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REAL TRUTH

A MAGAZINE RESTORING PLAIN UNDERSTANDING

ARE DISASTER VICTIMS “GREATER SINNERS”?



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VOL. III | NO. 6 | NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 2005

A R T I C L E S

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In recent months and years, the southern United States has experienced extreme weather conditions, which have caused billions of dollars in damage, upheaval of businesses and families, and loss of life. Is this the result of normal cyclical weather patterns? Or has the South been “targeted” because its sins are “greater” than any other area of the world?

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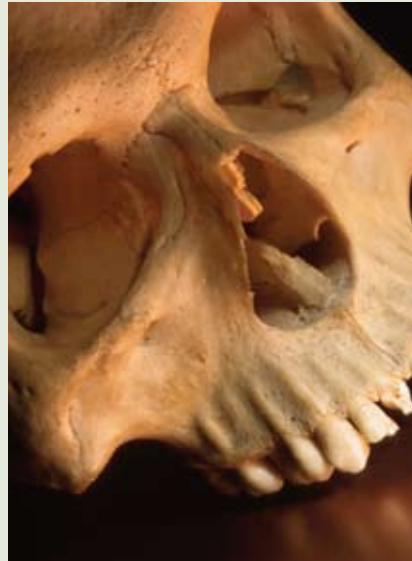
It is seen and felt in every corner of life. From the wealthy to the poor, from youth to the elderly, from the most vile criminal to the most generous giver—no one can escape its grasp. Here is the ugly truth about the carnal, natural mindset of man.

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We Are Not Jehovah’s Witnesses or Seventh-day Adventists

The teachings of The Restored Church of God are different from traditional Christianity. However, when some of our readers find certain doctrinal similarities with other religious groups, they conclude that we must be related to these organizations. This article will clear up such misunderstandings.

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ABOUT OUR COVER:

Tsunamis, earthquakes, mudslides, tornadoes, hurricanes, avalanches, wildfires, explosions—when hundreds, thousands, even tens of thousands are left homeless, starving, seriously injured or worse, some religious organizations declare that such disasters happen because the victims are “greater sinners.” But is this found in the Bible?

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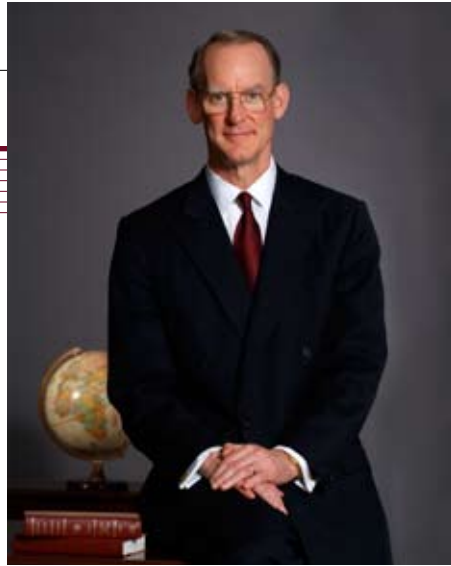
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PERSONAL FROM

David C. Fack



Can the Bible's Authority Be Proven?

THE BIBLE is the number one bestseller of all time. Is it mere superstition—the uninspired work of men? Or is it simply Hebrew and Greek literature—perhaps only useful as a history book?

This book purports to be the Word of God. Must its authority be accepted on faith? Can its divine authority be demonstrated? Are only parts of it inspired, with other parts to be considered inaccurate or unscientific?

Recently, in a stunning, but candid, admission of the position of the Catholic Church on the Bible's authority, the *London Times* (Oct. 5, 2005) carried an article describing a document just published by the Catholic Church in England titled *The Gift of Scripture*. This truly astonishing publication, in which various bishops and cardinals stated that one studying the Bible should not expect "total accuracy" from its contents, declaring that "We should not expect to find in Scripture full scientific accuracy or complete historical precision," totally undermines the Bible's authority. In it, the Bible was described as a combination of the "Word of God" mixed with "human dimensions."

The article went on to list a variety of biblical passages that church leaders felt should be consid-

ered "untrue." Cited were the first eleven chapters of Genesis, which were described as not "historical," but rather at best only containing "historical traces." Various other scriptures, such as Matthew 27:25 and Revelation 19:20, describing the beast and false prophet, and the mark of the beast, are described as unbiblical. These churchmen then offered their opinion of various other passages that they felt could safely be considered true.

Which is it? Is the Bible true?—false?—or a mixture subject to human opinion?

Book of Books?

Most people have a Bible—and the "family Bible" is a cherished possession in many households. Our family Bible dates to the mid-to-late 1700s.

Then why does this best-selling book remain a mystery to so many—with few even *professing* to understand it? And why is it that most Bibles are used as a showpiece, lying unopened, gathering dust? Many actively try to discredit the Bible, while others treat it with passive indifference. Still others hold it in awe—believing "on faith" that it is divinely inspired. They seem to require no proof of this, yet lack the necessary conviction to truly believe and practice its words in times of great stress and personal trial.

But can one actually *prove* the Bible? This is a huge question! Just as most never seek to prove the *existence*

of God, most never concern themselves with PROVING the authority of the Bible. They either have no interest in such proof or they assume there is none—that it cannot be done!

What about you? Have *you* taken the time to seek actual, tangible PROOF of the Bible's authority? As with the existence of God, have you been taught that you must accept it "on faith"?

Most people are never challenged to find real proof that the Bible is the inspired record of a Supreme Being. Probably you have not been so challenged, and this is at least partly because circumstances rarely *force* people to undertake such a task. This is perhaps the single biggest reason that most never do. While I regularly "went to church" when growing up, I was never required, nor felt compelled, to prove either that God exists or that He authored the Bible. Nor was any proof of these ever given or offered to me! And not one person ever suggested to me that I should even be concerned with proving the answers to these two looming, most important of life's questions.

Stop and think for a moment! Let's apply basic logic.

What kind of God would write an Instruction Book about how to live, command that it be followed as His Word and then offer no PROOF that it is? It insults whoever is God to even believe Him capable of such inconsistency—and unfairness! On what basis would He—or even *could* He—require obedience to such an Instruction Book, if He left no proof that it was authentic?

The apostle Paul wrote *in the Bible*, speaking on behalf of the One who claims to have authored it, "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good" (I Thes. 5:21). If God wrote the Bible, and He tells you to "Prove *all* things," then surely He would not make proof of His authorship of the Bible an exception. It states, "ALL things."

In other words, would God require you to prove what the Bible teaches about all *other* points of doctrine or practice, but not expect you to prove whether an all-powerful God stands behind its authorship, requiring you to then OBEY it—to adhere to its teachings? What sense would that make? God would never exempt from the need for proof (thus making them towering *exceptions* to this command) the questions of His own existence and His authorship of the Bible!

We must take this instruction at face value. If God says to "Prove all things," and "Prove Me now herewith..." (Mal. 3:10), as well as "Prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God" (Rom. 12:3), then He means it. And if God did not make the answers to these questions provable, He is setting Himself up to be discredited—or one could conclude that He only desires simplistic, unthinking people to follow Him blindly. In other words, Christians are those who are willing to make assumptions on the very most important questions of life, and to be able to hold convictions for a lifetime that are based on mere assumption.

On the other hand, if the Bible *is* the inspired Word of a great living God, then it is the standard by which mankind—including you—will be judged. Then dare you delay any longer the process of proving its all-important authority in your life?

Most spend their entire lives worried about what PEOPLE think and say. Few concern themselves with what GOD thinks or says. Be honest and consider *yourself*. How much time have *you* spent trying to prove either the existence of God or that the Bible is His Word?

So then, the answer to both of these questions is that they *can* be proven. And you will notice, as we summarize the first great proof of the Bible, that it is also inseparable from proof that God exists. In fact, each different proof that the Bible

is the Word of God is also its own proof that there IS a God!

The First Proof—Evolution Disproved?

While numerous proofs could be listed, no discussion about the Bible's authorship would be complete without addressing the subject of evolution. It represents, perhaps, the first proof, in overall priority, that should be examined.

Most people have been taught from childhood that mankind evolved through a long process. While the theory of evolution is commonly accepted throughout the Western World, it has never been more than an *unproven theory*. Yet, to believe in the biblical Creation account is considered unfashionable, un"chic"—and even unintelligent! And, of course, if the theory of evolution *is true*, then the Bible is a flawed book. At best, it is a mixture of truth and error, exactly as the Catholic Church now alleges. Yet, if the Roman church is right, and the Bible can be so wrong on a matter as important as the beginning of all life on earth ("Genesis" means *beginning*), then it cannot be trusted on any *other* point. If evolution occurred, the entire Bible collapses like a house of cards.

If evolution can be *disproven*, and the Creation account firmly established, then a great proof of the Bible's authority has also been established.

Make no mistake! ALL of the Bible purports to be the Word of God. It *all* stands or it *all* falls together. Either the Bible is a book of TRUTH from start to finish—and mankind should tremble before it (Isa. 66:2)—or, if evolution is true, the Bible must be judged false. It would thus stand as the greatest fraud ever perpetrated on an unsuspecting mankind!

We have carefully prepared a booklet, *Does God Exist?* It is a

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Intelligent Design

A Telling Debate

Controversy is intensifying as to whether the theory of Intelligent Design should be addressed by science teachers in public schools. Why is this issue so divisive?

BY JEFFREY R. AMBROSE

ON SEPTEMBER 26, 2005, a civil trial began in a federal court in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, centering on the theory of Intelligent Design (ID). This theory proposes that the universe is too intricate and complex to have developed through evolution and natural selection.

The lawsuit *Kitzmiller et al v. Dover Area School District* has been brought against the Dover, Pennsylvania, school board by eleven parents in that town. The American Civil Liberties Union and Americans United for Separation of Church and State have come to the aid of this group of parents, while the school board is being represented by attorneys from

the Thomas More Law Center, who state that they are doing so in the interest of preserving Christian religious freedom.

The parents object to the Dover school board requiring 9th grade biology teachers to read the following statement before beginning a unit on evolution: "The Pennsylvania Academic Standards require students to learn about Darwin's theory of evolution and eventually to take a standardized test of which evolution is a part.

"Because Darwin's theory is a theory, it continues to be tested as new evidence is discovered. The theory is not a fact. Gaps in the theory exist for which there is no evidence. A theory is defined as a well-tested explanation that unifies a broad range of observations.

"Intelligent design is an explanation of the origin of life that differs from Darwin's view. The reference book, 'Of Pandas and People,' is available for students who might be interested in gaining an understanding of what Intelligent Design actually involves.

"With respect to any theory, students are encouraged to keep an open mind. The school leaves the discussion of the origins of life to individual students and their families. As a standards-driven district, class instruction focuses upon preparing students to achieve proficiency on standards-based assessments" (*Associated Press*).

Note that Dover teachers are not required to *teach* ID

alongside evolution—they are merely required to read this statement before setting forth the standard evolutionary views. Yet, three of the parents in the suit have testified that this statement alone is harmful to their children. Why has this seemingly objective, measured disclaimer caused such a firestorm?

Two Camps

The court battle has brought to the stand expert witnesses on both sides of the issue. One of these is Dr. Michael Behe, a professor of biochemistry at Lehigh University and a prominent advocate of Intelligent Design. His 1996 book *Darwin's Black Box* essentially began the ID movement. Although Dr. Behe is Catholic, he maintains that his theory is not based on religious convictions, but rather on physical evidence seen in nature. He believes that the “irreducible complexity” of natural processes and mechanisms demonstrates that the universe and life could not merely have happened through random, unguided forces, but rather was designed.

Opponents contend that ID is simply a new name for creationism—the acceptance of the Bible's creation account in the book of Genesis. They believe that discussing Intelligent Design in a public school violates the principle of separation of church and state. (As an aside, the phrase “separation of church and state” can be traced back to an 1801 letter sent by President Thomas Jefferson to the Baptist Association of Danbury, Connecticut. It is not found in the U.S. Constitution or any of its amendments, as some mistakenly assume.)

