

news8_international

Humanity



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INTRODUCTION

The human race is, unlike the claims of many, not a great species. We like to bathe in the idea that we are “advanced” and “important”, that humans are the perfect output of millions of years of evolution. However, this is false. We are not great. We have so many flaws that, for centuries, we have failed to notice or have ignored altogether.

This report presents the three main problems with the human race – violence, advancement and religion. We are an extremely hostile, merciless species that gets caught in many ugly, bloody conflicts, some on an international scale. Our battles are over the least important of issues – take, for example, the Trojan War over King Menelaus of Sparta losing his wife, Helen, to Paris in an ugly cheating scandal that caused him to invade surrounding kingdoms to win her back. In modern day conflict, the War on Terrorism in the Middle East is fought simply on religious grounds. In terms of technology and science, we have trouble making new advancements in many different scientific and technological fields. At times, it takes the threat of death to force new ideas out. Finally, religion oppresses our ability to grow and cooperate. Faith is no longer compatible with our advanced intelligence, it now deludes instead of its original purpose, to explain.

There are many new challenges coming in the future, some of which will be on a scale unimaginable. Global warming is one of the most urgent problems in the world today – it threatens to render Earth uninhabitable, mostly on the actions of the human race. Other issues, like religion, are hurting us slowly but surely. In recent decades, faith has severely impeded our flexibility and ability to cooperate as a race. Now, horrible wars are fought over the most primitive of religious ideals. People are discriminated and, in more extreme cases, killed because devout believers have been deluded into doing it.

In order to help the species advance in the future, we must fix these flaws we have accumulated over the history of our race. If we do not, we face a much more dismal and idiotic future than we can imagine presently. This report is meant to serve as a guide to the solutions – but it should also get you, the reader, to start thinking about all the answers to the problems we face today. A better future requires the contributions of as many people as possible. Working together and solving problems is what humanity is all about. Unfortunately, humans are not completely humane.

PART ONE: VIOLENCE

Violence and greed is not a good sign when it comes to a species. Unfortunately, humans are clearly more violent and aggressive than any other life form on Earth. We continuously kill other humans, and spend money and time on finding new and exciting ways to destroy each other. The human race always has a war going on, somewhere, somehow. Humans have no compassion for the other animals that share Earth with us – we just kill and eat, kill and eat, kill and eat. Other times it's kill and sell, and sometimes kill and wear. And we can do all this without caring at all – a war in Iraq, no problem; a war with the USSR, who cares? We'll work it out, we'll kill the others.

Using violence and destruction to solve problems has always been a habit of the human species. Yes, it does work – but only for one side. And even if the “good” come out victorious, and that the “best policy” becomes standard, lives were still lost and cities were still destroyed. We must learn how to be more peaceful and cooperative – that way, both sides of the conflict get their way and nobody dies in the process. But, sadly, no matter how hard we try; peaceful collaboration always ends up falling apart. I want everyone to admit that we have our differences, and that no two minds are alike. For example, the abortion debate in the United States continues, with members of the Democratic and Republican parties warring over the outcome of *Roe v. Wade*. Personally, I support abortion, but I think both sides should come to a peaceful resolution: *Roe v. Wade* was an acceptable approach to the debate, and it should remain the current federal law on abortion. If we all keep arguing *after* a conclusion has been reached, no matter how biased it may be, than we can safely say that no cooperative solution can be reached without one side being favored. Any disagreement resulting in that means that, somehow, we'll have to force ourselves to live with whatever came out of the argument.

But people, admittedly, don't like to just “live with it”. People want *their way*, *their* ideas to be law. I know that everyone wants their say to be accepted, but life doesn't always hand you the right side of situations. The anti-abortionists out there, with their bumper-stickers and t-shirts, want change. I can understand that they have an idea, and they think it should be applied to a certain issue – but I want them to admit that an agreement was reached in government, and there is no other way to clear up this issue. It would be impossible to favor both sides in this event. And, with me being pro-choice, I want them to think about the lives of the mothers under an anti-abortion law. They would be forced to give birth, a life-changing event. Desperate, they will resort to illegal acts or abandon their children. This point brings me to the first issue: control.

CONTROL

Violence is used as a weapon to control the actions of other human beings. All dictatorships and socialists use destructive measures to control their citizens and scare them into a life of no freedom. For some strange reason, many humans like to take control. At some point, we all want to take the wheel and lead massive crowds into following our way. Religions and restrictive governments are good examples of this – they like having power and leadership. But, of course, control is wrong – yet so many of us want it.

Humans have a knack for taking the quest for power overboard. The most obvious example is the international war waged by Hitler in the 1940s, part of his lifelong dream to make Germany the world's major superpower. Of course, that didn't work out, and the world was relatively peaceful for the next half-century –

but now, 60 years later, new countries like North Korea (ICBMs?), Iran (world's largest army *and* possible ICBMs), and even Russia (selling resources to hostile nations) are threatening the balance of control. When you have countries dilapidated like these three, you must understand their craving for a place in the world. They want power. Terrorists in the Middle East want power and chaos, some politicians have a need for power, devout religious people want bigger masses, which equals more power. But controlling people's lives isn't beneficial for all. People need to understand that they have no right to forcibly lead someone's life just so they can have more power. Again, anti-abortionists need to see that having a child isn't just something you can wipe away – it has implications that last for decades. Giving birth is also a painful process that isn't enjoyable to anyone. If we overturn *Roe v. Wade*, thousands of people will be controlled – forced into a life that they never anticipated. Sure, it might've been their fault, but having a child is too steep of a price to pay. *That* is control. Taking the wheel and cutting away every option but one.

Humans must work together to spread freedom and peace about and eliminate unnecessary control. Leading superpowers like the United States, the United Kingdom, Russia, China and international organizations like the United Nations should do more to get hostile nations to lessen the control on their citizens. Also, in order to set better examples, nations should give more freedoms to their own people (legalize gay marriage, separate church and state, ect.) so that others may follow the same example. Instead of starting wars and refusing diplomatic action, countries should work out peaceful negotiations and have face-to-face talks with leaders. When it comes to Western foreign policy, the United States elected Barack Obama for his more peaceful, diplomatic and progressive form of negotiating. This way, instead of spewing threats and destroying relations, we can work things out with concerned governments.

When two countries argue, it can come to war.

WAR

War is the best example of what is wrong with natural human behavior. Wars are usually pointless ways of spreading policy and inducing power. They take lives and destroy nations. Basically, when a war comes along, all hell breaks loose – bombs are dropped, guns are fired and soldiers are imprisoned. Sure, it may be in the best interests of someone, somewhere, but there are many other ways to work out a situation besides the violence and corruption that is inherited when military conflicts start. Humans have a habit of letting things get out of control, and letting diplomatic cooperation shatter is like playing with fire. It could burn you later. If we want to prevent international conflicts later in history, we as a species must work together to tighten relationships and block the possibility of wars in the future. Peace is the way – it prevents unnecessary deaths and guarantees prosperity and happiness.

Unfortunately, many see war as a quick path to peace, but using something unmerciful to earn peace just doesn't make sense. The only way to stable, long-term peace is peace! Essentially, I am saying war is unnecessary, but there are some special cases. The most relevant example is the "War" on Terrorism in Iraq and Afghanistan – while not technically a war, a military intervention. When a terrorist group has been plotting and bombing countries for decades without remorse, you may just have to get in there and wrestle them to the ground. Sadly, it is the only way. My recommendation is that when a nation has no other options except war, they should fight using the smallest possible impact to ensure that civilian lives will not be taken and the conflict may be solved quicker. In the Middle East, for example, the United States has yet to learn this. By invading the unrelated country of Iraq instead of the actual hotspots – Afghanistan, Pakistan and/or Saudi Arabia – the Americans have seriously damaged stability in the region. The War in Iraq only intensified violence there – it was completely unnecessary and is a great example of the flaws of humanity. While Iraq

was a very violent nation before the 2003 invasion, the Americans had no sufficient reason to invade the entirely unrelated country. Five years later, Iraq is lying on a shaky foundation with a corrupt government. The invasion was badly planned and entirely pointless. Meanwhile, in Afghanistan, the real terrorists fled to Pakistan, another unstable nation which is in no position to catch terrorists in the vast western edge of the Himalayas. If the U.S. had launched a more secretive invasion of the remote areas of eastern and northern Afghanistan, instead of deploying the main military force in Iraq, then the terrorists may have been easier to find. But, instead, the actual military plan has plunged the Middle East into a dangerous state. Forming better relations with Arab nations, especially Iran, is more difficult because of the destructive actions the U.S. has taken across the area.

This is the consequence of starting unnecessary war, and it will be felt for decades to come. The U.S. should have worked with Middle Eastern countries to capture terrorists and take action only if they refused. That way, diplomatic cooperation would have prevailed, and only terrorists would be dying, not civilians.

Now that major conflicts have been covered, we'll move on to the more common form of violence: crime.

CRIME & PUNISHMENT

In modern society, crime is an everyday event. All across the world, innocent civilians are getting robbed, shot or kidnapped. It's just the way things go. Crime is the most common form of violence in the human species, and it always has been.

Criminals are always those who want easy power – in the form of wealth, fear, or leadership – without having to work their way up among social or political rankings. If you were poor and needy, like those after Hurricane Katrina, you would have almost no other choice, unless you looked at the situation differently. Humans must learn that hurting others does not make one a better person – overall, it tears away at their personality to the extent which a person is none other than a heartless killer. We need to prevent ourselves from preying on others. As we all know, a person's life starts the day they enter school – young, fresh and easily gullible. Governments and private schools should teach children the consequences of a criminal career and teach them what to do when life isn't going so good. This way, we might see less and less crime as time progresses.

Sadly, most criminal activity comes from the poorer walks of life – those who have grown up scrounging for income and wealth. Because these poor people have not been given the chance to earn a good education and haven't been as fortunate as others in job-hunting, they resort to crime to get a taste of the high life. Stealing money, vehicles, jewelry, electronics – anything of value, just to have a little glimpse. Governments need to assist the poor by helping them move into shelters and warning them about the consequences criminal activity possesses.

Higher up on the scale are the truly evil ones – murderers and assaulters, those who want fear to be their assistant in the world. These people are losers, the ones who were never looked up at, never complimented – always cast down and thrown aside. These criminals want power. They want to be recognized instead of pushed away. In order to prevent people from becoming like this, we must give them a position in society. Criminals start at an early age, and school is usually what turns them into killers. We need to STOP bullying in schools – bullies are like mini-murderers, those who want power. Those who are the victims of bullying are also potential criminals – possibly, someday in the future, they'll pick up a gun and start murdering in the name of revenge. Schools must assure everyone has a healthy level of self-esteem. Teachers

need to be less critical of failing students and offer help instead of harsh words. This way, instead of students despising peers and staff, they'll feel like they've accomplished something.

Depressed people can also turn to the dark side. Governments need to assist the depressed and mentally unstable and help them back onto their feet. These citizens need to be watched carefully and have certain limitations – such as a ban on purchasing weapons. Using this approach will help ease the number of schizophrenic maniacs on the streets. Mark David Chapman, the man who murdered John Lennon, was much like this. All he needed was a gun.

This leads us into the other subject: punishment. Nations must be careful about how they interrogate criminals. Punishments too extreme or too lean can be dangerous once the criminal is released from prison. Many criminals shouldn't even be in prison; they should be in rehabilitation centers. Rehab is a better, less harsh approach to dealing with troubled minds. As I said, criminals are the citizens who have usually been cast away from society, so giving them a position is better than locking them out completely.

