fri; WADL 10:00, Sun
Grand Rapids WZPX 5:00, Fri
Lansing WLAJ-DT 9:30, Sun
Marquette WBKP-DT/WBUP-DT 9:30, Sun
Traverse City WBVC 9:30, Sun
Minnesota, Duluth KDLH-DT 8:30, Sun
Mankato KWYE 8:30, Sun
Minneapolis KPXM 5:00, Fri
Rochester-Austin KTTC-DC 8:30, Sun
Sioux Falls (Mitchell) KWSW/KSWD-DT 8:30, Sun
Mississippi, Biloxi WBG 8:30, Sun
Columbus WCBI-DT 8:30, Sun
Greenville WBWD 8:30, Sun
Greenwood WBWD 8:30, Sun
Gulfport WBG 8:30, Sun
Hattiesburg WHPM-DT 8:30, Sun
Laurel WHPM-DT 8:30, Sun
Meridian WTOK-DT 8:30, Sun
Tupelo WCBI-DT 8:30, Sun
Missouri, Columbia KOMU-DT 8:30, Sun
Hannibal WGEM-DT 8:30, Sun
Jefferson City KOMU-DT 8:30, Sun
Joplin KSXF 8:30, Sun
Kansas City KPXE 5:00, Fri
Kirksville KWOT 8:30, Sun
St. Joseph KBJO/KNPN-DT 8:30, Sun
Montana, Billings KTVQ-DT 8:30, Sun
Bozeman-Butte KBZK-DT/KXLF-DT 8:30, Sun
Glendive KWZB 8:30, Sun
Great Falls KRTV-DT 8:30, Sun
Helena KMTF-DT 8:30, Sun
Missoula KPAX-DT 8:30, Sun
Nebraska, Lincoln-Hastings KWBL 8:30, Sun
Kearney KWBL 8:30, Sun
North Platte KNOP 10:30, Sun; KWPL 8:30, Sun
Scottsbluff KGWN-DT/KCHW 8:30, Sun
Nevada, Reno KRNS-CA/KREN-DT 9:30, Sun
New York, Albany WYPX 6:00, Fri
Binghamton WBNG-DT 9:30, Sun
Buffalo WPXJ 6:00, Fri; WUTV 10:00, Sun
Elmira (Corning) WENY-DT 9:30, Sun
New York City TVCLT-Bilingual, 10:30 Sun; WPXN 6:00, Fri; WZME-TV 7:00, Sun; WZME-TV 8:00, Tue-Fri
Plattsburgh WPTZ-DT 9:30, Sun
Rochester WUHF 8:30, Sun
Syracuse WSPX 6:00, Fri
Utica WKTV-DT 9:30, Sun
Watertown WWTI-DT 9:30, Sun

