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A MAGAZINE RESTORING PLAIN UNDERSTANDING

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THE REAL TRUTH

A MAGAZINE RESTORING PLAIN UNDERSTANDING

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A R T I C L E S

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Evolution Exposed: Deconstructing False Science (Part 1)

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PHOTO: MCT

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ABOUT OUR COVER: A resident “treasure hunts” along the dry lake bed of North Carolina’s Falls Lake, which normally supplies water to Raleigh and several Wake County communities.

Photo: MCT

Published 10 times per year, with online news updates throughout the week.

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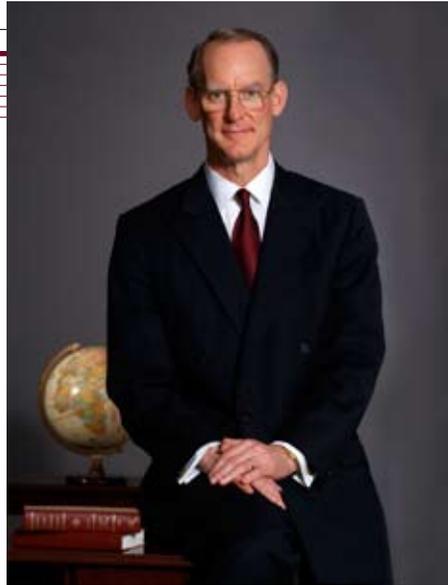
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PERSONAL FROM

David C. Fack



Man's Insoluble Problems—Why?

THE WORLD IS filled with problems—disease, pollution, poverty, ignorance, religious confusion, war, terrorism, crime, violence, hunger, immorality, slavery, oppression, political upheaval and much more. *Why?* With the passing of time come more problems, not less. *Why?* Also, existing problems grow collectively worse instead of better. *Why?* Why, at every turn, has man bungled and botched all efforts to solve his truly great problems?

Individually, people have never seemed more *incapable* of addressing and overcoming their personal problems. As with the world in general, the passing of time finds individuals and families drowning under an ever-worsening sea of decadence and seemingly insurmountable difficulties. More and more seem completely incapable of managing their lives.

Yes, *why?*

Men have created many amazing technological inventions, but they cannot create solutions to their problems. Mankind has harnessed the power of computers to help process vast amounts of information, but human beings cannot correctly process their personal problems. Scientists have discovered much about the size, magnificence and precision of the universe, but they cannot discover the way to peace. Astronomers can find majestic, beautiful new galaxies throughout the universe, but they cannot find a way to preserve the beauty and majesty of earth. Scientists have also unleashed the power of the

atom, but they are powerless to unleash answers to life's greatest questions. Educators have taught millions how to earn a living, but not how to live.

The well-known presidential historian and columnist Peggy Noonan summarized the complex, jumbled course that has been mankind's history: "In the long ribbon of history, life has been one long stained and tangled mess, full of famine, horror, war and disease. We must have thought we had it better because man had improved. But man doesn't really 'improve,' does he? Man is man. Human nature is human nature; the impulse to destroy coexists with the desire to build and create and make better" ("America's Age of Uncertainty," *Knight Ridder*, Nov. 9, 2001).

Who could disagree?

State of the Present—and Future

Consider some of the terrible conditions on earth today. Should events remain unchecked, they are predicted to grow far worse by the year 2050—if mankind survives for that long! Many of the following statistics come from the United Nation's "The State of World Population 2001" report. It is thorough, and makes for sobering reading.

The world population (6.65 billion) has more than tripled in the last seventy years. It has doubled since 1960 and is predicted to reach between 9.3 and 10.9 billion by 2050. The forty-nine poorest, least-developed nations will actually triple to a population of nearly two billion. This worldwide population growth will bring staggering problems.

Just 2.5 percent of the earth's water is fresh. Only 20 percent of this (or 0.5 percent) is accessible ground or

surface water. The current population consumes 54 percent of this available water. By 2050, it will need 90 percent—because the earth grows by 77 million additional people *per year* (requiring an amount of water equivalent to the mighty Rhine River *every year*). Also, developing countries dump 90-95 percent of their untreated sewage and 70 percent of their untreated industrial waste into surface waters. Population growth insures that this problem will only grow worse. In addition, acid rain and chemical runoff from fertilizers and pesticides sufficiently ruin water quality, making it largely unusable.

Population growth continues to outpace food production. There are 800 million people who are chronically malnourished, and 2 billion who lack “food security.” Only fifteen crop species provide 90 percent of the world’s food, yet it is estimated that sixty thousand different plant species could reach extinction by just 2025! By that year, the projected 8 billion inhabitants of earth will require *twice* today’s food needs, with greatly improved distribution, to completely eradicate hunger. But few experts see this as remotely possible.

Each day, 160,000 people move from rural areas to cities. This is happening fastest in under-developed countries. Enormous problems result from this: sanitation, overcrowding, access to modern health services and the ability of schools to absorb the increase of students.

Fully 60 percent of all disease on earth is sanitation-related. Each year, air pollution kills nearly 3 million people in developing countries alone, with poor sanitation killing another 12 million. Various forms of indoor air pollution (soot, dung, coal for cooking and heating, etc.) affect 2.5 billion people a year and kill 2.2 million. Changes in climate are altering the zones of risk for insect-borne diseases. New and more

virulent diseases are appearing or reappearing. And many bacteria are proving to be drug-resistant because of the ongoing over-prescribing of antibiotics.

Some of the problems predicted for the near future include: Limited and diminishing arable land, deforestation, urbanization, shrinking size of family farms, degradation of the land, shortages and degradation of water, irrigation problems, waste, the extinction of certain types of crops, the increased intensity and frequency of severe weather, which causes flooding and seasonal loss of crops, and greenhouse gases and changes of climate. At the same time, 1.6 acres of rainforest—often called the “lungs of the world” because it produces so much oxygen—are disappearing through logging *every second!*

Together, these problems spell untold calamity, and even catastrophe, for a mankind unprepared to solve these and many other problems.

While the world is suffering from “information overload,” none of this knowledge increase is truly addressing mankind’s growing number of complex, insoluble problems. With all of man’s creative ingenuity and intelligence, he cannot solve the most important problems—those that threaten his very existence on an earth he is systematically destroying.

Educators have duped generations into believing the evolutionary lie. This has caused countless millions to believe that mankind is continually evolving into a better and higher order of existence. Look around and you will see the fruits of this deception. (Read our booklets *Does God Exist?* and *Evolution – Facts, Fallacies and Implications*. They thoroughly address the fallacy of evolution, while proving the existence of God.) Man is not evolving upward—he is degenerating downward, into ever new

lows of indulgence, decadence and immorality.

WHY?

A Great Unseen Law

Everyone understands the law of gravity. All recognize that if they break this law, it could “break” them. If one accidentally drops a brick on his foot, the result could be broken bones. If a skydiver jumps from an airplane, and the parachute fails to open, the result is certain death. This is easy to understand.

Here are some examples that are only a little less obvious, but are just as true. If a person is constantly sick, it is obvious that laws of health (proper diet, enough exercise or sufficient sleep, etc.) are being broken. Bad health has one or more *causes*. If a marriage ends in divorce, it can also be attributed to one or more *causes*: lack of communication, financial woes, death of a child, sexual problems, unhappiness on the job, etc. If someone is pulled over for drunk driving, it is not hard to see the *cause* of the arrest.

While most never identify cause and effect as an immutable LAW governing almost every action in life, they are generally aware that it is a principle at work in certain circumstances.

Every effect can be traced to one or more causes. Unwanted or illegitimate pregnancies, crime, drug addiction, bankruptcy and a thousand other effects, can all be linked to specific causes. Create your own list. You may find it to be almost endless.

The King James Version of the Bible teaches, “...the curse causeless shall not come.” Two other translations of this verse are “...the undeserved curse will never hit its mark” (Jerusalem Bible), and “...the baseless curse never goes home” (Moffatt). This scripture is saying that every difficulty carries a reason—there is a cause for every effect!

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Evolution Exposed

Part 1
Deconstructing False Science

RCG PHOTO ILLUSTRATION: DARNITRA D. MAIDEN

Some in the scientific community question the theory of evolution; others believe it is fact. What is the truth behind the evidence?

BY BRADFORD G. SCHLEIFER

THE ORIGIN OF life has for several generations been a hotly contested and unnecessarily complicated issue.

Scientists, educators and theologians staunchly stand in opposite ditches, unable to see the full picture. Their deep-seated biases have turned an inspiring subject into one filled with bitter controversy. This need not be.

Throughout this series, the subject of evolution will be made plain. Many of its teachings will be deconstructed and the underlying assumptions exposed. You will be left with a conclusive picture about the theory of evolution.

Your thinking—and understanding—about the foundation of the world will be forever changed.

You have but one task as you read: Review the evidence with an open mind. Do not allow any existing bias to blind you to this crucial understanding. The implications are much greater than you probably realize.

Most scientists believe that evolution is the foundation for many disciplines of science. Biologists, geologists, archeologists, biochemists, etc., would state that evolution is the starting point for further study.

Why is evolution cemented in the minds of many as *fact*, when it is nothing more than *theory*?

How did this occur?

Certain aspects of evolution may be confusing and difficult to understand. Do not be surprised! The rationale invented to support evolution *is* bewildering and complicated. It *is* tiresome and boring. Certain facts are conveniently left behind, and tedious scholarly language is used to stop most people from examining the subject in detail. Left frustrated, most assume evolution to be fact.

This series will demystify the subject. You will know if evolution is science fact or science fiction. Convoluted and illogical theories will be simplified in a way never before presented. While some sections are technical, the more detail given, the better you will be able to see through the theory's "smoke and mirrors." Clear and simple logic always destroys ill-conceived suppositions.

Once evolution is dismantled, you will be left with many questions—and serious implications.

Conflicting Opinions

Even a cursory review of this subject demonstrates that decades of scientific study have resulted in little more than assumption, disagreement and widespread confusion. Allow the late Colin Patterson, once the world's foremost fossil expert, to summarize: "One morning I woke up and something had happened in the night, and it struck me that I had been working on this stuff [evolution] for twenty years and there was *not one thing I knew about it.*"

He addressed his concerns to both the geology staff at the Field Museum of Natural History and the Evolutionary Morphology Seminar at the University of Chicago, saying, "Can you tell me anything you know about evolution, any one thing...that is true?" Each time, he was met with weak explanations, hypotheses and theories.

The only salient comment came during the Evolutionary Morphology Seminar, in which one participant stated, "I do know one thing—it ought not to be taught in high school."

This led Mr. Patterson to conclude, "It does seem that the level of knowledge about evolution is remarkably shallow. We know it ought not to be taught in high school, and that's all we know about it."

What are the facts about the theory of evolution? What do we actually *know*? What is the basis for its near universal acceptance?

You will be amazed at what the scientific evidence reveals!

Science is Logical

No matter the discipline, when one is presented with a vast swath of empirical data, sound logic must be used to interpret it. Right conclusions can only be reached when proper logic is employed. Faulty logic—often called logical fallacies—cause error, confusion and misinterpretation. Sometimes these fallacies are used by accident; other times the motives are more sinister.

In the latter case, fallacies are meant to cause an audience to misinterpret data and reach a wrong conclusion. By

creating a tangled web of confusion, the data is impossible to navigate and correct conclusions are lost.

While it should not be so, science is riddled with logical fallacies. Nowhere is this more true than with the subject of evolution. The seven fallacies below are the most commonly used to explain evolution. As the evidence unfolds, try to recognize these fallacies in the evolutionist's arguments.

■ **Hasty Generalization:** A small sample is used to reach a broad conclusion. Suppose your local car dealership only sells red cars; a hasty generalization is to conclude that *all* dealerships in your country *only* sell red cars.

■ **Begging the Question:** Often referred to as "reasoning in a circle," or circular logic. An assumption is used to prove a conclusion; in turn, that conclusion is used to prove the original assumption.

