



# ETERNAL VALUE REVIEW

## MONEY MONITOR & GLOBAL TRENDS REPORT

Issue 6, Volume 18

"For thinking Christians seeking to understand the times."

DECEMBER 2015

FEATURE REPORT

### Prophetic Staging? East Asia Trends Revisited

A little more than five years ago, a 3-part series entitled "Far East Asia Trends Today" was published in this column. We discussed the prophetic implications both for and involving Asia (i.e. the collective of nations east of the Euphrates River). Already, an update is in order. Why? Events and developments in Asia have been fast-paced. Particularly, China is in much of the news these days. Rapid changes are taking place with this country that have the potential to radically alter the post-World War II geopolitical order.

As we concluded in the previous series, there indeed are some prophetic perspectives concerning "Asian nations" that can be deduced from the Bible. We will again briefly mention these. At the very least, it is reasonable to identify the rapid developments in Asia today as being "prophetically significant"...though likely not in the ways popularly speculated.

All of the five, tell-tale hallmarks of a last-day phenomenon can be observed with China: 1. An acceleration trend taking place sometime after 1948 (that being the point at which God's timepiece, Israel, again became a sovereign entity in its original land); 2. A seeming improbability and inexplicability of the occurrence of a change, at least at first; 3. Driving factors of change marked by humanism and political amorality (including apostasy and antichrist spiritual elements); 4. A large scope for worldwide impact; and 5., above all, suddenness and rapidity.

All of these five markers apply to a number of Asian countries, and most latterly, to China. A review of our earlier 3-part series will substantiate and convince just how improbable and incredible the developments in Asia have been. Seen in perspective, the scale and rapidity is awe-striking.

... continued on page 3

### Why China/Asia Rising Geopolitically? Significance and Scale of China's One Belt, One Road Plan



Source: China Investment Research

Source: <http://www.chinainvestmentresearch.org/>

"[...] we want you to know, Your Majesty, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up."

— Daniel 3:18

#### In This Issue

**Feature Report:** *Prophetic Staging? East Asia Trends Revisited* —pg. 1

**World Money Update:** *Wanted: Floating Bubbles and Mammon's Deceptions.* —pg. 1

**Signs of the Times:** *Apocalypse Now for Believers* —pg. 5

**Facts & Stats** —pg. 7

**Letters to the Editor** —pg. 9

**Personal Perspective** *Fatal Impact of the Endtime Value Trap* —pg. 12

#### WORLD MONEY UPDATE

### Wanted: Floating Bubbles & Mammon's Deceptions

It is such an obvious truism of the human being and its societies that it is largely ignored: It is that a great behavioural bias is incessantly exerting its force upon virtually every human. There are few exceptions. Like the force of gravity, this bias — or vulnerability — never stops; its power never repealed.

What we are referring to here is the pull of money ... the gain of it ... the hoarding of it ... the indefatigable quest for it. Yes, there may be a modest number of people who are free of this "human lust." Few stop to think how firmly this trait is embedded within the human being and how it has shaped world history.

To some, an insight into this "money bias" yields an important tool for great material gain. They make this "force" work for them. As Charlie Munger, the famous partner of Warren Buffet in the firm Berkshire Hathaway, says, "Show me the incentive and I will show you the outcome." In other words, if you know where the incentives are you can pretty much sniff the opportunities.

... continued on next page

Upton Sinclair observed another angle of the forces of incentive and vested interest, saying: “It is difficult to get a man to understand something, when his salary depends on his not understanding it.”

The earthly “money incentive” system (the domain of Mammon) that defines a prominent character of the current dispensation is indeed an effective one. For example, people who would normally be incorrigibly rude in their private affairs will witness an amazing transformation when representing their business or vocation. Even the vilest of them will transform themselves into placating, smiling, friendly people in order to make a sale to you or to earn a tip as a restaurant waiter. Even little children know how to solicit lemonade sales. You are sure to get a smile with your lemonade.

We see that in many ways, money can perform a remarkable transformation in people’s behaviour — good or bad. And that is the mortal deficiency of money itself. It is amoral and therefore will spawn many bad outcomes and facilitate many immoral actions.

That brings us to monetary policies of the world that are being invented today. It only follows that for societies that have become deeply humanistic and materialistic, that the pull of money and wealth is all the more controlling. These dispositions are then imbedded in its highest institutions.

That explains why within the macro-policy-making sphere we find this “money bias” becoming ultrasensitive to the point of the absurd. Central banks today have financial markets and their traders so conditioned and trained that the slightest raised eyebrow of a central bank governor will have billions and trillions of capital reacting, running and rampaging in the blink of an eye.

The most oblique and minor of central bank “signallings” and statements are scoured by analysts so as to possibly gain an insight to the future direction of interest rates ... or quantitative easing ... or anything else that might impact the world of money and wealth.

Today, we find that these “experts in greed” are so blinkered that the whole money system is disconnected from

material reality. Rather, it floats disembodied with no foundation, on the hot air of Pavlovian responses and confidence of its human participants. There no longer need be any fundamental realities.

To no surprise then, in recent years the world’s major central banks have become ever more inventive and desperate, to keep the perception of money floating in its bubble ever inflating. What’s more, virtually all financial participants want this deception to continue. However, to continue upon this road leads to ever greater absurdity and systemic vulnerability.

The new policies being contemplated and endorsed by so-called “respected” analysts and economists are incredible. These include negative interest rates; more quantitative easing; money finance policies (meant to launch government infrastructure spending and/or tax cuts); and much more. The latter approaches fall into the categories of “massive wealth distribution” and outright theft.

That these policies will eventually be shown to be bankrupt should be no surprise. There is plenty of evidence to support this conclusion. For example, consider the case of Japan. The huge quantitative easing programs that its central bank (Bank of Japan) had unleashed in recent years were so large as to have been thought not possible. The result? Its economy remains comatose. Japan is experiencing its fourth economic recession in the past eight years.

However, at the same time I believe that it would be wrong to conclude that the major central banks and policymakers around the world cannot yet spin greater deceptions. In fact, these could even appear to be very real and believable. There very well could yet emerge a global economic boom (though surely unsustainable).

Impossible? The important fact to remember is that most people (whether policymakers, financial professionals or the general public) want to believe the deceptions. The logical consequences are well known by some, but are repressed. And, why not? Let the good times last as long as they can. “Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die” (Isaiah 22:13).

Gold, which many believe to be “real money” (by some, even God’s money), will remain on its hind foot so long as faith in Central Banks remains in ascendancy.

What to do? At minimum, one should keep one’s eyes open and try not to be deceived. And, at the very least we can chuckle at some of the absurdities that are emerging in today’s money world.

Here an observation from Charles Gave, thoughtful co-founder of Gavekal Research. He theorizes the following: “If interest rates really are there to compensate me for an uncertain future, then in philosophical terms negative rates must mean that the future is more certain than the present. This is idiotic; the future cannot be more certain than the present—a logical certainty if ever there was one” (The Catastrophe of Negative Rates, November 11, 2015).

