



# ETERNAL VALUE REVIEW

## MONEY MONITOR & GLOBAL TRENDS REPORT

ISSUE 4, VOLUME 9

"For thinking Christians seeking to understand the times."

August 2006

FEATURE REPORT

### Last-day Prophecy — Hot Comfort, Cold Faith

**D**airy Queen, the international ice cream chain has as its slogan, "Hot Eats, Cool Treats." They would go out of business if they instead served cold hamburgers and hot ice cream. No wonder the Church is losing its franchisees. Increasingly, it has been serving, "Hot Comfort, Cold Faith." Prophetically, Christ asked the question, "[...] when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?" (Luke 18:8) This statement is probably the most important prophecy for the Church Age.

With that introduction, we want to focus on a most challenging topic for Christians in the modern world — faith. It is a delicate thing, only flourishing under the most rarified of conditions. No doubt, it is a tired topic for most Christians. Therefore, we want to provoke a completely different line of inquiry.

#### A World View of Faith

Please look at the map of the world shown on this page. It is color keyed to show the distribution of faith in the world. The darkest-colored countries have the lowest faith, the lighter hues more. Ponder for a moment where the least faith might be found in the world today. Which country do you live in?

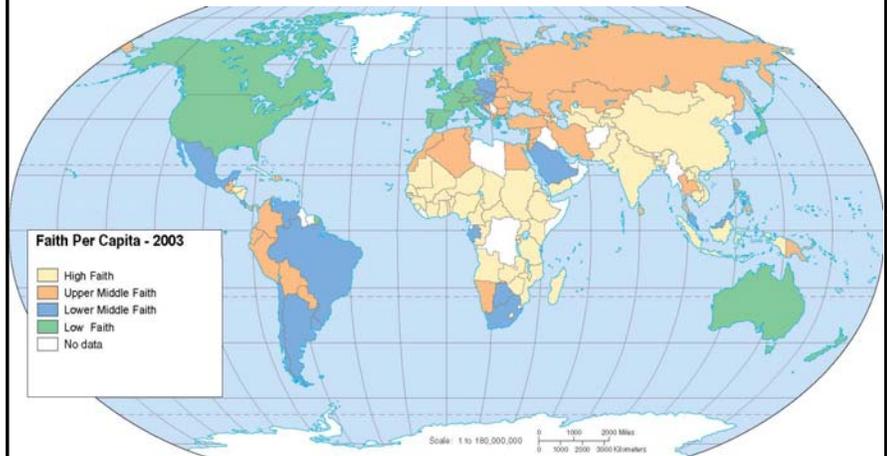
Clearly, there are shown low areas of faith and higher ones. What is the source of this map? The World Council of Churches in Geneva, Switzerland? No, though perhaps it could be. Actually, it is an authentic map from the World Bank — that transnational organization headquartered in Washington, USA, whose motto is "Our wish is a world free of poverty."

At this point, you may be puzzled,

... continued on page 3

### World Distribution of Faith

Darker areas have lower faith (See color legend), 2003 Data



Source: World Bank with alterations by Mulberry Press

*"When the kings joined forces, when they advanced together, they saw her and were astounded; they fled in terror. Trembling seized them there, pain like that of a woman in labor. You destroyed them like ships of Tarshish shattered by an east wind."*

Psalm 48:4-7

(Text for article, page 6)

#### In This Issue

*Last-day Prophecy — Hot Comfort, Cold Faith.* — pg.1

*Denial: Consumers Whistling Out of the Last Hole?* — pg.1

*Searching for the Last-day, 10-King Power Coalition* — pg. 6

#### WORLD MONEY UPDATE

### Denial: Consumers Whistling Out of the Last Hole?

**P**eople are puzzled. Wall Street and various financial pundits exult at the excellent economic statistics that they have been interpreting about the economy in recent months and years. Yet, the average household is falling into a gaping trap, experiencing declining income growth in real terms and spiraling debt.

But, apparently that doesn't matter. The received wisdom is that it's dangerous to underestimate the North American consumer. Over past years, there have been many forecasters who have issued the warning that consumer spending was due for a squeeze ... that consumers were heading into a cash crunch. I have read such negative reports for decades. And, to be honest, I have been among that number who were forecasting that consumer spending would soon hit a wall.

Last September, I was sure as ever that consumer spending would take a downturn, thus possibly contributing to a serious recession. After the heavy hurricane season, oil prices had headed sharply higher, interest rates had been rising for some time, the credit

... continued on next page

card companies were accelerating payment policies and more onerous personal bankruptcy laws were also being introduced. As it was at that time, household savings rates were already at rock-bottom levels — the cupboard being bare, so to speak — while household debts were at all-time highs. This was a sure recipe for waning consumer spending. What happened?

