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Never give up

BY KELLY BOGGS, BAPTIST PRESS

French journalist Jean-Dominique Bauby suffered a massive stroke in December 1995. Twenty days later, the 43-year-old father of two awoke from a coma to discover the only muscles in his body unaffected by the stroke were those of his left eye. By blinking, he was able to make it clear that although his flesh was unresponsive, his mind was unimpaired.

Through an amazing process, Bauby was soon able to communicate. A special chart was devised that listed the letters of the alphabet based on frequency of usage. As letters were pointed to, Bauby would blink to indicate his selection and thus spell out his communication.

Undaunted by his debilitating setback, Bauby continued to write. He worked daily in three-hour shifts, blinking his thoughts one letter at a time as a secretary pointed to the chart. Though the process was painfully slow, by the end of the summer of 1996, Bauby had "dictated" the text of a 137-page book.

Titled "The Diving Bell and the Butterfly," Bauby's book was published in 1997. In it, he shares the experience of possessing a healthy mind that is trapped inside a paralyzed body. He compares his own body to a diving bell—a mere container, providing only life support—in which his soul exists like a caged butterfly.

I find Bauby's determination to embrace life in spite of his tragic circumstance inspiring.

Winston Churchill is another person I admire. The indomitable statesman stirred the hearts of the British during the dark days of World War II. It was Churchill's "never, never, never, never give up" attitude that enabled him to see beyond bombed-out buildings and smoldering rubble and envision a victorious England.

The Apostle Paul also possessed a determined "never give up" attitude toward life. It was he who penned, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."

Paul's singular goal was to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Unjust prison chains did not discourage him, nor did the

stark reality of a pending date with death daunt him. Paul faced every obstacle with his goal clearly fixed in his mind.

The aforementioned men have one thing in common. They refused to give up on pursuing a goal in spite of the fact that each encountered overwhelming and discouraging difficulties in life.

Awarding-winning cartoonist Jules Feiffer once presented a sketch that captures well the spirit of these men.

The cartoon begins with a man encountering a guru sitting at a fork in the road.

"Which way is success?" the man asks. The stoic sage points down the path to his left. The man, thrilled at the prospect of easy success, rushes off in the appropriate direction. From the distance comes a loud "SPLAT."

The man reappears. He is bruised and tattered. Again he asks the guru, "Which way is success?" Once again the wise man says nothing. He simply points down the path to his left. The man quickly races down the path for the second time. From the distance comes a much louder "SPLAT."

The man returns crawling on his hands and knees. He is bloody and beaten. He yells at the guru, "Twice I have asked you about the path to success. Both times I followed your directions and both times all I have gotten is splatted!" He screams at the top of his lungs, "No more pointing, talk to me!"

The wise man calmly replies, "Success is that way. It is just a little past splat."

Jean-Dominique Bauby was debilitated by a stroke. SPLAT!

Winston Churchill faced the ruthless Nazi war machine. SPLAT!

The Apostle Paul was beaten, imprisoned, and faced a death sentence. SPLAT!



JEAN-DOMINIQUE BAUBY BEFORE HIS STROKE



ARTIST'S CONCEPTION OF THE APOSTLE PAUL



WINSTON CHURCHILL IN 1939

THOTS

"Far better is it to dare mighty things, to win glorious triumphs, even though checkered by failure, than to rank with those poor spirits who neither enjoy much nor suffer much, because they live in a gray twilight that knows not victory nor defeat."—Theodore Roosevelt, 1858–1919, twenty-sixth president of the U.S.

Though each man encountered severe setbacks, they did not quit. They persevered past the splats in their lives.

Splat happens. Whatever shape, form or fashion it takes in your life, don't quit. Remember, success is just a little past splat.

(Jesus:) Faith and persistence in the face of adversity is the key to success, My dear ones! It doesn't matter what obstacle you face, what disease or disability you confront, what setback you encounter. No matter how you've failed, or think you've failed, success is there for you if you'll hang on, keep going, and continue to fight! "This is the victory that overcomes the world, even your faith" (1John 5:4). Have faith and keep going! Success is there, just past what may look like failure to you.

Have the faith of Joseph, who kept going despite slavery and prison, and rose to help rule Egypt. Have the faith of Moses, who kept going despite exile and 40 years of anonymity in the desert, and delivered his people from Egypt. Have the faith of David of old, who lost his wife and children and all that he had while in exile among the Philistines, and whose own men were ready to stone him. Yet he encouraged himself in Me, fought on, and recovered all, and went on to become the greatest king Israel ever had. (See 1Samuel 30:1-19.)

Have the faith of your own David, My modern prophet and king, who kept going for Me despite what he considered failure, and didn't find his true calling until he was nearly 50, when he began the Family.

All these men kept going, kept fighting, and refused to give up. Although they were knocked down, they refused to stay down. Although they faced tremendous odds, they rose above and overcame. Although they faced failure again and again, they would accept nothing less than success—and they attained it, as well as an eternal crown of glory, just as you can!

Remember, "With God all things are possible" (Matthew 19:26). Do you believe that? "If you can believe, all things are possible to him that believeth!" (Mark 9:23). Nothing is impossible to you. So keep going, no matter what "splats" you may face. If you do, it will be the Enemy that goes "splat," foiled again by My faithful, persistent, can't-be-stopped children!

◆ Endtime economics

When the wells run dry

COMPILED FROM ARTICLES BY *THE WEEK* AND PAUL ROBERTS, *THE LOS ANGELES TIMES*

How much oil is left? About 3 trillion barrels, give or take a trillion; no one can say for sure. But oil is indisputably a finite resource, and the industrialized world is rapidly draining the vast seas of petroleum under the earth's surface. Pessimistic experts think we're only about a decade away from reaching what geologists call "Hubbert's peak"—the point at which oil production reaches its all-time high, and begins to decline. Some pessimists say the peak has already come, and that calamity is imminent. Optimists say that we don't peak until around 2035. Whenever the peak is reached, the reaction is likely to be traumatic, given the worldwide addiction to oil. The world now consumes a record 70 million barrels of oil a day, and by 2030, the daily total is expected to soar to 120 million barrels. Experts say that gas prices in the U.S. may climb to \$7 to \$10 a gallon. But if the current trends continue, the price of gas could be the least of our troubles.

What else could be affected? Life as we know it. It's hard to think of a product that hasn't been made from, or transported by, petroleum. It powers factories, farms, and ships. It heats homes and businesses. Fertilizers and insecticides are made from oil, as are most organic chemicals, including pharmaceuticals, plastics, and fabrics. The U.S. economy is so tied to oil prices that every recession since the early 1970s has been preceded by a sharp rise in oil prices. To get an idea of what may lie ahead, think back to the worldwide oil shortages of 1973-74 and 1979, when Americans waited in hour-long lines to buy gas. At some point in our or our

children's lives, an even more severe shortage may strike—and this time, it will not be temporary. As production falls, prices won't simply increase; they will fly. If our oil dependence hasn't lessened drastically by then, the global economy is likely to slip into a recession so severe that the Great Depression will look like a dress rehearsal.

Why won't the shortage be temporary? Because when supply begins to fall off, there will be no new sources of oil to tap. Optimists have been laughing off such predictions since 1956, when a Shell Oil geophysicist, Marion King Hubbert, predicted that oil production in the U.S. would peak sometime around 1970, declining thereafter. Hubbert turned out to be right. There was no crisis, though, because we were able to feed our oil addiction by

buying oil from the Mideast, Venezuela, and other nations. But when we hit the global Hubbert's peak, with no new oil sources available, prices may skyrocket, and true panic will begin to set in.

What could happen? In the best-case scenario, says physicist David Goodstein, author of the recent book *Out of Gas*, the U.S. and other industrialized nations will make a frantic and expensive transition to natural gas for heating, while frantically building hundreds of nuclear power plants to generate electricity. In the worst case, he says, "runaway inflation and worldwide depression will leave billions of people with no alternative but to burn coal in vast quantities for warmth, cooking, and primitive industry." This, in turn, would speed up global warming, bringing disruptions of unprecedented proportions.



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THIRD WORLD DONKEY CAR—THE WAVE OF THE FUTURE, AS OIL RUNS LOW?

Why don't we cut down our use of oil? Politicians aren't going to win many votes by telling the public to turn off their air conditioners and give up their SUVs. With the oil still flowing, there's not much economic incentive for private corporations to gamble tens of billions of dollars developing uncertain alternatives. It's far easier to think that none of this will happen in our lifetimes, or that some new, miraculous energy source will be found before the world runs out of oil. "People don't want to face this reality," says geologist Michael Rogers. "Once you face it as a possibility—not even as a certainty, but just as one of many possible scenarios—then you have to make all sorts of changes in the way you live."

(Dad:) There have been oil scares in the past, and I have written on the subject a number of times. In those scares, supply was being cut, so people panicked and prices shot up. Well, imagine when people begin to finally realize that this isn't just someone turning off the tap; this is when the well runs dry! This means their whole lifestyle is down the drain. Most people will probably try to ignore it, thinking it is just the prophets of doom again. But this is serious and it is going to have quite an effect on the world. Oil is not an infinite resource. It will run out. But before it runs out it's going to get scarce and more and more expensive. It's going to be a long, slow strangulation of the world's economy.

Some people have been reading the handwriting in the desert sands for a long time and have been trying to get the world's attention. But like all true prophets, they only get the attention of a few, and those few aren't enough to make a difference. It will be a while



THE WORLD CONSUMES A RECORD 70 MILLION BARRELS OF OIL A DAY

before the effects really start to be felt. Production will peak and then slowly fall away. The phony prophets of peace have the money on their side, so don't expect a lot of publicity to be given to this. And then every time a true prophet brings this up, you can be sure he or she will be ridiculed. But that's the way it goes for true prophets.

Know that oil won't always be there, so don't get yourself so dependent on it, thinking it will be. All this plays into the End. It is one of the components that will bring on the grand finale and will be manipulated by the Antichrist and his cabal to bring their designs to pass. But then, as I have always said, these people are all just being allowed to do this type of stuff because they are fulfilling God's will. He is not that interested in having oil in the Millennium anyway. They're just doing Him a favor!

(Dad:) There is a very serious oil shortage on in the world, beloved. You say, "So what? What does that mean to me?" Well, you already know that it's going to mean a shortage of gasoline for your car and for your business and a shortage of diesel for your heating and your trains and planes and ships—which will mean a tremendous cut in transportation, including a shortage of materials transported by diesel-powered engines, which means ships, trains, trucks, planes, etc.—all of 'm! If the shortage becomes very severe and the West's war machine cannot operate..., it may even precipitate the Oil War in the West's last desperate effort to secure the oil that it needs to survive in its present rich, industrialized condition! (From "The Oil Shortage," ML #938:34–36, Vol.8.)