■ **Misuse of Authority:** Pointing to a group of experts to validate a conclusion, even if those experts disagree with each other or with the conclusion. An example would be stating that dentists prefer a certain brand of toothpaste, but never actually polling them about their preference in the first place.

■ **Appeal to the People:** Using the general public as a basis for proving a hypothesis, instead of relying on relevant evidence. Stating, "Of course, everyone accepts that as fact," would be an example.

■ **Argument to Future:** Stating that while a theory is not yet proven, it will be with further study and investigation.

■ **Hypothesis Contrary to Fact:** Repeating as new a theory or hypothesis already disproven. This is akin to asserting that the earth might be flat, when evidence already demonstrates otherwise.

■ **Chronological Snobbery:** When a theory is either refuted or proven by dating "evidence" as extremely old, making it either no longer available or impossible to verify.

One theme flows throughout all fallacies: They are FALSE! Through dishonesty and lies, a proponent attempts to deceive. People would not be sur-

prised if such a person was a snake oil salesman or a con artist. However, it is shocking how often scientists use such deception to promote the theory of evolution as irrefutable fact.

Inescapable Law

There is an overarching law governing the entire universe. It is so intrinsic to everyday life that most apply it without knowing. It is inescapable. Everyone is impacted by it.

It is the law of CAUSE and EFFECT.

Drop a rock and it falls to the ground. The *effect* is the rock hitting the ground; the *cause* is gravity. Jump into a swimming pool on a hot day and you are refreshed. The *effect* is feeling refreshed; the *cause* is jumping into the water.

Cause and effect is so universal and proven, it carries the status of being a scientific law: *causation*, which states that every effect can be traced to a cause that happened before (or simultaneous to) the effect.

All effects must have causes. It is that simple.

Linking cause and effect with another set of scientific laws—thermodynamics—makes the picture sharper. The word "thermodynamics" comes from the Greek words *therme*, meaning "heat or energy," and *dunamis*, meaning "power." It is the study of how energy is transferred, and is usually defined by three fundamental laws, on which all disciplines of science are based.

We will focus on the second law in this example (covering all in more detail later in the series). The second law states that the total entropy (unusable energy) of any isolated thermodynamic system tends to increase over time, approaching a maximum value. In laymen's terms, it can be summarized by saying that when left alone, everything "burns" its usable energy, eventually reaching a point of no usable energy.

Consider: Water is heated on a burner to the boiling point. If the stove is turned off, the water's temperature

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DMITRY MEDVEDEV

RUSSIA'S NEW PRESIDENT

Elected to become Russia's new president, will Dmitry Medvedev make his own mark on Russia or continue along the course set by his predecessor?

BY MARK P. DENEE

AS THE END of Vladimir Putin's eight-year presidency approached, Russia and the world prepared with uncertainty for political transition. Speculation was rampant on the "how," the "who" and even the "when." Many expected

that Mr. Putin would retain some degree of power. Certainly, the majority of the Russian population, and much of the world, recognized that the Putin administration had returned Russia, at least in part, to its former glory.

In 2005, Mr. Putin appointed Dmitry Medvedev to the newly created post of First Deputy Prime Minister, thus introducing Mr. Medvedev to the international community, and setting the stage for the eventual handover. It was as early as 1999, when Mr. Putin became the acting president of Russia, that Mr. Medvedev became his protege.

Expectations regarding the March 2008 election abounded in speculating how different the new president and his country would be. There were some hopeful indications that Mr. Medvedev would take Russia on a slightly more liberal path. However, there was concern regarding how much actual power he would have with Mr. Putin "stepping down" to the position of prime minister.

Background

Dmitry Anatolyevich Medvedev was born Sept. 14, 1965, to a middle-class family in suburban Leningrad (now St. Petersburg). He attended St. Petersburg State University, graduating with a law degree and doctorate in 1990, where he taught as an assistant professor until 1999.

While teaching, Mr. Medvedev joined the legal team of St. Petersburg Mayor Anatoly Sobchak, who had also brought ex-KGB agent and future president Vladimir Putin into his city's administration. There the two aspiring politicians worked together for five years. At the end of Mr. Sobchak's term, Mr. Medvedev returned to academic life, while Mr. Putin took a position at the Kremlin.

In late 1999, after becoming acting-president of Russia, Mr. Putin almost immediately brought Mr. Medvedev to Moscow. In 2000, Mr. Medvedev headed Vladimir Putin's presidential election campaign. Following his victory, Mr. Putin made Dmitry Medvedev his First Deputy Chief of Staff.

Also in 2000, the Russian government appointed Mr. Medvedev chairman of the state-owned natural gas monopoly Gazprom. Mr. Medvedev proved to be an able administrator, becoming President Putin's Chief of Staff in 2003.

By 2005, Mr. Medvedev became Russia's First Deputy Prime Minister, in charge of national projects. As such, he oversaw major initiatives in agriculture, health, education, and efforts to boost Russia's low birth rate. He also helped restructure the Kremlin's relations with the

powerful billionaire oligarchs, who had made their fortunes when Russian businesses were privatized after the collapse of the Soviet Union, but were somewhat ostracized during the Putin years.

In January 2007, Mr. Medvedev told the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, “We aim to create big Russian corporations and will back their foreign economic activities...Even if the state retains a controlling interest...we aim to create public companies with a substantial share of foreign investment in their capital” (*BBC*).

Privately, Mr. Medvedev, at age 23, joined the Russian Orthodox Church. He also married his high school sweetheart Svetlana, with whom he has one son, Ilya, born in 1996.

Russia Profile, a magazine published by *RIA Novosti* news agency, stated that Mr. Medvedev swims nearly one mile twice a day, and is otherwise “studious, mild-mannered, and quiet.”

The Transition

In December 2007, President Putin announced that Mr. Medvedev would be his heir apparent, pending the outcome of the March 2008 election. At the time, Mr. Putin said, “I have known him for more than 17 years, I have worked with him very closely all these years” (*BBC*).

Mr. Medvedev responded by stating that Vladimir Putin would serve as his prime minister. This raised questions as to where Russia’s executive power would lie, as the move provided the opportunity for Mr. Putin to someday return to the presidency.

The election campaign featured a poster of both men with the slogan “Together We Will Win.” The campaign also used the slogan “Freedom is better than no freedom,” which some interpreted as a hint of openness to the West. This was uncharacteristic of the Putin administration.

It could, however, also be a statement to the Russian people that the relative freedom and prosperity that they enjoy now is better than the repression and poverty experienced during the Soviet years. Today, they are once

again able to feel some nationalistic pride, which many attribute to Mr. Putin.

Mr. Medvedev won the election by a landslide. While some outside observers considered it to be an unfair process, most admitted the outcome reflected the will of the Russian people.

At a celebration in Moscow’s Red Square, Mr. Medvedev announced, “We will be able to preserve the course of President Putin” (*ibid.*).

A Different Tune?

The London Times reported that the president-elect was Russia’s youngest leader since Nicholas II was crowned Tsar in 1894. The article also indicated that many of Russia’s political elite consider the Medvedev presidency to be a temporary measure until Mr. Putin can return to the post, possibly in 2012.

The relative youth of Mr. Medvedev has enabled him (and Mr. Putin) to reach out to a younger generation, one that came of age during the height of the Cold War, experienced the struggles of *perestroika* as young adults, and more recently have begun to enjoy the prosperity of the new Russia as they approach middle age. This generation appreciates what Mr. Putin has done in restoring Russian pride and power—but also acknowledges his authoritarianism.

Mr. Medvedev has said that Russia will continue along the path of economic development set forth by President Putin, while also calling for increased independence of the judiciary system and less state interference in the economy.

He also declared that freedom was the most important issue for any prosperous modern state: “I mean freedom in all its manifestations—personal freedom, economic freedom, finally freedom of expression” (*The London Times*).

Skeptics remain wary, however, suggesting Mr. Medvedev will have to rely on Mr. Putin to control his fellow *siloviki*, the Kremlin-hardliners in the military and secret police

(most of whom Mr. Putin installed), who favored Mr. Medvedev’s rival, Sergei Ivanov (the second of two First Deputy Prime Ministers, and Minister of Defense from 2001-07).

So far, it appears to be “business as usual” in Russia, with authorities continuing their usual crackdown on social activists and political critics, according to the *International Herald Tribune*. “Medvedev today is Putin yesterday. There is no change in the regime whatsoever,” said veteran human rights campaigner Lev Ponomarev.

“We’ve seen in this last two months what the freedom [Mr. Medvedev] talks about really means,” Andrei Illarionov, a former economic adviser to Mr. Putin and now a prominent critic, told reporters. “Are there any examples of real actions, not just words, that someone can use as proof that Medvedev is a liberal person, economically, politically or over civil rights?”

The Economist stated that in a new report for the European Council on Foreign Relations, Andrew Wilson of University College London concludes that at first, the Russian system will have more control over Mr. Medvedev. The article also stated that despite the desire to retain the status quo, Russia would be a different place in a year’s time.

In the meantime, President-elect Dmitry Medvedev paid a visit in late February to Serbia, and played a significant role in solving the near-crisis with Ukraine. He also hosted, at Mr. Putin’s request, German Chancellor Angela Merkel, during which Mr. Medvedev said, “We highly appreciate your coming here and consider the visit as a continuation of the strategic cooperation and partnership that has traditionally existed between Russia and the Federative Republic of Germany” (*Xinhua*).

Otherwise, it appears that a Medvedev-led Russia will largely continue along the course set forth by Vladimir Putin. Some cosmetic shifts to increased freedoms may come at the hands of its new president, but this will only endear it to the world, in particular, the Europeans. □

EVOLUTION

Continued from page 4

will drop instead of rise. Water will dissipate heat until it reaches room temperature.

Here's another example: Connect a light bulb to a battery, and it will produce light. Over time, the battery will fully drain, and you will be left with no light and a dead battery. Instead of having two usable items, both will eventually reach a state of complete entropy—no usable energy.

Left alone, energy always changes from usable to unusable.

This is closely related to the law of cause and effect. Scientific laws

are immutable and complement one another.

Combining cause and effect with the second law of thermodynamics, we reach a fascinating conclusion. *Every* effect has a cause and, over time, *all* systems have less usable energy. This means that the effect always has *less* usable energy than the cause. Said another way, every cause results in a lesser effect. The effect must have less energy, be less complicated, be less advanced than its cause.

The theory of evolution states that a more “evolved” life-form (the effect) stems from a simpler one (the cause)—in violation of both cause and effect and the second law of thermodynamics.

So begins the quandary of evolution...

In Part Two, we will look into what the theory actually means. You may be stunned at how many differing definitions it has. Then we will investigate how a scientific law and theory are defined—and whether evolution fits into either category! Also in Part Two, we will tackle the first assumption of evolution: survival of the fittest.

After learning the facts, you will be amazed that this theory is universally accepted. Again, if you keep an open mind, you will find yourself agreeing with the comments from the Evolutionary Morphology Seminar that evolution “ought not be taught in high school”! □



COMING SOON!

THE WORLD TO COME

VIDEOCAST | PRESENTED BY DAVID C. PACK

Since Jan. 21, 2003, *The World to Come* audio program has addressed life's greatest questions—*Is world peace possible? Is heaven the reward of the saved? What is real faith? Have we entered the last days? What is human nature? What is salvation? What is the true gospel of Jesus Christ?*—with crystal clarity and easy-to-understand answers.

And now, *The World to Come* will soon transition from audio to video! From a newly built state-of-the-art television studio, David C. Pack will continue to address the pressing issues of today, making plain the truths of the Bible and tying their significance to world events, trends, conditions—and to your life!

