

JULY 2011

THE

WWW.REALTRUTH.ORG

REAL TRUTH

A MAGAZINE RESTORING PLAIN UNDERSTANDING



LEFT vs. RIGHT

Global Political Rift



THE REAL TRUTH

A MAGAZINE RESTORING PLAIN UNDERSTANDING

VOL. IX | NO. 6 | JULY 2011

ARTICLES

WWW.REALTRUTH.ORG



■ **DESTRUCTIVE FUNNEL:** An F2 tornado touches down in South Dakota.

PHOTO: CANSTOCKPHOTO

When Wild Weather Strikes...

Tornado swarms, massive floods, record-setting droughts—why such volatile weather?

Page 11

FEATURES

Personal from David C. Pack **1**
World News Desk **28**

■ **FRONT COVER:** Top, lawmakers express outrage following a vote in Madison, Wisconsin. Bottom, Greek municipal workers confront police.

PHOTOS: (TOP) SCOTT OLSON/GETTY IMAGES; (BOTTOM) LOUISA GOULIAMAKI/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

America the Jobless

What happens to a nation whose citizens no longer work?

Page 4

Seeing Clearly

The Story of the Human Eye

The human eye is truly fascinating. One of the most complex systems in existence, its origin is among the least understood. Learn why evolutionary theories become *blurry* where the eye is concerned.

Page 7

GLOBAL POLITICAL RIFT

Liberals vs. Conservatives:

Will the United States Be Ripped Apart?

Cutthroat politics have left the United States in political stalemate.

Page 14

North vs. South:

What Can Unite a Fracturing Europe?

The European Union is missing the key ingredient to truly unify the power bloc.

Page 17

The True Church—Unbroken for 2,000 Years!

The Church Jesus Christ built has continued for two millennia and can still be found today.

Page 20

What Is Conversion?

Many believe “conversion” is simply accepting Jesus Christ as Savior. Yet the Bible reveals otherwise.

Page 23

PUBLISHER/EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
DAVID C. PACK

SENIOR EDITORS
WILLIAM H. BEHRER
KEVIN D. DENECE
GABRIEL N. LISCHAK

MANAGING EDITOR
JEFFREY R. AMBROSE

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

DAVID C. PACK
JEFFREY R. AMBROSE
SAMUEL C. BAXTER
WILLIAM H. BEHRER
ABDON V. BUENA
RYAN L. CASWELL
SCOTT A. CLARK
JEFFREY D. DAVIS
KEVIN D. DENECE
MARK P. DENECE
RYAN P. DENECE
JONATHAN A. DICEN
ROBERT R. FARRELL
BRIAN K. JACKSON
GREG E. KAIDANNEK
GABRIEL N. LISCHAK
H. CHRIS LOMAS
LARRY J. MCELROY
KENNETH M. OREL
JUSTIN T. PALM
JAMES RODRIGUEZ
BRADFORD G. SCHLEIFER
MARK A. SHARPE
JACOB C. TOEWS
NESTOR A. TORO
JAMES F. TURCK
F. JACO VILJOEN
VIDAL N. WACHUKU

ASSOCIATE EDITORS
SAMUEL C. BAXTER
STACEY L. PALM

ART/GRAPHICS
DARNITRA D. JACKSON
PAULA C. RONDEAU

WEBSITE SERVICES
BRADFORD G. SCHLEIFER
ANGELA K. BAXTER
JEFFREY D. DAVIS
JUSTIN M. FRAZIER

The Real Truth magazine is provided free of charge. This is made possible by the voluntary, freely given tithes and offerings of the members of The Restored Church of God, and by the offerings and donations of co-workers and donors. Contributions are gratefully welcomed and are tax-deductible in the U.S. and Canada. Those who wish to voluntarily aid and support the Work of God in preaching and publishing the gospel to all nations are gladly welcomed as co-workers. Contributions should be sent to the address below.

The preparation and production of this magazine involved the work of editors, proofreaders, graphic artists, illustrators, writers, researchers and those who support the Work of God.

Copyright © 2011, The Restored Church of God. Printed in the USA. All rights reserved.

The Restored Church of God is not responsible for the return of unsolicited articles and photos.

Scriptures are quoted from the King James (or Authorized) Version of the Bible, unless otherwise noted.

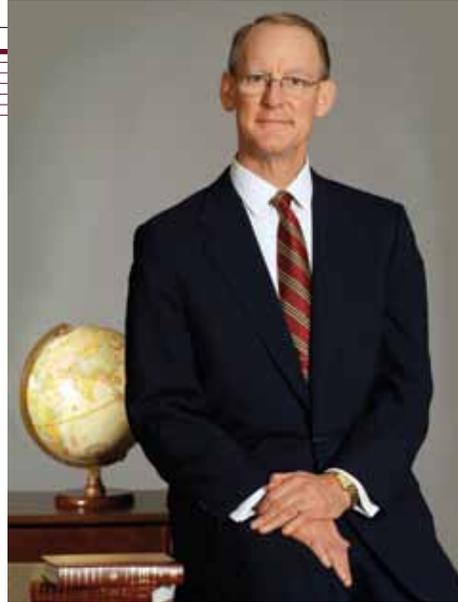
Contact The Real Truth:

P.O. Box 23295
Wadsworth, OH 44282

www.realtruth.org

PERSONAL FROM

David C. Fack



Live the Abundant Life!

NEVER HAS the world had so much, yet been so miserable. Depression, unhappiness, confusion, frustration, unfulfilled hopes and dreams, dissatisfaction, emptiness—and HOPELESS MISERY—describe humanity the world over.

The American Constitution guarantees its citizens the right to “pursuit of happiness.” The framers knew they could not guarantee reaching it. They could only guarantee one’s right to “pursue” it. Most are pursuing happiness, but in all the *wrong* places!—and they are not finding it.

Vast new frontiers of expanding scientific knowledge have not brought the happiness that leaders prophesied would accompany it. Neither have laborsaving devices, which were supposed to bring people more leisure time to “enjoy themselves.” Instead, mental illness, drug addiction, despair, suicide, alcoholism, self-pity, and other forms of escapism—and *general discontent with life*—are everywhere.

Educators have failed to lead people to the abundant life. So have scientists. Religion has also failed terribly in teaching people what God intends they know about *real* abundant living.

Many religions have taught people to *feel guilty* if they enjoy themselves—if they are HAPPY! So many

believe God wants them to suppress joy and happiness—and that Christ *expects* this from His followers.

Millions view Christianity as a series of “Thou shalt *nots*,” rather than THE PATH to enjoying a wonderful, happy life. These same millions often think of sin as the fun that will end if they obey God. They think accepting Jesus also means accepting a constrained life.

Be honest. Haven’t you seen Christianity primarily *this* way? Haven’t you thought that Christianity primarily means an *end* to fun, pleasure, excitement, thrills and an interesting life? Haven’t you also thought of most church services as solemn, sober, unemotional and devoid of real meaning—and *happiness*? Because of this, many attend emotional churches, seeking a *feeling* (always temporary) they equate with happiness in order to fill terrible emptiness inside.

Few equate Christianity with enjoying a true zest for life!

What Christ Said

Just before His crucifixion, Jesus taught His disciples many vital principles, saying, “These things have I spoken unto you, that My JOY [Jesus’ own joy] might remain in you, and that your JOY *might be full*” (John 15:11). Knowing the disciples would grieve at His death, He added, “Your sorrow shall be turned into JOY...and your JOY no man takes from you” (16:20, 22).

This is a powerful promise. Christians are to experience real joy and happiness *in this life*—if they are pleasing and obeying God. Most know nothing of this extraordinary statement, or similar verses. Yet it has been God’s purpose from the beginning that His servants enjoy life to the FULL—and with *His* joy.

Consider. The true God of the Bible is the happiest Being in the universe! David understood this and wrote: “In [God’s] presence is *fullness of joy*” (Psa. 16:11). God lives life with “*fullness of joy*.” All those in His presence can experience this. The apostle Jude added God wants “to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with *exceeding joy*” (vs. 24).

This is your ultimate destiny!

Why then would God expect His people to merely *endure* this life? This life is a time of lesson-learning, including trials and suffering. But it is also a forerunner, in a very small way, of what eternal life is intended to be. It would make no sense for God to expect life to consist of only suffering and pain *now* as preparation for perfect joy and happiness *later*.

What Christ Brought

Many years ago, I learned of one of the most incredible verses in the entire Bible. No one in the large, respected denomination of my youth ever mentioned it. Apparently, none ever *thought* about it either, because their lives did not reflect it. Notice: “I am come [Jesus said] that they might have life, and that they might have it more *abundantly*” (John 10:10).

Have you seen or *heard* of this verse? Probably not. Christ came bringing the *abundant* life—and said so plainly!

Yet so many believe Christianity is supposed to be *endured* instead of *enjoyed*. Why do they not understand that the radiant, abundant life can be theirs—if they will follow God’s formula to achieve it?

God never instructs or commands His people to avoid anything unless it is for *their own good*. Many things *seem* like fun, but carry a delayed penalty, and price, afterward. God instructs what to avoid so we will not get hit later by an unexpected “boomerang”!

I have not met one person who actually *wanted* to be unhappy. All want to live life to the fullest, and feel happiness and joy. But most have simply not known *how* to do this—or whether God even *expected* it. He does—and tells you *how*!

Bible Formula

For every person, there is a different definition for what a Christian is. Can you turn to a verse that explains, removing all doubt? There *is* such a verse—and it is the only place to begin to learn how to live the HAPPY, JOYFUL, ABUNDANT LIFE!

The apostle Paul said more about happiness than any other Bible writer. The verse that speaks most about this subject appears not to mention it. Let’s read it: “You are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, *he is none of His*” (Rom. 8:9).

This basic scripture leaves no room for misunderstanding. A Christian is *one who has the Spirit of God*. If not, “he is none of His.” This includes you. Countless millions of merely professing Christians sincerely believe they are “Christ’s,” yet do not have God’s Spirit and are, therefore, not Christians.

Keep this simple—as we move step-by-step. The beginning point of Christianity is that one must receive God’s Spirit. But what does the Holy Spirit have to do with happiness, joy and the abundant life? Let’s connect two big dots. First notice: “The fruit of the Spirit is love, JOY, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness and temperance” (Gal. 5:22-23).

This verse is all-important. When a newly converted Christian receives the Spirit of God, he gets a little of each of these qualities of God’s character. Since God experiences fullness of joy, it is not strange then that His Holy Spirit—which is His “divine nature” (II Pet. 1:4)—includes JOY.

The Christian starts out by practicing “love,” the only fruit listed before joy. Love is the fulfilling of the Law of God (Rom. 13:10; I John 5:3). “Joy” is listed second because it is the first and most immediate *byproduct* of practicing obedience to God’s Law. Next comes “peace,” which flows from being genuinely happy in life—and toward those around you.

It is not hard to see how this will yield real peace in your relationships with others. Without God’s Spirit within one’s mind—which produces the deep, inner peace Paul wrote must “rule in your hearts” (Col. 3:15)—it is impossible to be happy.

Each additional fruit of the Spirit will flow as a direct result of having God’s Spirit, and *being* a real Christian. While millions may think they are Christians, and may think they have the Holy Spirit, they have not followed the biblical formula of Acts 2:38.

This means you. If God’s Spirit is present within you, you can experience a joy and peace no one can take from you—even when persecuted. The Bible states, “*All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution*” (II Tim. 3:12). You will be persecuted for your beliefs, but this need not upset you and cause unhappiness.

God actually tells us to “rejoice, and be exceeding glad” (Matt. 5:11-12) when the very worst and most intense kinds of persecution and false accusation are thrown against us. This is because we will receive

Please see **PERSONAL**, page 25

You Can Know the Future...



www.TheRCG.org



AMERICA the Jobless

What happens to a nation whose citizens
no longer work?

BY SCOTT A. CLARK

STEVE HAD it all—a thriving small business in Florida, an attractive home, beautiful family, two cars, and the American dream of wealth and prosperity within his grasp. He had been working toward this goal for almost 15 years. Flush with cash, he began looking for ways to leverage his business income.

Having kept a keen eye on the real estate market, he knew not to

invest. The sunshine state's housing market was at fever pitch and properties were overvalued. He decided to wait for the market correction, which would cause prices to come down. After all, he knew history repeats itself; after every price boom, there is always a bust.

But when the collapse did finally arrive, Steve was not prepared for the scope of it. The entire nation, in fact, the world, was suddenly on the brink of financial disaster. Soon, Steve

found himself out of business, out of work, and out of cash. Faced with a destroyed dream, and the prospect of having to work for someone else for the first time in years, he wondered how it all went wrong.

