



## In This Issue:

March/April 2009 | Vol. 12, No. 3

### What's Next? A Looming Trade War?

by Mario Seiglie . . . . . 1

### Restoration: Hands of Confusion

by Darris McNeely . . . . . 2

### Rome's "Right Face"

by Paul Kieffer . . . . . 5

### Twilight on the Land



© Summit Entertainment

by Darris McNeely . . . . . 8

### Europe and the Church, Part 8: Otto the Great, Founder of the First Reich

by Melvin Rhodes . . . . . 10

### This Is the Way... A Different Breed of Warrior

by Robin Webber . . . . . 16

# What's Next? A Looming Trade War?

*News articles around the world are now focusing on another economic bubble that is bursting before our very eyes.*

by Mario Seiglie

**F**irst there was the housing bubble—over a year ago. Then there was the financial bubble—under a year ago. And now we are beginning to witness a third bubble bursting—a world trade bubble.

### Trade figures appallingly down

The figures are alarming. For December 2008, Japan's exports were down by 35 percent; Taiwan's were down 42 percent; South Korea's exports tumbled 17 percent; and in January 2009, China's exports were down 12.5 percent. Trade among emerging markets was just as grim, and the developed countries all suffered big export declines.

Now comes the news of the economic dire straits that Russia and some Eastern European countries are in. Nations such as Austria, Germany and Italy are also deeply exposed financially, due to prior lending to many Eastern European nations that now appear unable to pay them back.

*The Wall Street Journal* recently wrote: "The economic distress and currency tumbles in Eastern Europe will 'trigger a write-down into the Western European banking system,' says Hans-Guenter Redeker, a currency strategist at BNP Paribas in London. 'The question is how much.'



Reuters/Pick Wilking

*U.S. President Barack Obama signs the \$787 billion economic stimulus bill, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Plan, on Feb. 17, 2009.*

He says a conservative estimate would be about 20% of the total invested by such banks in the region. Moody's estimated the total at \$1.3 trillion at the start of 2008" ("Banks Reel on Eastern Europe's Bad News," Feb. 18, 2009, online edition).

### A looming trade war?

One should take note of what this can mean during 2009 if world eco-  
*(See "TRADE WAR," page 3)*



*World News and Prophecy* (ISSN 1942-1001) is published monthly, except April and October, by the United Church of God, an *International Association*, 555 Technecenter Drive, Milford, OH 45150. © 2009 United Church of God, an *International Association*. Printed in the U.S.A. All rights reserved. Reproduction in any form without written permission is prohibited. Periodicals Postage paid at Milford, Ohio 45150, and at additional mailing offices.

The mission of *World News and Prophecy* (WNP) is to provide United Church of God members and other interested persons with commentary and analysis of selected world news topics in the light of Bible prophecy. Its purpose is to help readers discern the times and increase their awareness and understanding of the answers Christ gave to His disciples' questions: "Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?" (Matthew 24:3).

Managing editor: Darris McNeely

Senior editors: Cecil E. Maranville, Melvin Rhodes, Robin Webber

Contributing editor: John Ross Schroeder  
Senior writer: Paul Kieffer

Copy editors: Mike Bennett, Doug Johnson  
Proofreaders: Becky Bennett, Debbie Pennington  
Layout/design: Elizabeth Cannon, Peter Eddington

Scriptural references are from the New King James Version (© 1988 Thomas Nelson, Inc., Publishers) unless otherwise noted.

The United Church of God provides *World News and Prophecy* (WNP) as an educational service for interested persons. The purpose of WNP is to help readers discern the times and increase their awareness and understanding of current events in the light of Bible prophecy. Although the staff strives for truth and accuracy in its reporting, analysis and Bible commentary, WNP is not a doctrinal publication. Articles do undergo both an editorial and a review process.

**Unsolicited materials:** Due to staffing limitations, unsolicited materials sent to *World News and Prophecy* will not be critiqued or returned. By their submission authors agree that submitted materials become the property of the United Church of God, an *International Association*, to use as it sees fit. This agreement is controlled by California law.

**Subscriptions:** *World News and Prophecy* is sent free to members of the United Church of God and all who request it. There is no subscription price. To request a subscription, write to *World News and Prophecy*, P.O. Box 541027, Cincinnati, OH 45254-1027, phone (513) 576-9796 or download from [www.ucg.org](http://www.ucg.org). For international addresses, see page 15.

**Address changes:** POSTMASTER—Send address changes to *World News and Prophecy*, P.O. Box 541027, Cincinnati, OH 45254-1027

**World News and Prophecy online:** Read *World News and Prophecy* as soon as it is completed. The next issue is scheduled to be available by May 8, 2009, on the Internet at:

<http://www.wnponline.org>



"Whom heaven must receive until the times of

# Restoration

of all things ... ACTS 3:21

## Hands of Confusion

The global economic crisis rolls on with no end in sight. From reports I have read I have been struck by the confusion among all the experts who are presenting their opinions about the fantastic sums of money and resources being committed to stem the tide of red ink and the failure that is churning through the system. No one to date has emerged with an over arching solution to show the way forward. No one can predict when the world economies will turn around.

A new area of focus is Eastern Europe, which continues to edge closer to a financial abyss that further threatens the stability of the global financial system. While America has banks that are too big to let fail, Europe has banks that are too big to save. Some Austrian banks have loaned out more than 70 percent of Austrian GDP—clearly an untenable system.

Bible prophecy tells us a future power will arise from the turbulent scene that is anchored on the Mediterranean basin.

Look at Daniel 7:1-3. "In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon, Daniel had a dream and visions of his head while on his bed. Then he wrote down the dream, telling the main facts. Daniel spoke, saying, 'I saw in my vision by night, and behold, the four winds of heaven were stirring up the Great Sea [Mediterranean]. And four great beasts came up from the sea, each different from the other.'"

The fourth beast of this system, in its end-time configuration, will be a political/religious system that controls the commerce and wealth of the world. It arises out of a time of turmoil that threatens global stability. We are watching scenes that could very well be the prologue to what we see described in Daniel.

The present world financial scene shows the confusion of a world that is spiritually, morally and ethically blinded. Old solutions do not seem to be working. Each week brings more revelations and understanding of just how deep the financial morass really is. We hear about the greed, dishonesty and incompetence involved in the collapse of banks and financial houses. These are spiritual matters that strike to the basic questions of our times.

The prophet Isaiah foretold our times with these words. "O house of Jacob, come and let us walk in the light of the LORD. For You have forsaken Your people, the house of Jacob, because they are filled with eastern ways; they are soothsayers...

"Their land is also full of silver and gold, and there is no end to their treasures; their land is also full of horses, and there is no end to their chariots. Their land is also full of idols; they worship the work of their own hands... People bow down, and each man humbles himself [to the idols]; therefore do not forgive them" (Isaiah 2:5-9).

Our age is steeped in a postmodern form of idolatry that values the power, status and celebrity that come with money. The developed world is vastly wealthy. But we have seen the fabric of that wealth can come apart with lightning speed.

When a house is built on a shaky foundation, it will ultimately collapse. It will not stand the stress and strains created by a world blinded to the true spiritual law of God. That is what we are seeing with today's financial turmoil.

It will take God's intervention and His rule through His Kingdom to bring the restoration of the kind of world that will guarantee long-term stability. We are not there yet. But we should pray every day for its coming.



—Darris McNeely

Darris McNeely

**“TRADE WAR”** (Continued from page 1)

conomic production and trade continue to skid downward. Already, *The Economist* magazine is bringing up the possible consequences—a looming trade war.

The recent February 2009 U.S. stimulus program of \$787 billion had some provisions of “buy American.” While this makes much sense nationally, if all the nations begin to turn inward, it will derail international commerce and produce an even bigger downward spiral.

