



THE  
**REAL TRUTH**

A MAGAZINE RESTORING PLAIN UNDERSTANDING

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**A R T I C L E S**

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**The Scourge of Illiteracy  
Soon to be Erased!**

Throughout the world, 785 million people ages 15 and above are unable to complete a job application, comprehend a bus schedule or read a magazine article. Global illiteracy remains a reality—but not for long. Here's why.  
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**ABOUT OUR COVER:** Across the world, millions are turning to Pentecostalism as a means of drawing close to God. But are speaking in tongues and an emphasis on the "holy ghost" what God requires?

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**PUBLISHER/EDITOR-IN-CHIEF**  
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**SENIOR EDITORS**  
GEORGE C. ROGERS  
JAMES F. TURCK

**MANAGING EDITOR**  
BRUCE A. RITTER

**WORLD NEWS DESK**  
MARK P. DENEEN

**CONTRIBUTING WRITERS**

DAVID C. PACK  
JEFFREY R. AMBROSE  
JEFFREY D. DAVIS  
KEVIN D. DENEEN  
MARK P. DENEEN  
RYAN P. DENEEN  
ROBERT R. FARRELL  
GABRIEL N. LISCHAK  
LARRY J. MCELROY  
JUSTIN T. PALM  
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JAMES F. TURCK

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ROSLYN D. MCFARLAND  
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**ART/GRAPHICS**

BRUCE A. RITTER  
JAMES T. BOYLE  
DARNITRA D. MAIDEN  
PAULA C. RONDEAU

**INFORMATION SERVICES**

BRADFORD G. SCHLEIFER  
JEFFREY D. DAVIS  
ANGELA K. ECHELBERGER

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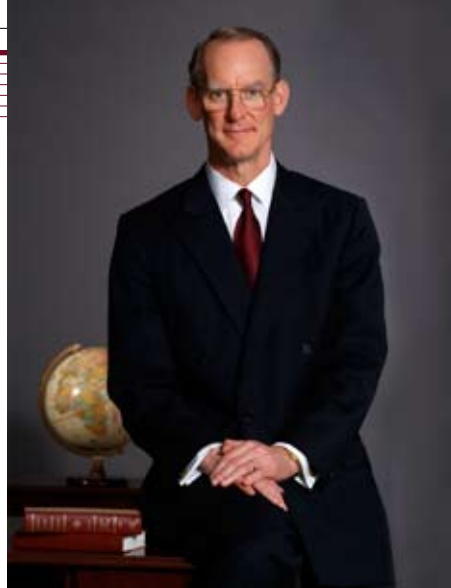
**Contact *The REAL TRUTH*:**

P.O. Box 23295  
Wadsworth, OH 44282  
www.RealTruth.org  
info@RealTruth.org



## PERSONAL FROM

David C. Pack



# *Special Tribute to Mrs. Shirley M. Pack*

**T**HIS IS A very special “Personal” written to give more detail to the passing of my wife, Shirley M. Pack. I believe all of you readers will want to know something about the unusual woman who was a big reason you became a reader of *The REAL TRUTH* magazine.

At the time of his wife’s death after a long illness in 1967, Herbert W. Armstrong, Editor-in-Chief and founder of *The Plain Truth* magazine (of which *The REAL TRUTH* is the continuation), wrote a special tribute in the May 1967 issue to her record of service and conversion. This tribute to my wife is written in the same spirit.

My dear wife of over 36 years of marriage died in the early morning hours (3:32 a.m.) of Sunday, July 22, 2007. I should first explain that Mrs. Pack was in and out of consciousness beginning Thursday (July 19) and this became complete on Sabbath morning at about 5:30 a.m. I mention this because, amazingly, she awakened shortly before the audio of the weekly Sabbath services for our Headquarters congregation was “piped” into our home for the two caregivers attending to her, and she remained awake until about 5:30 p.m., just as our service was completed. Due to the tradition of adding special international reports on the post-Conference weekend by ministers and representatives who are still here, there were three powerful messages, including the sermon that her caregivers

noted she was clearly able to hear. As services ended, she closed her eyes and did not reawaken.

Because my wife’s history in God’s Way goes back to the end of 1959, and because she was known by countless thousands in the Church, condolences and notes of sympathy have been arriving from all over the world, and from people both within and outside The Restored Church of God. These have already brought a tremendous comfort to me and to our children. Two of our three children and a son-in-law serve at the Church’s Headquarters. I wish I could respond to each letter individually, but there are uncounted hundreds, with large numbers still arriving every day. My family thanks you from the bottom of our hearts for such an outpouring of genuine love and concern during this extreme trial. I am honored to have been married to one who touched so many people.

May I now be permitted to tell you more about the background of one of the most extraordinary “soldiers of Jesus Christ” I have ever known. While it is not my intention to lionize my wife or make her larger than life, I believe a brief outline of her life and service is appropriate in such a case.

Mrs. Pack fought one of the longest and bravest battles against a deadly intruder that I have ever witnessed, and we only learned later that her battle probably lasted between three and five years’ duration. I can make this statement with some experience, since I have witnessed many scores of people suffer with cancer. We often

described her struggle as a “war,” comprised of what we referred to as *daily* “battles,” with days then broken into multiple “skirmishes.” I charted many kinds of indicators of her evolving condition on a daily and on a weekly basis as we hoped for the progress in natural healing that God, for His own reasons, chose not to grant, either dramatically or over a long period (Isa. 55:8-9).

It is important to know that my wife’s ability to confront this terrible disease as we did involved the assistance of many people here at Headquarters, bringing help in a host of ways far too numerous to recount—as nurses, caregivers, cooks, helpers with cleaning, shopping and other details, and more. Suffice to say that I have *never* witnessed the LOVE OF GOD within His people in the way that I did as these helped my wife over the last number of very, very difficult months. In fact, some of this still continues in the help that I am now receiving in her absence. Our family—and this would still include my wife because she will come up in the resurrection at Christ’s now soon Return and attest to this—is forever indebted to these brethren’s “work and labor of love” that God promises He will never “forget” (Heb. 6:10).

Some history might be important in this story. My wife’s health struggles actually began with fibroid tumors from about the time of the birth of our third and last child, a daughter, Jennifer, born in early 1980. This introduced physical challenges due to female-related health problems that made some aspects of my wife’s life difficult on a daily basis ever after. She suffered from severe anemia for years. (Also, in a certain percentage of cases, fibroid tumors become malignant and spread, which is what happened here.) Beginning in 1971, she was truly what Mr. Armstrong referred to as “50% of her husband’s ministry.” Those who know anything about

our life understand that my ministry has been one of extraordinary challenge and difficulty all through the decades.

This letter could not begin to recount all of those unique experiences and special training that brought that ministry to where it is today. Inseparable in all of it was the phenomenal steadfastness of the partner who was there at every twist and turn, backing me up, defending me, taking care of an ocean of details—all while we were under fire almost nonstop through the years for upholding God’s truth. Her typing of all God’s doctrines into book and booklet form, this taking her alone about 10,000 hours to help me complete—plus thousands of emails (just since RCG began) and all of the regular magazine articles that were not part of the rewriting of Mr. Armstrong’s literature—has, of course, now become a story and service of legendary proportion among thousands of God’s people who have been the beneficiaries of her efforts. In fact, the Work could not have remotely been able to achieve all that God helped us to do in rewriting His truth for the final “push” of God’s Work before the age ends were it not for her very unique participation, and as no other wife in the ministry could have done. Frankly, this participation provided her husband with an immense advantage over any other minister of God in being able to carry out the overwhelming responsibility of what God had laid before me to complete.

Make no mistake, I know this—and I will never forget it!

Dear readers, I have often thought of my wife as part of a future chapter of New Testament Church history, as part of the expected coming large extension of the Book of Acts that the Church has long understood will appear because that book closes without an “Amen.”

But all of the persecution by enemies of the truth, long hours, holding

our home together, handling financial difficulties because we poured every extra dime that we had into God’s Work, missed meals (not so much as a single bite of lunch for three and a half years straight at one point, from late 1999 to mid-2003), and so many other things in this vein—we were forced to eat dinner out three or four nights a week for years, and this after having already worked late all of those nights—in many ways wore down my wife’s remaining health and energy (II Cor. 12:15). In the truest sense, my wife may have almost *literally* “laid down her life for her friends” (John 15:13). I should add that, in the last months, she often repeated that she would not change anything. (Of course, looking back, there are things that I would try to change on behalf of her schedule if given another opportunity. Yet, I have often tried to figure out what I could have done differently in our workload and could not really come up with what would have been an alternative. God’s people are all forced to play the cards that He has dealt them.)

Know that in the last months Mrs. Pack remained more than ever positively determined to get back into the office and to help us finish God’s Work. She could not tell me often enough how much she wanted to come back and support me because she knew that no one else could understand the road that lies ahead for me personally. Even though she was declining, she still chose to come back once again to the office everyday for over two more full business weeks near the very end of her life. This included the first two days of the recent Ministerial and Leadership Conference, and seeing her son’s presentation on Day Two.

The Work of God was absolutely everything to my wife. Though she could not help me with the typing of my most recent book *THE WORK OF GOD – Its Final Chapter!*, she was

*Please see PERSONAL, page 21*



# THE RISING TIDE OF PENTECOSTALISM

**HOW A GRASSROOTS REVIVAL BECAME THE SECOND-LARGEST CHRISTIAN MOVEMENT IN THE WORLD.**

BY JUSTIN T. PALM

**U**NDER BRIGHT LIGHTS a band plays to a packed auditorium. The crowd is being worked into a frenzy, jumping around, waving their hands in the air and singing. The song ends. A preacher walks onto the stage. Already sweating, she begins her message. The crowd cheers, with shouts of “amen.” The preacher continues. One female attendee collapses into the aisle, her body jerking, writhing in a seizure-like trance. Her lips utter unintelligible

words as she goes into spasms. The preacher approaches a young man in a wheelchair. She cries out for him to be healed. He leaps up, her prayer seemingly answered.

It is Sunday morning at a Pentecostal church.

In just over 100 years, Pentecostalism has grown to be the second largest Christian denomination. With 500 million followers, it is second only to Roman Catholicism.

With an emphasis on the “Holy Ghost,” speaking in tongues, a distinctive worship style, a literal biblical interpretation and energetic preaching,

this controversial religion has attracted large numbers searching for religious purpose. Multi-million dollar church complexes are sprouting up around the world. The wild, animated style of worship has drawn in Catholics and Protestants alike, even attracting the nonreligious.

Why and how has this religion grown so big, so fast?

## **Sparking a Worldwide Revival**

In a tiny religious school in Topeka, Kansas, near the beginning of the twentieth century, a man named Charles Fox Parham first called for a revival of God’s Spirit in the face of a Protestant world that had seemingly lost its zeal. Parham, greatly influenced by the Holiness movement (an American nineteenth century religious movement

that emphasized postconversion spiritual experiences), encouraged disciples to seek God through prayer, fasting and studying the Bible, and then to wait for His blessings of the Spirit.

They soon received their answer. On January 1, 1901, Agnes Oznam was the first to speak in an “unknown tongue.” After many of Parham’s followers had similar experiences, he declared this to be the “initial evidence” of God’s Spirit. Reinvigorated, Parham and his students sought to evangelize others.

In the movement’s early years, many were attracted to the “spirit-filled” services. But those who joined often continued to fellowship in their previous church. They wanted to bring Protestants to see that the Holy Spirit was stirring up a new revival (this term is not to be confused with the tent-meeting revivals often held in the nineteenth century). These early revivalists were successful in attracting many members from the much larger Protestant and Catholic churches.

A long way from the popularity of Pentecostalism today, early renewalists were often met with resistance. Many were thrown out of their churches for their new worship style. This forced the movement to start churches of its own.

New congregations were established and the movement quickly grew. According to Parham, by 1905, there were 25,000 Pentecostals in Texas alone. Even when elements of the Pentecostal experience such as speaking in tongues, healings and exuberant worship services became routine, the denomination continued to expand. This led to another revival, and with it, a new church.

### **Azusa Street Revival**

Pentecostalism gained an even wider reach in 1906 during the Azusa Street revival in Los Angeles. William Seymour, also influenced by the Holiness movement and familiar with Parham’s beliefs, led a number of revivalists to transform an old building into a spiritual center where people of all backgrounds could participate.

Speaking in tongues was increasingly emphasized, along with healing and prophecies related to the end time.

The term “Pentecostal” was taken from the day of Pentecost, when first-century Christians were first given the Holy Spirit, marking the beginning of the New Testament Church. Many view this denomination as a return to the roots of early Christianity. During that time, the fruits of God’s Holy Spirit *seemed* to be much more evident. Compared to most religious leaders today, the original apostles seemed more imbued with God’s Spirit. The fruits of Christianity appeared much more evident.

