

SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER 2003

THE

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REAL TRUTH

MAGAZINE RESTORING PLAIN UNDERSTANDING

Abortion

life birth death U.S. Supreme Court Roe v. Wade decision appeal a woman's choice pro-choice pro-life statistics health incest rape unwanted pregnancy doctors scientists lawyers politicians lawmakers Planned Parenthood clinics protesters death threats murder religion God government police birth control partial-birth abortion unborn child fetus embryo stem cells news bias slanted media liberal conservative moderate left-wing right-wing teenagers young adults parental consent premarital sex adultery marriage family politics opinion science fact medical procedure moral immoral right wrong good evil past present future...?

THE REAL TRUTH

A MAGAZINE RESTORING PLAIN UNDERSTANDING

VOL. I | NO. 5 | SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER 2003

A R T I C L E S

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America's Education Crisis – Part One

The state of America's education system has continued to be in crisis. What is the *cause* of the problems facing it today? What is at the *root* of this failure?
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ABOUT OUR COVER: The word "abortion" is explosive! Its mere mention strikes a chord in most people, leading to endless arguments and debates: A woman's "right to choose," U.S. Supreme Court decisions, parental consent, right to protest, the life and safety of a fetus, stem cell research—and much more. But, in the end, abortion is the *erasing* of *human life!*

America The Burning

Raging fires have been common in recent news, and are part of a problem that government agencies and environmentalists have not been able to successfully address. The Bible shows why all humanly-proposed "solutions" will fail—and points to the only REAL solution!
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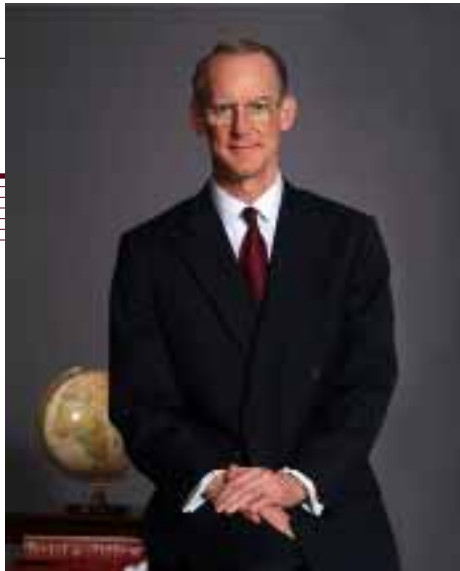
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PERSONAL FROM

David C. Fack

Which is the REAL GOSPEL?

JESUS CHRIST commanded, “Repent you, and believe the gospel” (Mark 1:15). But exactly what is it that we—YOU—are supposed to believe? Just what *is* the true gospel? Do you know? Are you certain? Be careful of assumptions. Did Christ teach the same gospel that Paul preached to the gentiles? And what does the word “gospel” mean anyway?

The vast majority of professing Christians do not know the vital—ALL-IMPORTANT—answers to these most basic questions—and many others related to the true gospel of the Bible! This is because the knowledge of what the gospel really is has been hidden from the world for centuries!

Christ, at His First Coming, came as a first-century NEWSCASTER, bringing advance GOOD NEWS of staggering events to occur just beyond the horizon, and the bad news occurring throughout today’s world. This climactic news involves *you*—and eventually every human being on earth.

Six new books on religion are published every day in America! And there are over two thousand separate religions in America! Yet there has never been more confusion and disagreement about the answers to life’s problems. Troubles, woes and human difficulties of every kind are multiplying. World peace is more illusive than ever. Why?

Why is there so much knowledge available to mankind, yet so much ignorance of the truth of the

answers to life’s BIG questions? All this has everything to do with the gospel!

Revelation 12:9 reveals, “Satan...deceives the whole world.” What a staggering statement! Do you believe it? If this is true, then it certainly applies to the truth of a matter so crucial as the meaning and correct understanding of the gospel.

Many False Gospels

Almost everyone believes that the gospel is merely about the Person of Jesus Christ. Certainly, Christ plays an extremely important role, but He is not *the* gospel. The Bible shows that Jesus is preached in conjunction with the gospel. Again, His role is vital to Christianity. But He is *not* the gospel.

Some proclaim a “gospel of salvation” or “gospel of grace.” Others believe a “gospel of miracles” or a “social gospel.” Still others think of “gospel of foods” or of “healing” or “faith.” And there are some who merely think of “gospel music” when they hear this word. These man-made ideas ignore the truth of the Bible!

Notice Mark’s account again: “Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God.” *This* is the gospel that Jesus preached. It was in *this* same context that He said, “Repent you, and believe the gospel.” Which gospel?...of the “kingdom of God.”

Verse 1 refers to this message, when it states, “The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ.” The gospel of Jesus Christ was about the KINGDOM OF GOD—not something else! One must believe that gospel—not a counterfeit or substitute.

Strong Warning Not to Pervert It

This subject is so important that God inspired the apostle Paul to warn the Galatians then—and us now:

“I marvel that you are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any

nians 2:4: “But as we [apostles] were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which tries our hearts.”

This responsibility is not to be taken lightly! True ministers always teach what God commands—not what pleases men or Bible “scholars.” So, any claim that Paul taught another gospel (usually thought to be about Christ or about “peace”) is wrong. Had he done this, he would literally have been pronouncing a curse on himself!

Jesus Was Prophesied to Bring the Gospel

Notice this Old Testament prophecy about Christ, found in Malachi 3:1: “Behold, I will send My messenger [John the Baptist], and he shall prepare the way before Me [Christ]; and the Lord whom you seek, shall sud-

denly come to His temple, even the Messenger of the covenant, whom you delight in.” Christ was the Messenger of the gospel, not the message itself. His message is actually the very core of the entire Bible!

of the government of God.” We will see later the who, what, where, when, why, and how of this good news, and how it relates to the Bible’s greatest prophecy.

The kingdom of God is the dominant theme of not only the New Testament, but the entire Bible. Yet most know little or nothing of it. This world’s ministers are oblivious to this gospel and never preach about it. Virtually the whole world stands in ignorance of this great truth!

How Many Times Mentioned?

The word “gospel” is found 104 times in the Bible. Sometimes it is found alone, and sometimes “of the kingdom” follows it. Other times, it includes “of the kingdom of God,” or the equivalent phrase “of the kingdom of heaven.”

Note that it says, “of heaven,” not “in heaven.” It is heaven’s kingdom,

“Christ was the Messenger of the gospel, not the message itself.”

other gospel unto you than that you have received, let him be accursed” (Gal. 1:6-9).

This is a very blunt statement—and strong warning to all who will heed!

In the next chapter, Paul stressed his hope that the “truth of the gospel might continue with you” (2:5). So there is only one true gospel, with all others false!

Plainly, from this verse alone, it is obvious that Paul never taught a different or additional gospel, as some assert. Ironically, God used Paul to warn against ever allowing such false teaching. He pronounced a curse on any man, angel or even apostle who violates this command—“But though we [apostles]...preach any other gospel” (1:8).

What a powerful scripture!

Paul explained that the apostles were entrusted by God to preserve the true gospel. Notice I Thessalo-

denly come to His temple, even the Messenger of the covenant, whom you delight in.” Christ was the Messenger of the gospel, not the message itself. His message is actually the very core of the entire Bible!

Now compare the above statement with another verse: “The law and the prophets [only Old Testament scriptures had been preached previously] were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presses into it” (Luke 16:16). Remember, we have already shown that Christ preached the “kingdom of God,” and called it the gospel.

Meaning of “Gospel”

The word *gospel* is an old English word meaning “god spell” or good news. The word *kingdom* is also an old English term, simply meaning “government.” It is accurate to say that Christ preached “the good news

and there is a big difference between the two. Just as kingdom of God means God’s kingdom—not the kingdom *in* God—the same is true of the kingdom of heaven or heaven’s kingdom.

Understand this crucial point!

Throughout the New Testament, the word “kingdom” is found 27 times. The phrase “kingdom of God” is found 75 times, and “kingdom of heaven,” 34 times. All are clearly one and the same.

Separate Gospel of Jesus Christ?

Recall Mark 1:1: “The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ.” What is the “gospel of Jesus Christ”? Is this a different, second gospel? Did Paul forget about *this* gospel?

No! But most preachers teach that the gospel of Jesus Christ is *about* Christ. They claim that Christ *is* the

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AMERICA

The Burning

GLACIER NATIONAL Park. Yellowstone Park. Oregon's Deschutes National Forest. Shoshone National Forest in Wyoming. These are but a few of the better known areas affected in a recent wave of destructive fires that have swept across various parts of the United States.

These fires have resulted in billions of dollars in property damage, not to mention the toll on human life, whether in actual casualties or resultant economic hardships. Animals and their habitats have also been destroyed, with surviving populations displaced as well, which can lead to various ecological imbalances. And the impact of these disasters reaches far beyond the immediate vicinities of the actual fires. Weather patterns and natural resources are also affected by these catastrophes—not to mention the drain on a region's economy, when its industries are impacted, especially in areas relying heavily on tourism for the bulk of their fiscal intake.

Among the factors contributing to this disastrous trend are drought conditions, forest mismanagement (which itself is rooted in, and even driven by, several elements) and human carelessness. Organized efforts to curb the trend are failing, due to the inability (or at least the lack of insight) to treat the CAUSES.

Drought Conditions

The weather has played a major role in these catastrophes. The western

Raging fires have been common in recent news, and are part of a problem that government agencies and environmentalists have not been able to successfully address. The Bible shows why all humanly-proposed "solutions" will fail—and points to the only REAL solution!

U.S. has been plagued by drought for the past five years. While it is not our purpose in this brief article to examine the dynamics of drought, or its many causes and effects, it cannot be overstated that widespread forest fires are but *one* of the disastrous results of long-term drought conditions. (To learn more about the drought phenomenon, read our trend report *What's Wrong With THE WEATHER?*)

It can be argued that little (if anything) can be done to control the weather. However, there can be little doubt that man and his environment have a direct relationship. The adverse effects of industry on the environment (including impact on weather patterns) are well documented. (Again, there is not space in this article to expound on this in detail. This is more fully addressed in our trend report *This POLLUTED EARTH.*)

Industry is not alone in bearing the burden of guilt. It seems that, with each advancement in any given field

of human endeavor, there is an array of unforeseen—or, at best, simply inevitable and insoluble—side effects. And again, true to human nature, man seeks to address the *effects* rather than the *causes*. For example, this is aptly illustrated by trends in modern medicine. The treatment for one malady often leads to adverse side-effects, which can only be offset by taking this or that remedy, leading to further side-effects—and the cycle continues.

Forest Mismanagement

The misuse and mismanagement of the earth's natural resources (by individuals, corporations and governments) have resulted in many disasters, having ecological and economic impact. Aside from the obvious problems of population displacement (both human and wildlife) and the "domino effect" of problems flowing from such upheaval, many other issues stem from the improper treatment and utilization of those resources.

Sometimes, even policies enacted

to diminish the negative effects of human “progress” will backfire, or even fail, when it is a case of “too little, too late.” Regarding one such practice, known as “timber harvest,” the findings among leading scientists have led them to conclude, “Timber harvest, through its effects on forest structure, local microclimate, and fuels accumulation, has increased fire severity more than any other recent human activity.” This is evidenced by the following:

■ Half a century of aggressive fire *suppression* by the U.S. government has hampered the natural and beneficial processes of fire. Many areas have been adversely affected, becoming clogged with brush. Other kinds of trees are also now competing with the formerly-dominating larger species.

■ In response to increasing fire threats, the U.S. Forest Service’s proposed solution was to grant logging companies greater access to land formerly allocated as National Forest

to the attempt to “regulate” forest fires. Ultimately becoming a much larger—and more difficult to control—“crown fire,” these fires consume the accumulated brush, and climb saplings to reach the limbs of larger trees.

As you can see, the picture is not very bright for the future of America’s forests. Even when problems are addressed, the outcome is ultimately determined by these factors: Addressing the problem in a timely manner; method of implementation; corporate best interest (as demonstrated above by the negligence of logging companies to follow through with all the steps necessary to ensure success, not just make money); community and personal involvement and accountability (because it is not solely the responsibility of the private sector).

Notice the following statistics: During the 2001 fire season, about 89,000 individual fires burned approx-

said, “If things don’t change, what we are going to see on the news this summer is fires.” And that is exactly what happened! By July 2002, Colorado, Arizona and New Mexico had experienced the worst forest fires in their history!

The following extensive quotes come from an article in the *Akron Beacon Journal*: “Nature rules...firefighters can only watch in helpless amazement as miles of evergreen forest erupt in a furious orange blaze...bearing down on suburbs southwest of Denver” (“Colo. Firefighters powerless over nature,” June 13, 2002). Named the “Hayman Fire,” it has destroyed 618 structures and 137,000 acres of forestland. Forty thousand people were warned or had been evacuated.

“A fire is a chemical reaction that requires fuel, heat and oxygen...In a wildfire, combustion releases hot gases and particles that rise in a col-

“As you can see, the picture is not very bright for the future of America’s forests.”

land. The problem was that the logging companies only took the high-value timber, which consisted of the largest trees whose thick bark was naturally resistant to the normal, small fires that periodically occur in forests.

■ The logging companies not only eliminated the fire-resistant trees, but they also left behind saplings and enormous heaps of sticks and other debris known as “slash.” The forest floor, deprived of the shade afforded by the larger trees, dries out more quickly. Temperatures also can get much hotter, converting slash piles and clearings littered with debris into easily-ignited “tinder.”

■ As a result of the accumulation of these “fuels,” over many years of the combined practices of logging and fire-suppression, some forest fires have the potential to burn hotter and faster than the smaller fires. These smaller fires would otherwise periodically sweep through forest areas prior

imately 3.57 million acres of land throughout the U.S. As bad as this seems, the year 2000 was much more intense: 123,000 fires, consuming 8.4 million acres. This was by far the most active fire season on record.