◆ Wars and rumors of war

Revvng up for war with Iran?

COMPILED FROM ARTICLES BY CHARLEY REESE, KING FEATURES SYNDICATE; BORZOU DARAGAH, SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE FOREIGN SERVICE; JUSTIN RAIMONDO, ANTIWAR.COM

What next for the War Party? Like a giant anaconda after a humongous meal, the monster is hardly finished with the process of swallowing its latest prey, Iraq, let alone digesting it. Yet the hunger that drives it is relentless and the creature is already eyeing the next course: Iran. Dan Sneider, foreign affairs writer for the *San Jose Mercury News*, put it well:

"Counter-terror specialists look for 'chatter' in Islamic extremist circles preceding an attack. There is a lot of chatter going on today in Washington—only this time, it is about an American attack on Iran."

The same neoconservatives who chattered us into war and lured us into Iraq under false pretenses are playing a similar game when it comes to Iran. All the usual suspects are revving up the propaganda machine for another chorus of the same old martial song.

The Bush administration seems to be under the impression that the Iranians are pursuing the development of a nuclear weapon. Sound familiar? The Iranians deny it. The administration says, in effect, that they are lying. If the administration has any proof, let's see it. It was so all-fired certain that Iraq was not only pursuing nuclear weapons but had stockpiles of other weapons, all of which has been proven untrue. That was a mistake that has cost the U.S. 1,500 lives and 10,000 wounded—so far. Make that mistake with Iran, and you'll see a





IRANIAN NUCLEAR REACTOR UNDER CONSTRUCTION

heck of a lot more body bags coming back to the U.S.

Our secretary of state, Condoleezza Rice, says that the Iranians must live up to their international obligations. Again, a familiar propaganda note. The Bush people claimed Iraq was not complying with U.N. resolutions, but in fact it had. The trouble is that, so far as we can tell, the Iranians are also complying. They signed the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, which the Bush administration's pet country, Israel, has refused to sign. The Iranians are cooperating with the International Atomic Energy Agency and are allowing inspections, which Israel does not. They have a right under the treaty to enrich uranium, but are negotiating with the European Union to forgo that right.

The United States refuses to participate in those negotiations and several times has tried to get the IAEA to refer Iran to the U.N. Security Council, where it hopes sanctions will be applied. The IAEA has refused to do so. Even if it did so, China or Russia would certainly veto any resolution mandating sanctions. Russia, in fact, is helping Iran build one of its nuclear reactors.

Are the Iranians pursuing a nuclear weapon? They say they are not. But they are more or less surrounded by nuclear powers—the United States, Israel, India

and Pakistan. Their reasoning for pursuing nuclear plants is feasible. They know their main export, oil, will run out one day, so by using nuclear energy to produce internal power, they can extend the life of their most profitable export. They are certainly wise to disperse their facilities, given the fact that the Israelis bombed Iraq's only nuclear reactor in the 1980s.

But let's assume Iran does develop a nuclear weapon. For decades Americans lived 30 minutes from total destruction by tens of thousands of the Soviet Union's nuclear warheads. The Bush administration's claim that nuclear deterrence, which worked against a superpower, will not work against a smaller and poorer country is bunk. Israel alone has enough nuclear warheads to pulverize Iran.

Oh, the administration says the Iranians will hand over a nuclear weapon to a terrorist organization. Well, where is any evidence of that? The evidence shows that once countries develop nuclear weapons, they keep pretty tight control over them.

But more to the point, if we don't want Iran to develop a nuclear weapon, why not negotiate? Why keep threatening the Iranians? It doesn't make any sense. If I were an Iranian, I would assume that President Bush intends eventually to attack my country. That would be stupid, but if you look at the stupidity of the Iraqi mess, you can't rule it out. Never believe that Bush won't do something just because it's dumb.

Iraq, with just over 20 million people, a flat terrain and a dilapidated military, has given the U.S. quite a bit of trouble. Try Iran, which has nearly 70 million people, a mountainous terrain, and a much more effective military.

Iran's army includes 350,000 active-duty soldiers and 220,000 conscripts. Its elite Revolutionary Guards number 120,000. Its navy and air force total

70,000 men. The armed forces have about 2,000 tanks, 300 combat aircraft, three submarines, hundreds of helicopters and at least a dozen Russian-made Scud missile launchers of the type Saddam Hussein used against Israel during the 1991 Gulf War.

And outside the country, Iran could create myriad troubles for the United States and the world. Within minutes of any attack, Iran's air and sea forces could threaten oil shipments in the Persian Gulf as well as the Gulf of Oman. Iran controls the northern coast of the Strait of Hormuz, the narrow waterway through which oil tankers must navigate, and could sink ships, mine sea routes, or bomb oil platforms.

Iran could activate Hezbollah militants in Lebanon, whom it supports, to launch attacks on Israel. It could have operatives attack U.S. interests in Azerbaijan, Central Asia or Turkey.

But most analysts agree that Iran's biggest trump card would be to unleash havoc in neighboring Iraq. "If Iran wanted, it could make Iraq a hell for the United States," Hamid al-Bayati, Iraq's deputy foreign minister, said recently.

In Washington, the Israelis and their agents are working overtime to provoke another war. But like fires, pestilence, and plague, wars break out and spread without respect for national boundaries—or the original intentions of the combatants.

(Dad:) Iran's not a threat to the U.S., just as Iraq wasn't a threat to the U.S.

The threat is to Israel, which has always worried about any of its inimical neighbors getting ahold of nuclear weapons. Israel, of course, has many nuclear weapons, but doesn't want its monopoly in that area challenged by atomic ayatollahs! So Israel is egging on the U.S. to do something about it, and is hinting that if the U.S. doesn't stop the Iranian nuclear program, then Israel will—the same way it stopped Iraq's nuclear program years ago, by blowing up their reactor.

That would probably blow up not just the reactor but the entire Mideast, so the U.S. has taken it upon itself to rattle the saber at Iran, which has responded by rattling its own saber and stepping up the pace of its nuclear program. And so far, there's no solution in sight, only U.S. and Israeli preparations for air strikes or commando raids on Iranian nuclear facilities, and Iranian war games designed to show the U.S. and Israel that they would pay a heavy price for doing so.

For some reason the American government just hates to negotiate in these situations, and if they do, they don't do so for very long. They'd much rather bomb things and blow them up. Well, they really would blow up more than a few Iranian nuclear sites if they go through with this attack! It would have the potential to create war and havoc throughout the Mideast, and economic



"These Neocon bumper stickers make me nervous."

instability throughout the world as the price of oil, already high, skyrockets!

Keep witnessing and winning souls as quickly as you can, Family, and keep working and praying as hard as you can, because the momentous and earth-shaking events that herald the End are drawing closer all the time! You've certainly seen that with the tsunami and the damage it wreaked. But that's just a fraction of the damage that these irresponsible warmongers could wreak on each other and their nations if they make the wrong choices. Pray for peace and hope for the best, but be prepared for the worst as well.



MUDSLIDE IN THE PHILIPPINES: PART OF THE "SIGNIFICANT IMPACT" OF CLIMATE CHANGE?



HURRICANE DAMAGE IN FLORIDA. IMAGINE WHAT A SUPER HURRICANE WOULD DO

◆ Climate change

Apocalypse now

COMPILED FROM ARTICLES BY GEOFFREY LEAN AND STEVE CONNOR, *THE INDEPENDENT*, AND *THE WEEK*

This February, 200 of the world's leading climate scientists issued the most urgent warning to date that dangerous climate change is taking place, and that time is running out.

The alarms have been going off since the beginning of one of the warmest Januaries on record. First, Dr. Rajendra Pachauri—chairman of the official Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)—told a U.N. conference in Mauritius that the pollution which causes global warming has reached "dangerous" levels.

Then the biggest-ever study of climate change, based at Oxford University, reported that it could prove to be twice as catastrophic as the IPCC's worst predictions. And an international task force concluded that we could reach "the point of no return" in a decade.

But it was in February that it all came together. The conference opened with the [UK's] Secretary of State for the Environment, Margaret Beckett, warning that "a significant impact" from global warming "is already inevitable." It continued with presentations from top scientists and economists from every continent. These showed that some dangerous climate change was already taking place and that catastrophic events once thought highly improbable were now seen as likely.

We learned that glaciers are shrinking around the world. Arctic sea ice has lost almost half its thickness in recent decades. Natural disasters are increasing rapidly around the world.

We learned that bird populations in the North Sea collapsed last year, after the sand eels on which they feed left its warmer waters—and how the number of scientific papers recording changes in ecosystems due to global warming has escalated from 14 to more than a thousand in five years.

Worse, leading scientists warned of catastrophic changes that once they had dismissed as "improbable." The meeting was particularly alarmed by powerful evidence that the oceans

are slowly turning acid, threatening all marine life.

Professor Chris Rapley, director of the British Antarctic Survey, presented new evidence that the West Antarctic ice sheet is beginning to melt, threatening eventually to raise sea levels by 15 feet: 90 percent of the world's people live near current sea levels. Recalling that the IPCC's last report had called Antarctica "a slumbering giant," he said: "I would say that this is now an awakened giant."

Professor Mike Schlesinger, of the University of Illinois, reported that the shutdown of the Gulf Stream, once seen as a "low probability event," was now 45 percent likely this century, and 70 percent probable by 2200. This will be catastrophic for northern Europe, giving us a climate like Labrador (which shares our latitude) even as the rest of the world heats up.

Professor Jared Diamond, of the University of California, Los Angeles, said society was on the brink of irreversible decline unless 12 major environmental problems were tackled. "Conditions of Somalia will spread," he said. "We will be living in a global Somalia if we don't do anything about it."

Water Wars. What could happen? Wars break out over diminishing water

resources as populations grow and rains fail.

How would this come about? Over 25 percent more people than at present are expected to live in countries where water is scarce in the future, and global warming will make it worse.

Disappearing Nations. What could happen? Low-lying islands such as the Maldives and Tuvalu—with their highest points only a few feet above sea level—will disappear from the face of the Earth.

How would this come about? As the world heats up, sea levels are rising, partly because glaciers are melting, and partly because the water in the oceans expands as it gets warmer.

How likely is it? Inevitable. Even if global warming stopped today, the seas would continue to rise for centuries. Some small islands have already sunk forever. A year ago, Tuvalu was briefly submerged.

Flooding. What could happen? London, New York, Tokyo, Bombay, many other cities and vast areas of countries from Britain to Bangladesh disappear under tens of feet of water, as the seas rise dramatically.

How would this come about? Ice caps in Greenland and Antarctica melt. The Greenland ice sheet would raise



sea levels by more than 20 feet, the West Antarctic ice sheet by another 15 feet.

How likely is it? Scientists used to think it unlikely, but this year reported that the melting of both ice caps had begun.

