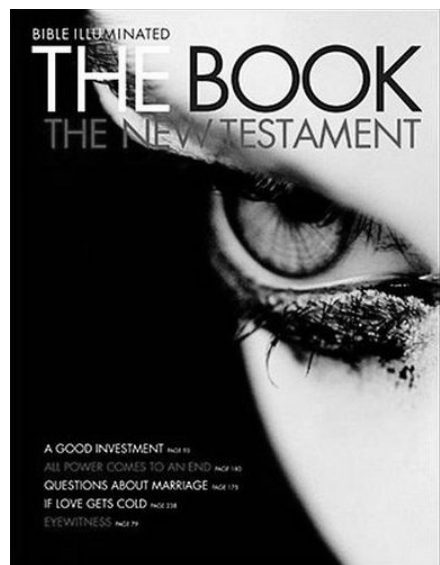


## Hip new 'Bible' makes the scene



**K**ing Solomon said that there is no end to the writing of books (Ecclesiastes 12:12). Today there seems to be no end to versions of the Bible, most of which are translated from the unreliable Wescott-Hort compilation of Greek texts. Now comes *Bible Illuminated: The Book*, the brain child of Swedish advertising executive Dag Söderberg.

Söderberg came to think that traditional Bibles lack visual punch. So he set out to produce his own version of the New Testament in the style of modern fashion magazines such as *Vogue*. *Bible Illuminated* is replete with large, glossy photos, and incorporates the text from the American Bible Association's *Good News Translation*.

Söderberg started distribution of *Bible Illuminated* in Sweden where 30,000 copies have been sold. Sweden's archbishop, Anders Harald Wejryd, has endorsed it, as have a number of other Christian dignitaries.

Söderberg has stated that his goal is "to make a version of the Bible that people

want to pick up instead of hide away or just place on a bookshelf."

"Most people have issues with the Bible," he says. "They have never gotten into it. They don't find it accessible. But it's our history, our heritage. And for most of us, we relate to it more than we think. Religious or not, it shapes much of our moral codes."

Both the Old Testament and New Testament of *Bible Illuminated* are available separately in Swedish. The English version is currently limited to the New Testament.

*Bible Illuminated* highlights selected passages from the Scriptures accompanied by photos which Söderberg considered relevant to those passages. For example, accompanying Mark 1:2 ("God says, 'I will send my messenger ahead of you to open the way'") are photos of Mohandas Gandhi, Nelson Mandela, and actress Angelina Jolie. (Söderberg's reasoning for including Jolie is that she is a UN Goodwill Ambassador and a noted humanitarian who has donated millions of dollars to the poor through the Jolie/Pitt Foundation which she founded with megastar boyfriend Brad Pitt.)

*Bible Illuminated* opens with an Andy Warhol poster ("Repent—and sin no more!").

Illuminated World, publisher of *Bible Illuminated* describes its mission:

Illuminated World seeks to introduce today's audience to a revolutionary contemporary Bible, one that encourages dialogue and is culturally relevant, readily accessible and easily digestible for any reader regardless of religious, economic, racial or social background.

We have no religious agenda and support no specific faith. *Bible Illuminated* is intended to be a unique vehicle for reacquainting today's reader with one of history's most important texts.

Söderberg plans to eventually produce a similarly formatted Koran.

## COMMENTARY

One must wonder how anyone can read Scripture, let alone want to share it with the world, and not perceive the essential truth that Jesus Christ is the only Way to God. It's as if God's Word is nothing more to them than one among many expositors of wisdom. To equate Gandhi with God's messenger is to say that Hinduism is God's religion. But man's concept of peace, which is associated with Gandhi's non-violent social protests, is not God's concept of peace, which is found only in one's relationship with Jesus Christ:

"Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you—not as the world gives, do I give to you." (John 14:27)

That Söderberg plans to produce the Koran in a similar format reveals a woeful ignorance of salvation found only in the person of God's only-begotten Son. But then, why should we expect different?

Amazingly, however, we do expect God to use even *Bible Illuminated* to reach lost souls. As convoluted as the text of the *Good News Translation* may be, and as confused as the graphics accompanying it may be, the Holy Spirit often uses whatever small truth one may encounter in such things to convict the soul and to start people on the path to true faith in Jesus Christ.

I personally know people whose faith began as a small seed planted in churches that are far askew—even at Robert Schuller's Crystal Cathedral—but grew as they continued searching for truth.