In 2002, because of the ongoing drought in the U.S., and ice storms that downed several thousand trees and branches, fires surpassed those of the previous five years. Rainfall in the South, Southwest and East was far below normal. Conditions were ripe for hundreds of thousands of acres to ignite like a tinderbox loaded with fuel.

The East Coast was also dry because of several years of below-normal rainfall, resulting in an unusually high number of fires. But the worst conditions occurred in the West and Southwest, where the season began early and more vigorously.

Colorado State University’s Ronald Waskom, a water resource specialist,

urn into the atmosphere—30,000 feet high in the case of the Hayman fire. The fire creates its own wind as fresh air rushes in to replace the rising air. A large fire can generate hurricane-force winds of 120 mph.

“This propels the fire up the steepest mountain slopes. Even without direct contact with flames, this convective uplift can dry out, preheat and, in extreme cases, ignite plants in front of the wall of flames.

“The steeper the slope, the faster a fire will move and the hotter it will burn. A fire on a 30-degree slope will spread twice as fast as a fire on flat ground, according to the U.S. Bureau of Land Management.

“The fire releases large amounts of radiant energy, not unlike the sun. This phenomenon also preheats the ground ahead. So when the fire licks at shrubs and trees, they are fully primed to explode in flames.

“Scientists said the Colorado fires

could burn for another month until they are drenched by the annual summer monsoon.

“However, rainfall cannot be guaranteed during a year in which precipitation already is at a 100-year low.

“It’s just very scary and way bigger than any of us ever thought a fire could spread in this country,” said Wayne Baker, fire management officer for the Pike-San Isabel National Forest.”

Sobering statements!

At the beginning of the 2002 season, the worst fire in the state of New Mexico burned uncontrolled for several days. This fire marked an early start to the normal season. In 2000, the Cerro Grande blaze destroyed 235 homes and left 405 families homeless. This fire was intentionally set to burn off a potential fire hazard. It quickly burned out of control and, in about a month’s time, consumed close to 50,000 acres.

ally directed against whoever or whatever happens to be in their path.

This was evidenced recently, when a U.S. Forest Service worker started a fire in a National Forest area out of frustration involving problems in a personal relationship. The resultant blaze grew “into a wildfire of historic proportions” (“Forest worker indicted for starting wildfire,” *CNN.com*, June 19, 2002).

This is but one example of the disastrous effects of the disregard for the welfare of others, and the lack of appreciation for our environment and natural resources—attitudes that are rampant in today’s society.

Media Campaigns

Most readers can probably recall the popular ad campaign featuring “Smokey the Bear.” It was created in 1944 by the Ad Council, in an attempt to address this issue and to educate and involve the public in a direct way.

Because HUMAN NATURE—which leads to greed, lust, corruption and a focus on self-interest—has not gone away. God’s Word, the Bible, shows that it will only grow worse as the age continues, with everyone doing what seems “right in his own eyes” (Prov. 21:2). This is why personal conduct continues to descend to lower and lower moral levels. Most people are only concerned with *their own* happiness, safety and well-being.

However, the Bible speaks of how “heat,” in various forms, will be used to get the world’s attention. Notice: “The LORD shall smite you with a consumption [to make lean by a gradual wasting away of flesh], and with a fever [febrile or feverish disease—*heat*], and with an inflammation [a burning fever—*heat*], and with an extreme burning [to melt burn or dry up—*heat*], and with the sword [a cutting instrument; from a root word meaning “to parch through

“Half a century of aggressive fire *suppression* by the U.S. government has hampered the natural and beneficial processes of fire.”

After a fire, there is potential for mass erosion due to the absence of grasses and bushes. The soil is exposed to rain and is washed away, causing even further problems—mudslides, flooding, ash plugging up small streams and rivers, etc. The courses of these small tributaries can even be changed due to debris. Sewer systems can become plugged and backed up, causing health problems.

Human Carelessness

Another contributing factor in this trend is the ever-increasing lack of personal concern and responsibility. As also evidenced by the traffic phenomenon known as “road rage,” people no longer exercise patience and self-control when confronted with problems. They simply allow their emotions to take over, leading them to commit irrational, illogical acts of violence—usu-

Unlike most programs enacted to combat problems, this one, at least on the surface, sought to address one of the *causes*. Utilizing a slogan promoting personal responsibility—“Only You Can Prevent Forest Fires”—this “forest fire prevention campaign has reduced the number of acres lost annually from 22 million to 4 million” (“Forest Fire Prevention – ‘Only You Can Prevent Forest Fires’ (1944 – Present),” *aded.org*).

While there may have been other such attempts to create public awareness and involvement, this one has been, by far, one of the most visible, vocal and effective. And yet, the problem has not gone away.

The Root Cause

What is ultimately the underlying cause of all of these disasters? WHY are they not going away?

drought”—*heat*], and with blasting [scorch—*heat*], and with mildew [paleness from drought—*heat*]; and they shall pursue you until you perish. And your heaven that is over your head shall be brass [lack of rain], and the earth that is under you shall be iron [rock hard because of *heat*, lack of rain, and misuse of soil]” (Deut. 28:22-23).

The many conditions described in this verse are among the results of mankind’s 6,000 years of disobedience to God. They will only escalate as time goes on—culminating in the worst time of trouble that America has ever seen.

The GOOD NEWS is that, before man has totally destroyed the environment, God’s kingdom will be established and the world will learn how to properly manage and care for the earth’s resources God has provided! □

ROADBLOCKS

in the Roadmap to Peace

Will the latest Middle East peace plan succeed? Or will it prove to be like all other manmade solutions—noble intentions that ultimately fail?

BY BRUCE A. RITTER

BOMBINGS—shootings—assassinations—death threats—kidnappings—military strikes. Since its creation as a sovereign, independent state in 1948, the nation of Israel has long struggled for peace, yet it continues to be plagued by violence and turmoil.

For decades, all eyes have looked to the Oval Office to solve disputes anciently rooted in thousands of years of hatred and strife. Time and again, United States presidents have stepped onto the world stage, each offering his own vision of how to establish permanent peace between Israel and the Palestinian people. Yet, these same well-intentioned leaders have since passed into the pages of history—and so have their failed solutions for

peace.

In April 2002, President George W. Bush unveiled the latest Middle East peace plan: “A performance-based roadmap to a permanent two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.” Diplomats and journalists refer to it as “the roadmap to peace.”

Devised by the U.S., the European Union, the United Nations and Russia, the roadmap is a three-phase blueprint designed to reach a peaceful settlement between the Israelis and Palestinians by 2005. The plan (explained in the informational graphic below) contains a step-by-step process calling for both parties to take certain actions to reach its eventual objective: The creation of a sovereign, independent Palestinian state, peace-

ably existing side-by-side with the nation of Israel.

Blocking the Path to Peace

In order for the roadmap to reach its ultimate goal, several roadblocks must be overcome. Otherwise, this current peace plan has no real chance for success.

■ **Terrorism and violence:** The roadmap requires Palestinian authorities to stop militants from planning and committing acts of terrorism and violence against the Israeli people. So far, the Palestinian prime minister has been relying on persuasion to do this, while Israel calls for him to take action, such as making arrests. Until then, Israel refuses to withdraw from Palestinian towns.

Fueling suicide bombings and other murders are three militant Palestinian groups: Hamas, the Islamic Jihad and the al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades.

Founded in 1988, Hamas is the largest of the three, and has carried out

ROADMAP—PHASE I: *Ending terror and violence, normalizing Palestinian life, and building Palestinian Institutions*

The Palestinians must:

- Acknowledge Israel's right to exist in peace and security.
- Call for immediate and unconditional ceasefire to all acts of violence, terrorism and incitement against Israelis.
- Arrest, disrupt and restrain individuals and groups from planning and carrying out violent attacks against Israel.
- Undergo government reforms in preparation for independent statehood. Includes drafting a constitution, appointing an empowered interim prime minister, and

holding open democratic elections.

Israel must:

- Affirm its commitment to the creation of a Palestinian state.
- Call for an immediate end to violence and end acts of incitement against Palestinians.
- Take all necessary steps to help normalize Palestinian life.
- Withdraw troops from Palestinian areas held since Sept. 28, 2000.

- Freeze all construction of Jewish settlements in the Palestinian territories and begin dismantling those built since March 2001.

Timeframe: Originally intended to take place by May 2003



terrorist attacks against both military and civilian Israeli targets. They oppose the peace plan, claiming that the roadmap is only a trick to get Palestinian militias into laying down their arms. Also, while the roadmap offers a two-state solution for peace, Hamas (which means “zeal”) is dedicated to the creation of a single, Islamic state—including *all* of Israel, along with the West Bank and Gaza.

Inspired by the 1979 revolution in Iran, the Islamic Jihad is cloaked in secrecy. This group believes that peace with Israel is impossible, and claims that the mere existence of a Jewish state amounts to surrendering lands that rightfully belong to the Palestinian people. Like Hamas, the Islamic Jihad has ordered numerous suicide bombings, as well as attacks against Israeli military targets and security officials.

The third group, al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades, splintered off from Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat’s Fatah movement. It calls for the removal of Israeli soldiers in the occupied territories and the establishment of an independent Palestinian state. Publicly disavowed by Fatah for its violent actions, al-Aqsa has carried out suicide attacks against Israeli citizens.

Last June, Hamas and the Islamic Jihad declared a three-month ceasefire—yet, both groups later claimed responsibility for an August 19th bus bombing in Jerusalem that killed 20

people, including six children. Days later, Israel responded by killing a senior Hamas official, then four more in an additional response almost immediately following.

As of this writing, both Hamas and the Islamic Jihad have ended their ceasefire.

■ **Fear, doubt and suspicion:** The last three years of continuous bombings, shootings and other acts of terrorism and aggression have claimed thousands of lives. A chasm of distrust, doubt and suspicion has greatly widened between the two sides.

Even among the Israeli and Palestinian peoples, various factions harbor their own ideas of how to bring about peace—and some involve the total destruction of the opposing side!

For the roadmap to succeed, both sides—and all parties within them—must set aside all fears, doubts, personal grudges and thoughts of revenge.

Now consider: It has been said that in the entirety of man’s history, there have only been about 100 years of peace—just 100 years in which a battle or war did not take place somewhere on earth. A quick browse of today’s national and international news headlines paints a picture of a world still mired in war, hatred, aggression and violence.

When you take into account the past and the present, what are the chances that *any* plan could establish lasting peace in the immediate

future—especially between ancient enemies committed to claiming the same land, even to the death?

■ **Land settlements:** Outnumbered by three million Palestinians, some 200,000 Jewish settlers live in about 150 settlement outposts in the West Bank and Gaza.

The Palestinians, and the international community at large, regard these settlements as illegal under international law, according to Article 49 of the Fourth Geneva Convention: “The occupying power shall not deport or transfer parts of its own population into the territories it occupies.”

The Palestinians view such outposts as attempts to expand Israeli settlement in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Believing that all such settlements are an illegal trespass on their land, the Palestinians claim that stopping all Israeli settlement construction is critical to the roadmap’s success.

However, Israel argues that this law does not apply to the Jewish settlements, since the West Bank and Gaza are not under the legitimate sovereignty of any state.

Even the Israelis are divided over what to do about these settlements. The vast majority believe that the Jews have a historical claim to the land. In a recent survey, *BBC News* reported that 43% of Israelis believed that settlers should resist a government order to evacuate—last year, the number was 12% (*Harry S. Truman Research Institute for the*

PHASE II: *Transition*

■ Palestinian leadership must decisively act against terror, and be able and willing to build a practicing democracy.

■ Progress will be based upon the consensus judgment of the Quartet (the U.S., EU, UN and Russia) of whether conditions are appropriate to proceed, taking into account the performance of both parties.

■ New constitution for democratic, independent Palestinian state is finalized and approved. Arab states restore pre-intifada links to Israel, such as trade offices.

■ Revive talks regarding regional water resources, environment, economic development, refugees, and arms control issues.

■ Formally establish an empowered reform cabinet with the office of prime minister, consistent with a draft constitution.

■ The Quartet will promote international recognition of a Palestinian state, including possible UN membership.

■ Phase II ends with the possible creation of an independent Palestinian state, with

provisional borders.

Timeframe: June-December, 2003

SOURCE: *CTV News, BBC*



Recent Opinion Poll

Results from an April 2003 public opinion poll conducted by the Harry S. Truman Research Institute for the Advancement of Peace:

- 55% of Palestinians and 61% of Israelis support the roadmap for peace.
- 39% of Palestinians and 35% of Israelis oppose the peace plan.
- 71% of Palestinians support a mutual ceasefire, while 27% oppose it.
- Under conditions of a mutual ceasefire, 50% of the Palestinians would support taking measures against those who would continue to carry out attacks against Israeli civilians; 45% oppose doing so.
- 57% of Palestinians support, in the absence of a mutual ceasefire, armed Palestinian attacks against Israeli civilians inside Israel; 40% oppose it.
- More than 90% of Palestinians support attacks on Israeli soldiers and settlers.
- Two-thirds of Palestinians believe that armed confrontations have helped achieve Palestinian rights in ways that negotiations could not.
- 38% of Palestinians and 24% of Israelis would support deploying international forces, if necessary, into the West Bank and the Gaza Strip in order to force both peoples to accept and implement the roadmap. (An additional 9% of Palestinians would support it only if the forces were European. An additional 13% of Israelis would support it if these are American forces, and only 3% support it if the forces are to be European.)
- 48% of Palestinians and 58% of Israelis support deployment of any international force.
- 65% of Palestinians and 77% of Israelis support reconciliation between both peoples after a peace agreement is reached, and a Palestinian state is established and recognized by the state of Israel.

