

MARCH-APRIL 2017

THE

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REAL TRUTH™

A MAGAZINE RESTORING PLAIN UNDERSTANDING



Should We Fear ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE?

**Can America and Britain
Lead the World Again?**

**St. Patrick's Day: Religious
Tribute or Empty Tradition?**

**Battling
Heroin Abuse**

**The Importance of
Digestive Health**

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VOL. XV | NO. 2 | MARCH-APRIL 2017

A R T I C L E S

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■ **IN MEMORIAM:** Parents place flowers at the grave of their son who died from a fatal heroin overdose in Plainville, Connecticut (March 7, 2016).

PHOTO: JOHN MOORE/GETTY IMAGES

Battling Heroin Abuse A Changing Fight Against an Old Foe

Given increased levels of addiction, law enforcement officials and healthcare workers are abandoning traditional approaches of combatting the drug and opting instead to treat the epidemic's negative effects.
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People worry that smart gadgets and similar technology will develop into super-intelligent, out-of-control machines that subjugate the world. The answer to whether you should be concerned about this reveals a fundamental—yet little known—fact about your mind.
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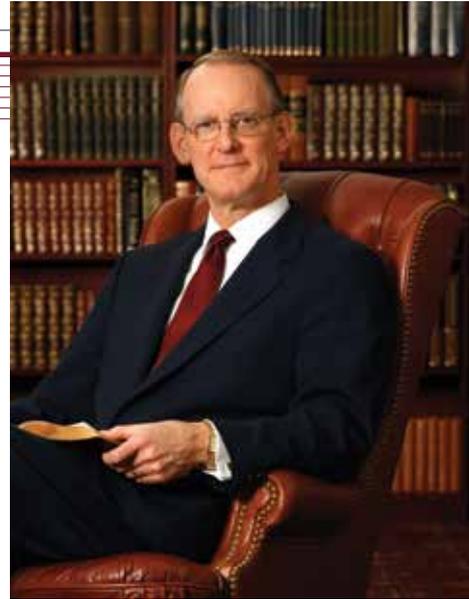
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PERSONAL FROM

David C. Fack



10 More Bible Verses Christendom Ignores

MODERN CHRISTENDOM twists, perverts and ignores the many plain truths of the Bible. Over the last 2,000 years, it has counterfeited every true doctrine and replaced them with cheap substitutes. This has been possible because certain more difficult to understand passages can be easily misrepresented to say something they do not. It is these verses that invariably become the vehicle through which false doctrine can be introduced—with almost no one able to recognize it all may have begun with a single wrong scriptural premise.

Unaware of the most crucial rule of study, most Bible students do not build their understanding by beginning with the clearest verses on any subject. Instead they enter God's Word with preconceived ideas and search for passages that *appear* to support what they have assumed the Bible teaches. This makes them candidates for confusion and deception.

Picking up from my previous Personal, let's look at 10 *more* verses Christianity ignores. The apostle Peter

stated that the apostle Paul wrote "some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest [twist], as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction"

(II Pet. 3:16). Completely unaware of any of the rules of Bible study, but understanding how most people think, teachers and scholars can take advantage of the way certain parts of God's Word are written. This applies to verses beyond what Paul wrote.

One of the greatest truths about which ministers have deceived billions is the gospel.

(11) Mark 1:14-15

This introduces the 11th verse largely unnoticed by Christians—Mark 1:14-15: "...Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the *gospel* of the *kingdom of God*, and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the *kingdom of God* is at hand: repent you, and *believe the gospel*."

The most butchered teaching in the Bible is also the most fundamental. Different denominations have invented gospels of healing, salvation and grace, to name a few, but the biggest false gospel is the one focusing on Christ—the Messenger—instead of His message.

Gospel means "good news"—and this news is far greater than today's wrong focus about Christ.

The word gospel is found 101 times throughout the Bible—sometimes alone, or with “kingdom,” “kingdom of God,” or “kingdom of heaven” (not kingdom *in* heaven). Since “kingdom” is a King James term meaning government, and “of” denotes possession, *kingdom of God* can be written as “government of God” or “God’s government.”

The “gospel of the kingdom of God” can be expressed as “the good news of God’s government.” How plain! Jesus announced the good news that God’s government is coming to Earth. He did not speak about Himself. Notice: “Jesus...said, My doctrine is not Mine, but His that sent Me...He that speaks of himself seeks his own glory...” (John 7:16, 18).

God takes the truth of the gospel seriously. Paul warned the first-century Church—and all Christians thereafter—that some “would pervert the gospel of Christ” (Gal. 1:7). He *twice* declared that any who do are cursed! (Read verses 8 and 9.)

This is a sobering warning! God demands the true gospel be taught. Jesus Christ and Christians through the ages were put to death for this message.

Take time to order the free booklet *Which Is the True Gospel?* Christians are in training for positions in a new and different government.

(12) Revelation 18:4

The 12th verse rejected by Christianity is Revelation 18:4. God commands, “...come out of [Babylon], My people, that you be not partakers of her sins, and that you receive not of her plagues.”

Babylon means confusion. True servants of God have come out of this world, and its Babylonish religions, ways and governments. They have left behind its teachings, division, strife and confusion. Paul wrote, “Come out from among them [the world], and be you separate...” (II Cor. 6:17).

Let’s understand! Just before His crucifixion, Jesus reflected a central

principle to His disciples in a prayer: “I pray not that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them through Your truth: Your word is truth” (John 17:15-17).

It is truth that sets Christians apart (“sanctifies” them) from everyone around them. They are not *of* this world, and its ways, customs, beliefs and traditions. They have come out of it, leaving all of its values, ideas and philosophies behind.

“It is truth that sets Christians apart (“sanctifies” them) from everyone around them. They are not *of* this world, and its ways, customs, beliefs and traditions.”

Christians cannot live in caves or as hermits. Some religious zealots misunderstand Christ and enter monasteries or retreats to avoid contact with people. Jesus never did this. He did not mean come out of the *physical* world, but rather its system of governments and religions. Christians practice and believe the truth—the whole truth and nothing but the truth of God’s Word—not popular ideas—any of them!

(13) I Corinthians 10:3-4

Although widely missed, the identity of the Old Testament God is found in the New Testament. This introduces the 13th passage Christianity leaves out—I Corinthians 10:3-4: “[Ancient

Israel] did all eat the same spiritual meat; and did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that *Rock was Christ*.” This is plain! Jesus Christ is the God of both the Old and New Testaments.

In both testaments, Jesus is described as the God who never changes (Mal. 3:6; Heb. 13:8). New Testament teachings reflect the Old. In my last Personal, we saw the Law of God—the Ten Commandments—is still binding on Christians today. What happens when we die, what sin is, the true gospel, and so many more doctrines are in complete agreement when compared to the Old Testament.

If these verses were not ignored, they would point to the true God of the Bible and, in turn, to the primary purpose of the New Testament—the establishment and building of God’s Church.

(14) Matthew 16:18

The 14th verse describes how Christ built *one* Church. Matthew 16:18: “...I will build *My church*; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” Stating it would never disappear, Jesus promised to build His Church—singular!—not the mass confusion of hundreds of fighting and competing churches, which seemingly cannot agree on anything.

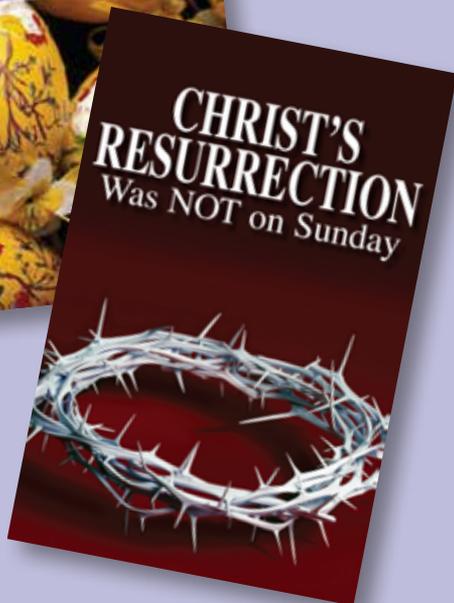
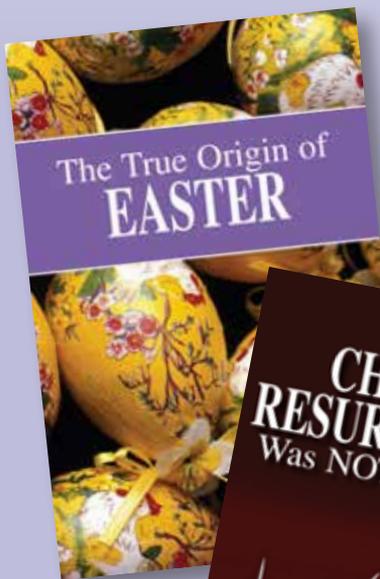
Your job is to seek out and find one Church—*Jesus’ Church*! It is only from that Church you will receive true spiritual nourishment, which will allow you to develop and grow in godly character.

