**What On Earth Is God Doing? Satan’s Conflict With God**

***Lesson Eight***

***THE CONFLICT***

***FROM HUMAN DESPAIR THROUGH***

***THE MOVE TOWARD GLOBALISM***

**The Results of the Denial**

The denial of God’s existence or relevancy that was caused by man’s rejection of divine revelation has prompted radical changes of great consequence for society and the world.

*Human Despair*

First, it has caused despair for many people. This despair found expression in art, literature, music, philosophy, and some forms of theology beginning near the end of World War I and continuing through the end of the twentieth century. God created human beings with need of a personal relationship with Him for ultimate meaning and purpose in life. The denial of the personal God who controls history and moves it toward an ultimate good end has produced a spiritual void inside of people. It has led man to conclude that there is no ultimate good purpose for history or one’s personal life. Science and materialism have not been able to provide humanity with a satisfying replacement for a personal God – a replacement that can give man ultimate meaning for life and comfort from fear of death. As society seems to be falling apart in disorder and conflict, it appears to man that everything exists and happens purely by purposeless, unintelligent chance. Thus there is no rhyme or reason to this present existence.

In response to this despair, man tries desperately to find release or meaning through many vain means: alcohol, materialism, constant entertainment, fornication, adultery, homosexuality, lesbianism, drugs, witchcraft, spiritism, Satan worship, other forms of the occult, astrology, Oriental mysticism, transcendental meditation, yoga, some forms of music, New Age concepts, and false religions. Satan offers these and other things to fill the void and bring people under his influence. When individuals find that none of these things satisfies the need for ultimate meaning and purpose, in a sense of futility some turn to suicide. The denial of a personal God is leading man to preach the following message: “Vanity of vanities; all is vanity” (Eccl. 1:2).

*Denial of Moral Absolutes*

The denial of God’s existence or relevancy has prompted the denial of moral absolutes that are binding upon all human beings. Man reasons that, if there is no personal God who has revealed moral absolutes to mankind, who holds persons responsible for their actions, and who will judge them in the future, then there can be no standards of morality to which people must conform. The traditional moral absolutes must have been developed by man in a past age that is no longer relevant to this one. Since man was the source of those absolutes, then man has the right to reject, change, or ignore them. Morality is a relative, not an absolute thing. It is relative to the attitude and circumstance of the individual. The *Humanifest Manifesto II* states, “We affirm that moral values derive their source from human experience. Ethics is autonomous and situational needing no theological or ideological sanction.”

Some influential persons claimed that the rejection of moral absolutes is beneficial. In the 1960s, God-is-dead theologian Thomas J.J. Altizer asserted that, in order for the world to move into the new utopian age, mankind must reverse all the morality taught in the Bible. He called biblical morality “satanic.” In the 1970s Professor Charles A. Reich of Yale University suggested that such things as use of drugs, sexual permissiveness, pornography, and despising of productive work may help usher in the new utopian age.

As a result of this reasoning, society has experienced an incredible breakdown of morality. Contrary to the absolutes God has revealed, the idea that any sexual relationships outside the bonds of male-female marriage are immoral is rejected, and advocates of that idea are increasingly despised and threatened. There are movements to legally redefine the historic concept of marriage and force society to accept that redefinition, to abolish spanking of children and capital punishment for murderers, to abolish or redefine the family, and to protect the propagation of adult and child pornography. The killing of the unborn and partially born human beings has been legalized. Some people insist that no moral issues are involved with assisted suicide, human cloning, and the destruction of viable human embryos for the sake of stem-cell research. Divorce, drunkenness, illegitimacy, and free use of drugs have become widespread. Obscene language, immodest dress, public display of nudity, stealing, lying, cheating, and even sadomasochistic sex are increasingly condoned. Permissiveness and lack of discipline have become the order of the day. The foundation of society is threatened by this breakdown. A computer scientist, who as a victim of violence, has asked “how America could have deteriorated so quickly from a stable and orderly world into our current chaos of fatherlessness, illegitimacy, divorce, violence, deviancy, and anything-goes morality.”

God created man (male and female) in His own image (Gen. 1:26-28) and thereby gave man greater dignity than any other creature. As a result of rejecting divine revelation and God, man is losing that human dignity through immorality. While praising this moral “freedom,” man becomes a slave to lusts.

The modern breakdown of morality is a repeat of what Gentiles experienced in ancient times. In both instances the breakdown was the result of willful rejection of divine revelation and the true and living God. Romans 1:18-32 indicates that, because Gentiles in ancient history willfully rejected divine revelation and God and developed false religions, God judged them by turning them over to uncleanness, shameful passions, and a reprobate mind, which resulted in the breakdown of morality, order, civility, and decency in society. This indicates that a society that experiences such breakdown is under a form of divine judgment because it willfully rejected God and His revelation.

*Denial of Objective Truth*

The denial of God’s existence or relevancy has prompted the conclusion that there is no objective truth that is binding upon all mankind. The Scriptures declare that the God of the Bible is “the God of truth” (Ps. 31:5; Isa. 65:16) and that the revelation He has given to mankind is truth (the presentation of ultimate reality) (Ps. 119:160; Jn. 17:17; 2 Tim. 2:15). In light of this, the denial of God’s existence prompts people to reason that there is no body of ultimate truth that exists apart from man and has been delivered to man by another source. Each individual determines what is truth for himself or herself. What is truth for one person is not truth for another. Thus truth is subjective and relative.