Advancement of Peace). On the other hand, many Israelis debate whether, in return for peace, they should remove the outposts and surrender the land to the Palestinians.

For now, Israel has determined to dismantle only those outposts deemed

unnecessary for the nation's security.

■ **Religious differences:** In the same survey, nearly 40% of Jewish settlers who choose to live in the occupied territories do so because of religious convictions. One settler called it "a God-given right to settle

any part of the land."

On the other side, the Palestinians are just as convinced that the land belongs to them—all of it, according to militants.

History has shown that many (if not most) of the longest, most devastating wars have been caused or fueled by religion and single-minded, uncompromising religious fervor.

■ **The West Bank "security fence":** Begun in the West Bank in June 2002, the structure, which is part wall/part fence, consists of razor wire, a ditch on one side (about 13 feet wide) and electronic sensors. When construction is finished, the structure's total length will extend several hundred miles.

Israel claims that the fence will prevent potential suicide bombers from entering Israel and attacking civilians. But the Palestinians see it as a bid to pre-empt negotiations on the final borders of the yet-to-be-established Palestinian state.

■ **The right of return:** Hundreds of thousands of Palestinians have fled Israel due to decades of endless fighting and Jewish expansion. Israeli law prohibits them from re-entering Israel. But the Palestinians claim their right to return as refugees, citing UN Resolution 194: "Refugees wishing to return to their homes and live at peace with their neighbors should be permitted to do so at the earliest practical date."

Please see **ROADBLOCKS**, page 31

PHASE III: Permanent status agreement and end of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict

■ Reform and stabilize Palestinian institutions, and establish Israeli-Palestinian negotiations aimed at a permanent status agreement in 2005.

Second International Conference:

■ Talks convened by the Quartet, in consultation with Israel and the Palestinians, concerning finalized borders between the two states; the status of Jerusalem (which is claimed by both sides as their capital); right of return for Palestinian refugees;

and the status of Jewish settlements.

■ Parties reach final and permanent status agreement, ending the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and ending the occupation that began in 1967. Includes "an agreed, just, fair, and realistic solution to the refugee issue, and a negotiated resolution on the status of Jerusalem that takes into account the political and religious concerns of both sides, and protects the religious interests of Jews, Christians, and Muslims worldwide, and

fulfills the vision of two states, Israel and...Palestine, living side-by-side in peace and security."

■ Arab states' acceptance of full normal relations with Israel and security for all the states of the region.

Timeframe: 2004-2005
SOURCE: CTV News, BBC



The **PLEASURE SEEKERS**

P A R T T W O

A Desperate Need to Escape

WITH THE THREAT of terrorism, a struggling economy, increasing national debt, viruses and syndromes, child pornography, and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, the twenty-first century is certainly a frightful age to live in. Not to mention the more personal issues, such as unhappy relationships, debt, unemployment, taxes, and the unpleasant conditions in which most live each day. Therefore, it is no wonder that most people seek pleasure to escape.

In Part One, we showed that modern society has adopted a “play hard” mentality, encouraging those who are weary of their daily lives to escape. From an early age, most are trained to seek “fun.” The easiest, most readily available, and most “pleasant” thing to escape to, is some sort of pleasure.

The world has many “pleasures” to offer. Unfortunately, most of them are truly immoral and completely wrong. Even those pleasures that are not wrong in and of themselves are often used to *excess*—and therefore incorrectly.

We also identified one of the primary reasons why mankind seeks endless pleasures, why it desperately “needs” an avenue of escape—that is, the overall emptiness and lack of fulfillment in most people’s lives. We saw how this is primarily the case among

As this age draws to a close and life gets increasingly stressful, fearful and seemingly out of control, most feel a need to escape. To do so, they seek various physical pleasures. What are the consequences of this—and what will be the final result?

BY MARK P. DENEÉ

the people living in the most blessed nations today, how it has eroded the strength of their nations—their work ethic and family values—and how it is a clear sign of their decline.

In this second part, we will address fear—another primary reason why people seek to escape. We will identify the consequences of continually seeking pleasures. We will also address a terrible time just ahead, when the most vile of pleasures will abound—and then a time just beyond that, when the need to escape will disappear altogether. At that time, *true* pleasures will prevail, along with correct instruction, understanding and priorities.

Great Paradoxes

We are truly living in awesome times. They are also times of great paradoxes. While information abounds, and technology seemingly advances daily with great leaps, most in the Western World

(particularly those in the English-speaking countries) live with a feeling of insecurity. Since September 11, the threat of terrorism has become an almost daily factor in our lives. The great “Fortress America” was no longer untouchable. For the first time in several decades, Americans were actually frightened for their national and individual lives.

Continuing from that event, there was quite suddenly the flaring up of world religious strife—Christianity vs. Islam. And then a war in Iraq, followed by almost daily killings of the liberating forces. Others fear the seemingly indiscriminate proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Europeans and Americans alike are concerned with countries like Iran and North Korea possessing nuclear weapons. And yet, most people seemingly refuse to admit how truly frightening these times are. Unfortunately, most do not even concern themselves

with these “big” problems.

Fear of the unknown, and even of the little-known, will drive most to seek an escape, to find something more pleasurable than the cares and concerns of daily life, hoping that their problems will simply go away. But they do not—and this usually leads to much bigger problems. In fact, what is commonplace among *individuals* typically extends to a *regional society* and then to a *nation* as a whole. Could anyone honestly believe that if most citizens do not deal with *their* problems that their nation will deal with *its* own problems?

On another point of paradox, we are so far removed from the last great world calamity (World War II) that very few understand and appreciate the realities of the violence and hatred that occurred then, and the similarities today. Yet at the same time, we all experienced, in explicit detail, large airplanes crashing into skyscrapers, and a modern army overrunning two countries within a matter of weeks.


But how much did these recent events really change your daily life? While, for some, there is increased reason to be fearful, for most, there is also increased desensitization, callousness, and preoccupation with the self. Both, however, often lead one to seek “something more comforting”—to endlessly seek those pleasures and escape.

Despite experiencing life with so much instant and graphic information, we are simply unable to properly describe, to make real, the incredible immensity of events and their implications in our time. While most find the frightening aspects of today’s world “unacceptable,” the inability to under-

stand them leads many to hope—even believe—that things could not be that bad. And so, most go about their daily lives, largely concerned only about themselves and their problems, and seeking pleasures to escape them.

The Downward Spiral

The level at which most seek and escape into these pleasures is of and by itself rather disturbing. The increased greed in society has not only removed most from the true pleasures of life—such as time with family, preparing and enjoying good food, or experiencing God’s beautiful creation—it has also created a need to have more—to never be satisfied. The little bit of

A photograph showing a tall skyscraper under construction, with its steel framework visible against a blue sky. In the foreground, a fire helmet with "F.D.N.Y." written on it is resting on a surface. The text "For the first time in several decades, Americans were actually frightened for their national and individual lives." is overlaid on the image in white serif font.

“For the first time in several decades, Americans were actually frightened for their national and individual lives.”

pleasure that was fun yesterday quickly becomes tiring and unexciting, and so the search quickly begins for something “new,” something a little more stimulating. This is typically how one or two drinks lead to several, how experimenting with a drug often leads to heavier drug use, and how the addiction to sports can lead to an addiction to “extreme” sports.

And so the spiral continues downward, with a never-ending seeking of greater thrills and spills. Yet the feeling of emptiness and lack of fulfillment remain. So does the fear (and the reality) of personal problems, and the world’s larger problems. In fact, the emptiness and difficulties more than likely increased during, and as a consequence of, the continual escape! The pleasure, and the escape it brought, was only *very* temporary. No one really can avoid the realities of life. They simply must always be dealt with eventually.

Tragically, some deal with the extreme of their desperation with the ultimate method of escape—suicide. The inability to cope with life quickly diminishes any sense of purpose and hope and, at that point, some see taking their own life as their only option. Suicide statistics are quite telling, particularly among young men in most English-speaking nations:

A 1999 study by the Australian Institute for Suicide Research and Prevention showed that the suicide rate among males rose significantly from 1964 to 1997, particularly in the age groups of 15-24 years and 25-34 (*Australian suicide trends 1964-1997: Youth and Beyond?*).

A similar study from the New Zealand Health Information Service

showed that the male suicide rate increased by 72% from 1978 to 1997, with the highest number of male suicides occurring among 25-29 year-olds (New Zealand Ministry of Health, *Suicide Trends in New Zealand 1978-98*).

In the United States, from information compiled by the National Center for Injury Prevention and Control (a subsidiary of the Center for Disease Control and Prevention), suicide is overall the 11th leading cause of death for all Americans. However, it is the third leading cause for those ages 15-24. Just fewer than 30,000 Americans took their own lives in 2000, which is 1.7 times the number of homicides.

The descent into complete misery, however, most often does not end in suicide. The vast majority continue with their pleasure-seeking escapism. Whether it be through drugs and alcohol, illicit and improper sex, endless movies and television, or constant socializing and partying, most are ignorantly content remaining addicted to their vice.

Most young people will imitate adults with their own form of “sex, drugs, and rock n’ roll.” At the same time, they also rebel against the futility of the world around them. This protesting is of and by itself a form of escape, a yearning for a more stable present and a brighter future.

The Last Attempt to Escape

Fortunately, a brighter future is just beyond the horizon. However, it is not visible to most, and will only come after a far more terrifying period that is now fast approaching, referred to in the Bible as the Great Tribulation (Matt. 24:21). Mankind has been living his own way, in rebellion to God, for the last 6,000 years, and his time is just about up. Since Adam and Eve chose to eat of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, a fruit that was “...good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes...” (Gen. 3:6), mankind has rejected God. They have instead insisted on doing things their own way, exposing themselves to the influence of Satan the devil, who

deceives the whole world (Rev. 12:9).

By doing things his way for 6,000 years, man has experienced great destruction, evil and misery—as evidenced by his now insatiable need to seek pleasures and escape. God has allowed man this choice, and will further allow it to culminate in the very near future, during a short but horrendous time of trouble.

The prophet Ezekiel spoke of this time and, in fact, warned the modern-day descendants of ancient Israel of this soon-coming time of calamity. Notice how Ezekiel even spoke of the modern game of “let’s pretend,” and how he prophesied that our leaders would in fact encourage it: “Then said He unto me, Son of man, these are the men [the “spiritual” leaders of the nation] that devise mischief, and give wicked counsel in this city: Which say, It is not near [the impending destruction]; let us build houses...” (Ezek. 11:2-3).

Does this sound familiar to the post-September 11th rally cry?

Our entire system is based on greed. The vast majority of advertising today is promoting, in one form or another, pleasures and escapism: “Build a new house, buy a new car, get a boat, look ‘beautiful’ with this gimmick or cosmetic, relieve that ailment with this pill and, while you’re at it, have another drink.”

Most do not understand the purpose of life—and they live in fear. They fear a war between Christianity and Islam, another major terrorist attack, and weapons of mass destruction in the hands of dictators.

Despite how most feel, there is, as Sir Winston Churchill once said, “...a purpose being worked out here below.” The Great God and Creator of the entire universe did not create man to live a futile and fearful life. There is much more to our physical existence than meets the eye!

Your Awesome Potential

From the very beginning, God intended every human to eventually be a part of His DIVINE FAMILY. That means to be like Him, to be a son of God—to be a

great, powerful, SPIRIT BEING with absolutely perfect, holy, righteous character. He most certainly did not intend for us to be aimlessly living, with little or no sense of purpose, continually seeking pleasures to escape from the inexplicable and fearsome realities of our lives.

This great Plan, however, has been hidden for most of mankind’s existence. In fact, a counterfeit was devised by Satan thousands of years ago, and has been implemented and assured support by his servants ever since. During the 6,000 years that God has allowed man to live his own way, this counterfeit has dominated the world, causing mass confusion, despair and destruction.

It has confused, for example, most people’s belief regarding creation, the authority of the Bible, the nature of God, His purpose for mankind, His Great Plan, humanity’s inability to solve its problems, the history and identity of God’s true Church, the concepts of conversion, faith and salvation, what happens after death, and how world peace, happiness and prosperity will finally come.

The Abundant Life

You can even live a joyful, abundant life right now. This is what God intended! Many spend countless hours seeking pleasures and some sort of happiness, but, unfortunately, they are often looking in all the wrong places. Living God’s Way (instead of your own), by His laws, can and *will* bring you happiness, joy, and an abundant life now. In such a condition, this life can be forerunner, in a very small way, of what eternal life in the God Family will be like. Notice what Jesus Christ said: “I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly” (John 10:10).

Christ’s followers, true Christians, do indeed have life more abundantly. But you may be asking, “Why don’t I have an abundant life? And what are true Christians anyway?” Notice Romans 8:9: “But you are not in the

*Please see **SEEKERS**, page 29*

AMERICA'S EDUCATION CRISIS

P A R T O N E

THIS IS the time of year in the United States when parents begin to turn their attention to sending children back to school. Even the stores are running their “back to school” sales. Parents are hurriedly purchasing the latest fashions so their children can be in step with their fellow students. Notebooks, backpacks, pens, pencils, organizers and binders are flying off store shelves as parents try to equip their children for another school year. Even college-bound students get into the fray as they start or return to their pursuit of “higher education.”

While it is normal and expected that parents provide the physical items their child needs for another school year, most depend on the educational system to do the actual educating. Every year, parents happily hand over their open- and receptive-minded children, entrusting teachers with educating and preparing them for life.