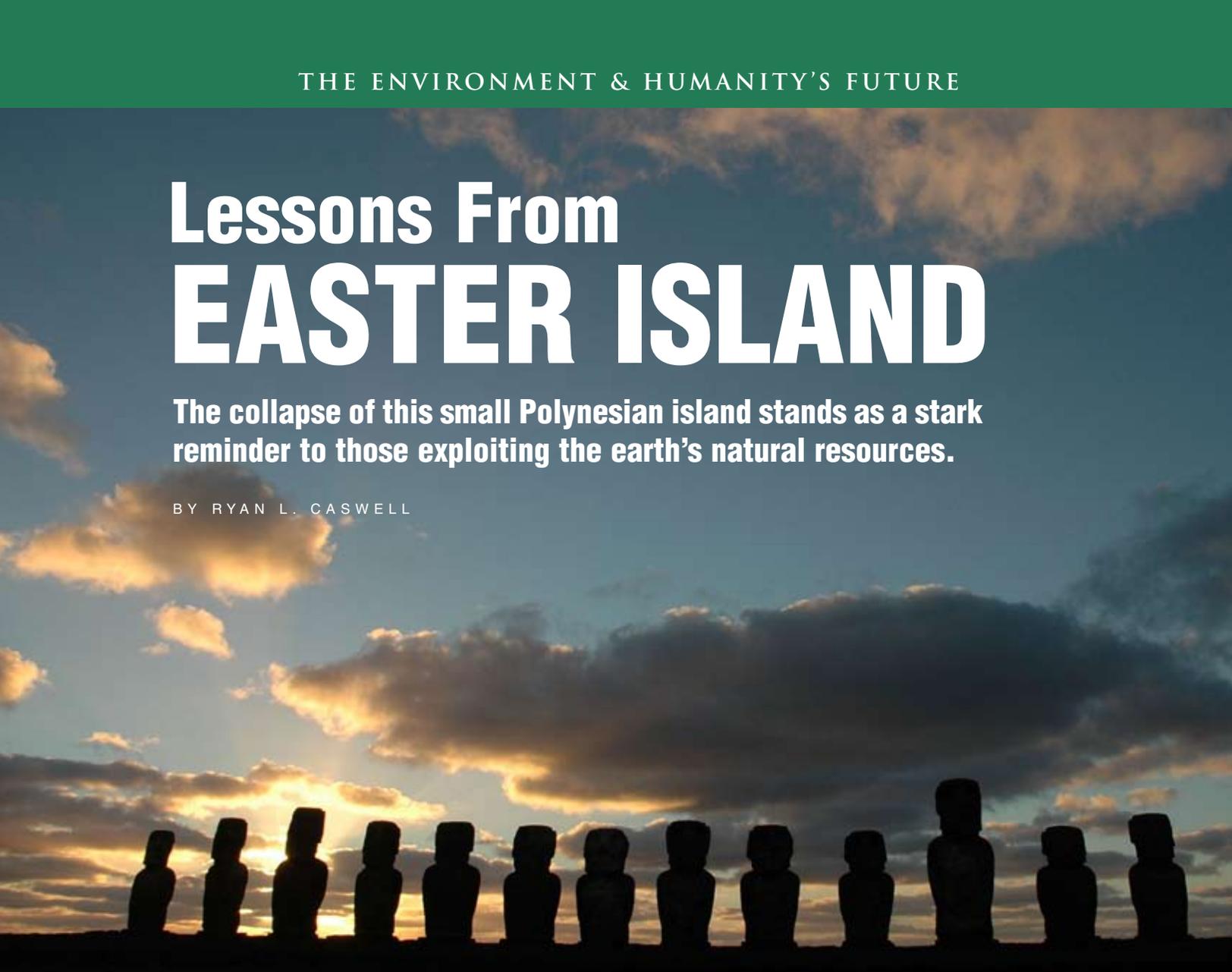
Videocasts will be available for viewing 24 hours a day/seven days a week. Stay tuned to learn more!



Lessons From EASTER ISLAND

The collapse of this small Polynesian island stands as a stark reminder to those exploiting the earth's natural resources.

BY RYAN L. CASWELL



THE COLD FACES OF stone stare silently over the barren landscape. Standing at attention, each stoic face resembles the one beside it. On a tiny Polynesian island in the Eastern Pacific Ocean, these sentinels are the only immediately recognizable sign of life.

This is Easter Island.

A closer inspection reveals abandoned villages, gigantic stone quarries and hundreds of platforms used for religious rites, built by a once thriving society.

Throughout *Rano Raraku*, a 600-yard quarry, stone picks, chisels and axes lie in dusty disarray. Situated on a dormant volcano, the quarry provided material for *Moai*, the giant stone statues dotting the island. The only human presence in the mine is a crushed finger bone trapped under a toppled *Moai*, perhaps remnants of a miner's accident. Many of the *Moai* remain unfinished, partially carved and frozen in time. Finely chiseled features adorn some groups; others are without defined shape, ranging from

13 to 75 feet tall. This stone army grimly stands watch at the abandoned mines and gapes at the deserted scar in the earth.

Just east of the quarry lie vast stretches of field, flat, brown and scorched. Dried hay forms a thin veneer over layers of volcanic rock. Sandy soil, drained of all nutrients, no longer supports even small shrubs and trees. The flat terrain offers little resistance to strong winds sweeping the plains. The few remaining trees are no taller than 10 feet and offer little protection for indigenous animals from the beating sun. Only a handful of shattered, starving islanders remain on the island.

Without firsthand descriptions of historic events, scientists have relied on pollen samples, archeological digs and geological tests to understand what happened to the ecosystem. Hailed as one of the most haunting cases of environ-

■ **A BARREN LAND:** The massive stone sentinels of Ahu Tongariki form an uncompromising guard against the crashing sea on Chile's Easter Island.

PHOTO: MCT



mental collapse ever seen, Easter Island is an isolated eco-survival study of mankind's "worst case scenario"—a testament to environmental destruction on a grand scale.

Early Easter Island

Off the coast of Chile, Easter Island was once a lushly forested subtropical paradise. This tiny triangular island nation supported a prosperous and complex society of up to 30,000 people. Separated from the rest of the world by roughly 1,300 miles of Pacific Ocean, the early Polynesian inhabitants made a daring migration from the neighboring Pitcairn Islands and the mainland of South America.

The climate was well suited for habitation; three long-dormant volcanoes left rich deposits of fertile soil across the terrain. Open grasslands covered the island in between Easter Palm forests, which grew to over 70 feet tall. The volcanic

deposit at Rano Raraku to the southeast provided plentiful stores of volcanic tuff for construction.

The tribes that migrated to the island formed a loose collective government that created a unique culture. Primarily farming and seafaring, these groups had a structured tribal society, with a leading chief and a class of priests, along with farmers and tradesmen. The religious pantheon included hundreds of animalistic gods.

Chiefs raised the Moai, each weighing an average of 10 tons, to prove their status with the gods, and exercised power over their followers. The chiefs' elite status allowed a ruling class to organize society and maintain order among the tribes. Under them, vast projects were organized.

Trading harvested resources from the 66-square-mile island encouraged construction on a broad scale. Large plantations produced food surpluses, which aided population growth. Religious worship, fueled by ever larger Moai and elaborate funeral services, united the tribes.

Their society blossomed in an era of prosperity and peace—yet it eventually collapsed.

A Lack of Vision

An August 1995 article in *Discover* magazine suggested that the environmental collapse of Easter Island happened "not with a bang but with a whimper." After several generations, islanders slowly consumed most available resources.

Forests were clear-cut for canoes, ropes and firewood. Farms producing sweet potatoes, taro and sugarcane stripped soils of available nutrients. Bird, fish and porpoise populations dwindled to extinction by overhunting. Blind to the impact that a growing population would have on the environment, inhabitants used up the island's resources until there was nothing left.

A massive migration was impossible due to the great distance from the nearest landmass. The isolated island was unable to draw needed resources from other continents; it was forced to continue on its own. Populations, now too large for the island to support, soon began to die out. Easter Island descended into civil war as chiefs-turned-warlords vied for leftover resources.

Internal conflict and violence turned into anarchy, as the only way to survive was to steal food from opposing tribes. The wars hindered communications and made transportation between the tribes almost impossible. The island was no longer unified—cooperation between peoples ceased. The greed of individuals nullified any attempt at an organized solution to the now catastrophic problems.

The islanders' use of resources was not sustainable. Great amounts of forest were clear-cut for materials

to erect the gigantic Moai. While scientists today do not fully understand how these ancient people raised the monoliths, they agree that strong lumber and rope were necessary. This, coupled with unchecked growth, eventually led to a food shortage. The tribes sank into starvation and cannibalism.

Resource priorities were completely misplaced. Instead of planning for the future, tribal chiefs squabbled over who could erect the largest Moai. In their lust for power, chiefs sought to maintain their god-like status with great feats of architecture and dazzling sacrificial pyres.

Without a vision of future needs, the population slowly overextended itself. Their unabated consumption ended with the extinction of 90% of all plant and animal life on the island. By the time the people realized their mistake, it was too late. The population was too large, and there was nowhere else to go.

The inhabitants of Easter Island became a historic example of Proverbs 29: "Where there is no vision, the people perish" (vs. 18).

Our Earth

Many today see Easter Island as a metaphor of the modern world. With haunting and obvious parallels, our earth is a tiny island floating in the vastness of space. Globalization, trade and communication have united various "tribes" on our "island." With "tribes" of nations bound together in a global network, humanity is responsible for planning, controlling and using its valuable—and limited—resources.

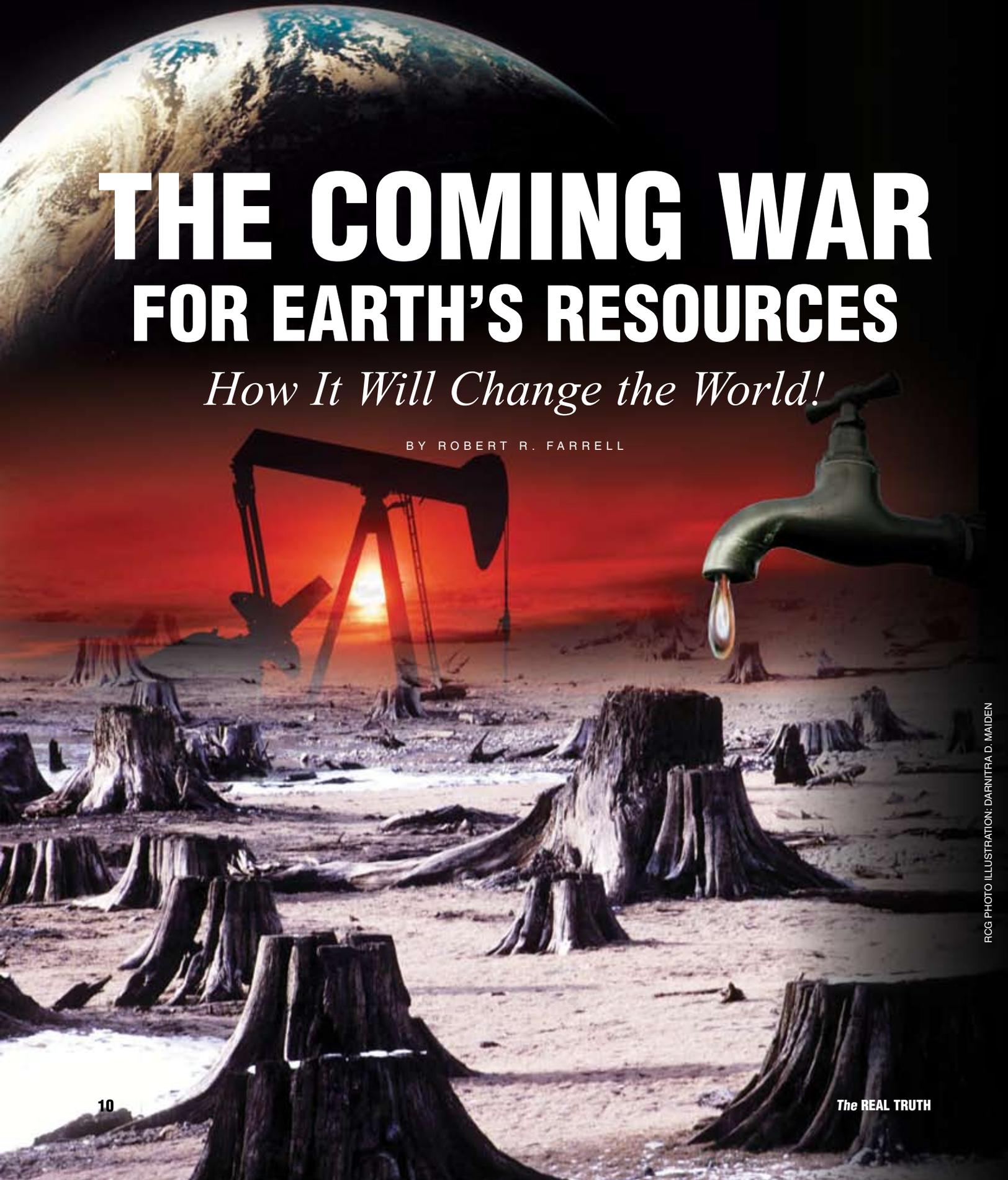
The shortsighted decisions made on Easter Island caused the complete destruction of its environment and inhabitants. All tribes were guilty of the sentence they brought on themselves.