Because there is no Pentecostal world headquarters, its organizations are not linked together by a unified governing body collectively directing Pentecostal efforts. Instead, they consist of individual congregations, which do not necessarily compete with one another, but whose success depends on the group’s own efforts (as opposed to other denominations that are looked after by a “mother” church or headquarters).

Attempts to unify the denomination under one organized body were undertaken in 1947 in Zurich, Switzerland, but eventually failed. In 1948, leaders in North America also tried, but without success. Although Pentecostal churches continue to splinter today, this trend has not caused the movement to lose steam.

Instead, Pentecostalism is thriving.

### **Enveloping the Globe**

Pentecostalism’s influence around the world is great. It is estimated that over 10 million Americans are Pentecostals; 5.5 million U.S. citizens attend the Church of God in Christ denomination and 2.5 million attend with an Assembly of God. The latter group is perhaps the biggest Pentecostal denomination, with 25 million members and congregations in at least 150 countries (*Encyclopedia Britannica*). According to the World Christian Database, 147 million Africans are either Pentecostals or charismatics (*Reuters*). (The charismatic movement consists of those in

Protestant and Catholic churches who believe that the Pentecostal worship style and emphasis on healings and speaking in tongues should be incorporated into their churches.) Similarly, a 2006 survey conducted by the PEW Forum on Religion and Public Life showed that 70% of Protestants in Kenya are Pentecostal or charismatic. The same survey also found that 60% of Nigeria is either Pentecostal or charismatic, and that roughly one-third of South Africans who live in cities profess to be one of these. This approach is also making gains in Europe and Asia.

However, Pentecostalism’s mark is most clearly seen in Latin America. This once Catholic-dominated region is now being overshadowed by Pentecostal churches, the fastest growing Protestant denominations in the Latin world. Catholic congregations are even beginning to adopt the more music-driven, concert-style services to reinvigorate flagging enthusiasm among its membership. Numerous Pentecostal denominations in Latin America boast a membership of at least one million.

The 2006 survey cited above revealed that 75% of Protestants in Latin America are Pentecostals, and nearly 30% of this region’s population consider themselves Pentecostal or charismatic. One Pentecostal-style church in Brazil, the Universal Church of the Kingdom of God (UCKG), is now in more than 90 countries and claims to have 10 million followers. Its founder owns one of Brazil’s largest television stations, a number of newspapers and a sports team.

In the United States, Pentecostals tend to focus more on youth. The recently released film documentary *Jesus Camp* examined this trend. The film presents an in-depth look into how more radical Christian-right churches are focusing on the upcoming younger generation, encouraging teens to deliver sermons. Youth in Pentecostal churches are being courted by current leaders as a key element in the church’s future. They are groomed as evangelists-in-training, on a mission to “spread Jesus” and spark another



spiritual revival in the West. They are told that, despite their age and inexperience, they can make a difference.

Pentecostal leaders in America are counting on the next generation to be tomorrow's leaders, preachers and evangelists.

### **Charismatic Leaders**

Much of Pentecostalism's recent popularity can be attributed to its leaders, engaging speakers who travel the world conducting mass healing campaigns and preaching to hundreds of thousands. Crowds at their speaking engagements fill large sports arenas. When American preacher T.D. Jakes visited Nairobi, Kenya, in 2006, the service was attended by one million Kenyans (almost 1 in 30). Benny Hinn, a U.S.-based televangelist, recently traveled to Uganda for a two-day healing crusade; 40,000 adoring followers filled the national stadium. Such speakers are often treated like visiting heads of state or celebrities.

Some *are* pop stars. Brazil's Padre Marcelo is an ex-physical education teacher turned charismatic Catholic priest whose albums outsell every Brazilian pop star. Other Pentecostal leaders claim to be prophets. One even claims he is Jesus Christ!

### **Emotion, Not Doctrine**

P.T. Barnum, founder of the famous Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus, once stated, "Nothing attracts a crowd like a crowd." Human beings are attracted to big events, big shows, big crowds. This observation helps explain the unprecedented spread of Pentecostal churches around the world.

Excitement abounds in these churches. Many are drawn to the entertainment value of a service. A Sunday morning often resembles a rock concert rather than a church service. With large complexes, arena stadiums, bright lights, wealth, expensive cars, underground parking garages, video screens, and wildly popular, energetic preachers, recent decades have seen parishioners flocking to Pentecostal or Pentecostal-flavored churches.

It is also largely a religion based on emotion, not doctrine. The famed author and speaker Dale Carnegie once observed, "Much as we would like to think we are moved by reason, the whole world is, in fact, moved by emotion." Emotionally-charged music plays an integral part in the Pentecostal service, designed to give followers a "spiritual experience," taking them to a higher plane of worship. On any given Sunday, music often receives more focus than the actual message.

Another draw is people's curiosity surrounding the mystery of tongues. Those who have not seen or experienced it are invariably fascinated. Some attend to see "what the hype is about."

Pentecostals believe that a "baptism of the Holy Spirit" should be sought. This is when, after conversion, a baptism of the "Holy Ghost" takes place and a believer acquires gifts such as the ability to prophesy or heal. This "baptism" is supposedly accompanied by the manifestation of speaking in tongues.

(While the Bible makes clear that all true Christians have the Holy Spirit, does this involve "tongues"? What are the fruits of God's Spirit? To discover the truth about this subject, and what is truly behind this strange occurrence, read our booklet *Understanding TONGUES*. You will be shocked by what you learn.)

### **Promises of Health and Prosperity**

In many ways, Pentecostalism is the ultimate "people's religion." It has something for everyone. Adherents are welcomed to "come as they are." Often, Pentecostal messages speak to the needs of the disenfranchised and the poor. Many come to these services seeking hope.

Allan Anderson, the Professor of Global Pentecostal Studies at England's Birmingham University, put it this way: "The success of Pentecostalism is the focus on people's problems in this life. In countries where people are living on the breadline, Pentecostalism gives hope" (*Reuters*).

Another obvious appeal is the movement's doctrine of wealth. Energetic preachers urge people to trust God to bless them. Adherents are taught that if one has enough faith, God will bless him with a new car, bigger house or a raise at work. Amazingly, a preacher at UCKG in Soweto, South Africa, said this about God's will for their lives: "God doesn't want you to be poor and ashamed—he wants you to drive a new car" (*ibid*).

Not surprisingly, the message was well received by the crowd.

There is also the issue of healing. The church's "prosperity gospel" teaches that whether one is healed is connected to the size of their contributions to the church. Of course, this teaching would attract anyone, religious or not. Everyone desires prosperity and success. But these promises are not always fulfilled. After donating large sums of money to their Pentecostal church, some members not only remain sick but are left destitute. (To fully understand why and how God heals read *The Truth About HEALING*.)

All of the above factors have resulted in Pentecostalism's widespread popularity. But is the denomination's globe-girdling size and over-the-top style of worship PROOF of where God is working?

### **Fruits of God's Work**

With mass "healings," speaking in tongues, energetic services, emotionally charged messages and a focus on prophecy, many see the fruits of Pentecostal churches and conclude, "God must be here."

Jesus Christ said He would build His Church (Matt. 16:18)—not *churches*. How do the divided and constantly splintering Pentecostal churches fit into this plain statement about Christ's Church? Is it divided? Is it an amorphous blob of disconnected, disagreeing and competing churches? Where is the Church Christ said He would build and protect—and how can you know if you have found it?

If you are interested in learning where God is truly working, read *Where is God's TRUE CHURCH?* □



# DESIGNED *for* DISCOVERY – PART III THE UNIVERSE

WE ARE BUT A MICROSCOPIC SPECK IN A REMOTE PART OF THE COSMOS.  
LEARN JUST HOW SMALL, AND WHY OUR EXISTENCE IS SO UNIQUE.

BY BRADFORD G. SCHLEIFER

**F**OR THOUSANDS of years, mankind has gazed into the heavens. Some have seen the stars and imagined that they formed meaningful pictures and symbols—bulls, scorpions, lions, etc. Others view the beauty of the night sky as a source of inspiration. Still others see the dark expanse as a window into both our past *and* future.

No matter the reason, human beings have always had an unquenchable fascination and sense of wonder with the heavens. This has grown into an insatiable desire to understand and explore their awe-inspiring beauty.

In Part One of this series, we started small by examining Earth and its many unique attributes. In Part Two,

the scope was broadened to include our solar system and the Milky Way galaxy. Though such an inspection spans tens of thousands of light years, our cosmic neighborhood is but a tiny speck. Much more lies beyond the spiral arms of the Milky Way. The beauty and harsh extremes therein are nearly impossible to properly frame.

The universe was constructed in a specific way, making life possible. In fact, the margin of error for some universal constants is so small that even minute changes would cause the entire universe to unravel. As your understanding grows about our precise and perfectly designed cosmos, its purpose will become more personal.

### Measuring Light

You may have wondered how astronomers measure the distance and age of stars, galaxies and other cosmic objects. This is possible by an attribute

of light (and other forms of electromagnetic radiation), known as *red shift*. Over extreme distances, radiation shifts toward the red side of a spectrum.

Every human being is able to see part of the visual spectrum of light. However, this is an extremely small segment of the electromagnetic spectrum. Just below the range of the human eye is infrared. Most people are familiar with equipment enabling soldiers or others to see in dark conditions. This equipment converts infrared light into visible light.

There are many more forms of electromagnetic radiation, including ultraviolet, x-rays and gamma rays. Some segments of the spectrum are able to travel much farther than visible light and are easier to measure. This is particularly true of extremely high-power gamma radiation.

The farther light travels, the more dramatic its red shift. If we measure



that shift in comparison to light coming from our sun, a difference can be determined. And, using the speed of light as a constant (186,000 miles per second), distance can be calculated.

This is the part of criteria used to determine that the universe is nearly 14 billion years old. However, the age of the cosmos is not the only thing that inspires awe. Its scope and size has also enthralled mankind.

### **Incomprehensible Size**

It has only been in recent decades, thanks to technological advancements, that humanity has been able to determine the approximate size of the universe. When describing it, measurements with values of billions and trillions are used—in light years, not miles. Analogies and descriptions can help one appreciate our comparative microscopic size in relation to the cosmos.

In Part Two of this series, we quantified the size of our solar system and galaxy. Doing the same with the universe is a much more difficult task—in fact, its actual size is unknown. All that can be measured is the visible universe (and even this value is not completely agreed upon). Generally speaking, it is thought that the visible cosmos is approximately 93 billion light years in diameter. Since each light year is 5.879 trillion miles, the diameter of the visible universe is 546,747,000,000,000,000,000 miles—546 billion *trillion* miles! It is impossible to fully comprehend a number of such proportions.

To make these distances more meaningful, we must shrink our universe to a more manageable scale. First, let's reduce the Earth to the size of a grain of salt, making our planet 42.5 billion times smaller.

At this scale, the diameter of our solar system shrinks to less than 600 feet and our galaxy reduces to nearly 14 million miles across. Even at this scale, the visible universe is still 12.9 trillion miles wide.

Numbers this large are impossible to appreciate. Let's reduce the scale even further.

If we could shrink our solar system from the Sun to Pluto down to the size of a single grain of salt, the Milky Way galaxy would be 24 miles in diameter—an easy distance to visualize. This still leaves the universe's span at an incredible *22 million miles*—about two-thirds the distance from Earth to Mars.

This number is still too large to envision. The scale must be reduced yet again.

If the Milky Way galaxy (in reality, nearly 600,000 billion miles in diameter) was reduced to the size of a grain of salt, the visible universe would be just over 915 feet wide—about the length of three American football fields. Finally, a size we can picture!

What is lost in this analogy is the sheer mass of the Milky Way galaxy and how much reduction is needed to reach this result. In fact, this manageable cosmic scale would mean we have reduced the universe 3.2 septillion times—or 3.2 trillion trillion times. Our solar system, never mind the Earth, would be smaller than a single hydrogen atom!

### **Atomic "Glue"**

Do not be disappointed if you are having trouble wrapping your mind around these numbers. This exercise serves to demonstrate that the cosmos is of near unimaginable size. There are no adjectives to properly frame these distances. Celestial bodies are separated by millions of light years. Much of space is just that—*space*. Yet everything remains held together by an unknown celestial "glue." Since scientists do not really understand this glue, they have loosely termed it *dark matter*. Few agree as to what it is. Assuming that some form of matter is needed to generate the gravitational fields required to hold the universe together, scientists have put forth their shaky hypotheses.

