



ETERNAL VALUE REVIEW

MONEY MONITOR & GLOBAL TRENDS REPORT

Issue 5 Volume 16

"For thinking Christians seeking to understand the times."

OCTOBER 2013

FEATURE REPORT

Burning Alight: 12 Endtime Fuses – Part I

Says the National Intelligence Council in a recent report: "We are at a critical juncture in human history, which could lead to widely contrasting futures. It is our contention that the future is not set in stone, but is malleable, the result of an interplay among megatrends, game-changers and, above all, human agency."¹

This excellent report seeks to identify megatrends that will impact America and the world. As the above quote suggests, the NIC senses that an extraordinary period of time is ahead...that the entire world is now at a "critical juncture."

Bible-believing Christians would agree. In fact, interestingly, some of the NIC's forecasts find parallels in Bible prophecy. While the Bible and NIC would share the view that the future is largely the result of "human agency"—in other words, the choices of people and mankind overall—the Bible goes one decisive step further, claiming a foreknowledge of these ultimate choices.

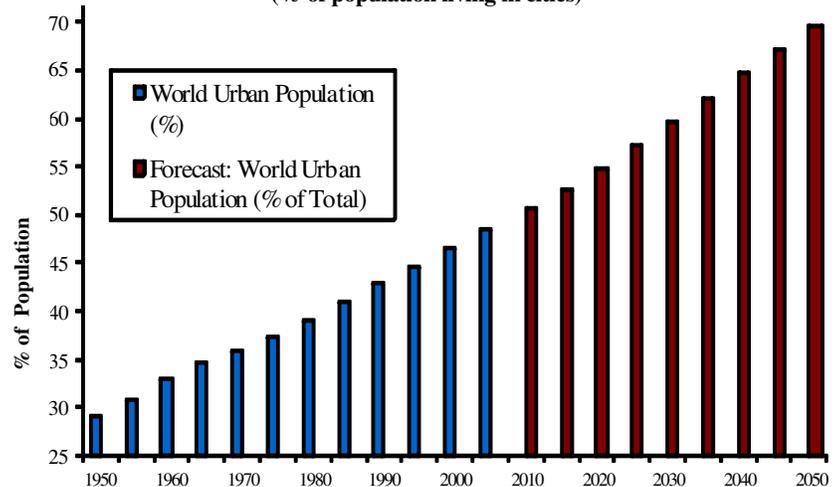
God Jehovah, the author of the Bible, specifically chose to differentiate Himself from all other gods by being the one and only who can reveal both the beginning and the future. He said: "Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure" (Isaiah 46:10).

The mistake that most philosophers and economists often make in their forecasts is simply to extrapolate present trends, assuming the underlying forces that gave rise to them in the first place will continue to accelerate as before. Most often, this is an unreasonable assumption. The created order simply cannot support infinite trends. For example, infinite compound growth is not

... continued on page 3

Back to Babel: World Urbanization Trend

(% of population living in cities)



Source: UN Population Division

"Be careful, or your hearts will be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness and the anxieties of life, and that day will close on you suddenly like a trap." — Luke 21:34

In This Issue

Feature Report: *Burning Alight: 12 Endtime Fuses Part I & II* —pg. 1

World Money Update: *No Exit: Lost and Out of Control* —pg. 1

Signs of the Times: *Financial Signs—Part VI* pg. 5

Letters to the Editor —pg. 7

Facts & Stats —pg. 6

Personal Perspective *Update on the Endtime Money* —pg. 12

WORLD MONEY UPDATE

No Exit: Lost and Out of Control

This past month the world received a warning. There will be no exit. For central banks, accountability will not be escaped. And "thus spoke Zarathustra"... more specifically, the Master of the Universe himself, the head of the U.S. central bank. Recently, he made a big pronouncement and the world listened.

What are we speaking of? Nothing other than the announcement by Ben Bernanke of the U.S. Federal Reserve Board (Fed) that they would not "taper." Readers might not appreciate the large kerfuffle that this caused. Many observers were shocked. Earlier, the Fed had signalled that it would like to begin "tapering." As a result, interest rates promptly soared. Bond markets everywhere, from Indonesia to Spain, threw a tantrum. Then, when the time came for their decision on September 18th, the Fed balked. It announced it would not "taper."

What is the "taper" all about? Simply this: Back in 2012, when the economy was

... continued on next page

again sagging, the Fed felt it could not risk a further deceleration and again began a program of buying \$85 billion worth of treasury bonds and mortgage-backed securities per month. It can do so quite easily, though this might amount to a gargantuan \$1.02 trillion per year. It can pay for its purchases by simply crediting banks with new reserves.

For all intents and purposes, it is a form of money printing. It's a clever little technique, since by doing so, these actions also lower the debt burden for the federal government. The Fed collects the interest on all the fixed-income instruments that they have purchased and gives it back to the government. Voila.

But now, the Fed said it would not stop this program. They would not "taper" (reduce their pace of buying every month); they would continue. A number of conclusions and confirmations spring from this action.

Firstly, the Fed now realizes that there is no easy exit. Once the financial markets, both domestically and globally, are used to the drug of cheap and unlimited money — this being money that has not been earned by human effort and wages — they become hooked. It is like heroin. A few doses may be necessary when the patient is in triage with deep economic trauma, but no more. As soon as drug dependency is established, the exit can only be painful. This situation applies to the actions of all the world's major central banks including the Bank of Japan (whose monetary arteries have already collapsed long ago), the European Central Bank, the Bank of England and others. Taken together, the world's eight biggest central banks have bloated their money base by over \$9 trillion over the past five years. The balance sheets of all the world's central banks (almost all of it by fiat) now amounts to an equivalent of 32% of world economic output.

This is unconscionable. Yet, very few officials have any great worries. They have no sense of the grave immorality and kleptocracy that these policies are ushering in. Wealth distribution, extremely unequal as it is already, will become

even worse. Without a doubt, that is indeed what is happening. Just why would sales of Ferraris be at an all-time high, while revenues at Wal-Mart are slowing down? (See Charts #1 and #2 on page 3.) This is symptomatic of a much broader trend.

The larcenous policies of the major central banks are indeed endorsed at the highest levels. In time, these actions will be sure to contribute to an obliteration of morality at all levels of society. To illustrate, in the great Weimar inflation of the 1920 to 30s (another era of massive monetary malfeasance, though not the same form) people would no longer wait to get married. Money was devaluing so quickly, waiting to pay for a wedding was financially hazardous. Better to cede to economic advantage and get hooked. Out-of-wedlock births soared. This is but one anecdotal illustration of the effects on morality.