Witnesses testifying on behalf of the plaintiffs assert that ID cannot be classified as scientific, as it cannot be tested or disproved. (Of course, evolution fails to meet the same criteria.) Some have compared ID to medieval sciences such as alchemy, and the president of Cornell University has called the effort to bring this theory into the classroom “very dangerous” (*The New York Times*).

Elsewhere, the National Academy of Science and the National Science Teachers' Association are not allowing their copyrighted materials to be used by the Kansas Board of Education in Kansas' science curriculum, due to the curriculum's critical stance toward evolution.

At Iowa State University, 120 faculty members signed a petition declaring that Intelligent Design is not science. This was in response to one of their colleagues, a faculty astronomy teacher, who wrote a book that contends that Earth had to have been designed. Similar battles are in progress at the University of California at Berkeley and Ohio State University.

The majority of academia seem to oppose even entertaining the possibility of the universe having originated from anything other than blind chance and happenstance.

Predictably, some prominent media outlets are already framing this debate with a pro-evolution slant. Articles drawing comparisons between the Pennsylvania lawsuit and the “Scopes Monkey Trial” of 1925, a case in which teacher John Scopes was charged with violating a Tennessee state law that forbade the teaching of evolution. Some consider the media coverage of this high-profile trial, which in general ridiculed the creationist side, to have been a tipping point, influencing public opinion in favor of evolution.

The Crux of the Controversy

Dr. Behe believes that he has faced considerable bias against his theory. In court, he stated, “My ideas on Intelligent Design have been subjected to a thousand times more scrutiny than anything I've written before” (*The New York Times*).

Again, we must ask, why is there so much opposition even to the *mention* of an alternate theory of origins?

Evolution has largely been accepted as fact by those who are considered highly educated. In the New Testament, the apostle Paul describes the state of those who are willingly ignorant of the Creator: “Because that which may be known of God is mani-

fest in them; for God has showed it unto them. For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: because that, when they knew God, they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. *Professing themselves to be wise*, they became fools, and changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things...Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator” (Rom. 1:19-23, 25).

Why must the status quo of evolution be maintained? This can be answered by merely connecting the dots. If the universe was designed, this implies that there is a designer. This designer would have to be superior to human beings in intellect and power. This sounds suspiciously like a “Supreme Being”—God. If God exists, then He is sovereign over His creation. If this Creator happens to be the God who inspired the Holy Bible, then this God sets forth laws and requires that human beings live by them.

However, living within God's laws is contrary to human nature: “Because the carnal [fleshly, natural] mind is enmity [hostile] against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be” (Rom. 8:7). The human mind vehemently opposes the notion of subjection—being ruled!

Continuing the passage cited earlier, Paul goes on to describe the character and mindset of individuals who choose to ignore the reality of God's existence: “And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate [unfit, worthless, rejected, debased, degraded, useless] mind, to do those things which are not convenient; being filled with all unrighteousness, for-

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IRAN

THE NUCLEAR STAND-OFF

Iran has decided to resume uranium conversion. Negotiations with the EU have broken down. Is a peaceful solution to this nuclear stand-off still possible?

BY GABRIEL N. LISCHAK

PART TWO: THE LOOMING CONFRONTATION

SINCE FEBRUARY 2003, The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), deemed the United Nations “nuclear watchdog,” has been investigating Iran’s “peaceful” nuclear program.

Nearly three years later, having rejected the West’s demands to abandon its program in exchange for incentives, Iran now faces the prospect of the IAEA referring the nation to the UN Security Council for sanctions.

The United States insists that Tehran’s nuclear program is a guise for developing nuclear weapons. With Iran’s president thundering provocative words against Israel, this idea

is not without merit: “Israel must be wiped off the map. No doubt the new wave [of attacks] in Palestine will soon wipe off this disgraceful blot from the face of the Islamic world. Anybody who recognizes Israel will burn in the fire of the Islamic nation’s fury” (*Financial Times*).

Also, considering that Iran is one of the biggest oil exporters in the world, it is unlikely that Iran is seeking an alternative source of power because they want to combat global warming.

In trying to push for sanctions against Iran, the White House faces two problems:

(1) With dangerously high crude oil prices, Iran—a major oil exporter—could withhold its oil supply, thus driving the price up farther. Most coun-

tries understand this threat, and would be against imposing any sanctions that could threaten their own economies. The head of Iran’s Revolutionary Guards warned, “Any sanction against Iran can make the oil price reach \$100 a barrel” (*News24*).

(2) Any UN resolution calling for sanctions must be approved by *all five* members of the Security Council. This is not an easy task, as two of the five members are Russia and China.

Geo-Strategic Triangle

With the U.S. having a massive military presence around the world, many countries have developed a *unilateral superpower phobia*. This fear is causing tremendous changes in the realm of geopolitics, such as the formation of a triangular alliance between

TIMELINE OF KEY EVENTS

The West's fiasco with investigating Iran's nuclear program spans the course of three years, with numerous inspections, allegations and negotiations:

2002

Dec. 12-13: U.S. television stations broadcast satellite images of two nuclear sites in Iran. American media claims they could have a military use. Iran agrees to an International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) inspection.

2003

Feb. 9: Iran's president says that uranium deposits have been discovered in Iran. Tehran is building two factories to convert the ore into nuclear power station fuel.

Feb. 21: The head of the IAEA visits Iran to verify that its nuclear program is peaceful. The U.S. maintains that Iran is trying to develop nuclear weapons.

June 19: The IAEA requests that Iran agree to an additional protocol within the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and allow unannounced inspections of its nuclear sites.

Aug. 26: Iran says that it will allow unannounced inspections, but wants guarantees that inspectors will not reveal strategic military secrets. A confidential UN report discloses that Iran has developed two kinds of enriched uranium not needed for peaceful energy production.

Nov. 10: An internal IAEA report states, "At the moment, there is no proof that Iran is creating nuclear weapons." The U.S. disagrees.

Dec. 18: Iran signs the additional NPT protocol.

2004

April 4: Iran denies that it has any secret nuclear sites, insisting that the experimental use of its uranium ore conversion plant in central Isfahan does not violate its NPT obligations.

June 1: The IAEA claims it has discovered new traces of enriched uranium that surpass levels necessary for peaceful energy production.

July 31: Iran admits that it has resumed the production of parts for centrifuges used for enriching uranium, but insists it has not resumed enrichment activities.

Sept. 1: An IAEA report says a number of Iran's claims concerning its nuclear development are "plausible." But the report

Russia, China and Iran. Such an alliance not only helps their economies, but it also serves to counter American military dominance.

The three countries have more in common than one might think. They are geographic neighbors; they are experiencing economic upturns; they are able to act swiftly; and, above all else, they hold much disdain for America. In addition, Russia possesses weapons and technology that Iran and China lack, but are more than willing to spend money to acquire them. A natural supply-and-demand partnership is taking shape.

Beijing's interest in relations with Iran is due in part to China's soaring energy consumption. For example, its crude oil imports soared 40 percent in the first eight months of 2005. Oil analysts have said that China could deplete its domestic oil supply in 14 years.

In turn, Iran is becoming China's major importer of manufactured goods, such as computer systems, household appliances and cars. Iran's former representative to the IAEA stated, "We mutually complement each other. They have industry and we have energy resources" (*The Washington Post*).

Also, trade between these two nations is weakening the impact of American economic embargoes against Iran. A leading conservative theorist and editor of the Kayhan newspapers said, "Sanctions are not effective nowadays because we have many options in secondary markets, like China" (*Ibid*).

In 2004, China became Iran's top oil importer, signing a \$100 billion mega oil-pipeline deal with Tehran, coined the "deal of the century" by various commentators. A similar agreement is being worked on that is reported to be worth an additional \$100 billion. That March, a state-owned oil trading company in China signed a 25-year agreement to import 110 million tons of liquefied natural gas (LNG) from Iran. Later that year, a deal was struck for China to import an additional 250 million tons of LNG and 150,000 barrels per day

of crude oil over the same 25-year period.

Along with these momentous deals, China is investing sizeable amounts of money in Iranian energy exploration, drilling and production, as well as petrochemical and natural gas infrastructure. Such transactions violate America's Iran-Libya Sanctions Act, which penalizes companies for investing more than \$20 million dollars in Iran or Libya. Apparently, what the U.S. thinks is of no concern to Beijing or Tehran.

Since the mid-1980s, Russia has been supplying Iran with advanced missiles and missile technology, and has been assisting in the development of long-range ballistics. With this assistance, Iran has developed Shihab-3 and Shigab-4 missiles that have ranges of roughly 1,250 miles. A Russian defense company is negotiating a deal with Iran to repair and modernize Iranian submarines as well, said to be "a \$270 million dollar deal that could revive the bilateral arms trade [between Russia and Iran] but further irritate the United States" (*St. Petersburg Times*; emphasis ours).

Sales of missile technology breach the U.S.-Iran Non-Proliferation Act of 2000, which states that sanctions will be "imposed on countries whose companies provide assistance to Iran in its efforts to acquire weapons of mass destruction and missile delivery systems." So far, Washington has failed to enforce this act.

In early 2005, Russia signed a deal in which they will supply Iran with nuclear fuel for use at its nuclear power plant in Bushehr. (Russia has expressed interest in the construction of 6 more nuclear reactors and 20 nuclear power plants as well.) In return, to ease U.S. concerns that Iran will use the spent fuel to manufacture weapons-grade plutonium, Russia has promised that all spent nuclear fuel will be returned to them. Whether this actually takes place remains to be seen.

Along with economic development, trade and investment, this triangular alliance also brings foreign policies with mutual objectives. For instance,

all three countries agree on policies toward Taiwan and Chechnya, with which the U.S. naturally disagrees. China and Iran are in full support of Russia's war against the Chechen separatists, and Russia and Iran fully support China's anti-succession stance toward Taiwan.

When it comes to the nuclear stand-off at hand, it should not be a surprise to learn that Russia and China pledge their full support of Iran. Moscow has consistently stated that it will not support referring Iran to the UN Security Council for sanctions; in addition, after striking the gas and oil deal with Tehran, Beijing stated that it would not support sanctions. Again, such opposition is significant due to both countries holding UN Security Council veto power. It is doubtful that countries with great economic interests in Iran will agree to impose burdens that will affect them as well.

Understand—Russia and China do not base their foreign policy on what the United States or any other nation of the West may want. Quite the contrary, they seek to undermine the West's ambitions.

A Seasoned Hardliner

What about Iran's newly-elected president, Mahmoud Ahmedinejad? What kind of effect will he have on the nuclear issue at hand? An examination of his background—with his involvement in regional issues from Iraq to Lebanon to Palestine—provides some clues.

In June 2005, he won a landslide victory in Iran's ninth presidential election, sending political shockwaves throughout the world. He clearly stated on his ticket that justice and freedom stand in contradiction, and that he stands on the side of justice. His hostility to "the corrupt Western way of life" is most apparent and is firmly entrenched in his past. One of his supporters echoed this sentiment, saying, "I picked Ahmedinejad to slap America in the face" (*The Washington Times*).

Mahmoud Ahmedinejad was born to a working class family in 1956. He

was brought up in a Tehran district known for its poverty, which was an ideal area for Muslim fundamentalism to flourish. No stranger to higher education, in 1975, he founded a university engineering course at Elmo-Sanaat University. Four years later, he established the Islamic Student Association and became the university representative in the Office for Strengthening Unity between Universities and the Theological Seminaries (OSU). Interestingly, in 1979, this organization led the seizure of the American Embassy in Iran.

