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The Anthropocene Age of Corruption

By Wilfred Hahn

Apostle Paul opined, “For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labor for me. Yet what shall I choose? I do not know! I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far” (Philippians 1:21-23). Who would disagree with Paul? It is far better to be with Christ than to continue to sojourn here in this fallen world.



Mankind was sentenced to “toil” after the fall of Adam and Eve. “Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat food from it all the days of your life” (Genesis 3:17). We must labor. We are bound by the physical laws of gravity, which is always pulling on our bodies. There is no such thing as “standing still.” There is yet no final rest.

In fact, all of creation labors. Says Paul, “We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time” (Roman 8:22). It groans under its corruptible nature of sin

and imperfection. The Second Law of Thermodynamics (entropy) is operative, causing all of physical creation to deteriorate ... to tend toward randomness. The entire earth wears out like a garment (Isaiah 51:6).

Elijah has not yet come who “[...] restores all things” (Mark 9:12). As such, the world presently is still in spiritual turmoil, the spirit of the antichrist at work, incessantly militating mankind to an insurrection against God (1 John 4:3). It marches to the “ruler of the kingdom of the air” (Ephesians 2:2), the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient,” both succumbing and pandering to Mammon. The “lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the



pride of life” (1 John 2:16) remain the overwhelming motivations of much of if not most human action.

Thankfully, we can exult in the knowledge that the day will come that “[...] this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality” (1 Corinthians 15:53). Until that time, we here on earth do continue to groan. Why? “For everything in the world [...] comes not from the Father but from the world” (1 John 2:16). Everywhere we look, the world is wearying itself.

A World Wearing by Corruption

Though philosophers and New Age thinkers may proudly declare that the world has recently entered the Anthropocene Age—the Age of Man—it only shows signs of deterioration. The world at large, busily trying to make its appointment with history, is ever further removed from the wisdom of God. This statement of Isaiah reflects the attitude of the Age of Man: “You wearied yourself by such going about, but you would not say, ‘It is hopeless’” (Isaiah 57:10). God’s plan of salvation is doggedly refused and denied.

We list here just a few of the corruptions that continue to weary the world. In every direction that we can look, we see growing burdens, corruptions, and the taxes of sin.

1. Shrinkage. In the retail industry, “shrinkage” refers to decreasing inventory for reasons other than through sales. Mostly, this is attributable to stealing. According to the Worldwide Shrinkage Survey, “the annual cost of shrink is equal to a ‘tax’ on every family worldwide of about \$229.”¹ It is estimated that an equivalent to 1.34% of all sales (estimated at \$104 billion in 2008) are lost due to theft. Here we see that honest consumers end up paying more because of the cost of doing business. In effect, every consumer bears this burden of “shrinkage,” whether fair or not.

2. Insurance Fraud. Fraudulent insurance claims are a serious problem, adding enormously to insurance costs for honest consumers. False claims plague virtually every type of insurance. According to the Insurance Research Council in the U.S., fraudulent auto injury claims added \$4.8 billion to \$6.8 billion in excess payments in 2007. That is equivalent to 13 percent to 18 percent increases in payments under private-passenger auto policies from 2002.² According to a study of the Canadian Coalition Against Insurance Fraud (CCAIF), an insurance industry association, at least 26 percent of all personal injury claims in Canada contain elements of fraud.³

3. Wages of War. The world remains in a fractious, competitive and evil state. Vested interests, whether economic or religious, continue to foment wars and strife. The impact of wars in human terms is incalculable. It is not possible to assess the total cost of suffering, terror and inconvenience. Only the Lord can know. Everyone would agree that the world would be a less corrupt place if there were no more wars on earth. Consider that the defense-related expenditures for the U.S. in 2012 are estimated to be greater than \$1 trillion. While these expenditures indeed support many jobs, we can still agree that a world not burdened with the costs of war would be a better place. One organization provides comparisons to alternate expenditures to warfare. For example, instead of spending \$80 million on a F16 fighter plane, one could buy 205,128,205 meals for starving people or 2,515,723 adult cataract operations, restoring sight to the blind. Of course, such calculations are not entirely valid. But nevertheless, such comparisons illustrate how much less the world would groan if there were no war.

4. Costs of the Legal Profession. There are over 1.1 million attorneys in America. Accord-

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ing to estimates, the U.S. has one lawyer for every 265 citizens. While this is a high ratio, other nations have even higher concentrations ... i.e. Spain. India also has over 1 million lawyers, albeit with a general population that is more than 3 times larger than in the U.S. Lawyers, of course, do provide services that are needed. That said, just imagine the benefits were there no frivolous law suits, unnecessary litigation and liability claims? According to one study, tort costs have reportedly increased in relation to the U.S. gross domestic product (GDP) since 1950 from 0.62 percent to 1.87 percent. This is high relative to other countries such as France and the United Kingdom. But this is only one type of legal cost. It would be near impossible to estimate how many fewer groans there would be if there were no more crime, fraud and frivolous litigations. It would not be a small decrease. But societies riven with self-interest, greed, immorality and jealousy will continue to need many attorneys and litigators.

5. Cost of Imprisonment. Prison systems almost everywhere in the world are packed to overflowing. According to the International Center for Prison Studies, which compiles statistics for most countries around the world, 147.9 out of every 100,000 people in the world are incarcerated. In the U.S. this rate is much higher at 715 per 100,000 in

population. Overall, we here again see how a fallen world in its civilian obligations groans under such incarcerations costs. Were there no crime or sin, wouldn't creation be less wearied? The burden upon civilian governments and its citizens would be so much less.