What is worst of all is that central banks themselves are now unsure and confused...and desperate. They have pumped many trillions of dollars into the world economy and what do we see? Nothing more than slow, creeping economic growth in most of the developed countries in the world. Even the faster-emerging countries are facing economic decelerations at the present time. All the trillions in fabricated money has been shown to be largely impotent. (See Chart #3 which shows the trend in world trade. No acceleration is evident!)

In Europe, an economic depression is underway in many countries. While some economists are lately ecstatically celebrating the fact that economic collapse has stabilized in some of these nations, the fact remains that unemployment levels in Spain, Greece and other European countries is massive...at much higher levels than in the U.S. during the Great Depression of the 30s.

Our expectation all along has been that even greater monetary cleverness yet lies ahead. Too clever by half to this point, the major central banks have lost their reverse gear. They have discovered that they cannot unwind their actions. Should financial instabilities strike again, they can only ramp up their money creation to even more absurd levels.

More and more economists are prescribing "money finance" policies. This involves true high-power money creation. What these types of policies comprise is the direct purchase by central banks of new government bonds. In effect, central banks would be directly financing governments with newly-created money. Governments will be sure to spend this free money. What government wouldn't? No doubt, this will cause a surge in economic activity...but only for a time. Inflation will also surge.

We anticipate that many people will be taken in by these possible actions. Thinking that a new prosperity is underway, suddenly, they will discover that it is a trap...a false, empty, fabricated prosperity.

The Psalmist brings a comforting message for those that loathe the ungodly environment of the world at this time. "This is what the wicked are like—always free of care, they



ETERNAL VALUE REVIEW
MONEY MONITOR & GLOBAL TRENDS REPORT



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Bible Quotations - All scriptural references are quoted from the *New International Version* unless otherwise stated.

Chart #1: Ferrari Global Sales (# of vehicles)

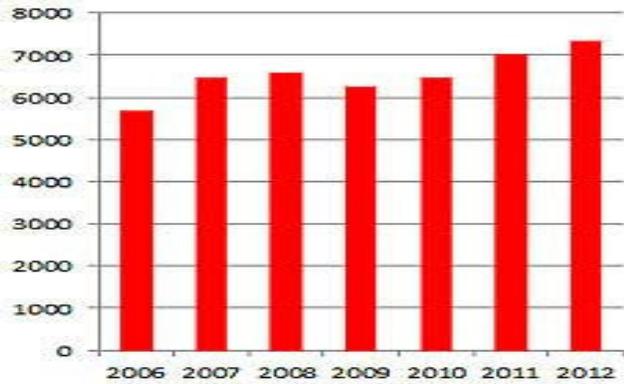
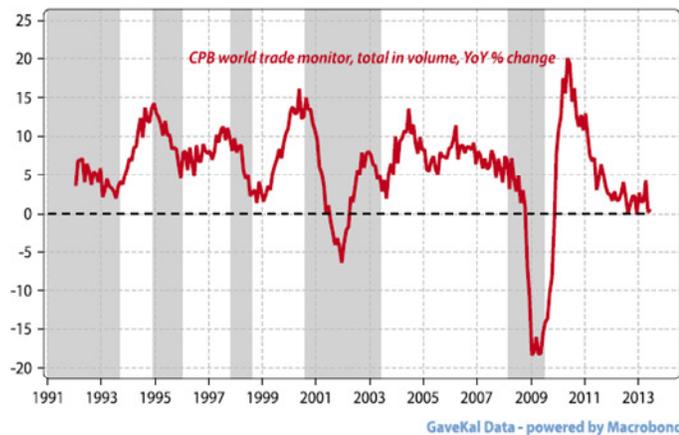


Chart #2: Wal-Mart Revenue Growth (yoy%)



Chart #3: World Trade Volume (yoy %)

Shaded areas = OECD recessions



go on amassing wealth. Surely in vain I have kept my heart pure and have washed my hands in innocence. Surely you place them on slippery ground; you cast them down to ruin. How suddenly are they destroyed, completely swept away by terrors!” (Psalm 73:12-13, 18-21).

“Will not your creditors suddenly arise? Will they not wake up and make you tremble? Then you will become their prey” (Habakkuk 2:7).

“While people are saying, ‘Peace and safety,’ destruction will come on them suddenly” (1 Thessalonians 5:3).

EVR

possible, despite what humanists will want to believe. Yes, mankind can inflate money almost without limit, but not real wealth. God Himself is infinite, but not Creation. Therefore, all trends on earth must eventually decay or collapse spectacularly.

To the extent that mankind’s decisions, expectations and beliefs are based on illusory untruths and false gods, it will face the judgment of a spectacular collapse.

Just what are the major trends that we see, reflecting the unwise choices of secular mankind today? These will lead to judgment...i.e. the global collapse of mankind’s kingdoms and global order. In this series, we propose to list 12 such developments, these being burning fuses that will likely have explosive implications.

However, we will first mention a few caveats. Our list will surely overlook some important trends; it is also likely that we will order them incorrectly in terms of their importance. Why? Like every other generation that has sought to interpret Bible prophecy or peer into the future, we are influenced by the light of our time. It is impossible not to be biased by the current trends and conditions that we see around us. We really have no idea of the exact course of these trends into the future. These may accelerate and then reverse, only to accelerate again or be subsumed by another trend.

It is also challenging to sort factors into major and minor categories. Some may have a significant impact, yet are the fall-out or companion development to another. With these cautions being expressed, we venture into our list of 12 fuses burning. Approximately half of these fall into the realm of secular humanism; the other half fall into Biblically-prophesied or implied developments of the end time. All assume a Biblical worldview and are the direct consequence of shifting human beliefs and/or idolatry.

1. Population Growth and Post-Familialism: Changing Perspectives on Marriage

The U.S. birth rate plunged to an all-time low in 2011. Quoting an article written by Gary D. Halbert, “The overall birth rate is now at its lowest level since reliable records have been kept, falling to 63.2 births per 1,000 women who are of childbearing age in 2011. That is down from 122.7 births at the peak in 1957 during the Baby Boom.”²

Some claim that this trend is due to economic difficulties in recent years. People simply do not want to undertake the financial burden of another child. But, actually, declining birth rates are a long-time global phenomenon, not just North American. Looking at this trend closer, one realizes it is the result of a global shift in values and beliefs. It is a rapid one. David Brooks, in the *New York Times*, writes: “The speed of change is breathtaking. A woman in Oman today has 5.6 fewer babies than a woman in Oman 30 years ago. Morocco, Syria and Saudi Arabia have seen fertility-rate declines of nearly 60 percent and in Iran it’s more than 70%. These are among the fastest declines in recorded history.”

Around the world, attitudes towards marriage and childbirth are changing. For various reasons, also including the populations of emerging nations where the fertility rate has been relatively high, birth rates are dropping dramatically. Many countries, particularly in the advanced nation bloc, are already experiencing population shrinkage (notably Japan and several European nations). Of course, people are free to make their own choices. We only point out that all changes in beliefs that have an impact on human action will have consequences.