In 1980, Mr. Ahmedinejad joined the Iranian Revolutionary Guards (IRG), and later worked for the Internal Security Department. Six years later, he was promoted to a position leading the Special Brigade of the Revolutionary Guards at the Ramazan garrison, which is near Iran's border with Iraq. This was the headquarters of the IRG's international military operations. While stationed at the Ramazan garrison, Mr. Ahmedinejad reportedly established an elite assassination squad known as Quds Force, which is still active in Iraq.

After becoming the mayor of Tehran, it is reported that he used his new position to cultivate a network of young Islamic fundamentalists, known as *Abadgaran-e Iran-e Islami*, which works alongside Iran's secret services and the IRG. This group promotes a hard-line conservative religious and political outlook and seeks to preserve the legacy of Iran's first Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Khomeini.

A day after his victory, Mahmoud Ahmedinejad proclaimed that he would pursue a moderate line; however, in light of his past, it is much more likely that he will stick to his ultra-conservative roots, in contrast to the former president of Iran. His vision of Islam is expected to shape Iranian foreign policy. If he fails to deliver on his promises to eliminate corruption, ensure greater employment and raise the living standards of the poor, he will likely try to focus his supporters' attention on hot-button international issues, such as the Palestine/Israel conflict

also expresses renewed concern about Iran's decision to resume large-scale production of feed material for enrichment. The U.S. Secretary of State says the IAEA report warrants Security Council action.

Sept. 18: The IAEA gives a Nov. 25 deadline for Iran to reveal all its nuclear activities.

Sept. 21: Iran says it has resumed large-scale conversion of uranium ore.

Oct. 31: The Iranian parliament passes a bill allowing enrichment activities to resume.

Nov. 14: Iran agrees to suspend uranium enrichment activities, including the precursor process of conversion, while further negotiations are held.

Nov. 22: Enrichment is suspended. However, Iran says it will resume activity in the future, and that it will "never renounce" its right to enrich uranium.

Dec. 13: Talks open between Iran and the EU.

2005

Jan. 13: IAEA inspectors visit the Parchin site, southeast of Tehran.

Feb. 27: Iran and Russia sign a nuclear fuel agreement for operations to begin at the Bushehr plant. Russia will fuel the reactor on condition that Iran sends back spent fuel.

April 30: Iran announces that it could resume uranium conversion at its Isfahan plant.

May 11: The European Union warns Iran against resuming an activity that "would end the process of negotiation." Eight days later, Iran announces that its decision is "irreversible."

May 25: Iran agrees to hold off on a final decision until Europe submits "detailed proposals" in two months.

Aug. 1: Iran announces that it will officially notify the IAEA of its decision to resume uranium conversion.

Aug. 3: Iran's new ultra-conservative president, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, takes office.

Aug. 5: Iran rejects the EU's offer of a broad incentive package.

Aug. 8: Iran says that it has resumed ultra-sensitive nuclear fuel work at Isfahan.

Sept. 22: The EU offers to delay its drive to bring Iran before the U.N. Security Council if Russia and China will agree to a new resolution that criticizes Tehran for violating nuclear commitments.

Source: Agence France-Presse



■ **DECEMBER 1996:** The Iranian government purchases its third Russian-built, Kilo-class diesel submarine from Moscow.

PHOTO: U.S. Department of Defense

and the ongoing nuclear stand-off with the West.

With an ultra-conservative now serving as Iran's top elected leader, massive changes in government are expected. Mending "reformer" ideas of culture, education and the media is high on the conservative list of priorities. Greater restrictions on freedom of expression and greater politicization of education and culture are expected to occur.

Also, keep in mind that the ultra-conservatives view the United States as the foremost enemy of the Islamic Republic of Iran. It is doubtful that they (and the president leading them) will strike a deal with the White House.

Preparing for Battle

In a speech given September 2005—during an annual parade of troops, ballistic missiles and other military hardware—Mahmoud Ahmedinejad issued a warning of what would happen if anyone considered and carried out an attack against the Islamic Republic. He stated that Iran's "enemies have understood that we are very serious in defending our security. If some want to

again test what they have tested before, the flame of the Iranian nation will be very destructive and fiery. Relying on our nation and armed forces, we will make the aggressor regret their actions." Further, Iran's president told the army to "prepare their defensive readiness" and called for an "expansion of the defense industries and the utilization of the latest technology" (*News24*).

These are strong words, but they do have a ring of truth to them. According to a professor of national security strategy at the U.S. National War College, Iran is capable of retaliating with "an elaborate, ferocious, global provocation designed to draw the United States into a protracted conflict." (Or, in other words, more terrorist attacks against America and an escalation of violence in Iraq.) Iraq's Deputy Foreign Minister added, "If Iran wanted, it could make Iraq a [nightmare] for the United States" (*The Sunday Telegraph*).

While politicians continue to call for a diplomatic solution to the Iranian nuclear issue, Tehran is preparing for a fight that it thinks may be inevitable.

In an attempt to demonstrate that the price for any military solution would be high, the Iranian government has made great strides in recent months to upgrade and prepare its military for action. "They see a fight coming, regardless of what they do, so they are getting ready for it," said a European diplomat in Tehran (*The Christian Science Monitor*).

Some analysts expect the "Iraqization of the Iran dossier" or, in other words, the eventual presentation by the White House of the same plan for Iran as in Iraq. (For example, similar to the months before the war with Iraq, the White House would proclaim that Iran is in possession of weapons of mass destruction and is governed by a tyrannical, anti-democratic regime.) However, one must consider that, unlike Iraq, Iran has many venerable military assets from which to draw in the event of an attack:

■ Upgraded Shahab-3 missile, capable of reaching Israel and U.S. forces in the region.

■ The construction and set-up of sophisticated defenses around its nuclear facilities.

■ Possible possession (from Ukraine) of a dozen Soviet-era Kh-55 cruise missiles—designed to carry a 200-kiloton nuclear warhead 1,860 miles, virtually undetectable by radar; a recent satellite deal with the Russians would supply digital maps for improved accuracy.

■ Possible stockpile of sophisticated military equipment such as armor-piercing sniper rifles and night-vision goggles.

■ In addition, Iranian hardliners have assembled a list of 15,000 suicide bomber volunteers.

"It is code to America: 'If you hit us, we will play dirty, using Hizbullah and volunteers to hit the U.S. across the region,'" said a European diplomat, echoing analysts who have warned that Iran could easily destabilize Iraq and close the Strait of Hormuz to oil traffic. "There is an enormous danger of miscalculation" (*Ibid*).

Please see **IRAN**, page 25

CHEMICAL WARFARE

Millions of Lives Destroyed by Crystal “Meth”



PHOTO: U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency

Crystal “meth” is spreading throughout society at an alarming rate. What is this drug, and what are its effects?

BY KEVIN D. DENEE

CRYSTAL “METH” is so powerful that it can immediately transform casual users into out-of-control junkies. Once a person is seduced by this drug, the end result is that lives are destroyed—often including those of innocent family members.

Use of crystal methamphetamine is widespread—affecting all strata of society, young and old, rich and poor. *Newsweek* reports:

“[Meth] is hooking more and more people across the socioeconomic spectrum: soccer moms in Illinois, computer geeks in Silicon Valley, factory workers in Georgia, gay professionals in New York. The drug is making its way into suburbs from San Francisco to Chicago to Philadelphia” (“America’s Most Dangerous Drug,” Aug. 8, 2005).

Deputy District Attorney Mark McDonnell, head of narcotics in Portland, Oregon, said that Crystal meth “is an *epidemic* and a *crisis*

unprecedented.” U.S. Attorney General Alberto Gonzales added, “In terms of damage to children and to our society, meth is now the most dangerous drug in America” (Ibid).

This drug is spreading quickly for a number of reasons. First, it is *highly* addictive; but second, and more dangerously, it is inexpensive and relatively easy to make. It has already earned the nickname “poor man’s cocaine.”

Crystal meth is changing neighborhoods, as production labs pop up throughout rural America. Since the resources needed to produce this destructive drug are basic, over-the-counter materials, interested parties are able to make it in the confines of their homes. A simple Internet search provides all the details and directions needed to produce it.

The result of these makeshift labs is that houses and living quarters become extremely toxic, and remain contaminated for years. The next homeowner, not realizing that his new home was a drug lab, can experience many detrimental health effects—including heart attacks and breathing problems. These homes become their new owners’ worst nightmare.

Ultimately, this chemical is destroying lives across a vast spectrum.

Impact on Society

Just how widespread is the use of crystal meth? Studies show that 12 million Americans have tried the drug, with 1.5 million described as regular users. In other words, as many as *1.5 million* people are currently in the process of destroying their lives, as well as the

lives of their family and those around them, and 12 million are teetering on the edge of disaster.

In 2004, more than 6% of high school seniors reported using this drug. This means that 1 in 20 high school students have used a drug that is truly *not* “child’s play.”

Crystal meth is not a new drug. Having derived from a medicinal use, it has existed for some time. But techniques to manufacture it have evolved and created a much more potent version—and much greater danger for the user.

In contrast, the purity of crystal meth has actually *decreased*, from 71.9% in 1994 to 40.1% in 2001. This means that, in addition to the addictive qualities and resulting health risks, there are even more harmful and toxic materials in the drug that can affect the user’s body.

Before the user fully realizes it, he has already become addicted to the drug. The “before and after” pictures of addicted meth users are shocking! One cannot imagine how deplorable a human being can become—and how quickly.

Yet, despite the ravaging effects on the user’s own health and body, one of the worst tragedies is the resulting effect on the children related to the user.

As mentioned in the inset of this article, the drug takes over a user’s life. Everything else becomes second in importance. Users often go on binges for days—even weeks—after which they crash from their high and leave their children to fend for themselves. And, since the users often go to prison, their children are abandoned to foster care.

The Facts

Crystal meth is a drug that strongly reacts with the brain, and is more potent than other stimulants such as cocaine.

A chemical reaction releases dopamine, a neurotransmitter, which stimulates brain cells and creates improved moods. Since the amount of dopamine released is *far* higher than what natural-

ly occurs in the human body, eventually these brain cells wear out, and dopamine levels actually *decrease below* normal levels. This causes the user to become unhappy and depressed—the opposite of the artificial high from using crystal meth. As a result, the user needs more and more of the drug to retain the desired effect. When taking it, users experience a sense of great euphoria. The rush from this drug is intense and almost immediate, depending on how it is consumed.

Other “wanted” effects are increased alertness and physical activity, decreased appetite and increased respiration. (Incredibly, small doses have previously been used as treatment for conditions such as obesity.) People often begin to use crystal meth simply as a means to stay awake—but before long, they want to use it all the time.

The drug can be taken in many ways: oral, nasal, injection or smoking. And it has many different names; the most common are speed, meth, ice and glass. Others include blade, chalk, crystal glass, hot ice, L.A. glass, L.A. ice, shards, stove top, super ice and Tina.

The long-term effects are terrifying. Those who become fully addicted exhibit violent behavior, anxiety, confusion, insomnia, among many other psychological problems. Brain and heart damage can occur. In a very short time, users become paranoid, disturbed, delusional and often experience hallucinations.

Just how severe can the effects become? Consider this fact: “Chronic methamphetamine abuse can lead to psychotic behavior including intense paranoia, visual and auditory hallucinations, and out-of-control rages that can result in violent episodes. Chronic users at times develop sores on their bodies from scratching at ‘crank bugs,’ which describes the common delusion that bugs are crawling under the skin” (whitehousedrugpolicy.gov).

Oftentimes, users lose *all* control: “Some users, while refraining from eating and sleeping, will binge, also known as a ‘run’ on methamphetamine. During these binges, users will inject as

much as a gram of methamphetamine every 2 to 3 hours over several days until they run out of the drug or are too dazed to continue use” (Ibid.).

This drug can trap the user in a death-grip.

Why?