My own faith began in the Roman Catholic Church as a foundation to believe that the Bible is the inspired Word of God, even though Catholicism gives equal or more standing to its traditions and magisterium. When I began to study the Bible I understood that there is a greater understanding of God's salvation and sanctification than was afforded to me through all my years of Catholic education and service.

None of this justifies the errors of false religious systems or skewed texts of Scripture. It merely demonstrates the greatness of God's grace to reach through such errors to touch the hearts of those who truly seek to know Him and the power of His resurrection. ❖

# Obama seeks ties to Syria

Two days after confirmation of his election to the office of President of the United States, Barack Obama sent his senior foreign-policy adviser, Robert Malley, to meet with Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak and Syrian president Bashar al-Assad to discuss the new administration's Mideast policy. According to journalist John Perazzo, writing for FrontPageMagazine.com, "An aide to Malley reports, 'The tenor of the messages was that the Obama administration would take into greater account Egyptian and Syrian interests' than has President Bush."

The Bush administration has recognized Syria to be a chief supporter of the al Qaeda insurgency in Iraq, as well as the headquarters of the terrorist organization, Palestinian Islamic Jihad. Syria is also a long-time sponsor of Hamas whose stated goal is the total annihilation of Israel.

An Obama aid has also revealed that the new president plans to make a major foreign policy speech at the capital of an Islamic state within 100 days of his inauguration.

President-elect Obama's promise to engage in negotiations with known terrorist-supporting states and organizations was part of his campaign platform. But his selection of Robert Malley to spearhead his first attempts at placating Egypt and Syria has been met with grave concern by those who know Malley's background.

Malley was born in France. His father, Simon Malley, was an important figure in the Egyptian Communist Party and had a profound hatred of Israel. The elder Malley was a close personal friend of the late PLO terrorist Yasser Arafat and a strong critic of "Western imperialism."

That Robert Malley would be chosen to meet with al-Assad and Mubarak is disconcerting considering Malley's exposition of Syria's plans stated in his testimony to the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations on November 8, 2007:

Many also dismiss the argument that Syria would moderate its policies if return of the Golan were on the table. As U.S. officials put it, Damascus may like to recover the Golan, but its

core interests lie elsewhere: resuming its hegemony over Lebanon and scuttling the international tribunal. Since Washington is not prepared to concede on either, there is little to be gained by discussions. Some go further and maintain that occupation of the Golan has become the lifeline of a regime that has lost legitimacy; the occupation provides justification for maintaining the state of emergency, postponing domestic reforms and silencing opposition. The mere initiation of a high-level dialogue would send a signal to worried U.S. allies in Lebanon (the March 14 forces) that a deal was being cooked behind their backs. In like manner, engagement would threaten the unprecedented consensus that currently exists between the U.S., major European and Arab (Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Jordan) countries on the issue of Lebanon and the tribunal.

Malley's revelation that Syria wishes to resume its hegemony over Lebanon (which has the largest percentage [39%] of Christians among predominantly Muslim nations) demonstrates that its support for Hezbollah continues. Hezbollah controls a large portion of southern Lebanon from where it launches attacks against Israel.

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## COMMENTARY

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For the most part, believers in Christ support Israel because of the Scriptural prophecies that relate to the last days when, as Jesus returns for His people, the Jews will look on Him whom they pierced and they will mourn—not just because they had rejected their Messiah, but because of the terrible tribulation that will be unleashed against them by the anti-Christ forces of the world.

Currently Israel is no godlier than any other nation. The Zionist political machine that has built and maintained the nation is as anti-Christ as any temporal power on earth. But that does not mean God has no purpose in using Zionism to gather some of His people from out of the nations as a prelude to dealing with them during the last half of Daniel's seventieth "week."

Seventy seven-year periods are determined upon your people and upon your holy city, to finish the

transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy.

Therefore, know and understand that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem until the Messiah the Prince shall be seven sevens, and sixty-two sevens. The street and the wall shall be built again, even in troublous times.

And after the sixty-two sevens, Messiah shall be killed, but not for Himself. And the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary, and its end shall be with a flood. And unto the end of the war desolations are determined.

And he shall confirm the Covenant with many for one seven. And in the midst of the seven he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and because of the over-spreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the end, and that which is determined shall be poured upon the desolate. (Dan 9:24-27)

Because ancient Israel was the oracle of God and we are grafted into the true faith of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, we understand that God's promise to the nation cannot be voided. The true Israelites in the flesh who have faith in Jesus Christ will inherit the Land during the millennial reign of their Messiah, Yeshua (Jesus). The modern nation of Israel, though still in spiritual blindness for its ancestors' sin of rejecting the Messiah, is nevertheless evidence of God's sovereign will to one day gather the people in belief from out of all nations.