Back to reality: What kind of world “outcome” would there be without Mammon incessantly propositioning the souls of mankind? Mankind will definitely find out some day. That will be when Jesus Christ establishes his kingdom on earth and “restores all things” (Matthew 17:11).



**ETERNAL VALUE REVIEW**  
MONEY MONITOR & GLOBAL TRENDS REPORT



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*Eternal Value Review* is produced bi-monthly by *The Mulberry Ministry*, P.O. Box 41159, Lake Country, BC, Canada, V4V 1Z7 Please direct all inquiries concerning distributions in writing or by contacting our administrative offices at [admin@eternalvalue.com](mailto:admin@eternalvalue.com).

**Annual Subscription Rates** - *Eternal Value Review* is available free of charge in PDF format to on-line subscribers six times a year. Please sign up for free distribution at [www.eternalvalue.com](http://www.eternalvalue.com). Back issues are posted on our website.

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**EVR**

With respect to China, Napoleon Bonaparte's prediction could not have been more discerning. Returning from a trip to that nation 200 years ago, he uttered these now famous words, "*When China awakes, it will shake the world.*"

Today, hardly 40 years after China began to awake, the world is indeed shaking.

### What Is Newly Afoot in China?

Many developments in China have been progressing for some time in the background. Now, these are coming to the forefront, gaining rapid recognition. For example, China has been gradually opening its financial system for several decades. All this occurred while the country continued to be viewed as a "developing" country with a small and inefficient financial system. Now, all of a sudden, moves are underway for China to penetrate the ranks of the Western nations, standing shoulder to shoulder if not higher than the Roman-based, European nations that ruled the world these past centuries.

China continues to accelerate its influence upon the world. Its current President, Xi Jinping, is its most powerful perhaps since Mao Tse-tung. He has set high goals to "rejuvenate" China—to re-attain its glory experienced between the third century BC and the eighteenth century. He has shown himself ruthless as demonstrated in his campaign against corruption (having netted some 100 high-ranking officials to date).

We will highlight just six recent developments involving China to help readers gain perspective on the scope and potential impact of these changes.

**1. Joining the World Stock Market.** Recently, Morgan Stanley Capital International (MSCI) has begun the process of adding the value of China's stock market to its various regional and global stock market benchmarks. It may require a few more years to be accomplished, though it is virtually inevitable that it will happen. Readers may not understand why this is significant. The MSCI stock market indices are yet another "accounting system" that has been dominated by the high-income countries of the world. Though China's stock market is quite large today, it is not considered to be fully part of the world stock market sanctioned by MSCI. As such, institutional investors around the world (controlling in excess of \$200 trillion in assets) consider the Chinese stock market as if it did not exist (somewhat analogous to the nation of Israel not appearing on maps taught in Arab schools).

Once the Chinese stock market is added to the MSCI indices, there will be an overnight recognition of just how large China's stock market is (then likely representing in excess of 10% of the entire global stock market, the second largest in the world). This is remarkable. China today is still a communist nation, after all. Three decades ago its stock market was virtually non

-existent. The significance of this is that China stands to gain much more economic clout in the world.

**2. Gaining Recognition in the IMF.** Western-based countries (and latterly, its institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund [IMF]), pretty much ruled the world (economically, financially, geopolitically) for the past 200-300 years. Voting rights in the IMF and World Bank were highly skewed in favor of the U.S. and European countries. Though China and India may have accounted for two-fifths of the world's population, they today still only have 6.1% of the voting rights in the IMF. This is about to change, according to indications given by Christine Lagarde, head of the IMF.

**3. Up the Ranks as a Currency.** Earlier this year, China made an application to have its currency (the yuan) become part of the currency basket that defines the Special Drawing Right (SDR). This is a global accounting unit (a form of currency) that is employed by the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

Though China accounts for the largest portion of world merchandise trade (even exceeding the U.S.), its currency to this point has not played a significant role in these transactions. The SDR, by the way, is the ideal forerunner to a one-world currency (should this ever happen, though not certain). Founded in 1969, in a sense it has been a currency-in-waiting. As such, for a nation to have its currency as part of the SDR is an important, if mostly symbolic, development.

**4. A Chinese Parallel Universe.** Earlier this year, China successfully launched a new transnational investment bank, the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB). Fifty-seven nations signed up as founding members, including many Western countries such as Australia, Britain, Canada, Israel and others. This institution is widely seen as a counter-strike to the U.S. and European-dominated IMF and World Bank (and other) institutions. It is a very significant development.

**5. Advancing in Every Avenue.** China is making new forays on many fronts. Recently, the London Bullion Market Association announced that China would be joining its electronic platform that sets the world's gold price. It will join seven existing members, including Goldman Sachs, UBS, Barclays and others. This inclusion seems long overdue given that China is the world's second biggest gold consumer and also the largest producer. China's role in the gold markets bears watching.

**6. The New Silk Road and Marine Belt Initiatives.** By far, the most significant initiative of China is the New Silk Road and great Marine Belt programs. These are both enormous infrastructure spending projects designed to benefit the entirety of Asia. The Silk Road (playing on the historic overland trading link between China and Europe) is a grand scheme to finance and build railways, trade and transportation ports across Asia. Given China's

massive currency-exchange reserves (over \$3 trillion), it is in an ideal position to finance these building plans.

These investment programs could extend for decades. The end goal is to tie Asia together through mutual interest and benefit, with China at the helm. The impact could be enormous, though there are risks. China in the past has sometimes proven to be too interventionist in local politics (i.e. Sri Lanka), and has not been too discerning when cooperating with corrupt regimes.

In any case, all the above trends point to a new “parallel economic universe” that is taking form—a regional Asian bloc. It sets itself directly against the old-European, post-Westphalian world order...also anti-Globalization.

Where once Asian nations ascended the economic ranks through merchandise trade (mostly consumer goods) with the high-income world, their focus now becomes the export of investment as well as trade with each other (as opposed to with the West).

China is rising, as are other Asian nations. Crucially, China is pursuing policies that will serve to pull together the common interests of many Asian nations. It is conceivable that a group of aligned Asian nations could take form that would fulfill the emergence of the “kings of the east” that are mentioned in Revelation 16:12.

Just what is the outlook for Asia according to Bible prophecy?

### **Prophecy Explaining Asian World Threats**

Overall, there are not many references to “kings of the east” and/or Asian countries in Bible prophecy. However, there is at least one significant verse in the Bible that applies to some key Asian countries, where they are not mentioned at all. It is found in Revelation 17:12. It supports an important deduction about some Asian nations, and reads: “The ten horns you saw are ten kings who have not yet received a kingdom, but who for one hour will receive authority as kings along with the beast.” Just how does this verse connect to Asian countries today?