Quoting Halbert further: “In Europe, Asia, and most advanced countries, people are running away from marriage, children, and family life at an amazing rate. For example, 30% of German women today say that they do not intend to have children. In Japan in 1960, 20% of women between 25 and 29 had never married; today the number is more than 60%. It is estimated that up to 25% of all East Asian women will remain single up to age 50, and up to a third will remain childless.”

What must be acknowledged here is that a change in behavior has occurred that is related to human values and beliefs. Crucially, taking a Biblical worldview, we must further add that it is a turning away from “Biblical values and beliefs.” Many surveys today document the declining preference for marriage and child-rearing.

For example, consider this summary of a survey conducted by the *Weekly Standard*:

“Americans have been wedded to marriage for a very long time. Between 1910 and 1970, the ‘ever-married rate’—that is, the percentage of people who marry at some point in their lives—went as high as 98.3% and never dipped below 92.8%. But beginning in 1970, the ever-married number began a gradual decline so that by 2000 it stood at only 88.6%. Today, the numbers are even more striking according to the 2010 Census. Almost 24% of men, and 19% of women, between the ages of 35 and 44, have never been married. If we look at the people between 20 and 34—the prime-childbearing years—the numbers are even more startling: 67% of men and 57% of women in this group have never been married. When you total it all up, over half of the voting-age population in America, and 40% of the people who actually showed up to vote this time around, are single.³”

The author of the article from the *Weekly Standard*, Jonathan V. Last (author of the recent book *What to Expect When No One’s Expecting: America’s Coming Demographic Disaster*), provides a chilling summary:

“It’s a complicated story involving, among other factors, the rise of almost-universal higher education, the delay of marriage, urbanization, the invention of no-fault divorce, the legitimization of cohabitation, the increasing cost of raising children, and the creation of a government entitlement system to do for the elderly childless what grown children did for their parents through the millennia.

But all of these causes are particular. Looming beneath

them are two deep shifts. The first is the waning of religion in American life. As Joel Kotkin notes in a recent report titled ‘The Rise of Post-Familialism,’ one of the commonalities between all of the major world religions is that they elevate family and kinship to a central place in human existence. Secularism tends toward agnosticism about the family. This distinction has real-world consequences. Take any cohort of Americans—by race, income, education—and then sort them by religious belief. The more devout they are, the higher their rates of marriage and the more children they have.

The second shift is the dismantling of the iron triangle of sex, marriage, and childbearing. Beginning in roughly 1970, the mastery of contraception decoupled sex from babymaking. And with that link broken, the connections between sex and marriage—and finally between marriage and childrearing—were severed, too.”

This burning endtime fuse is leading to a type of explosion, namely an implosion (a slow and reversed version of explosion). Already, more than half of the world’s population is residing in countries where birthrates are below the replacement level. Little do people realize that this shift carries an undesirable sting...an unavoidable consequence.

Without a doubt, the biggest contributor to prosperity is population growth (everything else being equal). To the modern humanist, this will sound like an old-fashioned notion. Yet, this is an inviolable fact of economics. Why? Economics is human economics. It couldn’t be any other way.

The slower the population growth, the slower will be economic expansion. The maximum wealth and prosperity that can exist in the world is mostly defined by total labor output.

Where is this trend headed? Jonathan V. Last says the following:

“In a word, higher. There are no indicators to suggest when and where it will level off. Divorce rates have stabilized, but rates of cohabitation have continued to rise, leading many demographers to suspect that living together may be crowding out matrimony as a mode of family formation. And increasing levels of education continue to push the average age at first marriage higher.”

God allowed humans free choice. People are free to make choices regarding marriage and child-rearing, but they cannot escape the consequences. Already, these are at the door. Pension systems are collapsing and are increasingly underfunded. The ratio of workers per retirees is declining in most advanced nations. One does not need to be a mathematician or economist to conclude that the lifestyle of future retirees is bound to deteriorate dramatically. Financial markets, therefore, will be in recurring crisis. It all connects, as there is no escape from consequence.

... continued on page 8

Signs of the Times



Financial Signs Update—Part VI: Wage Injustices

Though financial wealth has been booming in the world in the recent century, it is also evident that it is being hoarded as never before in history. In a previous part in this series, we already established that for hoarding to occur there have to be poor people (most certainly so viewed in relative terms).

To briefly review, as mostly all financial wealth in the world must ultimately be underpinned by labor income, our investments and savings are really a claim on someone else's labour — past, present or future. Given that the hoarding of global wealth in the world is probably now at the most extreme in recorded human history, it follows that the value of much of the human labor obligations in the world has been accumulated in the hands of a very few.

The Apostle James tells us to expect this development. In James 5:4, we find: "Look! The wages you failed to pay the workmen who mowed your fields are crying out against you. The cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord Almighty."

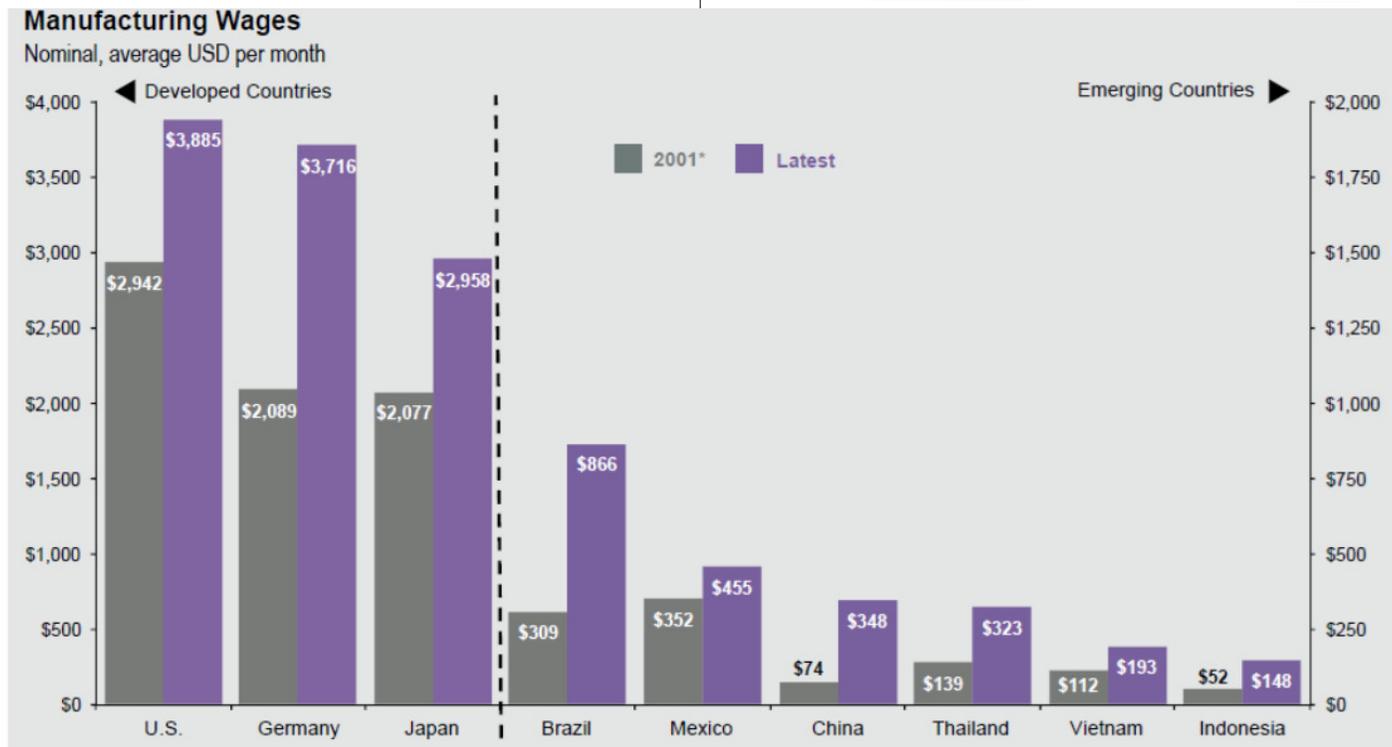
However, we need to be careful in interpreting this condition of the endtimes. There are several ways that wealth can fall into the hands of a few. Of course, there are perfectly legitimate and God-honoring ways of coming into wealth. As well, some of this phenomenon of hoarding is in