This does not mean we should give all criminals the chance to start a new life. Some people are just too dangerous to be let back into society – mass murderers, terrorists, assaulters are good examples. They deserve to be locked up for the rest of their lives. Willingly committing such atrocious felonies is just too much of a crime to be let go easily. The only exception is the mentally challenged; they must be sent to mental facilities and monitored closely. These poor, incurable humans must be kept away from the rest of society so they cannot go out and induce such disgusting acts.

Please note that when I was discussing the extremely violent – mass murderers and such – I said *“locked up for the rest of their lives”*. I did not say *“executed”*. The death penalty is not the correct way to deal with despicable people like this. While they deserve to die, these citizens should live out the rest of their lives in a cold, bland prison cell, rotting away while knowing they will never escape beyond the barred windows and doors. Execution is usually the wish of a felon. Now that they have successfully committed their crime, death is their desire. They think that their lives are over, and they know that their future will be acted out in a cold, bare room. Death is, frankly, better than spending decades in a locked cell. Life in prison is a reminder that these people still have time left, and that time will be spent alone in a sheltered room.

All crimes come with punishments, and there should be reasonable and regulated consequences for each crime. However, in the justice system, what is considered *“reasonable”* by a court is sometimes way out of order. To ensure a fair punishment, governments must end profiling and guarantee that the punishment for one crime will be the same for every person. Race, gender and sexuality all play roles in modern courts, and their roles must be cut out. We need to develop a justice system that is as fair and regulated as possible. To accomplish this, new laws must be passed setting strict mandates for assigning verdicts and court cases must be overlooked by justice departments to make sure they comply with equality laws. I don't think people should be irresponsible enough to punish someone worse just because of their skin color – we must remember that we are comparatively all the same – we are all human – but we have different lifestyles and values.

This leads into the next section: discrimination.

DISCRIMINATION

RACISM

Racism is stupid. It is idiotic and wrong. Unlike most violent acts, racism is something that everyone can tolerate. It can be safely said that all racists are pathetic losers who have no compassion for anyone but

themselves. Racists are idiotic morons who think privilege is being a certain skin color – and, obviously, it isn't. Currently, as of 2009, it is possible to change your skin color, but not at birth.

As a species, we must work together to overcome problems, but in the last 200 years racism has hurt relations between people. This is not the way to solve troubles, judging the intelligence of a person simply because of the way they look. A person can only be truly known if one has talked and negotiated with them. Sadly, though, not enough people act like this.

Barack Obama, the 44th President of the United States, is African-American. In the 2008 election, Obama won by a sizable margin against Republican John McCain, which caused newspapers around the world to declare that the United States has overcome the boundaries of its own racist heritage. While, to some extent, this may be true, it can mostly be written off. The United States, like many other nations, is still disturbingly racist – and this was shown during the heated election. Across the country, racists preached their messages of hate: shouting violent words at election rallies, sending threats and attempting assassinations. Rumors were started stating that President Obama was from Kenya, or was a Muslim. The last few months have proved just how terrifyingly racist some citizens are – and it *must stop now*. Racists must give up their ridiculous ways of making points and hurting lives. Acting racist only divides us more and turns people against each other. It isn't the way to make friends or prove ideas. It only leads to unrest.

To combat racism, governments around the world must enact new anti-racism policies or expand the ones they currently have. The United Nations should bring countries together to sign a resolution to end racism and enact overall equality. On the local level, schools should teach children the dangers of racism and make sure that they understand the divisions it can widen. Organizations such as the KKK need to be eliminated by governments and members bent on violent racism should be arrested. Vaguely like the War on Drugs, the U.S. should launch a War on Racism and destroy white supremacy groups that preach hate and destruction. We can only take down racism by using quick, swift and forceful action.

Currently, racism is in retreat. The number of racists is dwindling, and white supremacy groups have populations lower than ever. As countries continue to become more diverse and open, racism will eventually wither and die. But this is a very long process. Stereotypes against Asians, Arabs, Europeans and blacks are still prevalent in society. There are many, many people who still have racist attitudes, however mild. Extreme racism is only half of the problem. To stop people from using "mild" racism, new rules should be put in order to prevent these people from displaying this behavior to other people. When hiring employees, businesses should have a "racism check" as part of the job application process – this will stop racist employees from being rude to customers. Fines should be imposed on those who act racist in front of people of other ethnicities. Using these small methods will eventually shock people out of acting racist in public.

Racism is a disease, and it can be stopped – but only with cooperation from everybody. We need to destroy racism so that society will be balanced and fair for all, regardless of skin color.

RELIGIOUS INDIFFERENCE **(SEE PART THREE FOR MORE ON RELIGION)**

There are thousands of different religions across the world, each with their respective beliefs. While, personally, I think religion is unnecessary (part four will explain this), we must learn to respect the opinions of other people. Religion has always been a controversial issue in society; it has started wars and destroyed relationships. For some reason, faith is extremely important to people and has very profound effects on the way they treat others.

For hundreds of years, religion has divided people into different groups. Today, in modern times, there is a new religious war brewing – the Muslims in the Middle East and the Christians in the West are teetering on the brink of fighting. Religious terrorists in the mountains of Afghanistan killed thousands of Americans in September 2001, and since then the religious attitude in the United States has changed. People are changing ways. Many are turning away from religion altogether – the number of irreligious has been rising for years – yet the religious are becoming more religious. This has caused a lot of backlash against American Muslims, as well as many other religions, for being “different”. Unlike other developed countries, the United States is freakishly religious; in America religion and belief are big.

Muslims are being hurt by the U.S. badly. Many Americans disapprove of other non-Christian religions, especially Islam, which has been miscalculated as some sort of “evil” religion by many citizens of Western nations. Violence against Muslims has been on the rise, and it must end. The West must educate its citizens by teaching them what Islam is really about. Their governments should end religious indifference by cracking down on anti-Muslim (or anti-everything-except-Christianity) preachers and eliminating extreme churches. Halloween displays featuring hate messages should be forcibly taken down. Using resources like community centers and schools, the U.S. can teach its people to be a little nicer.

America also has a serious separation of church-and-state problem. Too much Christian influence is seeping into the system, and it should be removed as soon as possible to ensure a fair and balanced government, one that serves all its residents.

Religion is an increasingly controversial issue, and it must be controlled so that conflicts don’t get out of hand.

AGAINST GAYS

As humans, we are all different in our respective ways. We all choose our own destinies in life and make decisions differently than others. In order to become a more peaceful and cooperative species, we need to learn to understand and accept different approaches to everyday living.

A very controversial life choice is homosexuality, which is often looked down upon by many nations. The United States currently bans same-sex marriage in most states and many homosexuals are the victims of hate crimes. Along with many of its developed allies, the United States is in the middle of an ugly, heated gay rights debate. The problem in America is intensified by the strong presence of Christianity in most of the country, a religion that calls homosexuality a sin. For the last 30 years, the anti-gay force in the U.S. has won most fights and debates.

But this should be considered wrong. If the United States wants to label itself as a true democracy (or, technically, republic) with full rights for all, it must legalize gay marriage and enact new gay rights for its homosexual citizens. Banning gay marriage is a form of control – all people of both genders have the right to couple with whoever they want, regardless of the gender of the partner. It is not a question of moral “values”; it is a question of freedom. We need to give gays the rights they deserve so they can rise up to the same level on the social pyramid as the rest of us. New measures giving homosexuals the same employment opportunities as heterosexuals should also be enacted. Most of all, gays need to be protected from hate crimes – the level of backlash against pro-gay legislation is disturbing in many nations. The United Nations should also introduce a gay rights pact so more nations across the globe can liberate their homosexual citizens.

In a modern world, homosexuality will play a much bigger role than in the past. Governments must rise above the religious squandering and unshackle their gay citizens. Being gay never hurt anyone, and it can bring in a new level of society where more than just the “normal people” are included.

CONCLUSION: VIOLENCE

The human species is hopelessly violent and discriminatory. Over the centuries, we have quarreled in war after war, and every day someone on Earth is shot at or robbed. This is not something we should be proud of. Yes, humans are just another lifeform struggling to survive, but we have taken survival to a whole new level. Now, in order to make it through another generation, we must battle for everything. Resources, land, wealth – the list goes on. Meanwhile, on a larger scale, people hurt others for their own benefit. Criminals rob banks, homes and businesses. Murderers kill to settle disputes or just for the fun of it. Across the planet, we injure others just so we can have something, or win a fight. To see a species fall to the level of war and destruction is disturbing. We can obviously do better.

In order to usher in a world of universal peace and understanding, we must take action. Use diplomacy instead of war, happiness instead of anger. Countries must work together and cooperate. Governments must help citizens, the vulnerable, and work with citizens to solve the mystery of a crime wave or mass murder. Racism must be eliminated, along with discrimination against gays and women. We have proved, time and time again, that problems can be solved. There are six-and-a-half billion of us, all human – and we can work together to end violence and establish peace. We can motivate leaders to crack down on the evil and harmful people in the world. We can end control and spread freedom and democracy. There are many paths to peace, but the easiest is cooperation. Working with even the most secretive and hostile nations to spread the word of harmony. Countries like Iran, North Korea and China – one way or another, we can work together with them. Violence is a threat to the balance of our species. It divides us and destroys our lives. But, by being peaceful, we can end it. Humans are quite intelligent, and we can all join together, as one, to spread peace and calmness to all.

PART TWO: ADVANCEMENT

For thousands of years, the human species has dominated the world and shown its intelligence. Now, in the information era, we are more advanced than ever. We have cracked many glass ceilings and discovered so much. Yet, still, there is so much more to learn. We are heading toward a future much more intellectual than we can imagine.

But, for some reason, we are slow at advancing. The human species has come to a point where we are too lazy and incompetent to make big leaps – it now takes decades to discover new technologies. It only took a few years to launch the Atomic Era and the Space Age, but the Information Age isn't as quick and agile as previous intellectual periods. If we want to bring the future in faster, we need to push ourselves to the limits. Now, as the Earth becomes polluted and economies start to crash, we need new advances more than ever. If we don't move forward, we will perish eventually – and, sadly, we will have caused our downfall.

MOVING ON

Advancement is what has kept the human race going all these years. 20,000 years ago, we used nifty crafts to rise above the other animals and spread across the world. In 1945, we used the atomic bomb to end a terrible war and usher in peace. In 1969, we landed a man on the moon and cracked the limits of our atmosphere. We have conquered the world and explored every square mile. Through the Internet, we have connected millions and ushered in a new era where, regardless of location, we can cooperate easily.

But, for some reason, we have reached a standstill. In present times, it takes over 20 years for technologies to be widespread, and new advances are planned to come out far into the future. We still use fossil fuels for energy, as we did 150 years ago. We still drive in cars powered by combustion engines – just as we did 100 years ago. We still haven't unlocked nuclear fusion power or have created any colonies on the moon. Back 50 years ago, when the atomic age was flourishing, there were great outlooks for the future. We aren't even close to the imagined expectations.

Now, thanks to our lack of advancement, we have a serious problem. Over 150 years of pollution have damaged the environment greatly. Now, it is not unusual to see hazy smog covering huge cities or to hear of another extinct or threatened species. Projections indicate that sea levels will rise dramatically in the near future, and climates around the world will swing in different, more extreme directions. As the weather changes, droughts and water shortages will come to the places where water is essential. Food production will decrease as farmers submit to the drier climates. In poor nations, such as many African countries, people will perish in famine as the desert grows and farms shrink. We are on the brink of a crisis – created purely by man.