Work finally came after 16 months. Steve was offered a management position 5,000 miles away in another country, only to be laid off within nine months when the crisis hit overseas. He was forced to return to Florida, where the pattern continued. Each company within his chosen field was downsized or went bankrupt.

■ **LOOKING FOR WORK:** Prospective employees line up at a job fair in Las Vegas, Nevada (April 14, 2010).

PHOTO: ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

By the end of 2010, southern Florida's economy was still suffering from the recession's effects. Seasonally adjusted unemployment reached 12.2 percent, and the housing market was crushed. In March 2011, South Florida home prices hit their lowest level since the recession began, a devastating blow that reflected the national trend. It caused many economists to speculate that recent market gains were superficial.

Today, a stunning 46 percent of all homes in Florida are underwater, and their owners owe more than their market value—over double the national average of 22.7 percent. The *South Florida Business Journal* cited a study by CoreLogic that showed Florida ranks third behind Arizona (50 percent) and Nevada (63 percent) in number of homes with negative equity.

This story and others could be repeated by untold thousands across a once-wealthy, prosperous nation. What happens to the national psyche of a once-productive people when millions remain out of work for months or years?

Price of Unemployment

According to a Pew Research Center survey, long-term unemployment (six months or longer) has a deep impact on an individual's emotional well-being, career prospects, and finances.

"Of those who have experienced an unemployment spell of at least six months, more than four-in-ten (44%) report that the recession has caused—'major changes' in their lives," it revealed. "By comparison, fewer than a third (31%) of those who had been unemployed less than six months and 20% of adults who were not unemployed during the recession say they were similarly affected."

This is bad news according to the Bureau of Labor, which stated in a report that "the median duration of unemployment stood at 24.2 weeks in May 2010, meaning half of the unemployed—the largest proportion since World War II—have been looking for work for six months or more. The previous high, in May 1983, was 12.3

weeks, about half the level today."

This factor is particularly problematic as those who have been out of work six months or longer often suffer the most.

"Slightly less than three-in-ten adults who were unemployed less than three months (29%) and those jobless for three to five months (28%) say they lost some self-respect while they were not working. That proportion rises somewhat to 38% among those unemployed for six months or longer. The long-term unemployed also are twice as likely as those unemployed less than six months to have sought professional help to deal with depression and other emotional issues (24% vs. 12%)" (Pew Research Center).

When out-of-work husbands are resigned to relying on their wives' income, or wives, as a result of their joblessness, feel trapped at home, stress levels build. In such a tough economic climate, young college graduates—or even 30-somethings—often decide it is easier to live with their parents than face a cutthroat job market. This also occurs with middle-aged citizens who stop searching for jobs after realizing they are hopelessly lost in a haze of rapid-fire technological change.

As is often the case, the stress of unemployment significantly affects relationships with family and friends. "Four-in-ten unemployed report they lost contact with close friends while jobless. Roughly the same proportion (42%) report strained relations with their families...A small proportion acknowledged that they had problems with alcohol or drugs (5%) during the time they were jobless" (ibid.).

The Pew study also stated, "Few significant differences are evident between workers who were unemployed less than three months and those who were jobless for three to five months," the report stated. "But among those unemployed for six months or longer, experiences with emotional problems increased dramatically."

Claims Rise

According to *Reuters*, the number of new claims for unemployment ben-

efits nationwide rose unexpectedly in early June 2011. The increase has reinforced concerns that the labor market recovery has stalled.

State jobless benefit claims for the week ending June 4 initially increased by 1,000—totaling 427,000. An additional poll, however, showed that economists had expected claims to drop to 415,000 from a previously reported count of 422,000. Compounding these worries, the U.S. government stated that the unemployment rate notched up to 9.2 percent in June, and only 18,000 jobs were added to nonfarm industries.

Although there has been a downward trend in new claims since the beginning of the year, this recent increase has dampened countrywide optimism. To add insult to injury, the news coincided with a report that showed lower-than-expected expansion in the service sector, which employs 90 percent of the nation's workforce.

With the U.S. economic recovery plan showing signs of fracture, the monthly unemployment reports will be a key indicator within the coming months. The data could cause companies to pull back on hiring—a major problem for workers struggling to obtain steady employment.

Still, economists continue to be optimistic, stating that the recent signs of weakness are a one-time fluke, and do not reflect the underlying trend—a bold position considering that the economy keeps being hit by negative shockwaves. Clearly, if the rate of job growth does not pick up soon, it will be a grim future for the millions of Americans who are still looking for jobs.

Disappearing Pride

Workers drive a nation. If there are no workers, no products can be manufactured. If payrolls are not increasing, then people cannot stir the economy with spending.

Long-term joblessness means fewer dollars for consumption, deficit reduction and control. It also equates to fewer individual and corporate tax

dollars contributing to government revenues. Adding to the issue is the increase in billions of dollars in expenditures for entitlement benefits.

Less money coming in, and more money going out—a recipe for disaster!

When there are not enough funds, employees are laid off, roads cannot be repaired, infrastructure begins to crumble, and cities go to waste.

Because of joblessness, poverty levels rise and crime goes up. In certain cases, incarcerated criminals may need to be released for lack of income to the state, which forces an already downsized police force to contend with an increasingly violent society. Add to this natural disasters, which have driven food prices through the roof, and have further pushed those hanging on to even a part-time job down poverty's steep cliff.

All one has to do is read about Detroit, Michigan, or Chicago, Illinois, to understand this pattern.

“What is left in Englewood and West Englewood [suburbs of Chicago] draws comparison to the worst of Detroit,” *The Chicago Tribune* reported. “As residents fled and investors pulled out, the number of abandoned buildings and vacant lots on many streets outnumbers occupied buildings.

“Into that emptiness has washed a flood of urban ills. Drug dealers use the abandoned houses to store their stashes, addicts break in to shoot up. Sexual predators drag victims into empty houses and prostitutes find decrepit ruins convenient for doing business.”

Such a cycle has caused extreme hopelessness for many across the

country. Safe neighborhoods once filled with innocent, laughing children are now dangerous hangouts for gun-toting gang members. White-picket-fence homes are boarded up, their owners forced to default on their mortgages when they lost their jobs.

Since no one wants to move into empty houses in unsafe neighborhoods, remaining residents are forced to make a decision: stand their ground

all while feeling there is virtually no hope for themselves—or the future of the country.

How has the nation slipped into such decline?

Country of Greatness

America has long been known for its abundance and ability to produce and manufacture on a massive scale. The nation has the greatest concentration of natural resources in the world. This allowed it for a time to produce the majority of the world's oil, steel, coal, tin, iron, lead and copper, among other important metals.

At the same time, it also had the governmental stability necessary to maximize those resources. Because of this, the U.S. became the envy of the world—many millions wanted to emigrate there.

At that time, Americans were proud to be farmers, to be able to work the land they possessed and earn the kind of living they desired. Opportunities abounded—nothing was out of the question. They considered the United States unique, had hope for the country's future, and worked hard to help make it great.

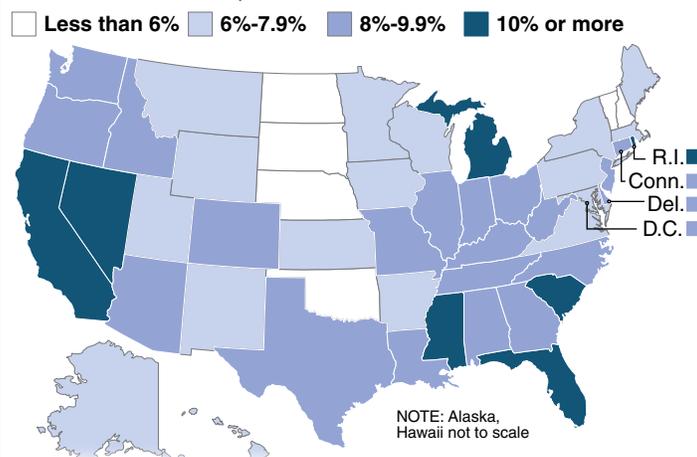
In his book *America and Britain in Prophecy*, David C. Pack writes, “America's forefathers

could never have envisioned this nation as the global superpower it became. The United States has continually been at the forefront of economic prosperity, medical science, technology, food production, sanitation, architecture, space exploration, etc. Its citizens enjoy freedoms unattainable to so many.”

Please see **JOBLESS**, page 22

Unemployment by State

The national unemployment rate for May was 9.1 percent. How the state rates compare:



Changes since last year

Forty-three states reported decreases in jobless rates from a year earlier; best and worst changes in jobless rates, May 2010 to May 2011:

Best			Worst		
State	May '11 rate	Change from May '10	State	May '11 rate	Change from May '10
Nev.	12.1%	-2.8	N.J.	9.4%	-0.1
Mich.	10.3%	-2.5	Tenn.	9.7%	-0.1
Ind.	8.2%	-2.2	Texas	8.0%	-0.1
Okla.	5.3%	-1.8	Ark.	7.8%	0.0
Ill.	8.9%	-1.6	Conn.	9.1%	0.0
Ohio	8.6%	-1.6	S.D.	4.8%	0.0
Ore.	9.3%	-1.6	Ala.	9.6%	0.1
N.M.	6.9%	-1.4	Mont.	7.3%	0.1
N.H.	4.8%	-1.3	Idaho	9.4%	0.2
Pa.	7.4%	-1.3	La.	8.2%	0.9

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Graphic: Judy Treible © 2011 MCT

in homes that they have invested in, hoping the economy picks up and allows them to turn a profit by selling, or start a life elsewhere, with the knowledge their once-beloved place will soon become just another residential casualty.

Having lived in a neighborhood for decades and with no other place to go, most cannot help but stay. They are forced to accept the hand dealt them,

Seeing Clearly

The Story of the Human Eye

The human eye is truly fascinating. One of the most complex systems in existence, its origin is among the least understood. Learn why evolutionary theories become *blurry* where the eye is concerned.

BY BRADFORD G. SCHLEIFER



PHOTO: KEN HURST/GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO/THINKSTOCK

WHAT ALLOWS you to read the articles in this magazine? Obviously, at a more complex level, you have to understand the English language. But before you even begin to decipher *what* is written, you must see it. In fact, an amazingly complex series of actions takes place between your eyes and your brain for you to see what is written on this page.

Your eyes are responsible for 80 percent of the information your brain receives. This makes it by

far the most vital of your sensory inputs. Just imagine trying to live without your vision!

From how the inner eye functions, to how light becomes a picture in your mind, science has studied the human eye in such detail it is astounding.

But while the *function* of the eye is crystal clear, its origin seems clouded in mystery. As mentioned in previous articles, what is really only the *theory* of evolution is assumed to be *fact*. Children are taught it in school and most scientists subscribe to its tenets. Surely, evolution at least attempts to open the window into the origin of the eye. If so, there must be creatures from whom our eyes have evolved.

The story of this fascinating organ is both inspiring and, pardon the pun, eye-opening!

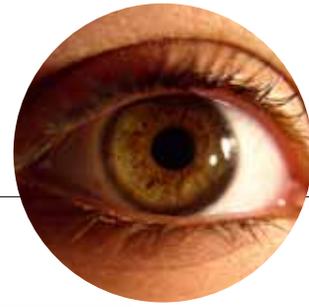
How Does It Work?

Before looking at the eye in the light of evolution, we must first understand how the eye functions and what systems are in place to allow photons to become an image. But you may wonder: what is a photon?

The whole universe is made up of tiny, microscopic (or even smaller) particles. The combination of these particles is what constitutes matter—the universe in which we live. One of these basic “particles” is a photon. Photons originate in the sun and are

Inside the Eye

A cross-section view of the human eye:



SCLERA: Photon “pellets” enter your eye, coming in contact with this outer layer. The sclera maintains your eye’s shape and acts as its frame. Muscles are attached to it, which are responsible for moving your eye. Interestingly, while only four muscles are needed, the eye has two extra muscles. This provides additional stability.

CORNEA: Inside the sclera is the cornea, the clear surface that light—in this case “pellets”—must pass through.

