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REAL TRUTH

A MAGAZINE RESTORING PLAIN UNDERSTANDING



**“A TRUE
WORLD POLITICAL
AUTHORITY”
...WITH “REAL TEETH”**

HISTORY AND PROPHECY ALIGN

THE REAL TRUTH

A MAGAZINE RESTORING PLAIN UNDERSTANDING

VOL. VII | NO. 8 | SEPTEMBER 2009

A R T I C L E S

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■ **UNDATED PHOTOGRAPH:** The emergency hospital at Camp Funston, Kansas, during the 1918 influenza epidemic.

PHOTO: COURTESY ARMED FORCES INSTITUTE OF PATHOLOGY/CONTRA COSTA TIMES/KRT

The Mother of All Viruses? Is Another 1918 Pandemic Possible?

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■ **FRONT COVER:** Pope Benedict XVI speaks at the General Assembly at the United Nations headquarters in New York City (April 18, 2008).

PHOTO: SPENCER PLATT/GETTY IMAGES

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Blurring the Lines Between Life and Television

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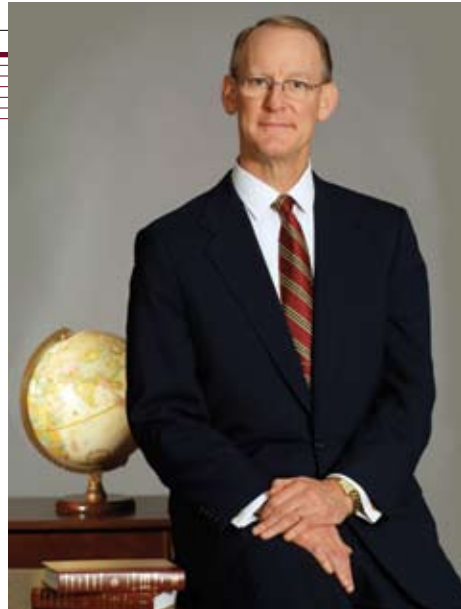
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PERSONAL FROM

David C. Fack



What Is Your Reward in the Next Life?

NOTHING IS MORE misunderstood than salvation. Why are so many confused—deceived—about what they will do in the afterlife? Does salvation come *by grace* or *through works*—and what is the difference? How—on what basis—are people *rewarded* in the next life?

Many expect to receive salvation at the end of this life. But what does this mean? So many are ignorant about what the Bible says their final reward will be. Most have no idea what they will actually *be doing* for all eternity.

Do you?

A famous evangelist was once asked what heaven would be like. He answered, “I don’t know but it will be wonderful and we will all be there.” He dodged the question.

Obituaries speak of people who “passed away” and “went home to be with the Lord.” Others write that their departed loved one “joined the angels” and that they are “looking down on us right now.”

Some believe that they are “bound for glory.” When asked what this means, most are unsure. But the most common ideas are that everyone will “ride clouds,” “play harps,” “walk the streets of gold in front of the pearly gates,” “sit in rocking chairs” and just “roll around heaven all day.”

Hundreds of millions of others have been taught to believe that salvation is staring at the face of Jesus for all eternity. Not only is this idea based on a wrong scriptural understanding, but it also teaches that no one will actually be able to see His face *directly*.

What could possibly be more *boring* than fulfilling these ideas? I cannot imagine doing any of these things for an extended period—let alone for ALL ETERNITY! When one man considered these popular ideas, he remarked that he would “rather go to hell, because it sounded much more exciting.”

So much confusion! So much ignorance! The vast majority have been deceived into believing a false salvation.

What have *you* assumed? What popular concepts have you absorbed without checking to see what the Bible actually teaches?

Salvation Is a Gift

Do works have anything to do with your salvation? Put another way, is *your* “righteousness” connected to being saved? If so, do these things automatically ensure salvation? Is salvation “by works?” Can you *earn* salvation by anything that you do?

Some believe that they *can* earn their salvation. We have been accused of teaching “salvation by works,” simply because we believe Christians have a responsibility to *do* certain things.

The Bible does teach that there is something that people “earn” by their works. It states, “*All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God*” (Rom. 3:23). Romans 6:23 adds, “the wages of sin is *death*”—“but the *gift* of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ.”

But what *is* sin? I John 3:4 states, “for sin is the transgression of the law.”

Isaiah 59:1-2 explains that sin cuts people off from God. He is literally “unreachable” to the sinner whose past has not been forgiven and cleansed. Isaiah 55:6-7 instructs those who wish to come to God, “Let the wicked forsake his way.”

Many verses explain that sin can be forgiven only through Christ’s sacrifice. The apostle John was inspired to write, “And this is the record, that God has *given* to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He that has the Son has life; and he that has not the Son of God has not life” (I John 5:11-12).

Unless we have a Savior—One who paid the penalty for our sins—we are headed for death! Many more verses could be cited to prove this. Examine John 5:26 to see that only God has the power to grant eternal life. The good news is that God *does* hold the power to grant the *gift* of eternal life. Make no mistake! Salvation cannot be earned—it is a free gift. But it is a gift given with conditions to those who qualify.

Most Christians believe they are “saved by the *blood* of Christ.” *This is not true!* The Bible says that we are “saved **BY HIS LIFE**” (Rom. 5:10), while we are “*reconciled* to God” and “*justified* by His blood” (5:9). Understand this point. We are not *justified* by works, but by the blood of Jesus Christ.

Repentance—turning to God and obeying Him—addresses a Christian’s *future* obedience. It does nothing to cover up PAST sins. Christ’s blood justifies—makes clean, white, righteous—all *past* transgressions, sins. See also I Corinthians 15:17-18. But, being “saved **BY HIS LIFE**” is vital to understand and requires explanation.

Consider! If Christ is not risen from the dead, then His Spirit cannot guide and strengthen new converts, for it is the Holy Spirit that leads Christians. Paul wrote, “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, *they* are the sons of God” (Rom. 8:14). It is this same Spirit that God will use to change the converted into spirit-composed sons of God—resurrected Spirit Beings. This Spirit in them, when they are changed, makes eternal life—salvation—possible. Is this clear? If Christ had not been resurrected, then He could not have gone to heaven where the Father and He could send Their Spirit to His followers. Without this Spirit living in a Christian’s mind, there is no hope of eternal life.

Human beings do not have life inherent within them. They are not born with an immortal soul. Genesis 2:7 states that people ARE souls—they do not HAVE souls. And Ezekiel 18:4, 20 states, “The soul that sins, it shall *die*.” Matthew 10:28 confirms this. You are not an immortal being. Your life span will cover a certain allotted time, after which you will die. Unless God intervenes, you have no future beyond a limited time of about 70-80 years. Christ alone has inherent immortality with the Father (I Tim. 6:16; 1:17).

Let’s get this straight! We must remove all doubt about what brings salvation. It is a free gift from God. There is absolutely nothing a Christian can do to merit or earn it. The only wage that human beings can earn is *death*. Before studying the subject of Christian works, recognize that no one can earn eternal life through works.

Salvation is by God’s grace. But what is grace? It is completely unmerited pardon of one’s sin. This is what *grace* means. Salvation means that one is *saved* from death. Unless God intervenes to apply the blood of Jesus Christ to cover the repentant sinner’s past, there can be no salvation.

What role does faith play? Some believe that being “justified by faith” is all that Christians must be concerned with. They believe that anyone who teaches that *any* works are neces-

sary denies God’s gift of salvation. Faith does play a role, but what is it?

Ephesians 2:8-9 expands on Romans 6:23: “For by grace are you saved through faith; and that [the faith] not of yourselves: it [faith] is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.” Salvation comes as a free gift, *by grace—through faith!* However, Paul explains that even the faith must be a gift. Otherwise, it would be a “work” generated by human effort. If God gave salvation on this basis, it would mean that a Christian *earned* it through humanly derived faith. (Read our booklet *What Is Real Faith?* to truly understand this subject.)

Another question arises. Should a Christian be preparing—training—for anything that he will be *doing* in the next life? And what does this have to do with the gift of salvation? These questions speak to the heart of another great question: What *is* a Christian?

So many do not know the answers to these basic questions—but you can!

What Is a Christian?

Before explaining whether or not a Christian must perform good works in his life, we must examine a more basic question.

Just what *is* a real Christian? Is he one who “attends church”—“professes Jesus”—“knows Christ”—has been “baptized?” Is there a single verse that gives the Bible definition of a Christian and eliminates all confusion?

Paul wrote, “For as many as are *led by the Spirit of God, they* are the sons of God” (Rom. 8:14). A Christian is one who has the Holy Spirit leading him. But is having God’s Spirit absolutely *essential* to being a Christian? Earlier, Paul had said, “But you are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. *Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His!*” (vs. 9).

It is that simple! One either has the Spirit of God and *is* a Christian,

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Is This Reality?

Blurring the Lines Between Life and Television

BY JEFFREY R. AMBROSE

WITH THE ARRIVAL of *The Real World* in 1992, the template for a new kind of television program took shape. The show featured seven twenty-something “regular people”—that is, non-actors—who moved from various parts of the United States to a New York City apartment. With cameras running constantly, both inside and at locations around the city, the show documented their lives for one TV season.

Thus began the rise of a whole new kind of programming.

The reality genre’s breakout moment in the U.S. was the success of the program *Survivor*. The show features a group “stranded” on an island, which periodically convenes to vote one of the contestants “off the island”—therefore, off the show and out of the running for the \$1 million cash prize.

This format has also taken off in Western Europe, particularly Britain. At the forefront is the long-running *Big Brother* series, in which “housemates” form alliances and rivalries, and nominate two housemates per week to be

evicted, with one or both chosen by the viewing public to be removed through a phone/text message poll.

These shows have multiplied and expanded in recent years. An entire cable channel is now dedicated solely to reality television. At the same time, their content has been sliding ever further into the gutter of amorality and empty-headed behavior.

Sampling a few titles speaks volumes: *My Big Fat Obnoxious Fiancé*; *Sex Decoy: Love Stings*; *Shock Treatment*; *Temptation Island*.

How about *When Chefs Attack*? From the show’s website promo: “A mind-boggling, stomach-turning collection of surveillance footage taped in restaurants the world over. A diner’s worst fears are confirmed as the footage reveals grotesque food tampering by miscreant chefs, waiters and kitchen help.”

■ **EXTREME:** An animal handler puts live scorpions on the head of a participant during a theme park competition of the reality television show *Fear Factor Live* (June 16, 2005).

PHOTO: ROBYN BECK/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Some of the programs classified as reality television do showcase genuine talent, useful skills, interesting occupations, or other information from which viewers can benefit. But much of what now passes for entertainment in this realm forms a sad commentary on the state of America and Europe.

Lowest Common Denominator

The shock value of appalling conduct is a mainstay of reality TV. Backstabbing and betrayal—scheming to get others eliminated as contestants—cheating boyfriends and girlfriends—all-night drinking binges—drunken brawls—random, indiscriminate sexual encounters—women spitting in each other’s faces and pulling one another’s hair in catfights over a romantic interest—the list goes on. Raw, ugly and often violent human nature celebrated in prime time.

Several reality TV “stars” first found notoriety through homemade pornographic videos that were “leaked” (perhaps intentionally) and then distributed for sale, with the stars reaping a portion of sales revenue. On the subgenre of “dating” shows, many of the women vying for the attention of a central male figure are employed as strippers. As of this writing, more than one former reality show personality has been named a suspect in high-profile crime investigations.

As these shows drag standards of behavior toward the lowest common denominator, it begs the age-old question: *Does art imitate life, or does life imitate art?*

The most tragic potential effect is that young viewers who see the type of behavior routinely displayed on reality shows could come to see it as acceptable—even normal. (*MTV*, one of the main purveyors of reality television, reportedly targets the 12- to 17-year-old age demographic.)

Are we ready for a generation raised on *A Shot at Love with Tila Tequila* and *Date My Mom* to take positions of responsibility in society?

Plumbing the Depths of Shallowness

While much of network and cable television’s output is at best a waste

of valuable time, reality TV can be particularly shallow in content—even mind-numbingly inane! Hour after hour is spent languishing in vacant stares, meaningless conversations, thoughtless actions, and the recurring theme of men and women professing their “love” for a person they hardly know.

For example, producers built an entire show around a California tanning salon. A sample of some of the “momentous” events documented: “Molly is pushed to tears when Holly calls her mean names in front of the whole staff. Is their friendship over for good?...See what happens when the Olly girls try to eat as many donut holes as possible!...Ania and Keely cater to an unusual request when a guy wants his girl to match his skin tone to please his parents.”