There is only one way out of the environmental mess we are in. We must move on – past the polluting factories and cars, past fossil fuels – to a new age of clean, green technology. Governments **MUST** support projects combating global warming and create new ones to help. We can use the cream-of-the-crop scientists to invent new, efficient and cheap ways of creating electricity and powering cars without destroying the planet. Hydrogen engines and such must make their way into cars much, much quicker than presently forecasted to fight the problem *now* instead of later.

All of this can be accomplished using the sheer intelligence of our species. We have solved problems quickly in the past, and we can solve this one just as fast, if not faster. It is essential we advance to ensure our species does not fall prey to something that could have been solved easily, using simple intellect. We are game-changers – humans have impacted everything one can possibly imagine, and we can use our great minds to solve dilemmas. We are intelligent enough, but we are not fast enough. We fought our way, over 20,000 years, through the other animals and became the ultimate species on Earth. We must keep that title for centuries to come – but only by assuring that we advance, move on to the even higher stages so that problem solving is easier and we can survive and flourish. We are the smartest – and that brings me to the next subject.

CREATING SMARTER MINDS

We can thank ourselves for our own advancements. Humans have done very well at educating our citizens and becoming more informed. We breathe information and pass it around. All of this starts in schools, where every morning young minds come to learn.

Education is *essential* to the advancement of the human species. We can only survive a changing world by adapting and moving along with it. This is why, in order to make it, governments must invest more in educating their people – not on strength and wealth – but on assuring that the next generation will have the

knowledge to invent and advance. Many, many nations around the world spend more on power than on their citizens, causing the next generation to suffer from an underfunded upbringing.

For example, in the United States the education system is crumbling. Schools are getting older and more outdated, and teachers are entering less experienced and stricter than before. The education budget is at the bottom of the pyramid. We need to remind ourselves that we are upbringing the next generation of the human species – our survival in the universe depends on our strength and intelligence. We must produce smarter students so that when the big challenges come along, they can be solved quicker and easier. Therefore, I call on nations across the world to invest in their students and secure a bright and less flawed future. We need to protect our younger ones from false information and let them learn at a healthy pace. More technology, including interactive whiteboards and good, up-to-date computers need to be added to schools so that learning is more attractive and connective. Curriculums need to be re-written so learning is less stressful and more exciting and inciting.

As I just mentioned, false information is a danger to the public. Rumors and unverified claims seep into society, poisoning the minds of many, many people who take it as fact. Children are most vulnerable to this type of info, and they can remember this fact for many, many years. That is why we need schools to debunk false rumors and protect gullible minds from untrue lies. Teachers need to protect their students from the lies and rumors that float around society – false intelligence. Community leaders also must disprove false information from the community and keep everyone updated and correctly informed.

The gullibility of people was revealed greatly during the 2008 presidential election in the United States. Mysteriously, rumors (some hateful) were injected into the political stage through the vast Internet community – lies about Barack Obama's birthplace, lies about John McCain's military service in Vietnam. This fooled many, many people into believing that Barack Obama was a native of Kenya, or that he was really a Muslim in Christian clothing. While all these rumors were majorly debunked, they lived on in the minds of voters – especially those leaning to the political right – and effected President Obama's image. While we like to think that most people are sensible enough to realize these unverified claims are false, humans have not yet reached the intelligence level high enough for common sense to really work. While, as all animals do, we possess common sense, we need to make it perform.

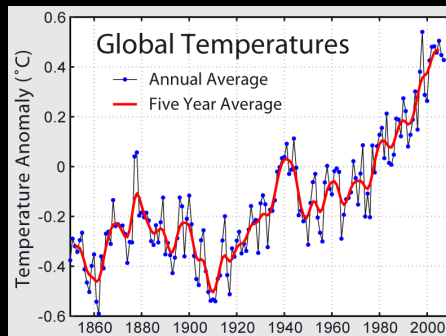
This is why I call on people to actually *think* before doing something. Before taking a stance on some issue, or doing some activity, take a minute to look over the benefits and problems and always view the other side of the story. People shouldn't rely solely on peers for information – only trust cited, fact-checked sources. Even those you "trust" may be telling you a lie or a false rumor. When you choose a side on a political or religious issue, think carefully and listen only to sources which are supported by the facts. For example, those who say Barack Obama is a Kenyan: look closely and actually read all the evidence collected against you, and make an intellectually sensible choice – don't decide on something just because a "friend told you".

Everyone can use their mind and help spread proper, reliable intelligence. Creating smarter minds is not only through schooling, but through debunking rumors and getting the real, fact-checked information out into the public. The human species must use its common sense and realize just how ridiculous and unusual some rumors we take as fact are. *Make an informed decision*. Don't rely on something you "read online" or heard in the office. We can all become a little brighter by using proper information.

NEW TECHNOLOGIES GREEN ENERGY

As I mentioned earlier in the report, a large (if not huge) challenge in the near future is global warming. Every day, millions of pounds of carbon dioxide and other poisonous gases are released into the atmosphere, damaging it even more. From the dirty coal-burning power plants in China to the daily morning traffic jams in Los Angeles, pollution is an enormous dilemma that must be solved as soon as possible. If we ignore the threat, the future will have terrifying consequences.

Firstly, nations around the world must encourage the ongoing expansion of the renewable energies industry and support it every step of the way. Governments must fund new green efforts wholeheartedly, and make sure that budget is secure and plentiful in the long term. In the near future wind, solar, hydroelectric and nuclear are sure to thrive, but only with the support of governments internationally. Coal and petroleum-based energy sources must be phased out and rendered obsolete before a chain reaction of environmental disasters occurs.



Worldwide average temperatures since 1850

Wind energy is currently one of the cheapest and most viable sources of renewable energy. Several studies indicate that there is enough wind to support the entire world's power demands, plus an additional surplus. Major advances in wind technology have already been made, but total production is only about 1% of the world power supply. Wind must be harnessed in the future as fossil fueled power sources are phased out. While predictions show that wind production will surge in the near future, it is not enough. We must encourage the "big oil companies", who have raked in excessive amounts of money from the peak in the cost of oil, to explore the benefits of wind and use it. Governments must help form new wind energy companies and power government buildings using wind. Along with wind, solar energy is also an incredibly inexpensive and very flexible power source. Solar panels can be installed on almost any building, and can even power vehicles (such as solar-powered cars). Solar will most likely be a very popular form of green energy and needs to be, as I said before, used. If possible, new building codes could be put in place requiring solar panels powering part of a certain building, if not all of it.

Hydroelectric energy has been around for decades and was very efficient in powering parts of the Soviet Union during the midst of the Cold War. While its use would be beneficial in producing green electricity, hydroelectricity comes in a mixed bag. The implications of damming rivers across the world could be dangerous – ecosystems could be impacted hugely, and the formation of new lakes hurts native species to the area. While hydroelectricity is very original and very green, it has side effects that could outweigh its benefits.

Nuclear energy is my favorite – uranium is abundant and while not 100% green, very close to it. Nuclear power plants produce large amounts of electricity – more than wind, solar, or hydroelectric plants – and already hold a sizable amount of the world's energy production (around 15%). Nuclear fission is very well

understood and can be trusted as safe. I encourage nations to increase nuclear electricity production and follow the path the French, with a power supply made up of mostly nuclear energy. Most of all, we need to develop the next advancement in nuclear technology – nuclear fusion. While many say that fusion is decades away, we can still try to develop it in the meantime. Nuclear fusion, the process of combining two atoms to produce enormous amounts of energy, is possible. It is much less risky, dangerous and polluting as its counterpart, fission, and there is a huge amount of the fuels (deuterium or lithium) required for fusion power – up to 60 million years' worth for lithium.

However, fusion power is incredibly expensive and difficult to research. The needed technologies are in the process of being developed or haven't even started. Fusion reactors require massive amounts of money and actually use more energy than they give off, and this problem is far from being solved. Yet, with a future requiring greener technologies and a completely new power system, fusion is an option not for the next 20 years, but for the next 100. Fusion is achievable, despite the numerous problems and difficulties that have arose while developing it.

Global warming is the most urgent problem currently at hand – not the economic crisis or any wars currently raging, but the fact that the world is spiraling downward into a climate crisis that will be very hard to get out of. We need to push aside all the “important” issues in the political world – gay marriage, abortion, religion, control, war, the economy – and focus on what will affect us, the human species as a whole, the most: our environment. No matter how advanced we are or how much we try, we will always rely on the resources around us for our survival. That is what is essential.

COMMUNICATIONS

Throughout the existence of the human species, we have always found ways to communicate – talking and writing on telephones and the Internet. Communication is essential to the advancement of our race, for we can only move on together – it always takes more than one person. Nowadays, for many modern scientific achievements to be made hundreds of people need to cooperate and work on it together. Large corporations require hundreds of people to be connected to their networks so that projects can be completed faster and more efficiently.

Huge advancements in communications have been made in just the last decade. The Internet has connected millions of people and helps with the spread of information. Videoconferencing has eliminated the need for traveling to meetings. The telephone has also been influenced – calling is now cheaper and sounds clearer than ever.

As we continue to communicate with each other, more and more advances will be made. The most important communications resource is, of course, the Internet, a tool which has defined an era. The passage of information between people has never been easier and more efficient. Now, over one billion people use the World Wide Web to study and learn. In schools across the world, students get help with projects or homework using the thousands of study guides on the Internet. The Internet is also used for people to connect with each other – with services for business meetings linking people located across the world, or for a person looking for a date. Communicating and sharing information has never been cheaper and easier.

We must keep the Internet alive and continue its growth. In the future, near and far, communications resources like the Internet will be extremely important – almost essential – to the development and advancement of the human species. Governments need to invest in the Internet by making it faster, more efficient and available for more people. There are so many people in the world who have valuable knowledge that could be shared with millions. There are ideas, floating around, that could develop into solutions for

problems, big and small. Websites like Wikipedia, the world's largest and most comprehensive encyclopedia must be kept alive and operating *at all costs*. Wikipedia currently hosts over 11 million articles in over 230 languages, many of these articles full of information that goes much, much deeper and is more complex than any other information source. Losing all this knowledge would be a massive blow in the new goal of "free information".

As communications technology changes and morphs to fit in with the new workings of the Internet, the telephone will most likely be phased out in the next 50 years. It will be replaced with either videophones or the Internet itself through instant messaging and video chatting. Cellphones will become more popular and technologically advanced over time, but eventually will suffer the same fate as the regular land-line phone.

As I've stressed many times, communication between people is a necessity in the continuing development of the human species. Isolation is not the answer to advancing – cooperation is.

SPACE EXPLORATION

Space is one of those many mysterious places that surrounds us yet is so unknown. For thousands of years, civilizations have surveyed and studied the night sky, charting stars and discovering constellations. And in the process of studying the universe, many thought they had found something new, or had explained something. Most of the time, they were wrong – but in a few exceptions they were almost completely correct. Then, in the 1950s, the human race finally cracked the limits of the atmosphere and explored space for the first time.

Now it has been almost 60 years, and much more has been learned about the universe and our place in it. Humans have traveled to the moon and sent probes out to distant worlds. In the relatively short time that we have been in space, we have seen so much. All this new information is somewhat overwhelming. But, in a much broader sense, we have seen very little. Our tiny spot in the universe, just another planet in another solar system in another galaxy, has no impact at all on what occurs out in space. If Earth were to explode and completely disintegrate, there would be *no* impact on the universe whatsoever. There is still so much to learn.

Space exploration will be an enormous part of the future. NASA plans to establish a colony on the moon by 2020, and there are projects being developed to send humans to Mars. New satellites are being developed for communications. Next-generation planes may enter space to cut travel times. And, possibly, wars (or, in general, conflicts) could happen in space using weapons-based satellites. Tourism could expand into space, bringing regular citizens into the vastness and emptiness of what lies outside the sky. Most importantly, if Earth falls into chaos and disaster in the far-off future, there would be something to fall on – colonies.

