

# Kingdom Report

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## Signs of the Times: The Inevitability of Peace on Earth

Contrary to “Apocalypse Now” theology I want to give you encouraging information of the underlying signs of the times. God’s Kingdom agenda is moving forward. There is major shift in world power dynamics. Nations want to trade, not fight.

The world system is in the process of re-organization. There are new power alignments emerging. The problem we have in our church is today’s eschatology interpretation of scripture is misinterpreting what is happening now in the world.

If I say “a New World Order” is coming...the immediate response is yes the Antichrist is going to rule a “One World Government”. That is a fundamental mistake. Reality on the international world stage? The world is breaking into a multi-polar diverse groupings of nations, economies and cultural dynamics. Which is God’s strategy for infiltrating the Kingdom to all people everywhere.

There is a very interesting phenomenon about these new world multi-polar powers. They are not interested in war as a means for projecting power or securing their future. They are interested in trade. War is economic waste. And they don’t have money or available man power for war.

Let me give you examples to support my argument. But part of the calculus of these new world power players is this hidden reality. They are all projecting 50 years and more into the future and they all are in trouble...there are not enough babies and children.

### **Fertility and Economy**

Aging populations and a shrinking workforce are the great challenge to the prosperity and stability of the industrial world, including China. Japan now has fifty dependent elderly for every one hundred workers; that is projected to rise to ninety by the end of the century. China’s ratio will rise from about twenty to seventy, the same level as Western Europe. The US ratio will rise from less than thirty to more than fifty.

China, with planning and foresight, seeks to harness the labour of hundreds of millions of young workers in the Global South by building infrastructure and exporting its technology. Europe has no plan at all. Japan is investing overseas to pay for old age pensions. All the industrial nations of the world are in long term population collapse.

## **International Competition**

Today's international great power competition is unlike anything seen in the past. War is not an option like in the past. There are not enough young men who want to join the military. Neither enough money to pay for armaments and welfare.

The Japanese defence force has never fought an actual war, but it suffered a crushing defeat last year – missing recruitment targets by 50%. The year before it was a 35% miss. And for years it has had 20% shortfalls. Thus, JSDF is something of an old, undermanned and overworked force. America has the same problem as does Europe.

The Japanese don't want to fight. Neither do the Germans, whose armed forces have shrunk since Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022. The Europeans and Japanese don't want to fight. Why should they? Who will lay down his life for future generations, if there aren't going to be any future generations?

For all the demands on America's NATO allies to bulk up their armies, the opposite is happening. Japan and Germany, the American allies with economies big enough to make a difference in defense spending, are quietly abandoning their commitments to higher defense outlays.

Japan pledged 43 trillion yen (US\$272 billion) in defence spending through 2027, mainly in the form of procurement of US F35s and other expensive foreign hardware. But Japan calculated its procurement costs at an exchange rate of 108 yen to the dollar, compared with around 160 yen currently. That implies a drastic cut in actual procurement.

Germany's budget negotiations, meanwhile, eliminated most of the planned increase in the German defence budget. In 1989, the country had 12 combat-ready divisions. Today it can't field one.

China shrank its military as fertility fell. Including reservists and paramilitary police, its armed forces total 4 million, versus 3.4 million active duty, reservists and civilian employees for the US, which has a quarter of China's population.

All the cajoling in the world won't persuade the Europeans to sacrifice their depleted young manhood in land wars. America's NATO allies will promise to spend more and recruit more soldiers, and their plans will dissolve before the ink is dry.

For that matter, the notion that Russia wants to recreate the Soviet Empire runs contrary to arithmetic. Stalin sent 29.5 million soldiers to the Eastern Front; Putin barely can manage a force of half a million. That may be enough to claw back Donetsk, Luhansk, Crimea, and a few other parcels of land, but not enough to occupy Western Ukraine, let alone march on Poland.

Imperial powers of the past filled the world and pursued conquest for the sake of, among other things, scarce resources. Roman soldiers were stationed from Mesopotamia to the

Hibernian border, sending 100,000 or more slaves a year back to Rome. The “far-flung battle line” of the British Empire included large parts of Asia and Africa. Britain financed its trade deficit during most of the nineteenth century by growing opium in India and selling it to China. The empires of Spain and Portugal extracted bullion from the New World and spent most of it on luxury imports from China—this bullion in turn paid for China’s nineteenth-century opium imports. The French and British fought their eighteenth-century wars over control of colonies, the slave trade, and the East Indian trade. Even the world wars of the twentieth century were fought because of territory. France in 1914 wanted the return of Alsace and Lorraine; Serbia wanted Bosnia-Herzegovina. The frontier of German expansion into Slavic lands defined the conflict between Moscow, Vienna, and Berlin. Hitler, for his part, demanded Lebensraum.

Today’s scarce resource is **people**—specifically working-age people who can be trained to work in a modern economy. Among today’s world powers, China is the only one that understands this and has taken measures to secure it.

Without a revival of fertility, countries with declining populations have four choices: austerity with the attendant threat of social instability; immigration; rising productivity; and export of capital to employ workers in middle-income countries. China has embraced the latter two alternatives, with a single-minded program to adopt AI-driven productivity enhancements and the export of infrastructure and technology to middle-income countries of the Global South through the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).

