

THE WORLD AHEAD

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EDITORIAL



Roderick C. Meredith
Editor in Chief

A Crusade for SANITY!

We're living at the *end* of an age. Social and ethnic divisions in our nations are worsening. The Western world's spiritual and moral deterioration is accelerating. A recent survey of Northern Illinois University students found that 25 percent believed that sexual abstinence actually *permitted* sexual practices similar to those of ancient Sodom and Gomorrah (*The New York Times*, Jan. 7, 1996). All around us it seems that violence and even terrorism have become accepted as commonplace. It is dawning on increasing millions of people that "something has got to give."

The living standard in America, Canada and Britain continues to deteriorate. Among European Union countries, Britain is now ranked almost at the bottom for many quality-of-life categories—ahead of only Portugal! But the bad news is that our standard of living is going to go *down* beyond what most people could ever imagine.

At the same time, unusual, record-breaking storms, earthquakes and other "natural" disasters have been striking our peoples with increasing frequency. Major insurance companies have lost billions and have become increasingly reluctant to continue insuring some areas for some perils. Meanwhile, horrifying disease epidemics are destined to strike our peoples with unmitigated fury within the next decade or two due to our abuse of antibiotics, bioengineering and the environment! **WHY?** What is the *reason* behind our lifestyle deterioration? Why are our economic, health and climatic problems increasing beyond our ability to handle them? Where have we gone wrong? Why aren't we being blessed as professing "Christian" nations?

The real answer is that although we *profess* Christianity, we do *not* truly follow the religion of Christ and the original apostles at all! We have lost our way. We have so "watered down" the teachings of Jesus that they would be virtually unrecognizable to Him and His original followers. The shocking *truth* is that most people in the "Christian" world have rejected *the way* that would bring them genuine peace, harmony, prosperity and untold blessings from the Creator of heaven and earth. The proclamation of *that way* is what this Work of God is all about! It is to be given to the world as a witness just before the end of this present age (Matt. 24:14). It is a literal *crusade for sanity* to teach the revealed physical and spiritual laws that produce peace, happiness and universal prosperity. The power of this crusade is *growing* steadily.

Your Bible says in Amos 3:7, "Surely the LORD God will do nothing but he *revealeth* his secret unto his servants the prophets" (KJV). When you read in *The World Ahead* about solutions and real answers to the problems in relationships, marriage, child rearing and the preservation of the family—do you realize that Bible prophecy is being fulfilled before your very eyes? Where else on this earth can you obtain real understanding of the problems of human suffering and

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World Ahead/Corel Image

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Will Christ Return Tonight?

by Roderick C. Meredith

Millions of Pentecostal and Evangelical Christians believe that Jesus Christ may come at any time. They see world events shaping up according to Bible prophecy. And they want to be “ready.”

A recent feature article in the *Los Angeles Times* quoted Franklin Graham, son of Evangelist Billy Graham, as saying, “The churches believe that everything is coming to a head and that God is moving. Many people in the evangelical community believe that the return of Jesus Christ could be at any moment—and I’m one of those” (*Los Angeles Times*, Dec. 31, 1995).

For decades, many iron-lunged evangelicals have thundered in revival tent meetings, “Jesus Christ may come TONIGHT. You need to be ready to meet your Maker NOW!”

Although any of us could die prematurely, is it *likely* that the Jesus Christ of the Bible will come tonight? For most people in this world, the *reality* of divine intervention does not seem very real at all. Even among “believers,” there is great disagreement as to *when* and *how* Christ will return or if He will literally return at all.

Will God intervene suddenly and mysteriously—totally unexpectedly? Or has the Almighty revealed a specific *chain of events* that will inform and warn those who take the Scriptures seriously?

What does the BIBLE really say? You need to know!

Due to the general lack of faith in

the Word of God today, it is necessary to state that God is NOT capricious. The Creator of the universe does NOT plan things for fanciful, impulsive or temperamental reasons. God the Father will send Jesus Christ back to this earth at a time when His Second Coming will make the difference between life and death for the human race. Preachers who fatuously intone “tonight is the night” are doing a grave disservice to those who listen to them. The return of Jesus Christ is deadly serious business. It is a question, possibly, of YOUR survival!

Only from one place, the Holy Bible, can you find the *revealed knowledge* about this crucial ques-

tion. Most of the ideas and speculation of men about Christ’s return are sheer nonsense—based on nothing but guesses and vanity!

Endtime World Conditions

The Bible reveals that man’s technological knowledge will be vastly increased just before Christ returns. It will also be a time of mass travel and large movements of immigrants: “But you, Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book until the time of the end; many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase” (Dan. 12:4).

Despite this boom in technologi-

cal ability, man’s know-how in *spiritual* things is stagnating! Our ability to get along with each other just has not improved over the last 4,000 years. Jesus said, “But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be” (Matt. 24:37).

The Bible clearly reveals that Noah’s day was characterized by rampant *sin* and *violence*: “Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually... And God said to Noah, ‘The end of all flesh has come before Me, for the earth is filled with violence through them; and behold, I will destroy them with the earth’” (Gen. 6:5, 13).

The Apostle Paul was also inspired by God to look into the future to describe the last days as “perilous times”—times of crass materialism, moral degradation and a false spirituality that denies the POWER of the true God of the Bible (2 Tim. 3:1-5). Does this description fit our present Western civilization?

Another characteristic of the general time leading up to Jesus’ return will be the abundance of horrifying wars and destruction (Matt. 24:3-20). Jesus warned that there would be a definite threat of human EXTINCTION—if He did not intervene to save man from his deadly ways: “For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect’s sake those days will be shortened” (vv. 21-22).

The Decline of the Anglo-American Powers

Believe it or not, there are *prophecies* that describe the overall condition of the United States, Canada, Britain, Australia and New Zealand at the endtime. These prophecies state that the Anglo-

American-descended peoples will be in a condition of national captivity and slavery! The key is to understand under what name these modern peoples are identified in Bible prophecy. This key is fully explained and *proved* in our new brochure, *America and Britain in Prophecy*. If you have not already requested it, please call or write for your free copy today.

To briefly summarize this point, the Anglo-Saxon-Celtic peoples are the descendants of the so-called “Lost Ten Tribes” of Israel. The “birthright promise”—carrying a future of national greatness and power—was given specifically to the two sons of Joseph, Ephraim and Manasseh, two of the Lost Ten Tribes (cf. Gen. 48:13-19). This divine birthright blessing promised that Manasseh would become a great nation and Ephraim a great “company” or *commonwealth* of nations (Gen. 35:9-11). But, these prophecies also noted that when the modern descendants of these two birthright tribes of ancient Israel turned aside and *forsook God* for the pleasures of selfishness, God stated that they would be PUNISHED.

Are we, the peoples of the United States, Canada and the British-descended nations, God’s “pet people”? His “favorites”? Some might think so if they consider all the wealth and power our nations have enjoyed over the last 50 years or so.

But God is not a respecter of individuals or nations! No indeed!

God does not play favorites! He *chose* us to properly use and set an example in sharing the birthright promise with other nations. He intended that His people be an example of righteousness and equity. But we have *failed*. Instead, we show the world the selfish, individualistic way to live with our bulging prisons, our tolerance of adultery, our acceptance of divorce and our abuse of children while our demand for porn, booze and drugs has skyrocketed in what some used to call our “Christian nations.”

God knew in advance that we would lapse into materialism, agnosticism and vanity once the promise of national greatness was obtained. So, over 100 years *after* Israel’s first captivity in antiquity, God prophesied about a *future* captivity in the endtime and then a final “restoration” at the Messiah’s return.

Coming National Captivity

Notice this prophecy that God gave to Jeremiah: “Now these are the words that the LORD spoke concerning Israel and Judah (two SEPARATE nations)... ‘So why do I see every man with his hands on his loins like a woman in labor, and all faces turned pale? Alas! **For that day is great, so that none is like it;** and it is the time of Jacob’s trouble, but he shall be saved out of it’” (Jer. 30:4, 6-7). Again, it is important to note that Jeremiah lived and wrote over one hundred years *after* Israel’s ancient Assyrian captivity around 734-721 B.C. So the prophecy of Jeremiah 30 could only be talking about a future captivity *in our time*—NOW!

This coming, modern-day captivity is called by the Scriptures the Great Tribulation; it is the *same time* described by Jesus in Matthew 24:21-22. There *cannot* be two such terrible times so great that “none” is like them!

Then, in the very *next two verses* of Jeremiah 30, God describes the yoke of slavery being removed from our peoples at the *Second Coming of Christ*. And He describes our people finally beginning to truly *serve* God: “But they shall serve the LORD their God, and David their king, whom I will raise up for them” (v. 9). This occurs at Christ’s return—after the *resurrection from the dead*, because David and all the righteous saints and prophets will have been raised to life!

Again, in Ezekiel 36:24-38, God describes how He will “gather” all the House of Israel out of captivity,

restore them to the land of Israel, give them His Spirit and cause them to walk in His laws (v. 27). He will bless that parched Middle Eastern land so

hate, envy and jealousy between Israelite and Jewish brothers will cease. And all anti-Jewish feelings will END. *God speed that day!*

When Will Christ Return?

Regarding His Second Coming, Jesus prophesied, “Of that day and hour no one knows” (Matt. 24:36). Yet, He also said to “watch” (v. 42) and to “be ready” (v. 44).

that it will become fabulously lush and beautiful like the garden of Eden (v. 35).

Then, in Ezekiel 37:15-25, God clearly describes how, at that time, He will make Israel and Judah “one nation” (v. 22)—when all *Twelve Tribes*

are finally reunited at Christ’s coming. Skeptics should notice that if all Twelve Tribes were simply the modern Jews of today, then why is God making this remarkable prophecy that all the descendants of the Patriarch Israel will be reunited as one people and one nation? The truth is that, today, the Jews are divided from, and identified separately from, the rest of the tribes of Israel. Yet God promises that in the future they will *never again* be separate peoples and separate nations! King David will be resurrected to rule over them as one nation and to teach them God’s laws and statutes (v. 24).

What an AWESOME time!

The Jewish people and the Anglo-Saxon-Celtic peoples of America and the British-descended Commonwealth nations—along with their Celtic relatives composing the peace-loving nations of Northwest Europe, such as France, Belgium, Holland and the Nordic peoples of Scandinavia—will all finally learn that they are “one people”—descendants of the various Twelve Tribes engendered by the Patriarch Jacob, who was also known as Israel. The

In this famous Olivet prophecy, Jesus predicted a *special series of events* that will precede His return to earth: false religious leaders, wars, famines, disease epidemics, earthquakes, the Great Tribulation and the heavenly signs (vv. 3-29).

In Revelation 6:1-8, Christ makes it plain that the coming wars, famines and disease epidemics will destroy fully *one-fourth* of the entire population of the earth! Right now, that figure would equal about **1.5 billion human beings!** Then, the future Great Tribulation on the true Church and on the nations of modern Israel [primarily America and the other British-descended nations] will take *additional millions of lives* (vv. 9-11). He also describes the “heavenly signs”—the sun and moon being darkened, falling stars and other awesome phenomena (vv. 12-16; cf. Matt. 24:29).

After that, the prophesied “Day of the Lord” (Rev. 6:17) when the PLAGUES of God are directly poured out on a rebellious world (cf. Rev. 9). Throughout this time of God’s *direct* wrath, *one-third* of the grass and trees are burnt up and *one-third* of the seas

and rivers become blood!

“Then the *sign* of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other” (Matt. 24:30-31).

Is this describing some sort of “secret rapture”? Obviously not! The return of Jesus Christ will be an awesome, dramatic, publicly witnessed event. For quite a number of all the people still alive on the earth will “see” a blinding light as Christ returns in divine glory (v. 30).

No Idea When?

Is there yet a future, verbal warning that the return of Christ is near? Let’s go back for a moment to the Great Tribulation preceding the Day of the Lord. Two *powerfully inspired* servants of God will be publicly preaching and pronouncing a series of supernatural disasters as warnings to the followers of the coming idolatrous power (Rev. 11:1-12).

These “two witnesses” will so infuriate the leaders of this coming church/state system that ultimately they will be martyred and the sight of their dead bodies will cause public rejoicing (vv. 7-10). But God will resurrect them after three-and-one-half days and then, following the final “woe,” Christ will return to CRUSH His enemies and govern the nations of this earth: “Then the seventh angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, “The kingdoms of this world have become

the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever” (v. 15).

Yet, many religionists give the impression that we can have no idea as to *when* Christ may return!

No idea? After the worldwide shock of the coming destruction and national captivity of America and the British-descended Commonwealth, after the two witnesses *warn* the world during the coming Tribulation, after the “heavenly signs,” followed by the fearful *plagues* of God, you would have no idea when Christ might return?

We must all quit *assuming* that this world and our human societies are going to continue in normal, fairly predictable patterns indefinitely into the future. Rather, the most fearful and TRAUMATIC events of earth’s history are just ahead of us *in this generation* (Luke 21:31-32)! And the true Christ of your Bible commands, “Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man” (v. 36).

How Will Christ Return?

Christ’s return to earth will be like the majestic homecoming of a conquering monarch—only much more so. For Christ will return as

in heaven as detailed plans are reviewed and the moment of Christ’s return draws closer? It will be the most AWESOME and inspiring triumphal procession in the long history of this planet!

Jesus will come in the clouds of heaven with great GLORY (Matt. 24:30). As He descends, men will see the blinding light of His magnificence, and many of Jesus’ enemies will try to hide from His face in caves and under rocks (Rev. 6:15-16).