Why would people hand themselves over to such a drug? Is the high *really* worth it? Why are they not able to see that this drug can and will destroy their lives?

Look at the world around you. Drug abuse, promiscuous sex, cigarettes, alcohol, pornography, sexually-transmitted diseases and violence are now common. An entire generation has grown up in a society that looks for every possible pleasing, stimulating sensation. They seek to appeal to their senses—touch, sight, hearing, taste and smell—in any way possible. All they do must be “approved” by their senses.

Society is obsessed with feeling good. It has been conditioned to seek comfort and pleasure. But the world refuses to face the tragic TRUTH about crystal meth. They do not want to hear the *true* answer!

The search for euphoria is destroying society. Many are helplessly seeking an escape from the pain and suffering of their lives, and fall victim to the allure of drugs. Some claim that they use drugs because there is nothing else in life that gives them the same feelings. “Give me the hope of something better and I’ll quit,” they might say.

Without a goal in life—a *purpose*—all the money, police forces and drug rehabilitation programs available will not end this problem. But what solution can there be for the drug user? What can possibly replace these euphoric experiences?

The *true* answer is the soon-coming KINGDOM and GOVERNMENT OF GOD!

People and nations will not accept this answer and will try to find *another* solution—but they will find none. There is no other!

The Bible describes the soon-coming KINGDOM OF GOD. By himself, man cannot solve the problems he has created. The vicious cycle of drugs will be

broken, and there will be TRUE happiness, peace, love and joy.

In this wonderful future world, people will be truly happy—without drugs. People will live in *true* euphoria—and in a *real* utopia. Under God's rule, there will be *real* solutions for mankind's *real* problems. God's Way deals with, and will destroy, the *cause* of drug abuse, and not just the *effects*.

Unhappiness and misery will no longer exist. Any desire for *escapism*—the root of drug abuse—will cease. When Christ establishes His kingdom, He will heal all the damage that drugs have inflicted on people's bodies and minds, and will heal all forms of physical and psychological dependence.

While mankind is helpless in finding a solution to the drug problem, God's kingdom will *truly* end the tragedy of drug abuse!

(Of course, individuals can always choose to change and overcome in *this* life. To learn more, read our article "You Can Overcome and Prevent Sin!") □

IN THEIR OWN WORDS...

The stories from those who have been addicted to this drug are shocking. Users lose everything for a quick high. Consider some statements from a user of meth published in the *Itawamba County Times*. (Emphasis ours.)

■ "It was there that I first tried meth and instantly became addicted to it... Your mind is rushing so fast that it never takes time to think of any problems that you have or that [meth] may be causing in your life."

■ "After you have crossed the line of user to addict, everything changes. You begin to build your whole life around the drug because if you run out of the drug your life pretty much stops. You can't get out of bed without it, so the drug comes first. Family and friends become second. Friends who didn't use meth don't see you much anymore. When you are around your family, you're either in bed or peeled out on dope. To the user of meth, *the drug becomes his or her god*."

■ "When I first started meth, I weighed 275 pounds. Four months later I weighed 190 pounds. Meth users' teeth actually rot. Some users pick at themselves causing scars all over their arms and face."

■ "The public needs to know that meth is an epidemic. Every user is going to turn others on to it. Every cook is going to teach others. It is an addiction physically and mentally. The public cannot look the other way and expect it to go away."

■ "The drug is *evil*. It will try to *steal, kill and destroy* your life. Crystal meth is not satisfied until she has *taken it all from you*—family, friends, job, finances and finally your freedom or your life. There is no upside to the end of crystal meth."

■ "My use and addiction has hurt everyone around me, especially my 5-year-old son. He doesn't understand why daddy can't come home. My wife is struggling to keep the bills paid. *It has torn my family apart*."



Why Christmas?

WHERE did Christmas originate? From the Bible or paganism? What is the *real* origin of Santa Claus—mistletoe—Christmas trees—holly wreaths—and the custom of exchanging gifts? Many are concerned about putting "Christ back into Christmas." Was He ever there? This free booklet reveals the stunning answers!



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Are Disaster Victims “Greater Sinners”?

In recent months and years, the southern United States has experienced extreme weather conditions, which have caused billions of dollars in damage, upheaval of businesses and families, and loss of life. Is this the result of normal cyclical weather patterns? Or has the South been “targeted” because its sins are “greater” than any other area of the world?

BY JAMES F. TURCK

THE LAST FEW years have seen multiple tropical storms and hurricanes pummel the southern region of America. From Texas to Florida, violent storms brewing in the Atlantic Ocean and Caribbean Sea, picking up strength from the warm gulf waters, have come ashore.

The 2005 hurricane season has been an especially active and costly one. With Katrina, Rita and Wilma, the South has been reeling from what could be compared to a prizefighter delivering a one-two-three knockout punch that leaves his opponent staggering.

Hurricane Katrina single-handedly devastated the central Gulf Coast, using New Orleans as a punching bag. The city was virtually washed off the map, with people’s homes, property, possessions and businesses completely ruined or just *gone*. Lives were lost. A city of almost half

a million people was displaced, with perhaps the majority never to return. The economic impact of this storm alone is likely to be felt for years to come.

Gulfport and Biloxi, Mississippi, fared little better. The panhandle of Florida and the coast of Texas have also felt the fury of raging waters driven by the fierce winds of these storms.

Why has this happened?

Possible Explanations

Some point to global warming, saying that man's interference and meddling with the environment, and the burning of fossil fuels, have naturally led to changing weather patterns. They claim that it is to be expected, and it is man's just dessert for ruining the earth's natural state. Or, as some would put it, "Mother Nature" is getting even.

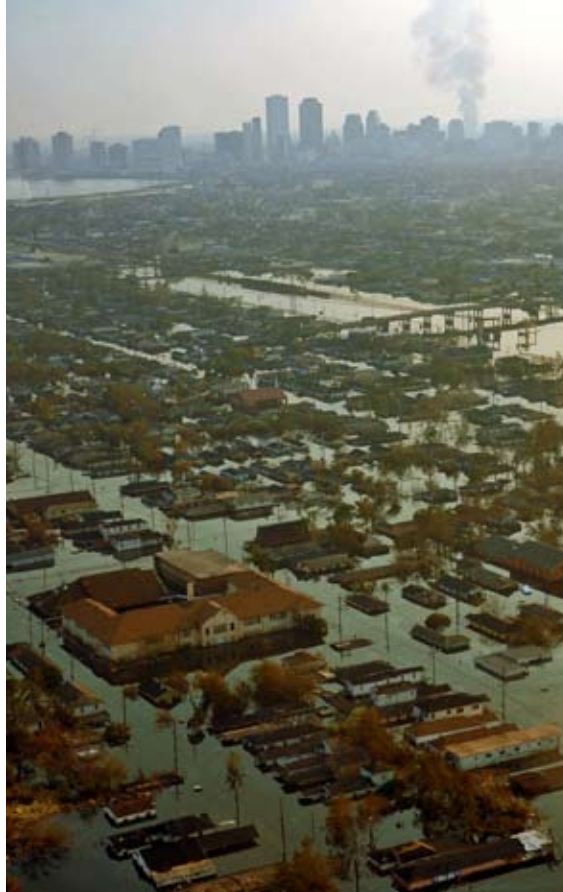
Others say it is just a normal weather pattern. In fact, many meteorologists definitively state that the last few years of these unusually numerous and violent storms originating in the Atlantic Ocean are simply the result of a normal cycle. Though they cause much damage, there is no mysterious cause behind them.

Taking a historical look at the weather, they point out that this recent escalation of severe coastline weather is nothing more than a normal weather cycle, which may or may not be "enhanced" by global warming. A few more years of this present cycle, they assert, and all will be well once again, as the weather pattern enters an expected calmer cycle.

But are they correct?

The Real Reason

Yet, there remains another possibility—one that many do not want to hear: that these incredibly destructive storms are punishment from the hand of a loving God who is trying to get a nation's attention. Throughout



■ **KATRINA'S AFTERMATH:** New Orleans struggles to recover.

PHOTOS: U.S. Navy (top, middle); FEMA (bottom)

the Bible, God warned that punishment would come upon the peoples descended from the patriarch Israel in the "latter days," due to their stubborn rebellion and breaking of His Law.

Leviticus 26 has been called the "blessings and cursings" chapter. A similar account is found in Deuteronomy 28. In these chapters, God promises to bless the nation of Israel if they obey Him. If they keep His laws, commandments and statutes, they will dwell safely in their land without fear of enemies, and have good weather with just the right amount of sunshine and rain, and plenty of food.

However, if they rebel and break His commandments, then punishment will come in the form of failed crops, disease epidemics, severe weather, including alternating drought and excess rain—and, ultimately, national captivity! (Read our vital book *AMERICA AND BRITAIN IN BIBLE PROPHECY* to comprehend what is at stake.)

Greater Sinners?

But why has the South been hit so hard—and why the residents of New Orleans in particular? Has God singled them out because of greater sins—because what went on in New Orleans and surrounding areas was particularly evil? Why not other cities across America? Can't the same types of behavior be found in them?

Why not Las Vegas, home to every form of gambling, accompanied by every sort of vile behavior known to man? Or Atlantic City, another popular gambling spot? Why have New York City or San Francisco not received such attention? Surely, Los Angeles, with its famous suburb of Hollywood, the movie-producing capital of the world, has as much sin happening in it as any other city—right?



■ **AUG. 30, 2005:** A Coast Guard Petty Officer looks for survivors in the wake of Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans.

PHOTO: U.S. Department of Defense

Fair questions. But do they have an answer?

During the time of Christ, some wondered the same. When a group of people brought Him news that Pilate had a number of Galileans put to death, Jesus posed this question: “Suppose you that these Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans, because they suffered such things?” (Luke 13:2). Obviously those who brought this news did suppose this, otherwise Christ would not have asked them this question.

He then posed another question: “Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think you that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem?” (vs. 4). Were these people, upon whom such terrible tragedies occurred, somehow worse sinners than others and therefore singled out? If so, are “lesser” sinners off the hook?

In answer to His own questions, Christ said, “I tell you, No: but, except you repent, you shall *all* likewise perish” (vs. 5). All are accountable, “...for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Rom 3:23).

Yes, all the same sorts of wrong conduct and vile behavior are occur-

ring in virtually every city and town across America and in all the nations descended from Israel. The South has not been the *sole* recipient of a wake-up call in the form of severe weather. With God, there is no respect of persons (Rom. 2:11).

Fires have ravaged millions of acres across the western United States. Drought has turned once high-yielding farmland in America’s breadbasket into parched, cracked earth, unable to even support a weed. Heavy rains across the Northeast have caused their share of troubles—ruined homes and property into the millions of dollars.

Yet, this is only the beginning.

Unless the people of this nation, collectively and individually, repent of—stop—violating the laws of the Supreme Being who has blessed it above all others, that loving and merciful God will have to bring more corrective measures. He does not mince words:

“But if you [the modern day descendants of ancient Israel] will not hearken unto Me, and will not do all these commandments; and if you shall despise My statutes, or if your soul abhor My judgments, so that you will not do all My commandments, but that you break

My covenant: I also will do this unto you; I will even appoint over you terror, consumption, and the burning ague, that shall consume the eyes, and cause sorrow of heart: and you shall sow your seed in vain, for your enemies shall eat it. And I will set My face against you, and you shall be slain before your enemies: they that hate you shall reign over you; and you shall flee when none pursues you. And if you will not yet for all this hearken unto Me, then I will punish you seven times more for your sins” (Lev 26:14-18).

The End Result

Sin is a reproach to any nation (Prov. 14:34). As any loving parent would do, God must correct His children, giving them time to learn and change. Tough times lay ahead for America and her sister nations in the near future. Together, they have some lessons to learn.

But there is also good news.