Such vast distances between objects are not limited to outer space. "Inner space," the space within atoms, is equally as dramatic. Let's examine a hydrogen atom. The smallest and most abundant of all elements, hydrogen consists of a proton nucleus and a single

orbiting electron. Using our reference point above, what would be the scale if we multiplied the size of the hydrogen atom's nucleus 300 billion times so that it was the size of a grain of a salt?

At this size, and assuming a constant distance between the proton and electron, a near microscopic electron would be orbiting the nucleus 98 feet away.

Truly, there is VAST space within the largest galaxies as well as the smallest subatomic particles.

Like dark matter, scientists do not fully understand what holds atoms together. Termed *atomic glue* or *dark energy*, the source of attraction has eluded scientists for thousands of years.

No matter the scale, science is left with more questions than answers. The source of the universe, the way it is held together and many other facets are left unanswered because the true SOURCE of the cosmos is ignored.

One of the few things science agrees upon is that our cosmos is enormous, and with such vast expanse, scholars make another foolish leap—the assumption that physical life *must* exist elsewhere. This is simply not the case.

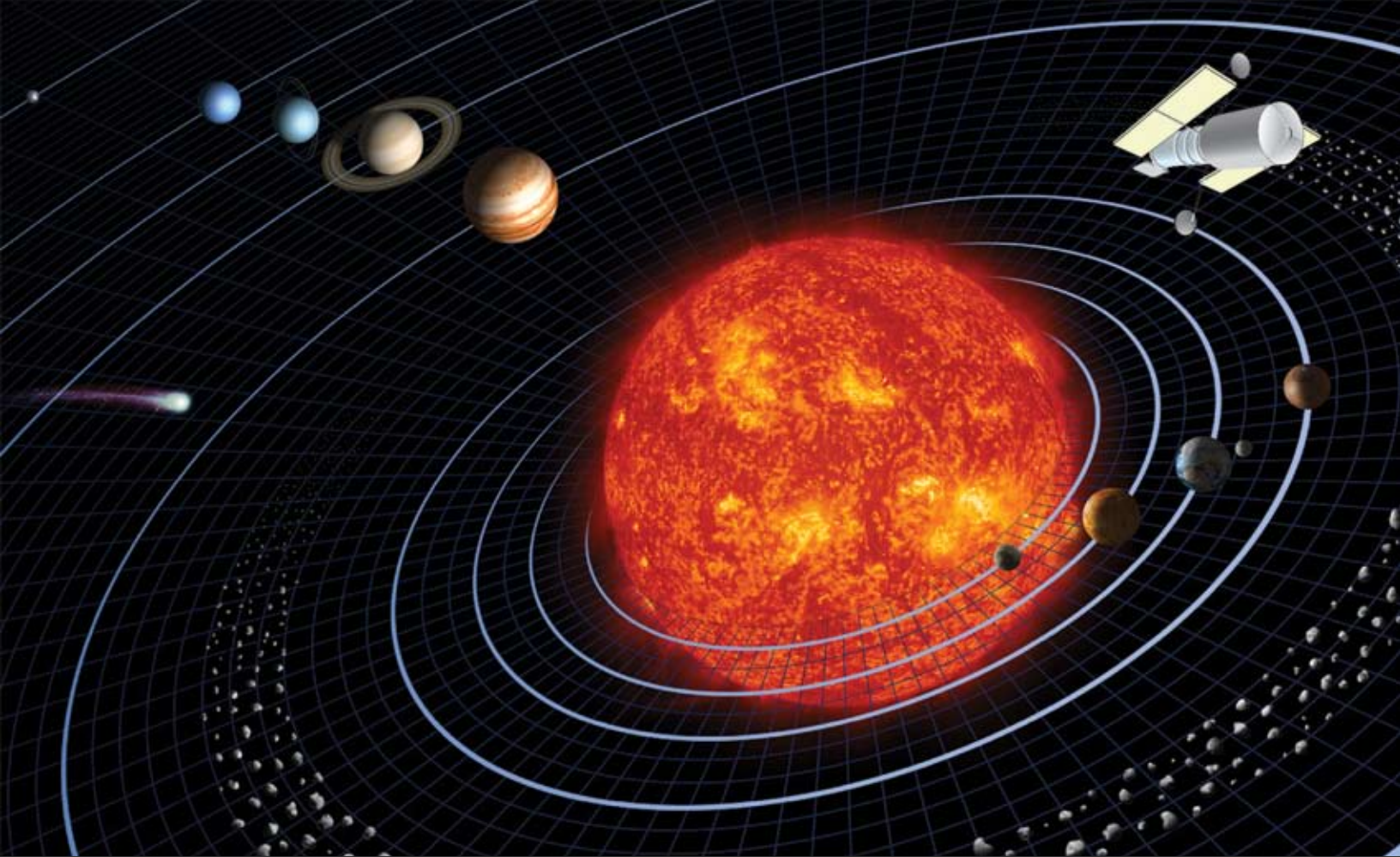
Even with billions and trillions of galaxies, most of the universe is extremely hostile to *any* form of life. The gravitational effects, destructive gases, harmful radiation and a variety of other factors make it impossible for would-be human explorers to come within thousands of light years of these remote galaxies, never mind for life to form, evolve and flourish.

In fact, almost all basic conditions for life are missing in the vast majority of the universe. Over 98% of nearby galaxies are far less metal rich than ours—virtually eliminating *any* chance for earth-like planets to form.

### **Our Position—A Key to Discovery**

Some galaxies are billions of light years away from their nearest counterparts, making the night sky pitch black.

If you could stand on a planet in one of these distant galaxies, there would be no visible stars, no super clusters of galaxies, nothing to see in the sky at all. In fact, our celestial neighbor-



## INVISIBLE WAVES FROM SPACE

Since the 17th century, scientists have used telescopes to study the visible light coming from the heavens. Modern instruments can detect waves the eye can't see:



Wavelength about 1,000 kilometers

Wavelength about 1,000 miles

**ELECTROMAGNETISM** is a single kind of energy that acts differently depending on how long its waves are

Wavelength about 100 billionth of an inch

Wavelength about 100 billionth of a centimeter

RADIO	MICROWAVES	INFRARED LIGHT	VISIBLE LIGHT	ULTRAVIOLET LIGHT	X-RAYS	GAMMA RAYS	COSMIC RAYS
<b>PAST AND PLANNED OBSERVATORIES</b>							
With launch dates of satellites							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Arecibo Observatory, 1,000-foot dish, Puerto Rico</li> <li>■ Very Large Baseline Array, Hawaii-to-Caribbean dish network</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Submillimeter Wave Astronomy Satellite, 1998</li> <li>■ MAP satellite, 2000</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Infrared Space Observatory, European-Japanese, 1995</li> <li>■ Next Generation Space Telescope, 2007</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Hubble Space Telescope, 1990</li> <li>■ Keck Telescopes, world's largest, Hawaii</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Extreme Ultraviolet Explorer, 1992</li> <li>■ Far Ultraviolet Spectroscopic Explorer, 1999</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Rossi X-ray Timing Explorer, 1995</li> <li>■ Chandra X-ray Observatory, 1999</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Compton Gamma Ray Observatory, 1991</li> <li>■ Swift Gamma Ray Burst Explorer, 2003</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ AMANDA Detectors, Antarctica</li> <li>■ Auger Observatory, planned for Argentina, Utah</li> </ul>

SOURCES: Encyclopaedia Britannica, High Energy Astrophysics Science Archive Research Center, NASA, National Science Foundation, MCT

hood is unique even when compared to regions where the galaxies are relatively close. Gravitational fields tend to pull galaxy clusters together, making the sky extremely bright. This would

make deep space viewing impossible, including some of the discoveries we have covered in this series.

When understood, our galaxy is located in a region of space that is nei-

ther too dark nor too bright. Humanity is located in a region, like the line from a popular child's fairytale, which

*Please see **UNIVERSE**, page 11*





PHOTO: MCT

## JOHN HOWARD

PRIME MINISTER OF AUSTRALIA

Considered an effective leader by some, an ill-advised ally of U.S. President George W. Bush by others, John Howard has been Prime Minister of Australia for more than 11 years. As the 2007-2008 election draws near, what will his current position spell for the future of Australia?

BY MARK P. DENEE

**T**HE YEAR WAS 1996: Tired of broken promises, Australia's population (18.25 million at the time) voted overwhelmingly to replace the liberal Australian Labour Party (ALP), which had held office since 1983, with the center-right coalition of the Liberal Party and the National Party. John Winston Howard, who led the coalition, became Prime Minister.

Born July 26, 1939, Mr. Howard first leaned toward a law career, but after obtaining a bachelors degree from the University of Sydney in 1961, and serving as a solicitor of the New South Wales Supreme Court, he quickly turned to politics. In 1974 he was elected to parliament as a member of the Liberal Party, and eventually served as Minister for Business and Consumer Affairs (1975-77) and Federal Treasurer (1977-83).

By 1983 John Howard was leader of the party.

In his personal life, Mr. Howard is a passionate fan of sports, particularly cricket. He also enjoys playing tennis and golf.

He has been married since 1971 to his wife, Janette, a teacher by profession, and together they have three adult children.

### Domestic Challenges

Australia's economy was a primary focus during the 1996 election campaign, and played an integral part in Mr. Howard's policy during his first year in office.

As promised, his Cabinet quickly began "cutting away the fat" of several Australian "institutions," forcing the sale of one-third of the giant telecommunications monopoly Telstra, and reducing funding for the state-run Australian Broadcasting Corporation, universities and other federal cultural and foreign aid programs.

The first Howard budget laid out further cuts based on a looming financial disaster due to "Beazley's Black Hole"—an \$8 billion AUD deficit that had been concealed by the previous administration.

Mr. Howard's conservative financial policies have maintained an annual government surplus since 2002.

During the first few years as Prime Minister, Mr. Howard faced several challenges, including the formation of the opposing One Nation Party, which made considerable inroads peaking in the 1998 elections and national debates surrounding immigration and race relations.

Mr. Howard also undertook a more active role on the world scene, sending Australian troops to East Timor as part of a United Nations mission in 1999. That same year, Australia held a national referendum as to whether it should sever its historic ties to the United Kingdom, and become a republic. The referendum—which Mr. Howard opposed—failed to pass. Australia remains a federal parliamentary democracy, with Britain's Queen Elizabeth II as the Chief of State.

In the area of social issues, Mr. Howard introduced law in 2004 ensuring that same-sex couples cannot legally marry. The law, according to the *International Herald Tribune*, even closed any potential legal challenge to the ban.



Despite a 2007 poll revealing that 71% of Australians believe homosexual couples should have the same legal rights as common-law heterosexual couples, Mr. Howard remained firm. He stated, "We are not in favor of discrimination, but of course our views on the nature of marriage in our community are very well known and they won't be changing."

### Foreign Relations

From the outset, Mr. Howard has maintained close relations with the United States. In 2003 Australia contributed troops to the U.S.- and British-led war in Iraq. Despite accusations of misleading the public regarding the war, a 2004 government report cleared the Howard administration of any wrongdoing.

Later that year, Mr. Howard won his fourth successive term as Prime Minister.

Relations with the People's Republic of China have been increasingly important and complex. China accounts for 11.5% of Australia's exports, and 13.7% of its imports. Relatively wealthy in natural resources, Australia has been an important source for China's growing economy. However, conservative policies of Mr. Howard's administration have increased tensions between the two nations.

For example, earlier this year Australia signed a defense pact with Japan, which the *Christian Science Monitor* described as "committing the two nations to cooperation on military, antiterrorism, and security matters."

According to *Bloomberg*, Mr. Howard stated the declaration "represents a new dimension to our relationship and should not be seen as being antagonistic to anyone in the region," but that "this will not contribute to an arms race or a military build-up in the region."

*Bloomberg* pointed out that both Japan and Australia have security treaties with the U.S., and that the new Japanese-Australian pact called for strengthening cooperation among the three countries.

