JULY-AUGUST 2005

THE

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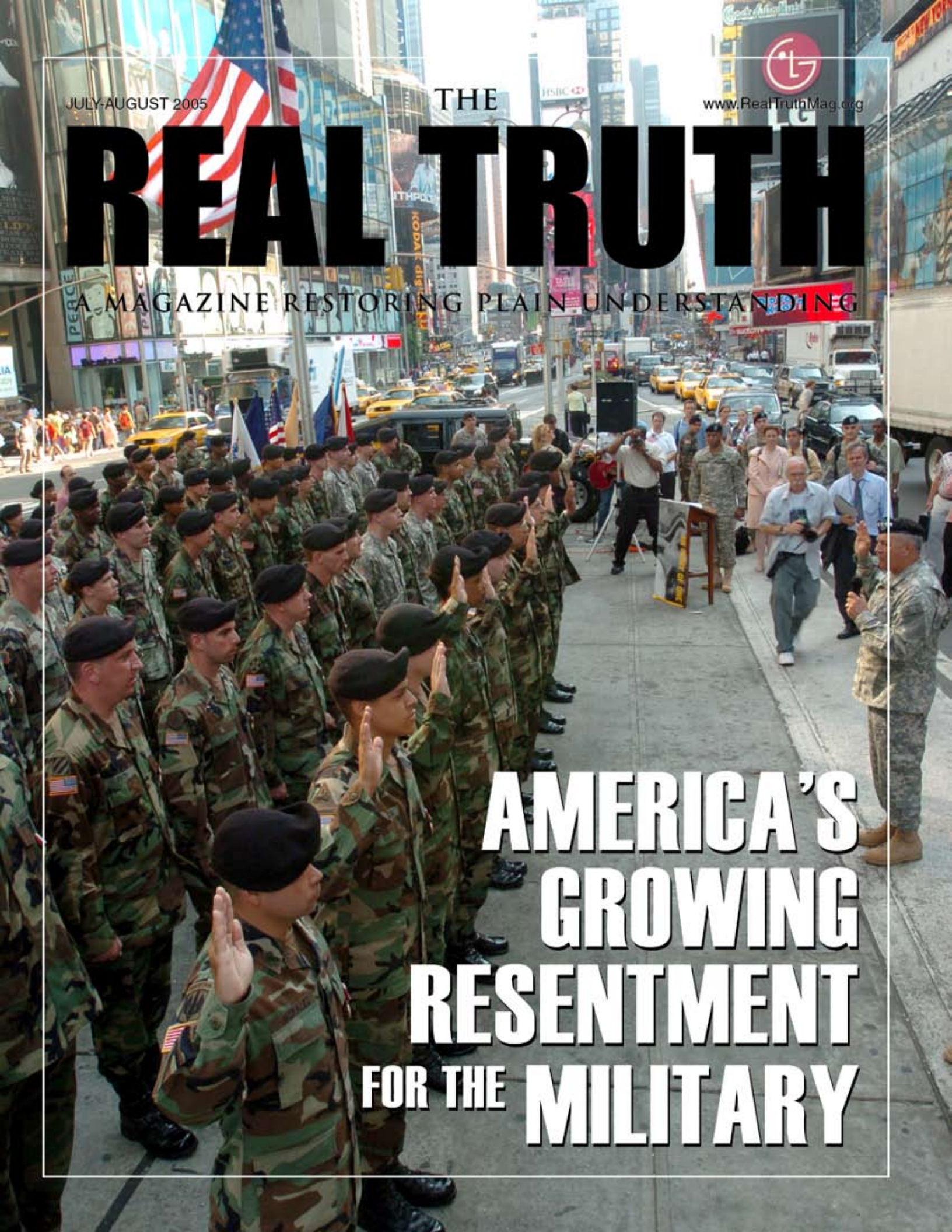

AMERICA'S GROWING RESENTMENT FOR THE MILITARY

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A MAGAZINE RESTORING PLAIN UNDERSTANDING

VOL. III | NO. 4 | JULY-AUGUST 2005

A R T I C L E S

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The Way We Were…and Now

Why are strong, balanced, principled men so rare today—even viewed as oddities? Why are there so few men of the same stature and uncompromising strength as in past generations? Likewise, traditional, virtuous femininity in women is as scarce as precious jewels. What has happened?

America's Growing Resentment for the Military – Where Will It Lead?
Many people assume that the United States will always possess the most powerful military force in the world. Is this a safe assumption? Or are there events occurring behind the scenes that could change this?
Page 3

The Vatican Selects a New Prefect
The new pope handpicked Archbishop William J. Levada to replace him as Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. Who is this man—and why did the new pope appoint him to this important office?
Page 10

***Star Wars* – The Truth Behind the Fiction**
The *Star Wars* series, which has captivated millions of moviegoers, is possibly the most popular Hollywood production in history. Yet, few realize that the series is full of not-so-subtle inferences from the world's best-selling book—the Bible.
Page 12

Video Games – An Escape From Reality?
Millions around the world spend their free time playing video and computer games. Many even believe they are improving themselves by doing so. Could they be right?
Page 15

F E A T U R E S

ABOUT OUR COVER:
Amidst traffic in New York's Times Square, Gen. Richard A. Cody, vice chief of staff of the Army, re-enlists recruiters stationed in New York in celebration of the Army's 230th birthday. (Photo: Office of the Chief of Public Affairs)

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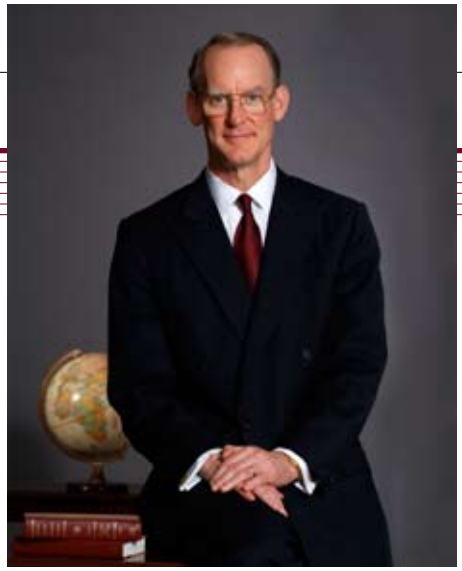


WHERE IS GOD'S TRUE CHURCH?

JESUS CHRIST declared, "I will build *My Church*" (Matt. 16:18). No matter how men interpret it, this passage speaks of a single church! Christ continued, "and the gates of hell [the grave] shall not prevail against it." He promised that *His* Church could never be destroyed.

Over 2,000 different professing Christian church organizations have been "built" by men in the United States. Another is started every three days. Estimates place the number of professing Christians at more than two billion. While church *attendance* seems to be increasing, it is not increasing as fast as the confusion surrounding the question of which is the *right* church.

While it has been said, "They can't all be *wrong*," it is more correct to say, "They cannot all be *right*." If Christ built His Church as He said, then it can be found somewhere on earth today—and it is the only *right* Church. But we must ask: How do we find it—what do we look for—how do we identify it—how do we know it if we see it?

My mother required me to read many books when growing up. I spent many summers reading her assigned "book a week." I enjoyed most of them and am very thankful she did this. On occasion, perhaps two or three times, I picked up the Bible and attempted to read it. But I never got far, because it made no sense to me. I simply could not understand the Bible.

Despite this lack of understanding, upon turning sixteen, I was "confirmed" into the church that I had been born into. I recall having to appear briefly before a panel of "deacons" to answer some questions, which I no longer remember. I do recall making some kind of general affirmation about this denomination, but I also remember that I was not concerned in the least with whether or not I was in the right church, or if I was fulfilling the Bible definition of a Christian.

Neither of these questions remotely interested me. I did vaguely believe that God existed, but He was not *real* to me. I had certainly never attempted to build a personal relationship with Him or to find His true Church. I did not pray or study His Word for guidance or doctrinal instruction. These concerns did not enter my mind until a year and a half later, in 1966, when I heard a powerful voice on the radio that introduced me to Christ's statement in Matthew 16:18. I began to question where I could find this true Church. I immediately realized that it *had* to exist because, through just basic study, I came to understand Christ's promise that it would remain and could not be destroyed.

Traditions of Men

Christ said, "But *in vain* they do *worship Me*, teaching for *doctrines* the commandments *of men*" (Matt. 15:9). In Mark's parallel account of this statement, He continued, "Full well you *reject the commandment of God*, that you may keep your own TRADITION" (7:9).

The world's Christianity is filled with traditions. One of the largest is the traditional view of the New Testament Church. Most ministers, theologians and religionists typically define the church in this way: "All those who sincerely believe in Jesus Christ as their Savior comprise the true Church." This is often followed with the familiar

statement, "There are many routes to heaven" or "There are many spokes on the wheel of salvation." Though the Bible does not teach that heaven is the reward of the saved, the clear implication of these is that people can believe what they want, or be a part of any group that they choose, and still be Christians—still receive whatever is salvation. While people may sincerely believe these traditional ideas, *they are sincerely wrong!*

My research led me to absolute PROOF of *where* the Church was that Christ promised to build. I learned that this Church could be carefully traced through almost 2,000 years of New Testament history. I was shocked. I could not believe the Bible was so clear on a subject that confuses so many.

Your Bible declares, "God is not the author of *confusion*, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints [the context shows this refers to all *congregations* of the true Church, not all *organizations* of men]" (I Cor. 14:33).

God's Church (composed of *many* congregations of saints) was to reflect *peace*—not confusion. You need not be confused about the identity of the true Church. God commands, "*Prove* all things; hold fast that which is good" (I Thes. 5:21). While this certainly refers to *scriptural* matters (not the car you drive or house you buy), it does say that "ALL things," not "*some* things," should be PROVEN! Surely God would not exclude something of such magnitude—such vital importance—as the matter of where His true Church is found. And He would never emphatically tell people to prove things that *cannot be proven!*

The more I studied the other doctrines of the Bible, the more I learned that the churches of this world were *wrong*—on virtually EVERYTHING! One plain scripture after another contradicted each *traditional* "Christian" idea I had been taught. I was amazed—actually stunned—at how easy it was to find direct, clear, undeniable proof that even the most popular traditions of the big denominations were not based on the Bible—*at all!*

Each time I studied a Bible doctrine—salvation, baptism, who and what God is, the gospel, death and hell, law and sin, grace, being born again, the Christian Sabbath, the true origin of supposed "Christian" holidays, where the modern-day tribes of ancient Israel are found today, the sequence of prophetic events preceding Christ's Return and so much more—I gained *undeniable proof* of what the Bible *really* taught! I was excited and fascinated. I found that the churches of this world were almost invariably confused on *all* these and many other plain points of Bible teaching. I came to realize that there had to be a church that correctly believed and practiced *all* the doctrines of the Bible.

I learned that this Church existed, and that the proof *identifying* it and setting it apart from all the churches of recognized, mainstream Christianity was no different than the proof of any other biblical doctrine.

A Persecuted Little Flock

When speaking to His disciples about the importance of seeking the kingdom of God, Christ said, "Fear not, *little flock*; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom" (Luke 12:32). By no stretch can churches comprised of millions, let alone over 2 billion, be considered a "little flock."

Christ understood that *His* Church—His *little* flock—would be persecuted and despised by the world. Just before His crucifixion, He warned, "Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have *persecuted Me*, they will also *persecute you*" (John 15:20). In the previous verse in the context, Jesus had reminded His disciples that "I have chosen you *out of the world*, therefore the world *hates* you." Christ *was* persecuted, to the point of horrible crucifixion after a night of brutal torture. Therefore, the true Church could also expect to be persecuted—and hated! Those in it are not "of the world." The world senses this and hates them for it (Rom. 8:7). Christ used Paul to record, "Yes, and *all* that will live godly *in Christ Jesus* shall suffer *persecution*" (II Tim. 3:12). The word "all" means what it says!

Consider what we have just discussed. How many churches can you name that are small, persecuted, not of this world—and even hated because of it? Think about those you are familiar with. Do any fit this description? Surely not many!

The Importance of the Name of the Church

The world's churches have many different names, which are derived in various ways. These include the particular *doctrines* they teach, the names of the *men* who founded them, the humanly-devised type of *church government* that they espouse, their *location*, or their intended scope and size, such as *universal* or *catholic*—in order to be thought of as all-encompassing.

On the night of His betrayal, Christ prayed for His Church. Here is what He said: "Holy Father, keep through *YOUR OWN NAME* those whom You have given Me, that they may be *one*, as We are. While I was with them in the world, I kept them *IN YOUR NAME*…I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I pray not that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them through Your truth: *Your word is truth*" (John 17:11-12, 14-17).

There are twelve separate places where the New Testament records that the true Church *has* been kept in the name of the Father—*God*. The first five refer to the entire Church, or Body of Christ, as a whole. The

Please see ***PERSONAL****, page 20*

Photo: U.S. Air Force

AMERICA'S GROWING RESENTMENT FOR THE MILITARY

Where Will It Lead?

Many people assume that the United States will always possess the most powerful military force in the world. Is this a safe assumption? Or are there events occurring behind the scenes that could change this?