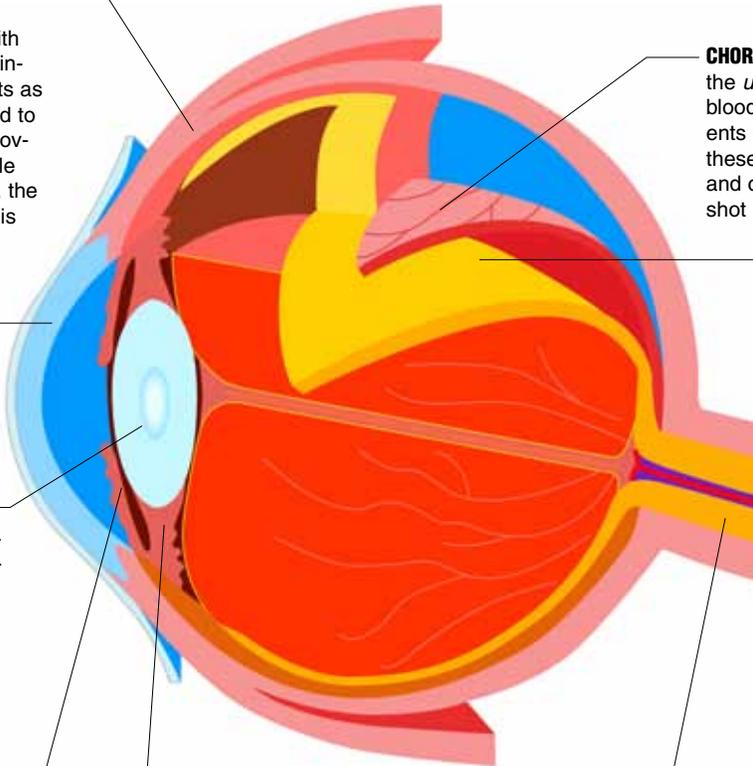
LENS: Most standard eye problems are related to the degeneration of the lens. Over time, this muscle begins to settle in a fixed position, thus creating farsightedness. It is also why wearing glasses, *corrective* lenses, allows these problems to be easily alleviated.

IRIS: One’s eye color is based on the pigment found in the iris. The more pigment your eyes have, the closer they will be to brown. Some people have brilliant *blue* eyes, due to a complete lack of pigment.

Pigment is also responsible for blocking any “light noise” from getting into the inner eye. This explains why people with light colored eyes can have problems with bright lights—their inner eye is receiving too much stimuli.

The iris is an adjustable diaphragm that controls the amount of light entering the inner eye. It does this by changing the size of your pupil. Everything you see reflects many more pellets than are needed to create a clear picture of that object. In fact, too many will overload the eye—such as looking at a bright light. Even after you have turned away, that bright light leaves an impression—a spot—on your vision until the nerves recover.

SOURCE: howstuffworks.com



CHOROID: Sometimes referred to as the *uveal tract*, this layer contains blood vessels, and supplies the nutrients your eye needs. When irritated, these tiny blood vessels can rupture and cause what is known as blood-shot eyes.

RETINA: This part of the eye is responsible for reacting to the light that has entered through the lens and pupil. The retina is made up of two types of light-sensing cells—rods and cones.

How the retina responds to the pellets hitting its surface depends on lighting conditions and color. In regular light, the cones are responsible for most of what we see. While everything you look at has some degree of black in it, most objects are made up of color.

As the brightness decreases, the rods begin to take over. This is why as it gets darker, things appear blacker. Rods are not capable of seeing color, so when lighting gets too dark for your cones to function, everything you see is in black and white.

That is exactly why you do not see color very well in a dark room!

The brain interprets the on-and-off responses of the cones and rods, and creates a picture. It then balances that picture with your other eye. The result is what you see. Amazingly, this entire process happens 500 times per second.

CILIARY BODY: A muscular structure that is responsible for changing the shape of the lens. It can either widen or flatten the lens to allow you to focus on objects. As in the case of our analogy, if the pellet was not a perfect sphere, the lens could bend it so it entered the eye as a perfect sphere.

OPTIC NERVE: When the pellets interact with these cones and rods, various chemical reactions begin to take place. These reactions create tiny electrical impulses that travel to the *optic nerve*. Interestingly, the optic nerve is not part of the eye at all. It is actually an extension of your brain. This nerve extends from your brain into your eye and carries back those tiny electrical impulses of the 137 million rods and cones—delivering those pulses at 300 miles per hour!

Rods and Cones

In most parts of the retina, cones and rods are interspersed. But one part of the retina—the *macula*—is made up entirely of cones. This region is responsible for seeing extremely fine detail. You may have heard of the disease called *macular degeneration*. Failure in this region is responsible for that condition.

ROD CELLS: Numbering as many as 130 million, they are responsible for seeing black and white, and are extremely light-sensitive, so they function well in low light.



CONE CELLS: Numbering approximately 7 million, these cells are responsible for seeing color and fine detail. Partly because of their much lower number, they are not very effective in low light.



what we perceive as light. Without photons, there is no light!

The way different objects reflect photons determines how colors, textures and surfaces are perceived. Everything we see is based on how substances absorb and reflect photons.

An easy example of this process is to look at two extremes: (1) a mirror and (2) a black surface. If you shine a light into a mirror you will *reflect* the light back at you. On the other hand, if you shine a light at a black surface, very little will reflect back at you. How the surface reacts with light determines if you see color. While this is a very simplified explanation of how photons react to produce differences in what we see, it serves our purpose to explain how the eye plays a part in this procedure.

So when light reflects off an object, it changes the makeup of that light, which then enters your eye. Imagine photons as the tiny ammunition in pellet guns; this will help you visualize

their path through your eye and into your brain.

Complex Details

The graphic “Inside the Eye” (opposite page) provides a microscopic view of the eye. We have not yet addressed how the brain interacts with the eye, or any of the corrective measures the eye undertakes when it detects a problem. But before going into that, the following is the detailed representation of what *really* happens when a “pellet” comes in contact with the surface of the retina.

This may seem highly detailed, but such amazing detail is one of the reasons the eye *is* a working miracle.

“When light first strikes the retina, a photon interacts with a molecule called 11-cis-retinal, which rearranges within picoseconds to trans-retinal. The change in the shape of [11-cis-] retinal forces a change in the shape of the protein, rhodopsin, to which the retinal is tightly bound. The protein’s metamorphosis alters its behav-

ior, making it stick to another protein called transducin. Before bumping into activated rhodopsin, transducin had tightly bound a small molecule called GDP. But when transducin interacts with activated rhodopsin, the GDP falls off and a molecule called GTP binds to transducin. (GTP is closely related to, but critically different from, GDP.)

“GTP-transducin-activated rhodopsin now binds to a protein called phosphodiesterase, located in the inner membrane of the cell. When attached to activated rhodopsin and its entourage, the phosphodiesterase acquires the ability to chemically cut a molecule called cGMP (a chemical relative of both GDP and GTP). Initially there are a lot of cGMP molecules in the cell, but the phosphodiesterase lowers its concentration, like a pulled plug lowers the water level in a bathtub.

“Another membrane protein that binds cGMP is called an ion channel. It acts as a gateway that regulates the number of sodium ions in the cell.

Trilobite’s Eye: Evolution Reversed?

The crux of the theory of evolution is that all living animals have evolved from simpler creatures. It all started as a puddle of living matter, which evolved into more complex and diverse creatures, and then animals.

This whole concept is based on the assumption that, over time, all organisms improve by natural selection—survival of the fittest. While that concept is riddled with holes, let’s assume it is true for a moment.

You would expect to find that the fossil record shows that, as time passed, creatures grew more and more complicated. This would be especially true in vision systems. Because vision, in even the simplest of creatures, is very complex, you would expect it to take millions of years for any “advanced” vision system to appear.

Anything complex that appeared too quickly, or appeared without any prior organism being its precursor, would be an embarrassment to proponents of evolution.

This introduces the trilobite. These extinct invertebrates existed in vast numbers throughout the world’s oceans, and date back to the Cambrian period—approximately 400-500 million years ago. What is most amazing about these creatures is that they had remarkably complex vision systems.

So complex were their eyes, that no invertebrates—or even many *vertebrates*—possess anything comparable today! Also, these creatures seem to

have appeared suddenly, with no fossil record of anything of the like before them.

Professor Richard Fortey, a researcher at the Natural History Museum in London states, “We know that the first trilobites already had a well-developed visual system. Indeed, the large eyes found in the genus *Fallotaspis*, from Morocco, prove that sophisticated vision goes back at least 540 million years to the Cambrian period.”

Of the *Phacops* trilobite genus, he went on to state, “Clearly a very sophisticated structure (even more so than the [usual] hexagonal-lensed trilobite eye), *Phacops*’s crystal eye is a sports coupe in the age of the boneshaker” (*Natural History* 109, no. 8).

With such statements from a world-renowned paleobiologist, it is quite obvious that another leg “supporting” the theory of evolution is nothing more than smoke and mirrors. □



PHOTO: FREDERICK KASELOW/BETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO/THINKSTOCK

Normally the ion channel allows sodium ions to flow into the cell, while a separate protein actively pumps them out again. The dual action of the ion channel and pump keeps the level of sodium ions in the cell within a narrow range. When the amount of cGMP is reduced because of cleavage by the phosphodiesterase, the ion channel closes, causing the cellular concentration of positively charged sodium ions to be reduced. This causes an imbalance of charge across the cell membrane which, finally, causes a current to be transmitted down the optic nerve to the brain. The result, when interpreted by the brain, is vision”

and opens or closes the iris to allow the right amount of focused light on the retina.

Now that you understand the basics of how an eye operates, try this simple experiment to witness how much interaction actually takes place between the brain and eye. While you are reading these words, look at something far away. While you do this, visualize that you had to move the muscles in your eye, change the iris and adjust your lens to get the object farther away in focus.

This leads to the final part in understanding how your eyes work. How does the brain “know” how to

what are the odds of both the software *and* hardware appearing *at the same time*?

Simply Impossible!

Even in this short article, you have begun to see the amazing design of the human eye. Think for a moment on the complexity required to form the first eye. Or what caused a cell to become sensitive to light. Or why trilobites and their eyes disappeared. (See the inset “Trilobite’s Eye: Evolution Reversed?”)

Such questions are never addressed!

And even more amazing, there has never been any attempt to explain the

“...what you see with your eyes is nothing more than a picture that your mind has created.”

(“Evidence for Intelligent Design from Biochemistry”).

It is not necessary to fully understand what takes place to cause those electrical impulses to fire into your brain, but it is necessary to identify the extreme complexity required for the process to take place. Are you beginning to understand why the concept of evolution becomes impossible when applied to your eyes?

Hardware Requires Software

The makeup of an eye—lens, iris, retina, etc.—are the nuts and bolts that send the electrical pulse into your brain. But how does a brain know what to do with those signals when they are received?

Imagine a computer, with all its parts and pieces, many of which are too complicated for most people to understand. No matter how intricate and complicated the equipment is—without software, it can do *nothing*. Your computer will not even turn on without some form of software telling the hardware what to do.

It is the same with the eye. All the movements that take place in the eye are controlled by your brain. The brain moves your eye to center on something, adjusts the lens to focus,

transform the more than 100 million impulses into what we see? If your brain did not know how to put together the photon “pellets” and then balance what each eye sees, there would be no comprehensible picture defined as *vision*.

Another amazing process takes place in regard to this. In any single lens system (such as our eyes), the image received is inverted. So, not only does your brain put together those millions of photons, it also *knows* to invert the image!

Like computer software, the brain has to be programmed with all the information needed to interpret this data. It has to know what colors are represented by what type of light, and how the whole picture fits together. If you really think about it, what you see with your eyes is nothing more than a picture that your mind has created. Put another way, it is the vivid version of what you can visualize with your eyes closed.

The human brain truly is the most amazing organ ever created.

Without this software appearing at the same time as your eyes, they are completely useless!

Again, while it sounds impossible for the eye to have evolved,

process by which an eye could have possibly evolved from a simpler form.

But is it really that amazing? When you cannot explain the process by evolution, there is *only* one other option—it was designed! And that is an option that most scientists refuse to entertain.

King David stated, “I am fearfully and wonderfully made” (Psa. 139:14). The human eye is a perfect example of something wonderfully *made*.

In light of the complexity displayed in the human eye—just one organ of one living creature, you can see why God states, “The fool has said in his heart, There is no God” (Psa. 14:1).

God understands that physical people need physical proof. We need to SEE evidence of the Creator: “For the *invisible things* of Him from the creation of the world are *clearly seen*, being understood by the things that are *made*, even His eternal power and Godhead; so that they are WITHOUT EXCUSE” (Rom. 1:20).

This is just another proof pointing to the real origin behind the eye—and the whole universe—the God of the Bible! The proofs have always been there, if people would only clearly look! □

WHEN WILD WEATHER STRIKES...

Tornado swarms, massive floods, record-setting droughts—why such volatile weather?

BY NESTOR A. TORO

RESIDENTS HEARD warning sirens and watched televised weather reports of powerful storms forming in the late afternoon. By 5:40 p.m., blustery winds and precipitation began dropping as much as nine inches of rain. Then, partly disguised by explosively loud thunder and baseball-sized hail, a colossal funnel more than a mile wide appeared in downtown Joplin, Missouri. In some cases, people had just 20 minutes to find a safe place to hide.