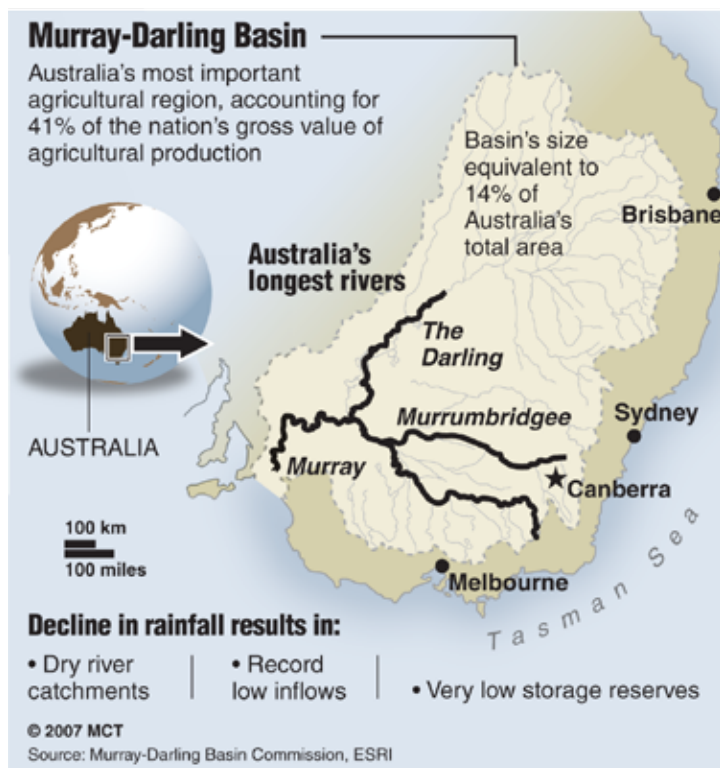
### Drought

Another challenge for Mr. Howard has been that Australia is reeling from several years of drought.

Earlier this year Mr. Howard announced the government might ban the use of water from the Murray-Darling river basin for agricultural purposes. This water system contains the nation's three largest rivers, and 14% of the landmass (similar to the size of France and Spain combined)—making it the most significant agricultural area in Australia. According to several sources,

## AUSTRALIA THREATENED BY DROUGHT

Declining rainfall during the past year may lead to an irrigation ban threatening Australia's agriculture and wine production.



it generates approximately 40% of the country's agricultural production, and is commonly called Australia's "food bowl." If water for irrigation were cut off from use in this area, it would spell the end to Australia's agriculture industry.

*The Independent* (UK) stated the continuing drought has already cut total agricultural production by one-quarter, and the country's GDP by 1%.

Reading from a commission's report, Mr. Howard indicated that Australia was in "an unprecedented dangerous situation," warning that "there will be insufficient water available to allow any allocation of the commencement of the 2007/2008 water year for irrigation..." He added, "...it will be sometime before we know the full extent of it and whether or not it will enable some allocation to be made."

### The Future

Despite Mr. Howard's steadfast leadership and relatively successful tenure as Prime Minister, significant change is in the air. A federal election is expected sometime in 2007 or 2008, and current polls suggest Labour Party leader Kevin Rudd is maintaining a consistent preference. □

# UNIVERSE

Continued from page 8

is “just right.” In fact, another name for a habitable zone is a *Goldilocks zone*.

As we have seen in this series, Earth is perfectly positioned in this zone in our solar system. Our solar system is positioned in this zone within the Milky Way. And our galaxy is

to you? Even with the most aggressive estimations of scientific and technological advancement it would be tens or hundreds of years before mankind would be able to colonize neighboring planets. It would seem that, beyond being interesting, the universe does not matter to the average man or woman.

That conclusion could not be more wrong. There is an advancement coming of which even the most brilliant scientists are ignorant. Hundreds or

The great Creator of all things, from atoms to galactic clusters, does everything for a purpose: “For thus says the LORD that *created the heavens*; God Himself that *formed the earth and made it*; He has established it, He created it not in vain, He formed it to be INHABITED...” (Isa. 45:18). The Creator of the heavens and Earth designed them to be “inhabited.” They had a special and distinct purpose.

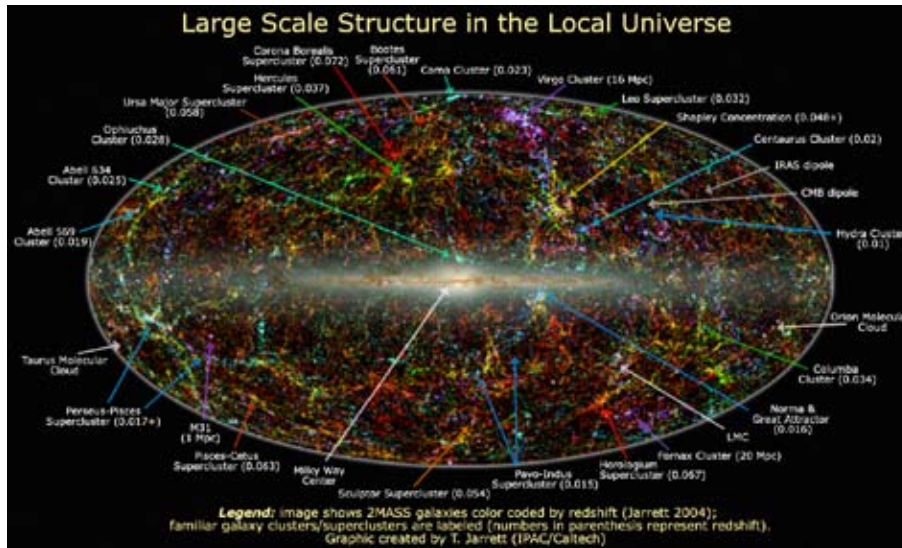
Notice: “For by Him were *all things* created, that are in *heaven*, and that are in *earth, visible and invisible...all things* were created by Him, and for Him” (Col. 1:16).

Again, all things were created for a purpose. Turning to the back of the Bible reveals even more fascinating understanding. The phrase “all things” appears again. This time, it is connected to true Christians alive *today!*

Those who obey God *now* will inherit a reward foretold over thousands of years: “He that overcomes *shall inherit all things*” (Rev. 21:7). The Moffatt translation renders the single Greek word translated “all things” as THE UNIVERSE.

*That* is why you were born! *That* is the reason for the breathtaking expanse of the heavens. *That* is why mankind cannot satisfy its curiosity about the cosmos. Man is meant to one day inherit “all things”—the entire universe!

If you make the CHOICE to respond to your Creator and develop your awesome potential and overcome today, *you* can have a part in this great inheritance. □



ideally positioned to support life and discovery of the cosmos.

Everything is “just right.” Can you now grasp why the Creator states, “The fool has said in his heart, there is no God” (Psa. 53:1)?

## Your Great Inheritance

Throughout this series, we have toured aspects of Earth, our galaxy and the greater cosmos. Why does this matter

even thousands living today will be able to explore the universe, traveling faster than the speed of light—and soon!

The farthest reaches of the cosmos will be reached in just a few short years. Does this sound impossible—too incredible to be true?

What if you were told that YOU could be one of those intergalactic explorers?

## What is Ahead for Your Future?

Prepare to be staggered—stunned beyond belief! Incredible truth has remained hidden—held back—from all humanity for 2,000 years. A deceived world has been kept from knowing the vital missing dimension to resolving mankind’s problems. Christ came as a newscaster revealing future events—explaining in advance good news for all mankind. This is the shocking story of the true gospel that He brought—and how it involves you!







# STAR-CROSSED!

## ASTROLOGY'S PERSISTENT INFLUENCE

BY JEFFREY R. AMBROSE

**C**ONSIDER FOR A MOMENT the greatest decisions in life: “What will I do after high school?...Should I go to college?... If so, what should I study?...What approach will I take in maintaining health?...Should I practice a religion?...Should I get married?... Who should I marry?...Should we have children?...Are we ready to buy a house?...Should I change careers?”

Now think of the mundane, routine decisions each day presents: what time to awake—what to eat—how to spend free time—how to manage the day’s schedule.

Human lives are defined by decisions, large and small. The choices we make have a bearing on our success, happiness, effectiveness and even our very identity. This is simple common sense.

With this in mind, ask yourself: Would a rational person’s decisions—of any consequence—have anything to do with a ball of gas, or a large chunk of minerals and metals, billions of miles or light years away from earth? This seems like a silly question, with an obvious answer.

Yet, millions answer with an enthusiastic “yes”—and sometimes pay for the services of “professionals” who will help them make decisions on this basis.

### A Long History

Astrology is a form of divination—an attempt to foresee the future or discover secrets through omens or contact with the supernatural. Its adherents claim the stars and planets have an influence on earthly events—and that this influence can be understood and then used for one’s advantage.

Astrologers believe the constellations through which the sun’s orbit passes during a solar year, called the zodiac constellations, affect individuals and nations. They attribute particular importance to the alignment of these heavenly bodies at the time of a per-



son's birth, which they believe determines his or her character traits and destiny. The most well-known form of astrology today is the daily star chart, or horoscope.

Forms of this belief have existed for thousands of years, with its early development largely taking place in the ancient kingdom of Babylon. Langer's *Encyclopedia of World History* states, "When Babylon became a great metropolis and the capital of an empire, its god Marduk acquired a new importance and...became the supreme god of the pantheon and was later called *Bel* [the "Baal" referenced in the Bible]... The most characteristic and influential features of Babylonian religion, aside from its mythology, were the elaborate systems of magical practices (incantations) and the interpretation of omens (divination), particularly the movements and position of the heavenly bodies (astrology), the actions of animals, and the characteristics of the liver of sacrificial victims."

From Babylon, astrology was exported to Egypt, Greece, India, China, Rome and Byzantium, even making inroads for a time in Iran and the Islamic world.

The modern West, which views itself as sophisticated and advanced, scoffs at the idea of finding useful information in a dead animal's liver. But somehow the related practice of astrology lives on—and is thriving!

### Popular Throughout Society

Astrology has seen a number of revivals over the centuries. The daily newspaper horoscope became an industry mainstay after London's *Sunday Times* included an astrological profile in a feature on Princess Margaret's birth in 1930. Its popularity surged in the late 1960s, as interest in Eastern mysticism and other forms of spirituality, often accompanied by psychoactive drug use, took hold among the counter-culture generation.

The practice appears to be most prevalent among Americans and Britons. A 2003 Harris poll found that 31% of American adults believe in astrology, with a higher percentage

among some segments of the population. A study of female university students conducted in England in 2001 documented "the strong influence of astrology on women's lives," which showed that "72% do not think astrology is just superstition and almost 90% said that they find out the sun signs of people they have relationships with. 78% had read a book concerning their sun sign in love."

Some of the most heavily visited websites dedicated to spirituality are astrology-based. Entire magazines are devoted to astrology, and many women's monthlies such as *Glamour* and *Cosmopolitan* feature an astrology column. Most top 20 American newspapers, including the *Los Angeles Times*, *Chicago Tribune* and *Washington Post*, feature daily horoscopes. Hundreds of smaller papers run these as well.

Here is a typical horoscope excerpt: "Cancer (June 22-July 22): The tone of your personal relationships will swing from serious to lighthearted, keeping loved ones on their toes. The air of unpredictability around you is ever so attractive" (*Los Angeles Times*).

Despite the obvious shallowness of this advice, some will approach their day with these words in mind, leading to real consequences in their personal relationships!

### Problems and Contradictions

Astrologers present their practice as a science—yet there is not a shred of scientific evidence that any celestial body affects human beings (apart from well-documented occurrences such as circadian rhythms and sun-related phenomena). Its claim to provide an avenue to improve relationships and foster success is an empty promise. "Though often regarded as a science throughout its history, astrology is widely considered today to be diametrically opposed to the findings and theories of modern Western science" (*Encyclopedia Britannica*).

The logical gaps in astrology's theories are large—and many.

Consider the infinitesimal odds that an object light-years away has an influence on an earthbound being.

It could be compared to expecting a pebble thrown into the Arctic Ocean to have a noticeable effect on the shore of Antarctica!

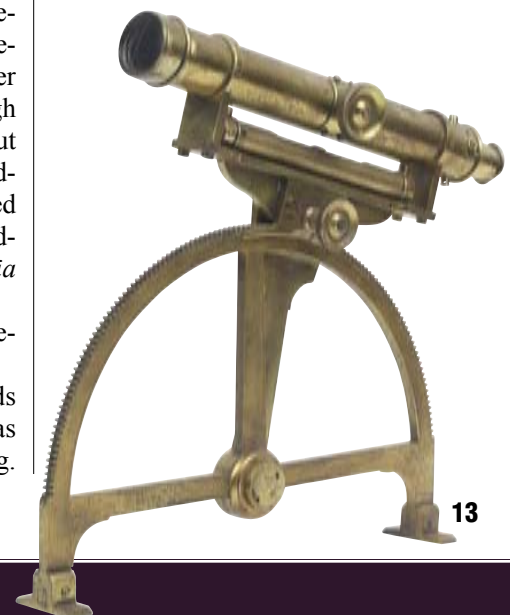
Also, according to horoscopes there are only twelve general kinds of a day being experienced on planet earth—productive, happy, nostalgic, melancholy, romantically-charged, etc. So the half a billion-plus people born under the same sign must be having the same kind of day—apparently even if one of them is royalty and another is among the poorest residents of the Third World.

Never mind the fact that charts by various astrologers, supposedly reading the same heavenly signs, contradict one another.