Other shows have been based on an aging rap star’s quest for a girlfriend, a drug detox program for celebrities, the life of an often incoherent former model (who later died of a drug overdose), and a competitive beauty pageant in which a panel of male judges assign numeric scores to various body parts of swimsuit-clad women.

“I Love Money”

Another implied message is projected by many reality shows: “People will do anything for money.” The series *Fear Factor* took this to the extreme, with contestants engaging in repulsive “challenges”—such as eating cockroaches—for a prize. Another series gets right to the point in its very title: *I Love Money*.

Not all of the blame for the content of these shows should be placed on the men and women in front of the camera. The producers share a large part of this, as they devise the scenarios and push on-air personalities toward desired behaviors. They do this in pursuit of ratings, which in turn lead to higher advertising revenue.

A recent article documented the lengths to which producers will go to turn a human life into a spectacle for public consumption: “Long workdays and communication blackouts

are largely the rule for contestants on reality shows, a highly lucrative genre that has evolved arguably into Hollywood’s sweatshop. Unscripted series now account for more than one-quarter of all primetime broadcast programming—and essentially the entire day on cable channels like *Discovery*, *Bravo* and *A&E*. The most popular reality series, ‘American Idol,’ has commanded advertising rates as high as \$1 million for a 30-second spot.

“But with no union representation, participants on reality series are not covered by Hollywood workplace rules governing meal breaks, minimum time off between shoots or even minimum wages. Most of them, in fact, receive little to no pay for their work.

“It can make for a miserable experience but compelling entertainment, creating a sort of televised psychological experiment that keeps contestants off-balance and vulnerable.

“Most reality series have contestants sign nondisclosure agreements that include million-dollar penalties if they reveal what happened on set. But interviews with two dozen former contestants—most of whose agreements expired after three years—from half a dozen reality series suggest that the programs routinely use isolation, sleeplessness and alcohol to encourage wild behavior.

“During the 2006 season of the popular *ABC* dating show ‘The Bachelor,’ the contestants waited in vans for several hours while the crew set up for a 12-hour ‘arrival’ party where, two contestants said, there was little food but bottomless glasses of wine. When producers judged the proceedings too boring, they sent out a production assistant with a tray of shots.

“‘If you combine no sleep with alcohol and no food, emotions are going to run high and people are going to be acting crazy,’ said...a contestant that year” (*The New York Times*).

Longing for Celebrity

It was predicted in the 1960s that in the future *everyone* would be world-

Please see **REALITY**, page 11

THE MOTHER OF ALL VIRUSES?

Is Another 1918 Pandemic Possible?

A WORKING-CLASS father and his young family stand outside a clinic, masks over their faces. While his wife and children wait anxiously, worry creases his forehead. A mysterious virus has engulfed the country and he is concerned about its effects. *What will happen to my family if I'm unable to work?* he wonders.

Short-staffed hospitals overwhelmed with patients attempt to quarantine the infected before others contract the illness. But it is so contagious that even nurses fall prey.

Frustrated about the unexplained sickness, authorities shut down schools and force businesses to close, bringing the whole nation to a halt. Transportation systems all but stop, and health officials urge citizens not to leave their homes.

As the tired father waits in line, he recalls news reports about the illness ballooning into a pandemic-level outbreak. Glancing at his family, he wonders, *Will we be next?*

Although this description is eerily reminiscent of what is occurring today with the H1N1 virus, the year is 1918. And the influenza pandemic depicted above is not the current H1N1 swine flu outbreak, but the Spanish influenza that took the lives of 40 to 100 million people worldwide from 1918 to 1919.

Unparalleled in History

The early 20th-century pandemic started much the same as the current one.

Three years before the 1918 virus took its worst toll, it first surfaced in birds, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

“Recently published sequence and phylogenetic analyses suggest that the genes encoding the HA and neuraminidase (NA) surface proteins of the 1918 virus were derived from an avianlike influenza virus shortly before the start of the pandemic and that the precursor virus had not circulated widely in humans or swine in the few decades before...Regression analyses of human and swine influenza sequences obtained from 1930 to the present place the initial circulation of the 1918 precursor virus in humans at approximately 1915–1918.”

From 1915 to 1916, the United States suffered a hard-hit respiratory disease epidemic, upping the death toll resulting from pneumonia and influenza complications. Although mortality rates decreased by 1917, people's weakened immune systems paved the way for the pandemic's first wave in March 1918.

Spanish influenza initially appeared in Kansas in early spring, but was first recorded as extremely virulent in several soldiers in Boston, Mass., who had returned from fighting overseas in the First World War. The bustling port city became a breeding ground for the virus. Within three days, it infected 58 military personnel. The sick were sent to Chelsea Naval Hospital. From there, influenza infected civilians, with cases multiplying rapidly across the state and country.

The pandemic continued in three stages over a 12-month period: The first wave reached Europe, the U.S. and Asia in late spring and summer; a second—and more deadly—strain spread approximately six months later, wiping out entire families from September to November 1918; and a third wave struck in early spring of 1919.

“Most Viscous Type”

Unlike most viruses, which normally affect the very young, the weak and the elderly, the 1918 influenza targeted *healthy* adults from the ages of 20 to 40. Victims suffocated as their immune systems backfired—overreacted—filling their lungs with a reddish liquid, which often bubbled out of them as they died.

A letter written by a military doctor on Sept. 29, 1918, described the dreadful conditions at Fort Devens, near Boston.

“These men start with what appears to be an attack of la grippe or influenza, and when brought to the hospital they very rapidly develop the most viscous type of pneumonia that has ever been seen. Two hours after admission they have the mahogany spots over the cheek bones, and a few hours later you can begin to see the cyanosis extending from their ears and spreading all over the face, until it is hard to distinguish the coloured men from the white. It is only a matter of a few hours then until death comes, and it is simply a struggle for air until they suffocate.”

Later he wrote, “It takes special trains to carry away the dead. For several days there were no coffins and the

bodies piled up something fierce, we used to go down to the morgue...and look at the boys laid out in long rows. It beats any sight they ever had in France after a battle. An extra long barracks has been vacated for the use of the morgue, and it would make any man sit up and take notice to walk down the long lines of dead soldiers all dressed up and laid out in double rows” (PBS).

One pandemic survivor recounted the bodies that stacked up in Vancouver, Canada: “The undertaking parlours couldn’t handle the bodies as people died...they were having to use school auditoriums and places like that to store bodies temporarily” (The Canadian Press).

A survivor stated that in Washington, D.C., “the flu’s spread and the ensuing restrictions ‘made everybody afraid to go see anybody,’ he said. ‘It changed a lot of society...We became more individualistic’” (MSNBC).

Social Distancing

An effective measure at the time was social distancing—a method (related to the quarantine laws of the Bible) that public health officials in the 21st century still consider one of the most powerful ways to stop illness without a vaccine.

In St. Louis, Missouri, officials instantly closed schools, cancelled church services, and banned gatherings of more than 20 people, including funerals, weddings, dances and sports activities. As a result, the city’s death rate was only one-eighth that of Philadelphia—one of the cities hardest hit by influenza, which health authorities maintain took action too late.

St. Louis, however, did make one fatal mistake.

“On Nov. 14, 1918—in high spirits three days after the armistice that



ended the war, and with influenza cases declining—the city reopened schools and businesses. Two weeks later, the second wave of the epidemic struck, this time with children making up 30 percent to 40 percent of the infections” (The New York Times).

Since the first wave of the pandemic did not hit as hard—merely infecting thousands, but not killing them—people did not take it seriously until it was too late. By the time influenza ran its full course, a fifth of the world population contracted the flu—killing as many as 100 million.

Throughout America, churches shut down, government banned public meetings, schools closed, businesses collapsed from lack of customers, state institutions became overrun with orphaned children, infected postal carriers were unable to deliver mail, and rancid garbage lined city streets. Decomposing bodies overflowed from

morgues and had to be stored in nearby elementary schools. Wherever people ventured, the smell of rotting flesh haunted them.

In the book *Flu: The Story of the Great Influenza Pandemic of 1918 and the Search for the Virus That Caused It*, Gina Kolata, commentator for *The New York Times*, stated that if the Spanish Influenza were to strike the U.S. now, it would have devastating results. “If such a plague came today, killing a similar fraction of the U.S. population, 1.5 million Americans would die, which is more than the number felled in a single year by heart disease, cancers, strokes, chronic pulmonary disease, AIDS, and Alzheimer’s disease combined.”

■ **GLOBAL PANDEMIC:** People around the world wear face masks to protect themselves against the risk of contracting swine flu, officially known as influenza A (H1N1).

PHOTO: AFP/GETTY IMAGES

This is not to mention that millions—perhaps even as many as 1.8 billion, according to current population estimates—would die worldwide.

One of the strangest parts of the virus, Ms. Kolata noted, is that scientists still have not been able to determine what made it so deadly.

“No one knows for sure where the 1918 flu came from or how it turned into such a killer strain,” she wrote. “All that is known is that it began as an ordinary flu but then it changed. It infected people in the spring of 1918, sickening its victims for about three days with chills and fever, but rarely killing them. Then it disappeared, returning in the fall with the power of a juggernaut.”

Snapshot of Today

As of this writing, the latest version of the swine flu has not attacked as vehemently as did later strains of the 1918 influenza. The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates there are 182,166 suspected cases of H1N1 worldwide. However, unlike the Spanish flu, those who contract the H1N1 virus today are more likely to live than die—the WHO reports that only 1,799 people have fatally succumbed.

Nonetheless, the illness continues to spread. The most updated information from the WHO revealed newly detected, first-time cases in Ghana, Zambia and Tuvalu (the fourth smallest nation on Earth).

A map of the infected areas shows that even though almost all countries have reported only 10-50 virus-related deaths, cases have stricken all corners of the world. So far, the only places H1N1 has not claimed lives are Greenland, Mongolia and parts of Western Africa.

But the death toll continues to accelerate.

Last month, swine flu cases in Britain doubled to 100,000 in one week in July alone! The virus has had such a significant impact on the country that within minutes of opening, the National Pandemic Flu service website—capable of handling 1 million calls per week—crashed.

“Dr Alan Hay, director of the WHO’s London-based World Influenza Centre, said the extensive summer outbreak in Britain had not followed expected patterns and warned that the health department needed to be prepared for a more deadly form of the disease.

“We have been a little surprised by the degree of spread of this virus. A few weeks ago we anticipated that this was going to be a short series of outbreaks that would probably peter out before reappearing in the autumn or winter and that has proved not to be the case,” he said” (*Guardian*).

Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, recorded 569 new H1N1 infections in one day in August—the highest number ever reported in such a short time period. Around the same time, the Chinese Ministry of Health registered 132 new cases of H1N1 in two days, bringing the number of cases there to 2,861.

Even Martha’s Vineyard, a small island off the coast of Massachusetts known as a playground for the rich, was affected. A 26-year-old Brazilian man died after being diagnosed with H1N1. He is among 447 people in the U.S. since April 2009 whose deaths have been linked to the virus.

A startling report revealed, “Swine flu may infect half the U.S. population this year, hospitalize 1.8 million patients and lead to as many as 90,000 deaths, more than twice the number killed in a typical seasonal flu, White House advisers said” (*Star-Telegram*).

The U.S. military also reported another 67 confirmed cases of swine flu among soldiers in Iraq. Authorities suspect there could be dozens more.

Just the Beginning

Although the virus initially jumped from one country to another, sparking worldwide panic, deaths have been few and far between compared to other pandemics. But researchers who have studied the virus in the past, and the parallels of the 1918 strain to that of today, say it may only be in its initial stages.

“The Spanish and swine flu viruses are very similar although the current

one does not seem to be as nasty—but it is in its early days yet,” John Powell, an associate clinical professor of public health at Warwick University in the United Kingdom, said in an interview with the British *Daily Mail*.

“There are enormous parallels with 1918 and our current pandemic,” he added. “They are spreading at a similar rate, but we don’t know if the virus will mutate...If it does, this is when it could become very dangerous. But we are working on vaccines and we hope that they will be sufficient” (*ibid.*).

The U.S. Health and Human Services originally ordered 120 million doses of the inoculation to use before the approaching flu season, but said that now only 45 million will be available by October due to production delays—leaving up to 200 million Americans not immunized.

Next month, Australia may be the first nation to begin vaccinating its citizens, making 2 million doses available. Already, “Australia’s death toll from the virus reached 128, and there are 460 people in Australian hospitals with H1N1, 94 of them in intensive care” (*Bloomberg*).

