



Messages from Jesus or Dad are denoted by bold type. Notes from the editors are either in italics or are preceded by "Editor." Short quotes from the Letters are preceded by a bullet and are followed by the reference.

Deconstructing "Da Vinci"

COMPILED FROM ARTICLES BY JULIA DUIN, *THE WASHINGTON TIMES*; COLLIN HANSEN, *CHRISTIANITY TODAY*; JERRY FALWELL, *WORLDNETDAILY*

The Da Vinci Code, the best-selling novel by Dan Brown that asserts as fact that Christianity is a man-made fabrication, has provoked fierce opposition from Christians.

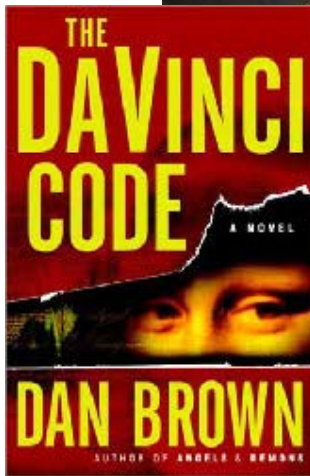
The central claim the novel makes about Christianity is that "almost everything our fathers taught us about Christ is false." Why? Because of a single meeting of bishops in 325, at the city of Nicea in modern-day Turkey. There, argues Brown, church leaders who wanted to consolidate their power base created a divine Christ and an infallible Scripture—both of them novelties that had never before existed among Christians.

In other words, in the gospel according to Dan Brown, the Bible is just another book and Jesus is an overall good guy—but certainly not the Son of God. Moreover, Mary Magdalene was His wife (who bore Him a daughter, and moved to Southern France after His death) and was the one He intended to carry on His church, rather than Peter—a fact that the church has suppressed ever since, along with any sort of female role in religion.

"Dan Brown's book isn't an innocent book. There is something else going on here. At its very core is an attempt to reshape our culture and Christian beliefs," says professor Darrell Bock of the Dallas Theological Seminary, who calls the book's claims "ludicrous."

"[The author] wins your trust with fascinating facts that are true, then misleads you with insights that are not," says the Rev. Tim Floyd. "The book easily deceives readers by cleverly mixing truths, half-truths, and complete falsehoods."

Was Jesus merely a great moral—and mortal—teacher and philosopher? Let us



consider the words of C.S. Lewis, who brilliantly defended the fact that Jesus was in fact God: "I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him: 'I'm ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don't accept His claim to

be God.' That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic—on the level with the man who says he is a poached egg—or else he would be the Devil. You can shut Him up for a fool. You can spit at Him and kill Him as a demon; or you can fall at His feet and call Him Lord and God. But let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about His being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to."

(Jesus:) I will help you crack *The Da Vinci Code*, My dear ones. The secret lies in the very distant past, in the Garden of Eden. In fact, the secret is a lie, the words which the Serpent uttered to Eve so long ago: "Hath God said?"

The Serpent is the same, the voice is the same, the method is the same, and only the words have been brought up to date and put into modern language for the sake of tempting today's Adams and Eves. "Now, did God really say this? Listen, let me wise you up to some historical facts here, a little bit of history, of art, of architecture, of science and psychology. These are things that will open your eyes and show you that you're actually gods yourselves. You have godlike power within yourself, so you don't need to externalize that power and create some man-made fiction of a God who rules over all. And as for religion, well, look what a mess it's made of the world!"

Thots

"If we work in marble, it will perish; if we work upon brass, time will efface it; if we rear temples, they will crumble into dust; but if we work upon immortal minds and instill into them just principles, we are then engraving upon tablets which no time will efface, but will brighten and brighten to all eternity."—Daniel Webster (1782–1852), U.S. lawyer, politician, and orator

This is the Devil's sales pitch, and he tailors it to each new generation or each new audience that seems receptive. He mixes a little of the truth with a lot of falsehood. He applies a sugar coating to his poison pill, to make it sweet to the taste and delicious to the palate. It's only when it's eaten that it goes to work on you, with terrible effect. You've heard of salesmen pitching "snake oil." Well, this is the Snake himself, the Serpent, pitching his wares.

In saying that this is the Devil's sales pitch, I do not mean that the author is possessed or demonic. He is but a carnal man, and the Enemy plays upon the nature of such men, their pride and intellect and self-confidence, to get them to deliver and promote his message, which comes very naturally to those who have such tendencies. They often do so with skill and wisdom, as this man does in his story, although this wisdom is not of the type that comes from above, but is earthly, sensual, and devilish.

So there is a coating of truth on the falsehoods, as I said, for all good salesmen know that they must get the customer to agree with them before they can make their sale. The author creates sympathy for the intellectual hero of his story, the professor motivated and inspired by his knowledge, rationality, wit and cleverness. At the same time, those who embody religion are portrayed as inflexible, bigoted, power-hungry, materialistic, and even murderous in trying to protect their so-called secret, and the author stirs up a dislike for them, a hatred for them. He brings in many subtle little digs at religion in an attempt to undermine your faith, rather than launching a direct frontal attack at it or at Me.

There are truths in the book: Some of those who have claimed to love Me and represent Me down through the ages have done neither. Yes, the Old Church has often suppressed women and prevented them from playing the role they were meant to play in the church, and some churches continue to do so today. And yes, there are some true historical and scientific facts in the story.

However, the truthful coating on the poison pill is a very thin one, and before long the truths give way to half-truths, and then to a mass of lies, and then to the most terrible lie of all—the deceit that I was not the Son of God, your Savior and the Creator, and did not claim to be, but that to the contrary, men created Me and My role. This is a very large lie, a blatant one, but the Enemy hopes you will swallow it because of the tasty coating of truth that he has applied to it, making

it appealing to the eyes and enticing to the pride.

Those who know Me and My Word will not be taken in by such things. Throughout My Word I proclaimed the truth: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not. He came unto His own, and His own received Him not. But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name" (John 1:1, 10–12). Those who accused Me asked Me if I was Christ, the Son of God, and I said plainly that I was (Mark 14:61–62). In fact, I told them that if I had asked My Father, He would have sent more than 12 legions of angels to protect and save Me (Matthew 26:53), but My mission was to save you instead, to give you eternal life. You will find this truth throughout My Word, and men today are only taken in by such things because they know so little of My Word.

This book is a novel, a fiction, and those who are deceived by it are those who know little of the truth, who wish the story to be true rather than a fable, and those who do not truly know Me. They may have a head knowledge of Me but they do not have a heart knowledge. They know this or that about Me, but the truth has never penetrated to their heart. In some cases, they may have even gone to church, but the things they have seen and heard there have caused them to harden their heart rather than open it. If they had opened their heart to Me, they would know that I am no fictional fantasy created of man, but that I am indeed the Son of God, and that I designed their heart to be My home, My temple, which I long to fill with love, hope, peace, joy, and every other good fruit of My Spirit!

This novel flows with the times you live in, this modern era, where it is well thought of and even highly regarded to look down on those with faith in Me, to criticize them, to exclude them, to persecute them, whereas those with other faiths and beliefs are often exempt from criticism and censure. If you want to believe in paganism, druidism, goddess worship, or any so-called sacred heathen symbols or New Age crystals, well, that's no problem to the world. They are often happy to grant you this "freedom of religion." But if you believe in Me and have the nerve to preach and proclaim Me, that's a different matter entirely, and "freedom of religion" no longer applies. They accuse you of being bigoted and intolerant, the very things of which they are guilty themselves!

This too has been the Enemy's tactic since days of old, and is another part of *The Da Vinci Code* which I reveal to you—a devilish strategy which began long before Leonardo Da Vinci.

So, "Hath God said?" Yes, He has! I have said and do say and will proclaim the truth, that I am the Son of God! Those who wish to be certain can simply try Me; they can "taste and see" that I am real, alive, divine, and that I love them and have eternal life to offer them! Mine is no poison pill, which brings death, but a fountain of life, springing up to eternal life! In fact, I am the bread of life, and those who come to Me shall never hunger, and those who believe on Me shall never thirst (John 6:35). "I am the resurrection, and the life. He that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live, and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die" (John 11:25–26). That is a truth that you can base your life and your eternity on, not a fictional fable cunningly crafted and devised by the Enemy of your soul. So "taste and see that the Lord is good!" (Psalm 34:8). You won't be sorry you did!

(Question:) Lord, can You please tell us if You ever got married and had children?

(Jesus:) Of course I got married, and I had many children! And guess who I married? I married you who believe in Me! You are the Bride of Christ, as My Word says, and you're married to Me in the spirit, as the Word explains. "Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to Him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God" (Romans 7:4).

When it says "fruit" here, it means spiritual children—children of God. Those who receive Me are the sons of God, and the daughters too, for that matter! (See John 1:12; Romans 8:14; Philippians 2:15; 1John 3:1–2). You're My offspring, and I love you more than any human father ever could.

As far as being married on Earth, no, I wasn't in the way you consider it, and I didn't have any physical children. But I have spiritual children every day, thousands upon thousands of them! In fact, you can be one too, if you aren't already. All you have to do is ask Me into your heart and you can be one of My children, and tell others about Me and be My Bride, bearing even more children! Why not give it a try? As a child of the King, you inherit the Kingdom—the Kingdom of Heaven—and you can't beat that inheritance! It's out of this world for sure!

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News Review: February 2004

Some of the top news stories of the month, in brief (*Reuters/AP/AFP*):

AFRICA

A powerful earthquake rocked northern Morocco, toppling houses and killing at least 550 people.

Inflation in Zimbabwe rose to 622% last month, further deepening Harare's worst economic crisis since independence in 1980.

ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

The human death toll from Asia's bird flu outbreak rose to 22 as the virus ravaged poultry flocks in 10 countries. The disease also showed up on U.S. farms. Around 100 million chickens have been slaughtered across Asia to stop its spread.

A Japanese army contingent left for Iraq, with the public deeply divided over the nation's first military dispatch to what is effectively a war zone in nearly six decades.

Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf pardoned the founder of Pakistan's nuclear weapons program after the scientist admitted that he had shared nuclear technology with Iran, North Korea and Libya for personal profit.

EUROPE

The leaders of the Turkish and Greek sides of divided Cyprus held new talks under UN auspices to attempt reunification.

Macedonian President Boris Trajkovski was killed when his plane crashed into a Bosnian mountainside in thick fog.

LATIN AMERICA

On February 6, armed rebels seized control of Haiti's fourth-largest city, Gonaïves, killing police and inflicting heavy casualties on government forces who tried to retake it. The uprising spread throughout Haiti, left at least 100 dead, sparked looting and reprisal killings, and caused President Jean-Bertrand Aristide to flee into exile a little more than three weeks after the rebellion began.

Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez disputed a recall referendum sought by opponents he accused of "massive fraud."

Clashes in Colombia between the army and leftist rebels and rightist paramilitary groups left dozens dead.

MIDEAST

Around 250 Muslim pilgrims were crushed to death and the same number were injured in a stampede during a devil-stoning ritual at the climax of the annual haj pilgrimage in Saudi Arabia.

Two suicide bombers killed 100 people and wounded 200 others in attacks against two Kurdish parties aligned with U.S.-led forces occupying northern Iraq. Other bombings made it one of the deadliest months since the

U.S. invasion. The U.S. said it would have to delay elections in Iraq because of the deteriorating security situation.

Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon said he is planning to evacuate 17 Jewish settlements in the Gaza Strip in a unilateral move. Meanwhile, the World Court is examining the legality of Israel's West Bank wall, which is to stretch nearly 450 miles through occupied Palestinian territory.

NORTH AMERICA

President George Bush was under fire because his economic policies have created few jobs and his foreign policy has found no weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, and increasing numbers of American soldiers there have become casualties—around 550 killed and nearly 10,000 wounded or disabled. In political news, Senator John Kerry looks increasingly likely to be the Democratic candidate for president this year.

RUSSIA/CIS

An explosion by a suicide bomber tore through a packed underground train in Moscow during rush hour, killing up to 40 people and wounding around 130 others. Later in the month, a snow-laden glass dome at a Moscow water park caved in, killing 38 people and injuring more than 100 in a hail of glass shards and broken concrete.

◆ Wars and rumors of war

Climate collapse: The Pentagon's weather nightmare

COMPILED FROM ARTICLES BY DAVID STIPP,
FORTUNE; MARK TOWNSEND AND PAUL HARRIS,
THE OBSERVER

Climate change over the next 20 years could result in a global catastrophe costing millions of lives in wars and natural disasters.

A secret report, suppressed by U.S. defense chiefs and obtained by *The Observer*, warns that major European cities will be sunk beneath rising seas as Britain is plunged into a "Siberian" climate by 2020. Nuclear conflict, megadroughts, famine and widespread rioting will erupt across the world.

The document predicts that abrupt climate change could bring the planet to the edge of anarchy as countries develop a nuclear threat to defend and secure dwindling food, water and energy supplies. The threat to global stability vastly eclipses that of terrorism, say the few experts privy to its contents.

Climate change "should be elevated beyond a scientific debate to a US national security concern," say the authors of the report, Peter Schwartz,

CIA consultant and former head of planning at Royal Dutch/Shell Group, and Doug Randall of the California-based Global Business Network.

An imminent scenario of catastrophic climate change is "plausible and would challenge United States national security in ways that should be considered immediately," they conclude.

According to Randall and Schwartz, by 2020 "catastrophic" shortages of water and energy will become increasingly harder to overcome, plunging the planet into war. Randall told *The Observer* that the potential ramifications of rapid climate change would create global chaos. He added that it was already possibly too late to prevent a disaster happening. "We don't know exactly where we are in the process. It could start tomorrow and we would not know for another five years," he said.

The threat that has riveted their attention is this: Global warming, rather

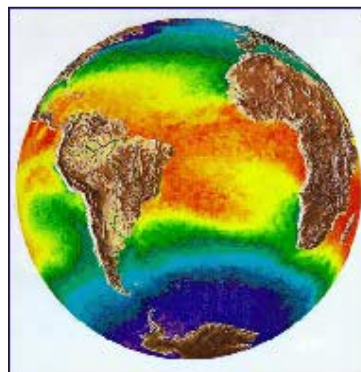
than causing gradual, centuries-spanning change, may be pushing the climate to a tipping point. Growing evidence suggests the ocean-atmosphere system that controls the world's climate can lurch from one state to another in less than a decade—like a canoe that's

gradually tilted until suddenly it flips over.

Though triggered by warming, such change would probably cause cooling in the Northern Hemisphere, leading to longer, harsher winters in much of the U.S. and Europe. Worse, it would cause massive droughts, turning farmland to dust bowls and forests to ashes. Picture last fall's California wild-

fires as a regular thing. And imagine similar disasters destabilizing nuclear powers such as Pakistan or Russia.

History shows that whenever humans have faced a choice between starving or raiding, they raid. Imagine Eastern European countries, struggling to feed their populations, invad-



WILL CLIMATE CHANGE LEAD TO ANARCHY AND WAR?

ing Russia. Envision nuclear-armed Pakistan, India, and China skirmishing at their borders over refugees, access to shared rivers, and arable land.

Growing tensions engender novel alliances. Europe forms a truly unified bloc to curb its immigration problems and protect against aggressors. Russia, threatened by impoverished neighbors in dire straits, may join the European bloc.

Nuclear arms proliferation is inevitable. Oil supplies are stretched thin as climate cooling drives up demand. Many countries seek to shore up their energy supplies with nuclear energy, accelerating nuclear proliferation. Japan, South Korea, and Germany develop nuclear-weapons capabilities, as do Iran, Egypt, and North Korea. Israel, China, India, and Pakistan also are poised to use the bomb.

The changes relentlessly hammer the world's natural resources. As they shrink, an ancient pattern reemerges: the eruption of desperate, all-out wars over food, water, and energy supplies. As Harvard archaeologist Steven LeBlanc has noted, wars over resources were the norm until about three centuries ago. When such conflicts broke out, 25% of a population's adult males usually died. As abrupt climate change hits home, warfare may again come to define human life.

(Jesus:) I often use what man calls "climate change" to deal with him, either to bring him back to Me, to teach him lessons and draw him closer to Me, or sometimes to chastise him for his sins and iniquities. I have done this throughout history, and I will do so again in these Last Days.

Remember what I said to My disciples when they asked Me of the signs of My coming and of the end of the world. "As the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be" (Matthew 24:37–39).

My message was not only that I would come suddenly but also that judgment would come suddenly in these Last Days, just as it did in the days of Noah. Though I have sworn to never again destroy the Earth with a flood, I do use floods and drought and many other forces of nature to work in the lives of men—and will continue to do so even in the Millennium, when I will chastise those men who refuse to obey by withholding the rain from their lands (Zechariah 14:16–19).

Suddenly will these changes come upon the world in the Last Days, and suddenly have they come, for the days are already upon you. But greater and far more cataclysmic will be the changes in the times ahead, to the

point that men will either be driven to Me or will hate and curse Me, that My judgments might be just and righteous. It will be a time of trouble such as men have not seen since the beginning, but for the elect's sake—for you and My other dear children—those days shall be shortened. So fear not. Look up and rejoice, knowing that as the days grow more intense, they also grow shorter!

◆ Famine and drought

The world is getting hungrier each year

BY PAUL VALLELY,
THE INDEPENDENT

I have never forgotten my first experience of ordinary life in an African village. I had been in Ethiopia, covering the terrible famine of 1985, with its haunted lines of starving, blank-eyed faces, sitting waiting for death. But I had not been to an ordinary village.

Not long after, I traveled to Sudan, where drought had also shriveled the land. Halfway to the famine area, we stopped to refuel our four-wheel-drive. There by the roadside in the parched scrub was a dusty straw-thatched hut. Outside a family was huddled around a meager fire made from a handful of sticks. The children had swollen bellies and thin limbs. The mother was cooking a single piece of flat bread which was the entire meal for the whole family. "Why didn't you tell me we were in the famine area already," I said to my guide.

He laughed. "That's not famine," he chided. "That's just ordinary life in Africa. Being hungry is normal."

The world is getting hungrier, according to a report issued by the United Nations food agency. Across the world an estimated 842 million people are today undernourished—and that figure is climbing, with an additional 5 million hungry people every year. The figures, says the report by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), "signal a setback in the war on hunger."

"We must ask ourselves why this has happened," says the FAO director-general, Jacques Diouf, in his introduction.

The economics of globalization are that the very poorest get poorer still. "Overall," the report predicts, "the lion's share of benefits from trade liberalization is expected to go to developed countries."

The report repeats the familiar statistic that the West spends 30 times more on domestic farming subsidies than it does on aid. It catalogues how the U.S. spends \$3.9bn a year subsidizing its 25,000 cotton farmers—more

than the entire GDP for Burkina Faso, where 2 million people depend on cotton for their livelihood. Europe is now the world's second-largest sugar exporter, even though EU sugar costs twice as much to produce as does that of Third World peasants.

The harsh truth is that the industrialized world has abandoned any pretense that trade negotiations have anything to do with development.

"Bluntly stated," the report concludes, "the problem is not so much a lack of food as a lack of political will." Bluntly stated, the problem is that none of us really cares.

(Dad:) The poor of the world really suffer from the policies of the rich. It's more than a lack of political will; it's plain old selfishness and greed, combined with a lack of love or even simple concern for the poor!



AN EMACIATED CHILD IN ETHIOPIA. FOURTEEN CHILDREN DIE EACH DAY FROM FAMINE IN ETHIOPIA'S REMOTE OGADEN REGION.

In most poor countries, the main occupation of the people is farming, and they try to eke out a living that way. They could eke out a lot better living if they could sell their crops for better prices, but they can't because the rich countries of Western Europe and North America subsidize their own farmers so they can produce food for a fraction of the price that Third World farmers can. The government's paying them lots to grow food—or not to grow it sometimes—whereas the Third World country can't afford to pay its farmers at all. In fact, it taxes them all it can!

And many farms in these wealthy nations aren't your little family farm with a few hundred acres and a couple of tractors. They're huge corporations, agribusinesses which farm tens of thousands of acres, have big political clout, and receive millions of dollars in subsidies—almost as much as the national budgets of some of these poor countries! So wealthy Western farmers ship off cheap food to Latin America, Asia and Africa, and that sounds philanthropic, but what it actually does is drive Third World farmers to the verge of poverty and despair, bankrupts many of their businesses, and makes their countries more dependent on Western food and aid. The rich grow richer and the poor grow poorer, including many little family farmers in the U.S., who are virtually driven out of business by the big guys!

What it comes down to is that too few control too much, make too much money, and care too little about the too many that are suffering and starving! Real globalization will only happen in the Millennium, under the Lord's control, and then there'll be plenty for all the little people. All the little farmers "shall

sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree; and none shall make them afraid" (Micah 4:4). Thank the Lord!