6. Security Services. Who would be trusting enough today to leave one's valu-

ables unattended or his front doors unlocked? We would imagine hardly anyone. Public premises, businesses and homes are increasingly monitored with surveillance systems. An individual walking about town today may be caught on hundreds ... perhaps thousands ... of cameras. Security services are in high demand in recent years, growing much more rapidly than the general economy, especially as the wealthy increasingly seek to insulate themselves. According to IBISWorld Research, private security is expected to grow more than 6 percent in 2012 and is estimated to account for almost \$33 billion in expenditures by 2015 in the U.S. Add to this the costs and resources of public policing and the justice system, and again we identify a large category of human effort that would not be required in a sinless world.

7. Inflation and Tampered Scales. Who invented such a nefarious beast as inflation? Why was such a thing possible in the created order? It serves as the principle vehicle of theft upon earth. Actually, it is a phenomenon solely limited to mankind, as it is this creature that has developed the concept of money ... most destructively, fiat money. Of course, not all prices increases are a function of monetary malfeasance. All the same, Mammon is the patron and willing facilitator of monetary inflation. Year after year,



the purchasing power of one's labors (productivity and everything else remaining equal) is diminished. Societies become vulnerable to the relative wealth transfers that are possible, through the monetary prestidigitations of policymakers and their complicit elites.

In 2010, with the exception of a few countries that actually had deflation, inflation ranged as high as 29% (not including Zimbabwe, which experienced a hyper-inflation). A corrupt society will invariably be plagued by above-average inflation. During the time that Israel was wicked, Hosea described it as time that, "The merchant uses dishonest scales and loves to defraud" (Hosea 12:7). The world's business and financial conduct can certainly be seen to align with "[...] skimping on the measure, boosting the price and cheating with dishonest scales" (Amos 8:5). And so, the world groans under the oppression of inflation.

8. Mental Depression (Soaring Sales of Psychotropic Drugs). The tally of those who are so disabled by mental disorders that they qualify for Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) increased nearly two and a half times between 1987 and 2007—from one in 184 Americans to one in seventy-six. For children, the rise is even more startling—a thirty-five-fold increase in the same two decades. Mental illness is now the leading cause of disability in children, well ahead of physical disabilities like cerebral palsy or Down syndrome, for which the federal programs were created.⁴ The World Health Organization forecasts that depression will become the world's second most devastating illness, after heart disease by the year 2020. It is estimated that one in five Americans will experience major depression in their lifetimes, and one in ten suffers from recurring bouts of major depression.

The WHO has called it a global depression epidemic. Pharmaceutical companies have been cashing in on the trend. Psychoactive drugs have been the fastest growth segment of their business. A growing body of professional opinion argues that these drugs are



being far over-prescribed. A grieving and unhappy world is being medicated ... to relieve its stresses.

We have reviewed just a few examples of "wages of sin," corruptions," imperfections, "inefficiencies," shrinkages," short-changing and taxes, that beset the wayward world. We could include other examples such as rapidly expanding burdens of regulation and laws, globally coordinated tax minimizing schemes, billions of billions of money redirected from the trade flows of poor third-world countries ... and much more. We have not even broached the burdens of sociological and health ills that cause societies to increasingly groan. The dysfunctions born of high divorce rates, an increasing population of single-parent kids, and drug abuse (to again name a few) all weigh on societies.

Indeed, we must agree that the entire creation moans. Suffering and toil is everywhere. In fact, the groans of the world are increasing. We therefore echo the wail of the Psalmist: Oh Lord, "Remember how fleeting is my life. For what futility you have created all humanity!" (Psalm 89:47).

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All of nature will be at rest, as well. “The wolf will live with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the goat, the calf and the lion and the yearling together; and a little child will lead them. The cow will feed with the bear, their young will lie down together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox. The infant will play near the cobra’s den, the young child will put its hand into the viper’s nest” (Isaiah 11:6-8).

Points to Ponder

At the present time upon this earth, self-interest, self-love and the “love of money” are the natural, basal, motivators of human action. Politicians, employers and marketers on Madison Avenue cater to these human proclivities ... the wants and jealousies of people. Behavioral systems are built upon these base tendencies. The unsaved world, unaware or not wanting to know of God’s right arm having performed salvation (Psalm 98:1, Isaiah 52:10, 59:16, 63:5), wearies itself.

But the day will come where love will rule. It will become the motivation for all human action, thus fulfilling the second Royal Law, “Love your neighbor as yourself” (Matthew 22:39). How do we know that this will occur in the Millennium?

Apostle Paul tells us that “love will never fail” during the time “[...] where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away” (1 Corinthians 13:8). That is the Millennium, as the Prophet Daniel also states (Daniel 9:24).

The Psalmist anticipates this very same time: “You gave abundant showers, O God; you refreshed your weary inheritance. Your people settled in it, and from your bounty, God, you provided for the poor” (Psalm 68:9-10).

There will be no more war. Swords will be beaten into ploughshares. “[...] Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more” (Isaiah 2:4). “He makes wars cease to the ends of the earth. He breaks the bow and shatters the spear; he burns the shields with fire” (Psalm 46:9).

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For now, “[...] we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven” (2 Corinthians 5:2). “For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life” (2 Corinthians 5:4).

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls” (1 Peter 1:3-9, KJV). 

ENDNOTES

- 1 The Global Retail Theft Barometer: Monitoring the Costs of Shrinkage and Crime on the Global Retail Industry. The Worldwide Shrinkage Survey (2008).
- 2 Insurance Research Council. November 2008. (<http://www.insurancefraud.org/autoinsurance.htm>) Accessed March 31, 2012.
- 3 (www.insurance-canada.ca) October 17, 2010 /CNW
- 4 Marcia Angell. New York Review of Books. Accessed March 3, 2012. (<http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/2011/jun/23/epidemic-mental-illness-why/?pagination=false>)