A 1969 book aimed at public school teachers states, “We now know that each man creates his own unique world, that he, and he alone, generates whatever reality he can ever know….Among other things, this means that no man can ever be absolutely certain of anything. The best anyone can ever do is to say how something appears to *him*. The cosmos offers no absolute confirmations.” The “concept of absolute fixed, unchanging ‘truth,’ particularly from a polarizing good-bad perspective,” is an “out of joint concept.”

*Denial of an Objective Standard of Right and Wrong*

This denial of objective truth has prompted the conclusion that there is no objective standard by which a person can evaluate whether something is right or wrong. Thus no person can legitimately tell another that what he or she has done is wrong. For example, a person should never tell another that his or her lifestyle is wrong, even though that lifestyle may cause premature death. And no one should ever tell teenagers that they should abstain from sex until marriage. No one has the right to impose his or her concept of right or wrong upon another.

This denial of objective truth and an objective standard of right and wrong is propagated through values clarification courses in grade schools, college and university courses, the media, Internet, publications, some forms of music, and the entertainment industry.

In the 1970s a former public school administrator showed me a sixth grade values clarification course text book. Immediately inside the front cover were three large symbols – the swastika of Naziism, the cross of Christianity, and the hammer and sickle of Communism. Underneath the symbols was the question, “Which of these is right?” The first half of the book communicated the following concept: no one can legitimately say that any of these is right or that any is wrong, because there is no objective standard by which a person can evaluate whether something is right or wrong. In the middle of the book was a quotation of the Ten Commandments from the Bible. The second half of the book indicated that people who believe in the Ten Commandments as a standard of right and wrong are out of touch with reality.

Shortly after the beginning of the twenty-first century, Scholastic, Inc., which publishes books for school children, began targeting Christian schools and parents with books related to faith. Some of the books are decent. But one, *Conversations With God for Teens,* presents questions that teenagers might address to God. The author gives what he imagines would be God’s answers. For example: teen question – “Some of the kids are cheating in class, and on tests. They want me to join them. But I know that cheating is wrong.” God’s answer – “There is no such thing as ‘right’ and ‘wrong,’ as we discussed earlier. There is only what ‘works’ and what ‘doesn’t work,’ given what you are trying to do.”

As a result of children being taught that there is no objective standard by which a person can evaluate whether something is right or wrong, students coming to college find it impossible to conclude that such things as human sacrifice and the Nazi killing of millions of people in the Holocaust are morally wrong. Tragically their moral relativism is intensified even more at many college and university campuses that propagate the post-modern denial of any objective truth.

*Growing Spirit of Anarchy or Lawlessness*

There also is a growing spirit of anarchy or lawlessness in society. This is closely related to the denial of God, moral absolutes, objective truth, and an objective standard of right and wrong. Human beings are becoming progressively irritated with external restraints being placed upon their desires and conduct. They reason that, if there is no God ruling over man to control and judge human conduct, then other human beings and man-made institutions have no right to do that. Each individual should be free to do what is right in his or her own eyes whenever and however he wants to.

Charles Darwin gave expression to this attitude when he said: “A man who has no assured and no present belief in the existence of a personal God or a future existence with retribution and rewards, can have for his rule of life, as far as I can see, only to follow those impulses and instincts which are strongest or which seem to him the best ones.”

As a result of this attitude, human beings are acting more and more like spoiled, pampered children who throw violent temper tantrums if they cannot have what they want when they want it. Society is becoming characterized by road rage on highways; passenger rage on airplanes; killing of parents by children; violence in schools; killing of fellow workers and bosses by fired workers; drug related violence on streets, in neighborhoods, and homes. If there is no objective standard for determining right or wrong, then on what basis can a society or individual conclude that these kinds of violent acts are wrong and should be stopped?

*New Concept of Tolerance*

The denial of objective truth and an objective standard of right and wrong has prompted a movement to force society to accept a new concept of tolerance. The historic view of tolerance taught that people and groups of differing opinions and practices are to live together peaceably. They have the right to believe that a contrary opinion or practice is wrong and to openly express that belief, but they do not have the right to threaten, terrorize, or physically harm those with whom they disagree.

The new concept of tolerance asserts that the belief or open expression that an opinion or practice of a person or group is wrong amounts to a hate crime and should be punished by law. Powerful groups pressure state and national governments to make this new concept law by passing proposed antihate bills. Since laws against threatening, terrorizing, or physically harming people or groups of differing opinions and practices already exist, it is obvious that the goal of these proposed bills is to outlaw freedom of belief and speech. Passage of such bills have the potential of turning states and nations into police states comparable to those that adopted the Inquisition and Communism.

Police in one community in England enter “restaurants in disguise to listen for bigoted conversation. In the first week of ‘Operation Napkin,’ one man was arrested for unacceptable table talk….Columnist John O’Sullivan, former editor of *National Review*, points out that George Orwell (in his book 1984) foresaw a nation in which the most serious crimes would not be rape or robbery but ‘thought crimes.’ O’Sullivan wrote: ‘And the evidence for thought-crimes has to be sought in the nearest equivalent to thoughts: private conversations.’ Last year, he noted, an official British report proposed criminalizing racist remarks made in the family home.”