Most today believe this scenario could never happen again. Yet Easter Island stands as a stark reminder for those who believe in endlessly exploiting earth's valuable resources—a testament to mankind's inability to solve its problems. □

THE COMING WAR FOR EARTH'S RESOURCES

How It Will Change the World!

BY ROBERT R. FARRELL



ROG PHOTO ILLUSTRATION: DARNITRA D. MAIDEN



CONSIDER ACTIVITIES most take for granted, particularly those who live in industrialized nations: drinking a glass of water; driving a car or traveling by mass transportation; living in a decent house or apartment; using modern household appliances; using tools to build, fix and repair; even breathing fresh air. These activities improve our quality of life. Indeed, some are vital to our very existence.

Have you considered that to do all of the above requires the availability of *natural resources*, whether used as raw materials or in finished products?

The subject of natural resources has been in the news for years. The media has long reported that the world's supply of oil, minerals, fresh water, and lumber are in danger of running out. Yet few take this seriously.

As earth's resources are being depleted, nations are competing for what remains. This is leading to great conflicts. Eventually, the severity of the problem will cause nations to take drastic measures to ensure continued access. It will change the world in which we live!

A Growing Resource Problem

The United Nations projects that the global population will increase from the present 6.65 billion to 7.95 billion by the year 2025. At the same time, the world is becoming more prosperous. The average person is consuming more food, water, energy and metals. Multiple millions in nations that were once poor are now moving into the middle class. This includes growing numbers of China's 1.3 billion citizens and India's 1.1 billion. They are driving cars, acquiring household appliances, using electronic gadgets and adopting high-protein diets, similar to Western industrialized nations.

Population growth and growing prosperity have driven the skyrocketing demand for natural resources. Demand has outpaced supply to the extent that the prices of key resources such as oil, minerals and commodities have risen dramatically. Increasing demand is putting a strain on sorely needed resources.

Scarce Water

The availability of fresh water is essential to human life, necessary for consumption, agriculture, industry and sanitation. Over two-thirds of earth's surface is covered by water. Yet only 2.5% of it is fresh; the remainder is salt water, which is not readily usable. Added to this, about 70% is contained as ice at the North and South Poles, with most of the remainder being in the soil as moisture or in deep underground aquifers inaccessible to man. This means that less than 1% of all fresh water on earth is accessible to man.

Over the past 40 years, water withdrawals from rivers and lakes have doubled due to increasing populations and industrial use. Humans now use 40% to 50% of all natural freshwater. Within the next 50 years, the world's population is projected to rise by 40% to 50%. This growth, coupled with increasing industrialization and urbanization, will result in greater demand for water, thus straining the supply of this limited resource.

Today, many of the world's greatest rivers—the Nile in Egypt, the Yellow River in China, the Indus in Pakistan, the Rio Grande and Colorado in the U.S., the Murray in Australia and the Jordan in the Middle East—run dry long before they reach the sea. Many of the major rivers are shared by two or more countries in arid or semi-arid areas:

- The Nile (shared by Egypt, Ethiopia and Sudan), the Jordan (shared by Israel, Lebanon, Jordan and Syria)
- The Tigris and Euphrates (shared by Iran, Iraq, Syria and Turkey)
- The Indus (shared by Afghanistan, India and Pakistan)
- The Amu Darya (shared by Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan)

This interdependence creates a fertile ground for conflict.

As populations increase, water will become more scarce, increasing tensions. UN figures suggest that there are around 300 potential conflicts over water all over the world. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), about one-sixth of the world's population lacks access to clean water, while 40% are without access to proper sanitation services.

Competition for water has grown so serious that at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon warned, "A shortage of water resources could spell increased conflicts in the future...Population growth will make the problem worse. So will climate change. As the global economy grows, so will its thirst. Many more conflicts lie just over the horizon" (*Inter Press Service*).

"Peak" Oil

With the price of oil over \$100 USD per barrel and rising, there is a growing consensus among experts that the days of cheap oil are finished. And with our technologically sophisticated, urbanized world, the demand for oil has never been

greater. Oil accounts for 43% of the world's fuel consumption, and 95% of this is used for transportation.

The U.S. Department of Energy has estimated that global oil consumption will increase from 77 million barrels per day in 2000 to 110 million in 2020—an increase of 43%. If this analysis proves correct, some 670 billion barrels of oil will be consumed during that time or about two-thirds of the world's known oil reserves.

While it is likely that new reserves will be found, it is unlikely that supply will be able to keep up with demand, particularly with soaring energy use in Western societies and the emergence of economic giants China and India.

It is estimated that in up to 54 of the largest 65 oil-producing nations production of oil has peaked and is now in decline. This includes the U.S., Indonesia, Australia, nations along the North Sea, and Mexico. What is of concern is that much of the oil being produced today is the heavy-sour crude (indicative of the bottom of the well), not the light-sweet crude (at the top). According to U.S. Assistant Energy Secretary Alexander Karsner, "the places where oil can be found and extracted and brought to bear in the world are declining. It will get harder, and demand will outstrip supply for probably the rest of my lifetime" (*Commodity Online*).

As nations look for new supplies, some of the most promising sources lie in offshore areas that are fiercely contested. This includes the Caspian Sea, the Persian Gulf, the Red Sea, the Timor Sea and the Gulf of Guinea. Even in areas where reserves are not in dispute, there are concerns about future availability because of political and social unrest, war or outright hostility of the governments. This includes countries such as Algeria, Indonesia, Nigeria, Sudan, Iran, Iraq, Venezuela, Columbia, Angola and Saudi Arabia.

The search for oil is causing countries to develop new alliances, such as China's funding of African development, the U.S. and European forays into the former Soviet republics of

Central Asia, and Japan's interest in the oilfields of Siberia.

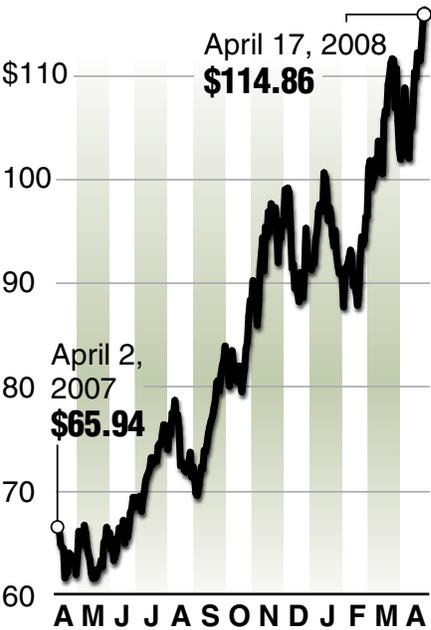
Potential hotspots include the Persian Gulf, Sudan, Venezuela, Nigeria, the Caspian Sea, Chad, Algeria, Angola and the South China Sea. These areas contain about 80% of the world's oil supply.

Mineral and Timber Conflicts

Minerals that are so vitally important for industry are in short supply in

Oil Prices

Nymex closing prices daily since April 2007 for West Texas Intermediate crude:



Source: U.S. Energy Information Administration, AP MCT

the major industrialized societies of Europe, the United States, China and Japan. They are heavily dependent on raw materials from other countries, especially Africa, a continent rich in natural resources. Africa possesses vast wealth in strategic, precious and base metals, including 99% of the world's chrome, 85% of its platinum, 68% of its cobalt and 54% of its gold. Africa has become an arena of competition among America, China, India, France and Britain.

The fight for control over natural resources such as minerals, timber, oil

and diamonds has fuelled brutal civil wars in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Angola, Sudan, Ivory Coast, Sierra Leone and Liberia. For example, mineral rich Congo holds millions of tons of metals, including diamonds, cobalt, uranium, gold, manganese, and niobium. It has the world's largest supply of high-grade copper and coltan (used in cellphones and fiber optics). At its height, conflict in Congo between 1998 and 2003 drew in seven foreign armies and claimed 2.5 million lives.

Timber is another resource in high demand, due to heavy deforestation around the world. It has fueled some of the world's most brutal wars in countries such as Cambodia, Sierra Leone, Ivory Coast, Congo, Myanmar and Liberia.

High concentrations of minerals and timber are in areas that will likely be hotly contested: the diamond fields of Angola, Congo and Sierra Leone; the copper and gold mines of Congo, Indonesia and Papua New Guinea; the emerald mines of Columbia; the forests of Brazil, Fiji, Liberia, Mexico, the Philippines, Cambodia, Congo, Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia and Borneo.

The Hunt for Resources

Many nations consider the sourcing and securing of resources a high priority, even a matter of national security. It is driving foreign policy, particularly among the most powerful players. In this high-stakes endeavor, governments are forging new alliances as they scour the globe seeking precious resources. And the resource rich areas of Africa, the Middle East, Australia, Canada and Central Asia are the targets.

■ China is undergoing perhaps the most rapid industrialization process in history, fueling an insatiable thirst for resources and catapulting it into the world's second-largest consumer of oil. The hunt for resources has led it into diplomatic overtures in previously unfamiliar territories in Africa and the Middle East.

Please see RESOURCES, page 21



SEVERE DROUGHT, global food shortages, strip-mining, the destruction of rainforests—these are a few of the issues raised by the green movement.

The average man or woman lives a life of excess, the movement asserts. Water is being used up and polluted, and fast—the global population is 6.65 billion and expected to surpass 9 billion by 2050—experts insist consumers buy organic foods so future generations will be able to continue farming—30% of wildlife species have been driven to extinction over the past 30 years.

Some issues rely on science, others on ethics and morals. However, while many of the above points may be valid, will “going green” solve the world’s problems?

Certainly, “going green” has garnered a lot of press. Virtually everywhere you turn you see “green.” Major TV networks “go green” for a week, featuring shows with an environmentalist message or promoting sustainable practices. While shopping at a mall, you hear an announcement crackle over the loud speaker concerning an “eco-friendly” promotional giveaway. “Thank you for going green with us,” the message ends.

There are websites where you can take a test to see how many “earths” your lifestyle consumes. These ask about your car, job, eating habits, etc., and reveal whether you are living a sustainable lifestyle. Even if you are living under the global average, you still are reminded, *We only have one earth.*

It seems that everywhere you turn, the green movement asks, “Are you doing your part?”

Even though it began as a grassroots idea, going green is quickly gaining a voice. Many are looking to this movement as the way to solve man’s environmental issues. But has mankind already pushed the earth past its limits—or is there still time to change if humanity comes together and acts quickly?

Is Going Green the Answer?



PHOTO: GETTY IMAGES

Or Is It Too Little, Too Late?

