

PLAIN TRUTH®

CHRISTIANITY WITHOUT THE RELIGION®

Volume 89, Number 3

inside

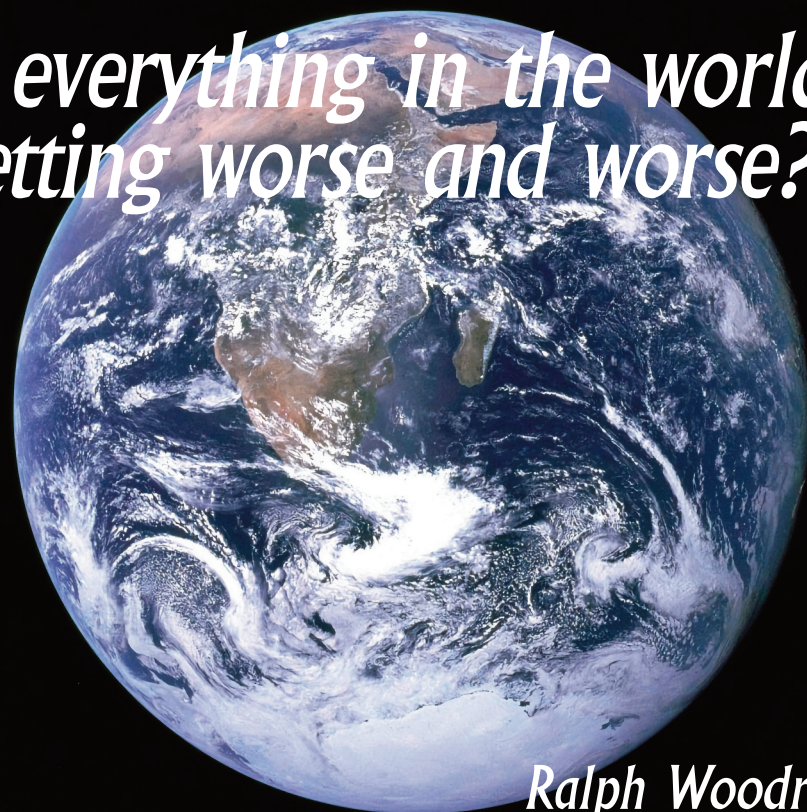
School Is Out! 2

God Knows Your Name 5

Grandma Said So 7

Quotes & Connections 8

Is everything in the world getting worse and worse?



Ralph Woodrow

There are some who tell us in all seriousness that “*everything in the world is getting worse and worse!*” It seems popular, even in some pulpits, to talk about how bad everything is getting—“*and getting worse all the time!*” But the evidence is overwhelming that MANY things are better than they have ever been, especially in countries that enjoy the blessings of civilization.

This is not to say there is not a lot of evil in the world. Many things are not as they should be. Nevertheless, progress has been made in the right direction. In harmony with Philippians 4:8, “... *think on things of good report*”—let’s consider some of the GOOD things God has blessed us with and for which we should be thankful.

Advances in Travel

In 1917, the main highway through Indio, California had been paved, but there was no white line down the center. While driving her Model-T Ford on this highway, June McCarroll (a female medical doctor) was run off the road by an approaching truck. Because of this near-fatal accident, Dr. McCarroll came up with the idea of a white line in the center of the road.

Unable to get much interest from officials and others about her idea, she hand-painted a white stripe down that stretch of highway. A monument near the intersection of Indio Blvd. and Fargo St. in Indio honors McCarroll as the inventor of the white line, which is now used on highways worldwide.

In October 1819, the first Christian missionaries to Hawaii left Boston for the 18,000-mile voyage around the tip of South America (there was no Panama Canal at that time). After **five months** in cramped quarters, with bouts of seasickness and other difficulties on board the ship, the Hawaiian Islands finally came into view. **Today**, a non-stop flight from Boston to Hawaii takes just over **11 hours!** Flying west (with the sun), a flight leaving Boston at 8:00 AM arrives in Hawaii by early afternoon, at 1:10 PM!

My Aunt Thelma did not live far from the Golden Gate Bridge when it was completed in 1937. Years later, as a boy, I recall her talking in glowing terms about this bridge—how it is supported by cables and can even sway in the wind. I had never heard of a bridge like that! The many wires from which the supporting cables are made, if separated into one continuous length, could wrap around the earth over three times! Each day, people in about 112,000 vehicles cross the bridge. I don’t suppose any of them think things were better when the bridge was not there!

My grandparents migrated from Missouri to California, arriving in Riverside in 1919 with six children. Their oldest son, Edward (from whom I have my middle name), was the only one who knew how to drive a car. Long stretches of the road (later known as “Route 66”) were unpaved. It was the first long distance highway in the United

Continued from page 1

States to be entirely paved, but that was not until 1938.