No spending declines were apparent over the following months. With housing prices remaining strong, economic growth rebounded in the US back to a rip-roaring 4.8% annualized rate in the first quarter of this year. As stock markets experienced blistering returns in many markets, it really did seem as if consumers were entirely invincible and completely immune to economic realities.

In actuality, however, consumer spending did begin to start weakening earlier this year. Has a downturn now begun that will pull down the economy with it?

We'll quote some statistics here and let you judge for yourself.

According to Paul Kasriel of The Northwestern Trust Co., the household debt-service burden hit a new record high of 13.93% in the first quarter of 2006 (*see graph on page 3*). It has been rising relentlessly since the early 1990s, even though interest rates over that time — the major item contributing to debt service costs — have fallen. Today, debt service costs for the average household are much greater than some 20 years ago when interest rates were more than three times as high. One doesn't have to be imaginative to understand what could happen were interest rates to continue rising.

Income growth has lagged in recent years. Quoting the Economist magazine, "*After you adjust for inflation, the wages of the typical American worker have risen less than 1% since 2000. To compare, in the previous 5 years these rose 6%.*"

The household savings rate is at its worst in history. Over the past year, the average family recorded a negative

rate of -0.6%. In earlier times, savings rates were above 10% for the nation. Today, in many Asian countries, household savings rates are well about 30% of income, by comparison.

The above statistics are even worse than they appear. Why? The wealth gap in the US and other countries continues to widen. While being rich is not necessarily a bad thing, it is not healthy for a nation if the majority of wealth and income are held in the hands of a few.

According to Piscataqua Research, in 2005, over 90% of new consumer cash flow in the US came from debt. Amazing? They expect that this ratio must rise to 95% this year in order for the economy to keep moving forward. This is insanity as it is not a sustainable path to prosperity.

We could review many more statistics reflecting similarly deteriorating conditions. Reading them, what is the logical conclusion? Well, not so fast. While current conditions seem very worrisome to me, that is only one opinion. Apparently, to some officials and economists, these troubles are nothing more than a frame of mind. Says *Fortune Magazine* recently that "*the problem is that Americans' pay isn't going up*" and that this is remarkable because the economy is booming. (Forbes, July 10, 2006) But no problem, there is a solution: Get creative. Quoting further, "*Apparently, the problem is that we are suffering a certain poverty of imagination. We massively underestimate human ingenuity and resilience.*" Indeed, those are admirable qualities, however, it is also surely true that we cannot imagine away horrible financial problems.

What if interest rates continue to rise and housing prices start to fall? Actually, that is already happening in some localities. Some observers are already dubbing these areas as "disasters." But, according to others, that shouldn't be a problem. Despite the fact that the US and other countries have experienced one of the most speculative real estate bubbles on record, spurring an enormous rise in mortgage debt and its service costs, apparently nothing can stall the housing market. Quoting the New York Times (July 17, 2006) "*The raising of interest rates on millions of adjustable rate mortgages over the next several years has all the makings of a classic horror story.*"

Certain troubles? No, not for the mortgage industry. Why? For one, "*it offers an opportunity*" according to one mortgage banker that the article quotes. They are not worried, and anticipate that higher mortgage payments will be a boost for them.

The above comments provide a glimpse of the current complacency and rampant corruption. Hear no evil, see no evil, say no evil. The North American consumer has always come through. Don't count them out, because they are creative.

Yes, that is surely true, but in recent years, this creativity has been directed to the wrong areas — consumption, dissipation, borrowing and massive financial and economic corruption. This is evident at all levels, particularly amongst policymakers of all types, both in domestic and international circles, and particularly on Wall



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Street. The financial industry has invented all kinds of irresponsible debt and credit instruments that are premised either on an economic death wish or a massive inflation (*also meaning a slumping dollar*).