This is why the continuing exploration of space is essential to advancing towards the future we dream of. Space can provide answers to difficult scientific questions, it holds minerals that we could use, and it could house people if needed. There are so many possibilities waiting in the future, and space holds many.

WEAPONRY

History tells the tales of hundreds of wars – all fought in different time periods, between different people using different technology. Overall, the period of time in which the battles were fought influences who won and how influential the war was. Two warring nations (or sides) will always have different weapons, and that has an enormous impact on who ends up victorious and who doesn't. For example, in the final month of World War II, the United States dropped two atomic bombs on Nagasaki and Hiroshima in Japan, causing

destruction beyond belief and taking over 300,000 lives. This new technology forced Japan to surrender and ended the bloodiest and dirtiest war in human history.

But the atomic bomb and the era of nuclear weapons it ushered in almost pushed the fragile alliances of the world into another international conflict. The U.S.S.R. and the United States fought for the next 45 years, each trying to collect a bigger nuclear stockpile than the other. After many close calls in which these weapons were almost let off the leash, the climax ended and the U.S.S.R. collapsed under its own failed policies.

This brings me to my first super-important point: nuclear weapons. If a World War III comes along in the future, it could be much, much worse thanks to countries using fission and hydrogen bombs on each other. This is why I call on the nuclear nations to decommission their nuclear arsenals and eliminate weapons of mass destruction. If we do not, the threat of a nuclear war will linger and eventually occur. All-out bombing could have effects comparable to the apocalypse – millions would die, and Earth's climate would dip into a horrid "nuclear winter", as toxic fumes from the bombs and their destruction enter the atmosphere and cool the international climate dramatically. If we want to assure a safe, doomsday-free future, our nuclear armories must be eliminated.

Other destructive weapons, such as chemical weapons, must be kept in limited numbers. The objective of war is to destroy the enemy government, not the civilians. Nations need to stress this – civilian casualties need to be kept to a minimum. While it is inevitable that some innocent lives will be taken during a conflict, we have to keep these deaths to a minimum. During World War II, millions of helpless people were unnecessarily killed – including 6 million under Hitler's Holocaust.

But, if you're going to have a war, you have to do it right. New technologies in tanks, guns of all types, warships, aircraft and other necessary weapons should be encouraged. As I said in Part I, war is sometimes the only way to solve a problem, and using better weapons and more reliable and efficient forces is a good way to win the battles against fascist nations. More reliable weapons will also reduce the number of deaths from faulty equipment and accidental firing. However, I do not encourage hostile advancement – this sends a negative message to other nations, warning that X country is becoming more cautious and less friendly. Weapons research is something that can take place at a steady rate instead of a rapid rate.

Finally, in order to lessen the potential number of casualties during warfare, infantries need to be prepared with more safety equipment. Researching and developing new types of helmets, body armor and such is something that must be kept at top priority. Warfare is dangerous, obviously, and the less injuries sustained means a more flexible and ready military. Better armored vehicles are also vital to making sure that all losses of life are as small as possible. If not, the impact of many deaths could be overwhelming – backlash would rise against the war, and the available forces would be less able to perform the tasks at hand.

War is not the solution to every problem – frankly, it isn't the solution to many problems at all. But when there is that one situation that can only be solved by force, such as World War II or the Mexican-American War, the best way to fight is to fight efficiently and with as little pain as possible.

TRANSPORTATION

Humans are a very nomadic species. We travel to places every day, billions of us – whether it's across the street to work or school or across continents for meetings and vacations, we always use different forms of transportation to get where we want to go. In this section, the four main formats of transport: the automobile, train, aircraft and ship, will be covered. Each has their major differences and drawbacks, and each has varying futures.

CAR

All over the world, millions and millions of cars and trucks take to the road every day. The automobile is the most popular mode of transportation for the human race by far; roads and highways stripe the Earth and lead people to every possible corner of land. Current estimates put the number of automobiles at over 590 million, and 1 billion in the near future. No other mode of transportation matches the massive number of people that travel using cars and trucks every day. The automobile has become so popular that it is doubtful that the basic format of the regular car (four wheels carrying passengers in seats while traveling on a concrete or asphalt surface) will ever be forgotten. The current popularity and mass-production of automobiles dramatically changes its potential future as a form of transportation.

The automobile will be used for the near and far future. However, the current form of energy for them (the internal combustion engine) is way past its expiration date. As was mentioned before, the most imminent crisis facing the human race is global warming, a force that could become almost impossible to reverse if not stopped soon. Cars emit enormous amounts of carbon dioxide per day, each ton making it harder and harder to fix the climate crisis. This is why alternatives, most notably hydrogen engines, must replace internal combustion engines as soon as possible. However, car corporations are moving slowly, and it will take decades to replace the current infrastructure for automobiles – gas stations, mostly. The only way to quickly and easily make this huge transition to hydrogen is by government. This means tax incentives for hydrogen car owners, funding new hydrogen gas stations, and rewarding companies who do invest in this new, green technology.

In a new, different world where resources are becoming ever more difficult to find and use, we cannot continue to waste billions of gallons of oil in automobiles that *could* not emit at all. We shouldn't worry about how fast or good-looking cars are, even if those things are cool and more interesting. We need to worry about the fact that we are looking at a dim future where everything is much harder and more expensive than it was before. If the human race really cares about their planet, then we'll sit up and actually take action instead of talking about new "proposed" engines and delaying countless projects for even longer times. So, simply put, the future of the automobile is in hydrogen. It's time for gas to go.

TRAIN

The train has never been a well-known and famous form of transport. Currently, railways are in decline: the automobile has expanded even more and blanketed the rail industry with even bigger roads and faster, more luxurious, and cheaper cars. But the automobile has reached a tipping point, as people flee from car dealerships due to high gasoline prices and the increasing threat of global warming. The train is making a very slow yet significant comeback. More and more cities are investing in metro systems, and ridership for rail lines in many countries is increasing.

More importantly, the new climate crisis means that trains will have a bigger role in transport. Trains are greener and transport more cargo and passengers in one trip than any other transportation form. Locomotive engines can run on alternative power sources, such as normal electricity, cutting their emissions significantly. These are the main reasons why trains will play a larger role than they have before in transportation – but "larger" does not equal "large". Automobiles will still dominate the transport world, and trains will still have a diminished role.

AIRCRAFT

Aircraft is the future of transportation. Out of the four modes of transport, air travel has always been a fast-moving, expansive and innovative industry. Luckily, the future for the air industry is huge. New developments in airplane technology are coming out more frequently than ever, including the very recent completion of a new type of transport, the space plane, a vehicle that cuts travel times and brings regular civilians outside the boundaries of the atmosphere. However, there are numerous problems with the technology currently being used in planes. The jet engine, which has roots in World War II, is obsolete and must be replaced. Jet fuel has become astronomically expensive and extremely polluting, two flaws that cannot be tolerated in an environmentally-conscious future. Many planes currently in use are aging and becoming too old to continue service.

Therefore, air travel must find a cheap alternative fuel source, or the air industry faces a dark future as passenger numbers decrease over time. That being said, I strongly recommend that the two major aircraft manufacturers (Boeing and Airbus) cooperate with the major international airlines to find a new way to power planes inexpensively and polluting as little as possible. Currently, new biofuels are being tested, but these test flights have just begun, meaning that it could take years until these new solutions make it into jet fuel tanks. We must speed up the process, or the air industry faces doom in the near future.

PASSANGER AND CARGO SHIPS

Ships will survive as a major transportation form for many reasons. Shipping is reliable and is the only way to transport a massive amount of goods between continents. Cruise liners offer a level of vacationing unlike any other, as they are the only ones able to travel by water. Ships can transport tons and tons of many different resources, which serves as an environmental benefit – unlike the automobile, which can only transport a very limited amount of the good.

However, the ship's demise is coming. As more and more advanced automobiles and aircraft, along with longer trains, come out, the ship will eventually fall to the lowest spot on the transport list. Shipping technology has reached its climax, and modern ships can't get much larger than they are – especially considering the absolutely outrageous size of some oil supertankers. No form of alternative energy has been tested for vessels yet (excluding nuclear reactors, which are uneconomical in many sectors of the shipping industry). I discourage any major investments in shipping technology, because shipping has reached a tipping point – ships are now too large, too expensive and too slow. The future does call on ships to be continually used for international trade, but the technology in them won't move anywhere soon.

HEALTHCARE

There are so many diverse, complicated diseases that plague the human race currently. While in the last 100 years great advances have been made in medicine and general healthcare, there are *still* many, many horrible viruses which have yet to be solved. These include, among many, cancer and AIDS. It is assured that in the future, new sicknesses will spread and there will be even more to cure. Plagues are part of evolution and are entirely natural, and sadly inevitable. There will always be a handful of horrific, incurable diseases that will spread and kill.

But, as medical technology advances, solutions to these problems can be found. Investing in medical research is essential to preventing dangerous diseases from spreading, causing pandemics, and helps prevent

new sicknesses from emerging in pockets of the world population. A major new ability is stem cell research, something medical scientists to solve huge medical problems injuring and killing millions. It is *absolutely crucial* that we allow this practice to be performed so that the human race can live healthier and individuals can live richer and longer lives. Viruses like cancer could be cured using stem cells.

I mentioned above “longer lives”, and this raises a major question: whether medical researchers should attempt to extend the human lifespan beyond 80 years. The senior population contributes very little to the international economy, due to their lack of working individuals, and only consumes resources that the poor and sick could use. Because the old don’t benefit anyone, only consume, I recommend that the world’s average lifespan should stall at 80 years. It isn’t necessary, nor practical with a booming world population nearing 7 billion (and upwards of 9 billion by 2050) to extend the average human’s life beyond 80 years.

In many nations, healthcare is very poor and limited. Regions such as South Asia, Africa and parts of Central and South America suffer from devastating plagues due to the lack of healthcare in those regions. Many organizations and charities, including the United Nations, are trying to help bring reliable healthcare to these areas – but it isn’t enough. The governments of these dilapidated nations must step up and help their people. This way, coupled with a widespread education system, these countries can rise to the top and help advance the human race instead of tarnish its image. For example, India is in the phase of cleaning up the dirty, unhealthy areas of the country and is starting to make new advances in technology thanks to its latest efforts to become a Western nation.

Healthcare is one of the main reasons why the human race advanced to the stature it holds now. Over thousands of years, new, innovative ways of curing sicknesses and stretching out our lifespan were found. Hundreds and hundreds of diseases were discovered and solved. New surgeries can heal even the most destructive wounds and save lives. Almost any organ can be fixed relatively easily by thousand of medical practitioners all around the world. In many nations, healthcare is available to a majority of the population – in most industrialized nations, free of charge. Millions are saved from death by skilled doctors and amazing new medicines every year.

However, many areas of the world are sick and dying. Diseases plague hundreds of millions of people, struggling to survive. There are no hospitals to cure the wounded, or the ones that do exist are poorly funded and the practitioners have little to no experience. Very few survive enormous plagues that sweep across nations. The governments of these countries ignore the suffering and greedily reside in luxurious mansions. Other nations reach out to help, but are unable to make much widespread progress.

Healthcare is one of the fastest advancing technology sectors, and its continued research and milestones are needed to keep the human race living. Advances in this field help make us more flexible and able to accomplish difficult tasks. We need to keep living healthily, or we’ll spend precious time curing plagues instead of moving on. Healthiness is healthy, and it is needed for a successful future.