In an article titled “Buying American” *The Economist* explains, “In 1929 Willis Hawley and Reed Smoot, two protectionist Republicans in Congress, sponsored a bill to raise tariffs to the highest levels America had ever seen. And in the midst of economic distress, the protectionists won. The result was a round of reciprocal tariff hikes elsewhere, and a disastrous collapse in international trade...”

“[Now] House Democrats want to require that all iron and steel used in stimulus-funded infrastructure projects should be made in the United States... But American exporters fear retaliation against their goods, both in places like China, at whom the steel provisions are aimed, and in rich countries, which are already slipping domestic-purchasing requirements into their own stimulus packages” (Jan. 31, 2009, p. 40).

**“Beggar thy neighbor” policies**

This, in economic terms, is called a “beggar thy neighbor” policy. As each nation strives to stem the political distress over the dire economic situation, it begins protecting and heavily subsidizing its own industries and raising protectionist tariffs. This raises the possibility of a trade war.

The term “trade war” strikes a nerve in me. Over 30 years ago, I remember taking an economics class at college where the professor, an avid Bible prophecy reader, mentioned that the most feasible end-time scenario would be one where an *international trade war* begins the process.



*World Trade Organization Director-General Pascal Lamy speaks at a news conference at “Global Korea 2009: Korea in a Reshaping World” in Seoul Feb. 23, 2009. Lamy referred to the “Buy American” act of the U.S. stimulus bill as “a mixed bag” that raises protectionist pressure but has been implemented in a way that meets global trade rules.*

We asked, “Why is that?” He answered, in effect, “Because it would disrupt the world economic system to the point where unemployment would reach unacceptable levels and nations would turn inward for solutions, hoarding the money for themselves and causing further economic decline. People would then demand that a different economic system emerge that placed jobs, security and order over freedom and a free-market system.”

This is precisely what happened in Germany in the 1930s, as the trade war and economic and political weaknesses helped bring Adolf Hitler to power and led to World War II.

For several decades, we have not experienced the devastating effects of a trade war. As long as nations continue to trade among themselves, each contributes to the welfare of the other and each can help prop the other up. But a trade war turns your economic friend into an adversary and much ill-will is generated. In a short time, a trade war can also

lead to another type of war—of the military genre.

**Possible scenario for end-time prophecy**

In Daniel 7:2-3, we read of four world empires represented as wild beasts emerging from the churning “Great Sea” (the Mediterranean Sea), indicating restlessness.

In Revelation 13:1, we also read of the emergence of a great power at the end time as coming out of the sea, possibly signaling that it comes out of something deep and restless. The apostle John said, “Then I stood on the sand of the sea. And I saw a beast rising up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and on his horns ten crowns, and on his heads a blasphemous name” (Revelation 13:1).

This unexpected emergence from a restless society will certainly take the world by surprise.

We hope that the looming trade war does not materialize. But what can we do if it does?

In the short term, you can prepare financially for the present recession by reading our free booklets *Managing Your Finances* and *Making Life Work*. It is certainly time to get our financial houses in order. Also, you can contact trained ministers for help at our [ucg.org](http://ucg.org) Web site, under “Contact” and “Local Congregations.”

In the long term, we must be ready spiritually if the coming events lead to an end-time scenario. When we pray each day, “Thy kingdom come,” we are reminded that God is ultimately in charge of everything, and His Kingdom that is coming will solve all the world’s ills under the righteous government of Jesus Christ. That is at least *very comforting* to know!

### Christ’s advice in eight points

Also, Jesus Christ warned, “But take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness, and cares of this

life, and that Day come on you unexpectedly. For it will come as a snare on all those who dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man” (Luke 21:34-36).

We can break down Christ’s admonition into eight points:

1. We need to first examine ourselves spiritually and see how we are doing before God.

2. We need to make sure we are not so absorbed in the daily cares of life that we aren’t concerned about Bible prophecy. True, we shouldn’t get wrapped up in Bible prophecy to the point that we forget to take care of our physical needs, but going to the opposite ditch is just as damaging.

3. We need to realize “that Day” is coming, whether we like it or not. To stick our heads in the sand like the proverbial ostrich is not a sound policy.

4. We need to realize that most of the world will be unaware of the coming of that Day, just as they were during Noah’s day about the coming Flood (Luke 17:26-27). Noah, after all, was a “doom-and-gloomer” who got it right!

5. We need to watch world events to see the “fig leaves” (Mark 13:28-31), or the signs appearing before “that Day.” That *is* the main purpose of *World News and Prophecy*!

6. We need to “pray always.” Don’t let down in your spiritual life—you need God’s help more than ever!

7. We need to focus on the hope “that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass.” This means God has a way out for all of us from the coming world-shaking events—a place of safety He has promised for God’s faithful people.

8. We need to remember the all-important purpose of our lives: “To stand before the Son of Man.” Christ has promised to return, and He wants us to humbly stand before Him. We won’t be ashamed in “that Day” if we now put Him first in our lives and fulfill His work upon this earth—helping get the true gospel out to the world and helping to prepare a people for Him as He establishes His Kingdom of peace, love and joy.

So, as you can see, there is plenty to do as we continue to watch these disconcerting and unprecedented world events! ❖



**Want more**  
*World News and Prophecy?*

Join the *WNP* fan page and group on

**facebook**

Follow us on

**twitter**

Watch *WNP* seminars and stay informed. Visit our Web site at [www.wnponline.org](http://www.wnponline.org)

**World News & Prophecy**  
BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVES ON CURRENT EVENTS  
*online*

### Recommended Reading

What advice does the Bible offer about wealth and our attitude toward it? Is money really the root of all evil? Be sure to read this booklet to discover biblical answers to these important questions and more.



Contact any of our offices listed on page 15, or request or download it from our Web site at [www.wnponline.org](http://www.wnponline.org)

# Rome's "Right Face"

*The Vatican's embarrassment caused by a restored bishop's views on the Holocaust hides the significance of the restoration itself.*

by Paul Kieffer

**W**hen Pope Benedict XVI signed a decree on Jan. 21, 2009, lifting the excommunication of four bishops from the archconservative Society of St. Pius X, he thought he was healing an internal schism in his church. Benedict's predecessor John Paul II had approved the excommunication of the four bishops in 1988 after rebel archbishop Marcel Lefebvre consecrated them without papal authority, an action the Roman Catholic Church considered "unlawful" and "schismatic."

Benedict's decision was a direct response to a letter written in December by St. Pius Bishop Bernard Fellay on behalf of his three banned colleagues and himself.

Bishop Fellay formally requested the removal of the excommunication. He affirmed that he and his three fellow bishops were "firmly resolute in our desire to remain Catholics and to put all our strength at the service of the Church of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is the Roman Catholic Church. We accept her teachings in a filial spirit. We firmly believe in the Primacy of Peter and in its prerogatives, and for this reason the current situation causes us much suffering."

Catholic spokesmen declared the pope's decision to be a first step toward a full restoration of the relationship between the Vatican and the Society of St. Pius X, which has been strained because of the society's rejection of the reforms introduced by the Second Vatican Council in the early 1960s.

What was supposed to be an act of healing became a source of great embarrassment for the Roman Catholic Church when one of the restored St. Pius bishops, British-born Richard Williamson, was revealed to have repeatedly denied the Holocaust. During a trip to Germany in November 2008, Williamson confirmed his views in an interview recorded for Swedish television network Sveriges Television AB, asserting that

"not one single Jew died in a gas chamber" during World War II.

In a strange twist, the interview was broadcast on the very day that Pope Benedict signed the decree lifting Williamson's excommunication. News media reported the Holocaust denial, and within hours of the news release announcing Williamson's restoration, the Vatican had a full-blown scandal on its hands.