The verse we have quoted from Revelation specifically refers to these last-day 10 kings, and reveals a crucial clue. John the Revelator tells us here that these 10 kings “have not yet received a kingdom.” This means that neither the kings nor their kingdoms referred to in this verse had yet existed either at or by the time that Apostle John wrote the Book of Revelation (approx. 90-95 AD).

As such, we can validly draw some conclusions from Revelation 17:12: Any nation today that existed at or prior to the time of John’s prophecy, therefore, cannot qualify as one of the 10 final kings...in other words, one of the final 10 nations. If we apply this rule, it reveals that nations such as China, India, Persia and others will not be part of the final 10 -king world power coalition.

China already existed in New Testament times. According to historians, the Han Dynasty, a predecessor to modern-day China, was in power at the time of John’s prophecies. The same may be concluded for the nation of

Japan today. As already mentioned, the nation of “Hodu” (India) had already existed, as the book of Esther confirms. Crucially, therefore, we discover here that none of these large and influential Asian nations will be part of the last-day rulership represented by the 7<sup>th</sup> head of the beasts shown in Revelation 12, 13 and 17...the 10 kings.

What light could this information possibly shed upon our times today? Without a doubt, there indeed will be “kings of the east” that fulfill their action as described in Revelation 16:12, confirming their existence at that time. However, these nations will in the end be dominated by the 10 kings, as the 7<sup>th</sup> head that they represent is the final power that then has dominance over the entire world with the Antichrist (See Daniel 7).

Beyond the certainty that these nations will not be part of the world ruling order at the time that the Antichrist achieves global control, we can only attempt a few additional speculative conclusions.

A scenario that appears plausible is that the formation of the final 10 kings may very well be a counter strategy to the perceived threats or non-aligned perspectives of other global players, these very possibly being the “kings of the east” who are growing in power. There is no doubt that China is strategically placed geographically, allowing it to become a naval and economic power that can control and coordinate much of Asia. A number of geographers and geo-strategists have long thought this to be the case. As it happens, China today has sharply increased its naval capabilities.

### **Thoughts to Ponder**

Today, China is often mentioned in the same breath as America. It is now popularly perceived that these are the two biggest powers in the world. These two nations are seen to be adversaries by many international relations (IR) scholars. George Soros, the multi-billionaire philanthropist (and ex-hedge fund manager) recently struck an urgent warning that these two nations are on course for a world war if they do not first reach an “understanding.”

China is clearly striking its own course, choosing to build relations with “non-aligned” nations such as Russia and others, while building a cooperative of economically-linked Asian nations. China’s military budget has risen at double-digit rates for well over 20 years. According to estimates of some experts, China’s military budget is more than 40% that of the U.S. (Others argue that China’s effective military spending is the 2<sup>nd</sup> biggest in the world, soon to exceed U.S. expenditures.)

Interestingly, the “Chinese diaspora” that occurred over the course of the past century, as a result of various revolutions and persecutions in China, has (by happenstance?) contributed enormously to China’s sudden economic flowering over the past three decades. This writer has long wondered about the significance of this development (in appearance, similar to the plight of the Jews). Though the ethnic Chinese are minority populations in Asian nations (other than China, Taiwan and Hong



Kong), they represent the majority of the business class and wealth in these nations. These “family” business networks of dispersed Chinese have proven indispensable in the sudden development of trade with China and Asia overall.

While America is seen to be challenged by China (and lately, seemingly falling in world influence), it would be more balanced to view the world as separating into camps. It would not be overly speculative to identify a trend toward a coalition of “kings of the east.” These nations at one point do rise up, charging west across the Euphrates. Scripture seems to indicate that the Kings of the East are shown to be an opposition force. The catalysts may be economic or geopolitical. The Bible is silent on these matters.

The 10 kings, on the other hand, come together to collect power and to then give it to the Antichrist. The Bible tells us that, “These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast” (Revelation 17:13). It is possible that the specter we see developing in Asia today could very well be the world power dynamic that hastens the formation of the 10-king coalition. If so, the time may already be very short.

What we can know is that these geopolitical upheavals occur inside the 7-year Tribulation period. The forerunners of such great geopolitical events will surely already be visible before that time period. Therefore, the generation living during this time will certainly witness these developments. Could that already be our generation? It is highly possible (though, obviously, not certain.)

Finally, we again recall that China will not be part of the 10-king coalition that rules the world briefly during the last rule of the 7<sup>th</sup> head (shown on the image of the beast in Revelation 17) just prior to the Tribulation period. It therefore has been the conjecture of this writer that a rivalry will form between the collective of these 10 Roman-derived nations and another rising power in the world (the Kings of the East?), which spurs them to pool their powers together. Time will tell. However, one aspect that can be validly concluded is this: The Kings of the East will not be in alignment with the rule of the 7<sup>th</sup> head—this being the 10-king Roman-derived collective.

As such, that era could very well already be upon us today. We most certainly do not want to “[...] go beyond what is written” (1 Corinthians 4:6). Yet, without a doubt, we live during interesting times, marked by many phenomenal and unprecedented developments. Jesus Christ charged us to “watch.” We can discern the season (though not the timing and detail) of the last days and say Maranatha, Lord come!

**EVR**

### **Wilfred’s Itinerary: *The Mulberry Ministry***

- December 7-9, 2015: 24th Annual Pre-Trib Study Group Conference. Irving, Texas.  
[www.pre-trib.org/conference](http://www.pre-trib.org/conference)

## **Terrible Times: 10 Challenges Facing Christians in the Last Days—Part II**



*(Editor’s Note: This 10-part series focuses on the general theme of last-day trends that challenge Christians today. Each edition is based upon a previous article originally published between November 2003 and August 2008 in one or more publications. These articles have been edited from their original.)*

### **Apocalypse Now for Believers**

**W**hat’s the major life force of society today? Without a doubt it is the quest for the attainment of the “good life”. Most people, if they had the choice and the means, would likely not knowingly choose to pursue anything less. And why not? The “good life” seems so within grasp in our society today. Images of this earthly “good life” dance before us in and through every communication medium. Today’s entire commercial culture tilts feverishly to create imagined “cares of this life” (Matthew 13:22) and to pitch their solution to every potential consumer need, no matter whether affordable or fulfilling.

We are witnessing a hyped, last-days stage of what was already a glimmer in New Testament times: “To what, then, can I compare the people of this generation? What are they like? They are like children sitting in the marketplace and calling out to each other: ‘We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we sang a dirge, and you did not cry’” (Matthew 11:16-17). The whole world increasingly accepts a materialist perspective on life. To our culture, at least, you have only “lived” if you had your chance at greatness and importance (at least as the world would see it); if you have consumed luxury items; are living in ease; popularly accepted; and have excess wealth. Anything less means that one has not met the standard of “success” and worst of all, may even be seen as a failed “blessed” Christian.