But the quantity available is still far less than that which was originally expected, and health officials agree that while vaccination is a start, it is not a surefire solution. The virus could morph and render all produced vaccines unusable, making social distancing (as with 1918) the best option.

In his book *The Life of Reason*, famed historian George Santayana once said, “Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.”

Judging from history, humanity is setting itself up to confront another “Mother of All Pandemics.” Will we learn from the past, and glean from the experiences that those had, such as the father standing in line with his children in 1918? Or will we choose to ignore the clear pattern of history that always repeats itself?

To learn more about this topic, read our series on the Four Horsemen of the book of Revelation. □



PHOTO: GETTY CREATIVE IMAGES

What's So Wrong *With Sex Before* **MARRIAGE?**

BY MARK P. DENEEN AND SAMUEL C. BAXTER

LINING SUPERMARKET check-out lanes, amid candy bars and breath mints, are enticing headlines in bold, eye-catching letters: “101 Sex Secrets”; “43 Ways to Improve Your Love Life”; “15 Ways to Drive Him Wild”...

Sex is everywhere. It permeates television shows, the Internet and magazines. Even children’s movies have thinly veiled sexual undertones.

Over the last 100 years, Western nations have shed every hint of Victorian era prudery: condoms were made widely available to the public after soldiers returned home from WWII; the “free love” 60s gave way to the counter-culture 70s; standards on sex continued lowering in the 1980s; and even more in the 90s, with a high-profile case involving the President of

the United States.

Today, society’s carefree thinking on sex out of wedlock is simply, *Why not?*

Believing that “most are doing it anyway,” high school administrators build sexual education programs around this mentality.

In fact, the modern adage is true—most *are* doing it anyway. A 2002 study of 40,000 Americans found that 95 percent had premarital sex. The report, by the Guttmacher Institute, a non-profit organization that researches sexual health, stated that 93 percent of them did so before age 30 (*USA Today*).

Is this a bad thing? Most say no.

Sex does have tremendous health benefits. According to *WebMD*, some may even surprise you: It relieves stress, boosts one’s immune system, burns calories and improves heart health, increases self-esteem, and can reduce the risk of prostate cancer.

Sexual activity can even help one sleep better at night.

We are sexual creatures with an innate sex drive, the thinking goes. This is all natural, so really, why not?

Undoubtedly, there are dangers for the sexually active person: sexually transmitted infections, unwanted pregnancies, and emotional scarring from a promiscuous lifestyle of multiple sex partners. Nonetheless, “experts” assert that if you are smart and practice “safe sex,” the health benefits of sexual activity could outweigh the negatives.

Obviously, people who live with reckless abandon—getting drunk and waking up not knowing what they did with whomever the night before—practice risky sex.

It seems easy to conclude—given the health benefits, knowing that sex is fun, being “smart” and using contraceptives, and having only one sexual partner at a time—there is little downside to premarital sex.

But something is missing from the prevailing mindset that sex is okay outside of marriage.

Sex for Pleasure

A pamphlet created by Britain's National Health Service (NHS) illustrates what society thinks of sexual activity out of wedlock. The booklet, tellingly titled *Pleasure*, attempts to foster frank discussion between adults and teens about sex, and the enjoyment it can bring. It even glibly mentions that an "Orgasm a day keeps the doctor away"—then details health benefits of sex.

The publication is the latest effort by Britain—where teenage pregnancies are rampant—to meet young people "where they are" and talk openly about sex. Educators hope to arm teens with enough information to dispel the mystery of sex so they can decide when they are ready to lose their virginity. The pamphlet even encourages regular masturbation for health benefits!

"One of the things young people say a lot is that the sex education they get is virtually meaningless, it's too biological and doesn't relate to how they are feeling," said a professor of health psychology in a statement published by the NHS Centre for HIV and Sexual Health in Sheffield. He wrote *Pleasure's* introduction and advised on its content.

In addition, the United Kingdom is spending millions on "awareness and contraceptive campaigns."

Essentially, educators have concluded they are no longer able to stop children from having sex. The best they can hope to do is teach them about it and how best to avoid some of the pitfalls.

Steve Slack, director of the center, who assisted in writing the pamphlet, said it this way: "Far from promoting teenage sex, it is designed to encourage young people to delay losing their virginity until they are sure they will enjoy the experience" (*The Associated Press*).

The Downside

Religious groups have taken offense with what the *Pleasure* pamphlet pro-

notes, thinking this sort of approach goes too far.

In general, churches of professing Christianity encourage young people not to be intimate before marriage (e.g., fornication) because it promotes promiscuity, can lead to emotional scarring, may result in unwanted pregnancies—and, most importantly, destroys the sanctity of marriage.

Quoting biblical passages that issue commands to "not commit adultery" and "flee fornication" (I Cor. 6:18), these "faith-based" groups say "No" to sex before marriage.

And, just as with the "sex for health and pleasure" crowd, proponents of "waiting until you are married" can back up their beliefs with scientific evidence. The United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention maintains that the "most reliable ways to avoid transmission of sexually transmitted diseases, including human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), are to abstain from sexual activity or to be in a long-term mutually monogamous relationship with an unaffected partner."

Sex before marriage means a stronger likelihood of divorce later.

But the bad relationship does not stop with the parents. Often, children from a broken home suffer numerous consequences.

In contrast, an attentive parental unit can keep kids from risky sexual behaviors.

Reporting on a study of 3,206 teens conducted by Boston College, *MSNBC* said, "The more attentive the dad—and the more he knows about his teenage child's friends—the bigger the impact on the teen's sexual behavior, the researchers found. While an involved mother can also help stave off a teen's sexual activity, dads have twice the influence."

Even the "safest" sex can result in unintended pregnancies—birth control works only most of the time. These can lead to the difficult and tragic decision to abort, a decision a woman will carry with her forever.

But why only sex inside marriage? Why can't someone reap all the physical benefits of sex outside of wedlock,

just as long as they are "smart" about it?

Created by God

Many view God as prudish—not allowing people to freely enjoy sex. Some even believe sexual activity is shameful.

Nothing could be more wrong! The Creator made all things—including the pleasures of sexual relations.

Almost immediately after creating man and woman, He blessed the couple in a marriage ceremony (Gen. 2:18, 21-24). Notice that verse 25 says the first couple "were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed." Then God commanded them to "Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it" (Gen. 1:28). There is only one way to be "fruitful" and "multiply"—through sex!

In other words, one of the first things God did after creating human beings was sit them down for a true and right "sex talk." As He is not the author of confusion (I Cor. 14:33), God would have laid out the rules of sex and marriage to Adam and Eve.

Note that God looked at His entire creation and pronounced it "good." This includes our bodies as they are, including the sexual organs. He also created our hormones and the emotions we feel. All of this included great purpose and design.

Again, God established the institution of marriage, including sexual relations. As the Creator and Author of marriage and sex, God is also the supreme authority on these subjects. Therefore, we should consider His Word, the Holy Bible—a wonderful INSTRUCTION MANUAL to guide us.

Despite giving us free moral agency and dominion over the earth, God did not intend for us to simply seek pleasure whenever and however we see fit. He provided us with laws—instructions and boundaries in personal conduct—based on His perfect knowledge and love.

The Ten Commandments are a foundation to all of the laws, principles and instructions in the Bible (Ex.

20:1-17). The Commandments can be broken down into two groups: the first four express love toward God, and the last six show love toward fellow man.

Sex outside of marriage directly breaks at least five of the Ten Commandments, expressing hatred—putting the self first at the expense of others—toward one’s fellow man: *coveting* (desiring what you cannot have), *stealing* (taking what does not belong to you), *dishonoring one’s parents* (shaming them through personal conduct), *adultery* and *lying*. (Of course, to break *any* of God’s Commandments is to break *all* of them; Jms. 2:8-11.)

From ancient times, tradition required that a woman’s father and brothers protect her from harm, in particular, from men who might take

her virginity. Her father was expected to “hold her hand”—protect and lead her—through life as she grew up. As she entered adulthood, he would then give her hand to her husband in marriage, who would assume the role of her protector and leader.

A woman’s virginity was not hers to give away! It belonged to her future mate. Of course, most today view this as archaic. But can one look at modern secular society—its widespread permissiveness—and conclude that “civilization” is better off?

Both men and women are to save their virginity for their future mate. To do otherwise is STEALING! Premarital sex is often “given” or “sold” in exchange for attention, appreciation or “love” (actually, lust). Yet it is not a person’s to sell.

But why did God create the joys of sex for a man and a woman to share exclusively within marriage? Because of what the God-ordained institution of marriage, and family unit that it produces, *represents*. It contains a spiritual dimension hidden even from the understanding of men’s religions!

A Greater Meaning and Purpose

It is a sad reality that the vast majority of mankind, including educators, scholars and even religious leaders, has cut itself off from spiritual understanding that would bring true joy and prosperity—including how to have a happy marriage and successfully rear children. Why?

Because “your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid His face from

THE PARENTS’ RESPONSIBILITY

There comes a time in life when parents notice their children are growing up, transitioning from childhood to becoming an adult. It likely begins by observing their sudden changing appearance, or maybe an increase of their interest in the opposite sex.

Parents should be clear that this transition is relatively lengthy—it takes the entire teenage years, sometimes even longer, to complete. While the physical transition may be shorter, transitioning mentally and emotionally into adulthood is longer, as well as more important.

For some parents, this can be an awkward period, as they may be uncertain as to what they can do to assist or guide their children. Tragically, for others it can almost be a non-issue: Some parents do not realize or care enough (thinking it is society’s responsibility), or figure that learning life in the “school of hard knocks” is a better way to go.

Any change in life creates a vacuum. Certainly, the change into adulthood is a significant one. Most adults can recall their own experience with the changes that the shift in hormones brings. Naturally, these changes raise questions—that need answers! While the world should not revolve around any preteen or teenager, and not every single question has an answer, parents must take a significant role in educating their children—in fact, long before this critical juncture in life. Doing so will make the challenge much easier!

To do otherwise, to not fill that vacuum, will ensure that someone else will fill it, possibly a schoolmate, a teacher—or, in a worst-case scenario, a pervert! While a good teacher could play a complementary role, it should be primarily the parents’ responsibility. Any other options will be disastrous.

While a child’s friends are ready to offer information or advice, they are going through the same transition, and therefore can shed no real light on the matter. Again, when we consider mental and emotional maturity, a parent should be able to answer questions from a clearer perspective.

One of the most significant questions that will arise: *When is the right time to begin sexual relations?* Sadly, to consider this question in any way connected to marriage is almost passé. A

long, healthy marriage itself is almost the same: Society lacks a good understanding of its meaning and purpose.

Today’s Approach

Consider what is typical for today’s approach to answering the question of when is the right time to begin sexual relations. If parents are involved, they will generally base any discussion with their child on their own experiences, both past and present. What are those experiences?

For those who believe waiting until marriage is unrealistic, here are a few scenarios:

One might hope that his children will wait until they are a little older—but how old? What criteria would one use? In addition, how does a parent respond when asked, “How old were you?” or “Why did you not wait until you were married?” If answered truthfully, what example does that set for the child?

If divorced, what example do parents set in regard to dating and sex? Do they believe it is acceptable for them, as supposed mature adults, to have sexual relations outside of marriage whenever they feel like it? If so, should they expect anything different from their children?

Consider for a moment the emphasis on the self: *What feels right for me*, or *What I believe is the right choice for me, at this particular moment in time*. Contrast this with concern for the future, for the next, and even subsequent, generations of your family, the value of a future mate, the value of sex with that mate, and even life itself, when one has a child with that mate.

Next, if waiting until they are a little older is not a concern, some parents might wish to avoid the unpleasant scenarios of a pregnancy or a sexually transmitted disease. Awkward and untimely discussion—and even the supply of contraceptives—typically ensues. In a worst-case scenario, any of the parties involved may consider, even demand, an abortion—for some, to prevent the appearance of promiscuity; for others, to rid themselves of responsibility.

To learn more about the hidden meaning behind sex, marriage and the family unit, read David C. Pack’s book *Sex – Its Unknown Dimension*. □

you, that He will not hear” (Isa. 59:1-2). Sin—breaking or transgressing God’s Law (I John 3:4)—cuts man off from his Creator. Thinking he already knows how to direct his own steps through life (Jer. 10:23; Prov. 16:25), man will not consider the actual, godly truth of any matter, including premarital sex.

God Himself IS a family—the God Family, currently comprised of the Father and Jesus Christ. God is expanding His Family through mankind—each and every one of us will be given the opportunity to become His spiritually begotten sons—ultimately to be born into His kingdom (John 3:16). We were, after all, physically created in His likeness (Gen. 1:26). Our bodies, including their proper functions, are for a greater pur-

pose, ultimately pointing toward our Creator and Father in heaven.