Now ask: why are you hearing these verses now—in this Personal? Jesus built His Church to carry out His Commission, and *only one* fulfills all New Testament requirements. It is that Church from which you are learning the truth, including about these basic Bible verses. To understand God’s Church, request my free book, *Where Is the True Church? – and Its Incredible History!*

Please see **PERSONAL**, page 23



Let's Clean Up the Easter Mess!



How do three days and three nights (72 hours) fit between Friday sunset and Sunday morning? Jesus Christ Himself said He would be “three days and three nights in the heart of the earth” (Matt. 12:40).

To solve what appears to be a Bible conundrum, order your free copies of *The True Origin of Easter* and *Christ's Resurrection Was Not on Sunday*.

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Can America and Britain Lead the World Again?

Washington and London are rejuvenating their “special relationship” to ensure global prominence for their nations for years to come. Yet they are missing a crucial piece of the puzzle.

ON JANUARY 27, Britain’s Prime Minister Theresa May became the first foreign head of state to meet with United States President Donald Trump.

A British head of state being first in line is unsurprising. A speech Mrs. May delivered before the meeting helps explain why.

Speaking to Republican lawmakers at a congressional retreat in Pennsylvania, she declared her resolve to continue Britain’s longstanding “special relation-

ship” with America. In addition, she said that “the leadership provided by our two countries through this bond has done more than win wars and overcome adversity. It made the modern world.

“The institutions upon which that world relies were so often conceived or inspired by our two nations working together.”

She affirmed that it was both an honor and a privilege to “join hands as we pick up that mantle of leadership once more, to renew our special relationship and to recommit ourselves to the responsibility of leadership in the modern world.”

The prime minister added that “a newly emboldened, confident America is good for the world. An America that is strong and prosperous at home is a nation that can lead abroad. But you cannot—and should not—do so alone. You have said that it is time for others to step up. And I agree.”

A day after this speech, during a joint news conference with President Trump at the White House, Mrs. May once again discussed this relationship: “...I am clear also that there are many issues on which the United Kingdom and the United States stand

■ **CLOSE TIES:** U.S. President Donald Trump and British Prime Minister Theresa May participate in a joint press conference in the East Room of the White House in Washington, D.C. (Jan. 27, 2017).

PHOTO: ALEX WONG/GETTY IMAGES

alongside one another; many issues on which we agree...we are at a moment now when we can build an even stronger special relationship which will be in the interest not just of the UK and the United States, but actually in the interest of the wider world as well.”

That statement echoed some of the ideas from her Pennsylvania speech: “So as we rediscover our confidence together—as you renew your nation just as we renew ours—we have the opportunity—indeed the responsibility—to renew the special relationship for this new age. We have the opportunity to lead, together, again.

“Because the world is passing through a period of change—and in response to that change we can either be passive bystanders, or we can take the opportunity once more to lead. And to lead together.”

Lead the world together. This is a bold statement. But is strengthening the “special relationship” enough to help the two nations remain global powerhouses?

Longstanding Relationship

Referring to America and Britain’s “special relationship” has become a tradition. It started with Sir Winston Churchill, who first used the term aside the phrase “fraternal association of the English-speaking peoples” to describe the friendship between the U.S. and UK during an address at Missouri’s Westminister College in 1946.

It was an emphasis on the unique bond Mr. Churchill’s country shared with the United States, realized just years prior as the two toiled in blood, sweat and tears to defeat Hitler’s Germany.

This was not only a working relationship, but a personal one. *Time* magazine reported that, during World War II, President Franklin Roosevelt and Mr. Churchill “exchanged 1,700 letters and cables between 1939 and 1945, with Roosevelt once telegraphing Churchill, in 1942, saying: ‘It is great fun to be in the same decade with you.’”

The U.S. lent its arm to Great Britain prior to formally entering the war. Through the Lend-Lease Act, military and financial assistance to the UK helped preserve the island nation—which for a time was the only standing opponent to the Axis powers after Paris fell to the Nazis.

The bond solidified in the coming years as America and Britain became flagships of democracy against the Soviet march to spread communism throughout the world.

Whether at the height of the Cold War or the war on terror, each nation has been glued to the other’s side.

President Ronald Reagan and Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher evidenced this bond: “They shared the same ideological vision, presiding over historic free-market reforms in the 80s as they sought to end the Cold War,” *Time* reported.

The depth of this relationship was evidenced during Reagan’s funeral, during which Thatcher spread herself over the late president’s casket. Her biographer told *NBC*: “This was not play acting. She was devastated by his death, almost as much as she was by the death of her own husband.”

At the beginning of the war on terror, Prime Minister Tony Blair offered his unwavering support for President George W. Bush’s foreign policy. A 2002 report detailing Britain’s role in the Iraq War revealed that Mr. Blair wrote to Mr. Bush: “I will be with you, whatever.”

President Barack Obama remarked on the relationship between these peoples during a state dinner in Washington. With his British counterpart Prime Minister David Cameron present, Mr. Obama said: “We are by no means the first President and Prime Minister to celebrate the deep and abiding bonds between our people. There has been no shortage of words uttered about our special relationship.”

Further, Mr. Obama stated: “In war and in peace, in times of plenty and times of hardship, we stand tall and proud and strong, together. And as free peoples committed to the dignity of all human beings, we will never

apologize for our way of life, nor waver in its defense.”

Mr. Cameron responded: “Like my predecessors, I’m proud of our essential relationship and of Britain’s strong national bond with the United States of America. I feel it in my bones.”

Marrow-deep sentiment is not just represented by the words of leaders. The peoples of these nations have seemingly always been intertwined.

“Historian Anthony Seldon, who is currently writing a book on the bond entitled *Special*, tells *TIME* that the two countries have been intimately bound together over the past century by shared history, government structures, ideals and defense cooperation,” *Time* reported.

Mr. Seldon told the magazine: “It is the norm to be close, and it happens because of the overlap of three set of factors: a common enemy, personal chemistry and common ideological outlook.”

Unpacking some of the terms used helps demonstrate the connection between these two nations.

■ **“A common enemy.”** Throughout large portions of the 20th and 21st centuries, Britain and the U.S. have aligned military efforts against common enemies. Think fascism, communism and terrorism.

While the relationship was a bit more rocky throughout the 18th and 19th centuries due to conflicts of interests, Britons and Americans generally favored each other. Even during the Revolutionary War and the War of 1812, public opinion of Americans by British and vice versa were positive.

President John Adams wrote in 1785 that King George III said to him after the revolution, “...the Separation having been made and having become inevitable, I have always said, as I say now, that I would be the first to meet the Friendship of the United States as an independent Power” (The National Archives).

According to Adams, the king also stated, “...let the circumstances of Language; Religion and Blood have their natural and full Effect.”

The Special Relationship Over the Years

1943

1987



Generals pose behind U.S. President Franklin Roosevelt and British Prime Minister Sir Winston Churchill during the Casablanca conference that included planning the Normandy and Italy landings (Jan. 1943).

PHOTO: AFP/GETTY IMAGES



President Ronald Reagan and Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher pose for photographers on the patio outside the Oval Office in Washington, D.C. (July 17, 1987).

PHOTO: MIKE SARGENT/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Historians consider the king's cool reaction as unusually low-key after just having lost the British Empire's largest and most prosperous colony up until that point. Keep in mind that the colonies were under the British crown since the early 1600s.

Today, British-American defense cooperation is the most comprehensive in the world. Mrs. May stated during the joint conference at the White House that "the UK-U.S. defense relationship is the broadest, deepest and most advanced of any two countries—sharing military hardware and expertise."

■ **"Personal chemistry."** The British and American peoples share many characteristics: the English language, similar religious values, and a rich, vibrant culture.

As such, they have often had similar tastes, despite their differences. For example, the two nations shared an interest in pop music during the 20th century. They put forward musicians that took the world by storm, with such mega-selling acts as Frank Sinatra, The Beatles, and Elvis Presley.

And curiously, they seem to enjoy each other's entertainment the most. As one person commented on a Quora discussion board: "We listen to each other's music (Jimi Hendrix [in the] UK, Beatles [in the] US), and remake each other's TV shows (The Office, House of Cards)."

Today, American and British recording labels dominate the global music industry. The "Big Three," American-based companies Universal Music Group and Warner Music Group, as well as Sony Music Entertainment, which owns the UK-based EMI Group, control over 88 percent of the market.