When residents heard the whirlwind's deafening train-like noise, confusion erupted. Shoppers inside a nearby superstore began desperately running, crashing shopping carts against each other, scrambling to exit. Store managers tried to get as many people as possible away from the doors.

Others watching the funnel bear down on the city had only one thing in mind: seek shelter. Neighbors crammed into basements and bathrooms, piling on top of one another to escape the fierce winds. Amid crushing sounds and screams of fear, people recited prayers, and cried out to God to help them.

Some did not listen to the initial reports, preferring instead to wait until they could actually see the funnel bearing down on their homes. As the deadly twister swirled nearer, the fascination of those recording the event on cellphones turned to horror. Debris that once

■ **COMPLETE DESTRUCTION:** An aerial view of the city of Joplin, Missouri, shows the extent of damage caused by a tornado that recently hit the area (May 24, 2011).

PHOTO: KEITH MYERS/KANSAS CITY STAR/MCT





appeared as tiny specks in the air flew by like 10-foot, 100-mile-an-hour bullets. By the time they sought shelter, the storm's fury was upon them—and it was too late.

Far worse than anyone ever imagined, an EF5 multi-vortex tornado (several twisters within one main tornado) with 200-mile-per-hour winds demolished up to 75 percent of Joplin. More than 150 people fell prey to

the storm to pass were killed where they sat.

Of the town's 50,000 people, most sought safety and their lives were spared. Others, though, could not hide from the violent twister that demolished their manmade shelters.

Yet Joplin was not the only town wiped out by tornadoes in 2011. The Missouri funnel—which caused the most twister-related deaths in a single

havoc on the economy and the lives of millions of people.

Why such violent weather?

Clouded Issue

While meteorologists can explain the physical conditions necessary for inclement weather, they are incapable of pinpointing the exact reason why such weather occurs. For instance, they are able to recognize the principle of angular momentum—sudden concentration of mass near a rotating object's axis, which produces an explosive spinning effect at work in a tornado—but not *why* it occurs.

"If a draft of air from [a] storm comes along close to the ground and then moves upwards (called an 'up-draft'), it will pull the spinning air upwards," a University of Pennsylvania physics professor described. "Now comes the part that we don't understand quite as well. So far the spinning air is still really really wide. It then gets pulled in really tight so that it makes a tornado in the same way as a figure skater pulls in his/her arms during a spin to spin faster. Scientists aren't

exactly sure why this reduction in width happens sometimes but not at other times, but, when it does, wind speeds can go from the 30-40 mph winds of a regular storm to over 300 mi/hour."

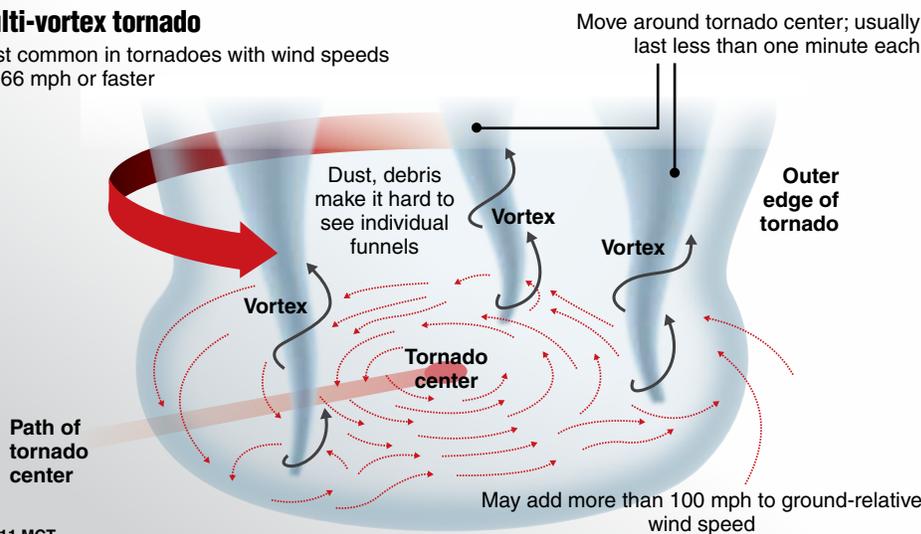
An understanding of basic physics, coupled with advanced monitoring of changes in wind direction, can give scientists a clear picture of when conditions are ripe for a twister. While such information can be helpful in better appreciating the nature and composition of such violent wind rotations, experts cannot guarantee

Deadly Storm

Tornadoes form when warm, moist air meets cool, dry air. The most violent can have multiple vortices, which form and dissipate as the tornado moves along.

Multi-vortex tornado

Most common in tornadoes with wind speeds of 166 mph or faster



© 2011 MCT
Source: U.S. National Weather Service, USA Today

Graphic: Melina Yingling

the worst twister to hit the area in 60 years. Trees were uprooted, cellphone towers knocked over, cars tossed on top of each other, and roofs ripped off. Once-thriving neighborhoods were unrecognizable. In a matter of minutes, 8,000 homes and businesses were damaged. Joplin was flattened—a city laid waste.

The superstore's roof was sucked away and its support beams collapsed, crushing several people. In the parking lot, a telephone pole split in half, and a car was wrapped around it. Some who had waited outside in their vehicles for

day in United States history—was just one of many to hit towns across the country during one of the deadliest tornado outbreaks in decades. In May, an estimated 370 tornadoes struck the Midwest, while April experienced a record 800 twisters.

"No question about it: this has been a wild weather year so far in the United States, with record rains, droughts, wildfires and tornadoes," *Reuters* reported.

Across the country, abnormally devastating weather, deadlier storms, multi-state flooding, excessive drought, and harder-to-control fires are wreaking



their path or, in Joplin's case, predict if one will become a multi-vortex tornado. It is only by watching video reports and hearing testimonies of those involved after the fact that such details can be analyzed.

From ancient times, people have turned to spiritual explanations to understand the weather. This has led them to take extreme measures, including human sacrifice, to appease supposed higher powers they feel control the environment. Yet the worship of these has still left man without the answers he seeks.

Thousands of years before today's meteorological advancements, the Bible had much to say about weather. Psalm 135 states: "He [God] causes the vapors to ascend from the ends of the earth; He makes lightnings for the rain; He brings the wind out of His treasures" (vs. 7).

Notice that this verse reveals the water (hydrologic) cycle process (which includes evaporation, cloud formation and precipitation) thousands of years *prior* to its discovery by scientists.

King Solomon's God-given wisdom allowed him to understand the complexity of Earth's wind currents: "The wind goes toward the south, and turns about unto the north; it whirls about continually, and the wind returns again according to his circuits" (Ecc. 1:6). Meteorologists were not able to fully explain these wind circuits until the 1800s!

The next verse in this passage expands on the global water pattern: "All the rivers run into the sea; yet the sea is not full; unto the place from whence the rivers come...they return again" (vs. 7).

The Moffatt translation of Ecclesiastes 1 verses 6 and 7 is even clearer: "From south to north the wind blows round, the wind turns as it blows, turning and then returning on its track. The streams all flow into the sea, but the

sea they never fill, though the streams are flowing still."

If mankind would stop neglecting the wealth of knowledge revealed only in God's Word, then it would finally begin to understand the wild weather it has been unable to comprehend for centuries—and the God who created it.

Perfect Storm

In addition to scientific processes, the Bible reveals that weather events include time and chance (Ecc. 9:11). Notice what Jesus said in Matthew 5: "[God] makes His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust" (vs. 45).

Most weather throughout man's history has been the result of automatic scientific processes. When a farmer has too much or too little rain, it is generally due to normal shifts in weather. Yet this fact does not mean such weather can be ignored—God *does* use weather to fulfill His purpose.

Later in the book of Matthew, Jesus stated that natural disasters *would* increase and intensify in what are called the "last days." The recent tornado swarm in May 2011 is just one example of this.

Ask: when have 800 tornadoes occurred in a month?

Weather upsets are just one condition that will increase in the last days. Matthew 24:7 states: "For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in diverse places."

Christ specifically warned that weather-related calamities would be only one part of the beginning of a succession of events that would overwhelm humanity—including some of the most affluent Western nations. Notice He mentions "famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes."

Certainly, given today's headlines, a far-worse proverbial "perfect storm"—compounding weather catastrophes,

followed by famine and disease—now looms. A plethora of weather calamities—record floods in the Midwestern U.S., Australia and China, increasingly violent hurricanes and typhoons in uncommon locations, massive dust storms, and crop-eradicating droughts and forest fires—have been occurring. This will ultimately result in increased pest infestation, wild animals looking for alternate food sources, and severe famine worldwide.

A sobering example of worsening problems tied to such weather anomalies was reported by *Reuters*: "Recent flooding in southern and eastern Arkansas has displaced turtles from their normal habitat in the canals, swamps and low-lying areas near the rice fields, and driven them to seek shelter in the ditches next to the crops."

The media outlet added, "Arkansas crops account for about 48 percent of U.S. rice production, according to the Arkansas Rice Federation. The state is the world's third-largest exporter of the grain."

Later, the article states, "The turtles are only the latest concern for rice farmers. Agricultural experts estimated the floods could stifle as much as 10 percent of rice planting in Arkansas this year. Arkansas rice farmers have battled both flooding and drought this year in various parts of the state. Some farmers in eastern Arkansas near the Mississippi River have lost more than 2,000 acres of rice."

According to U.S. National Drought Mitigation Center data for the state of Texas, "Through June 27, Del Rio had the driest October to June in the 1906-2011 record, San Antonio had the second driest October-June in a period of record beginning in 1871, and Austin Mabry was third driest for October-June in records going back to 1856."

The data further showed, "For Texas, 80 percent or more of the pasture

Please see WEATHER, page 24

Liberals vs. Conservatives

Will the United States Be Ripped Apart?

Cutthroat politics have left the United States in political stalemate.

BY SAMUEL C. BAXTER

THEIR GOALS seem similar: peace, prosperity, health and a fair chance at success for everyone. All admirable ideals. The trouble comes when liberals and conservatives discuss *how* to accomplish them.

In Wisconsin, when a *conservative* governor championed budget-slashing austerity measures restricting bargaining rights of public employees, a sea of *liberal* union protesters toting signs reading, “Workers rights are human rights,” quickly filled the state’s capital.

In other protests, radical *conservatives* held up signs comparing the current president to Adolf Hitler—during leftist rallies, fringe *liberals* called for riots in the streets to move forward their agenda.

Saddled with crippling unemployment, home foreclosures, years of overspending, and the makings of a Great Depression Part II, American citizens have called on politicians to do one thing. Just one: work *together* to stabilize the economy and bring normalcy back to their lives.

But there is a problem. For decades, the rift between the political left and the right has grown from the size of a sidewalk crack to opposite ledges of the Grand Canyon—with miles of desolate, rocky terrain between the two. In effect, each side refuses to climb down and meet on the banks of the Colorado River.

The constant backbiting, shameless politicking, and venomous rhetoric leave America in gridlock. Liberal ideals have a death grip on one piece of the U.S., yanking it toward the left end of the political spectrum. Conservative

ideals are clamped onto another part of the nation, pulling with every ounce of strength toward the right.

In the middle is America, and something *must* give. Either the nation discovers the way to true unity, or it will dismantle itself from within—en route to an utter crash in standard of living and world status.

Lines in the Sand

Consequences of the right-left rift hit home for Minnesota in early July 2011. There, a Democratic governor and “Republican legislative leaders failed to reach agreement on a \$5 billion budget deficit...state offices, parks, highway rest areas and a state zoo were shuttered. In addition, 22,000 government workers were hit with layoff notices.

“When negotiations broke down, the two sides were about \$1.4 billion apart with Democrats insisting on a tax increase for the rich and Republicans strongly opposed” (*Reuters*).

While the opposing parties were able

to make *some* concessions, they were still “\$1.4 billion apart”! As the days ticked by without a budget deal, each side blamed the other for the shut-down.

Finances aside, there is little that liberals and conservatives agree upon. On almost every issue, it is a war of words: “Pro-life” vs. “Women’s Rights”—“Small Government” vs. “Big Government”—“Sanctity of Marriage” vs. “Gay Rights.”

Sometimes, the arguments border on the absurd, where someone takes an opposing viewpoint solely because it is the opposite of their opponent.

The United States has become accustomed to the constant back and

forth of partisan politics. Many voters probably cannot remember a time when the two parties were not working to undermine one another.

The divide began long ago.

Roots of Separation

Both political ideologies came into their own around the time of the American Revolution, with their main goals to remove tyrant rulers. Historically, conservatives stick to long-held traditions and distrust sudden change to society. This viewpoint

servative. On others, they shifted liberal. Much of early United States history was formed along this line of thinking.

The rift between these viewpoints suddenly widened in the early 20th century. Many liberals felt limited government intervention allowed the wealthy to grow too rich, perpetuating a societal imbalance and exploiting the poor.

