

Newsbytes

The First Watch

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“Let us be alert to the season in which we are living. It is the season of the Blessed Hope, calling for us to cut our ties with the world and build ourselves on this One who will soon appear. He is our hope—a Blessed Hope enabling us to rise above our times and fix our gaze upon Him.” Tozer

Wow, this is pretty significant. And with more weird weather since this was written, can we conclude there is no sign it's letting up? Livin' large in the last days....MD

Floods & Drought Devastate Crops Around The Planet - Global Food Crisis Coming?
prophecynewswatch.com

It looks like global food production could be well below expectations in 2019, and that could spell big trouble in the months ahead. In recent weeks, I have written extensively about the problems that we have been experiencing here in the United States.

As many as a million calves were lost to the flooding that hit the state of Nebraska in March, farmers have planted less than half of the corn that is normally in the ground by this time of the year, and a lot of the crops that have been planted in the middle of the country are really struggling due to extremely wet soil.

But it isn't just the United States that is facing a very troubling year. Earlier today, one of my readers sent me an article entitled "Global food crisis ahead as extreme weather events devastate crops and fields around the world".

In that article, we are told that after the worst drought in 116 years Australia has actually been forced to import wheat. And according to the Guardian, this is the first time in 12 years that this has happened...

Australia is planning to import wheat for the first time in 12 years after drought across the eastern states saw grain production fall 20% last year.

The Department of Agriculture and Water Resources confirmed this week it had issued a bulk import permit to allow wheat to be brought in from Canada to be processed for the domestic market.

Normally, Australia exports a tremendous amount of wheat.

In fact, they were the fifth largest exporter of wheat in the entire world last year. But now they are having to bring wheat in from Canada, and that is a very ominous sign.

The article on Strange Sounds also detailed crop failures in Italy, France, Mexico and Argentina. I will not reproduce all of that information here.

But one major crop failure that was missed in that article is the massive rice crop failure in the Philippines.

More than P350 million worth of damage on rice crops due to drought was recorded by the Office of the Provincial Agriculturist (OPA)-Capiz.

Per damage assessment report as of May 10, OPA information officer Florie May Castro said the damage on rice crops already reached P358,452,650 in the entire province of Capiz due to the dry spell.

All over the world, crops are being devastated by floods, drought and colder than expected temperatures, and many are desperately hoping for a return to normalcy for global weather patterns.

Things are particularly bad in North Korea. At this point, hardly any rain at all has fallen so far in 2019...

The rainfall is the lowest amount since 1982. Thus far in May, North Korea has seen 0.02 inches of rain. However, Pyongyang City, Nampho City, Kangwon Province and North and South Hwanghae provinces have seen no rainfall.

According to KCNA, if precipitation for the rest of May does not exceed 50% of the average annual precipitation, North Korea's January to May rainfall totals will be about 3 inches, the lowest amount ever recorded for that time period.

With so little rain, farmers have had an exceedingly difficult time growing anything at all, and at this point the nation is facing an enormous food deficit.

Adding to the struggles is a widespread food shortage. The United Nations reported earlier this month that North Korea has a food deficit of 1.36 million metric tons. The 2018-2019 food crop production is an estimated 4.9 million metric tons, the lowest since the 2008-2009 season.

On top of everything else, let us not forget that African Swine Fever is absolutely devastating the global pig population.

According to the Hill, it is being projected that 200 million hogs could die from the disease in China alone...

Pork prices are expected rise as African swine fever decimates Chinese pigs, The Wall Street Journal reported Monday.

McDonald's, Burger King, Jimmy Dean and Dunkin' all reportedly expect sausage and bacon prices to rise this year as China has to import pigs to make up for the 200 million hogs that are expected to die from the disease.

To put that in perspective, that is more pigs than the entire U.S. pork industry produces in an entire year. For much more on this ongoing crisis, please see my previous article entitled "'An Estimated 150-200 Million Pigs" Have Been Hit By A Global Plague Of Biblical Proportions'. Here in the United States, endless rain and unprecedented flooding have been the biggest problems. The previous 12 months have been the wettest in all of U.S. history, and the middle of the country just got hammered by yet another series of severe storms...