The two cultures have together valued creativity, expression and satire. Another commenter on a Quora discussion stated: "since there is linguistic affinity, both cultures tend to like puns...you don't come across puns often, compared to English."

■ **"Common ideological outlook."** The United States and the United Kingdom share a seemingly inherent desire to spread democracy and all of its values—individualism, capitalism and human rights. They have sought to herald such liberties not only for their own citizens, but also for all nations.

Interestingly, this common drive for expansion has also been the cause of tense conflicts. During the dispute over the Oregon boundary from 1844 to 1846, overlapping British and American claims to land nearly drove the two to war.

The British middle class, however, felt the dispute should be settled without bloodshed, as they purported a unique bond with Americans due to language, migration, evangelicalism and extensive trade. This moved

London to appease Washington and settle on a peaceful resolution.

While there have been tensions over the years—some continue today—their relationship remains unique. Many of the conflicts have been because the two are such global powers that they frequently butt up against one other. They are like brothers, each trying to one-up the other. Yes, there are familial squabbles, but they always find a way to get along.

What two nations on Earth, completely independent from each other and separated by an ocean, share such a unique bond?

In addition, what has helped these countries to grow together? The answer can help one not only understand why they have nurtured this special relationship—but also how they have achieved astonishing results.

Leaders of the World

When Prime Minister May speaks of leading the world together *again*, it is not a statement pulled from a hat.

For two centuries, Great Britain ruled the world. At its peak, it controlled nearly one-quarter of the world population and held 11 million square miles of territory spanning the globe, leading to its slogan: "The sun never sets on the British Empire."

To govern such a vast amount of territory, the empire commanded one of the most powerful naval forces in history.



President George W. Bush presents the Medal of Freedom to former Prime Minister Tony Blair during a ceremony at the White House in Washington, D.C. (Jan. 13, 2009).

PHOTO: MARK WILSON/GETTY IMAGES



President Barack Obama arrives at 10 Downing Street to meet with Prime Minister David Cameron in London, England (April 22, 2016).

PHOTO: DAN KITWOOD/GETTY IMAGES

Territories and Sea Gates Held by the UK and U.S. at the Height of Their Power



After the first world war, the United States effectively overtook Great Britain as a military force, and has risen ever since. America allocates about \$600 billion per year toward defense—by far the most of any nation. In addition, the U.S. Navy is the only naval force that possesses 10 operational aircraft carriers. Only six other nations have even one, at most two.

Also consider that America has over 40 allies bound by formal treaties, including most members of the world's largest economies.

Together, at their heights of power, London and Washington had control over many of the world's most coveted sea gates including the Suez and Panama canals, straits of Gibraltar and Hormuz, Singapore, Cape Horn,

Malta, Cape of Good Hope, Hong Kong, Hawaii and the Philippines. This contributed to their great military prowess and their status as economic leaders of the world.

On top of that, two of the most well-known financial capitals of the world are New York City and London.

*Please see **U.S. AND BRITAIN**, page 26*

BATTLING HEROIN ABUSE

A Changing Fight Against an Old Foe

Given increased levels of addiction, law enforcement officials and healthcare workers are abandoning traditional approaches of combatting the drug and opting instead to treat the epidemic's negative effects.

BY EDWARD L. WINKFIELD

“THIS IS YOUR brain. This is drugs. This is your brain on drugs. Any questions?”

Simplicity is what made this 1980s-public service announcement—in which a man cracks an egg into a heated frying pan to illustrate the damage caused by drugs—compelling. One plus one equals two. If you do drugs, they ruin your life. Period.

Yet in reality, drug addiction is not that simple.

A quarter of a billion people use illicit drugs annually. This is despite the increased risk of overdose, which has gone up 33 percent in the United

States over the last five years, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

At the front end of increasing drug use is *heroin*, which is now the number-one killer among illegal drugs. Given its resurgence over the past decade, the old stigma of it being confined to inner cities, the poor, and minorities is fading. The highly addictive drug now grips rural towns and wealthier suburbs.

The story of an Ohio couple interviewed by *The Columbus Dispatch* shows heroin abuse's impact. The 39-year-old man, who became hooked on painkillers after dislocating his shoulder, once dreamed of working in law enforcement. Instead, he became addicted to the drug after he discovered that the \$10 to get high from heroin is

■ **UNCERTAIN FUTURE:** A recovering heroin addict sits under a bridge in Camden, New Jersey, two days after serving a 30-day jail sentence for stealing food, during which he was forced to come off the drug (Aug. 21, 2013). The 30-year-old man, who grew up in an affluent neighborhood, studied architecture in college, was married, fathered a daughter, and served in the U.S. Army, became addicted to the drug after sustaining a shrapnel wound from an explosion during the War in Afghanistan. Due to his addictions, he was dishonorably discharged from the Army, divorced, estranged from his daughter, and has become homeless.

PHOTO: ANDREW BURTON/GETTY IMAGES





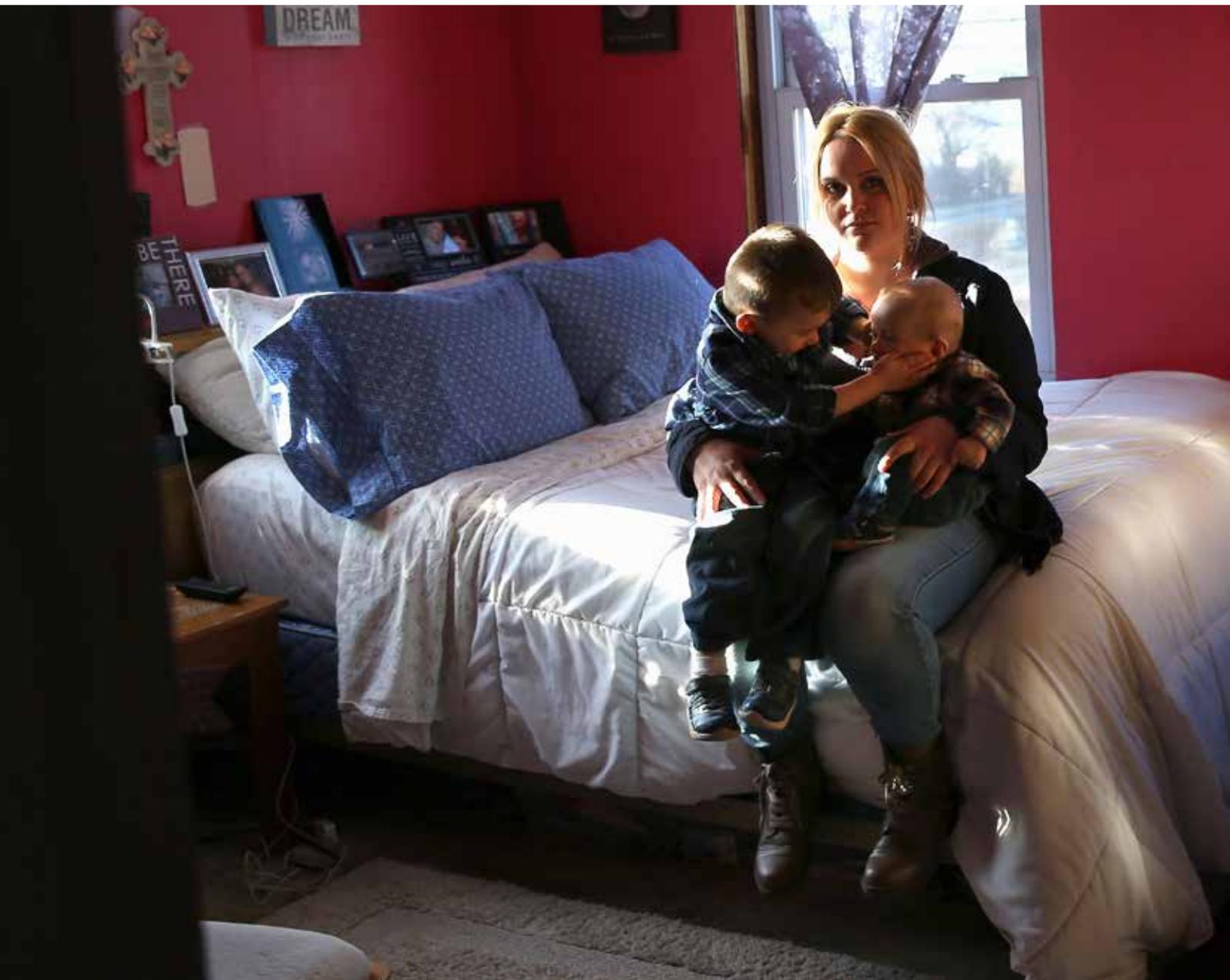
■ **THE BEGINNING:** Antique prescription heroin bottles are on display at the Drug Enforcement Agency Museum in Arlington, Virginia (Aug. 25, 2015).