The anti-Christ spirit hates Israel and wants to see the nation destroyed. For if that can happen then God's promises will have failed, and Satan can rightfully claim victory in his desire to exalt himself above the stars of God (Isaiah 14:13).

It will do no good to pray for the peace of Israel in its present state. There will be no peace until Israel's Prince of Peace returns. So when Scripture says, "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem" (Psalms 122:6), it is saying, "Pray for Messiah's coming."

Just prior to this verse the psalmist says, "For set there are thrones of judgment—the thrones of the house of David."

When Jesus returns He will sit on the principal throne in Jerusalem to judge the nations. Those nations that come against Israel are fighting God's purpose in establishing the nation, regardless how anti-Christ its founders and even most of its citizens may be at present.

Will the United States be a recipient of that judgment?

Much may depend on how future administrations act. ❖

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## Planned health-worker rule attacked

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In the closing days of his administration President George W. Bush has proposed new protections for health-care providers who oppose abortion and other birth-related procedures on religious or moral grounds. The proposed rule would prevent health-care organizations from discriminating against employees who refuse to perform abortions or sterilizations, or to administer birth-control and other drugs contrary to their consciences. It would also prevent health-care organizations (hospitals, doctors' offices, clinics, drugstores) from requiring employees with religious or moral objections to "assist in the performance of any part of a health service program or research activity" financed by the Department of Health and Human Services.

President Bush's proposal has met with strenuous objections from opponents in Congress, civil-rights organizations, and leaders within the health-care industry. Three officials from the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) said the proposal would negate forty years of civil rights gains for women.

Reed Russell, President Bush's appointee to the position of legal counsel for the EEOC, claims that Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 already prohibits employment discrimination based on religion. He states that the courts have defined "religion" to include "moral or ethi-

cal beliefs as to what is right and wrong, which are sincerely held with the strength of traditional religious views."

President-elect Barack Hussein Obama has also registered objections to the proposal, saying that it would create new obstacles for women seeking reproductive health services such as abortion and some contraceptives.

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### COMMENTARY

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It is true that Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits employment discrimination based on religion. But the court has defined "religion" within the confines of what it calls "traditional religious views." Suppose someone has an objection to abortion based on non-traditional religious views. Many brethren in Christ who meet in homes are not part of traditional religious institutions. Might they be denied protection under Title VII? And if not protected under Title VII, what other safeguards against discrimination and even persecution might not apply to them?

The leftists have consistently raised the argument, "What right do you have to impose your morality on us?" against any and all attempts to maintain civil law based upon the biblical ethic which is the foundation of this nation's laws. Yet they have no qualms about imposing their "morality" on the consciences of the many who oppose their ungodly agenda of infanticide.

They know that any "rights" granted by government are subject to interpretation by courts that may swing in any direction. They also know that those "rights" can be removed by government. This is why they want the foundational declaration that all true rights are granted by the Creator replaced with "civil rights" based on the whims of man's capricious sense of "right" and "wrong."

There should be no need for President Bush's proposal to protect right-thinking people from being discriminated against for acting on their consciences. Civilized people, in spite of their sin nature and even their acting contrary to their consciences, recognize what is right and what is wrong according to nature. God's moral laws given to Israel through Moses affirmed what is naturally right and wrong; He did not invent the Law except

to impress upon Israel the importance of what He had already established in nature. Even the ungodly nations knew right and wrong, though they chose the wrong and had to be destroyed for it.

People who support abortion know they are acting wrong; they just don't care to have even nature tell them how to behave. This is why the leftist agenda incorporates so many unnatural platforms: homosexuality; euthanasia; assisted suicide; imposition of its "morality" upon the truly moral.

While leftists decry execution of the most heinous criminals, they work themselves into a frenzy to protect the "right" of doctors to kill babies both inside and outside the womb.

They are headed to hell in a hand basket. Woe to those clinging to their coat-tails. ❖

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## Mammoths could live again with reconstructed DNA?

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Will *Jurassic Park* become reality? If scientists at Pennsylvania State University have their way they believe they can make it so. All it would take is about \$10 million to fund experiments to recover the DNA of a woolly mammoth and use it to modify an elephant's egg so that its DNA can be progressively changed to resemble the DNA in a mammoth egg. The final-stage egg would be implanted in a female elephant.

But it would not stop there. It is being suggested that the same technology could be used to reanimate any extinct species from which scientists can extract DNA as long as that species went extinct within the past 60,000 years. That is said to be the effective limit for DNA survival.