Heavy rain, high winds and hail has swept across the central states, bringing devastation to the region during a brutally wet spring period, leaving 22 million people braced for more flash flooding.

Four million residents were under a flash flood 'emergency warning' on Tuesday morning, including in Oklahoma, where as much as five feet of water entered homes in Hominy, to the northeast of the state.

Some 22 tornadoes have been reported so far across Oklahoma, Texas, Kansas and Missouri, while

rescue crews in boats pulled at least 50 people from flood waters as heavy downpours inundated roads and homes, said Oklahoma Emergency Management Agency.

Our planet is changing, and global weather patterns are going to keep shifting. The "new normal" is going to look a whole lot different from the "old normal", and we all need to get prepared for a very uncertain future.

Even during the good years, the world has really struggled to feed everyone.

Now that we are facing catastrophic crop failures all over the planet, what will we do?

Many believe that a global food crisis is looming, and without a doubt U.S. consumers will soon be paying much higher prices when they visit the grocery store.

Jews warned against wearing kippah in Germany

israelnationalnews.com

May 25

German anti-Semitism commissioner says he 'can't advise' Jews to wear skullcap everywhere in Germany, blames Muslims, far-right.

Germany's government commissioner on anti-Semitism has warned Jews about the potential dangers of wearing the traditional kippah skullcap in the face of rising anti-Jewish attacks.

"I cannot advise Jews to wear the kippah everywhere all the time in Germany," Felix Klein said in an interview published Saturday by the Funke regional press group.

In issuing the warning, he said he had "alas, changed my mind (on the subject) compared to previously."

Klein, whose post was created last year, cited "the lifting of inhibitions and the uncouthness which is on the rise in society" as factors behind a rising incidence of anti-Semitism.

"The internet and social media have largely contributed to this -- but so have constant attacks against our culture of remembrance."

And he suggested police, teachers and lawyers should be better trained to recognize what constitutes "clearly defined" unacceptable behavior and "what is authorized and what is not."

His comments came just weeks after Berlin's top legal expert on anti-Semitism said the issue remains entrenched in German society.

"Anti-Semitism has always been here. But I think that recently, it has again become louder, more aggressive and flagrant," Claudia Vanoni told AFP in an interview, adding the problem was "deeply rooted" in German society.

Anti-Semitic crimes rose by 20 percent in Germany last year, according to interior ministry data which blamed nine out of ten cases on the extreme right.

Justice Minister Katarina Barley told the Handelsblatt newspaper the increase was "shameful for our country" but added that the police were "vigilant."

Vanoni also said that the proliferation of online platforms that allow people to express extremist views without inhibition while hiding behind screens had fostered the rise in cases.

The arrival in parliament of the far-right AfD, whose leaders openly question Germany's culture of atonement for World War II atrocities, has also contributed to the change in atmosphere, as has the arrival of more than a million asylum seekers, many from Muslim countries such as Syria, Afghanistan or Iraq.

Klein said that while the far-right was to blame for the vast majority of anti-Semitic crime, it was apparent that some Muslims were also influenced by watching certain television channels "which transmit a dreadful image of Israel and Jews."

Bitcoin is not dead, neither is crypto in general. Don't schedule a funeral yet... MD

Facebook's GlobalCoin 'will bring blockchain adoption to the masses'

Scott Thompson Coin Rivet May 25, 2019

Facebook yesterday released further details about its highly touted cryptocurrency. Dubbed GlobalCoin, this is the trojan horse that will bring blockchain adoption to the masses, according to José Maria Macedo, Head of Advisory at blockchain advisory firm, AmaZix. Facebook's 2.4 billion monthly users will be able to change dollars and other international currencies into digital coins, which could then be used to make payments or transfer money without needing a bank account. Facebook is looking to set this up in about a dozen countries by the first quarter of 2020. And the social media giant wants to start testing GlobalCoin, the value of which would be pegged to a basket of established currencies, including the US dollar, the euro and the

The post Facebook's GlobalCoin 'will bring blockchain adoption to the masses' appeared first on Coin Rivet.