Does any of this make sense?

Additionally, astrologers have misrepresented the path of the earth in relation to the stars for centuries. Over the last two millennia, they have failed to make adjustments based on the precession of our planet (the "wobbling" of the earth on its axis, similar to the end of a spinning top as it slows down) that has shifted the position of the stars in relation to the earth. This shift has caused the "zodiac calendar" to be nearly a month out of sync with the stars.

Horoscopes also ignore one constellation classified by astronomy—a legitimate science—as within the zodiac group: Ophiuchus. The earth now spends more time within the boundaries of this constellation than it does within Scorpio (named Scorpius by astronomers).



Study after study has shown that astrologers' predictions and insights are no more accurate than random guesses. In fact, in some of these studies, a non-astrologer was brought in alongside the astrologers and asked to do just that—make guesses regarding a person's life, without being given personal information on the subject. The spontaneous assessments from these individuals often had the *same rate of accuracy* as the veteran stargazers who spent hours consulting charts and gathering personal data.

Should a human being base any decision on this pseudoscience?

### **Harmless Entertainment?**

Horoscopes are often presented next to comic strips in newspapers. But is astrology only fun and games—something like the obviously fraudulent tabloids whose headlines scream about Martians and half-man/half-animals roaming the forests?

Astrology ventures into much more dangerous territory. Those who become involved with it are opening their minds to the influence of spiritism (read our report *Witches, Wizards and Spirits – Grave and Growing Danger*). As one study, which effectively debunks astrology, states, "Some astrologers see the birth chart as a mandala or magical diagram, a means to contact spirit powers that guide and direct a person. Note again the parallel with shamanism, where 'practitioners deliberately alter or heighten their conscious awareness to enter the so-called "spirit world"... Of nine randomly-selected lecturers at a major American astrology convention in 1988, seven claimed to have spirit guides or were spiritists, and another was involved with spiritistic literature'" (*Journal of Consciousness Studies*).

### **Astrology in the Bible**

The countries in which astrology is most popular profess to be Judeo-Christian nations. Is this strange practice mentioned in the Bible?

It is!

God instructed Israel, a nation He intended to be an example for the rest of the world, "Learn not the way of

the heathen, and be not *dismayed at the signs of heaven*; for the heathen are dismayed at them" (Jer. 10:2).

Regrettably, millions of human beings *are* dismayed at the signs of heaven. They routinely consult astrologers and horoscopes—at best a hoax, and at worst a gateway to the occult—before making important, life-altering decisions! The potential harm in this is incalculable.

The name of astrology's birthplace, Babylon, means "confusion" in Hebrew, and the city of Babylon is used throughout Scripture as a symbol of a world mired in confusion and separated from the true God (see Revelation 14:8; 18). Many traditions of the modern world can be traced back to this ancient metropolis.

A story in the book of Daniel reveals a Babylonian king's use of astrology after he witnessed a troubling vision: "The king cried aloud to bring in the astrologers, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers. And the king spoke, and said to the wise men of Babylon, whosoever shall read this writing, and show me the interpretation thereof, shall be clothed with scarlet, and have a chain of gold about his neck, and shall be the third ruler in the kingdom. Then came in all the king's wise men: but they could not read the writing, nor make known to the king the interpretation thereof" (5:7-8).

Then as now, *astrology failed!*

The account goes on to show a dramatic contrast in the ability of Daniel, a true prophet of God, to explain the vision. The queen of Babylon gives her king some advice: "There is a man in your kingdom, in whom is the spirit of the holy gods; and in the days of your father light and understanding and wisdom, like the wisdom of the gods, was found in him; whom the king Nebuchadnezzar your father, the king, I say, your father, made master of the magicians, astrologers, Chaldeans, and soothsayers; Forasmuch as an excellent spirit, and knowledge, and understanding, interpreting of dreams, and showing of hard sentences, and dissolving of doubts, were found in the same Daniel, whom the king named Belteshazzar:

now let Daniel be called, and he will show the interpretation" (vs. 11-12).

Daniel repeatedly delivered where astrologers and stargazers could not—however he did not credit himself, but rather a higher Source of wisdom and power: "There is a God in heaven that reveals secrets...this secret is not revealed to me for any wisdom that I have more than any living, but for their sakes that shall make known the interpretation to the king, and that you might know the thoughts of your heart" (2:28, 30).

### **Can We Understand the Future?**

Everyone would like to know what the future holds for the world at large, and for them personally. And the average human being would jump at the chance to have special knowledge that would give him or her an "inside track" to success, achievement and happiness.

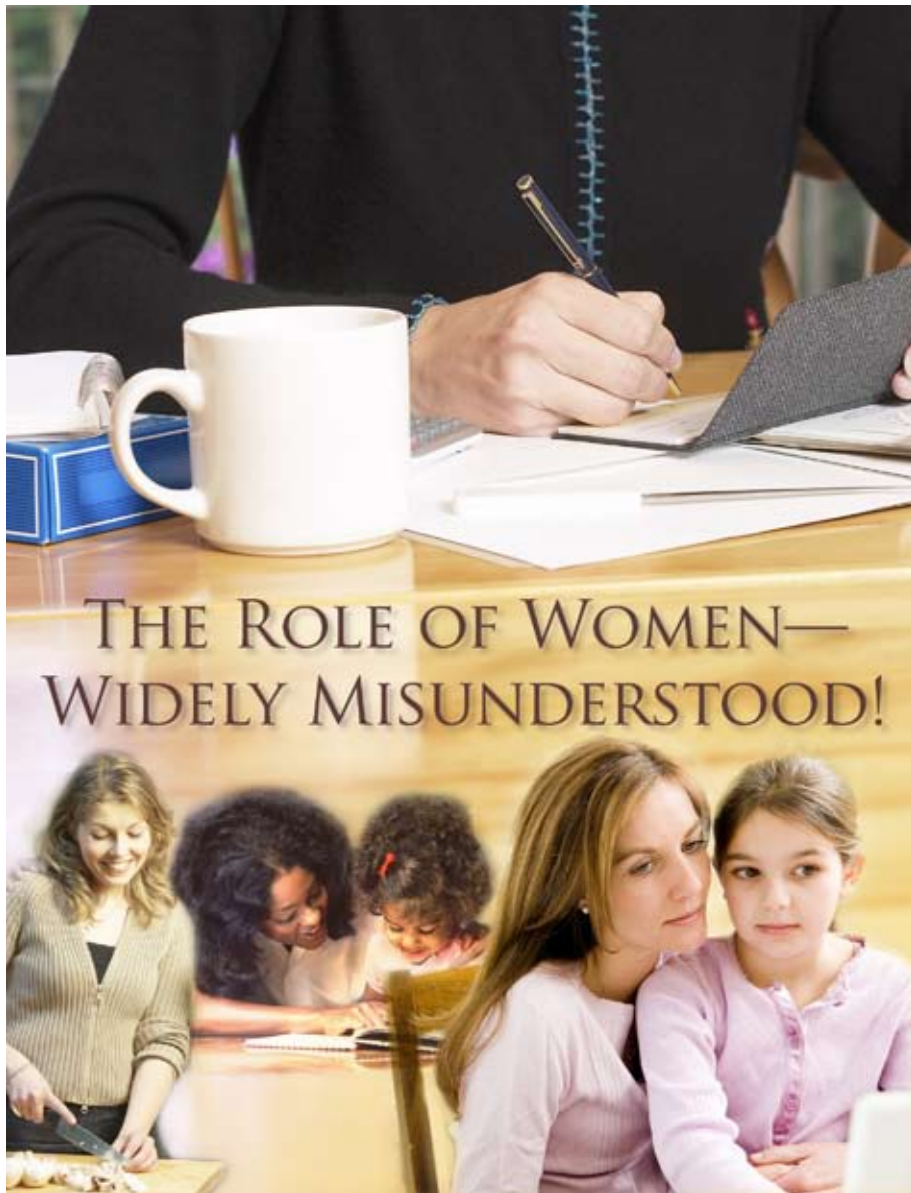
But can the future be known? And is there a source of knowledge that reveals the path to success? Is the same wisdom given to Daniel available today?

While we cannot know every detail of events to come, God's Word does reveal the future of the nations and groups of nations that will be dominant players in events ahead. It also reveals a law, and a way of life, that leads to success and strong relationships—for those who are willing to heed.

Predicting the demise of the resurgent false religion to appear at the end of the age, God inspired the prophet Isaiah to write, "You are wearied in the multitude of your counsels. Let now the astrologers, the stargazers, the monthly prognosticators, stand up, and save you from these things that shall come upon you. Behold, they shall be as stubble; the fire shall burn them; they shall not deliver themselves from the power of the flame" (47:13-14).

Prophecy reveals that, in the years preceding the Second Coming of Christ, most will follow false religion and spirituality on a collision course with disaster. But this need not include you!

Unlike astrology, the Bible does provide valuable insight on life and the future. To learn more, read *BIBLE AUTHORITY...can it be proven?* □



## THE ROLE OF WOMEN— WIDELY MISUNDERSTOOD!

Are women any different from men? Should one be treated better than the other? Here is the Bible's answer!

BY KEVIN D. DENEÉ

**H**ONOR KILLINGS—domestic violence—prostitution—rape—slavery—degradation—verbal abuse...these are the sad realities in the lives of many women today.

“Women’s rights” has been a hot topic in the Western world for decades. The treatment of women around the world, whether good or

bad, makes headlines regularly.

In countries such as Pakistan, South Africa, Peru, Russia and Uzbekistan, women are regularly beaten at home. Governments and authorities often turn a blind eye to domestic violence. For example, “in Pakistan, officials at all levels of the criminal justice system believe domestic violence is not a matter for criminal courts” (*Human Rights Watch*).

In Ukraine, Moldova, Nigeria, the Dominican Republic, Burma, Thailand and other nations, women are bought and sold for prostitution—reduced to an object to fulfill the carnal appetites of human nature.

In many conflicts in the past few decades, rape has been used as a weapon of war and oppression. Even children are not excluded. In such cases, men simply overpower women and horribly abuse them—leaving scars, physical and emotional, that last a lifetime.

Partly fueled by rape, AIDS is devastating Africa, stealing lives and orphaning innocent children. The United Nations Children’s Fund found that in Ethiopia, Malawi, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe, “for every 15-19-year-old boy who is infected, there are *five to six girls infected* in the same age group.”

This is not just a snapshot of today’s world—this has been the history of mankind.

Having been designed by their Creator as the “weaker vessel” (I Peter 3:7), many women have been the recipients of abuse, wrong perceptions and much more.

But is this what God intended? What does His Word say about women—and how should they be viewed and treated?

### Misconceptions

There are various Christian views on this subject among many disagreeing and competing groups and denominations. Each faction of professing Christianity has its own doctrinal agenda and focus.

Some take the extreme, right-wing approach to women—thinking the Bible dictates that a woman should walk five paces behind her husband, should never speak unless spoken to and should be quiet, looking at the floor.

While not saying this outright, others reduce women to individuals who cannot think for themselves—who, like newborn chicks, need everything “chewed” for them by a husband or father before they can “digest” it.



On the opposite end of the spectrum—anything goes! Many think there are no differences between men and women. This school of thought says that distinctions of any sort in any arena of society should never be made. If distinctions *are* made, the assumption is that they result from inequality.

Like any other organizational structure that was ordained millennia ago—whether groups of nations, individual nations, cities or families—mankind has manipulated, confused, twisted, enlarged and diminished the role of women in civilization.

Again, what does the Bible say? If there are so many varying beliefs, even among professing Christians, is there *any* right view on this subject? And is Scripture so unclear that one conclusion simply cannot be reached? Like any subject in the Bible, there are many differing opinions, but human beings and human institutions, cut off from God, come to *their own* conclusions—not God’s.

This article will demystify how the Bible and its Author explain how women should be viewed and treated.

### All Equal in God’s Sight...

Human beings, since the beginning of time, have tried to place their own class, race, nation, culture, gender, etc., above others. Citizens feel their nation is better than other nations. Races feel their race is superior. Some pride themselves in their culture and look down on others who are not as refined or liberated.

In this same way, many feel that their gender is better than the other. Jokes of all kinds are told throughout the Western world in an attempt to diminish and make fun of the opposite sex. Pop culture, specifically television sitcoms and advertisements, attempt to “right the wrongs” of the past, putting women ahead of men. Men are often portrayed as imbeciles who must have everything spelled out to them by their (much smarter) wives. But are women *better* than men? Or are men *better* than women? Or are they perfectly equal?

The Bible is very clear. Notice: “For you are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, *there is neither male nor*

*in subjection* to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives; while they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear. Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of

“Many think there are no differences between men and women. This school of thought says that distinctions of any sort in any arena of society should never be made.”