As Christ nears the earth, the titanic ROAR of His voice will shake the atmosphere—then it will be punctuated by the heavenly trumpet blast signaling the arrival of the Son of God. The Bible describes Him as riding a white horse followed by the angelic armies of heaven—the most *powerful* in the universe (Rev. 19:11-14)! He and His angels will “smite the nations” of this earth, and He will prepare to rule the earth as King of kings (vv. 15-16).

The angelic hosts will also seize the chief enemy leaders—called “the Beast” and “the False Prophet”—who opposed Christ’s rule, and will cast them into a lake of fire (vv. 19-20).

Then the remnant of the Beast’s army is to be slain (v. 21). The Prophet Isaiah reveals, “For behold, the LORD will come with fire and with His chariots, like a whirlwind, to render His anger with fury, and His rebuke with flames of fire. For by fire and by His sword the LORD will judge all flesh; and the slain of the LORD shall be many” (Is. 66:15-16).

GOD this time—as “King of kings and Lord of lords” (Rev. 19:16).

Can you imagine the excitement

Opposite page left: Red Cross personnel in Zaire stand in the bed of a truck as they pick up bodies left on the streets following an outbreak of the deadly Ebola virus.

Middle: Israeli soldiers chase Palestinian stone throwers. **Bottom:**

Members of the Mexican Army search for survivors in the debris of what used to be the hotel Costa de Oro in the port of Manzanillo, Mexico, after a 7.5 earthquake hit on Oct. 9, 1995. **This page bottom:** A woman cries as she looks through the ruins of the home of relatives on May

31, on Sakhalin Island in Russia after a 7.5 earthquake hit. **Top:** Thousands of supporters of the main opposition Awami League attack police on Dec. 7 as they demand Prime Minister Khaleda Zia’s resignation. **Left:** Smoke billows from a smoldering car outside Zurich’s Grossmuenster Cathedral Sept. 23 after heavy clashes between left- and right-wing extremists at an anti-European rally. **Below:** Heavy surf churned up by Hurricane Opal batters Florida’s coastline on Oct. 4, 1995. —AFP photos.

The Prophet Zechariah describes those who resist Christ as He returns to Jerusalem: “And this shall be the plague with which the LORD will strike all the people who fought against Jerusalem: their flesh shall dissolve while they stand on their feet, their eyes shall dissolve in their sockets, and their tongues shall dissolve in their mouths” (Zech. 14:12).

As Jesus arrives over the Mount of Olives, His angels will gather His

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France Still Stuck in CRISIS MODE

by Dibar Apartian

BUDGET
DEFICITS
FORCING
PAINFUL
LOWERING
OF
LIFESTYLES

At last, with a deep sigh of relief, the French heard the news. It came suddenly, almost unexpectedly, in the midst of general disorder. Echoing the worldwide media, a headline in the *Los Angeles Times* announced, "Longest French Strike in 3 Decades Ends" (Dec. 16, 1995).

However, the French have not been duped by that "hopeful" news. They are well aware that the end of the crippling, 22-day general strikes didn't mean a settlement or resolution of the country's deficit-ridden, never-ending budget crisis. It simply meant that, after a series of concessions from Prime Minister Alain Juppé, French transport workers had decided to return to work.

Earlier in December, when the nation—especially the French capital—was virtually paralyzed by the devastating effects of the ongoing strikes, I was on my way to the airport in Martinique, a French island in the West Indies. "What do you think of the transport workers' strike in France?" I asked my cabdriver.

"I personally don't like strikes," he protested, "but neither do I like foolish promises made by politicians. Before Jacques Chirac was elected president, he drew us a bright picture of his plans for the future: cutting taxes; raising wages; increasing public spending; reducing unemployment.... And now, look where we are!

He and his ministers are demanding higher taxes, proposing to ration our health care and to reduce our pension benefits and subsidies.... How do they expect us to survive?"

Absorbed in our discussion, my French cabdriver did not realize—or, possibly, care—that while talking and thinking at the same time, he was causing traffic to slow down. "The government is adamant. It claims that our national deficit must be reduced," he said. "Well, I have no qualms about that. That's one step France will indeed have to take to meet the criteria for the European monetary union. But is integration worth the price we have been asked to pay? And why should the working class bear most of the heavy burden? Aren't governments supposed to be working primarily toward the protection of our rights and possessions, instead of depriving us of our privileges?"

After a short pause to clear his throat, he pursued with renewed determination, "We are now told that, through the years, our administrations have made mistakes. None of us is surprised to hear that. But why do we have to pay for their mistakes with our personal

sacrifices? Let me repeat, sir, I don't like striking. It makes us lose money. It causes disorder, hardship and inconvenience. But how else can our voices be heard?"

Two unions, representing transport workers, had begun striking in protest of the government's plan to restructure the state-owned rail company known as the SNCF. Among other things, the unions objected to the government's proposal to increase the amount of time public employees must pay into the social security system—from 37 1/2 years to 40 years—to qualify for full retirement benefits.

My cabdriver clearly perceived his country's economic dilemma. But, like most other Frenchmen, he had no workable solutions. Today, most of the French understand that the entire social security and health care system must be changed somehow. Perhaps such a painful restructuring is even justified, but they don't like the way the government is handling it.

Most Americans and Canadians can probably sympathize with the French because the United States and Canada are also facing similar challenges to reduce their ever-increasing public deficits.

Facts Are Facts

Like any candidate for election, Jacques Chirac had indeed made excessive campaign promises before being elected president—including reducing unemployment, slowing down immigration and other improvements to France's social and financial infrastructure. However, he should have known that his country's policy to pursue economic and monetary union in Europe would necessitate deep cuts in social spending. Although he knew such budget reforms were absolutely necessary, it took President Chirac and his ministers nearly six months before they could offer a plan—a harsh one, a cruel one, in public opinion. No wonder most of the French, although recognizing the gravity of the situation, sympathized with the strikers.

Many consider the French tax system unjust and inequitable. They claim that it discourages both employment and higher income. The culprit in both cases may very well be the constantly increasing costs of social and welfare services. "France has to change. In a competitive world, it cannot continue to tax its citizens significantly more heavily than those of most other rich countries. Nor can it afford, even though it is rich, to spend so much on social welfare; either it must find jobs for the unemployed or it must be less

generous to them" (*The Economist*, "France," Nov. 25, 1995).

Today, the heavy tax burden in France is approximately 45 percent of GDP, while the unemployed constitute over 12 percent of the potential work force. But this heavy taxation enables the social security benefits to be very generous. "At the end of last year, the state was providing a guaranteed minimum income to 907,000 people, 60 percent of whom were unemployed. On top of that... recipients could claim family allowances and housing benefits. They could also, like almost everyone else in France, make use of an unusually indulgent health service.

Patients could go

Far left: An unidentified civil servant holds a torch and blows his whistle during a demonstration on Nov. 30. Middle: Several thousand people gather for another day of protests in Paris on Dec. 7. Demonstrators are calling for the withdrawal of French P.M. Alain Juppé's welfare reform plan. Above: Railway workers read the full-page advertisement launched by the government explaining its reform goals. —AFP photos.

François
Mitterrand

The enigmatic ex-President of France, who died at age 79, became the longest serving head of state since Napoleon in modern French history. Although his most notable achievement was his relentless pursuit of greater European unity, his tenure was marked by changes that led to economic growth and a widening gap between rich and poor.

to one doctor after another, taking their treatment *à la carte* and passing most of the bill on to the government. This is now to be curtailed" (*The Economist*, Nov. 25, 1995).

Perhaps the most onerous reform is the proposed

overhaul of the French state health system. It runs an annual deficit of \$12 billion, and its accumulated debts are estimated to be \$50 billion. Moreover, government employees, who constitute 24.3 percent of the labor (compared to less than 15 percent in the United States), reap more generous benefits than those employed in the private sector. Because of this large percentage of government employees, one can understand why France finds itself particularly vulnerable to labor disputes in matters of public policy.

A retrenchment policy is a necessary evil, yet hardly anyone in France is willing to reduce his or her lifestyle, or to pick up the tab for the much-needed reform and restructuring.

The Reaction in the French Press

During the devastating strikes, the French press recognized, almost unanimously, the urgency to reform and restructure, while disagreeing heatedly as to how to achieve it. France, an individualistic society, is divided between haves and have-nots!

The media stressed the fact that France was not merely on strike. It was—**and it continues to be—in a deep social and political crisis, one of the worst it has known for the last 50 years.** Besides paralyzing the whole country, the strikes created a climate of fear and mistrust. Train services were brought to a halt; the subway system was shut down; most schools, universities, and even airports were closed. In their anger, exasperated workers and students alike clogged the streets by the tens of thousands, sometimes even hundreds of thousands.

Le Figaro, the prestigious Parisian daily newspaper, found it inconceivable that a rich and modern country like France—the world's fourth most powerful nation in some rankings—should continue its archaic way of handling social issues. It underlined the fact that the French national debt is approaching 4 trillion francs (U.S. \$800 billion), up from 400 billion in 1980. The country's very generous social security system is on the verge of bankruptcy with its 200 billion francs (U.S. \$40 billion) deficit (Dec. 11, 1995).

Most media sources conceded that the old system of subsidized benefits and retirement plans, established decades ago, was no longer viable in today's economy. The time for cutting back, for lowering the standard of living, for austerity, had finally come.

Economic growth for 1995, estimated to be approximately 2.5 percent, is projected to be only 2 percent for 1996 (*Le Point*, Dec. 9, 1995). This means meager new job creation, higher financial deficit, higher unemployment, less industrial productivity—and, of course, failure to meet the European Union's Maastricht economic targets

imposed on France. The country must drastically reduce its public deficit from 6 percent of its GDP (\$83 billion) to 3 percent. Today, the French people, fearing a decline in their living standard, are beginning to question the value of a European monetary union and a single market.

When Prime Minister Alain Juppé finally presented his austerity plan, the opposition violently objected to it—and the long strikes began.

Paradoxically, the French are known for their great revolutionary ideas, yet they don't like change and reform. They fiercely resist change. When the pressure was building for a strike, instead of productive negotiation, the transport unions and the government chose confrontation and showdown, wrote Alain Duhamel in *Le Point* (Dec. 9, 1995).

Commenting on the action taken by “the Railroad Men,” *Le Figaro Economic* wrote that these men led the strikes because they were afraid for their future (Dec. 11, 1995). It stated that the SNCF's total deficit is now over 175 billion francs, which is three times more than its annual income. The state-owned railroad company's 1995 deficit was close to 14 billion francs—each day of strike cost the company another 100 million francs.

What a way of reducing the deficit! According to *Le Nouvel Observateur* (Dec. 7-13, 1995), the SNCF had 182,350 employees at the end of 1994, while another 353,400 retirees were receiving pensions totaling more than 27 billion francs.

The strikes further revealed that students also feared for their futures. French youth, today, have a hard time finding a place in a work force where five million are already unemployed. Moreover, due to mergers, layoffs and cutthroat competition, many find their future goals in jeopardy. Marching down the streets by the thousands, students shouted for more professors and more classrooms that will help them prepare for better careers. They protested against the harshness and selfishness of the educational system's administration. Some even expressed fear about the rise of the extreme political right—the *Le Pen* movement.

Where Is the Solution?

There is a solution, but it requires sacrifice and self-discipline from everyone—a willingness to cooperate in mutual respect and concern.

Obviously, neither individuals nor nations can continue living on borrowed money forever. No one should expect to balance the budget without giving up some benefits and privileges—and, especially, without shouldering more personal financial responsibility. Reform and growth carry a price tag. But in a world where the “buy now and pay later” system is encouraged, people, more often than

(continued on page 29)

The Human Spirit REVEALED

by Raymond F. McNair

The fantastic accomplishments of the human mind are truly mind-boggling! So far as is known, there is virtually no limit to the capacity of the human mind!

How is it that humans have been able to put men on the moon? When Neil Armstrong stepped out on the moon on July 20, 1969, he said, “That's one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind!” Now, men are reaching for the stars!

Where did man's seemingly limitless mental capacity come from? Is his fantastic mind the result of random forces which somehow prompted lovesick amoebas, sloshing together in a supposed primordial soup, to evolve into higher life forms? Or is it the product of an all-wise, all-powerful Creator God? Speaking of the unique mind and body of humans, King David said, “I will praise You [God], for **I am fearfully and wonderfully made**” (Ps. 139:14)! How is it that man is so vastly superior to the most intelligent animals?

How did man come to possess a mind of almost unlimited capacity? Is the human mind utterly unique among all creatures on earth?

Nothing Beyond Man's Ability?

Immediately after the Great Deluge destroyed all life forms on this earth except Noah, his family and those animals preserved in the ark (Gen. 7:11-23), God explained that man had been endowed by Him with virtually unlimited mental capacity. After taking notice of the city of Babylon and the impressive tower which the earth's inhabitants were building there, God exclaimed,

“Indeed the people are *one* [united] and they all have one language, and this is what they begin to do; **now nothing that they propose to do will be withheld from them**” (Gen. 11:6). That is—unless the Eternal God intervened!

God knew that if He didn't disperse Noah's descendants over the face of the earth, they would pool their intellectual capacity and, over time, their inventiveness would seemingly know no bounds! Yet it would only be to their detriment. For not only would they begin making leaps into outer space—they would also invent weapons of mass destruction capable of erasing all life from this planet!