Are they simply being taught how to earn a living, or how to *live* as well? Will they be able to pass state-mandated proficiency tests and make it to graduation? Will they even graduate? (A high percentage of students fail every year, with some only receiving a certificate of completion, not an actual diploma.) Few ever stop to consider what kind of education, if any, their children are receiving.

The state of America’s education system has continued to be in crisis. What is the *cause* of the problems facing it today? What is at the *root* of this failure?

BY JAMES F. TURCK

Some do consider, but are more concerned about whether school is even a safe environment, providing an atmosphere that will allow a student to learn. They might ask, “Will my child be a victim of violence?” “Is the school building itself safe or will the ceiling come crashing down?” (This did happen in one Cleveland, Ohio school building.) “Are the buildings filled with hazardous materials, germs and viruses that pose a health risk?”

Sadly, these have become real concerns. Without a well-rounded, balanced, educated citizenry having high standards, ethics and morals, a nation cannot hope to maintain or advance its position in the world. At a time when America is increasingly challenged for world dominance as an economic and military superpower, her educational system is failing.

Why? While many can easily see the problems—the effects—of its failure to properly educate every child, very few see or know the real CAUSE!

What is at the *root* of this failure? What is the *cause* of the problems facing the educational system today?

A Look at the Effects

Before we can take a look at the cause of the failing education system, we should study the problems facing and being produced by modern education.

President George W. Bush recently stated, “When it comes to the education of our children...failure is not an option.” This statement was made twenty years after the Reagan administration commissioned the report *A Nation at Risk*. This 1983 report warned of “a rising tide of mediocrity [in our schools] that threatens our very future as a nation and as a people.”

The findings in that 1983 study were shocking:

- About 13% of all 17-year-olds, and perhaps 40% of minority youths were functionally illiterate.

- When matched against 21 other countries, U.S. students *never* ranked first in 19 academic tests and ranked *last* seven times among industrial nations.

- Average scores of high school students on standard achievement tests were lower in 1983 than before

1957—the year Sputnik set off a flurry of U.S. educational reforms.

Following in 1989, then President George Bush held the first National Education Summit, with the states' governors in attendance, for the purpose of setting educational goals, ranging from eliminating illiteracy to propelling U.S. math and science students to rank first in the world.

National Urban League President Hugh B. Price is quoted as saying the current President is “asking our schools to do something that no society has ever done, to educate all children well, regardless of their circumstances.” This is being equated with making a solid education a fundamental civil right.

This is a very tall order in the Information Age. The population of schools in the U.S. for grades K-12, public and private, in the year 2000 was approximately 53,167,000. These school-age children come from all walks of life, differing social and economic backgrounds, races and religions, two-parent families, single-parent families and even now a growing number of “alternative lifestyle” families. Each child comes from a unique background and environment, requiring teachers to adjust their educational methods for each one.

As class sizes have continued to grow since the 1950s, when former Harvard President James B. Conant advocated replacing small schools with large comprehensive ones, this has become increasingly more difficult to do. The result of this thinking has led to urban high school students having to attend a factory-like school with student populations approaching 1,000! There is a statistically documented higher occurrence of violence, poor achievement and dropout in large urban schools. (All statistics are cited from the National Center for Education Statistics [NCES] throughout.)

How can a child be properly educated under such conditions? And how can a teacher guide and instruct children on a one-on-one basis, giving them the time they need in such an environment? It is impossible, though

Comparing U.S. Literacy Scores With Other Nations

Year 2000 average literacy scores, 15-year-olds:

■ Finland	546
■ Canada	534
■ New Zealand	529
■ Australia	528
■ Ireland	527
■ South Korea	525
■ United Kingdom	522
■ Japan	516
■ Sweden	507
■ Austria	507
■ Belgium	507
■ Iceland	505
■ France	505
■ Norway	500
■ United States	497
(International average)	494
■ Denmark	493
■ Switzerland	492
■ Spain	483
■ Czech Republic	
■ Liechtenstein	

Source: National Center for Education Statistics

every good teacher truly tries. This is just one of many impediments facing America's education system.

Take the case of one student who attended and was removed from the highly regarded Hunter College High School in New York. She found it to be too competitive and impersonal, stating, “My attendance and grades were terrible.” Enrolling in the 175-year-old Humanities Prep, a small school in Manhattan that specializes in giving students a second chance, she flourished in the one-on-one atmosphere. Now a senior applying to college, she has this to say: “At Hunter they didn't care, but here they're really concerned.” Were it not for Humanities, “I would likely have ended up on welfare.”

Lack of a good education frequently leads to underemployment, unemployment and lifelong reliance on welfare, which carries on to the next generation.

Herbert W. Armstrong, the founder of this magazine's predecessor, was also the founder and chancellor of

three liberal arts colleges. Mr. Armstrong knew the importance and benefits of keeping class sizes small. Notice: “I was well aware that colleges had fallen into a dangerous drift of materialism...I also realized that mass-production, assembly-line education in universities of five to forty thousand students resulted in loss of personality development and much that is vital in student training” (*Autobiography of HERBERT W. ARMSTRONG*, Vol. 2, pp. 212-213).

Upon founding Ambassador College, Mr. Armstrong purposely set out to avoid the problems of large campuses and class sizes.

He later wrote, “To that end, the small student body on campus and the small student-faculty ratio provide a distinct advantage. On campus the relationship between student and faculty is as happy and helpful as it is unusual. The smaller college, adequately staffed and outstandingly equipped for its needs, with high character and cultural surroundings, offers greater opportunity for self-expression and activity in the area of the student's talents. It can give more personal attention to the individual student's problems. It produces an altogether different and more desirable campus atmosphere” (*Ambassador College Course Handbook*, Fall Semester, 1983).

How Are We Doing?

How much progress has been made since the national effort was begun to improve the level of education in America? A Washington research group, the Education Trust, shows that the U.S. is ranked 17th in graduation rates (after formerly leading the world), with only 74% of 18-year-olds having completed high school. Not even half of the school children in America can read proficiently at their grade level. A look at the test scores in mathematics and science of U.S. twelfth-graders reveals the fact that they score well below their peers in almost every other developed country! Due to many contributing factors, students from a minority or a low-

income background perform worse.

Milt Goldberg, who headed the commission that produced *A Nation at Risk*, stated, "While we've certainly made some improvements, they're not enough to keep up."

Those nations that are ahead of the U.S. in educating their children will not wait for this country to catch up, not if they want to replace America in her role as the leader of the free world.

The three subject areas that are most often used to gauge student achievement are reading, mathematics and science. These three subjects are the tools that allow a society or a country to achieve, progress, advance and excel.

Consider the following:

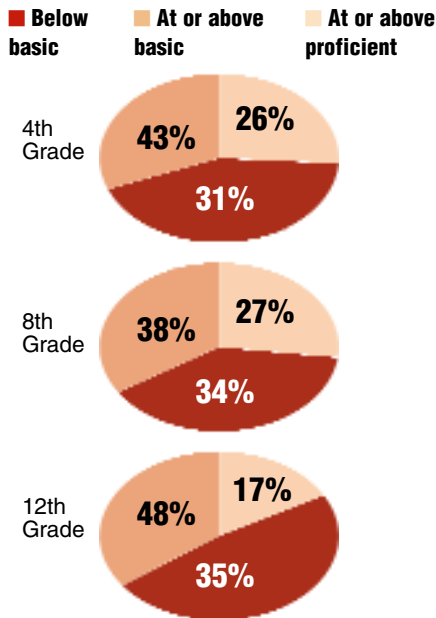
READING performance of 9- and 13-year-olds was higher than the performance in 1971, but there was no meaningful difference among 17-year-olds. In reading, both 9- and 13-year-olds' achievement scores increased in the 1970s. Although no further improvements in average reading scores have occurred for these age groups since the 1970s, their average scores were higher in 1999 than in 1971. In contrast, average scores for 17-year-olds were about the same in both 1971 and 1999. Their scores have remained within a narrow range during all assessment years.

MATHEMATICS scores for 9-, 13- and 17-year-olds have increased since 1973. For 9-year-olds, a period of stable performance in the 1970s was followed by an increase in average scores from 1982 to 1990, and then some subsequent modest increases through the 1990s. For 13-year-olds, an increase in average scores between 1978 and 1982 was followed by additional increases during the 1990s, resulting in a pattern of overall progress. The average scores of 17-year-olds declined between 1973 and 1982, but since then, they have risen. In all three age groups, the average scores were higher in 1990 than in 1973.

SCIENCE performance of 9-, 13- and 17-year-olds declined during the

A Look at Mathematics Levels

Percentage of students below, at and above U.S. mathematics achievement levels (1999-2000):



Note: Numbers are rounded off.

Source: National Assessment of Educational Progress, Mathematics Assessment

1970s, increased during the 1980s and early 1990s, and has been mostly stable since then. Among 9-year-olds, average science scores declined between 1970 and 1973 and then remained stable through 1982. Scores for 9-year-olds rose between 1982 and 1992 but have been stable in more recent assessments. Among 13-year-olds, scores declined from 1970 to 1977, and then increased steadily from 1982 to 1992. Since 1992, scores for 13-year-olds have dropped slightly, resulting in a 1999 average that was similar to that in 1970. Scores for 17-year-olds declined from 1969 to 1982, and then increased over the next 10 years. Since 1992, scores for 17-year-olds have remained stable, but average scores in 1999 were still lower than those in the first assessment.

Although these statements show a trend toward improvement, they do not tell the whole story.

Consider these revealing statistics:

■ As of 1998, only 31% of fourth graders were at or above proficient in

reading performance, with 38% scoring below basic.

■ Only 33% of eighth graders were at or proficient in reading performance, with 26% scoring below basic.

■ Of twelfth graders, only 40% were at or above proficient in reading, with 23% scoring below basic.

■ In math, only 26% of fourth graders were at or above proficient, with 31% scoring below basic performance for the year 2000.

■ Of eighth graders, only 27% are at or above proficient, with 31% scoring below basic.

■ Of twelfth graders, 17% were at or above proficient, with 35% scoring below basic.

■ In science, only 29% of fourth graders were at or above proficient, with 34% scoring below basic skills.

■ Of eighth graders, only 32% were at or above proficient, with 39% scoring below basic.

■ And of twelfth graders, only 18% scored at or above proficient, with 47% scoring below basic science skills.

These statistics do not include all of the almost 11% of 15- to 24-year olds who *dropped out* of school in 2000! Eleven percent might not seem like much until you know how many students it actually represents. In 1996, by the month of October, five out of every 100 young adults who were enrolled in high school had left without successfully completing a high school program. This means that of the 9.6 million 15- to 24-year-olds enrolled in high school, approximately 500,000 dropped out.

This figure remains relatively constant. The cumulative effect of this number of dropouts each year translates into several million young adults lacking high school credentials.

Recall that these three subjects are the tools that allow a society to progress, achieve, advance and excel. If the educational system in America cannot properly teach each generation of children to achieve proficiency in these subject areas, not only will it have failed, but so will the nation.

With the government mandating

that schools teach more non-essential classes (and schools willingly adding non-essential classes) as an attempt at social engineering, along with the requirement that they act as an extension of social services, the emphasis on the major subjects, along with the time necessary to teach them, is diminished.

Crime and Violence in School

On top of this is the fact that school is just not a safe place anymore. Gone are the carefree days of sending your children off to school. Not only do parents need to be concerned with their child's safety *to and from* school, but, increasingly, they need to be concerned with his safety *at* school!

Just call to mind the school shootings in Littleton, Colorado, in which 12 students and a teacher were killed. Or Paducah, Kentucky, where three students were killed and five wounded. Even educators are the target of violence, as evidenced in the shooting death of a teacher in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. In the period from October 1, 1997 to May 26, 2000, there were at least 12 major incidents of school violence. Those incidences left 30 dead and 75 wounded or hurt.

Here is a sampling from the *Associated Press*:

■ October 1, 1997—a 16-year-old boy in Pearl, Mississippi, is accused of killing his mother, then going to his high school and shooting nine students, two fatally.

■ December 1, 1997—three students are killed and five others wounded in a hallway at Heath High School in Paducah, Kentucky.

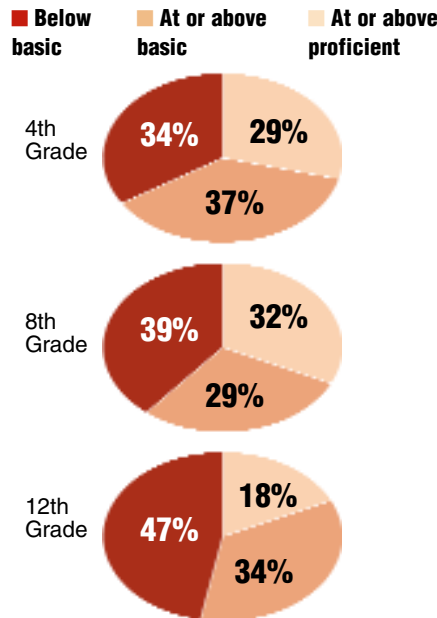
■ March 24, 1998—four girls and a teacher are shot to death, and ten others wounded, during a false fire alarm at a middle school in Jonesboro, Arkansas, when two boys, ages 11 and 13, open fire from the woods.

■ April 24, 1998—a science teacher is shot to death in front of students at an eighth-grade dance at a banquet hall in Edinboro, Pennsylvania. A 14-year-old student awaits trial.

■ May 21, 1998—two teenagers are killed and more than 20 people hurt

A Look at Science Levels

Percentage of students below, at and above U.S. science achievement levels (1996-2000):



Note: Numbers are rounded off.
Source: National Assessment of Educational Progress, Science Assessment

when a 15-year-old boy allegedly opens fire at a high school in Springfield, Oregon. His parents are killed at home. On a police videotape, he is asked why he opened fire. He responds: "I had no other choice."