## Vatican response to anti-Semitism

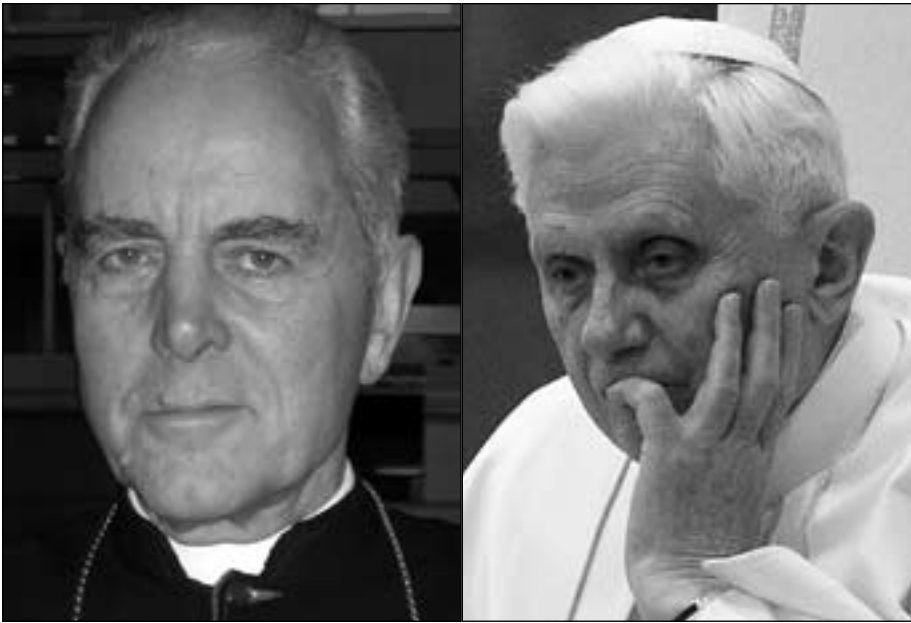
The fact that Williamson voiced his views on the Holocaust in Germany was especially galling. Denying the Holocaust is a crime in Germany, and Williamson's remarks prompted a state prosecutor to open an official inquiry on the need to press charges against him. Roman Catholic cardinals in Germany were quick to distance themselves from Williamson's position, and German Chancellor Angela Merkel called upon the German pope to take a strong stance against anti-Semitism.

The Jewish community in Germany also voiced its dismay over the possible implications of the pope's decision. Some Catholics were so embarrassed by their church's initial silence that they renounced their membership in their own church.

After 10 days of waiting, there was finally a response from the Vatican. Pope Benedict repeated his well-known condemnation of the Holocaust and called upon Bishop Williamson to recant his views or face renewed excommunication from the church.

Without retracting his anti-Holocaust statements, Williamson apologized for any embarrassment he had caused the Vatican and agreed to review his controversial opinion. Since Williamson has consistently denied the Holocaust for over 20 years, it would be a major reversal for him to recant, and it is likely he won't.

*What was supposed to be an act of healing became a source of great embarrassment for the Roman Catholic Church when one of the restored St. Pius bishops, British-born Richard Williamson, was revealed to have repeatedly denied the Holocaust.*



*Pope Benedict (right) angered Jewish leaders and progressive Catholics when he lifted Bishop Richard Williamson's excommunication to try to heal a 20-year-old schism within the Catholic Church.*

The pope reassured Jewish religious leaders that his predecessor's attempts to improve relations between the Catholic Church and the Jewish community would continue. In the immediate aftermath of the Williamson revelation, the pope's visit to Israel this spring appeared to be off, but in mid-February Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert confirmed that the pope would visit Israel in May as planned.

While the Vatican's attempt at damage control may have allayed fears that the church was reverting to anti-Semitic tendencies, questions remained about how the pope could have restored someone like Williamson to full communion with his publicized controversial views. Is Benedict an intellectual who makes his decisions in isolation, as the German newsmagazine *Der Spiegel* speculated? Did his advisers not give him advance warning about Williamson's position?

Having already condemned the Holocaust himself in unequivocal terms, it is implausible that Pope Benedict's decision to reinstate Bishop Williamson can be equated with approval of Williamson's anti-Holocaust views. Instead, the impetus

for the pope's decision was his desire to promote a restoration of unity within the church that he believes to be the only true church on earth. In the four years of his papacy, Benedict has clearly demonstrated his desire to position the Roman Catholic Church as the true defender of the Christian religion.

### **The most conservative pope in years**

Benedict conveys a different image than Pope John Paul II, who was seen as reaching out to other religions and attempting to establish an interfaith dialogue. Benedict has no objection to reaching out to other religious groups as long as the restoration of unity within the Christian community and promoting unity among religions does not translate into questioning the preeminence of his church. Several examples confirm this viewpoint:

- During a visit to Germany in September 2006, the pope chose to quote a Byzantine emperor who was critical of the Islamic faith: "Show me just what Muhammad brought that was new, and there you will find things only evil and inhuman, such as his command to spread by

the sword the faith he preached." His use of the quote prompted violent protests in the Muslim world, but German Interior Minister Wolfgang Schäuble remarked just a day after the pope's Regensburg speech that it ought to be possible for the pope to use a quote critical of Islam.

Apparently there weren't enough Europeans expressing similar views to satisfy the European Union commission president, José Manuel Barroso. "I was disappointed that there weren't more European leaders who said that the pope has the right to express his views," Barroso said in comments made to the *Welt am Sonntag* weekly. "The problem isn't the pope's speech, but rather the reaction of the extremists," he continued.

Barroso gave two reasons for the reluctance of fellow European leaders to voice support for the pope: "concern over a possible confrontation" and a "kind of political correctness" that says that "one is only tolerant if one values the opinion of others higher than one's own opinion."

In an interview with the French daily *La Croix* a year after the pope's controversial speech, the president of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, French Cardinal Jean-Louis Tauran, said that interreligious dialogue is currently not possible "with Islam, not at this time. Muslims do not accept discussion about the Koran, because they say it was written under the dictates of God. With such an absolutist interpretation, it's difficult to discuss the contents of the faith."

- On June 29, 2007 the Vatican restated its position that the Catholic Church is the only true church established by Jesus Christ. In a brief document titled "Responses to Some Questions Regarding Certain Aspects on the Doctrine of the Church," the Vatican's doctrinal office repeated controversial claims made in a doctrinal paper published seven years earlier, "Dominus Iesus." According to the Vatican, other Christian denominations may have certain elements of biblical truth, but they cannot claim apostolic succession—the ability to trace their bishops back to the apostle Peter. Rome therefore reasons that

such denominations cannot properly be called churches.

The response of various Protestant leaders was to be expected. The idea that non-Catholic churches are deficient because they do not accept papal authority and the primacy of the pope generally caused offense and was seen as a blow to the interdenominational dialogue fostered by the late Pope John Paul II.

- Last year Pope Benedict authorized changes to a Latin prayer for Jews by traditionalist Catholics at Good Friday services. The new Latin prayer deleted a reference to the Jews' "blindness" over Christ, but added a request that "God our Lord enlighten their hearts so that they recognize Jesus Christ as the savior of all men."

Since the Catholic view is that the pope is Jesus' representative on earth, accepting Jesus for Jews would also mean that they are incorporated into the church that Catholics consider to be the only true church on earth—the Catholic Church.

### The Society of St. Pius X and the Second Vatican Council

In July 2008 Pope Benedict was reported to have authorized the Congregation for Divine Worship to study some modifications in Catholic mass liturgy. In particular, the pope is supposed to favor the restoration of Latin for the eucharistic consecration within the mass otherwise conducted in the local language. Benedict is also

said to favor the use of Latin for the texts used in the Catholic baptism, confirmation and confession ceremonies.