BY GABRIEL N. LISCHAK

THE WAR IN IRAQ has brought a firestorm of resentment, especially among those targeted for recruitment—young adults. Protests against the U.S. military, both peaceful and non-peaceful, are being staged at various schools, campuses and recruiting stations around the country.

■ In February, roughly 500 students from a Seattle, Washington community college surrounded an Army recruiter. Chanting loudly and throwing newspapers and soda cans at him, the students chased the recruiter off their campus.

■ In April, over 300 university students removed Army, Navy and Marine Corps recruiters from their school's job fair.

■ In May, an estimated 150 Seattle-area students walked out of their college classes and marched on three different military recruitment offices in the area. At one location, the students loudly criticized the United States recruitment practices, chanting phrases such as "Education, not war! Kick recruiters out the door!" They also held signs that read, "Money For Education, Not Ammunition" and "I Want To Learn To Read, Not To Kill." After the students were ejected from the offices, one of them claimed a victory, saying, "Nobody can be recruited while we are here."

■ Several hundred people, including students, gathered at Cambridge Common (near Harvard University) in Massachusetts to stage a protest during a recent 230th Army birthday celebration featuring military re-enactors. Protestors wore shirts that had the phrases "You Can't Bribe Us To Die" written in blood-red letters on the front and "You Can't Bribe Us To Kill" on the back.

As the war in Iraq wages on, protests and demonstrations in San Francisco, Seattle and other major cities across America are becoming more vocal.

During a speech by the Army's Acting Undersecretary, phrases such as "Abu Ghraib, Guantanamo, U.S. torture has got to go" and "No blood for oil, U.S. off Iraqi soil" were chanted loudly. In addition, a trumpeter playing "Taps," a well-known military tune, was drowned out by protestors who repeated the words "Bush is still lying, soldiers are still dying."

The sentiment around the country can be summed up in the words of a Seattle youth activist: "We are going into this summer with a lot of energy because that's one of the biggest times for recruiters to go out and recruit students into the military. And we're going to be out there every step of the way making sure that Seattle is a recruiter-free zone. We want to make their job impossible. We do not want anyone else to go over to Iraq from our city" (*AlterNet*).

What are the implications of this growing disdain for the military?

An Army recruiter in the Seattle area said that student protests would result in fewer enlistments, thus bringing a national draft closer to fruition. In the end, these same protestors would be forced to enlist. However, would they willingly submit to a draft board—or would they refuse, choosing instead to protest that as well? What are the repercussions of the military not meeting its required number of recruits?

Banning Recruiters

Due to the outcry against the war in Iraq, the U.S. military has become more aggressive in scouting out potential recruits. Common practices such as roaming the halls of high schools and colleges, setting up recruitment tables and pulling students out of classes for interviews have all been increased.

In response, anti-war activists and counter-recruitment groups, such as Youth Activists-Youth Allies (YaYas), are targeting these practices, hoping to convince students to choose alternative options to the military. The ultimate goal of these groups is to deny recruiters access to schools and campuses, a tactic that has just recently become lawful.

In 1995, the Solomon Amendment was signed into law. It allowed the federal government to withhold funding from schools that refuse to allow military recruiters access to their facilities. As a result, only schools that do not receive such funding have barred recruiters.

However, the law schools of Yale, New York University and George Washington University have since brought about a lawsuit stating that the Solomon Amendment violates the First Amendment's right to "convey a message opposing discrimination." These schools declared that since the military does not allow gays to enter its ranks, it is a discriminatory organization; therefore, schools with anti-discriminatory policies should be able to ban military recruiters. In 2004, a federal appeals court in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania agreed with the lawsuit—opening the door for activist groups in other areas of the country to file similar suits.

Waning Recruiting Numbers

One of the results of a hostile environment for recruiters and a negative portrayal of the war in Iraq is a shortage of new recruits. Of course, there are other contributing factors, such as an economy offering attractive alternatives; but the current anti-military sentiment is playing a major part—and is a new phenomenon.

The Army has seen four straight months of lower than expected recruiting numbers. In February, the Army missed its recruiting goal by 27%; in March, it was missed by 31%; in April, it was missed by 42%; and in May, with a target of 1,350 recruits lower than normal, it was missed by 25%. The Army Reserve and National Guard were even further behind their respective targets.

While a spokesman for the Army chief of personnel is optimistic that the Army will reach its goal of 80,000 recruits for fiscal 2005 (ending September 30), others say that hope is rapidly fading. At the time of this writing, the Army is barely at 50% of its year-long goal. In order to reach it, 9,760 recruits a month will have to be processed during the next four months, which means they will have to exceed usual monthly targets ranging anywhere from 5,650 to 9,250 recruits.

(It should be noted that the Marine Corps, Navy and Air Force are meeting their active-duty recruiting goals. Time will tell if they can continue to do so with the growing negative attitude toward the military.)

To combat this shortfall, the Army has been forced to carry out drastic measures. One is the acceptance of recruits who would not have been accepted in the past, such as high school dropouts or those who score

low (the 10th to 30th percentile range) on the military's standardized aptitude test.

Notice the other measures that the Army has taken: They have sent out 1,200 extra recruiters, increased their advertising budget (spending $200 million on television ads), raised four-year enlistment bonuses from $4,000 to $20,000 for certain jobs (with plans to boost this to $40,000), began to offer $50,000 in low-rate home mortgages and reduced the minimum enlistment period from 24 months to 15 months. They have also increased the maximum enlistment age from 35 to 39 in the Reserves and National Guard.

What kind of effects could these measures have?

■ One of the benefits of an all-volunteer force is that the military is able to "pick and choose" potential recruits and ensure that only qualified individuals are allowed to enter. Lowering the standards means that problems could surface with unfit candidates in basic training or later, resulting in wasted money and man-hours. It could also put a damper on plans to transform the Army into a high-tech fighting force, one in which its soldiers are competent in making decisions without waiting for orders from higher ranks.

The director of the Center for Research on Military Organization at the University of Maryland had this to say: "The overall quality of the force today is lower than it was a year ago. It means [the Army] can anticipate more problem situations with recruits in the training cycle" (*Taipei Times*).

■ Increasing the recruitment force will cause various manpower issues, as military recruiters are drawn from various military jobs.

■ Additional advertising requires an expanded media budget.

■ Increasing enlistment bonuses, including home mortgages, requires money as well. From where will this money be drawn? And what is the motivating factor for those signing up under such terms? Are they just "doing it for the money"? A recruit might base his decision to join solely on the lucrative pay. But when this is spent, what motivation does he have left? Can he truly be counted on in a time of crisis?

■ Will soldiers who enlist with a 15-month contract *truly* want to be in the Army—or will they exhibit a "get in and get out" attitude and lack proper motivation?

Then we must ask the question: What if these measures do not work? A former Army captain observed, "America faces a choice. It can be the world's superpower, or it can maintain the all-volunteer military, but it probably can't do both" (*The Nation*).

Military installations, such as certain U.S. naval bases, will be shut down, resulting in the loss of tens of thousands of military and civilian jobs. (Photo: U.S. Navy)

BASE CLOSINGS ANNOUNCED

In May 2005, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld proposed a closure of 33 major U.S. military installations, one of which is home to half the country's fleet of B-1B bombers. Twenty-nine other bases would be reduced by thousands of people. The proposal would result in a savings of $48.8 billion over a 20-year period, but a loss of over 29,000 jobs, both military and civilian, over a six-year period. Mr. Rumsfeld said, "Our current arrangements, designed for the Cold War, must give way to the new demands of the war against extremism and other evolving 21st Century challenges" (*Associated Press*).

The proposals are likely to be high-stakes political fights, as the closings will affect jobs in many congressional districts. Communities will put up a fight, using lawmakers, civic officials and lobbyists. In four previous rounds of proposed base closings, 85% were approved.

The proposed closings must first be either approved or changed by a federal base closing commission by September 8, 2005. They must then be approved by the President and Congress.

Are these planned closings financially and strategically wise? Or will they only serve to weaken U.S. defenses, thus leaving America more vulnerable to attack? Time will tell. □

What About a Draft?

During World War II and the Vietnam War, 10 million and 1.8 million Americans, respectively, were drafted by the Selective Service System. This agency still exists today, quietly keeping the draft machine ready. A spokesman for the Selective Service said, "We're told not to do a particular thing but to be prepared to do it. We just continue to carry out our mission as mandated by Congress." He also stated that the Selective Service is "like a small-town fire volunteer fire company. There may never be a fire, but you still want that depart-

ment there just in case" (*Washington Post*). Last year, 15.6 million men between the ages of 18 and 25 were registered.

Another official of the agency stated that if a draft were to be instituted, it might involve enlisting specific skilled professionals, rather than a general draft. For example, since 1987, the Selective Service has had a plan that will allow male and female healthcare workers ages 20 to 45 in various specialties to be registered. He also stated that a variety of other specialties, such as linguists, computer experts, police officers or firefighters, could be called up as well.

Recently, at a presentation on how to win conscientious objector status, the executive director of the Center on Conscience and War informed her audience that she believes there will be a draft. She said that there is a "perfect storm" of conditions: low recruiting numbers and the strain that the war in Iraq has placed on the all-volunteer force. Her aim was to warn potential conscientious objectors (those who refuse to enlist in the military for religious reasons or because of personal beliefs) that they must begin to document their objections before the draft is instituted.

The President and Congress have emphatically stated that a draft will not be instituted. They argue that it would produce unwilling soldiers who lack the talent and motivation required for today's high-tech fighting force. However, with enlistment rates dropping, the prospect of instituting a national draft becomes a greater possibility by default. If the U.S. wants to continue as a superpower—or continue at all—it needs to have a military, and a sizeable one at that! If people will not willingly sign up for military duty, the government will be forced to draft some of its citizens.

In a June 3rd article published by *The Ledger*, some intriguing points and questions were raised: "One thing is clear: With so many American troops bogged down in Iraq and Afghanistan, the nation's ability to respond to other potential conflicts is already limited. If North Korea or Iran suddenly turn 'hot,' the military's 'thin red line' will be stretched very thin indeed.

"What to do? Bring the troops home before Iraq has a stable government capable of defeating the insurgency? Lower recruiting standards? Bring back the draft? Rethink America's status as the world's last remaining superpower?

"None of these options have currency in Washington. But neither can the president and Congress afford to ignore the indications that America's all-volunteer military is in danger of becoming unsustainable."

It is certain that in a culture in which individuals' opinions and rights outweigh law and government of any kind, if a draft of some sort were to be instituted, a wave of protests would ensue. The current climate of "Everyone has a voice" and "Do what feels right" is setting the stage for disaster in ways that people would never imagine.

There has always been resentment for the military and opposition to war, but never as intense and widespread as today.

What does all of this mean?

A Call for Battle

As the modern-day descendants of Manasseh (one of the "lost" tribes of ancient Israel), the peoples of the United States are the recipients of an *unconditional promise* made by God. They have received great blessings, which were realized through no effort of their own. However, as is typical of human nature, they have become unthankful, and they have forgotten the God who has blessed them. As a result, God is in the process of breaking the country's pride: "*And I will break the pride of your power*; and I will make your heaven as iron, and your earth as brass" (Lev. 26:19).

The people as a whole insist on walking according to the dictates of their deceitful minds. Notice: "*The heart is deceitful above all things*, and desperately wicked: who can know it?…O LORD, *I know that the way of man is not in himself*: it is not in man that walks to direct his steps" (Jer. 17:9; 10:23). While those who are either anti- or pro-military may have the best of intentions, they are basing their positions on human reasoning. If they were to compare their positions to *God's* viewpoint, they would realize that they are wrong—and that their ideas will ultimately fail, no matter how noble they may seem (Prov. 14:12).

Unless the U.S. as a nation repents and turns from its evil practices, such as committing idolatry and breaking the Sabbath, God is going to do the unthinkable—send the nation into captivity. Consider the following prophecies for the United States:

"And I will set My face against you, *and you shall be slain before your enemies*: *they that hate you shall reign over you*…" (Lev. 26:17).

"A third part of you shall die with the pestilence, and with famine shall they be consumed in the midst of you: *and a third part shall fall by the sword round about you*; *and I will scatter a third part into all the winds* [captivity], *and I will draw out a sword after them.* Thus shall My anger be accomplished, and I will cause My fury to rest upon them, and I will be comforted: and they shall know that I the LORD have spoken it in My zeal, when I have accomplished My fury in them" (Ezek. 5:12-13).

Many events will unfold to make this coming captivity a reality, with one of them being the weakening of the military. It is probable that the current intense disdain for the military will contribute to the demise of the U.S.

Ultimately, the call for battle will be made, but America will be too weak to respond: "*They have blown the trumpet*, even to make all ready; *but none goes to the battle*…" (Ezek. 7:14).

(We recommend that you read our book *AMERICA AND BRITAIN IN BIBLE PROPHECY* to learn more about the coming captivity of the peoples of the democratic nations of the West.) □

THE WAY WE WERE …AND NOW

Why are strong, balanced, principled men so rare today—even viewed as oddities? Why are there so few men of the same stature and uncompromising strength as in past generations? Likewise, traditional, virtuous femininity in women is as scarce as precious jewels. What has happened?

TODAY'S SOCIAL landscape is being turned upside down. Gender roles are being blurred and marriages redefined. Traditional roles and values once considered normal are now being dismantled and reshaped.