the control of each and every one of us. We can choose to be poor stewards, squander our resources unwisely, and fall into deep indebtedness as a consequence of undisciplined consumer habits. It is unlikely that James is mainly speaking to these types of factors in the wage inequalities he predicts.

It is more likely that James is merely referring to laborers that are not being paid adequately for their work — for the expenditures of their energies. Mowing and harvesting was hard work in those days, swinging a small sickle or gathering crops in the heat of the sun. It is the type of work that is physical in nature...what in our day may be called low-value work. These aren't the jobs found in the "knowledge" industries, the professions or in executive positions. What is implied here are the hard-working laborers who exchange their time and sweat for wages. The laborers of the factories and the fields might therefore be more the equivalent to the "mowers" of the agrarian economies of Biblical times.

Are factory laborers not being paid their wages today? The answer will vary depending upon who is asked. Though the fairness of the North American or Western labor economy is far from perfect, it hardly qualifies as the main target of the accusations made by James. Far from it. Laborers are generally well looked after in the Western World. Governments legislate minimum wage standards and labor unions remain active, albeit much less so than earlier in the twentieth century. The interests of laborers living in the high-income nations are reasonably well-represented. Unfortunately, that is not necessarily the case elsewhere in the world.

... continued on page 7



Source: ILO (International Labor Organization), U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Ministry of Labor-Mexico, EM Advisors Group, Thailand National Statistical Office, General Statistics Office of Vietnam, Statistics Indonesia, IMF, FactSet, J.P. Morgan Asset Management. Chinese wages are those of rural migrant workers as a proxy. *Data begins in 2005 for Vietnam due to availability of data. Data is from 2012 for Mexico, China, and Thailand; 2011 for United States, Vietnam (preliminary), and Indonesia (preliminary);

Facts & Stats ... Ends & Trends



TOPICAL QUOTES

163,000 Christians die every year for their faith. Half of all the Christians who have ever died for their faith did so in this century alone, some 35 million! 15,000,000 of these were Orthodox or Catholic Christians who died under the Soviet regime between 1917 and 1980, primarily in prison camps. — **Persecution by Mark Moore**

America is no longer the most obese country among more populous nations. That honor, which, according to another study, Americans held as recently as March [2013], now belongs to Mexico. Roughly 70% of Mexicans are overweight and almost 1/3 are obese. Nearly 1/3 of Mexican teenagers are also obese, a number that has tripled in the last decade alone. The vast majority of those teenagers will remain overweight for their entire lives, the study said, which could lead to weight-related health issues such as diabetes. — <http://gawker.com>

Mothers are the main breadwinners in 40% of American households, according to Pew [Foundation]. Most of those are single parents, but the big rise is in the share of households in which the wife earns more than her husband, which is now the case in 15% of all households with children. The median family income in such homes is \$80,000, compared with a national median of \$57,100 and \$23,000 for single-mother households. Women's participation in the workforce has been rising for decades, but Pew reports that the number of mothers who want to work has shot up since recession struck in 2007. — **The Economist, June 1, 2013**

The handful of global banks that already bestride capital markets seem likely to increase their dominance even further. Kian Abouhossein, an analyst at JPMorgan, forecasts that in 2014 the six largest investment banks (currently JPMorgan, Goldman Sachs, Morgan Stanley, Barclays, Citi and Deutsche Bank) between them will control nearly half the industry's total revenue, whereas the 10 smallest will have just 10% of the market between them. — **The Economist, May 11, 2013**

A critical byproduct of [China's] amazing growth has been skyrocketing economic inequality. A recent study by the Southwestern University of Finance and Economics, in Chengdu, found that China is now one of the most unequal societies on earth. China has a Gini coefficient of 0.61; the Gini coefficient is a measure of economic inequality, with 0 indicating the least possible inequality and 1 indicating the most. That score put China on par with Botswana and Haiti when it comes to inequality. This is a recipe of substantial social discontent, especially because China's have-nots are increasingly exposed to all the benefits that contemporary consumer society can offer. — **Foreign Affairs, July/August 2013**

Some 21.6m Americans aged 18 to 31—36% of the total—still languish in the parental home, according to the Pew Research Centre, a think-tank. This figure is slightly misleading, since it includes students, who may live at home only during the holidays. Nonetheless, the share of youngsters stuck with mom and pop is the largest since surveys began in 1968. — **The Economist, August 17, 2013**

While anti-depressant use is surging in Sweden (up 1000% since 1980), bursting in Britain (up 495% since 1991), and up an astounding 400% since 1994 in the USA (with 1 in 10 on some kind of 'prozac'), it is the poor-old Nigerians that should really be complaining. Based on 7 variables, Bloomberg has scored 74 nations around the world for their 'stressed-out' factor and finds the USA to be 54th, Norway the least stressed-out of all and El Salvador and South Africa at the top with Nigeria (with the roiling Egyptians ranking 15th). — <http://www.zerohedge.com>, July 18, 2013