CONCLUSION: ADVANCEMENT

I do believe that the human race is a very flexible and able species, and that we will continue our advancement as we move out beyond Earth. Humans have already accomplished a lot – landing a man on the moon, creating intelligent computers and the massive, worldwide computer network, the Internet, solving complex problems in healthcare, discovering nuclear energy – and much, much more. However, there is so much more to accomplish. There are many things which could have (and should have) been done by now. Alternative power sources, something we could have invested in decades ago, are now an essential part of the future – partly thanks to our own polluting automobiles and power plants. Using stem cells as a cure for many

dangerous illnesses could have been done by now, but this hasn't been accomplished – thanks to our own religious bickering about it. Many technology sectors, including computers, the Internet and the automobile industry, could have made so many beneficial advances. We have had many, many chances to take advantage of our inherited intelligence and use it to solve problems – but many of those chances were wasted. In the future, we will have additional opportunities, and we must use these openings for the good of mankind.

Ultimately, the destiny of the human race lies on how much we advance. We could make enormous advancements: colonize space, discover alien races, engineer fusion power plants, conquer sicknesses. Or, we could wither and fall to the huge challenges that will face us as time progresses. Intelligence is a resource that can be used by all – but only if we cooperate and give as much effort as possible. Over time, science will only become more difficult and time-consuming; it will require more manpower and more minds. As the human race surges on into the new realm of high technology and complex, difficult science, we will need all the brainpower possible. Knowledge must be shared and transferred – only by working together will our species crawl up to the next level.

In this game, there are infinite levels. There will always be more to learn and record. It is doubtful that the human race will last through all the unbelievable challenges that are imminent in the far future – but we can try our best to solve these puzzles and use our evolved minds to overcome each apocalyptic occurrence. We will always just be animals, making every striving effort to survive and move on in the world. Humans are just animals – like every other species on Earth – except that our advanced intelligence grants us much larger abilities... and much larger challenges. Sometimes, the challenges will be larger than what we can handle – this is inevitable. But we can overcome. Nothing is impossible when it comes to the human race.

However, that applies to stupidity as well. We can be incredibly ignorant at times – one survey shows that an unbelievable 13% of Americans think the moon is made of cheese. I've said this before – humans have a certain level of common sense, but we don't use it enough to make credible choices. Sometimes, people move too quickly and make important decisions without balancing the situations and choosing the side that actually makes sense after the logic is run. Major ideas in the modern world that point to our incredible lack of common sense are subjects like religion and the War in Iraq. Even after the flaws and problems with these points are found, and the evidence is collected and shown to the masses, our lack of thought leads to the complete denial of what really happened. This leads into the next part: religion.

PART THREE: RELIGION

There are many credible dangers facing the human race, as I have stressed many times throughout this report. Religion is one of the worst of these challenges. Faith is an example of why humans have not been able to advance as quickly and fluently as possible, and is a shining illustration of our lack of common sense. If we are to call ourselves an “advanced” species, this is the one major flaw we must overcome.

Curiosity is a completely natural thing and is a sign of intelligence. It is through curiosity that we have made many great accomplishments, and curiosity is what keeps us humans going. It stimulates our senses and pushes us to solve great mysteries and problems. Religion was an answer to the imminent questioning pestering ancient civilizations – “Where did we come from?” “How were we created?”

These people had no natural answer. This was a period where science was based on random myths and the human race was barley from developing. In order to provide a possible answer to these questions, books

like the Bible and Koran were written. They were accepted and taught as fact for hundreds of years, without much opposition or any other creation theories to stem their spread among the human population. That is, until the human race reached a new level in intelligence. Science began blossoming in the 19th century, and new theories arose falsifying many of the ideas of the three monotheistic religions. Since Darwinian evolution was introduced into the scientific arena in the 1840s, religion has undergone many bashings by new evidence disproving large portions of most creation theories.

As the number of religious people drops dramatically and the number of atheists, agnostics and the non-religious rise (by up to 15% per year), the future of religion is looking bleak. Religion has reached a tipping point where, for the first time in history, a widespread opposition to religion and its teachings has formed. Across the world, people are dropping religion. After over 2,000 years of dominating the world population, it seems that the “big three” monotheistic beliefs are coming to an end.

CREATION MYTHS

Myth, n. – A person or thing *existing only in imagination*, or whose actual existence is *not verifiable*.

- Webster's Revised Unabridged Dictionary, 1998

Over 2,000 years ago, the human race was in the infancy of advancement, and many basic questions had yet to be answered. At the time, the most intriguing was explaining how the world came to be, and what “force” created the universe. This was answered through stories, myths that sought to “figure out” what really happened before time. One of the many tales floating around at the time was the Christian Bible, simply another religion that had formed. The Bible insists that God was the single force that created the universe, Earth, life and controls every event that occurs in the world. It also asserts that, after death, humans keep living (nullifying the definition of the word “death”, which means something *stops* living) in either Heaven or Hell. Heaven, a magical land in which the person’s soul is showered with their every desire, is ruled by God and is solely for the good. Hell, on the other hand, is a wasteland of eternal fire and torture, ruled by the Devil and reserved for the most evil on Earth.

While a majority of religions present in that age died out after a few hundred years, a small handful (Judaism, Islam, Christianity/Catholicism, Buddhism and Hinduism) survived and became the world’s leading beliefs. Today, 88% of the world population is religious, with Christianity leading at about 33%. In a modern age where science has overtaken faith as the primary, most reliable source for answers to creation questions, an overwhelming amount of humans are still religious. Therefore, I want to stress that these are creation *myths*. Myths that were written up two-thousand years ago, when the human race had yet to discover all the amazing things the world has to offer, all the answers that were lying under our noses. If we truly want to call ourselves an “advanced” species that is ready to colonize space and do new, unbelievable things, we must abandon these *myths* that have plagued us for so long. Common sense should tell us that the idea of a living god who created the world in only a week is absolutely ridiculous. There is no solid evidence of a creator god, and it is extremely doubtful there ever will be. Numerous studies have been done indicating the lack of the influence of God, including three studies involving prayer published by Duke University and the American Heart Association, all which showed no effect on sick patients in hospitals that were prayed for compared to ones that weren’t. One of the two studies by the American Heart Association actually showed a negative effect on patients that were prayed for – more frequent deaths and slower recovery times occurred in those patients, due to the added stress of knowing that they were being prayed for.

It really is surprising just how religious the human race has become. There are so many flaws that can be associated with faith. Religion is incredibly falsifiable, and too many beliefs discriminate – be it against homosexuals or women. Not only this, but all the good bits that are shipped with religion – morals (“love thy neighbor”) that we should follow – are ignored, overlooked. Why is it that our species is the only on Earth that has tricked itself into believing lies? Why are we so stupid? How could a force so incredibly despicable survive for such a long time? The answer to the latter question lies in our children.

GENERATION BY GENERATION

The main reason faith has continued as a primary force in the world for so long is because it is passed on from generation to generation. For 2,000 years, children have been taught the ways of their parent’s religion, fooled into believing such unusual tales. This practice continues on to this day, as forceful as ever. Now, parents have a wider ammunition stockpile than before – besides church (or the mosque or temple or whatever), there are Sunday schools, private religious schools, summer camps and all sorts of other brainwashing centers. Parents insist that their children must follow their religious beliefs, no matter what – and that, that is just plain *wrong*.

If we are to become a more diversified society that encourages freedom and the ability to choose instead of what I call “limited development”, we must let our children make their own choices. I call on parents to encourage their children to choose a religion – or no religion at all – instead of, as Richard Dawkins put it, “forcing it down their throats”. Every human, regardless of race, gender, or sexuality has the undeniable right to be able to choose their own faith. Parents may think they have the “right” to choose their child’s religion for them, instead of encouraging their own development at their own pace, but human rights laws apply to all people, and age is not an exception. That includes the Constitution of the United States, unfortunately for most American parents.

Parents need to explain to their children the values and beliefs of the major religions (and atheism, for that matter) and encourage them to make a choice. Parents should not be biased towards any of the religions, or tell their kids that one particular religion is “right”, because young people are easily tricked and will believe almost whatever their parent says. Besides, the parent’s religion might as well be wrong, because an overwhelming majority of the world’s beliefs are incorrect about almost everything (Buddhism is the one exception).

The common belief that atheism is some sort of cynical, communist devotion is not true. Atheism should not at all be excluded from a child’s religious choice – actually, it should be encouraged just as much as any of the other religions for them to choose from. Atheism could be accurately described as the actual future of religion, because the number of atheists, agnostics and non-religious has been rising for decades as the number of monotheistic religious people drops.

Religion is not something that parents can inject into their kid’s minds just because they think it is “correct” and the “only path”. Faith is personal, a decision that shouldn’t be forced onto someone because of another person’s opinions. I would actually like to see laws passed *preventing* parents from influencing the religious choices of their children, because they have absolutely no right to. Parents: you have to encourage your children to make their own choices. They will be more independent intellectually because you let them choose their own life path instead of being forced yours. I don’t care if their choice is a “sin” or will prevent them from making it to Heaven, because it is *their choice, their right*, and you have no place there, no matter how much of a control freak you are. It isn’t just healthy for your children, it’s law.

RELIGIOUS TENSIONS

Throughout the entire existence of the human race, there has always been war – and every war starts for a different reason. In World War I, it was Archduke Ferdinand’s assassination. In World War II, it was Germany’s invasion of Poland. In the War on Terror, it was religious-inspired terrorist attacks. Religion can play a huge role in war – over the course of history, many conflicts have been sparked because of faith. These differences in belief can raise tensions – even with people in the *same* religion. In Iraq, the United States’ invasion set off a civil war between Shiite and Sunni Muslims – two factions of the same belief.

Religion is unhealthy in this way: it separates people, turns people against each other. All these enormous, yet unnecessary, disagreements over what faith is “right” or “wrong” have split portions of the world population up. Take, for example, Christianity – originally one single belief, it was soon split between Catholics and Christians, and then the Christians split multiple times, forming hundreds of differing churches all over the world – all because of small arguments over interpretation of the Bible. Infighting in the Christian religion has been prevalent for centuries, thanks to the multiple divisions that have been made over time.

It is hardly necessary to bicker and fight over who is “right” and “wrong” because these are opinions. For example, a large portion of the world population most likely believes that murder is “wrong”. However, terrorists and serial killers would think that there’s nothing bad about taking another person’s life. They think it is “right”. While most would say it is “wrong” to kill, that is their opinion – there are people out there who believe it’s “right”. The same logic applies to religion – the “right” and “wrong” teachings of Christianity are opinions, and everyone has a different thought on what should and shouldn’t be interpreted in the Bible. This doesn’t mean we should start a commotion over it – people shouldn’t try to inject their own ideas into others. Everyone has the right to believe whatever they want to believe, even if it is stupid and wrong, and arguing over it won’t help anyone get anywhere.

But there are too many people in the world that have the idea that everyone must follow one faith. This can most easily be shown in Arab terrorists, including Osama bin Laden and al Qaeda. These mysterious people attack Western nations because they are against the ideas of free religion. Osama bin Laden’s goal, by trying to destroy the United States and its allies, is to exterminate Christianity and spread the murderous Muslim ideas they hold dear. If there were no religion, however, there would be no terrorism, less war and more peace. The international conflicts of belief are tearing us apart as a species. The fact that we fight and fight over something as senseless and unnecessary as religion is an enormous example of just how gullible and undeveloped we humans really are.

All the war in the Middle East, all those bombings in London and the lurking threat of some form of air attack on the U.S. could all just float away if we came to our senses and lessened, if not abandoned, religion. After so much progress has been made, after so many discoveries and inventions, we are just going to battle over some dusty book written 2,000 years ago? What this says about us is not just embarrassing, it is sad. I call on the people of the world, Christian and Muslim, theist and atheist, Shiite and Sunni, Protestant and Catholic, to cooperate peacefully with each other instead of war and argue. We can get to so many new places if we just be diplomatic.