In an article written for the *Trentonian*, a columnist writes, "Women are the new men…And I have no earthly idea what the men are, now…By, 'women are the new men,' I mean that women are strong, efficient, and can balance work and family. We can open doors and jars for ourselves, kill bugs, install electronic equipment without help, even put in our window air conditioning unit after work on a 90-degree day. Or, women can do anything men can do."

A marketing and style strategist from Fashion Group International also notes a shift in gender roles: "The masculine ideal is being completely modified. All the traditional male values of authority, infallibility, virility and strength are being completely overturned…[he] no longer wants to be the family superhero" (Ibid). The *Associated Press* article that originally published this quote contained a picture of a man with "punk rock," fire-engine red hair, backwards suspenders and a striped green and red sweater.

Many parents still teach traditional gender roles to their children. However, their efforts are being thwarted by an increasing number of teachers who are instructing young children and teenagers that they must recognize "the various ways in which gender categories are

tied to an oppressive binary structure for organizing the social and cultural practices of adolescent boys and girls" (*ON LINE opinion*).

One result is that traditional literature is coming under assault for promoting heterosexual relationships, and fairytales such as *Jack and the Beanstalk* are being ridiculed for portraying boys as physically assertive. A classroom resource titled *Fracturing Fairytales* argues that traditional stories "present powerful images of gender-specific roles, and, in particular, negative female roles and the attitudes, beliefs and values inherent in them need to be critically examined and challenged" (Ibid).

Those promoting the redefining of gender roles understand that, in order to bring about acceptance of this idea, cultural perception must first be adjusted. And they realize that such an adjustment is best introduced in schools, where they can indoctrinate young teachable minds.

If this new way of thought becomes accepted, does this automatically mean that it is *correct*? What are the implications of a society in which males and females are no longer distinguishable?

One Extreme to Another

This "new" way of thinking is not new at all. History demonstrates that, prior to total economic and military collapse, prosperous and dominant cultures always produced a final generation of weakened and softer men. Feminine qualities among men such as compromise, tolerance and submissiveness—each a great virtue when complemented with the strength and guidance of a masculine leading partner—became the norm.

Prior to the 20th century, relationships between men and women were governed by tradition and somewhat by biblical instruction, with roots extending back for centuries. While men and women had unity of purpose in forging ahead with their lives, the roles of each were very different, yet still complementary.

The natural differences between the sexes were emphasized throughout the formative years of childhood. Fathers taught their boys to be courageous and daring, to be out in front, to provide, to be tough and to sacrifice. Mothers instructed their daughters to be meek, unassuming, respectful and supportive. Men taught their boys to hunt and to perform heavy, physical work at an early age, while girls were assigned duties around the house, assisting with cooking, sewing, cleaning and nurturing. The typical family worked as a team, with each member having an important role to play.

The tight-knit family unit of generations past is being redefined and restructured—resulting in confusion and constant strife within the modern family.

When of age, the young brides would willingly offer the words "love, honor and obey" in marriage ceremonies. Young men would commit to protect and provide for the woman with whom they had agreed to spend the rest of their lives. Nuptial vows were viewed as commitments to be kept despite all obstacles. Marriage was considered a lifelong partnership and mates worked together as a team.

However, it should be noted that the hallmark of human nature is to be given to extremes. The Victorian Age, during the 1800s and early 1900s, established and shaped a society of sexual repression and rigidly-defined roles of masculinity and femininity. While the roles were predominantly correct, there was some misuse, as will always be the case when human nature is involved.

Later generations gave way to the social backlash of the liberal and "free love" oriented 1960s and 70s, and, as a result, Western civilization has been radically different ever since—as have the traditional roles of men and women, husbands and wives.

The prominent advertising agency Leo Burnett did a study to learn how men viewed their roles in society and how these compared with the way that men are portrayed in advertising:

"Half of the men surveyed in most parts of the world said they didn't know what society expected of them. Three-quarters feel the imaging in advertising is out of touch with reality.

"Most male-targeted advertising places men in one of two camps. The latest incarnation of man is referred to as the 'metrosexual,' a guy who loves shoes, pink shirts, man-purses, and conversations over General Foods International Coffee. They're refined, sensitive, in touch with their feminine sides and can screech like a 13-year-old girl at an American Idol concert…" (*WebProNews*).

A metrosexual has been defined as a "straight man who embraces the homosexual lifestyle, i.e. refined tastes in clothing, excessive use of designer hygiene products, etc." (a user entry from *Urban Dictionary*).

Obsessed with his appearance and self-image, the typical metrosexual maintains an urbane lifestyle of frequenting the finest clothing stores, nightclubs, gyms and hairdressers.

"According to Leo Burnett, though, the world is shifting toward more femi-

nine attributes and the advertising world should adjust accordingly.

"'As the world is drifting toward a more feminine perspective, many of the social constructs men have taken for granted are undergoing significant shifts or being outright dismantled,' said Tom Bernardin, chairman and chief executive of Leo Burnett Worldwide" (Ibid.).

The other group that advertisers are targeting is called "retrosexuals." The antithesis of the metrosexual, the retrosexual is a man who does not obsess over his physical appearance, such as plucking his eyebrows. Some view him as a man who rejects casual sex as mindless and immoral.

In its early years, Hollywood portrayed such men as having strength of character. They were seen as tough, hardworking and self-sacrificing. For these heroic cinema characters, family and country always came first. And yet, because human nature shifts to the extreme, Hollywood often portrayed such characters as stoic, the "strong and silent" types; tenderness and gentleness were generally seen as weakness. A generation of young moviegoers grew up to emulate this Hollywood-made image of masculinity. Many became husbands, fathers and leaders who were strong, dedicated and uncompromising—yet without much emotion. This helped set the stage for the "sexual revolution" and "women's lib" movement years later.

Accepting Divorce as an Option

Although it was not entirely absent, divorce was almost unheard of before the 20th century, with separation usually occurring only at death.

Prior to this time, the husband was recognized and accepted as the head of the household. Practically, as well as legally, the authority to make the final decision resided with him. The wife was obliged to accept her husband's decisions—even if she did not believe those decisions to be wise. (Of course, a wise husband would seek and listen to his wife's counsel.) There was government in the family. Disagreements did not automatically lead to separation and divorce.

But today, the state of marriage and divorce is radically different.

Let's look at a few startling numbers: In 1886, there were 25,000 divorces *for all causes*. The number rose to over 72,000 by 1906, hit nearly 500,000 by 1965 and passed the one million mark per year by 1975. The number has leveled off at about 1.2 million per year over the past decade. Put another way, taking into account increases in population, the divorce rate increased more than 700% in the 20th century! It should also be noted that subsequent remarriages fail 60-75% of the time.

Marching Toward Moral Decay

One of the perplexing ironies of history is that many difficulties accompany the material prosperity and power of a dominant culture. People, governed by human nature, have typically become much more selfish and self-centered. Associated with this change in human behavior are all forms of corruption and evil.

Consider. As the industrial revolution moved toward its climax in the 20th century, many began to view the guarded traditions of culture as impediments to their "self-fulfillment." Increasing numbers of men fell into the age-old snare of infidelity, while women sought economic independence from men. As the 19th century faded into history, a growing number of discontented men and women pursued "liberation" from the established and traditional "old" ways.

Note that before the ratification of the nineteenth amendment, allowing women the right to vote, each household had one vote, which was cast by the husband. (Naturally, the wife had, to a certain degree, influence upon the husband's decision.) A woman running for office and assuming political power was unthinkable until the early 20th century.

Following the passage of the nineteenth amendment by Congress, and its ratification into law, the political landscape shifted dramatically. With the codification of "women's suffrage," a wife could politically divide the household by casting her vote for a different candidate, effectively canceling her husband's vote.

The "feminist movement" derived its beginnings from an alliance between discontented women and affluent male politicians who saw the political benefit of independent women, who they viewed as a voting block to which to cater.

The Effects of World War I

Along with the above watershed movement, the contribution of World War I to cultural change must be discussed. Men had marched off to a new type of mechanized war, a conflict more terrible and costly than ever before in history.

The idyllic and chivalrous perception of wars prior to WWI, however erroneous, had encouraged such masculine qualities as courage and self-sacrifice. Traditional warfare, horrific in its own right, truly separated the men from the women. Men marched off to fight for their country, an idea, religion or their children's future. Both men and women celebrated courage and this ultimate sacrifice. While the act of war is wrong, boys at least looked up to the brave men of their culture, and women desired to marry such protectors and heroes.

The impersonal, automated, and brutal nature of modern warfare began to change the way men reflected upon armed conflict. An unseen enemy from hundreds of yards, or even miles away could now deliver mass death and destruction. The true senselessness of warfare became more evident to growing numbers, igniting anti-war sentiment. But, as is so often the case when *man* attempts to solve his *own* problems, desirable marital qualities such as courage, fortitude and resolve were also de-emphasized, and even discouraged in men.

America had tipped the balance of the war and Germany was defeated, thus supplying a two-decade respite in hostilities. Sandwiched between the

*Please see **WAY WE WERE**, page 18*

The Vatican Selects a New Prefect

The new pope handpicked Archbishop William J. Levada to replace him as Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. Who is this man—and why did the new pope appoint him to this important office?

BY JAMES F. TURCK

UPON ACCEPTING his election as the new pontiff, the former Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger (often referred to as the "cardinal of enforcement," for his staunch position in support of established conservative church doctrine) left vacant one of the most important offices, next to the papacy, in the Roman Catholic Church. He had been appointed Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, previously known as the Holy Office of the Inquisition, by Pope John Paul II, and held the office for 24 years. The purpose of this office is to ensure that the teachings and positions of the universal church are clearly understood and taught.

In finding a replacement, he looked to an old friend, Archbishop William J. Levada, to fill the void. During an audience with the pope in Rome, the new pontiff asked the archbishop to become his successor, a position that no American has ever held.

A Fourth Generation American

William Levada is the well educated great-grandson of Portuguese and Irish immigrants who arrived in the San Francisco Bay area in the 1860s. Born June 15, 1936, to Catholic parents Joseph Levada Jr. and Lorraine Nunez Levada, the archbishop's early years were shaped by the Catholic elementary and high schools that he attended in Long Beach, California. This period was briefly interrupted by a three-year stay in Houston, Texas when his

father, who worked for Shell Chemical Corporation, was transferred there. While living in Houston, William Levada attended St. Mary's School, finishing his elementary education.

Returning to Long Beach, he received his high school education from St. Anthony's High School, graduating in June 1954. He then completed four years of Seminary College in the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, which included philosophy coursework, and graduated in 1958 with a Bachelor of Arts degree. Continuing his education, he entered into theological studies at Gregorian University and a seminary formation program at North American College, both located in Rome, Italy.

While studying there, he received a post-ordination doctorate in sacred theology magna cum laude. He was ordained into the priesthood in a ceremony held in St. Peter's Basilica on December 20, 1961, after which he spent five years performing parish work in the Archdiocese of Los Angeles. During this time, he served as an associate pastor, high school religion teacher and chaplain of the Community College Newman Center.

In the fall of 1967, Mr. Levada was sent back to Gregorian University for graduate studies to pursue a doctoral degree in theology, eventually earning a Doctor of Sacred Theology degree in June 1971. During this time, he also conducted seminars at North American College for the undergraduate theology students. He went on to teach theology at St. John's Seminary in the fall of 1970, a position that lasted six years. He was also named Director of Continuing Education for the Clergy in the Los Angeles Archdiocese during that tenure, and served in 1975-76 as the President of the Senate of Priests.

Continued Advancement

It was autumn 1976 when William Levada, at the recommendation of the President of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, was first assigned to the congregation that the archbishop now oversees. He was appointed an Official of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in the Vatican, which once again took him back to Rome. This assignment lasted six years and included teaching as a theology Instructor at Pontifical Gregorian University. The former student had returned as a teacher.

During the last year of his assignment to the congregation, Mr. Levada first came to know Cardinal Ratzinger, who had just been appointed to the position of Prefect. This planted the seeds of a working relationship and friendship that would cross paths in the years to come.

Returning once again to California in mid-1982, the now Monsignor Levada, continued gaining experience by serving as Executive Director of the California Catholic Conference of Bishops, as well as serving as coordinator of statewide church efforts and liaison with government agencies.

Spring 1983 saw his appointment and subsequent ordination to Bishop. As a member of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, he served on various committees such as Committee of Doctrine (which he chaired) and Committee for Pro-life Activities.

Conservative in a Liberal City

Upon taking his new appointment, Mr. Levada leaves behind some 425,000 Catholics in Marin, San Mateo and San Francisco counties that were under his spiritual supervision. As Archbishop of San Francisco, he was responsible for upholding Catholic teaching in one of the most liberal cities in America, home to a large population of homosexuals and lesbians.

Staying the course of conservative Catholic doctrine in a liberal city was not new to Mr. Levada when he took over the Archdiocese of San Francisco from his predecessor, Archbishop John Quinn. In fact, his first appointment as an archbishop (1986) was in overseeing a diocese in Portland, Oregon, also a liberal American city. One of his many accomplishments during his nine-year tenure as Archbishop of Portland was a successful drive for a $5 million retirement fund and the St. John Vianney retirement residence for diocesan priests. This certainly did not go unnoticed by the church hierarchy. It was during this time that he served, from 1987 to 1993, on the Editorial Committee of the Holy See's Commission for the new Catechism of the Catholic Church, to which he was appointed by Cardinal Ratzinger—the only American bishop to have been selected.