Trading in foreign exchange markets averaged \$5.3 trillion per day in April 2013. This is up from \$4.0 trillion in April 2010 and \$3.3 trillion in April 2007. FX swaps were the most actively traded instruments in April 2013, at \$2.2 trillion per day, followed by spot trading at \$2.0 trillion. — **BIS Triennial Central Bank Survey 2013**

“In individuals, insanity is rare; but in groups, parties, nations and epochs, it is the rule.” — **Friedrich Nietzsche**

“It's discouraging to think how many people are shocked by honesty and how few by deceit.” — **Noël Coward, *Blithe Spirit***

“In reading The History of Nations, we find that, like individuals, they have their whims and their peculiarities, their seasons of excitement and recklessness, when they care not what they do. We find that whole communities suddenly fix their minds upon one object and go mad in its pursuit; that millions of people become simultaneously impressed with one delusion, and run after it, till their attention is caught by some new folly more captivating than the first.” — **Charles MacKay, *Extraordinary Popular Delusions and the Madness of Crowds***

“Our analysis leads us to believe that recovery is sound only if it does come of itself. For any revival which is merely due to artificial stimulus leaves part of the work of depressions undone and adds, to an undigested remnant of maladjustment, new maladjustments of its own.” — **Joseph Schumpeter**

EVR

There is one practice in the world today that appears to match the injustices portrayed by James. It is the economic exploitation of the workers of the lower-income countries of the world. Many large corporations are dependent upon the cheap, bargain-basement wages of the countries in the Third World — countries such as Vietnam, China and Indonesia to name a few. It is a practice that people living in the Western World benefit from directly. If these societies were not so reliant on the long-day, lowly-paid workers of these countries, their standard of living would be substantially lower. These fellow citizens of the world — potential fellow inheritors of God's grace of salvation — work for pennies an hour, a few dollars a day. A full day's work in many instances doesn't provide them with sufficient income for proper food and shelter. (See the chart on page 5 which provides global wage comparatives.)

These workers manufacture almost all of our clothes and shoes. They perform the menial jobs of assembly or any labor intensive function that our society of consumers could not otherwise afford. Were they to receive the same pay as equivalent workers in our own society, the prices of many of our consumer goods would triple or quadruple, if not more.

To add insult to injury, many of the poor workers of the Third World are hidden due to a statistical sleight of hand. Living in the high-income countries, people are judged to be in poverty if they earn less than 60% of the average wage. Indeed, relative to the standards of the lifestyles being enjoyed by most in the high-income nations, incomes of this level or lower definitely do represent hardship. But what is the definition of poverty in the lower-income countries of the world? Would it be a twentieth of the amount that is considered the poverty-threshold in North America? Unbelievably, the definition of poverty still used today is an income threshold of less than \$1 a day...or sometimes, \$2. Doesn't it seem unimaginable that the world's aid agencies, the World Bank and others still use such a low threshold to measure the incidence of poverty in the less advanced nations? Why is such a laughable definition employed for the economically-disadvantaged people of the world?

Whatever the reason, doing so underestimates the great inequity that exists in the world today. The wages that are not being paid to the workers of the field indeed cry out against the relatively rich societies.

Christians do not need to comply with the demands of an expected endtime economic order. To an extent, the "anxieties of life" of the last days are subject to the choices we make. For example, if maintaining a high lifestyle or accumulating much financial wealth is a high priority for our lives, we invite complicity with a materialist belief system that is sweeping the world. This is Mammonism. It invites us to participate. Once we do, we may find ourselves trapped and open to the "anxieties of life" that can rob us of contentedness and peace.

EVR

Letters to the Editor

READER: Re: Burning Fuse PART II article. [See page 8 of this issue.] I found it most interesting and read it on the Rapture Ready site. I don't think Baghdad or Iraq is going to be the world capital but rather Rome. The evidence is overwhelming in the Book of Revelation ... city on seven hills, when the religious systems are amalgamated there it will become a booming economy if it isn't already. Then the shipmaster sees her burning. That's not possible with Iraq as it is landlocked. — **M.K.**

EVR: Thank you for your email. May I present some thoughts for you to consider. The endtime identity of Babylon is a greatly debated topic to say the least. We have published quite a bit of material on this and related topics in the past. Many of these can be found on our website. May I point out that the Bible is quite clear as to the symbolism of the "seven hills." Revelation 17:9 says: "This calls for a mind with wisdom. The seven heads are seven hills on which the woman sits." However, the next verse must not be ignored. "They are also seven kings" (Revelation 17:10). The seven hills therefore represent seven sovereign powers (seven kings) and not the topology or physical central location of the last-day Babylon.

READER: In Revelation, there is mentioned 24 elders before God's throne. Who do you say they are? — **S.M.**

EVR: I have no firm answer to your question, and can only offer some opinions. After all, this is a debated topic. As these 24 elders are mentioned after Revelation 4.1 (namely after the Rapture), it is reasonable to believe that at least 12 of these elders are from the Church. What about the other 12? As the Second Resurrection has not yet occurred at this time, one could doubt that pre-Church Age Jews are in Heaven at this time, qualifying as the other 12 elders. Others argue that the patriarchs and other godly people of the Old Testament are in paradise (this being interpreted as heaven) and therefore could indeed be candidates to be these elders. There could be 12 Apostles as elders as well as 12 representatives of the 12 tribes of Israel. If so, this would align with the mention of the 12 gates of the New Jerusalem being named after the 12 tribes (Revelation 21:12) and its 12 foundations named after the 12 Apostles (Revelation 21:14). We do know according to Scripture that the Bride of Christ will eventually be comprised of Gentiles and Jews; the original church as well as all those who are judged to be righteous and resurrected. The New Jerusalem is the final and complete form of the Bride of Christ (Revelation 21:9-11).

EVR

Wilfred's Itinerary: *The Mulberry Ministry*

- **October 19-21, 2013: Midnight Call Ministries, 2013 Atlantic Prophecy Congress—Myrtle Beach, SC.** Please contact Midnight Call at 1.800.845.2420 or visit www.midnightcall.com.
- **December 2-4, 2013, 22nd Pre-Trib Study Group Conference, Dallas, TX**
- **April 18-21, 2014: Mitternachttruf Osterkonferenz. Dübendorf, Switzerland**

2. Global Urbanization

An ever greater share of the world population is moving from rural areas to urban ones...to the city life. This is called urbanization, and it is a rapid trend. According to forecasts of the United Nations Population Division (UNPD), 16.3% of the world's population (2.6 billion people) will be moving to urban areas over the next 39 years.⁴ Assuming this forecast is correct, more than two-thirds of the world's population (or 6.3 billion people) will then be living in cities.

It therefore only follows that there will be more big cities...in other words, greater agglomerations of people. While there were only 10 urban agglomerations with an excess of 10 million people in the world in 1990 (Tokyo, New York, Mexico City, Sao Paulo, Bombay, Osaka-Kobe, Calcutta, Los Angeles, Seoul, Buenos Aires), there are 23 today. The UNPD forecasts that there will be 37 such cities by 2025.