Physical marriage and sex are a part of that process. As such, they deserve respect. Sex is an important way by which husbands and wives express love—that is, outgoing selfless concern for another. Real love—as defined by God, not men—is the foundation of holy, righteous, godly character (I John 4:8, 16), and an integral part of God’s Family and soon-coming kingdom.

Adultery and fornication emphasizes the self: *What feels right for me, or What I believe is the right choice for me, at this particular moment in time.*

Contrast this with establishing the right foundation for marriage: loving and respecting one’s mate, valuing

and appreciating the true purpose of sex, starting a family, shaping and molding one’s children for success—all of which will affect the wellbeing of future generations.

Premarital sex does untold damage to oneself and his or her future spouse. It is simply an act of selfishness. On the other hand, the marriage institution and the children produced within it serve as a type or pattern of the spiritual process by which one becomes a member of God’s Family.

Any form of sex outside of marriage works against God’s Plan for humanity!

This knowledge brings an extra level of honor and respect for the institution of marriage, and sex within it. It also brings with it responsibility. □

REALITY

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famous for 15 minutes. Many now live their lives as if this is their goal.

A *Psychology Today* study revealed this to be true: “The attitude that best separated the regular viewers of reality television from everyone else is the desire for status. Fans of the shows are much more likely to agree with statements such as, ‘Prestige is important to me’ and ‘I am impressed with designer clothes’ than are other people. We have studied similar phenomena before and found that the desire for status is just a means to get attention. And more attention increases one’s sense of importance: We think we are important if others pay attention to us and unimportant if ignored.

“Reality TV allows Americans to fantasize about gaining status through automatic fame. Ordinary people can watch the shows, see people like themselves and imagine that they too could become celebrities by being on television. It does not matter as much that the contestants often are shown in an unfavorable light; the fact that millions of Americans are paying attention means that the contestants are important.”

Detached From Reality

These shows have a number of negative effects on viewers, both subtle and overt. They promote dissatisfaction with life in the average viewer, who sees someone who may be perceived as “just like them” achieving fame (and often fortune). Any human being with access to television or the Internet can now covet another person’s whole life—even if they have never met (see Jeremiah 6:13; 8:10).

Such shows also promote a passive and even voyeuristic mindset. Most of them do not motivate or inspire action—rather, they make it easy to live vicariously through others, expecting to be constantly entertained instead of informed or edified. And they play into the natural human tendency to criticize others in order to elevate the self. Viewers can find themselves watching outrageous behavior and thinking, “I would never do that!” while being perfectly content to watch “that” happening—over and over again.

Ironically, the more time and energy a viewer invests in reality television, the further he gets from *actual* reality—the challenges, joys, responsibilities, stresses and opportunities facing men and women today. These shows

drain away precious, finite hours from one’s schedule, with little to show for it afterward.

Finally, reality programs prevent viewers from learning what is happening day-to-day on planet Earth. With so many parts of the world aflame with war, economic upheaval, civil unrest, disease outbreaks and other history-making events, do we really have time for *America’s Trashiest Weddings*?

Rise Above!

Have you ever asked yourself, “Is there more to life than this? Is this all there is?” The good news is that the answer is YES—there is more than just this temporary physical existence! But this spiritual void can never be filled through a life of idly waiting for the next guilty pleasure to be delivered through an electronic screen.

There is a reason you were born—a transcendent potential that, for most, is obscured by the pursuit of physical thrills and immersion in passive entertainment.

If you would like to learn about the many ways in which the reality of *your* life can be far more exciting than any television show, read David C. Pack’s book *The Awesome Potential of Man*, as well as his booklet *The Laws to Success*. □

“A TRUE WORLD POLITICAL AUTHORITY” ...WITH “REAL TEETH”

HISTORY AND PROPHECY ALIGN

BY ROBERT R. FARRELL AND BRUCE A. RITTER



■ **STRENGTHENING TIES:** Pope Benedict XVI waves to the United Nations General Assembly at the UN building in New York (April 18, 2008). The pope reminded all UN member states of their duty to protect their people from “grave and sustained” human rights violations, warning that if they were unable to do so, the world community had to intervene.

PHOTO: FRANCESCO SFORZA/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

World

IN HIS THIRD encyclical—the second-highest level of teaching in the Catholic Church—Pope Benedict XVI wrote there is an “urgent need of a true world political authority” in the wake of the global economic crisis.

“Furthermore, such an authority would need to be universally recognized,” he added, “and to be vested with the effective power to ensure security for all, regard for justice, and respect for rights.”

Titled “Charity in Truth,” the church document “was released a day before leaders of the Group of Eight industrialized nations [met] to coordinate efforts to deal with the global meltdown, signaling a clear Vatican bid to prod leaders for a financially responsible future and what it considers a more socially just society” (*The Associated Press*).

Why would the top religious leader of 1.2 billion professing Christians—whose position, *vicar* of Christ, meaning “in place of” Christ on Earth—call

for “a true world political authority”—one with “real teeth”? And what if a worldwide governing entity did become reality: Would it bring success—or disaster?

Past Glory Days

Pope Benedict, in his encyclical, advocated “the responsibility to protect” poorer nations and give them an “effective voice in shared decision-making”—that is, a prominent seat at the table of international affairs.

The stated goal: “To manage the global economy; to revive economies hit by the crisis; to avoid any deterioration of the present crisis and the greater imbalances that would result; to bring about integral and timely disarmament, food security and peace; to guarantee the protection of the environment and to regulate migration.”

A tall order.

The United States used to be the shining knight all looked to for direction and assistance. But the domestic attacks of 9/11 revealed the face of a new nation: America the Vulnerable. The aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, and news images of “American refugees,” revealed America the Impotent. And the current global economic meltdown, its bankruptcies, rising unem-

ployment rate and increasing debt, reveals America the Ailing Financial Giant. Can it recover—or is its economic “cancer” terminal?

Its glory days now behind, the world’s lone superpower no longer shines as the heroic knight poised to rescue lesser nations.

The Vatican and other members of the international community seek another to take its place: *Someone* must save the “Zimbabwes” of the world—underdeveloped countries suffering runaway inflation, virtually nonexistent infrastructure, government-wide corruption and social injustice. *Someone* must disarm nations from caches of weapons of mass destruction. *Someone* must intervene in regions facing mass starvation, secure food and medicine, protect refugee camps against civil unrest, and break the chains of abject poverty. *Someone* must balance the scales of economic equity between the “haves” (largely the West) and the “have nots” (the Third World).

For now, Pope Benedict has called for “a reform of the United Nations Organization, and likewise of economic institutions and international finance”—but is that a viable solution? □

History

POPE JOHN PAUL II, during a 1982 trip to Spain, urged Europeans to “Return to yourself. Be yourself. Discover your origins. Revive your roots. Revive those values which made your history glorious and made your presence beneficial among the other continents” (*Zenit*).

Twenty-three years later, his successor, Pope Benedict XVI, repeated the identical call for Europeans to return to their cultural roots.

During the past 500 years, Europe has

played the leading role in shaping history. The continent has produced matchless advances in diverse fields, such as science, business, education, agriculture, technology, art, architecture and music. Monumental historical developments—the Renaissance, the French Revolution, the Industrial Revolution and two World Wars—began in Europe before impacting countries in other continents. The richest and most powerful nations in modern history have invariably been European or those founded by their descendants. In short, Europe has been the axis around which the world has largely revolved.

And yet at this time the continent is troubled, beset by problems of every kind: economic stagnation, terrorism, illegal immigration, low birthrates, widespread crime, culture clashes and

difficulties with integration—to name just a few.

In the face of these issues, Europeans are becoming disenchanted with their leaders. In the recently concluded European Union parliamentary elections, citizens showed their displeasure by voting out several incumbents, and in some cases, voting in right-wing extremist groups. Many are unhappy with the state of affairs in Europe, and feel that their leaders are not addressing their concerns.

Both the current and previous pope identified Europe’s problems as spiritual, rather than physical. For well over 1,000 years, religion has played a major role in shaping the continent, and has historically proved to be the only glue capable of holding together diverse cultures and competing national agendas.

As problems multiply, Europeans are looking for direction—for leadership—for someone with a “map and compass” to lead them out of their troubles—to provide real solutions. At the same time, the Vatican is concerned about the state of world affairs, and has proposed a global political entity “with real teeth” to solve pressing problems. Both church and state are looking for a leader to address their concerns.

Will such a leader arise? If so, what impact will he have on Europe, and ultimately the world? Also, what role, if any, will religion play?

From Earliest Times

To determine the answers to these questions, one has to first understand the historic nature of the 1,500-year relationship between Europe and the Vatican.

In AD 324, the Roman Emperor Constantine, after seeing a vision, established “Christianity” as the official religion of the Roman Empire. (In reality, this was the great counterfeit version of the true Church; read David C. Pack’s book *Where Is the True Church? – And Its Incredible History!* to learn more.) Until that time, those who professed to be Christian lived under threat of persecution. Indeed, countless numbers were tortured, and even murdered.

Then, in 325, Constantine followed this up with the Council of Nicea, a gathering of religious leaders from all over the empire that convened to settle doctrinal disputes. Most accepted its decrees. Those who did not were forced to flee for their lives—especially when the Council of Laodicea, in 363, decreed Sunday to be the official day of Christian worship, replacing the seventh-day Sabbath.

The church at Rome had become a key player in European affairs. Within the next 300 years, a number of events occurred to strengthen its influence.

The unthinkable happened in 476: the mighty Roman Empire fell to Germanic invaders. This colossal event rocked both Europe and the Vatican.

After Rome fell, the papacy worked behind the scenes with other influential elements to eliminate the Germanic bar-

barians. In 554, Justinian restored the empire as the “Holy Roman Empire.” This would be significant for a number of reasons.

Adding the word “Holy” indicated that those involved believed this government entity was the kingdom of God on Earth. This was the first time the Vatican was the most influential factor in selecting the emperor, as its support gave the civil leader legitimacy in the eyes of the people. From this time onward, the relationship of church and state would be the primary factor in European history, up to and including the 21st century. The emperor provided leadership, and ensured that the state carried out the church’s wishes. From then on, the Vatican became the major player in continental Europe.

Through the Middle Ages

Shortly after Justinian’s death in 565, the empire declined. Over the next 200 years, it would ebb and flow with successive rulers, but not return to its former glory.

During the 8th century, the powerful Germanic Frankish kingdom started to emerge in France and Germany, led by a line of kings known as the Merovingians, followed by the Carolingians—who, under Charles Martel (“the Hammer”), rescued Europe by defeating the invading Saracens in a momentous victory at Tours in France. By this, the Vatican recognized the Franks as the defenders of Christianity.

After the Frankish leader Pepin died in 768, his son Charles (six-foot, four-inches tall) ascended to the throne. He undertook 53 military campaigns against 12 nations during the next several years, uniting all of the countries in Western Europe. After a desperate plea for help from Pope Adrian I, Charles defeated the Lombards and in the process united Italy. After several victorious campaigns and a generous donation of land to the church, Charles was hailed as defender and guardian of the Christian faith. The alliance between the church and the Franks was strengthened. Charles would later become known as Charlemagne (Karl

der Grosse to Germans)—Charles the Great.

His defining moment came in the year 800, when Pope Leo III crowned him as “imperator Romanorum”—Emperor of the Romans. The crowning cemented the marriage between the church and state, and restored the Holy Roman Empire. It also showed that the crown was the pope’s to give and to take away. A future pope would later declare that “church and state are like soul and body and both must be united in order to live and function rightly.”

Europe fell into disarray after Charlemagne’s death, as foreign invaders continually threatened the continent. The church and various governments were occasionally at loggerheads. Disunity reigned. Weakness in the church proved to be tied to weakness in Europe, and vice versa. Both awaited a leader to point the way forward.

In 924, Otto the Great, son of a Saxon duke, came to power, approvingly elected by participants who raised their right hand and shouted, “Sieg und Heil!”—victory and salvation. The German Otto then went about successfully expanding his kingdom. As the continent drifted into another period of decline, Pope John XII in 961 asked Otto to restore order and defend the church. Otto subsequently swept into Italy and defeated all enemies. The grateful pontiff then crowned Otto “Holy Roman Emperor.” Once again, church and state moved in lock step. Otto’s kingdom was the beginning of what was subsequently called the “Holy Empire of the German Nation”—the First Reich.