In the meantime, the average citizen is in dire shape. There is an apt German saying that applies to this parlous situation. Consumers “*are whistling out of the last hole.*”

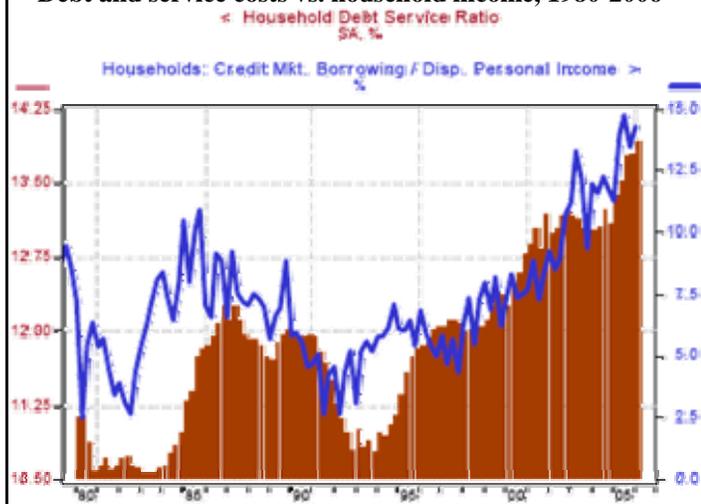
And now, housing markets are beginning to crumble. No longer will it be so easy to refinance mortgages for “cash outs.” This is significant as much as 7-8% of economic activity has been dependent on this source in recent years. This source of household funds (*really, nothing more than increased borrowing*), will now begin to vanish. Meanwhile, over \$1 trillion worth of outstanding mortgages are set to incur higher interest charges over the next years even as home ownership affordability is already at 15-year lows. What to do? Get creative! More seriously, the best advice is to get out of as much debt as possible, as soon possible, while there is yet time.

Finally, a sad comment. I do not believe that the deteriorating condition of the North American household is entirely due to excessive consumption and voluntary borrowing. Yes, America is definitely a hyper-stimulated consumer society. Then what other causes are there? Given slow employment earnings growth and booming housing and education costs, many households have no other option but to borrow funds simply to pay the monthly bills. They are anxiously borrowing ever more money in an attempt to maintain their standard of living and to pay the interest costs on existing debt. For many, it is an act of desperation ... a road headed to a certain painful end.

Some, of course, will see my comments as being negative or pessimistic ... in other words, I am not being “positive” or “creative.” Yes, I know, there is much pressure to say nice things —sweeter-sounding, inoffensive things. But to do so sometimes means hiding or falsifying the truth. The facts are well documented, not the subject of creative thinking. Get out of debt! **EVR**

### Rising Consumer Debt Trap—U.S.

Debt and service costs vs. household income, 1980-2006



Source: Paul L. Kasriel, The Northwestern Trust Company, July 15, 2006

wondering what does the World Bank have to do with the topic of faith? As an opposite, it points towards an important scriptural principle. The title of the chart has been tampered with. It actually portrays the distribution of wealth in the world — more specifically, the average level of income in each country. The color key has been flipped upside down. The areas with the highest income are shown as those with the lowest faith.

Is this a reasonable way to show the distribution of faith in the world? While it may not be exact, our technique for substituting low faith for high income is defensible. Why? Because the Bible substantiates this inverse relationship numerous times. Jesus said, “*Blessed are you the poor, for yours is the kingdom of God. But woe to you who are rich, for you have already received your comfort.*” (Luke 6: 20, 24, Sermon on the Plain)

The half-brother of Jesus, James, re-emphasized this perspective in a different way, saying: “*Has not God chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom he promised to those who love him?*” (James 2:5) Certainly, the World Bank’s survey of world income qualifies as a perspective from “*the eyes of the world.*”

Most assuredly, there are many exceptions to this general equation of faith versus riches. Remember, we are dealing here with general correlation and population averages, not specific persons or households. And, when viewing the map, it should also be noted that it is symbolizing all types of faith, not just the type of faith that the Bible requires of true Christians. Many false religions that display deep faith in their beliefs happen to be most prevalent in poor regions of the world.

There clearly is an inverse relationship with faith, and wealth and comfort. We can further expand wealth to the concept of mammon. It is that spiritual realm that seeks its confidence and affections with materialism and the boastful pretensions of mankind.

### Working Out Our Faith Against Opposition

Why is it that there is this opposition between faith and money?

In the pleasure of God’s creation, it is a condition of the world. Jesus said: “*You cannot serve both God and mammon.*” (Matthew 6:24) This statement struck right to the heart of the cosmology of opposites — good and evil, sin and righteousness, the Kingdom of Light versus the forces of darkness. Were it any different, it would not be possible for us to choose to bring a meaningful sacrifice of faith and love to our Lord. Otherwise, to do so, would simply be an automatic, programmed response of no value.