The Boy Scouts of America paid a high price because of this new view of tolerance. When an assistant scoutmaster publicly revealed that he was homosexual, the Scouts asked for his resignation. Homosexuality violated the Scout Oath to be “morally straight” and the values that the Scouts wished to develop in boys. As a result of this stand, the United Way and many other longtime supporting organizations withdrew financial support. The Scouts were evicted from public facility meeting places and denounced widely by the media. They were forced to defend their stand in court. The New Jersey Supreme Court unanimously ruled against them, but the United States Supreme Court, with a 5-4 vote, ruled in their favor. The majority justices indicated that this was an issue of freedom speech.

This new view of tolerance has prompted businesses, education, and other institutions to require all employees, faculty, and students to attend minority, gender, and gay sensitivity training sessions. It has impacted what elementary school children are taught in public schools. Some versions of elementary school sex-education courses are designed to persuade children to regard homosexuality and lesbianism as legitimate lifestyles. Some of the courses contain detailed sexual instruction provided by The Gay Men’s Health Crisis organization. Concerning this, authoress and editor, Midge Decter, stated, “This effort to teach so-called tolerance for those whose ‘lifestyle’ might be different from the one known to the child within his own family has resulted in a number of pedagogic crimes against the young.”

*Women’s Liberation Movement*

There is an attempt to annul distinctive roles and appearances that God ordained for the sexes. This has prompted the development of the Women’s Liberation Movement.

Secular feminists have concluded that, since, there is not God who created man as male and female and revealed distinctive roles and appearances for the sexes, then the traditional distinctions that have been followed for centuries were man-made, devised in past times by the male for the purpose of keeping the female in subjection. Since man was their source, man may reject or change those distinctions.

The secular phase of the movement has produced major changes in the workplace. Women have been able to gain leadership positions in businesses that formerly were held exclusively by men. In the realm of government women have been appointed or elected to key positions in executive, legislative, and judicial branches. In the field of education some have become chairpersons of departments, board members, and even presidents of colleges and universities.

Authoress and editor Midge Decter has stated, “Even at is mildest, however, the women’s movement demands that women be given the right to seek freedom by redefining sex, marriage, motherhood, and career in whatever way they find least psychologically and physically burdensome to themselves.”

In addition, Decter declared, “Ideally the movement would impose regulations without end on all the relations between men and women, and boys and girls, in everyday life” and “has managed….to impose regulations aplenty.” Some examples: the United States Supreme Court has required the Jaycees and Rotary Clubs to open their memberships to women.

Feminist educators at some universities have developed a plan that would overhaul every campus department and curriculum to be “woman-friendly,” require every academic department to “hold an annual seminar on gender issues,” require all faculty and students to “undergo gender sensitivity training,” require all teaching styles to be “woman-friendly,” forbid curriculum from being “overrepresented” by men, modify traditional academic freedom, and punish noncomplying teachers with denial of “promotions, raises, and other benefits..”

In the military realm the United States Army tired mixed-gender training for five years but abandoned it as a failure in 1982. But feminist political pressure caused it to be reinstalled in 1994. As a result, basic training was reconfigured so that “anybody can get through,” largely in “response to women’s high rates of injury and inability to meet the old standards.” The Pentagon lowered standards, instituted some double standards, and redefined basic training “success” in terms of what women did well. A new concept of “comparable effort” enables a female trainee, who does not perform as well as a male in a physical task, to receive equal or higher scores than the male. John Leo stated, “Fake scores and the degradation of basic training are a disaster for the military. Mixed-gender training has nothing to do with combat readiness. It has to do with politics and the desire to show absolute equality even where it doesn’t exist and can’t.”

In the realm of relationships, male bashing has become a society phenomenon. Christina Hoff-Sommers, authoress of *Who Stole Feminism*, points out that a double standard has developed in male-female conflict. She stated, “There used to be a certain level of good-natured teasing between the sexes. Now, even the most innocent remark about women will get you in trouble but there’s no limit at all to what you can say about men.”

Humorous and nonhumorous hostile comments about men keep growing with very little objections. Media hints that a woman who has been jilted might want to consider violent action against the man escape protest. Antimale greetings cards become increasingly hostile toward men, including a humorous one of women suffocating men to death. Cathy Young, *Detroit News* columnist, noted a swelling expanse of male bashing in calendars and women’s magazines.

Anthropologist Lionel Tiger claims that “the long campaign of public denunciation of men by activist women is not encouraging men to take more responsibility. The fact is that it’s not that easy being a guy these days.” In addition, Tiger asserts that the birth control pill gave women sexual freedom from having to be bound to one male in marriage throughout life and “placed into question existing moral and religious systems that focused on controlling sexual behavior.” And good paying careers have made it possible for women to be free from dependence upon a husband to be a provider.