To correct this, a new form of liberalism was born: the social liberal. This meant government intervention

was necessary to take from the rich (usually through higher taxes) and redistribute the funds to the poor. This thinking was behind President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s New Deal and President Lyndon Johnson’s Great Society program, which gave rise to Medicare and Medicaid.

With each passing year, ideals of both conservatives and liberals evolve into increasingly varied and complex forms. Rather than reaching a consensus, individual ideas

continuously result in the birth of disagreeing factions. Now there are neo-conservatives, classical liberals, libertarians, green liberals, traditionalist conservatives, and so on.

There are even liberal conservatives and conservative liberals!

Ask yourself: Shouldn’t we be narrowing in on one form of government, rather than creating new ones all the time? Shouldn’t things be getting better rather than worse?

Faulty Assumption

Any political idea starts with one assumption: man *can* govern himself. It began with warlords and monarchies. Rome first tried a republic. In



OPPOSITE SIDES: Anti-abortion and pro-choice demonstrators argue in front of the Supreme Court during a March for Life in Washington, D.C. (Jan. 24, 2011). PHOTO: CHIP SOMODEVILLA/GETTY IMAGES

tends to steer clear of what are seen as abstract, “high-minded” ideas, and favors limited government. Liberals also originally believed in small government, while emphasizing the rights of the individual. Liberalism is more receptive to societal change due to technological advances and shifts in morals.

Simplified, conservatives continue with what has worked in the past, slowly offering new changes. Liberals tap into intellectual arguments and theories to bring about swifter change and “justice for all.”

Many of America’s Founding Fathers borrowed from both camps. On some issues, they leaned con-

Greece, Plato believed elite “philosopher kings” should rule. The United States began a push toward constitutional republics. World War II-era Germany and Italy experimented with fascism. The Soviet Union tried communism.

Every ancient empire ended in utter collapse. And the greatest nations of the 20th century are in decline (the British Empire, America, etc.), making way for new superpowers (China, India, etc.).

You must question the basic assumption of manmade governments: Can mankind *really* govern itself? With thousands of years of experimentation, making mistakes, adjusting political ideas—how can there still be political standoffs over how to achieve “life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness”?

Many conservatives will jump to point out that the U.S. was founded on Judeo-Christian values and sound biblical principles. In response, liberals will often dismiss the Bible as antiquated Hebrew literature.

On the surface, America appears to retain biblical roots—found on U.S. currency (“In God We Trust”), the Pledge of Allegiance (“under God”), and sprinkled throughout laws (for example, bankruptcy regulations borrow for the seventh year of release found in Deuteronomy 15). It also seems to be evidenced in the countless churches throughout the nation.

Yet one *basic* Bible verse reveals a vital, but largely ignored, point. Notice Jeremiah 10:23: “O LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is *not in man* that walks to direct his steps.”

If a Bible reader is honest, he will see that he cannot “direct his steps.” On the other hand, a person who relies on logic alone needs to look to the overwhelming evidence of history. Either way: man cannot govern himself!

Still Deeper Roots

The United States has a deeper connection to the Bible than its citizens realize. Notice Amos 9:9: “For, lo, I

[God] will command, and I will *sift* the house of *Israel among all nations*, like as corn is sifted in a sieve, yet shall *not the least grain fall upon the earth.*”

Ancient Israel had 12 tribes. The modern-day nation called Israel is mostly comprised of the tribe of Judah. The other Israelitish tribes were lost to history. In Amos 9, God promised protection for these tribes as they “sifted,” or moved, through the nations. While that was happening, these peoples forgot their heritage.

A special blessing was put upon the tribe of Joseph, passed to his sons Ephraim and Manasseh. God promised that both would “grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth” (Gen. 48:16). The older brother, Manasseh, was to “become a people, and he also shall be *great*: but truly his younger brother [Ephraim] shall be greater than he, and his seed shall become a *multitude* of nations” (vs. 19). Only one pair of brother nations has ever become a singular GREAT nation and a MULTITUDE of nations—the United States (Manasseh) and Britain and its former colonies (Ephraim).

While God promised blessings for these nations, it was not without qualifiers. Once those blessings were poured out in full, God had fulfilled His obligations to America and Britain.

Centuries of prosperity and decades of being a lone superpower have blinded American politicians—both liberals and conservatives. They have believed *their* government policies made America great. Not so! God’s blessings set the nation apart.

Still, both liberals and conservatives yearn for peace, prosperity, health and a fair chance at success for everyone. They want a burgeoning economy, to make sure the elderly are provided care, and that those troubled with debt can find relief.

Unknown to almost all, this kind of government was offered to ancient Israel and has been within reach of America for hundreds of years—if only its people had chosen it. The offer is found in Deuteronomy 30:15-

16, where God says, “See, I have set before you this day *life and good*, and *death and evil*; in that I command you this day to love the LORD your God, to walk in His ways, and to keep His commandments and His statutes and His judgments, that you may LIVE and MULTIPLY: and the LORD your God shall bless you in the land whither you go to possess it.”

This promise still stands today. God commands America to walk in His ways and keep His Commandments—His laws. Wherever there are laws, there is a government. And God’s government would bring “life” and “good”!

Notice that under God’s rule there would be...

- assured peace throughout the nation (Lev. 26:6-7).

- promised economic prosperity (Deut. 30:9).

- a streamlined tax system with outstanding returns (Mal. 3:10).

- assured health for everyone (Ex. 15:26).

- a system to provide for the elderly, orphan children, and poor (Deut. 26:12-13).

Remember, man cannot “direct his steps.” History proves this. And America cannot eke out its own blessings through cutthroat politics. Only God’s governmental system can deliver all that liberals and conservatives desire for America.

Just as God set a fateful choice before ancient Israel, He does the same for the United States: “I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you *life and death*, blessing and cursing: therefore CHOOSE LIFE, that both you and your seed may live” (Deut. 30:19).

Without God’s continued blessings, America is doomed to suffer decline and defeat at every turn. Unless liberals and conservatives—and every individual American—admit they have been wrong and take God’s warning to heart, they will have to endure the final outcome of political stalemate. (Read *America and Britain in Prophecy* to learn what the coming years will bring for these nations.) □



PHOTO ILLUSTRATION: DARNITRA D. JACKSON

North vs. South

What Can Unite a Fracturing Europe?

The European Union is missing the key ingredient to truly unify the power bloc.

BY SAMUEL C. BAXTER

“I WISH TO speak to you today about the tragedy of Europe,” Winston Churchill said in a 1946 speech to European leaders.

At the time, the continent was in ruins. London had been ravaged by firebombing, Warsaw flattened, Berlin decimated. Despite being on the heels of a divisive war between European nations, Churchill longed “to re-create the European Family, or as much of it as we can, and provide it with a structure under which

it can dwell in peace, in safety and in freedom.

In remarks that kick-started the push toward a unified Europe, He continued, “We must build a kind of United States of Europe.”

Today, the motley “European Family” remains divided. And everything the power bloc does to foster unity seems to only further infighting, divisive rhetoric, and finger-pointing. There is squabbling over bailouts, multicultural woes, bloody protests, meetings excluding “poorly performing” nations, and even serious discus-

sion about member-states exiting the euro zone.

What happened? A year and a half ago, the European Union seemed to be doing “fine, thank you.” It was finally gaining a voice on the world stage, moving as one organized unit, and even had a constitution of sorts—the Lisbon Treaty, which created a two-and-half-year-term presidency for the European Council.

The future of the EU seemed solid, as described by European Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso in his article published by *Project Syndicate*: “The Lisbon Treaty allows us to

achieve a greater coherence and gives us a much greater capacity to act. It will allow diplomacy, crisis management and an emerging European defense capability to be used hand in hand with more traditional policies such as trade and development.”

In 2010, the EU deftly handled the prospect of Greece defaulting on its federal debt, working with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to create an impressive \$1 trillion bailout fund for foundering economies.

By February 2011, the continent seemed confident it had dodged a bullet, with Poul Thomsen, head of the IMF mission in Greece, stating that the bailout had “successfully pulled the economy from an abyss.”

Under the first bailout, however, Greece was required to slash government spending and hike taxes to pay its debts. That plan seems to have backfired. Since that time, Greece’s recession has deepened, unemployment is over 14 percent, its economy is shrinking for the third year in a row, and citizens protest daily.

Today, Athens has approved fresh austerity measures, allowing the EU to dole out about \$144 billion more. Europe appears to be fracturing under the weight of each successive bailout—first Greece, then Ireland and Portugal, now Greece again—and any positive outlook is out the window.

If the compounding crises continue, it appears EU member-states may revert to their default positions of “every nation for itself” and bring any progress within the power bloc to a grinding halt.

What can bind together a crumbling European Union?

Growing Divide

Families often have disagreements, and the European Family is no different. Today that debate is over Greece. The question is this: how long should the EU prop up a failing member-state?

Newspaper headlines highlight the growing concern that Greece will go bankrupt whether or not the EU continues bailing it out. *The New York Times* wrote that the EU is “Fumbling Toward Default.” German paper *Der Spiegel* reported, “Legal Challenge to Greece Aid: ‘The Greeks Would Be Well Advised to Exit the Euro Zone.’” The *Guardian* simply stated, “Eurozone Split Over New Greece Bailout.”

Notably, the crisis has rejuvenated a divide between north and south. Taxpayers from the more fiscally stable “northern” nations, such as Germany and France, loathe the thought of shouldering the brunt of a mess they see as made by “southern” countries, such as Greece, Portugal and Spain. In contrast, the nations lining the Mediterranean cannot imagine a scenario in which sweeping budget cuts fail to cause nation-crippling protests and further stunt economic growth.

An *Economist* editorial summarized stereotypes of the north-south divide: “According to popular tradition... northerners are more likely to be thrifty, dour, cold, honest, hard-working, plain-speaking, blunt, rigid in their morality and a bit unfriendly to outsiders. Southerners are spendthrift, warmer, more fun-loving, lazier, less honest, more hospitable, more flexible in their morality and a bit sly.”

While these characteristics are overly simplified, they help to explain why Europe is split over this issue.

Similarly, the north-south divide can be simplified into a Germany-Greece divide. A *Reuters* report stated, “The euro was meant to bring Europe together. Instead, it’s splitting the currency bloc apart. Greeks are furious that its rescuers, led by Berlin, are imposing ever tougher conditions on the aid Athens receives. Germans are baffled that they should be burdened with the cost of rescuing what they see as a badly managed country.”

According to a *Financial Times* survey, “Germans overwhelmingly opposed offering financial support to Greece as it struggles to control its public sector deficit and are strikingly more hostile than other Europeans, including the British... Almost a third of Germans believed Greece should be asked to leave the eurozone.”

The poll also found that 40 percent of Germans believed their nation “would be better off outside the single currency—a significantly higher level of scepticism than in France, Spain or Italy” (*ibid.*).

As the euro crisis deepens, so does the rift between Europe and Greece, north and south, member-state and member-state.

The divide also has an element of political left versus right, as well as fiscal conservatism versus fiscal liberalism.

Europe has long favored left-wing ideals, but current EU crises have created a backlash toward the right.

Detroit Free Press reported, “European solidarity is in shorter supply now than a year ago. In Denmark, Finland and the Netherlands, for

■ **EU SUMMIT:** Greek Prime Minister George Papandreou (center) addresses the press at the end of a conference in Brussels concerning a second bailout for Greece (June 24, 2011).

PHOTO: JEAN-CHRISTOPHE VERHAEGEN/AFP/GETTY IMAGES



example, populist right-wing parties have made significant electoral gains, led by politicians who often spout ‘Euroskeptic’ rhetoric about being yoked to countries they deem too different or irresponsible.”

Right-wing parties are also making gains in Austria, Sweden, Italy and France.

With the growing divides and increasing number of schisms, any hope of recreating the European Family seems distant.

Preserving Prosperity

Churchill’s 1946 speech recalled Europe’s shared history: “This noble continent, comprising on the whole the fairest and the most cultivated regions of the earth; enjoying a temperate and equable climate, is the home of all the great parent races of the western world. It is the fountain of Christian faith and Christian ethics. It is the origin of most of the culture, arts, philosophy and science both of ancient and modern times.”

He continued, “If Europe were once united in the sharing of its common inheritance, there would be no limit to the happiness, to the prosperity and glory which its three or four hundred million people would enjoy.”

Churchill was describing a future united Europe, which is not surprising. In the past, Europe has come together. *Why* it did begins to reveal how it can overcome today’s struggles. Throughout the centuries, the continent has pulled together to ensure its inhabitants continue to live comfortably—to ensure their *economic* prosperity.