Christ made this comment to His disciples right after he told the rich young ruler to “*sell his possession and give to the poor.*” (Matthew 6:21) It threw the disciples into an immediate debate. They were daunted by the challenges of

property and the requirements of the Kingdom of God. While on the one hand to be wealthy was to be considered a blessing of the godly — after all, Abraham was — on the other hand, Christ admonished that *“it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.”* (Matthew 19:24) *“Who can then be saved?”* they asked. (Matthew 19:25) Christ replied, *“With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.”* (verse 26)

Here we see two completely different systems that contradict each other — the Kingdom of God versus the domain of mammon. These two realms have completely different wealth systems. They have two different currencies, respectively, faith and money.

Though we are ever so thankful that it is by the grace of God that we are saved, whether we are beset by the deceitfulness of riches or not, the sad reality is that most people in high-income countries are seriously blinded to the true nature and wealth potential of faith.

### **The Most Precious Commodity in the World**

The contrast between earthly riches and true riches — or wealth, prosperity, material satisfaction, or worldly confidence — is a theme repeatedly presented throughout the entire Bible. True faith itself is considered the most valuable and real of all possessions.

Consider just a few of the Bible’s perspectives on what really should be “hotly” valued — real faith: Jesus stated: *“So if you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, who will trust you with true riches?”* (Luke 16:11). Just what are these “true riches”? Scriptures repeatedly portray our faith and salvation as real riches and that the price of their procurement in the first place is inestimable.

*“For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers [...]”* (1 Peter 1:18)

*“For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich.”* (2 Corinthians 8:9)

Apostle Peter reflects these evaluations of faith in this passage:

*“In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, for you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of*

*your souls.”* (1 Peter 1:6-9)

Without a question, according to scripture, real faith is much more valuable than property and worldly wealth. They are “true riches.” Peter assesses it as more valuable than gold. Why? Because without it we cannot please God ... nor receive the “goal of our faith”, the salvation of our souls.

While the world strains for the attainment of material wealth, the most precious acquisition of all, faith, today lies cold in many countries — especially wealthy countries of Christian heritage. Yet, there is nothing, absolutely more worthy than faith.

At this point, we must take a brief respite from our inquiry and ask this age-old question: What is faith? After all, the word “faith” must surely be the most misused and misunderstood word in the English language. Many people think it is just a noun. We can only focus on the simplest of answers. According to the Bible, more often faith it is a verb. Faith is the act of believing. But what? The word of God, the evidence of which is faith if we do it. It is for that reason, *“that faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the world of God.”* (Romans 10:17)

### **Current Conditions in the Church**

Let’s again examine the relationship between faith and wealth. The words of Christ and the apostles that we reviewed say that these two are generally oppositional in nature. Something, however, rings false. It argues with a growing church constituency that portrays itself as Christian, which presents the exact opposite perspective.

Some in this community even go so far as to say that if you have much faith that you can “get wealth.” Or, just send in your seed faith offering and you may get a “divine wealth transfer.” Perhaps a large cheque from some mysterious source may arrive in the mail as a result. Such things may well happen to some people. But as a formula, this has nothing to do with real faith nor real wealth.

Apparently, without laying one’s life down for Christ and taking up a personal cross, one can just use the principles in the Bible to become prosperous and lead a well-adjusted life in every way. This is one of the biggest and sorriest lies ever perpetrated. It is a major contributing reason why real faith is running cold today.

Yet, this fleshly notion of faith that is gaining popularity so easily appeals to our nature ... hearing and interpreting things as we would like them to be. Who has not ever made this type of complaint to the Lord when meeting trials or difficulties? *“Lord, I am serving You. Don’t I deserve to be rewarded here on earth for the good things that I do?”* To say this, is to fall prey to a form of “prosperity teaching.” But, why on earth should I have this human flaw to so easily always fall for this idea?

Even more consternating is that this view of cheap faith is perpetrated so strongly in the richest of areas on the world map in the first place — particularly in North

America. There is no caution, no fear of the dangers of wealth which the Bible so clearly lays out. Why is the vulnerability to Balaam's error greatest there? *"I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you by the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel — which is really no gospel at all,"* said Paul to the Galatians. (Galatians (1:6-7))

Inverting the relationship expressed in James 2:5, we can say: *"Has not God chosen the rich of this world, to be poor in faith?"* Looked at from this perspective, we realize just which Christians in the world will have the most trying conditions to produce fruit and true faith. The "true faith" of Christians in Canada, United States and other rich nations will be most under siege. These countries may indeed be blessed, but not with the conditions that naturally foster an abundance of real faith.