Such perspectives betray blindness to eternal realities and scriptural truths at its most complete. Nevertheless, it stands as a success of the humanist view of the world ... unfortunately, one which the majority of Christians today also endorse. The Humanist Manifesto 1 actually even states that “[...] the quest for the good life is still the central task for mankind. [...] And that he alone is responsible for the realization of the world of his dreams.”<sup>1</sup>

A hyper-commercialized culture is a natural outgrowth of the humanist view and, moreover, serves as the stage-setting of an endtime money trap that is being set for the world. In this mass following of consumer indulgence and “blessed wealth” is evident an additional endtime agenda: To weaken and annihilate the true Church.

### **A Most False Message**

Many movements identifying themselves as Christian are peddling the same visions and techniques as are the marketing wizards of Madison Avenue. They are “[...] like children sitting in the marketplace calling out to each other” (Luke 7:32) with the latest marketing sciences that deliver results.

While we don't intend to provide a detailed analysis here of these latest techniques (See our article Post-Modern Merchandizing: Bringing in the Beast) our only intent is to point out the common message that underpins many of today's church "marketing" programs — ease, comfort, the "good life here and now" and how "you, too, can have all your trials solved."

All the techniques applied in the secular world of commerce and neuro-psychology are evident in the "church business." Just as Walmart and other large "big-box" retailers squeeze out the smaller stores with their massive buying power, ever becoming larger, so some mega-churches are draining attendance at the "drab and boring" churches. After all, it requires "bigness" and "success" to afford jumbo Videotrons, attract popular speakers, and the latest music or Hollywood entertainment stars to perform during services. Church-growth consulting services are even operated as "profit centers" in at least one ministry. The net result of it all is that "big-box" church-goers are being taught that to be Christian is to be materially blessed; to be culturally relevant; to have all of one's problems solved; and even to be accepted by a secular talk show host.

There is only one problem. While it is possible that some Christians may have fewer trials than others, nowhere is the "good life" presented as the identifying mark of the Christian in the New Testament. Actually, if anything, the exact inverse is true. The Bible says, "In this world you will have trouble" (John 16:33). "If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also," said the Savior (John 15:20). These are clear statements.

There are far, far more warnings about persecution in the New Testament than there are possible indications of attaining the worldly "good life." Rather, persecution and trials are held up as being good and commendable. "Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you" (Matthew 5:12). Why? "For it is commendable if a man bears up under the pain of unjust suffering because he is conscious of God" (1 Peter 2:19).

That was the case during Biblical times, the era of the New Testament church. But it gets worse (or better, depending on the perspective). The Bible tells us that in the last days there will be terrible times for Christians, so awful, in fact, that the "[...] love of many will grow cold" (Matthew 24:12).

Envisioned in the Scriptures may in fact be the tragedy that we see unfolding in Western Christendom today. At the most inopportune and dangerous of times, a coddled Christianity is looking for the reward of the "good life" in the here and now. As the return of Christ nears, Christianity is nesting in the idea of a worldly heaven.

As such, people are being made captives of the "deceitfulness of wealth" and "worries of life" (Matthew 13:22) and "desires for other things" (2 Peter 2:10) and are no match for the type of brutal environment that the Bible prophesies will (and does) typify the last days before Christ's return. There are many indications that those terrible times are already here and are presently intensifying. Sadly, many Christians in North America and other rich countries are falling away for other gospels. Their shepherds are leading

them astray.

### **What Kind of Good Life?**

Just what should those who have the real "Good" in their life expect? As Christ said, "There is only One who is good" (Matthew 19:16). Just what should life be like for the people that have the Good One living within them during the "last days"?

We will come back to this question. Apostle Paul provided a key warning to the church about the conditions that it will face in the last days, saying, "But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days" (2 Timothy 3:1). Paul is pointedly speaking to the Church — believers, in other words, and not just the world overall.

Just why will the faith of many become "lukewarm" and the "love of many grow cold" at that time? The original Greek word used for "love" in the above text is "agape," meaning the type of perfect love that is "Godly and selfless." We see here that the faith of many Christians will wither and die (Matthew 24:12). The Bible says, "Because of the increase of wickedness" (Matthew 24:12).

We can conclude that the prophesied boom in wickedness will test Christians as never before. Of course, persecution of some form has characterized the life of the faithful from the beginning. But as the Parable of the Sower shows, not only physical persecution can make one's faith grow cold. Quoting Mark 4:17-19: "When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away. Still others, like seed sown among thorns, hear the word; but the worries of this life, the deceitfulness of wealth and the desires for other things come in and choke the word, making it unfruitful."

Everyone who interprets Bible prophecy literally will agree that horrible conditions will most certainly unfold in the "last days." The events depicted for the period of wrath — the Great Tribulation — are horrific to say the least. A third of the earth's population will die at one point amongst various other developments described by numerous prophets throughout Scripture in graphic terms. These are all events taking place in that general period that can be called the "last days" ... either the second half or whole of the 7-year time period also called the "Day of the Lord."

However, the "terrible times in the last days" mentioned by Paul specifically speaks to those who have already recognized and "bowed their knees" to the Messiah — the Church. It applies to a period before the return of Christ and the Tribulation. Would this period of trials then be any less horrific than what is to unfold during the Tribulation period? Some think yes. Many believe that they will escape this "terrible time" in the Rapture.

In at least one sense, this "terrible time" applying to the Church can be seen to be even more terrible than the Great Tribulation. How so?

### **Terminally Terrible**

Let's take a moment to confirm what Apostle Paul exactly meant by the word "terrible." Actually, this word is not an ideal interpretation of what is originally expressed in the Greek. Of all the main Bible translations, the King James probably uses the best-fitting word — perilous. The original

... continued on page 8

## Facts & Stats ... Ends & Trends



## TOPICAL QUOTES

Chinese buyers have surpassed Canadian snowbirds as the dominant foreign buyers of homes in the U.S., according to the National Association of Realtors. Purchasers from China made up 16% of international buyers who bought primarily single-family homes and condominiums in the 12-month period that ended in March, according to the survey by the National Association of Realtors. That was up from 12% in 2013. Canadians made up 14% of international buyers, down sharply from 23% in the 2013 survey. In third place were Indians, who made up 8% of foreign buyers in the recent period, up slightly from 2013.