One of the first times Europe unified to protect its lifestyles was during the Roman Empire. Constantine united the people under one religion and ruled as an unchallenged emperor. By AD 321, Constantine established Sunday as part of the official state religion, thus legitimizing the various traditions attached to that day.

Under his watch, the empire enjoyed continual wealth and abundance. Edward Gibbon’s *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* describes the empire at that

time, when the capital, Constantinople, “enjoyed, within their spacious enclosure, every production which could supply the wants or gratify the luxury of its numerous inhabitants. The sea-coasts of Thrace and Bithynia...still exhibit a rich prospect of vineyards, of gardens, and of plentiful harvests; and the Propontis has ever been renowned for an inexhaustible store of the most exquisite fish, that are taken in their stated seasons, without skill, and almost without labor.”

In short, with Constantine, the people had *anything* they wanted to gratify their desires. This pattern repeated throughout the centuries.

The decline of the Roman Empire sent Europe into a “transition” period under the Germanic tribes of the Vandals, Heruli and Ostrogoths. It emerged a disunited kingdom.

Then, in AD 554, Justinian routed the Ostrogoths and reconstituted the empire as the Holy Roman Empire—restoring the size and grandeur of its land holdings to near that of the original empire.

The examples do not end here. While some historians paint the life of the commoner as harsh under Holy Roman Emperor Charlemagne (crowned in AD 800), others record that he used his expansive power for “increased royal concern for the helpless, continued efforts to strengthen royal administration, active diplomacy, the maintenance of religious reform, and support of cultural renewal” (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*). In the end, because his thinking on a politically unified continent has influenced European ambitions for centuries, Charlemagne has come to be known as the “Father of Europe.”

Otto the Great came next, crowned emperor in AD 962. His cultural reforms and use of the Roman Church to achieve peace made a secure empire.

He was followed by the Hapsburg dynasty of Charles V in AD 1520, and Napoleon’s reign, which began with his crowning in 1805. Both times, Europe again had emperors.

The most recent resurgence of the Holy Roman Empire began when Giuseppe Garibaldi united Italy in

1870, which culminated in the defeat of Adolf Hitler and Benito Mussolini in 1945. Oddly, even Hitler claimed he would create 1,000 years of “peace” for Europe.

In every case, the reasons were the same—unite for stability, prosperity and freedom.

Tie That Binds

The present seems to be bucking the pattern of history. As the European Union attempts to overcome economic hardship through unity, member-states seem to push each other away.

A common feeling across Europe was summed up by *The Economist*: “Alas, Greece’s austerity plan looks doomed to fail.” This realization is bringing out calls for drastic plans of action. According to *Newsweek*, “To save the euro, the euro zone may have to shrink to a small core of financially sound members. That is not yet on the agenda. But its time will come.”

What is Europe missing?

The European Union is still neglecting a key factor in the formula to bring themselves together. Look again at *every* time the continent has united. Constantine made Christianity the state religion. Justinian, Charlemagne, Otto the Great, Charles V and Napoleon all ruled over the HOLY Roman Empire, uniting church and state. Each time religion played a part. Religion is the tie that binds the European Family together. Without it, the continent can never truly unify.

Many find this notion implausible—IMPOSSIBLE! With Christianity in decline across the continent, how could Europe again unite under the shared banner of religion? Yet there it is in the pages of history—over and over again, it was *religion* that brought Europe together.

But you do not need to rely on history alone for evidence. Europe will have a crucial role to play in the coming years, and it can be understood in astounding detail. To understand *why* and *how* Europe will again unite, watch *The World to Come* broadcast “Europe and The Vatican – What Is Coming!” at www.worldtocome.org. □

THE TRUE CHURCH

Unbroken for 2,000 Years!

The Church Jesus Christ built has continued for two millennia and can still be found today.

BY JAMES F. TURCK

PHOTO: JAMES STEIDL/GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO/THINKSTOCK

READERS OF our literature recognize that *The Real Truth* magazine and the group that publishes it, The Restored Church of God, are different. Our doctrines, which are based squarely on the Bible, are provable—and challenge the many manmade traditions of “Churchianity.”

Our writings lead readers to reconsider what they have been taught. We urge them to “blow the dust off” their Bibles and prove what the Book says or does not say about heaven, hell, the reward of the saved, on which day you should attend services, what is the gospel, and much more. Millions find our approach refreshing.

One of the beliefs in which our position differs from other organizations is that we believe Christ’s statement that He would construct *one* Church. Consider His promise: “I will build My Church, and the gates of

hell shall not prevail against it” (Matt. 16:18).

This means what it says!

After reading this Bible passage, questions often arise: “Is there *really* only one true Church?” “How is this possible when there are tens of thousands of churches around the world?” “Is only one correct?”

Such questions often prompt others: “Is this Church (which is called Christ’s Body in Colossians 1:18) a single, unified organization? Or is it divided into multiple organizations, groups and scattered individuals—all carrying Christ’s authority and approval?” “If He built only one organization, then where is it?”

You can know the answers to these questions—through proof found in your own Bible!

Today’s View

In traditional Christianity, the term “church” carries an accepted and broad meaning for those who use it. Theologians, religionists, ministers and churchmen alike most often con-

sider “the church” a body of believers from every shape, flavor, color, size, stripe and texture of Christianity. None believe that one particular “organization” is right. Rather, they speak of their “fellowship” or “community of believers” as being “part of the Body of Christ.”

Consider some of their positions:

■ **Lutheran:** “The Christian church is made up of those who have been baptized and thus have received Christ as the Son of God and Savior of the world...Indeed, to be called into fellowship with Christ is also to be called into community with other believers... Most Lutherans recognize a wider fellowship of churches and are eager to work alongside them in ecumenical ministries and projects” (“Essential Questions,” Lutheran Church of the Resurrection).

■ **Methodist:** “The branches of Christ’s church have developed diverse traditions that enlarge our store of shared understandings. Our avowed ecumenical commitment as United Methodists is to gather our own doctrinal emphases

into the larger Christian unity, there to be made more meaningful in a richer whole” (*The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church*).

■ **Presbyterian:** “The Church is a fellowship of believers which seeks the enlargement of the circle of faith to include all people and is never content to enjoy the benefits of Christian community for itself alone...” (*Book of Order: The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Part II*).

■ **Seventh-day Adventist:** “The universal church is composed of all who truly believe in Christ...” (“Fundamental Beliefs,” Seventh-day Adventist Church).

■ **Baptist:** “[The church] is more of a spiritual blessing than an operational unit. Its members are spread over all the earth and in heaven. It is incomplete and finds its final form in the future” (“The Bride of Christ,” Antioch Baptist Church).

While adherents of traditional Christianity have long believed Christ works in different churches, the reader should ask *why* so many believe the Church is composed of multiple millions of people in various churches—when Christ said He would build only *one* Church.

Undivided and Unified

Jesus was a carpenter and the son of a carpenter. He knew what it meant to conceive, design, plan and build an individual structure. He followed proper building principles and practices, beginning with a solid foundation. He did not build in a haphazard, shoddy, confusing or disjointed manner. Whatever He built reflected on Him and His ability as a master builder.

When founding His Church on Pentecost in AD 31, Jesus used the same approach, constructing it “upon the foundation [teachings] of the apostles [New Testament] and prophets [Old Testament], Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone” (Eph. 2:20). Verse 21 calls the Church a “building fitly framed together” that teaches all nations “to observe all things whatsoever I [Christ] have commanded” (Matt. 28:20).

The true Church’s doctrines and practices are uniquely different from those of traditional, mainstream Christianity. It holds solely to the truth of God’s Word—the Bible—and follows the pattern of the early Church, continuing “steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers” (Acts 2:42). This includes observance of the seventh-day Sabbath and God’s seven annual Holy Days.

Because the Church follows the Bible, it is highly organized and unified (I Cor. 12:12-27; Eph. 2:21, 4:16). It has God’s government structure (I Cor. 12:28; Eph. 4:11-16).

Members understand that the Church is not a physical building. It is the *ekklesia*—the “called out” ones—who believe the same things (Acts 2:44) and are in one accord (vs. 46).

The Church that Jesus built has true knowledge and understanding of salvation—what it is and what one must do to receive it. This includes understanding God’s Plan for all humanity—His desire that people build holy, righteous character in this life by growing the amount of the Holy Spirit one is given at baptism.

Receiving God’s Spirit enables those called to understand His mind, which then helps them become more like Him. God desires all men to reign with Him and Christ when His kingdom is established on Earth (Rev. 5:10). This can only happen, however, if one is overcoming in this life and striving to live His Way. (For more about His Plan—and how you can be part of it—read *The Awesome Potential of Man*).

Unique Perspective

With such wonderful opportunities available to those who learn God’s truth, one would think that everyone would want to be part of His true Church. Yet the Church Christ built is a “little flock” (Luke 12:32). This is far different from what is pictured and practiced by professing Christian churches, whose membership numbers in the billions.

A simple analogy illustrates why there can be only one true Church. In the New Testament, the Church is considered “the mother of us all” (Gal. 4:26), meaning that it acts as a “mother” to those who have been called into it.

“The Church, like any human mother, is responsible for the *diet* of her children (in the Church’s case, the *spiritual* diet),” *The Real Truth* Editor-in-Chief David C. Pack writes in his book *The True Church – One Organization, or Many?*

“She must work out a daily menu that ensures the *health* of her growing children. If children do not like the courses their mother serves, they do not have the option of picking a family that serves food to their liking. If a child does not want fruits, vegetables and grains—the typical child!—he cannot go where he will receive only candy and ice cream.

“Jesus Christ would *never* permit His Church to be broken into 300 ‘homes,’ all serving as different ‘mothers,’ in which God’s children can roam, picking and choosing at will. This recognition becomes its own powerful proof that there has to be *one central authority*—the government of God—within the one Church of God administering to the needs—protection, doctrine, discipline and diet—of the Church Christ built! Only the *true* Mother—the one *true* Church—is authorized by God to do these things!”

Believe Jesus Christ

If you do believe Christ—that He would build His one, singular Church—not churches, sects, denominations, communities of believers, fellowships, or associations—then the question becomes “Where is THAT Church?”

Untold millions have been taught that there are “many paths to heaven” or “many spokes on the wheel of salvation.” This is said to try to make sense of the confusing and competing messages of Christendom, and to keep its adherents from questioning its teachings.

While many offer a come-just-as-you-are, nothing-is-expected-of-you sales pitch, the words of Jesus are clear: “Not everyone that says unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that *does* the will of My Father which is in heaven” (Matt. 7:21). The apostle James also declares one must be a “DOER of the word, and not [a] hearer only” (1:22).

Jesus plainly states, “No man can come to Me, except the Father which has sent Me *draw him*” (John 6:44).

If you understand the one true Church and doctrines stated above, God may be drawing—calling—you. Those He calls will see past the traditions of men, allow their eyes to be opened, and search their Bibles about what Christ really says about the structure He built—and where to find it.

There is only ONE organization on Earth that Christ built. Yet we do not expect you to take our word for it. Christ tells those looking for His Church to “prove all things” (I Thes. 5:21). You can!

(For proof about the unbroken line of God’s Church through the centuries—and how to identify it—read *Where Is the True Church? – and Its Incredible History!*) □

JOBLESS

Continued from page 6

One of the reasons America became great was that in times of difficulty, its people were ignited with passion for their country. They stood together with the knowledge that if they did not, their homeland could be overrun by opposing forces. Such events—for example the Civil War, the Great Depression and World War II—made them realize how special the United States really was.

Since that time, however, there has not been a unifying event that has defined the country and forced citizens to appreciate it in quite the same way. Instead, many Americans have lost focus, no longer considering the nation or the relative peace it experiences a blessing. The U.S. life of abundance is now taken for granted. The nation has moved from understanding that achieving the American Dream takes diligent hard work to believing it should be delivered on a silver spoon.

Due to this, the majority today do not have a strong work ethic, and the small number of unemployed who are fervently seeking employment have to swim against a torrential current. America has turned its back on its founding principles of drive, ingenuity and faith in “Divine Providence,” as the Declaration of Independence states.

Yet faith is even more vital than even the Founding Fathers realized. This is especially true when trying to make sense of the hardships in life.

The third book of the Bible, Leviticus, introduces the principle

of cause and effect. It shows that if a nation moves away from the principles outlined there, it will lose its drive toward success—and in turn, its prosperity and blessings will fall by the wayside.

Notice: “If you walk in My [God’s] statutes, and keep My commandments, and do them...I will have respect unto you, and make you fruitful, and multiply you, and establish My covenant with you... But if you will not hearken unto Me, and will not do all these commandments; and if you shall despise My statutes [laws], or if your soul abhor My judgments, so that you will not do all My commandments, but that you break My covenant...I will break the pride of your power...” (Lev. 26:3, 9, 14-15, 19).