Interestingly, Benedict's move was considered to be an attempt to reach out to the ultra-traditionalist Society of St. Pius X and bring it back into the Vatican's fold. The Society of St. Pius X was founded by the late Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre in 1969 in Switzerland in opposition to the reforms introduced by the Second Vatican Council. In his desire to promote unity within his church, Benedict wanted to reconcile with the conservative group, which has demanded freer use of the old Latin Mass as a precondition for normalizing relations with the Vatican.

Benedict himself appears to believe that statements from the Second Vatican Council need explanation. For example, the pope's position that apostolic succession is an important key for identifying the only true church is his attempt to clarify some of the confusion resulting from the Second Vatican Council.

Specifically, the term "sister churches" was used in reference to non-Catholic denominations. A "sister church" is therefore a denomination that can trace its roots back to Peter as the supposed first pope, but is currently separated from the Roman Catholic Church as a result of an earlier schism. In the Vatican's view, one church in this category would be the Eastern Orthodox Church.

Two weeks after his excommunication was lifted, St. Pius Bishop Bernard Tissier de Mallerais told the Italian daily *La Stampa* that he and his three colleagues (including Bishop Williamson) would not be satisfied with just being readmitted to full communion in the Catholic Church: "We don't want to change our position. Instead, we want to convert Rome [to our position]."

His remarks appear to have prompted Benedict XVI to state publicly that the Pius bishops would have to accept the teachings of the Second Vatican Council. Bishop Fellay said that the pope appeared to agree with the Pius bishops on the question of liturgy, but agreement on Vatican II's teachings may take longer. According to Bishop Fellay, his society insists

on clarifying the council's teachings before an agreement can be reached on adhering to them.

"The [Vatican II] texts are not clear, and there are a multitude of diverse interpretations that have gained currency in the church. If one does not desire the collapse of the church, clarifications on this council—which was supposed to be pastoral and not dogmatic—are urgently needed" (as quoted by the Catholic News Service, Feb. 18, 2009).

### Traditionalism as a source of stability

The continent that is home to the Roman Catholic Church, Europe, is entering a challenging phase of its post-World War II history. The European Union with its 27 members has become a sluggish bureaucratic giant, and the streamlining of its institutions via the Treaty of Lisbon is by no means assured.

The current economic crisis has plunged Europe into a deepening recession. Germany, the national economy that is the motor of the European Union, may contract as much as 5 percent this year. German exports, which account for one third of Germany's GDP, have dropped by 10 percent since November.

The months and years ahead could strain European unity to the breaking point. One institution has remained largely unchanged in the last five decades—or even centuries, for that matter. It is the Roman Catholic Church, which under Pope Benedict XVI is accentuating its conservative roots and its claim to being the only true church on earth, the mediator between all men and God.

When postwar economic assumptions and alliances are challenged, will the church at Rome and its growing conservative assertiveness provide a source of stability for a Europe seeking to realign itself in a fast-changing world? Bible prophecy indicates just that.

To learn more about the end-time prophecies of Europe and the church, request or download our free booklet *The Book of Revelation Unveiled* from [www.wnponline.org](http://www.wnponline.org) or contact our offices listed on page 15. ❖

### Recommended Reading

The book of Revelation remains mysterious to most people today but offers great insight into the events leading up to one of the world's most momentous events—the return of Christ! For more information, request a free copy of *The Book of Revelation Unveiled*.



Contact any of our offices listed on page 15, or request or download it from our Web site at [www.wnponline.org](http://www.wnponline.org)

# Twilight on the Land

*I was 17 when I saw my first vampire film. I laughed till I cried. Today I am 57 and I do not laugh at images and stories of vampires. Today I shudder.*

by Darris McNeely

*The popularity and commercial success of Twilight, by Stephenie Meyer, testifies to the truth that people today cannot discern between good and evil.*

It was 1968 when the original *Dracula*, starring Bela Lugosi in the title role, came to my hometown movie theater in a rerelease. I had read about this famous movie, and some friends and I decided to go and see what it was all about.

When the count made his first appearance in the movie, it was one of those dramatic shots where he was looking up a staircase at a woman who would become the object of his twisted affection. Lugosi was dressed in that famous black outfit with the cape and had a leering look in his eye. The scene was intended to frighten moviegoers, and maybe it did in 1931 when it was originally released. But by 1968 we were a jaded lot. The entire theater audience howled with laughter at the sight of the “sinister Count Dracula”!

## A different story today

Vampire stories are no laughing matter today.

Lately, I have been reading about the latest twist on the vampire story. *Twilight*, the first of a series of novels by Stephenie Meyer, has recently been made into a movie and is seeing commercial success just as her books have.

*Twilight* begins a four-novel saga about a teenage girl named Bella who moves to Washington state to live with her father after the remarriage of her mother. She begins life in a new high school and meets a “young” man named Edward who, as the story progresses, she discovers is a vampire and lives with a “family” of vampires.

The relationship builds through four novels with the story of adolescent love building between Bella and Edward. Bella’s attraction for Edward moves her to desire to become a vampire and join their relationship for “eternity.” Edward resists, and it takes four books until a resolution is reached where Bella sacrifices her human life for the desire of her heart.

This series has the familiar elements of the vampire story with a few twists. Instead of living off human blood, Edward subsists on animal blood. But *Twilight* does continue the idea of the “undead” vampire, living between the two opposites of life and death forever. It focuses on the tension between good and evil, light and darkness.

In fact, on the cover of the novel, one finds a bright red apple, symbolizing the so-called “forbidden fruit” of the Garden of Eden, and inside is a quote from Genesis 2:17 with the reference to the knowledge of good and evil. Perhaps this is a reference to the forbidden love between the human Bella and the vampire Edward.

Let me say something at this point. I have not read the books. Nor do I intend to. I have not seen the movie and don’t intend to. I’ll get into why later.

I have read about the movie and the book and, as I have already stated, I have seen other vampire movies over my life, so I think I know the genre pretty well. Beyond that I know what the Bible teaches about good and evil, life and death, and good and evil spirits. I also know where the Bible warns us against the deceptions of the end of the age.

## Subtle deception

It is the subtlety of deception that surrounds this latest tale that has me worried. *Twilight* has cast the story of vampires within the explosive emotional web of adolescent sexuality. Everyone who has lived through that period of life personally understands the powerful attractions of sex, desire and forbidden love at that stage of life. Adolescence is when so many futures are molded and shaped, fashioned and formed and, sadly for many, destroyed or forever altered.

Physical attraction, love, sex and commitment to another are powerful emotions that by themselves are not bad. They are part of human life designed by God to be developed, controlled and enjoyed within the boundaries set by His law.

Visualizing these powerful feelings within the sordid, twisted and blatantly evil world of demons and vampires is a monstrous and blasphemous heresy. The popularity and commercial success testifies to the truth that people today cannot discern between good and evil. “Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; who put darkness for light, and light for darkness; who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!” (Isaiah 5:20).

When I hear the story of a young girl who is willing to leave her family and give up being a human to join herself with a vampire, I see a demonic subtlety. Here is another way to teach that death is preferable to life. The culture of death has another arrow to shoot at young, moldable minds.

I see also the idea promoted that one can leave righteous faith and embrace evil, feeling good about it because it is done in the name of “love.” These are powerful stories hitting the culture at a time when there is a growing void of values. The religious faith of the land is not strong enough to push back against this growing tide of interest and fascination with the occult.

### Confusion of a people

What happens when a nation allows the occult to make inroads into its culture? An example from ancient Israel is instructive.

In 1 Kings 22 we are told of a council of war between the kings of Israel and Judah. Ahab and Jehoshaphat were planning war against Syria to regain land that Israel had lost. Ahab had allowed the worst of the cult of Baal to come into the nation through his wife, Jezebel. The remaining vestiges of the true worship of God had been driven underground. This was the time of Elijah’s great witness against the land for its abandonment of the God of Abraham.