— [www.marketwatch.com](http://www.marketwatch.com), June 17, 2015

Strong economic and equity market performance helped create nearly a million (920,000) new millionaires globally in 2014, as High Net Worth Individuals (HNWIs) grew in both number and wealth to 14.6 million and US \$56.4 trillion, respectively. [...] Looking ahead, global HNWI wealth is projected to grow by almost 8% annually from the end of 2014 through to 2017, to reach US \$70.5 trillion, led by Asia-Pacific at an anticipated growth rate of 10.3%. — **Capgemini & RBC Wealth Management, February 2015**

A team led by Ben Whipple at the University of Georgia sifted through 130,000 earnings announcements US companies filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission in the 10 years till 2013. They found a persistent rise in unorthodox reporting. In 2003, 22% of the filings featured “pro forma”, non-GAAP measures of financial performance. By 2013, 49% did. Rising share prices create a demand for the earnings with which to rationalize them. — [www.ft.com](http://www.ft.com), July 20, 2015

The proportion of American teenagers who believe themselves to be “very important” jumped from 12% in 1950 to 80% in 2005. — **The Economist, May 23, 2015**

World trade recorded its biggest contraction since the financial crisis in the first half of this year, according to figures that will fuel a debate over whether globalization has peaked. — [www.ft.com](http://www.ft.com), August 25, 2015

Chinese men now smoke one-third of all the world’s cigarettes, and a third of all young men in China are doomed to eventually die

from the habit, scientists in China and Britain have concluded. Their study, published [...] in *The Lancet*, estimated that two-thirds of all males in China smoked, more were still taking up the habit and more were starting as teenagers, which adds risk. With population growth stagnant, the number of men 60 or older is expected to double by 2030, and the number dying of smoking-related ailments each year will triple, hitting 3 million a year by 2050. — **New York Times, October 12, 2015**

If the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) were a company, it would be about to lose its position as the world’s largest corporate employer. When troop cuts recently announced by Xi Jinping, China’s president, are completed in 2017, the ranks of China’s armed forces will have shrunk by 300,000 to 2m, putting it just behind Walmart, a retailer. It would be still be by far the world’s largest military outfit. — **The Economist, September 19, 2015**

The top 100 families in Asia (ex-Japan) received dividends in 2014 totaling more than \$17.5 billion from the publically-listed companies they control. This was a 25.6% increase from the \$13.9 billion earned the previous year and extends the rising trend since 2011. Greater China, which includes mainland China, Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan, provided 53 of the richest families, with total dividend income of \$10.841 billion. In India, a further 15 families earned \$2.762 billion or 16% of the regional total. — **FinanceAsia, September 29, 2015**

Since the 1950s South Koreans have taken in only 4% of their orphaned children. Adoptions are often done secretly by parents who ensure that the baby’s blood type matches theirs; some women fake pregnancy to pretend the babies are their own. — **The Economist, May 23, 2015**

Farming is more efficient than ever. But the search for high yields has also made it more concentrated. From the wheat in steaming noodles to the maize of fresh tortillas, just 30 crops now sate almost all of humanity’s nutritional needs. [...] Much harm has been done. In the past century about three-quarters of global crop genetic diversity is thought to have been lost, and with it many potentially beneficial traits. — **The Economist, September 12, 2015**

“We’re lost, but we’re making good time.” — **Yogi Berra**

“Panics do not destroy capital. They merely reveal the extent to which it has been previously destroyed by its betrayal into hopelessly unproductive works”. — **John Stuart Mill**

“Financial markets have worryingly come to depend on central banks’ every word and deed.” — **Claudio Borio, head of BIS economic department.**

“The greatest trick the Devil ever pulled was convincing the world he didn’t exist.” — **The Usual Suspects**

“A system of morality which is based on relative emotional values is a mere illusion, a thoroughly vulgar conception which has nothing sound in it and nothing true.” — **Socrates**

“To love means loving the unlovable. To forgive means pardoning the unpardonable. Faith means believing the unbelievable. Hope means hoping when everything seems hopeless.” — **Gilbert K. Chesterton**

Greek word is “chalepos”; having among its meanings, “troublesome, dangerous, harsh, fierce and savage.” Not once is this word found in the Book of Revelation. The only other time that “chalepos” is employed in the New Testament is in Matthew 8:28, where we find Jesus encountering two demon-possessed men, living in caves, who were “exceeding fierce, so that no man might pass by that way” (KJV). Here we can postulate demonic connection to these “perilous times.”

We can know that the period just before the Great Tribulation will be a complacent time for the world where “[...] people will be eating and drinking as in the times of Noah” (Matthew 24:37-40). The humanist view prevails. The achievements of mankind — new technologies, globalism, etc. — will be viewed with pride.

It is therefore a perilous time because it is spiritually treacherous. Much of the Church will be neutralized and deceived during that time. It will be different during the Great Tribulation. While the Church will already have been removed, the world will witness mass Christian purging — genocide — during that period. Tribulation saints (those that come to faith during that time) will be systematically slaughtered. But will that time actually be dangerous for Christians living then?

No. After all, Scripture says, “Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul” (Matthew 10:28). In that sense — in the spiritual — the answer is “no.” In the end, their souls will be safe for an eternity no less. They may be slaughtered, but there will be little jeopardy with respect to them rejecting the grace that was theirs through Jesus Christ. We see them as “a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb” robed in white (Revelation 7:9).

These Tribulation Christians will be forced to make a decision when it comes to accepting the “mark of the beast” (Revelation 13:16-17). Any person who is or becomes a believer during the Tribulation and refuses to take the sign of the beast is certain to die physically (Revelation 14:11). Believers will know that their decision will lead to at least one type of death should they take the “mark of the beast — certain spiritual death” (with physical death still possible over the remaining Tribulation period).

What would be heroic for Christians in this situation? The alternative of certain physical death would be the obvious choice. With such facts and evidence, what sane, non-deceived person who recognizes Christ as eternal savior would take the mark?

Let’s compare the “perilous times” that Apostle Paul mentions to that of Tribulation Christians. As mentioned, the period to which Paul refers occurs well before the Great Tribulation. Paul is saying that Christians who are living in the last days — before the Great Tribulation and before Christ’s return — will face conditions that will be “fiercely” and harshly dangerous wherever they may live. As mentioned, these will be perilous times during which the faith of many will be tested. They may still keep their salvation, but certainly they will be out of circulation spiritually — ineffective, ignoring truth, not running the race, totally

dormant or worse.

We adopt the view that it would require much, much more courage and resolve to remain the “salt of the earth” during this pre-Tribulation time in which wickedness is widely and popularly increasing. The entreaties of a godless world promising comforts and indulgence and a “godliness” without its power (2 Timothy 3:5) will appear so tempting and agreeably acceptable that few will withstand. The many mockers who deny His coming (Jude 1:18, 2 Peter 3:4) tempt the Christian to think that they and the Church have decades and centuries yet ahead to align themselves with the “blessed hope.” Comparatively, to make a choice for Christ and to refuse the “mark of the beast” at a time when the Tribulation period is clearly running down its limited 7-year period and that developments have proven the “endtime” prophecies of the Bible true, requires neither heroism nor much courage. It is really a decision of pragmatism and little more.

### Signs of the Terrible Times

Given that we are likely living during the very last of the last days, then shouldn’t Christians already be experiencing (or at least observing) fierce, harsh conditions? Would we be overstating the case to say that we should be observing a veritable flood of “terrible” and demonic things today?