China’s exports to the Global South have doubled since 2019, to Brazil, India, Indonesia, and Malaysia in particular. Exports to these countries now exceed China’s exports to all developed markets, although a large part of exports to the Global South are components to be assembled and re-exported to developed markets. Digital infrastructure is China’s flagship product. It lays a foundation for e-commerce, e-finance, digital currencies, digital tax payments, and other businesses that lock China’s customers into its technology.

In contrast the United States spent six trillion dollars on wars in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Syria, with nothing to show for it. China spent two trillion on BRI and emerged as a world power. China’s global footprint is quite different from imperial powers of the past. The United States has about 230,000 military personnel stationed overseas; China has just 200, at its sole overseas base in Djibouti. The United States has 177,000 active-duty Marines against China’s 30,000, and 70,000 Special Operations personnel against China’s estimated 12,000. This is how power is going to be projected in the New World Order. Trade and trading relations. What can you produce and sell to buy what you need. You can no longer invade and destroy and occupy to get resources you need.

There are no overseas Communist Parties on Beijing’s payroll, no Chinese advisors fighting wars of subversion—nothing but the usual influence-peddling and cultivation of compliant politicians. But China’s global influence is enormous and growing. It dominates several high-tech industries, most importantly telecommunications infrastructure, but also new-energy vehicles, solar panels, and nuclear energy

China has also built digital and physical infrastructure that transform developing economies. Huawei alone reportedly built 70 percent of Africa's 4G networks. Mobile broadband has moved tens of millions of people from the barter economy into the banking system and enabled entrepreneurs to run businesses on cheap smartphones. Once internet penetration reaches the 60 percent threshold, business formation in the Global South jumps. Today, China graduates more engineers and installs more industrial robots than the rest of the world combined, and it leads the world in factory automation, telecom infrastructure, nuclear and solar power, and new energy vehicles.

This is a new power on the world stage with a civilization whose character and approach to conquest are so very alien. China is not a nation but an artificial construct that still speaks in 200 dialects. The combined 8,000 miles of the Yellow and Yangtze Rivers demanded a centralized state to manage flood control and irrigation, and this state required a centralized bureaucracy. Qin Shi Huang gave his name to China in the third century BC and consolidated his rule with irrigation and canal construction that opened tens of thousands of square miles of land to farming. The Communist Party of China is the modern incarnation of the old Mandarin system, and the Belt and Road Initiative is a continuation of China's ancient strategy of assimilation through infrastructure—except that much of the infrastructure today is digital. Today's Chinese do not fear famine or catastrophic natural disasters for the first time in their 5,000-year history.

If China succeeds, or rather, continues to succeed, in assimilating the six billion people of the Global South into its economic sphere, it will be the world's dominant power. It is well on its way.

However make no mistake. China is not alone. It is but a central part of a nexus of emerging trading blocks of nations grouping under various names like BRICS, SCO (Shanghai Cooperation Organization), ASEAN etc....nations from Eurasia, Africa, the Middle East, Latin America. They are not interested in exporting either war or ideology. The objectives of all these emerging international cooperation agreements are as follows:

- Secure the agreement of non-interference in the internal affairs of member states. That means no ideological or political exports.
- Secure international trade agreements under rule of international law.
- Create new economic financial links. Practically this means move away from the US dollar as international trading currency, trade more in local currencies and protect international payment systems from outside political sanctions or interference.

### **The Implications for the Church and the Kingdom of God**

As I look across these world power changes in the international arena I am reminded of the Roman Empire and Paul's missionary journeys. He was a Roman citizen. He could safely travel protected on Roman roads, he had freedom to preach in open places, in homes and before crowds, he could collect money from one group of believers in Asia and send relief financial help to the church in Jerusalem. He could speak in a common language all could understand wherever he travelled (Greek) and all Greek speaking

people could read the Greek translation of the Hebrew Torah translated by the government of Egypt in 280 BC and made available to all for copying in the government library at Alexandria and thereafter in the academies of Greece and Judea.

This is the new world order of international travel, safe trade, international capital flows, the world wide internet web, freedom of movement with the freedom of expression.

This is a world made for the mass dissemination of “the knowledge of the Lord covering the earth as the waters cover the seas.”. God has prepared this new world order for us His Church to spread the gospel everywhere. This is fertile international soil prepared by the Lord for His Kingdom purposes. This is not fertile soil for an Antichrist One World Government!

This is a world where the major industrial nations know that they are dying long term because they know how to make money...but they don't know how to make growing families. They also don't know how to pay for armies when there are budget constraints and not enough young men to either join the army or willing to die for their country.

This is the world where the wealth of the wicked are laid up for the righteous. This is the world where the global industrial north needs the labour and consumption of the Global South. And this is not the world where apocalyptic preachers can continue to pursue the idea of an Antichrist one world government can

And in the Global South the church of Jesus Christ is growing by exponential rates as the industrial nations die out. As Jesus said in all of His parables of the Kingdom of God...it is the tares that are gathered first and taken out and the wheat is left behind, and as with Noah it is the wicked who are taken out and the righteous remain.

So it will be that in fact in this new world order now emerging.....eventually it will be the meek who will inherit the earth.