Of course, solving these differences will be a bit of a challenge. This is why I also encourage people to lessen their religious views – be more open to new ideas. Research the beliefs of other faiths instead of criticizing them. Allow new movements – including homosexuality, abortion, and stem cell research – to pass instead of going against them on the ground that it conflicts with *your* religious views. The world is not all about *you* – we must allow room for others to join in and help. While *you* may think an issue is “wrong”, there

are others that differ, and your opinion should not represent everybody's opinion. This is limiting our development – and that leads into the next section.

LIMITING OUR ADVANCEMENT

In this report, I have mentioned stem cell research multiple times. Using unborn human embryos to discover new cures to horrific diseases is something we must do in order to save millions of lives. Stem cell research could pave the way to solving many medical mysteries and one curing one of the toughest sicknesses: cancer.

However, there is a widespread opposition to stem cell research. Why? Because the conservative Christian base in the United States opposes what they view as the “killing” of humans. I will dumb it down for them: human embryos *are not living people*. They are undeveloped groups of cells – only 150 per embryo. Many insects that we step on and smack down every day have almost 100 times this number of cells. “Human” embryos do not have a functioning brain or any organs. Usually, they are only three days old by the time scientists start prodding and picking at them. While these extremely religious people would prefer to imagine “what could've been” of the embryos, there are a lot of potentials in life, and too many are missed. Curing diseases and saving millions is a much bigger potential than simply having one more child to take care of. Sure, there is an extremely slim chance that the person born from that embryo could grow up and make some sort of huge accomplishment, but there are also millions out there, in the African safaris and South Asian jungles, that could also do so much if their lives were better. Banning stem cell research to save a few babies is a stupid, unverified decision – it's either save a handful of children or save entire countries' worth of dying people. Curing diseases is part of advancement, and religion is limiting it.

Scientific theories, most notably evolution and climate change, are under attack by extremist religious groups. Evolution is one of the few science topics that collides with religion in a large way. It falsifies many sections of prominent holy books and teachings that have been passed on, from generation to generation, for hundreds of years. Of course, any new, radical idea takes some time to settle in. However, since *On the Origin of Species* was published in 1859, we've had 150 years to adapt to evolution. In general, there is a massive – massive – amount of evidence supporting Darwinian evolution. Human DNA is 99.5% similar to that of apes, our ancestors. Since the London Underground subway system was built in 1863, a new species of mosquito has evolved there. Fossils extracted from many areas of Earth fit with other, similar fossils and create detailed timelines of a species' evolution. There is no doubt, by any biologist, that evolution is not fact. I think it's about time we shredded the Book of Genesis and follow ideas we have observed and know to be true. Opposition to evolution by creationists, who argue that it's “just a theory” and cite “broken timelines” with missing links are clearly not familiar with evolution. By definition, a theory is, of course, not a fact, but a “set of statements used to describe phenomena”. Basically, it's an idea. However, the label “theory” applies quite nicely to religion as well – a synonym of “theory” is “belief”. This puts evolution and religion on the same basic level – they're just two ideas. Evolution, however, is the one with more evidence and the one that is actually observable. Religion has no proof to back itself up – it cites a group of mysterious books, all of which completely unreferenced and written in ancient times when the world was a mystery. No religion can be observed in real life, even though some have claimed to have had spiritual “visions” – that will be covered later.

Arguments of “missing links” are not relevant because animal skeletons are rarely fossilized. Timelines that do exist currently are detailed enough to clearly show that evolution occurred in the development of X species – take, for example, the horse, which has an extremely detailed recorded timeline, one which analyzes

everything, right down to the evolution of the bones in the hooves. Additional attacks, such as the accusation that some animals (or some of their features) are too complex to have been an output of evolution, are also false and have been disproven quickly and neatly by the scientific community. Yes, many body parts, most notably the eye, are extremely complex, but this does not mean that they couldn't have been developed through evolution. Biologists have always found ways to explain the development of these organs while abiding by the principles of evolution, so evolution hasn't failed as fact yet. Darwin did acknowledge that if something was to be found too complex and elaborate to have been created by evolution, his theory would collapse. Yet, after 150 years, it hasn't.

Part of moving on means abandoning failed ideas. Religion is one of those outdated, dead theories that needs to be left behind. In the last 100 years, the world has changed a lot, and the human race jumped ahead on the advancement scale. We have probably learned more in the last century than we have in the entire history of our species. However, we can do so much more with that new intelligence – we could cure diseases and answer those extreme questions, such as the creation queries, that have babbled us for so long. However, religion is holding us back – religion is the master, and the human race is the dog on a leash. If we really care about our race, we must kill off religion – while that does sound harsh, it is entirely necessary. There are several more reasons why faith is dangerous... starting with mass insanity.

MASS INSANITY

Wherever religion exists, there are bound to be people who claim that their god(s) “spoke” to them or gave them some sort of psychological message. In order to counter claims made by atheists, religious people use this “message” story as evidence of a creator god. However, this is simply not true – the human mind, as Richard Dawkins elaborated in *The God Delusion*, is much more complex than we can imagine.

This is how hearing works: the ears pick up sound and relay that data to the brain. The brain, in turn, processes that sound to the best of its ability and then releases it for you to hear. All of this happens in milliseconds – an example of how powerful our minds are. Now, note how I mentioned that the brain processes this sound *to the best of its ability*. If the brain detects an unusual sound, it will usually try to relate it to a previously heard sound – for example, someone talking. Just because you may hear someone talking does not mean that, in reality, someone *is* talking – your brain just got confused for a second. If you move closer to the source of the “talking”, it will turn out to be something entirely different. Religious people have sections of their holy books etched into their memories, and the brain will use this saved data to identify unusual noises. For example, if a Christian person hears God “talking” to them about the apocalypse; it would probably just be a faint noise being made understandable by the brain. If that person moved closer to the faint noise, the brain would be able to identify it better and play the proper sound. These brain-produced noises have been shown as the culprit time and time again, ruling out the idea of a “talking” God.

If it isn't because of a faint noise, “talking” to God can also be a sign of a mental illness. For example, in January 2008 the co-pilot of an Air Canada flight from Toronto to London had to be restrained and dragged out of the cockpit after continuous rambling about talking to God. After an emergency landing in Ireland, the man was taken to a nearby psychiatric hospital and tests revealed the man suffered a mental breakdown mid-flight.

Faith in a god can also lead people to do stupid and dangerous things. In 1999, *another* co-pilot of *another* trans-Atlantic flight crashed his plane into the ocean, killing over 200, shortly after turning off the autopilot and stating that he was “[putting] his faith in God”. Clearly, there was no God there to help him. On a much larger scale, Muslim terrorists attack Western nations and the other monotheistic religions because of

their belief that God is commanding them to. And, mentioned in the previous section, religion causes people to childishly refuse to accept the facts – evolution, global warming, stem-cell research – the list goes on. Finally, religion induces control – be it over gays or atheists. This leads into the next section.

RELIGIOUS POLITICS

For some unusual reason, the human race has a knack for always introducing faith into government. This can be observed in ancient monarchies that mandated that one religion be followed, or in modern nations where conservatism willingly injects policies based on religious teachings into the workings of government. Nevertheless, it always fuels heated debate and separates groups of people. Faith was never meant to be part of leadership; it is completely separate and personal. Letting religion and government collide with each other can be dangerous, as I will explain here.

Religion is deeply embedded in the human race – it is so amazingly personal and “important” that it has a significant influence over almost everything. For example, in the Middle East faith is stapled onto almost every imaginable topic. This includes women, education, clothing, technology, science – the list goes on. As a result of the overwhelming loyalty to Islam present in this region, governments there base a majority of their laws on the teachings of the Koran. This includes the ugly parts – women are subject to terrible conditions in these nations and are executed for the most unusual reasons. Gays are stoned for no apparent reason other than the belief that it’s “wrong”. Atheists are barred from doing almost anything – becoming a citizen, purchasing certain items, even residency. The people in these countries are so pious that they are willing to kill and slaughter innocent civilians based on the laws dictated by a 2,000 year old book. If the governments of these countries tried to end the outrageous amount of violence instead of encouraging it, chances are that conditions would be much better. In these cases, religion and government are mixed together in a very ugly way.

Meanwhile, the nations that encourage freedom of religion and try to keep government neutral usually experience decreased violence and a wider range of civil rights available to residents. The members of the European Union, Australia, Canada, Japan, South Korea, and to a *lesser extent*, the United States are all prosperous nations that also have numerous freedom of faith laws and policies in effect. These nations attempt to keep government secular and try not to sway in favor of one faith. In the case of the United States, however, religion irritatingly interferes with leadership. One can easily and factually describe America as the most pious developed nation. Because of the strong presence of Christianity in the U.S., especially in the southern portions of the country, leaders are elected that make decisions based on faith. The political party that contains a majority of these religious leaders, the Republican Party, takes stances on many controversial issues with a Christian-based point of view. This is not an example of how elected leaders should govern if they are to represent all of the citizens in their respective districts. Since Republicans have tried to ban gay marriage, limit gay rights, and de-legalize abortion, a political rift has formed between the conservative and liberal groups in the United States. Religion has infiltrated government and is causing outrage. Some members of the Republican Party are so motivated by their mixed religious and political views that they murder abortionists in the name of government. Riots have been started over gay rights, especially in the center-left state of California. As a result of the GOP’s careless ideology, America is becoming more divided.

The religious conservative base in the United States is also attempting to spread Christianity through public schooling. The constitution of the United States clearly lays down that government (state-operated schools) and religion are not to interfere with one another. When evolution was introduced into school science curriculums, it was met with harsh backlash from the Republicans. Ever since, the conservatives have

attempted to substitute the teaching of evolution with other, faith-based teachings. These include creationism, which was gleefully killed by the Supreme Court by the 1980s, or intelligent design, which was also killed. The latter is still lingering around, however, especially in the red state of Kansas. In a nutshell, intelligent design is creationism without the Bible. It claims that a “spiritual life force” created the universe and everything in it, and backs that claim up with this “evidence”: that some things are too complex to have been evolved. This is false and can be easily shot down using fact-based biological theories. Almost any qualified biologist can explain the evolution of even the most complex lifeforms.

There are some extremist Christian preachers in the United States that claim that America is a God-guided, wholly Christian nation and that freedom of religion is cynical and wrong. They swear they will infiltrate government and turn the U.S. into a Christian version of Iran – a fascist, merciless, controlling leader that bases laws purely on the Bible, including the terribly disturbing Old Testament. They would execute abortionists, ban other faiths and deport gays. Just by reading this, one can see how dangerous letting the faithful and government mingle really is. If these extremist, Christian Taliban members do gain a seat of power, all hell could break loose. Some senators, such as Oklahoman Senator Jim Inhofe, make political decisions purely based on faith. Inhofe claims he is “proud” not to have one single gay or lesbian family member, denies global warming (even with unspeakable amounts of pure scientific evidence to counter his refutation) and routinely quotes passages from the Bible when speaking on the Senate floor. He additionally has a desire to shoot down the founding “separation of church and state” passage in the Constitution and was quoted as saying that he has no problem with torturing inmates at Guantanamo Bay. When a dangerously faithful man like Inhofe enters government, he can make many misleading and false statements – such as that there is “evidence” refuting climate change released by the “nation’s top scientists”. This is blatantly false and somewhat idiotic, as a majority of climate researchers now firmly believe that global warming is real and evident. The claim that the “nation’s top scientists” disagree with climate change cannot be referenced, as Inhofe failed to provide any names or verification. Not surprisingly, Inhofe is second in the nation when it comes to campaign funding by oil companies.

