



# PROPHETIC TIMES

WEEKLY WORLD NEWS UPDATE

OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA

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## SECOND PLAGUE DEATH IN WEST CHINA

*May 3, 2009* The BBCNews reported: "A second man has died of pneumonic plague in a remote part of north-west China where a town of more than 10,000 people has been sealed off. The 37-year-old victim was a neighbour of the first person to die from the plague, a herdsman aged 32 in Ziketian in Xinghai in Qinghai Province. The sparsely populated area is mostly inhabited by Tibetans.

Pneumonic plague, which attacks the lungs, can spread from person to person or from animals to people.

A spokeswoman for the World Health Organization, Vivian Tan, said an outbreak such as this was always a concern, but praised the Chinese for reacting quickly and for getting the situation under control."...

Local officials in north-western China have told the BBC that the situation is under control, and that schools and offices are open as usual. But to prevent the plague spreading, the authorities have sealed off Ziketian, which has some 10,000 residents. About 10 other people inside the town have so far contracted the disease, according to state media. No-one is being allowed leave the area, and the authorities are trying to track down people who had contact with the men who died.

Initial symptoms of pneumonic plague include fever, headache and shortness of breath. The local health bureau has warned anyone with a cough or fever who has visited the town since mid-July to seek medical treatment."...

According to the WHO, pneumonic plague is the most virulent and least common form of plague. It is caused by the same bacteria that occur in bubonic plague - the Black Death that killed an estimated 25 million people in Europe during the Middle Ages.

But while bubonic plague is usually transmitted by flea bites and can be treated with antibiotics, pneumonic plague is easier to contract and if untreated, has a very high case-fatality ratio."..."

## EU POPULATION TO HIT 500 MILLION

*August 8, 2009* The EU Observer reported: "The European Union's population is set to reach the 500 million mark in 2009, new figures from Eurostat, the bloc's statistics agency, showed on Wednesday (3 August). On 1 January 2009 the population was estimated to stand at 499.8 million, compared with 497.7 million on 1 January 2008.

The EU population has been on the rise since 2004 due to an increase in birth rates combined with annual immigration of between 1.5 and 2 million people. Last year, 5.4 million babies were born in the 27 EU member states, which translates as 10.9 per 1,000 inhabitants.

Only in Germany fewer children were born in 2008 than in previous years (8.2 per 1,000 inhabitants in 2008 compared to 8.3 in 2007). Outside the EU, Turkey also saw a significant drop in its birth-rate (from 19.4 in 2007 to 17.9 in 2008).

Ireland still holds the record as the most fertile EU country (16.9 per 1,000 inhabitants) followed by France (13.0), the UK (12.9), Estonia (12.0), Sweden (11.9) and Denmark (11.8). At the other end, Germans are making the fewest babies. Austria had the second lowest birthrate in the EU (9.3) and despite the Italians' reputation for romance, the country had the third lowest figure (9.6)."..."



## RUSSIA CHARGES US IS REARMING GEORGIA

*August 5, 2009* The Voice of America reported: "A top Russian diplomat says the United States is quietly rearming the Georgian military, and he warns the U.S. move will force Moscow to react. Deputy Foreign Minister Grigori Karasin leveled the accusation Wednesday in Moscow. He did not describe the weapons, nor indicate what form Russia's response would take.

A top Russian general says Moscow is not planning any offensive in the Caucasus as the anniversary of last year's brief war with Georgia approaches on Friday. However, General Anatoly Nogovitsin says Russia's armed forces are alarmed by Georgia's military buildup.

U.S. Assistant Secretary of Defense Alexander Vershbow told a U.S. Senate panel Tuesday that U.S. resources are currently aimed at training Georgian forces. But he said other forms of help could be offered in the future.

Tuesday, President Barack Obama and Russian counterpart Dmitri Medvedev spoke by telephone about reducing tensions in Georgia. U.S. Vice President Joe Biden also telephoned Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili. Biden stressed the need to avoid actions that could further destabilize the region.

Moscow has warned it will use "all available force" to protect the pro-Russian populations of South Ossetia and a second breakaway territory, Abkhazia."..."

Russian forces swept into Georgia August 7, 2008, following Georgian attempts to regain control of breakaway South Ossetia by force. Georgia said it only shelled South Ossetian targets after Russian forces invaded."..."