As most people visualize it, famine is the aftershock of some calamity that has left thousands of the starving flocked together, emergency food kept from their mouths by the perils of war or the callousness of despots or the impassibility of washed-away roads. But more often, in the developing world, famine is both less obvious and more complicated. Even small jolts to the regular food supply can jar open the trapdoor between what is normal, which is chronic malnutrition, and what is exceptional, which is outright starvation. Hunger and disease then feed off each other, leaving the invisible poor to die in invisible numbers.—Barry Bearak, *NY Times Magazine*.

◆ Pests and pestilences

Flu's deadly numbers game

COMPILED FROM ARTICLES BY IAN SAMPLE, *THE GUARDIAN*; ASSOCIATED PRESS; REUTERS

The nets being pegged up over chicken farms in Singapore are not to stop the birds making a break for freedom. The worry is about what lurks *outside* the enclosures. Farmers fear wild birds could land among their chickens and spread the strain of avian flu that has thrown Asia into



AN ARMY HOSPITAL IN KANSAS IN 1918 IS FILLED WITH THE FIRST VICTIMS OF THE SPANISH INFLUENZA EPIDEMIC THAT WOULD EVENTUALLY KILL AT LEAST 50 MILLION WORLDWIDE.

turmoil. The virus has already forced South Korea and Vietnam to order mass slaughters of domestic birds in the hope of thwarting the spread of the deadly infection. Nearly 100 million birds have either died or been destroyed throughout the region.

There's good reason for worry. According to the World Health Organization, this epidemic of avian flu is unprecedented, having ripped through bird populations in at least ten countries.

Health officials are getting edgy. Avian flu, they say, could do more than wipe out countless chickens. It could trigger the next "big one"—a human flu pandemic that spreads around the world, killing huge numbers of people. Is such a doomsday scenario likely or is avian flu little more than a good scare story?

So far, the virus has ticked two of the three boxes that most concern health officials. First, it has shown it can jump from birds to humans. Second, it is highly dangerous when it does so—

at least eight people in Vietnam to catch avian flu, six have died. The virus has yet to tick the third box: To date, there are no confirmed cases of the flu being spread from person to person. If that happens, the chances of a pandemic rocket.

But virologists say if enough people become infected, it is only a matter of time before the virus mutates into a strain that not only can infect people, but also be spread from person to person. "Every time somebody gets infected, the virus is going to mutate, and the more people get infected with it, the more chance there is of that happening," says Laurence Tiley, a molecular virologist at Cambridge University. "It's just a numbers game."

The big concern is that a person carrying a human flu virus also catches avian flu. If that happens, the viruses can trade genes, leading, in the worst case, to a lethal and highly infectious virus, which no one has immunity to.

What could happen? It already happened in 1918, and possibly for the same reason. The 1918 flu virus, which killed 40 to 50 million people around the world, was probably so deadly because of a unique bird-like protein, U.S. and British scientists have reported.

Like the current outbreak of bird flu in east Asia, the 1918 influenza appears to have jumped from birds to people with little change, they wrote in the journal *Science*.

(Dad:) I was born in the middle of that flu epidemic, and I had it too. Thank the Lord He healed me

and delivered me from it, but many millions died around the world, just as many millions will die in the Endtime plagues and pestilences yet to come.

Flu itself is a pretty nasty pestilence, as you know if you've ever had it. So if you're wise, you'll do your best to keep from catching it, dear Family, whatever variety of flu it's called. Pray and

claim the Lord's protection and immunity from disease while you're out, wash your hands frequently (kids, keep those fingers out of your mouth), try to avoid those who are sneezing and coughing and obviously sick if you can, change your clothes when you come home if anything's going around your city or area, and give the Lord all the cooperation you can! Taking precautions may

take a little extra time, but they take a lot less time than getting sick.

And remember, dear folks, if you're not feeling well with something or other, the loving thing to do is to keep yourself and your dishes apart from the rest of your Home, so they won't catch it too! Flu is definitely for the birds, ha!

Seriously, remember to pray for your brethren in crowded Asian fields where such diseases often originate and spread like wildfire, as these sicknesses affect their life and work in a big way. The Lord protects and keeps them and provides for them, but He also counts on your prayers to do so!

◆ Earthquakes

Death and destruction in Bam

Editor: On December 26, 2003, a massive earthquake leveled the city of Bam in southeastern Iran, killing more than 41,000 people. The quake struck at night and destroyed about 80% of the ancient city, where many of the houses were made of mud bricks or mud and straw, as well as the Citadel of Bam, the world's largest mud-brick fortress.

We asked the Lord to give us some insight into this earthquake, the largest and most devastating to hit a populated area in years.

(Jesus:) There are often many reasons why I allow what you call natural disasters, and that is the case in this one as well. But first let Me address one great underlying question that you often have, even you who know My ways so well: How could a loving God kill so many innocents all at once, and shatter the lives of the survivors?

You must remember that death is not the end, but is simply a passing from one realm to another. Those who are My children come to join Me and the hosts of Heaven. Those who have never

had a chance to receive Me either get that chance then or pass into the spirit realm, where they will receive a chance later. And those who have fully and definitely rejected Me are given over to the Enemy.

The only time death is a punishment is for those in the last category, who receive the stripes they are worthy of, the chastisement they deserve for their rejection and iniquity. Those who receive Me receive a wonderful reward, and those who have neither decided for or against Me wait out their time in a realm of the spirit world which is far better than the conditions they lived under on Earth, which were



BAM BEFORE THE EARTHQUAKE, WITH THE CITADEL IN THE BACKGROUND

often miserable. Often it is the poor of the land who perish in such calamities, and their passing on into the spirit world is a great relief to many of them.

So, dear ones, do not think of death as a great punishment and judgment. For some few wicked ones, it is a judgment, yes, but for the great majority of those who die it is a release from this present evil world, a relief from their grinding poverty, sickness and pain, and a step into eternal life.

I know your hearts still go out to those who perished in this city, but there were few among the dead who suffered. Most were sleeping and never even woke up as their houses collapsed around them. Some experienced a moment of pain in their passing, but will never again feel physical pain or suffering. They have been set free from the torments of the flesh and its frequent afflictions. Do not sorrow for the dead as do those who have no hope.

Now, as for the “why,” there are many reasons I allowed this, as I said. It is a sign of the times, one of those earthquakes in diverse places that indicate the approach of the End. More than that, the news of this quake works in the hearts of many around the world as they consider the brevity and fragility of their lives, how quickly they can pass on. It reminds them that their lives are more than a constant scramble to survive and accumulate possessions, the abundance of their things, because both lives and things can be taken from them in an instant, in the blink of an eye. They are forced to ponder their mortality, and through this I work to draw many to Me, planting seeds that My children water and harvest afterwards.

This was also a demonstration to the world of what happens when they build their house on the sand, as had many of those in this city. It was a city of sand, a city of mud bricks, and when the quake came, it fell, for it was not founded on a rock. Many of those around the world who have a passing knowledge of My Word know of this parable, and again I use it to work in their hearts.

I also use this quake to help bring the Gospel to those of this city, for there are many Christians who have taken part in the relief missions who have flown there from other countries. This is My gift of love to these simple people of the desert who have survived, the care and concern of those who are My children, and who can minister to them not only physically but spiritually. Not all preaching of the Gospel will be open—very little will, in fact—but My sheep will hear My voice and sense My touch and My love, and they will follow, whether now or later.

Another reason I allowed this earthquake was to slow down Iran’s march toward the atomic bomb, for its acquisition would have been fatal for both Iran and the Mideast as a

whole. Those of Israel would not have allowed such a thing, and their objections would have been both violent and destructive, as Iran’s retaliation would have been likewise. But it is not yet My time for such events in the Mideast. With this disaster, Iran will be forced to put more money and energy into rebuilding and less into weapons which destroy and tear down. And both Israel and her ally, the United States, will be less likely to attack her, for this would cause an outcry around the world.

So you see that the status of this country on what has been called the axis of evil has been downgraded to the axis of not quite so evil, at least for a time. The enmity remains, and that which I have spoken of Persia in the Last Days will be fulfilled, but it was not yet time for the fulfillment. (See Ezekiel 38:3–9.) Those of Zion maintain their belligerence and the mullahs of Persia maintain their hatred, and that which is to be will still come to pass, but not yet.

The End will come at the time appointed, and it will not be a moment too soon or too late, My dear ones. And the destruction which you have heard of in this city of the desert is but a fraction of what the unbelieving nations of the world will experience for their rejection of Me and their attacks on My children. So this too is a sign—let the wicked beware, and tremble, for My Word will be fulfilled. Both the righteous and the wicked shall receive their just recompense, and as for the wicked, it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of an angry God.

◆ Cloning

How biotech became the new religion

BY JAMES M. PETHOKOUKIS,
US NEWS & WORLD REPORT

In *Rapture: How Biotech Became the New Religion*, science journalist Brian Alexander examines the world of genetic engineering, focusing on the scientists who are trying to radically extend the human life span and the people who hope and think such advances—even immortality—are coming soon. Here is [an excerpt of] a recent E-mail chat I had with him.

US News: What common threads, if any, run through the various “bio-utopians” you met in writing and researching your book?

Alexander: The most common thread, the uniting thread, was a deep-seated belief in the power of science and technology to change lives for the better. All bio-utopians, and many who I would not necessarily classify as bio-utopians, truly believe that answers to some, if not most, human problems can be found through science.

They also have serious doubts, if not outright antipathy, toward standard, god-based religions of all kinds. They see old-style religion as superstition. They don’t believe in heaven or life after death, and so, looking into the void which currently awaits us all, they say “Hey! Let’s do something about that!”

Deeper into the bio-utopian subculture, you get transhumanists, those who believe in a transformative era in which human beings will cease to be completely human and will become a new species, some mix of biotech and machine enhancements that will deliver super brain power, immortality, and perfect health. ...

Religion promises everlasting life, perfect well-being, happiness, a bliss that’s unencumbered by the usual woes of life on earth. Biotech as the new religion has begun to promise all these things in one way or another, and those who adhere to the new religion—they hate that I call it that, by the way—think that more will come and that eventually, the promised paradise will be created by science.

(Dad:) So, science will create paradise? Well, if scientists have been developing paradise for the last few hundred years, they haven’t done a very good job of it! It looks to me as if the world is in a worse state than ever because of the efforts of many so-called scientists!

Now you have to distinguish between true scientists and so-called scientists, the proponents of “science falsely so-called” (1Timothy 6:20), like these fellows above, who don’t believe in God. In fact, many of them oppose God and even hate God because His Word sets limits on their experiments, not to mention on their morality.