How can one explain the source of man's almost unlimited mental capacity? Science, which deals with the purely physical realm, has been unable to explain the enormous chasm between the animal brain, which is limited by instinct, and the virtually unlimited human mind. Is it possible, then, that we humans have a *non-physical* component, which somehow imparts to us our awesome

God-like mental powers of choice, planning, problem-solving and making moral judgments?

If so, isn't it logical that our Creator would have revealed to us that fact in His Word? Truly, the Bible alone can enlighten man as to *who* he is, *where* he came from, the *source* of his fantastic mind power and his ultimate destiny! What does the Creator's manual, the Bible, have to say about the "inner man"?

A "Spirit in Man"?

Man was created a "living being." The Scriptures clearly reveal that man was created mortal! "But," God plainly says, "**there is a spirit [Heb. *ruach*] in man**, and the breath [Heb. *neshamah*] of the Almighty gives him understanding" (Job 32:8). What is the precise function of that "spirit"? Since it gives understanding, it evidently is that which imparts intellectual ability to the human brain.

Further, God declares, "Thus says the LORD, who stretches out the heavens, lays the foundation of the earth, and forms the **spirit of man ["human spirit" NRSV] within him**" (Zech. 12:1). And, in Isaiah 42:5, we read that "God... created the heavens and stretched them out... spread forth the earth and that which comes from it... gives *breath* to the people on it, and *spirit* to those who walk on it."

Through His Holy Spirit, God can direct human actions: "The king's heart [i.e. *mental faculties* or *mind*] is in the hand of the LORD...

He turns it wherever He wishes" (Prov. 21:1). How does He do this? Through influencing the human spirit: "The LORD stirred up the *spirit of Cyrus* king of Persia, so that he made a proclamation" that the Jews would be allowed to return to their ancient homeland in Judea (Ezra 1:1).

When does God put that spirit in each human? Though the Word of God does not specifically tell us, indications are that it most likely occurs at *conception*, when a new human life is created. Consider that John the Baptist was a six-month-old fetus when he "leaped... for joy" in his mother's womb (Luke 1:41, 44; cf. vv. 24-27).

Former U.S. Surgeon General C. Everett Koop stated, "The story of the incarnation [of Jesus] leaves no room for doubt. The angel told Joseph, 'That which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit.' From the moment of conception God had entered human life. Pregnancy begins with fertilization, not with implantation!" (*The Rebirth of America*, Arthur S. DeMoss Foundation, 1986, p. 113). All of this should give pause to those who would consider abortion.

What happens to a man's spirit at the other end of his physical life—death? God's Word says, "**Then the dust [man's physical body] will return to the earth as it was, and the spirit [Heb. *ruach*] will return to God who gave it**" (Eccl. 12:7). Here *ruach* means the *human spirit* or *mind*. It would be ludicrous to conclude that the literal breath or air from a man's lungs somehow goes back to God at death.

The Human Spirit in the New Testament

Does the New Testament mention man's spirit? The Apostle Paul wrote, "For what man knows the things of a man except the *spirit of the man* which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the *Spirit of God*" (1 Cor. 2:11). Clearly, Paul distinguishes between the "Spirit of God" and the "spirit of the man"! This is more evidence that the human spirit is the facilitator of human intellect.

So, even though humans are *never* called spirits in either the Old or the New Testaments, nonetheless the Bible consistently teaches that there is a spirit in man which is *not* physical. It is that spirit which elevates man far above the animals and enables him to communicate, through prayer, directly with his Creator (cf. Ex. 31:2-6; Dan. 2:19-23).

Paul noted, "**The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit** that we are the children of God" (Rom. 8:16 KJV). Again, we see that "our spirit" is distinct from "the Spirit [of God]." And here is described the conception of spiritual life. God unites His Holy Spirit with a person's human spirit after that person repents and is baptized (Acts 2:38-39).

Let us examine another interesting statement by Paul: "Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole *spirit, soul, and body* be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thess. 5:23).

When "spirit" (either *ruach* or *pneuma*) is used to refer to man's inner self, it always refers to what we call the human mind. But the Hebrew word *nephesh* and the Greek word *psuche* (often rendered "soul" in English translations) can refer to a *person* (Num. 35:11), his *life* (2 Sam. 1:9; Matt. 10:39) or his *mind* (Acts 14:2; Phil. 1:27)—depending upon the context of a particular verse.

With this background concerning the meaning of "spirit" (*ruach/pneuma*) and "soul" (*nephesh/psuche*), we can now begin to understand the New Testament teaching regarding the spirit in man.

When a married couple in the early Church deliberately lied to the Apostle Peter (Acts 5:1-8), God willed that they die because they deceitfully lied attempting to "test the Spirit of the Lord" (v. 9). "And Ananias [the husband]... fell down, and gave up the ghost [Gk. *pneuma*] and great fear came on all them that heard these things" (v. 5 KJV).

When Ananias "gave up the ghost," what, exactly, did he give up? When humans die, they always give up two things: 1) the physical breath or air—Gk. *pneuma*—and, 2) the human "spirit"—Gk. *pneuma*—which the Creator gives to every person He creates. The Apostle James wrote, "The body without the [human] spirit is dead" (James 2:26).

Notice another account of someone dying: "And they stoned Stephen as he was calling on God and saying, 'Lord Jesus, receive my spirit'" (Acts 7:59).

And at Jesus Christ's death, "He said, 'Father, into Your hands I commend My spirit.' And having said this, He breathed his last" (Luke 23:46). The King James Version says, "And having said thus, he gave up the ghost [*pneuma*]."

What really happened? Before Christ drew His last breath (*pneuma*), He commended His "spirit" (His *mind* and His entire *life*—as well as His

body) into the Father's hands for safe keeping during the "three days and three nights" that He would be dead—*totally unconscious* (Matt. 12:40).

Are Dead People Conscious?

Some of the most intriguing questions you can ask yourself are: "What happens to me after death? Will I be in any way conscious? Will I go to heaven? Or to hell?"

The famous magician, Harry Houdini (1874-1926), planned to communicate, if at all possible, with his friends and relatives after his death. Though many tried to make contact with him, their efforts all proved to be in vain! Why were they unable to ever contact him? The Bible gives us the answer.

Only the Bible can reveal to man what actually transpires after death. So let's see what God's Word says: "Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might; **for there is no work or device or knowledge or wisdom in the grave where you are going**" (Eccl. 9:10). This verse teaches us that those who are in their graves have no physical activity (work) nor mental activity (wisdom or knowledge) of any kind. They are totally unconscious!

God's Word says, "Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help. His breath [*ruach*—spirit] goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; **in that very day his thoughts perish**" (Ps. 146:3-4 KJV).

Is it even possible to remember God in the grave? "**For in death there is no remembrance of You [God];** in the grave who will give You thanks?" (Ps. 6:5)!

Today, many fervently believe that *spiritualists*, called necromancers, can contact the dead. Though some mediums certainly claim to contact the dead, in actual fact they do not—and cannot! What really happens when they attempt to

contact the dead? Most often, nothing at all, since many psychics are frauds! But when contact is made, the mediums are actually contacting wicked demonic spirits—and are deceived into thinking they are contacting the spirits of dead humans.

The Bible reveals that demons do somehow have the power to communicate with humans and often lead the gullible into believing they are communicating with spirits of the dead. God condemns all such vain attempts to communicate with the dead (Deut. 18:10-12; 1 Sam. 28:3-25; Is. 8:19-20.)

God's Plan to Perfect Every Human Spirit

If the dead are totally *unconscious*, do humans forever cease to exist when they die? No! The Scriptures clearly teach that, sooner or later, all will be *resurrected*. Christ said that "the hour is coming when all who are in their tombs will hear his [Christ's] voice and come forth... [either to] the resurrection of life... [or to] the resurrection of judgment" (John 5:28-29 RSV).

In the resurrection of life at Christ's Second Coming, the Great God will create a new, immortal spirit body for each Christian's human spirit (1 Cor. 15:22-57; 1 Thess. 4:13-17). The human spirit has no consciousness of itself. A person, therefore, has no awareness between his death and resurrection. Not until his spirit is joined with a new body in the resurrection does consciousness return. Through a spiritual begetting (James 1:18; 1 Peter 1:3), the human spirit of each believer "is joined to the Lord... [thus becoming] one spirit with Him" (1 Cor. 6:17).

Everyone knows the human body can be developed and "perfected" through proper diet, a suitable exercise program, good mental hygiene and other health measures. But can

(continued on page 25)

In our January 1996 *World Ahead* article, "What Is Man?," we noted that according to the Hebrew Scriptures man was made a *mortal creature*—"a living being [Heb. *nephesh*]" (Gen. 2:7). The Greek Scriptures also say that Adam was created "a living being [Gk. *psuche*]" (1 Cor. 15:45).

Moreover, the Scriptures plainly reveal that *nephesh* and *psuche* mean exactly the same thing, and are translated by various English words: "soul," "person," "being," "creature" or "life." *Nephesh* and *psuche* usually refer to humans, but can sometimes refer to animals as well (Gen. 1:20-21; Rev. 8:9).

In that article, we also noted that all souls (physical creatures) can die, be killed, destroyed or, in some way, perish! We saw, too, that, in the Scriptures, humans are *never* spoken of as possessing immortality.

We also observed that ancient pagans such as Druids and philosophers like Plato came to the erroneous conclusion that every human possesses an immortal soul—thereby having inherent immortality. The belief that humans have an *immortal soul* definitely did *not* come from the Scriptures, but from pagans cut off from their Creator by their vain imaginings—"Professing to be wise, they became fools" (Rom. 1:22; see vv. 18-25).

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Thanks for Literature

I am new on your mailing list. I have been blessed out of my socks by the articles in the two magazines I have read. Would you please send the booklet you offered in one of the articles: *Do You Believe the True Gospel?*

Leonard Nance
Houston, Texas

Please send the booklet you named this morning on the *World Ahead* television program. I am 81 years old. Not in all my life have I ever heard anything like your preaching. You are gifted by God to preach in this crazy world we have today.

Walter Sagen
Rochester, New York

I would like to have the literature about the true Gospel. I heard you preach and enjoyed it very much. I have never in my life heard anyone preach about Christmas like you did!

Doris Forrister
Cedartown, Georgia

I write to you from Charny (a suburb of Quebec City). I am very happy to take up with the Truth and the Word of God. Your magazine is great and inspired from God. I encourage you on your good work.

Daniel Cossette
Charny, Quebec, Canada

The God You Can Know

Today we received *The God You Can Know*. We finished this brochure in one sitting. It was impossible to put down! It wasn't too long ago we were told that if we were *mature* Christians, we would be able to understand the Trinity foolishness. We were told to give it time—all would become clear! We went from Trinitarian "gobbledy-gook" to

the immediate clarity of your brochure. Does this mean that we're finally mature Christians!?

Just halfway through your brochure, our hearts were singing. What a joy to read the explanations with words straight from the Bible. Can anyone hope to do better than using God's own words? Thank you for such a beautifully written and clear explanation and description of the God that we can relate to and love.

Carl and Eva Schultz
St. Ocala, Florida

World Ahead on TV

I saw the last part of your program which aired December 23. It was concerning the pagan aspects of Christmas and was being taught by Dr. Roderick Meredith. I've known about our pagan traditions for some time, including Easter (Ishtar) in place of Passover and all the other "holidays" derived from pagan practices.

I must commend you all. This was the first time I ever saw a program (presumably Christian) that dared to denounce the "sacred" commercial day, I mean "holiday," of Christmas.

Thanks for trying to open the sheep's eyes.

William Barron
Trenton, New Jersey

World Ahead Home Page

I found out about your Church from people on the internet and visited your home page on the World Wide Web. I have decided to write for more information about you.

Stephen Korsman
Republic of South Africa

Our readers can visit the *World Ahead* home page on the Internet! Our address is <http://www.deltastar.nb.ca/worldahead/>—ed.

God's Healing Power

Thank you for your inspiring edition of the Oct.-Nov. 1995 *World Ahead*. All the articles were full of spiritual meat. However, the article "Curing the Global Crisis in Health Care" was incomplete. It should have covered one more aspect of the subject.

Hebrews 9:27 says, "And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment." When we die at an old age, in the majority of cases it is from some disease. Unless we die a premature death, the time comes for all of us to grow old, suffer sickness and die.

It is therefore wrong to conclude that someone suffering from an incurable disease is not being healed by God because of some deep-rooted sin.

There are other reasons for suffering as well. In John 9:1-3, we read of Jesus Christ meeting a blind man. His disciples asked Him for what reason the man was blind—the sins of the man's parents, or his own sins. Christ's reply was that the man was blind not due to the sins of anyone, but so that the works of God might be revealed in him as Christ healed him. Moreover, it is part of the human condition to suffer—that's what physical life is all about. This is, after all, Satan's world!

To exclude these reasons for illness is to give the impression that by simply following some health laws (i.e. exercising, eating right, getting adequate sleep), you are guaranteed a healthy life. Certainly you would have a better chance for one, but it is by no means guaranteed!

Edward Lever
Farmborough Heights, Australia

Your points are well taken. It was never our intent to imply that all suffering and disease is the direct result of sins committed by someone who is suffering, or by others who have caused him to suffer. In fact, there is ample biblical evidence to the contrary. Therefore, none of us should judge others' illnesses or suffering to be a consequence of some hidden sin (Matt. 7:1). None of us knows how God is

working in the lives of others.