Hothouse Earth. What could happen? Global warming escalates to the point where the world's whole climate abruptly switches, turning it permanently into a much hotter and less hospitable planet.

How would this come about? A process involving "positive feedback" causes the warming to fuel itself, until it reaches a point that finally tips the climate pattern over.

How likely is it? Abrupt flips have happened in the past.

Starvation. What could happen? Food production collapses in Africa, for example, as rainfall dries up and droughts increase. As farmland turns to desert, people flee in their millions in search of food.

How would this come about? Rainfall is expected to decrease by up to 60 percent in winter and 30 percent in summer in southern Africa this century. By some estimates, Zambia could lose almost all its farms.

How likely is it? Pretty likely unless the world tackles both global warming and Africa's decline. Scientists agree that droughts will increase in a warmer world.

Acid Oceans. What could happen? The seas will gradually turn more and more acid. Coral reefs, shellfish and plankton, on which all life depends, will die off. Much of the life of the oceans will become extinct.

How would this come about? The oceans have absorbed half the carbon dioxide, the main cause of global warming, so far emitted by humanity. This forms dilute carbonic acid, which attacks corals and shells.

How likely is it? It is already starting. Scientists warn that the chemistry of the oceans is changing in ways unprecedented for 20 million years.

Disease. What could happen? Malaria—which kills two million people worldwide every year—reaches Britain with foreign travelers, gets picked up by British mosquitoes and becomes endemic in the warmer climate.

How would this come about? Four of our 40 mosquito species can carry the disease, and hundreds of travelers return with it annually. The insects breed faster, and feed more, in warmer temperatures.

How likely is it? A Department of Health study has suggested it may happen by 2050; the Environment Agency has mentioned 2020. Some experts say it is miraculous that it has not happened already.

Hurricanes. What could happen? If the oceans grow warmer, they may spawn more powerful hurricanes than any we've ever seen. For every degree

that water temperature rises, MIT atmospheric scientist Kerry Emanuel says, maximum storm winds increase 5 mph. In theory, a warmer Atlantic could, in a decade or two, begin producing super violent hurricanes with winds exceeding 175 mph or even 200 mph. Since the power unleashed by these storms increases exponentially with wind speed, a 200-mph hurricane wouldn't be merely twice as strong as a 100-mph storm; it would be dozens of times stronger.

(Dad:) It's not "Apocalypse now," but it will be an apocalypse in the future because many of these dire events are written in the Apocalypse, the book of Revelation! Climate calamities are part of the events of the End that must come to pass before Jesus returns.

Men have "sown the wind" through their pollution and destruction of the Earth, their greed and hoarding of its resources, their selfishness and refusal to share and help their neighbors, and their wars and rejection of peace, as well as of the Prince of Peace, and they'll "reap the whirlwind" in the days to come (Hosea 8:7).

So, calamitous days are coming for the Earth and for men of the world, but they'll be wonderful times for you who know Jesus! These events will turn many to Him, and to you, and you'll be kept and provided for and protected despite these things, until the wonderful day of His return to gather you to Him in the clouds!

◆ Earthquakes/disasters

2004 the deadliest earthquake year in five centuries

ASSOCIATED PRESS

The death toll from the earthquake-generated tsunami in Asia and east Africa made 2004 the deadliest year for earthquakes in five centuries, the U.S. Geological Survey said.

The agency estimated the toll from the Dec. 26 tsunami at 275,950 people, but said they expect the final count to be even higher.

Based on the agency's estimate, 2004 would have counted an earthquake death toll of 276,856, the second highest in recorded history.

The deadliest quake on record occurred Jan. 23, 1556, when an



EARTHQUAKE DAMAGE IN BANDA ACEH, INDONESIA

estimated magnitude 8 earthquake killed about 830,000 people in Shansi, China.

◆ Euthanasia

Dutch treatment

BY JOSEPH SOBRAN, GRIFFIN INTERNET SYNDICATE, AND CHUCK COLSON, BREAKPOINT

The *Associated Press* reports that a hospital in the Netherlands has "recently proposed guidelines for mercy killings of terminally ill newborns." Moreover, the hospital has already begun carrying out these "procedures" without waiting for any form of official review or approval.

According to Wesley J. Smith in the *Daily Standard*, "For anyone paying attention to the continuing collapse of medical ethics in the Netherlands, this isn't at all shocking. ... Doctors were [already] killing approximately 8 percent of all infants who died each year in the Netherlands. That amounts to approximately eighty to ninety per year. The study found that a shocking 45 percent of neonatologists and 31 percent of pediatricians who responded to questionnaires had killed infants." Smith adds that at least a fifth of the killings were performed without parental consent.

What's left of civilization has taken another decisive step downward—as someone has said, not on a slippery slope, but over a vertical cliff. Once again, the Dutch are leading the way in "progressive" medical ethics, the practical expression of the Culture of Death. And our news media take this horrible and portentous story in stride.

Pope John Paul II once said that in the Culture of Death, children are seen as disposable inconveniences. The natural progression has been from contraception to abortion to infanticide and euthanasia, fulfilling the darkest warnings in a startlingly short time.

Even if I were an atheist, I'd find it very unsettling to live in a society that can discard its oldest convictions and moral traditions so lightly. G.K. Chesterton once said on this: "Most men now are not so much rushing to extremes as merely sliding to extremes; and even reaching the most violent extremes by being almost entirely passive."

As always, the latest monstrosity begins under humane pretexts. Infanticide is introduced to spare babies



BABY IN INCUBATOR. DOCTORS KILL APPROXIMATELY 8 PERCENT OF ALL INFANTS WHO DIE EACH YEAR IN THE NETHERLANDS

suffering. When this is accepted, it will become a parental right. Abortion too began with hard cases, such as rape and incest; and the list lengthened until it became an unqualified right. Contraception was originally assumed to be for married couples, especially the poor; now it's for everyone, including schoolchildren.

Liberalism is taking us back to the Dark Ages it scorns—not to the era when the Church dominated Europe, but to the beginning of that era, when the Church's civilizing task was still ahead. Over several long centuries she discredited or abolished the common evils of a pagan culture. Today, as these evils are reintroduced, liberalism calls it "progress."

It's actually the reversal of the greatest period of progress in human history. And, as the latest news from the Netherlands illustrates, it is already near completion.

There can be little doubt that the "slippery slope" of euthanasia has turned into an avalanche. Once this kind of attitude starts to spread, no one is truly safe. It can be only a matter of time before lawmakers and doctors determine that none of us needs to have any say in whether we or our loved ones live or die.

(Jesus:) Men have come up with many euphemisms for the killing of the innocent, but the fact remains that they are murder. Killing unborn children through abortion is murder, as is the killing of the newborn or the elderly to "spare them suffering." They may call it abortion or euthanasia or any number of other names, but I call it murder, and it has a murderous effect on a culture.

Look at the Netherlands, once Christian and peaceful, and now

pagan and violent, with its people attacking and killing one another, and hatred of other races and religions running rampant. This is one of the fruits of their murder and their tolerance of the murder of the weak and the helpless, the infant and the infirm and the aged. As they have sown murder, they have reaped murder. As they have tolerated evil, so it has come upon them—and so will it come upon others who do similar things.

It's the work of the Enemy himself to make evil sound good and noble, to justify abortion, infanticide and euthanasia, and to call those who would condemn such things intolerant and narrow-minded. He not only calls evil good, but he calls good evil, because he seeks to pervert the heart of men to the point that they will worship him and hate Me. That is a slippery slope to his own destruction and to all who will follow him.

◆ **Cloning/
genetic engineering**

Of mice, men, and in-between

COMPILED FROM ARTICLES BY RICK WEISS, WASHINGTON POST, AND MARYANN MOTT, NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC NEWS

In China, scientists at the Shanghai Second Medical University have successfully fused human cells with rabbit eggs.

In Minnesota, pigs are being born with human blood in their veins.

In Nevada, there are sheep whose livers and hearts are largely human.

In California, mice peer from their cages with human brain cells firing inside their skulls.

These are not outcasts from *The Island of Dr. Moreau*, the 1896 novel



ARTIST'S CONCEPTION OF A CHIMERA—MYTHICAL GREEK CREATURE WITH A LION'S HEAD, A GOAT'S BODY AND A SERPENT'S TAIL

by H.G. Wells in which a rogue doctor develops creatures that are part animal and part human. They are real creations of real scientists, stretching the boundaries of stem cell research.

Biologists call these hybrid animals chimeras, after the mythical Greek creature with a lion's head, a goat's body and a serpent's tail. They are the products of experiments in which human stem cells were added to developing animal fetuses.

But with no guidelines in place, questions hover above the work. During one recent meeting, scientists disagreed on such basic issues as whether it would be unethical for a human embryo to begin its development in an animal's womb, and whether a mouse would be better or worse off with a brain made of human neurons.

Chimeras—meaning mixtures of two or more individuals in a single body—are not inherently unnatural. Most twins carry at least a few cells from the sibling with whom they shared a womb, and most mothers carry in their blood at least a few cells from each child they have born.

But chimerism becomes a more sensitive topic when it involves growing entire human organs inside animals. And it becomes especially sensitive when it deals in brain cells, the building blocks of the organ credited with making humans human.

In experiments like those, Henry Greely, a law professor and ethicist at Stanford University, said, "there is a non-trivial risk of conferring some significant aspects of humanity" on the animal.

Biotechnology activist Jeremy Rifkin is opposed to crossing species boundaries. "There are other ways to advance medicine and human health besides going out into the strange, brave new world of chimeric animals," he said.

"One doesn't have to be religious or into animal rights to think this doesn't make sense," he continued. "It's the scientists who want to do this. They've now gone over the edge into the pathological domain."

David Magnus, director of the Stanford Center for Biomedical Ethics at Stanford University, believes the real worry is whether or not chimeras will be



put to uses that are problematic, risky, or dangerous.

For example, an experiment that would raise concerns, he said, is genetically engineering mice to produce human sperm and eggs, then doing in vitro fertilization to produce a child whose parents are a pair of mice.

"Most people would find that problematic," Magnus said.

(Dad:) It's the Evil One who's inspiring some of these scientists to mix men with animals. He hates life, and he especially hates the human form, because it's made in God's image, so he's tried to defile it for centuries!

He's often changed his demons into forms that were partly human and partly animal, mixing the two and giving them great power, to the point that superstitious and ignorant men bowed down to them and worshipped them in days of old. Look at the ancient Egyptians—a lot of their so-called gods were part human and part animal, and the Babylonians the same. And the Enemy does the same today with his demons, with Obstacon and others. (The Lord also has some far-out spirit beings that look like they're part human and part animal, but they're not! They're not a mixture of anything—they're brand-new creations of God, beings which the Devil tries to imitate by perverting man's form and mingling it with that of his own demons. God forms, and the Enemy deforms; God creates and the Enemy tries to obliterate.)