The combination of all these things has given men “less and less control of the impact of their own sexuality” and caused them to question the purpose of their role as a man in society. As a result, more men are “abandoning their role of being good providers” and “real fathers” for children, and there is “a higher divorce rate.” Tiger asserts that this trend may have devastating long-term results for children. “Daughters must now be raised to take care of themselves,” and it is especially devastating “for raising boys.” He points out that David Popenoe emphasizes this in his book, *Life Without Father*, which is a “plea for restoring traditional forms of fatherhood.”

Researchers and other authorities are beginning to emphasize that boys are the people most at risk from the effects of the Women’s Liberation Movement. John Leo claims that “the worst impact of all the male bashing is on the young.” He relates the experiences of Barbara Wilder-Smith, a teacher and researcher in the Boston area. She made “Boys Are Good” T-shirts for boys in her class, but all ten of her female student teachers objected t the message. She claimed that people who would see her son wear the T-shirt would “object strongly and shout things,” but there was no objection to derogatory messages by girls against boys. The worst thing is the fact that many adolescent boys would not wear the T-shirts because the male-bashing cultural messages have convinced them that “something is seriously wrong with being a male.”

Feminist leader Gloria Steinem said, “We need to raise boys like we raise girls.” That kind of feminist thinking has prompted efforts to feminize boys. Schools are one place where such efforts have been put into practice. In her book *The War Against Boys: How Misguided Feminism is Harming Our Young Men,* Christina Hoff-Sommers demonstrates that studies that claim that girls are at greatest risk in schools have it in reverse. Through specific data she shows that it is boys who are at greatest risk in schools.

Feminist-minded educators have constructed school philosophies of education, curricula, and activities contrary to the abounding energy and competitive nature of boys. Marvin Olasky points out that an “anti-competition bias” that impacts children exists in schools. He states, “At many schools the classic competitions are dead. Dodge ball is out. Despite the high profile of the National Spelling Bee, classroom spelling bees are much less frequent. At some elementary-school basketball games no one keeps score. His point is that this approach is contrary to the way that boys are naturally geared to learn. Thus he states, “What New Age facilitators don’t realize is that friendship grows fastest when boys are working side by side with the common goal of winning, not sitting in a circle sharing their feelings. Competition also builds leadership. And “what’s mainly needed is an attitude adjustment among educators. They need to understand that since boys have enormous energy, teachers should channel the current, not fight it….We need to raise boys to be boys.”

Some religious feminists claim that Jesus’ male successors overthrew His teaching by creating “a males-only power structure in the church.” This view is causing radical changes in the realm of theology.

By 1989 eighty-four Christian denominations had ordained women as pastors. In 1989 the first female bishop was appointed in the worldwide Anglican Communion. Some feminists have questioned if a woman can be saved by a male Savior and have adopted a new crucifix with a nude woman named Christa nailed to the cross. Some reject the generic noun “mankind” and substitute “Creator, Redeemer, and Comforter” or “Mother, Lover, and Friend” in place of the designations “Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.” According to one observer, “The prime goal of Christian feminists….is a thorough and comprehensive transformation of the language, symbols and sacred texts of the Christian faith – and therefore of the faith itself. They have influenced some translators and Bible publishers to produce genderless language Bibles.

In November 1993 approximately 2100 women, including female theologians, two dozen Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) national staff members, and 56 top United Methodist officials, attended a “Re-Imagining” conference that “denounced the Christian church and its teachings as the source of racism, sexism, classism, heterosexism, human violence and environmental destruction. The conference was characterized by negative comments about the names “Jesus, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit”; ridicule of blood atonement; an expression of pantheism; celebration of lesbianism; a call to reinvent the family; and replacement of communion with a service of milk and honey devoted to “Our maker, Sophia.” The leader sang, “Our mother, Sophia, we are women in your image.” The crowd responded, “Sophia Creator God, Let your milk and honey flow, Sophia, Creator God, Shower us with your love.”

Feminist biblical scholar Elizabeth Achtemeier criticized such “mother metaphors for God because they resurrect the Near Eastern fertility goddesses whom the authors of the Hebrew Bible rejected in proclaiming a Creator who is qualitatively different from his creation.”

*Push for Unity*

The denial of God’s existence and divine revelation of truth has prompted the growing conviction that the goal of mankind should be unity. During the twentieth century two world wars involved the armed forces of many nations and brought unparalleled massive destruction and loss of life to large areas of the world. Genocide was practiced on a grand scale against various ethnic groups. Multinational forces intervened militarily in the Far East (Korean and Vietnam Wars), Middle East (the Gulf War), and Europe (Bosnia and Kosovo). Warfare technology developed nuclear weapons and delivery systems. With such doomsday weapons possessed by two opposing superpowers, the Cold War continuously had the potential of destroying all life on earth throughout most of the second half of the twentieth century. The twenty-first century has continued the tragic saga of man’s inhumanity to man. A new kind of warfare, Islamic-related terrorism driven by the commitment to cause all of humanity to submit to Islamic rule, threatens the world.

Because there seems to be no end to continuous conflicts that threaten the existence of humanity, many conclude that, since there is no God who can intervene and bring lasting peace to the world, then man must solve the problem. *The Humanist Manifesto II* states, “No deity will save us; we must save ourselves.” They also conclude that the only way that man can save himself from suffering and destruction is to unite all of humanity into a common, human community. There must be a movement toward one-world government and a single church or religion. All differences of opinion and convictions that divide man must be abolished.