Religion injures our capability to govern. Overly religious leaders usually have extremely closed minds and make terrible political choices based on personal faith. If politicians are supposed to make reasonable decisions for entire regions of people, then they should keep their faith out of their political influence. Otherwise, less progress and more bad choices will be made. Inhofe is the perfect example – a brainwashed, unreasonable, somewhat stupid man who clearly doesn’t understand any of the issues he discusses so dearly – he just takes advice from a 2,000-year-old book. Is that who we should trust? Someone who can’t make choices for the people? An overly conservative, environment-hating man who trusts an outdated piece of literature rather than the facts?

If we let religion and government collide, our nations will slowly but surely turn into dictatorships like those in the Middle East. We denounce their actions, yet we embrace our own, equally unreasonable attempts to mix church and state. These boundaries are placed to protect us from becoming like Iran or Medieval England. These boundaries are to ensure a balanced, free social theatre in which we can mingle and frolic in without having to worry about what personal choices we make. Those who attempt to advance their own faiths using government are hurting the image and advancement of the human race. Religion is entirely personal and should not be forcefully spread about. Historically, all controlling religious nations have fallen apart eventually – be it the British Empire or the civil war that broke out between Muslims in Iraq. Meanwhile, the more liberal, free nations have stood the tests of time and continue to prosper. Don’t be selfish and try to advance your *own* flawed ideals. Count yourself lucky that you’re not in Iran right now – because your

attempts to advance religion using government will drag your own nation down to the same sick, demented level.

THE WAR AGAINST GAYS AND ABORTIONISTS

This section applies specifically to the Western world, and more directly to the United States – the most Christian nation on Earth. In the West, there is a widespread disapproval of abortion and homosexuality, mainly due to their interference with the religious beliefs of others. It is clearly stated in the Bible and the Koran that homosexuality is a “sin” and will lead to one’s peril in the depths of Hell. Abortion violates the much-noted commandment “thou shall not kill” – because, as many have come to believe, abortion “kills” “babies”.

I must correct this: not all abortions kill “babies”. Early abortions are the disposal of unborn, undeveloped fetuses – fetuses that lack any nervous system or a developed mind. They cannot comprehend “pain” or “death” because they have barely developed. An overused excuse for being “pro-life” is that abortion “kills”, but one cannot be killed if they aren’t even alive yet. Early abortions cannot fall upon the category of murder because the fetus is fully dependent on the mother – it has not developed much at all, so therefore it is immune to what we perceive as “death”. On the other hand, late abortions are much less pretty. If a mother aborts too late, the unborn fetus will feel the death. Even with my stance as an extreme liberal (I am not afraid to state this), I do not support late-term abortions – the conservatives are correct when they call *that* murder. Early-term abortions, however, cannot be technical fatalities because the fetus isn’t developed and does not have any measureable amount of intelligence required to feel pain.

Now, that being said, I would like to move on to the main issue in this section – the barbaric persecution of the gay population. This is a pure example of extreme religious groups attempting to make their ideas law, and that makes them idiots (I’m *not* afraid to say that, either). Faith has become so mainstream and influential it causes masses of people to follow clearly outdated principles that are not designed for a 21st-century world. There is no logical reason to discriminate against homosexuality other than its perception as “wrong” by an unreferenced 2,000-year-old book. I do recall another excuse made by a neighbor of mine who is strongly Republican – that homosexuals, according to Darwinian evolution, are “flaws” in the human population and are not necessary as they fail to contribute to the human population (have children). There one major error with this theory that took me until hours after the debate to realize. First, while gays can be classified as “flaws” in the species, these “flaws” are required to balance the human population and to help prevent overpopulation. If there were no homosexuals or childless people in the world, it would be assured that the international population would soar to unbelievable and unsustainable heights. Gays are important and necessary as they balance out population growth, even to a limited degree.

So this leads into the more social problem: why should we limit their rights? Gay marriage doesn’t harm anyone, it just brings people together. I strongly support homosexual marriage based on the fact that it won’t cause any problems, short- or long-term. A commonly made argument is that gay marriage will lead to people wedding multiple spouses and even animals and random objects, but this is also false. Gay marriage simply changes the wording of marriage law – from “a man and a woman” to “a person and a person”. It doesn’t open any loopholes that could let other changes be made. The modification is so incredibly simple that it can’t possibly open doors. Multiple spouses would change it to “a person and other persons” and animals and objects to “a person and another living or non-living object”. Homosexual marriage is not, in any

way, related to the other types of marriage that small portions of the population petition for. It is completely obvious that homosexuality and multiple spouses are not two things in common. One involves gender, the other involves numbers. The same logic applies to objects and animals – one involves gender, the other involves species.

If we remove religious influences from the equation, in a secular government there is no reasonable excuse to outlaw homosexual marriage. Basing our modern-day governmental policies on some dusty old book published in the ancient ages says a lot about our gullibility and our common sense. Gays are people too – living, breathing people who have the same heart and mind as the heterosexual world does. They just think differently. Homosexuality could actually be an inherited trait – genetic studies looking into this are leaning towards the conclusion that it is not a personal decision and rather one that was passed on through DNA. Who are we to abuse them just because we disagree with their way of life? It is not our life to control. However, mentioned at the beginning of this report, control is something people love. Every living human has had, at one point, a desire to control others. It may just be natural.

We must free the gays and allow early abortions. While, in some opinions, it may not be “right”, one’s definition of what is “right” and “wrong” varies. *Your “right” is not their “right”*. I beg the anti-gays and anti-abortionists of the world to admit that they have no privilege to control the will of others. As I said before, do we want to pull ourselves down to the level of Iran? Or do we want to be the free, mixed nations that we always claimed that we “loved”? If the United States and its Western allies want to be totally free and fair, they must put aside their religious disagreements and stop discriminating. We like to preach that we aren’t like the controlling Arab nations, but sometimes we think just like them.

CONCLUSION: RELIGION AND THE SCIENTIFIC EVIDENCE AGAINST FAITH

Before I get to any of the more philosophical writing here, I would like to list a small portion of the massive amount of backed-up scientific evidence against certain teachings in holy books here.

- **Age of the Earth** – geological findings from meteorite remains and exposed crust in certain parts of the world conclusively show that the Earth is approximately 4.54 billion years old, over 9,000,000% higher than the 5,000-year-old age elaborated upon by some creationists.
- **Creation theory** – there is an amazingly diverse and enormous amount of factually-based evidence disproving creationism. The most significant, evolution, contends that all animal and plant species on Earth evolved over millions of years from the beginning of life. This conflicts with common religious views that everything was “created”, as-is. Evolution can be observed in many insect species because of their short lifespans – genetic changes occur much more quickly as one generation exits every two weeks or so. As mentioned before, a new species of mosquito evolved in only 150 years in the London Underground railway network – relatively short compared to the millions of years required for humans. No remains of the Garden of Eden, the primary location in the Book of Genesis where a majority of God’s “creations” first originated, have ever been found. Materialistically, no evidence of a creator god from any religion has been found. It only exists in the minds of humans.
- **“Noah and the Ark”** – The story of Noah and the Ark, which tells of an international flood encompassing all but the mountaintops, is well known among the general population. However, the statistical problems with this myth are enormous. If we look at the history of the soil in any area on

Earth, there is no clear indication that some sort of massive flood occurred. It is also likely that there is not enough water to cover the entire planet's surface – a majority of it, but not *all* of it. Water cannot be destroyed or created, there is always a consistent amount of H₂O on Earth. Even if all the ice melted and all the clouds emptied, there would still be a considerably large amount of habitable land remaining. The continuation of life by inhabiting the ark with two of each animal is also ridiculous and impossible. To gather every animal species on the planet would be like climbing Mount Everest drunk. It's *not possible*. There are millions of different types of animal, and it is extremely doubtful all of them would survive for almost two months on a small ark. The myth ends with the party surviving the flood and landing on Mount Ararat, almost totally submerged by 16,000-foot-deep waters*. However, searches on Mount Ararat have turned up fruitless. The problems with this childish-sounding section of the Book of Genesis clearly falsify it.

- **Intelligent Design** – In order to spread monotheism, religious conservatives have attempted to introduce “intelligent design”, mentioned before, into school curriculums. Intelligent design (ID) is basically creationism worded down to sound more politically correct. It claims that a mysterious “creator” designed the universe and all its contents, and that evolution is improbable due to the sheer “complexity” of some animals and their body features. As I said before, evolution is incredibly flexible and can be applied to almost anything. Even the seemingly most complex organs can have a fitting timeline of evolution behind them. As for some kind of “creator”, there is no evidence of one. Simply put, God's existence is just as probable as $2 + 2$ equaling 1,793.954. It isn't probable at all.
- **Prayer** – This was covered earlier in the report – the effects of prayer cannot be observed. Studies have shown that patients prayed for and not prayed for at a hospital have equal death rates. Actually, those who knew they were being prayed for suffered more due to the anxiety over what God would do to them.
- **The Apocalypse** – The Bible and, to a lesser extent, other holy books describe the “end of the world” – the apocalypse – in which Jesus returns to Earth and resurrects all the “good” Christians into a newly founded Kingdom of God. Meanwhile, those who aren't deemed holy are left to perish on the molten hellhole that Earth morphs into. Hundreds of predictions about when this ambiguous even will occur have been made, even one by well-known scientist Isaac Newton who sets a date in 2060. Of course, none of these have been correct, and no signs of the return of Jesus have appeared. Still, devout religious people consistently anticipate the apocalypse. There is no evidence of some kind of doomsday occurring anytime soon, yet people still seem to be deluded enough to look forward to an event that, after a relatively small dose of common sense, seems ridiculous. Anyway, the main point is that science cannot predict the apocalypse or verify its occurrence due to the simple fact that there is no indication that it will happen.
- **Heaven, hell and the afterlife** – As many well know, heaven and hell are the two areas in which one enters after death. Heaven is for the good – it is stock full of luxuries and all the greatness of life. Hell, meanwhile, is for the evil – it is positioned in the molten center of the Earth where endless torture and fire burn victims forever. Science cannot find these places – they are undetectable. No solid proof of heaven or its counterpart hell have ever been found. While some claim to have “seen” heaven or the stairway to it in near-death experiences, these are most likely the work of the brain in its final moments. Before death, one feels a sudden coziness and good feeling all over the body. Most likely, the brain is attempting to display enjoyable images to accompany this. This also leads into the afterlife – that humans have “souls” that continue on to heaven/hell after death. Obviously, no medical evidence of a soul in the body has been thrown out yet. As far as we know, when something dies it

stops living. We may want to make ourselves feel better by conjuring up the imagining of a divine paradise where we reside after death, but the sad truth is that we will all die fully. Many defendants of religion claim that the fact faith makes people “feel better” about themselves is a reason to be religious. Well, eating tons of fast food every day may also make you feel good, but it isn’t necessarily healthy, is it? The scientifically-based fact is that we will all perish and none of us can live on. I’d like to see some certified, factually-based report come out proving the existence of a human soul before I believe any of it.

Now that we have tortured the holy books using relatively simple and comprehensible scientific facts, it’s time to continue the conclusion. Religion was originally used as an explanation for natural phenomena thousands of years ago. Whether it’s the Greek gods around 12,000 years ago or the current monotheistic God today, they all serve the same purpose – to explain the unknown. Faith relies on the imagination for its power, not on facts and proven ideas.