Nevertheless, the article was intended to point out the many biblical admonitions concerning proper health care. Although sickness and suffering may arise from a variety of causes, **they are not normally what God intends for His children.** For the most part, we bring about our own health problems when we ignore the clear biblical instructions for taking care of ourselves. The good news is that we, as individuals, can generally avoid much disease and suffering by adhering to biblical health principles today. And in the soon-coming *World Ahead*, all of mankind will heed God's instructions and our modern medical plagues will be no more!—ed.

God's Creation

Thanks for your faithfulness in continuing to proclaim the full Gospel of Jesus Christ and for responding to 2 Timothy 3:14: "But as for you, continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them." Every issue fulfills this commission.

The article titled "Understanding God Through His Creation," in the December issue, is an inspiring example of this. God reveals things through His Word and Creation that mankind cannot discern for itself. God is a Family and understanding this is at the heart of the Gospel of the Kingdom of God.

Fred Nunez
Escondido, California

We welcome your comments, criticism or questions. Please mail letters for this section to "Letters to the Editor" at our U.S. address. Be sure to include your name, address and daytime phone number. We reserve the right to edit your comments for clarity, propriety or space.

EDITORIAL (continued from page 3)

the spiritual paradoxes of our time?

Many seeing the need for solutions have become "co-workers" with us, *and with Christ*, in this global Work of God. That is WHY this magazine has no subscription price. That is WHY there is no begging, nagging or pleading for money on the *World Ahead* television program.

Yes, this is a Work of faith. By faith in the Living Christ we are purchasing time on new, powerful television stations. We're sending out additional thousands of *World Ahead* magazines, booklets and other literature to help our peoples understand the real purpose for their lives—and what truly lies ahead.

All of this obviously costs money! And it has all been made possible through the financial support of a comparatively few thousand supporters and co-workers who have, of their own accord, decided they want to have a part in helping to preach and publish God's warning message as a witness to all nations!

Notice this scripture: "We then, as WORKERS together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain" (2 Cor. 6:1 KJV). In context, this verse clearly shows that *all* true Christians should be *workers together* with Christ in reaching the unconverted world with His message. And there certainly is a lot of work to do! Jesus said, "Freely you have received, FREELY GIVE" (Matt. 10:8). We cannot, therefore, put a price tag on the precious truth of God and the warning message, which must go to all the world, regardless of its reception. Today, as in apostolic times, God is raising up a growing family of co-workers—laborers together *with Christ*—who are helping out financially, morally and *prayerfully* in this Work of God!

After a person has *voluntarily*, of his own free will, expressed a desire to help us, I send a personal, monthly letter informing these individuals in our family of co-workers about the news and financial conditions of God's Work. Some people don't express themselves by overtly saying, "I want to be a co-worker." They just *add themselves* to our co-worker list by *voluntarily* sending in tithes and offerings regularly to show they are *fellow laborers* in the Work of Christ. However one decides to help, it is ONLY this inner circle of members and co-workers who are ever told about the financial needs of this Work, the details of its growth or asked for money in any way.

In a time of so much bad news, the good news is that this CRUSADE FOR SANITY is not a work or idea of men. In due time, you will know—and you will *know that you know*—that this is the Work of the GREAT GOD who guides the lives and destinies of people and nations here below!



Sunday vs. Sabbath Does It Really Matter Whitsunday vs. Pentecost Which Days You Keep? Easter vs. Passover

by Jeffrey H. Patton

Periodically, *The World Ahead* interviews interesting personalities with expertise in areas of controversy and debate that are of general interest to our readers. An interviewee's comments are his own and do not necessarily represent the view of the magazine staff.

In our worship of God the Father and Jesus Christ, should Christians keep traditionally popular, accepted days like Lent, Ash Wednesday, Good Friday, Easter, Whitsunday and Christmas? Or should we keep the days that the Bible talks about like

Atonement and Feast of Tabernacles?

Does it really matter which days we keep or choose NOT to keep? Why would anyone suggest that Christians should get their religious Holy Days out of the Old Testament? Hasn't there been a total theological divorce

between Old Testament and New Testament, law and grace, Judaism and Christianity?

What is the Truth?

To investigate this controversial subject, Jeff Patton, managing editor of *The World Ahead*, interviewed Dr. Samuele Bacchiocchi, professor of Church History

and Theology at Andrews University in Berrien Springs, Michigan.

Dr. Bacchiocchi, a native of Rome, Italy, was raised a devout Catholic until his parents were loaned a Bible from a man of the Waldensian faith. Their biblical study led them to embrace a Seventh-day Sabbath and eventually they joined the Seventh-day Adventist Church. In the wake of the Catholic Church's Vatican II reforms in the 1960s, Samuele Bacchiocchi applied and was admitted to the prestigious Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome as its first non-Catholic student.

Earning his doctorate *summa cum laude*, Bacchiocchi personally received a gold medal from Pope Paul VI in recognition of his achievement. Already a published author of 12 books on biblical topics including *From Sabbath to Sunday*, *The Sabbath in the New Testament* and *Divine Rest for Human Restlessness*, Dr. Bacchiocchi has recently written a new book, *God's Festivals in Scripture and in History*. It examines the question of the validity for Christians of the festivals revealed in the Hebrew Scriptures.

WA: Dr. Bacchiocchi, is there an interest in the religious community

these days in the Old Testament festivals?

Dr. B: Mr. Patton, I was pleasantly surprised to discover a considerable interest on the part of Messianic Jews who are trying to recall their Jewish roots, and on the part of a number of Christian scholars—Lutherans and Presbyterians—who feel that tracing or examining these Old Testament festivals helps us to understand the heritage of the Christian faith. In fact, I found more studies, more books on the subject than I had anticipated. So, apparently, there is among Christians the desire to understand their spiritual heritage by studying the religious life of God's people in the Old Testament, as exemplified in the observance of the Holy Days.

WA: For years, if I understand this correctly, you taught that the annual Sabbaths, these Old Testament festivals, had come to an end. Yet, now you've altered your position. It is most unusual for a published scholar, who is widely known in the academic community, to reverse his position on such a controversial subject. What made you decide to change your point of view?

Dr. B: To be honest with you, I had never examined this subject very thoroughly. As with most evangelical scholars, I had always *assumed* that the Old Testament festivals, because of their connection with the sacrificial system, had come to an end when Jesus died on the cross. This has been the prevailing [academic] assumption. I bought into it and I thought it was a valid assumption.

However, early last year when I was speaking to a convention of seventh-day Sabbath-keeping groups and denominations, somebody challenged me to reexamine this whole question. I accepted the challenge without knowing what was going to come out of it. As I started studying

the history of these Holy Days, especially their typology, surprisingly I discovered that the typology of these annual feasts points beyond the cross to the consummation of redemption.

I came to realize that the continuity or discontinuity of the feasts is determined not by their connection with the sacrificial system, but by the scope of their typology. If the feasts had typified *only* the redemptive accomplishments of Christ's First Coming, then obviously their function would have terminated at the cross. But, if the feasts foreshadow *also* the consummation of redemption to be accomplished by Christ at His Second Coming, then their function continues in the Christian Church, though with a new meaning and manner of observance.

WA: This is going to be very controversial among some of your colleagues perhaps. What kind of feedback are you getting from your colleagues and from people you know?

Dr. B: Let me say that my book just came out a couple of weeks ago. It's a very recent publication and I was

able to submit the manuscript [for review] prior to the publication to about 15 top Seventh-day Adventist scholars and some church leaders. With very few exceptions, the response so far has been very positive. Because, basically, the focus of my research is to encourage not only my own Seventh-day Adventist Church, but Christians in general, to enrich their worship

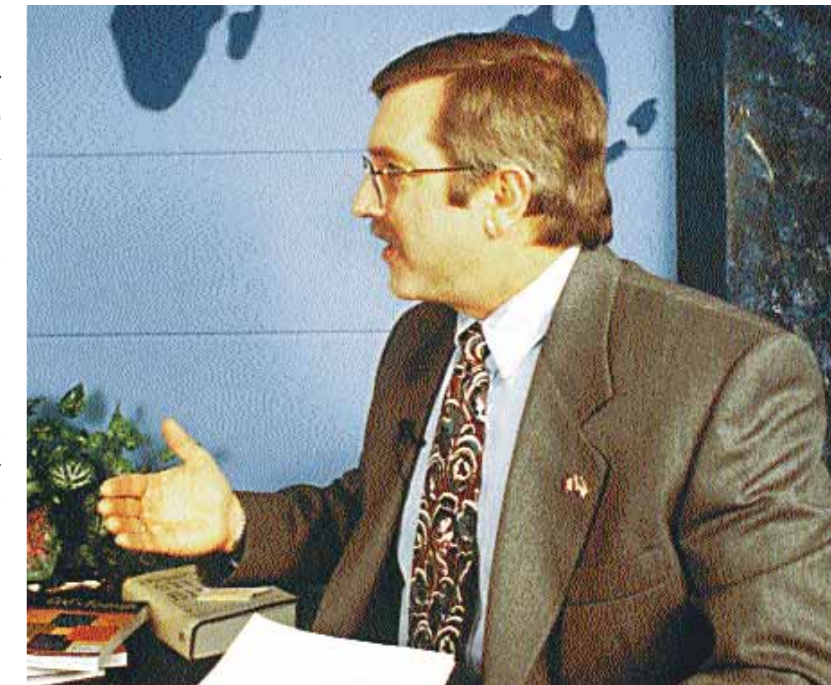
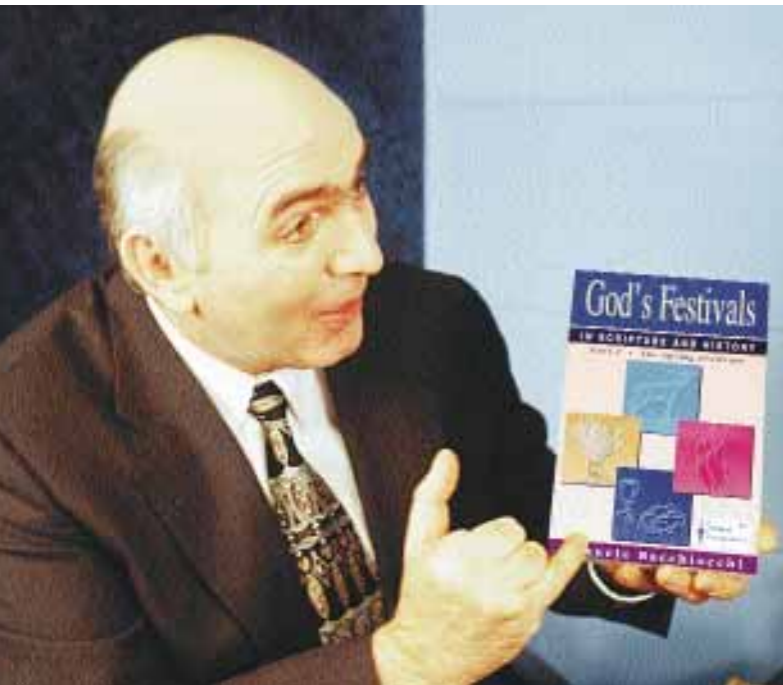
experience—whether it be private or public.

We can do this by commemorating and celebrating in the course of the year the redemptive accomplishment of the First Advent [First Coming] through the Spring festivals of Passover and Pentecost and then the redemptive accomplishment of the Second Advent through the fall festivals such as Trumpets, the Day of Atonement and the Feast of Tabernacles. I personally feel that any Christian who takes time to celebrate the great saving acts of God through the course of the year is bound to be enriched in his or her own spiritual life.

WA: Was the life of the Apostolic Church—the original Church of God in Jerusalem—regulated by the Hebrew calendar? What's the biblical evidence that you have found on this subject?

Dr. B: The question you are posing is based on the faulty assumption that the cross represents a kind of "line of demarcation." There are many Christians out there who sin-

cerely believe that before the cross we have Judaism, we have the law and we have the Holy Days. After the



cross we have Christianity, we have grace and we have new Christian Holy Days like Sunday, Easter and Christmas. But, you know what? The true historical reality is that Christianity began—not as a radical divorce, not as a radical separation or breakaway, but as the continuation of Judaism [the continuation of the true religion that God gave to Moses].

If you and I had asked those early converts on the Day of Pentecost, 3,000 of them—later on there are 5,000 and then in the book of Acts it speaks about myriads (21:20)—if we had asked this great multitude of Jewish people who had accepted Jesus as their expected Messiah; if we had asked them, “Who are you?,” what would they have said? Would they have said, “Hey, I’m not a Jew; I am a Christian!” Would they have said that? Probably not. Why? Because the name “Christian” didn’t even exist. It was given to them later on by the Romans.

Their response would have been, “I am a *believing* Jew!” The tension in the book of Acts, for example, is not between Jews and Christians, but [between] believing and unbelieving Jews. It’s interesting to notice that James, who was the presiding officer of the Jerusalem Church, says to Paul in Acts 21:20: “You see brother, how many myriads of the Jews there are who have believed, and they are all zealous for the law.” I remember, Jeff, the day when I went to show this Bible text to my professor there at the Vatican... and I asked him, “Professor Monachino [Vincenzo Monachino, chairman of the Church History Department, Pontifical Gregorian University], this is what it says: they were *zealous* in the observance of the law.”

WA: What did he say?

Dr. B: “If they were *zealous* in the observance of the law, can you, can I, can we imagine that they gave

up some of the fundamental practices of the observance of the law, such as the Sabbath and the Holy Days? He said, “Well, isn’t this something worth thinking about!”