There are two large forces (*both related*) reverberating through this last-day world — both globalization and oppression of various types. Living in North America or Europe, you will be facing both cross-currents — living in a seductive richer region of the world and your Biblical beliefs and trust in God being ridiculed and suppressed.

#### **Achan and the Last Day Church of Laodicea**

If one is poor in faith, then what does that actually mean? It is a very important question for those who are part of the Church in richer parts of the world. The last-day church as mirrored by the last of the seven churches mentioned in Revelation, Laodicea, is the one that was convinced that it needed nothing, confident in its own riches and capabilities ... even trusting in its confidence.

This church is actually poor, blind and naked — poor in faith, blind as to the true state of things, and vulnerable to the loss of true faith and power. They fell for the error of Balaam by sacrificing lukewarm faith for the primacy of warm comfort. The story of Achan in the Old Testament (Joshua 10) provides a picture of the future Church that loses the "power" of God for the sake of riches and comfortable materialism. Israel was commanded not to take any treasures from the booty of fallen Jericho.

Yet, one person fell to its lure. Said Achan, *"When I saw in the plunder a beautiful robe from Babylonia, two hundred shekels of silver and a wedge of gold weighing fifty shekels, I coveted them and took them."* (Joshua 7:21) He hid these items underneath his tent.

When Israel next went up to conquer the city of Ai, they were sorely defeated. The power and blessing of God was no longer with them. Why? Achan's household brought impurity upon entire Israel by falling for the baubles of Babylon and Jericho — both cities which were renowned ancient centers of commercialism. *"When Achan son of Zerah acted unfaithfully regarding the devoted things, did not wrath come upon the whole community of Israel?"* (Joshua 22:20)

We have every reason to believe that this is the same

reason why much of the last-day church has lost its power to effectively minister the Gospel.

#### **Thoughts to Ponder**

We return to Christ's prophecy: *"[...] when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?"* As mentioned, it likely is the most important of all last-day prophecies for the Church. Yet, in the New Testament, this prophecy seems almost hidden. It is only half a verse long, found only in one of the four Gospels, and seems entirely disjointed from the text before and after. Jesus is clearly saying that there will be very little faith found on earth when He returns.

We can better understand why, using our inverse equation rule. When Christ returns, [...] will He find "wealth" on earth? Yes. James confirms that this will be the case, saying *"Now listen you rich people [...] you have hoarded wealth in the last days."* (James 5:1, 3) At the time Jesus uttered His statement, He knew that the faith of his flock would face a great onslaught from worldly wealth and comforts in the last days, also revealing that *"[...], the love of most will grow cold."* (Matthew 24:12) While this statement was probably spoken directly to the Jews, it only follows that it also applies to Christians.

Without a doubt that cold day has arrived ... certainly so for Western Christianity and Jews alike. Without pretension, faith in Europe is largely dead. In North America, there are indeed many that profess a Christian faith, but of the type that is without power. Many use faith as nothing more than a contractual indemnity policy with God or a device to "get wealth" or warm comforts.

This state of mind is easy to fall into ... no premeditated plan is necessary to do so. Once one attitudinally becomes totally reliant upon the bank account, technology, and the pride and accomplishments of mankind, the power of God diminishes — at least as is utilized in daily life. No longer does our faith rest in the notions that God will care for us, has a purpose and a destiny and wants to lead us, not by sight, but by faith.

*"We live by faith, not by sight."* (2 Corinthians 5:7.) Can it be done in North America — a region much overtaken by "Hot Comfort, Cold Faith?" Here, it surely is a daily struggle to beat back the cooling influences upon our faith.

But every challenge also offers an opportunity. We can again remember what Peter tells us, already quoted earlier. We have reasons to rejoice, for our struggle is only for a little while and there awaits the eternal reward of real riches ... yes, real riches!

*"In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials [...] for you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls."* (1 Peter 1:6-9)

*[...] but he who stands firm to the end will be saved."* (Matthew 24:13)

**EVR**

## Ends n' Trends: Signs of the Times

## Personal Perspectives

### Names For a Time Such as Now?

One of life's joys is picking a name for a newly-born son or daughter. For most, the name chosen carries significance ... perhaps honoring someone of importance or a specific meaning. In recent years, American parents have certainly been choosing some interesting names.

Here is a statistic that quite possibly may be a sign of the times. According to US Social Security data, guess what was the most popular name given to male children this past year? Jacob. What's so unusual about that?