In line with this thinking, *The Humanist Manifesto II* states, “We deplore the division of humankind on nationalistic grounds. We have reached a turning point in history where the best option is to transcend the limits of national sovereignty and to move toward the building of a world community in which all sectors of the human family can participate. Thus we look to the development of a system of world law and a world order based upon transnational federal government. Finally it states, “Commitment to all humankind is the highest commitment of which we are capable; it transcends the narrow allegiances of church, state, party, class, or race in moving toward a wider vision of human potentiality. What more daring a goal for humankind than for each person to become, in ideal as well as practice, a citizen of a world community.”

*Prospect of Unified World Community*

In light of these statements, it is interesting to note that the world is moving rapidly toward the formation of a global village. International institutions, such as the World Court, were established to judge actions and disputes of nations and leaders, and the United Nations was formed to provide a forum whereby nations could solve differences without war. Other factors that make the formation of a unified world community appear possible are long-range airplanes that make travel to most areas of the world possible within one day; telephones, satellites, computers, fax machines, and e-mail that make instant, worldwide communication possible between people, governments, and businesses; television and radio that bring the sight and sound of world events into homes; the European Union, which is forging a from of unification with a common economic system, currency, and the possibility of eventual political and military union; and the advancing internationalization of economics. The threat of worldwide terrorism may drive civilization toward a unified world government for the sake of survival.

The increasing globalization of the world imposes a growing concern for what happens worldwide. In light of this concern, on September 6-8, 2000, approximately 150 world leaders gathered at the United Nations world headquarters for the United Nations Millennium Summit. This was the largest gathering of world leaders in the history of mankind. The stated purpose of this summit was to make globalization “fully inclusive and equitable” by getting world leaders and their nations to commit to the goals of freeing all peoples of the world from want and fear, protecting the environment from destruction, and renewing the United Nations. The summit ended with world leaders unanimously adopting the *United Nations Millennium Declaration,* which “contains a statement of values, principles and objectives for the international agenda for the twenty-first century.”

Satan will try to establish a visible, political form of his kingdom rule over the entire world with all mankind united under a one-world government and dominant ruler, the Antichrist. He will attempt to establish this during the last seven years prior to the Second Coming of Christ. The world is moving rapidly toward the formation of a global village. In addition, the growing convictions that the goal of mankind should be unit; that the only way man can save himself from suffering and destruction is to unite all of humanity into a common, human community; and that there must be a movement toward one-world-government all indicate that the world is moving in the direction that Satan wants. The groundwork is being prepared for him to attempt to obtain his goal.

*Religious Pluralism – Move Toward One-World Religion*

The denial of the existence of God and divine revelation has prompted a widespread spirit of religious pluralism. Increasing numbers of people are claiming that in the realm of religion there can be no theological absolutes. Since there is no personal God, there never has been a divine revelation of theological truth or of any religion. All dogmas and religions are man-made; therefore, they are relative. The idea that a particular faith is the only true one because it alone was divinely revealed must be rejected. Exclusive claims of only one true God, one true religion, and one way are a divisive form of intolerant bigotry. Since all religions are man-made, all must be respected and regarded as equal. Attempts to convert people from one religion to another should be stopped.

Some people declare that, in order to totally unify mankind and prevent future wars motivated by religion, there should be a single world church or religion. The threat of Islamic-related terrorism to the world ma prompt many more people to advocate this.

The twentieth century witnessed significant developments of an ecumenical nature in the religious realm. These included interdenominational cooperation; unions of denominations; national federations of church groups, such as the National Council of Churches; international councils and fellowships, such as the World Council of Churches; dialogues between groups within organized Christendom; dialogues between Christendom and non-Christian religions; Catholic observers at World Council of Churches’ meetings; Protestant observers at Roman Catholic meetings; and joint participation of Protestants, Catholics, and people of other religions in large public rallies.

In October 1999 representatives of 20 religions from 48 nations met at the Vatican to explore cooperative opportunities in the new millennium. Non-Christian attendees included Jews, Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, Sikhs, Zoroastrians, Mandaeans, Jains, Shintoists, Confucians, Bahai’s, representatives of traditional religions, and several Japanese faiths. Organized Christendom attendees came from the following groups: Roman Catholic, Anglican; Lutheran; Reformed; Mennonite; evangelical; and Greek, Armenian, Romanian, and Assyrian Orthodox.

Anglican and Roman Catholic bishops from thirteen world regions met in May 2000 to form “a joint commission to consider unification.”

The Episcopal Church and the Evangelical Lutheran Church (America’s largest Lutheran denomination) approved an alliance to “share clergy and sacraments, and work together in ‘shared mission.’”

Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox leaders from around the world met in July 2000 “to seek common ground” with the prospect of “eventual complete reconciliation.”

Three hundred representatives of 39 religions met in June 2000 under the leadership of Episcopal Bishop William Swing to sign a charter establishing the United Religions Initiative. The URI asserts that all religions derive their wisdom from the same source. This implies that all religions have a common base for unification. In 1995 Bishop Swing declared that, as the world is progressing toward “unity in terms of global economy, global media and global ecological system,” one thing is missing – “a global soul.” In other words, a unified world will need a unified religion.

