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The Days of One World, One Crisis

By Wilfred Hahn

Huge developments are sweeping the entire world in recent times like tidal waves. First, a "globalization bubble" unfolded over the past several decades—one that was popularly thought would never end—then followed by the biggest and most rapid bust of world financial and real estate wealth since the 1930s (in fact, even worse).



Next, the most invasive and coordinated intervention of governments has occurred around the world as they attempt to resuscitate plunging economies and bail out failing companies. In tandem, a desperate bout of money manipulation has unfolded.

Crucially, none of these developments were expected by the world's policymakers or societies at large even a year ago. It all happened rapidly ... like a sudden trap. No doubt, these are treacherous times where the unsuspecting are being herded from one disaster to another. Just how can the average household either anticipate or navigate through such see-saw conditions? It can be seen as an early sign of the times ...

the global period of trouble and anxiety where faith runs cold (Matthew 24:12). What next? As grim as it might seem in some parts of the world, it is not yet the end for the world, nor has the apocalypse begun.

Signs of the Times

No doubt, we are witnessing important signs of various endtime trends. Consider that never before in history—even than during the two world wars of the past century—has global opinion been so galvanized and unified to a common view. From Iceland to Vietnam, from rural China to downtown Zürich, whether business people or consumers, all are battening down the hatches in response to the global "finan-





cial heart attack” that has crippled the world recently.

The recent shakings of the false gods of global prosperity have struck fear into the remotest parts of the globe. Filipino guest workers in the Arab Emirates are flocking home, running away from debts and obligations. Possibly as many as 20 million Chinese have lost their jobs in recent times. The



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Chinese migrant workers are returning by the millions to the industrial region near Guangzhou but many are unable to find work. (Tim O'Rourke for *The New York Times*)

evidence is everywhere. In international policymaking circles, harried meetings are being held to find solutions to economic and financial ail. What we see is something very remarkable: Never before has the entire world behaved so much as one monolithic culture.

To illustrate, according to a first-ever worldwide poll¹ on the current financial crisis, 49% of the respondents believed that the economic situation would worsen in the next three months. In Canada and the United States, 61% and 46%, respectively, felt that it would get worse. Only 8% of citizens in G8 countries thought that things might get better. Such a one-sided consensus opinion is a significant. It shows that the entire world has been affected as one. The unified responses of world policymakers, consumers and businesses (at least to this point) is unprecedented.

Crucially, we now recognize that the economic and financial conditions of the world have come to the point where man-made events can impact the sentiment of the entire world almost instantaneously. This is new. It would be one thing if the mood of the entirety of mankind were to suddenly change in response to a nuclear winter or the blotting out of the sun. However, a mass global response to an economically-related impulse is of a different order in several ways. For one, it is generated by the non-physical actions of humanity itself (an emotional event). Secondly, it reveals a common set of affections ... a universal re-

liance upon the prosperity of mankind's global commercial systems.

This alone is a realization of one of the expected “signs of the times” of the last days. From Scripture, we know that certain economic conditions—from food inflations (Revelation 6:6), to systemic collapses (Chapter 18), to commercial controls (13:17) and other phenomena—will be able to affect the entire world. This is what we already see today. The entire world, from peasant to king, is under the influence of common commercial developments.

Unified for Global Judgment

In Isaiah's Apocalypse (Isaiah 24-27), we read of the “globality” of God's final judgments and punishments. Though much of these chapters refers directly to Israel and the Jews, many of the judgments mentioned apply to the entire world. For example, “The earth will be completely laid waste and totally plundered” (Isaiah 24:3). Also, “The earth reels like a drunkard, it sways like a hut in the wind; so heavy upon it is the guilt of its rebellion that it falls—never to rise again” (verse 20). In fact, emphasizing the global span of these events, the word “earth” is mentioned 17 times in chapter 24 alone.

Of course, it only follows that a global judgment must and will apply to a “globalized” mankind, one that is characterized by a unified rebellion against God. If that were not so, why would the entire world be judged and no nations spared? God, who is



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compassionate but just, was even willing to spare Sodom if only 10 godly people could be found. Therefore, as revealed prophetically, mankind will choose to move to an ever more global, monolithic culture of godlessness.

In that vein, we must note the current longing expressed by many leaders and policymakers to build and pursue global organization and solutions. It is a natural extension of “[...] the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does” (1 John 2:16). One doesn’t need to spin great conspiracy theories involving cabals of demon-possessed people to bring about this result. We see this innate human impulse to pursue greatness and power at work everywhere. In the corporate world, firms conglomerate into ever larger entities seeking a broader global footprint in their respective industries (executives aspiring to be big fish in an ever smaller global pond).

The same hegemonic impulse is shared by politicians, churchmen and global policymakers. There is a natural, fleshly appeal to greater celebrity; to ruling over ever larger domains ... even the entire world. Interestingly, all of these corporate captains, policymakers and Christian reconstructionists see times of world crisis as signaling great global opportunity. To them, it is an opportune moment to satisfy the “lust of the eyes.” Documenting this yearning, here are several excerpts from comments by selected global policymakers.