But we have entered a new era in the human race. Science has suddenly exploded before our eyes and is there to explain so many things we once thought were unimaginable – and it does it quickly and simply. This raises the new question: is religion, with its many errors and annoyances, necessary anymore? Now that we can answer questions using technology and intelligence instead of just guessing, we should start abandoning belief instead of clinging onto it. We once thought that there was a “creator” of life, now we know that it was all just the result of slow, gradual evolution. We once believed that the Earth was the center of the universe and was flat, now we know that our lonely planet is one of billions and is spherical. We once had the idea that the world was covered by a deep flood in which only a few survived, now we know that the particular “worldwide flood” that was preached about was only a small local river overflowing in southern Iraq.

Religion is an embarrassment to the human species. We claim to be advanced and extremely clever, only to base our knowledge on a collection of books written by mysterious authors two thousand years ago. Faith is not compatible with a developed human race that can split atoms in half and send people to other worlds. It is outdated and hurting our development. It makes us selfish and arrogant. Take, for example, all the wars that have been fought over religion, all the idiotic preachers who have desires to kill non-believers. I once saw an American preacher on Yahoo! Answers spur off about how to kill atheists – by firing range or stoning?

I cannot understand why people are so defensive and “sensitive” to something as debatable and public as faith. In modern society, it has become commonplace for people not to debate religion – politics, for sure, but religion is “off-limits”. This is a major reason why so many refuse to admit the falseness of their beliefs. If we openly debate our religious positions, maybe more of us will realize just how unethical and false some of them are.

So, I encourage the world to convert to atheism and humanism. Religion has lost its benefits and now tortures us. It injures our development and advancement, separates us, starts wars, and makes us delusional. Thanks to religion, gays are stripped of rights for no practical reason; stem-cell research is banned because it “kills babies”, depriving millions of cures to horrible diseases; idiotic wars are fought over relatively small disagreements and ownership of the “holy land” and individuals make major decisions based on shaky, ancient suggestions. It seems ironic that devout believers will fight to save “babies” and still have a desire to kill and injure people who question their faith. Apparently, the two commandments “thou shall not kill” and “love thy neighbor” only apply to the unborn – and these are the some of the only reasonable parts of the Bible. Believers claim to respect other’s religious views, only to try and teach their own beliefs in public schools. Above all, the religious claim their religion is the “right” one – it is truth, it is *law*. They fail to admit any flaws with their faith, they only point out the small number of benefits. They act over-offended when others

question their belief, even if they are most likely correct. Muslims in the Middle East and Christians in the United States both share this in common – they fail to question themselves, they always believe they are correct... when they probably aren't.

The ideas and policies of the ancient ages, when most of our international religions were founded, are not compatible with today's modern world where we have gained the intelligence and technology to discover instead of wonder. We can only become a truly advanced species by giving up our unreasonable, childish, ridiculous religious ways. If the believers really want to benefit the human race, they must admit the problems with their faith and abandon it. While religion was necessary and inevitable when it came about thousands of years ago, it is now unnecessary and harmful – just like purchasing milk was necessary at first, but after it spoiled it was harmful. It had to be thrown away. Faith is spoiled milk, and it must disappear before it causes any more anguish.

I'd like to end the religion section with this quote from an advertising campaign by the British Humanist Association:

“There's probably no God. Now stop worrying and **enjoy your life.**”

CONCLUSION

The human race, as I have said many times throughout this massive report, has a wide array of flaws, many of which can be repaired. But this is, by no means, stating that our species has done no good. Humans have succeeded in becoming civilized and intelligent, and we have shown our capability to overcome extreme challenges and solve terribly complex problems. We are, essentially, very good at surviving whatever nature randomly hurls at us.

However, we mustn't ever let our guard down – there is much, much more in store for the human race, some challenges that will be too massive to overcome. In about 5 billion years, the Sun will age to the point where it will expand enough to encompass Earth in its atmosphere, killing off all life for the rest of the planet's history. Astronomers predict that, by then, some other natural disaster – an ice age or meteorite hit, for example – will have obliterated the species anyway. Basically, our time is limited on Earth, and we should make the most out of our species' existence. There will always be more to work for – and I will list five of them here.

THE FIVE CHALLENGES

Firstly, we must abandon religion. As I mentioned in the previous section, faith is seriously affecting our ability to advance technologically and causes major groups of people to split and war between each other. I know this will be an extremely long and difficult transition, but it is essential that we move beyond our arrogant, barbaric ways. If we refuse, we will face a future where religion prevents our true intellect from flexing its power.

Secondly, we must stop warring and usher in an infinite era of peace and compatibility. War only damages our race, it has no benefits whatsoever. World War II, the ultimate example, threatened to derail the balance of the human race and plunged the world into a bitter rivalry between two equally advanced superpowers. While it did prevent the Axis powers, Germany and Japan, from dominating huge chunks of the Earth and imposing harsh fascist dictatorships, it came at the cost of over 60 million lives. Entire nations were obliterated and others fell into difficult recovery periods. The nuclear bomb, the mother of all weapons, was invented and its power loomed over the United States and the U.S.S.R. for over 40 years, sometimes putting the relative peacefulness after WWII on thin ice. Today it still threatens the balance of power. A fully peaceful world is, of course, impossible to make reality – but we can try and get as close as possible to it. Humans naturally have major differences and disagreements, this is part of our slow evolution, but we can control whether we fight or join hands over it.

Thirdly, we must do everything possible to end the looming threat of global warming. While many are skeptical of its reality, we must put aside our doubts and admit that, according to all available scientific evidence, the atmosphere is warming due to the actions of the human race. We must stop burning fossil fuels as soon as possible – a target date of 2070 would be efficient, if not a little high. By then, wind, solar, nuclear, geothermal, hydrogen and hydroelectricity power sources must provide energy for the world. Investing in “clean coal” and the storage of carbon dioxide is also a step down the correct path, however this is not dramatic enough to prevent climate change. The kind of change required to undo the 150 years of widespread

pollution thrown up by humans is massive – it will be much more difficult to revert back to a regular climate now that we have damaged it so dearly.

Fourthly, advancements in many sectors of technology must continue. We cannot afford to affect future generations because of our own selfish opinions about what is more “important” than continuing research and moving the species forward. The entire reason the human race is at where it is now is due to major advancements in science and technology – and more advancements are on the horizon, but can only be achieved through uninterrupted research. For example, we should not and cannot risk the lives of millions of innocent, poor people because we are afraid that the resources required to cure them “kill” a few unborn fetuses. That logic is obviously flawed and very dangerous – that we are, frankly, stupid enough to think that the lives of a handful of babies are worth more than the lives of millions of sick people in third-world nations. Just because a group of people have certain religious doubts about science doesn’t mean we shouldn’t continue to move the species forward. If this is the influence faith has over our race – that it limits our advancement and oppresses intelligence – then belief should definitely be insulted instead of protected.

Fifthly, we must end the ongoing oppression to homosexuals, women and other races. These divides have separated sizable groups of people for generations, and has severely damaged our ability to cooperate and work together. Millions of people have been tortured and killed simply because of their gender, race or sexuality. This is another example of our incredible primitive ideals that still prevail long after our title as an “advanced” species was earned. There is no real reason to discriminate against people with different ideals, the only reason this occurs is due to religious laws and stereotypes. Many holy books, most notably the Koran and Bible, have strong views about women and gays – women are the “property” of men, and homosexuals are evil and must be executed. Some preachers in devout nations, including the United States, still ramble on about the sin of homosexuality and that women have less rights than men. Stereotypes also play a major role – in the first half of the 20th century, there were many negative portrayals of black-skinned people – that they couldn’t talk properly, had smaller brains than whites, and were all around stupid. There is no scientific evidence to back this up, and most of this discrimination was just plain wrong. Today, racism still continues towards blacks, and has spread to the Arab population since the uprising of terrorism in the 1980s and 1990s. None of us have any right to treat others badly because of our own opinions. One could argue that naturally, humans have some racist instinct – and this could be possible – but that doesn’t mean we can’t oppress it. The only way to world peace is cooperation and understanding, two things that discrimination opposes.

These five challenges which I place before the human race now will not be easy to overcome and will take at least two generations to accomplish. We have been very successful in the past at noticing our flaws and repairing them, but there are so many more to stitch up. As we evolve over the next thousands of years, we will eventually overcome a majority of the things I list now. Some, such as global warming, are much more urgent than others, such as world peace – but all of them are equally important. I must warn that if we do not solve these problems, they will come back around to hurt us in the future – we shouldn’t procrastinate; we must move on and climb up to the next level. This will only work if every one of us – from the presidents and kings to the homeless and laborers – work together and use our intelligence and common sense to conjure up new ideas and, eventually, overcome. The human race is capable of so much. We have many, many problems. This is obvious and unavoidable. We can fix them, but only if we work hard. This report is a simple guide to the solutions. The governments of the world can fix problems, but these five are more massive than anything any bill or movement can cover. The human race needs you to help. Please, use your common sense and make the right decisions. It’s for the good of the species – it’s for humanity.

A LETTER FROM THE AUTHOR:

If you are reading this letter, you have read most, if not all, of Humanity. Hopefully, you should be pondering over all the challenges we, the human race, currently face and must overcome to advance and be successful in the near and far future. However, this letter will not cover these problems; it will cover the obstacles I face in making a serious point.

If you do not already know, I am a 13-year-old teenager living in Houston, Texas. It took me about three to four months to compose this report, and I am very proud of what I have written here. Still, I am concerned that the message I'm making here – that the human race is too dilapidated, barbaric and ignorant to move on in the future – will not be heard or accepted simply because some adults will think of me as too young and unintelligent to really understand the issues I am discussing. While they are correct in the sense that I am young, they are incorrect when they brush my opinions aside because I'm young. Just because I have only been alive for 13 years does not mean that I'm too incompetent to comprehend the large, controversial issues that the world faces today. I researched the issues to the best of my ability through reliable sources (such as Wikipedia) and tried to understand them as well as I could. The problem is, too many adults immediately ignore the ideas of young people because they are young, or think that whatever they believe is "wrong".

For example, let us hypothesize a small child, about 10 years old, at a party. He has just gotten some food and decides to sit down in a nearby chair. He, however, does not notice the disabled man who has just arrived behind him. The child proceeds to sit, only to be yelled at by two unknown partygoers who are assisting the disabled man who had just appeared near the chair. They harshly tell him to abandon his seat for the man, who was not intending to sit in the first place. The child is embarrassed and shaken, for he really was not guilty of anything, but was in the wrong place at the wrong time. This is a clear example of how the adult world comprehends the actions of children – that they are feeble and silly, that they have little respect for authority. It is true that many young people oppose adult authority, some are even anarchistic. Still, this does not mean that we are all stupid and incompetent. I want the adult world to realize the capabilities of the next generation instead of oppressing our thoughts.

Therefore, if I do receive any opposition from the adult world telling me to "be respectful" and "shut up", I will respond harshly and deny their requests. If a 60-year-old man in political debates on television has the right to question the opinions of others, why shouldn't I? Yes, some of the ideas in this report can be considered "offensive", especially in the religion section, but this does not revoke my right to make them. Many adults believe that they hold power over the world under 18, but they do not. I am just as competent of, let's say, abortion as the anti-abortionists are. I may as well be more competent, as I have learned that not all abortions "kill babies", while the adult anti-abortion world believes that all abortions "kill babies". Or on the issue of religion – one could say my religious position, atheism and secular humanism, is better researched and more sensible than those of extreme adult religious groups.

So, in closing, I send this message to the adult world which I have yet to enter: do not ignore my ideas because I am young, because if you do you will be making quite a mistake.

— Justin Raine

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