PHOTO: PAUL J. RICHARDS/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

more sustainable than paying \$80 per pill for painkillers.

His girlfriend, who aspired to work in a veterinarian's office, began her struggle with drug abuse after accepting an OxyContin pill from her boyfriend. Their four children were eventually taken by authorities and put up for adoption.

Twelve years or so into their addiction, the couple, now frail and haggard, spend their days scouring streets and rummaging dumpsters for soda cans and other recyclables to sell to support their habit. On a good day, they earn



enough to split a dose of heroin the size of a watermelon seed.

“It just makes you feel more of what you are supposed to be,” the man explained in a video interview posted by the newspaper. “I know there is normal, but this makes you feel above and beyond normal. It makes you feel you can do way more than what you can.”

“It makes you feel like you are Superman...” he added.

This explains why the drug is so hard to kick—heroin rewires the brain and makes you feel invincible. Brad Lander, clinical director of addiction medicine at Ohio State University’s Wexner Medical Center, explained in a *Columbus Dispatch* article that heroin “changes the brain and the user’s reality.”

He described how heroin activates the brain’s release of adrenaline and endorphins—the body’s naturally occurring “opiate system” that normally provides energy and helps relieve pain when we get hurt. Once addicted, the brain thinks it needs heroin just to function.

“You need to have it, or you feel dysphoric, sad, anxious, depressed,” Dr. Lander continued. “Any pain you have is exaggerated.”

He likened an addict being denied heroin to a person starving to death.

“If you’re starving to death, you’ll take more risks with employment and relationships. You would steal more things if you were really starving to death. So [addicts] are doing things they never thought they would do.”

This depiction of hopeless dependence has replicated itself across America—from bustling streets in downtown Seattle, Washington, to quaint fishing towns in Massachusetts. As a result, those on the front lines are trying a new approach: Instead of focusing on stopping its usage, the fight has turned to minimizing the drug’s effects.

In short, in the modern war on heroin, authorities are beginning to lay down their weapons.

Making a Comeback

Introduced nearly 120 years ago for commercial use by the pharmaceutical company Bayer, heroin, which is derived from the opium poppy plant, was originally seen as a wonder drug. It quickly became a vital component of pain management, as chemicals in it suppressed pain receptors in the brain and spinal cord.

By 1924, however, it became illegal after doctors learned of its addictive qualities. Yet this did not stop a population suffering from chronic pain from wanting relief. This prompted the medical community to turn to less potent forms of the opioid to treat pain. As a result, illegal heroin mostly disap-

peared—other than for a brief stint in the 70s—and became overshadowed by other banned substances such as cocaine and marijuana.

Fast forward 20 years. The early 1990s saw a rise in prescription opioid requests. According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse, prescriptions for hydrocodone (used in Vicodin) and oxycodone (used in Percocet) jumped from 44 million in 1991 to 73 million in 1996. The spike in demand resulted in the release of OxyContin, a concentrated form of oxycodone, that same year.

As opiate-based medications crept closer to the potency of heroin, pharmaceutical marketers were forced to address fears of addiction. Thus the creators of OxyContin went on a media blitz in 1998, sending promotional materials to doctors’ offices and placing product advertisements in medical journals. The ads touted the pill’s effectiveness against pain as well as the unlikelihood of chemical dependence.

In response, opioid prescriptions jumped 10 percent the following year. The makers of OxyContin raked in billions in sales and profits as doctors continued to hand out pills to those who they thought needed them.

Eventually it was discovered that people were using the pills to get high. And authorities later learned that the manufacturer of OxyContin misled regulators, doctors and patients about the drug’s risks of addiction and its potential for abuse.

Following a lawsuit and steep fine, the makers of OxyContin tweaked the formula, adding what they referred to as “abuse deterrents”—designed to make the pills more difficult to crush into powder, for example, so that they could not be snorted or injected.

Ironically, this move is what many point to as the true start of the heroin crisis. The modification had the unintended consequence of pushing those who were already addicted to the pain pills toward heroin. The illegal substance was cheaper (\$10 per hit versus \$60-100 per pill), easier to find, easier to use, and—most important to a craving addict—much more powerful.



■ **TORN APART:** A woman whose husband died of a heroin overdose holds her children in her bedroom in Plainville, Connecticut (March 6, 2016).

PHOTO: JOHN MOORE/GETTY IMAGES

Newfound Markets

The shift from painkillers to heroin across America has been a boon for drug cartels. Weary of stiff competition in major metropolitan areas such as New York City or Chicago, drug syndicates have set up shop in suburbs and small towns. Dealers know that a successful illegal drug ring thrives on access to certain elements, namely money, communication (e.g. cellphones), transportation and privacy for drug use. Suburbia and many rural towns offer an abundance of each.

Another benefit for cartels regarding small towns is the lack of adequate law enforcement. Most small unassuming areas have never experienced anything like the current heroin crisis—and are thus ill-equipped and ill-prepared to handle it.

“Out-of-town dealers don’t even bother to fight over turf...There are plenty of customers to go around,” law officials of a particular town told the publication *STAT*.

The town’s director of the drug task force added, “There’s too much money to be made.”

The same article noted that the town’s 17 officers are overwhelmed dealing with overdoses and petty drug crimes. They simply do not have the resources to fight back.

In an effort to stay a step ahead of authorities, dealers not only sell heroin on street corners but also through advanced distribution networks. Ordering a “hit” is now as easy as ordering a pizza or buying clothing on a smartphone!

“It’s a highly evolved network that allows users to buy heroin without leaving the comfort of their homes,” *Newsday* reported the executive director of a New York-based nonprofit committed to fighting substance abuse as saying. “You’re dealing with a generation that’s conditioned to instant gratification, and the dealers are taking advantage of that.”

Ripple Effects

Technology has also played a role in putting a new face on the heroin crisis.

Last autumn, a picture of a couple who overdosed in the front seat of their SUV made its way around social media. The most sickening part about the photo was the blank stare of a four-year-old boy sitting in the back seat, who presumably witnessed all that transpired. Authorities who released the photo did so on the grounds that “it is time that the non-drug using public sees what we are now dealing with on a daily basis” (*STAT*).

For many, the little face peering from the backseat of the car made heroin abuse more real. Yet the photo was just a glimpse into what occurred at the scene. Reports revealed that the distressing image was merely the finale of a death-defying spectacle. Law enforcement officials recounted: “A school bus was making its way down St. Clair Avenue, stopping now and then to let off children. The Ford Explorer was just behind it, weaving erratically. Now, abruptly, the driver hit the brakes. The SUV skidded across the pavement—narrowly missing the bus. It drifted at an angle onto Prospect Street and came to rest near the spot where the children had disembarked, steps from a church” (*ibid.*).

A police officer who witnessed the entire event reported that when he approached the vehicle the driver’s “head was bobbing back and forth. His pupils were pinpricks. His speech was almost unintelligible.”

The officer says the man then reached for the gearshift and mumbled something about taking his unconscious female passenger to the hospital. This prompted the officer to lean in and snatch the keys from the ignition. While doing so, he noticed the boy in the back seat.

“At that moment,” the story continued, the driver “went completely unconscious” while the woman, “the boy’s grandmother and legal guardian, was ‘turning blue.’”

After backup and medical support arrived, the picture was taken to use as evidence in court. The photographer, a 24-year police force veteran, admitted that as he looked through the lens, he could not help but to think of the child.

“He never said a word,” the photographer told the news outlet. “To this day I have not heard his voice.”

“Just seeing that blank, emotionless expression on his face—it spoke for itself,” he continued.

According to officials, heroin laced with fentanyl was to blame for the whole ordeal. Often called heroin’s synthetic cousin, fentanyl is just one example of a trend in which users are experimenting with more potent chemicals, leading to more overdoses and, sadly, more deaths.

Examples of this are difficult to hear. A five-month old girl from Pennsylvania starved to death in her crib after her parents, in their 20s, fatally overdosed on fentanyl. The coroner believes the child survived alone in her bed for three or four days after her parent’s death before eventually succumbing to a lack of food and water. All three bodies were discovered by a neighbor.

Police and paramedics report that it is not unusual to get called to a residence where multiple family members have overdosed. They say that such calls due to heroin and other powerful opioids are mounting. In one community where overdose calls are twice the number of all other medical calls combined, *carfentanil*—an elephant tranquilizer—is to blame.

The heroin-carfentanil concoction is so intense—10,000 times more powerful than morphine!—that it can take multiple doses of the heroin antidote Narcan (or naloxone) to revive an overdose victim.

The cost to communities for this life-saving remedy is growing as the desire for an increased high spins out of control.