It is technically possible that the same method could be used to create Neanderthals. Scientists are working to recover that species' full genome soon. The DNA of a Neanderthal could con-

ceivably be used to modify human eggs in stages until it could be implanted into a woman who could then give birth to a Neanderthal baby.

### COMMENTARY

Nothing is sacred to those who have rejected God and His Word. They have been given over to a reprobate mind to do those things that are not proper. Even as there are discussions within the scientific community whether or not such a thing as resurrecting extinct species—especially Neanderthals—is ethical, there is no reason not to think that someone, somewhere, will go beyond the bounds of ethics. For that matter, ethics is not even the real issue. Nor is morality. These vacillate according to individual consciences—even individual desires. The real issue is God's Word.

There is a good reason God forbade the mingling of seeds from different species and even from different types within the same species. What God has created, let not man tear apart.

Man has been tearing apart God's creation from the beginning. It is Satan's desire to contaminate and confuse nature in order to destroy God's work. It all points to God's plan of redemption for His creation. His enemy seems to think that if he can contaminate nature then the creation cannot be redeemed. But this is why the entire cosmos must be destroyed by fervent heat and recreated into the perfect universe it was before the fall of Satan. Only fire can purify the impure. Unless, of course, one is purified from sin by the blood of Jesus Christ.

For no man can lay any other foundation than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

Now if any man builds upon this foundation [Jesus Christ] gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble, every man's work shall be revealed, for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire. And the fire shall test every man's work of what sort it is.

If any man's work remains which he has built thereon [on Christ], he shall receive a reward. If any man's work is burned, he shall suffer loss, but he himself shall be saved, yet so as by fire. (1 Corinthians 3:11-15)

If this will be the end of the unrighteous works of the believer, what will become of the works of the lost? They will perish with their works in the fire.

Man's science is for the most part contrary to God. The more man intrudes into the sacred things of God's creation the more he begs God's judgment.

That men would even think of the possibility of recreating Neanderthals should send shivers down the spine of any right-thinking person, even if that person is far removed from faith in Christ Jesus.

That Neanderthals existed cannot be denied. But what they were is subject to much speculation. Were they progenitors of modern man? Not if God's Word is true. God created the first man Adam from the dust of the earth, then breathed into him the breath of lives. This is what makes man distinct from all other animals. Different animals have varying degrees of limited intelligence—even scant powers to reason. But only man is created in the image of God.

Scripture tells us that God made man in His own image and likeness, then breathed into him the breath of lives. All our lives were in Adam. This is why we are partakers of his sin nature. All mankind, without exception, is descended from Adam and therefore partakes of the sinful human nature. Only Jesus Christ was conceived without sin by the power of the Holy Spirit. His flesh was subject to death, but His spirit cannot die. Those who are born again by the Spirit of God can still die in the flesh, but we cannot die in the spirit.

But what about these man-like creatures called Neanderthals? Were they descendants of Adam? Obviously not, because their physical characteristics, though similar, as are those of all primates, are not human. All archeological evidence from the time of man's beginning some 6,000 years ago demonstrates that mankind has not changed in appearance. But there were without doubt creatures that resembled man and which walked the earth at one time.

I will not address what I think Neanderthals were. My concern is what they might be if recreated en masse. Would such creatures have consciences? Would they even have a human soul—or any soul at all? For what purpose might they be used?

We know that science, with funding from governments, is employing eugenics to create super soldiers—fighting machines controlled by instincts rather than conscience. The super strength of Neanderthals could fit their plans.

Too farfetched?

Consider what man's science and technology has accomplished within only the past 100 years. Mankind is about to set foot on Mars if God allows it. A few generations ago mankind was barely moving about the earth. Journeys across the North American continent took months to accomplish.

I would not be so foolish as to put anything past man's abilities. God certainly wasn't when He scattered mankind across the earth from the Tower of Babel:

And YHWH said, "Look! The people are united and they all have one language, and they begin to do this. And now nothing they have imagined to do will be kept from them. Come, let Us go down, and there confound their language so that they may not understand one another's speech." (Genesis 11:6-7)

God will not restrain man's imagination. And only His intervention can and will prevent man from accomplishing what he imagines to do.

All the more reason to pray that the Lord comes quickly.❖

**Anybody who has been  
seriously engaged in  
scientific work of any kind  
realizes that over the  
entrance to the gates of the  
temple of science are  
written the words:  
'We must have faith.'  
It is a quality which the  
scientist cannot dispense  
with.**

Max Planck  
German Physicist [1858-1947]  
(Nominal Christian)