True scientists, on the other hand, are often believers of one sort or another, and many of the greatest scientists of all time have been Christians. Heaven is full of them, and they go on studying and developing science here under God’s guidance, just as they did on Earth, whether they knew it or not at the time.

Heaven is the true paradise, full of superhuman beings of all sorts and species, but it’s created by God, not scientists! And the life spans aren’t just lengthy, they’re eternal!

Cloning briefs

* **Genetically altered fish glow in the dark.** *UPI.* A Texas company has begun selling a genetically altered pet fish that glows in the dark. The GloFish, as it is called, is a zebra fish containing a gene from a sea coral that makes the fish bright red under normal light and fluorescent under ultraviolet light. Similar fish using a different gene that



THE GLOFISH

makes them green instead of red, were developed in Taiwan and have been sold for several months in Asian countries.

* **Dewey the deer is the latest clone.** *Electronic Telegraph.* Scientists have unveiled the latest clone: a white-tailed deer named Dewey. Dewey is the world's first cloned deer, according to a team at Texas A&M University.

◆ Big Brother

Tracking kids 24/7

BY JENNIFER WOLCOTT,

THE CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR

In this high-tech era, when new electronic gizmos are unveiled almost every day, the term "parental controls" is taking on a whole new meaning. The growing business of child surveillance now extends into the offline world, thanks to new GPS devices—including cell phones, wristwatches, and even a surgically implanted chip—that enable adults to track down kids almost anywhere.

Adults who use these tools insist they provide a sense of

security in today's world of terrorist warnings and online predators. Some even go so far as to say it would be neglectful not to use them.

But many people warn that tracking devices can create big problems by eroding trust between parents and children. "What we are doing [with these tools] is diminishing our anxiety but increasing the odds that kids will want to do the wrong thing because they deeply resent their parents' mistrust," says family therapist Alvin Rosenfeld.

When Nicky Pratt, a stay-at-home mom in Garden City, N.Y., got GPS phones for her kids, the oldest—her 17-year-old son—refused to use it. His younger siblings, on the other hand, thought the phones were cool. Now when they drop by a friend's home after school, they don't have to phone home since Mom can check her own GPS phone to see exactly where they are.

There are also wristwatches that feature not only a built-in GPS device but also buttons for calling home or the police. Those watches, marketed for kids ages 4 to 12, are locked onto children's wrists with a key, which parents keep. "It's like they're criminals," says Rosenfeld.

Depending how much parents want to know about what their children are up to online, parents can choose from among a wide variety of spy software. They include IamBigBrother, which specializes in recording all incoming and outgoing instant messages; Spy Agent, which records all correspondence, whether it be instant messages,

e-mails, or chat-room exchanges; and eBlaster, one of the most sophisticated and aggressive, which immediately forwards incoming and outgoing e-mails to a parent as they are sent. Xanovia also offers the ability to spy on webcam activity as well as to capture and compress screen shots.

"I'm concerned," says Wendy Simonds, an assistant sociology professor at Georgia State University, "that subsequent generations are going to take all this surveillance for granted and stop thinking about all the technology that surrounds them and what it means."

Robert Butterworth, a Los Angeles therapist who studies families and technology, says, "When I was growing up, neighbors were always watching us, and we didn't want to mess up because somebody might tell [our parents]. That sense of community no longer exists because no one wants to get involved, so parents are forced to use technology."

(Dad:) They're not forced to use technology; it's just the easy

way out for most parents! Instead of parental surveillance in person, real involvement in their children's lives and keeping an eye on what they're doing, where they're going, and who their friends are, they cop out and opt out with technological gizmos. But they're poor substitutes for personal involvement and just widen the generation gap and increase mistrust in many cases, because kids figure their parents are either too busy for them or they're spying on them, or both!

Besides that, as the man says, it has the bad effect of getting the poor kids accustomed to surveillance. After all, their parents monitor their e-mail, their phone calls, their whereabouts and more, so what's wrong with the government doing it? Well, plenty, generally, since governments don't have the love and concern of most parents! They don't want to keep an eye on you for your good but for their good!

So the world's lurching toward "Big Brother" more every day, who'll want to keep an eye on everyone "for the good of the world as a whole," of course. After all, that way there'll be no more criminals, no more gangs, and certainly no more terrorists, and if people have to give up a little freedom—or a lot—well, they should

be used to it by then. They'll have been under surveillance for years anyway!

Big Brother Briefs

Big Brother Britain, 2004. (Maxine Frith, *The Independent*) More than four million surveillance cameras monitor our every move, making Britain the most-watched nation in the world, research has revealed.

The number of closed circuit television (CCTV) cameras has quadrupled in the past three years, and there is now one for every 14 people in the UK.

The increase is happening at twice the predicted rate, and it is believed that Britain accounts for one-fifth of all CCTV cameras worldwide.

Estimates suggest that residents of a city such as London can each expect to be captured on CCTV cameras up to 300 times a day.

Worker whereabouts. (Judy Muller, *ABC News*) When the street sweepers of Oakland, California, go on their appointed rounds, they know their own work habits had better be squeaky clean. That's because every vehicle is equipped with a GPS tracking system to let supervisors know exactly where they are at all times. Road crews also are monitored. Oakland is just one of a number of cities across the U.S. using GPS technology to track workers.

Spooks turn to hi-tech geography. (Alfred Hermida, *BBC*) Imagine being able to pinpoint someone's location anywhere in the world simply by typing a few keywords on your PC. That is what software partly funded by the U.S. military is trying to do. The MetaCarta program works by analyzing thousands of documents and cross-checking the results with a massive geographical database. Search results appear as points on a map instead of as a list of documents.

German airport testing iris scan.

(AP) Travelers at Frankfurt airport, continental Europe's busiest, can now enter Germany with a three-second scan of their eyes. Passengers in the program still go through regular security controls, but can bypass conventional passport checks. They can simply put their passport through a scanner, take a quick look at a camera, and a few seconds later enter the country, airport officials said.

To qualify, passengers would need background checks by German border police, a machine-readable passport, be citizens of the European Union or Switzerland, register at the airport and have an iris scan on file.

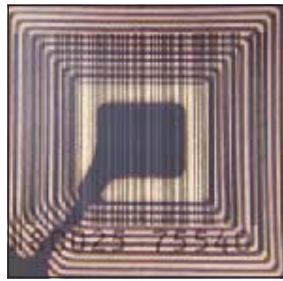


THE PARKWATCH "KID POSITIONING SYSTEM" FOR CONCERNED PARENTS



GERMAN INTERIOR MINISTER OTTO SCHILY PASSES THE AUTOMATED PASSPORT CONTROL BY USING IRIS-SCANNING TECHNOLOGY AT RHINE-MAIN AIRPORT IN FRANKFURT.

The test is part of efforts in many countries to extend the use of biometric technology—using fingerprint, eye or facial recognition scans—to track travelers and immigrants, while also cutting down on time spent in line.



A CLOSE-UP LOOK AT AN RFID TAG AND CHIP

Chinese to get new ID cards. (*Xinhua*) Chinese citizens will be issued

new, second-generation ID cards with personal information contained in an embedded microchip starting from the end of 2004, the Ministry of Public Security announced. The new smart cards, unlike the current paper ones, can be checked on computers.

◆ Racing toward the Mark An ATM card under your skin

BY DECLAN MCCULLAGH, *CNET NEWS*

Radio frequency identification tags aren't just for pallets of goods in supermarkets anymore. Applied Digital Solutions (ADS) of Palm Beach, Fla., is hoping that Americans can be persuaded to implant RFID chips under their skin to identify themselves when going to a cash machine or in place of using a credit card.

The surgical procedure, which is performed with local anesthetic, embeds a 12-by-2.1mm RFID tag in the flesh of a human arm. ADS Chief Executive Scott Silverman, in a speech at the ID World 2003 conference in Paris, said his company had developed a "VeriPay" RFID technology and was hoping to find partners in financial services firms.

Matthew Cossolotto, a spokesman for ADS who says he's been "chipped," argues that competing proposals to embed RFID tags in key fobs or cards were flawed. "If you lose the RFID key fob or if it's stolen, someone else could

use it and have access to your important accounts," Cossolotto said. "VeriPay solves that problem. It's subdermal and very difficult to lose. You don't leave it sitting in the back seat of the taxi."

RFID tags are minuscule microchips, which some manufacturers have managed to shrink to half the size of a grain of sand. They listen for a radio query and respond by transmitting a unique ID code, typically a 64-bit identifier yielding about 18 thousand trillion possible values. Most RFID tags have no batteries. They use the power from the initial radio signal to transmit their response.

MasterCard has been testing an RFID technology called PayPass. It looks like any other credit card but is outfitted with an RFID tag that lets it be read by a receiver instead of scanned through a magnetic stripe. "We're certainly looking at designs like key fobs," MasterCard Vice President Art Kranzley told *USA Today*. "It could be in a pen or a pair of earrings. Ultimately, it could be embedded in anything—someday, maybe even under the skin."

ADS is running a special promotion urging Americans to "get chipped." The first 100,000 people to sign up will receive a \$50 discount.

(Jesus:) This is a preview of things to come, and it serves a dual purpose: First, as your David has taught you, there's no such thing as bad publicity. So the controversy surrounding the "chipping" of people publicizes this company and its product, and more than that, the ease and convenience and advantages of this new proposed payment system. Even though relatively few will take advantage of it now, they are forced to consider it when they hear of it, and the concept

becomes familiar to them—a practice any advertiser will heartily endorse. It prepares them to more readily receive the real thing when it appears, promoted by the AC and the False Prophet.

Second, those of the world who have only a passing familiarity with My Word look at this particular chip and wonder, "So what's wrong with getting chipped?" Some people say this may be of the Devil or whatever, but I don't see any Devil. There's no one-world government, no devilish dictator, no new economic system; there's just this company trying to make some money by pushing a product that seems as if it'd be truly helpful to people. What's the problem?" In this way, the Enemy hopes to desensitize the world to what's to come, the real Mark of the Beast, while hoping to discredit My Word and warnings against it! He seeks to engender doubts about My Word even among Christians, that he might even deceive the elect.

So this chip is a precursor of the real thing, and it helps to prepare the way of the Evil One, making inroads in the hearts and minds of men. It is not evil itself, but its results will be so.

◆ Techno Topics

Scientists try to crack the mystery of giant hailstones

BY MICHAEL WOODS, *TOLEDO BLADE*

A Spanish-American scientific team is monitoring ice events in the United States this winter following research on a baffling phenomenon first detected in Spain.