The Holy Roman Empire and Germany were inextricably linked, with Germanic leaders assuming the mantle of kingship—the imperial crown, the symbol of European unity—sitting on their heads. Germany became the power center of Europe.

However, a struggle for power between church and state ensued throughout the Middle Ages; once again, Europe declined. In the 12th and 13th century, Europeans launched unsuccessful wars—the Crusades—to take Jerusalem from the Muslims.

Then, in 1453, the unthinkable happened: Constantinople, the capital of the eastern Roman Empire (known as Byzantine Empire), fell to the Muslim Turks. A shaky Europe was once more ripe for a strong leader to lead it out of the morass.

In the 1500s, an influential Germanic family, the Habsburgs, came to prominence, having amassed large swaths of land across Europe. Pope Clement at Bologna, Italy, crowned one of its own, Charles V, Holy Roman Emperor in 1530, making him “the defender of the faith.” (This was technically the last time a pope crowned someone emperor.) Charles went on to become the greatest Habsburg emperor. Indeed, some historians even considered him to be the greatest emperor to wear the imperial crown since Charlemagne.

The Habsburgs, by a series of marriages, were so interconnected with Spanish, Dutch and other European royalty, Charles V’s empire stretched from Europe to South America. Through his efforts, the Hapsburgs controlled a vast global empire—the first in modern times. Charles declared, “In my realm, the sun never sets.” Charles’ goal was a united Europe under one religion (this idea remains in play today, with the move toward a united Europe and religious ecumenicism). With the Habsburg Empire, many dreamt of a Christian European empire, but with his death, again decline set in.

The 17th and 18th centuries would see the Roman church struggle against threats to its power: the rise of Protestantism, the decline of the Spanish and Portuguese empires, conflict between France and Germany, and the emergence of the Ottoman Turks and protestant Britain as formidable powers. During these difficult times, the church once again awaited a leader to champion its cause.

Napoleon and Beyond

A star suddenly emerged in the late 18th century. Napoleon Bonaparte, a young, brash, but brilliant military leader from Corsica burst onto the scene. By age 26, he was already commanding the French army in Italy, and had seized

power in France by age 30. Short in stature, but long on ambition, this keen student of Roman history dreamt of a resurrected Roman Empire, with himself as emperor—which he declared himself in 1804 after he snatched the imperial crown from the pope’s hand and *crowned himself* during the royal ceremony. With this, he set about unifying Europe.

Napoleon saw some initial successes (most notably, the defeat of Prussia in 1806). However, one disastrous campaign after another led to his defeat and downfall, first in Russia and then against the British in the Belgian town of Waterloo. With Napoleon’s defeat, 1,260 years of the Holy Roman Empire came to an end—from Justinian in 554 to Napoleon’s downfall in 1814. The church again lost a champion.

A period of rebuilding in Europe ensued. Giuseppe Garibaldi reunited Italy in 1870, and Otto von Bismarck reunited Germany in the following year, which brought about the Second Reich.

Bismarck forged an alliance between Germany and Italy, rekindling ties going back to the days of Charlemagne and Otto the Great.

In later years of the German-Italian axis, Benito Mussolini tried to revive the Holy Roman Empire, reconciling a longstanding rift between church and state, even entering into a concordat (agreement) with the Vatican. But the dictator’s reign was short-lived, ending in abysmal failure with his hanging in 1945. Nazi Germany’s Adolf Hitler, with visions of glory, set about establishing the Third Reich; that too ended in failure.

Though it had suffered in the hands of fascist dictators, the dream of European unity lived on. After World War II, the European Economic Community was established to improve trade between European countries. This later morphed into the European Union (EU), as the continent moved toward political unification, a drive that continues to this very day.

But there are many problems to overcome, problems that require strong leadership.

The Vatican’s View

Surveying the world scene, the Vatican is troubled by what it sees. In his book *Without Roots: The West, Relativism, Christianity, Islam*, then-Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger (today’s Pope Benedict XVI) described Europe as having denied its religious and moral foundation. He lamented a continent overtaken by secularism and materialism, a Europe that had slipped into immorality, cultural confusion and irreligiousness. A Europe in danger of being overrun by outside forces.

Pope Benedict has lamented the weakening of European churches, telling a gathering of Italian priests “there’s no longer evidence for a need of God, much less Christ. The so-called traditional churches look like they are dying” (*USA Today*).

According to the Center for the Study on Global Christianity, every major religion in Western Europe is declining—except Islam. Thirty-eight percent of people in 12 major European countries say they never or rarely attend church. France’s 60 percent non-attendance rate is the highest. In some areas of France, Sweden and the Netherlands, attendance is less than 10 percent (*USA Today*). The Europe of today represents a danger not only to itself, but also to the church’s very existence.

The Vatican’s worldview is much the same. It sees a world of secular humanism, of no absolute morals, a world devoid of leadership. In his encyclical “Charity in Truth,” the pope called for a world political authority to manage the global economy, disarm nations, guarantee the protection of the environment, and regulate migration. Such an authority would have the power to enforce compliance with its decisions. For the papacy to implement its wishes, it needs an alliance with a sympathetic civil leader.

Will it look once again to the historical precedent?

Europe’s Challenges

Europe presently faces several crises. On the economic front, the EU’s economy is forecasted to contract by four

percent in 2009, worse than the 2.8 percent projected for the United States. And European bank losses from the present global financial crisis are projected to overtake those by U.S. banks (*Wall Street Journal*).

All of this has badly affected the European job market. Today, some 20 million EU citizens are unemployed, many permanently. Total employment in the continent is 63 percent, while it is 75 percent in the U.S. In Italy, France, and Germany, 38 percent, 58 percent and 81 percent of the people respectively believe that unemployment is the most urgent social problem (*Heritage Foundation Lectures*).

Immigration is another highly contentious issue. In Europe's capitals and small cities live large enclaves of immigrants, a significant number of whom are Muslim, often from Africa. Significant percentages of populations in France, Belgium, Holland and other nations consist of immigrants. Often with starkly different cultures and religions, a large number have not assimilated into the dominant European cultures; this has caused friction between the incumbents and newcomers. The

age-old contentions of racism and religious conflict, particularly between professing Christians and Islamic believers, have returned.

Low birthrates are another serious concern. The populations of major countries such as Italy, France and Germany are in danger of falling if their birthrate does not rise significantly. The lack of young workers is also putting tremendous pressure on social welfare programs and pensions, vital to Europe's sustainability.

Meanwhile, moves toward unification have continually met roadblocks, with bickering between EU member-states and slow progress in ratifying the new constitution. Terrorism, defense, energy and the rise of extremist political parties are some of the many concerns requiring solutions. Yet many EU citizens feel, both publicly and privately, that their leaders are not addressing the problems. In this time of instability, they yearn for leadership.

A Leader Emerges

Both Europe and the Vatican are looking for a leader to address their challenges. Will such a man emerge? While secular

Europe says, "No," Bible prophecy says, "Yes."

As humanity draws closer to the end of man's age of rule without God's governing guidance, the Bible is most clear that a powerful strongman will arise. This man will have the personality and political influence to galvanize and unite Europe. He will lead a unification of 10 European nations, or groups of nations—a superpower that will challenge the United States, Russia and China for global dominance.

Endorsed by, and working with, a powerful religious leader, he will seem to have all the answers, ushering in a time of unmatched prosperity for Europe. This civil leader—working with the world's top recognized and accepted religious leader—will bring together church and state, reviving the Holy Roman Empire one final time, with Germany at its lead. Europe will once again become the focus of the world, with cataclysmic implications for humanity.

To learn more about the details of prophecy, read our booklets *Who or What Is the Beast of Revelation?* and *Revelation Explained at Last*. □

Prophecy

THE RECORD OF the past 6,000 years presents overwhelming proof of Scripture—"that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walks to direct his steps" (Jer. 10:23).

Why is this?

Animals, powered by their brains, live for the moment, reacting to their surroundings through instinct. Human beings, through the power of their minds, possess the capacity to plan, formulate and make their dreams become reality.

Animals build dens and nests, and establish territories. Human beings build homes of one, two, three stories or more—farmhouses, townhouses,

duplexes, apartment buildings, skyscrapers.

Animals can fly—if they already have the natural ability to do so. Human beings construct flying machines so they can glide through the air, fly across continents, orbit the earth—even rocket to the moon and back.

Yet despite his mastery over the physical—to even potentially walk on Mars—man flounders in handling the intangible. He does not know how to lead a happy, productive marriage or successfully rear children or establish everlasting peace (which is more than just the absence of war).

Why? Because his problems are *spiritual* in nature. God has given 6,000 years of self-rule—six millennia of attempting to achieve prosperity, happiness and success. Yet the record of history—of wars, broken marriages and families, civil injustice, religious confusion, failing education systems, and the like—speaks for itself.

Yet prophecy reveals that humanity will not learn from the past.

A "world political authority" will arise and assume a leading role on the global stage of politics, international trade and military presence. Today's largely secularized Europe will see a new and unexpected interest in religion, due to the sudden appearance of a religious leader, who will sway the masses and use his influence to endorse a political leader. Most likely, European citizens will hear cries of "A New Europe!" and calls for attaining peace and prosperity. For a time, Europe will experience unprecedented wealth from international trade and commerce. The glory days of America's economic empire will fade in memory.

Speculation? No, tomorrow's news written in advance: Bible prophecy.

Read the following excerpt from our booklet *Who or What is the Beast of Revelation*, written by David C.

Pack, under the subhead “The Bible Explains It”:

“There are many theories about the ‘two-horned beast.’ Some have thought it is a grouping of Protestant churches, and others think that it is the papacy linked to the United States. Most, however, claim not to know what it is, and speak little of it. Therefore, we must let the Bible explain its true meaning.

“Now let’s examine the passage that describes this other Revelation 13 beast: ‘And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spoke as a dragon. And he exercises all the power of the first beast before him, and causes the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. And he does great wonders, so that he makes fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, and deceives them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast...and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed’ (vs. 11-15).

“Some important points emerge.

“This two-horned beast gives ‘power’ to the first beast of verses 1-5. Daniel 7:17, 23 revealed that ‘beast’ is a term for a civil government or kingdom, or the leader of the kingdom. Therefore, our first important conclusion is that this beast must be a government or kingdom. Second, is that it gives power to the Roman Empire system.

“It also appears like a ‘lamb,’ but speaks like a ‘dragon.’ This is critical to understand. Here is why. Christ is depicted in the Bible, in several places, as a lamb (John 1:29; Rev. 17:14). We have seen that the dragon is Satan. So this beast, then, appears to be religious, but is really of the devil. In other words, this is a satanic kingdom that appears on the surface to be the kingdom of God, and of Christ. Many scriptures reveal that Christ did not establish His kingdom at His first

ATTAINING TRUE “CHARITY IN TRUTH”

Love. Rather than turning to the Bible—the only true authority defining and instructing in all things good and right—people choose to create their own definition of this widely used word. They define love as something one “feels.”

The papal letter “Charity in Truth” (or rather, “Love in Truth” since charity is an Old English word for “love”) is no exception.

While the religious document does quote I John 4:8 (“God is love”), it goes no further in letting the Bible speak for itself. The encyclical speaks of pursuing social justice and helping, but notice what the apostle Paul, inspired by the Holy Spirit, wrote: “And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity [love], it profits me nothing” (I Cor. 13:3).

In other words, while giving to the poor and sacrificing one’s life are admirable, these do not *automatically* mean that a person is led by the love of God.

The next few verses then define God’s—not men’s—standard of love: “[Love] suffers long, and is kind; [love] envies not; [love] vaunts not itself, is not puffed up, does not behave itself unseemly, seeks not her own, is not easily provoked, thinks no evil; rejoices not in iniquity, but rejoices in the TRUTH; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. [Love] never fails” (vs. 4-8).

Scripture also states, “For this is the love of God, that we KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS” (I John 5:3). In other words, if you want the love of God in you, then obey God.

The latter half of the verse states, “and His commandments are not grievous.” Most of the world’s “Christian” leaders teach otherwise—that God’s Law was “done away” at Christ’s sacrifice—that “Jesus kept the Law for you.”

But if the Law is not “grievous”—“burdensome, heavy in weight,” according to the meaning of the original Greek word—then what would be the point of doing away with it, or Christ keeping it for us in our stead?

Romans 13: “Owe no man anything, but to love one another” (vs. 8). If God’s Word did not elaborate beyond this verse, it would be up to people to define love. Instead, the Bible interprets itself.

The rest of the verse states, “For he that loves another has fulfilled the law,” and expounds upon this in verse 9: “You shall not commit adultery, you shall not kill, you shall not steal, you shall not bear false witness, you shall not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, you shall love your neighbor as yourself.”