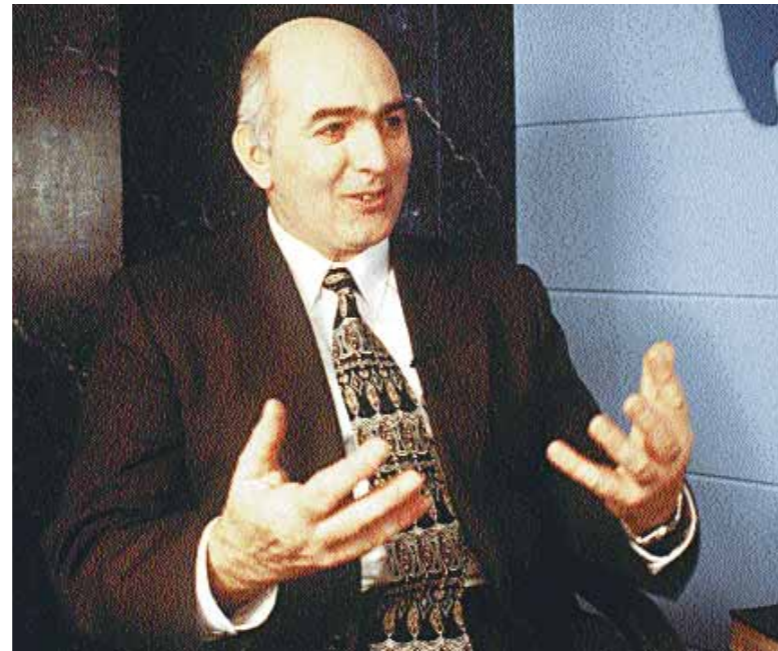
WA: Are there other scriptures or documents that would support the keeping of the Holy Days?

Dr. B: Exactly. This was a very rewarding aspect of my research. As I was working there at the Vatican Archives for five years looking for early Christian testimonies relating to the religious life and to the observance of Holy Days, I found a number of documents. In fact, anyone who is interested in [studying] the subject can find relevant information in the fifth chapter of my doctoral dissertation [published as the book entitled *From Sabbath to Sunday*].

I remember one day... I was reading the Palestinian historian, Epiphanius. He lived in the middle of the fourth century, about 350 A.D. He gives the whole history of the Jerusalem Church.... Do you know what it says? That the direct descendants of the Jerusalem Church *insisted* and *persisted* in the observance of the Sabbath and other Jewish practices like Holy Days. When I found the document I said to myself, let me go and show it to my professor right away. He looked at it and he asked me, “Where did you find this?” I said, “Professor, it was right here, I did not bring it from America. It was right here in your archives.” After reading it carefully—it was Latin in one column and Greek in the other column—and

after reading the original Greek column, you know what he said: “Sam, this is the death certificate.”

In English you would say the “death blow” to the theory which



World Ahead Image

makes Jerusalem the birthplace of Sunday-keeping and all these other pagan holidays. Why? Because, if the direct descendants of the Jerusalem Church *insisted* and *persisted* in the observance of the Sabbath, how can they be the pioneers of the abandonment of the Sabbath and the Holy Days and the adoption of pagan holidays when they were still observing the biblical days in the middle of the fourth century?

WA: Do you feel that Epiphanius is a reliable source?

Dr. B: No question about it. Because, number one, he’s a Palestinian historian, so he knows the history of his own people. Number two, his references to the direct descendants of the Jerusalem Church are only an incidental reference. It’s not something that he’s trying to argue or dispute. In other words, he takes for granted what everybody knows, and that’s why his testimony has such value. But there are many others as well.

WA: What were the factors, then, that led to the rise of what we know as “Christianity” today? To the abandonment of the Sabbath? The abandonment of the Passover? And bringing in things like Sunday and Easter?

Dr. B: I would say there were two major factors. I would define them: 1) anti-Judaism; and 2) paganism. Anti-Judaism created the necessity to separate from the Jews and from the liturgical [sacred Hebrew] calendar at the time when the Jewish religion was repressed and suppressed by the Roman authority.

WA: When was that?

Dr. B: Well, I found in my research that in the year 135 A.D. the Roman Emperor Hadrian promulgated the most repressive anti-Jewish, anti-Holy-Day legislation—prohibiting categorically not only the practice of Judaism in general, but the practice of the Holy Days in particular. Why? Because the Jewish people were uprising, were rebelling everywhere in Cyrenaica, Egypt, Asia Minor, Palestine. This Roman Emperor Hadrian had to engage the best Roman army and bring them over to Palestine to suppress what is known as the Bar Kokhba Revolt [the second Jewish revolt, 132-135 A.D.].

And when he finally succeeded in suppressing this Palestinian revolt, capturing Jerusalem, he leveled Jerusalem, sprinkled the salt to indicate that it would never be rebuilt as a Jewish city, changed the name from Jerusalem to Aelia Capitolina—which was a pagan name—expelled all the Jews. And that was the historical moment when the Emperor prohibited categorically, not only the practice of Judaism in general, but also the seventh-day Sabbath and Holy Days in particular. I found that at that critical moment, when observing the Sabbath and the Holy Days was forbidden—proscribed—by Roman

law, many Christians who came from a pagan background said, “Why should we suffer by observing Holy Days that are seen as Jewish? Why not distance ourselves from the Jews by changing the Sabbath to Sunday and Passover to Easter Sunday.”

What I found is that the way they went about doing it is very interesting. I have a whole chapter in my dissertation, how the Bishop of Rome played a leading role in introducing theological, social, liturgical methods to lead Christians away from the observance of the Sabbath and Holy Days to the observance of what we would consider pagan holidays.

The second factor is the influence of paganism. The Christians said, “Why don’t we adopt... the day of the sun?” That was the day that was venerated in the pagan world, because the sun god became the most important god in the Roman pantheon. So they said by observing the day of the sun—that is the weekly Sunday and also the Easter Sunday—we can show ourselves to be closer to the pagan and more distant from the Jews.

We could discuss this at much greater length, but basically what I’m trying to say, Jeff, is that what led to the change of the Sabbath and the Holy Days was *not* a commandment of Christ, was *not* the authority of the apostles, was *not* the authority of the Jerusalem Church, was *not* the desire to honor the resurrection of Jesus on the first day of the week.

But, it was rather an interplay of social, political and pagan factors.

The question that we have to ask is this: Is expediency a legitimate motive for changing divine commandments, divine institutions? Did Jesus ever say, “If it is difficult to observe My commandments, if it is difficult to observe the Sabbath or the Holy Days, don’t suffer for it. Just change them”? Just change it! Did you ever find that in your Bible? We don’t. But, shall I tell you, that is exactly what has happened. **Time and again in the history of**

Christianity, churches have chosen expediency—compromise—rather than commitment to the teaching of the Word of God. And the result is what we see today. The result is that God’s Holy Day [weekly Sabbath] and Holy Days [annual Sabbaths] have become pagan holidays. People seek for pleasure—for profit—rather than for the presence in the peace of God.

WA: Even so, many feel that these Old Testament Holy Days—the weekly Sabbath, the annual Sabbaths like Pentecost—all these things were replaced by the reality of Christ’s sacrifice. How do you answer this perspective?

Dr. B: The question we have to ask is this: Why would God ask His people in the Old Testament to remember Him? To remember His creative and redemptive activity—acts—weekly and annually.

WA: Are you saying that God is actually interested in time? That He’s intervening in time?

Dr. B: The biblical God is a God of history. He’s a God who is active in history by creating, redeeming and restoring at the end. The biblical faith is rooted on God’s saving activity in history. And the biblical calendar is designed to help us remember, commemorate, celebrate the great saving acts of God.

If God’s people in the Old Testament needed to remember God’s creative and redemptive activity—not only weekly in the Sabbath, but also annually through these Holy Days—why shouldn’t we need it today? Don’t we also worship the Creator God, the Redeemer God? Don’t we also need to remember God’s creative and redemptive love? Don’t we also have today the temptation to become forgetful? And if we become forgetful we become skeptical!

The reason so many people today doubt that there is a Creator God, they doubt that there is a Redeemer God... [is] because having forgotten those days—which were designed to maintain alive this awareness—they have questioned the saving activity of God in the world and in their own lives.

When we study the biblical feasts, they help us understand the unfolding of redemptive history. The spring festivals, for example the Passover and Pentecost, are designed to help us understand the accomplishment of Christ's First Advent. But, they go on beyond that—like Passover. What did Jesus say? Luke 22:15-16: "With fervent desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; for I say to you, I will no longer eat of IT (a reference to Passover), until it is FULFILLED in the kingdom of God." In other words, Jesus Himself speaks of Passover—not as being completely fulfilled at the cross. Jesus Christ, the Pascal Lamb, was sacrificed, but a future ultimate fulfillment [of the Passover redemption will take place] in the Father's Kingdom. And since He said that He's not going to eat it again [at this time] He expects you and me to partake of the Passover during His absence and FEEL that great [future] Pascal supper meal of the lamb.

And the same is true of all the other festivals, like Pentecost. Pentecost reminds us of the resurrection/ascension/beginning of Christ's ministry, outpouring of the Holy Spirit, the beginning of the Christian Church. It reminds us of the accomplishment of Christ's First Advent that made available the enabling power of the Holy Spirit that launched the Christian mission.

But, Pentecost is an experience to be repeated, as was the early rain of Pentecost. There's going to be a lot of rain. And the Church also is going to be empowered to complete the mission that was begun there at Pentecost. By celebrating Pentecost, we not only celebrate that incredible outpouring of the

Holy Spirit, which set the Christian mission in motion, but we are also expressing our hope and faith that God will repeat the same miracle in our own life in the Church to complete the mission that God has given us to do.

We could go through and see exactly the same that there was an initial fulfillment and an ultimate fulfillment in all the other feasts. Like the Fall feasts of Trumpets, Day of Atonement, Tabernacles. All of them have the scope, the goal, to nourish our hope and strengthen our faith so that we can internalize the consciousness of God working in history to accomplish His redemptive purpose.

WA: I get the point. Yet the Holy Days and the Sabbath are part of God's law and most people have the perspective that the Apostle Paul was very anti-law. People say Paul really taught against the law—that it wasn't something Christians should do. What did Paul teach?

Dr. B: I surely appreciate your asking this question. I want to assure you that I have spent many years of my life addressing this concern. In fact, in my book, *The Sabbath in the New Testament*, I have a whole section entitled "Paul and the Law." I would like to urge anyone who's really interested in this question—in fact, it's chapter 6—to read this section.


But, in a nutshell, the fundamental problem is this: people read only those statements of Paul which negate the value of the law as the basis of salvation, such as Romans 3:28: I affirm that we are saved by grace through faith without the works of the law. And we have statements similar to that in Galatians.

However, what many forget [is] that while on one hand Paul will affirm that we are not saved by the law—that we are saved by faith through grace without the works of the law—on the other hand, this same Paul says that the law is holy; the law

is just; the law is pure [Rom. 7:12]. God sent His Son in the likeness of sinful flesh so that the just requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us (Rom. 8:4). So the question is this: How can Paul negate the law on one hand and affirm it on the other hand?

WA: Is it contradictory?

Dr. B: It seems contradictory. How can you say it's *abolished* and it's *established*?... How do you reconcile it? If you study my analysis, you will find that the key to resolve this *apparent contradiction* is in the context of any particular text. When Paul speaks of the law as the basis of salvation, he says that the law cannot save us. Because we are not saved through rules and regulations. Salvation is a divine gift. It's not a human achievement. Do you follow me?

So, when Paul speaks of the law as the basis of salvation he clearly says, the law is of no avail. But, when Paul speaks of the law as the *standard of salvation*—the standard to which we are saved—[he says that] we are not saved to remain in sin. But, we are saved to become what God likes us to be. We are saved to reflect the righteousness of God in our own life. And when Paul speaks of the law in terms of the standard of salvation, then he affirms it. WHY? Because the function of the law is to help us understand the will of God. God has given us the [box]spring support so that we can develop the character after His likeness. 

(This interview will be continued in the March issue.)

If this interview has evoked some questions in your mind or if you would like further information about obtaining Dr. Bacchiocchi's books, request an answer by addressing your questions to: "Letters to the Editor," P.O. Box 501111, San Diego, CA 92150-1111, USA.

Q. In Genesis 24:2-9 we read that Abraham made his servant swear an oath to find a wife for his son Isaac from his own people. But Jesus said, "Do not swear at all" (Matt. 5:34)! Was Abraham causing his servant to sin?

A. There are many instances of "swearing" or taking oaths by God's servants in the Old Testament. Making a vow is also considered a form of taking an oath. One such example is during the time when King Saul was pursuing David and trying to kill him. After expressing remorse for his actions, Saul tells David to swear to the LORD that he would not cut off Saul's descendants. The response: "**David swore to Saul**" (1 Sam. 24:21-22).

The Prophet Nahum touched on this topic when he instructed his fellow Jews, saying, "**Perform your vows**" (Nahum 1:15).

We see, then, that taking oaths or vows in Old Testament times was considered acceptable.

Just what is an oath? A vow? An *oath* is calling upon God's name to confirm what we are saying. According to *Unger's Bible Dictionary*, "Every oath contains two elements... an affirmation or promise, and an appeal to God as omniscient, and the punisher of falsehoods" (1970, p. 800). Similarly, a *vow* is a religious undertaking—to do something or refrain from doing something—which is made in the form of an oath (pp. 801, 1, 159).

But the New Testament instructs Christians to *avoid* this form of speech. In James 5:12, we read, "But above all, my brethren, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or with any other oath."