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## **CATHOLICS ALARMED BY EU EQUAL RIGHTS LAW**

*August 4, 2009* The EU Observer reported: "Atheists could attack galleries for showing religious art and witches could claim the right to use church halls under a draft EU equal rights law, the Roman Catholic church has warned.

The EU bill aims to curtail discrimination on grounds of religion, disability, age or sexual preference in social situations not covered by existing labour law, such as renting properties. The directive could enter into force in 2011 if member states give unanimous approval in discussions planned for November by the Swedish EU presidency.

The criticism was put forward in recent days by the Roman Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales as part of a British government consultation procedure. The bishops' group "commends" the EU effort to protect "the innate dignity of every person."

But it calls for the legal text to soften a clause against creating an "offensive environment" and to add an exemption to let religious organisations "function in accordance with [their] ethos."

"There is a risk that practical implementation may effectively turn the directive into an instrument of oppression against one or other group," the church paper, signed by bishops' conference general secretary Monsignor Andrew Summersgill, says.

"Homosexual groups ...may declare themselves offended by the presentation of the Catholic Church's moral teaching on homosexual acts; Catholics may declare themselves offended by a 'Gay Pride' march; an atheist may be offended by religious pictures in an art gallery."

"It is not clear whether [the bill] would apply to the activities of a Catholic priest, if, as recently occurred, he were to refuse to take a booking for a Church Hall from a group of witches," it adds."..."

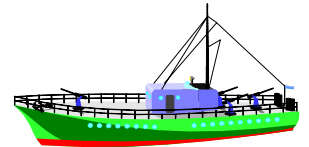
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## **SCIENTISTS STUDY HUGE PLASTIC PATCH IN PACIFIC**

*August 4, 2009* Reuters reported: "Marine scientists from California are venturing this week to the middle of the North Pacific for a study of plastic debris accumulating across hundreds of miles (km) of open sea dubbed the "Great Pacific Garbage Patch."

A research vessel carrying a team of about 30 researchers, technicians and crew members embarked on Sunday on a three-week voyage from the Scripps Institute of Oceanography, based at the University of California at San Diego. The expedition will study how much debris -- mostly tiny plastic fragments -- is collecting in an expanse of sea known as the North Pacific Ocean Gyre, how that material is distributed and how it affects marine life.

The debris ends up concentrated by circular, clockwise ocean currents within an oblong-shaped "convergence zone" hundreds of miles (km) across from end to end near the Hawaiian Islands, about midway between Japan and the West Coast of the United States.



The focus of the study will be on plankton, other microorganisms, small fish and birds. "The concern is what kind of impact those plastic bits are having on the small critters on the low end of the ocean food chain," Bob Knox, deputy director of research at Scripps, said on Monday after the ship had spent its first full day at sea."..."

Little is known about the exact size and scope of the vast debris field discovered some years ago by fishermen and others in the North Pacific that is widely referred to as the "Great Pacific Garbage Patch."..."

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## **POPE CALLS FOR A "GLOBAL AUTHORITY" ON ECONOMY**

*July 7, 2009* Reuters reported: "Pope Benedict called on Tuesday for a "world political authority" to manage the global economy and for more government regulation of national economies to pull the world out of the current crisis and avoid a repeat. The pope made his call for a re-think of the way the world economy was run in a new encyclical which touched on a number of social issues but whose main connecting thread was how the current crisis has affected both rich and poor nations.

Parts of the encyclical, titled "Charity in Truth," seemed bound to upset free marketers because of its underlying rejection of unbridled capitalism and unregulated market forces, which he said had led to "thoroughly destructive" abuse of the system and "grave deviations and failures."

An encyclical is the highest form of papal writing and gives the clearest indication to the world's 1.1 billion Catholics -- and to non-Catholics -- of what the pope and the Vatican think about specific social and moral issues.

The pope said every economic decision had a moral consequence and called for "forms of redistribution" of wealth overseen by governments to help those most affected by crises. Benedict said "there is an urgent need of a true world political authority" whose task would be "to manage the global economy; to revive economies hit by the crisis; to avoid any deterioration of the present crisis and the greater imbalances that would result."

Such an authority would have to be "regulated by law" and "would need to be universally recognized and to be vested with the effective power to ensure security for all, regard for justice, and respect for rights."..."

Compiled by L. Jim Tuck, Pastor  
UCGIA Oakland, San Jose, and Santa Rosa  
ljt5053@sbcglobal.net