Now, though, instead of men bowing down to these half-men/half-beasts to worship them, men are experimenting with the human form and seeing how far they can stretch its boundaries toward the beasts, and the form of beasts toward that of humans! The Enemy has gotten men themselves working on twisting and manipulating their forms, perverting the image of God—and many of the scientists doing so don't even realize it's wrong. The days are evil, Family, and growing more so quicker than ever!

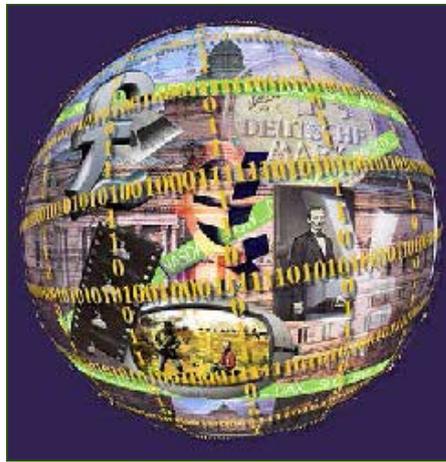
◆ Galloping globalization

Emerging global government?

BY MARTIN WALKER, UPI

It takes a bold man to find any kind of silver lining in the dark clouds that have gathered over the occupation of Iraq and the Bush administration's war on terrorism. Amitai Etzioni, a professor at George Washington University, stands back from the gloom in Iraq and claims to see a far brighter picture in his book *From Empire to Community*.

Etzioni suggests that in the global anti-terrorism coalition, in which over 140 countries are more or less formally involved, we are seeing the emergence of a new "Global Safety Authority" in which governments are banding together to share intelligence information, to make arrests, to track terrorist finances



GLOBAL GOVERNMENT: LAYING THE FOUNDATIONS

and so on. There is already an enforcement arm, Etzioni notes, through which national armed forces band together to search and seize on the high seas ships suspected of carrying nuclear contraband.

Etzioni then notes that similar transnational authorities and structures have become established in other sectors of global interchange. He cites commerce, with the World Trade Organization. He cites finance, with the Bank for International Settlements and the Basle central bankers' committee. He cites health, with the World Health Organization's new powers (a direct result of the SARS crisis) to deal directly with local health authorities rather than going through a national government. He also cites new agreements on environmental pollution, on controls against intellectual piracy and Internet fraud.

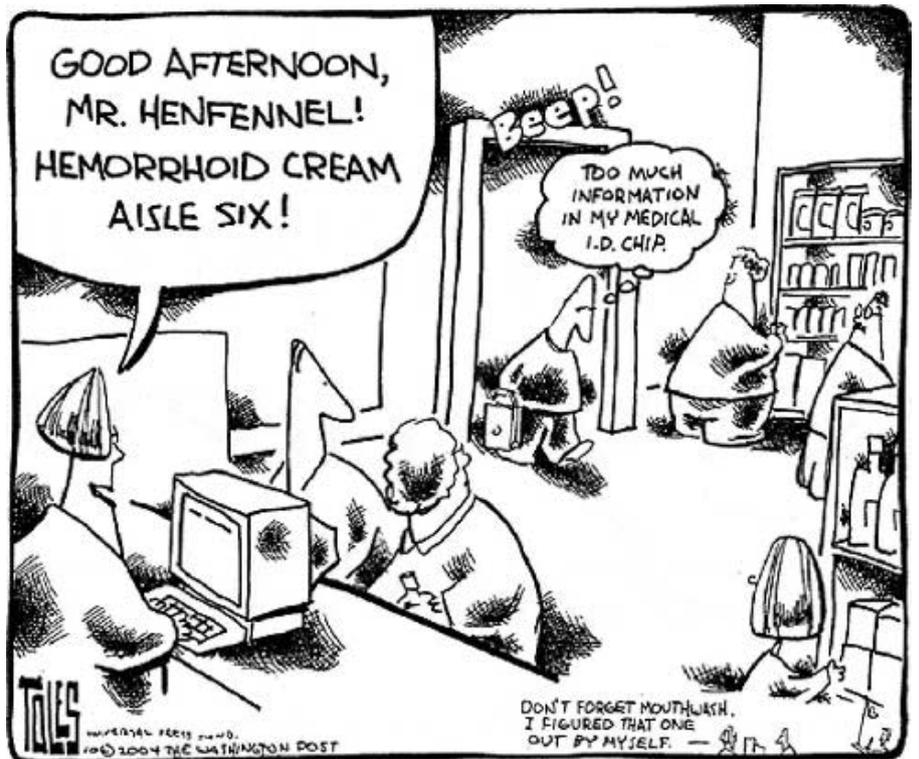
Put all these together, Etzioni suggests, and "the building blocks of a new global architecture" begin to emerge. A complex and multilayered structure of global governance based on gov-

ernmental consent and upon common interests is growing before our eyes. And it "is laying the groundwork for a global state, whose first duty—like that of all states—is to protect the safety of people living on its territory."

Etzioni is right. These structures are emerging, and if the trend continues, the direction does point to a system of global governance. The real question is whether any one government or agency or group of governments will be able to take the essential next step, which will be to think about coordinating these new structures, and codifying the wide range of institutions and mechanisms into something more coherent. It will be at that point that the supporters and opponents of world government will start to clash.

(Dad:) Yes, the foundations for world government are being laid even now. It takes a long time to get so many nations to coordinate their security, their trade and financial policies, to get their national health systems working together better. But it's happening, little by little, as one crisis after another crops up. Terrorism and crime causes nations to link their security forces more closely. Diseases and epidemics draw doctors and health care systems together around the world.

Little by little, the threads that will weave governments together into one are being woven. And when the time is right, the crisis of all crises will come to pass and the world will cry out for the man who can bring it all together and make it one, solving all these problems, and he will appear on the scene—the Antichrist. But they won't realize that the threads that have been joined together into a strong rope of world government aren't their salvation but their bonds!



◆ Big Brother

Big Business becoming Big Brother

BY KIM ZETTER, WIRED

The government is increasingly using corporations to do its surveillance work, allowing it to get around restrictions that protect the privacy and civil liberties of Americans, according to a report released by the American Civil Liberties Union.

Data aggregators—companies that aggregate information from numerous private and public databases—and private companies that collect information about their customers are increasingly giving or selling data to the government to augment its surveillance capabilities and help it track the activities of people.

Because laws that restrict government data collection don't apply to private industry, the government is able to bypass restrictions on domestic surveillance.

"Americans would really be shocked to discover the extent of the practices that are now common in both industry and government," said the ACLU's Jay Stanley, author of the report.

Last year, JetBlue Airways acknowledged that it secretly gave defense contractor Torch Concepts five million passenger itineraries for a government project on passenger profiling without the consent of the passengers. The contractor augmented the data with passengers' Social Security numbers, income information and other personal data to test the feasibility of a screening system called CAPPS II. That project was slated to launch later this year until the government scrapped it. Other airlines also contributed data.

Information about the data-sharing project came to light only by accident.

Critics like Stanley say there are many other government projects like this that are proceeding in secret.

Corporations freely share information with government agencies because they don't want to appear to be unpatriotic, they hope to obtain future lucrative Homeland Security contracts with the government, or they fear increased government scrutiny of their business practices if they don't share.

But corporations aren't the only ones giving private data to the government. In 2002, the Professional Association of Diving Instructors voluntarily gave the FBI the names and addresses of some 2 million people who had studied scuba diving in previous years. And a 2002 survey found that nearly 200 colleges and universities gave the FBI information about students. Most of these institutions provided the information voluntarily without having received a subpoena.

Corporations are not subject to congressional oversight or Freedom of Information Act requests—two methods

for monitoring government activities and exposing abuses. And no laws prevent companies from voluntarily sharing most data with the government.

"The government is increasingly ... turning to private companies, which are not subject to the law, and buying or compelling the transfer of private data that it could not collect itself," the report states.

Congress voted to cancel funding for John Poindexter's Total Information Awareness, a national database that would have tracked citizens' private transactions such as Web surfing, bank deposits and withdrawals, doctor visits, travel itineraries and visa and passport applications.

But this hasn't stopped the government from achieving the same ends by buying similar data from private aggregators like Acxiom, ChoicePoint, Abacus and LexisNexis. According to the ACLU, ChoicePoint's million-dollar contracts with the Justice Department, Drug Enforcement Administration and other federal agencies let authorities tap into its billions of records to track the interests, lifestyles and activities of Americans.

By using corporations, the report said, the government can set up a system of "distributed surveillance" to create a bigger picture than it could create with its own limited resources and at the same time "insulate surveillance and information-handling practices from privacy laws or public scrutiny."

Most of the transactions people make are with the private sector, not the government. So the amount of data available through the private sector is much greater.

Every time people withdraw money from an ATM, buy books or CDs, fill prescriptions or rent cars, someone else, somewhere, is collecting information about them and their transactions. On its own, each bit of information says little about the person being tracked. But combined with health and insurance records, bank loans, divorce records, election contributions and political activities, corporations can create a detailed dossier.

(Dad:) The U.S. government can't compile and maintain all this information on its people because of privacy laws, but if companies and corporations choose to do so and just happen to want to sell it to the government, well now, that's another matter entirely. That's just free enterprise at work, right? Ha! And if some companies and organizations would even want to volunteer information to the government that might be helpful, thereby proving their patriotism—and their eligibility for federal loans, contracts and aid—well, what's wrong with that? They're just proving they know what side their bread is buttered on, while they're buttering up various officials and agencies.



SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR MONITORING SCHOOLBUSES WITH GPS SYSTEM

It's one more example of the way that governments get around the laws that are meant to keep them under control, while they apply the same laws pretty ruthlessly to keep their citizens in line and under control. Their people are supposed to do as they say, not as they do, because that would be illegal.

When you combine government unscrupulousness with business profiteering, big brother with big business, you get big control and surveillance, and big trouble in the days to come!

Big Brother Briefs

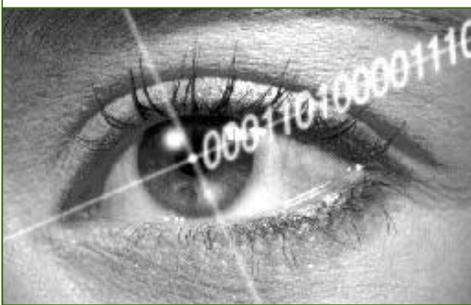
Snooping by satellite. (Declan McCullagh, *CNet News*) When Robert Moran drove back to his law offices in Rome, N.Y., after a plane trip to Arizona in July 2003, he had no idea that a silent stowaway was aboard his vehicle: a secret GPS bug implanted without a court order by state police.

