

We are surely traversing down a dark and frightening path here in the United States. Our elected representatives in government have in essence sold the soul of our nation in a panic in this monstrosity they're calling a stimulus bill. Not only is a socialist system enshrined, but vast sums are being allocated that represent what can only be regarded as wasteful and corrupt. Some of what's known to be "funded" is nothing short of idiotic, if not corrupt. If debt is slavery, and it certainly can be, the next generation is being sold into it.

One of the most suspicious aspects of the massive expenditure bill being hustled through the legislature is the fact that no one, including those backing it, knows what all it contains. There's been no time to read, let alone digest the thousand pages of mysterious legal jargon it contains.

Will it work? Will American financial institutions be saved from the brink of insolvency? Will millions of jobs be created, and the national economy saved from the depths of recession? A number of prominent economists are doubtful. Regardless of the overall success or failure of the trillion-dollar gamble, there is real and legitimate concern that the American system of liberty, the freedom to succeed or fail, is being destroyed.

If you read Murray Allatt's update from Sydney, you'll realize that Australia, under their ultra liberal Prime Minister Rudd has just shepherded a similar "stimulus" bill through their legislature. As Murray stated, that leap into long-term debt is actually three times larger on the basis of GDP than what's moving through the House and Senate in D.C.

God gave us free moral agency. The concept of liberty is at the heart of God's plan for mankind. We have the choice to prosper under it (in a free country), or lose it.

We know that God can interfere in man's affairs if and when He sees fit. He either chooses leadership or simply allows nations to reap what they deserve. We can certainly see what has been allowed to transpire in recent history when whole populations have either bought in or been co-opted by self-serving regimes. You can certainly read of what happened to ancient Israel when they turned away from God and put their faith in the hands of their kings. One can't help wonder, given the way this nation has devolved socially, morally and spiritually what may lie ahead for this once proud, God-fearing nation.

In years past, there's been a proclivity in God's church to point to one event or another as prophetic fulfillment, and wonder aloud whether it may presage the time of trouble foretold in the Bible. I'm afraid, as never before, that we may have entered a time of great deception and ruinous national behavior that may well lead to an eventual breakdown of order in our society. It would behoove us all to take seriously the times in which we live, and prepare physically and spiritually to face them. I hope you've taken advantage of the offer in our last letter of my Dad's sermon, Christ's Cabinet Members.

It speaks of physical and spiritual salvation, and is amazingly pertinent and timely. Anyone can call the office to request it on DVD.

The election in Israel has taken place, but its outcome is still not 100% certain. Mr. Netanyahu is still, nevertheless, expected to be the one who will be able to form a majority government and take the helm as Israel's next Prime Minister. And he is no dove when it comes to Israel's security. We shall see in the days ahead whether he is ultimately successful.

Iran's weird and dangerous leadership is as arrogant as ever, and with Russia's backing, is nearing completion of a nuclear reactor in addition to their nuclear enrichment program. For our part, the new administration in the U.S. hopes to be "sitting across the table" in direct talks in the months ahead. Maybe they'll give up their religion that demands we all convert or die.

As attractive as optimism can be, there's simply little room for it in the current national environment, unless you believe that a bunch of self righteous, narcissistic, greedy politicians have all the answers in defiance of every right principle. We have indications that some people, outside of church membership, may be beginning to take God's Truth more seriously as the outlook turns bleak. The power of our united prayers for our country and for our brethren, combined with the promise of God's kingdom look to be our only source for optimism now.

We've finished the 21st Century WATCH we've been working on, and it's in the printer's hands. I hope it reaches you while it's as timely as it is now. The Garner Ted Armstrong telecast this week brought in a surprising 505 requests for material on God's Laws, with two hundred nine first time contacts. That is well beyond what we've learned to expect from this subject matter.

We can all look forward to our Sabbath now, and give thanks for the incredible blessings we continue to enjoy.

Have a good one.

Mark Armstrong