The Bible gives us some signs to answer these questions.

Scripture tells us exactly what to anticipate and what its results will be during the “perilous” times. Above all, it is a time of great deception. We are even given the specific signs of its occurrence. Eighteen of them alone are mentioned in 2 Timothy 3:2-5.

People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God — having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with them.

These 18 behavioral characteristics take place under the license of institutionalized religion. As such, this number 18 could represent the final or highest rationalized form of mankind’s rebelliousness that the world will raise against God — a figure that is three times six, the numbers of completeness and of man, respectively. Could that day be here today?

We have no trouble finding statistics and evidence that document the emergence of each of these characteristics as accepted norms in today’s societies. Many of these still see themselves as “Christian” countries. And, many of these characteristics of the times that Paul outlines are today “white washed” by various theologians and religious organizations. For example, starting at the beginning of the list, here are some brief observations:

1. “People will be lovers of themselves.” There are myriad surveys that document the increase of narcissism and selfishness. The best indirect evidence of this trend is the high incidence of depression. The World Health Organization has produced studies on this trend in recent years, calling it an epidemic. While this phenomenon will have different causes, it is also promoted by the empty values that society incessantly promotes. Self-love is



deceitful. It tricks people into believing that they can imagine something better for themselves than what God has in mind for them.

2. “Lovers of money.” The love of money is today worshipped as a central engine of economic growth, this the chief measure of national and personal achievement. In recent decades, policymakers of many countries have advanced the deceitfulness of wealth by even tantalizing its citizens with effigies of effortless (but false) wealth.

3. “Boastful.” Once upon a time, people were encouraged to be discreet and understated. The Bible counsels us to give God all the glory, and whatever we do, to do it unto Him. One telling statistic, aptly documenting today’s acceptance of “boastfulness,” is the incidence of lies and overstatements on résumés submitted for job positions. A survey, for example, found that more than 95% of US college students were willing to make at least one false statement on a résumé to get a job.<sup>2</sup> And of course, today, we have “bragging rights.”

We could provide statistics that document the wide-spread emergence of the other 15 characteristics that are found in 2 Timothy 3:2-5; however, space doesn’t allow. All of them can occur under the guise and structure of godliness and apparent piety, but denying the power of Godliness. “Have nothing to do with them.”

True believers, those who will be faithful to the end and whose love has not turned cold, will not have succumbed to these conditions and can expect to face persecution of many types. Christ, when outlining the signs of the last days in Matthew 24, told the disciples this:

“Then you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of me. At that time many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other, and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people. Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold, but he who stands firm to the end will be saved” (Matthew 24:12-14).

These are among the last conditions that Christ mentions before He returns. Do we see these conditions of persecution today? We hear of Christians being slain for their faith in Muslim countries and various third world countries, but not in North America or Europe, for example. However, Christ mentions two hardships — persecution and being put to death. Persecution can take many forms. In North America, it can be argued that Christians are being persecuted in a much more dangerous and cunning fashion.

As “wickedness increases” and more and more of society and so-called Christian churches take on the characteristics that we already examined it takes much courage to go against the flow. One is pitted against an antagonistic consensus and therefore, should expect to be attacked.

Consider these examples:

- If you have a retail business, it is now virtually impossible to close one day a week and stay profitable. What to do — sell the business, go bankrupt or stay open on the Sabbath?

... continued on page 10



## Letters to the Editor

**READER:** The newsletters are terrific. I have a suggestion, since I am just reading the [article] about Greece [See October 2015 EVR article, [Recent Market Signs of the Times](#)]. The writer thinks the 10 nation confederacy of governments during the Tribulation will be "Roman" or "European." Rome wasn't "European" at the time John was given the Revelation, so I don't think we should anticipate a European rule. I believe if you look at a globe of the world, then demarcate that into 10 economic sections you'll find the answer to the [identity of the 10] "kingdoms" or horns of the coming world-wide government. One sector will be the NAU—or North American Union, with a ruler of that sector; one will be the SAU—or South African Union and a ruler "king" will oversee that one, and so on. The headquarters for this rule will be "that great city, where also our Lord was crucified" (Revelations 11:8) — Jerusalem. — **J.T.**

**EVR:** The topic of the 10 kings attracts much speculation. It is a topic in the Bible that requires systematic study. One must consider all of the Bible’s references and clues about the 10 kings. As it happens, they are shown or mentioned in Scripture a total of 10 times, with all of these references found in the books of Daniel and Revelation. With this foundation, one can easily identify false speculations. We published numerous articles and studies on this very topic. All of these are available free from our website. Finally, will all of the ten kings come from the regions of present-day Europe? We cannot be 100% sure. The Bible leaves open other scenarios. Therefore, we have never confirmed the view that all 10 kings would come out of modern-day Europe or out of the historical geographic area of the Roman Empire. It remains a theory. Yet, that a Revived Roman Empire may occur that then would be comprised of 10 kings just before the Antichrist comes on the scene is, indeed, very good postulation. There is a significant probability that this view will prove correct. However, as mentioned, there are also other scenarios that the Bible does not disprove. As such, we will keep our powder dry on this particular answer.

**READER:** Just curious on your thoughts on the Ezekiel 38 war. Do you think this is the same as Armageddon or should we be looking for a major (world) war before the Rapture? Many people argue Gog can't be Russia, but with the current events I wonder. I know you are more inclined to money issues but you have a more precise grasp of prophecy than most so I thought I'd ask. Thanks again for the newsletter. — **C.L.**

**EVR:** Frankly, I have never come to a firm conclusion on this question that I couldn't punch holes into and refute myself. I don't know how many times I've processed and studied Ezekiel 37 and 38 and I still don't have a view that I feel 100% certain about. If I had a leaning (at the present time) it would be the view that the battle of Ezekiel 38 does occur inside the Tribulation and in fact is Armageddon. That view has the least amount of problems in my view. That said, many respected scholars are on either side of this of this question.