Mr. Levada authored the Catechism's Glossary. In a recently released statement, he said that the purpose of the group of seven bishops serving on this commission "was to prepare a draft of the catechism, conduct a consultation among bishops of the world and many scholars, and develop a final text under the direction of the commission of 12 cardinals of which Cardinal Ratzinger was president" (*Catholic Online*).

It was during this time that Cardinal Ratzinger and Archbishop Levada would have come to know each other's thinking and position on church doctrine. The archbishop recalled the "many occasions when [Ratzinger] would unexpectedly join our discussions, roll up his sleeves, review the proposed changes and amendments, ask our opinions and discuss them with us…" (Ibid.)

Mr. Levada's appointment as Archbishop of San Francisco in 1995 was seen by some to be a clear statement from Pope John Paul II. Mr. Levada's predecessor had shown a lenient attitude towards Catholics who were openly practicing homosexuality—even though the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, then headed by Cardinal Ratzinger, had released a paper declaring homosexuality an "intrinsic disorder." Of course, this did not sit well with San Francisco's homosexual community. John Paul's visit there in 1987 spurred sign-carrying protesters, who attacked Cardinal Ratzinger by name.

Mr. Levada has not been shy in his comments about gay and lesbian lifestyles. Though "he has been involved on several occasions in delicate nego-

*Please see **NEW PREFECT**, page 23*

STAR WARS

THE TRUTH BEHIND THE FICTION

The *Star Wars* series, which has captivated millions of moviegoers, is possibly the most popular Hollywood production in history. Yet, few realize that the series is full of not-so-subtle inferences from the world's best-selling book—the Bible.

BY CHARLES E. HERZOG

SIMILAR TO the recent *Matrix* movies, *Star Wars* contains elements of biblical truth mixed with much fiction. Such films are extremely popular, as they produce a fictional world that appears to address the mysteries of life—appealing to everyone's desire to understand the unknown.

The *Star Wars* saga portrays a war of good versus evil, and contains many themes similar to those found in the Bible. Some have a hint of truth to them. Others have come from manmade "traditional" Christian beliefs—counterfeits to biblical truths.

Good Versus Evil

The *Star Wars* epic begins "A long time ago in a galaxy far, far away…," in which there is an ongoing battle between the forces of good (the Jedi knights) and evil (the Sith warriors).

In real history, a titanic cosmic battle was also fought. In the very beginning, God first created angels, then, some time later, He created the universe. This was such an awesome sight that the angels shouted for joy (Job 38:4-7). But eventually something went wrong among the angels.

Among these spirit beings was a powerful arch (cherubim) angel, Lucifer, who was in charge of one third of all the angels. Lucifer and his angels were sent to earth to take care of it—to improve and finish it.

Lucifer was a brilliant being, and the book of Isaiah explains that he began to think that he was as great as God: "For you [Lucifer] have said in your heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north" (14:13). Lucifer, whose name was changed to Satan (meaning adversary), convinced those of whom he was in charge that God was unfair. He was able to sway them to rise in revolt against their Creator, in an attempt to overthrow God. However, Satan lost the battle and was cast back down to earth: "I [Christ] beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven" (Luke 10:18).

Because of this rebellion, the earth became "without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep" (Gen. 1:2). All life on earth was destroyed. It is probable that this led to the extinction of the dinosaurs.

There are other parallels. We need to ask what are they and what lessons can be learned from them. You will see that, as the rest of the article develops, elements of the *Star Wars* series are counterfeits of the world's brand of Christianity—which is a counterfeit of true Christianity! The world's

Christianity, like *Star Wars*, mixes truth and error. Let's notice.

This Present Evil World

In Stars Wars, the "bad guys" came to be in charge of the empire. Before then, good ruled the galaxy. The people of the republic came to believe that supporting a high-profile senator named Palpatine was the right cause, but the truth is that he had his own evil scheme to turn the republic into a tyrannical empire.

In much the same way, traditional Christianity, and the world at large, who believe they are supporting the right cause, are, in reality, greatly deceived. For instance, many Christians believe they are "spreading" God's kingdom now, but Jesus Christ said, "My kingdom is not of this world: if My kingdom were of this world, then would My servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is My kingdom not from here" (John 18:36).

In the movie series, the people are led to believe that good is in control. But the reality is that the "bad guys" are in control. In a similar sense, most people assume that this is God's world, yet it is not. After the initial battle described above, Satan was cast back down to earth, where he continues to be the "god of this world" (II Cor. 4:4). When he tempted Christ, Satan stated that he had the authority to give the world to Him; due to Christ's response, we can glean that He and the devil understood that this is Satan's world (Matt. 4:8-10).

The effects of Satan governing this world are apparent—famine, war, anger, bitterness, murder, abuses of every type, corruption, etc. Ask yourself: Would these effects be so rampant if the kingdom of God were here now? This present evil world (Gal. 1:4) will be replaced when Jesus Christ returns to reclaim it!

"The Force"

Both the Jedi and the Sith derive supernatural power from "the force." The Sith lords are on the "dark side" of this force.

This "force" is a resemblance of God's Holy Spirit. Like the Holy Spirit, it is impersonal and is a source of great power.

Consider some similarities of the force to the Holy Spirit. When asking how to differentiate between the good side and the bad, Luke Skywalker was told by his master, Yoda, "You will know when you are at peace." In the same sense, there are fruits of the Spirit. And notice that one of these fruits is peace: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, *peace*, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law" (Gal. 5:22-23).

Another similarity is related to the midichlorians, which are an element of the force. In the series, there was a prophecy of a coming savior, (comparable to prophecies of Jesus Christ) "one who would come and bring balance to the force." The one who would fulfill this prophecy would be begotten by the midichlorians. Anakin Skywalker, one of the main characters, had potential to fulfill this prophecy. His mother claimed that Anakin was conceived without a father.

Observe the similarity in the following scripture: "Therefore the Lord Himself shall give you a sign; behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel (Isa. 7:14). Jesus was born to a virgin, Mary, and was conceived with the Holy Spirit. Like Jesus who had more Holy Spirit than any human being (John 3:34), Anakin had a midichlorian count much higher than the Jedi had ever seen.

There are ways in which the force is not comparable to the Holy Spirit. While the force is said to be in every person, the Holy Spirit is given by God at conversion and combines with the spirit in man, allowing man to understand the spiritual things of God (I Cor. 2:11). Also, while the force can be used for both good and evil, the Holy Spirit cannot be used for evil—only good (I John 1:5).

The Jedi

Throughout the series, the Jedi knights are always fighting for good. New Jedis are always being trained by their masters. As a young boy, Anakin Skywalker, the one who had potential to fulfill the prophecy, is discovered by the Jedi and begins to train in their art. Later in his life, he is assigned to protect the Princess of Naboo, Padme. During this mission, he falls in love with her, and secretly marries her. This brings us to another comparison. Anakin secretly married because marriage is not allowed for the Jedi, for they believe that attachment to others will only lead to jealousy.

Much of professing Christianity believes that celibacy is a higher state of being for its priests. This teaching, however, does not come from the Bible—it is a pagan custom of men. Notice Genesis 2:18 "And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him." (Also see Ephesians 5:33, I Timothy 3:2 and Titus 1:6.)

Another element of the Jedi, which *is* comparable to true Christianity, is that they live a *selfless* life. Their purpose is to protect and care for all other life. They dedicate their entire lives to fighting evil in order to keep the universe at peace. While Jedi fight on a *physical* plane using physical weapons, true Christians fight on a *spiritual* level with spiritual weapons (Eph. 6:11-18). Also, God's way of life can be described as the way of GIVE—outflowing and outgoing care and concern for others. A Christian lives a life of selflessness, as a living sacrifice! On the other hand, the Sith lead a *selfish* life, similar to Satan's way of GET—grasping for oneself at the expense of others.

The Sith

Let's continue with more of the story line. During a battle between the Galactic republic and the separatists, Senator Palpatine is taken hostage by Count Grievous. Anakin sets out to rescue him. Anakin returns from this mission to find that his wife Padme is pregnant.

Anakin has a vision that Padme will die in childbirth. When he describes the vision to Jedi master Yoda, he is told not to mourn those who die, as they will go to a better place. Yoda also said that the fear of loss is a path to the dark side.

When Anakin also tells this vision to Senator Palpatine (the Sith lord), he is told that there is a way he can save his

wife—a way to overcome death. If he is willing to turn to the dark side, he can learn to use a great power that no Jedi has ever had. Palpatine uses lies and deceit, as well as vanity, to get Anakin to follow him. He knows that Anakin could defeat him. He tells Anakin that the Jedi are holding him back from his true potential; they do not fully recognize his talents. He also tells him that those who would like to understand the mystery must embrace *all* sides of the force in order to come to the full knowledge of how to harness its power.

The manipulation that Palpatine foisted upon Anakin can be compared to how Satan deceived Eve in the Garden of Eden. Satan subtly appealed to Eve's vanity and said that God was limiting her potential. (Read Genesis 3:1-6.)

Continuing, Anakin believes Palpatine's lies and submits to learning the ways of the dark side as Darth Vader. He gives in to the lust for the power to decide who can live and who can die. Darth Vader (meaning dark lord of the Sith) becomes Palpatine's right hand man.

Palpatine used subtle deceit, manipulation and outright lies to gain control of the Galactic Republic. Satan himself is the father of lies and manipulates human beings for his purpose. Christ, when talking to the Pharisees, said, "You are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father you will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks of his own: for he is a LIAR, and the father of it" (John 8:44).

Palpatine convinced Anakin that he would be able to save his wife from death. In the end, this turned out to be a lie, as Anakin did not save his wife from dying. Similarly, Eve was told by Satan "you shall not die," but this was a lie as well.

Palpatine was so cunning that people believed that he was trying to save the Republic from the evil that he himself was perpetrating. Consider this verse: "And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light" (II Cor. 11:14).

Now let's look at Anakin (Darth Vader) and understand more inferences that come from the Bible.

The light in Anakin went out, he could no longer think correctly. The hate inside overpowered him, causing him to walk in total darkness. In the same way, if Christians allow Satan to influence them, they can take on wrong attitudes. The opposite of darkness is light, and the two cannot mix: "This then is the message which we have heard of Him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another." (I John 1:5-7).

Also note that Darth Vader once occupied a prestigious office with the Jedi, being the youngest ever allowed to sit on the Council—just as Satan was once the "anointed cherub that covers; and…set…upon the holy mountain of God" (Ezek. 28:14).

Life After Death

The Jedi believe that death is not to be feared. They believe that when one dies he becomes a part of the force. When a certain Jedi, Obi-Wan Kenobi, was in a battle with Darth Vader, he said, "If my blade finds its mark, you will cease to exist. But if you can cut me down, I will become more powerful." Two points must be noted here. The evil die—cease to exist—and the good continue to live on. This has elements of truth mixed with error when it comes to human beings on earth.

Consider. Many professing Christians believe that they will go to heaven when they die. This is not consistent with what the Bible teaches. Notice what the wisest man who ever lived, King Solomon, said, "For the living know that they shall die: but the *dead know not any thing*, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten" (Ecc. 9:5).

Now look at what the apostle Paul wrote about a "change" that will come to all true Christians (carefully read the following): "Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump… the dead shall be raised…and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, death is swallowed up in victory" (I Cor. 15:51-52, 54),

In *Star Wars*, Kenobi's statement implies that those who are evil die and cease to exist. In the world today, the most common misconception is of people roasting forever in hell. Apart from what the Bible teaches, ask yourself: What kind of God is capable of this? Would a loving God design an everlasting torture chamber? If so, He (as well as all of the relatives of those condemned) would have to witness—for the rest of eternity—the suffering of those that He had condemned to such a "hell."