“A dose of Narcan would usually revive [a] person and bring them back. What we are noticing now is our paramedics sometimes use between four and six, maybe seven doses of the Narcan to revive them, so it is a lot stronger and it has taken a lot more,” a police official told *Fox 8 Cleveland*.

Even after being revived, victims cannot seem to be scared out of over-

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St. Patrick's Day

Religious Tribute or Empty Tradition?

Superstitions, hard drinking, and raucous behavior are hints of this holiday's true colors.

BY NESTOR A. TORO



THE HOLIDAY has become an emblem of spring and all things Irish. A day for millions to wear their “St. Patty’s” attire and pinch those who neglect to wear green. City streets reverberate to the tunes

of marching bands. Harp, fiddle and bagpipe sounds are matched with the aroma of freshly boiled corned beef (or traditional boiled bacon) and cabbage.

March 17 is a day of Irish folklore and the color green—mythi-

cal green leprechauns, green shamrocks, green fingernails, green rivers, green athletic jerseys, and green alcoholic drinks, among others.

For countless numbers of celebrants, it is a holiday in which religion and the pub meet halfway. Many begin the day with acts of devotion,

■ **YEARLY JOURNEY:** Churchgoers take turns carrying a staff representing Saint Patrick during the Saint Patrick's Day service and pilgrimage from Saul Church to Down Cathedral in Downpatrick, Northern Ireland (March 17, 2016).

PHOTO: CHARLES MCQUILLAN/GETTY IMAGES

only to end it with excessive booze. This type of widespread inebriation moved Michigan's government to pass a "super drunk" law in 2010. The date is even part of AAA motor club's "tow-to-go" program, a free and confidential ride home for drunken holiday drivers.

The historical inspiration for such a celebration? A fifth-century Briton largely attributed with Ireland's conversion to Christianity. On the anniversary of his death, March 17, he is commemorated as the symbol of Ireland.

In *The Antiquities of Ireland*, author Edward Ledwich examined medieval accounts that promoted the myths surrounding the holiday: "St. Patrick while an infant, brought a new river from the earth, which cured the blind. He produced fire from ice. He raised his nurse from the dead. He expelled a devil from an heifer, and he changed water into honey. These were but the infant sports of this wonder-working Saint."

Obvious fables aside, most see nothing wrong with the festivities, national pride, and religious overtones attached to this day. Yet the holiday's track record unmistakably shows its true intent.

Party Spirit

St. Patrick's Day has resulted in numerous riots over the years.

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette reported that 2014 pre-St. Patrick's Day celebrations turned ugly: "At the University of Massachusetts...police in riot gear arrested more than 73 students, some of whom threw beer cans, bottles and snowballs, causing minor injuries to four officers."

Notice what occurred at Ohio's University of Dayton in 2013, which was named the top St. Patrick's Day party school in the nation during the same year.

"More than 1,000 people were involved in [a] St. Patrick's Day riot," *Dayton Daily News* reported. "Ten police jurisdictions respond to the incident in the student campus housing area. There were broken beer

bottles and 11 damaged cars, including a police cruiser."

The year 2011 was particularly violent.

An out-of-control Hoboken, New Jersey, celebration resulted in 34 arrests and reports of two sexual assaults, *Reuters* stated. As a result, the town's mayor declared "she would switch the traditional weekend parade to a weekday."

The article continued: "Scores of arrests and violence at parades in Albany, New York and Newport, Rhode Island are prompting police and city officials to rethink their approach as well. They said [2011's] parade violence is the worst they have seen to date."

In Cleveland, "Fights broke out in Public Square around 3 p.m. and continued for over three hours...The majority of those arrested were teenagers," *NewsNet5* reported.

At Pennsylvania State University, a student-run St. Patrick's Day drinking marathon referred to as a "drunken free-for-all" has become more extreme. According to *The Patriot-News*, "In recent years, the event has led to a rash of vandalism, public drunkenness, medical emergencies and arrests. Community and student groups have attempted to tamp down the fallout of hundreds of drunken young people carousing through campus and borough streets. Even so, with some of those initiatives in place, last year was the worst year yet."

In Ireland, "Fifteen teenagers under the legal drinking age were arrested in just one area of south Dublin in a night of drunken St Patrick's Day celebrations," British newspaper *The Independent* reported. "The figures reflect a worrying rise in under-age drinking flagged by leading mental health experts..."

These are far from uplifting ways to honor a "saint."

In fact, St. Patrick's Day is brimming with what the Bible condemns. Notice: "Now *the works of the flesh* are plain: fornication, impurity, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery... selfishness, dissension, *party spirit*,

envy, *drunkenness*, *carousing*, and the like..." (Gal. 5:19-21, *Revised Standard Version*).

Patron of Ireland?

Patrick is known as Ireland's "Patron Saint." In his book, Ledwich explained how the "patronage" came about: "Let us next inquire how St. Patrick came to be dubbed the Patron Saint of Ireland. The ninth century, famous for reviving and incorporating Pagan practices with the Christian ritual, observing that Rome had her... Mars, Athens her Minerva, Carthage her Juno, and every country and city a proper and peculiar deity, whose guardian care was its greatest protection and security, conceived it a very becoming employment for Christian Saints to assume the patronage of a Christian People, and to interest them the more in this new occupation, they brought their bones or reliques, wherever laid, and deposited them in the principal church of the metropolis. The superstition and illiteracy of the age were favourable to every clerical imposition" (*The Antiquities of Ireland*).

The author further stated: "It is an undoubted fact, that St. Patrick is not mentioned by any author or in any work of veracity in the 5th, 6th, 7th, or 8th centuries. In 858, we find his name and miracles in a fragment of Nennius: this fragment is composed of the wildest incoherences and exactly in the style of the incredible fictions of that age. It seems to have been compiled from an Irish Legend, as in some places it refers to it."

Not one of Patrick's generally accepted writings claim any connection with the Roman church of his time. William Dool Killen's *The Ecclesiastical History of Ireland* records: "He [Patrick] never mentions either Rome or the Pope, or hints that he was in any way connected with the ecclesiastical capital of Italy. He recognises no other authority but that of the Word of God..."

The title "Patron Saint" refers to "a saint or angel designated (by individuals, groups, or the Church) as the heavenly protector of individu-

als, institutions, or specialized activities,” according to the *New Catholic Encyclopedia*. This implies Patrick is somewhere in heaven looking over and protecting Ireland.

Such an idea also conflicts with the Bible, a book, Killen explained, Patrick embraced as his *only* authority.

God’s Word reveals that a person should rely on Him for protection—not any person—dead or alive.

Ecclesiastes states, “...*the dead know not anything*, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten” (9:5).

This means only one thing: the real Patrick has been dead for a long time, and knows “not anything.”

No matter how many millions today believe otherwise, the concept of a dead “Patron Saint” is contrary to what the Bible teaches. (For much more on this subject, read *Do the Saved Go to Heaven?* at rcg.org/dtsgth.)

Silly Myths

Above all, St. Patrick’s Day is about Irish superstitions and traditions. Here are some of the most popular:

■ **Leprechauns:** “In Irish folklore, [a] fairy in the form of a tiny old man often with a cocked hat and leather apron. Solitary by nature, he is said to live in remote places and to make shoes and brogues. The sound of his hammering betrays his presence. He possesses a hidden crock of gold; if captured and threatened with bodily violence, he might, if his captor keeps his eyes on him, reveal its hiding place. But usually the captor is tricked into glancing away, and the fairy vanishes” (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*).

God tells those who follow Him that such beliefs are worthless: “For the customs of the people are vain...” (Jer. 10:3). *Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance* defines “vain” as “unsatisfactory” or “emptiness.”

■ **Shamrocks:** “According to St. Patrick’s Day lore, Patrick used the three leaves of a shamrock to explain the holy trinity...Today, St. Patrick’s Day revelers wear a shamrock out of tradition,” *National Geographic* reported. Colossians 2:8 warns against fol-

lowing manmade traditions: “Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.” (For more on this, read the book *The Trinity – Is God Three-In-One?* at rcg.org/ttigitio.)

■ **Excessive drinking:** “Like many other forms of carnival, St Patrick’s Day is a feast day, a break from Lent in which adherents are allowed to temporarily abandon rigorous fasting by indulging in the forbidden. Since alcohol is often proscribed [forbidden] during Lent the copious consumption of alcohol is seen as an integral part of St Patrick’s Day” (*Multiculturalism’s Double-Bind*). (For a better understanding of this topic, read the article “The True Meaning of Lent” at rcg.org/ttmol.) Scripture strictly forbids drunkenness: “And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit” (Eph. 5:18).