At the council Jehoshaphat asked whether there was “a prophet of the LORD here, that we may inquire of Him?” (verse 7). When finally the prophet Micaiah was brought before the two kings, he revealed an amazing vision from the throne of God that showed the depth of confusion within the nation.

Micaiah saw God sitting on His throne and the spiritual host of heaven around Him. The extent to which God had given King Ahab and his people over to deception is shown in this dialogue. “Then a spirit came forward and stood before the LORD, and said, ‘I will persuade him.’ The LORD said to him, ‘In what way?’ So he said, ‘I will go out and be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his proph-

ets’” (verses 21-22). God was allowing Ahab to be persuaded into a battle he could not win.

The depth of spiritual confusion was so great in Israel that it impacted the decisions made at the highest level. A lying spirit could work through false prophets to persuade the king to an action that resulted in his death and defeat in battle. There was a twilight upon the land. This “spiritual twilight”—where the people wavered between opposing ideas of right and wrong, righteousness and unrighteousness, and good and evil—mirrors our land today.

When the influence of evil spirits is pervasive in the ideas and imagination of a culture, you see a nation in serious decline. I currently see America in a time of transition and crisis. The continuing economic problems defy the traditional solutions typically used by government. A new president with a team of brilliant advisers will work very hard at correcting the economic slide.

Is there a connection between spiritual deception—a fascination with the occult and other ideas of the spirit world and what lies behind the world we see—and political confusion that leads to decline? I look at the land and read the Bible and hold deep concern for the future.

### Spiritual warfare

The Bible tells us we are in a spiritual war with dark forces who seek to confuse, disorient and destroy. We can live a comfortable life and not fully appreciate the battle that rages around us in the spiritual dimension. The passage from 1 Kings quoted above is a glimpse into a part of that dimension we do not see with our mortal eyes.

But the Bible is very plain in teaching us the reality of this spiritual battle, and it gives us the knowledge and tools to do combat. In Ephesians 6 it says, “Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might.



*Stephenie Meyer’s novel Twilight has recently been made into a cinematic pop culture phenomenon.*

Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places” (verses 10-12).

This is why I don’t want to view or read any stories about vampires and the occult. I don’t need to put those thoughts and images into my mind. When I saw the pictures and movie trailer to *Twilight*, I saw the new age of subtlety that Satan the devil is employing to tune in a generation of people to his wavelength. The images of vampires in this telling are not something to laugh at. They are something to avoid.

The apostle Paul warned us to give no “place to the devil” (Ephesians 4:27). All of us struggle enough with temptation in our daily lives. Why add to that problem by dwelling for any period on twisted love stories of humans and vampires? It is not godly nor does it give us focus and direction toward the Kingdom of God. ❖

# Europe and the Church, Part 8

## Otto the Great, Founder of the First Reich

*Almost everybody is aware of the Third Reich, which was meant to last a thousand years, but few today know much about the First Reich, which actually did. Although its origins go back to Charlemagne, the 10th century German Emperor Otto I was instrumental in founding the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation.*

by Melvin Rhodes

**T**he 18th century French philosopher and intellectual Voltaire wrote in an essay in 1756 that “this agglomeration which was called and still calls itself the Holy Roman Empire was neither holy, nor Roman nor an empire.”

But it lasted a thousand years and was an inspiration for Hitler’s Third Reich, which was similarly intended to last a millennium. It also inspires today’s European Union, which continues to strive toward “an ever closer union.”

“It is fatally easy to see the whole history of the Holy Roman Empire, down to 1806, unfolding itself in Charles the Great’s coronation in Rome in the year 800. In reality the story of the Empire, later of the Holy Roman Empire, is a story of discontinuity. It meant different things to different men at the same time, and different things to men at different times; indeed, it was different things at different times” (Geoffrey Barraclough, “The Medieval Emperors Were Realists,” “Problems in European Civilization,” 1966).

The Holy Roman Empire ended with Napoleon’s victory at the Battle of Austerlitz, also known as the Battle of the Three Emperors, when the empires of Russia and Austria were defeated. The Austrian Emperor Francis was forced to renounce the title of Holy Roman Emperor, thereby formally ending an empire that had lasted a thousand years.

The Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation was the First Reich (*reich* is the German word for “empire”) and traced its origins back to the time of Charlemagne, crowned by the pope on Dec. 25, 800.

The coronation of Charlemagne was a deliberate act on the part of Pope Leo III. In crowning Charlemagne “Augustus” (emperor), the pope was effectively declaring the rebirth of the Western Roman Empire, which had collapsed in the fifth century.

The only Roman emperor in the year 800 was the ruler of Byzantium, the Eastern Roman Empire, who ruled from Constantinople. To the Byzantines there could be only one *Imperator Romanorum* (Roman emperor). An earlier attempt to revive the Western Empire had been led by an eastern emperor, Justinian, in the sixth century. To those in the east, Pope Leo’s crowning of Charlemagne was an illegal act and a deliberately provocative one.

Charlemagne’s elevation to “Augustus” was the result of his having defended the pope against the rebellious people of Rome. This started the idea of the empire being the protector of the church.

Charlemagne’s empire did not endure. “The attempt to revive the ancient glories of the Empire of the Caesars was sadly premature and under the feeble successors of Charles both Empire and Papacy sank into weakness and contempt. A strong line of German Emperors at length brought relief to both institutions and saved Europe from barbarism” (L. Elliott Binns, *The Decline and Fall of the Medieval Papacy*, p. 21).

### The nadir of the papacy

Upon Charlemagne’s death in 814, his only surviving adult son, Louis the Pious, crowned himself emperor and ruled the

*Otto was to become one of the most important monarchs in history and was considered the protector of Europe, like Charles Martel and Charlemagne, two men who were his ancestors.*

empire until his death. As emperor, Louis made provisions to divide the empire among his three sons with the Partition of Aachen, as Charlemagne had intended to do until his two other sons, Pippin and Charles, died prematurely. Louis's attempt, however, was marred by civil war, disloyalty and conflicts caused, in part, by the birth of his fourth son, which damaged the validity of the partition agreement.

Charlemagne's grandsons finally settled their differences by the 843 Treaty of Verdun, dividing his empire, foreshadowing Europe's current political divisions. France and Germany owe their origins to this treaty. One of Charlemagne's great-grandsons, Berengar I, was crowned emperor by the pope in 915, continuing the close relationship between church and state. But after his death in 924, an imperial vacancy lasted for almost four decades.

During this time, it wasn't only the state that was in disarray. The church, too, was going through one of its most difficult periods in history. The period from 904-964 is often referred to as the "pornocracy," or "government of filth."

The term "pornocracy" was first used by a Catholic historian. German theologians later referred to the period as the "rule of the harlots." Historian Will Durant refers to the period from 867-1049 as the "nadir of the papacy" (*The Story of Civilization, Part IV: The Age of Faith*, 1950, p. 537).

In the light of Revelation chapter 17, it is interesting to note the use of the term "rule of the harlots." The chapter describes the secular, political church as "the great harlot who sits on many waters" (verse 1). In the 10th century, popes openly lived with their mistresses and fathered children, one of whom became pope himself.

Meanwhile, Germany had become the dominant region of Europe; and although at this time there was no emperor, there were still kings. In 918 the dukes of Germany chose Henry the Fowler as their king. (He was called "Fowler" because he was



Wikimedia Commons

*Magdeburger Reiter, a tinted sandstone equestrian monument, circa 1240, is traditionally intended as a portrait of Otto I.*

laying bird snares when informed of his election.) His rule was the first of the Saxon kings, who continued in power until 1024. Henry strengthened the German army and fought wars defending Europe from invaders.

Following his death in 936, his 24-year-old son Otto was elected king by the German dukes. At his coronation the people raised their right hands to show approval and shouted: "*Seig und Heil*"—victory and salvation.