■ December 6, 1999—a 13-year-old student fired at least 15 rounds at Fort Gibson Middle School in Fort Gibson, Oklahoma, wounding four classmates.

■ February 29, 2000—a 6-year-old boy at Buell Elementary School in Mount Morris Township, Michigan, shot to death a fellow first-grader.

■ May 26, 2000—a 13-year-old boy was indicted as an adult on first degree murder charges in the shooting death of his teacher in the hallway of Lake Worth Middle School, in Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

Schools find it increasingly necessary to employ security guards and metal detectors in an effort to prevent drugs, firearms and violence from making it into the schools.

In 1999 alone, there were about 2.5

million crimes involving theft or violence at school. Students between the ages of 12 and 18 were the victims. Of that 2.5 million, 186,000 suffered violent crimes, including rape, sexual assault, robbery and aggravated assault.

In 1996-97, 10% of all public schools reported at least one serious violent crime to the police or a law enforcement official. Principals' reports of serious violent crimes included murder, rape (or other type of sexual battery), suicide, physical attacks or fights with weapons, or robbery.

Who is in control of the schools? The educators? They are the very ones who have taken discipline out of the schools! And an increasing number of parents will also not allow their children to be disciplined, often suing schools because their children's "rights" have been "violated."

Corporal punishment is fast becoming a thing of the past. The mantra of some is that spanking teaches violence. Says a former school teacher, now a school board member, "Do you want someone to spank your child in the classroom when you are not present to witness it?" "The bottom line," she says, "is if you don't want that to happen to your child, then I don't want it to happen to any child." This virtually guarantees that the students—children—will be in control of the class, and it does not take them long to figure it out. The teachers cannot do anything.

Yet in an age when spanking has been virtually outlawed, youth violence is increasing. Almost none have a healthy fear of authority.

A recently retired police detective from Berea, Ohio, who headed his department's juvenile crime unit, stated, "They tell us if we strike a child as a form of discipline, they'll grow up violent. In law enforcement, we're finding the opposite is true" (*abc-news.com*).

In Part Two, we will continue our look at the effects of the failing education system, and examine the *real* cause behind those problems. □

ABORTION

A Woman's Choice *or a Modern Holocaust?*

P A R T O N E

THIRTY YEARS after the Roe versus Wade case, which led to the legalization of abortion in the United States, the battle still rages on. Those on both sides of this issue, firmly entrenched in what they believe to be morally and ethically right, are taking their campaigns to the street, television studios, abortion clinics and, chiefly, Washington, D.C.

Some resort to political mudslinging to get their point across. Others to violence, murdering those they feel are guilty of the same crime! Adding to this chaos, developments in stem-cell research and the Laci Peterson murder case are causing some activists to lose sight of their political stance.

What confusion! Little did the Supreme Court imagine that their ruling would lead to such a divisive battle in the *United States*.

On the PRO-LIFE side (sometimes referred to as “anti-choice”), abortion

is seen as the outright slaughter of innocent lives, as merely a convenient way for women to “resolve the problem” of unplanned and unwanted pregnancies. Since its legalization in 1973, nearly 50 million abortions have been carried out in the United States alone. Is abortion simply “a woman exercising her rights over her body”? Or something much more grave?

is seen as the outright slaughter of innocent lives, as merely a convenient way for women to “resolve the problem” of unplanned and unwanted pregnancies.

By promoting abstinence in sex education programs, instead of merely the use of contraceptives, pro-life supporters reason that there would be fewer unwanted pregnancies. In addition, they suggest that any unwanted children could be adopted by one of the thousands of couples unable to have children.

In the wake of the murder of Laci Peterson and her eight-month-old unborn son, Conner, momentum is now building to make it a federal crime to harm a fetus. The Unborn Victims of Violence Act, now dubbed “Laci and Conner’s Law,” seeks to treat a fetus as a *separate* victim. Under the law, anyone who harms a fetus would spend as much time in jail as if the mother were harmed. Additionally, handing abortion opponents their greatest victory in decades, Congress banned the procedure known

Images of a Healthy Developing Fetus

*Weeks measured
from conception*

PHOTOS: Life Issues Institute



as “partial-birth abortion” in June 2003. These developments are causing pro-life supporters to wonder whether the Bush administration is taking the much-anticipated steps to overturning *Roe v. Wade*.

On the PRO-CHOICE side (sometimes referred to as “anti-life”), advocates view abortion as a way of putting children who may be born with birth defects or diseases out of their misery. This allows the medical community to terminate fetuses that would otherwise have short lives and long, painful deaths caused by genetic disorders or other such maladies. Abortion is also seen as a way of reducing the number of unwanted children who would be born into abusive or poverty-stricken homes, thus reducing child abuse. Pro-choice supporters also state that if a woman happens to be a victim of rape or incest, she should have the option of abortion readily available.

Overall, the pro-choice movement states that a woman should have the right to choose whether to keep or abort the child growing inside *her* body. In effect, the reasoning is, “It’s *my* body, so *I* decide what to do!”

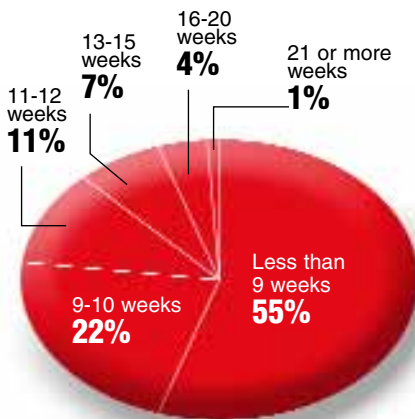
Therefore, the struggle continues, with many millions of unborn children caught in between. Whether single or married, parent or child, young or old, and regardless of race or religion, abortion has affected us all—in more ways than most realize.

“Abortion on Demand”

Over thirty years ago, the Supreme Court handed down a decision that

WHEN WOMEN HAVE ABORTIONS:

(88% of abortions occur in the first 12 weeks of pregnancy.)



SOURCE: The Guttmacher Institute, calculations based on CDC data, 1998

legalized abortion in the U.S. Before this time, abortion was *illegal* and simply considered an IMMORAL action that one would never think of actually debating.

This soon changed. Although Texas law prohibited abortion, except to save a pregnant mother’s life, Jane Roe, a resident of the state, filed a lawsuit seeking to obtain one. The court ruled that a woman had a constitutionally protected *right* to have the procedure, and that this fell within the right to privacy, as protected by the Fourteenth Amendment. The decision made it legal for a woman to have an abortion at any point during the pregnancy. It also defined levels for regulating abortion in the third trimester of the pregnancy—weeks 27 through 40.

In effect, the final verdict ruled that a child is the *property* of the parent—who *has* the right to decide whether the child is wanted.

Attempting to walk the tightrope allowed by the U.S. Constitution, Justice Harry Blackmun stated, “The Constitution does not define ‘person’ in so many words. Section 1 of the Fourteenth Amendment contains three references to ‘person.’ The first, in defining ‘citizens,’ speaks of ‘persons born or naturalized in the United States’...But in nearly all these instances, the use of the word is such that it has application *only postnatally*. None indicates, with any assurance, that it has any possible pre-natal application...”

“We need not resolve the *difficult question* of when life begins. When those trained in the respective disciplines of medicine, philosophy, and theology are unable to arrive at any consensus, the judiciary, at this point in the development of man’s knowledge, is not in a position to speculate as to the answer” (emphasis ours throughout).

As a result, this court ruling affected the laws of all 50 states.

Liberals and the feminist movement at the time viewed this as a monumental step in the “emancipation” of women—of leveling the playing field with men, who never had to deal with an unwanted pregnancy. Women now had the right to CHOOSE—a family *or* a career, marriage and a monogamous relationship with a husband *or* a single life of sex-

12 weeks (3 months)



14 weeks



16 weeks (4 months)



20 weeks (5 months)



ual freedom. Additionally, since unwanted children could now be aborted, child abuse would soon end.

But since then, what has happened to this “brave new world” of women’s liberation and freedom—one supposedly free of child abuse?

Not exactly what was envisioned. In fact, aside from a high increase in sexual promiscuity, sexually transmitted diseases and AIDS, child abuse has skyrocketed since 1973, when 167,000 cases were reported in the U.S. In 1980, the number rose to 785,100; in 1987, there were 2,025,200 cases; in 1989, there were 2,435,000; and in 1999, there were 3,244,000 cases of reported child abuse (National Center on Child Abuse Prevention Research).

These numbers speak for themselves. Clearly, this is not the result foreseen by feminists and liberals in the 1970s.

and II, Korean War, Vietnam War, Gulf War and the Iraq War, in addition to deaths attributed to September 11—all combined—is estimated at 1.27 million. In 2001, 1.31 million pregnancies in the U.S. alone ended in abortion—down from the all-time high of 1.61 million in 1990.

■ At least one in three women in the U.S. will have had an abortion by age 45.

■ By age 20, one in seven women in the U.S. will have had an abortion.

■ About 19% of women having abortions in the U.S. are teenagers; 33% are age 20-24; 48% are age 25 and older.

■ About 83% of abortion patients are unmarried.

■ 26% of women seeking abortions have the procedure billed directly to their public or private insurance.

■ The Alan Guttmacher Institute stated that the worldwide abortion rate

the amazing transformation of what some term “fetal tissue.”

The First Trimester (weeks 1 through 13): Fertilization, or conception, takes place when the chromosomes of the sperm and the egg combine. Conception is calculated as occurring two weeks after the woman’s last period. (This is the date from which the weeks of pregnancy are determined.) Within the next week, the fertilized egg will bury itself in the lining of the uterus, where it can be protected and nourished throughout its growth.

This begins the development of the embryo’s physical characteristics, such as the backbone, spinal column, nervous system, kidneys, liver and intestines. By week three, the heart begins beating. At five weeks, the brain begins developing. In the seventh week, facial features, including the eyes, mouth and tongue, begin to

“About 43% of women obtaining abortions identify themselves as Protestant, and 27% identify themselves as Catholic.”

Sobering Statistics

Since 1973, has the “better, brighter tomorrow” envisioned by the feminist movement become reality? What has been the result of *Roe v. Wade*? To what extent have women in the U.S. sought abortions? The facts are staggering:

■ Abortion is one of the most common surgical procedures.

■ The estimated number of *legal* abortions performed in America alone since 1973 is nearly 50 million—and this is said to be even greater, since it only represents abortions *reported by licensed agencies*.

■ Every twenty-two seconds, an abortion takes place in the U.S.

■ According to the Department of Defense, the total American casualties for the Revolutionary War, War of 1812, Mexican War, Civil War, Spanish-American War, World Wars I

(the number of abortions per 1,000 women age 15-44) can range from a low of 6.5 in the Netherlands, to a high of 77.7 in Cuba.

The U.S. abortion rate is 21.3, comparable to other developed nations such as Sweden (18.7) and Australia (22.2).

■ Black women are more than 3 times as likely as white women to have an abortion, and Hispanic women are 2½ times as likely.

■ About 43% of women obtaining abortions identify themselves as Protestant, and 27% identify themselves as Catholic.

■ Over 60% of abortions are among women who have had 1 or more children.

The Formation of Life

The following is an overview of the growth process, from a fertilized egg to a cuddly newborn baby, illustrating

be visible on the small, raisin-sized embryo. Blood cells develop, giving the unborn child its own blood type. The muscle system also begins development, allowing movement within the womb.

Also in week seven, brain waves can be measured. (Ironically, brain waves are one of the legal criteria in determining whether a person is alive. So, if one can be pronounced “dead” because there are no measurable brain waves, then how can one not be considered “alive” when brain waves *are* detected?)

Arms, legs and toes are growing, and the placenta can now provide oxygen for the baby to “breathe.” Blood is redirected through the almost completely formed heart. In week ten, teeth begin to bud in the unborn child’s mouth. Week twelve brings the production of vocal cords, and crying in the womb becomes possible,

although quieted by the amniotic fluid. Because of the now fully developed brain and nervous system, the child can feel pain. Eyelids are formed, protecting the optical nerves until the eyes are opened in the seventh month. Also during this point, the unborn baby can often be seen through ultrasound sucking its thumb.

Over 88% of abortions take place within this first trimester of a pregnancy!

The Second Trimester (weeks 14 through 26): With the baby's developing muscle system and growing arms and legs, the mother begins feeling kicks and movement. During weeks fifteen and sixteen, eyebrows, eyelashes, hair and taste buds appear. With fully developed hands and feet, the baby can now kick, grab and grasp.

By weeks sixteen through twenty, a doctor can determine the sex of the child through an ultrasound. The unborn baby now has fingernails, fully developed fingerprints, and can even recognize its mother's voice. By this point of the pregnancy, the fetus, while not yet fully developed, could survive outside the womb.

About 11% of abortions take place

within this second trimester of the gestation process.

The Third Trimester (week 27 through birth): The fetus is now completely formed and only needs time for growth and the maturing of internal organs. Legs are now proportionate to the entire body, and toenails, teeth, hair and eyebrows are now visible. A thin hair, called *laguno*, covers much of the baby's body at six months, and a waxy covering, *vernix*, coats the skin. The baby breathes oxygen-rich amniotic fluid into its developing lungs. Most of the baby's time will be spent sleeping during the seventh and eighth months. The baby also begins to experience REM (rapid eye movement) sleep, which causes dreams. For several months, the baby has been feeding through the umbilical cord, drawing nutrients from the mother's blood. Now that the baby is tightly confined to a small space within the uterus, the mother feels numerous squirms and wriggles. It is only a few weeks until the baby is born.

One percent of abortions take place within the third trimester of the pregnancy. While abortion advocates state that 1% is insignificant, keep in mind that it is 1% of an estimated 1.5 million

abortions a year. What seems to be a small number is actually an estimated 15,000 third-trimester abortions a year—or 1,250 a month—about 40 a day! When seen in the proper context, this 1% is far larger than most care to admit.