Interestingly, as a side note, the UNPD does not see Baghdad or any of its suburbs qualifying as one of these big cities in the near future. If we are to go by the UNPD's forecast, it will be some time yet before Babylon can again rise as a "great city" and serve as the world's nexus point for commerce and trade. A number of prophecy teachers do believe that a physical Babylon will again revive.

The Bible generally does not reflect an approving view of great cities. According to secular anthropologists, greater urbanization tends to go hand in hand with the deterioration of the family unit, lower marriage rates, and consumerism. Seen from the Bible's perspective, these are not developments that the Creator designed as preferential and most blessed for mankind.

The Bible goes further, indicting other moral pitfalls of city life. Several times it decries large cities for their violence and immorality. For example, of Nineveh, Nahum says: "Woe to the city of blood, full of lies, full of plunder, never without victims!" (Nahum 3:1). Isaiah describes Jerusalem as such: "See how the faithful city has become a prostitute! She once was full of justice; righteousness used to dwell in her—but now murderers!" (Isaiah 1:21). Sodom and Gomorrah are shown as cities at the apogee of great moral failure.

The woes of Bible prophecy are frequently addressed to cities. One characteristic noted is the potential for smugness and self-determination, the same attitude that afflicted Babel. For example, Babylon the Great boasts in her heart: "I sit enthroned as queen. I am not a widow; I will never mourn" (Revelation 18:7). Sodom is said to be "arrogant, overfed and unconcerned; they did not help the poor and needy" (Ezekiel 16:49). Seen in this light, cities are hotbeds for both humanism and immorality.

Most cities mentioned in the Bible would likely have had less than 3,000 inhabitants, according to estimates. A few large cities are mentioned: among these Nineveh, said

to be 120,000 in population and to be a "very large city" (Jonah 3:3); Babylon, which would have even been larger; and most certainly, the ancient metropolis of Babel. How large was Babel? No one knows. Yet it stands as an example of an "agglomeration" of people of which God did not approve. He intervened, scattering them with a confusion of languages.

The Bible refers to "great cities" ten times in the Book of Revelation. Only one of these ten references points to a wonderful and benevolent outcome, and this is the "great city" of the New Jerusalem: "[...] that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God" (Revelation 21:10). In a sense, we may see that the world's immoral cities finally have their redemption in the form of the New Jerusalem. Just as God redeems people, so He will also eventually redeem the great city.

Today, we see a world of larger and larger cities, ever higher population density, and globalism (this being a form of a global city)—unified, smug and intent upon constructing a world apart from God. The sins of Babel are today being replicated on a massive global scale.

Points to Ponder – Part I

While the entire world looks apoplectically into the future, anticipating accelerating and interrupting change (though not exactly knowing what), the fact is the world has already experienced such change. Many do not realize this. Much more change lies ahead, also impacting the geopolitical sphere. We will review the remaining 10 "endtime fuses burning alight" in the following series.

Notes

- 1 National Intelligence Council's (NIC) 2012 report (Global Trends 2030: Alternative Worlds).
- 2 Gary D. Halbert. Forecasts & Trends Letter: US Birth Rate Hits New Low—A Nation of Singles, December 18, 2012.
- 3 Ibid.
- 4 United Nations Population Division. World Urbanization Prospects—The 2011 Revision.

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Burning Alight: 12 Endtime Fuses – Part II

We continue with our list of 12 burning fuses. These represent significant endtime trends that may be defined by their rapidity and explosiveness. These are notable even more so in our day, where many of the enormous technological shifts of the past century are fizzling out. For example, the speed of travel, after accelerating from horse and buggy speeds to the jet, has not advanced in five decades. The impact of antibiotics is near its zenith of conquering germs. Global communication and interconnectedness is near its maximum practical impact (though possibly still becoming cheaper). Very likely, advances in agricultural productivity are slowing...and so on.

But is this also true of the future impact of technology in general? Aren't the limits of technology boundless? Just as people may have underestimated the advances of

technology a century ago, would it not be reasonable to trust in the ingenuity of mankind to drive further technological leaps?

Yes and no. We firstly say no, as the ingenuity of mankind is not without limit. Only God Himself is infinite. But we also answer yes, as there is at least one more technological development that has the potential to impact the souls of humanity.

3. The Final Prophesied Impact of Technology

We venture the opinion that technology has at least one more role to play in the prophetic timeline of the world. In fact, it is connected to one other endtime fuse that we have already reviewed in Part I—Post-Familialism. More and more people are choosing to remain single, and this is in part linked to the increase of self-love and narcissism.

What is narcissism? Borrowing a definition from *World of Psychology*, this is a trait evidenced by “egotistical preoccupation with self, personal preferences, aspirations, needs, success, and how he/she is perceived by others.”¹ Readers will agree that such inclinations are anti-social and evidence a lack of love for others. We think this facilitation of “self” is the last prophetically-significant frontier of technology; it is having a rapid impact.

The “Self” Enabled Through Technology?

The most pivotal technological developments over the past several decades, as everyone will know, have been the internet and the personal cell phone. The adoption of these two consumer services has been more rapid than any other new technology ever before. Crucially, these two developments have lately converged into one leading edge—the smart phone. The conversion to internet-connected cell phones (basically, that’s what smartphones are) is even more rapid, exceeding the adoption rate of the basic cell phone.

This is significant, as it opens the gateway to the ultimate “dotage upon the individual” (the self), though within a centrally-controlled, global nexus of connections. We will explain why.

Consider these statistics: While it required over 30 years for the telephone to penetrate one-quarter of North American households, the internet achieved the same penetration level in less than 7 years. Similarly, the adoption of the cell phone was also quick, requiring only 13 years from the time of invention. Consider that 419 million mobile phone devices (which include smartphones) were sold worldwide in the 3rd quarter of 2012. At an annualized pace, that represents one phone for a little more than 4 people in the world! (The global population is 7.0 billion presently.)

Within this cell phone demand explosion in recent

years has been a sub-trend to buy smartphones. Hundreds of millions of these devices are being sold. In the period cited earlier, 172 million of the mobile devices sold were smartphones—for example, the Apple iPhone or the Android, among other brands.

But why should the advance of these communication and media devices be more significant than any other? The key difference (besides the speed of adoption) is that the internet-enabled smartphone is a personal item. These are designed for the voice communication and internet usage of the individual human. TVs and a land-based internet connection, on the other hand, tend to be a household purchase (at least, that was the case originally).

Readers may be wondering why these developments are so prophetically noteworthy. Where is the connection to the Bible? Just where do we find any mention of an endtime burst of personal mobile devices in the Bible? Is this an evil technology that should not be used? Let’s first turn to the Bible before we return to our further examination of this endtime “burning fuse.”