“What is needed is a large worldwide fiscal stimulus to counteract falling private demand. [...] the world must also build the institutions for the twenty-first century economy. Any crisis is an opportunity. This crisis has demonstrated that the destinies of countries around the world are linked. Policy coordination and a global strategy that instills

confidence and creates hope will bring a quicker and stronger recovery to us all.”²² (Kemal Dervi & Juan Somavia of the United Nations Development Program) “What I am saying is that a crisis is an event which can force democratic governments to make difficult decision like those that will be required to create a North American Community. It’s not that I want another 9/11 crisis, but having a crisis would force decisions that otherwise might not get made.”²³ (Dr. Robert A. Pastor)

“2009 will be a year of learning the lessons of the financial crisis; a year where its reach in terms of time and scope becomes more evident; a year that calls for a new financial architecture to be shaped. At the same time, it will be a year that will test the resolve and willingness of world leaders to collaborate and take action to move beyond this crisis. 2008 has proven the extent to which the world is subject to global risks; let 2009 be the year where the world finds a common agenda to begin mitigating their impact.”²⁴ (Klaus Schwab, founder of the World Economic Forum)

[...] the very unsettled nature of the international system generates a unique opportunity for creative diplomacy. The nadir of the existing international financial system coincides with simultaneous political crises around the globe. Never have so many transformations occurred at the same time in so many different parts of the world and been made globally accessible via instantaneous communication. The alternative to a new international order is chaos. An international order can be permanent only if its participants have a share not only in building but also in securing it. In this manner, America and its potential partners have a unique opportunity to transform a moment of crisis into a vision of hope.²⁵ (Henry Kissinger)



Countless more such comments could be quoted. Times of crisis are seen as an ideal environment to hasten the resolve to build a global ark of man.

Global Arrogance Revealed

Despite the apparent chaos and fears of the current times, we then see an additional condition on clear display: It is the pride and self-determination of mankind. This is evident at both national and global levels. Despite the clear and painful repercussions of past follies—including materialism, unbridled greed, economic oppression, poor stewardship, and consumption excesses—one does not discern even a hint of contrition being reported in the popular media. Actually, quite the opposite is true. While overpaid bankers are the object of much blame these days, the general idea still prevails that there need not be any consequence for past sins.

Also, consider that macro-economists and policymakers have yet to offer any apologies for the massive failure of their theories (these really not any different from sorceries). With very few exceptions, none foresaw or warned that the world's enormous financial imbalances would lead to a systemic "heart attack." They were all blind guides, more greedy for gain than honest and forthright. Yet, they are not shy to offer new solutions today. It reveals that macro-economics is not a science, but rather a fraudulent religion. It is not capable of dealing with the heart of man. On that topic, the Bible is clear: "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" (Jeremiah 17:9).

Yet, the world is resolute in healing its problems without recognizing the underlying spiritual diseases. The Bible gives us clear evidence as to the outcome of such human arrogance. Not only are the experiences of Israel and other nations documented in the Old Testament for our benefit, the consequences of the future

choices of "global man" are also foretold. A willful rebellion against God is revealed ... a stiff-necked independence and spirit of humanist self-determination. To illustrate, let's briefly review a few prophecies from the Old Testament. But first, we should be reminded of the indictments against Israel.

Many Economic Sins

About Israel, Scripture tells us: "[...] Because you have rejected this message, relied on oppression and depended on deceit, this sin will become for you like a high wall, cracked and bulging, that collapses suddenly, in an instant" (Isaiah 30:12-13). A point often overlooked is that "economic sins" feature prominently in the list of allegations against Israel. There are seemingly countless references to these in the Scriptures. But, what was Israel's response?

It was similar to what we observe today.

"[...] Ephraim and the inhabitants of Samaria—who say with pride and arrogance of heart, 'The bricks have fallen down, but we will rebuild with dressed stone; the fig trees have been felled, but we will replace them with cedars'" (Isaiah 9:9-10). Edom also betrayed a similar humanist defiance: "Though we have been crushed, we will rebuild the ruins.' But this is what the LORD Almighty says: 'They may build, but I will demolish'" (Malachi 1:4). A similar attitude prevails today: "Hah! We will not be reprimanded nor reproved. We will rebuild bigger and better!"

Says Thomas Friedman, the high-profile opinion columnist, "America still has the right stuff to thrive. We still have the most creative, diverse, innovative culture and

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open society—in a world where the ability to imagine and generate new ideas with speed and to implement them through global collaborations is the most important competitive advantage. [...] the 21st century is still up for grabs.”⁶

This is surely a hopeful thought. But it is human hubris.

Paul Volcker, the chairman of the US Federal Reserve from 1979-1987, in an article entitled “We Have the Tools to Manage the Crisis” (Oct 10, 2008, *Wall Street Journal*) claims that the world has the tools to overcome the financial excesses of the past. He says: “Fortunately, there is also good reason to believe that the means are now available to turn the tide. Financial authorities, in the US and elsewhere, are now in a position to take needed and convincing action to stabilize markets and to restore trust. [...] the needed tools to restore and maintain functioning markets are there. Now is the time to use them.” Lately, Mr. Volcker is not so confident. Yet, though a respected central banker, his ideas reflect humanist self-determination. These “propping up” policies may indeed prove to hold up financial systems for a time—even leading to what will seem to be global solutions—yet in the end, they will not solve the problem of the corrupt human heart.