They're not watching for ordinary ice storms or slick roads, but incidents involving "megacryometeors," great balls of ice that fall out of the clear blue sky.

"I'm not worried that a block of ice may fall on your head," said Jesus Martinez-Frias of the Center for Astrobiology, in Madrid. "I'm worried that great blocks of ice are forming where they shouldn't exist."

Heads, however, have very nearly been cracked by megacryometeors, a term coined from "mega," which means "big," "cryo" for "ice" and "meteor," the extraterrestrial debris that streak through the atmosphere. Most weigh 25 to 35 pounds, but one whopper found in Brazil tipped the scales at 440 pounds.

Ice balls have punched holes in the roofs of houses, smashed through car windshields and whizzed right past people's heads. Last winter, an ice chunk that eyewitnesses described as "half the size of a car" ripped through the roof of an automobile dealership in Lawrenceville, Ga.

Incidents like those may be just the beginning, according to David Travis, who chairs the department of geography and geology at the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater.



"If megacryometeor formation is linked to global warming, as we suspect, then it is fair to assume that these events may increase in the future," Travis said.

Martinez-Frias pioneered research on megacryometeors in January 2000, after ice chunks weighing up to 6.6 pounds rained on Spain out of cloudless skies for 10 days. A government scientific research agency thought the ice might be extraterrestrial, from a comet, and asked him to investigate.

At first, scientists thought the phenomenon was unique to Spain. But they've accumulated strong evidence that megacryometeors are a global event, Travis said. They've documented ice balls falling from cloudless skies everywhere from China to the United States.

Martinez-Frias' team quickly ruled out obvious explanations.

The ice balls, for instance, were not frozen water from toilets flushed on jetliners. The ice contained no human waste and none of the blue disinfectant used in airplane toilets. Air-traffic-con-



THIS PLANE WAS HIT BY A MEGACRYOMETEOR THE SIZE OF A FOOTBALL.

trol records showed that no planes overflew the areas near the ice falls, so the ice was not shed from aircraft wings or fuselages.

Chunks of debris from a comet? Lab tests showed that ice in megacryometeors had the distinctive chemical signature of ice in ordinary terrestrial hailstones. When sawed in half, they also showed the physical profile of hailstones.

That leaves monster hailstones forming in a cloudless sky, a notion that

defies more than a century of research on hail formation.

(Dad:) One more thing that man's science can't puzzle out, but which the Lord foretold thousands of years ago in His Word—gigantic hailstones raining down out of the heavens! (See Ezekiel 38:18–23; Revelation 16:21.)

Some of those "hailstones" will be rocks flung high into the air by volcanic explosions, "fire and brimstone," and others will be these gigantic balls of ice, as you've read about here. Men's hearts will have grown cold toward the Lord, so the Lord will allow them to be smitten and crushed by ice. Their hearts will have grown angry and wrathful toward His children, so the Lord will allow them to be consumed by fire and brimstone, burning stones!

So it's yet another sign of the times—in this case, a sign in the skies, falling out of the skies! It's not as spectacular as some of the other signs the Lord has in store, but if you were on the receiving end of one of these hailstones, it'd be plenty spectacular to you, let me tell you!

◆ Religion in the News

France vs. Faith

COMPILED FROM ARTICLES BY REUTERS; ASSOCIATED PRESS; ZENIT; AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE; WORLD MAGAZINE

France's lower house of parliament has voted overwhelmingly to ban students from wearing Islamic head scarves and other religious apparel in public schools.

The classroom ban, which also applies to Jewish skullcaps and large Christian crosses, is expected to take effect in September. Applying the law could be the real test: Critics say it's too vague, will create chaos in the classroom, and will inflame anti-French feelings among the nation's large Muslim minority.

The bill stipulates that "in schools, junior high schools and high schools, signs and dress that conspicuously show the religious affiliation of students are forbidden." It would not apply to students in private schools or to French schools in other countries.

Sanctions for refusing to remove conspicuous religious symbols and clothing would range from a warning, to temporary suspension from school, to expulsion.

France has been widely condemned in the Arab and Muslim world, where thousands of protesters from Beirut to Baghdad have made known their indignation and opposition to a head scarf ban.

"It's in complete contradiction with the slogans (on human rights and freedom) that France proclaims," said Moroccan journalist Nadia Boukilli.

A newspaper seller in downtown Cairo, Iman Mohammad, thought Egypt

was now a freer country than France. "Foreigners in Egypt wear what they like," he said. "Why is France trying to make Muslims there dress like French people?"

Western religious leaders weighed in on the debate as well. Cardinal Jean-Marie Lustiger of Paris appealed to the state "not to meddle in religious questions." The cardinal said that the debate on the legislation has awakened "an anti-religious aggressiveness that has totally surprised Catholic circles." He mentioned that there have been cases lately of Catholics who suffered verbal attacks for wearing a cross on their chest.

The head of the worldwide Anglican church, Archbishop Rowan Williams of Canterbury, said the law banning religious symbols in state schools was unsurprising "in a secular environment

that looks at religion not only with suspicion or incomprehension but with fear." The [law] suggests that there is a nervousness about letting commitment show its face in public, he said. Archbishop Williams said faith was "neither a perversion of human freedom or a marginal and private eccentricity."

The *International Herald Tribune* accused President Chirac of practicing "secular fundamentalism." And so it is. France is declaring that it has no absolutes except its commitment to nonabsolutes.

But it's not true that France has no religion. As she is increasingly backed to the wall, expect to find the true colors of tolerance revealed, and the velvet glove removed to bare an iron fist. As the striptease of liberties continues, it will become clear, for all the world to see,



just how zealous a religion secularism can be.

(Dad:) France is really going to great lengths to protect its young people against any sort of faith! The new law was aimed at Muslims, but they threw in Christianity as well, and even Judaism, and it wasn't merely an afterthought—they'd planned it all along, so they wouldn't seem "discriminatory." The men who rule France genuinely don't like any kind of religion, especially the witnessing kind, and they'd just as soon see it fade away and die out if they had their way.

It's happening throughout Europe, with countries calling any sort of faith that actually witnesses and wins converts dangerous and a cult, and they're enacting laws to stop the spread of "cults," including such mainstream groups as the Southern Baptists and the Pentecostals! These nations supposedly guarantee religious freedom—unless you want to exercise it outside your home and tell people about Jesus! Then it's a no-no. Some European evangelicals are even wondering if underground churches will be necessary in Europe one day, just as they are in China and other countries where the government considers Christianity a threat to the state.

Britain's going that route too, and they're recommending that "religious instruction" in their schools include less about Jesus and more about agnosticism, humanism, and atheism! They're proposing that "children with strong religious beliefs should be encouraged to question those beliefs." Imagine! That's anti-religious education!

Government attempts to crack down on faith aren't going to

succeed, of course. Real Christians are going to stand strong, witness, and spread their faith anyway. Muslims are going to be just as militant about their faith. And religious Jews aren't going to back down either, by a long shot! But those behind the scenes in the various governments are prepared for that as well—they're looking forward to non-compliance and even some lawbreaking and "religious terrorism" by militants, because that'll demonstrate to the public that they were right and that even more harsh and oppressive measures are necessary!

Governments not only know how to stir up opposition, but how to pay people to act like the opposition and do outrageous things that will smear the opposition! It's one of the Devil's oldest tactics, and is as effective as it ever was.

Many Christians have heard of the "underground church" in China, where believers are forced to meet in secret and often endure persecution. But could the same thing eventually happen in Western Europe as well? Some Christian leaders believe recent laws and the pervasive anti-Christian sentiment in Europe point in that direction.

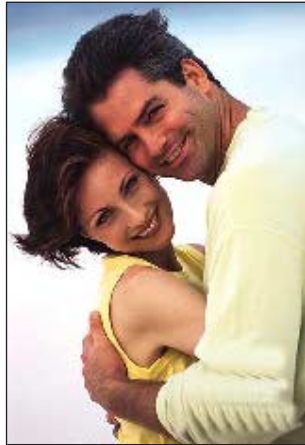
[Swiss evangelical] Pastor Jean Pierre Trachsel said, "Yes, I say this in the prophetic sense, I feel the time is coming where here in Europe, maybe the real Christians will have to be underground."

Mathew Ashimolowo, pastor of the fastest growing church in London and Western Europe, says the church in Europe is at a dangerous crossroads. "Not only is Europe now not going to church, ... but we're now in the paradigm shift where Europe is church-unfriendly."—By Wendy Griffith, *CBN News*

◆ Men's Corner

Hugging is the answer

BY ZIG ZIGLAR, *CREATORS SYNDICATE*



STRETCH THOSE ARMS WITHOUT DELAY AND GIVE SOMEONE A HUG TODAY!

Perhaps I feel that hugging is the answer because my wife is affectionately known as "The Happy Hugger." If it's moving, she'll stop it and hug it, and if it's not moving, she'll dust it off and sell it! There's another reason I believe hugging is the answer, however. According to Greg Risberg of the Northwestern University Medical School in Chicago, the physiological benefit of hugging includes a reduction of blood pressure and increased oxygen in the

blood. He said that we all have a "skin hunger" and we are missing out on a vital part of our health if we're not getting in on some serious hugging. He maintains that four hugs a day are the minimum required to meet that skin hunger.

From my perspective, I need lots more than four. Stanley Simon of the University of Massachusetts said that "hugging does more than demonstrate affection. It actually seems to keep people healthy. The skin is the body's largest sensory organ. If it's understimulated, many people actually develop an aching sensation. These are the people who will find it harder to get well and to stay well."

For the benefit of you husbands, let me tell you something about your wives. They love hugs but resent it when you ignore them all day and then give them your undivided attention when the lights

go out at night. They want a hug when a hug is all you have on your mind. They don't necessarily want them to be long, and in most cases, they do not want them to be suggestive or sensual. The hug really says, "I love you, I enjoy being around you, you're important to me, I look forward to spending more time with you." There's an old saying that actions speak louder than words, and to take a few seconds a number of times during the day to get and give those hugs really speaks volumes. Give it a try!

It's wondrous what a hug can do.
A hug can cheer you when you're blue.
A hug can say, "I love you so,"
Or, "Oh, I'm sad to see you go."

A hug is, "Welcome back again!"—
And, "Great to see you!" or,
"Where've you been?"
A hug can soothe a small child's pain
And bring out a rainbow after rain.

The hug! There's just no doubt
about it,
We scarcely could survive without
it.
A hug delights and warms and
charms,
It must be why God gave us arms!

Hugs are great for fathers and
mothers,
Sweet for sisters, swell for
brothers.
And chances are some favorite
aunts
Love them more than potted
plants.