Police suspected the lawyer of ties to a local Hell's Angels Motorcycle Club that was selling methamphetamines. So investigators stuck a GPS, or Global Positioning System, bug on Moran's car, watched his movements, and arrested him on drug charges a month later.

A federal judge in New York later ruled that police did not need court authorization when tracking Moran from afar. "Law enforcement personnel could have conducted a visual surveillance of the vehicle as it traveled on the public highways," U.S. District Judge David Hurd wrote. "Moran had no expectation of privacy in the whereabouts of his vehicle on a public roadway."

The court decision is the latest to grapple with the slippery subject of how to reconcile traditional notions of privacy and autonomy with increasingly powerful surveillance technology. Once relegated, because of their cost, to the realm of what spy agencies could afford, GPS tracking devices now are readily available to jealous spouses, private investigators, and local police departments for just a few hundred dollars.

No room key needed. (Tony Kontzer, *Information Week*) In recent months, eight out of 10 guests staying in the presidential suite of Boston's plush Nine Zero Hotel have willingly participated in a pilot project for technol-



ogy that identifies people by detecting the unique patterns of the irises in their eyes.

Participants have images of their irises recorded at the hotel concierge's desk, and the images are stored in a database. When trying to gain access to the suite, a video-camerallike device takes a picture of the iris and matches it to the database record. Guests' iris images stored in the database are set to expire upon checkout.

(Dad:) There used to be a saying that dated back to the Revolutionary War: "Don't fire until you see the whites of their eyes!" Biometrics could say, "Don't open until you see the irises of their eyes!"

◆ Racing toward the Mark Growing up with your chip

BY JIM HIGHTOWER

If we have the technology to track the movements of everyone in America, we should use it, right?

"No," shout most of us. So, how can the authorities break down this innate resistance that we Americans have to Big Brotherism? One simple word, whisper today's technocratic machiavellians: children.

We love our children and naturally want them to be safe. There's the perfect opening for the snoopercrats. It's an insecure world, they darkly warn us—terrorists, kidnappers, molesters, you name it. To protect children, we should electronically track them. It's out of love that we do this.

Thus, the school district of Spring, Texas, is now issuing radio frequency ID cards to its school kids, so police can track each of them on a computer screen. Did little Jeannie stop off at her friend's house rather than going straight home after school? With her RFID tag, the authorities know where she is.

It's security paranoia. This district in suburban Houston has not had a single problem with child disappearances. "But," says one mother who applauds the \$180,000 system, "you hear about all this violence." So—like keeping track of livestock and Wal-Mart merchandise—parents have okayed the tracking of their own children. Indeed, authorities in Spring are now considering having the RFIDs implanted under the skin of each child. Then they could track them 24/7.

Not everyone is thrilled. "It's too Big Brother for me," says a 15-year old stu-

dent. "Something about the school wanting to know the exact place and time makes me feel kind of like an animal."

Exactly! Rebel, kids—don't let them do it to you! But, of course, the youngest ones can't rebel and will grow up without knowing any different system. Wearing a chip will be normal to them—and they'll not object to having one as an adult, too.

(Dad:) The Catholics used to say, "Give us a child until he reaches the age of five and he'll always be Catholic." In other words, if they can give them good Catholic training during their first few formative years, it'll shape the rest of their life. Well, governments are hoping to use the same methods—influence kids when they're young and malleable, and they've got them for the rest of their lives! But in their case, they're not giving them religious training but their own indoctrination and propaganda.

They can teach them that homosexuality is normal, just another lifestyle, and the kids will see nothing wrong with it. They can teach the kids that religion has no place in school, and they'll grow up wondering what place it has in their life. They can teach the kids that they shouldn't judge others for anything—after all, what standards can they use?—and they'll grow up confused about right and wrong. And they can teach the kids that surveillance is for their good and that chips are to protect them and help them, and they'll grow up believing it and accepting it.

Governments increasingly try to reach the youth, which is one more very good reason to educate ours at home!

◆ Techno Topics

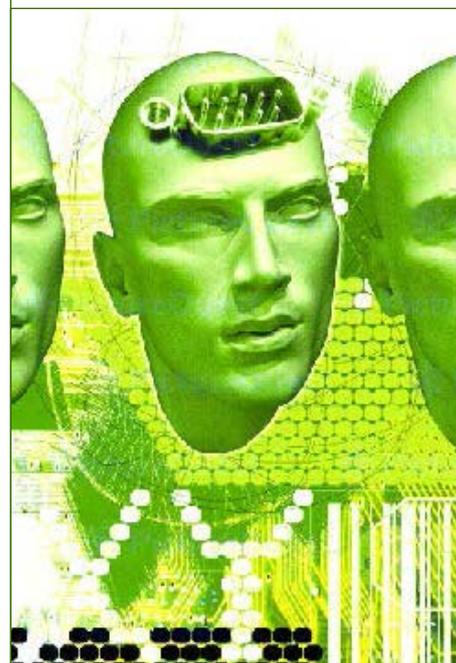
Rewiring the body

BY MICHAEL ARNDT, *BUSINESS WEEK*

Reed S. Kohn has donated his brain to science. An epileptic since he was 8 years old, Kohn has tried everything from experimental drugs to harrowing surgery to control his seizures. Since his first seizure in 1978, he figures he has had 10,000 more.

His life may get better. Last fall, doctors scrutinized images of his brain as it malfunctioned. Then, guided by these scans, they wired electrodes to eight "hot spots" deep in his brain, and implanted under his skull a pacemaker-like device. About the size of a micro-cassette tape and only a bit heavier, it houses a microprocessor programmed to detect the brain-wave pattern that precedes a seizure. Whenever this pattern arises, it immediately zaps the trigger sites with tiny jolts of electricity to restore normal brain activity before Kohn is even aware that a seizure is brewing. Since the operation, Kohn has been averaging only 10 to 15 seizures a month, down from 50 to 70.

Using advances in pacemaker technology, researchers and doctors



are finding that rapid-fire bursts of low-voltage electricity can alleviate symptoms in an astonishing number of illnesses in many other parts of the human body. Scourges such as depression, post-stroke paralysis, migraines, sleep apnea, angina, obesity, tinnitus, and digestive tract disorders all may be treated with neurostimulators by the end of the decade. If early-stage experiments pan out, Alzheimer's disease, obsessive-compulsive disorder, Tourette's syndrome, bulimia, and other brain ailments could be next.

Unlike most drugs, these implants produce few side effects. The devices also are aimed at prevalent diseases that can't always be treated with drugs. As a result, doctors predict that such implants could one day become as common as cardiac devices, which are currently helping 2 million Americans.

As neurostimulators get even smaller and their microchips more powerful, researchers foresee new uses for these implants. "The body is on fire with electricity," says Dr. Stephen N. Oesterle, chief medical officer at Medtronic Inc., the No. 1 maker of implantable electrical devices. "If you start with that concept, then all you need is imagination."

The list of therapies is growing. And they all benefit from advances in microelectronics and our deepening understanding of the brain and nervous system. "These devices were science-fiction dreams 20 years ago," marvels Dr. Robert Levy, a Northwestern Memorial neurosurgeon who has seen neurostimulation give stroke victims use of their hands and arms again. The body, as medicine is learning, truly is electric.

(Dad:) Yes, the body is an amazing creation, and scientists are learning more about it all the time. But it's no coincidence that doctors and scientists are studying the interaction between

the brain and the nervous system and the use of implants so extensively these days. While it's a very helpful realm of research, and potentially a very profitable one for the medical industry, it's also one that the Antichrist and his people will make use of in designing and preparing their own implant technology.

A little medical chip in the brain or elsewhere in the body to monitor

or control disease, keep down weight gain, stop migraines, restore body functions and more, wired into your nervous system, would be so helpful that millions of people would want to get one. There'd be much less squeamishness on the public's part about implants after that. And if a new implantable chip came along that was designed to help you manage your finances, your

buying and your selling, which fit right into the new world economic order being established, well, there'd be a lot more people who'd take it a lot more readily than before!

With the world's technological and medical advances, and men's falling away from the Lord and their hearts growing colder, you folks are entering some interesting and eventful times!

◆ Religion in the News

Many Christians in world face persecution daily

COMPILED FROM ARTICLES BY ASSEMBLIES OF GOD NEWS AND BOB FU AND GLENN PENNER, VOICE OF THE MARTYRS MAGAZINE

"Millions of Christians around the world live in constant fear of persecution or forced conversion, from either governments or local vigilantes," Philip Jenkins writes in *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christendom*.

According to the persecution watchdog organization Open Doors, 200 million Christians worldwide suffer physically for their faith, while an additional 300 million face discrimination because of their beliefs.

Todd M. Johnson, director of the Center for the Study of Global Christianity, says 160,000 Christians die "prematurely in a situation of witness" each year. According to Johnson, the 20th century had more martyrs than the previous 19 centuries combined, led by 15 million Christians dying between 1920 and 1950 in Soviet prison camps.

An increasingly common tactic, even in democracies, is to outlaw conversion from the dominant religion when minority Christians are gaining followers. Five states in India, the world's largest democracy, have passed laws to prevent Hindus from converting to Christianity.

Yet churches in many locations are growing despite efforts to eliminate them. Indeed, Christians and churches often become stronger when persecution comes.

New York Times columnist Nicholas Kristof reported on November 26, 2002, that police in a remote region of China

had interrogated a woman named Ma Yuquin, but their efforts were unsuccessful. Kristof wrote: "She never broke. Even when she was close to death, she refused to disclose the names of members of her congregation or sign a statement renouncing her Christian faith."

Kristof wrote: "One of the ironies of Christianity in China is that in the first half of the 20th century, thousands of missionaries proselytized freely and yet left a negligible footprint. Yet now, with foreign missionaries banned and the Underground Church persecuted, Christianity is flourishing in China, with tens of millions of believers."

Indeed, in 1949 there were only 834,000 Chinese Protestants. In 1982, the estimate was 35 million Christians. In 1987, Christians in China estimated that there were 50 million; and in 1991, a figure of 63 million was given to Protestants and 12 million to Catholics. In 2000, an unconfirmed report stated that there are approximately 80 million believers in the house church movement.

Why has Christianity grown so rapidly in China? One of the pioneers of the modern-day house church movement—Pastor Samuel Lamb—spent 20 years in various prisons for his unregistered evangelistic activities. He explained that while the government hopes to destroy the unregistered church by stepping up efforts to suppress it, the result is actually the opposite: The church continues to grow rapidly as the communist government increases persecution against Christians. Persecution is the fuel feeding the flames of revival.

"Before I was arrested, my church had only 200 members. After I was released from prison the first time, I found the church had grown to 900 members! Then came the confiscation of books and equipment in the church. Before the government confiscated our church, the church numbered 900 members. After the confiscation, the church had grown to 2,000 members!" With a broad grin on his face and a twinkle in his eye, the elderly Pastor Lamb exclaimed, "Persecution good for church!"