When they have learned the lessons God is trying to teach them, God promises, “Then will I remember My covenant with Jacob, and also My covenant with Isaac, and also My covenant with Abraham will I remember; and I will remember the land. The land also shall be left of them, and shall enjoy her Sabbaths, while she lies desolate without them: and they shall accept of the punishment of their iniquity: because, even because they despised My judgments, and because their soul abhorred My statutes. And yet for all that, when they be in the land of their enemies, I will not cast them away, neither will I abhor them, to destroy them utterly, and to break My covenant with them: for I am the LORD their God. But I will for their sakes remember the covenant of their ancestors, whom I brought forth out of the land of Egypt in the sight of the heathen, that I might be their God” (Lev. 26:42-45).

God will remember His covenant made with our forefathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and will once again bless us, and in doing so, the entire world.

That time is coming soon. □



HUMAN NATURE *Exposed!*

It is seen and felt in every corner of life. From the wealthy to the poor, from youth to the elderly, from the most vile criminal to the most generous giver—no one can escape its grasp. Here is the ugly truth about the carnal, natural mind of man.

BY BRUCE A. RITTER AND JEFFREY D. DAVIS

SEPTEMBER 2005: When the category-four winds and resulting floodwaters of Hurricane Katrina struck America's Gulf Coast region, homes, towns and cities were devastated—in many cases, blotted out!—affecting the lives of millions.

Horrific stories of widespread panic, chaos and despair in the streets of New Orleans were broadcast day and night by the national press. Accounts of citywide murder, shootings, rape, carjackings, looting, police corruption and scores of the elderly being left behind to die were published around the world.

How could a city descend into mass anarchy—and so quickly? And how could this happen in the United States of America—the most powerful and prosperous nation in the history of mankind?

Once the federal and state governments finally brought aid relief and security to New Orleans, the validity of these stories came under fire. The New Orleans Police Department and much of the news media now believe that these accounts were vastly overblown and largely based on unsubstantiated rumors. However, many witnesses still stand by their claims. Perhaps the full truth will never be known.

In any case, some from foreign lands maintain that such violent acts of human nature and lawlessness could never take place in their countries. Yet, a brief look at the “civilized” nations around the world paints a different picture:

In Birmingham, Britain's second largest city, ongoing contentions between blacks and Asians have exploded into murder and rioting. Mass rioting has also struck France, where Muslim youths are protesting police presence, randomly destroying vehicles and



local businesses. European soccer fans (called “hooligans”) are notorious for rioting when they are dissatisfied with the outcome of a match. Denmark and other European nations struggle to subdue child pornographers, who selfishly strive to fulfill their lusts at the expense of destroying the lives of young children. China is notorious for violating human rights and sanctioning mass abortions of infant girls. Japan drowns in sexual crimes and perversion. According to Pakistan’s Human Rights Commission, 350 gang rapes were reported during the first nine months of 2004. Australia has also been plagued by this sickening crime. Islamic regimes almost routinely torture and abuse women in the name of religion, and violently murder their own countrymen and foreigners alike in their lust for power.

Civilization today pictures a humanity that takes to itself whatever it wants—and is willing to hurt others in unimaginable ways just to satisfy lusts. Clearly, human nature—with its selfishness, violence and brutality—plagues mankind. And it particularly rears its ugly head when people are under extreme duress.

The Righteousness of Men

Sprinkled among the barrage of daily news stories exposing the excesses of humanity are accounts of people performing incredible acts of kindness. Every year during Thanksgiving and Christmas, many volunteer their time to serve in soup kitchens that feed the poor and homeless. Numerous Hollywood and music celebrities use their fame to hold benefits that draw a flood of donations. The wealthy donate huge amounts of money to charities, relief funds and other projects created with good intentions.

For example, computer entrepreneur and multibillionaire Bill Gates recently announced that his charity, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, will allot another \$258.3 million in grants toward funding malaria vaccine research.

Most Americans view themselves as being kind and generous. When disasters strike, such as the tsunami in the

Indian Ocean or the earthquake that hit Pakistan, many are quick to open their wallets and give. This is why charitable donations in the U.S. ranked fourth in spending categories.

Canada is also generous in giving to those in need. In 2004, Canadians gave a record \$6.9 billion to charity, up 6.3% from 2003 (*Statistics Canada*).

HSBC, Britain’s biggest bank, is making donation-giving easier. The financial institution is enabling its nearly nine million customers to make charitable contributions through its 2,900 cash machines throughout the United Kingdom. This follows the launch of a similar service involving HSBC cash machines in Mexico, which has generated more than 710,000 customer donations per month.

Many around the world support (through money and volunteering) non-profit organizations that aim to clean up the environment, protect animals, remove landmines, educate the illiterate, among other noble efforts.

Yet, despite all his sincere motives, notice how the God of the Bible views man’s efforts: “...every man at his best state is altogether VANITY...Surely every man walks in a *vain show*” (Psa. 39:5-6). Despite all the sizeable monetary contributions and services that are given to the needy, God views human beings “all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away” (Isa. 64:6).

In the original Hebrew, the word “filthy” is actually “menstrual.” In other words, the righteousness of men is as “menstrual rags” in God’s sight!

Why?

Like the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in the Garden of Eden, man’s nature—*carnal* nature—is a mixture of good and evil. In every person, there are varying degrees. Some people are more selfish, while others are more generous. Some are naturally more gentle and outgoing; others are harsher and colder in their relations with people. But, in spite of all their “good” works, all have human nature—all have their weaknesses of

the flesh—which is why God says, “There is none righteous, no, not one: there is none that understands, there is none that seeks after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that does good, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulcher; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: their feet are swift to shed blood: destruction and misery are in their ways: and the way of peace have they not known: there is no fear of God before their eyes” (Rom. 3:10-18).

This presents a very stark picture.

When it comes to how they live and interact with others, people tend to think they are “doing just fine.” But is this how God sees it? Notice: “All the ways of a man are *clean in his own eyes*...Most men will proclaim every one *his own goodness*: but a faithful man who can find?” (Prov. 16:2; 20:6).

The Desire of “Self”

Basic selfishness, which permeates every society and nation, is largely caused by “the ego” (vanity), for virtually everyone sees himself as important. And to even appear to cause an insult is likely to incur the wrath of someone who has grown up in a society accustomed to violence and bloodshed.

This is why “Road rage” is so common in the streets and highways across the U.S., and is gaining momentum in other countries. A road rage incident often occurs when a driver feels that another has not shown him the courtesy and politeness he should be afforded. Because they feel “disrespected,” many think it is their right to “teach the other driver a lesson.” This “lesson” usually involves tailgating, forcing the other driver off the road, beatings—or even murder!

A disgruntled employee suddenly “going postal,” assaulting and killing fellow workers, was once a rare incident; today it is almost common. Employers must now carefully consider the temperament of every person they seek to hire (or fire). These mur-

derous rampages are often triggered when an employee's pride is "hurt." When his skills and talents are not "properly revered," he decides it is his duty to show how effective he really is—through violence.

There was a time when school shootings were unheard of. Schools were once a place of relative safety—but not any more! Now, children who feel they are not included enough, or who are not respected for all their qualities, go berserk—most often killing whoever did not give them the respect and friendship they "deserved."

Human nature also comes in non-violent forms. How many will always tell the truth, even if it means facing serious consequences? How many will obey traffic laws, stop signs or red lights when they *know* that a police officer is not around to catch them? How many would return tens of thousands of dollars they found? How many would do so if they knew there would be no reward?

Now consider sexual promiscuity. *Jane* magazine published an Internet sex poll involving 3,740 participants, the vast majority of whom were single women, ages 20 to 29. This U.S. survey revealed that...

■ Roughly one in five answered "yes" when asked if they would have sex for money.

■ Of the 70% who said they were in a monogamous relationship, 36% admitted to cheating on their partner.

■ A famous British actor—who had recently been caught cheating on his fiancée with his children's baby-sitter—was considered the most-fantasized-about celebrity, with 24% of the women wanting to seduce him.

No matter the situation, people tend to think of themselves first, without regard to the needs and concerns of others. *This* is man's nature.

Defining Human Nature

Writers, philosophers and scientists cannot agree as to what con-

stitutes human nature. Nevertheless, there is a definitive source that defines and identifies man's carnality—the Holy Bible.

But here is an irony: Millions of people around the world profess to be Christian, yet cannot agree on what God's Word actually teaches. Religionists, theologians and other church leaders view and teach their personal interpretation of Scripture. The God of the Bible states that He desires unity between Christian believers (Psalm 133). However, because people cannot fully agree as to what the Bible actually teaches, they cannot walk together in unity (Amos 3:3). This is why there are so many differing—and competing—beliefs, organizations, denominations and churches within professing Christianity.

To understand the biblical definition of human nature (also called carnal nature), we must allow the Word of God to interpret itself.

In it, God declares, "The heart [the seat of every man's thoughts, motives and feelings] is *deceitful above all*

things, and *desperately wicked*: who can know it?" (Jer. 17:9). The latter phrase is equivalent to "who could believe this?" Of course, most cannot. Nor can they believe this inspired statement: "...the carnal mind is *enmity* against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be" (Rom. 8:7).

The carnal mind naturally hates God, the Supreme Lawgiver, and therefore abhors His laws, as well as the laws of men. No wonder riots and rampant lawlessness abound when law and order collapse! No wonder so many professing Christians conveniently believe that Jesus Christ "did away" with the Ten Commandments and the rest of God's laws!

Throughout history, philosophers have argued that people are generally good. They assert that man's natural tendencies are toward kindness and "the good of his fellow man," but that he somehow is stuck in a body with desires that inadvertently force him to do evil against his will.

Many others, a little more realistic, think that human nature is simply selfish. Seeing the evil prevalent in the world, they conclude that man's basic tendency is to take the "easy path" and do whatever is best for him. Surprisingly, most look at themselves and think they somehow do not fit this mold—that they are good!

Why?

Because everyone harbors in his mind a personal set of values defining right and wrong. Conveniently, most define right and wrong in terms of themselves. Simply put: Whatever someone is, he believes that is what others should be like. And because no one else is precisely like him, everyone else looks worse. As a result, most people are able to rationalize that they are basically a wonderful person!

This may sound absurd, but ask anyone what a person should be and what are the most important qualities someone should possess. Nearly all will describe

RUDENESS POLL

In an Associated Press-Ipsos poll, 69% of 1,001 Americans questioned nationwide said that people are ruder today than 20 or 30 years ago.

Nearly 70% of those surveyed faulted celebrities, athletes and public figures for behaving rudely and being poor role models; 73% blamed television and movies for showing rude behavior; 93% blamed parents for not teaching their children well, with 44% saying that they frequently see children behaving unruly in public; and 75% believed that because people today lead busier lives, they do not take time to be polite.

The polls further revealed how often those surveyed frequently encountered the following situations:

■ People who use their cell phones in a loud or annoying manner in public – 55%

■ People who use rude or offensive language in public – 48%

■ People who talk loudly or use cell phones at movie theaters – 22%

■ Drivers who are aggressive and reckless on the road – 55%

■ Store sales people who ignore customers or treat them rudely – 28%

themselves! People are quite effective at making convincing arguments of why their own qualities are so important.

Even the worst criminals often see themselves as the greatest people. The classic book *How to Win Friends and Influence People* tells the account of a killer named “Two Gun” Crowley, who brutally murdered a police officer. But how did Crowley regard himself? While under fire by police, he wrote a letter addressed, “To whom it may concern,” stating, “Under my coat is a weary heart, but a kind one—one that would do nobody any harm.”

American philosopher John Dewey said that the deepest urge in human nature is “the desire to be important.” Since very few, if any, achieve the importance they desire, every man will lie to himself, convinced that he is far better and far more worthwhile than he truly is.

Naïve Solutions

Liberal idealists and thinkers philosophize that if everyone had all their basic needs fulfilled—if every person was employed and earned comfortable wages, had their own homes and had enough food, clothes, etc.—the problems and ills that plague mankind would vanish.

