

Newsletter January 2012

In Book III, *Pentecost to the Eternal Ages*, Chapter 19.4, we presented a brief summary of the existing far reaching Economic-Political Crisis in the United States, which is rapidly leading it into a state of religious, moral, and political decline (page 501). That summary necessarily ends just prior to the November congressional election of 2010 as the Third Edition of Book III was being readied for publication. Observations within this newsletter are intended as an update to crisis conditions as they now exist a year later.

As was anticipated, a strong House majority was won by conservative Republicans in November of 2010, while the Senate remains under majority control by liberal-progressives who continue to push for larger government and even greater governmental economic control through increased spending measures funded by ever-increasing taxation. U.S. interest rates remain artificially low through persistent monetary action by the Fed causing the value of the dollar to decline against gold and other international currencies. Hyperinflation of staple goods is well underway, a fact to which any grocery shopper can readily attest. The national debt continues to rise even as U.S. Foreign Policy has been severely hampered by excessive borrowing from communist China. In the housing market, existing home prices slowly continue to fall, although there is some evidence of a positive upward movement for sales of lower priced homes, as current renters take advantage of the buyer's market and low mortgage rates. New home construction remains weak, and foreclosures by banks on home mortgages continue even as more homeowners begin to discover negative equities in their homes.

There are some bright spots beginning to show in the form of a moderate increase in consumer spending, and the official unemployment rate within the private sector dropped to 8.6% in November of 2011. Nevertheless, various economic sectors and regions of the nation continue to experience much higher unemployment rates than the national average. Furthermore, many discouraged unemployed workers have discontinued their search for employment in the highly depressed jobs market. They subsist by performing various odd jobs and by receiving basic aid and lodging from family and friends.

Although most liberal-progressive bills pushing for ever greater government spending have been effectively blocked by the conservative Republican-controlled House in 2011, there has been little or no progress in reversing earlier debilitating programs such as the extremely expensive socialized healthcare system passed by Congress on March 21, 2010. Meanwhile, President Barack Obama has chosen to impose his own Keynesian methods on the economy through various executive orders in an effort to circumvent the current stalemate in congress. Undoubtedly, he hopes to impress the electorate of his presidential prowess in doing so, as well as enlist the support of the beneficiaries of additional government spending programs to secure his reelection in 2012. It is yet too early to know whether the weakened economy is capable of recovering sufficiently to aid in the reelection of Obama and other progressives to office in November.

As this newsletter is being written, no unassailable contender has yet been put forth by the Republican Party to effectively challenge Barack Obama for the presidency. Outspoken Christian conservatives have fallen far behind in the race for the Republican presidential nomination because they are considered unelectable in light of their firm stand on Christian ethics. True Christianity is being regarded as extremism by a growing number of American citizens as genuine Christian values continue to erode within the nation. Moreover, fiscal-conservative politicians are increasingly being portrayed as obstructionists through the general media as Republicans continue to hold the line on runaway government spending in the House, but are unable to get any of their viable economic solutions past the Democrat-controlled Senate. It is, therefore, far from certain that

we can expect a large conservative majority to remain in the House after the next election in November, much less be assured of a conservative majority in the Senate sufficient to halt the current rush toward socialism. Barack Obama could quite readily be reelected by a cowed U.S. populace that fears electing a seemingly highly principled, but untried, conservative candidate to the powerful office of the presidency in trying times.

Socialism is now being viewed by a growing number of U.S. citizens as a necessary means to achieve so-called "social justice," which would not only disastrously change the nation's economic system, but also would have ruinous underlying moral implications as all personal responsibility eventually degenerates into governmental dependency. A growing entitlement generation is increasingly demanding a greater redistribution of national wealth from the rich to the poor through governmental action in support of this type of radical change. The early twentieth century British economist, John Maynard Keynes, advocated strict government monetary control and periodic infusions of public money into the economy intended to energize business activities and increase employment during economic downturns. This speculative philosophy, known as Keynesianism, has been employed in the United States during past times of economic crisis, most notably during the Great Depression Era, as a strong stimulus to boost and restore sagging capitalism. However, it is presently being utilized by progressive government leaders during this current crisis in a more aggressive way sufficient to overwhelm and permanently replace free capitalism with socialism.