These bold believers have come to expect persecution, because they are followers of Jesus rather than the Chinese Communist Party leadership. They know it has been granted to them for the sake of Christ "not only to believe

in Him, but also to suffer for His sake" (Philippians 1:29).

Why would our Chinese brothers and sisters endure such agonies with no physical or political solution in sight? They know that they will win in the end, like the elderly Chinese woman who lined up every morning outside her jail cell. Instead of shouting, "Communism is good" with the others, she would shout, "Jesus is better!" and then was forced to do push-ups as her punishment. Millions of overcoming Chinese believers proclaim, "Jesus is better!"

(Dad:) Persecution isn't bad, but good. It's not only good for you, it's good for the church—spreading its message far and wide and reaching the hearts of millions who wouldn't have heard the message any other way, who can then say, "Jesus is better!"

So don't feel discouraged or defeated by a little name-calling or even actual persecution. Just take it in stride, consider it a privilege that you've joined the ranks of the prophets that were persecuted before you, and Jesus Himself, and keep going for Him!

And if you aren't being persecuted right now, you can always pray for your brethren who are, both in and out of the Family. All around the world there are millions suffering because of their faith in Jesus, and they need your prayers too. Help them keep going by your prayers!

◆ Men's corner

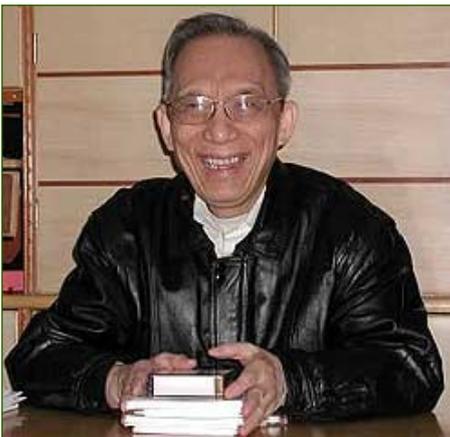
Romance may not last, but true love does

BY KIM CAMPBELL, THE CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR

Why does love endure in some cases but not in others? How do couples make it last? Author and journalist Bruce Brander offers some answers in his recent book, *Love That Works: The Art and Science of Giving*.

Born of decades of research and conversations, *Love That Works* delivers a succinct assessment of what's wrong with the way people love today and how they can grow to have better relations with significant others and even strangers in grocery store lines.

What most people do wrong, he suggests, is equate romance with love, not realizing it's only a steppingstone. Romance—the head-over-heels, can't-think-about-anything-else kind—is self-oriented and doomed to fizzle if not



PASTOR SAMUEL LAMB



FATHER WITH BABY AND LAUNDRY. TRUE LOVE LASTS

built upon. It draws people together and jump-starts love, but that's it, he says.

"We expect romance to carry the whole weight of love. We shouldn't stop there, and our society tells us to stop there." In his view, the media and society keep people at the selfish level by promoting looking out for No. 1 and encouraging them to view love as something to be consumed, rather than expressed. That cultivates emotional responses that are narrow and needy.

"Instead of only falling in love," he writes, "we also can rise to love." Being in love is "a passive and personal emotional state," he says, but loving is "an active effort to aid someone."

"Marriages that succeed [are] more generous, where the other person is important in his own right, rather than just an instrument for my wants and needs."

Loving differently means having a more generous, kinder, less-acquisitive approach toward everybody and not just one person, he suggests. That's what will help people rise above the current level of relationships and develop their spiritual and emotional being.

"It's very simple," he adds. "Not easy, but simple."

(From "A Wonderful Wave of Worldwide Witnessing:")

(Dad:) Marriage is more than sex or friendship, or a business partnership for the Lord's work! It is the most intimate, humbling, loving, and self-sacrificial relationship between human beings in all of life. No greater love hath any man than this: that a man lay down his life for his friends! (Jn.15:13). This is love, real love, true love—the willingness of a husband to sacrifice himself for his wife, the eagerness of a wife to lay down her life for her husband! This is supernatural love, divine love, God's love, more than human!

Married love is not just sex, affection, and romance! Although it is all of these, it must be more if it is to last and be an enduring relationship for the glory of God—an example of His own relationship with you! It must be a God-given love and a spirit of self-sacrifice in which each prefers the happiness of the other to his own! This is true love, the only kind that lasts! (ML #154:62,63, Vol.2).

Your favorite customer

BY MICHAEL WEBB

When I first ventured into the working world I landed a job that required a great deal of customer service. There were some valuable lessons I learned on the job that I now use at home.

Those who work in customer service are taught that when customers have complaints, we should first listen to them. We are often tempted to try to solve their "problem" before we even hear them finish telling us why they are upset. If we listen to their whole story, sometimes that in itself satisfies them. They just needed to let off a little steam.

The second step in good customer service is to acknowledge the problem and to be genuinely sorry that everything did not go as they expected. A simple, yet sincere apology satisfies many situations.

Only after we have fully heard the complaint and have acknowledged their suffering can we truly offer them some sort of compensation. In many cases if you ask a customer how they would like the situation remedied, they will offer a solution that is both very fair and will have them very satisfied.

The next time your mate comes to you with a complaint, don't butt in, but fully listen to them. Understand and express sympathy for their hurt feelings. Ask them what you can do for them to make them feel better. If you want your beloved to keep coming back, treat them like they are your number one customer.

◆ Media matters

What you get in 20 seconds

COMPILED FROM ARTICLES BY GREG PHILO, *THE GUARDIAN*, TIM LLEWELLYN, *THE OBSERVER*, AND TOM FENTON, *CBS NEWS*

Television news is the main source of information on the Israel-Palestine conflict for about 80% of the population. Yet the quality of what they see and hear is so confused and partial that it is impossible to have a sensible public debate about the reasons for the conflict or how it might be resolved.

This is the conclusion of exhaustive research by the Glasgow University Media Group, which brought journalists, academics and ordinary viewers together to study the influence of news on public understanding. More than 800 people were interviewed and researchers examined around 200 news programs. Senior journalists told researchers that they were instructed not to give explanations—the focus was to be on live action. George Alagiah stressed a belief in the BBC that the attention span of viewers is about 20 seconds.

The result of this approach is that there is almost nothing on the news about the history or origins of the conflict, and viewers are extraordinarily confused. Many believed that the Pal-

estinians were occupying the occupied territories or that it was basically a border dispute between two countries who were trying to grab a piece of land which separated them. The great bulk of those we interviewed had no idea where the Palestinian refugees had come from—some suggested Afghanistan, Iraq or Kosovo.

Without history or context, news reports tend to focus on day to day events and, in reporting these, there is a strong emphasis on Israeli perspectives. The research found that Israelis were interviewed or reported more than twice as much as Palestinians. There were also a large number of statements from U.S. politicians who tend to support Israel.

Israeli perspectives dominate. One example is a template for hundreds: When Israeli police killed 13 Israeli citizens of Palestinian origin in October 2000, inside Israel, BBC and ITN coverage was a fifth of that given to the Palestinians who stormed a police station in Ramallah a day later and murdered two captured Israeli soldiers. These Palestinians were "a frenzied [lynch] mob ... baying for blood." No such lurid prose was used to describe the Israeli killing of their own citizen Arabs.

In the Israeli reprisals that followed the Ramallah killings, ITV said the Israelis were "abandoning their restraint." This was after two weeks in which Israeli forces had killed 100 Palestinians, most of them civilians.

The cycle is always shown as Palestinian attack and Israeli reprisal. Broadcasters consistently fail to suggest that it might be the military occupation that engenders armed resistance, or that Israeli actions may be such as to provoke Palestinian violence.

In October 2002, the BBC repeatedly referred to the killing of the Israeli tourist minister as the reason for Israeli army reprisals against Palestinian towns and villages. It did not mention the fact that the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine had killed the minister in reprisal for the Israeli assassination of its leader.

Between October and December 2001, on BBC1 and ITV news, Israelis were said to be responding to what had been done to them about six times as often as the Palestinians. This pattern of reporting clearly influenced how some viewers understood the conflict. As one young woman put it: "You always think of the Palestinians as being really aggressive because of the stories you hear on the news ... I always think the Israelis are fighting back."

There were also differences in the language used for the casualties of both sides. Words such as "mass murder," "atrocities," and "brutal murder," were used to describe the deaths of Israelis, but not Palestinians. Palestinians are labeled as "activists," "militants," "extremists," "assailants," "gunmen,"

“bombers,” “terrorists,” “killers,” “assassins,” “fundamentalist groups,” “attackers,” “self-styled Palestinian martyrs” and “fanatics.”

Israelis are “soldiers” or “troops,” and even when an Israeli group tried to bomb a Palestinian school, they were not “terrorists” but “vigilantes.”

The study finds that the daily despairing and degrading consequences of living under military occupation are rarely reported. And while there is constant reference to Israeli security and Israel’s right to exist, there is little mention of Palestinians’ security or their right to exist.

The report also found that there is significantly more coverage of Israeli casualties than Palestinian, even though Palestinians consistently have two or three times as many casualties. This again apparently had a strong influence on the understanding of viewers, and only a minority questioned knew that Palestinians had substantially higher casualties.

Journalists also spoke to us of the pressures they were under and of the

hate mail they received, particularly if their reports were deemed to be critical of Israel. A BBC journalist told the researchers his boss had instructed him not to do “explainers.” So his reports were “all bang bang stuff.” And the BBC is widely thought to be better on foreign news coverage than American TV.

The authors conclude that the lack of understanding of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict leads to a lack of interest. One British viewer complained, “Every time it comes on, it never actually explains it so I don’t see the point in watching it. I just turn it off and go and make a cup of tea or something.”

(Dad:) That’s the news on how the news is shaped and on how public opinion is molded, especially when it comes to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. As you can see, ordinary journalists often have very little say in how their stories come out, and how they’re slanted! And, unless they’re especially courageous, after a while many reporters will just take the path of least resistance and write their stories in a way that they know they’ll have the least trouble.

They sort of censor themselves by leaving out facts that would get dropped or edited out anyway, or put them at the end of the article, where most readers won’t get to them.

The result is that most people who watch or read the news wind up with a very distorted, perverse view of what’s happening, and that translates into a support of the main aggressor in the conflict, Israel, which has been occupying Palestinian lands for more than 50 years. The poor Palestinians can hardly get a fair break in a lot of the Western media! They get more fair, unbiased coverage in some of the Israeli papers than they do in the American media!

So take what you see on TV news or read in mainstream papers with a healthy dose of skepticism, folks! You may be getting only part of the truth—the part that’s designed to leave you thinking or feeling a certain way. It’s often news with an agenda or an attitude, designed to make you feel the same way—almost like advertising! They want you to buy it, whether it’s their product or their attitude. Be a wary and prayerful consumer!