Otto was to become one of the most important monarchs in history. His period of rule revived the Western Empire. His relationship with the church can aptly be described as one of "fornication" (Revelation 17:2), an uneasy relationship where church and state each sought their own advantage.

He was crowned king by the archbishops of Mainz and Cologne. During the ceremony the archbishops handed him the imperial sword with which to fight the enemies of Christ. Following his coronation, he quickly suppressed rebellions throughout his kingdom and then

went on to fight against foreign foes, defeating the then pagan Magyars (Hungarians) who had been attacking German settlements. Earlier, he had marched into Italy in support of a widowed queen, Adelaide. Marrying her, he became the ruler of northern Italy.

Otto was increasingly seen as the protector of Europe, another Charles Martel or Charlemagne, two men who were his ancestors.

### **Crowned Holy Roman emperor**

Earlier in the same century, Pope Sergius III "reached the pontifical throne by violent means" (Claudio Rendina, *The Popes: Histories and Secrets*, 2002, p. 215). "Sergius III had a relationship with the noblewoman, Marozia...from their union was born a son who was to be the future pope [from 931 to 935], John XI" (*ibid.*, p. 216). A later successor, John XII (955-964) was to be important in the reign of Otto.

As pope, John XII "continued to gratify his unbridled pleasures, and the Lateran Palace became a real bordello, with the pope surrounded by beautiful women and handsome

boys in a depraved lifestyle completely at variance with his ecclesiastical duties” (ibid., p. 226).

Italy by this time was in chaos and the pope appealed to Otto to restore order, which he did. On Feb. 2, 962, the pope crowned Otto Holy Roman emperor. This was the most historically significant date of the Middle Ages since the coronation of Charlemagne on Christmas Day, 800.

Once more, Western Europe had an emperor, Otto I. Once again, church and state were allies. Supported by the church, Otto reigned supreme over the German Reich. Later historians referred to this period as the beginning of the *Sacrum Romanum Imperium Nationis Germanicae*—the “Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation,” a term that was not to be officially used for another five centuries.

German kings would from then on be crowned by the pope and rule over the Holy Roman Empire at the very heart of Europe. The empire was to last until 1806. The Second and Third Reichs were to follow in the 19th and 20th centuries.

The octagonal imperial crown made especially for Otto’s coronation was to become the symbol of European unity through the centuries. The significance of his coronation and subsequent reign are felt down to this day. In 2008, Emperor Otto I was selected as the main motif for a high-value commemorative coin, the 100-euro Imperial Crown of the Holy Roman Empire coin. One side shows the imperial crown of the Holy Roman Empire. The reverse shows Emperor Otto I with old St. Peter’s Basilica in Rome in the background, where his coronation took place.

A few days after his coronation, a pact was agreed to between church and state, the *Privilegium Ottonianum*. “In it Emperor Otto confirmed to John XII and his suc-

cessors all of the rights and properties that the Church had acquired on the basis of preceding treaties. The pope, on his side, took an oath of loyalty to the emperor, promising that he would never betray the emperor” (ibid., p. 227).

The close relationship between Otto and the pope did not last long. The pope soon rebelled against the emperor. On Nov. 2 of the same year Otto took control of the city of Rome

through the centuries has been one of “fornication,” prophesied in Revelation 17:1-2. “Come, I will show you the judgment of the great harlot who sits on many waters, with whom the kings of the earth committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth were made drunk with the wine of her fornication.” The true followers of God are commanded to “come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins and lest you receive of her plagues” (Revelation 18:4).

The Saxon line continued after the death of Otto I in 973. His successors were Otto II (973-983) and Otto III, who secured the election of the first German pope, Gregory V, in 996. (Gregory died just three years later at the age of 27.) On May 21, 996, Gregory crowned Otto III as Holy Roman emperor.

Otto made Rome the administrative center of his empire and set on his seal the inscription *Renovatio imperii Romanorum*—“Restoration of the Empire of the Romans.” This ideal of the Roman Empire was to continue on into the second millennium, the Holy Roman Empire itself last-

ing a thousand years from the time of Charlemagne to Napoleon. ❖



Wikimedia Commons

*The “Imperial Crown of the Holy Roman Empire,” designed by Austrian Mint designer Thomas Pesendorfer, is the first of five gold commemorative coins of the series “Crowns of the House of Habsburg.”*

and convened a council at St. Peter’s that put the pope on trial.

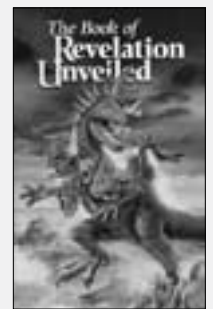
“A summons containing the charges was sent to the pope among which the following were underlined: ‘Know therefore that not a few but all laymen and clerics have accused you of murder, of perjury, of sacrilege, of incest with your relatives and with two of your sisters...that you have made a toast to the devil and, while throwing the dice, you called upon Zeus, Venus and other demons...’

“Undefended, John XII was found guilty of high treason and was deposed from the pontificate because of his behavior, judged unworthy of a pope” (ibid., p. 228).

These events are a classic example of how the unstable relationship between church and state down

## Recommended Reading

The book of Revelation remains mysterious to most people today but offers great insight into the events leading up to one of the world’s most momentous events—the return of Christ! For more information, request a free copy of *The Book of Revelation Unveiled*.



Contact any of our offices listed on page 15, or request or download it from our Web site at

[www.wnponline.org](http://www.wnponline.org)

# The Uneasy Relationship Between Church and State

The uneasy relationship between church and state dominated the Middle Ages and has continued into modern times.

In the 11th century, during the reign of Henry III as Holy Roman emperor, the split between East and West was formalized when the pope at Rome and the patriarch of Constantinople excommunicated each other. Division had existed for centuries, but this was a formal break that still remains. It has had major political consequences throughout history. More recently, the East-West divide of the Cold War arguably had some of its roots in the church split of the 11th century. Additionally, the ethnic conflict in the Balkans in the 1990s goes back to ancient religious rivalries.

A major struggle between Germany and Rome was started by the Lateran Council of 1059, which decreed that future popes would be elected by a college of cardinals, removing the influence of the emperor. This was to have a long-lasting effect and was a portent of conflict to come.

The crowning of Charlemagne by Pope Leo III in A.D. 800 had led to a close alliance between church and state, which can be likened to a marriage. The church at Rome was considered the spiritual authority over men's lives, whereas the emperor was the head of the political organization to which men submitted. The church taught the people that they must obey the emperor, whereas the emperor enforced the authority of the church over the people in spiritual matters. It was the emperor's job to ensure religious conformity and the unity of the faith, with force when necessary.

Between them, they controlled most of the peoples of Europe for centuries. Only with the Protestant Reformation of the 16th century was any progress made toward religious freedom.

Pope Leo XIII, late in the 19th century, summed it up this way: "The Almighty has appointed the charge of the human race between two powers, the ecclesiastical and the civil, the one being set over divine, the other over

human things." He also said: "Church and State are like soul and body and both must be united in order to live and function rightly."

But harmony between the two was rare.

Pope Gregory VII came to the throne in 1073 and declared that "the Pope is the master of Emperors!" His proof for this was that the popes were the ones who crowned the emperors, not the other way around. Emperor Henry IV (1056-1106) clashed with the pope on the issue of lay investitures. For centuries the secular leaders appointed bishops and abbots, investing them with spiritual authority. The pope wanted this to end, so that only he could make such appointments.

Henry would not yield and was finally excommunicated by the pope. This action meant that Henry's subjects were absolved by the church of all loyalty to the emperor, provoking a revolt by his barons. In order to save his throne, Henry had to grovel before the pope, begging his forgiveness.

In January 1077 Henry traveled to a castle at Canossa in northern Italy where the pope was staying. For three days he humiliated himself by standing barefoot and wearing sackcloth in the snow in full view of Gregory's window. Gregory finally granted him absolution and Henry was reconciled to the church.