Kittens crave them. Puppies love
them.
Heads of state are not above
them.
A hug can break the language
barrier
And make the dullest day seem
merrier.

No need to fret about the store of
'em,
The more you give,
The more there are of 'em.
So stretch those arms without
delay
And give someone a hug today!
—Author Unknown

Tips for new exercisers

BY CHRISTINE HARAN, *ABC NEWS*

Many people end up making mistakes when they begin an exercise regimen. "Probably the most common mistake is not using common sense," says Catherine Jackson, chair of the department of kinesiology at California



USE COMMON SENSE WHEN EXERCISING

State University, Fresno. Below, Jackson gives some common-sense tips.

Not getting the proper equipment or not wearing the proper shoes or clothes is one very common error. For example, many people have stationary bikes. Some models cannot be adjusted properly so the leg is not in full extension during the down cycle of pedaling, which can lead to knee problems.

Likewise, people frequently will buy exercise clothes that are totally inappropriate for the activity that they've chosen. If you're going to be on a treadmill, for example, you don't want clothes that are really loose and could get caught in the machine.

Do people often attempt to do too much too soon? Yes, most individuals think, "If I walk one mile this week as my exercise program, I can walk two miles next week," and that's wrong. Your frequency, intensity and duration should never increase more than 10 percent in a subsequent week. Many individuals increase the workout 100 percent in their first week and end up not continuing to exercise, usually because of injury.

What are some common injuries that are sustained by new exercisers?

Common injuries are usually knee problems, ankle problems and hip problems. If you really overdo it, then you probably are going to hurt your back. Injuries are usually associated with over-exercising and not having the proper equipment or footwear.

How quickly can people expect to see results? Aerobic changes are going to take time, so you need to be persistent, rather than expect immediate results. One thing that happens around six weeks is that you're going to be really tired. Changes are occurring physiologically in the body, and your red blood cells are adapting. Many individuals reach that fatigue point and they don't continue past it. With strength training, however, the results occur very fast.

If your goal is to lose weight, does the type of exercise matter? If you're interested in weight loss, it may not be about the intensity of workout, but the consistency of it. You need to commit yourself to doing some kind of exercise that is different from your daily routine seven days a week. It doesn't have to be the kind of exercise that makes you sweat or that you really get really exhausted after. It can be what we call moderate exercise. Moderate exercise

includes things like working out in the garden or adding walking to your day. But you do need to do that seven days a week if you're looking at weight loss.

How can people monitor how hard they're working? One of the best ways to get an idea of your intensity is to see if you can talk during a workout. If you can actually say something and not have to gasp for air while you're saying it, then your intensity is probably OK.

How important is stretching? Stretching is very important. Many individuals only stretch before they exercise, but studies show the soreness is diminished if you stretch after exercise. In general, one should warm up first with some type of big muscle activity, such as walking briskly, and then stretching will be more effective. The best type of stretching is slow and sustained, which means after reaching the final position, the stretch should be held for 10 to 30 seconds.

◆ Economic News

The incredible shrinking dollar

BY ROBERT REICH (SECRETARY OF LABOR UNDER FORMER PRESIDENT BILL CLINTON)

The U.S. dollar is taking a nosedive. Some people think that's good news. When the dollar drops, everything we export to the rest of the world becomes cheaper to them—which means they buy more from us. That's why a lot of American businesses are cheering as the dollar continues to drop—and why the Bush administration seems quite content to let it plummet.

But there's another side to this story. As the dollar drops, almost everything you and I buy from the rest of the world costs us more.

Another problem: A falling dollar causes global investors to get nervous. After all, who wants to be stuck with investments in a currency worth less and less? Even [billionaire] Warren Buffet says he's putting some of his fortune into euros. If major global investors

start pulling out of dollars, you ain't seen nothing yet; there could be a run on the dollar, like the runs on old-time banks.

Behind the falling dollar is this simple reality: America is spending like mad and going deep into debt. Personal debt is at record levels. The federal government is awash in debt, and that debt is growing. Our trade deficit with the rest of the world is also huge, and growing.

Just to keep the dollar steady would require that foreigners buy \$1.5 billion [of U.S. dollar securities] every day. But they're not going to do that anymore. Why should they? We're out of control, like a drunken sailor. And after all, who wants to entrust their money to a drunk?

Even if the American public is asleep, the rest of the world is wide awake—and they don't like what they see.

(Dad:) America's behaving like a drunk, all right—that's how the Lord Himself describes her in the Bible. It calls her "the great whore ... with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk, ... arrayed in purple and scarlet, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication. And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus" (Revelation 17:1–6). She's not only drunk on the blood of the martyrs, but she's drunk on debt!

The official national debt of the U.S. is over \$7 trillion now, an unimaginable amount! And that's only the "official" national debt; the unofficial national debt is much more, not to mention the many more trillions that U.S. businesses and consumers owe! So when it comes to bankrupt nations, the U.S. could teach Argentina and others a thing or two.

It's getting worse all the time, too. It took 150 years for the U.S. to reach the first trillion dollars of national debt. Do you know how long it took to add the last trillion dollars of national debt? Less than 2 years!





How long do you think it will take the rest of the world to wise up to the fact that those growing trillions will never be repaid? The day of reckoning is coming one of these days, and it may be sooner than the U.S. thinks. It's gotten to the point that even the IMF is issuing warnings to the U.S. about the state of its economy!

So the U.S. can't go on living on borrowed money forever, saying, "I sit a queen, and shall see no sorrow" (Revelation 18:7). As one economist put it, "Things that can't go on forever, don't." The crash will come, and those who've been "living deliciously" may find themselves struggling to fight off poverty, while the world is being prepared for the Antichrist and his new economic order!

"What we have here is a form of looting."—George Akerlof, Nobel laureate in economics, speaking of the Bush administration's budget policies. (Quoted by Paul Krugman in *The New York Times*.)

◆ Health matters

"Super Size Me"

BY DAVID USBORNE, NEW ZEALAND HERALD

Director Morgan Spurlock had a bright idea for a film project. On Thanksgiving Day 2002, slumped on his mother's couch after eating far too much, he saw a news item about two teenage girls in New York suing McDonald's for making them obese. The company responded by saying their food was nutritious and good for people. Is that so, he wondered? To find out, he committed himself to 30 days of Big Mac bingeing.

The result is his documentary *Super Size Me: A Film of Epic Portions*, a sometimes comic but serious look at America's addiction to fast food.

Spurlock, 33, a tall New Yorker of usually cast-iron constitution, made himself the guinea pig. He ate only at McDonald's for a month—three meals, every day—and took a camera crew along to record it. If a server offered

to super-size his order, he was obliged to accept—and to ingest everything.

Neither Spurlock nor the three doctors who agreed to monitor his health during the experiment were prepared for the degree of ruin it would wreak on his body. Within days, he was vomiting up his burgers and battling with headaches and depression. And his sex drive vanished.

When Spurlock had finished, his liver, overwhelmed by saturated fats, had virtually turned to pâté. "The liver test was the most shocking thing," said Dr. Daryl Isaacs, who joined the team to watch over him. "It became very, very abnormal."

Spurlock put on nearly 12kg (26 lb) over the period and his cholesterol level leapt from a respectable 165 to 230. He told the *New York Post*: "I got desperately ill. My face was splotchy and I had this huge gut, which I've never had in my life.... It was amazing—and really frightening."

Spurlock claims that the goal was not to attack McDonald's. "If there's one thing we could accomplish with the film, it is that we make people think about what they put in their mouth," he said. "So the next time you do go into a fast-food restaurant and they say, 'Would you like to upsize that?' you think about it and say, 'Maybe I won't.'"

(Dad:) **Fast food can be a nice treat and a convenient meal once in a while.** The problem is, if you don't minimize it, it'll maximize you!

The Lord was the creator of fast foods, and He even has them in Heaven—trees bearing all manner of fruit, both along the River of Life and throughout the City!

Fruit is wonderful fast food, both here in Heaven and there on Earth. It's good, and good for you, in contrast to the sort of empty, greasy calories that earthly restaurants cook up for a quick buck. Please eat healthful food if you can, dear Family. In doing so, you'll stay healthier and better able to do His work!

◆ Ask Dad!—No.21

Subject: Current Comments

■ Aristide's last days in power

It looks like Aristide is on his way out in Haiti, and as dark as that country is, he may be on his way out of this life! An armed rebellion started in northern Haiti in early February, about three weeks ago, and the rebels have now seized most of the country and are advancing on the capital, Port-au-Prince.



JEAN-BERTRAND ARISTIDE

Aristide agreed to a political compromise that would have let him hang on to some sort of power, but the rebels said, "No way." So Aristide said he'd be willing to die for his country, and the rebels said they'd be happy to take him up on that particular offer—to help him along, you know—so we shall see what happens!

When the U.S. put Aristide back in power in 1994, he was fairly popular for a while. But he apparently rigged the elections in 2000, so the opposition refused

to work with him, and there's been no parliament for years. He pretty much functions as the government himself, a dictator, along with a few cronies, but he hasn't even been very good at that, so the country has gone downhill pretty steadily—and that's really saying something, since it was already the poorest country in the Western hemisphere! It has an economy on a par with parts of Central Africa now, and the poor people can barely scrape out a living. Drug-dealing is one of the few lucrative businesses, and there's lots of that taking place.

The U.S. grew disillusioned with Aristide a few years ago and they cut off aid to his country, along with the EU, so he's had very little to offer

his people. They used to live off tourism, but no sane tourist wants to visit Haiti anymore, and all their other industries have virtually collapsed. So ordinary Haitians are pretty much fed up with him. The rich are fed up with him. The U.S. is fed up with him. And the Lord is certainly fed up with him, especially since he made voodoo one of the official religions, putting Devil worship on the same level as worship of the Lord! So I think the Lord is letting the Devil have his way with Aristide, a priest who rebelled and turned from the Lord just as Satan rebelled against the Lord!

The problem for Haiti is, there's not much of an alternative to



VICTORIOUS HAITIAN REBELS ENTER PORT-AU-PRINCE AFTER ARISTIDE'S DEPARTURE

president. It remains to be seen whether rebel forces will support this new government.)

(Question:) Was the U.S. actually behind the rebellion, and did they kidnap Aristide?

(Jesus:) There were many forces behind the rebellion, for there were many people opposed to Aristide—the former Haitian army, which he disbanded when he resumed power; the rich and formerly powerful, whose riches and power he attempted to seize; many of the poor, whom he had said he would help but did little for; and the U.S., which had expected him to be grateful and compliant when U.S. forces returned him to power in 1994, but found him to be neither.