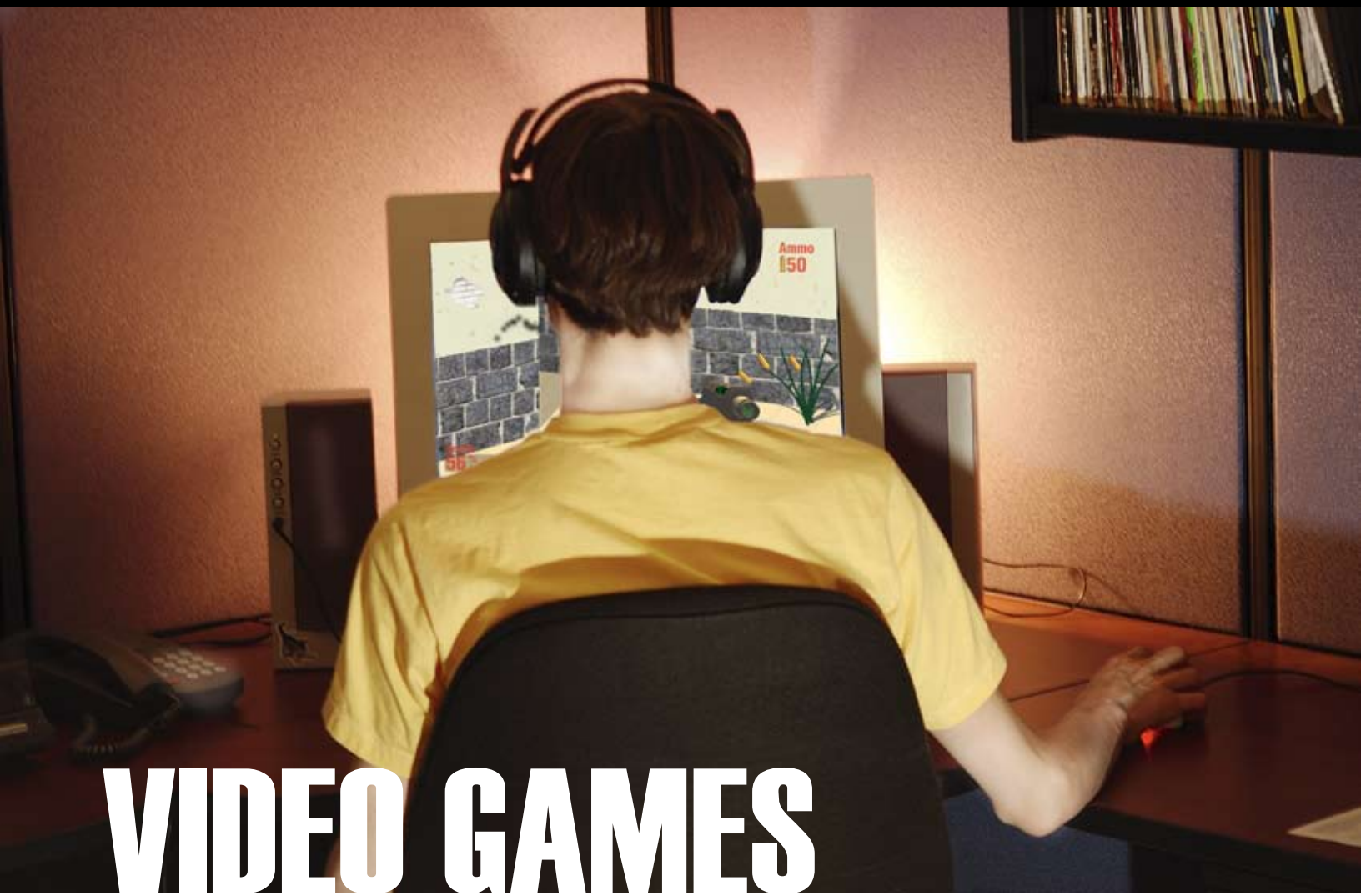
The truth of the matter is that like the movie, those who ultimately do not submit to God's way will cease to exist: "For, behold, the day comes, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yes, and all that do wickedly, shall be *stubble*: and the day that comes shall *burn them up*, says the LORD of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch. But unto you that fear My name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in His wings; and you shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall. And you shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be *ashes under the soles of your feet* in the day that I shall do this, says the LORD of hosts" (Mal. 4:1-3).

The righteous will rule with Jesus Christ as spirit beings in God's kingdom, and the wicked will be ashes under their feet.

Temptation

As Christ was tempted by Satan (recorded in Matthew 4:2-11), so were Anakin and his son Luke. They were both tempted before having the opportunity to become Jedi. As we have already discussed, Anakin gave into the temptation and joined the dark side. Luke, on the other hand, resisted both attempts (one by Darth Vader, the other by Palpatine) to draw him to the dark side, and he eventually brought balance to the force.

*Please see **STAR WARS**, page 23*



VIDEO GAMES

An Escape From Reality?

Millions around the world spend their free time playing video and computer games. Many even believe they are improving themselves by doing so. Could they be right?

BY JEFFREY D. DAVIS

BEADS OF SWEAT form on your brow as you grip the gun. Your heart is beating out of your chest as you creep through this virtual world. You are in control. Law—what law? Go ahead, steal a car, shoot innocent bystanders…

Crouching on a rooftop, you patiently wait, not making a move. Suddenly, there is movement—the enemy. He comes into the crosshairs of your rifle's scope. You pull the trigger, his neck explodes and blood splatters on the street…

As the general of your army, you are the commander—the conqueror! Tremendous power lies at your fingertips. At your command, tanks will enter a city, destroying whatever, and killing whoever, is in sight. Commandos will stealthily sneak in and blow something—or somebody—to pieces. The enemy doesn't stand a chance…

Real?—Almost. "Thrilling"? "Heart throbbing"? "Captivating"? "Addictive"?—YES!

The video game industry is exploding. People of all ages are enjoying them, whether on a computer, game console or the Internet.

Everyone is talking about them. Consider these recent headlines: "Top Activity for National Goof-Off Day: Playing Video Games!",

"Video games, not TV responsible for obesity in kids…," "Video Games Approved For Teens Often Contain Sex And Violence, Study Concludes," "Violent video games are training children to kill," "Are video games breeding killers?," "Video games 'increase aggression,'" "Electronic Nightmares: Sex and Violence Invade Your Game Console," "Child's Play? – Grand Theft Auto III Provides Video Gamers With a Virtual World of Extreme Violence," "Boy grabs knife after dad unplugs video game."

Are video games a paradise?

Why is society so wrapped up in them? What do studies and research show? Why are people so enthralled by these inventions, spending countless hours in front of a screen?

Escape From Stress

For many people, the world of video games is a perfect break from a reality filled with deadlines, stress and responsibilities. People play them because they are fun, interesting and a way to relax. Often, they are used to pursue certain passions. Sports fans love to play football and baseball video games. Many chess lovers who cannot find enough human opponents to compete with will play computer chess or even seek competition from online chess players.

Computer and video games are often used to help people focus on something other than life's daunting problems. For a few fleeting moments, the players "lose themselves" in the games as they feel the bliss and release of being in control. They are in a virtual world that makes sense to them—a place where they can be whoever or whatever they choose, without worrying about how they look or act, and without having to deal with real-life problems.

For some, this escape is just a passing fascination—but for others, video games are much more.

In Search of Social Lives

The video games of today can be compared to the board games of previous generations. People once played board games as a form of social interaction. These games were generally a way of learning about and getting closer to family, friends or even dates. It was an opportunity to spend time with people and learn about how they thought. Board games offered a chance to socialize, stimulate the mind and enjoy interesting conversation. Human beings need this type of innocent social interaction. People were designed to engage with—talk to—each other.

Many today believe they can gain a social life from playing computer and video games.

Practicing Skills

Recently, the U.S. Army and Navy have employed video games to train their recruits. They have found that the large simulators once used were much too expensive. Since there is a whole generation already raised on video games, training today's recruits through video games is considered an obvious solution. Instructors are able to spend far less time explaining how to use a complex simulation; this allows them to spend far more time training soldiers in battlefield tactics.

There is evidence that "gamers" (those who play video and computer games with such intensity that they call themselves "hardcore") have faster reaction times and more accurate hand-eye coordination than "non-gamers." Like the military, certain corporations have seen positive results from using video games to train workers who engage in intense mental activities, such as stock market trading.

Games Make You Smarter?

Additionally, there is a tendency within the circle of avid gamers to talk about the wonderful benefits of these games. Many in this crowd claim that video games are actually making them smarter.

In a recent book, *Everything Bad Is Good for You*, the author presents the idea that playing video games further develops various aspects of the brain. He reasons that, since video games are complex and difficult, people who play them become smarter. He argues that this is a major factor in why people are achieving higher scores on IQ tests than those of previous generations.

In a recent study by the University of Rochester, participants were asked to count the number of squares that were flashed on a screen for a 20th of a second. Gamers picked the correct number 13 percent more often than non-gamers did. Some believe this proves that gamers are more intelligent. However, since the study used an activity common in video games, all this shows is that gamers have simply become better at taking certain tests.

One of the greatest difficulties in creating a good intelligence test is finding one that measures innate skill or capability. Given the same circumstances, a "smarter" person should be able to do better than a "normal" person should. As with anything in science, for an experiment or test to be valid, it must eliminate all other variables, except the one being tested.

There are various conflicting theories as to defining and measuring intelligence. Some psychologists say that it is skill; others consider it an aptitude for learning; and still others assert that it is an ability to handle diverse situations. Regardless, knowledge is *not* the same as intelligence.

Gamers have not actually become more intelligent—they have become more *experienced*.

Consider. Would anybody be surprised if studies proved that smokers are better at smoking or that heroine addicts are better at giving injections? Experience in these "skills" does not make such people more intelligent.

Children Are Practicing Violence

Practicing an activity makes one better at it. Apply this understanding to the video games that children play—games in which kids practice fighting, murder, taking drugs and even sexual activity. As a result, children are becoming good at being deplorable!

Additionally, the scientific community has known for several years,

proving through several studies, that violence in games directly correlates to aggressive behavior. It is inferred that sexual acts, drug use and the constant barrage of swearing in modern video games have similar effects on children. The evidence shows that video and computer games are making children *worse*, not better.

Consider all the acts of violence that have become commonplace among youth: fights, stabbings and shootings. There is a growing trend involving children murdering their siblings and even their parents; and shockingly, young children have carried out large-scale planned attacks. Yet, video game marketers claim that they and their products are not to blame.

Many parents are unaware of the level of violence to which they are exposing their kids in giving them such games. Sadly, most parents simply do not take the time to know what their children are really doing. Often, the few who try are met with the violence or cursing that their kids have been learning from video games.

Some parents trust stores and corporations to tell them what is good for their children, yet these are often unreliable. For example, the "kids and family" section on Amazon.com currently has *Grand Theft Auto III*—a game that graphically depicts *especially* violent beatings, thefts, and murders—as number three on its list of "family games"!

Parents need to be diligent and cautious in buying video games for children, or else they risk exposing them to violence and sexually explicit material.

Cause and Effect

Remember, people once played board games to engage in conversation and to learn about each other. But today, when people play video games with each other, the conversation is far from engrossing. It will usually consist of meaningless comments and exclamations like "ha-ha!", "ooh…", "oh no!", and "duh!" More commonly, the conversation will simply degrade into a tirade of cursing and swearing.

Then there are online games, in which players do talk to each other and participate in group activities within virtual worlds such as *World of Warcraft* and *Everquest*. Many gamers claim that since they are not good at dealing with other people, they turn to their "online friends" to find the camaraderie they lack in reality. However, is the "virtual social life" that these people engage in truly as beneficial as real life?

If you are hit with financial trouble, or need help with moving your furniture or building a house—or if you just need someone to talk to for hours on end, someone you can confide in and trust—a friend is somebody to whom you can turn. You cannot get this kind of friendship from "virtual friends" on online computer games.

The Bible is clear that human beings were intended to work with, confide in and rely upon each other: "Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labor. For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falls; for he has not another to help him up" (Ecc. 4:9-10).

A vast number of people participate in online relationships—now considered a normal part of the "gaming experience." People even go so far as to get "married" in these games to show their supposed love and devotion for each other. However, people are actually substituting real relationships with *false* ones—which, in the end, will be terribly unfulfilling. The reality is that, when it comes to romance and marriage, man was designed to have a partner in his life—a real, living, breathing, human being that he can enjoy and share life with face-to-face (Gen. 2:18-25).

Gamers who devote virtually all their spare time to playing video games do not allow themselves to develop the social skills that would lead to real-life relationships. They do not have a social life because they have not allowed themselves the opportunity to develop one!

To be good at anything takes practice—and this includes developing an active, healthy ability to interact with all kinds of human beings.

Addictive Behavior

Recently, researchers have recognized that video games have another destructive quality: They are *addictive*. Many video games are so engrossing that players feel they absolutely *must* finish the tasks in the games—even going so far as to neglect their own personal lives. This has been further compounded in online games, in which players who "take time off" in order to live their normal lives feel as though they are letting down their online friends.

The effects of this have been tragic. In 2002, a gamer was so addicted to *Everquest* that he actually took his own life, most likely because of problems he was having solely *within* the game.

The implications of addictions have been demonstrated even more profoundly throughout the world in cases in which people have actually died while playing video games. In 2002, a man in South Korea died after playing games non-stop for 86 hours. Ten days later, another man died in Taiwan after playing for 32 hours. Just recently, a twelve-year old collapsed from exhaustion after playing in a computer club for 12 straight hours. Doctors said that his death was the result of emotional stress due to being obsessed with games.

Of Lasting Value

The current state of video games reveals a world that is progressing further into self-deceit, confusion, violence and ignorance. However, the world will not always be this way. God's Word shows that Jesus Christ will soon return and establish right knowledge through His world-ruling government. Then, all will learn which pursuits truly have long lasting value.

Ultimately, God will teach mankind how to form correct relationships and how to react, respond to and deal with stress. People will no longer turn to vain pursuits in the hope of finding social lives, or to waste the day away. □

WAY WE WERE

Continued from page 9

two world conflicts was a decade of euphoric frivolity called the "Roaring Twenties"—characterized by liberation from established moral guidelines.

While the culture of the American heartland continued as it had for generations, people living in the cities led lives of pleasure, becoming ever more unrestrained. Secular hedonism and anti-religious sentiment became a growing part of American culture. Among the many traditions that were being cast aside were the biblically-defined roles of men, women and family.