Lyrics to the highly popular song “Imagine,” originally released in 1971, offered an idealistic—and profoundly naïve—solution to the world’s problems. Essentially (according to the song), if people removed God and the Bible from their lives (“Imagine there’s no heaven, It’s easy if you try, No hell below us, Above us only sky...”), did away with national governments and borders (“Imagine there’s no countries, It isn’t hard to do, Nothing to kill or die for, No religion too...”), and gave up all personal possessions (“Imagine no possessions, I wonder if you can, No need for greed or hunger, A brotherhood of man...”), a utopia would somehow emerge, with “all the people living life in peace...Sharing all the world...”

Today, several decades later, people still sing and hum along with this melodic tune whenever it is played. And many sincerely believe its message.

Humanity’s escalating problems cannot be solved by these or any other humanly-devised solution, for man’s carnal nature stands in the way. Read the daily newspaper. Watch the nightly news on television. A thorough examination will reveal that the “works of the flesh”—byproducts of man’s nature—described in Galatians 5:19-21, and other verses, are embedded in man’s

thinking and are evident in every area of life.

And these are all triggered by one basic drive. Notice: “From where come wars and fightings among you? Come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members? You lust, and have not: you kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: you fight and war, yet you have not, because you ask not. You ask, and receive not, because you ask amiss, *that you may consume it upon your lusts*” (Jms. 4:1-3).

All conflicts, battles and wars ever fought sprang from man’s carnal desire to take what did not belong to him!

Does this mean that civilization is doomed to drown in the excesses of human behavior?

No! The same God who describes man’s nature as “deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked” and his best state as “vanity” and “filthy rags” offers hope. His Plan is to build His godly character within the minds of men, enabling them to deny the “works of the flesh” and bear the fruits of God’s Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23). Our book *The AWESOME POTENTIAL of Man* reveals how God plans to do this with every human being.

Additionally, our booklet *Did God Create HUMAN NATURE?* explains the true origin of human nature. □

DESIGN

Continued from page 4

nication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, spiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenantbreakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them” (Rom. 1:28-32).

This is a very strong description—and warning!

Acknowledging a Designer eventually leads to uncomfortable ques-

tions regarding law and sin, right and wrong. It is far easier to swallow evolutionary propaganda because blind, purposeless natural forces do not require human beings to change their ways or to submit to any standards of behavior.

Also, those on both sides of this debate are purportedly seeking the truth on the question of origins. However, speaking of the nature within all human beings, we read, “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?” (Jer. 17:9). The theory of evolution places human beings at the top of the food chain, accountable to no higher authority—veritable “gods” (Gen. 3:5). This sounds like a comfortable position, if it were accurate. But this scenario is a case of mass delu-

sion—self deception on a grand scale.

On the other hand, blurring a very real and personal Creator God into a nebulous, anonymous “intelligence” does not honor that God!

However, we can be thankful that the question of origins will soon be settled conclusively! After Jesus Christ returns to establish His government on the earth (Isa. 9:6), true education will prevail: “...yet shall not your teachers be removed into a corner any more, but your eyes shall see your teachers: And your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, This is the way, walk you in it, when you turn to the right hand, and when you turn to the left” (Isa. 30:20-21).

To learn more, read our brochure *EVOLUTION – FACTS, FALLACIES AND IMPLICATIONS*. □

We Are *Not* **JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES** or **SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS**

The teachings of The Restored Church of God are different from traditional Christianity. However, when some of our readers find certain doctrinal similarities with other religious groups, they conclude that we must be related to these organizations. This article will clear up such misunderstandings.

BY GEORGE C. ROGERS

MANY NOTICE that The Restored Church of God (RCG), which publishes *The REAL TRUTH* magazine, does not observe Christmas, Easter, Halloween or other holidays of pagan origin. As a result, some quickly associate this with the practices of the Jehovah's Witnesses.

Other similarities, such as our not celebrating birthdays and our focus on the kingdom of God, seem to reinforce these assumptions. However, upon closely comparing our beliefs with those of the Jehovah's Witnesses, the differences far outweigh any similarities.

Many tend to classify us with any group that embraces even a *few* similar beliefs. For this reason, we are also frequently categorized as being associated with the Seventh-day Adventists. Obviously, this is due to our obser-

vance of the biblical seventh-day Sabbath. A close comparison of our teachings likewise reveals many differences.

Although completely independent of one another, it is interesting to note that the Jehovah's Witnesses and Seventh-day Adventist movements are distinctly American in origin. Unlike The Restored Church of God, which traces its roots to the first-century Church established by Jesus Christ, these two organizations began in the 1800s. Both have also traditionally emphasized the Return of Christ as the focal point of their prophetic understanding. The differences between their respective approaches, in contrast to the beliefs of the Church of God, are more significant than most realize.

Many sincere and dedicated people follow the Seventh-day Adventists' and the Jehovah's Witnesses' beliefs. It is not our intention to belittle their convictions, but to compare their doctrinal positions to our own. Since some of our readers confuse us with

these organizations, our purpose is to emphasize that we do not subscribe to the vast majority of their doctrines.

Beginning of the Seventh-day Adventist Movement

To better understand the origin of the Seventh-day Adventist movement and the influences upon it by remnants of the (Sabbatarian) Church of God, we need to review events that occurred primarily in the 1800s. Initially, we look back to 1664, when Steven Mumford arrived from England and helped to develop interest in the doctrines of the Church of God in Rhode Island. After a few decades, congregations developed in Newport and Westerly.

Membership in Rhode Island and Connecticut flourished, as did congregations later established in New Jersey and Pennsylvania. By 1818, the majority of these Sabbath keepers agreed to merge under the banner of the Seventh Day Baptist General Conference. Reasoning that the name "Church of God" sounded too exclusivist, they desired a name similar to the churches around them; however, they still held to observing the Sabbath. This led to a split in the membership, in which a small minority continued as the Church of God. (You may read our fascinating book *The History of God's TRUE CHURCH* to learn more.)

Just prior to 1843, a very popular movement took place in the U.S., in which a famous theologian, William Miller, pronounced that Christ would

return about the time of 1843 to 1844. This was known as the Advent movement (in this context, “Advent” means advocacy of Christ’s Second Coming). Miller’s movement at this point consisted entirely of Sunday-keepers.

When Christ did not return by 1844, William Miller and his many hundreds of followers were greatly disappointed. In fact, the abandonment by many of his adherents was actually called “The Great Disappointment.”

Many of the Adventists who left Miller began to associate with the remnants of the Church of God that still held fast to the Sabbath and refused to adopt the doctrines of the immortality of the soul and the trinity. After about 15 years of associating with them, the majority of these Church of God members started adopting some of the Adventists’ beliefs—just as the majority had previously accepted popular beliefs of other churches upon forming the Seventh Day Baptist General Conference.

In 1860, the Sunday-keeping Adventists influenced the majority in the Church of God to abandon the name “Church of God” (just as their predecessors did in 1818) in favor of a name “more descriptive of their beliefs.” They merged with the former Adventists (who vastly outnumbered them) and jointly decided to call themselves “Seventh-day Adventists.” It was not until 1863 that the Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) Church was formally organized. Thus, this movement had roots with *some* who had been in the Church of God, through whom they were exposed to and accepted the truth of the Sabbath, as well as other positions, such as their initial opposition to the trinity, the immortal soul and an ever-burning hell fire.

Ellen G. White was most influential in shaping the posture of the newly formed Seventh-day Adventist movement. She articulated many doctrines and prophetic understandings that formed its foundational beliefs, and is considered its founder. White held that Miller’s 1844 prediction was correct, but that benchmark year began the period of supposed “Investigative

Judgment,” a time in which Christ would begin judging the dead and the living on the earth. She believed this judgment period would be followed by the Return of Christ. More than 160 years have transpired since 1844, with no apparent evidence that Jesus did return, as Miller had predicted and White had later theorized.

Some Practices and Doctrines of the SDA Movement

Although it originated in the United States, the Seventh-Day Adventist church is currently well represented throughout the world. The SDAs generally support and promote medical research, hospitals, clinics and dispensaries. They also operate more than 90 colleges and universities worldwide.

One unique aspect of this group is the special interest they take in health concerns. Many of its members are involved in owning or associating with health food stores and restaurants. One reason numerous SDAs take an unusual interest in health is their abstaining from eating meats—even those designated by the Bible as clean. Many but not all SDAs follow this practice. One of the doctrines prophesied for the “latter times” pertains to those who abstain from meats: “Now the Spirit speaks expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith,...abstain[ing] from meats, which God has created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth” (I Tim. 4:1, 3).

Another unusual practice that existed in the early SDA movement is that of children—as young as six years old—being influenced, apparently supernaturally, to preach the church’s doctrines. By contrast, in the Old Testament, God required that the Levitical priests and Levites with crucial jobs had to be mature men of at least age 30 (see Numbers 4) before they could serve. Levites with lesser responsibilities did not begin their service until they reached age 25 (Num. 8:24). Even Jesus did not begin His ministry until He was 30 years of age (Luke 3:23). The New Testament describes God’s

true ministers as “elders”—never children (Acts 14:23, Titus 1:5).

Vast Differences in Prophetic Understanding

One of the major differences between the teachings of The Restored Church of God and the Seventh-day Adventists is our belief that the Millennium will occur *on earth*—1,000 years of peace and abundance under the rule of Jesus Christ and His resurrected saints.

The SDAs, however, teach that the saints who have previously died will be resurrected and *taken to heaven*. They believe that during the following 1,000 years, only Satan and his demons will be living on the earth, and that the planet will be desolate. Then, at the end of the Millennium, the second resurrection will occur, and the righteous will return to earth and establish the New Jerusalem.

The portrayal of the Millennium as a time of desolation amounts to a gross distortion of what the scriptures plainly reveal. In contrast to the SDA position, we read of this time in Revelation 20:6: “Blessed and holy is he that has part in the first resurrection: on such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.”

Revelation 5:10 tells us *where* these saints will reign: “And has made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall *reign on the earth*.”

Only on earth could we find such conditions as the following: “The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice’ den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain: for THE EARTH shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea” (Isa. 11:6-9; see also 35:1-2 and Amos 9:13-14).

There are also vast doctrinal differences in other areas, such as the observance of God's annual Holy Days (which picture His overall Plan of Salvation) instead of the world's pagan holidays.

Beginning of the Jehovah's Witnesses Movement

Shortly after the Seventh-day Adventist movement began around 1860, the Jehovah's Witnesses (JW) movement started. This organization was started in Pennsylvania by Charles Taze Russell, and was established as a religious society of ministers. "The Watchtower Bible and Tract Society was incorporated in 1884 with Russell as president... The Society's magazine, *Watchtower*, was first published in 1879."

The Jehovah's Witnesses Society adopted their name from Isaiah 43:12 as found in the American Standard Version of the Bible: "...You are My witnesses says Jehovah [Heb. 'YHWH'] and I am God" (*World Book Encyclopedia*, Vol. 11). The TANAKH (the Jewish Publication Society translation of the scriptures according to the traditional Hebrew text) renders this same passage as "...So you are My witnesses declares the LORD and I am God." The *King James Version* (KJV) also uses the term "LORD" in this verse.

From the KJV, Exodus 6:2-3 reads: "And God spoke unto Moses, and said unto him, I am the LORD. And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob by the name of God Almighty [El Shaddai], but by My name JEHOVAH was I not known unto them. In verse 2, YHWH is translated as "LORD"; yet, in verse 3, the same word is translated as "Jehovah." According to *Strong's Concordance*, the original terms in verses 2 and 3 come from YHWH (Strong's #3068).