One thousand representatives of religions from around the world met August 28-31, 2000, at the United Nations for the Millennium World Peace Summit of Religious and Spiritual Leaders. The purpose of this summit was to create “an international Advisory Council of Religious and Spiritual Leaders that is designed to serve as an ongoing interfaith ally to the U.N. in its quest for peace, global understanding and international cooperation.”

The secretary-general of this religious summit, Bawa Jain, worked with United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan and his office to arrange this gathering. Jain is a leader in Bishop Swing’s United Religions Initiative. Jain expressed belief that all religions are equal, that claims of absolute truth bust be dealt with, and that all attempts to convert people from one religion to another should be outlawed. He stated that the timing of the religious summit one week before the United Nations’ Millennium Summit of world political leaders was perfect, because it afforded religious leaders the opportunity to show political leaders “how to usher in the peace of the new world order through religious universalism.”

This religious summit received heavy support from Ted Turner, founder of CNN, and Canadian billionaire Maurice Strong. In his speech at the summit Turner told how he rejected the Christian faith he was taught as a child because of its intolerant claim to be the only true religion. Strong, who is senior advisor both to the secretary-general of the United Nations and the president of the World Bank, is so influential in global affairs that *New Yorker Magazine* stated, “The survival of civilization in something like its present form might depend significantly on the efforts of a single man.”

Representatives of several religions reacted negatively to the summit’s emphasis that all religions are equal and that there should be no attempts to convert people from one religion to another. Less than two weeks after the summit the Vatican’s Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith issued a 36-page document that declared that the Roman Catholic Church is the only “instrument of the salvation of all humanity,” that non-Christian religions are “gravely deficient” as a means of salvation, and that most non-Catholic Christian denominations are not “churches in the proper sense.”

In September 2000 more than 160 Jewish leaders from all major branches of Judaism signed “a landmark statement acknowledging Judaism’s shared roots with Christianity and calling on Jews to give up distrust of Christians.

Two thousand representatives of “Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Anglican, Reformation Protestant, Pentecostal, and evangelical churches as well as Christian networks and para-church organizations” from around the world met September 9-11, 2000, to explore the possibility of forming a “global Christian forum” that would address issues of common concern and “foster relationships that could lead to common ministry.”

In September 2000 leaders of the National Council of Churches, the National Association of Evangelicals, and possibly the Roman Catholic ecumenical affairs in Washington were considering meeting in the future to study the possibility of forming “a new broad-based national ecumenical body that would work together on common social causes.”

The secular and religious developments toward the unity of mankind and globalization take on more significance when viewed from a biblical perspective. Revelation 17 – 18 reveals that a global political-economic-religious system will dominate the world during the future Tribulation Period. The political division (the beast) will tolerate domination by the religious division (the harlot, which has global influence – 17:15) as long as it needs the influence of that division to help it attain complete global domination (17:3, 7). But once that goal is reached the political division will turn against and destroy the religious division (17:16).

According to Vatican expert Malachi Martin, powerful cardinals in the Vatican have formed an alliance with “leaders of major international humanist organizations,” such as “academia, foundations, nongovernment organizations, even some governmental agencies.” These cardinals and humanist leaders have a “globalist view.” They believe that the Roman Catholic Church is “the only global structure” that is able “to act as a stabilizing social force in the world.” Thus the humanist leaders hope that “they can get the Roman Catholic Church to side with them” in fulfilling their globalist view. If this be true, then one can expect that globalism will increasingly pressure religious groups to unite with the Roman Catholic Church to form a one-world church.

Religious pluralism lays the foundation for people to reason as follows: Since all religions are man-made, not divinely revealed, then there would be nothing wrong with man merging all religions together to form a one-world religion for the sake of unifying all mankind. That would be the wise thing to do to bring peace and harmony to the world. By laying that foundation religious pluralism conditions people to accept not only the harlot religious system (Rev. 17), but also the one-world religion of Antichrist worship (Dan. 11:36-37; 2 Th. 2:3-4; Rev. 13:5-8) that will destroy and replace the harlot religious system.

*Persecution of Christians*

The denial of the existence of the God of the Bible and biblical revelation has prompted increasing hostility toward and severe persecution of Christians at many places around the world. This war of Christians is being carried out by Communist governments in China, North Korea, and Vietnam; by Hindus in India; and Muslims in numerous nations in Asia, the Middle East, and Africa. Orthodox religious leaders instigate persecution against evangelical Christians in Eastern European nations, and Roman Catholic leaders do the same in some Central and South American nations.

In some instances Christians are forbidden to gather together for group worship, distribute Christian literature and Bibles, and witness to non-Christians. In many places they are arrested, imprisoned, threatened, tortured, mutilated, and killed. Others are forced to flee from their homes and sources of income. Christian women and children are kidnapped and sold into slavery. Many Christian women and girls are raped because of their faith. Churches and homes are destroyed. Christian hospitals and schools are bombed.