The Procedure

Despite having sterile and clinical-sounding terms attached to it, such as “vacuum aspiration,” “D&C,” “D&E” and “D&X,” exactly what is involved in the abortion procedure? The following is a brief description of the most popular forms of first-trimester abortions. (Note: While the procedures are described in the least graphic manner, some explicit description is unavoidable.)

Mifepristone: Also known as RU 486 or the “morning-after pill,” mifepristone is a chemical that interferes with the woman's hormones needed to maintain the womb lining—the baby's source of nourishment and protection—which, in effect, causes the embryo to starve. A second drug is administered, causing the woman to expel the embryo—the unborn child! Mifepristone is relatively new and the exact long-term side effects are still

Misconceptions About Roe v. Wade

Abortion advocates firmly state that the Supreme Court's ruling provides strict guidelines regulating second- and third-trimester abortions.

But what exactly are those guidelines? What reasons could allow the state to grant an abortion during the final three months of the child's development?

Justice Blackmun, author of the *Roe v. Wade* decision, divided the full-term pregnancy into three trimesters. He ruled that states had *no* right to restrict abortions within the first six months (the first and second trimesters), and that a woman can abort her pregnancy during this time for *whatever* reason.

Concerning third-trimester abortions, the ruling continued that the state had a *right—not an obligation*—to restrict the procedure only to pregnancies that posed a health risk to

the woman. However, this third-trimester ruling hinged on how the state defined exactly what poses a “health risk.”

In “*Roe v. Wade: Abortion on Demand*,” Dr. Frank Beckwith helps clarify the court's definition of a “health risk,” by examining the ruling made in another abortion case, *Doe v. Bolton*: “In *Bolton* the court ruled that ‘health’ must be taken in its broadest possible medical context, and must be defined ‘in light of all factors—physical, emotional, psychological, familial, and the woman's age—relevant to the well being of the patient. All these factors relate to health.’”

In effect, as long as the pregnant woman can convince her physician that the birth will be a “risk” to her physical, emotional, psychological or familial well-being, the state can

grant her an abortion *up until a few weeks prior to her due date!*

Dr. Beckwith continues, “It is safe to say, therefore, that in the first six months of pregnancy a woman can have an abortion for *no reason*, but in the last three months she can have it for *any reason*. This is abortion on demand.”

With four simple words—“IT IS SO ORDERED”—the Supreme Court legalized the practice of abortion. While Norma McCorvey, otherwise known as “Jane Roe,” is now a staunch *pro-life* supporter, her lawsuit caused a decision that drastically changed multiple millions of lives. □

unknown. However, one of its effects is heavy bleeding, for up to three weeks, after its use. (See “The ‘Morning-After Pill’” inset for more information on RU 486.)

Methotrexate: Though not FDA-approved for abortions, this chemical is also used as a treatment for arthritis and psoriasis—as well as a cancer treatment, when administered in higher doses. Injected five to nine weeks into the pregnancy, methotrexate creates a folic acid deficiency that stops cell division (the growth process), resulting in termination of the fetus. Suppositories are then administered to expel the unborn child. Possible side effects include severe bleeding, nausea, pain, diarrhea, bone marrow depression, severe anemia, liver damage and methotrexate-induced lung disease.

Vacuum Aspiration: This procedure takes place during weeks six to sixteen, and consists of a suction tube

being inserted into the cervix and uterus, and sucking out the placenta and the fetus into a container. Often, because of the powerful suction, the unborn child is dismembered. To ensure that there are no pieces of the fetus remaining in the womb, body parts are accounted for (often by reassembling the unborn baby). The uterus can be punctured during this procedure, causing internal hemorrhaging. Severe infection is also common, as placenta often remains in the uterus.

Dilation and Curettage (D&C): Surgically expanding the cervix (the mouth of the womb), a loop-shaped steel knife is inserted into the womb and the abortionist slices the fetus into little pieces, as well as separating the placenta from the uterus wall. This procedure is administered between weeks six and sixteen of the pregnancy. Similar to vacuum aspiration, internal hemorrhaging and severe infec-

tions commonly occur after this procedure. (This procedure is not to be confused with the similarly named procedure to correct menstrual abnormalities.)

The following are second (or third) trimester abortion procedures:

Dilation and Evacuation (D&E): This is a common procedure for pregnancies between weeks thirteen to twenty four, and is similar to D&C. The cervix is again forced open, and forceps grab the unborn child’s body parts and tear them out from the mother’s womb, piece by piece. Since the skull is hardened to bone by this time, the abortionist crushes the head inside the womb and extracts all the pieces. During such an operation, the fetus can be seen on an ultrasound recoiling from the abortionist’s forceps.

Describing the D&E procedure, Dr. William Hern, an abortionist from

Please see ABORTION, page 30

The “Morning-After Pill”

There has been much written over the last few years about mifepristone (trade name mifeprex), also known as RU 486 outside the U.S. This is often referred to as the “morning-after pill,” because of the perception that this non-surgical “pill” is actually just an after-the-fact contraceptive.

In reality, the “pill” is a series of treatments and follow-up visits to the doctor. The initial visit involves the pregnant mother taking three pills—either in the doctor’s office or at home. This is followed a few days later by another drug dispensed by the doctor. A third visit is then required approximately fourteen days later to verify that this process has terminated the pregnancy. This procedure is successful in ending early pregnancies (49 days or less from last menstrual cycle) approximately 95% of the time. The other 5% still require a surgical abortion.

When the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved this in September 2000, many felt it would be a much easier way to end a pregnancy, when compared to a surgical abortion. What has become clear is that this is anything but an easy way out. It requires more follow-up with the

doctor, more pain over an extended period, the potential for serious side effects (scores of deaths have resulted from its use), and a significant psychological impact on the pregnant woman.

Some, willing to take the risks, have said it felt like a “more natural way to go” because they could feel changes in their body as it reacted to the powerful drugs, which block hormones and cause the woman to go into contractions. In essence, this forces a miscarriage. Women have said that they likened the pain and discomfort to a type of “penance.”

Though not as popular as anticipated, RU 486 is a way for women to avoid the stigma of a surgical abortion, and “running the gauntlet” of protesters outside clinics. No matter how medical science tries to sanitize the process of ending innocent life, numerous women have found that there is no avoiding the emotional scars inflicted by their actions.

The June 2, 2003 issue of *TIME* reported that the health center of the publicly funded James Madison University had prescribed the “morning-after pill” over 2,000 times. When discovered by a state legislator, a

measure was proposed to the J.M.U. senate, which would end its distribution to university students. It was approved, and the health center stopped dispensing the pill.

The result?—2,714 university students signed a petition stating that the decision affected the health and safety of the student body, and that the center should continue prescribing the “pill.” The bill, however, was not overturned. (However, the president of the National Abortion and Reproductive Rights Action League [NARAL]: Pro-Choice America personally invited the two women who led the campaign to attend a five-day training course in the Gloria Steinem Leadership Institute.)

In effect, no matter how people may want to simplify it, the “morning-after pill” is merely an abortion in *tablet form*. □

THE UNIVERSE

Seven Requirements to Sustain Life

Before evolutionists can attempt to “prove” the theory of evolution as fact, they must begin with the idea of a pre-existing, stable, biologically-favorable universe. But can such a tailor-made environment evolve from blind chance? Or was it actually the result of careful, creative forethought?

BY GEORGE C. ROGERS

EVOLUTIONISTS’ assumptions of a creation without a Creator should not go unchallenged. Mathematical probabilities alone disprove the mere existence of matter coming about by random chance. Even the existence of a universe containing biological life prohibits *any* possibility of countless intricate balances occurring by chance.

Yet, evolution ignores the overwhelming probabilities prohibiting the existence of this creation by random chance.

This article will focus only upon seven of the numerous, very specific conditions required in order for matter to exist in a form that is favorable to sustain life. Once we proceed beyond the rudimentary existence of matter, numerous other hurdles would still have to be accounted for.

Thus, this article will not begin to address such remaining factors as the orbits of the earth and moon, the precise tilt of the earth, issues of temperature, pressure, composition of the atmosphere and its filtration of radiation, the continuous water cycle and

numerous other requirements for biological life to thrive.

The following seven requirements are usually expressed in highly technical terms. While diligent effort has been made to relay this information in more understandable terms, the concepts may be relatively complicated. Where a technical term appears, it is because no equivalent term exists that could be substituted without missing the point.

Requirement 1: Neutron Mass \approx Proton Mass

The sun is made up mostly of hydrogen and helium. At the sun’s core, hydrogen is converted to helium through a nuclear reaction, releasing energy. In this process, when two protons collide, one of the protons changes into a neutron. The two bond together, forming a new particle, known as a *deuteron*, consisting of one proton and one neutron.

The instantaneous change of a proton into a neutron is possible because the mass of both particles are nearly the same. The particle of greater mass

will generally transform into a particle of lesser mass by giving up a tiny percentage of its mass during the collision. A neutron is about one part in 1,000 greater in mass than a proton—nearly identical. Thus, the formation of deuterons in the sun’s core would never take place if the neutron mass was significantly greater or less than the proton. In short, deuterons would not form unless the relative mass of each particle was within 0.1 percent of the other.

Stars are able to produce nuclear energy through the formation of deuterons. Without this critical process, no star would produce enough sustained energy to support life on *any* planet orbiting around it. Deuterons are *vital* to sustaining the sun’s thermonuclear reaction, which provides sufficient energy to sustain life on earth.

The lifetime of a neutron, when outside of the nucleus, is about 15 minutes, in which it decays into a proton and an electron. If a neutron were only 0.998 of its actual size, free protons (particles that are not part of a nucleus) would then decay into neutrons—and atoms simply would not exist! In such a case, free protons would decay into neutrons, and—since the nucleus of a hydrogen atom is simply a free proton—hydrogen could not exist!

Thus, a relative mass change of even the *slightest* proportions between neutrons and protons would *eliminate* hydrogen, the most abundant element in the universe. Consider: Without

rent location in relation to the sun. Such an orbit would impose a host of unbalanced conditions hostile for biological life to continue. For example, in such an orbit, a year would exceed a *decade!*

On the other hand, if our sun were a red dwarf, the earth would have to be much closer to it than Mercury is currently located. Many of the same problems that have made Mercury hostile for life would exist on Earth—only much worse. At such a close distance, a red dwarf’s gravitational forces would virtually prevent the earth from rotating. The side facing it would overheat, while the dark side would lose most of its heat, resulting in a temperature differential that would quickly dissipate the gases in the atmosphere.

Scientists agree that neither a blue giant nor a red dwarf can support life on an orbiting planet. Yet, the exact balance of the epsilon constant relative to the gravitational fine structure force is *required* for biological life to exist. The slightest deviation in one direction or the other would cause all the stars in the universe to quickly develop into either blue giants or red dwarfs.

What are the chances that an un-designed, random universe would somehow “find” this thin, hairline range of tolerance and never deviate from such an intricate balance?

Requirement 5: Primordial Escape Velocity = Primordial Expansion Velocity

Consider the primordial expansion velocity, the speed at which the universe has to expand in order to escape the inward pull of the gravity of all the universe. The primordial escape velocity (essentially the cumulative gravitational force of the universe) is the opposite force, which is precisely equal to the primordial expansion velocity.

If the primordial expansion velocity had been only one part in a million greater than the primordial escape velocity, the universe would have expanded so rapidly that matter could not have formed together into galaxies!

On the other hand, if the primordial expansion velocity had been only one part in a million *less* than the primordial escape velocity, then the matter of the

universe would have formed into black holes instead of galaxies. In such a case, there would be no stars radiating energy to supply heat and light.

What are the chances that these two intricate forces could balance each other with precisely equal values in an un-designed, random universe?

Requirement 6: The Cosmological Constant ≈ 0

The cosmological constant is somewhat related to the primordial escape velocity. The expanding universe is inhibited by the cumulative force of gravity from all the galaxies. This force is analogous to the propulsion of a rocket, which must overcome earth’s gravity, which would otherwise hold it back. The force of gravity that inhibits the expansion of the universe is such that this force *decreases* as distance *increases*. Imagine such a force with opposite characteristics, in that it increases with distance, causing the universe to expand more rapidly. This opposite force is called the cosmological constant.

The value of the cosmological constant is very close to zero. To express the actual value of this constant, it would be written as less than 0.000000000000000000000000000000000001 per square meter. Suppose this cosmological constant were to increase to the level of 0.0001 per square meter. In this case, a distortion of spacetime would take place over any distance more than a few kilometers. Under these conditions, one who traveled more than a few kilometers would not be able to return to his place of origin.

If the value of the cosmological constant were decreased from 0.0001 to only 0.0000000001, then the distortion of spacetime would not take effect until one traveled about one-tenth of the distance to the sun. Even with this “slightly improved” level, planets would not be able to have suitable orbits around stars. It is not necessary to understand the concept of spacetime, but rather to appreciate the precision of the cosmological constant in order for the universe to exist as we know it.

Scientists indicate that there would

exist only a very few stars if a different cosmological constant permitted a different rate of expansion to occur. The optimum rate of expansion that did occur allowed for the formation of the maximum range of stars in all the myriads of galaxies. As mentioned in the previous section, a faster rate of expansion would have prevented the formation of stars. A slower rate would have caused matter to form into black holes instead of galaxies. (Black holes are theorized to be the result of the runaway collapse of very massive stars. Not even light can escape the crushing gravity of tiny black holes—usually only about five miles in diameter.)