Jesus said, "But I say to you, do not swear at all: neither by heaven, for it is God's throne; nor by the earth, for it is His footstool; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. Nor shall you swear by your head, because you cannot make one hair white or black. But let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No.' For whatever is more than these is from the evil one" (Matt. 5:34-37).

It is not the words of the oath which

constitute sin. But, rather, in *taking an oath*, we may be using God's name in vain (Ex. 20:7), since we, as physical humans, **cannot guarantee that we will fulfill our vows**. This principle holds true even in legal proceedings. When Christians are required to participate in legal matters that normally require sworn statements or testimony, they should simply *affirm* the truth of what is said, as opposed to swearing an oath.

Thus, a simple "yes" or "no" should suffice when Christians speak.

Q. The Bible mentions "spirits in prison" in 1 Peter 3:19. Who are these spirits and when was it that Christ "preached" to them?

A. We read in 1 Peter 3:19-20 that Christ "went and preached to the spirits in prison, who formerly were disobedient." The Apostle Peter explains who these spirits were, saying, "God did not spare the **angels who sinned**, but cast them down to hell... to be reserved for judgment" (2 Peter 2:4). Thus, these "spirits" were demons—angels who had been influenced by Satan to rebel against God (cf. Rev. 12:4).

The term "cast down to hell" here means being confined to a place of restraint, being translated from the Greek word *tartaroo*. *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words* defines the verb *tartaroo* as confining sinning angels "to be reserved unto judgment" (p. 300). Where are they reserved unto judgment? Satan, the "god of this world" (2 Cor. 4:4), has a kingdom on this earth. The earth, then, is the "place of restraint" for the fallen angels.

Exactly *when* did Christ preach to the demons? Many claim that He preached to them for the three days and three nights that He was in the tomb (cf. Matt. 12:40). But is this supported by Scripture? Could it be that Christ was both *dead*, and also *conscious*—preaching to the demons? The Bible clearly explains the state of death: "There is no work or device or knowledge or wisdom in the grave" (Eccl. 9:10). The

dead are not *conscious*!

When did this happen then? The Bible says that Christ preached to the imprisoned spirits "in the days of Noah" (1 Peter 3:20). It was during the 120-year period while Noah was building the ark that God, in the Person of the pre-incarnate Jesus Christ, "went and preached to the spirits in prison."

Q. In 1 Corinthians 10:27, the Apostle Paul says that when you are invited to dinner you should eat whatever is put before you, asking no questions. Does this mean that the dietary laws of clean and unclean meats in Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14 are no longer in effect?

A. To properly answer this question, we must consider the Corinthian society of the time. Pagan worship required animal sacrifices. Routinely, there would be a surplus of meat which was not consumed in religious rites. This meat would be sold to local butchers who would then resell it to the public.

This posed a problem for the Corinthian Christians. They knew not to participate in pagan worship—as Christians, they were to flee idolatry (1 Cor. 10:14-21). The Corinthian saints wondered whether eating meat sold at the market (the source of which was unknown) could be considered *sin*. Paul's response was that the meat itself was just meat—the real sin would be to participate in the false, idolatrous ceremony (vv. 19-21). Paul explained that the Corinthian Christians could continue to purchase meat without worrying about its origin—if they did so with a pure conscience.

Note that in all of this, the focus is on **pagan religious rites**. Nowhere is the subject of clean versus unclean meats even mentioned in this section of Scripture. The dietary laws as set forth in Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14 have never been abolished, are still in effect today, and will still be binding upon all humanity when the glorified Jesus Christ returns to establish the Kingdom of God upon this earth (cf. Is. 65:1-5; 66:15-17).

Don't Eat the Cleanup Crew!

by Douglas S. Winnail, Ph.D., M.P.H.

Why did God prohibit eating certain foods? Was the Creator being capricious? Why should He be concerned? Is there a rational, logical basis for the Scriptures dealing with which foods are fit for human consumption?

After dealing with edible land animals, the second major set of divine dietary instructions concerned aquatic creatures. In Leviticus we are instructed: "These you may eat of all that are in the water: whatever in the water has *fins and scales*, whether in the seas or in the rivers—that you may eat.... Whatever in the water *does not have fins or scales*—that shall be an abomination to you" (11:9, 12).

Numerous and sometimes fanciful reasons have been proposed for these guidelines. While some Bible scholars recognize that the consumption of unclean organisms can be harmful (*Expositor's Bible Commentary*, 1990), others suggest that organisms without fins and scales resembled snakes and thus are abhorrent to eat (*Interpreter's Bible*, 1953). One source stated that scripturally "unclean," bottom-dwelling organisms were symbolic of living in sin and pollution, and that fins were symbolic of prayers that could lift us out of such situations (*The Bible Commentary*, Scribner, 1871). The discoveries of science, however, reveal in greater detail

the wisdom and benefits of God's plain instructions about appropriate food.

Biblically "clean fish" are generally free swimming in bodies of water. Most "unclean" fish are either *bottom dwellers* or *predatory scavengers*. The prohibition against eating scaleless fish protects against the consumption of fish that produce poisonous substances in their bodies. A U.S. Navy manual comments, "All the important fish with poisonous flesh... *lack ordinary scales*.... Instead, these poisonous fish are covered with bristles or spiny scales, strong sharp thorns, or spines, or are encased in a bony box-like covering. Some have naked skin, that is, no spines or scales" (*Survival on Land and Sea*, 1944).

Many sea creatures listed as venomous (4 sharks, 58 stingrays, 47 catfish, 57 scorpion fish, 15 toadfish, etc.) do not have true scales (Caras, *Venomous Animals of the World*, 1974). Eels—nocturnal predatory scavengers that eat

"almost any kind of food, dead or alive"—would also be considered unclean (*International Wildlife Encyclopedia*, 1990). Eel blood contains a toxic substance "which can be dangerous" if it comes "into contact with eyes or another mucous membrane" (*Encyclopedia of Aquatic Life*, 1988).

The biblical guidelines were designed to point people to the safest kinds of fish to eat. However, care must be taken—even clean fish should be adequately cooked before eaten. Raw fish (such as sushi or sashimi) or poorly cooked fish can transmit several kinds of parasitic tapeworms and flukes (Black, *Microbiology*, 1993).

A Different Purpose

Shellfish, lacking both fins and scales, are clearly excluded by the biblical dietary laws. But why would lobsters, crabs, crayfish and shrimp, which are considered delicacies in many parts of the world, be prohibited? The answer lies in understanding the role they were designed to play in nature.

Lobsters are "nocturnal" foragers (*Encyclopedia America*, 1993). They are "bottom walkers" and "predatory scavengers" (*Encyclopedia of Aquatic Life*) that "scavenge for dead animals" and other bottom-dwelling organisms and debris (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 1995). They are usually caught in lobster pots "baited with dead fish." Lobsters have long antennae and tiny hair-like sensors all over their bodies "that can detect specific chemical molecules in the environment (released by decaying organisms), which can help the lobster identify and locate food"—even in the dark (*New Standard Encyclopedia*, 1993)! Lobsters have been observed to bury a dead fish and then dig it up later, at intervals, to eat a bit more of it (*International Wildlife Encyclopedia*).

Crabs are referred to as "professional garbage hunters" and as "scavengers" that eat almost anything. "The edible crab *prefers dead fish*, but will eat any carrion [dead, putrefying flesh]" (*International Wildlife Encyclopedia*). Common shrimp, a small, delicate relative of crabs and lobsters, live by day in the mud or sandy bottoms of bays and estuaries all over the world. However, they become active at night as predatory scavengers and are "bottom dwelling detritus feeders [eating dead and decaying matter]" (*Encyclopedia of Aquatic Life*).

These organisms were all created for a very important ecological purpose. They are, in essence, the "garbage collectors" or the "cleanup crew" for the

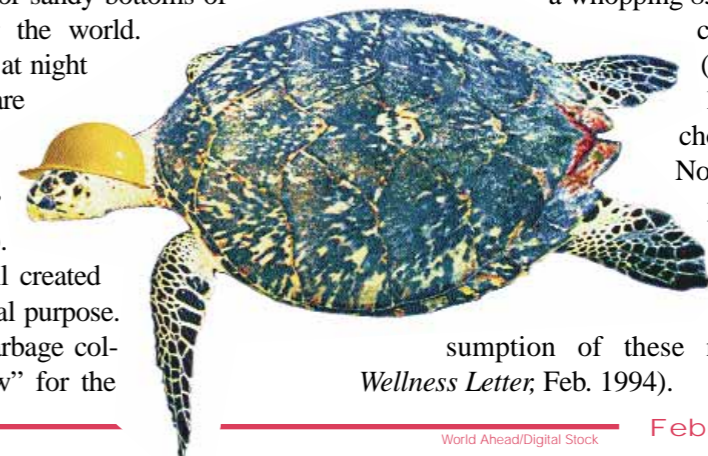
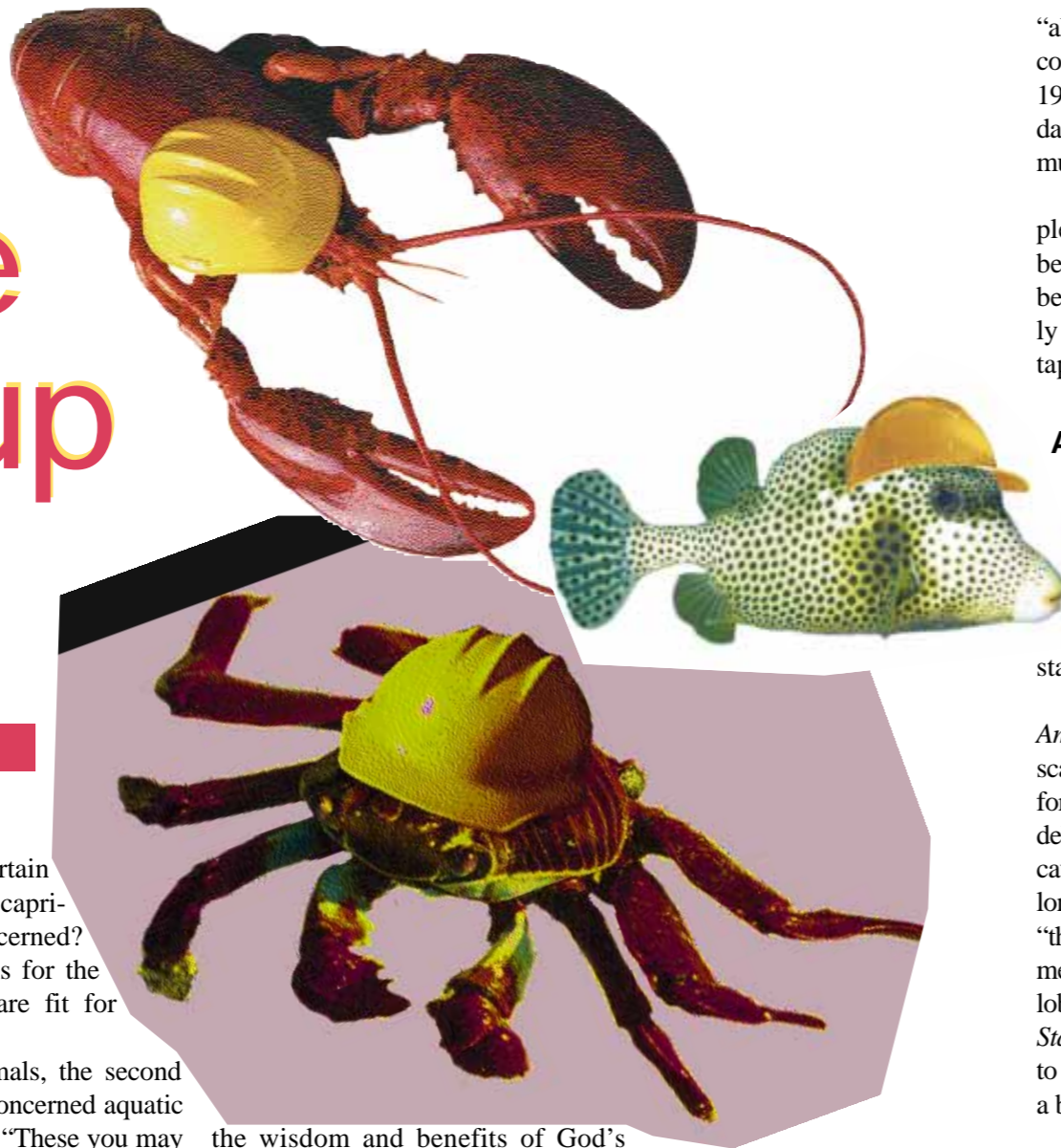
bottoms of lakes, rivers, beaches, bays and oceans. They were *not intended* to be food for human beings. That is also why the consumption of raw, pickled or undercooked crabs, crayfish, snails and shrimp carries a significant risk of parasitic infections like liver flukes, which infect up to 80 percent of some rural populations in Southeast Asia (Black).

Danger on the Half Shell

There are also important and logical reasons why God created and then clearly labeled clams, oysters, mussels and scallops as unclean and inappropriate for human consumption. These creatures are found in lakes, streams and coastal areas around the world where they perform specialized roles. As stationary filter-feeding mollusks, they pump large amounts of water over their mucus-covered gills, trapping tiny pieces of food (silt, plant debris, bacteria, viruses) which they then eat (*Encyclopedia Americana*, "Mollusks"). As a result, "mussels and other animals feeding on microscopic particles are the *ultimate scavengers* of the sea" (*International Wildlife Encyclopedia*). Filter-feeding organisms are the "vacuum cleaners" for aquatic environments. Their role is to purify the water.