If progressives should prevail over conservative attempts to regain control of an expanding federal government in November of this year, the nation could become socialist in every practical sense within the span of the following four years. Conversely, if conservatives should gain firm control of the government, working our way out of the present economic crisis, which has been greatly exacerbated by massive government spending and debt, would prove to be extremely slow and painful as established entitlements are necessarily reduced or cut. Public anguish over those essential measures could result in a strong political backlash against conservatives in future elections, thus incrementally bending the nation back toward socialism over time.

Many European nations, already overcome by their own massive socialist spending programs, are presently struggling to maintain civil order against angry crowds of citizens seeking to retain and increase various entitlements from their governments, which are at or near the point of bankruptcy from previously unfunded spending. Meanwhile, widespread economic unrest in the United States has resulted in protests, riots, and the illegal occupation of public areas by progressive members of society. This movement began with a group of anti-capitalists who attempted to disrupt financial markets by occupying the Wall Street area in New York City. This movement has spread nationally, and it has now become an inconsistent mix of anarchists, socialists, radical union members, the unemployed, moral deviates, and the down and out. The widely varying rhetoric heard within later demonstrations is rapidly approaching revolutionary proportions. Winter weather has apparently slowed this movement somewhat, but it could easily awaken with new vigor in the warmth of spring.

Adding to the world's present economic woes are Islamic upheavals within various Muslim nations, such as Egypt, Libya, and Syria as despotic rulers are being overthrown by violent civil unrest and through bloody civil wars. As many of the despots are being brought down, however, there is a growing concern that they will be replaced by devout Muslim leaders who will institute strict Sharia Law, not by those who advocate legitimate civil democratic reform. The recent U.S. troop withdrawal from Iraq now leaves that nation vulnerable to radical Islamic takeover; beginning efforts by Iran and internal dissidents are already in evidence as this new year begins.

The continuing war in Afghanistan has been greatly complicated by increased U.S. conflicts with neighboring Pakistan, a predictably unreliable Islamic ally that has nuclear weapons at its disposal. This radical Islamic revolutionary trend along with highly belligerent rhetoric by nations such as Iran, which hastily continues to work toward obtaining nuclear weapons, threatens the very existence of the nation of Israel. She may be induced one day soon to take preemptive military action to protect her people from annihilation. Any military action initiated by either Iran or Israel will most almost certainly set the oil-rich Middle East ablaze. The detrimental effect that would have on both U.S. and broader world economies through the oil market is quite predictable.

Meanwhile, the pervasive Muslim movement within the United States is often being encouraged and abetted by secular progressives in their common desire to bring down free capitalism and oppose every trace of Christian ethics remaining within society. Once capitalism falls and Christianity is sufficiently crushed, atheist progressives apparently believe that they can then subjugate Muslims much in the same way that they had dealt earlier with Christians. During this dangerous time of religious and ethical tumult, most of today's temporal churches blissfully remain on the sidelines totally unaware, as a delusive form of religious progressivism moves them increasingly away from sound biblical authority toward humanism.

As devout believers, we must earnestly continue to pray that God will halt this disastrous upheaval through a grass-roots awakening of his Elect and the worldwide spread and acceptance of the true Gospel of Jesus Christ. Nevertheless, it is impossible for us to know God's will regarding this tumultuous time in which we live. He may very well be orchestrating mankind's sinful habitation of earth to come to an end through the inevitable fulfillment of established unalterable biblical prophecy. Therefore, if present trends continue unabated, it could very well signal the beginning of a period of massive worldwide chaos, violence, and rebellion resulting in the formation of a powerful one-world government in an effort to control the earth's raging multitudes. Establishment of this world government would then pave the way for a ruthless ruler to gain full control as its head. In Holy Scripture, that global ruler is known as the antichrist both because he will be viewed incorrectly by his minions as the "savior of the world," and because he will openly oppose Jesus Christ and his true Church. As this New Year begins with its inherent optimism for a brighter future, we could very well find ourselves instead on the threshold of the great apocalyptic events set forth in the book of Revelation.

(The End Times are discussed in great detail in the last section of Book III, *Doctrines of the Last Days*, Section 20, beginning on page 523). Arthur J. Smith, January 2012