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Founder Mark Zuckerberg has spoken to Bank of England Governor Mark Carney regarding the opportunities and risks involved in launching a cryptocurrency. His company has also sought advice on operational and regulatory issues from officials at the US Treasury.

'Bigger than the US dollar'

"Through Facebook and Whatsapp, potentially hundreds of millions of people will use GlobalCoin. It has the potential to be bigger than the US dollar in terms of numbers of users," Macedo argues.

“Mark Zuckerberg has looked beyond the hype, and seen the potential of cryptocurrencies for low-cost, reliable cross-border transfer of payments. Startups are set to transform industries from banking to the supply chain. Companies large and small, like Facebook, are looking at how blockchain can help their business in this new digital era, and we are just at the start of the journey of this fledgling industry,” he adds.

Regulatory perspective

Oliver Woodhouse, a financial services regulatory lawyer at Capital Law, agrees that this is an opportunity to introduce billions of people to innovative and emerging technology that has the potential to revolutionise the payment and remittance market; particularly in “unbanked” areas of the world, where individuals may not be able to open a bank account, but otherwise have internet access and a social media account.

So what does this mean from a regulatory perspective? The cryptoasset space is a fluid area that is continually developing, both in the UK and globally. The mere existence of GlobalCoin demonstrates this perfectly. In the UK, the FCA, HM Treasury and the Bank of England are all consulting on regulatory treatment of cryptoassets, and exploring whether legislative change is necessary.

“Effectively this may bring a broader range of cryptoassets into the regulated space (so beyond those which have characteristics of existing regulatory financial instruments); however, players in the sector consider that regulatory decisions have been slow to develop in many jurisdictions,” Woodhouse says.

“But the potential opportunities afforded by the 2020 launch of GlobalCoin to expose billions to the sector should, hopefully, further encourage regulators and legislators globally to provide clarity on treatment of the new asset class at a faster pace.”

This also demonstrates that global technology businesses are continuing to take marked steps into the world of financial services, he adds. “How this will be treated from a regulatory perspective is one thing, what effect this will have on more traditional financial service providers, who may already be suffering as existing customers move to more innovative providers, is quite another.”

Genocide of Christians Reaches "Alarming Stage"

by Raymond Ibrahim

May 26

"Christian persecution 'at near genocide levels,'" the title of a May 3 BBC report, cites a lengthy interim study ordered by British Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt and led by Rev. Philip Mounstephen, the Bishop of Truro.

According to the BBC report, one in three people around the world suffer from religious persecution, with Christians being "the most persecuted religious group". "Religion 'is at risk of disappearing' in some parts of the world," it noted, and "In some regions, the level and nature of persecution is arguably coming close to meeting the international definition of genocide, according to that adopted by the UN."

British Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt is also quoted on why Western governments have been "asleep" — his word — concerning this growing epidemic:

"I think there is a misplaced worry that it is somehow colonialist to talk about a religion [Christianity] that was associated with colonial powers rather than the countries that we marched into as colonisers. That has perhaps created an awkwardness in talking about this issue—the role of missionaries was always a controversial one and that has, I think, also led some people to shy away from this topic."

Whatever the merits of such thinking, the fact is that many of the world's most persecuted Christians have nothing whatsoever to do with colonialism or missionaries. Those most faced with the threat of genocide — including Syria's and Iraq's Assyrians or Egypt's Copts — were Christian several centuries before the ancestors of Europe's colonizers became Christian and went missionizing.

The BBC report highlights "political correctness" as being especially responsible for the West's indifference, and quotes Hunt again in this regard: "What we have forgotten in that atmosphere of political correctness is actually the Christians that are being persecuted are some of the poorest people on the planet."

Although the BBC report has an entire heading titled and devoted to the impact of "political correctness," ironically, it too succumbs to this contemporary Western malady. For while it did a fair job in highlighting the problem, it said nothing about its causes — not one word about who is persecuting Christians, or why.