The Bible on Self

The Apostle Paul wrote this to Timothy: “But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. People will be lovers of themselves [...], unholy, without love, [...] without self-control, [...] not lovers of the good, [...] conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God” (2 Timothy 3:1-4).

Paul is clearly speaking of the last days. An identifying characteristic of that time he says will be people preoccupied with the “self.” By definition, such people must be worldly. Why?

Despite the fact that many so-called Christian ministries today cater to the “self,” the Bible never endorses this emphasis. Actually, the Bible counsels the exact opposite. We are to “deny” ourselves. Jesus said to his disciples, “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me” (Matthew 16:24, Mark 8:34, Luke 9:23). It could not be any clearer: Whoever wants to be a disciple of Christ must therefore deny “themselves” and be selfless.

To be self-seeking has consequences both for individuals and societies, according to the Bible. Paul says that “[...] for those who are self-seeking and who reject the truth and follow evil, there will be wrath and anger” (Romans 2:8). Moreover, a focus on self does not align with the duty to love. “Love is patient [...] It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking” (1 Corinthians 13:4, 5).

A preoccupation with the “self” is not godly; moreover, a mass emphasis on the self would indeed be a condition witnessed in the last days. If this is so, we can further know that it will represent an age that will be

corrupted by deceitful desires. Why? Again, because the Bible tell us so. Paul says: “You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires” (Ephesians 4:22). Therefore, a last-day world of ungodly people still mastered by their “old selves” will surely lead to a loveless and deceitful consumer culture and society of the self. But just how could the preoccupation with the self gain such reinforcement and enabling in a world with billions and billions of people? Technology provides the means.

Technology Glorifying the Self

Consider these developments of the internet. Today, online tracking systems have the ability to build a personal profile about you. All your online activity is tracked. (Nothing you do online is secret!) With this information, these systems make inferences about your likes, tastes and views. Doing so, they can then target advertisements to you specifically that are likely to attract your response. This is called “social graphing.”

In addition, these systems can predetermine what information you will want to see when you are browsing the web. Says Omar Tawakoll, founder of BlueKai (a firm whose clients track more than 80 percent of the U.S. online population): “Hyper-targeted ads will follow us to TVs and cellphones.”

The new breakthrough is this: Today, everything is about you. Ads are now targeted to you specifically—the you that is the one and only me, myself and I.

Even if one is not using the internet to shop, but rather to search for information, even here “personalization” is becoming the norm. Says one observer: “*Courtesy of technology, we can now receive all our information from people who agree with us—which is exactly what human beings want. And, the new economics of media makes it extremely profitable for information-providers to pander to what we want to hear.*”²

This is disturbing as it means that the internet is becoming a controlled system, pre-screening what it will allow you to see. However, what’s even more significant is that all these technologies cater to the likes and proclivities of the individual. It all feeds a trend of individualism...the world of me...the single.

The social media revolution is a companion trend. What is meant by social media? We here refer to such services as Twitter, Facebook, YouTube and others that achieve their connectivity and platform over the internet. With these services, everyone can individually be on display and on show to the world.

Taking license with William Shakespeare’s phrase from the play *As You Like It*, today, “All the world of me

is a stage.”

The worldwide connectivity of the internet is said to open up a range of consumer options and information. It is argued, therefore, that the internet represents the welcome unshackling of the individual, ushering in maximum freedom. Actually, it is likely to be the complete opposite.

The Good or Evil of Technology

No doubt, readers may think that we see nothing of value in the many new technologies of our day. Not at all. The internet and the cell phone offer great convenience. We even wonder if one could survive without them, though they have barely been 20 years in existence. [This article was partially researched using the internet.] Technology in and of itself is not evil. That would only be possible through the agency of human action and motives. It is up to the individual to decide for what purposes they will use any technology...good or bad.

Nonetheless, an awareness of the potential side-effects of technology is urgent. All the conveniences of technology come with a price—a trade-off. We quote here an excerpt from an earlier book, *The Endtime Money Snare: How to live free* (now out of print):

The successful advance of technology has opened mankind up to tremendous spiritual seduction, both subtle and direct, even though science is not evil in and of itself [...]. Hardly anyone reading this [article] will not have succumbed to its comfortable inventions in one way or another. Some will have swallowed the whole hook, line and sinker, flatly rejecting the existence of God. These people instead choose to place their full faith in the present and future promises of technology and the intelligence of the human brain. Though this group is rapidly increasing in size over past decades, they are still small in number. Most of us would reject their conclusion as being much too extreme and stark. It’s too obviously wrong. It is for that reason that the subtle seductions of [science and technology] are much more dangerous. We are not aware of [...] these seductions [as they] do not confront us in terms of black and white trade-offs. They stake their advances in tiny steps of convenience and novelty. Though we still consciously believe in the existence of God, sub-consciously He has become very small. We have allowed our faith in technology to whittle Him down. Now God is only the weatherman or the God of random chance. We need to better understand how the advances of technology impact our faith.

[...] they pose the same proposal to our souls: To trade a higher vulnerability to worldliness for new convenience; to opt for increased exposure to a godless world in return for higher material comfort.

[...] We must see that all the conveniences and pleasures offered by new technology come with a price. In some ways ‘high-tech’ is no exception to the adage, ‘There’s no free lunch.’ Every improvement comes with a new vulnerability in spiritual terms.

Thoughts to Ponder

What we are witnessing today is the proliferation of personal connectivity devices. Why is this significant? It provides two-way communication and information within a globally interconnected and controlled system that facilitates the emphasis of self. This is a development foreseen by the Bible. Ultimately, it actually becomes an instrument of bondage to the “self” and also centralized control of the entirety of humanity.

Now, everyone in the world can be on their own stage; to have their most personal wants and lusts catered to; enjoying the ultimate in individual customization to their interests and beliefs. We dare state that this is the emerging endtime world of the self...the celebration of the individual...the single life. The consequences of these choices are already destabilizing societies in a number of insidious ways.

Quoting Joel Kotkin, “Traditional values have almost without exception been rooted in kinship relations. The new emerging social ethos endorses more secular values that prioritize individual personal socioeconomic success as well as the personal quest for greater fulfillment.”³

We can indeed benefit from the new inventions of science and technology, yet not allow them to affect our focus on the Lord or to abandon a Biblical worldview. We must constantly fend off subtle and luring inroads into our minds and the fleshly proposals to our wants, if we are to stand separate from the deceits of a last-day world.

But most of all, we rejoice in the fact that we have a personal Lord. He knows each of our needs, tendencies, vulnerabilities, wants, weaknesses and talents on an individual basis. There can be no higher personal care nor purer love and motive for relationship with each of us (individually) than through Jesus Christ. “Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you” (1 Peter 5:7). We can “log-on” with Him at any time through prayer. The Holy Spirit is the only infallible interconnection with the entire Body of Christ. Technology can only provide a cheap and deceiving substitute if we are not aware.