*female*: for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you be Christ’s, then are you Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise” (Gal. 3:26-29).

In God’s eyes, when one is a Christian, there is *NO DIFFERENCE* whether one is male or female! One is not better than the other—period. One does not have more rights than the other. In the truest sense, there is equality. Humans—every female, and every male—are made in the image of God (Gen. 1:26-28)—and each human being on earth has the potential to become an “heir according to the promise” given to Abraham thousands of years ago.

Neither gender is superior to the other—but does that mean there are no distinctions?

### ...But Different Roles

Many who have experienced and seen the atrocities committed against women have jumped into the opposite ditch—throwing out any semblance of structure that the Creator ordained thousands of years ago. The Bible does give explicit instruction to males and females, husbands and wives. Many professing Christians are probably familiar with these passages.

Let’s read the detailed account I Peter 3: “Likewise, you wives, be

plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; but let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands: Even as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose daughters you are, as long as you do well, and are not afraid with any amazement.

“Likewise, you husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.

“Finally, be you all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous” (vs. 1-8).

One word probably stands out the most and is deemed unacceptable in contemporary society: “subjection.” It can also mean “to submit or be subordinate to.” Essentially—when one truly understands what this means (many do not, and simply recoil with emotion)—this is simply God structuring the family unit. One individual must be in charge. As with any suc-

cessful business, someone must be at the top. For example, a vice-president in a company is subordinate to the president. Does that make the president more valuable or better? No! But he is given more responsibility and therefore held more accountable. The same is true with any father or husband.

Ephesians 5 also explains the different duties of husband and wife. Take time to read verses 22 through 33.

There are several other passages that explain the various duties within a family, but what we have read is enough to understand that the God who created the entire universe, with its ten billion trillion stars, also established a certain family structure. This was not implemented at random, but rather to create an atmosphere of success, peace and happiness, if applied correctly and with God's Holy Spirit, for both the wife and husband, as well as the children who follow.

Again, some recoil at the thought that a wife is to submit to her husband or that women are "the weaker vessel." But these are the plain statements of mankind's Creator. Be careful not to find yourself fulfilling Isaiah 45:9: "Woe to the man who quarrels with his Maker...Does the clay ask the potter what he is doing?" (Moffatt).

(Due to length, this article cannot begin to cover all the duties of a husband and wife. To learn more, read our booklet *You Can Build a HAPPY MARRIAGE*.)

### Jesus' Example

For those willing to study Jesus Christ's life, it is clear that He had a balanced and correct view of men and women.

Consider the account of the woman who was caught in the act of adultery. Take a moment to read John 8 verses 1 through 11. The Pharisees wanted to stone the woman (not very different from the "honor killings" found in some countries in the Mid-East today). But Jesus pointed out, possibly by writing the Pharisees' sins in the sand, that all people sin. He did not see her identity (and the fact that she was female)

as a reason to respond differently to her than to any other individual's sin. In the end, while many conclude this is a story of "you should not point out any one else's sins," it is instead a story of "go, and sin no more" (vs. 11)—of repentance and change.

It also shows that Christ did not take a different view because the sinner was a woman—He treated her the same as He would treat anyone else. People would do well to copy His example.

In another instance, in John 4:27, some were surprised that Jesus was talking to a woman in public—again, something still prohibited in many societies today. In fact, throughout the New Testament, we see Jesus Christ interacting with women, and never is there a sense that He viewed them as better or worse than men or as some sort of second-class citizens.

### Women in the Bible

Some may conclude that although Jesus did not stereotype or look down on women, other sections of the Bible do. A proper study of this Book reveals this is not the case. In some instances, women led (as a judge) the nation of Israel or served as prophetesses. In the case of Esther, she courageously saved her people from destruction. In the New Testament, some of the most oft-referenced servants and helpers are women.

Then there is the "Proverbs 31" woman. The passage begins, "Who can find a virtuous woman? For her price is far above rubies." The following scriptures describe a virtuous woman as one who...

■ works hard and willingly (vs. 13)

■ is productive and makes use of all the time she is given (vs. 15)

■ is a thinker, a businesswoman (vs. 16, 24)

■ is strong (vs. 17, 25), but generous (vs. 20)

■ is clothed with beautiful attire (vs. 21-22)

■ is honored (vs. 25), wise and kind (vs. 26)

■ takes care of her family (vs. 27)

■ is beloved by her husband and children (vs. 28)

■ is praised as a pillar in her community (vs. 31)

Does this sound like a quiet, foot-shuffling, always-looking-down, five-paces-behind-her-husband woman? Of course not! This is a person who understands who she is—a woman who strives and achieves real success! Those who scoff at the Bible say that it degrades and looks down upon women. In God's true Church, this is simply NOT the case! And true ministers maintain a very strict policy against the abuse of women.

### A Missing Dimension

The reason humanity will never take a balanced approach to this subject, or any other related topic, is that there is an UNKNOWN DIMENSION absent in the vast knowledge of mankind. In rejecting divine revelation, still available today, people have rejected the spiritual understanding that is connected to the roles of male and female.

The Bible provides the foundational knowledge man cannot discover by his own investigation or experimentation. When man rejects this knowledge, he inevitably lands in error. Just as all equipment comes with an instruction manual, so has God provided such a Manual for mankind. Heeding the instructions of this Manual of spiritual information leads to happiness and fulfillment. Abiding by it assures blessings in every endeavor. Disregarding it guarantees curses and eventual breakdown of all progress in every endeavor.

In the end, men and women are equal in God's eyes, but are simply assigned different roles—neither one better or worse, more or less intelligent, of more or less worth, etc.

This should be our view as well. All human beings should be treated with respect, love and honor. Each individual has the potential to be part of God's Family, and all should be treated as such. While there are different roles, and oftentimes different strengths and weakness, we are all human, created to fulfill our incredible human potential! □



# THE SCOURGE OF ILLITERACY

*Soon to be Erased!*

**Throughout the world, 785 million people ages 15 and above are unable to complete a job application, comprehend a bus schedule or read a magazine article. Global illiteracy remains a reality—but not for long. Here’s why.**

BY BRUCE A. RITTER

**L**ET’S TAKE A GLIMPSE into the school of the future: Class sizes are small, enabling teachers to work more closely with each student. Every school uses the same quality of books, manuals and other scholastic material, due to equitable funding.

Educators and staff are friendly and approachable, diligent to set the right example and free of “progressive” sociopolitical agendas. Teachers are well educated, highly quali-

fied and earn comfortable salaries. All desire their students to succeed. All use the most effective teaching methods, leaving no place for confusion in the scholastic curriculum.

Students peaceably stroll through the hallways without fear of intimidation or assault from fellow classmates.

The school grounds are clean, free of graffiti and other markings of disfigurement.

A safe, clean, uplifting environment where students can retain their innocence. Where educators are highly and personally motivated. Where young

minds are ready and willing to learn and are encouraged daily to excel. Where illiteracy is extinct.

An impossible scenario? An elusive dream of utopia? No, this is a reality that *can* and *will* come to pass—though not by the governments and institutions of men.

## **A Look Into the Past**

The United Nations defines illiteracy as the inability to read and write a simple message in one’s language. This also includes not being able to comprehend texts of various levels.

For millennia, the ability to read and write was generally limited to rulers and the wealthy, as well as scholars and religious leaders. Under the Greek and Roman empires, literacy among the masses became more prevalent.

In Europe, major catalysts of literacy were the debut of the printing press and the Protestant Reformation, which stressed the importance of reading the Bible.



In the past 100 years or so, Western nations have made schooling compulsory, serving to reduce man's illiteracy rate even further. Coinciding with this, the Industrial Revolution, which brought an ability to inexpensively mass produce goods, made books, pens and other scholastic material affordable.

Revolutionary political movements during the past 200 years targeted illiteracy as an enemy. Even totalitarian communist regimes sought to bring reading and writing to the people—though in a way that brutally conditioned and controlled the masses.

Nonetheless, oppressive societies throughout history have suppressed education from being given to the common people. The thought of commoners and others at the bottom rung of society understanding how to read and write was viewed as a threat to the balance of power. Illiteracy made it much easier to control the people.

The modern world has made great gains in reducing illiteracy: From 1970 to 2000-2004, the adult literacy rate rose from 75% to 88%; today, 82% of those ages 15 and above are literate.

In 2005, the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) published the *EFA Global Monitoring Report*, which presented the following global snapshot for 2000-2004:

- Approximately 18% of the world's adult population is illiterate.

- While illiteracy rates since 1990 have fallen in most regions, Sub-Saharan Africa and the Arab States rose 9.8% and 12.6%, respectively.

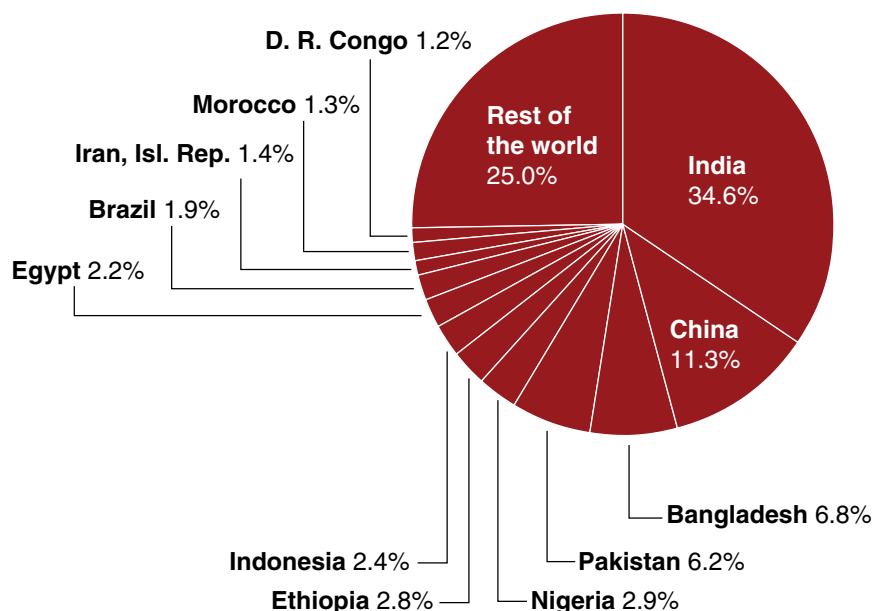
- In nations where severe poverty is widespread, so is illiteracy.

- More than two-thirds of all illiterate adults are in eight countries: India, China, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Nigeria, Ethiopia, Indonesia and Egypt.

- 75% of the world's adult illiterate population lives in only 12 nations.

In addition to those who are illiterate, there are also the “functionally illiterate,” who can read and write simple messages in their own language, but are unable to read, write and use basic math skills in everyday situations. The

## Global Adult Illiterate Population



functionally illiterate cannot fill out employment applications; follow written instructions; read news articles; interpret a bus or subway schedule; or consult a dictionary.

Studies indicate illiteracy is tied to poverty and crime, all of which are perpetuated from generation to generation.

### Awesome Future Just Ahead!

Generally, worldwide literacy rates are progressing, even for many living in the poorest of nations. However, illiteracy and substandard education will continue to exist as long as young minds remain prisoners in a scholastic environment of inept and/or powerless educators, sociopolitical agendas, negligent parents, poor funding, illegal drugs and on-campus violence.

Yet the future scenario described at the beginning of this article will one day become reality for all. It will be established by a new, world-ruling system—a supergovernment—led by the greatest Educator, foretold millennia ago in Scripture.

Take note: “For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given: and the GOVERNMENT shall be upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The

Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His GOVERNMENT and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon His kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even forever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this” (Isa. 9:6-7).

This is a prophecy of Jesus Christ returning to establish the kingdom of God upon the earth. Quoting this might seem laughable to secular minds. Yet 6,000 years of history—monarchies, dictatorships, communist systems, republics, democracies—proves that human beings are incapable of ruling themselves. Man does not know how to bring about the universal peace, prosperity and personal security all long for. All governments of men, even those that started with noble intentions, eventually degenerate into corruption, nepotism, hypocrisy and moral compromise.

But the kingdom of God is different. It is the divine government of God administered by the Family of God—whose members have rejected over the course of a lifetime the pulls and temptations of this world and replaced carnal nature with holy, righteous, godly character. In addition to being kings and judges under Christ's rule, they will also be *teachers*.

Notice: “For the people shall dwell in Zion at Jerusalem: you shall weep no more: He will be very gracious unto you at the voice of your cry; when He shall hear it, He will answer you. And though the Lord give you the bread of adversity, and the water of affliction, yet shall not your *teachers* be removed into a corner any more, but your eyes shall see your *teachers*: And your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, *This is the way, walk you in it*, when you turn to the right hand, and when you turn to the left” (Isa. 30:19-21).