◆ Ask Dad!—No.23

Subject: Current Comments

■ Fighting crime with dirty looks

Folks in South Africa have found a new way of fighting crime in some neighborhoods—long hard stares and dirty looks! Residents in some low-class areas of Cape Town band together in groups of 10 or 20 and walk around their neighborhoods, stopping to stare at suspicious people who could be thieves, drug dealers and assorted other lowlifes. The objects of attention get uncomfortable and either walk away or move away. It’s a nonviolent way of fighting crime, although I imagine the criminals are aware of the alternatives to a hard stare—some communities have beaten and killed suspected thieves, rapists and murderers, or put a tire around the victim’s neck, filled it with gasoline, and lit a match! Considering the alternative, they probably figure moving along is a real good idea!

■ Africa and colonialism

Speaking of South Africa, its president, Thabo Mbeki, has been going around denouncing Western imperialism, while his younger brother Moeletsi, a 58-year-old businessman there, says Africans were better off under colonial rule! He says that the colonial powers built the roads and cities that made Africa what it is today, while the African leaders that followed them just made themselves rich while their people suffered and their countries went to pot. In fact, it’s even gotten worse in recent years. A recent

U.N. report said that Africa was the only continent where most people are poorer now than they were 20 years ago.

Well, when the Africans tossed out their colonial masters or these Western powers had to leave, they just traded one set of fairly benevolent tyrants and oppressors for a different set that wasn’t so benevolent—dictators and strongmen of various sorts. Not only that, but these governments got dumped on people who didn’t really know how to run them, various bureaucrats and civil servants who didn’t know beans about governing or serving, and many African countries wound up in wars, anarchy or kleptocracy, where the ruler systematically stole everything valuable he could get his hands on, cashed it in, and shipped it off to foreign bank accounts!



THABO MBEKI

So, considering the state of much of Africa now, which was better, independence or colonialism? Under independence, most Africans have their freedom, but they also have riots or civil wars, poverty, malnutrition and anarchy. Under colonialism, they had no freedom, but they had a measure of peace and stability, jobs and income, and more food and clean water than they have now.

In saying this, I’m not justifying the colonial powers. Some of them were pretty brutal, like the Belgians, and deserved to be kicked out. But others weren’t as bad as some of the rulers and leaders that followed them, and in retrospect, Africa would probably have been better if the Western powers had been sort of eased out rather than suddenly thrown out—if the Westerners had stuck around for a few more years to make sure their replacements knew what they were doing and could do a good job, that their police and military could keep the peace, and that their economy could keep functioning.

They could have called it pater-nalism, sort of a fatherly guidance and direction, rather than colonialism, which is a bad word in the world today, and they would have been better off than they were in either case, and certainly better off than most African countries are today!

■ Haiti, “failed states” and world government

Haiti could certainly use a dose of colonialism all over again, or something even stronger, because the country is a mess! Aristide is gone, but the problems remain—rebels roam the streets, drug lords and bandits rule the

countryside, business is at a standstill, there's little work and not much of an economy, and almost nothing functions. The U.S. established an interim government after Aristide left and the U.N. sent in a few thousand peacekeepers and police, but neither is doing much good. The authority of the Haitian government doesn't extend much outside its government buildings and the authority of the peacekeepers doesn't extend much beyond the capital, if even there.

So the situation in Haiti is just about as bad as it's ever been, and no national government ever seems to help very much or very long. What some people are talking about now is putting Haiti under some sort of international control, a protectorate like Bosnia, Kosovo or East Timor, and letting the U.N. rule it. The U.N. would supply the management team and the institutions to run pretty much everything, and it'd be a lot more efficient than the present setup.

Of course, the Haitian government isn't too keen on the idea of a protectorate, nor are other countries in the Caribbean or Latin America. So diplomats are saying that maybe they could just go ahead and do it and simply not call it that, ha!—That Haiti could be talked into hiring teams from the U.N. or somewhere to receive and disburse the aid money, run most of the government, keep the peace, etc., with the Haitian government remaining in charge as the figurehead. They'd have no real power, but they'd have the title, while the U.N. and others do all the work.

Well, the Haitian government probably won't go for it, unless it's forced on them, but it's just about the only way that poor country, and others like it, will get a halfway decent government. They call countries like Haiti, Somalia, and others "failed states," countries that just can't seem to run themselves in any successful way. Diplomats are slowly coming to the conclusion that outside intervention and control is just about the only solution for some of these places, although they generally have to impose it on them.

This sort of program will probably be a mainstay of the world government to come, and the AC will have a lot easier time getting different countries or places to accept it. He'll simply impose the peace and set up the protectorate, like it or not! "Once you was a failed state, and now you is a ward of the world government—or else!" And the world will applaud him for yet another solution to a formerly unsolvable problem.

■ **America's promotion of human rights and democracy**

The American government can be amazingly hypocritical when it comes to promoting human rights, freedom and democracy around the world, as if it were some sort of shining

example of all these attributes, and other nations were schoolchildren that had to be graded on their performance!

Every year the U.S. issues a human rights report in which it lists the lacks and failings of other countries, detailing how they abuse their people—and it's true, a lot of these other countries do abuse their people in one way or another. However, these countries have pointed out that the U.S. is guilty of the same, or worse, and it's the pot calling the foreign kettle black!

The U.S. condemned Cuba, and Cuba pointed out that the U.S. occupies a part of Cuba—Guantanamo Bay, which it's been trying to get back for decades—where the U.S. runs a prison camp full of inmates outside the reach of U.S. law, and tortures and humiliates and sometimes kills detainees, very few of whom have been convicted of any sort of crime.

The U.S. condemned Egypt and Syria for using torture, when it's shipped some of its own detainees off to those two countries where they could be tortured by foreign intelligence services who've had more practice at it, and where there wouldn't be any interference from pesky U.S. laws against such things. They're outsourcing torture and then condemning other countries for doing it!

The U.S. condemned China for its policies, and China responded that the U.S. had a lot of nerve, since it "frequently commits wanton slaughters during external invasions and military attacks." And it pointed out that the U.S. torture of prisoners at Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq wasn't exactly a shining example of honoring human rights and promoting freedom around the world! Also, when it comes to prisons, the U.S. runs a whole string of secret prisons around the world where it holds prisoners under who knows what conditions and does whatever it wants to them!

The U.S. condemned Syria for its 14,000 troops keeping the peace in Lebanon, when the U.S. has 150,000 soldiers in Iraq, where the death toll for innocent Iraqis—and others—rises every day! A while back some Iraqis kidnapped an Italian journalist and held her for ransom. When the Italians finally managed to get her released and were speeding her out of the country, an American checkpoint fired on her car, killing the Italian intelligence agent who negotiated her release, and wounding the journalist.

The U.S. condemned Russia, and Russia replied that the human rights report "once again gives us reason to say that double standards are a characteristic of the American approach to such an important theme." And other nations and organizations, including Amnesty International, also mentioned how two-faced the U.S. was in this respect.

It's amazing how brazenly hypocritical the U.S. can be sometimes! These other countries have their problems and they're no paragons of virtue themselves, but the U.S. could at least have been a little bit humble about it and confessed a few of their own faults, failings and problems along the lines of human rights violations. But humility isn't the American way, and certainly not the way of the American government!

Imagine, the U.S. maintains around 10,000 nuclear weapons, as well as chemical and biological weapons, and it's the world's foremost salesman of advanced weaponry, and it's going around lecturing Iran and North Korea and other nations on the virtues of nuclear non-proliferation and the horrors of weapons of mass destruction!

The U.S. talks about promoting peace and freedom and democracy, while it's occupying Afghanistan and Iraq and spreading democracy at gunpoint. One Western reporter said, "We haven't brought democracy to Iraq. We've brought blood, killing and death!" Another pointed out that, "The United States is bringing 'democracy' to Iraq on the same terms that Russia imposed its mandate on Chechnya, a region which has Iraq's future written in its rubble." Human rights activists in the Middle East say they can't even use the word "democracy" anymore—it's become a dirty word because of what people have seen going on in Iraq.

Maybe other nations would have a little more respect for the U.S. if they saw it promoting freedom and human rights and democracy among its allies. "Now listen up, you Saudis and Kuwaitis. You need to cut out the beheadings and the amputations, allow women to vote, and permit more religious freedom. And you Israelis, you've been occupying Palestinian lands for more than 50 years now and your own Arab citizens are second-class slaves who live in poverty. You need to shape up and allow more human rights! And while you're at it, we think you should get rid of some or all of your hundreds of nukes, because they're a menace to peace in the region!" That'll be the day, ha!

There are none so blind as those who refuse to see, and that sure applies to the U.S. when it comes to recognizing and admitting its own blunders and crimes, which it has plenty of!

■ **Ring of steel around the world**
American troops aren't just present in Iraq and Afghanistan and a few other well-known places like South Korea and Germany. There are American troops and bases in 138 countries around the world, and Americans have established bases in 37 of those countries since 9/11. It's an American ring of steel around the world!

■ Reading the Talmud

The Talmud, the Jewish book of law and commentary, has 2,711 pages, and many Orthodox Jews read and study one page a day in a sort of united plan. It takes about 7½ years to read and study it that way, and a lot of Jews are celebrating because they just finished it. I'd celebrate too, after 7½ years! But then they start reading it all over again!

The Talmud is different from the Torah, which a lot of you have probably read, or should have, at least! The Torah consists of the first five books of the Bible, the books of Moses: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. The Talmud, on the other hand, generally has one verse in the center of the page of this big tome, surrounded by interpretations and commentary by all these famous rabbis down through history—the traditions and

doctrines of the elders, a lot of whom disagree with each other!

Anyway, imagine studying 2,711 pages of Jewish customs, laws, traditions, and commandments of various rabbis and trying to make sense of it all. You folks can be thankful the Charter is so short in comparison—and that you have New Wine, words fresh from heavenly streams to feed your souls, rather than the dry-as-cracker-dust books that various religions try to draw their spiritual sustenance from!

■ The why of buy

Researchers are now monitoring people's brains under a magnetic scanner as they view images to try to figure out why they buy things—probably so that advertisers can sell them more things more often for more money!

There are certainly lots of things to sell them—around 700 new prod-

ucts are introduced every day. Last year, 26,893 new food and household products appeared on store shelves around the world, joining the 2 million brands vying for attention. And they're out to grab your attention with as many as 3,000 advertising messages every day, which is what the average American adult is exposed to! Whew!