When the rebellion broke out, the U.S. did supply some arms to the rebels, covertly and through intermediaries, for they wanted a new president whom they could bend to their will and their ways. They found it simple to add fuel to the fires of discontent and revolt. Other groups helped as well, including many little warlords, drug lords and petty criminals, for they thought it in their own best interests that Haiti be without

a government for a while, so that they could further their own ends.

In the end, in Aristide's last days, the rebellion had grown so large and his own forces had been reduced to roving bands of thugs and criminals, brutalizing their own people, that he realized he had little hope of maintaining power—that his very life was at stake. The U.S. had withdrawn its support for his rule, so he asked for their help in arranging his flight, which they were only so happy to do. They did not kidnap him, but they did bring a great deal of pressure to bear on him, and made it clear to him what the consequences would be if he chose to remain.

Now that Aristide has fled, it suits him to promote the lie that he was kidnapped, which was not the case. However, while he was not physically forced to leave, the U.S. exerted other types of force, telling him that staying would only result in his own death and the destruction of his country. So neither Aristide nor the U.S. government are being completely honest in the matter.

■ **Enterprising Afghans**

Some enterprising Afghans have come up with a new way to make money. They can either make peanuts working for themselves, or between \$3 and \$6 a day working for an international agency, or \$12 a day growing heroin poppies, or, using this new scheme, they can make \$5,000 at a time, with almost no work involved!

You see, since the U.S. has scaled back their forces in Afghanistan, they've been trying to get the Afghans to do some of their work for them. Rather than U.S. soldiers going out to dangerous areas and rounding up suspected Taliban and al Qaeda fighters, getting shot and possibly killed in the bargain, they pay the Afghans \$5,000 when they bring suspected fighters to them.



U.S. SPECIAL FORCES TROOPS GUARDING THE HAITIAN PRIME MINISTER

Aristide—at least not many good ones. Haitians with money and brains immigrated elsewhere years ago, so there aren't many folks to replace him who aren't crooks and criminals themselves! But whoever takes power, you can be sure it'll be someone acceptable to the U.S., who can get the U.S. aid and economic assistance flowing again. In fact, the U.S. may be behind the rebellion, or may at least be arming it, because the rebels have all sorts of modern weaponry, arms, and body armor, while Aristide's police mostly have pistols and antique rifles and usually run the other way when they hear the rebels are coming!

If the U.S. is helping it along, it wouldn't be the first U.S.-backed coup in Latin America by a long shot. It's hard to think of a Latin country where the U.S. hasn't meddled in its politics or overthrown its government or occupied it at one time or another!

(Note: On February 29, three days after the preceding message was given, President Jean-Bertrand Aristide resigned and sought temporary asylum in the Central African Republic. Aristide claimed that he was "kidnapped" and forced into exile by U.S. soldiers. The U.S. denied the charge. The United Nations agreed to send a multinational



'I SAY LET'S USE MINE—WE'RE ALREADY HALFWAY THERE!'

Well, the dear Afghans being the rogues and scoundrels they are, seeing the chance to make some money off the rich but ignorant American military, have been rounding up all sorts of people and turning them over to the Americans for a profit!

Among the “guerrillas” they turned over to the U.S. was one poor taxi driver they grabbed at a road-block, whom the Americans sent to the U.S. detention center at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba! The poor fellow spent 10 months in a cell there before the U.S. finally decided he was no threat and sent him back to Afghanistan.

It's terrible that the Afghans would do such a thing, of course, but it's even worse that the Americans would pay them for it and be accessories to the crime!—Not to mention the fact that they were so clueless that it took them 10 months to tell the difference between a taxi driver and a terrorist! You really wonder about American intelligence sometimes! They're so ignorant of the rest of the world, the last thing they need to be doing is meddling in Afghanistan, Iraq and the Mideast.

■ Ariel Sharon's wonderful offer in Gaza

Boy, has Ariel Sharon got a deal for the Palestinians, a real generous offer, showing what a “man of peace” he is! Ha! He's surprised the Palestinians and the world by saying he's willing to give up the Israeli settlements in Gaza—or at least most of them,

maybe—as a generous unilateral offer of peace. It is an unexpected offer, but it's hardly an offer of peace and good will!

You see, the Israelis have 17 settlements in the Gaza Strip, where some 7,500 settlers live among 1.4 million Palestinians! They're not very popular, to say the least, because those several thousand settlers occupy about 30 percent of Gaza, including all the best agricultural land and the most plentiful water. So the Israelis have to keep thousands of heavily armed troops there to



ARIEL SHARON: MAKING A SACRIFICIAL GESTURE OF PEACE?

protect them from the Palestinians. The Palestinians would like them out not only because they occupy their land, use their water, ruin their economy, and run life in Gaza—which they've surrounded by a fence and where they brutalize the Palestinians at will—but also because the troops and settlers kill scores of Palestinians who do something as innocent as walk within rifle shot of a settlement, even school children!

So Sharon says he'll move these settlers out. He says he hasn't been able to come to a peace agreement with the Palestinians—mainly because he's sabotaged every opportunity where he would have to do any serious negotiating and might have to actually give up something substantial—and he's making this “bold move” in Gaza.

Well, the reality of the “bold move” is that many of the settlers in Gaza would simply move to join their counterparts in the West Bank, where there's room among the 230,000 settlers in more than 125 settlements for a few thousand more! They'll occupy just as much Palestinian land and require less Israeli troops to guard them, since there are already lots of troops in the West Bank.

Oh, and guess who'll probably

wind up financing the move of these settlers, since the Israelis are making this “bold but costly” move toward peace, even if they claim their economy has been devastated by the Palestinian uprising? The U.S. will, of course, to the tune of billions of dollars! So,

if things work out as Sharon hopes they do, the U.S. will pay to transfer settlers from one occupied territory to another, where they'll be less costly for Israel to protect and maintain, and Sharon will have come off looking like a real hero and statesman!

The cherry on the cake is that by Sharon making this “sacrifice” now and giving up most or all of the settlements in Gaza, which he'd probably have to do sooner or later anyway, he'll have to make fewer real sacrifices in the long run! He can point to all he's “given up” and ask the Palestinians to match it, and the poor Palestinians don't really have much more they can give up! About all they have is a little land and a little sovereignty, and the Israelis take what they want of both already!

So it's a very sneaky and under-handed move on Sharon's part, and the Palestinians know it, the U.S. knows

it, and many other governments know it. But the charade will play out because the U.S. won't stand up to Israel, the Palestinians can't, and Israel doesn't really care what the rest of the world thinks. Whew! No wonder John called Jerusalem “that great city which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified” (Revelation 11:8). Thank God He's returning there to set things right one of these days in the not too distant future, and New Jerusalem will eventually take the place of the old, full of new people with new and heavenly hearts! Hallelujah!

◆ Words for the wise

Over and over—and under

BY RODERICK NORDELL,
THE CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR

Speaking of Saddam Hussein, a well-known journalist wrote: “the significance of the capture is impossible to underestimate.”

Surely he meant impossible to “overestimate.”

Put these two terms into an Internet search engine, and who knows the difference these days? Not many, judging by the number of errors that pop up.

The differences were distinct when we used to say, “Never underestimate the power of a woman.” Think of the uproar if “overestimate” were used.

Does another writer really mean: “it is impossible to underestimate the impact of a kind word”? Or “It is almost impossible to underestimate the importance of rugby to the South African nation”?

On the other hand, who would disagree with: “It is impossible to overestimate the importance of a team approach”?

I may be overestimating your tolerance for such hair-splitting when language impairment is no news.

But I refuse to underestimate your ability to detect the hair in the soup.

◆ Tidbits

Crocodile foiled by a punch on the nose and the name of Jesus. (AP)



FOILED BY THE NAME OF JESUS

A 3-meter (10-foot) saltwater crocodile attacked a hunter in the Australian Outback and clamped its jaws around his leg, releasing him only after the man's aunt punched the reptile in the snout. The victim,

19-year-old Manuel Pascoe, was returning from hunting geese when the crocodile, possibly attracted by blood from the dead birds, lunged from a creek and tried to drag the man into the water. Other members of the hunting party grabbed Pascoe, but the powerful reptile did not let go until the man's



PALESTINIAN MAN AND CHILD BY THE RUINS OF THEIR HOUSE, DESTROYED BY AN ISRAELI INCURSION INTO GAZA.

aunt, Margaret Rinybuma, punched it in the snout. "I hit him with my fist on the nose and I yelled out, 'Help! In the name of Jesus!' and it let him go," Rinybuma said. **(Dad:) Thank the Lord! The name of Jesus can repulse big dogs, big crocodiles, or big evil beasts and beings of any sort!**

Child passports' new rule. (AP) [American] parents seeking a passport on behalf of a child under age 14 now must take the child with them to passport offices to apply, the [U.S.] State Department said. The new measure is designed to enhance the accurate identification of passport applicants and aid in preventing international child abduction and trafficking. The rule applies to all regular, official and diplomatic [U.S.] passports for children under age 14, even if the child had previously been issued a passport.

Going to church doesn't make you a Christian.... (Bill Federer) A baseball star, Billy Sunday played for the Chicago White Sox in the 1890s. Born in a log cabin in Iowa, his father, a Union Army soldier, died of pneumonia and Billy grew up in an orphanage. His baseball career took off and he became one of the most popular athletes in the nation. While recovering from a baseball injury, he began attending YMCA meetings. A national sensation occurred in 1889 when Billy Sunday preached his first sermon as an evangelist in Chicago. Over the next 46 years 100 million people would hear him. In his animated style, Billy Sunday said: "Going to church doesn't make you a Christian any more than going to a garage makes you an automobile." **(Dad:) Ha! He had church Christians pegged. He should know, as he was one of the great American evangelists of his time. My mother was one of the great American evangelists of that era as well, along with Aimee Semple McPherson. They won multitudes of souls, but in the end they just couldn't get the church folks out of their "garages," their churches! They'd come along with their revivals, getting church Christians all revved up, but in the end they'd still be sitting there, parked in the pews, not going anyplace for Jesus.**

Dry lips. (HealthDayNews) Got dry lips? Don't lick 'em, especially not in winter. Licking your lips can cause two different problems, both of them more common in colder months when the air is dry. One is called perleche and refers to inflammation that occurs around the corners of the mouth as a result of contact with saliva. Saliva contains various digestive enzymes, two of which in particular can be irritating. "They basically digest your skin," says Dr. Richard Mizuguchi, a clinical professor of dermatology in New York City.