The overwhelming majority of Christian persecution, however, evidently occurs in Muslim majority nations. According to Open Doors' World Watch List 2019 [WWL], which surveys the 50 nations where Christians are most persecuted, "Islamic oppression continues to impact millions of Christians." In seven of the absolute worst ten nations, "Islamic oppression" is the cause of persecution. "This means, for millions of Christians—particularly those who grew up Muslim or were born into Muslim families—openly following Jesus can have painful consequences," including death.

Among the worst persecutors are those that rule according to Islamic law, or Sharia -- which academics such as Georgetown University's John Esposito insist is equitable and just. In Afghanistan (ranked #2), "Christianity is not permitted to exist," says the WWL 2019, because it "is an Islamic state by constitution, which means government officials, ethnic group leaders, religious officials and citizens are hostile toward" Christians. Similarly, in Somalia, (#3), "The Christian community is small and under constant threat of attack. Sharia law and Islam are enshrined in the country's constitution, and the persecution of Christians almost always involves violence." In Iran (#9), "society is governed by Islamic law, which means the rights and professional possibilities for Christians are heavily restricted."

Equally telling is that 38 of the 50 nations making the WWL 2019 are Muslim majority.

Perhaps the BBC succumbed to silence concerning the sources of Christian persecution — that is, succumbed to "the atmosphere of political correctness" which it ironically highlighted — because in its own report, it did not rely on the WWL. The problem with this interpretation is that the study the BBC did rely on, the Bishop of Truro's, is saturated with talk concerning the actual sources of Christian persecution. In this regard, the words "Islam" and "Islamist" appear 61 times; "Muslim" appears 56 times in this review on persecuted Christians.

Here are a few of the more significant quotes from the Bishop of Truro's report:

"The persecution of Christians is perhaps at its most virulent in the region of the birthplace of Christianity—the Middle East & North Africa."

"In countries such as Algeria, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Syria and Saudi Arabia the situation of Christians and other minorities has reached an alarming stage."

"The eradication of Christians and other minorities on pain of 'the sword' or other violent means was revealed to be the specific and stated objective of [Islamic] extremist groups in Syria, Iraq, Egypt, north-east Nigeria and the Philippines."

"There is mass violence which regularly expresses itself through the bombing of churches, as has been

the case in countries such as Egypt, Pakistan, and Indonesia."

"The single-greatest threat to Christians [in Nigeria] ... came from Islamist militant group Boko Haram, with US intelligence reports in 2015 suggesting that 200,000 Christians were at risk of being killed... Those worst affected included Christian women and girls 'abducted, and forced to convert, enter forced marriages, sexual abuse and torture.'"

"An intent to erase all evidence of the Christian presence [in Syria, Iraq, Egypt, north-east Nigeria and the Philippines] was made plain by the removal of crosses, the destruction of Church buildings and other Church symbols. The killing and abduction of clergy represented a direct attack on the Church's structure and leadership."

"Christianity now faces the possibility of being wiped-out in parts of the Middle East where its roots go back furthest. In Palestine, Christian numbers are below 1.5 percent; in Syria the Christian population has declined from 1.7 million in 2011 to below 450,000 and in Iraq, Christian numbers have slumped from 1.5 million before 2003 to below 120,000 today. Christianity is at risk of disappearing, representing a massive setback for plurality in the region."

The BBC should be commended for (finally) reporting on this urgent issue — even if it is three years behind the times. As the Truro report correctly observes, "In 2016 various political bodies including the UK parliament, the European Parliament and the US House of Representatives, declared that ISIS atrocities against Christians and other religious minority groups such as Yazidis and Shi'a Muslims met the tests of genocide."

At the very least, it appears that the BBC has stopped trying to minimize the specter of Christian persecution as it did in 2013, when this situation was just starting to reach the boiling point.

Raymond Ibrahim, author of the new book, *Sword and Scimitar, Fourteen Centuries of War between Islam and the West*, is a Distinguished Senior Fellow at the Gatestone Institute and a Judith Rosen Friedman Fellow at the Middle East Forum.