BY SAMUEL C. BAXTER

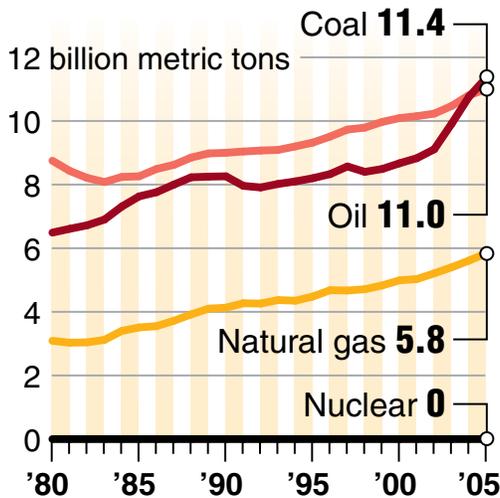
Living Within the Earth’s Means

The World Wildlife Fund (WWF) produced *Living Planet Report 2006*, detailing the state of earth. The report reveals that humanity’s ecological

footprint (the impact man has on the planet) has more than *tripled* since 1961. That footprint now exceeds the world’s ability to regenerate by about 25%. The report also shows that man’s increased ecological footprint

CO2 Output

Worldwide carbon dioxide emissions by power plants, by type:



MCT

Source: U.S. Energy Information Administration
Graphic: Angela Smith

leads to the rapid extinction of species, with populations of vertebrate species having declined nearly a third since 1970.

The WWF conclusion provides a fitting description of the green movement: “The message of these two indices is clear and urgent: we have been exceeding the Earth’s ability to support our lifestyles for the past 20 years, and we need to stop. We must balance our consumption with the natural world’s capacity to regenerate and absorb our wastes. If we do not, we risk irreversible damage.”

Those who strive to live sustainably tend to look to nature for inspiration. They see the equilibrium present and strive to disrupt it as little as possible.

To minimize man’s impact on the environment, systems are often devised to turn waste into a usable resource, such as harvesting methane gas from garbage dumps. Placing a membrane (which is generally made of clay) over the waste, pipes are used to pump out the methane gas, which can be used to create electricity or

heat homes from gas that would otherwise be burned off by landfill owners, further polluting the atmosphere. Even after a landfill is closed, it can still produce methane for 15 to 20 years. This process, if widely implemented, would be seen as a step toward reducing waste and relying less on fossil fuels, until more permanent solutions can be created.

This desire to live in harmony with nature is where the movement gets its name.

To live sustainably means to reuse waste. For instance, instead of tearing down an abandoned building and sending it off to the garbage dump, it can be renovated or the waste can be recycled.

Most of the green movement’s progress has been made at an individual level. People are switching from cars to buses, trains or bicycles as their major means of transportation. Some fit the roofs of their homes with solar panels,

or buy organic foods, or do something as simple as flushing the toilet less often. They help increase awareness by volunteering for vocal green organizations or supporting environmentally friendly politicians.

The green movement claims that no one owns the earth—no one has the right to destroy and take from it as they please. Instead, man must live within the means of nature (the movement advocates), always taking into account the effect his actions will have upon the environment.

Drop in the Bucket

While “going green” makes sense on paper, and seems plausible on the individual level, there is a problem. The global economy is based upon growth. Growth means consumption. Lack of growth is seen as moving into a recession.

Also, many in the West have come to expect a high standard of living, which automatically accrues substantial waste.

In order to put “green ideas” into motion, humanity as a whole would

need to change, much more than the efforts of a few scattered individuals. Nations would have to work together. Laws would have to be implemented, determining, for example, how buildings are designed and built in relation to the environment. Building codes would have to be enforced and followed. Farming practices would have to be completely changed. Large corporations would need to rethink their “bottom line.”

Instead of thinking solely for profit, here and now, they would have to think how their actions will affect the environment in 30 to 50 years. Cities would have to “retro-fit” buildings to make them “green.” Solar and wind power would have to be widely implemented.

While the green movement may look good, and makes people feel like they are doing their part, it is not easily applied globally. For it to work, it cannot remain a grassroots movement. Individual efforts are not enough.

Also, the world’s governments would have to begin working together to identify the problems *and* quickly implement effective solutions. Instead of worrying that a rival nation is growing more powerful, political leaders would have to think of the environment.

The sheer amount of money to make the global economy eco-friendly would be astronomical. Who is willing to pay the price?

“Going green” is a large investment now, with payoffs in the future. The global mindset of what you can *get* here and now would have to be changed. People would have to think of future generations, while taking responsible actions today.

Yes, “going green” has worked on minute scales. But governments, mindsets and ethics need to be drastically altered to accommodate this sort of thinking. Applying worldwide sustainability requires a complete change of mind.

To begin “living within the means” of the earth, there must be a *catalyst* for change. □



The Environment, Dwindling Resources and Mankind

What Will Be the Ultimate Outcome?

BY BRUCE A. RITTER

A FOUR-PART series about the environment and humanity's impact upon it: Think of all the issues that could be addressed—the efforts, theories and competing ideas that could be analyzed—and, after all is said and done, the many different ways this series could conclude.

In “Lessons From Easter Island,” we saw a historic example of what happens when human beings take the environment for granted, indiscriminately stripping the planet of its natural resources, bringing society to the brink of collapse. History also shows that man refuses to learn from the past, thus repeating disastrous patterns—ultimately on a global scale.

In “The Coming War for Earth's Resources,” we presented today's landscape: The world population is increasing to disastrous proportions. And with China and India, two of the most populous countries on earth, emerging as First World nations, there are too few natural resources available to maintain the industrialized, high-tech, “Me first” lifestyles that billions wish to copy from the West. In addition, cities continue to absorb surrounding towns and suburbs, transforming into burgeoning megacities that encroach upon farmlands and wildlife areas. These and other factors are contributing to a future scenario of global violence as peoples and nations clash over food, water, oil and other

disappearing necessities of life.

Then, in our article “Is Going Green the Answer?” we looked at the efforts offered to solve the situation before things grow worse.

Now, in this article, we ask, *How did humanity come to this point in the first place—and what will be its final outcome?*

To “Dress” and “Keep”

We live in a world of extremes, of religious zealotry and secular mindsets.

The religious zealot does not hesitate to make known his devotion to his deity. “I've loved God all my life,” he asserts, and will do anything to prove it—even massacre unbelievers. He ignores passages such as Romans 3: “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” (vs. 10-12).

At the other extreme is the secularist. He looks down upon religion, especially the Holy Bible, and deems it archaic opium for non-thinking people. Blissfully ignorant of God's Word, the secular mind proudly proclaims, “We evolved,” and therefore owe no allegiance to a Divine Maker who would presumably know exactly how His creation should behave. No need (the thinking goes) for living by “strict codes” of conduct established by a Being we cannot detect with our physical senses. To the secularist, all things spiritual and scriptural are foolish.

Of such people the Bible declares, “The fool has said in his heart, There is no God” (Psa. 14:1; 53:1).

Somewhere in between—or perhaps we should say, *above* and *beyond*—these opposing mindsets is the mind of the true God, reflected in His Word, the Bible. Both secularists and religious zealots would be surprised to learn this ancient Book has much to say about the environment, which God has charged human beings to “dress” and “keep” (Gen. 2:15)—that is, to “serve, till, work, labor” the land and to “guard, preserve and protect” it.

Even those who have never opened a Bible are aware that the ancient Israelites were once a slave nation that God delivered from Egypt, and that He established them in Canaan, the Promised Land. There Israel started from scratch. God gave them laws, statutes and judgments that formed their society and would have (if diligently practiced across the land) transformed Israel into a model nation for all the surrounding kingdoms and peoples to copy (Deut. 4:5-7).

Among these laws were regulations that governed agriculture, livestock, sanitation and other areas necessary for the survival and success of an agrarian society.

■ Sanitation and quarantine laws kept sickness and disease among the Israelites from breaking out into pandemics.

■ Laws governing farming and the environment prevented the land from being overworked, thus preserving the soil's nutrients and preventing fu-

ture generations from mass starvation. With these laws was the practice of gleaning, which helped each citizen to be “his brother’s keeper,” while also preventing the nation from becoming a welfare state. Citizens took responsibility for their personal economic situation, while looking out for the needs of the downtrodden. Receiving assistance from others was not viewed as a “civic right.”

■ Laws regulating urban living—such as prohibiting cramped and overcrowded communities—kept neighborhoods from degrading into slums.

■ Laws regarding the consumption of animals promoted good health.

Extremists put environment and wildlife before man. Those who abuse earth’s natural resources put the cares of today ahead of preserving the environment for future generations. But the laws with which ancient Israel was established benefited both the people *and* their surroundings—for the present *and* the future.

Yet Israel rejected them—and no wonder, for man has long rejected his Maker and His laws, which would bring success, prosperity and peace.

The Final Outcome

Human beings are prolific at inventing various competing pet theories and “solutions.” At best, some of these humanly devised ideas only delay the inevitable; at worst, they hasten suffering the consequences for making decisions that need divine direction.

Even if governments, nations and organizations worked together to solve the problem of the environment and earth’s natural resources, history teaches that the result would be disastrous. Whether it is education, poverty, war, man—of *himself*—CANNOT solve the problems that plague him.

Why?

Because “All the ways of a man are clean in his own eyes” (Prov. 16:2)—therefore, “There is a way that seems right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death” (vs. 25).

Because “The heart is deceitful

above all things, and desperately wicked” (Jer. 17:9)—therefore, “the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walks to direct his steps” (Jer. 10:23).

Because “God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth” (John 4:24), and “Your law is the truth” (Psa. 119:142)—yet “the carnal mind is ENMITY [hostile] against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be” (Rom. 8:7).

From atheists and agnostics to fervent, yet scripturally ignorant, religionists—all have rejected the PLAIN UNDERSTANDING that comes from the supreme mind of God. “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: *a good understanding* have all they that DO His commandments” (Psa. 111:10).

Amos 3:3 asks, “Can two walk together, except they be agreed?” No, they cannot! Humanly conceived governments, societies and systems, which compete, debate and bicker among themselves, have *never* been able to perfectly “walk together” in solving man’s problems. They all eventually corrupt themselves and break down. Only a PERFECT GOVERNMENT—one that will *never* corrupt, *never* render perverse decisions, *never* put self-gain above the needs of the people and the land on which they live—will solve humanity’s problems *as well as* preserve generations to come!

Since such a government will not and cannot come from fallible, imperfect people, then from where?

“For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given: and the GOVERNMENT shall be upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His 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 forever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this” (Isa. 9:6-7).

Earth is home to billions of people. Each life needs food and drinkable water to survive. There are already food shortages, and subsequently rising food prices, riots, hoarding and merchants placing limits on how much foodstuffs (such as rice) customers can buy—even in the United States. The Bible describes the depths of depravity to what human nature will resort to when facing starvation (Lev. 26:26, 29; Deut. 28:53).

God’s Word also states, “The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD: and He delights in his way. Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the Lord upholds him with His hand. I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread” (Psa. 37:23-25).

In Matthew 6, Jesus Christ assured, “Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? Or, What shall we drink? Or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?...for your heavenly Father knows that you have need of all these things. But seek you first the KINGDOM OF GOD, and His righteousness [Psa. 119:172]; *and all these things shall be added unto you*” (vs. 31-33).

In the meantime, man continues to address problems with faulty solutions, all while ignoring the ONE SOURCE that could guide him in the right direction. “The way of peace they know not,” God declares, “and there is no judgment in their goings: they have made them crooked paths: whosoever goes therein shall not know peace. Therefore is judgment far from us, neither does justice overtake us: we wait for light, but behold obscurity; for brightness, but we walk in darkness. We grope for the wall like the blind, and we grope as if we had no eyes: we stumble at noonday as in the night; we are in desolate places as dead men” (Isa. 59:8-10).

But humanity does not need to stumble about in spiritual darkness, unable to make correct decisions that determine human behavior and its impact upon society. To learn more, read our booklet *Why Man Cannot Solve His Problems – Unknown Until Now*. □

READER COMMENTS

From online subscribers of our weekly news updates

CANADA

■ I like reading your literature. It makes good sense.