The word "Jehovah" is also found in Psalms 83:18, Isaiah 12:2 and 26:4 of the KJV. Each of these is likewise a mistranslation of YHWH. The TANAKH and other versions based on the original Hebrew properly ren-

der the terms as "LORD" (instead of "Jehovah").

The true pronunciation of the Hebrew word YHWH has been lost. This happened because the Hebrew language uses consonants and semi-consonants, but not vowels. Moses was inspired to write this name for the Creator with the four Hebrew letters YHWH, which means "Self-Existent One" or "Eternal." This Hebrew word, which the Israelites originally knew how to pronounce, comes from another Hebrew word—HWH, an old form of the root HYH, which means "to be" or "to become."

If the term "Jehovah" did not originate from the Hebrew Scriptures, then from where did it originate? The *Jewish Encyclopedia* offers valuable insight on this subject: "'Jehovah' is generally held to have been the invention of Pope Leo X's Confessor, Peter Galatin... who was followed in the use of this hybrid form by Fagius... But it seems that even before Galatin, the name 'Jehovah' had been in common use... It is found in Raymond Martin's 'Pugio Fidei,' written in 1270" (*Jewish Encyclopedia*, article "Jehovah," Vol. VII, p.88). From all indications, the word "Jehovah" came to the modern world through the Catholic Church.

A Crucial Doctrinal Difference

The doctrine mostly unique to this group is their belief that Christ is a created spirit being. This contradicts John 1:1-2: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was *with* God, and the Word *was* God. The same was in the beginning with God." This describes the Godhead consisting of two Beings, yet both called God. This is why, upon creating the first man, God (Hebrew: *Elohim*) said, "Let *Us* make man in *Our* image, after *Our* likeness..." (Gen. 1:26).

One of these Beings, called "the Word," later became Jesus Christ (John 1:14). Christ was the YHWH ("LORD") of the Old Testament (I Cor. 10:1-4), who created all things (John 1:3; Eph. 3:9; Col. 1:16-17).

The other God-Being, called "the Father," was unknown to mankind,

and had to be revealed by Jesus Christ (Matt. 11:27). Yet, the Jehovah's Witnesses think that there is only one God-Being, whom they call "Jehovah," and that Christ was created, as were angels.

There is one God (I Tim. 2:5), but there are two Beings who share the name "God." *Elohim* is a uniplural term, like the word "family"—*one* family, but consisting of *many* members. "God" is a family name!

Although Jesus Christ is subordinate to the Father (John 14:28), the Bible clearly reveals that He is on the God-plane and is the second member of the God Family. (To learn much more about the true nature of God and man's future role in the God Family, read our books *The AWESOME POTENTIAL of Man* and *The TRINITY – Is God three-in-one?*)

The Jehovah's Witnesses consider Christ as somehow on the same plane and even synonymous with the archangel Michael. However, the book of Hebrews reveals otherwise: "For unto which of the angels said He at any time, You are My Son, this day have I begotten You? And again, I will be to Him a Father, and He shall be to Me a Son? And again, when He brings in the first begotten into the world, He said, And let all the angels of God worship Him. And of the angels He said, who makes His angels spirits, and His ministers a flame of fire. *But unto the Son* He said, Your throne, *O God*, is for ever and ever: a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your kingdom" (Heb. 1:5-8).

"Kingdom Power"?

Although the Jehovah's Witnesses stress the spreading of the good news of the kingdom of God, their understanding of this is very different from that held by The Restored Church of God.

Since it began in 1879, the *Watchtower* magazine had been calling attention to 1914 as an important year in Bible prophecy. Just as William Miller had predicted that Christ would return around 1844, the Jehovah's Witnesses movement was

looking to 1914 as the time of Christ's Second Coming and the setting up of the kingdom of God on earth.

When that year came and went without the world peace and the utopia associated with the kingdom of God being evident, the JW's explained this anomaly, noting that 1914 marked the beginning of increased world woes. They emphasize that this was prophesied by Christ, stressing that these prophesied signs would appear at the end of the current age. These signs would prove that Jesus was "invisibly present with kingly power." The signs of world wars, famines, epidemics and earthquakes would prevail as explained in Matthew 24. Since the First World War started in 1914, there has been an increasing array of lethal weaponry beyond what mankind had ever imagined. The JW movement considers these signs and trends as indicators of the time of the end.

Notice how they explain that the kingdom of God *could have* been set up in 1914, after Christ's undetected Return: "It is Satan the Devil who is responsible. When Christ received Kingdom power, his first act was to wage war on Satan in the invisible heavens. As a result, Satan, 'who is misleading the entire inhabited earth' was hurled with his angels down to the vicinity of the earth. Knowing that his destruction draws near, he stirs up great trouble..." (*Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania*, 2004).

They continue their explanation as to why the Millennium, with its time of peace and abundance, is not yet manifested on the earth: "Will there be any end to these woes? Yes!—when heaven's government itself, the Kingdom of Almighty God, goes into action to 'bring to ruin those ruining the earth'...Never will God permit political powers, false Christians, or anyone else to ruin his handiwork, the earth, with their nuclear devices...Jehovah, through his Christ, will use great forces that he controls in the universe in bringing overwhelming destruction to all who follow Satan on earth. This will be on a global scale,

similar in magnitude to the flood of Noah's day.

"In the Bible this destruction of wicked nations is called God's battle of Armageddon...Only meek persons...may survive Armageddon into God's peaceful new system...The grand work of restoring Paradise to the earth will then commence!" (Ibid.).

Although they have had more than nine decades to refine their explanation, it still lacks many vital details. The Jehovah's Witnesses believe that Christ received "kingdom power" upon returning to the earth in 1914, but is somehow unable to subdue Satan's opposition. After all, they picture Christ only as a created being—perhaps only slightly more powerful than Satan, since He is supposedly not yet able to restrain him. According to their teaching, only at the Battle of Armageddon will the kingdom of God fully take effect to subdue all evil and put down opposition. Yet, their order of events seriously contradicts the sequence given in Scripture.

Time of Protection—or Delay of Kingdom?

A correct understanding of Isaiah 26 is crucial here, since the Jehovah's Witnesses use such scriptures as this to explain the delay from 1914 to the future Battle of Armageddon. Yet, verses 20-21 read, "Come, My people, enter you into your chambers, and shut your doors about you: hide yourself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast. For, behold the LORD comes out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity: the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain."

The same event is described in Revelation 3:10: "Because you have kept the word of My patience, I also will keep you from the *hour of temptation*, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth." This "hour of temptation" is the Great Tribulation, which Christ warns of in Matthew 24:21-22: "For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world

to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened."

Concerning this protection reserved for God's servants, we read, "Watch you therefore, and pray always, that you may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man" (Luke 21:36).

In short, numerous scriptures describing God's future protection of His people during the coming Great Tribulation and the Day of the Lord are misapplied.

Christ Returns to Reign on Earth

To show how these end-time events will not become fulfilled in some secret way, unheeded or unnoticed by humanity, note the following passage describing the Day of the Lord: "And I beheld when He had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood; And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casts her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind. And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: *For the great day of His wrath is come*; and who shall be able to stand?" (Rev. 6:12-17).

Likewise, Christ's Return will not be an obscure event occurring invisibly—the whole world will witness His arrival: "For as the lightning comes out of the east, and shines even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be" (Matt. 24:27).

He will decisively defeat the armies gathered to oppose Him. After

their defeat (Rev. 19:15-21), His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives (Zech.14:4). Immediately after this, the seventh and final of the last plagues that complete God's wrath will take place (Rev. 16:17-21). This greatest earthquake in the history of mankind will be followed by hailstones weighing about 120 pounds, which will complete the quashing of man's rebellion against God. It is at this time that the voice of the angel will announce, "It is done."

The next order of business that Christ will address is prophesied in Revelation 20:1-3. Christ will have Satan put away for the duration of

the Millennium. This will be done promptly. Nowhere in Scripture do we find that Christ struggles with Satan for more than ninety years (as the 1914 theory supposes). When Christ returns, human rebellion will be put down and Satan will be restrained for a thousand years. Then the kingdom of God will be truly established on earth.

It is clearly not here yet! (Read our booklet *REVELATION – Explained at Last!* for more details.)

Dramatic Differences

As stated earlier, the teachings of The Restored Church of God are signif-

icantly different from those of the Seventh-day Adventists and Jehovah's Witnesses.

Beyond this most brief overview, many more differences could be cited. Many great doctrines of the Bible are misapplied or ignored by these two organizations.

But by examining just the nature of God and the sequence of end-time events alone, it is obvious that the differences between RCG and these two groups far outweigh any superficial similarities.

If you would like to know more about us, read our booklet *Here is The Restored Church of God*. □

PERSONAL

Continued from page 2

companion to the subject of the Bible's authority and it establishes, irrefutably, through many proofs, the absolute existence of God. Again, this question is inseparable from that of whether evolution occurred. It also firmly establishes the utter impossibility of evolution, leaving no doubt why the God of the Bible states, in several places, "Only the *fool* has said in his heart, *There is no God.*"

Space does not permit repeating that entire booklet here. However, it covers proofs from astronomy, the laws of thermodynamics, the fossil record gap, the concept of "irreducible complexity" as per DNA and cells, the presence of "tiny engines" inside cells, the law of biogenesis, the extraordinary complexity of the human mind, the amazing human eye, the nature of Australian termites, the impossibility of certain kinds of fish and birds having evolved—and the staggering mathematical improbability that even *one* planet like earth could have appeared anywhere in the universe *by chance*. These proofs establish not only that God does exist, but also that the Genesis Creation account is the only plausible explanation for the origin of life.

These proofs must be seen to be believed. The evidence is plain, emphat-

ic and irrefutable—and establishes the biblical account beyond question! The fact that certain "fools" (God's choice of terms, not mine) might ignore, reject or seek to discredit them is irrelevant to their validity. I ignore such people because I am instructed in Proverbs to "*Answer not a fool according to his folly, lest you also be like unto him*" (26:4). People who reject absolute proof are foolish and ought not to be dignified with an *answer* to their foolishness. This article has been written for those who seek—who deeply desire—the truth!

Evolutionists invariably use terms like "We suspect...We are coming to believe...What may have happened... We may theorize that...It is our opinion...What probably occurred...We do not know...." etc. These terms do not inspire much confidence. The dogmatic statements of the Bible *do*! The God of the Bible never speaks in such uncertain terms. He does not have to. He not only knows He created mankind, but that it also can be proven. Thus, He speaks boldly—with **AUTHORITY**—about what He has done!

Consider further. Evolutionists do not know the **PURPOSE** of life. They do not know *why* they were born. And they reject the authority of God's Word because they do not want Him "sticking His nose" into their lives. If they can discredit the authenticity of His Word, then they need not obey Him.

I cannot make you accept the proofs of God's existence, and neither can any man. These are decisions you must make. I cannot force you to act upon proofs of the authority of His Word, and again, neither can any man. I disproved evolution nearly forty years ago and had no choice but to act on this knowledge, if I *were* to remain an honest seeker of truth.

Remember, it is in the Bible that the six-day Creation account of God creating all plants, animals and man himself is found. If evolution is disproven, it is the very Bible account that is verified—validated!—established!—as the true record of how all life on earth came into being. We have now established the first great proof of the Bible. However, until you have read *Does God Exist?*, this proof is not complete. Take time to read it. (And also read our extensive brochure *EVOLUTION – FACTS, FALLACIES AND IMPLICATIONS*, which thoroughly disproves evolution.)

If you are interested in knowing more about other proofs of the Bible's authority, you are urged to read our booklet *BIBLE AUTHORITY...can it be PROVEN?* In these extraordinary times, when earth-shattering events, foretold in the Bible, are being fulfilled—and these are events that will affect every human being on earth—it behooves you to come to understand and to know your Bible, God's Word. □

WORLD NEWS DESK

AN EDITORIAL ANALYSIS OF WORLD NEWS, TRENDS AND CONDITIONS



GEOPOLITICS, STRATEGIES & ECONOMIES

RUSSIA BREAKS PROMISE

Going against promises made to both Israel and the United States, Russia will go ahead with a contract to deliver the world's most advanced surface missile to Syria, with the first deliveries expected in early 2006.