The correct level of the cosmological constant incorporated 32 zeros in this minute number that approaches the value of zero. If the extremely delicate force only had less than 30 zeros, then the expansion of the universe would have been explosive, allowing no stars to form. Had this number been decreased to more than 34 zeros, then the expansion would have been overcome by gravity, resulting in an inevitable collapse of the universe. This very sensitive and intricate force had to stabilize at an optimal value very close to zero in order for the universe to form.

The probability is virtually nil that such an optimum value could have been established by random chance!

Again, do not worry if you do not fully grasp these technical concepts. Our goal is to help you appreciate how this could never have happened apart from the careful planning of a Creator and Designer.

Requirement 7: Weak Nuclear Force

The weak nuclear force allows a proton to change into a neutron at the optimum rate. If this force were only slightly smaller, then all of the hydrogen in the universe would have long since been changed into helium. As covered earlier, hydrogen is an essential part of the water molecule—and water is essential for all biological life.

Two types of thermonuclear reactions take place in any star in the production of energy. The first reaction (discussed in Requirement 1) involves

the formation of a deuteron as two protons collide, producing one proton and one neutron bound together.

The second reaction occurs when a deuteron collides with a proton, producing a light helium nucleus with an emission of energy. Unless the weak nuclear force existed at the specified magnitude as occurs in the universe, deuterons would never form in the first reaction. The rate of transformation into deuterons is actually a very small percentage of the collisions involving two protons. Yet this restrained rate of reaction—caused by the strong nuclear force relative to the weak nuclear force—is what allows the sun’s thermonuclear reaction to be maintained at a favorable and sustainable rate.

If the value of this weak nuclear force were only slightly diminished, the energy-producing thermonuclear reactions of stars would simply cease! If this value were slightly increased, then the reactions would greatly intensify, burning up all available fuel in a relatively short time, by cosmic standards.

By being at an optimum level with respect to the strong nuclear force, the weak nuclear force allows the sustained reactions of the sun and stars to occur at a rate favorable for biological life!

What Are the Probabilities?

Universe Analyzer, a software program popular on engineering campuses a few years back, helped in calculating the mathematical probability of an undesigned universe meeting the seven requirements for the existence of life. Some of the information in this article was condensed and summarized from this program.

This software demonstrated how remote the probabilities were for all of these requirements to be met purely by random chance. One demonstration featured a total of 2,129 separate universe models. These models give a realistic picture of what the chances would be, given various requirements being met by random chance. Below is the list as to how many requirements were met.

■ Models meeting 1 of the 7 requirements—404

■ Models meeting 2 of the 7 requirements—8

■ Models meeting 3 of the 7 requirements—0

■ Models meeting 4 of the 7 requirements—0

■ Models meeting 5 of the 7 requirements—0

■ Models meeting 6 of the 7 requirements—0

■ Models meeting 7 of the 7 requirements—0

Notice that of the 2,129 separate universe models, only 404 met at least one requirement by random chance. (The only requirements for which the random number generation program were able to qualify were requirements 1, 3, 4 and 7.)

Of the 2,129 models, only eight met two of the necessary requirements. Not a single model was able to meet three or more. The program user could alter the parameters to differ from the forces and constants found in the universe and score a higher probability than the demonstration covered. The point is this: Given the constants, forces and other parameters in the known universe, the probability of these seven requirements being met by chance would be nil for *millions upon millions* of separate models conducted continually across time!

A few decades ago, Harlow Shapley, a noted astronomer, made an interesting admission that still defines the predicament that evolutionists have always faced: “We appear, therefore, to be rather helpless with regard to explaining the origin of the universe. But once it is set going, we can do a little better at interpretation” (*The Evolution of Life*, Vol. 1).

Once evolution is allowed the assumption of an orderly universe favorable for life, they “do a little better” in explaining how life might have evolved. However, the origin of such a universe can never be assumed—it simply could not have occurred without detailed, creative forethought.

The Great Designer

There is an intelligent mind behind the origin of the universe. And this

Personage unabashedly states that He had a purpose for doing so, proclaiming His power, authority and sovereignty to carry out His will. Isaiah 45:12 states, “I have made the earth, and created man upon it: I, even My hands, have stretched out the heavens, and all their host have I commanded.” Then, in verse 18, He continues, “For thus says the LORD that created the heavens; God Himself that formed the earth and made it; He has established it, He created it not in vain, He formed it to be inhabited: I am the LORD; and there is none else.”

One method by which we can prove the existence of this Being is to recognize that any and all hypotheses for the existence of a creation without a Creator have been overwhelmingly **FLAWED**—in every case!

The One who brought the creation together asserts that He “stretches out the heavens as a curtain, and spreads them out as a tent to dwell in” (Isa. 40:22). Then, in verse 26, He declares, “Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who has created these things, that brings out their host by number: He calls them all by names by the greatness of His might, for that He is strong in power; not one fails.” To those whose minds are receptive, God leaves no doubt as being the Author of the entire creation. Those who prefer alternate theories He leaves to their own devices—for now.

At a future time when God reveals Himself to the world in general, mankind will understand *who* this Creator is and *why* their minds were previously closed to accept and submit to His ways. Yet, those who seek to learn of Him now, and prove His existence, stand to gain more than just the understanding of the origin of the universe. That is only the starting point. It opens up possibilities so transcendent that it answers questions mankind has not yet begun to ask! □

This article is part of an on-going series of **REAL TRUTH** articles that will later be compiled into a stand-alone publication.

Seeing Clearly

The Story of the Human Eye



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 in order for you to see what is written on the page.

Your eyes are responsible for 80% of the information your brain receives. This makes it by far the most vital of your sensory inputs. 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 that it will astound you.

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

The human eye is truly fascinating. While one of the most complex systems in existence, its origin is among the least understood. Continue reading to understand why evolutionist theories become *blurry* where the eye is concerned.

BY BRADFORD G. SCHLEIFER

whom our eyes have evolved.

The story of this fascinating organ is both inspiring and, pardon the pun, eye-opening! The absence of evolutionary evidence reveals the **REAL** origin of the eye and the design that has gone into it.

How Does It Work?

Before we can begin to look 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

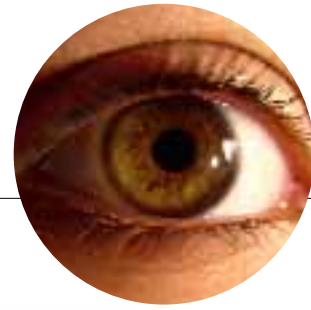
these basic “particles” is a photon. Photons originate in the sun and are what we perceive as light. Without photons, there is no light!

You are constantly bombarded with these particles. 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

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 extremely good 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, a *corrective* lens, 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 in 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.

CILARY 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 next part of the eye—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!

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.

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.



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.

The Complex Details

The graphic “Inside the Eye” is what could be called the 30,000-foot 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 your retina.

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. 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 concentra-

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 this equipment is—without software, it can do *nothing*. Your computer will not even turn on without some form of software, telling that 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, 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 your eye operates, try this simple experiment to witness how much interaction actually takes place between your brain and your eye. While you are reading these

“No matter how intricate and complicated this equipment is—without software, it can do *nothing*.”

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 behavior, 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

tion 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” (“Evidence for Intelligent Design from Biochemistry,” Michael Behe, Aug. 10, 1996).

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 so ridiculous when applied to your eyes?

Hardware Requires Software

The makeup of your eye—lens, iris, retina, etc.—are the “nuts and bolts” that send the electrical pulse into your brain. But how does your brain know

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 transform the over one hundred 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

required for 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 Trilobite’s Eye: Evolution Reversed?” inset.)

Such questions are never addressed!

And even more amazing, there has never been any attempt to explain the process by which an eye could have possibly evolved from a simpler form.

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).

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

completely useless!

Again, while it sounds impossible for the eye to have evolved, what are the odds of both the software *and* hardware appearing AT THE SAME TIME?

Do you see why evolutionists avoid conversations about the eye?

Simply Impossible!

Even in this short article, you have begun to see the amazing complexity

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 would 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

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! □

This article is part of an on-going series of *REAL TRUTH* articles that will later be compiled into a stand-alone publication.

The 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 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.

So 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 bone-shaker” (“Crystal Eyes,” *Natural History* 109, no. 8, pp. 70-71).

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. □

SEEKERS

Continued from page 11

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.” True Christians have the Spirit of God. Many believe in Christ, yet do not have God’s Holy Spirit, and therefore are not Christians at all. The physical carnal mind is, in fact, *hostile* to God and His Way (Rom. 8:7).

The Christian life in today’s world, however, is not as some would have you believe, some sort of happy-go-lucky, easy-as-pie fairy tale. It involves hard work! God’s servants are busy overcoming and conquering sin. We are preparing now to be a part of the God Family when Christ returns to this earth. By putting God first in our lives, we can have proper priorities, seeking His will, and then be able to perform it. One way in which God’s will is done is through His Work—producing magazines such as this—providing the REAL TRUTH about the gospel of the kingdom of God to the entire world.

Living God’s Way helps you to appreciate and be thankful for what you already have, and will lead you to be more concerned about others. It provides knowledge and vision of God’s Plan. Gone is the fear of this present world and its near future. Gone is the void created by a lack of understanding about our great purpose. There is no need to endlessly seek pleasures—there is simply no longer a need to escape one’s daily life.

You can live the abundant life NOW—simply stop rejecting God in your life, admit that man’s way, your way, is wrong. Notice I John 1:3-4: “...truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ. And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full.” (For more details, read our free article “You Can Live the ABUNDANT LIFE!”)

A Wonderful World to Come

The soon-coming Great Tribulation will be mankind’s final lesson in a

history of living his own way apart from God. It will be the end of this age—the end of this period of time in man’s or the earth’s existence. Fortunately, the Tribulation will be cut short: “...but for the elect’s sake those days shall be shortened” (Matt. 24:22). Christ will return to this earth as “King of kings and Lord of lords” (Rev. 19:16) to establish God’s government. His government is, of course, the basis or foundation of His Way. It will, in fact, be the driving force behind great change on earth.

The peoples and nations of the world will at first resist Christ. He will have to destroy that world-dominating seventh and final Holy Roman Empire, and free the modern-day descendants of ancient Israel to return to their homeland (Jer. 30:7-10). As an example to the rest of the world, they will be the first to experience living under God’s government, being taught how to live happy, healthy, prosperous and abundant lives.

Other peoples and nations will then see and want to learn about and live the same way, but some will still rebel and attack and have to be *forced* to live the right way. God’s government will spread across and rule the entire earth (Dan. 2:44; 7:14). Christ will be King, and He will rule with His saints—those humans who had been called as “firstfruits,” and had successfully completed their training to become perfect, righteous God-beings at Christ’s Return.

The new world government will include one world religion. All peoples will be taught the correct understanding of God, His Way and His Plan. Mankind will understand his purpose, and the concept of “cause and effect”—the great blessings that come as a result of living God’s Way (Isa. 11:6-9). This government will also include one system of education. It will be a *combination* of FAMILY, CHURCH and STATE. Parents will teach and train their children to be happy, industrious and obedient. The Church will teach everyone on God’s weekly Holy Sabbath and during the annual Holy Days, about the right way to

live, about God, and about His Great Plan. And schools will teach everyone the truth about God’s creation and mankind’s history—in fact, schools will teach the truth about *every* subject.

People in this wonderful world to come will be truly happy and fulfilled. There will be no need to endlessly seek pleasures. There will be no need to escape. Fear of the present and future will be abolished. The void of meaningless existence will be filled with a proper, correct sense of purpose. Gone will be the spirit of competition that drives commercials to scream and make you scream, “I want more!” Gone will be drug abuse and the immoral excesses of alcohol, and the improper—perverted—use of sex. Movies and television will depict correct, educational examples of life. Sports will be uncompetitive, unaggressive and truly entertaining. Family vacations will be a time to draw closer together and closer to God and His Creation. All will be done in moderation, in decency and in good order. (If you wish to learn more about this exciting time just ahead, read our free book *TOMORROW’S WONDERFUL WORLD – An Inside View!*)

Your Choice

The world to come is indeed an exciting time to consider. As just a part of God’s Great Plan, it is truly magnificent. Those of us who understand and are working toward that time live without fear of the present or future. We live purposeful lives, with a sense of security, confidence and faith.

You may be tired of endlessly seeking pleasures and trying to escape. You may be tired of living in fear and filling a seemingly endless void in your life. If this is the case and if you want to know more about the abundant life that you can start living *today*, and about God’s Plan, be sure to read the literature offered in this article.

It is your choice. It may be time you finally stopped trying to escape. It may be time you faced reality head-on. □

ABORTION

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Colorado, stated in a 1978 report to the Association of Planned Parenthood, “We have produced an unusual dilemma. A procedure is rapidly becoming recognized as the procedure of choice in late abortion, but those capable of performing or assisting with the procedure are having strong personal reservations about participating in an operation which they view as destructive and violent...Some part of our cultural and perhaps even biological heritage recoils at a destructive operation on a form that is similar to our own, even while we may know that the act has a positive effect for a living person.

“No one who has not performed this procedure can know what it is like or what it means; but having performed it, we are bewildered by the possibilities of interpretation. We have reached a

throughout the body, severe hemorrhaging, seizures, coma, serious side effects on the central nervous system, or even death.

Digoxin Induction: This technique is used between weeks twenty and thirty-two, and involves the injecting of chemicals directly into the child’s heart. Once dead, suppositories allow the mother to expel the unborn child.

Hysterotomy: Similar to the procedure followed when performing a c-section, the fetus and placenta are removed from the womb and simply “disposed of.” This procedure is used between weeks twenty-four and thirty-eight.