Notes

1. <http://psychcentral.com/blog/archives/2008/08/04/how-to-spot-a-narcissist/>
2. Steven Strauss, America: Drifting Towards the End of the Republic, With an Entertained Citizenry, Huffington Post, July 4, 2012
3. Joel Kotkin, www.newgeography.com, 10/10/2012. Accessed Jan. 19, 2013. <http://www.newgeography.com/content/003133-the-rise-post-familialism-humanitys-future>

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Updates on the Endtime Money Trap

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specific international groupings of regulators and supervisors, and committees of central bank experts. As can be concluded from this description, it is yet one more transnational organization that is seeking to promote an internationally-connected and regulated financial system.

Most interesting is that the FSB has determined that some financial institutions around the globe are systemically important banks (G-SIB). It has identified 28 such G-SIBs, these being the biggest, most internationally-connected banks. What are the implications of this initiative? To our thinking, while these banks will be carefully monitored at the international level, they therefore will likely also be favored and protected during any future financial crisis. With this protected status, it would not be surprising if the entire world banking system were eventually centralized into a few institutions. That would certainly facilitate the ability to control all financial flows.

A second significant development in the effort to harmonize banks around the globe is the activity of the Bank of International Settlements (BIS) based in Basel, Switzerland. Its purpose is to foster international cooperation and to act as a bank for central banks. Sixty such central banks are members of this organization today and its board of directors includes members from China to Canada.

A major endeavor of the BIS is the monumental Basel III program. This initiative was also taken expressly in response to the financial instabilities of the GFC. The new Basel III operating standards are now foreseen to be in effect by 2018. Crucially, the BIS continues to successfully build a common and unified foundation for global financial institutions and their central banks. This serves to organize common operating procedures and philosophies of global financial systems around the globe.

Finally, we will mention one other critical development in central banking. This involves the adoption of unorthodox monetary tools by central banks that by any fair standard would be considered immoral. These methods are considered necessary in response to the economic fall-out of the GFC. Central banks are desperately hopeful that such actions will restore prosperity. We would not be surprised to see aggressive implementation of such ideas as “money finance” and Outright Permanent Money Finance (OPMF) in the future. These policies will cause massive and unjust wealth transfers and an even greater stratification of wealth than already exists. All of this breeds the type of instabilities and problems that will require even greater financial controls in the future.

In our view, the three developments we have briefly outlined could well pave the road to the ultimate advent of the final money trap. Just when can we expect the next crisis that will drive the “money trap” to its final snap? According to our understanding of Scripture, the final one will occur in the second half of the Tribulation. This crisis could very well be the next one. Maranatha.

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Personal Perspective

Update on the Endtime Money Trap

We have written frequently on the topic of the Endtime Money Trap. A book entitled The Endtime Money Trap: How to live free was published on this topic in 2001. It documented the steadily accelerating trends toward financial controls, global financial interconnectedness and the financialization (money captivity) of an ever greater part of human activity. These trends indeed have continued to accelerate and remain a topic of interest at many levels.

A number of verses in the Bible point to the emergence of a potential “money trap.” Most specific is the following prophetic text: “[...] that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name?” (Revelation 13:17 KJV).

We note a number of new developments over recent years that could hasten the facilitation of just such an event as described. However, before pointing to these, it is worthwhile to first reflect on the implications of just such a prophecy. What does it mean that “no man might buy or sell”? It clearly means that **NOBODY ANYWHERE** will be able buy or sell **ANYTHING** unless they subordinate themselves to the “Beast and its image.” The question we wish to focus on is this: What systemic controls must be in place so that **NO ONE** on earth can either buy or sell without permission?

Essentially (and grossly simplified) for Revelation 13:17 to be fulfilled at least four things have to happen :

1. A globally integrated and closed financial system must exist. Necessary technologies must be in place. This means that not even a little bank in Tupelo, Mississippi or the Island of Tuvalu will be able to facilitate any type of transaction (whether buying food or selling a house) outside of this closed system.
2. A system of central banking must be endorsed everywhere and centrally coordinated. This must result in a commonly-shared monetary philosophy around the world, which, most importantly, achieves a strong influence over market and human behavior. In other words, the entire world must agree to play by the same rules and values, thereby obeying and following the actions of monetary officials (the modern money equivalent to suzerains).
3. The legal statutes and regulatory institutions that oversee financial activities of individual countries must be superseded by a centralized world-wide authority in order that unified actions can be enforced.
4. Finally, a unified global “political economy” must exist (either taking the form of a very small group of

powerful countries or a single autocrat) that is powerful enough to enforce and authorize such controls upon the entire world at a given time.

How far along is the world with respect to the four steps mentioned? Steps #1 and #2 are well advanced. For all intents and purposes, we could say that they are already in place. Only the final two remain to be completed. In our view, global initiatives in this direction are already well in tow. However, further development in this direction is difficult. Why? Because individual countries must first give up a measure of sovereignty for these to occur. They will do so only very reluctantly. If this is the case, then how can these last steps ever fall in place?

As technocrats and political strategists well know, there is nothing as effective as crises and fear to unify political consensus or to compel change. In such desperate times people will be prone to strike deals that will hold them captive. An example of this tendency is shown in the Genesis account of the 7-year famine during the time of Joseph. In the later stages of the famine, people became so desperate they said: “[...] buy us and our land for bread, and we and our land will be servants unto Pharaoh.”

A major crisis occurred only recently — the Global Financial Crisis (GFC). It was most significant as it was a globally-interconnected and fiercely contagious financial disaster that elicited the greatest globally-coordinated response of all time. Almost instantly, the attention of the entire world was captured, triggering a global wave of fear and angst. The spectre of collapsing stock markets, banks and other financial institutions met a hurried and panicked response. The sheer financial immobilization of the crisis allowed regulators and policymakers to enforce measures that might otherwise have been considered illegal. Such is the effectiveness of crisis. It can galvanize responsive action. Invariably, the changes born of such crisis tend towards centralization, greater controls and, crucially, massive wealth transfers. A measure of all of these has played out in recent years.

Let’s return to our original inquiry. Just what significant new developments over recent years serve to hasten the future facilitation of the Revelation 13:17 money policy? We will mention three.

Firstly, in 2008, in response to the GFC, the Financial Stability Board (FSB) was formed by the G20 countries. It was established to coordinate internationally the work of national financial authorities and international standard-setting bodies and to develop and promote the implementation of effective regulatory, supervisory and other financial sector policies.

As such, it brings together national authorities responsible for financial stability in significant international financial centres, international financial institutions, sector-

... continued on page 11