■ Excellent news brief – “Food Shortages Cause Worldwide Price Spike.”

GERMANY

■ I'm really excited and impressed by the good work done through this magazine to carry the gospel message across the world.

GHANA

■ I enjoy reading this website. I commend your magazine to others for your in-depth analysis.

INDIA

■ I found your articles give a new understanding of the socio-economic and political issues of today.

SAUDI ARABIA

■ I would like to receive an email subscription.

NIGERIA

■ I found *The Real Truth* magazine very educative and interesting to read.

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

■ I was a regular subscriber of *Plain Truth* magazine during my college days. **[Editor's note: The same biblically based analysis of world news, trends and conditions continues today through *The Real Truth*.]**

UNITED KINGDOM

■ I feel blessed by your amazing and awesome teaching materials. I sincerely hope that you will continue to spread the Word of God in a world that is so starved for spiritual knowledge.

■ I like the articles. They are inspiring.

UNITED STATES

■ I want to have better understanding of the book of Revelation. **[Editor's note: We recommend you read our book *Revelation Explained at Last!*,**

posted at www.thercg.org/books/real.html]

■ I went to the Google search engine and typed in “Herbert W. Armstrong.” I have so many of his previous books and wanted to see if anyone was carrying on the great work of God that he started (through Christ), that's when I came across *The Real Truth* (www.realtruth.org). Thank you for taking the mantle and finishing this Great Work! **[Editor's note: Mr. Armstrong was publisher/editor-in-chief of *The Plain Truth*.]**

■ I need to understand the Sabbath-day, whether it is on Saturday or Sunday. Could you please send me some literature on it? Thank you. **[Editor's note: We recommend you read our book *Saturday or Sunday – Which Is the Sabbath?*, posted at www.thercg.org/topic-sabbath.html]**

■ I have viewed your site of biblically-based information and I am truly impressed. I want to thoroughly read, study, learn and remember God's Word. □

Q&A

What is the meaning of the “fish” symbol so popularly displayed today? Where did it originate?

In recent years, this symbol has gained popularity, being displayed with the name of Jesus inside it. The Second Commandment forbids the use of any images to represent the true God. John 4:23 states that “...the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeks such to worship Him.” Leviticus 26:1 states, “You shall make you no idols nor graven image, neither shall you set up any image of stone in your land, to bow down unto it: for I am the Lord your God.” And in Exodus 20:4, we are commanded, “You shall not make unto you any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth.”

Also notice Deuteronomy 4:15-18: “Take careful heed to yourselves, for you saw no form when the Lord spoke to you at Horeb out of the midst of the fire, lest you act corruptly and make

for yourselves a carved image in the form of any figure: the likeness of male or female, the likeness of any beast that is on the earth or the likeness of any winged bird that flies in the air, the likeness of anything that creeps on the ground or the likeness of any fish that is in the water beneath the earth” (NKJV).

Many will argue, “I am not worshipping an idol. I am showing honor to Christ.” But read what the apostle Paul wrote in Romans 1:21-25: “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. Wherefore God also gave them

up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonor their own bodies between themselves: who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen.”

This symbol has its roots in the worship of the pagan Philistine fish-god, Dagon (see Judges 16:23; I Samuel 5:2-7; I Chronicles 1:10). Philistine and Babylonian priests wore head ornaments in the shape of fish heads, in honor of this false god. God commands true Christians, in Jeremiah 10:2, “...Learn not the way of the heathen...” And in Ezekiel 11:12, when pronouncing punishment upon Israel for their disobedience, God said, “...for you have not walked in My statutes, neither executed My judgments, but have done after the manners of the heathen that are round about you.” □



Coping With Miscarriage

Hundreds of women endure shame because of pregnancy loss or not being able to carry a pregnancy to full term. Here are plain facts about miscarriage and how you can prepare your body physically to avoid some of the health pitfalls that bring about pregnancy loss.

BY STACEY L. CASWELL

ATINY MOBILE hangs above an empty snow-white crib covered in pink baby blankets. Nearby, a stuffed bear sits on a shelf above a wooden changing table with diapers already stacked ceiling high. Twilight filters in through a cracked window, announcing the end of the day.

It is time to put the baby to bed.

But unlike millions of other households—whose parents will have the opportunity to gently lull their little one to sleep in a rocking chair—in this household there will be no sweet face to tuck under the blankets, no bedtime stories to read, no hugs to receive, no warm body to hold, and no cries to awake the new parents in the middle of the night. The room will sit motionless, empty—a mere preparation made in expectation of a child who never arrived.

The couple—once excited, but now in anguish—will slowly go to bed, walking with longing past the nursery.

For 25% of couples, their dream of bearing a child can easily turn into an emotional nightmare. After learning they are pregnant, 25% of women have a first trimester pregnancy loss. Generally, after a miscarriage, a woman is able to have several healthy children.

But for another 15%, it can lead to disappointment upon finding out they are unable to carry a child to full term. All the preparation and excitement become a thing of the past. What the couple may have been planning for since their wedding day—the possibility of a houseful of several happy, bright-eyed children—becomes a distant dream.

The couple is left with a decision: (A) Try again, which can include extensive doctor visits, fertility drugs, scheduled sexual relations, close monitoring of the woman's cycle, various blood tests to determine if either party has any type of infection, a dilation and curettage procedure, taking the man's sperm count, any variety of medical surgeries and examining options such as in vitro fertilization. Or (B) live without bearing their own children.

Many couples choose the former, seeking at all costs to have

their own baby—which, after spending thousands of dollars and years of trying without success, can set them up for even greater disappointment later, especially if the couple discovers they are infertile.

After consistently trying for one year to get pregnant, but to no avail, the couple feels like a failure, with some feeling they have been denied their God-given role to become parents.

But as statistics show, one miscarriage does not necessarily mean the couple will be completely infertile. The flipside of the 15% statistic is that 85% will bear children without any complications.

But what exactly does miscarriage mean for the thousands of women who have one? Before becoming overly discouraged, it is important to get the facts on the reasons behind miscarriages and what a couple can do to physically prepare for a healthy baby.

Reason Behind Pregnancy Loss

Pregnancy loss, or “spontaneous abortion,” normally occurs between the first and fourth month, or before the 20th week of pregnancy. After the 20th week, failed pregnancies are called “preterm deliveries.”

For most women, miscarriages can result from structural abnormalities in the fertilized egg, meaning that either the egg or sperm does not have a correct number of chromosomes, causing the fertilized egg to develop incorrectly. Other causes include the egg not being able to plant correctly in the uterus.

Harvey J. Kliman, M.D., Ph.D., Research Scientist of the Yale School of Medicine Department of Obstetrics, Gynecology and Reproductive Sciences, said there are four main causes for not being able to become pregnant: low egg quality, low sperm quality, low embryo quality, and failed implantation.

Failed implantation results if the woman’s uterus is unable to support growing a baby, often due to ill health or a variety of endocrinological malfunctions.

Dr. Kliman, who has worked with hundreds of women, patented and



■ **A CHILD-LOSS:** A three-year-old examines a picture of his brother, who died two days after he was born. A child-loss support group helped the family cope. “I just don’t think I’m ready to give up yet, even if we have another loss,” said the mother. At 27, she wants to continue trying despite two previous pregnancy losses and, last year, the death of her newborn son.

PHOTO: MCT

developed the Endometrial Function Test, which demonstrates the ability of a woman’s uterus to support implantation.

“An embryo is like a plant,” he said. “Therefore, for it to grow, it needs to be put into healthy soil and the soil is the lining of uterus.” He said his test is mainly effective for women considering in vitro fertilization, after all other aspects of the pregnancy have been analyzed.

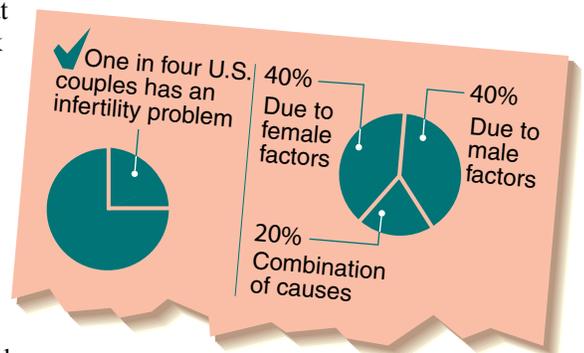
Often women suffer from other genetic complications that do not allow them to get pregnant including the onset of perimenopause, stress, endometriosis, damaged fallopian tubes, and hydrosalpinx, an infection that causes the fallopian tubes to leak fluid, which could be toxic to a newly implanted embryo.

Men who are infertile can suffer from problems such as low sperm count, sometimes caused by unhealthy lifestyle decisions or a variety of genetic disorders, which can affect testicular functioning.

The University of Maryland

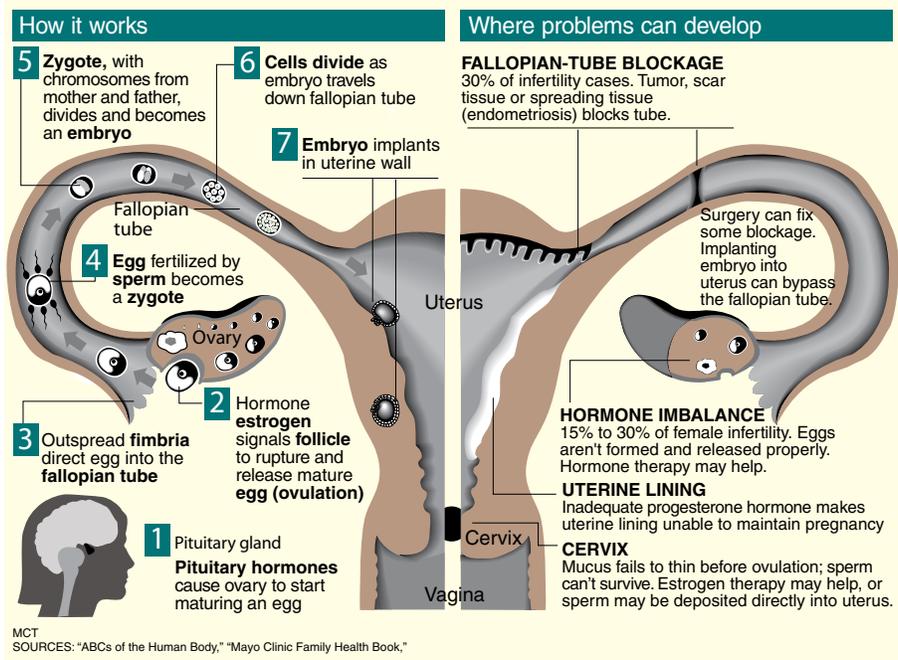
Medical Center also revealed that in men, “deficiencies in certain nutrients, such as vitamin E, vitamin C, selenium, zinc, and folate, may be particular risk factors for infertility.”

In addition, Dr. Kliman said a woman’s weight could play a role in her inability to get pregnant. In a society where thinness is brought to an extreme, with women valuing their figure above all else, Dr. Kliman said another problem women struggle with is trying to get pregnant while being grossly underweight. In such cases, he will flatly inform women they will be unable to support a pregnancy until they gain weight. On the other hand,



MCT / Source: Understanding Fertility Problems

THE FEMALE FERTILITY CYCLE



women who are overweight are more likely to experience complications during pregnancies.

Sometimes women miscarry and do not even know it. These are called “chemical pregnancies,” a clinical term for a very early miscarriage, in which a baby’s heartbeat is not yet detectable.

According to the American Pregnancy Association (APA), these may “account for 50% to 75% of all miscarriages. This occurs when a pregnancy is lost shortly after implantation, resulting in bleeding that occurs around the time of her expected period. The woman may not realize that she conceived when she experiences a chemical pregnancy.”

