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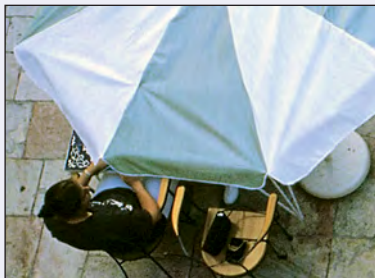
Where Have All the Christians Gone?
 by *Elwood McQuaid*10
 Freedom. Democracy. Have these truly been the result of the so-called Arab Spring? Not for Christians, who appear to be in even bigger trouble than they were in before.



The Megillah Begins
 by *Steve Herzig*14
 Almost 2,500 years ago, a Persian official wanted to wipe the Jewish people off the map. Sound contemporary? It's in the book of Esther, where the story begins.



Haman's Main Problem
 by *Peter Colón*20
 Haman had it all. Yet Mordecai's refusal to bow to him ruined everything, as far as he was concerned. That's because he had two problems many still have today.



How the Megillah Ends
 by *Thomas C. Simcox*24
 Evil has challenged good since the Garden of Eden. Here's what happened in the book of Esther, which is a harbinger of how other events will eventually end.



The Holiday of Purim
 by *Bonnie Pearson*26
 Fun, fun, fun! That's the theme of the Jewish holiday of Purim. Special foods, floats, costumes. Learn how people celebrate today, both in the United States and Israel.

Does history repeat itself? Yes, of course. But what's the success rate for learning from past experiences? Not too good. That's why we've chosen the book of Esther for the theme articles in this issue. All of the ingredients for past-present comparisons are here. But most important are the lessons for life that are indispensable for these last days. Mordecai's challenge to Jewish Queen Esther is the urgent call to you and me: "Yet who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" (Est. 4:14). If you want to make a difference, here's what you need to know. And for spiritual refreshing, check out the beautiful cover photo of the land preserved for the people Esther stepped up to save. It is of the wall of the Old City, Jerusalem, Israel (Richard Norwitz/Corbis).

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