Jacob has been the most popular name 7 years in a row ... repeat, 7 years in a row. Why should this ancient name, taken from one of the most prominent patriarchs of the Hebrew people living some 3500 years ago become such a popular name at a time such as now?

The second and third most popular male names last year are also significant — Michael and Joshua. In the Bible, Michael is the archangel of the Jewish people. Joshua (Y'shua) is the original Hebrew form of the Greek name of Jesus.

Clearly, for some reason or another, the influences of the ancient Hebrews and Christianity remain upon America ... if in name only. While faith is running colder in North America and nominal Christianity abounds, Jacob's legacy couldn't remain with us in any more visible way.

Jacob? Could it be one of these little details that God allows to appear out in the open just as the time of "Jacob's trouble" comes near. Jacob's trouble, as most will know, refers to the Tribulation period, mentioned as such in Jeremiah 30:7. It will be a difficult time for all 12 of the Hebrew tribes (*counting Ephraim and Manasseh as the double portion from Joseph and omitting Dan*) as well as the rest of the world.

Joshua (Jesus) will descend in victory right after "Jacob's trouble" and after the Archangel no doubt will be involved in the great battle in heaven that is recorded in Revelation.

#### Top 10 Male Names—2005

Rank	Male name
1	Jacob
2	Michael
3	Joshua
4	Matthew
5	Ethan
6	Andrew
7	Daniel
8	Anthony
9	Christopher
10	Joseph

Source: [www.ssa.gov/OCT/babynames](http://www.ssa.gov/OCT/babynames)

### Searching for the Last-day, 10-King Power Coalition

According to at least five prophetic statements or visions recorded in the Bible ( *Daniel 2, 7, Revelation 12, 13, 17*) 10 kings will come together to form a world-dominating power coalition in the last days.

Might you be living in one of these countries that give rise to a Top-10 last-day king? Whether or not you are, should it have an impact upon your life?

These are not frivolous questions. Then, just who might be these 10-day last-day kings? It remains a relevant and reasonable inquiry for everybody no matter which pre-millennial eschatological persuasion one may take. The power structures that give rise to the 10 domains of these kings will already be visible well ahead of the Tribulation Period. Therefore, though this final group of leaders could assemble rather suddenly and cannot be identified exactly until it occurs, the actual power machinery that underpins them can be identified in advance.

As such, given the late "last-day" times in which we live, it is assuredly likely that the countries and power structures that give rise to these individual last-day kings are already in view. The final 10 countries are surely jockeying into place. Together under the Antichrist, they soon will be in a position to crush, devour and trample underfoot everything else. (Daniel 7:19)

After all, the Bible says that these 10 kings "have one purpose and will give their power and authority to the beast." (Revelation 17:11) As such, our search will focus on the sources of "power and authority" that are found in the globalized world of today. Of course, we will first consult the Bible to discover the key identifiers of these final, last-day kings. There are at least 13 sets of such criteria as well as other clues.

#### Beginning Survey Results

This issue we begin a series searching for these kings. We will be presenting summaries and excerpts from an upcoming booklet entitled *10 Kings: The Last-Day Power Coalition* and an associated on-line survey, *The 10-King Power Coalition Survey*. If you so wish, you will be able to probe for possible answers yourself as the assumptions and criteria in *The 10-King Power Coalition Survey* can be easily customized.

This survey is derived from a mammoth global database covering approximately 200 countries that we have put together from numerous sources around the world. It will allow you to scan the entire globe for over 60 factors that can contribute to the power and influence of nations, as well as select and sort for the 13 identifying criteria of the 10 Kings.

**10-King Global Power Coalition - cont'd from pg. 6**

Why have we taken the time and effort to address this question when any proposed list of 10 “kings” will still prove somewhat conjectural? For at least three reasons. Firstly, to again alert us to the uniqueness and urgency of our times. The period of the top-10 kings is near, one more of many signs that the season of our Lord’s return is ever more imminent and the rapidly approaching time of “Jacob’s trouble.”

Secondly, to recognize that the nature of global power has become very opaque — different from older times — and, therefore, that which might seem obvious to the casual observer today could actually be a deliberate diversion. Power is not necessarily found where it may seem to exist. This should not be a surprise as our Enemy is both a liar and a deceiver. (John 8:44, 2 John 1:7) Even as more information is available today than ever before, discerning where real power lies in our world is more vulnerable to misdirection and conspiracy as perhaps never before. Popular perception cannot be trusted.