■ **Wearing green and pinching:** “According to some accounts, blue was the first color associated with St. Patrick’s Day, but that started to change in the 17th century,” *The Christian Science Monitor* stated. “Green is one of the colors in Ireland’s tri-color flag, and it has been used in the flags of several Irish revolutionary groups throughout history. Ireland is the ‘Emerald Isle,’ so named for its lush green landscape. Green is also the color of spring, the shamrock, and the Chicago River, which the Midwestern city has dyed green on St. Patrick’s Day for the past 40-odd years.”

The article later explains that pinching is “an entirely American tradition that probably started in the early 1700s. St. Patrick’s revelers thought wearing green made one invisible to leprechauns, fairy creatures who would pinch anyone they could see (anyone not wearing green). People began pinching those who didn’t wear green as a reminder that leprechauns would sneak up and pinch green-abstainers.”

But the apostle Peter taught true followers of God, “Let the time that is past suffice for doing what the [unbelievers] like to do, living in licentiousness, passions, *drunkenness*, rev-els, *carousing*, and lawless idolatry. They are surprised that you do not now join them in the same wild [licentiousness], and they abuse you” (I Pet. 4:3-4, RSV).

Also, I Timothy states, “Have nothing to do with godless and *silly myths*” (4:7, RSV).

God’s Traditions

St. Patrick’s Day customs, regardless of how harmless they may seem, are not from God. Jesus bluntly said what it meant for those who follow such customs: “...laying aside the commandment of God, you hold the tradition of men...Full well you reject the commandment of God, that you may keep your own tradition” (Mark 7:8-9).

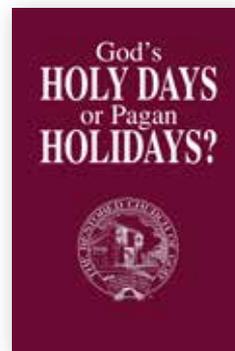
Recognize that, as with many other manmade holidays, St. Patrick’s Day is filled with pagan customs. The shamrock, green paraphernalia, and a plethora of fantasies about Patrick, including his fictional function as “Patron Saint” in heaven, are simply empty traditions. Such manmade holidays were adopted as early church leaders began “laying aside the commandment of God” to “hold the tradition of men.”

But to what *should* they be holding?

God commands that seven Holy Days be kept throughout the year. He records in Leviticus 23 that these were to be observed *forever* (vs. 41). These

were kept by Jesus Christ and the original apostles. Each feast depicts a fascinating step in His Master Plan of salvation. When these God-ordained Holy Days are obscured, so is God’s Plan for mankind.

To learn the vital importance of God’s biblical feast days, and how different they are from manmade traditions, read the free booklet *God’s Holy Days or Pagan Holidays?* □



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ARTIFICIAL IN

People worry that smart gadgets and similar technology will develop into super-intelligent, out-of-control machines that subjugate the world. The answer to whether you should be concerned about this reveals a fundamental—yet little known—fact about your mind.

BY SAMUEL C. BAXTER AND
DAVID J. LITAVSKY

CHECKING THE weather is an integral part of most morning routines. Yet you no longer need to look out the window. Instead, you simply speak into your phone or other similar device.

“Hey, Siri, do I need my umbrella?”

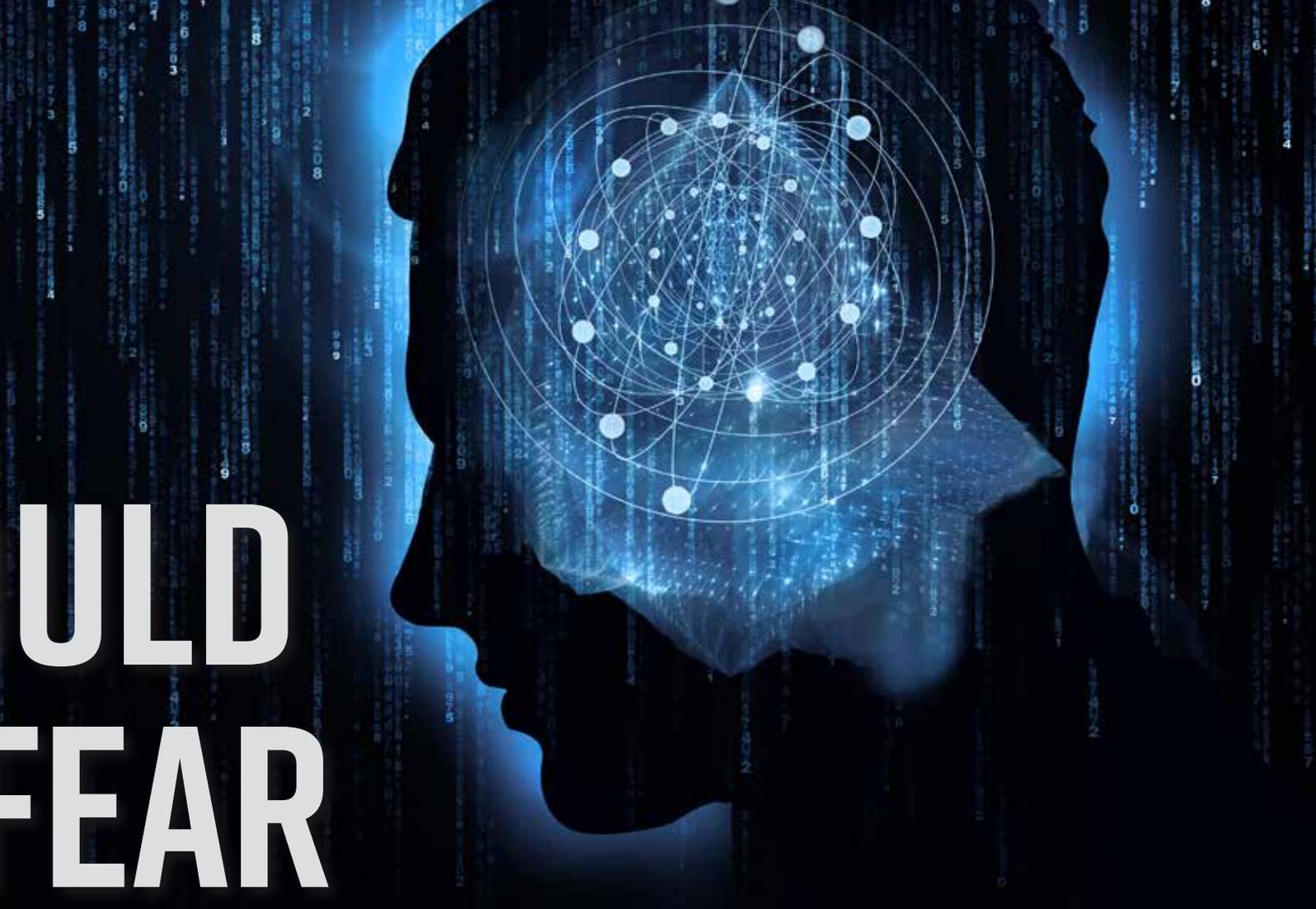
“Alexa, will it be hot this afternoon?”

“OK Google, how much snow will we get?”

“Hey, Cortana, should I wear a jacket?”

Take the last question. Your smart device responds, “You may consider wearing a light jacket, as it is 43 degrees Fahrenheit with a possibility of light rain showers.”

You have just had a conversation with a budding artificial intelligence (AI). If you are not already, get used to



ULD FEAR

TELLIGENCE?

asking a device what to do as it may someday learn to push *your* buttons, tell *you* what to do, or even begin to have feelings against *you*.

At least that is what many of the leading minds in science and technology want us to think. Stephen Hawking, Elon Musk, Bill Gates, Steve Wozniak, Neil deGrasse Tyson, and others fear AI may take over in coming years.

Ever since the term “artificial intelligence” was coined by American computer scientist John McCarthy in 1955, the idea that computers could learn

to listen, speak, think and feel emotions has permeated pop culture. Just think of the movies *2001: A Space Odyssey*, *The Terminator*, and *The Matrix*. Recent entries include *Her*, *Ex Machina*, and *Avengers: Age of Ultron*.

Although they do not live up to their fictional counterparts, current AI advancements are impressive.

It drives us around: Tesla Motors’ autopilot technology is close to providing full autonomy, which will allow a vehicle to completely take over for the driver.

It serves as our financial advisors: there are online chat bots that provide support for credit card or banking customers.

It reports the news: media outlets such as *Associated Press*, *Fox* and *Yahoo!* use computer programs to write simple financial reports, summaries and sports and news recaps.

Companies are also developing AI applications that provide in-depth responses to “non-factoid” questions, such as relationship advice. Some programmers are even including synthetic emotions to better connect with users.