Regardless of a couples’ health status, experts agree that a miscarriage is less likely if a couple is generally healthy and seeks immediate prenatal care after engaging in sexual relations with the aim of pregnancy.

Coping With a Miscarriage

Once a miscarriage occurs, the effects are not only physically painful, but psychologically scarring. A woman can often take several weeks to a month to recover before trying again.

The APA said that, after losing a pregnancy, a woman may experience

excessive vaginal bleeding or lower abdominal pain lasting up to two days after the miscarriage. She may also experience breast discomfort or leaking milk, or experience excessive bleeding, which results in infection.

Aside from the physical effects of a miscarriage, pregnancy loss can be emotionally devastating. Many have dreamed all their lives about becoming a mother—how they would raise their newborn baby and show pictures of him or her to friends and family. After a failed pregnancy, women suffer with the shame of what they perceive to be their own inadequacy as a woman, loving wife and life-giver. They can even become disillusioned with their very existence and feel something is wrong with them—that they were somehow created “incorrectly.” Most females feel it is unnatural for them to *not* be able to bear children!

Many women feel useless, worthless, empty, destitute and unworthy of their husbands, sentenced to a life of shame because they cannot fulfill the very purpose for which they were created. They blame themselves for everything they have done in life and question every decision they have ever made that could have negatively affected their bodies. They feel it is their fault and

they are being punished for their past mistakes.

Often, it is not until a woman officially conceives that she is able to put this difficult time behind her—and even then, psychological damage continues to persist. Some find themselves wondering: If the baby had been born, what would he or she have been like? Would she have had my features or my husband’s? Would he have grown up to be a successful businessman or a firefighter? These questions sometimes haunt women several *years* after suffering a miscarriage.

Dr. Kliman recalled one couple he treated, who tried eight times to get pregnant without success.

“A lot of women feel their body has failed them,” he said. “It does have a big impact on women and their self esteem. But they still sort of suffer alone in this regards. They don’t necessarily communicate with other people about this.”

However, given that approximately 900,000 to one million U.S. pregnancies out of 4.4 million per year—about 25%—end in miscarriage, women need not feel alone in this regard.

Dr. Kliman said while women mostly bear the brunt of the blame, the problem is half as much the man’s fault as it is the woman’s. “Forty percent are the woman, forty percent are the man and 20 are both,” he said.

But even though a couple may be able to get pregnant after just one miscarriage, coping with a pregnancy loss is not always easy. Often, a healthcare provider can only provide so much information and comfort.

Out of the hundreds of women Dr. Kliman has advised, he said those women with the strongest support system (including a loving husband, family members and friends) often have the highest ability to cope psychologically.

However, he agrees that it is more based on the woman’s individual strength.

“I would say it’s much more related to simply the characteristics of the patient,” he said, “Certain women have stronger constitutions and deal with life

Please see **MISCARRIAGE**, page 25

RESOURCES

Continued from page 12

In its quest for vast amounts of resources, Beijing has shown it will deal with anyone, from African dictators to fundamentalist Islamic clerics, to far-left leaders in Latin America. According to Germany's *Der Spiegel*, China's leadership believes the only chance it has of holding on to power is to continually achieve an annual economic growth rate of at least 8%. And it has no qualms about locking horns with the international community in order to achieve its ends, such as its prevention of "harsh" UN sanctions against Sudan over Darfur. China has also entered into long-term contracts for the shipment of iron ore and natural gas with Australia and has spent billions on energy projects in Canada. Almost 40% of its direct investment goes to Latin America, with much also going to Africa.

■ The United States, even with its large reserves and emphasis on conservation, is still heavily dependent on imported resources. It is the world's biggest consumer of energy. The current administration recognizes the importance of oil and, as such, is busy forging relationships around the world. Most of the world's oil reserves are located in nations not friendly to the U.S. Addressing this issue will be a key component of American foreign policy for years to come.

■ Japan has been concentrating its efforts on the vast energy reserves of Siberia. The Kremlin has awarded Tokyo a contract to construct a 3,800 km (2,361 miles) pipeline across Siberia to the coast, allowing oil to be easily shipped to Japan.

■ With a booming economy, dominated by the energy intensive technology and manufacturing industries, India is heavily dependent on energy imports. Over 70% of its oil and 50% of its natural gas consumption is imported. Its

biggest oil supplier is Saudi Arabia, but it is also supplied by Iran and military-run Myanmar. Once a supporter of the democracy movement there, India has now signed trade agreements with the resource-rich country.

■ Russia, with the vast oil and mineral riches in Siberia, is not as dependent as the others. It is a major exporter of resources.

■ The resource-poor European Union stands as one of the most vulnerable players in the hunt for resources. About half the region's energy requirements are currently imported, and the EU estimates that this could rise to more than 70% if action is not taken. With its diminishing North Sea oil reserves and heavy dependence on uncertain Russian oil, as well as its lack of mineral resources, European planners are faced with the problem of securing resources.

Fight to the Finish

The fight for earth's resources has begun. The battle lines have been drawn, and the contestants have suited up. As nations compete for resources, national tempers will flare-up.

How will it end?

A superpower will soon arise in Europe, a union of ten nations, and will play a key role in world events at the end of the age. When it emerges, it will go into Africa and the Middle East, subjugating many of the countries there (Dan. 11:41-43). A key reason for this will likely be to secure those regions' vast oil and mineral wealth.

This superpower will eventually be challenged by an eastern power led by Russia and China, with a 200 million man army (vs. 43-45; Rev. 9:16).

These two superpowers will eventually assemble near Jerusalem in a final showdown for world domination—a final world war that would eradicate human life if it were not cut short (Matt. 24:21-22).

(For more information, read the following literature posted at www.thercg.org: *The Mid-East in Bible Prophecy* and *Tomorrow's Wonderful World – An Inside View!*). □

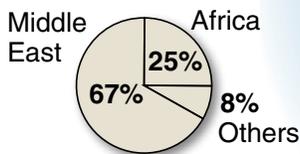
India and Oil

India is a large net oil importer, but it has recently become a net exporter of refined products, thanks to expansion of refining capacity.

Main oil, gas infrastructure

Crude oil imports

By origin

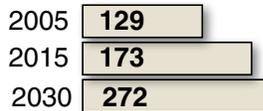


Total crude oil production

In thousand barrels per day

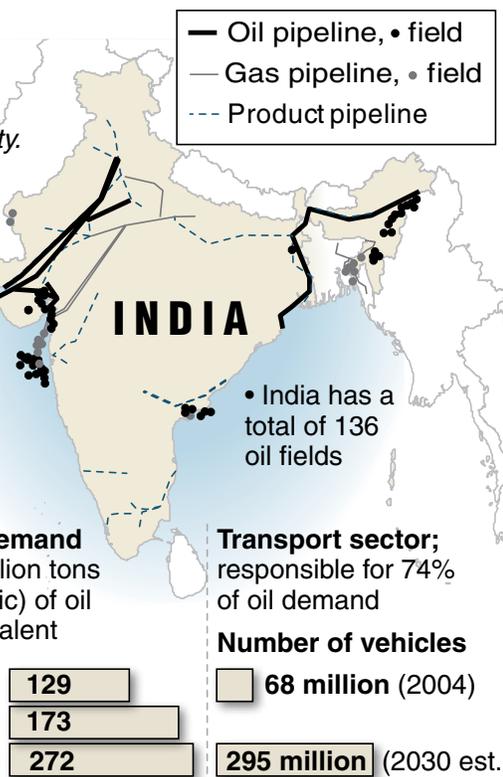


Oil demand
In million tons (metric) of oil equivalent



Transport sector;
responsible for 74% of oil demand

Number of vehicles



PERSONAL

Continued from page 2

Why can man not see this law at work when he looks at the world as a whole? Why is it that no one is looking for the cause of this world's ills and evils? Why are educators not teaching this most important of all principles? As you look at the world around you, are you concerned with it? Do you ever wonder *WHY* it is filled with misery, unhappiness and discontent? And why has even the Christian religion ignored this important relationship between cause and effect?

The cause of all the world's troubles began in the Garden of Eden. As simple as this sounds, it is true. The world has lost sight of a decision made by Adam and Eve. They chose not to eat of the *Tree of Life*, choosing instead to eat of the *tree of the knowledge of good and evil*. Have you ever wondered what would have happened if those two people had chosen the Tree of Life? Think of how this would have changed the entire world! *Everything* would be different.

There would be no armies, wars, death, devastation or displacement of peoples. There would be no famine or hunger because there would be plenty of food for everyone. There would be no doctors, because there would be no illness. All of the hospitals and clinics would never have existed. Neither would the prisons, jails, judges, courts and police forces that exist to punish lawbreakers.

Universal happiness, abundance, prosperity and peace would have been experienced worldwide. All people would get along—neighbors, families, individuals and nations. Can you imagine such a world?

When Adam and Eve made the wrong decision, it directly affected *you* and *me*! They brought untold effects upon humanity, because of their single wrong CAUSE—and this has not been understood prior to the 20th Century.

Let's examine the truth of *WHY* the world is in its current state of unending problems.

The Carnal Mind

Before continuing, let's examine a big reason for why violating the law of cause and effect has beset the world with insoluble problems.

The apostle Paul, in his letter to the Romans, records an amazing statement: "Because the carnal [physical] mind is *enmity against God*: for it is *not subject to the law of God*, neither indeed can be" (8:7). Other translations use the stronger phrase "is the ENEMY of God" in place of "is enmity against God."

For those who will believe it, this single passage offers startling insight into the working of the physical—"carnal"—mind of every human being. Cut off from God, the natural mind is God's enemy—it *hates* Him. Think of it! Ask yourself if any minister, religionist or theologian has ever explained *this* to you.

NO! The religious leaders of this world never refer to this. They either ignore this understanding entirely or do not recognize its far-reaching implications for mankind as a whole!

This verse plainly says that the natural mind does not want, and even hates, to yield to God and obey His law. While most people profess that they "love God," the truth is that their minds despise His way and refuse to truly submit to Him—to His authority over their lives. No wonder the prophet Jeremiah wrote: "O LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself: *it is not in man that walks to direct his steps*" (10:23). This is another incredible statement. When confronted with problems or important decisions, men simply DO NOT KNOW WHAT TO DO! They are at a loss for *how* to correctly address and solve the challenges, difficulties and problems they face in their personal lives.

How then can they solve the far more complex problems engulfing civilization today? *They cannot*. Solutions born of human reasoning always generate *more* problems. We will learn why.

In the Beginning

The apostle John wrote, "In the beginning was the Word" (John 1:1). He then continued, "the Word was *with* God, and the Word *was* God." If there is One who WAS God, but who was also WITH God, it is obvious that two Beings—two Persons—are being described.

Verse 14 continues, "the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us." The only God-Being who ever became flesh in order to dwell among men is Jesus Christ. Remember, it says that the Word "was made flesh." Christ was not flesh until He came to earth to become the Savior of mankind.

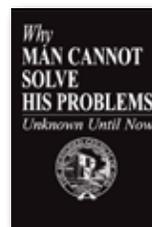
In Genesis 1:1 it states, "In the beginning God..." Moses recorded the first five books of the Old Testament in the Hebrew language. The Hebrew word translated "God" is *Elohim*. This word is uniplural and refers to words like team, group, family or church. God is one Family—One God—composed of TWO Beings. This is why Christ could *be* God and *with* God at the same time. John 4:24 states that "God is Spirit." God is actually made up of—composed of—Spirit. Men are composed of flesh.

Later in Genesis 1, we find that God said, "Let US [more than one] make man in OUR image, after OUR likeness" (vs. 26). There was clearly more than one person involved in the creation of man. Verse 25 adds that each animal was made after "his kind."

Dogs come from dogs and have puppies that look like dogs. Cats come from cats and have kittens that look like cats. Horses come from horses and have foals that look like horses. This is true throughout the entire animal kingdom. There is no mystery here.