Lastly, our survey also will serve to “best fit” existing pre-millennial prophetic views, particularly, the “Revived Roman Empire” and “Holy Roman Empire” theories as well as others. Not only will our “Last-day Power Coalition Survey” offer some eye-opening possibilities, but also the conclusion that, at this point in world history, there are still reasons to yet keep an open mind as to the identity of the final 10 kings. Whatever the case, our review of the final Global Power Coalition clearly again alerts us to the uniqueness and urgency of our times.

What is the risk of searching scriptures and testing various views? Not much. In the end, the Bible will always prove itself true. At the very worst, once we together have examined the results of our survey, we will have had an opportunity to reconfirm what you already believed. Rest assured: We will conduct our study here with humility.

As such, let’s consider scripture and facts and take a fresh look at the possible identity of the 10 countries that may give rise to the 10 kings, yet realizing that we cannot know their exact identity — at least not before the point that fulfilled prophecy actually happens. Think of our country

search as an early projection on a typical presidential election night. Projections of the final results can sometimes be made ahead, well before all the votes are counted in the ballot boxes.

**Follow the Power and Money**

Of the many characteristics that the Bible reveals about the last day kings — all of which we will yet review — one of the most important concerns their power. That is why our search will focus on the primary sources of “power and authority” that are found in the globalized world of our time. But, surveying the world’s power structures in order to determine just from where the last-day kings are likely to emerge, is not necessarily easy, though more information is available today than ever before.

We live in a time of globalism, an age where the nature

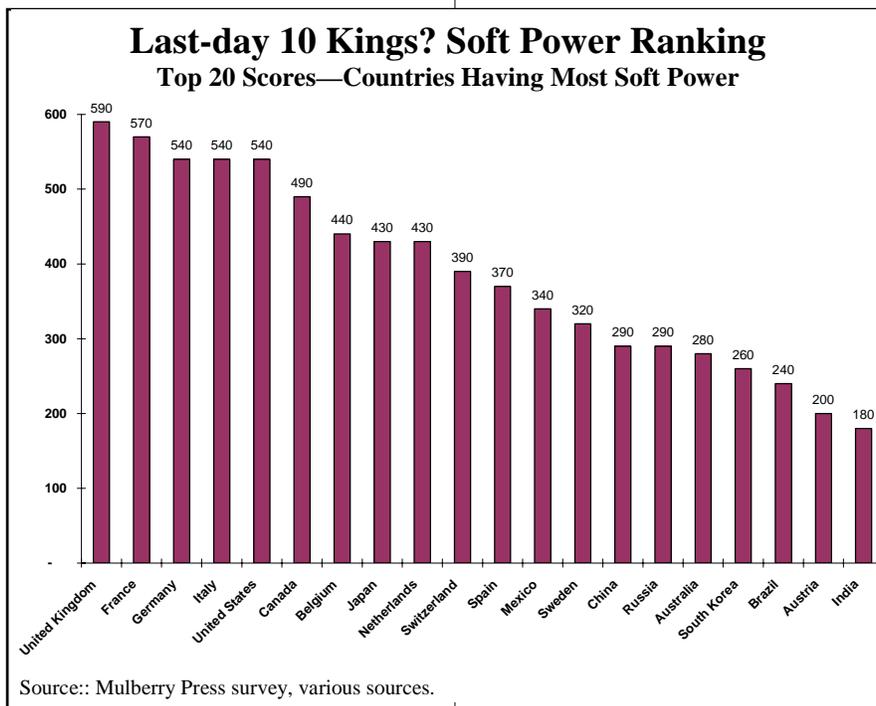
of world power is very different from earlier times. Power today takes many forms — soft types and tougher ones — from financial and economic to military; from technological to the soft power behind various global organizations such as the United Nations and the World Trade Organization. Out of this ethereal global sea rise 10 kings who then throw their support behind the Antichrist.

Please look at the exhibit on this page which shows our

survey’s result with respect to Soft Power. Shown are the top-scoring 10% of the world’s countries. Could one of the last-day kings arise from this group? There are many types of power to consider before answering. Our survey groups different measures of power into three categories — Soft, Direct and Indirect.

Soft Power in our survey is basically defined as that power that is exercised by individual countries through the major world multilateral organizations. We include 20 indicators of global power that are evident in the major 12 world transnational organizations. Here we include the United Nations, the Bank of International Settlements, the World Trade Organization, the Organization for Economic Development (OECD) and 8 others. Tallying up all the relative influences in each of these organizations and applying a point scoring system, you have the result that you see in the graph.