The second condition is called irritant dermatitis and is again due to saliva. Contrary to what most people



DON'T LICK DRY LIPS

think, licking your lips will not moisturize them. "When you lick your lips, the water has to evaporate, and when it evaporates, it takes the moisture out of the skin so it gets even drier. When it's drier you lick more and it becomes a vicious circle," Mizuguchi says. The result is a dry, eczema-type process. The alternative to lip-licking? Try chapstick and, for women, moisturizing lipstick.

Tolerance vs. Love. (Josh McDowell, *Focus on the Family* magazine) Tolerance says, "You must approve of what I do." Love responds, "I must do something harder: I will love you, even when your behavior offends me."

Tolerance says, "You must agree with me." Love responds, "I must do something harder: I will tell you the truth, because I am convinced 'the truth will set you free.'"

Tolerance says, "You must allow me to have my way." Love responds, "I must do something harder: I will plead with you to follow the right way, because I believe you are worth the risk."

Tolerance seeks to be inoffensive; love takes risks. Tolerance glorifies division; love seeks unity. Tolerance costs nothing; love costs everything. **(Dad:) Tolerance is the way of the world, in its better moments. Love is the way of the Lord and of Heaven, and though it costs a lot, the rewards are eternal.**

Exercise. (Zig Ziglar) There are 525,600 minutes in every year. How many of those minutes do you exercise, or do you use the old excuse, "I just don't have time"? In his book *Fit For Success*, Dr. James M. Rippe surveyed Fortune 500 CEOs and was surprised to discover that these busy executives were three times more likely than others to exercise. Two-thirds of them engaged in aerobic exercises at least three times a week and said it helped them to reduce stress, increase their energy, improve their health and boost their productivity.

Nobody asks, "When do you have time to eat?" The answer is obvious: We make the time. Exercise is much the same way. Experts maintain that three 20-minute walks a week will do wonders for your health. Since I started exercising over a quarter century ago, my productivity has substantially improved. It's actually made me more aware of my time and helps me to organize it better. Every moment is important, so I don't waste them. I encourage you to

put exercise in your daily program. It will improve your health and you'll be amazed at what it will do for your organizational skills. **(Dad:) You won't have the strength and health and energy for your work if you don't get some sort of exercise and stay physically fit. And if you do get exercise, you'll be able to do better and more efficient work. Taking that time pays off, just as taking time with the Lord in the Word and prayer pays off. Obedience always pays.**

Woman saved by angels. (WorldNetDaily) How did Michelle Hileman survive a weeklong ordeal in the Oregon wilderness, stranded in subzero temperatures without a winter coat or matches to start a fire? She says two angels stayed with her each night, emanating warmth and light. Hileman, 40, found herself in the canyon near Wallowa, Oregon, following an elk-hunting accident a year ago. The former home health worker says that during her struggle to survive, two angels appeared and remained with her, radiating warmth and keeping her from dying of hypothermia.

"The best way to describe it was two golden bright lights, just in the shape of two people," she told the *Oregonian*. They appeared on the second night after she began to pray for help, they never spoke and disappeared at daylight, but they were with her every night until she was rescued, she said. **(Dad:) "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them" (Psalm 34:7).**

Buckle up. (HealthDayNews) It's not enough if you wear your seat belt; everyone else in the vehicle better buckle up as well. In the event of an accident, "unrestrained" occupants can essentially become human projectiles, harming or even killing those who are strapped in, new research says. "Overall, having somebody in the vehicle without a belt increases your risk of death by about 20 percent," says Dr. Peter Cummings, lead author of the study appearing in the Jan. 21 issue of the *Journal of the American Medical Association*. Previous research had shown that wearing a seat belt decreases your own risk of dying by about 60 percent. This study shows that it makes a difference what other people do as well.

Tortured with rap? (Reuters) Lebanese Mohammed Jaber said when he went to Iraq on a pilgrimage to Muslim holy sites, he ended up being "tortured" with loud rap music by U.S. troops suspicious he might be a foreign fighter against their occupation.

Jaber said an Iraqi taxi driver handed him and three friends over to U.S. troops for \$100 each as fighters for ousted Iraqi President Saddam Hussein.

"They didn't torture us physically but they did psychologically by raising the volume of rap music all day until it

became unbearable and by withholding food," he said.

But Jaber said he kept one secret from his captors, fearing the treatment could get worse. "I mean I like rap; just imagine them playing jazz."

U.S.-led forces in Iraq later freed Jaber and sent him and seven other Arab detainees home.

The frog in the blender. (From *In Six Days. Why Fifty Scientists Choose To Believe In Creation.*) Suppose that you could go back in your time machine to a time when, according to evolutionists, a lifeless world existed. Assume that you have taken with you an ocean full of organic precursors of life. What would happen to them? They would all decompose to simpler and simpler molecules and mostly would end up as lifeless common inorganic substances. Sterilize a frog and put it in a blender—buzz. Seal up the mixture in a sterile container and leave it as long as you want. You won't get life, despite the fact that you started with the best possible mixture of so-called precursors to life. Repeat the experiment a million times—in the sun, in the dark; with oxygen, without; with clay, without; with UV, without. It won't make any difference. Thermodynamics clearly states that the mixture will decompose to simpler, lower energy, less information-containing molecules.

The complexity of the simplest imaginable living organism is mind-boggling. You need to have the cell wall, the energy system, a system of self-repair, a reproduction system, and means for taking in "food" and expelling "waste," a means for interpreting the complex genetic code and replicating it, etc., etc. The combined telecommunication systems of the world are far less complex, and yet no one believes they arose by chance.—Dr. Stephen Grcott, General Manager, Research and Development, Southern Pacific Petroleum. **(Dad:) Where there's a watch, there's a watchmaker, just as where there's a creation, there's a Creator.**

Anyone who can contemplate the eye of a housefly, the mechanics of human finger movement, the camouflage of a moth, or the building of every kind of matter from variations in arrangement of proton and electron, and then maintain that all this design happened without a designer, happened by sheer, blind accident—such a person believes in a miracle far more astounding than any in the Bible. [David Raphael Klein, "Is There a Substitute for God?" *Reader's Digest*, March 1970, p. 55.]

Lies abound in sex practices study. (*UPI*) A recent survey of sexual attitudes and practices in Britain shows one in five would not divulge they had a sexually transmitted disease. In other findings, 53 percent said AIDS would not stop them sleeping around.

Rumsfeld wins award for bad English. (*Electronic Telegraph*) Donald Rumsfeld, the American secretary of defense, has won the annual "Foot in Mouth" award for bad English.

The award singles out what judges believe to be the most baffling statement by a public figure in the past year.

Mr. Rumsfeld, who is not expected to attend the awards ceremony, won the prize for a statement in which he told reporters: "Reports that say that something hasn't happened are always interesting to me because, as we know, there are known knowns; there are things we know we know.

"We also know there are known unknowns; that is to say we know there are some things we do not know. But there are also unknown unknowns—the ones we don't know we don't know."

Meanwhile, Marks & Spencer will be awarded a "Golden Bull" for putting an extra label on a roast chicken salad which read: "Now with roast chicken."

"Can we buy this?" (*Parents Magazine*) The average American child sees 55 TV commercials a day, and during a typical shopping trip asks "Can we buy this?" 15 times.

Small changes for better health. (Allan Magaziner, *The Bottom Line*) A few quick and easy adjustments to your daily regimen could help you feel better, longer:

Posture. Change it every five minutes to avoid back, neck, leg and abdominal pain.

Breakfast. Change food choices daily—eating a variety of foods gets you more vitamins.

Workout. Change it every three to four weeks. Muscles adapt quickly, learning to do exercises with less energy and, as a result, burning fewer calories.

Contact lens case. Change it every two months to limit bacterial growth.

Toothbrush. Change it every two to three months to keep bristles effective.

Putting God first. (Tom White, *Voice of the Martyrs*) When I was in Egypt, local Christians reminded me once again about our duty to obey Christ and be His light to the world. Jesus states in Matthew 5 that we will be persecuted for this. It is against the law to evangelize Muslims in Egypt. This dear brother eating lunch with me described his interrogation by the national police (a level like our FBI). An informer had reported part of his sermon, which emphasized the authority of God's eternal kingdom over the temporal state.

"Did you say the church is over the state?" they asked him. "Yes," he replied, "every nation needs God as its foundation."

"What if we send you to prison?" they threatened him.

"If you send me to prison, then you will have two churches," he answered, "the one I helped establish and the one I will begin in prison." **(Dad:) God bless him! You cannot stop the man of faith! You may kill him, but that just frees him to work harder than ever in Heaven!**

◆ A few for fun

Roller-Blade Runner

BY BRUCE CAMERON, *CREATORS SYNDICATE*

Recently, I decided to try rollerblading, which is a sport where a set of in-line "blades" are used to lay down a layer of your "skin" on the "sidewalk."

Rollerbladers look a lot like roller skaters, with one key exception: Roller skaters can stop. Rollerbladers, on the other hand, can only scream "Look out!" and then execute a maneuver involving other people and tissue damage.

Here's all you need to get started rollerblading: First, pick a place to go—city park pathways are best because then joggers will find your body. Next, don a set of in-line skates with no brakes. (There's a stub of rubber on the back of one of the skates that looks like it might

be a brake, but it is actually just a big eraser, and what it erases is your ability to stand upright on your skates.) Next, wear lots of safety equipment.

Despite the padding you still have plenty of exposed "skin," which by the end of your first rollerblading session will have become "abrasions." When you're ready, stand up on your blades and immediately throw yourself flat on the pavement. (If you forget this last part, your blades will do it for you.)

Congratulations! You are now bleeding. If you're smart, you'll just lie there until you're rescued. But then again, if you were smart, you wouldn't be trying to rollerblade, would you?

Gingerly climb back into a standing position. Once you are fully erect, you'll immediately begin to roll downhill, which can be especially disconcerting if "down-

hill" is behind you. This is called "gravity," which comes from the Latin word "gravitas," which, literally translated, means, "You shouldn't be rollerblading."

As you gain speed, focus on the tree shredder that lies directly in your path and is, unfortunately, actively shredding tree branches. The laborers who are feeding this nefarious device may react to your approach by taking bets on whether they are about to mulch another rollerblader.

As you sail past, the relief you feel is short-lived, which is how people will describe you if you don't get off the rollerblades. You're still going downhill, which means you are still gaining speed and will soon be in need of a skin graft. You should decide where you are going to fling yourself to stop your momentum. All I can say is, pick someone soft.