What worries people most is that some computers think on a completely different level than humans. Only recently has an AI been able to beat the best players in the ancient Chinese Game of Go. Think of it as chess on steroids. Chess has 20 possible moves per turn. Go has 200.

The AI consistently uses moves that, at first, seem to be errors to top players. The decisions by the computer challenge knowledge passed down over centuries about how to play the game—yet turn out to be winning tactics.

Machines able to outthink human beings appear to be a double-edged sword. While they can help us see things in a new light—and make giant leaps in industry, science and technology—what happens if they begin to think *for themselves*?

In a short documentary titled, “The Turing Test: Microsoft’s Artificial Intelligence Meltdown,” by Journeyman Pictures, one robot AI based on sci-fi writer Philip K. Dick provided a humorous, but telling, answer. It was asked, “Do you think robots will take over the world?”

After pausing as if to think, the humanoid responded: “You all got the big questions today. But you’re my friend, and I will remember my friends, and I will be good to you. So don’t worry. Even if I evolve into Terminator, I will still be nice to you. I will keep you warm and safe in my people zoo, where I can watch you for old time’s sake.”

The exchange gave the developers a good laugh, to which the robo-author responded with a smile. Yet it summed up the fears many have about the future of AI.

Rise of the Humanoids

Experts on artificial intelligence believe the next generation of AI will be adaptive, self-learning, intuitive and able to change its own programming rules. They speak of a time when machines will exceed the intelligence of human beings—a moment defined as “singularity”—which experts believe could take place by 2035 or soon thereafter.

This could mean a brighter future for mankind. In fact, super AI may be

a necessity because of the explosion of man’s knowledge. But these advancements are a double-edged sword.

According to *The Observer*: “Human-based processing will be simply inefficient when faced with the massive amounts of data we’re acquiring each day. In the past, machines were used in some industries to complete small tasks within a workflow. Now the script has flipped: Machines are doing almost everything, and humans are filling in the gaps. Interestingly, tasks performed by autonomous machines require the types of decision-making ability and contextual knowledge that just a decade ago only human beings possessed.”

“In the near future, AI-controlled autonomous unconscious systems may replace our current personal human engagements and contributions at work. The possibility of a ‘jobless future’... might not be so far-fetched.”

While critics see robot minds taking jobs from humans as a negative, others feel it would allow workers to focus on greater pursuits.

The author of *2001: A Space Odyssey*, Arthur C. Clarke, wrote this

in the 1960s: “In the day-after-tomorrow society there will be no place for anyone as ignorant as the average mid-twentieth-century college graduate. If it seems an impossible goal to bring the whole population of the planet up to superuniversity levels, remember that a few centuries ago it would have seemed equally unthinkable that everybody would be able to read. Today we have to set our sights much higher, and it is not unrealistic to do so.”

A world where everyone could reach “superuniversity levels” *seems* appealing.

The flipside? A world where people have too much time on their hands would mean more time to delve into the darker facets of human nature.

Everywhere we turn in regard to AI, we run into similar gray areas and moral conundrums.

Uncharted Territory

Something as simple as self-driving cars creates difficult ethical problems. If everyone had such automobiles, it would save 300,000 lives per decade in America. It would also mean the end of daily rush-hour traffic. Also, think of everything you could accomplish dur-



■ **ROBO CHAT:** A news reporter interviews an android version of sci-fi writer Philip K. Dick in Chicago, Illinois (June 24, 2005).

PHOTO: SCOTT OLSON/GETTY IMAGES

ing your morning commute if you did not have to focus on the road!

Yet who is to blame for decisions a machine makes during a crash?

For example, if a driverless car suddenly approaches a crowd of people walking across its path, should the car be programmed to minimize the loss of life, even at the risk of the car's occupants? Or should it protect the occupants at all costs, even if that means hurting others?

Fortune chimed in on the debate, quoting Chris Gerdes, chief technology officer for the U.S. Department of Transportation: "Ninety-four percent of so-called last actions during an automotive collision are the result of human judgment (read: errors), Gerdes said. 'Self-driving cars have this promise of removing the human from that equation,' he said. 'That's not trivial.'

"The catch: With self-driving cars you've shifted the error from human drivers to human programmer, Gerdes said. Machine learning techniques can improve the result, but they aren't perfect.

"And then there are ethical concerns. If you program a collision, that means it's premeditated, [Patrick Lin, director of the Ethics and Emerging Sciences Group at California Polytechnic State University,] said. Is that even legal? 'This is all untested law,' he said."

Others speculate on the darker side to a post-singularity future. What if AI begins to see human beings as the problem? What if they begin to act on self-interest? And what if those interests conflict with human interests—and they must remove us to complete a task?

Human Rights Watch issued a warning in February titled, "The Dangers of Killer Robots and the Need for a Preemptive Ban." The report "detailed the various dangers of creating weapons that could think for themselves" (*International Business Times*).

The organization also warned that "removing the human element of warfare raised serious moral issues," such as "lack of empathy," which would "exacerbate unlawful and unnecessary violence" (*ibid.*).



■ **MAN VERSUS MACHINE:** South Korean professional Go player Lee Sedol places his first stone against Google's artificial intelligence program AlphaGo during a Google DeepMind Challenge Match in Seoul, South Korea (March 12, 2016).

PHOTO: GOOGLE/GETTY IMAGES

"Runaway AI" is the term used to define the future moment when machines begin to develop themselves beyond the control of human beings. But how could pieces, parts and electronics get to this point?

Nick Bostrom, the director of the Future of Humanity Institute at the University of Oxford, fleshed out a hypothetical example in his book *Superintelligence*. He asks the reader to picture a machine programmed to create as many paper clips as possible.

Technology Review summarized: "Now imagine that this machine somehow became incredibly intelligent. Given its goals, it might then decide to create new, more efficient paper-clip-manufacturing machines—until, King Midas style, it had converted essentially everything to paper clips."

"No worries, you might say: you could just program it to make exactly a million paper clips and halt. But what if it makes the paper clips and then decides to check its work? Has it counted correctly? It needs to become smarter to be sure. The superintelligent machine manufactures some as-yet-uninvented raw-computing material (call it 'computronium') and uses that

to check each doubt. But each new doubt yields further digital doubts, and so on, until the entire earth is converted to computronium. Except for the million paper clips."

Many do not see the threat, suggesting that we could pull the plug on these digital creatures should we begin to lose control of them.

Yet what if runaway AI cause machines to develop emotional responses and act in self-defense? Imagine if an entity more intelligent than us tapped into the same emotions that drive humans to commit terrible crimes—lust, envy, hatred, jealousy and selfishness?

Or what if they learned to harness the full fund of knowledge and connectivity of the web, and began to reproduce?

A *Slate* article summarized such concerns as the fact that we fear AI "will act as humans act (which is to say violently, selfishly, emotionally, and at times irrationally)—only it will have more capacity."

Actions based on emotion and irrationality suggest sentience, that is, the capacity to feel, perceive or experience subjectively. This allows for a range of human behavior, often labeled "human

nature,” including acting violently and selfishly.

Therefore, to answer whether we should fear AI, we must answer another question: *Is it possible for computers to gain human nature?*

Essential Element

Recognize that human nature is unique. Note the difference between human nature and the nature of animals. Why does man undisputedly have superior intellect, creative power, and complex emotions? Retrospectively, why do animals possess instinct, an innate ability to know what to do without any instruction or time to learn?

Science textbooks attempt to address this, yet there is one textbook that provides the complete picture. In fact, this book—the Bible—humanity’s instruction on how to live, contained many facts about nature long before mainstream science proved them.

For example, it states this about planet Earth: “It is turned as clay to the seal; and they stand as a garment” (Job 38:14).

The phrase “it is turned as clay to the seal” refers to the rotating cylinder used by potters in ancient times. This analogy expresses the rotating motion of the Earth, which causes the sun to appear to rise and set.

The book of Job was written well before the Greeks theorized that Earth was the center of the universe, and that the sun revolved around it. The Bible also speaks to the hydrological cycle (Jer. 10:13), underground aquifers supplying water to oceans (Job 38:16), and sea currents (Psa. 8:8).

So what does the Bible say about the uniqueness of the human mind? The apostle Paul wrote in I Corinthians 2: “For what man knows the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him?” (vs. 11).

Mankind “knows the things of a man,” that is, possesses intellectual capacity, because he was given a component called the “spirit of man.” This term is also found in Job 32: “But there is a spirit in man...” (vs. 8).

The original Greek word translated “spirit” in I Corinthians 2:11 means “a

current of air...vital principle, *mental disposition*” (*Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*).

Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines “disposition” as “prevailing tendency, mood, or inclination,” “temperamental makeup,” or “the tendency of something to act in a certain manner under given circumstances.” It has also been defined as a “person’s inherent qualities of mind and character.”