In Western European nations and North America there is a growing hostility particularly toward evangelical Christians who hold to historic, biblical Christianity and, in some instances, toward Roman Catholics. Many schools, colleges, and universities allow views, practices, and lifestyles that are contrary to and even anti-Christian. These views and practices are allowed to be represented, expressed, and even advocated by faculty, students, and outsiders. But representatives, expressions, and advocacy of Christianity are forbidden. Bibles, clothing, and other articles that may carry some expression of Christian faith are taboo in many public schools. Christian children are often forbidden to give any reference to their faith in oral or written projects.

In the workplace workers are often required to attend sensitivity training sessions, some of which advocate acceptance of lifestyles that violate biblical morality. If they object to such sessions, they are subjected to rebuke, ridicule, and in some instances forms of discipline or threat of loss of employment. Some Christian nurses are fired for refusing to participate in abortion procedures. Some men have been fired from longstanding positions once their biblical view on homosexuality became known.

A qualified, black football coach who sought the head coaching position at a large secular university was rejected early in the interview process because his Christian views were not compatible with the university’s liberal student body and active gay community. The coach was surprised at how bluntly the university expressed its reason for not considering him. He said officials wouldn’t have told him if they were discriminating against him because he is black. But they had no hesitation about telling him it was because of his Christian beliefs. A student writer pointed out the irony of a liberal university that stands for inclusion and diversity using Christian beliefs as a reason for rejecting a prospective coach.

Because evangelical Christians claim that biblical Christianity is the only true religion; take a stand against the great moral decline in society; and oppose the radical agenda that liberal, secular extremists are trying to force upon it, they increasingly are subject to vicious attacks. In May 2002 Joel Belz called attention to “the growing disdain many sophisticates in American culture hold for evangelical Christians. The big media in our society, along with higher academia, have habitually over the last six months compared conservative Christians to the radical Taliban. ‘When you’ve seen one fundamentalist,’ these folks tend to say, ‘you’ve seen them all.’”

Gene Edward Veith pointed out the contradictory nature of the comparison of conservative Christians with the terrorist Taliban. He wrote that in in that comparison, “those whose theology motivates them to try to save innocent lives are portrayed as being the same as those whose theology motivates them to kill innocent lives. Those who call for good music are lumped with those who want to abolish music altogether. A religion that has brought freedom wherever it goes is branded as the same as a religion that has brought tyranny. Christians exercising their constitutional liberty to express their convictions in the public square are identified as terrorists.”

Veith indicated that this attack on Christians should be identified as “religious bigotry,” “religious intolerance,” “secularist extremism,” and “theological terrorism.” But he also warned that, if this attack succeeds in convincing the public that the war on terrorism is a war against religion itself, “it lays the groundwork for actual religious persecution.”

*Denial of Christ’s Deity*

The denial of God’s existence and divine revelation has also prompted a tendency to completely humanize Jesus Christ. People have concluded that, since there is no sovereign, personal God or divine revelation, then Jesus Christ was neither a divine being incarnated in human flesh nor an incredible revelation of God to man.

In light of this conclusion, the counter-culture movement of the 1960s and ‘70s portrayed Jesus as the Great Revolutionary who wore long hair and a beard, trained a band of revolutionaries, and refused to take employment so that He could be free to roam the countryside fighting the establishment of His day. He was pictured on posters as a fugitive, wanted by the government for His subversive activities. His death was regarded as an example of what the establishment does to those who oppose it. Thus the counter-culture movement portrayed Jesus as its Superstar in order to inspire people to fight against what it regarded as the establishment of that time.

Modern stage and motion picture productions have portrayed Jesus as a man who deceived himself into thinking that he was a divine messiah, but who had the same faults, lusts and passions as other men.

The New Age Movement teaches that Jesus was a man, not the “Christ Spirit.” He was not different from other human beings. He was not a divine Savior who died for the sins of mankind. He was divine in the same sense that all human beings are divine. He did not experience physical resurrection.

*Deification of Man*

The denial of the personal God of the Bible has prompted the development of a pantheistic, religious attitude that deifies man. Man has the inherent need to worship something. Since he has rejected the personal God, the only thing left for him to worship is the material world of which he is the highest, supposedly-evolved representative. Thus man is concluding that the secular realm is the sacred one. Since man is the highest form of life that exists, then man should be regarded and worshiped as God.

The trend toward a pantheism that deifies man can be seen in the statements of several modern thinkers. Protestant God-is-dead theologian Thomas J. J. Altizer stated that, since man has denied the existence of a personal God, he must as a race achieve human self-transcendence, which is “man-godhood.” Thus, according to Altizer, the world cannot move into the new utopian age until we as human beings do three things – acknowledge that the God of the Bible is dead, reverse all the morality taught in the Bible, and “acclaim ourselves as ‘the Great Humanity Divine.’”

John Cooper wrote that theology must see the transcendent within this world; it must be based on a philosophy that recognizes no other world.”

Roman Catholic scholar Pierre Teilhard de Chardin stated that humanity is evolving into a collectivity of fellowship that will end ultimately in the unity of God and man. He concluded that, when a person loves the earth and especially loves man who is the crown of the evolution of the earth, he is loving God. Teilhard believed that scientific studies, communications, the growth of liberal social democracy, and the increasing dependence of man upon man that draws them into socialistically based communities, are forces that contribute to the growth of corporate humanity. In this corporate humanity “all men are to become part of one living organism that covers the face of the world.” Thus the God to be worshiped is the one who will arise out of the eternally evolving human race. In other words, according to Teilhard, man is becoming God through the evolutionary process.