Once you understand the purpose for which God created shellfish, the reason they are *unclean* should become obvious. Just as you would be reluctant to make a meal out of the contents of your vacuum cleaner bag or the material that collects on your furnace filter or in your septic tank, the decision to eat shellfish should also be considered carefully! Because their method of feeding is "ideal for concentrating bacteria in sewage," in addition to collecting and concentrating pathogenic viruses, heavy metals and nerve toxins produced by plankton, these shellfish present a serious health hazard to consumers (*International Wildlife Encyclopedia*; Black).

How serious is the threat of disease? The American Food and Drug Administration has stated that "raw oysters, clams and mussels—so savored by gourmets—account for a whopping 85 percent of all the illnesses caused by eating seafood" (*FDA Consumer*, June 1991). Outbreaks of cholera, typhoid, hepatitis A, Norwalk virus, salmonella and paralytic shellfish poisoning are just some of the health problems frequently linked to the consumption of these mollusks (*U.C. Berkeley Wellness Letter*, Feb. 1994).



Notices have been published that pregnant women, the elderly and “individuals with immune systems weakened by certain diseases (cancer, diabetes and AIDS) should... **avoid eating or handling uncooked shellfish**” (*Consumer Research*, July 1993). These dangerous and potentially life-threatening situations can be avoided by understanding and following the biblical dietary laws that prohibit eating marine organisms that lack fins and scales.

Birds to Bugs

The final groups of organisms covered by the biblical code are birds, insects and reptiles. Essentially all the excluded fowl are either *birds of prey* or *scavengers* like vultures and seagulls (Lev. 11:13-19; *Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, vol. 1, 1980). Carnivorous birds are important in controlling populations of other animals. Their dietary habits of eating the flesh and blood of their prey—carrion—make these birds potential agents for transmitting disease. Predatory fish-eating birds tend to accumulate high levels of toxic chemicals in their bodies. Most of these birds are not important food sources for humans.

Reptiles are also among the animals listed as unclean for human food (Lev. 11:29-30, 42-43). Regarding insects, only those from the locust/grasshopper family are permissible as food (vv. 21-23). These creatures are distinguished by having “strong hind legs for springing” (*Expositor’s Bible Dictionary*) and have been used, historically, as a food source in the Middle East.

Dietary Laws Abolished?

The biblical dietary laws are simple, rational, practical and profound. Long before human beings knew the details of disease-causing microorganisms, life cycles of parasites or global ecology, God revealed powerful principles that would protect the environment, provide safe, healthful food and prevent the spread of disease for anyone who would be willing to follow these instructions. The intent and benefits of these biblical guidelines have been acknowledged periodically in history. One scholar observed recently that “most of the laws can be clearly seen to tend toward public health... the laws were **wonderfully fashioned by God for the general health of the nation**” (*Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, 1990, pp. 529, 569).

But if these laws are so logical and beneficial to mankind, where did the idea come from that they have been abolished? Why do Bible-believing Christians seem to be in the forefront of promoting this notion? The answer is found in *interpretations* that are *read into* scriptures found in Mark 7 and Acts 10. Studying the “evidence” is instructive.

In Mark 7, Jesus addressed a question about why His

disciples ate without washing their hands according to ceremonial traditions followed by the Pharisees. Some Bible translations *add words* to Jesus’ answer in verse 19, *suggesting* that He did away with the dietary laws. However, these added words are *not found* in the preserved Greek texts. The translators put words into Jesus’ mouth that He did not say.

Christ’s point was that orally ingested dirt does not *spiritually* defile a person since it does not enter the heart to influence attitudes (vv. 18-23). The dirt passes through the digestive tract and is eliminated. The subject of clean and unclean meats and the dietary laws are *not being discussed* in this chapter (or in Matthew 15:10-20 which discusses the same event. Read these events for yourself in several different translations).

In Acts 10, Peter is given a vision to help him understand God’s future plans for the growth of the Church. He was shown a group of unclean animals and told three times to eat. Each time he *adamantly declined* because he believed it was *wrong* (vv. 13-16). Now remember, this was the Peter who supposedly heard Jesus abolish the dietary laws in Mark 7 (notice v. 2) and who was trained by Christ for three-and-one-half years—and yet he was *still* under the clear impression that eating unclean meats was *wrong!* He puzzled over the meaning of the vision (Acts 10:17) until three Gentile men came knocking at his door with a request to hear the Gospel explained (vv. 21-27). Normally Peter would not have associated with these men who were outside of the covenant community, because the Jews considered the Gentiles to be “unclean.”

When Peter put the pieces of this little puzzle together *he concluded*: “God has shown me that I should **not call any man common or unclean**” (v. 28). He perceived that God intended the Gospel to go also to the Gentiles and that they were to come into the Church on equal footing with anyone coming from a Jewish background. Peter does not conclude in this chapter, or anywhere else in the New Testament, that the dietary laws were to be abolished. The so-called evidence is *simply not there!* Neither Jesus Christ nor Peter abolished these God-given guidelines.

Ulterior Motives?

If the evidence for Christ and the apostles abolishing the dietary laws is so weak—in fact, is totally non-existent—where did this idea originate that has circulated so widely through the Christian community? The clues are to be found in the social, political and religious factors that influenced

church doctrines of the second century A.D. (cf. Dr. Samuele Bacchiocchi, *From Sabbath to Sunday*, 1977, chap. 2).

It is generally acknowledged that the early Christians continued to observe many of the so-called laws of Moses—actually the clear teachings of the Bible (cf. Luke 4:16; Gibbon, *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, chap. 15). However, as more Gentiles came into the Church they had to contend with strong anti-Jewish feelings that surged through the Roman Empire at that time. As a result of the attacks and ridicule heaped on Jewish customs by Latin and Greek authors, “many Christians severed their ties with Judaism” (Bacchiocchi, p. 185).

Many Gentile Christians attempted to “radically differentiate” themselves from anything that appeared to be Jewish. They wanted to appear as distinct and separate from the Jews. In their attempts to create a new identity they began to substitute new customs (many borrowed from the surrounding pagan culture) for their original biblical (so-called Jewish) practices (Bacchiocchi, chap. 2; Durant, *Caesar and Christ*). This included replacing the Sabbath with Sunday, the Passover with Easter and, in all probability, abolishing the dietary laws. As Dr. Bacchiocchi points out, early “Christian” writers developed some very novel ways of interpreting Scripture in an attempt to establish a biblical foundation for their new practices. They also sought to undermine the value of the Jewish practices described in the Bible (p. 183).

From Here to Eternity


One of the unfortunate consequences of the aversion to the dietary laws, spawned in the turmoil of the second century A.D., has been that millions of people have suffered and died of diseases they contracted by eating food

that God never intended people to eat.

Somehow, the plain, simple statement in the Bible that Satan would deceive the whole world (Rev. 12:9) has been overlooked or conveniently forgotten. This deception has included the belief that theological, rational and beneficial instructions about diet, which God gave to Israel so it could become a model nation for the rest of the world, have been abolished and are no longer valid.

This situation, however, is going to change. When Jesus Christ returns to this earth there is going to be a “restitution of all things” (Acts 3:20-21), including the dietary laws found in the Bible. Prophecies in Isaiah 65:1-10 and 66:15-20 reveal that the returning Savior of mankind is going to correct mistaken notions that He or anyone else has done away with these beneficial laws. People will be given an opportunity to learn why God established His laws and to experience the benefits of living in harmony with these divinely inspired principles (Is. 2:2-3). The Bible also indicates that when this restoration occurs it is going to last as long as physical beings need guidelines to regulate physical behavior (9:6-7)!

Fortunately, you don’t have to wait for the Second Coming of Christ to begin following the instructions of your Creator. You can start today. Individuals whose minds have been opened to the real meaning of the Scriptures are going to have the opportunity to share these life-preserving principles with all humanity (30:20-21).

Those who develop a working knowledge of the applications and benefits of God’s way of life are going to reign with Jesus Christ in the Kingdom of God on this earth (Rev. 11:15; Dan. 2:44). The dietary laws are part of God’s plan for well-being. They are still applicable today, and they will be fundamental instruction for healthy living in the World Ahead! 

JUST EVOLVE? (continued from page 13)

the human spirit also be perfected?

The New Testament tells Christians, “But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God... to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and the church of the first-born who are registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the **spirits of just men made perfect**” (Heb. 12:22-23).


This refers to those humans who, in this life, allowed God to perfect their human spirits by yielding themselves to Him. Thus, He developed His holy,

righteous, perfect character in them! Nothing is said here about these spirits being conscious. They are simply the spirits of those registered in heaven, which returned to God at death.

Each spirit bears the character, personality and memory imprint of the person who had it—in other words, all that which defines the person. Therefore, when God places this spirit in a new body at the resurrection, the *same person* will be alive again—just as though one exported on a disk, a computer software program from an old machine and transferred the data to a new piece of hardware. In this way, the human spirit is the vehicle by which

God preserves our uniqueness as individuals forever!

Many have utterly failed to realize that it is the human spirit which gives each human being his awesome, God-like mind power—his seemingly limitless mental capacity!

And, most important of all, it is that same human spirit which enables humans—made in the very image of our Creator—to connect with the *divine* Holy Spirit, through which we can communicate directly with the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ! “God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth” (John 4:24)! 

Fragmentation in the Age of Globalism—Where Is It Leading?

by John H. Ogwyn

Not since the days of the Tower of Babel have the efforts of all humanity been more intertwined and interconnected. We talk commonly about how the world has been transformed into a global village by jet planes, instant telecommunication and an integrated world economy.

From finance to manufacturing, multinational corporations and conglomerates dominate virtually every field. People all over the world are linked by the internet and satellite TV transmission. Yet the paradoxical present trend is for multiethnic, multireligious and multicultural nations to subdivide and fragment along the lines of whatever distinguishes one group from another.

Where is it all leading? Will the influence of multinational corporations, which owe no real allegiance to any one country, bring about world peace? Do interconnected communications and economies hold the key to solving mankind's age-old conflicts?

Make no mistake about it, today's world economy is more interconnected than ever before. Japanese companies aren't simply Japanese, American companies aren't simply American. Something that is "American made" is composed of parts which were manufactured in a number of other countries. Japanese auto manufacturers have plants in the United States and American companies have plants in

Mexico and Latin America. Most nations are far less self-sufficient economically than ever before.

There is an unconsidered danger presented by all of this cosmopolitan familiarity. And there is also a surprising paradox. The danger lies in the fact that while the economies of all nations are increasingly joined together like links in a chain, the whole chain is only as strong as its weakest link. Events in one nation can drastically disrupt the economies of other nations half a world away.

The paradox is that while the world's peoples are more connected and more interdependent than ever, they are also more divided. Multiethnic and multireligious Yugoslavia has been dismembered. Canada may split along French-English fault lines. There is ethnic strife throughout large portions of Africa and Asia. The United States itself is bitterly divided along ethnic and even religious lines.

Political fragmentation is deeply worrying to global business interests. The more multinational a corporation's interests, the more likely that corporation will desire a "new world order" to replace the present fracturing system of nation-states. Today's increasing political disintegration around the world puts enormous pressure on the powers-that-be to look for some viable alternative to our present, unsteady system.

The Cold War Is Over— But Where Is Peace?

Americans have spent over half of this century locked in war—both hot and cold ones. In the aftermath of World War II an "iron curtain," to use Winston Churchill's famous phrase, came down on Eastern Europe. Through hot wars, cold wars and wars fought by Third World proxy nations, America and its allies sought to contain communism for about forty years. Finally, in 1989, it seemed to be over. The iron curtain collapsed. People danced in the streets throughout Eastern Europe. There was a sense of euphoria in the air. Two years later, in December 1991, the Soviet Union itself ceased to exist. In its place was a non-communist Russia and well over a dozen newly independent, ethnic republics. The Cold War was over and we had won! After four decades of living under the shadow of mutually assured nuclear destruction, peace had finally been obtained. Yet had it really? In the almost six-and-a-half years that have elapsed since those giddy days in the fall of 1989, what has happened to the world?

The certainties of a bipolar world dominated by two superpowers are no more. In their place is a far more fragile and complex arrangement. As former Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev wrote, "It is very depressing. What hopes we had five years ago

with the end of the Cold War. Why did the New World Order that we envisioned dissolve so quickly and abjectly in the New World Disorder?" (*New York Times*, Sept. 6, 1995).

This past fall, within less than six years from their ouster in ignominy, we find "former" socialist-communist politicians coming back to power in Eastern Europe and Russia. Even Lech Walesa, hero of the anti-communist revolution of the 1980s, has now been voted out of office in Poland. His replacement is the candidate backed by the "new" communist party. What does all of this portend?

Three Geopolitical Contenders for World Power

A number of years ago the Catholic primate of Poland, Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński of Warsaw, analyzed the world scene by defining three geopolitical contenders for world power. "Three Internationales," he called them—the Golden, the Red and the Black. The Golden Internationale referred to the financial powers—the transnationalist capitalist leaders of the West. The Red Internationale, of course, referred to the socialist leaders of the East. The Black Internationale was a reference to the Roman Catholic Church.

The first two of these three contenders have a completely materialistic view of the world. Both Western capitalists and Eastern socialists view his-

tory from a secular perspective. In their raw form, both systems are exclusively materialistic and concerned with the here and now. The Vatican, which has played a dominant geopolitical role in centuries past and aspires to do so once again, takes a different view.