Obedying the first four of the Ten Commandments shows love and fear toward God; keeping the last six shows love and selfless, outgoing concern toward neighbor. This is why Paul wrote, “Love works no ill to his neighbor: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law” (vs. 10).

Anyone who speaks or writes about “the need for love” and “love is all you need”—but does not point love’s direct connection to obeying the Law of God—offers empty platitudes.

Now let’s focus on truth—again, not as men define it, but as the *Bible* defines it, of which Jesus Christ said in prayer to God, “Your Word is truth” (John 17:17).

Most students of Scripture focus primarily on the New Testament, and therefore are unaware of this Bible definition: “Your LAW is truth” (Psa. 119:142) and “all Your COMMANDMENTS are truth” (vs. 151). No wonder Paul wrote, centuries later, “Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good” (Rom. 7:12), adding two verses later, “For we know that the law is spiritual” (vs. 14).

Can God’s truth—His Law—be “grievous” and burdensome, as the vast majority of professing Christians have been deceived into believing?

Would God “do away” with His truth—that is, His Law and Word—which builds one’s faith (Rom. 10:17), sanctifies (sets apart as holy) and cleanses believers (Eph. 5:26), is a lamp that lights one’s path (Psa. 119:105) in the spiritual darkness of this “present evil world [age]” (Gal. 1:4), and is precious wisdom and understanding to all who keep it?

Ridiculous!

Nonetheless, God charges modern false religious leaders and teachers of violating His Law and profaning His holy things: “They have put no difference between the holy and profane, neither have they showed difference between the unclean and the clean, and have hid their eyes from My Sabbaths, and I am profaned among them” (Ezek. 22:26).

How? By falsely teaching that the laws of God—His truth, which defines good and evil—is no longer in effect! Such “leaders” are truly the blind leading the blind! □

Coming. He carefully explained this to His disciples in Acts 1:6, John 14:1-3 and Luke 19:11-27. We have already seen verses in Daniel 7 describing when Christ and the saints smash the fourth beast as they are given rulership over earth.

“When Revelation 13:12 states that ‘he exercises all the power of the first beast before him [of verses 1 and 2], and causes the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed,’ it was the Roman Empire to whom he was giving power. This occurred from the time of its healing in 554.

“For the full 1,260 years that the wound was healed, Roman emperors

he had power to do in the sight of the beast,’ with verse 13 stating, ‘he does great wonders.’

“Recognize these facts: The second beast is able to perform miracles. He does this ‘in the sight of’ the first beast—the Holy Roman Empire. These miracles are so extraordinary—so mesmerizing—that they allow him to deceive the whole earth! Finally, the beast is worshipped as a result.

“This future religious leader will lead the final resurrection of the Holy Roman Empire alongside a great civil leader. In II Thessalonians 2:3, this same religious leader is called the ‘man of sin.’ Revelation 19:20 refers to him as a ‘false prophet.’ This false

union between church and state. Those who fall in step—who willingly take the government’s “mark”—will receive the government’s “blessing.” But those who resist will receive persecution. Violently.

Under the guise of bringing security and prosperity to the masses, religious persecution, war and atrocities will rule the day. Humanity is entering a time foretold millennia ago when people will claim, “Peace, peace; when there is no peace” (Jer. 6:14; 8:11). The books of Revelation and Daniel, as well as numerous other passages, mention “the last days”—that is, the final days of man’s age.

Thankfully, a new and better age—the world to come!—will replace it.

The World to Come

After man’s dismal failure of trying to establish a “world political authority,” a world-ruling supergovernment *will* be established—one that will succeed! This ultimate government of governments—the KINGDOM OF GOD—will bring *true* freedom, justice, lasting peace and prosperity for all.

A qualified leader has long ago been selected, Jesus Christ (Isa. 11:1-5). Of His soon-coming worldwide reign, Scripture states, “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).

The days of human beings trying to direct their own steps through life—and of worldly religions, masquerading as being of God (II Cor. 11:13-15), attempting to rule people’s lives through civil government—will finally be over.

Only then will *real* peace, social justice and economic equity rule the day! □

“For the full 1,260 years that the wound was healed, Roman emperors acknowledged the supreme authority of religion throughout the empire.”

acknowledged the supreme authority of religion throughout the empire. This is one way it portrays itself as the kingdom of God on earth. Many encyclopedias state that the Holy Roman Empire was the ‘kingdom of God on earth.’ Actually, in 554, many felt that the kingdom of God had officially arrived.

“The second beast, however, has two horns. This is because it represents a two-fold combination of church and government. But since it is an actual kingdom, it does, in fact, have to be its own independent, sovereign state. Remember also, this two-horned beast possesses such awesome power that it inspires the world to worship the beast, whose deadly wound was healed. The power to bring fire down from heaven and to perform miracles will win vast numbers of people as worshippers of the beast.

“Verse 14 explains this: ‘And deceives them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which

prophet embodies all that counterfeit Christianity has represented through the centuries. In the near future, when the modern-day descendants of Israel are taken into captivity, many will see the bitter reality of its killing machine firsthand.

“This has been typical of this Babylonish church throughout the course of history. Millions have been put to death for not worshipping according to its false beliefs and practices. (Take time to read David C. Pack’s book *America and Britain in Prophecy*. It reveals the remarkable story of who ancient Israel is and where they are found today—and prophecies explaining what will soon happen to them.)

“Plainly, the ‘two-horned beast’ is the headquarters of the great false church that controls the first beast. The description we have just read is an unmistakable parallel with the ‘little horn’ of Daniel 7:8, 20-21, 24-25.”

This new “world political authority” will be the result of a convenient

Understanding Earthquakes and Volcanoes—and Their Role in Prophecy

IN RECENT HISTORY, mankind has come to understand the structure of the earth—the core, the mantle and the crust. We have learned of tremendous forces near the planet’s surface capable of immense destruction. This has helped us better understand how earthquakes occur.

Earth’s core is approximately 4,000 miles from the surface and is made of superheated metals. Our planet consists of a solid inner core and a liquid outer core. Beyond the outer core lies the mantle, which is 1,800 miles thick and consists of semi-molten and semi-solid rock. The mantle has a soft consistency and is often referred to as the “hot plastic layer.”

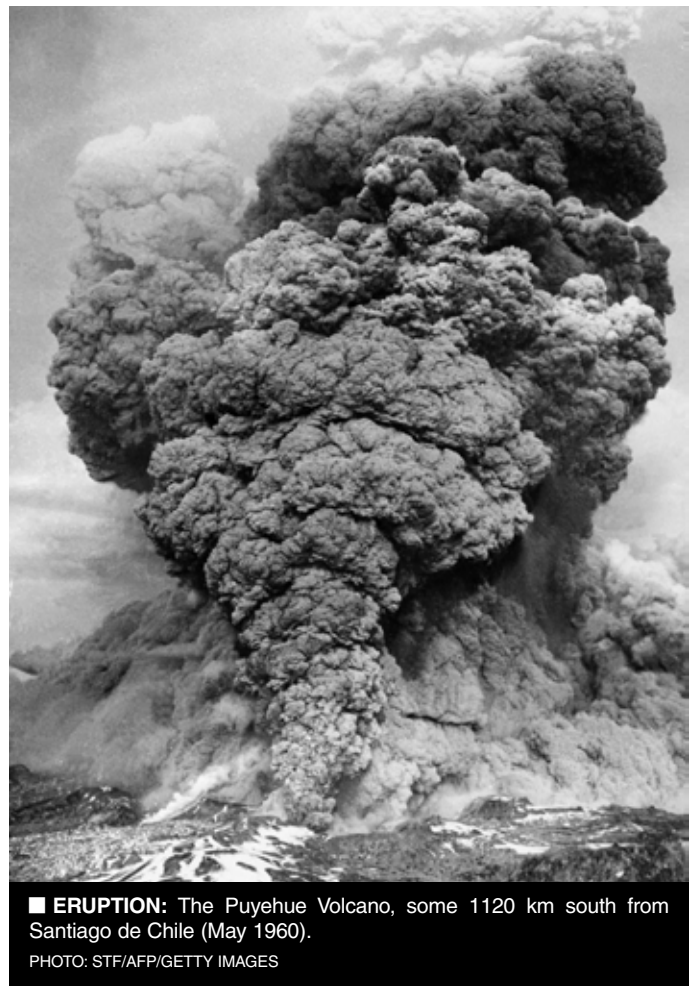
On top of the mantle float large semi-rigid slabs called tectonic plates, which form most of the earth’s crust. These plates are thousands of miles wide, but only three to 45 miles thick. If our planet was the size of an apple, the thickness of the crust would be less than that of the apple’s skin.

The plates’ visible surfaces are landmasses known as continents. For most continents, such as Africa and the Americas, the plate’s boundary coincides with the shoreline. The edges of tectonic plates—the borders between two plates—are areas of geological turbulence giving rise to visible fault lines.

A fault system borders Africa along the Red Sea and Suez Canal in the northeast, and continues along the main continental plate in eastern Africa. The western border, in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean, is called the Mid-Atlantic Ridge, which is also the border of the South American plate to the west and extends 12,000 miles, from Antarctica all the way to the North Pole. It divides the North American and Eurasian plates as well.

This ridge was formed by the movement of the tectonic plates. As the plates pull apart, magma from underneath the plates is released and rushes upward to fill the breach—one example of how the earth is self-sustaining.

When the movement of tectonic plates becomes restrained



■ **ERUPTION:** The Puyehue Volcano, some 1120 km south from Santiago de Chile (May 1960).

PHOTO: STF/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Earthquakes and volcanic activity are on the rise. The Bible prophesies that the greatest period of earthquakes lies just ahead.

BY JEFFREY D. DAVIS

by the friction between plates, tension builds.

Earthquakes occur when the edges of the plates can no longer withstand the pressure and break down—releasing the tension.

These plates move very slowly, usually no more than five inches a year. However, periods of *no* movement are interpreted as danger signals. When movement is restricted, energy is being stored up for a powerful earthquake.

Seismographs (instruments that measure ground movement) around the world detect about 30,000 earthquakes per year, with millions of smaller earthquakes also estimated to occur. On average, there is one extremely severe earthquake each year, such as the 9.3 magnitude earthquake that unleashed the late 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami.

Moderate earthquakes—such as the December 2003 quake of San Simeon, Calif., which registered 6.6 on the Richter scale, or the April 2009 quake near L'Aquila, Italy, which measured 6.9—have occurred about 145 times per year since 2000.

In the past 100 years, quakes of all sizes have claimed nearly 2 million lives worldwide. The danger is now greater than ever, since the population has dramatically increased during the last two centuries. Some of the world's most earthquake-prone regions are also the most densely populated.

The Pacific Rim has been the most volatile region, accounting for over 80 percent of the world's largest earth-

quakes. In addition, several thousand small to moderate quakes occur each year around the west coast of North and South America—the eastern flank of the Pacific Rim. The southeastern Asian countries and many island nations are also in this volatile region. Japan alone is shaken by more than 1,500 seismic

highest reading ever recorded in the 20th century.

The rippling effects were enormous. New volcanoes and several older volcanoes suddenly activated. Islands disappeared off the coast. A 25-mile strip of the coastal mountains (about two to three miles wide) suddenly dropped 1,000 feet, finally wedging between two giant plates, now partially submerged in the Pacific Ocean. The resulting casualties reached over 1,600, as it struck several mountain and coastal villages.

The earthquakes generated seismic waves that sped across the Pacific at about 500 miles per hour. In some areas, 150-foot waves reached the shorelines. The main tsunami traveled more than 10,000 miles, wreaking havoc wherever it hit. Japanese authorities issued a tsunami

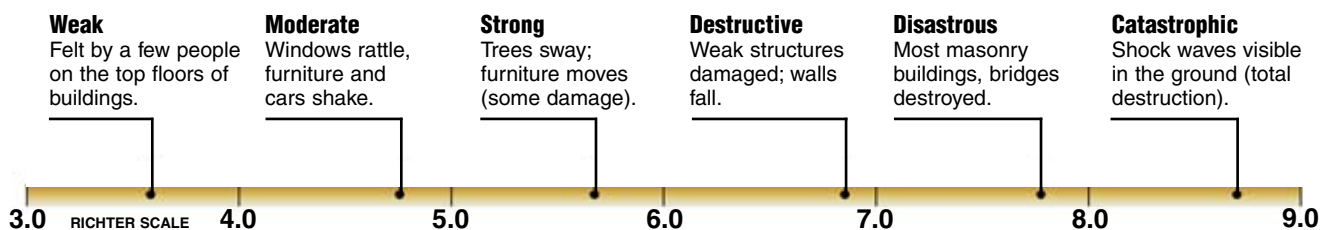
warning in time to evacuate some of Japan's shorelines, saving thousands of lives before the destructive waves hit 22 hours later. This was the first time a tsunami striking Southeast Asia originated as far away as South America.