Notice the phrase “*pride* of your power.” *Pride* in the Hebrew language (from which the Old Testament is translated) means “exaltation,” “majesty,” “pride,” “excellence” (*Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*). On the other hand, *power* is translated to mean either might or strength in a physical, personal, social or political sense.

God does not say that he will break a nation’s *power*, but rather its *pride*. Consider. In exchange for quick fixes, Americans have shipped jobs overseas, and have in essence, *given away* the pride of its power, and of its prestige in the eyes of the world. Its military is declining in part because the nation no longer stands united during a time of war. The threat of being invaded by another country is almost considered laughable.

Yet compared to almost every other country in the world, America is still on top physically. It has the largest GDP. Although storms have destroyed millions of acres of crops, the nation possesses more arable land than almost any other nation. It is its fighting spirit that has been dimmed.

Unemployment plays a role in this. When people such as Steve are out of work for an extended period of time with no prospects in sight, it can cause them to be discouraged about their future. They lose the big picture of where they are headed in their lives. If enough people are out of work, it can result in a feeling of national hopelessness. A people without hope can quickly turn to attitudes of indifference and amorality. This, in turn, causes the decline of a country—and the hopelessness now evidenced in such abandoned suburbs as those of Detroit and Chicago.

Add to this growing political confusion, worsening weather trends, unrest in the Middle East, a constant threat from terrorism, riots across Europe and talk of them coming to the U.S., drought, and new antibiotic-resistant diseases—the future itself seems confusing, dire, HOPELESS.

Everyone yearns to know what is around the corner for America and the world at large, and longs to know that they can be safe in the coming years. But most are unable to look forward, and must instead contend with the compounding troubles that beset them today. To understand looming world events, and how you can have a secure future, read *The Bible’s Greatest Prophecies Unlocked! – A Voice Cries Out*. □

What Is Conversion?

Many believe “conversion” is simply accepting Jesus Christ as Savior.
Yet the Bible reveals otherwise.

BY DAVID C. PACK

WHAT IS *true* conversion? Is it sudden, or a gradual process, lasting a long time? So many struggle with problems, weaknesses and sins. Does God expect *overcoming*—and *growth*? What role does the *Holy Spirit* play?

I have known many who doubted their conversion because they had never been taught the meaning of *true* conversion. When under fire—under pressure—they lacked the confidence to know they could effectively address their problems. They were not sure that they had the *power* to overcome them.

Most people today wait for some kind of additional strength upon conversion. Tell a teenager that he will be given the keys to the family car and he will have no difficulty understanding he is about to receive *real* power. The first time I was handed the keys to my father’s car, I understood exactly what it meant. It is no different with a potential Christian waiting to receive God’s Spirit (Acts 1:8).

But how does one actually *receive* God’s Spirit? And how can he know for certain that it has been given? Since not having God’s Spirit precludes one from being a true Christian, surely God would not leave His servants in doubt as to whether they have it—or exactly *when* they receive it!

Receiving the Spirit of God comes upon real repentance and a correct baptism. (For more about this topic, read my booklet *What Do You Mean Water Baptism?*) With these things also comes the remission of sin—or forgiveness.

But how is repentance achieved? Does one just declare, by simple assertion, “I have repented”? The answer is an emphatic NO!

Repentance is a *gift* from God just as much as one’s initial calling. You cannot understand God’s truth unless He has drawn you—called you—to it through the power of His Spirit. So, the process of coming to true Christian conversion begins with a calling or drawing directly by the Father. God’s Spirit is not something that you can *earn* by works, any more than *salvation* can be earned by works. Read Ephesians 2:8-9.

When speaking of Gentiles coming to conversion, the Bible states, “Then has God also to the Gentiles *granted repentance* unto life” (Acts 11:18) and it speaks of circumstances where “God... will *give...repentance* to the acknowledging of the truth” (II Tim. 2:25). Finally, it explains that it is “God’s goodness” (Rom. 2:4) that leads people to repentance. No one “works up” repentance in order to *require* God to give him His Holy Spirit.

People must *seek* God and *ask* for the gift of repentance. It is not automatic and should never be treated as such. But God grants repentance to all those who seek it with their whole hearts, as David did in Psalm 51.

Exactly what does one repent of? Sin. Notice that the Bible says, “all have sinned” (Rom. 3:23). But what *is* sin? I John 3:4 states, “Sin is the transgression of the law.” This refers to the Law of God. The normal, fleshly or carnal mind is hostile to it (Rom. 8:7). Human nature *disobeys—breaks—*God’s Law, and does so naturally! A Christian *keeps* God’s Law. He does not just hear it or talk about it. Romans states, “For not

the *hearers* of the law are just before God, but the *doers* of the law shall be *justified*” (2:13).

God will only give His Spirit to one He has conquered—one who is willing to obey Him.

The world depicts God’s Law as harsh and burdensome. But John wrote, “For this is the *love of God*, that we *keep His commandments*: and His commandments are not grievous” (I John 5:3). Also read Romans 13:10.

God’s Law is called holy, just, good and spiritual and it is through God’s Spirit that one is *able* to obey God and thereby practice the love of God. Romans 5:5 states, “the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts *by the Holy Spirit.*”

The repentant mind has turned from the selfish “get” way of life, to the way of “give.” It wants to follow God.

The power that comes with God’s Spirit helps a person grow and overcome. Literally, this power is Christ living His life in a Christian. Without His help, a new convert gets nowhere *fast!*

Human power—human energy—only helps a person overcome in physical areas. *Spiritual* problems cannot be conquered through physical, mental or emotional effort. Paul wrote, “I can do all things through *Christ* [who] *strengthens me*” (Phil. 4:13), and, “my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the *power of His might*” (Eph. 6:10). Jesus also said, “with God all things are possible” (Matt. 19:26). With God’s Spirit actively working and growing in you, this can be true of you!

To learn more about true conversion, watch my broadcast series “True Conversion—Explained!” at www.worldtocome.org. □

PERSONAL

Continued from page 2

a “greater reward” at Christ’s Return as a result!

Trials—a Part of Christianity

The same is true of trials, which are a part of every Christian’s life. Jesus was not an exception regarding trials and suffering. We saw He experienced joy and left it with His disciples and His Church, through His Spirit given on Pentecost (Acts 2). Yet Christ was also “a man of sorrows [pain], and acquainted with grief” (Isa. 53:3).

How could it be both? How could Christ be full of joy *and* experience sorrows and grief? Overcoming and truly conquering sin is not easy. Jesus did this, so He understood. He knew the whole world lives in sin and suffers terribly as a result. This brought Him great sorrow because it was never what He intended for mankind.

Jesus also understood the Christian way involves trials and difficulties throughout life. This is an inescapable fact for those in whom God is working. These are essential to the character-building process, and are GOOD for us. Trials and tests can make us temporarily sorrowful, but bring great joy when we understand their *purpose*.

The apostle Peter wrote, “Think it not *strange* concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: but REJOICE, inasmuch as you are partakers of Christ’s *sufferings*; that, when His glory shall be revealed, you may be glad also with EXCEEDING JOY” (I Pet. 4:12-13).

No one likes to suffer. Certainly Christ did not look forward to pain and suffering. But He knew, as He endured these things, that He would soon be sitting at God’s right hand, restored to full glory. During trials we are to focus on the glorious reward awaiting us, if we “endure unto the end” (Matt. 24:13)—throughout this life!

Of course, most people *do* think trials are “strange”—that they are unde-

sirable, painful and bad. They certainly are *inconvenient*. Most convince themselves that their trials are worse than everyone else’s, but this is not true. Christians have to train themselves to recognize that trials bring lessons—and lessons learned forge, temper and strengthen one’s character!

This is why the apostle James instructed, “Count it all JOY when you fall into various *temptations* [trials]; knowing this, that the trying of your faith works patience” (Jms. 1:2-3). Temptations are tests. And so are trials. God says to count these character-building opportunities as times of “joy.” Again, WHY?

Because of the “exceeding joy” we are to have when Christ returns. And we will receive a greater reward because of more character built!

Peter also wrote, “Wherein you GREATLY REJOICE, though now for a season, if need be, you are in heaviness through manifold temptations: that the *trial* of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perishes, though it [our character] be *tried with fire*, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the APPEARING OF JESUS CHRIST” (I Pet. 1:6-7).

Is this clear? Do you see the direct connection to trials *now* and greater reward *later*? No wonder God says we should be joyful during trials, temptations and persecutions.

You now know what to do when experiencing trials and difficulties. Do not become unhappy, wondering what is wrong—and moan, groan and complain as though something *bad* has happened. Instead, realize it is something that is very GOOD, IF received and used properly. Why would anyone complain or feel unhappy about building something “more precious than gold”?

Christianity Means Change

Becoming a Christian means a TOTAL CHANGE to a completely different way. It means a whole different manner of thinking and believing. Recognize that people do not automatically understand all God’s ways at the outset of conversion. All wrong ways, values and

beliefs must be *unlearned*, and everything that is good, pure and right—all things of God—must be *learned*!

God says, “MY THOUGHTS are not *your thoughts*, neither are *your ways* MY WAYS...For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts” (Isa. 55:8-9).

This scripture is far-reaching in meaning. It involves everything we think, say and do, including how we view joy, happiness and living the abundant life. It means recognizing this is what GOD wants. It means sweeping from your mind all previous false concepts of what you thought Christianity was supposed to be like.

If you are Christ’s, then your eyes are fixed on the kingdom of God (Matt. 6:33). You understand that this is the biggest objective—the greatest GOAL—in your life! Never forget that *everything* in your life is subordinate to achieving salvation, and building character on the path to *that end*!

Pause and think. How many things could bring more peace and satisfaction than understanding why you were born and where your life is going? The excitement, joy, thrill and contentment that flow from this confident assurance will dwarf every trial, difficulty, hurdle, obstacle and problem you will ever face. If you truly grasp this, you have gone a long way toward seeing *why* Jesus said His Way represents a life more wonderful and *abundant* than most could ever imagine!

Serving God does not mean loss of fun and giving up pleasures, but rather understanding what *real* fun and *real* pleasures are—and enjoying them.

Putting God First

Look at Matthew 6:33: “Seek you FIRST the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all *these things* [material blessings] shall be *added* unto you.” And the apostle John wrote, “I wish above all things that you may PROSPER and be in *health*, even as your [soul or life] PROSPERS” (III John 2).

These verses express God’s will regarding receiving physical things—

enjoying *prosperity*—in your life. In time, if you truly put God and His kingdom *first*, you have His sure promise that He will add physical blessings to you. It is impossible for God to lie (Heb. 6:18). When He makes a promise, He keeps it—and He has promised YOU that these things will flow into your life, if you put Him first! You can count on this!

Malachi 3:8-10 is an example of how this principle works in the mind of God—how He views faithful obedience. When we obey Him, good things happen—and sometimes *lots* of them!

But be careful you do not expect them right away. Also be careful you do not obey God simply because “there is something in it for you.” Many verses speak of being patient and waiting for answered prayers and blessings to come according to *God’s* timetable. Also, we must be pleasing God as a *regular* practice in our lives.

Let’s read an important verse tying obedience to confidence and answered prayer: “If our heart [mind or conscience] condemn us not, then have we CONFIDENCE toward God. And whatsoever we ask, *we receive* of Him, because we keep His commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in His sight” (I John 3:21-22). Savor this verse. Internalize and practice it—and then expect God will give you all the physical things you need.

Source of Enormous Power

Almost no one has any idea Christianity can bring them supreme happiness, beyond imagination. They have no concept that it represents fullness, richness,

pleasures and overflowing with plenty, both physically and spiritually. They have no thought that boundless energy is available to them if they will but TAP it.

Paul wrote this to Timothy: “God has not given us the SPIRIT of fear; but of POWER, and of *love*, and of a *sound mind*” (II Tim. 1:7).

This is not about how to tap the better “inner you.” It is not about practicing “pull yourself up by your bootstraps” positive thinking derived from human strength. In the long run, these are not worth much.

On their own, people fall short, and ultimately fail in the most crucial aspects of life. They are powerless to defeat weaknesses and faults—and to triumph in the end.

Paul is speaking about drawing upon God’s Spirit within a converted mind, and using it as a source of strength—of real power! He also wrote, “Be strong in the Lord, and in the POWER of *His* might” (Eph. 6:10).

This can be you. Enormous inner strength and power will flow into and through you, if you take advantage of the access God offers you.

Jesus told His disciples about how God’s Spirit worked in them: “He that believes on Me, as the scripture has said, out of his belly shall flow RIVERS OF LIVING WATER. (But this spoke He of the SPIRIT...)” (John 7:38-39).

