



"During times of universal deceit, telling the truth becomes a revolutionary act."

—George Orwell

**26-Oct-07**

## **Jena Sixed**

The following *USA Today* article, published on September 6, 2007, is typical of the coverage on the now-infamous Jena 6 case:

For a year, Jena (pronounced JEEN-uh), a poor mining community of 3,000 people, has been embroiled in racial tensions pitting the black community against white school officials and a white prosecutor. It began last August when a black student asked at an assembly if black students could sit under a tree where white students usually sat. The next day, two nooses hung from the tree.

Black parents were outraged by the symbolism, recalling the mob lynchings of black men. They complained to school officials. District superintendent Roy Breithaupt and the school board gave three-day suspensions to the white students who hung the nooses, overruling the recommendation of then-principal Scott Windham that the students be expelled. . . .

In November, an unknown arsonist burned down part of the high school.

Over the next three days, fights erupted between black and white students on and off school grounds. Police arrested a white man for punching a black teen. He pleaded guilty to simple battery.

The skirmishes culminated with a fight in which the six black teens, star players on Jena's champion football team, were charged as adults with attempted murder. The white student they're accused of beating, Justin Barker, 17, was knocked unconscious and suffered cuts and bruises. He was treated at an emergency room but not hospitalized.

Mychal Bell, 17, was convicted in May of a reduced charge, aggravated second-degree battery, which carries a maximum sentence of 15 years in prison.

Since then, charges against two youths have been reduced.

This seems like straightforward reporting of the facts. However, an October 24, 2007, *Christian Science Monitor* article by Craig Franklin, a longtime resident of Jena and assistant editor of *The Jena Times*, is throwing cold water on the media-induced racial firestorm spreading nationwide from the small Louisiana town. Franklin, who has covered the story since it broke in August, and his wife, who teaches at Jena High School, claim the mainstream media have distorted at least twelve vital facts surrounding the incident, fabricating and even inciting racial division where little or none existed. Franklin's twelve media myths range from the "whites only" tree (students of all races were free to sit under it) to the attack on the white students being linked to the nooses (none of the eyewitness testimony mentioned them).

How could professional journalists—if they can be called such—get so much wrong? Part of the answer follows Solomon's warning in [Proverbs 18:17](#), "The first one to plead his cause seems right, until his neighbor comes and examines him." According to Franklin, "because local officials did not speak publicly early on about the true events of the past year, the media simply formed their stories based on one-side's statements—the Jena 6." Evidently, reporters took advocates for the assailants at their word and made little effort

to fact-check their assertions. Franklin concludes, "[T]he media were downright lazy in their efforts to find the truth. Often, they simply reported what they'd read on blogs, which expressed only one side of the issue.

One might just relegate the media's mishandling of the facts to sloppy journalism except for a section of the *USA Today* article left out of the above quotation:

The events in Jena have caught the attention of national civil rights activists. Al Sharpton, Jesse Jackson and Martin Luther King III have marched on Jena in protest.

"The case plays to the fears of many blacks," Sharpton says. "You hear the stories from your parents and grandparents, but you never thought it would happen in 2007. I think what resonates in the black community is that this is so mindful of pre-1960 America."

When civil-rights activists like Sharpton and Jackson become involved in a matter, such as the equally infamous Duke Lacrosse case, the word "agenda" should come immediately to mind. These two men in particular exist to stir up racial animosity because the maintenance of their personal wealth and reputation demands that they exploit every incident of interracial friction, whether or not racism played any part in it. They have been aided and abetted by a willing media, which shares many of their views. Like the Duke Lacrosse case, the Jena 6 incident fit the liberal "template" of racist America—a pattern that has been used successfully many times in the past to score political victories for the Left.

Information has surpassed oil as the commodity of control in this nation and indeed around [the world](#). Spin is in; truth is out. Whoever controls the bias on the news controls the populace. One can see this in any number of areas: the Iraq War, the climate change hysteria, the homosexual-rights movement, the immigration issue, etc. Polls consistently show that the American people implicitly believe what the media tells them, even when the facts prove otherwise. For instance, a recent poll showed that most Americans thought that the troop surge in Iraq was increasing casualties there, but since the infusion of additional soldiers, casualties have decreased significantly. The public's impression of increased violence is an effect of media incessantly

reporting on so-called atrocities (many of which are later shown to have been greatly exaggerated). So, despite an improved situation on the ground, the public outcry is still, "Bring the troops home!"

Isaiah prophesies of just this kind of departure from the truth: "Justice is turned back, and righteousness stands afar off; for truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter. So truth fails, and he who departs from evil makes himself a prey" ([Isaiah 59:14-15](#)). The prophet speaks of a whole society so removed from what is true and right that they are groping, stumbling blindly forward, realizing instinctively that their doom is not far off. This is just what is happening in America as the truth is becoming more difficult to find amidst the flood of available information. How vital it is for us to seek the truth ([Proverbs 23:23](#)) and hold on to it in these evil days ([Revelation 3:11](#))!

- Richard T. Ritenbaugh

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## **From the Archives: Featured Sermon**

### **[Man's Greatest Challenge \(Part One\)](#)**

by Richard T. Ritenbaugh

In a speech, Michael Crichton noted the extreme difficulty of distinguishing truth from error. It is almost impossible to make sense out of this world if we try to process the voluminous information available in these days of exploding knowledge. What goes into our minds (good or bad) ultimately dictates what we believe. We desperately need to learn to collect and process information from God's perspective, unlike Pilate, who could not recognize truth even when it stared him in the face (John 18:33). Ancient Israel failed to process the truth, bringing hideous curses on themselves. All of humanity has been deceived by Satan. The key to knowing the truth of God is to recognize the true nature and character of God, and from this understanding all doctrine flows. Only God's Spirit, given to those who obey Him, can remove the blindness of false doctrine, such as ever-burning hell or eternal security.

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## From the Archives: Featured Article

### [Deceptions of the End Time](#)

by Richard T. Ritenbaugh

Our world is full of lies and liars, and many in God's church are ignorant of just how much deceit is out there. Jesus tells us, however, that the best way to resist deception is being convicted of the truth.

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