The highest known tsunami waves reached 1,722 feet in Lituya Bay, Alaska, on July 10, 1968. In 1883, a 120-foot tsunami hit the islands of northwestern Indonesia. This resulted from an explosive volcanic eruption that decimated the mountain island of Krakatoa, and erased all life from many small islands, taking more than 36,000 lives in Sumatra and Java alone.

Another tsunami hit the Philippines in 1976, killing over 5,000 people.



MEASURING THE INTENSITY OF AN EARTHQUAKE



Like most tsunamis, it too was caused by an earthquake.

The strongest earthquake recorded in North America centered near Anchorage, Alaska, in March 1964. It registered 8.5 on the Richter scale and 9.2 on the moment scale, and caused approximately 12,000 square miles of land southeast of Anchorage to rise about 7.5 feet. Roughly 35,000 square miles to the northwest dropped about five feet. Despite the enormous devastation, only 131 people died, since most damage occurred in sparsely populated areas.

In 1974, another quake of similar proportions could have been as lethal, but local farmers recognized that a well began yielding artesian water (water under sudden pressure)—one of the indicators of an imminent quake. The local populace sounded the warning, evacuating Haich'eng, China, and saving thousands of lives (*Powers of Nature*, Tom Melham).

Two years later, an earthquake in Guatemala resulted in 23,000 deaths and left a million homeless. That same year, the Tang Shan quake, near Peking, China, claimed an unbelievable 655,000 lives!

Measurement of Earthquakes

Dr. Charles Richter developed the Richter scale in 1935. While not a precise measure of earthquake energy, it provides a rough comparison of earthquakes. The scale is open-ended in that very small earthquakes may register as minus numbers, and no maximum limit exists. So far, no earthquakes have registered above the magnitude 9 range.

The Richter scale is *logarithmic*—meaning that for each unit jump (such as from 6.0 to 7.0 on the scale), the seismic wave amplitude increases 10 times, and the *energy* of the quake actually increases 30 times. This same comparison would apply from a 7.0 to an 8.0 on the scale—a 10-fold increase in seismic wave amplitude and a 30-fold increase in energy level. But from a 6.0 to 8.0, there would be a 100-fold increase in seismic amplitude and a 900-fold increase in energy level.

In a 1978 interview, Dr. Richter explained the scale, expressing his surprise that it worked as well as it did. He indicated that it was based on an assumption that could not possibly be true—that one could compare earthquakes merely by multiplying some arithmetical factor. He emphasized that two magnitude 6.5 tremors could release appreciably different amounts of energy (*Powers of Nature*).

Seismologists today generally use an improved and updated scale along with the Richter scale—the *moment magnitude scale*, which is determined by the area of a quake's fissure and the displacement of the relative plates.

Using the moment magnitude scale (and comparing it to the Richter scale), the 1906 San Francisco quake measured 7.6 (8.3 on the Richter scale), 9.2 (8.5) for the 1964 Alaskan quake, and 7.0 (6.9) for the 1995 quake that struck Kobe, Japan. (Publications often differ regarding earthquake magnitudes, due to confusion as to which scale was used to report the quake.)

Devastating Tsunamis

The most devastating tsunami in modern history occurred on Dec. 26, 2004. An earthquake, registering 9.15 on the moment scale and with an epicenter on the ocean floor about 150 miles west of Sumatra, triggered a series of deadly waves just after dawn, pounding the island's northwest coast. More than 180,000 were left dead or missing. However, Sumatra's long span served to shield other Indonesian islands, the isthmus of Malaysia, and Singapore from imminent and cataclysmic disaster.

Primarily spreading toward the northern sectors of the Bay of Bengal, the tsunami dispersed east, north and west from the earthquake's epicenter, striking 12 countries. Estimates of the dead and missing surpassed 250,000, making it one of history's costliest natural disasters.

The tsunami affected the western shores of Thailand, where thousands of vacationers were visiting from around the world. Other countries that suffered loss included Myanmar (Burma),

Bangladesh, the eastern shoreline of India and Sri Lanka.

In many areas, a second seismic wave proved to be more destructive, drowning thousands of injured and helpless victims who had narrowly survived the first wave.

Total destruction along the seacoasts was almost unparalleled in history—and all resulting from an earthquake that caused the seafloor to lift, and displace billions of tons of water. The *PBS* television program *NOVA* calculated that the resulting release of energy was equivalent to 23,000 Hiroshima sized atomic bombs! The earthquake that triggered the 2004 tsunami was the third most powerful ever recorded.

Nearly a year later, a major earthquake hit Pakistan (Oct. 8, 2005). Registering 7.6 on the moment magnitude scale, its epicenter was in the Kashmir region, a disputed territory that also borders Xinjiang, Tibet and India. By the end of 2005, the Pakistani government's official death toll approached 90,000; other estimates exceed 100,000. Regions most affected were mountainous, where landslides blocked roads and impeded access. An estimated 3.3 million were left homeless, and relief efforts continued for months.

How God Uses Earthquakes

Earthquakes and volcanic activity have plagued man's civilizations through history. Scripture declares that God will use earthquakes to punctuate climatic events in the near future.

Historically, the Creator has sometimes used earthquakes to demonstrate His presence (such as at Mt. Sinai, when ancient Israel received His laws), show deliverance from trials, express divine wrath, and indicate His unfolding Plan for humanity.

In addition, God's Word, the Bible, states that He will use future earthquakes to accompany terrifying prophetic events, announce the Return of Jesus Christ, and reshape the earth's surface.

To understand more, read our extensive prophetic trends and conditions report *Earthquakes and Volcanoes in Prophecy*. □

PERSONAL

Continued from page 2

or does *not* have it and is *not* a Christian—is “none of His.” All those who are truly converted must have the Holy Spirit in them.

The apostle Peter taught, “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and you shall receive the *gift* of the Holy [Spirit]” (Acts 2:38).

As with salvation and faith, the Holy Spirit is a gift! Unless God *gives* it, one can not *have* it. But notice! There are CONDITIONS to receiving it. Repentance and baptism precede receiving God’s Spirit. Neither of these *earn* God’s Spirit but they are *qualifiers*—CONDITIONS—that must be met for the Holy Spirit to be given!

Now notice what receiving God’s Spirit means, in terms of eternal life, which will be given later, at the resurrection: “Christ...in whom also after that you believed, you were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the *earnest* of our *inheritance until* the redemption of the purchased possession” (Eph. 1:12-14). God’s Spirit, in a person’s mind, is a down payment—“*earnest*”—of our future inheritance with Christ in the kingdom of God. We are “*heirs* according to the promise” of salvation (Gal. 3:29)!

Receiving God’s Spirit begins a process that ends in inheritance with Christ. Is this all there is to Christianity and conversion, or is there more?

There is much more!

When Christ kept the Passover on the night before He was crucified, He indirectly, through prayer, explained an important principle to His disciples: “I pray not that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil. They are *not of the world*, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them through Your *truth*: YOUR WORD IS TRUTH” (John 17:15-17).

A Christian believes and follows the *truth*. The *truth* sets him apart (sanctifies him) from all those around

him. He is not *of* the world and its ways, customs, and traditions. Again, what does this mean? Also, what is the *truth* about how a Christian’s life *now* relates to what he will be doing for *all eternity*?

Are You Required to Do Anything?

Are Christians required to obey the laws of God? What is the answer—the *truth*—from the Word of God?

Jesus never taught that people should just “believe on Him” to receive salvation. When a young, rich man asked Him what he must *do* to have “eternal life”—receive salvation—Christ did not tell him, “Just believe in Me.” Instead, He told him, “If you will enter into life, KEEP THE COMMANDMENTS.” Hearing this, the disciples were shocked. (So are most ministers and churchmen.) They did not understand how this was possible and asked, “Who then can be saved?” Christ answered, “With men this is impossible; *but with God all things are possible*” (Matt. 19:17, 25-26). It is possible to obey God.

Christians must not continue in sin after baptism and conversion. Paul wrote, “What shall we say then? Shall we *continue in sin*, that grace may abound? GOD FORBID. How shall we, that are dead to sin [Christ had paid the penalty for us], live any longer therein?” (Rom. 6:1-2).

Verse 12 amplifies this: “Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in the lusts thereof.” Verses 14-16 continue, “For sin shall not have dominion over you: for you are not under the law, *but under grace*. What then? Shall we sin [transgress the law, I John 3:4], because we are not under the law, but under grace? GOD FORBID. Know you not, that to whom you yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants you are to whom you obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?”

Christians are under grace. But, while they are no longer “under the law”—*under the death penalty that past disobedience brings*—they now obey God. Forgiveness for past sins is

not a license to freely commit future sins.

In Mark 7:7-8, Christ said, “Howbeit *IN VAIN DO THEY WORSHIP ME*, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. *For laying aside the commandment of God*, you hold the tradition of men.” It is possible to worship Christ in vain. It is possible to *think* about Him, *talk* about Him and *refer* to Him often as Lord—ALL IN VAIN!

Now notice: “Not every one that says unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven [“of” not “in” heaven]; but he that *does* the will of My Father which is in heaven” (Matt. 7:21). Paul wrote, “the DOERS of the law [God’s] shall be justified” (Rom. 2:13).

A Christian is one who actually does certain things. His responsibility is more than just belief. In the context of explaining the difference between those who build their house on a rock and those who build on sand, Christ said, “And why call you Me, Lord, Lord, and *do not* the things which I say?” (Luke 6:46). A Christian *does* what God says to *do*! Also, carefully read James 1:22-25; 2:8-12, 14, 17-20. These verses substantiate Christ’s instruction commanding true Christians to keep the laws of God, tying works and faith together. They show it is not *faith* OR *works* but *faith* AND *works*.

The Bible speaks of “the Holy [Spirit], [which] God has *given* [IT IS A GIFT] to them that *obey* Him” (Acts 5:32). Receiving God’s Spirit is preceded by repentance (of breaking God’s Law) and baptism (Acts 2:38). It is at this point that a new spirit-begotten life begins. The newly begotten child of God is now a “joint-heir with Christ” (Rom. 8:17). He becomes part of the true Church that Christ promised to build and lead (Matt. 16:18; Eph. 1:22-23; Col. 1:18), which He feeds through His true ministry (Eph. 4:11-15).

But what about “having love”? Are not Christians merely those who “show love”? If so, what is it? Let’s consider several more verses. Let’s clear up all confusion!

Paul wrote, "...because *the love of God* is shed abroad in our hearts *by the Holy [Spirit]* which is given unto us" (Rom. 5:5). When a Christian receives God's Spirit, he receives some (a very little at first) of the love of God. Over time, through actively exercising it, the depth and amount of love *grows*.

There are two different ways of life. One is the "GIVE" way—the way of love and outgoing concern—God's way. The other is the "GET" way—the way of selfishness and self-concern—man's way. Some focus entirely on "getting" salvation for themselves, in the meantime *doing* as little as possible. Christ taught that it is "more blessed to GIVE than to receive" (Acts 20:35).

With this in mind, what is the Bible definition of *love*?

John wrote, "For this is the love of God, THAT WE KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS: and His commandments are not grievous" (I John 5:3). Many who claim to have love believe that the commandments *are* grievous. God says they are not. He calls His law "holy, just, good and spiritual" (Rom. 7:12, 14).

The Bible explains, through Paul, that the commandments and the law are the same: "Love works no ill to his neighbor: therefore LOVE IS THE FULFILLING OF THE LAW" (Rom. 13:10). The Bible defines love as "the fulfilling of the law."

A more detailed explanation of love is found in I Corinthians 13. Take the time to carefully read this chapter. Demonstrating God's love involves many different aspects of conduct—action—works—that are *done* by the Christian!

Only if they keep men's laws can all people walk free within their societies. Citizens of every nation understand that freedom is a privilege, which can be forfeited by law-breaking. Surely God is not less wise than men. People are free in Christ only if they obey Him.

So, a Christian is a "doer" not just a "believer" or "hearer." Salvation is a gift, but there are qualifying *conditions*—behavior, conduct, works—that

must be performed, or belief in Christ is *in vain*! And one who claims to have love must perform definite "works" of obedience to the law, which demonstrate it.