Liberal theology taught that man has a spark of divinity within him.

The New Age movement teaches that all human beings are “innately divine.”

In the middle of the future Tribulation Period, Satan’s ultimate man, the Antichrist, will blaspheme the God of the Bible, claim that he is God, and demand that everyone worship him as God (Dan. 7:8, 19-20, 24-25; 9:27; 11:36-37; 2 Th. 2:3-4; Rev. 13:4-8). Through the development of an attitude that deifies man Satan is beginning to condition the minds of people to accept the future claim of Antichrist to be God and to worship him.

*Denial of Man’s Sin Nature*

Denial of the existence of the God of the Bible and divine revelation has prompted the denial of the sinful nature of man. Man has concluded that, since there is no sovereign, personal God, there never was an original sin of rebellion against Him. The biblical story of the fall of man is a myth; therefore, there was not a time in history when man received a corrupt nature. Instead of possessing a sinful nature, man is essentially good. He has some of the instincts of the lower forms of life from which he has evolved. But as the process of evolution continues, man overcomes more and more of these animal instincts. Thus one can expect improvement in man’s actions.

This has been the thinking of liberal theology. Similarly, the New Age movement teaches that in essence sin and evil do not exist. So mandoes not need a personal savior who died to redeem him from sin and its penalty. The ultimate cause of human predicaments is people forgetting their divinity. And the essence of salvation “is the realization of one’s own divinity.”

This denial of man’s sinful nature has led many to the false conclusion that humanity can live together as one harmonious unit without war, bigotry, and injustice if properly educated and if there is a radical change in the social order. That new order must consist of the complete unification of mankind under a one-world government and a one-world religion. On the basis of this same denial, many naïve souls have assumed that, if one nation lays down its arms and refused to fight, all other nations will do the same.

History demonstrates several things concerning the sinful nature of man. First, that nature is reality; it actually exists. Second, that nature, not the social order, is the root cause of man’s inhumanity to man. Third, that sinful nature cannot be eradicated by education or a social order.

All human beings, including government and religious leaders, have that sinful nature. Powerful positions of authority can have a corrupting influence upon leaders. Such influence has prompted some leaders to allow their sinful natures to turn them into dictatorial tyrants who will wage war and kill millions of people in order to enforce their wills upon others. History demonstrates that, if one nation threatened by such a tyrant lays down its arms and refuses to fight, the tyrant will easily bring that nation under his dictatorial rule. He will not lay down his arms and stop fighting. It also demonstrates that the only way a tyrant can be stopped from enforcing his dictatorial rule over others is through a powerful force that can overthrow him. If, for example, there had not been such a force in the 1940s to overthrow Hitler, his atrocities would have wreaked genocide and other havoc over greater masses of humanity for many more years. For the sake of mankind the world needs a balance of power to stop and overthrow dictatorial tyrants.

If the powerful position of authority over one nation can corrupt its leader into becoming a dictatorial tyrant, then surely the powerful position of authority over a one-world government could corrupt its leader into becoming an unprecedented dictatorial tyrant with unparalleled, unlimited powers. With a one-world government, the entire world would be subject to his rule. There would be no balance of power in the world, no powerful opposing force that could overthrow him or stop any tyrannical, cruel policies or atrocities that he would choose to inflict. A one-world government would be an irresistible opportunity for that kind of person to come to power. The Bible indicates that, as the world moves in the direction of a unified, one-world government, that is the kind of ruler who will come to power.

Man’s denial of the personal God of the Bible is proving to be no small matter. It is producing earthshaking, revolutionary results. The tragedy is that man believes he is following great wisdom in making this denial (Rom. 1:18-25; 1 Cor. 1:21). The truth is that he is being blinded by Satan, the god of this age (2 Cor. 4:4). Satan is using the results of man’s denial to prepare the world for his coming attempt to establish the visible, political form of his kingdom on earth.

Thus, although the media calls the present conflict of issues in society “a cultural war,” in reality it is a spiritual war that centers on two opposing world-life views. One of those views has the existence of the personal, sovereign, creator God of the Bible and divine revelation as its starting point and foundation. The other view has the denial of the existence of the God of the Bible and divine revelation as its starting point and foundation.

While Satan continues his work, God also is busy saving individuals from Satan’s kingdom and adding them to the true Church – that body of people who personally have believed the gospel of Jesus Christ revealed in the Bible by placing their trust in Him alone for salvation from sin and eternal judgment.

What should Christians be doing in light of these revolutionary results of the denial of God in society? Christ has given one commission to the Church, and He has not changed it. We should be making every effort to evangelize the world with the gospel of Jesus Christ defined in 1 Cor. 15:1-8 (Mk. 16:15), to ground believers in the rest of God’s truth by systematically teaching them God’s Word (Mt. 28:19-20; Eph. 4:11-12), and to pray earnestly for God to send a great spiritual awakening that will be instigated, governed, and empowered by the Holy Spirit and completely conformed to God’s thoughts, ways, and truth.