Interestingly, the United States, though the world’s only



power, isn't necessarily the country that has the greatest "Soft Power." Much smaller countries such as France and three others score higher. Have a good look at the countries in the top 10%. Many of them are European, but some are not. However, for the results of our Soft Power tally, indeed more than 10 European countries do qualify. So far, of course, we have only intended to wet your appetite. Just wait until we release the entire survey, including the results of the Direct and Indirect categories. The results will be interesting.

### **The Revived Roman Empire**

An important question we should address before continuing our survey, deals with the widely-received view that there will be a Revived Roman Empire. Will it give rise to these 10 kings and could the European Union (EU) be the fulfillment of this theory ... or, at the very least, the predecessor to this final empire? In fact, it is a view so firmly held in some circles — early, pre-EU versions having been around for at least 100 years if not more — that some might think it dogma. According to one of its forms, someday the old Roman Empire will be rebuilt on its original foundations and will again control approximately the same geographic region that ancient Rome once held at its peak power.

While this indeed could happen, scripture does not necessarily require this form, nor does it provide airtight proof. Also difficult to establish is conclusive evidence that the European Union (EU) of today represents the fulfillment or future fulfilling of any such revival. Could some non-European countries number among the final 10-kings? Or, in fact, will all of these kings arise from somewhere within the EU? We will find out.

Whatever the case, we can say in advance that it is almost totally implausible that the emergence of the EU today is not prophetically significant. Whether all 10 kings come from Europe or not, it is an unavoidable conclusion that it plays an important facilitating role in future prophetic fulfillment. The rather sudden rise of the EU is too remarkable to be regarded as a random event of history. We will return to the significance of this and other points in later parts, particularly for America. For now, consider that scripture gives no evidence of a single superpower numbering in this group of the final 10 kings. After all, if that were so, why would a 10-king coalition be needed to give their pooled power — sufficient to dominate the world — to the Antichrist when a single superpower would suffice?

### **Searching for a Revived Roman Empire**

Where do we find the primary scripture support for the view that links the European Union of today as the prefiguration of a reviving Roman Empire? To begin, technically, I do not find any specific prophecy that says that any of the four gentile kingdoms that the Prophet Daniel saw (Daniel 2 and 7) must be revived. Before we examine this point further, a very brief overview of Bible prophecy in this regard will be helpful.

In Daniel 2, the prophet Daniel interprets that three more major kingdoms would arise after the Babylonian reign of King Nebuchadnezzar's line, the fourth of these being the ancient Roman Empire. To recall, his interpretation was in response to Nebuchadnezzar's dream of a tall statue with a head "*made of pure gold, its chest and arms of silver, its belly and thighs of bronze, its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of baked clay.*" (Daniel 3:32-33) Ten toes of iron and clay were also shown. Later, Daniel is again shown these same kingdoms in the form of four different creatures. (Daniel 7) The last of these — the terrible, unrecognizable beast — had 10 horns which were interpreted to represent 10 kings.

In Revelation 17 we again see 10 kings shown as 10 horns, but this time on the 7<sup>th</sup> head of a beast (*which is also the final ruling form of the gentle 4<sup>th</sup> kingdom that Daniel saw*) and corresponds to the ten toes on the image and the ten horns on the fourth beast portrayed in Daniel 2 and 7. This same beast shown in Revelation 12 and 13 also has ten horns. We therefore see this group of ten reoccur quite often. As such, they must be significant. That is why we are specifically focusing on this coalition of 10 kings.

At one time, one of the earlier stages of the European Union was thought to represent these 10 kings exactly — especially when there were only 10 country members (*after Greece joined in 1981 and before 1986 when Spain and Portugal acceded*). While it is very possible that (future) leaders of European countries could represent most, if not all, of these 10 kings, there are a number of possibilities why the EU today alone may not represent the 10-king power coalition of the 7<sup>th</sup> head on the beast shown in Revelation 17. Could it be possible that the US, Canada or Brazil, for instance, might give rise to one of these kings?

To find the answer, we need to look at Daniel 9:26, the cornerstone verse supporting the Revived Roman Empire perspective. We will review this verse and others in the next issue.

What I conclude at this point is that the 10 kings and the final ruler will come out of this same constellation of people or extended society that destroyed the Jewish temple in 70 A.D. The same is true for the final "ruler" as he emerges from among the 10 horns (Daniel 7:8) that are kings. At the very least, they must be people of the population stock and/or society from which the Roman army was drawn in the first century AD, and not necessarily the same geographic region.

And that, as best as I can tell, is the truth ... for now. More to come in future issues.



Wilfred J. Hahn

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