The U.S. and NATO have code-named Russia's Iskander SS-26 "Stone." They have nothing that matches its capabilities and little to defend against it. The system easily overcomes air defenses, and is so fast and flexible that current electronic weapons systems cannot prevent the Iskander ("Alexander the Great" in the Turkoman language) from launching. The U.S. considers that this weapon can, even in limited numbers, radically change the strategic balance in a region.

Some feel that (in wake of the Hariri assassination) Syria's current regime is on the verge of collapse, and that this procurement is an attempt to delay it.

Source: *DEBKA*

SYRIA SENDS FIGHTERS INTO LEBANON

Lebanese authorities reported that Syria continues to export weapons and insurgent fighters into its country, despite a recent formal military withdrawal as well as international condemnation, including a damning U.N. report implicating Syria in the Hariri assassination.

Some of the incidents, most involving Palestinians, include:

- The death of a Lebanese Army contractor in a shootout with Palestinian insurgents near the Syrian border.
- Lebanese patrols being fired upon by Palestinian fighters in Syria.
- The death of a Lebanese farmer by unidentified Syrian gunmen in the Lebanese border village of Aarsal.

Several of the Palestinian terrorist groups have training camps in and receive support from Syria.

Source: *The World Tribune*; *The Times* (London)

PARIS BURNS

November 7: Rioting in France, primarily in the suburbs surrounding Paris, continued for its 11th night, claiming the life of a 61-year-old, who was beaten into a coma. At least 1,400 vehicles have been burned, 395 people have been arrested, buildings have been damaged and several policemen injured. The riots, involving young, unemployed Muslim men, began with the accidental deaths of two young men at an electricity sub-station. Locals maintain that police were chasing the two, but the authorities deny this.

French Interior Minister Nicolas Sarkozy fueled the riots by referring to the youths as "scum" and "rabble."

Authorities claim that gangs of youths are deliberately confronting police. A local police commander said of the most recent fighting: "This is real, serious violence—not like the previous nights. I'm very worried because this is mounting." One police union called for curfews and the army to be brought in to quell the growing violence.

From Paris, the violence has spread like a wave across France, and one report even indicated that the unrest was beginning to spread into neighboring Belgium, and possibly Germany.

France has 5 million Muslims (or 8.3% of the population), the most of any country in Western Europe. Conservative French lawmaker Philippe de Villiers, who has said he wants to "stop the Islamization of France," told RTL radio that the problem has arisen from the "failure of a policy of massive and uncontrolled immigration."

Ironically, the French riots come shortly after much of Europe sharply criticized the U.S. in the aftermath of hurricane Katrina for its example as a nation that had failed to address or maintain a state's social responsibilities.

Source: *BBC News*; *Breitbart*; *ABC News*; *CNN*

RELIGION

VATICAN OFFICIAL VISITS MOSCOW

Catholic Archbishop Giovanni Lajolo, Vatican secretary for relations with states, arrived in Moscow last week to hold talks with the Russian government, the Orthodox Church and the local Catholic community.

The visit is in part a response to an invitation extended by Russian Foreign Minister Sergej Lavrov, who visited the Vatican earlier this year, and is expected to improve cultural relations between the two states.

The trip is also intended to express the Pope's desire to improve relations with the Russian Church to "give common witness to the Gospel."

Considering the Vatican's increase in socio-religious-diplomatic relations, could it all be the groundwork for something just ahead?

Source: *Zenit News Agency*

SOCIETY AND LIFESTYLES

"HOMOSEXUAL COWBOY" FILM AN OSCAR FRONTRUNNER?

Arriving with nudity and explicit gay sex scenes between two cowboys, *Brokeback Mountain* has quietly become an award season frontrunner, interviews with Academy members reveal.

The movie, starring two young popular Hollywood actors, won the Golden Lion, the top prize at the Venice Film Festival.

Meanwhile, a spokesperson for the Wyoming Travel and Tourism Division says that, because of the film, her agency is hearing buzz from people in other countries who are expressing interest in visiting the state.

"It's gotten rave reviews from the international community," she said. "I don't know if they're more tolerant or something, but they're viewing it as a great Western movie."

Source: *Drudge Report*

IRAN

Continued from page 8

Iran has the largest army in the region, with 540,000 active-duty troops and 350,000 in reserves, plus more than 1,600 battle tanks and 1,500 other armored vehicles. A veteran Mid-east military analyst at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington wrote last December, "There is considerable evidence that [Iran] is developing both a long-range missile force and a range of weapons of mass destruction" (Ibid).

Politically, an American or Israeli strike on Iran would almost certainly push the Iranian government to the right, possibly making the situation even worse, particularly considering that the intelligence regarding Iran's nuclear program is weak. "This action will really work against democracy and reformers in Iran, and I believe the Americans know that," said a former Iranian deputy interior minister (Ibid).

A strong anti-American/Israeli Iran bodes serious difficulties in the region. In addition, a war in Iran would not be as easy militarily for the United States as its war in Iraq, and would be fraught with multiple problems. However, without specifically saying that military action would be considered, President George W. Bush stated

that "all options are on the table" with Iran. He had said months earlier that Iran would not be allowed to possess nuclear weapons.

The Final Proposal

Again, is a peaceful resolution to the nuclear stand-off with Iran still possible? An "unlikely source"—the Bible—explains that it is not possible for men to achieve lasting peace. Let's examine what God says about man's "righteousness" and peace aspirations:

"There is NONE RIGHTEOUS, no, not one: There is NONE that understands, there is NONE that seeks after God. They are ALL gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is NONE THAT DOES GOOD, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulcher; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: their feet are swift to shed blood: destruction and misery are in their ways: and the WAY OF PEACE HAVE THEY NOT KNOWN" (Rom. 3:10-17).

In the end, men's initiatives and resolutions of peace will always fail. The nuclear crisis between the West and Iran will not be different. In a world cut off from the only source of true wisdom and understanding—the living God—man is incapable of pro-

ducing lasting peace. Sin—the breaking of God's Law—is the cause (Isa. 59:2; I John 3:4).

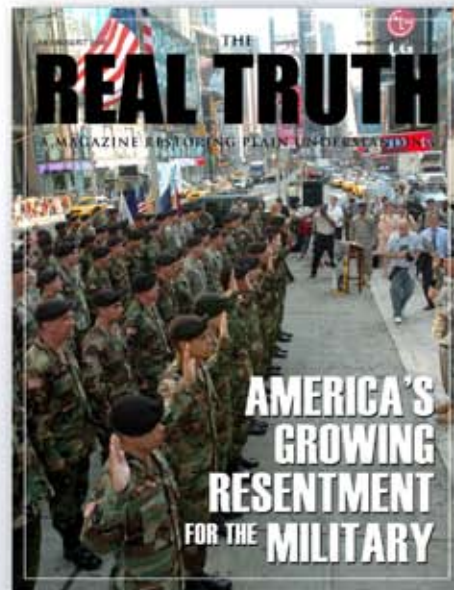
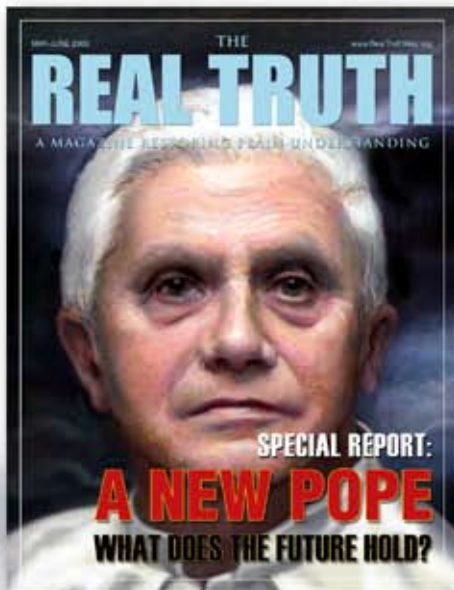
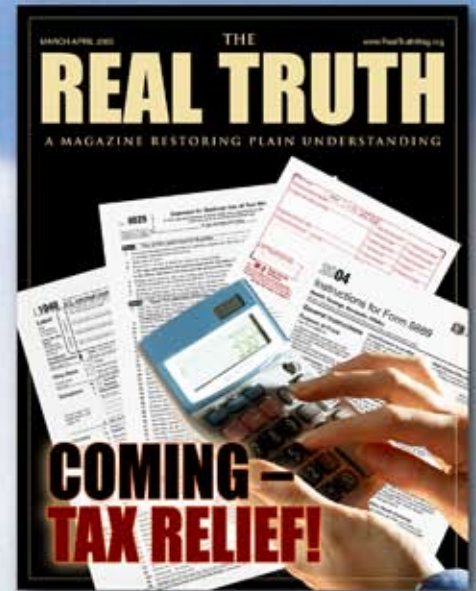
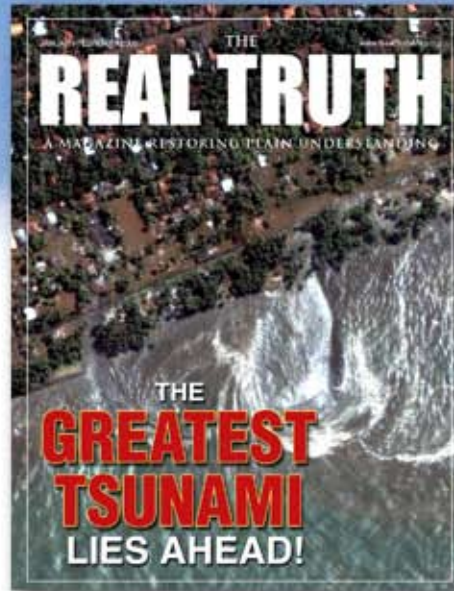
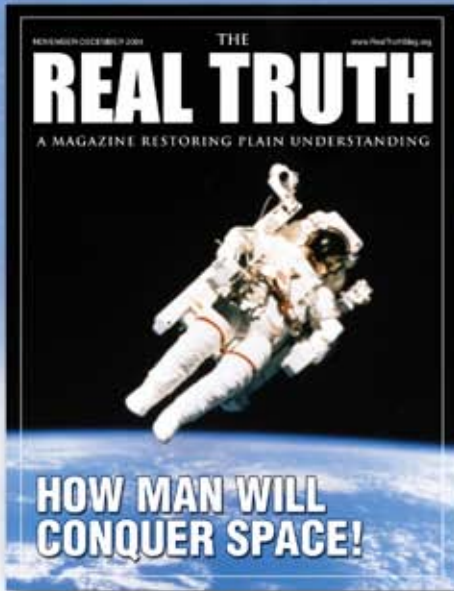
Ultimately, the nuclear saga with Iran will lead to violence in some fashion, whether all-out war or terrorist activities. Exactly how this plays out and to what degree remains to be seen. But one thing is for sure: Jesus Christ will return to earth in full power and glory. And when He does, peace, truth and justice will be established throughout His world-ruling super-government. Mankind's politicking, negotiations and resolutions (whether peaceful or violent)—with their inevitable lies, deceit and doubletalk—will cease being the norm.

Notice: "Of the increase of [Jesus Christ's] *government* and *peace* THERE SHALL BE NO END, upon the throne of David, and upon His kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with *judgment* and with *justice* from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this" (Isa 9:7).

"They *shall not hurt nor destroy* in all My holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea" (11:9).

To learn more about the coming world-ruling government of God, and how you can be a part of it, read our book *TOMORROW'S WONDERFUL WORLD – An Inside View!* □

Have you missed out on previous issues?



You can read them online
at your convenience!

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