World War II and the Family

In 1939, world war came once again. The demands upon a nation to conduct total war now required the near complete mobilization of national resources to field a modern army and navy. Prohibited from joining the military, except for nursing and office work, women entered the production workforce by the millions.

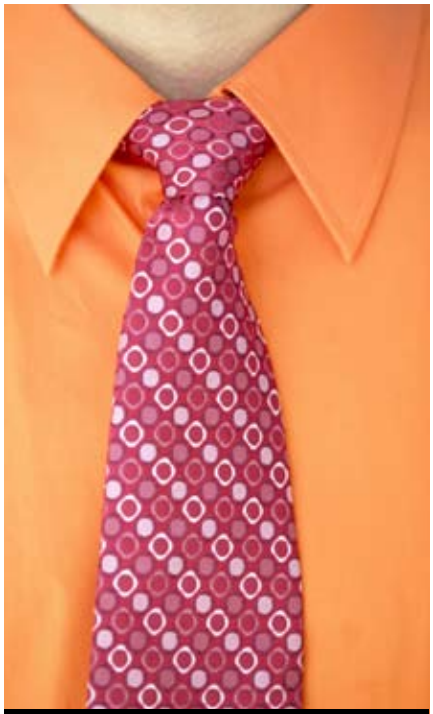
"Rosie the Riveter" moved from tending the home to the industrial environment previously occupied only by men. Her children went off to school, and Rosie drove rivets—all in the name of national security and necessity. While this may have been necessary for the war effort, it also had the unintended effect of fueling the pursuit of self-independence.

When the war ended, men returned home hardened by the battlefront, in many cases saturated with terrible memories of violence and atrocity, finding all forms of violence repugnant. Many women returned home from the factories, but others remained to claim their newly found economic independence. The results included changes to the thinking of both men and women—what they thought was important in life, their attitude toward patriotism and the definition of masculinity and femininity.

In spite of this shift in thought, throughout the 1950s, men with firm determination and conviction were considered best suited for positions of authority in government and industry. However, another way of thinking was slowly emerging from the fringes of academia into mainstream America. The universal violence of World War II, followed by a more localized conflict in Korea, along with the prospect of total annihilation from nuclear weapons, further removed an already jaded population from their past.

The expected chivalry and gallantry once encouraged in American men gave way to an expectation of a more pliable, less assertive male. The masculine tendency to fight it out had brought the human race to the brink of annihilation, so the reasoning went. Many reasoned that there had to be another way.

The evolving, "push button" culture envisioned by so-called luminaries also seemed to reduce the need for the strong, stalwart and somewhat stoic man. The change that many men and women came to believe necessary was made possible by the perceived reduced need for human strength and courage.



The typical metrosexual, obsessed with his appearance and self-image, maintains an urbane lifestyle of frequenting the finest clothing stores, nightclubs, gyms and hairdressers.

What was necessary for mankind to survive, they reasoned, was a softer, more "sensitive" man, and a more assertive and vigorous woman.

Thus, male and female roles were merged and mixed up. The word "Unisex"—defying nature and promoting sameness and likeness between men and women—was one of many new terms coined to further encourage the process. Those seeking social change, with the intent to eliminate differences between the sexes, created words such as this. Many advocated "unisex" restrooms—allowing admittance for all. Unisex clothing, not distinguishing between male and female form and function, came into vogue. The differences between men and women were thus further de-emphasized. This contributed to the acceptance of homosexuality.

Media Assaults the Family Unit

Hollywood contributed greatly to this merging of the roles of men and women. Television sitcoms and films of the 1960s subtly introduced new thoughts and ideas, intending to generate feelings of injustice toward the established norms. From that time through the 70s and 80s, more and more radical thought was introduced. Today, TV "comedies" celebrate loose sexual behavior, homosexuality, aggressive women, and silly, self-centered, weak, effeminate husbands—if the couples are married at all!

Larger-than-life heroines introduced in the mid-1970s (shows such as *Wonder Woman*, *Police Woman* and *Charley's Angels*) continued the process of changing the way the sexes viewed each other. While the characters in these programs retained some femininity, within 20 years they were cast as ridiculous, semi-masculine women such as *GI Jane*, *Xena*, *Dark Angel* and others.

Modern programming not only tosses out common sense and practicality, but basic physics as well. How often does one see a small-framed woman easily pulverize a large-framed man? Yet, if life were

as Hollywood frequently portrays it, this would happen on a regular basis!

The media, with its tentacles in nearly every home through television, radio, music and the all-pervasive Internet, has assisted in cultural change. Here is a general description of the method used: Desired change from established tradition is achieved by first using the media to shock the public, and push the proverbial moral envelope a bit further toward the desired outcome. Controversy is drummed up by other elements of the media in a debate about traditional values. Then, the previously shocking idea is repeated in other situations until it no longer shocks, but is debated and finally accepted. The media then pounces on the next tradition to corrupt and destroy.

Consider that "homosexual marriage" was *not* in the minds of most people 20 years ago. There was no need to define marriage, as religion, tradition and nature helped establish its meaning.

Enter the homosexual movement, whose objective is to redefine the basic bulwarks of society. The news media shocked most of the public by televising controversial homosexual couples engaging in mock wedding ceremonies, including the kissing of the "brides." These illegal unions were presented to engage the public in philosophical debate over their validity. Suddenly, what was once unthinkable became debatable, with news commentators, Internet "bloggers" and politicians asking, "Does anyone have the right to legally define marriage?"—"Why should we deny them the right to 'love' one another?"—"Are nuclear families really normal?"—"Shouldn't all citizens have the same rights as heterosexual couples?"

Family Redefinition

In his book *The Abolition of Britain*, Peter Hichens wrote, "The greatest fortress of human liberty, proof against all earthly powers, is the family. In its small private space, it can defy the will of authority and the might of wealth. It is without doubt the most effective means of passing lore, culture, manners, and traditions down through the generations. Its loyalties are stronger than those of the state, more powerful even than patriotism. All serious tyrannies have sought to undermine or infiltrate it, socialist tyrannies most of all."

Those who wish to change the roles of men and women in society must first redefine the family and indoctrinate the minds of the next generation. The family, the bedrock of civilization, must be altered into something more amorphous and general. Hence, the new definition of a family includes *any* group of people. To some, even a person and his pet are considered a family! Incredible!

The husband's role as the central protector and provider has been replaced by a more sensitive, docile, submissive character. And the wife's critical function as a source of counsel, a nurturer and supportive partner has changed; she is now expected to be forceful (or even aggressive), "all wise" and dominant. The result is the universal breakdown of the biblically defined family unit.

Some years ago, the late Herbert W. Armstrong, editor and publisher of this magazine's predecessor, taught that a "50/50 partnership" in marriage does not work, because *someone* will end up in charge. No organization, business, corporation, government agency or sports team can effectively operate and reach its full potential with two or more "co-leaders." One person must take the lead. And so it is with marriage. Yet, because we live in a time when traditions and values are being overturned, many would view the previous statement as "harsh."

The Bible has much to say about the condition of our age. Notice: "As for My people, children are their oppressors, and *women rule over them*. O My people, they which lead you cause you to err, and destroy the way of your paths" (Isa. 3:12).

Our loving Creator has clearly established boundaries for the different roles of men and women: "The woman shall not wear that which pertains unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment: for all that do so are abomination unto the LORD your God" (Deut. 22:5). Ignoring this command will prove deadly to civilization. Men are to be men and women are to be women, as God had created and ordained them to flourish in His intended roles for them.

The family unit—defined as a husband, wife and children—critical to the survival of a nation with a government ensuring personal liberty, is failing. In a hostile, blood-soaked world cut off from the true God, the result is national collapse.

The Final Generation?

Across the United States, Britain, Canada, Australia and other westernized nations, the traditional roles and functions of men and women are fading into the past. They are quickly being replaced by the modern definitions of a society in which true masculinity and femininity are no longer taught nor understood.

How long can a nation last without a generation possessing strength, principle, values and character steering its helm? What does the future hold for Western civilization when—in an age that requires tough-mindedness and determination in the face of all the world's problems—young males are being groomed to be "softer," more in tune with their "feelings," and young females are being molded and shaped into wives and mothers who see no need for—and even *disdain*—the leadership role of husbands and fathers?

The world is changing. Society has taken a new path, and God's Word sheds light onto the peril to which this path leads. It reveals that humanity's problems and ills will increasingly get worse.

Yet, the Bible also reveals that the ultimate "new way" of thinking—actually an "old" way, established millennia ago—will be established on earth. At that time, all men, women and children will be taught the true purpose of why they were born. True masculinity and femininity—instead of the extremes that man takes from generation to generation—will be widely understood and appreciated. □

PERSONAL

Continued from page 2

next four speak of a specific local congregation, while using the same term "Church of God." This may refer to the Church of God at Judea or Corinth, etc. The final three references speak collectively of all the individual local congregations combined. All these references use the term "Churches of God":

(1) Acts 20:28: This verse is instruction to the elders to "feed THE CHURCH OF GOD."

(2) I Corinthians 10:32: "Give none offense, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to THE CHURCH OF GOD."

(3) I Corinthians 11:22: "…or despise you THE CHURCH OF GOD, and shame them that have not?"

(4) I Corinthians 15:9: Paul wrote the same thing to two congregations: "For…I persecuted THE CHURCH OF GOD."

(5) Galatians 1:13: "I persecuted THE CHURCH OF GOD."

(6) I Corinthians 1:2: "THE CHURCH OF GOD which is at Corinth."

(7) II Corinthians 1:1: "THE CHURCH OF GOD which is at Corinth."

(8) I Timothy 3:5: Paul references any elder in a local congregation: "For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of THE CHURCH OF GOD?"

(9) I Timothy 3:15: "…behave yourself in the house of God, which is THE CHURCH OF THE LIVING GOD." This verse adds a descriptive word to God by using the term "living."

(10) I Corinthians 11:16: "…We have no such custom, neither THE CHURCHES OF GOD."

(11) I Thessalonians 2:14: "For you…became followers of THE CHURCHES OF GOD which in Judea are in Christ Jesus."

(12) II Thessalonians 1:4: "So that we ourselves glory in you in THE CHURCHES OF GOD."

In the modern age, for corporate reasons, the Church may use an additional descriptive name to distinguish itself from other "Churches of God"—those merely *appropriating* God's name, but not obeying His commandments, believing His true doctrines or doing His Work. Herbert W. Armstrong, the twentieth-century leader of the Church, chose the name Worldwide Church of God and before that, Radio Church of God. We have chosen the name *The Restored Church of God*.

Just as various mainstream denominations may have a few correct doctrines mixed with much error, some appropriate to themselves the name of God's Church. This "Personal" will later explain why some *few* churches may even have a significant amount of truth, but choose to accept a variety of false doctrines. Only one church on the face of the earth has the correct name and teaches all the additional many true doctrines that the Bible teaches! Recall that Christ prayed, "Sanctify them through Your TRUTH: Your word is TRUTH." The Church that Christ works through, directs and guides is sanctified—set apart—by its belief of the *plain truth* of God's Word!

In addition to carrying the name "Church of God," we have seen that the true Church has come out of the world, is small and persecuted, even to the point of being hated by it. This Church is then also set apart by its BELIEFS and PRACTICES—which are in complete agreement with the TRUTH of the Bible!

Unified Through God's Word

Men have their own differing definitions of what the Church actually *is*, but only the Bible definition—*God's* definition—matters. Read it for yourself. Paul wrote to Timothy, "…that you may know how you ought to behave yourself in the *house of God*, which is the *Church of the living God*, the pillar and ground of the TRUTH" (I Tim. 3:15). In the end, no other definition, devised by men, is acceptable. This definition of the Church *Christ* built will guide us throughout the remainder of this "Personal." God's Church has and teaches "the truth."

We have discussed how this world's churches are in confusion, divided by endless disagreement over doctrine and practice. Amos 3:3 asks, "Can two *walk together*, except they be *agreed*?" The answer is NO!

This world's churches do not practice the principle of "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by *every word of God*" (Luke 4:4), exactly as written. Instead, since they follow the many differing traditions of men, endless disagreements separate, divide and create more and more churches of *men*. They generally do not "walk together," because they do not "agree"—either with each other or God!

God's Church is different. Many New Testament verses show that the Church Christ built is *unified*—with all its members and congregations walking *together* in complete agreement with each other, and with God and Christ.

An important point, demonstrating the unity of the true Church, emerges from Christ's same prayer in John 17, on the night of His betrayal. He prayed, "And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also might be *sanctified* [set apart] *through the truth*…That they *all* may be ONE; as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You, that they also may be ONE *in Us*: that the world may believe that You have sent Me. And the glory which You gave Me I have given them; that they may be ONE, *even as We are* ONE: I in them, and You in Me, that they may be made *perfect in* ONE; and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them, as You have loved Me" (vs. 19, 21-23).

These are powerful statements! Christ intended that His Church be unified—"one"—*no less than were He and His Father*! There is no room for disagreement in a Church that is *this* unified. These verses describe a perfect oneness through the truth—the *same* kind of oneness that the Father and Christ enjoy. It is *this* kind of unity that allows true Christians to be "in" them—be *in* Christ and the Father (vs. 21).