Indeed, mankind is in a position today where global solutions will seem possible. Rather than stopping to consider the ways and counsels of the Lord, the “global arm of man” is invoked. “We will rise above God ... we will make our own future,” reflects the sentiment of our times. A similar spirit appeared evident in speeches given by the previous president, George Bush, following 9/11 and Hurricane Katrina. After the New Orleans flood, he is quoted as saying: “Every time, the people of this land have come back from fire, flood, and storm to build anew—and to build better than what we had before. Americans have never left our destiny to the whims of nature, and we

will not start now.”⁷ President Obama affirmed the same spirit, declaring, “We will rebuild, we will recover, and the United States of America will emerge stronger than before.”⁸

What does God think of such an attitude? To Israel He said: “Cursed is the one who trusts in man, who depends on flesh for his strength and whose heart turns away from the LORD” (Jeremiah 17:5).

Though God has made man in His image and given him the power of creativity, we are still counseled to put our trust in God, not in armies or the “arm of man.” There is no lack of guidance as to where our real confidence should lie. “Blessed is that man that maketh the LORD his trust, and respecteth not the proud, nor such as turn aside to lies” (Psalms 40:4, KJV). “Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help” (Psalms 146:3).

Thoughts to Ponder

Are people just to lay back, totally listless and without work and discipline, and just rely upon God to do everything for us? Of course not. When it rains, we are not faithless in having the good sense to use an umbrella. Isaiah provides us with God’s view as to where the separation lies between our achievement and the glory that is attributable to Him:

“Listen and hear my voice; pay attention and hear what I say. When a farmer plows for planting, does he plow continually? Does he keep on breaking up and harrowing the soil? When he has leveled the surface, does he not sow caraway and scatter cummin? Does he not plant wheat in its place, barley in its plot, and spelt in its field? His God instructs him and teaches him the right way. Caraway is not threshed with a sledge, nor is a cartwheel rolled over cummin; caraway is beaten out with a rod, and cummin with a stick. Grain must be ground to make bread; so one does not go



on threshing it forever. Though he drives the wheels of his threshing cart over it, his horses do not grind it. All this also comes from the Lord Almighty, wonderful in counsel and magnificent in wisdom” (Isaiah 28:23-29).

Here we see that the creator of all “technological possibility” was He who created all things. This is true whether it concerns the necessary technique of “breaking up the soil” to plant seeds, or building \$1-billion “clean rooms” to manufacture microprocessor chips. Humanists, however, refuse to recognize the existence of a Creator, arrogating to themselves the ability of self-determination and authorship of knowledge and technology. They doggedly cling to a belief in godless human progress, despite the setbacks of recurring world wars, natural disasters, repeated human atrocities and the toppling idols of monetary and economic systems.

All of man’s achievements: his technology—techniques of production, increases in productivity—and his heaping of wealth, are not of his own making and determination alone. God is the author of all creation, its cycles, its natural properties, both what is in the world and under the earth, and all the possibilities of technology. Technology and financial systems have their good uses. Rather, it is the heart of man that is the problem—the idolatrous attitude of self-determination and independence from God.

Ultimately, mankind’s choices will be judged. A period of tribulation lies ahead. After that comes restoration. Isaiah confirms some of the conditions after that time. For example, the Babylonian-based money system will be destroyed and “will never be inhabited or lived in through all generations” (Isaiah 13:20); the rule of elites and the wicked will be finished (Isaiah 14:5); peaceful conditions will prevail (verse 7); and, no rapacious industry will raze the earth in its quest for profits (Isaiah 14:8).



Those who believe in the God of Israel and accept the gift of salvation through His Son, in loud voices will sing: “Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!” (Revelation 5:12). (MC)

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ENDNOTES

- 1 The Globe and Mail/Worldwide Independent Network of Market Research Survey. This is made up of an international group of pollsters who have created the WIN Crisis Index to monitor citizens’ perceptions in their country, which surveyed 14,555 people in 17 countries during the fall of 2008.
- 2 “One Crisis, One World” by Kemal Dervi & Juan Somavia of the United Nations Development Program and the International Labor Organization respectively. <<http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/include/print.asp?newsidx=38298>> Accessed Jan 22, 2009.
- 3 Dr. Robert A. Pastor, December 15, 2006. <http://www.worldnetdaily.com/news/article.asp?ARTICLE_ID=53378>
- 4 Klaus Schwab, Foreword to *Global Risks Report 2009*, World Economic Forum.
- 5 Henry Kissinger, “The chance for a new world order.” *Herald Tribune*, January 12, 2009. <<http://www.iht.com/bin/printfriendly.php?id=19281915>> Accessed January 16, 2009.
- 6 Thomas Friedman, *New York Times* Op Ed, December 24, 2008.
- 7 George W. Bush, Sept. 15, 2005, <<http://www.cnn.com>>
- 8 Barack Obama, February 24, 2009, Associated Press.