Why This "Personal"?

This "personal" is written to explain the reward that a Christian can expect in the next life. Its purpose is to directly connect one's works in THIS LIFE to the degree of *reward* that will be given in the NEXT LIFE. The Bible has much to say and you must recognize how vital

“Almost nothing you will read in The Real Truth magazine will be more important than the answer to the question raised in this article’s title. The purpose is to explain the relationship between your works in this life and your reward in the next life.”

this understanding is to your future. Being "saved by grace" and "rewarded according to works" are entirely different matters. Few understand that it is not one or the other—IT IS BOTH!

Do not misunderstand the tremendous significance of the material here. Almost nothing you will read in *The Real Truth* magazine will be more important than the answer to the question raised in this article's title. The purpose is to explain the relationship between your *works* in this life and your *reward* in the next life.

"Works" Are Not Rituals of Moses' Law

The Bible repeatedly states that Christians will be *rewarded later* according to their *works now*. This is an absolutely CLEAR—PLAIN—teaching of scripture. But, what kind of works is this referring to? The Bible actually refers to works with two different intended meanings. This "personal" will focus on one of them.

Paul's epistles to the Romans and the Galatians make reference to "the works of the law." The Greek word for this, *ergon*, refers to the tedious physical ceremonies, rituals, and sacrifices that ancient Israel was required to perform under certain circumstances. The book of Leviticus and other places discuss them in detail. They were often required to be performed *in conjunction with* obedience to the Ten Commandments.

But, this is not the meaning that we will focus upon. *Ergon* can also refer

to "physical work, action, labor or acts of spiritual righteousness." Invariably, when this meaning is intended, the word "works" stands alone, omitting the phrase "of the law" (God's Law, the Ten Commandments). The often-used Greek word *praxis*, often translated "works," also has a nearly identical meaning.

You cannot live your life without *doing* many things each day. All the things that you do are either good or bad. They are your "works." They define you for what you are. Solomon wrote, "Even a child is known by his *doings*" (Prov. 20:11). If this is true of children, how much more so of adults?

While salvation is a gift, your reward in God's kingdom will be determined solely by your "works" now, in this life. Understand this!

To study the scriptures that prove this, read my booklet *What Is Your Reward in the Next Life?* □

AFRICA

Somali Refugees Flood Overpopulated Camp Complex



■ **MASS EXODUS:** A security officer keeps order for hundreds of people desperate to move to a less crowded refugee camp in Dadaab, the world's biggest refugee complex (Aug. 20, 2009).

PHOTO: SPENCER PLATT/GETTY IMAGES

Hundreds of refugees fleeing Somalia have overwhelmed camps in Dadaab, in northeastern Kenya, causing a severe humanitarian crisis, which the United Nations admits it has been unable to handle adequately.

The camp, originally built for at least 90,000 refugees, now houses over 300,000 on three sites—more than triple its capacity—with more arriving daily, according to Rana Jaber, program officer and regional head of operations in Nairobi for the International Organization for Migration, which has been involved in relocating refugees worldwide.

“New arrivals continue to stream in and this is causing a major problem in terms of services rendered,” she stated

in an email interview with *The Real Truth*. “There is insufficient land to build shelters, water sanitation is dire, and everyone is cramped!”

Dadaab, one of the oldest and largest refugee camps worldwide, receives displaced persons at a rate of up to 1,000 daily. Houses cobbled together with sticks, pieces of rope and cloth, and even plastic bags serve as makeshift homes, and residents often live in 10-by-10-foot spaces with eight or more people—and have to share one public toilet with up to 200 others.

Refugees raised their entire lives in the camp face bleak circumstances, unless they are moved elsewhere.

“Those that flee today or currently will have to wait in the camps for some

solution, the best being resettlement as return and reintegration is not an option at present,” Ms. Jaber wrote. “Others are being resettled to Canada, Australia, Scandinavia, Europe but the numbers are far too large for all to be resettled at any given time. Those that flee may not have a rosy future but they will be safer in the camps than back in Somalia amidst the war...”

UNHCR spokesperson, Andrej Mahecic said in a public statement that given the unstable situation in Somalia, most refugees cannot return home.

“The continued abductions, killing and intimidation of aid workers and the pillaging of humanitarian facilities and supplies, is making it increasingly difficult to reach and access the needy

population,” he said. “The situation is having an adverse impact on delivery of aid to internally displaced people (IDPs) who are in dire need of humanitarian assistance.”

In response to the crisis, the Kenyan government requested the relocation of 50,000 refugees to a camp in Kakuma, to the northwest, but due to financial constraints, only 12,700 can be moved.

“This will hardly make a dent in the congested camp,” Ms. Jaber wrote of Dadaab, leaving it well over its maximum capacity.

Earlier this year, Refugees International reported that the camp has failed to provide even the most fundamental human needs.

“The overcrowding means that international standards for basic services are

not being met,” the non-governmental organization said. “There is a shortfall



of 36,000 latrines and 50 percent of the refugees have access to less than 13 liters of water per day.”

Most refugees no longer believe they will ever return home.

“I have no hope of returning now,” a Somali father said, who has lived in the camp for 18 years. “I have to stay here. Every day there are 500 new arrivals, so it shows you that there is nothing to go back to. People are still leaving. Nobody is going back and I don’t think I ever will...There is a severe shortage of water, and the food ration is not enough for everyone. It is very hard here” (*BBC*).

He continued, “It is especially difficult for the young people because there is no future for them here. There are no jobs, no industry, and no hope” (*ibid.*). □

HEALTH ISSUES

Report: Baby Boomers, Ages 50-59, Still Abuse Illicit Drugs

Substance abuse among Americans ages 50 to 59 nearly doubled, from 2.7 percent in 2002 to 5.0 in 2007, according to a report from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). Researchers link the spike to the aging Baby Boomer generation, which has a higher drug use rate than previous generations.

The August 2009 report—“An Examination of Trends in Illicit Drug Use Among Adults Aged 50 to 59 in the United States”—found that of the Baby Boomers who have used illegal substances during their lifetime, one in

seven took drugs again in the past year.

Medical authorities are worried about the healthcare effects this trend will have on the middle-aged generation.

As the human body ages, its metabolism decreases and body water content lowers. This means that even when using small amounts of a drug, an older adult can have a longer “high” than someone younger—affecting the older person’s movement and increasing the risk of falls, injuries and other accidents.

This increased sensitivity and decreased tolerance to drugs means a

substantial risk of overdose for older users.

Also, many Baby Boomers use prescription drugs, which can be deadly when mixed with illegal substances.

SAMHSA projects that the number of drug users ages 50-59 will increase as future generations reach this age demographic.

The government organization said in its report that over the coming years “the United States faces the challenge of reducing drug use and treating drug use disorders and associated health conditions” among this age demographic. □

ENVIRONMENT

Canada: Millions of Salmon Fail to Return

On the shores of Fraser River in British Columbia, Canada, where salmon return to spawn each season, millions have vanished. Canada’s Department of Fisheries and Oceans expected up to 11 million sockeye salmon to return, but roughly 5.45 percent have come back.

“A record number of the young salmon were born in 2005 and then swam out to sea in 2007 after maturing upstream. They were expected to begin returning to spawn this month” (*Earthweek.com*).

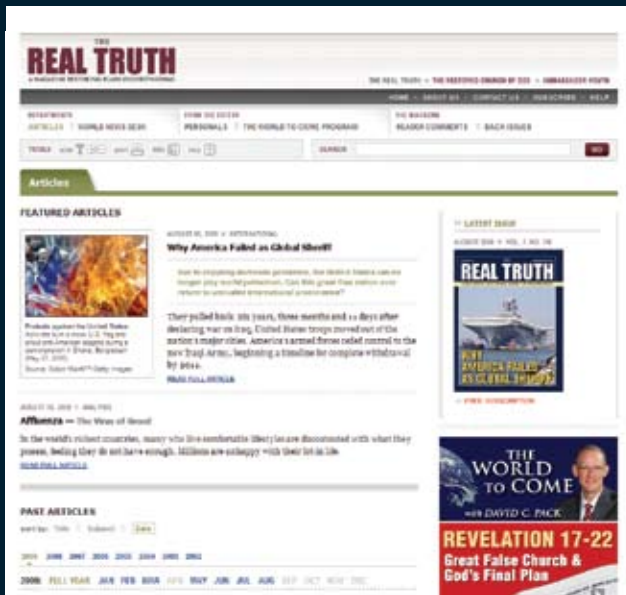
Speculation over the sockeye disappearance include “sea lice picked up by wild salmon from farmed salmon,

warmer river water temperatures which weaken the salmon, or temperature changes in the ocean reducing regular food sources” (*National Post*).

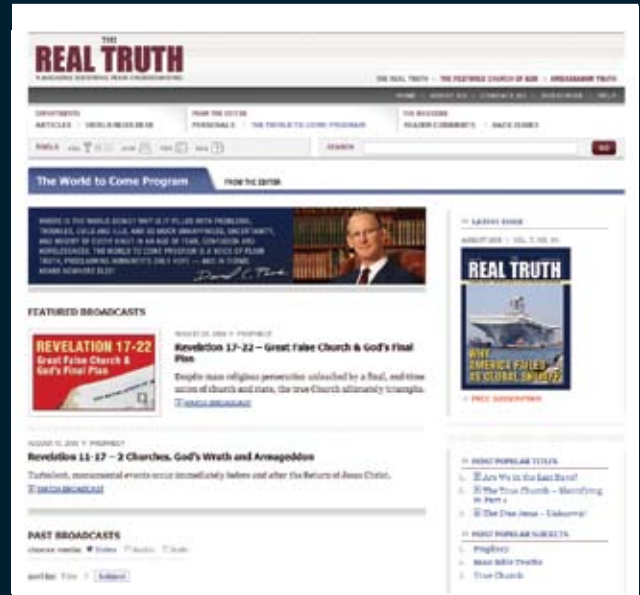
The mysterious disappearance could have a dramatic effect on the 52,000 people employed by the fishing industry, including an estimated loss of \$1.6 billion of revenue (*ibid.*). □

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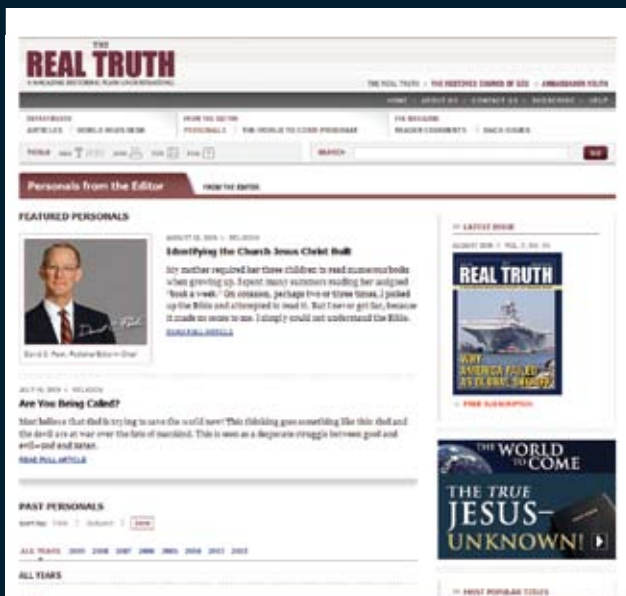
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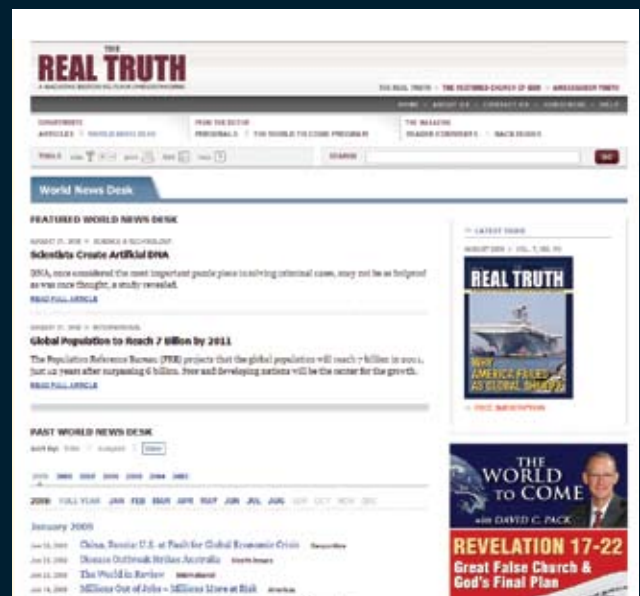
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