Even in the Old Testament, David was inspired to record, "Behold, how

good and how pleasant it is for *brethren to dwell together in* UNITY" (Psa. 133:1).

We now must examine several New Testament passages to see if, in fact, this kind of wonderful unity was apparent *after* the New Testament Church actually formed. Did God's true servants teach and administer *this* kind of agreement? And how is that unity achieved?

First, notice this early picture of God's Church. On the day of Pentecost, gathered in "one accord" (Acts 2:1), when the New Testament Church came into existence, 3,000 converts were baptized. They formed the very beginning of Christ's building of His Church. The initial description given was "…and they *continued steadfastly* in the APOSTLES' DOCTRINE and FELLOWSHIP" (vs. 42), "…*all* that believed were *together*" (vs. 44) and "…they, continuing daily with *one accord*…did eat their meat [food] with gladness and *singleness of heart*" (vs. 46). From these verses, we clearly see that the Church Christ built was unified—in agreement—over doctrine, and together. Notice verse 47: "And *the Lord added* to the Church daily such as should be saved." In the Church Christ guides and directs, He is the One who adds to it, building it!

Only One Body

The New Testament speaks of the Church of God as the same thing as the Body of Christ. This introduces remarkable understanding.

In his letter to the Corinthians, Paul recorded that the Church had many separate members (brethren), yet was like various parts of the human body, in that these members were connected. Carefully study chapter 12. Verses 12 to 14 state, "For as the BODY is ONE, and has *many members*, and all the members of that ONE BODY, being many, are ONE BODY: so also is Christ. For by ONE *Spirit* are we all baptized into ONE BODY...For the BODY is not one member, but many."

When one is converted—has repented, been baptized and received the Holy Spirit—this verse reveals that he has actually been placed into the Body of Christ as well as into the Church of God.

Many have been confused by what this means. In other words, exactly what is the Church or Body of Christ into which one has been baptized?

The context of chapter 12 uses the analogy of hands, feet, eyes, ears and the mouth to show how different parts of a *human* body are connected within the same person. Paul continues, "But now has God set the members every one of them in the BODY, as it has pleased Him. And if they were all one member, where were the BODY? But now are they *many members*, yet but ONE BODY" (vs. 18-20).

Let's understand what this means. The "Christian" world teaches that the Body of Christ—Jesus' Church—consists of many denominations, fellowships or "communities of believers," said to all be connected by the "Holy Spirit" working in believers wherever they are affiliated. (Many, many sources attest to this thinking.) But this is totally contrary to what the Bible teaches about the Body of Christ. This substitute—counterfeit!—idea asserts, in effect, that Christ and His Body are divided among many groups or organizations. We will see that this is not true.

I Corinthians 12 cannot be "spiritualized away" by human reasoning. It does not describe an amorphous, disconnected, "spiritual" body of disagreeing people and organizations throughout professing Christianity. Any foot, eye or ear that is taken from a human body *dies*! No severed body part can live for very long without blood supply and the connective tissue necessary to secure it to the body. God created the human body, so He obviously understands the analogy that He inspired.

For further proof of the meaning of *body*, consider two additional scriptures, written to two separate congregations under Paul's leadership.

Notice his statement to the Colossian congregation: "And He [Christ] is the head of THE BODY, *the Church*" (1:18). Now see his instruction to the Ephesian congregation. Speaking of what God placed under Christ's control, Paul wrote, "…and gave Him [Christ] to be the Head over all things to *the Church*, which is HIS BODY" (1:22-23). The Bible definition of the *Body of Christ* is *the Church*! They are the same.

In chapter 4 of Ephesians, Paul admonished the brethren to be "Endeavoring to keep the *unity* of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is ONE BODY [Church], and ONE *Spirit*, even as you are called in ONE *hope* of your calling; ONE *Lord*, ONE *faith*, ONE *baptism*, ONE *God and Father*" (3-6). Again, there must be no confusing the all-encompassing unity and agreement that this verse requires of God's people. Recall how Christ prayed for *this* kind of oneness and unity.

A few verses later, Paul described the importance of a faithful ministry, actively working with and teaching Christ's Church. Carefully read and understand the following lengthy, important passage: "And He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the *perfecting of the saints*, for the work of the ministry, for the *edifying of the* BODY OF CHRIST: till we all come in the *unity* of the *faith*, and of the *knowledge* of the Son of God, unto a *perfect man*, unto the measure of the stature of the *fulness of Christ*: that we henceforth be *no more children*, *tossed to and fro*, and carried about with *every wind of doctrine*, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; but speaking the TRUTH *in love*, may grow up into Him in all things, which is the Head, even Christ: from whom the WHOLE BODY fitly *joined together* and *compacted* by that which every joint supplies, according to the effectual working in the measure of *every part*, makes increase of THE BODY unto the edifying of itself in love" (vs. 11-16).

The Church is a type of Christ's own Body and, as its Head, He governs, directs and builds it, adding to it daily. These verses describe it as

being UNIFIED in both *doctrinal truth* and *love*. In phrase after phrase, this passage demonstrates that the entire Church ("*whole* body" and "*every* part") must be walking together in *complete* doctrinal agreement under Christ's authority. And He works through His *true* ministers to keep the Church from drifting into "every wind of doctrine."

Paul Stressed Unity

A great deal can be learned by also examining Paul's instructions to various other congregations he was overseeing. He continually stressed unity and oneness.

The CORINTHIAN congregation had many problems—including terrible division and disunity. Early in his letter to this congregation, Paul strongly admonished them to stop entertaining other doctrines and to quit playing favorites with ministers. Notice: "Now I beseech you, brethren…that you all speak the *same thing*, and that there be *no divisions* among you; but that you be *perfectly joined together* in the *same mind* and in the *same judgment*…Now this I say, that every one of you says, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas [Peter]; and I of Christ. *Is Christ divided?*" (I Cor. 1:10, 12-13).

Do not miss the intent of this passage. Paul was inspired to describe, in *five* different ways, how completely all of God's people in every age should be unified and in agreement. These verses also cannot be "spiritualized away" by deceptive human reasoning.

Where in this passage does Christ give license for multiple organizations—"churches"—to appear in His name? Where in this description is there room for hundreds, even thousands, of divided, competing groups, in disagreement over teachings—and diminished in the all-important impact in taking the gospel announcement of the kingdom of God to the world (Matt. 24:14; 28:19-20)? The answer: Nowhere!

Let's examine further. Verse 13 begins with the rhetorical question: "Is Christ divided?" The only reason it is not followed with the word "no" or something similar is because the answer is so obvious. Considering what he had just written, Paul knew that the thrust of his question was equivalent to asking, "Is grass green?" or "Is the sky blue?" When people ask rhetorical questions, no one actually responds, because the answer is so obvious. In Amos 3:3, even the question "Can two walk together except they be agreed?" is left unanswered for the same reason.

It was in this same letter to the Corinthians that Paul also had to write, "For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints" (14:33), followed by "Let all things be done decently and in order" (vs. 40). Real "decency" and "order" are impossible if God's Church is divided into many organizations, let alone hundreds or thousands.

Now consider Paul's admonition to the PHILIPPIAN congregation: "…stand fast in ONE *spirit*, with ONE *mind* striving *together* for the faith of the gospel; And in nothing terrified by your adversaries" (1:27-28). And, "Fulfill you my joy, that you be *likeminded*, having the *same love*, being of ONE *accord*, of ONE *mind*" (2:2). These passages teach that complete unity in the Church is the only condition that is acceptable to God!

Paul admonished the COLOSSIANS to be "knit *together* in love, and…the *full assurance of understanding*," and "rooted and built up in Him, and established in the faith, *as you have been taught*" (2:2, 7). There is no misunderstanding the total unity Paul is describing. Brethren walk "together," assured of the right "understanding" that they "have been taught." (We already saw how strongly Paul admonished the EPHESIAN congregation, in numerous ways, to strive for unity.)

The local ROMAN congregation was experiencing a problem with false doctrines entering the Church. Notice how Paul instructed them to address this: "Now I beseech you, brethren, *mark* [take note of] them which cause DIVISIONS and offenses *contrary to the doctrine* which *you have learned*; and AVOID THEM. For they…by good words and fair speeches *deceive* the hearts of the simple" (16:17-18).

The Two Trees

We must ask: How did mankind get into the state of confusion, division, war, competition and disagreement that exists all over the earth today? God's original command to Adam was, "But of the tree of the *knowledge of good and evil*, you shall *not* eat of it: for in the day that you eat thereof you shall surely *die*" (Gen. 2:17).

In the next chapter (3:6), Eve, with Adam following, rebelled and ate of this wrong tree. Notice that this tree represented *knowledge* that was both "good *and* evil." In other words, the tree was not entirely evil—it contained a *mixture* of true and false knowledge! It is the same with the churches of this world. Some do have small amounts of true ("good") doctrinal "knowledge," mixed with much false ("evil") doctrinal "knowledge." For 6,000 years, God has told His true servants to avoid mixing truth with error. He warned Adam that eating of the wrong tree would result in death. It did.

The warning is the same for us today!

When I was first learning the truth in 1966, I heard an analogy that I had never considered before—but have never forgotten since: Think of a delicious cake laced with either arsenic, cyanide, ricin or strychnine, while otherwise containing nothing but good and healthy ingredients. Eating the cake would always result in death.

The good ingredients would not be sufficient to overcome the poison hidden in the cake. Likewise, God's Church does not and cannot mix truth with error. As with the cake, the result for those who do is deadly!

I have explained some of the true doctrines taught by the Church Christ built. This "Personal" could scarcely contain a simple *listing* of all of them, let alone a detailed scriptural explanation proving them and explaining *why* God teaches them.

(To gain a deeper understanding of this vital subject, read our booklet *Where is God's TRUE CHURCH?*) □

STAR WARS

Continued from page 14

Christ was also tempted to submit to Satan (Matt. 4:9), but He overcame the devil in this titanic battle. In overcoming Satan, Christ qualified to replace him on the throne of earth. As King of kings, Christ will bring peace to earth, not "balance to the force." (It is interesting to note that all the temptations in Star Wars were on high ground, similar to Christ's temptation on a mountain.)

The Real Battlefield

In reality, a galactic battle of good versus evil is not being waged out in space. There is no "battle" for the earth going on between God and Satan, as many assume there is. If such were the case, then it would seem that God is losing—badly—when taking into account all the troubles and evils in this world. The truth is that God is much more powerful than Satan is, and He is in complete control of the universe. He is allowing Satan to continue for a short time longer so that man can learn that Satan's ways lead to death. The time will come when God will bind Satan (Rev. 20:2).

The true Christian must submit to the God of the universe in order to overcome human nature. After we completely surrender to God, He will fight our battles.

Man's Final Destiny

The question arises. What is man's destiny? The answer will astound you. Man has been blinded to the very purpose for his existence. Satan, using the religions of this world, has done his utmost to keep this purpose hidden.

God has created mankind for one purpose, to share the entire universe with Him. But man must do two things before God will finalize His creation: (1) He must overcome his own human nature. This nature is the pull toward vanity, self-centeredness, lust, greed, hatred, envy, jealousy and hostility toward God. And (2) He must be born again—changed from mortal to immortal, from *flesh* to *spirit*.

God is offering every human being an opportunity to have eternal life. While science fiction movies can be interesting, sometimes containing elements of truth, they do not hold the key to your destiny!

The Bible foretells that Jesus Christ will descend from heaven to wage war on a mankind that has rebelled against its Creator. He, along with His saints, will restore God's government on the earth (Isa. 9:6-7). Christ will rule as King of kings and Lord of lords. He will judge in righteousness and establish lasting peace. It is at this point that Christ will ultimately bring "balance" to earth.

To find out more of what can be *your* incredible future read our book *The AWESOME POTENTIAL of Man*. Also, you may want to visit our website to learn more about the subjects mentioned in this article, such as the Holy Spirit, heaven, hell, salvation and conversion. □

NEW PREFECT

Continued from page 11

tiations with the City to find a way of implementing gay rights issues," the guiding factor has been that it be done "in a manner *consistent with Catholic teaching*" (emphasis ours). He has been vocal in his opposition to same-sex marriages and has instructed priests to seek the guidance of bishops to determine whether a Catholic politician who supports abortion rights should be denied communion.

Speaking of San Francisco Mayor Gavin Newsom, who reportedly was denied communion by the pastors of two local parishes due to his active support of same-sex marriage, Mr. Levada has said, "I have told him that I think he is wrong on same sex marriage" (*San Francisco Chronicle*). Clearly, the new Prefect stands with Pope Benedict on this issue, as well as a host of other issues facing the Catholic Church, such as clerical celibacy, contraception and the ordination of women priests.

The Right Man for the Job

In 2000, Mr. Levada was made a member of the congregation that he is now Prefect over, once again exposing him to Benedict's strong conservative thinking and influence. Certainly, the new pope would have come to know the archbishop's mind on important key issues facing the Catholic Church.

He is well versed in, and understands, the pope's authority as the head of the church. He was Bishop Co-chair of the Anglican-Roman Catholic dialogue in the United States. These talks were geared at finding common ground and promoting unity between these two faiths. Mr. Levada shares this vision with Benedict XVI, who, during his first few weeks as pope, repeatedly attempted to reach out to Orthodox Christians and Protestants. The Roman Church would certainly like to bring the many churches of the Christian world under her protective umbrella and influence.