No event of the medieval period showed so clearly the supremacy of the church. However, remember that the story of the empire is a history of "discontinuity"—nothing remained the same for long. The Holy Roman Empire may have lasted for a thousand years, but it was never fully united or totally stable.

Beyond the empire, church-state conflict also occurred. In 1205 England's King John quarreled with the church. In 1208 the kingdom was placed under an interdict, in which the country was denied some of the sacraments of the church to force it into submission to papal authority. John retaliated by seizing church property. One year later, he was excommunicated. In 1212 the pope



Wikimedia Commons

*Heinrich vor Canossa by Eduard Schwoiser depicts Henry IV standing barefoot and wearing sackcloth in the snow to win back Pope Gregory VII's favor.*

issued a bull deposing him, forcing John to make abject submission to Rome. In May 1213 he agreed to hold his kingdom as a fief of the papacy and to pay a thousand marks a year as tribute.

Ironically, the church came to his rescue two years later. After the barons forced John in June 1215 to sign the Magna Carta, the document that is the basis of the British and American constitutions, the pope in August of the same year annulled it, declaring that no people ever had the right to demand anything of their king. The principle of the divine right of kings had to be upheld by the church, lest the authority of the pope also be questioned.

Today, the sovereign state of the Vatican City is the last remaining absolute monarchy in Europe. ❖

**“WARRIOR”** (Continued from page 16)

He would not work on the Sabbath. He would pray and meditate on that day, as well as attend Saturday church services. At nighttime he would study from the pocket-size Bible his wife had given him.

His fellow soldiers would curse him and throw their boots at him as he knelt by his bed to pray. It just seemed as if he had too many privileges—even though he would work around the clock on Sunday and be given the grimmest of chores to break his morale.

Matters came to a head at an Arizona training camp. A commanding officer ordered Doss to take a gun from him on threat of court-martial, even though it specifically stated on his papers that he did not have to carry a gun. He was given two chances. He refused both times. He knew he would be in trouble if he only compromised once, because he would then do it again and again.

The officer had to catch his own rifle to keep it from falling, and then he tore up the furlough pass for Doss to visit his wife and brother. It was a low moment for him.

Finally, his father’s legislator intervened and his officers were put on notice regarding an Act of Congress to respect the rights of conscientious objectors. The man that they tried to drum out of the service on the issue of “mental instability” was the same “conscientious cooperater” who had repeatedly told his officers, “Don’t doubt my courage. As you take life, I’m going to be right by your side saving life. I’ll be just as good a soldier as you.” Those words were about to come true.

### The legacy begins

From Guam to Okinawa this different breed of warrior would develop day by day and person by person an incredible legacy. The 77th Division shipped off to war and Desmond Doss was right beside them and often out in front of them.

He was again alerted to the danger of not carrying a firearm. The enemy had chosen to intentionally target the easily identified med-

ics as they performed their courageous labor so as to demoralize the troops.

But out he would go, again and again, among the wounded. He did most of his work at night, crawling from person to person in the muddy tropical landscape. In one battle on Guam, as Doss moved forward without a firearm along with the troops, the same officer who had threatened a court-martial fled the battle scene.

Ultimately, the 77th was given orders to replace the decimated 96th on Okinawa. The task before them was to take Hacksaw Ridge on a looming 400-foot-high escarpment. Nine times in seven days the troops were driven off the escarpment. Eight commanders were lost in 36 hours!

Finally the orders came down: “Hacksaw Ridge—do or die!” Volunteers were requested to drape a cargo net on the ridge so men could rapidly charge up the cliff. Three volunteered. Doss was one. A photograph shows the lone figure of Doss standing at the top of the ridge, cargo net in place. It was the last recorded impression, as the photographers would advance no further due to the fierce fighting.

On April 30, 1945, Doss requested that he might pray for his comrades before the next assault. On that particular day, not one man died in Company B.

### “Lord, help me get one more”

On the third assault of the escarpment, the Japanese launched a major counteroffensive. U.S. troops were being bayoneted and shot as they fled down the net. But many troops remained on top, unable to flee. Doss was there in place to save lives. He knew the enemy would torture the wounded men, so he refused to leave.

Over the next 12 hours, he would drag the wounded one by one, sometimes two by two draped under his arms, a distance of 400 feet to the cliff’s edge. He would then lower them one by one, 75 in all, down the 70-foot cliff by rope.



United States Army

*Desmond Doss stands atop the Maeda Escarpment, also known as Hacksaw Ridge.*

Each time he returned for another comrade, he would simply pray, “Lord, help me get one more!” Years later, one Japanese veteran during an interview stated, “I believe that man was in my sights, but each time I would shoot, the gun jammed.”

May 5, 1945, was to be the final assault on Hacksaw Ridge. It happened to be a Saturday. Yes, the Sabbath! All were ready to go except one person, Doss! He was the only medic in the vicinity.

Another commanding officer who had tried to drum Doss out of the service put the entire offensive operation on hold. By now, Doss had become the “safety blanket” of the 77th.

### Lost without his Bible

In that skirmish, he would take shrapnel from a grenade that fell in his foxhole. Even as he was being carried out on a litter, he rolled out of it to care for another soldier. As he did, he was shot again.

As he was being taken to a hospital ship, he realized something precious had been lost on the battlefield. His Bible was out there! His source of strength was missing, and without it he felt lost. He wrote to the men of Company B and asked if they might help. Some of the same men who had jeered at him, thrown their boots at him and made his life miserable went into the field of battle and found his "sword," the Word of God (Hebrews 4:12).

Upon return to the United States, President Harry Truman would personally award this "hero without a gun" the nation's highest military honors for valor. But his good deeds came at a cost. His wounds would leave him 100 percent disabled. Wrong doses of treatment for tuberculosis contracted in the islands would leave him nearly deaf.

### "Desmond did that every day!"

In a documentary titled *The Conscientious Objector*, one of Desmond Doss's wartime companions said it best about this different breed of warrior. He said that some men are awarded the Medal of Honor for one moment in time in which they perform an incredible act of courageous daring on behalf of their fellow man. He then simply added, "Desmond did that every day!"

The corporal's saga recalls the time when Joseph told his brothers who had betrayed him, "Do not be afraid, for am I in the place of God? But as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive" (Genesis 50:19-20).

Doss's determination before possible punishment echoes the words of three men in Babylon who when put to their time of testing regarding another commandment replied, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. If that is the case, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us from your hand, O king. But if not, let it be known to you, O king, that

we do not serve your gods, nor will we worship the gold image which you have set up" (Daniel 3:16-18).

### Our spiritual battles

Doss's actions were based on his heartfelt convictions, and they serve as an example of how to "endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ" (2 Timothy 2:3) in the day-to-day struggles confronting us. This man's light and the savor of his convictions (Matthew 5:13-14) slowly turned the wrath of his comrades into admiration until they couldn't advance without him.

It brings to mind the future prophetic reality of Zechariah 8:23, which speaks of a time when "ten men from every language of the nations shall grasp the sleeve of a Jewish man, saying, 'Let us go with you, for we have heard that God is with you.'"

Desmond Doss lived his faith in the crucible of war. As Christians under the New Covenant, we fight a different warfare than the wars of this world. Our calling is not to walk alongside those who would take life, but to stand for the One whose "purpose is to give life in all its fullness" (John 10:10, New Living Translation) and who fights our battles for us as the Captain of our salvation. Order our booklet *The Ten Commandments* ([www.wnponline.org](http://www.wnponline.org)) and give special notice to the chapter regarding the Sixth Commandment.

The apostle Paul often pointed out as examples those who stood in "harm's way" in order to crystallize and galvanize our own Christian walk. It is in that spirit and intent that we can learn from this "different breed of warrior" about the lesson of "this is the way, walk in it" (Isaiah 30:21).