Human beings do not understand that “the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walks to direct his steps” (Jer. 10:23). Every person has his own idea of right and wrong, good and evil—and no two people totally agree. Even worse, the laws, ethics, morals and rules of conduct people generally agree upon degenerate from generation to generation. What was liberal 40 or 50 years ago is now viewed as over-the-top right-wing. Man needs guidance from his Maker, or else civilization devolves into a society in which “every man does that which is right in his own eyes” (Judges 21:25).

Like the world today.

“But in the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of the LORD shall be established in the top of the mountains [large governments], and it shall be exalted above the hills [small governments]; and people shall flow unto it. And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and *He will teach us of His ways*, and we will walk in His paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem” (Micah 4:1-2).

One the many things the returning Christ will teach is the way to peace: “And He shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more” (vs. 3).

Notice verse 2 again: “for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.” God’s Word—the Bible—is an “instruction manual” for learning how to live, how to successfully interact with God and neighbor. This can only happen if people can *read* the Bible. Obviously, God will make certain that all peoples will know how to read and write.

The book *TOMORROW’S WONDERFUL WORLD – An Inside View!* offers a glimpse into man’s future under the kingdom of God:



■ **LEARNING TO READ:** The mother of the nine-year-old pictured above took out a \$4,000 loan so she could send him to a for-profit educational business that provides personalized tutoring in reading.

PHOTO: MCT

“Life is a process of education—learning to develop character by obedience to God’s laws, which in turn yields every good, fulfilling and favorable result. Education in the world tomorrow will explain how to live—and how to learn a productive trade. Of course, all academic subjects, including wholesome art and music, will produce well-rounded people. Life will become invigorating, exciting and fulfilling.”

“Re-educating the world will be a truly monumental task. The difficult job of teaching people to learn can only be done if teachers are *un-handcuffed* and allowed to bring proper discipline and order to schools and classrooms, now so out of control.”

“Perhaps the greatest single barrier to being sure all nations are taught the exact same thing, with no room for misunderstanding, are man’s hundreds of different languages. All peoples must be given a pure language so that God’s knowledge is not subject to the error of translators working in and out of hundreds of languages and dialects. The fulfillment of Isaiah 11:9 has to involve a *simultaneous* worldwide education program.

“In fact, the Bible directly prophesies the coming of this new, *pure language* to be spoken by all nations. Notice: “For then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the Lord, to serve Him with one consent” (Zeph. 3:9).

“Try to imagine a world with absolutely no communication barriers. It is a very different picture than today’s world.

“Only with one perfect language will every international barrier to peace truly disappear. The plague of mis-education and illiteracy will also vanish. Recognize that a leading cause of illiteracy is that great areas of the world do not even have language in written form. Among those that do, there are a variety of differing alphabets, such as Hebrew, Russian, Arabic, Greek and Sanskrit. Also gone will be the multiple ways that people pronounce the same words differently.”

“Education and literacy will be universal in the world tomorrow, restoring dignity to all humanity, created in the image of God.”

“With proper education and no language barriers, ‘the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea!’”

Incorruptible teachers. A pure, easy to understand, universal language. A world-ruling government dedicated to educating all people. Only then will the scourge of illiteracy be erased. □

## PERSONAL

Continued from page 2

able to carefully read it, even rereading certain parts of it. She expressed several times to different people upon reading it (1) how important it was that the message needed to be distributed among God's people, (2) how upset many readers were going to be, and (3) that she could not understand how anyone who survived the apostasy in the Worldwide Church of God could miss the message it contained. I found it most encouraging that the book left her repeating the word "incredible" over and over.

At this point, it would be inspiring to review a quote that one of the visiting wives from overseas who attended the Conference gave me the day of my wife's death. She may have been the last woman other than her caregivers and our daughter who spoke to my wife. Their brief conversation was Monday, July 16, Mrs. Pack's last day in the office:

"One of the most spiritually uplifting experiences I have ever had in my life was meeting with the late Mrs. David Pack. This courageous lady, within a few short days of her death meeting me for the first time, was so fired up and focused on God's Work, she said that no matter what happened to her, or the outcome of her illness, it was all in God's Plan and that the Work must go on. She added that we must not be discouraged but more determined than ever to get on with the job of serving in and supporting God's Work. These were her words. It seemed to me that she didn't consider, at any time, her own suffering. She was far more concerned about God's Work and getting on with it. Her love for God and God's people shone through her and I can never ever forget that meeting."

I am tempted to say that this statement says it all, but there is one other brief statement I would like to offer because it was part of my wife's very last conversation with me, held one week ago tonight as I write. She barely had enough breath to utter the words. It contains perhaps the most inspiring

for the reader, but for reasons you will see, the most difficult of words in her concluding sentence for me to hear:

"Tell the men in the office and the Church to always pray to keep their eyes on the Work. That is the most important thing for the rest of the age. Don't take your eyes off the Work. I am just sorry I could not stay and do it with you."

The Church has lost much with the passing of Mrs. Pack. That loss is simply incalculable. Her training began several years before Ambassador College, and she was already eleven and a half years in the faith when we were married. Before our marriage, she had traveled the world, attended two years of her college in Bricketwood, England, learned to play four instruments and been Mr. Armstrong's secretary for two stints totaling five years over an eight-year period. Later, after marriage, she worked with the same 10,000 to 11,000 people that were in my assignments through the years, endured the same trials and personal attacks for unwillingness to compromise, while bearing and helping rear our three children—and *always* attending *every* Sabbath service with me in the years I pastored two and three congregations. Of course, all of this was while she was also experiencing the many aspects of my special training and preparation by God referenced above.

I have personally lost a kinship that allowed either of us to mention any name, date, event, doctrine, situation or circumstance, including all elements of the apostasy after Mr. Armstrong's time and the resulting splinters, and know that the other had an instant frame of reference that required no being brought up to speed. Directly related to this, one of my wife's qualities was that she was always "real." She possessed an extraordinary intuitive ability to "smell" given situations.

We often felt that the best summary of our marriage, if we could only use one term, was "spiritually productive." She told me twice in the last few weeks of our marriage, "No one could ever understand our marriage." To say that my wife's passing leaves a hole in

the office is a great understatement. It leaves a bigger hole in our home.

I am not the only one of God's servants to endure losing a wife. Those who heard my sermon "At the Red Sea" (many thousands have now listened to it) know the story of Mr. Armstrong's wife dying in 1967, also after a long, difficult illness. Although almost age 75 at the time, Mr. Armstrong was required to go on without her for almost 19 more years. I also referenced how the prophet Ezekiel lost his wife at apparently a much younger age than was my wife, and how Paul must have lost his wife as well. We have had many dramatic healings in The Restored Church of God. Sometimes God allows people to continue living, through divine healing, and sometimes He does not because "it is appointed unto [all] men once to die" (Heb. 9:27). Ultimately, everyone dies of something, meaning everyone eventually dies having not been healed. My wife ran a long, difficult course of 43 years and 10 months with God's Spirit, nearly four years longer than Mrs. Armstrong, plus another almost four more years of attendance as a teenager before that. In regard to actual length of conversion, baptized in September 1963, she was in fact four years and three months longer than I in the faith, because I was baptized in December of 1967.

In her last months my wife built the qualities of much greater longsuffering, faith, self control—I often called her the "regimen queen" because of her tremendous willpower—and, finally, she developed a greater and complete peace over God's decision not to heal her. Despite wishing so badly to continue, she came to fully understand that "to live is Christ, and to die is GAIN" (Phil. 1:21).

My wife has reached the ultimate "GAIN"!

While the death of every saint is precious to God (Psa. 116:15), a unique circumstance exists in our age, and this may well have been the case with my wife because of what she would have possibly had to witness me endure. God explains in Isaiah, "The righteous perishes, and no man lays it to heart:



and merciful men are taken away, none considering that the righteous is taken away from the evil to come" (57:1).

May all of us "lay to heart" and "consider" what has happened here.

In the end, I am now alone. I repeat, as Christians, we are all forced to play the cards that God has dealt us. The only other option is to get up and leave the table and look for another "game." This was never an option for Mrs. Pack and it is not an option for me. Neither should it ever be for you (John 6:66-68). In my wife, you are all left with a wonderful example that you can emulate in regard to approach to the Work and in acceptance of God's will.

Brethren, know that I intend to press on toward the mark (Phil. 3:14) without looking back (Luke 9:62). This physical life is described as so much "grass of the field," "a handbreadth," as the ancient King David stated. On the other hand, in this age, time is very, very short. There are not remotely 19 years left to finish the Work. My wife's own words quoted above are what is on my mind. Like Paul, I intend to fulfill I Corinthians 9:26-27: "I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one

that beats the air: but I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a *castaway*." I am under no illusion that this will be easy. Paul knew that those of his office could also be *unapproved* by God (the more correct meaning of the Greek word *adokimos*, here translated as "castaway"). As a case in point, after posting this letter, I will go straight to do another *WORLD TO COME* broadcast. I ask that all of you would pray for me that I would have additional strength going forward in a way that I never thought I would have to ask anyone to pray for.

Continued and even increased attacks on the Work of God are to be expected. Remember, Satan accuses God's people "day and night." He never rests in his efforts. Therefore, neither should we. Be assured that I will not flag. I will not slow down and plan to do all in my power to speed up. While "the god of this world" (II Cor. 4:4) is angry with God's Church, the God of heaven is pleased with where His Church is going!

In the end, one of my wife's favorite verses, so important to her as she sought to get sleep each night with her

terribly difficult breathing problems, has in the final sense come to pass on her behalf. David also wrote, "I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep: for You, LORD, only make me dwell in safety" (Psa. 4:8). My wife is now at peace, asleep—and completely safe from all further spiritual threat and physical harm. I am very thankful that she had an incredibly strong constitution and heart, physically speaking (noted by those who cared for her), but of course spiritually also. This allowed me to have closure with her in the very fullest sense over a period of many months of her war against the cancer. But, in the light of King David's words, I can also take comfort that her long, incredibly difficult struggle is over. We are left to think of how the completion by God of one "living stone" (I Pet. 2:5) in His Temple (II Cor. 6:16-17) within a number so small in the First Resurrection trumps all other reasons why we might wish my wife to have been able to continue at my side.

I leave you with I Thessalonians 4:13-18. You may wish to consider it a reading assignment. As you think of Mrs. Shirley M. Pack, be sure to read verse 18 a second time. □

## READER COMMENTS *From our online subscribers*

### COLOMBIA:

■ "Thanks for the opportunity; always looking for well researched articles regarding the truth."

### FIJI:

■ "Interesting news articles, good analysis of the situations presented."

■ "I would like to get updates of what is happening and what is to happen."

### INDIA:

■ "A very good and informative site to get the news with real facts and

basic truth."

■ "*Realtruth.org* seems to provide accurate information of coming world events in the light of biblical predictions of the end times. It provides correlation of what was prophesied in the Bible and what is happening in the present world."

■ "The articles on geopolitics are very insightful and well-written."

### NIGERIA:

■ "I really enjoyed reading most of your write-ups that I came across."

■ "I found your article on 'The Da Vinci Code' very informative and educative."

### PAKISTAN:

■ "Indeed an excellent website, very useful and very educating. Regards to all contributors, researchers and people who are engaged in this website."

### UGANDA:

■ "I would like to think that among the many news websites there are not any bringing this Christian perspective that you so ably do."

### UNITED STATES:

■ "Your articles are quite informative. I am a Christian and am trying to understand and get a deeper meaning of the scriptures. I attend church on a regular basis, but it seems as if something is missing. We seem to be doing a lot a programs in our church but no real substance, when it comes to God's Word."

■ "I used to read...*The Plain Truth* and went online to see if it were possible to continue getting material from you. I found you and am very excited!!"

## AFRICA

## African Continent Handcuffed by Power Shortages

Twenty-five of the 44 sub-Saharan African nations are facing a mounting crisis from unprecedented power blackouts (load-shedding) that are blanketing the continent. Alarming, many experts agree there is no solution on the horizon due to a cacophony of complex issues and interrelated problems (*International Herald Tribune*).

However, blackouts are not the only issue. In certain countries such as Zambia, severe electricity shortages have resulted in only 20% of households having access to power and only 3% in rural areas having limited access to the power grid.

In countries such as Angola and Nigeria, it is the norm for almost all businesses and individuals desiring reliable power to operate individual gas-run generators. As imagined, this is not only burdensome to many with inordinately high gas costs, but is also contributing to an ever-growing pollution problem and environmental nightmare in the densely populated urban centers across Africa.