Though Mr. Levada pictures himself as more of a "cocker spaniel rather than a rottweiler," the task of clarifying worldwide Roman Catholic doctrine falls to him.

As the appointed Prefect of The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Mr. Levada released this statement: "The work of the congregation seeks principally to promote a sound understanding of the content of the Christian faith, as has been handed on through the Church [meaning the Roman Catholic] since the time of Christ, and to assist the Pope and the bishops of the Church throughout the world in the delicate task of clarifying erroneous positions when that is judged necessary" (*Catholic Online*).

Benedict XVI—who held the position of enforcer of Catholic doctrine, and did so in the face of vocal liberal opposition—would have picked a successor who was up to the task, and to carry on in the tone that he has set.

Many feel that the message to Catholic Americans, who have felt that the Vatican is out of touch with Western culture, and to the world, is that the conservative doctrines of the church will stay. □

WORLD NEWS DESK

AN EDITORIAL ANALYSIS OF WORLD NEWS, TRENDS AND CONDITIONS

HEALTH, SCIENCE & SOCIETY

AVIAN FLU PANDEMIC?

Typically, when one thinks of global instability or national security, war, terrorism and the price of oil are of primary concern. However, in reference to the possibility of avian flu spreading from Asia, Dr. Julie Gerberding, director of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, called it "a very ominous situation for the globe." Such a pandemic could occur in literal days, crippling economies, and threatening the stability and security of governments around the world.

Of most concern is the fact that the avian flu has already met two of the three criteria that health experts believe are required for the pandemic to occur.

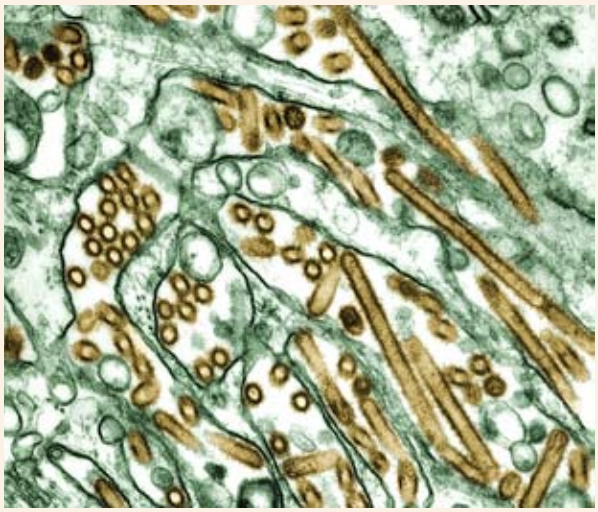
First, a strain of the virus, called A(H5N1), for which humans have little or no immunity, has recently emerged. In January, the World Health Organization reported the following regarding this new strain: "Never before had so many countries been so widely affected by avian influenza in poultry in its most deadly form." The report added, "Never before had any avian influenza virus caused such extremely high fatality in humans."

Second, this new strain can jump from one "animal" species to another (e.g. from chicken to human).

The remaining criteria that A(H5N1) does not yet meet is easy transmission from one human to another. However, with the rate at which viruses mutate—as well as the news that in recent months this strain has been detected in several mammals that have never previously been affected—may indicate that it is only a matter of time. According to some government officials, several cases of human-to-human A(H5N1) transmission have already occurred.

History—specifically the 1918 flu pandemic, which swept a planet prior to air travel, killing 20 to 40 million people—carries a most ominous warning. "A pandemic [today] of influenza could result in 350 million deaths globally and would cripple the global economy with the suspension of international trade," said Michael Osterholm of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

So far, however, the world turns to money and drugs as a possible solution to their problem. In particular, the United States, with an already over-stretched, precarious economy, is expected to take the lead. Consider this statement: "It is the first time in the history of mankind that anyone has thought about keeping a worldwide pandemic at bay," says William Aldis, the top World Health Organization official in Thailand.



Shown above, a colorized transmission electron micrograph of Avian influenza viruses (in gold) grown in MDCK cells. (Photo: C. Goldsmith)

Bible prophecy reveals that viruses such as this will *not* be held at bay.

Source: *The International Herald Tribune*

IS CHINA WORKING TO UNDERMINE AMERICA?

In 1999, Qiao Liang and Wang Xiangsui, two army colonels of the People's Republic of China, wrote the book *Unrestricted Warfare—China's Master Plan to Destroy America*. It is essentially a strategic military manual reflecting China's game plan for war with the United States.

The book, translated by the Central Intelligence Agency in 2002, begins with a thorough introduction by Al Santoli, an American author, historian and director of Asia America Initiative—an organization promoting assistance for and stabilization of developing nations throughout the Asia Pacific region. As an expert on Asian Pacific dynamics and trends, Mr. Santoli identified China's involvement in the al-Qaeda terrorist network. He stressed the likelihood that China had played a larger role than believed in training al-Qaeda in the principles of *Unrestricted Warfare*: "In June 2002, *The Washington Times* reported that U.S. intelligence has confirmed that before the September 11 attacks, China's military provided training for Afghanistan's Taliban and its al-Qaeda supporters."

Mr. Santoli added, "In reporting the dramatic intelligence finding in *The Washington Times*, Bill Gertz, the premier American national security journalist, adds, the information was 'surprising to U.S. intelligence officials…[who] do not know why the Chinese provided the military training to Islamic radicals.'"

According to Major General John K. Singlaub, U.S. Army (ret.), former chief of staff of U.S. forces in Korea "The 9-11 attacks may have been just the beginning of *Unrestricted Warfare*. Many terrorist nations and groups will try to imitate this operation…and China's war book *Unrestricted Warfare* will be their text."

Reactions to September 11, 2001

The introduction of the book states that, while people around the world recoiled in horror as they witnessed 9/11 unfold, this tragedy was greeted with applause by China's official state media: "Soon after September 11, London's *Telegraph* reported that 'the Chinese state-run propaganda machine is cashing in on the terror attacks…producing books, films and video games glorifying the strikes as a humbling blow against an arrogant nation.'"

President Jiang Zemin reportedly watched and re-watched with glee the footage of the World Trade Center attack.

In the documentary *Attack America*, produced by Beijing Television, a video of the jets crashing into the buildings was shown while the narrator said, "This is the America the whole world has wanted to see. Blood debts have been repaid in blood. America has bombed other countries and used its hegemony to deny the natural rights of others without paying the price."

China's Game Plan

Co-author Qiao Liang explained in an interview how the U.S. could be attacked, stating that the first rule of unrestricted warfare is that there are no rules, "with nothing forbidden." His book reveals that China is preparing to confront the United States and its allies with multidimensional attacks on almost every aspect of social, economic and political life. This includes waging the following types of warfare: *Financial warfare* (entering and subverting banking and stock markets); *smuggling warfare* (flooding the markets with illegal or pirated goods); *cultural warfare* (influencing cultural biases or accelerating social degeneracy); *drug warfare* (flooding the country with illicit drugs); *media and fabrication warfare* (manipulating foreign media, bribing journalists, etc.); *technological warfare* (creating monopolies and independently setting standards); *resource warfare* (gaining control of scarce natural resources; controlling market value); *psychological warfare* (dominating the nation's perception of its strengths and weaknesses); *network warfare* (dominating or subverting transnational information systems); *international law warfare* (subverting policies of multinational's views of legal rulings); *environmental warfare* (contaminating or altering the environment); and *economic aid warfare* (controlling the targeted country through aid dependency).

In Their Own Words

Here are a few excerpts taken from the training manual:

■ "Modern weapon systems have made it possible for [American soldiers] to be far removed from any conventional battlefield, and they can attack the enemy from a place beyond his range of vision where they need not come face to face with the dripping blood that comes with killing. All this has turned each and every soldier into a self-effacing gentleman who had just as soon avoid the sight of blood. The digital fighter is taking over the role formerly played by the 'blood and iron' warrior—a role that for thousands of years has now been challenged" (p. 33).

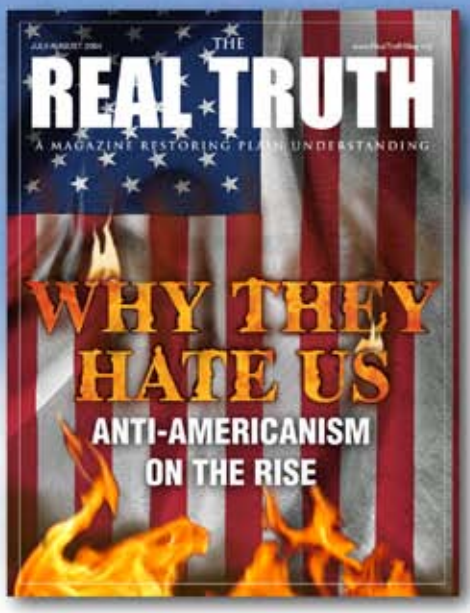
■ "From the military standpoint, then, the traditional war is characterized by the use of limited resources to fight an unlimited war. This characteristic invariably puts national forces in an extremely unfavorable position, even before war breaks out, since the national forces must always conduct themselves according to certain rules and therefore are only able to use their unlimited resources to fight a limited war. This explains how a terrorist organization made up of just a few inexperienced members who are still wet behind the ears can nevertheless give a mighty country like the U.S. headaches, and also why 'using a sledgehammer to kill an ant' often proves ineffective. The most recent proof is the case of the two explosions that occurred simultaneously at the U.S. embassies in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam. The advent of bin Laden-style terrorism has deepened the impression that a national force, no matter how powerful, will find it difficult to gain the upper hand in a game that has no rules" (p. 41).

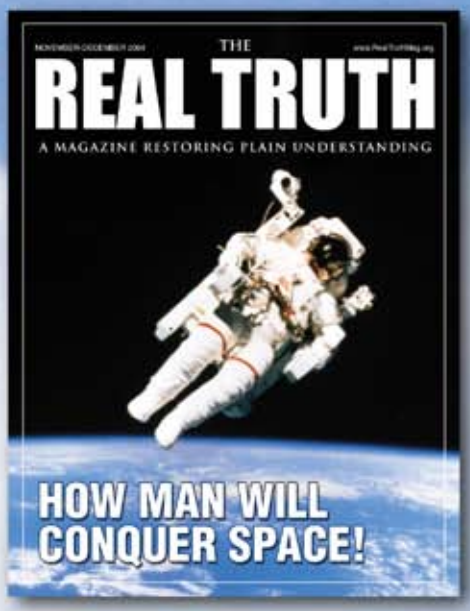
■ "When 'a military gives excessive focus on dealing with a certain specified type of enemy,' this can possibly result in their being attacked and defeated by another enemy outside their field of vision" (p. 121).

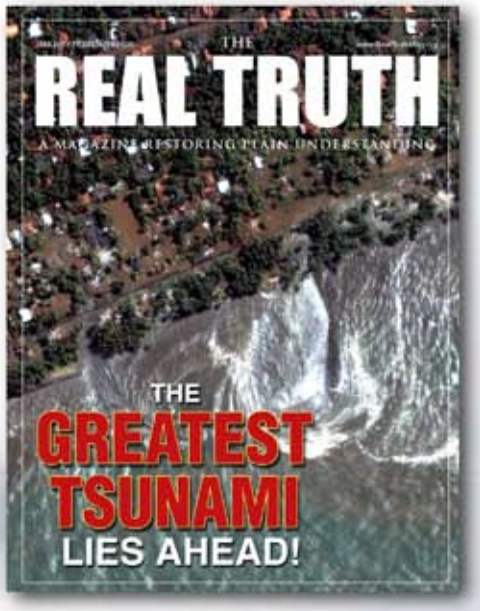
■ "Whether it be the intrusions of hackers, a major explosion at the World Trade Center [note that this was written in 1999], or a bombing attack by bin Laden, all these greatly exceed the frequency band widths understood by the American military. The American military is naturally inadequately prepared to deal with this type of enemy psychologically…" (p.122).

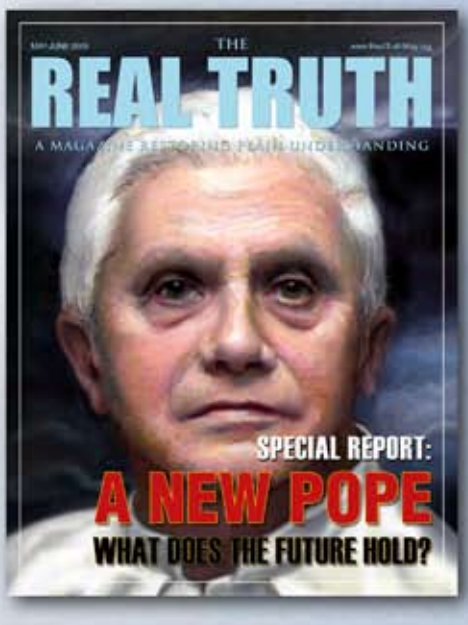
Although Bible prophecy does not show that China will launch a unilateral attack upon America and other allied nations, it does indicate that China will play a significant role on the world scene. □

Have you missed out on previous issues?









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