**EVR**

- Society today is given over to massive speculation and indebtedness. Why not “plunge with them into the same flood of dissipation” (1 Peter 4:4)? Doing so, it is even possible to rub shoulders with other successful Christian business people who seem perfectly suited to the corrupt business morality of the day. After all, it is not uncommon to see among the wiliest business people honored at the gatherings of Christian business associations.
- You forthrightly uphold God’s word, literally interpreting the Bible. You cling to Truth. But now people think you are a nut, and avoid you as a pariah. Even your Christian friends exclude you from their circle. They have given up waiting for the Lord’s return; succumbing to many “denials” being promoted by supposedly Christian authors.
- You work in a large multi-national corporation that enforces a highly incentivized performance structure and discover that honesty and attempts at maintaining a balanced family life render you unfit. Do you quit and give up the “good life”?
- Your children may be subject to deep insecurity and depression. They don’t possess the latest designer jeans and can’t see themselves matching up to the ideal image that our culture today demands. Counteracting the thousands of media messages that your children face every day is a thankless, never-ending task. Do you give up and let God deal with their worldly values once they have become adults?
- A “man-on-the-street” TV interviewer asks you whether you think homosexuality is a sin. You evade the question because your comment could be considered a “hate crime.” Besides, your employer or business may face repercussions.
- An apparent Christian inexplicably takes you to court. He was a trusted business partner at one time ... maybe a member of your “Christian” investment club. Undeservedly, you lose your house as a result. Your life is in ruins.
- You find yourself out of a job. Sending out résumés with inflated qualifications would be doing what is simply the norm. Why not? The cares of this life are pressing. You need to get your daughter into the right school to ensure her chances for an elite job. And, everybody in your circle is buying second houses.

Legions of other examples of pressures and persecutions could be cited, as well as specific demonic activity that can be directed against you should you be an open and “front-line” Christian. As we can see from the conditions observed, the time of persecution is already here. The bottom line is that being a Christian today has a price and involves a sacrifice.

But how could that be? Haven’t we been taught for years that being a good Christian brings rich blessings?

Therefore, many will choose to let their love run cold due to the disappointments brought about by persecution and wickedness. Instead of seeing it as a privilege to share in the

sufferings of Christ, they have been conditioned by apostate teachers to expect the “good life” in the here and now. Without these immediate pay-offs, they therefore repudiate their faith as a result of hardship and forced sacrifice. Better to go through the motions of godliness while yet endorsing the tactics and mindsets that will not forfeit the chance for the “good life.” After all, country club Christianity for its own sake is a rarified religion that has appeal.

### Up, Up and Away?

A point of difference between prophesy students in the pre-millennial camp is the topic of the rapture. Some interpret scripture to reveal that there will be a “snatching away” of the faithful at some point before Christ’s feet again physically alight on the Mount of Olives. Others are equally adamant that there is only one event. This writer doesn’t feel a duty to enter this debate in this article, other than to make this observation: Whatever of the two views comes to be, if Christians were to face the Great Tribulation, it can be seen as the less “perilous” outcome.

Understandably, some consider the “rapture crowd” as escapists who wish to avoid the tough times during the Great Tribulation period. Like the lyrics of the well-known Fifth Dimension song, they count on the “Up, up and away. My beautiful, my beautiful balloon.” While this is of course not an argument disproving the rapture, it nevertheless represents a correct and embarrassing view of the state of most Christians.

Some indeed are so idolatrous and focused on the “good life” that they have or yet want to enjoy, they are relieved to believe that their comforts will not be taken away from them before they go to heaven. We once heard a high-profile Christian express relief at the thought that his investment portfolio would be secure until the time of the devastations that are likely to occur during the Great Tribulation. He was comforted to interpret (though incorrectly) that he wouldn’t suffer any major losses before the rapture.

The case made here is that the really “perilous times” for Christians are today. Today is the dangerous period where the “love of many” becomes cold. In contrast, that likely will not happen during the Great Tribulation. Those with eyes to see and ears to hear during that time will clearly recognize the times. How could they not? In that sense, experiencing the Great Tribulation would be the easy way out. As a Christian during that time, the chances are better that one’s faith will be proven true, tested and secure.

Which outcome will the Lord honor most? Those that voluntarily made a choice for Him despite worldly entreaties of the “good life” and the encroachments of the “deniers”; or those that out of fear and lack of real options chose the obvious beneficial outcome?

### Thoughts to Ponder

Today is the dangerous time of deception, apostasy and complacency. If that is the case, dedicated Christians who truly strive to serve God and walk with Jesus Christ should be facing perilous times right now ... or at least, should expect it. All the resources of the world and the “prince of the air” will be engaged in the “rise of wickedness” with the express objective of annihilating the Church and true believers.

On a personal level, just how terrible are things for you

today? Just what form of persecution is the enemy directing at you? And, just what price will you be willing to pay in order to follow Christ? Many can't bear to pay the price of forsaking the "good life" and therefore retreat, shutting down their witness.

Of course, the most effective way of competing to attain the "good life" as the world and some churches would define it, is to have the 18 worldly characteristics foreseen by the Apostle Paul. Given the present "hyper-competitive" and deceitful economic environment, it is these characteristics that are most likely to be rewarded now. It is no coincidence that the Apostle Peter presents nearly the same list as the description of these false prophets in 2 Peter 2.

Given the "feel good" pop psychology being preached by many teachers and "smiling" preachers these days, Christ's statements that we should expect to share in his sufferings will surely seem incongruous and surprising to most Christians on the wayside path. It shouldn't be. Apostle Peter warned exactly otherwise. "Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed" (1 Peter 4:12-13).

Christians may now have this opportunity of these last days to prove that their faith is genuine: Grief is being suffered in "all kinds of trials [...] so that your faith [...] may be proved genuine" (1 Peter 1:6). With Christ it is possible to stand firm to the end (Matthew 24:13). Paul provides hope, saying: "For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:38-39).

For Christians, the terrible, fearsome times are worsening now ... before any prospect of the "up, up and away."

**Notes**

**EVR**

1. Humanist Manifesto I, 1973. The American Humanist Association. <http://www.americanhumanist.org/> Accessed July 22, 2005
2. The Vancouver Province, August 13, 1996, p. A25. Reid Psychological Systems found that more than 95% of U.S. college students surveyed said they would make at least one false statement to get a job. 41% said they had already done so.

**Based on the article: Terrible Times: Apocalypse Now for Believers, November 2005, Midnight Call Magazine**

**Fatal Impact of the Endtime Value Trap**

**... From Back Page**

Of course, it's a satanic concept that prices and wealth can be used as a measure of truth. This thinking is most obvious in the world's money industries — investment management and brokerage or any business dependent upon trends in market prices. To financial professionals, price is effectively truth. As one financial service said, "The moment of truth is when the best price is yours."<sup>1</sup>

Allow me to use the illustration of a portfolio manager to explain how price has become truth. If a portfolio manager buys an investment for whatever reason and the stock price then goes down in price, he has been judged to be wrong. The inverse applies as well. If a portfolio strategist reduces his

investment in the stock market on the belief that stock prices are too high, it will be left to the future direction of the stock market to determine whether he was correct.

In the competitive wrangle to squeeze wealth out of financial markets, the market is never wrong. Only investors can be wrong. Though a stock market may be in the midst of a huge mania that will someday end up in a sorry bust doesn't matter. The price is the truth, and it is hoped that the truth will be in a permanent upward trend.

**Christians Not Immune From the Deceptions of Numbers**

This subtle shift of thinking about truth hasn't just affected financial professionals. It extends to our whole society, including Christians.