But here is what *has* been a mystery. Men are not part of the animal kind. They do not carry the likeness of any "beast of the earth" (vs. 25).

They are made in the image and likeness of God. They are part of the God kind. So says your Bible! (To learn more, read my booklet *Why Man Cannot Solve His Problems – Unknown Until Now*) □



AFRICA

Abuse and Rape Part of Life for Darfur Women

After five years of conflict in the Darfur region of Sudan, women and girls in the internally displaced persons (IDP) camps, as well as rural areas, live in constant fear of violent sexual attacks and have no way to gain justice for crimes committed against them, according to a report by Human Rights Watch (HRW).

The report, titled “Five Years On – No Justice for Sexual Violence in Darfur” shows the problem of sexual violence has gone unabated for years.

A humanitarian organization, Médecins sans Frontières, treated almost 500 women and girls from October 2004 to February 2005.

In 2006, *IRIN* reported that during a five-week period there were over 200 reports of sexual assault.

However, the number of actual rapes and sexual assaults is impossible to know because of what HRW calls “chronic underreporting.”

Complicating matters, the sexual crimes are being committed at nearly every level of society. Rebel groups, military personnel, police, militia and criminal gangs have all been accused of perpetrating rape and assault.

Despite military efforts by the African Union, efforts by individual relief organizations, and repeated promises by the Sudanese government to address the issue, the crisis continues relatively unchecked. The HRW said that all “measures have so far failed to address root causes of sexual violence, prevent pervasive and persistent incidents of sexual violence throughout Darfur, or reverse the climate of impunity that perpetuates it.”

As of December 2007, peacekeeping in the region was charged to the United Nations African Mission in Darfur (UNAMID)—the largest-ever peacekeeping mission of 26,000 uniformed personnel. But four months after assuming the responsibilities, only about 1/3 of the promised forces have been deployed.

Armed groups target IDP camps be-



■ **IS THERE RECOVERY?:** A 14-year-old girl, who was raped outside of a refugee camp when she was collecting firewood, sits in her makeshift shelter in the Kalma IDP camp in South Darfur. Across the region, relief workers and refugees increasingly report of rapes and beatings by the Janjaweed, who stalk women searching for firewood, creating a climate of fear and insecurity.

PHOTO: MCT

cause of the presence of international aid organizations. Large scale looting and banditry takes place and UNAMID forces constantly come under attack. During these raids, crimes of sexual violence against woman and girls are common.

A Sudanese member of parliament, Salih Mahmoud Osman, said that most rapes offences were committed in the presence of male relatives of the woman, such as like their husbands, fathers and brothers, and that “rape is used as a weapon of war.”

He said that one of the problems in bringing the perpetrators to justice was the fact that the Sudanese court was in contravention with international standards, which makes it almost impossible to bring cases to conviction. The law of evidence by using medical reports is not recognized by the court and the only way to prove rape is to bring four male witnesses who have seen the offense happen.

To address the problem, the international community has deployed more troops to the region to try to end the attacks on civilians as well as instruct the Sudan military forces in the correct procedures in dealing with sexual violence.

Deployments of high-ranking women, who are trained in dealing with the sensitive nature of the problem, are being sent to the IDP camps.

Even with these measures in place, soldiers stationed in bases near the IDP camps wait for woman to leave these camps to perform their daily survival activities. There have been reports of women being kidnapped and raped. The victims are then sent back to the camps in the nude.

The UN has said that 80% of the UNAMID troops will be in place by the end of the year. With increased security in the region, it is hoped that the forces will be able to finally slow the sexual violence crisis. □

HEALTH ISSUES

One-Third of World Without Proper Sanitation

Of the estimated 6.7 billion people on earth, 2.6 billion—more than one third—“live without access to even a toilet at home and thus are vulnerable to a range of health risks,” according to a preliminary report by the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF).

The lack of access to proper sanitation, including clean water, “is a major cause of diarrhea, the second biggest killer of children in developing countries, and leads to other major diseases such as cholera, schistosomiasis, and trachoma,” the report said.

Africa’s situation is the most dire: more than 60% of Africans do not have access to a toilet—and in Central Africa alone, unclean water threatens the health of one million people.

Dr. Margaret Chan, the Director-General for the World Health Organization said that “sanitation is a cornerstone of public health.”

“Improved sanitation contributes enormously to human health and well being,” she said in a statement. “We know that simple, achievable interventions reduce the risk of contracting diarrheal disease by a third. Sanitation matters because a toilet at home spares a family from illness, health care expenses, and time lost from work and school.”

War torn nations are most at risk.

According to sanitation reports compiled from several relief agencies by the *UN News Service*, “the situation was worst in the northeast of the Central African Republic (CAR), where fighting between Government forces and rebels and attacks by local bandits have forced thousands of people out of their villages to seek shelter in the nearby bush.

“The insecurity is so widespread across the north of the country that many Central Africans there are too afraid to return to their villages, instead resorting to stagnant pools or rivers in the bush areas for their water supplies. Those that have remained in their

villages often face wells that are not working.”

The situation is the same for Afghanistan, which has suffered from war for decades.

In 2007, Afghanistan was ranked as the worst place in the world for sanitation in the “State of the World’s Toilets” report—92% of the country’s 26.6 million people lacked proper toilet facilities.

UNICEF reported that “preventable diseases such as diarrhea, cholera, dysentery and pneumonia kill about 600 under-five Afghan children every day” and “about 25 percent of under-five children in Afghanistan are affected annually by disease originating from poor and/or bad sanitation.”

Not only does poor sanitation result in health problems and death, it has economic implications for a country.

“Improved sanitation increases primary school enrollment, reduces illnesses so children miss fewer school days, increases productivity among adults, provides safety to women, and reduces the pollution of water resources,” according to a statement by The World Bank Group.

“The costs of environmental and health degradation due to inadequate water and sanitation services have been estimated at more than 1 percent of GDP in Colombia, 0.6 percent in Tunisia, and 1.4 percent in Bangladesh.”

In addition, the report quoted a study by the Water and Sanitation Program, which maintained that “poor sanitation is responsible for at least \$9 billion in economic losses per year in Cambodia, Indonesia, the Philippines and Vietnam combined.”

The same report also said that approximately 1.7 million deaths worldwide per year are due to unsafe water, poor sanitation and hygiene, primarily through infectious diarrhea.

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said that a lack of political will was the biggest obstacle to improving sanitary

conditions around the world. “Every dollar invested in water and sanitation yields an estimated seven dollars worth of productive activity. And that comes on top of the immeasurable gains in cutting poverty, improving health and raising living standards.”

Even in nations considered more economically developed, safe drinking water and proper sanitation is a problem.

According to the UN Economic Commission for Europe, “...over 100 million Europeans still do not have access to safe drinking water.” Of the 56 countries in the pan-European region, “37 children die of diarrhea each day due to the lack of access to safe water.”

In addition, the commission said, “The incidence of infectious diseases caused by poor-quality drinking water is often highest in children aged 6 to 11 months. More than 170,000 cases of water-related disease were reported in 2006, including over 120,000 cases of viral hepatitis A.

“The spread of water-transmitted diseases is especially common in Eastern Europe, where 16 percent of the population still do not have access to drinking water in their homes. The situation is even more severe in rural areas, where more than half of the population lacks a reliable supply of safe water and/or adequate sanitation systems.”

An editorial in *The East African Standard*, a daily newspaper in Nairobi, highlighted the problem: “Each year, the UN reports, poor sanitation and unsafe water claim the lives of 1.5 million children. Humankind’s biggest hurdle remains the deplorable failure to turn around the lives of the 2.6 billion people—half the population of the developing world—that has no access to basic sanitation.”

The editorial later added, “It is appalling that what could be the simplest of global problems has turned out the hardest.” □

GEOPOLITICS

China, New Zealand Sign Historic Free Trade Agreement

Leaders of New Zealand and China have signed a Free Trade Agreement (FTA), marking the first time a developed country has entered into a free trade agreement with the communist nation. The pact will phase out most tariffs between the two countries by 2019. “Over time this FTA will result in the elimination of tariffs on 96 percent of New Zealand exports to China, and is estimated to lift New Zealand’s export revenue from China between US\$180 to US\$280 million (NZ\$225 to NZ\$350 million) every year,” New Zealand Prime Minister Helen Clark said in a statement.

Currently, exporters from New Zealand face a 10 to 20% tariff when trading with China.

However, the FTA will not only affect trade on goods, but services as well. Business visitors from New Zealand will be allowed to stay in China for up to six months, rather than the cur-

rent 90-day maximum.

In return, New Zealand has promised to provide faster processing of student visas and will allow up to 1,800 skilled Chinese workers per year to enter New Zealand.

The agreement was the result of 15 rounds of negotiations over three years.

New Zealand has been criticized for signing the agreement due to current international outcry against China’s treatment of Tibet.

Parliament member Keith Locke expressed concerns with the agreement’s timing. “We shouldn’t be signing a free trade agreement on the back of the Tibetan people and their rights to be free of Chinese domination,” he said in *ONE News*.

The trade pact has not been embraced by New Zealand citizens either. A *ONE News/Colmar Brunton* poll, taken before the FTA was signed, revealed that 49% of New Zealand voters were opposed to

the treaty; 39% were in favor; and 12% were undecided.

However, Ms. Clark maintained that the agreement “promotes co-operation in a broad range of economic areas, and also provides a platform for further engagement at the governmental, cultural and people-to-people levels.”

In a written interview with the *Xinhua News Agency*, Ms. Clark said the agreement was “an important outcome for New Zealand.”

“It demonstrates that we can work effectively with one of the world’s major economies,” she said.

New Zealand’s Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade Phil Goff agreed. He said in a statement that “the FTA will give New Zealand businesses a distinct advantage over competitors into that market.”

The FTA is scheduled to become effective by October of this year, pending final approval from both nations. □

MISCARRIAGE

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in general, adversity and in a way that they are able to get through it better.”

Begin Preparing Now

According to pregnancy experts, one of the worst moves that a couple can make is to begin preparing too late—or ignore the warning signs of a failed pregnancy.

“When a mother’s body is having difficulty sustaining a pregnancy, signs (such as slight vaginal bleeding) may occur. This is a threatened abortion, which means there is a possibility of miscarriage, but it does not mean one will definitely occur. A pregnant woman who develops any signs or symptoms of threatened miscarriage should contact her prenatal provider immediately” (*Healthline*).

Other symptoms can include severe abdominal pain and pelvic cramps.

Most women do not take into account

that certain lifestyle choices leading up to a pregnancy will affect them. These include whether they practice correct eating habits and live healthy lifestyles.

Dr. Kliman said that everything a woman has eaten, the things she has taken into her body, the air she has been exposed to, or her general state of health potentially affect her ability to give birth.

“There are two things that women can do,” he said. “Have children as early as you can and just live a healthy life in terms of eating well, take vitamins, [eat] fruits, vegetables, [and] antioxidants.”

Dr. Kliman also recommends not smoking, not drinking too much alcohol, not using drugs, and not being too overweight or too underweight. He also said that minimizing stress is crucial to a healthy pregnancy. He has often seen women and couples focused on becoming pregnant feel so much stress that they are unable to conceive; but once the couple has stopped routinely trying, they are able to get pregnant more easily.

In addition, he recommends that women begin taking folic acid as early as possible. “Taking folic acid is one of the most important things to prevent neural tube defects,” he said.

Unlike men, he added, who can have children until their 80s, women’s ability to bear children peaks between ages 20 to 25, and begins to drop when a woman enters her 30s. By the time a woman is 40, Dr. Kliman says, she only has a 10% chance of having children.

“The clock for women is a very ruthless, unforgiving clock.”

Although a miscarriage can be discouraging, a couple should take comfort that just one failed pregnancy does not necessarily equal being unable to bear children.

There are steps both parties can take to improve their chances of giving birth to a healthy baby—including making smart lifestyle choices *now*.

To understand more, read our booklet *God’s Principles of Healthful Living*. □



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