Have you stood by a powerful river, watching the current? I have many times. A big river carries tremendous power and force—and Christ knew this. God’s Spirit flows like a river, and produces mightily in those

who have it. It radiates out of one, and brings love, faith, joy and peace from its Source—God.

This Spirit will help you meet challenges, defeat enemies, conquer fear and reflect cheerfulness. It will bring wisdom, knowledge and understanding, and drive anger, bitterness and anxiety away. It will replace discouragement with energy and hope. It will bring zeal to accomplish and remove confusion and indifference. It will take shattered dreams and shriveled feelings, and expand them to new horizons—and bring an *expectation* of success. It will take stress and turn it to productivity and fulfilling ACCOMPLISHMENT.

In James 1:17, God says He gives “every good and perfect gift.” People cannot offer or bring you the truly good things of life, but GOD CAN—and He says He will if you come to Him and ask for help in time of need. His answers are satisfying, His strength is real—and it is life-changing.

How sad that the lives of so many are so completely empty—so utterly devoid of joy, happiness and abundance. Many try drugs, fall into immoral lifestyles, pursue the wrong kind of entertainment, commit crimes, and otherwise get into trouble, simply because they are *bored*. They do not know they can have lives FILLED WITH PURPOSE. This lack of understanding is so unnecessary—so far from what God intended for *every* human being.

Notice: “*Everyone* that thirsts, come you to the waters, and he that has no money; come you, buy, and eat; yes, come, buy wine and milk

The Awesome Potential of Man

Read this free book at www.thercg.org to learn more about your incredible future!



without money and without price” (Isa. 55:1). You can come to God and “buy” His waters—His Holy Spirit—when you have no money. Isaiah continues, “[Why] do you spend money for that which is not bread? And your labor for that which satisfies not?” (vs. 2). Yet billions do this daily.

This has been a critical principle I have had to learn. I lead a very active, busy life, and am generally able to work long hours, day after day, for long periods. But this was not possible (and would never be possible) until I learned to claim God’s promise and tap His strength for the physical energy needed on a daily basis. Take a moment to read all of Isaiah 40:28-31, and then claim God’s promise to RENEW the “weary,” the “faint” and those with “no might”—if they come to Him.

Wonderful Way of Life

The vitality and abundance—and pure JOYFUL HAPPINESS—that can be yours is closer than you think. But you must recognize that God offers an entirely new and different way. It means living “by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God” (Matt. 4:4; Luke 4:4; Deut. 8:3). This means studying His Word and drinking in its meaning. It means praying daily and seeking God with your whole heart—and resisting Satan the devil.

This also means periodically accepting the Bible’s correction, which can sometimes cut deeply. But the converted mind seeks to grow at every opportunity. And receiving correction is also directly connected to happiness. Notice: “HAPPY is the man whom God corrects: therefore despise not you the chastening of the Almighty” (Job 5:17). Of course, no one naturally enjoys correction, but yielding to it produces a byproduct described as the “peaceable fruit of righteousness” (Heb. 12:9-11).

So, if even *correction* can bring happiness, just think of the joy that will come from practicing the many other aspects of true Christianity.

Practicing God’s Way will lead to concern for those around you. Self-

interest will be replaced with an interest in others. You will want to humble yourself and value the lives of others, more than your *own* opinions—your own needs. You will feel good will and cheerfulness in your heart. You will want to smile, lead a life of vigor and reflect calm while standing in the eye of a storm. You will find courage to step out in full and complete faith, knowing God is with you—that you are not alone! You will understand you “can do *all things* through Christ who strengthens [you]” (Phil. 4:13) and “with God *all things* are possible” (Matt. 19:26).

Those around you will see these things. You will become an example—a light (Matt. 5:14)—in a world growing darker every day (John 3:19-21; 9:4). They will see you have found meaning and purpose in a confused, disagreeing, unhappy world! And knowing you are doing this will bring its own happiness and satisfaction—because it is what God intends for His servants. Confidence will flow from this, but not *self*-confidence.

You will not find yourself constantly carping, griping, moaning and complaining about life’s endless “injustices.” You will not want to speak evil of others, but will want to lift them up, rather than pull or put them down. You will be able to conquer loneliness. And this will generate a never-before-realized strength and boldness that will literally DRIVE YOUR LIFE!

This may cause people to ask for help, encouragement or advice. They may see your life is “together,” while theirs is not! People are drawn to strength—confidence. If you exude these things, radiating a power greater than anything they have seen, they may seek your help.

Of course, be sure they *ask* for it (and they may even *ask* why you are filled with hope and cheerfulness—I Peter 3:15). Be sure you do not go around pushing your beliefs on others. This will turn them off, drive them away and produce the opposite of what you are trying to achieve.

But if people see you always give others the benefit of the doubt, and are

always willing to offer a helping hand, they will recognize you as *different* from everyone else. While they may not appreciate your doctrinal beliefs, they will appreciate your radiant attitude.

Remembering the Supreme Goal

Finally, you will always remember why God put you on Earth—why He gave you life. You will want to seek salvation, with zeal, vigor, enthusiasm and drive—and led by hope and faith—as though final success depends on your conduct *every day*. You will not want to compromise God’s Way or His truth—and you will enjoy richness and fullness overflowing as a result of this determined approach. This will give you more strength to address your problems and overcome them.

My book, *The Awesome Potential of Man*, reveals the truth about why you were born. Whole new vistas of understanding will open to you—and they are all connected to achieving the abundant life.

The Bible says, “Rejoice evermore” (I Thes. 5:16). Only two Bible passages contain two words. This is a command from God to all those begotten of His Spirit. One thousand years before, the Psalmist approached each day saying, “This is the day which the LORD has made; we will REJOICE and be GLAD in it” (Psa. 118:24), and asked God to “send now *prosperity*” (vs. 25).

These are not vague, nebulous scriptures. They are clear, direct and *plain*—and vital instruction for you and me. The apostle John added, “Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ...THAT YOUR JOY MAY BE FULL” (I John 1:3-4). *Your* joy can be full—beyond your wildest dreams—if you walk and fellowship with the true God and the true Jesus Christ as a constant way of life that overarches all you do. You can live the rich, radiant, full, happy, joyful, ABUNDANT life. All you must do is be willing to leave the old way behind. Go to the SOURCE—and begin! □

AUSTRALIA & SOUTH PACIFIC

Aftershocks Rattle New Zealand

Almost four months after a devastating earthquake rocked New Zealand, killing 181 people, powerful aftershocks continue to affect the area. The most significant occurred June 13, including a 5.5-magnitude that hit near the city of Christchurch at 1:00 p.m., followed by a 6.0-magnitude aftershock at 2:20 p.m.

“Their combined seismic weight took down at least another 50 buildings in the immediate city and caused much liquefaction to bubble up again on the eastern side of what used to be known as New Zealand’s Garden City,” *The Christian Science Monitor* reported.

The tremors left 54,000 homes without power, cut phone lines, and closed supermarkets. While no fatalities were reported, at least 10 people were injured.

“It is another blow to Christchurch residents, who have already endured so much,” New Zealand Prime Minister John Key stated in the *Guardian*.

“The region has been hit by dozens of earthquakes since a magnitude 7.1



■ **MUDDY MESS:** A car stands in water after two magnitude 6.0 and 5.5 earthquakes struck Christchurch, New Zealand, causing flooding (June 13, 2011).

PHOTO: MARTIN HUNTER/GETTY IMAGES

quake in September last year, which caused widespread damage but no fatalities,” the newspaper reported.

Video footage by *Sky News* showed a resident expressing concern for her family’s safety: “I’m scared, we all are going to think about whether we stay here or not because we can’t bring up our kids in an atmosphere where...they

are frightened to go home, to go out, to be with their friends...” she said.

“It seems like they are going to keep happening,” Australian seismologist David Jepson stated in an *Agence France-Presse* article. “Since they had that really big earthquake it seems to me like it activated all these different faults.” □

RELIGION

U.S. Episcopal Congregation Joins Catholic Church

A United States Episcopal church became the first American parish to officially accept Pope Benedict’s bid to become Catholics under the “*Anglicorum Coetibus*,” a Vatican ruling allowing Anglican and Episcopalian liturgy and even married pastors to join the Catholic church.

In a statement posted on the Maryland congregation’s website, the parish rector thanked the pope “for allowing the Holy Spirit to guide him and show him a way to bridge and heal a wound that has existed between Rome and Anglicanism for nearly five hundred years.”

“Leaders of the church said...that they were not leaving the Episcopal

Church because of the ordination of gays and women—issues that have bitterly divided the American wing of the Anglican Church and coincided with stepped-up efforts by the Vatican to reach out to Anglicans. Instead, church members said, they were satisfying their longing for a clear religious authority by welcoming the leadership of Pope Benedict XVI,” *The Washington Post* reported.

Several other Anglican priests have also already defected to Catholicism, and other congregations are considering such a move.

According to Vatican Secretary of State Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone, however, the practice of allowing married

priests to serve in the church may be temporary.

“Speaking in an interview in the Vatican newspaper, *L’Osservatore Romano*, and in recently published extracts from his forthcoming book, *A Great Heart: Homage to John Paul II*, Bertone said that although already married Anglican priests will be acceptable under the ordinariate, ‘the enduring value of celibacy will be reaffirmed, necessitating that for the future, unmarried priests will be the norm in such ordinariates,’” *The Anglican Journal* reported. “Until then, the procedures developed by Pope John Paul II for the reception of already married Anglican clergy will apply.” □

MIDDLE EAST

Iran Flexes Military Muscle

Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) engaged in a 10-day series of war games, broadcasting tests of highly advanced military technology, including long-range ballistic missiles and a top-notch radar system.

IRGC Aerospace Force Commander Amir Ali Hajizadeh called the exercise “a message of peace and friendship to the countries of the region.” Yet according to *Agence France-Presse*, the West is concerned “Tehran is developing a ballistic capability to launch potential nuclear weapons...under the guise of its civilian atomic programme.”

During the show of force coded “Great Prophet-6,” Iran “unveiled an underground ‘missile silo’ with what it claimed was a Shahab 3 which has a range of 2,000 kilometres [1,250 miles]—meaning it could reach US bases in the region and Israel,” *Euronews* reported.

“The head of the Revolutionary Guards’ aerospace division emphasized Iran’s preparedness to strike Israel and U.S. interests in the event of any attack on Iran,” *Haaretz* reported. The paper stated that “Iran has been emboldened by what it sees as U.S. military defeats in neighboring Iraq and Afghanistan.”

Regarding radar capabilities, *FARS News Agency* reported that the new system is “built to identify aerial targets, radar-evading aircrafts, cruise missiles and ballistic missiles as well as low-altitude satellites.”

Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad has repeatedly denied the Holocaust since taking power in 2005, openly calling for Israel’s destruction and citing “Western powers” as the source of “the myth of the Holocaust” (*Telegraph*). □

WEATHER & ENVIRONMENT

U.S. Wildfire Chars More Than 500,000 Acres



■ **ABLAZE:** Smoke rises in the Apache National Forest as the Wallow Fire continues to burn in Big Lake, Arizona (June 12, 2011).

PHOTO: KEVORK DJANSEZIAN/GETTY IMAGES

Arizona’s “Wallow Fire”—the largest in the state’s history—raged over 538,048 acres since starting on May 29. Believed to have been sparked by an uncontrolled campfire at the Bear Wallow Wilderness within the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest, the flames forced thousands of residents to evacuate and destroyed hundreds of homes, leaving an estimated \$109 million in damages. The fires also engulfed more than 15,000 acres of New Mexico.

The National Weather Service warned of imminent wildfire-linked flood danger: “The largest wildfire in state history has burned over 500,000 acres of the white mountains...numerous locations will be vulnerable to flash floods and debris flows...some area streams and rivers are likely to see flows beyond anything seen in decades if typical or above average rains occur this summer.”

According to the Eastern Arizona Incident Management Team, at least

2,347 people were involved in the effort to contain the flames, including 14 helicopters and five air tankers.

Wildfires have been of particular concern this season, as the area has experienced extremely dry conditions.

Additionally, human error has been a factor. *The Associated Press* reported that of the 1,494 wildfires that occurred this year, 950 were caused by residents.

The collective amount of national burned acreage—proportional to the state of Connecticut in size—already surpassed last year’s total, *MSNBC* reported.

“In Florida, the Everglades area has seen 115 fires so far this year—three times the norm...At 4.2 million acres, the first half of 2011 is way ahead of the 2.9 million acres for the same period in 2006, which turned out to be the worst year on record at nearly 10 million acres burned” (*ibid.*). □



The White Horse



The Red Horse



The Black Horse



The Pale Horse



The Four Horsemen

The FOUR HORSEMEN of REVELATION EXPLAINED AT LAST!

Watch *The World to Come* broadcast series at www.worldtocome.org