I can think of a number of prominent Christian investment managers who assume this posture. Their opinions about what drives markets and trends, no matter how ill-founded and baseless, are arrogantly assumed to be right simply because "the market" in retrospect has judged them as correct. That's perverse thinking. Markets represent the judgment and vanities of the world. Markets, prices, money, gold ... whatever, do not contain truth. They are all denominated in a currency of man's making.

We must not let prices — the new spectator sport of our world — determine our values. Our values — Biblical standards and eternal objectives — must determine our conduct. That imperative, of course, demands that we continue to be good stewards, work diligently and manage our resources faithfully. However, that is not the same as staking our hope and faith in the values of earthly wealth. Nor does it mean that the correctness of our living can be judged by how much wealth we accumulate, how much we earn, or how successfully our portfolios outperform the world's financial markets. Yet, this monetary measuring rod — like the idolatrous Asherah poles<sup>2</sup> worshipped during the times of the Old Testament prophets — is standing on many of the high places in the church today.

For us Christians caught during the times of the great Endtime Money Snare, living apart from the rule of numbers and markets will carry a cost. The measuring stick of price should not be allowed to be the arbiter of truth and what is right in our lives. And undoubtedly, for most of us, that will mean we may not accumulate as much wealth here on earth as the secular world thinks that we should.

Actually, we have great reason for joy. In one sense, living to God's standard during the present upswing of the great Endtime Money Snare is hardly costly at all. We have the greatest money manager of all at our service. He promised that he would reward us 100 fold<sup>3</sup> for every one of our sacrifices, with payment in an eternal currency that will never rust or corrode.

With an eternal guarantee like that, there's absolutely no need to invest by the numbers.

**Notes:**

**EVR**

1. Advertisement for INSTINET, Barron's August 2, 1999.
2. Quoting Compton's Expert Commentary: Asherah poles became a regular feature of Judah's landscape for hundreds of years. They were dedicated to a mother-goddess and often erected alongside altars on the high places devoted to God. They came to represent Judah's slide into idolatry.
3. "I tell you the truth," Jesus replied, "no one who has left home or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for me and the gospel will fail to receive a hundred times as much in this present age and in the age to come, eternal life." (Matthew 10:29)



## Personal Perspective

### Fatal Impact of the Endtime Value Trap

**T**he human exodus from Syria is of an enormous scale. More than a million refugees are expected to arrive at the borders of European nations. Millions more have fled to other Middle Eastern countries. It is a human disaster that will carry a price in many ways. Not only are there huge costs in providing food, shelter and relocation, but there will also be deep societal impacts that will manifest themselves over the long term whether in Europe or elsewhere.

Angela Merkel, long-time chancellor of Germany, famously said back in 2010 that "This [multicultural] approach has failed, utterly failed." This was a reflection on the influx of Muslim "gastarbeiter" (guest workers who were mostly Turks), who had been encouraged to immigrate to Germany in the 1960s and 1970s. It was at a time of great labor shortages in Germany. These worker communities, by and large, never fully integrated into German society. As a result, there have been challenges.

However, only five years later, despite "failed multiculturalism," Ms. Merkel plays the "good for economy card." Greater schisms in German society are likely to occur in the future. But, as most economists will agree, more immigrants can mean greater economic growth. However, what of the longer-term soft costs?

A similar disposition is shown by the new Prime Minister of Canada, Justin Trudeau. The message he brought to his first G20 meeting was that there is an "economic case for taking in large numbers of Syrians." This statement just happened to coincide with the latest outbreak of terrorist attacks in Paris, France. Trudeau's intentions are good. But, why would one need the incentives of economics to justify helping someone?

Most certainly, humanitarian aid is required. Fellow human beings are suffering. However, our focus here is more narrow. We want to highlight the "economic emphasis because it is one of the signs of the times. Economics and commerce could be considered the gods of the age. They are popularly considered by policymakers to matter most. But also in another critical way: The concepts of "right and wrong" no longer belong to the domain of morality or any sacred scriptures. What is right and wrong are concepts now mostly defined by money and markets.

Consider the theme of an upcoming conference titled [Pride and Prejudice: The Business and Economic Case for LGBT Diversity and Inclusion](#). Our focus here is upon the persuasion tactics. A full-size advertisement for this conference in the Economist Magazine, displaying this slogan in large type across the top of the page, read as follows: "Discrimination is Expensive." The advertisement went on to explain: "The purchasing power of the LGBT community worldwide amounts to \$3 trillion annually. 2.8 billion people live in countries that criminalize gay people. The estimated annual cost of homophobia to India's economy is \$30.9 billion."

We wonder how such "monetary" costs and benefits could

have been estimated with such authority. Nevertheless, the tactic of the argument is clear: Notions of morality and integrity are unnecessarily "expensive." The god of commerce will be appeased and the world's economies stand to benefit. It goes without saying that the persecution of any person is not acceptable for whatever reason.

What is "right" today is determined by "economics" ... more accurately said, superficial economics. An intellectually-honest evaluation of the longer-term costs in terms of economics and societal health clearly argues for disastrous outcomes for mankind. The long-term costs are not considered as there is a deliberate blindness.

#### No Real Value of Truth?

To this point, we have yet to make an appeal to the views—"rights and wrong"—expressed by the Bible. That there should be blindness is not a surprise to the Bible reader. "The god of this world has blinded the minds of those who don't believe. They can't see the light of the good news of Christ's glory" (2 Corinthians 4:4). Such a perspective, of course, must be ridiculed by the world if it is indeed blinded; however, the ultimate outcomes are determined by God. "Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows" (Galatians 6:7).

We see that we live in an age with more statistics and knowledge than ever before, but less truth. People seem to know the price of everything, but the value of little. Instead, wisdom—past, present and future—today tends to be found in the belly of some financial model or economic theory.

Just what is the real value of truth and wisdom? This is what Job had to say: "But where can wisdom be found? Where does understanding dwell? Man does not comprehend its worth; it cannot be found in the land of the living. The deep says, 'It is not in me'; the sea says, 'It is not with me. It cannot be bought with the finest gold, nor can its price be weighed in silver'" (Job 28:12).

Job is effectively saying that wisdom is priceless ... that it is unquantifiable. It cannot be captured in a number. Therefore, we should not look for wisdom nor truth in numbers and prices.

We live in a dangerous world where prices abound without values; and costs are only measured in prices. In such a world the price becomes the value and values are separated from real costs. What that means is that the common denominator of what is right becomes the price.

A world ruled by price? That's what happens in a world that is quickly globalizing and financializing. Price then increasingly becomes the world's judiciary. It alone determines what is right and good. That's a concept that ideally suits the juggernaut of globalization.

To recall, globalization reduced to its very essence is nothing more than this: A process leading to a world system in which all human actions are governed through the incentives of wealth and prosperity. And if material prosperity is the only worthy objectives, then whatever increases wealth will tend to be approved good and right.

... continued on page 11