The contrast between a car similar to the Buick in which they traveled, with what would be considered an *average* car today, is **striking!** Today's cars are thousands of inventions rolled into one. Truly a work of art.

Would anyone want to go back to using a crank to start a car? Or what about rolling down the window, extending the hand and arm to signal a turn? One wonders why it took so long for blinkers to come into existence. The same can be said about seat belts!

Most people who drive *enjoy* driving. This is reflected in advertising jingles from years past: "What a thrill to take the wheel of a smart new Oldsmobile!" or "See the USA in your Chevrolet!"

For quite a few years, some relatives of mine owned a 1941 Packard automobile which they bought new. It was a luxury 4-door sedan, olive green in color, and had a feature that seemed like a novelty at the time—a **heater!** **Today** heating and air conditioning have become standard in cars.

Advances in Technology

I remember the first time I saw a television set. It had been purchased by some neighbors. It had a 7-inch, black and white screen, in a large cabinet. It was overwhelming to me as a boy—to



Some in the 1960s who objected to the U.S. space program cited a passage from the Psalms: "The heavens are the LORD'S: but the earth he has given to the children of men."

be in Riverside and to not only hear, but to be able to see someone in Los Angeles, sixty miles away. But it was happening—somehow an invisible signal was coming through the air and picked up by an antenna on the roof! **Today**, would anyone want to go back to a small screen black and white television? Would we not prefer a large flat-screen with full color?

I recall hearing people in the early 1960s speak in negative terms about the space program. The idea of sending a man to the moon was ridiculed: "*We have not solved the problems here on earth, why would we try to send a man to the moon?*" Some affirmed it would never happen—that God would not permit it. They compared it to those Babel builders who sought to construct a tower into heaven (Genesis 11:1-9). A passage from the Psalms was also quoted: "*The heavens are the LORD'S: but the earth*

he has given to the children of men" (Psalm 115:16).

Today, we all benefit from technology that came out of the space program—the use of satellite communication whereby television programs can be beamed all over the world! Because of satellites, early warnings about approaching hurricanes can save the lives of thousands.

There was a time, not long ago, when we struggled with roadmaps, tried to read street signs or addresses at night, or stopped to ask directions. Now with GPS (Global Positioning System)—an "eye in the sky," as it were—precise directions are provided from an array of orbiting satellites.

Progress in the Right Direction

Years ago, while in Washington D.C., on two occasions I spent time doing research at The Library of Congress. Upon checking in and securing a desk, library workers retrieve the desired books for you. This is necessary because its collection fills about 838 miles of bookshelves! Now, because of the Internet, information from millions of books—"good and evil"—can be accessed right in one's home!

For years I used Strong's Concordance to look up words in the Bible, to find references, and check meanings in Greek or Hebrew. Now, it is simpler to pull up all this information with a computer. In times past, a dictionary (book) was a wonderful

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tool for English word definitions. Now all of this is available online—not only for definitions, but to find similar words, how to use them in a sentence, their etymology, and even the ability to hear how a word is pronounced, in English or some other language!

Was the world or this country better in the days of child labor? *Was it better* in the days of slavery? *Was it better* when travel was in covered wagons? *Was it better* when women could not vote or own property? *Was it better* when lights burned coal oil? Conditions may not be as they should, but on the whole, many have *better* food, *better* clothing, *better* housing, *better* health care, *better* education, *better* working conditions, *better* pay and *better* transportation than in the past.

Today there are organizations to encourage clean, wholesome activities for boys and girls; organizations to aid the blind, the handicapped, the underprivileged, the elderly; organizations to prevent cruelty to animals and provide shelter. Progress is being made in Alzheimer's research. Such things speak of kindness and progress in the right direction.

Despite all the “good things” the Lord has allowed us to enjoy in this day, there are those who suppose things are getting worse all the time. While the Bible does say that “*evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived*” (2 Timothy 3:13), this may simply refer to the fact that one sin leads to another sin; one lie leads to another lie; those who head in the wrong direction get further and further away from Jesus and the gospel.

“*But the path of the just is like the shining sun, that shines ever brighter unto the perfect day*” (Proverbs 4:18). Where sin abounds, grace shall much more abound (Romans 5:20). Let people of faith everywhere look on the bright side, thankful for the progress that has been made! Is there evil in the world? Yes! No doubt about it. But while “everything” is not as it should be, we are **BLESSED** in many ways! □

Ralph Woodrow, a member of the PTM Board of Directors, has been in Christian ministry since 1958. As an inter-denominational evangelist, he has written many books and has been invited to speak in hundreds of churches in the US and Canada.



In need of mending
from Christless
religion?

Jesus brings hope, comfort,
encouragement & healing.



PTM/CWR — All Jesus, all the time