Partial-Birth Abortion (D&X): Also called “dilation and extraction,” partial-birth abortion was banned by Congress in June 2003. This procedure is used for twenty to thirty-two week pregnancies, and involves pulling out the unborn child through the birth canal, making sure that the head

the U.S. is unmistakable. Thousands of pages would be needed to detail the numerous accounts of psychological trauma and life-threatening effects abortion has had on those involved in the procedure—not to mention the overall affects on a society that legalizes the termination of innocent life. In effect, we live in a world that relies on *murder* as a means of contraception and of dealing with social problems!

No doubt, abortion *has* deeply affected today’s society. There are countless opinions on the legality and morality of ending unwanted pregnancies. If you ask 100 different people for the basis of their opinion, they will offer almost as many different reasons.

Yet, without adding one’s individual opinion, two simple questions slice through personal commentary and philosophies, once and for all settling this controversial issue. They answer the CRUX of the never-ending debate over legalized abortion:

“No doubt, abortion *has* deeply affected today’s society. There are countless opinions on the legality and morality of ending unwanted pregnancies.”

point in this particular technology where there is no possibility of denial of an act of destruction by the operator. It is before one’s eyes. The sensations of dismemberment flow through the forceps like an electric current...The more we seem to solve the problem, the more intractable it becomes” (“What About Us? Staff Reactions to the D&E Procedure,” Hern, Corrigan).

Saline Abortion: This abortion procedure is used after week sixteen of the pregnancy, and entails the insertion of a needle into the woman’s abdomen, which removes about eight ounces of amniotic fluid, replacing it with an equal amount of a concentrated salt solution. The baby then inhales the salt, causing its lungs and flesh to burn. Death occurs within the hour, and a dead, shriveled child is delivered within twenty-four hours. Side effects can include uncontrolled blood clotting

remains in the mother. If the unborn baby were completely pulled out at this point, it would be alive. (Ironically, in any other circumstance, the doctor would be required to make every heroic effort to save the child’s life.) However, the abortionist makes an incision on the back of the head, and removes the child’s brain with suction through a catheter. The head then collapses, allowing the child to be removed “intact.”

If abortionists could see face-to-face the countless millions of babies who have been aborted in the above procedures, would their opinion on the morality and legality of abortion still be the same? Would they still see them as nothing more than “fetal tissue”?

Two Important Questions

The mountain of evidence proving abortion’s impact on mortality rates in

WHEN does LIFE begin?—and—WHO has the RIGHT to give or take away life?

Recall Justice Blackmun’s statement in *Roe v. Wade*, “*We need not resolve the difficult question of when life begins.*” When those trained in the respective disciplines of medicine, philosophy, and theology are unable to arrive at any consensus, the judiciary, at this point in the development of man’s knowledge, is not in a position to *speculate* as to the answer.”

But these questions *can* and **MUST** be resolved. Doing so removes all doubt of whether abortion is simply a woman’s CHOICE—or whether it is sanitized MURDER. Answering these questions also reveals the lasting effects abortion has had on the marriage and family institutions, and exposes the media bias around the world. We will analyze all these and more, in the second part of this two-article series. □

ROADBLOCKS

Continued from page 8

Diplomats, politicians, government officials, journalists and others “in the know” are aware of these and other barriers to the roadmap. However, there is one particular roadblock that escapes their attention. In fact, few—if any—ever stop to consider it.

The Simplest—Yet Least Understood—Roadblock

Of all the obstacles that will block this and all other peace plans from working, there is one that is most overlooked and least understood—yet it is basic to the very core of human nature. Described in the Holy Bible, this particular road-

block is the ROOT of every act of war, violence and aggression known to man:

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

All wars, battles, riots and fights come from one thing: Uncontrolled carnal lust to possess what belongs to other people—land, money, power, etc. It is as simple as that.

When left unchecked, such wanton lust will drive people to do *anything* to get what they desperately want. ANY-

THING—lie, cheat, steal, and even commit murder!

This is the reason for the many suicide bombings, massacres and other horrendous acts in the land of Israel—and throughout the world—and why they will continue! As long as human beings allow themselves to be consumed and driven by their carnal nature, peace will always remain just beyond man’s reach. That is the bad news.

But here is the good news: There is a peace plan that actually works! It existed long before man ever came into existence, and will soon be implemented among every nation on earth. It will bring true, lasting peace. You can learn more about it in our free booklet *How WORLD PEACE Will Come*. □

PERSONAL

Continued from page 2

kingdom of God—that the gospel of the kingdom refers to Jesus Christ. This is not what the Bible says! The gospel of Jesus Christ is HIS GOSPEL—HIS MESSAGE about the kingdom of God!

Messengers carry messages. As said, Christ was a Messenger sent from God with an announcement. His message was not about Himself—it was about the kingdom of God! In John 12:49-50, Christ said, “For I have not spoken of Myself; but the Father which sent Me, He gave Me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that His commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto Me, so I speak.”

Plainly, Christ functioned as a messenger—a representative—a SPOKESMAN for the kingdom of God.

In John 14:24, Jesus said, “the word which you hear is not Mine, but the Father’s which sent Me.” Christ brought the Father’s message. This should now be clear! He stated, in

Luke 16:16, “The law and the prophets were [preached] until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached.”

That is what this Work is doing today, and, through this article, this kingdom is being preached to you.

What Is the Kingdom of God?

Matthew 6:33 states, “But seek you first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness...” If you are to seek something as your *first* goal and focus in life, you must know exactly what it is! This chapter contains what many call “The Lord’s Prayer” (vs. 10). Christ instructs Christians to pray “after this manner,” and then continues by adding the phrase, “Thy kingdom come.” Knowing what you are praying for will make your prayers far more meaningful!

(This article’s primary purpose is to explain the true gospel of the Bible. To understand the *kingdom of God* in detail, read our free booklet *What is the KINGDOM OF GOD?*)

But let’s now ask, at least briefly: What *is* the kingdom of God? The word *kingdom* simply means “government.” Of course, you cannot have a government without a nation to govern. Therefore, a kingdom is at

least one nation with a government.

There are four necessary components of any kingdom: (1) Land, property or territory—however large or small. In other words, one must have a specific and definite set of boundaries that constitutes the size of the kingdom; (2) a ruler, king, monarch or governor leading the government; (3) people or subjects living within the territory governed; and (4) a system of laws and rules and a basic structure of government.

No kingdom is complete without these basic elements.

But how does this apply to the kingdom of God? Is this to be a literal, physical place on earth, with people and laws, presided over by a ruler?

Most do not understand the most basic elements of the kingdom of God. Some believe that the kingdom is in the hearts of men. Others believe that it is wherever you find a particular church. Still others believe that it is Jesus Christ Himself. Some believe that it is here now. Others believe that it is yet to come, but do not understand how or when this will occur.

Such confusion! One must be *born again* into the kingdom of God—and this will be explained in the next issue. □

WORLD NEWS DESK



RELIGION

The Pope's Decalogue for Europe

The press office for the Spanish Episcopal Conference recently released the Pope's proposed Decalogue for the construction of the United States of Europe. It is as follows:

(1) Europe, in its history and in its present, is extensively and profoundly penetrated by Christianity. The Christian faith has shaped European culture, making "one whole" with its history and, despite the painful divisions between East and West, Christianity is the religion of all Europeans.

(2) The values advocated by the Gospel will contribute to construct the Europe of the spirit, the Europe of hope. Hence, the European Union will have no solidity if it is reduced only to the geographic and economic dimension, as it must consist above all of agreement on values.

(3) Christian inspiration can transform the political, cultural, and economic integration in a coexistence in which all Europeans will feel at home and form a family of nations, a model for

other areas of the world.

(4) The Christian roots are, for Europe, the principal guarantee of its future. To ignore, forget, or conceal Europe's Christian heritage is an injustice, an offense, a profound impoverishment that sooner or later will have to be accounted for.

(5) This is why, in the future, European Constitution reference must be made to the religious heritage, particularly the Christian, and that its rights must be respected and recognized.

(6) In the present context, impregnated with laicism, materialism, and consumerism, the Church must be a consistent witness of the transcendent dimension of human existence.

(7) Europe must continue in its defense and promotion of the inviolable dignity of every human person, in his/her entire vital cycle and in the totality of his/her inalienable rights.

(8) The Europe of the future will be a Europe of love and preferential and permanent service to the poor and

needy, a Europe that promotes the culture of solidarity.

(9) The foundations on which a Europe united in diversity will be built are acceptance, respect, sympathy, dialogue, and fraternity.

(10) They conclude, "Do not be afraid! The Gospel is not against you, but for you." "In the Gospel, which is Jesus, you will find the sure and lasting hope to which you aspire."

The new European Constitution, along with the above-stated goals of the Roman Catholic Church, is simply laying the foundation for greater things to come. □

Source: Zenit News Agency

ASIA AND THE MIDDLE EAST

North Korea, Iran and Missiles

A conservative Japanese newspaper reported that North Korea was currently in talks with Iran to discuss the export of long-range ballistic missiles to Iran, as well as joint development of nuclear warheads. The report indicated that the negotiations have been going on for about a year, and are expected to end with an agreement this October. The exporting

of military technology is a primary source of revenue for cash-strapped North Korea.

Although North Korea should indeed be considered a legitimate strategic threat to the U.S., it is nothing when compared to the much-less covered threat from China, Russia and Europe. Can you imagine the possible tri-alliance of the economic power-

house of Europe, the "former" superpower of Russia, and the world's most populous country, China? Do you think September 11th may have just been an event to simply shift America's focus to primarily rouge states? □

Source: The Washington Post

NORTH AMERICA

The U.S. as World Cop

U.S. troops in Liberia? At the beginning of the current U.S. administration, such a notion would have been scoffed at and quickly disregarded. There was, at that time, a certain urge to return to a former isolationist view of the world, caring only about a very few critical areas, and disregarding the rest with some contempt. Of course, September 11th quickly changed all that. However, even now, a quiet subtle wind of change seems to be blowing across U.S. foreign affairs.

The situation in Afghanistan continues to simmer and require much U.S. attention. The peace of a post-Taliban/al-Qaeda era simply does not exist. In a recent 24-hour period, 64 people were killed. In Iraq, what was supposed to be a quick “in and out” war is now becoming a “generational” commitment. Can you imagine U.S. troops in Iraq for the next 20 years? In addition, while North Korea enters a nuclear missile alliance with Iran, it has to, at the same time, negotiate with the U.S., China, South Korea and Japan. China itself continues to build up forces across from Taiwan and develop more and various missiles. The U.S. remains a committed ally of Israel while at the same time committed to a Middle East peace plan.

Can the U.S. afford to have such a diverse and widespread foreign affairs



Source: Zenit News Agency

policy? Can it afford not to? How will Europe and the Muslim world view the U.S. during a generation in Iraq? When will China force Taiwan to return to the “motherland”? What would the U.S. be able to do about it? Many questions—and the answers lie ahead. □

EUROPE

Many Germans Believe U.S. Behind Sept. 11

A recent poll of Germans indicates that almost one-third of those below age 30 believe the U.S. government may have sponsored the attacks on September 11th. Almost 20 percent of all ages hold this view. Although German support for the U.S.-led war on terrorism was quite high after September 11, 2001, it has quickly eroded and been replaced with suspicion, particularly in response to the reasons given for, and the media coverage of, the more recent war in Iraq. “The news is controlled,” a 17-year-old German was quoted as saying. “You could see that in the Iraq war. It doesn’t seem to me that you get the full truth.” □

Source: Reuters AlertNet

SCIENCE

China Creates Human-Rabbit Hybrid

For the first time, Chinese scientists have used parts of the cloning procedure, to produce human-rabbit hybrid embryos. More than 100 of the hybrids were allowed to develop for several days before being destroyed to allow extraction of their embryonic stem cells. The scientific goal is to be able to mass-produce human embryos to provide a source for these embryonic stem cells, which can theoretically be used to create human tissue and organs—skin, lung, kidney, eye, brain, or spinal cells, etc. The problem they face is that the extraction of human egg cells is costly and somewhat difficult. So, if they can mass-produce and “harvest” egg cells

from another creature (e.g., a rabbit), and remove most of its DNA, then insert human DNA, the result is a hybrid embryo that is “mostly” human!

Of course, mankind’s next question is, “How human do the embryos have to be before we must give them human rights?” Richard Doerflinger, of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, said, “I think because all the nuclear DNA is human, we’d consider this an organism of the human species.” □

Source: The Washington Post



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The screenshot shows the website interface for 'The REAL TRUTH ONLINE EDITION'. The browser title is 'The REAL TRUTH Magazine - Microsoft Internet Explorer'. The page header includes the magazine's name, volume and issue information, and a search bar. A navigation menu on the left lists 'HOME', 'WHO ARE WE?', 'ARCHIVES', 'BROADCAST', 'Q & A', 'EMAIL UPDATES', and 'PDF VERSIONS'. The main content area features a large article titled 'The WORLD TO COME' with a sub-header 'ARTICLES FOR SEPTEMBER - OCTOBER 2003'. Below this, there are several article teasers with images and titles: 'RAGING FIRES: The Warning', 'MIDDLE EAST: as the Roadmap to Peace', 'PLEASANT SLEEPERS: Part Two: A Desperate Need to Escape', 'ABORTION—A Woman's Choice or a Modern Holocaust? Part One', 'HUMAN LIFE: Seven Requirements to Sustain Life', 'THE HUMAN EYE: The Story of the Human Eye', and 'AMERICA'S EDUCATION SYSTEM—Part One'. A sidebar on the left contains an article titled 'Which is the REAL GOSPEL?' with a sub-header 'PERSONAL FROM DAVID C. PAGE'. At the bottom, a 'WORLD NEWS DESK' section provides brief news updates. The browser's address bar shows the URL 'http://www.RealTruthMag.org' and the system clock indicates 'Wednesday, September 03 2003 9:22 AM'.