North Carolina, Durham WRPX 6:00, Fri; 9:00 am, Sun
Fayetteville WFPX 6:00, Fri
Greensboro WGXP 6:00, Fri
Greenville WEPX 6:00, Fri; WNCT-DT 9:30, Sun
Lumber Bridge WFPX 6:00, Fri
New Bern WNCT-DT 9:30, Sun
Raleigh WRPX 6:00, Fri; 9:00 am, Sun
Washington WNCT-DT 9:30, Sun
Wilmington WWAY-DT 9:30, Sun
North Dakota, Bismarck KWMM 8:30, Sun
Dickinson KWMM 8:30, Sun
Fargo WDAY-DT/WDAZ-DT 8:30, Sun
Minot KWMM 8:30, Sun
Valley City WDAY-DT/WDAZ-DT 8:30, Sun
Ohio, Cleveland WVPX 6:00, Fri
CincinnatiWSTR 8:30, Sun
Lima WBOH 9:30, Sun
Steubenville WBWO 9:30, Sun
Zanesville WBZV 9:30, Sun
Oklahoma, Ada K TEN-DT 8:30, Sun
Lawton KAUZ-DT 8:30, Sun
Oklahoma City KAUT 8:30, Sun; KOPX 5:00, Fri
Tulsa KTPX 5:00, Fri
Oregon, Bend KTVZ-DT 9:30, Sun
Eugene KEVU-TV 10:00, Sun; KLSR 8:30, Sun; KMTR-DT 9:30, Sun
Medford-Klamath Falls KTVL-DT 9:30, Sun
Portland KPXG 6:00, Fri
Pennsylvania, Erie WSEE-DT/WICU-DT 9:30, Sun
Philadelphia WPPX 6:00, Fri
Wilkes Barre WQPX 6:00, Fri
Rhode Island, Providence WPXQ 6:00, Fri
South Carolina, Charleston WCBD-DT 9:30, Sun
Florence WWMB-DT 9:30, Sun
Myrtle Beach WWMB-DT 9:30, Sun
South Dakota, Rapid City KBWB/KNBN-DT 8:30, Sun
Sioux Falls (Mitchell) KSFY-DT 8:30, Sun
Tennessee, Jackson WBJK 8:30, Sun
Knoxville WPXK 6:00, Fri
Memphis WPXX 5:00, Fri
Nashville WNPX 5:00, Fri
Texas, Abilene KTWS-DT 8:30, Sun
Amarillo KVII-DT/KVIH-DT 8:30, Sun
Beaumont KFDM-DT 8:30, Sun
Brownsville KCWT/KNVO-DT 8:30, Sun
Corpus Christi KRIS-DT 8:30, Sun
Dallas KDAF 7:00, Sun; TVCLT-Bilingual, 9:30 Sun
Harlingen KCWT/KNVO-DT 8:30, Sun
Houston KPXB 5:00, Fri
Laredo KTXW 8:30, Sun
Longview KYTX-DT 8:30, Sun
Lubbock KLCW-DT 8:30, Sun
Midland KWES-DT 8:30, Sun
Odessa KWES-DT 8:30, Sun
Port Arthur KFDM 8:30, Sun
San Angelo KWSA 8:30, Sun
San Antonio KPXL 5:00, Fri
Sherman K TEN-DT 8:30, Sun
Tyler KYTX-DT 8:30, Sun
Victoria KWVB 8:30, Sun
Weslaco KCWT/KNVO-DT 8:30, Sun
Wichita Falls KAUZ-DT 8:30, Sun
Utah, Salt Lake City KUPX 5:00, Fri
Vermont, Burlington WVMY 10:00, Sun; WPTZ-DT 9:30
Virginia, Charlottesville WVIR-DT 9:30, Sun
Harrisonburg WVIR-DT 9:30, Sun
Norfolk WPXV 6:00, Fri
Roanoke WPRX 6:00, Fri
Washington D.C. WPXW 6:00, Fri
Washington, Pasco KIMA-DT/KEPR-DT 9:30, Sun
Richland KIMA-DT/KEPR-DT 9:30, Sun
Seattle-Tacoma KWPX 6:00, Fri
Seattle KCPQ 7:00, Sun
Spokane KGPX 6:00, Fri; KAYU 7:30, Sun

Yakima KIMA 6:30, Sun; KIMA-DT/KEPR-DT 9:30, Sun
West Virginia, Beckley WVVA-DT 9:30, Sun
Bluefield WVVA-DT 9:30, Sun
Charleston WLPX 6:00, Fri
Clarksburg WVFX-DT 9:30, Sun
Oak Hill WVVA-DT 9:30, Sun
Parkersburg WCWP 9:30, Sun
Weston WVFX-DT 9:30, Sun
Wheeling WBWO 9:30, Sun
Wisconsin, Eau Claire WXOW-DT 8:30, Sun
La Crosse WXOW-DT 8:30, Sun
Milwaukee WPXE 5:00, Fri
Rhineland WAOW/WYOW 8:30, Sun
Superior KDLH-DT 8:30, Sun
Wausau WAOW-DT/WYOW-DT 8:30, Sun
Wyoming, Casper KWYF/KFNB-DT 8:30, Sun
Cheyenne KGWN-DT/KCHW 8:30, Sun
Riverton KWYF/KFNB-DT 8:30, Sun