It's no wonder that Americans are so conditioned to spend and go in debt that one investor described them as "rich spending junkies" who were on their way to becoming a nation of "sharecroppers" if they didn't cut back! In other words, at the rate Americans are going into debt, they'll soon be slaves to their creditors, spending their lives working for the benefit of others. That's what reckless and irresponsible spending can do to a person, or a nation! Don't you be guilty of it!

◆ Words for the wise

Fast-paced words

BY NANCY M. KENDALL, THE CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR

To railroad. When North Americans built the railroads in the 19th century, they did not let the mountains, rivers, and forests stand in their way. The speed at which the rails were laid and the disregard for obstacles in their way inspired the expression "to railroad" as early as the 1870s. Its figurative meaning grew over time: First it meant to send a person to jail without a fair trial (and pretty hastily, too). More recently, the expression has come to mean rushing important legislation through Congress and bypassing various procedures and formalities.

Quick. This word for rapid or fast originally had nothing to do with speed. It simply meant "living." Therefore, at one time livestock was called quickstock. Quicksilver, or mercury, was so named because the metallic element moved about freely as if it were alive—living silver! Quicksand, too, shifts its place as if it were living. Today, the soft, sensitive skin under a fingernail or toenail is still called the "quick," named for its tender tissue. And figuratively, "to cut someone to the quick" alludes to tenderness and sensitivity, as in hurting what is innermost—one's feelings.

◆ Tidbits

Gatecrashing for Jesus. (Brother Andrew, *Christianity Today Magazine*) I see Muslims as God-seekers. I almost feel like Paul in Athens. We should have that boldness to go to them and say, "What you seek, I have."

I go gatecrashing all the time. Evangelism, by nature, always has to be aggressive. We have deviated from that whole concept of Acts 1:8, and we've reversed the roles and say, "Well,

they've got to invite us." No way. Jesus says blessed are the peacemakers. Where do peacemakers go? Where there's a war.

We need a new breed of missionaries to not only understand the issue but who are humble enough as followers of Christ to go without shoes, without a purse, identify with them in their dire need, and say, "I am Jesus to you. I love you. I want to be your friend." Then you will find them hospitable and open.

Failure or success does not come into my picture. Maybe it should not come into anybody's. We are following the Master. And I believe that the life of the church on earth will end as the life of Jesus ended on earth, on the cross. **(Dad:) These are the ones who follow in the footsteps of their Lord and Master, who overcome the Enemy "by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and love not their lives unto the death" (Revelation 12:11).**

A nation of faith and religious illiterates. (Stephen Prothero, *Los Angeles Times*) The sociologist Peter Berger once remarked that if India is the most religious country in the world and Sweden the least, then the United States is a nation of Indians ruled by Swedes. But here is the paradox: Although Americans are far more religious than Europeans, they know far less about religion.

In Europe, religious education is the rule from the elementary grades on. But, according to a 1997 poll, only one out of three U.S. citizens is able to name the most basic of Christian texts, the four Gospels, and 12% think Noah's wife was Joan of Arc. That paints a picture of a nation that believes God speaks in Scripture but that can't be bothered to read what He has to say. **(Dad:) Well, a lot of them aren't really too anxious to read what He has to say because**

they're afraid it might run contrary to the way they live!

Best remedy for a child's cough? **Water.** (*Seattle Post-Intelligencer*) A glass of water will do as much to relieve a child's cough as an expensive, over-the-counter cough syrup, a new study suggests. The research, published in the medical journal *Pediatrics*, concludes that parents who treat a child's nighttime cough with the widely available medications are wasting their money.

"Consumers spend billions of dollars each year on over-the-counter medications for coughs," said Ian Paul, an assistant professor of pediatrics at Penn State Children's Hospital in Hershey, Pa. "But our study showed that the two ingredients used in most over-the-counter medications were no better than a placebo, non-medicated syrup, in providing nighttime relief for children with cough and sleep difficulty as a result of upper-respiratory infection," he said.

U.N. condemns U.S. Cuba embargo. (Portia Siegelbaum, *CBS News*) For the 13th year in a row, the United Nations General Assembly has approved a resolution condemning the U.S. embargo. The vote in favor of the Cuba-sponsored resolution was 179-4. The four opposing votes came from the United States, Israel, Palau and the Marshall Islands. The vote last year was almost identical, 179 in favor, 3 against, with two abstentions. The embargo has been in effect since 1962.

The U.N. condemnation has become an annual event in Cuba. Students and countless workers across the island stopped their regular activities at 11 A.M. to watch a special one-hour feature prepared by Cuba's state-run television. In Washington, however, approval of the resolution produced little more than yawns at the Bush White House. **(Dad:) The U.S. only considers U.N. resolu-**

tions important when it sponsors them and pushes them through—or when it figures it needs to veto them, as it has for 35 Security Council resolutions it considered unfavorable to Israel.

Even drug dealers are giving up on the dollar. (Daniel Gross, *Slate*) The dollar's decline against the euro shows no sign of ending. Now there are signs that we're losing some of the most devoted fans of the greenback: drug dealers, Russian oligarchs, and black-market traffickers of all kinds.

Euros have become easier to carry, store, and hide than dollars. Generally, the largest denomination of U.S. currency readily available is the \$100 bill. But the European Central Bank has started to print 200-euro and 500-euro bills. These larger bills thus allow for the concentration of wealth in smaller packages.

For most products, losing international drug cartels and corrupt Third World dictators as customers would seem to be a desirable outcome. But these guys represent part of our long-standing and faithful base. If you think pundits are fretting about the slumping dollar now, just imagine what might happen if we start to lose the arms dealers.

Defining moments. (Dr. John C. Maxwell, *Leadership Wired*) On December 18, 1998, I had an experience that dramatically changed my outlook on life. On that day, at the age of 51, I had a heart attack. As I tried to make sense out of what was happening to me, the brutal reality of the situation hit me head on. I didn't know if I was going to live to see another day. As I contemplated the possibility of dying, I suddenly understood that all I have is today. There's no dress rehearsal for life. This is it.

I had known that intellectually, but having a heart attack drove the point home like nothing else could. If I want to live a useful life I have to make the most of every experience.

In *Geeks & Geezers: How Era, Values and Defining Moments Shape Leaders*, Warren G. Bennis and Robert J. Thomas state that all of the truly effective leaders they studied, regardless of age, had "undergone at least one intense, transformational experience" that set them on their leadership paths. These "crucible" experiences, as Bennis and Thomas describe them, are defining moments that "unleash abilities, force crucial choices and sharpen focus." In essence, they teach "a person who he or she is."

We don't always know it when we're in the middle of a defining moment; sometimes, the importance of these experiences can only be seen in retrospect. Either way, it is up to us to decide how they are going to affect us. As Aldous Huxley said, "Experience is not what happens to a man. It is what a man does with what happens to him."

(Dad:) "The clock of life is wound but once

And no man has the power,
To tell just when the hands will stop
At late or early hour.
Now is the only time you own,
Live, love, toil with a will!
Place no faith in time,
For the clock may soon be still!"

Germans tiring of harping about the war. (Allan Hall, *The Age Melbourne*) Most Germans want to consign their Nazi past to the history books. A University of Bielefeld survey revealed that 62 percent of Germans were "sick of all the harping on about German crimes against the Jews." Many Germans believe they have atoned sufficiently for their grandparents' crimes and now have the right to bury the past. Also in the study, half of respondents believed that Israel was pursuing a genocidal policy against the Palestinians, and that there was "little difference" between Nazi treatment of Jews and Israeli treatment of Palestinians.

Trash sales are up, technology down. (Floyd Norris, *NY Times News Service*) Who says the United States can't compete? Trade statistics may indicate the country is slipping in technology, but we're still tops in trash. Exports of advanced technology products are down 21 percent, while those of scrap and waste are up 135 percent. There are easy jokes to be made about trash and technology, but to make them is to risk overlooking the real importance of the deteriorating trade picture, which is that American competitiveness is waning rapidly. **(Dad:) Tops in trash! And that doesn't even include American music,**

movies and media! Way to go, U.S.!

Buddhist meets Jesus in coma. (Dawn FridayFax) "I work in a hospital ward for terminally ill patients," writes Eva-E. Müller-de Ahna from Munich. "I spoke with a nurse about Christianity and her experiences with dying people. I had just read a very good book (George Ritchie, *Return from Tomorrow*). [Note: See summary in *Christian Digest* 24.] The author had died in a field hospital when he was 20 years old, and been taken to the mortuary. To the astonishment of the doctors and nurses, he returned to life. He experienced many wonderful things while dead, including meeting Jesus. The nurse I was talking to told me of a similar case: Her uncle had married a practicing Buddhist whose father, also a Buddhist, had suffered a heart attack and was taken to a Munich hospital, where he spent several days in a coma in intensive care. When he awoke from the coma, he continually pointed at the cross hanging on the wall. The nurses asked him if the cross offended him as a Buddhist, and whether they should take it down. He shook his head, but continued to point at the cross. When he could finally speak again, he said that he had met Jesus in his coma. Jesus had told him that he would awake from the coma and live for another fourteen days, that he should be baptized, and that Jesus would wait for him. The patient insisted on being baptized immediately, and died exactly fourteen days after waking from the coma." **(Dad:) The Lord isn't willing that any should perish, and He'll do whatever it takes to help win them to His Kingdom. His love is so wonderful!**

◆ A few for fun

Scripture updated

BY RICHARD OSTLING, ASSOCIATED PRESS

"There was no room for them in the inn," says the famous Christmas reading from Luke.

Now, try this variation: "Crisis! 'No vacancy' signs in every B&B window."

That's a sample from "The Word on the Street," a slang-ridden paraphrase of Old and New Testament passages by Britain's Rob Lacey, who's trying to make the Scriptures more interesting to modern Brits.

Some famous old Revised Standard Version phrases compared with new Lacey Britishisms:

Creation (Genesis 1:31). Old: "God saw everything that He had made, and behold, it was very good." New: "Fantastic. I love it!"

Eve (Genesis 2:23). Old: "Then the man said, 'This at last is bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh.'" New: "Whoa! Now we're talking!"

The First Commandment (Exodus 20:3). Old: "You shall have no other gods before Me." New: "I'm it, the only God! No other god's worth squat."

Proverbs 6:6. Old: "Go to the ant, O sluggard." New: "Look at an ant, you couch potato."

Ecclesiastes 1:2. Old: "Vanity of vanities! All is vanity." New: "What's the point?! What IS the point?!"

God's reply from the whirlwind (Job 38:2). Old: "Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge?" New: "Who d'you think you are?"

Jesus' parting words (Matthew 28:20). Old: "And lo, I am with you always." New: "I'm with you 24/7/52."

Jesus' Second Coming (Revelation 1:7). Old: "Behold, He is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see Him." New: "Look up! Is it a bird? Is it a plane? Is it a computer game gone 3D? No it's HIM, surfing the clouds, full orbit so everyone gets to see."