However, in nations where customers do have access to power, significant obstacles still exist. Perhaps the most critical problem is an unreliable power supply due to crumbling infrastructure, which is largely based on lack of routine maintenance and virtually no implementation or integration of the new technology for the massive interconnected power grids between African nations.

Lawrence Musaba, the manager of the Southern Africa Power Pool, a 12-nation electricity consortium on the continent's tip, characterized the state of Africa's power grid with a sobering report: "We've had no significant capital injection into generation and transmission, from either the private or public sectors, for 15, maybe 20 years," he said (*ibid.*).

Nigeria is a clear example of the effects of badly deteriorating infrastructure and dilapidated or ill-maintained

equipment. The Council for Renewable Energy in Nigeria reported that of its 79 existing power plants only 19 are currently operational and generating power. The results have been devastating for Africa's most populous nation, as electricity production plummeted by over 60% in

Here, power supply and distribution is controlled by multiple private companies that lack strict regulations and oversight. Because of this, grids are so poorly managed that power companies are paid for as little as 60% of the power they produce with the rest either being stolen by those who are



this nation of over 140 million people (*ibid.*).

However, lack of investment to improve aging equipment and infrastructure is not the only contributing factor to faltering power and rolling blackouts. War in the Congo has delayed and disrupted the country's plans to use its rivers and their massive potential for hydroelectric power, and armed conflict has destroyed much of the existing power grid. Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda and Ghana have significant hydroelectric capabilities, but severe drought has persistently limited certain rivers' water flow, subsequently crippling facilities ability to generate large quantities of reliable power for their citizens.

A pivotal time period contributing to current conditions was the decision made by many nations in the early 1990s to privatize portions of their national power industries in the name of providing a free market and healthy competition. In many cases, the results have been disastrous. For instance, circumstances in Mozambique typify the frustration of both customers and power suppliers across the continent.

almost never caught or simply lost due to poorly maintained grids.

As a result, on July 15, 2007, the World Bank's Board of Directors approved a \$45 million dollar loan from the International Development Association to fund the construction of new transmission lines between Mozambique and Malawi. Although this investment shows recognition of the crisis by assisting in developing the regional electricity grid, only time will tell if this accomplishes anything tangible.

It would seem that government control and regulation may be the solution. In the case of South Africa, the government has nationalized power through the world's fourth-largest power utility ESKOM, over which it maintains strict control. Sadly, even the power problems are becoming dire for different reasons than its less economically strong neighbors. Although warned by experts for over a decade to invest in new, renewable resources and build more power plants, ESKOM has refused.

Please see **AFRICA** page 24

## AFRICA

Continued from page 23

The result has been massive rolling blackouts and shortages of power across a country that once had the only truly reliable power grid in Sub-Saharan Africa. Although ESKOM announced plans in July 2007 to expand new energy sources such as nuclear, wind, solar and hydroelectric power, they acknowledge these investments will not have a signifi-

cant impact until 2025 (*Business Day Johannesburg*).

This has caused a ripple effect across the continent. In recent years, South Africa's reliable and extensive chain of power plants has not only provided more than enough power for its citizens, but was a power "safety net" for its less developed and power-deficient African neighbors to the north.

However, persistent power failures in recent months have experts ominously predicting that the country could itself experience at least seven

years of worsening rolling blackouts, interrupted power and electricity shortages. It is clear that South Africa no longer has the ability to support its neighbors.

The issues affecting the continent of Africa are complex, cross international borders and affect the daily lives of hundreds of millions who are seeking a better life and the ability to participate in growing economies.

The current power shortage is just one of many issues that does not appear to have an easy solution. □

## GEOPOLITICS

### Rising Costs Jeopardize UN Food Programs

**D**ue to an increase in food prices this past year, the United Nations has warned that its World Food Programme could fall short in providing aid to at least 28 countries this year.

According to a new UN report, severe droughts occurring in various regions across the world, combined with severe crop shortages and a price hike in existing crops, will severely inhibit the organization's ability to assist the more than 90 million people it has continued to sustain.

In 2006 alone, the organization reportedly spent over \$600 million providing staple foods to nations in need. If prices continue to rise at the current rate, the UN subsidiary estimates that food costs will exceed its budget.

"We face the tightest agricultural markets in decades and, in some cases, on record," Josette Sheeran, World Food Programme Fund director, said in an interview with the *Financial Times*.

In addition, civil strife, internal conflict, effects of the HIV/AIDS epidemic and adverse weather conditions—including the 2004 Tsunami in Southeast Asia and the 2005 earthquake in Pakistan—have exacerbated the situation for thousands of residents currently receiving aid.

If certain aid programs were halted, recipients would have nowhere to turn for food.

According to a crop prospects report issued by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization, "An anticipated slowdown in growth of cereal production in low-income food-deficit countries, coupled with prospects for continued high international prices, could result in a tighter food supply situation for these countries in the coming year."

Places hardest hit would include Lesotho, Somalia, Swaziland and Zimbabwe, along with 16 other countries in Africa, seven in Asia, as well as Bolivia, the report states.

Several other areas are also experiencing hardship:

■ **Morocco:** Drought there has caused a poor yield in cereal crops; experts estimate production levels are only one quarter of last year's.

■ **Iraq:** Instability continues to threaten the food situation, with more than 1.8 million individuals having been displaced in four years of conflict.

■ **Bangladesh:** Unstable weather conditions have depleted the nation's wheat crops.

■ **Nepal:** 42 of its 75 districts are considered food deficient.

Though the situation appears

especially bleak in Africa, not all African nations are seeing crop failures this year. Several countries in the continent's southern tip—Malawi, Angola, Mozambique, Madagascar and Zambia—reported record or above average harvests. However, according to the report, surpluses in certain areas may not be enough to make a difference worldwide.

Along with drought and various other international problems, authorities credit the high cost of crops to an increase in biofuel production.

Recently, the U.S. Department of Agriculture relayed concerns about the production of ethanol. It warned that surging corn prices resulting from a decreased level of production, combined with continued strong demand for its use in ethanol, was not helping to resolve the price issue. (It is thought that using ethanol as an alternative fuel source may help combat the effects of global warming.)

United Nations Environmental Program Director, Achim Steiner, agreed: "There is significant potential and risk for competition between food production and production for global biofuels markets. We have to be aware that there are risks, and for some countries those risks may not be worth taking" (*Reuters*). □



## Flooding in Britain—No Power, No Water, No Food

**T**orrential rain caused flooding throughout England in June and July. In some areas, a month's worth of rain fell in just one hour—the wettest month since records began in 1766.

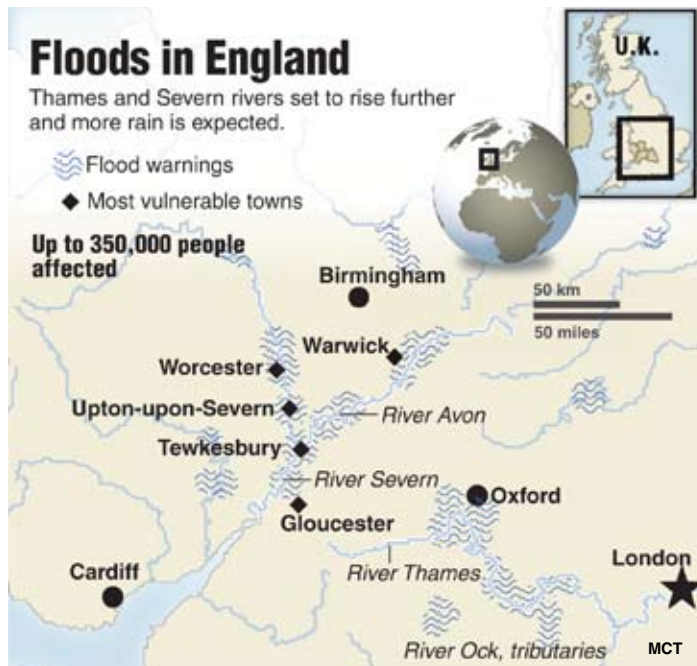
Unable to handle the increased water flow, three major rivers—the Severn, Ock and Thames—flooded Gloucestershire, Oxfordshire, Worcestershire and Berkshire, as the rivers rose as high as 20 feet above the normal level.

Thousands evacuated their homes, sleeping in sport stadiums and shelters. Thousands more who remained in their homes did not have drinking water or electricity. Utility buildings hit by the flood have contributed to the crisis. Over 300,000 citizens in Gloucestershire did not have running water after a treatment facility was flooded, contaminating the supply. Authorities estimated citizens in this region would be without a safe water supply for up to two weeks.

Travel was also hindered as roads were inundated and train stations shut down. With grocery stores cut off from their supply shipments, fresh produce and bottled water became scarce.

The last major flood in Britain, in 1947, is called by the Environmental Agency of England and Wales (EA) a “once in a hundred years” event.

However, 60 years later, Anthony Perry, an EA spokesman, stated, “We have not seen flooding of this magnitude before. The benchmark was 1947 and this has already exceeded it.”



Despite continuing rainfall, flood waters are pulling back, revealing the true costs caused by the flood. Produce prices are expected to increase sharply as a result of flood-damaged farmland. Insurers expect to pay out 2.5 billion pounds (over \$5 billion USD).

On top of the costs of restoring their flood-damaged properties, residents of affected areas can also count on higher water bills. □

### HEALTH ISSUES

## Study Reveals Deadly Impact of Environment on Children

**I**n the world's poorest regions, one in five children will not live to age five. This is mostly due to environmental hazards, the World Health Organization (WHO) reported last week, in its first study of children's unique susceptibility to harmful chemicals at various stages of development.

The comprehensive report authored by 24 scientists found that more than 30% of disease in children, who constitute one third of the world's population, is attributable to harmful environmental factors such as water and air pollutants, pesticide

residue in food and lead in soil, among many others. Children most affected are those who lack proper nutrition and live without access to clean water or sanitation.

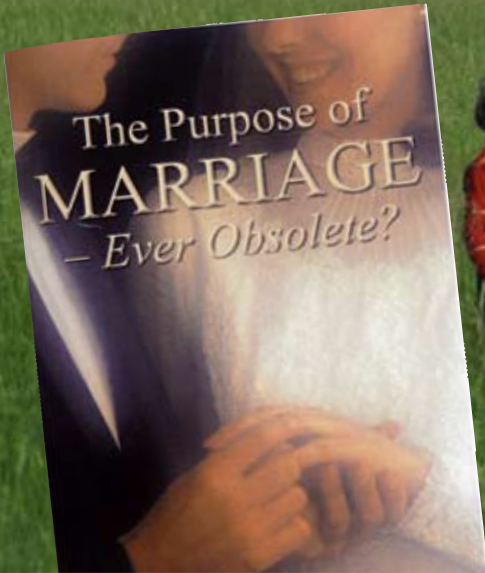
The study also revealed that the stage at which developing children are exposed to environmental hazards is just as important as the degree to which they are exposed.

“Children are not just small adults,” said Dr. Terri Damstra, the WHO team leader for the Interregional Research Unit. “Children are especially vulnerable and respond differently from adults

when exposed to environment factors, and this response may differ according to the different periods of development they are going through.”

New evidence shows that exposure to chemicals during childhood may increase the risk of contracting diseases such as cancer and heart disease later in life.

To learn the all-important cause behind the earth's current contaminated state—and how it ultimately will be solved—read our extensive report *This POLLUTED EARTH*. □



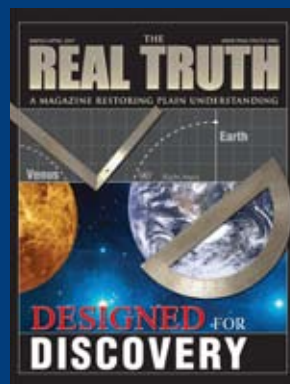
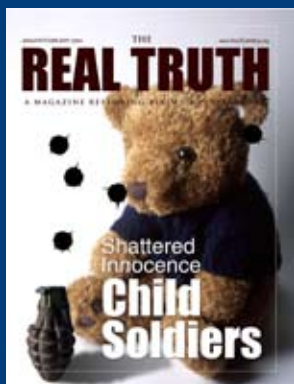
## Does Marriage Have a Purpose?

**M**arriage is under assault as never before. Will it—can it—survive? Adultery is exploding—why? Traditional home and family life is blurring. The once-typical family is becoming extinct—why?

Most do not know where the institution of marriage came from. And they have no idea why, or if, it is even necessary.

This booklet reveals the true meaning—the astounding purpose—of marriage and FAMILY!

## Have you missed out on previous issues?



*Read them online at your convenience!*