BRITAIN AND EUROPE
Britain, Europe, the Middle East and Africa CBS Reality 8:00 B.S.T., Sun

CANADA
Nationwide satellite
 Galaxy 3 Trans. 17, 21:11:30 ET, Tue/Thu
Nationwide cable
 WGN 8:00 ET, Sun
 Discovery 6:30 ET/PT, Sun
 Vision TV 4:30 pm ET, Sun
 CHCH 11:30 ET, Sun
 Grace Television Network 11:00 ET, Sun
Alberta, Red Deer KAYU 8:30, Sun
Calgary KAYU 8:30, Sun
Edmonton KAYU 8:30, Sun
Medicine Hat KAYU 8:30, Sun
Lethbridge KAYU 8:30, Sun
British Columbia, Vancouver
 CHEK 9:00, Sun; CHNU 5:30 pm, Sun; KCPQ 7:00, Sun
Victoria CHNU 5:30 pm, Sun
Manitoba, Winnipeg WUHF 8:30, Sun; CILT Joy TV 11:00, Sun
Nova Scotia, Halifax WUHF 8:30, Sun
Sydney WUHF 8:30, Sun
Ontario, Ottawa CJOH 5:30, Sun
Toronto WADL 10:00 Sun; WUTV 10:00, Sun; CHNU 8:30 pm, Sun
P.E.I., Charlottetown WUHF 8:30, Sun
Quebec, Montreal WVMY 10:00, Sun
Saskatchewan, Saskatoon WUHF 8:30, Sun

CARIBBEAN
Regional satellite
 Galaxy 3 Trans. 17 11:30 ET, Tue/Thu
 Galaxy 3 Trans. 21 11:30 ET, Tue/Thu
Aruba WGN 8:00, Sun
Bahamas Discovery Chan. 26, 6:30, Sun
 FOX W Chan. 216, 10:30, Sun
Belize WGN 7:00, Sun
Cuba WGN 8:00, Sun
Dominican Republic WGN 8:00, Sun
Haiti WGN 7:00, Sun
Jamaica WGN 9:00, Sun
Puerto Rico WGN 8:00, Sun
Trinidad and Tobago WGN 8:00, Sun

LATIN AMERICA
Regional satellite
 Galaxy 3 Trans. 17 11:30 ET, Tue/Thu
 Galaxy 3 Trans. 21 11:30 ET, Tue/Thu
El Salvador WGN 6:00, Sun
Guatemala WGN 6:00, Sun
Honduras WGN 6:00, Sun
Mexico TVCLT-Bilingual, 7:30 Sun; WGN 7:00, Sun
Panama WGN 7:00, Sun

AUSTRALASIA
Australia
Adelaide TV44 11:30, Sun; 10:00, Sat
Perth WTV, 11:30, Sun/Wed
New Zealand TVNZ, 5:30, Sun
Philippines TV49:30 PHT, Sun

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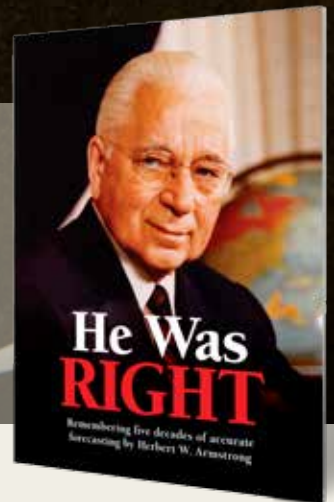
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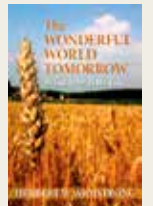
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