The transnational interests of Western capitalism rest on a tripod of international trade, an international method of payment and physical security. In the 19th and early 20th centuries, the British Empire served as guarantor in these matters. Great Britain with its far-flung empire provided the underpinnings and stimulus for world trade transacted in pounds

sterling. Its vast navy provided security on a global scale. Following World War II, the United States succeeded Britain in this role. However, in recent years, many capitalist interests have closely followed the Anglo-American relative decline in power. These big-money interests have in recent years sought to strengthen their economic projections by creating large free or relatively free trade pacts such as GATT, NAFTA and the European Union. These trading blocs promote the stability and profitability so desired by multinational capitalists. The Golden Internationales in Europe are now concentrating on creating a new reserve currency for the European Union to be called the "euro." In the

Tony Stone Image

future, should the U.S. dollar falter as the world's reserve currency due to declining confidence in American power, the rival euro will be ready to take over.

Western capitalism lures the world to her bed by promising the twin pleasures of freedom and prosperity. However it has become apparent to some that the West has confused freedom with moral anarchy. These capitalists worship bottom-line profits and individuality over virtue and community solidarity. Their selfishness has begotten social insecurity and decadence. The drive for short-term, quick profits has produced a society in which an accountant's computer reduces human beings to numbers on a balance sheet. Many profitable multinational corporations these days relish any opportunity to lay off tens of thousands of employees if the move is expected to immediately boost stock prices and reward top management with handsome bonuses. Undercutting their competitors by staying mean and lean is their slogan. As corporations have increasingly become multinational, any allegiance to a local community, employees or even to a nation has become minimal or non-existent.

As for the Red Internationale—the socialists—history has shown that a centrally planned economy has not been able to compete with an entrepreneurial one. Despite promises of constructing a worker's "paradise," the communists ultimately had to rely on barbed wire fences and armed guards to keep their people from escaping.

A market that denies individual incentive, freedom of conscience and private property will stagnate. Coercion can never effectively compete with the freedom to enjoy the fruits of one's labor as a stimulus to production.

The Red utopian promises have failed and left hundreds of millions of once "true believers" disillusioned in their wake. However, among intellectuals who still subscribe to the possibility of a man-made utopia, and among

have-nots witnessing an ever-widening gap with the haves in bottom-line capitalistic countries, "democratic" or "reformed free-market" Marxism retains drawing power. It offers promises of security from want and touts class envy as a means of attracting a following. Memory is often short, and many in Eastern Europe are already longing for the "good old days." Politicians who were steeped in communism's statist ideology have simply bided their time and now find themselves being voted back into positions of power in Europe. Presently these "reformed" socialists promise to be good democrats and no longer shoot the opposition.

People the world over are increasingly aware of the failures of exclusively materialistic philosophies. As currently constituted, neither capitalism nor socialism-communism is able to offer any transcendent goal or purpose. Nor can they produce a just and equitable society where prosperity is sustainable indefinitely. As a result, age-old ethnic, economic and religious rivalries threaten to fragment an interdependent world.

It is apparent that unless human emotions and actions can be channeled differently, they will fracture the whole global economic house. An identity that transcends the current divisions and rivalries is clearly needed. Despite the desire of the internationalists to supersede the independent nation-state, they have been unable to come up with a solution that would claim the loyalty and stir the emotions of the average man on the street. People don't develop intense emotional loyalty to faceless bureaucrats or to goals of maximizing corporate profits. **Where is the looming crisis of fragmentation in this age of globalism taking us?**

A third geopolitical force is increasingly flexing its muscles. Its influence was crucial in bringing about the emergence of a non-communist Eastern Europe and the collapse of the bipolar, post-World War II World Order.

This third force is what Cardinal

Wyszynski referred to as the "Black Internationale"—the Roman Catholic Church. The Vatican isn't simply a religious institution; it is also a sovereign state that maintains diplomatic relations with many nations. In addition to being a religious leader, the pope is also ruler of Vatican City and his representatives are full participants in international conferences. For many centuries the papacy played a major international role, and it unabashedly aspires to do so once again. The current pontiff clearly believes that he offers a moral, alternative worldview to contrast with those of both capitalism and communism. He claims to offer a spiritual vision in contrast to their entirely materialistic views.

History Recorded in Advance

The answer to the question of what lies ahead for our nations and our world is recorded in what to most people would seem an extremely unlikely source. In Isaiah 46:10, One claiming to be God tells us that He declares "the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things that are not yet done, saying, 'My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure.'" Bible prophecy, which constitutes about one-quarter of all the Scriptures, is simply history recorded in advance! What does it reveal about the turbulent times we live in and the days immediately ahead of us?

The rise and fall of empires and ideologies is not just a matter of chance. It is possible for us to understand where the current trends will really lead, regardless of the hopes and aspirations of current leaders on the world scene.

An ancient Babylonian king, Nebuchadnezzar, learned a very valuable lesson in this regard. After undergoing a seven-year period of madness, King Nebuchadnezzar regained his

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FRANCE CRISIS (continued from page 10)

not, look around hoping someone else will pick up the tab!

For years, in France, major public protests have been followed by a one-day strike, or by a series of strikes. They have created public inconvenience, hardship and

disorder. Yet, these strikes have hardly solved any disputes in a satisfactory manner.

We humans tend to be selfish. In France when two parties disagree, each one primarily seeks its own interest. Each

expects the opponent to make most of the concessions. Or even to simply give in. Hence, the order of priorities for the common interest is upset. Selfishness overshadows the basic principle revealed in the Golden Rule.

All of us have to learn to abandon our selfish ways of thinking and acting in order to follow God's recommended way of living in peace and harmony one with the other. We all have to learn that God's commandments about loving our neighbors as ourselves constitute the guideline for all of our relationships. These commandments (not being unfaithful, not stealing, not using violence, not lying, not being greedy for what is not fairly ours) apply to relationships between employers and employees.

The Apostle Paul in his letter to the Ephesians clearly underlined the necessity of mutual love and respect between employers and employees. He wrote, "Servants [that is, all those who work under others], be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in sincerity of heart, as to Christ; not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, with good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men, knowing that whatever good anyone does, he will receive the same from the Lord, whether he is a slave or free" (6:5-8).

And addressing himself to the employers, Paul wrote, "You, masters, do the same things to them, giving up threatening, knowing that your own Master [Christ] also is in heaven, and there is no partiality with Him" (v. 9).

In today's competitive, cutthroat society, heavily dominated by prejudice, unfairness and injustice, God's commandments are considered impractical by many. Yet, ultimately, it is only by their observance that employers and employees will ever succeed in solving their disputes and in gaining mutual understanding, love and respect.

Jesus Christ came to proclaim a message: the Good News of His return as King of kings and Lord of lords. He showed humanity the way to peace and true happi-


ness. He told us to be good to each other, to be honest and merciful, never cruel nor vengeful. He said, "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to

you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you" (Matt. 5:43-44).

Generally speaking, men have not followed these instructions. Quite the contrary. From the beginning, they have allowed themselves to be led by self-centered ambitions, lust and covetousness. But this human way of living will soon change. The whole world will soon experience a spiritual awakening, a renewal of the human mind. This will happen when Christ returns to establish His Kingdom on earth.

This, in essence, is the Gospel Christ came to preach. It is the Good News He announced to all mankind. Today, only a few people around the world truly obey God and know how to solve their problems

in an equitable and peaceful manner. But in the World Ahead, under Christ's leadership and Government on earth, all men and women everywhere will learn to respect the Golden Rule. They will live by it. Everyone will be taught to pursue peace, to seek first of all their neighbor's interest rather than their own. All men and women everywhere will learn to love the way of peace because they will be led by God's Holy Spirit. (To better understand this Good News, please write for our FREE booklet, *Do You Believe the True Gospel?*)

Needless to say, in the World Ahead, there won't be any more strikes anywhere! 

Left: Demonstrators carry a placard with the effigy of French P.M. Juppé during a rally in Bordeaux. The protests were against the government's plans to curb spending. Top right: A crowd of Parisian commuters jostle each other on the Metro platform Gare de l'Est. The French capital faced a traffic nightmare as simultaneous strikes by bus and rail crews took effect. Above: Some three hundred railway workers block a high-speed train from entering its station.
—AFP photos.

CHRIST RETURN TONIGHT?

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saints from around the world (Matt. 24:31). Those who are dead will be *resurrected* and those who are still living will be changed to *spirit beings* in the Kingdom of God (1 Cor. 15:52-53). At that moment, all who are truly converted and walking with God will be glorified (Phil. 3:21). The faces of these glorified saints will SHINE LIKE THE SUN! (Rev. 1:16; 1 John 3:2).

A Job of Rulership

Soon afterward, the now Spirit-born saints of God will join Christ in the mop-up operations against any remaining leaders of the rebel governments of this world. For God's saints are prophesied "to execute vengeance on the nations, and punishments on the peoples; to bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron; to execute on them the written judgment—this honor have all His saints. Praise the LORD!" (Ps. 149:7-9).

Then the saints of God will join Christ in RULING over the nations of this earth: "And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations—'He shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the potter's vessels shall be broken to pieces'—as I also have received from My Father" (Rev. 2:26-27).

Again, the inspired prayer of the saints reveals that Christ has "made us kings and priests to our God; and we shall **reign on the earth**" (Rev. 5:10). Under the direction of Christ the KING and His saints, the enslaved Anglo-Saxon-Celtic peoples will be brought back to their ancestral homeland—the Promised Land of Israel (Jer. 30:7-10).


But first there will be weeping and tears of genuine *repentance* for following the ways of this present

sinful world (Jer. 31:8-9). Then, the released prisoners' tears will be turned into *joy* as they grasp Christ's mercy and forgiveness and the incredible *blessings* He will pour out once they learn their lessons, begin to practice His way of life and obey His laws (vv. 10-14; Ezek. 36:24-28).

For a time, there will be healing, peace and quiet for the survivors of the worst trauma the human race will have ever endured.

Will Christ's return be some obscure, mysterious, sentimental "stirring" in somebody's heart? Or will it be like a streak of lightning flashing around the earth, with thunder and earthquakes and the voice of the archangel, with glory and power and a MAJESTY that will send chills up and down the spines of millions? Truly, Christ will return to His creation! The Kingdom of God will be established on this earth!

But where will *you* fit into all this?

The literal return of that great Being, Jesus Christ, through whom God the Father created all things, is destined to occur within *this generation*. The Creator will return to save His creation from cosmocide. It will be a terribly dangerous, though exciting, time. The return of Jesus Christ is not some virtual-reality game. It is prophesied reality! It is going to be *real-time* reality! God help *you* to set your house in order—to seek the true God and learn to obey Him—that you may be prepared to serve with His saints on that magnificent day! 

All publications are now available on audiocassettes.



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FRAGMENTATION

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sanity and his throne. What he learned in a change from being the seemingly all-powerful King of Babylon to being a madman roaming the fields like a wild animal was that "the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomever He chooses" (Dan. 4:25).

In the book of Revelation, God reveals that in the endtime a powerful system He calls "Babylon the Great" will arise and dominate the entire earth. This system involves religion as well as having military, political and economic components. Revelation 18:9-18 and Ezekiel 27 reveal that a great global trading system will dominate the world's economy just before the Second Coming of Christ. This political system represents, according to Bible prophecy, the final "resurrection" of the old Roman Empire system of government (Rev. 17:9-13). It will possess great military power and strength (Rev. 13:4). But religion is the real binding force of this modern Babylon (Rev. 17:1-6).

Jesus Christ warned His disciples in Matthew 24 that there would be false religious leaders who would come claiming to represent Him, yet would lead people astray with a counterfeit message.

He also warned that at the endtime a great charismatic religious leader will work false miracles and "lying wonders" which will deceive the vast majority of people on earth. This leader will head up a great religious system described as "Mystery, Babylon the Great, the mother of harlots and of abominations of the earth" (Rev. 17:5). In other words, it will be an evolutionary outgrowth of the old Babylonian Mystery Religion, which has been modernized with new terminology and an updated religious philosophy. It has given

birth to daughter churches which have retained essential doctrinal links to their "mother."

As the instability of the political and economic situation around the world becomes more threatening toward future growth and prosperity, world leaders will become increasingly desperate to find a "New World Order" which can guarantee stability. The stage is being set for the appearance of a powerful, charismatic religious leader who will be allied with a great economic, politico-military "savior." There is to be a subsequent revival of intense religious fervor worldwide. Religion will be used as the glue to bind a fragmenting world and to promote unity and a common identity. It will not really solve the problem, however, because it will not be based upon the Truth of God. It will be a counterfeit palmed off by Satan the Devil.

This bad news about an unholy alliance of false religion with economic, politico-military interests is not the end of the story, however. God revealed through the pen of the Prophet Daniel the good news beyond the bad. "And in the days of these kings [the final ten who constitute the revived Holy Roman Empire] the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed" (Dan. 2:44).

According to the inspired Word of God, Jesus Christ is going to return to this earth as King of kings and Lord of lords (Rev. 19:11-16). When He does, He will sweep away the false systems that men have erected and replace them with the glorious Kingdom of God, a government based upon the righteous laws of Almighty God.

In future articles we will show you how the Bible clearly reveals the identity of this endtime Babylonian system. With this understanding of Bible prophecy, you can clearly know what lies ahead for your nation and your world. You can also understand the ultimate purpose the Creator is working out beyond the events that lie immediately ahead of us. 