It was from the mouth of one who once despised him that the echoing lesson of Isaiah can be heard. Some men are awarded the Medal of Honor for one incredible act of courageous daring, but "Desmond did that every day!" ❖



Robin Webber

### How to Contact Us

AFRICA and ASIA (except as listed below): United Church of God, P.O. Box 541027, Cincinnati, OH 45254-1027, U.S.A. E-mail: [info@ucg.org](mailto:info@ucg.org)

AUSTRALIA: United Church of God—Australia, GPO Box 535, Brisbane, Qld. 4001, Australia. Phone: 0755 202-111 Fax: 0755 202-122

BENELUX countries (Belgium, Netherlands and Luxembourg): P.O. Box 93, 2800 AB Gouda, The Netherlands

BRITISH ISLES: P.O. Box 705, Watford, Herts, WD19 6FZ England. Phone: 020 8386 8467 Fax: 020 8386 1999

CANADA: United Church of God—Canada, P.O. Box 144, Station D, Etobicoke, ON M9A 4X1, Canada. Phone: (905) 876-9966, (800) 338-7779 Fax: (905) 876-0569 E-mail: [info@ucg.ca](mailto:info@ucg.ca)

CARIBBEAN: United Church of God, P.O. Box 541027, Cincinnati, OH 45254-1027, U.S.A. E-mail: [info@ucg.org](mailto:info@ucg.org)

EAST AFRICA (Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda): United Church of God—East Africa, P.O. Box 75261, Nairobi 00200 Kenya. E-mail: [kenya@ucg.org](mailto:kenya@ucg.org)

FIJI: United Church of God, P.O. Box 11081, Laucala Beach Estate, Suva

FRENCH-SPEAKING AREAS: Église de Dieu Unie—France, 127 rue Amelot, 75011 Paris, France

GERMANY: Vereinte Kirche Gottes, Postfach 30 15 09, D-53195 Bonn, Germany. Phone: 0228 - 9454636 Fax: 0228 - 9454637 E-mail: [info@gutenachrichten.org](mailto:info@gutenachrichten.org)

ITALY: La Buona Notizia, Chiesa di Dio Unita, Casella Postale 187, 24121 Bergamo Centro, Italy. Phone/Fax: (+39) 035-4523573 E-mail: [info@labuonanotizia.org](mailto:info@labuonanotizia.org)

MALAWI: P.O. Box 32257, Chichiri, Blantyre 3, Malawi. E-mail: [malawi@ucg.org](mailto:malawi@ucg.org)

MAURITIUS: P.O. Box 53, Quatre Bornes. E-mail: [mauritiust@ucg.org](mailto:mauritiust@ucg.org)

NEW ZEALAND: United Church of God, P.O. Box 22, Shortland St., Auckland 1140, New Zealand. Phone: 0508-463-763

NIGERIA: United Church of God, P.O. Box 2265, Somolu, Lagos, Nigeria. Phone: 01-8113644 E-mail: [nigeria@ucg.org](mailto:nigeria@ucg.org)

PHILIPPINES: United Church of God, P.O. Box 81840, DCCPO, 8000 Davao City, Philippines. Phone: (+63) 82 224-4444 Cell/Text: (+63) 918-904-4444

SCANDINAVIA: Guds Enade Kyrka, P.O. Box 3535, 111 74, Stockholm, Sweden E-mail: [sverige@ucg.org](mailto:sverige@ucg.org)

SOUTH AFRICA (and Namibia, Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland only): United Church of God, Southern Africa, P.O. Box 2209, Beacon Bay, East London 5205. Phone/Fax: 043 748-1694

SPANISH-SPEAKING AREAS: Iglesia de Dios Unida, P.O. Box 541027, Cincinnati, OH 45254-1027, U.S.A. Phone: (513) 576-9796

TONGA: United Church of God—Tonga, P.O. Box 2617, Nuku'alofa, Tonga

UNITED STATES: P.O. Box 541027, Cincinnati, OH 45254-1027. Phone (513) 576-9796. E-mail [info@ucg.org](mailto:info@ucg.org)

ZAMBIA: United Church of God, P.O. Box 23076, Kitwe, Zambia. Phone: (02) 226076. E-mail: [zambia@ucg.org](mailto:zambia@ucg.org)

ZIMBABWE: United Church of God, Zimbabwe, P.O. Box 928, Causeway, Harare. Cell Phone: 011716273 E-mail: [zimbabwe@ucg.org](mailto:zimbabwe@ucg.org)

**Internet access on your computer:**  
 Along with [www.wnponline.org](http://www.wnponline.org), the United Church of God's home page [www.ucg.org](http://www.ucg.org) gives you access to *The Good News*, booklets and links to our international Web sites: [www.ucg.ca](http://www.ucg.ca) (Canada), [www.ucg.org.au](http://www.ucg.org.au) (Australia), [www.labuonanotizia.org](http://www.labuonanotizia.org) (Italy), [www.goodnews.org.uk](http://www.goodnews.org.uk) (British Isles), [www.ucg.org.ph](http://www.ucg.org.ph) (Philippines), [www.ucgeastafrica.org](http://www.ucgeastafrica.org) (Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda) and [www.ucg-rsa.org](http://www.ucg-rsa.org) (Southern Africa).



by Robin Webber

## A Different Breed of Warrior

**A** soft-spoken Southern man served in the U.S. military during World War II, yet he refused to carry a gun. The army brass tried for over two years to kick him out of the service, but a grateful nation upon war's end awarded this most unlikely of heroes the Medal of Honor, two Bronze Stars and three purple hearts.

That's right: This one man earned six medals for heroism. This hero without a gun waged a different kind of fight. Meet Desmond Doss.

But I don't want you to meet him as just one more aging veteran from the conflict of long ago, because you really can't. You see, he died in 2006. But neither do I want you to immediately meet him in a foxhole of long ago and far away. No, let's go back a bit to events and values that molded Corporal Doss to become worthy of our notice.

### How could one brother kill another?

Doss grew up in a typical Depression-era family. One of his earliest memories was staring at an illustrated picture of the Ten Commandments hanging on their living room wall. One caption that vividly stood out in his mind was the scene of Cain beating Abel next to the inscription of the Sixth Commandment: "You shall not kill."

At a young and tender age, it startled Doss that one brother could kill another. Family members would recall how the lad would reach out and touch that illustration. These simple images on a country home's wall would shape and define his character a half a world away in years to come.

One specific occasion in his youth solidified his belief regarding firearms. His father and uncle got into a tussle

and a gun was drawn. His mother got in between his dad and her brother to stop the fight.

Both men backed down because they didn't wish her harm. But all Doss could see through his wide-open eyes was a reenactment of the vivid picture of Cain attacking Abel. His mother gave him the gun and asked him to dispose of it. After that event, Doss vowed never to touch a gun again.

### Call me a "conscientious cooperater"

When World War II arrived, he chose to become a combat medic. He made his position clearly known. He would not carry a gun as would many medics. He refused to call himself a conscientious objector. He preferred the designation of "conscientious cooperater." Yet right from the beginning he got one clear message: "You're in the army now. We'll tell you! Don't tell us!"

The officers attempted to break his morale by assigning him to a rifle company. There he would either cave in to peer pressure, or he would be considered a pest and be pushed out of the service due to intolerable peer abuse.

Most simply didn't "get" this soft-spoken and easygoing person with the strange beliefs. He was ostracized. One guy threatened, "If we go into battle together, I'll shoot you."

Unfortunately, most of his detail didn't realize he had chosen to be there as a medic to save lives—theirs!

### Honoring the seventh-day Sabbath

At Fort Pickens another of Doss's beliefs would become an issue. He was a seventh-day Sabbath-keeper.

(See "WARRIOR," page 14)