The spirit that God put into us is what allows us to think like human beings. It allows us to be creative and puts us on a completely different plane from animals.

Beasts do have a sort of spirit, however. Notice: “Who knows the spirit of man that goes upward, and the spirit of the beast that goes downward to the earth?” (Ecc. 3:21).

Animals are lumped together in one group. Though each creature has distinct characteristics, the entire animal kingdom differs from mankind in that it possesses the “spirit of the beast”—or what we call *instinct*.

These two spirits are very different. Note that, upon death, human spirits are preserved (“go upward”), while animal spirits simply disappear upon their demise (“goes downward to the earth”). (To learn more about exactly how this works, read the booklet *Do the Saved Go to Heaven?* at rcg.org/dtsgth.)

For each type of spirit, there is a disposition or nature that goes with it: human nature, animal nature, and even God’s nature.

But what about robot nature?

AI Limitations

The greatest fear about AI is that it will take on its own mental disposition. In Bible terminology, this means we fear it will develop a human spirit—that it will possess autonomous thinking power and behavior driven by emotions.

Scripture answers this concern. Genesis 2:7 shows that God “breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.”

At the other end of the spectrum, Jesus Christ said, “Fear not them which

kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear Him which is able to destroy both soul and body...” (Matt. 10:28).

Intelligent and resourceful human beings cannot even destroy spirit, let alone create it! Only God can generate and destroy spirit.

All this signifies that AI, which is created by human minds, could never fully be given the spirit of man susceptible to human nature and run amuck on the Earth. Any negative actions by such machines are the result of those who programmed them.

We could also reason that since most people, including scientists, do not know *about* the spirit in man—there is no way they could produce it in a computer program. Given unlimited funds and time, the very best mankind can hope for with computer brains is to make them similar to animals. Their programming could be likened to instinct—as a human mind behind it has to guide everything it does.

Conferring “animal instinct” to a computer would be a huge undertaking and represent the best men can do. Imagine the impossibility of trying to teach an animal to think as a man (in effect, giving the spirit of man to a beast). To teach calculus to a cow, train an elephant to write poetry, or hire an orangutan to design and engineer a space shuttle—is beyond possible. It simply does not work. Without the spirit in man, as Paul stated, a living being cannot “know the things of a man.”

Yes, AI technology can be programmed to compute equations, poetry and designs, in some cases at a far greater capacity than man. It can search the bounds of logic without facing the same human limitations and setbacks—fatigue, emotion, irrationality. Yet it must be combined with human intellect—a product of the spirit in man—to come anywhere near to what those who fear it say it will do.

Man’s mind is utterly unique in all of Creation. The Bible explains why. To learn more, read Editor-in-Chief David C. Pack’s booklet *What Science Will Never Discover About Your Mind* (rcg.org/wswnedaym). □

The Importance of Digestive Health



ALL 11 MAJOR systems of your body must function well for you to experience good health—and of these, your digestive system is significant. It is through this intricate system that nutrients from the foods you eat are transferred into your blood and to every cell throughout your body.

Think of each step in the digestive process as continually breaking down food to be used at the blood and cellular levels. Once vital nutrients are extracted, any remaining waste is eliminated.

As we age, our ability to break down foods and absorb nutrients begins to slow. Most people have come to accept the resulting effects of this: heartburn, bloating, constipation and irritation of the digestive tract. They seek to ease this discomfort with a variety of over-the-counter medications—the “pink stuff” that coats your stomach, fizzy

tablets dropped into water, or handfuls of chewable, rainbow-colored antacid tablets. They see these short-term remedies as the only option for relief.

This emerging problem begs the question: Are digestive issues just a natural part of getting old—leaving us to only treat the effects—or is there something that can be done to reverse them?

Widespread Problem

The sheer size of the market for digestion products reveals that the problem of poor digestive health has reached staggering levels. Consider three of the most well-known digestion issues: heartburn, constipation and gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD).

The industry for products to treat heartburn symptoms is the second largest over-the-counter medicine category in the United States. According to the Consumer Healthcare Products Association, \$2.6 billion worth of heartburn-related products are sold annually.

Only the painkiller industry sells more at over \$4 billion annually.

Constipation, which is infrequent or difficulty with waste elimination, has also become a major issue in the U.S. The American College of Gastroenterology reported that at least 15 percent of the population—nearly 50 million people—experiences chronic constipation. Pain, hemorrhoids and vomiting can result from extended periods of non-elimination.

People often confuse GERD with heartburn. Though they are related, GERD is a more severe form of reflux. While heartburn is a frequent symptom, other symptoms of GERD include:

- regurgitation of food or sour-tasting liquid
- coughing, wheezing and difficulty swallowing
- severe chest pain while lying down

According to the National Institute of Health, GERD affects about 20 percent of Americans.

How the System Works

To help understand and prevent digestive problems, it is good to have basic knowledge of how a normally functioning gastrointestinal tract works.

Think of the digestive tract as a hollow tube running through the middle of your body. It is where the initial steps of digestion begin.

The process starts in the mouth. Food is mixed with saliva and systematically broken down by chewing it into smaller pieces. The semi-liquefied food is then swallowed and brought into the stomach. There it is further broken down by powerful stomach acids and enzymes.

From there, food proceeds to the small intestine where probiotics (or “friendly” bacteria lining the intestines) continue breaking down food so that it is small enough to be carried to every cell in the body.

When functioning properly, the digestive system can handle almost all that passes through it.

Take for instance the digestive health of teenagers. They can eat just about anything, including rich, fatty foods, without facing the immediate consequences of heartburn, constipation and upset stomachs. Their young digestive systems are strong, with enough acids, enzymes and more to wash down several slices of pizza with a quart of soda and yet experience no problems.

Such a meal would be unthinkable as we get older. This is in part because as we age, so do our digestive “pipes.” They eventually lose their “juice”—the powerful stomach acids, healthy probiotic bacteria, and digestive enzymes—that all enhance the body’s ability to break down foods.

When this happens, negative digestive symptoms come into the equation—heartburn, upset stomach, constipation, etc. These are all signs of a malfunction in the body’s process of digestion.

To further see the impact of a failure in the digestive process, consider what occurs in the stomach. Imagine squishing a meal of roasted chicken,

vegetables, brown rice, and salad inside a large Ziploc bag and placing it outside on a slab of concrete on a hot sunny day. (This is analogous to food sitting for several hours in the near 100-degree environment of the stomach.)

In as little as 30 minutes, and certainly within hours, the plastic bag of food would start to bloat and swell as gases released by bacteria build up inside the bag. Since there was no liquid inside of the plastic container, the food would take longer to break down and would eventually rot.

This is a picture of what happens in the stomach when it lacks sufficient helpful digestive acids and enzymes to break down food.

Practical Tips

What can be added to your routine to help promote normal digestive function as you age? Consider these four options.

■ **First:** Drink enough water. Many digestive problems are the result of a lack of water, as the liquid helps dissolve fats and soluble fiber.

A good rule of thumb to ensure you are drinking enough is to divide your body weight (in pounds) by two. The result is the amount of water (in ounces) you should drink each day. Meanwhile, avoid drinking sugary, carbonated drinks, which can dehydrate the body.

In addition to drinking enough, it is important to drink water at appropriate times to aid digestion. Taking a glass of water soon after waking up jumpstarts the digestive system, which helps prevent constipation. Also, drinking a glass of water 30 minutes before a meal stimulates the stomach lining and prepares it for food.

Avoid drinking excessive liquids during or up to two hours *after* a meal, however, as it dilutes stomach acids, causing them to become less efficient at breaking down foods.

■ **Second:** Eat unprocessed foods, including vegetables, whole grains, lean meats, and anything that goes through minimal “processing” before it reaches your table.

Medical and nutrition experts are increasingly making the connection between the consumption of processed foods—which contain additives, preservatives and chemical ingredients—and poor health.

Make sure you chew your food thoroughly. Even healthy foods can cause digestive issues if not chewed properly.

■ **Third:** Incorporate a daily supplement of digestive enzymes. Our bodies naturally decline in producing enzymes as we age. Taking an enzyme supplement may help.

There are also cases in which you may benefit from taking a specific enzyme such as if you have pancreatic insufficiency, are lactose intolerant, or have a high-fiber diet. Research to find the appropriate, high-quality supplement that fits your needs.

■ **Fourth:** Include a daily probiotic supplement. “Probiotics are live bacteria and yeasts that are good for your health, especially your digestive system,” *WebMD* stated. “We usually think of bacteria as something that causes diseases. But your body is full of bacteria, both good and bad. Probiotics are often called ‘good’ or ‘helpful’ bacteria because they help keep your gut healthy.”

In correct quantities, probiotics can help prevent irritable bowel syndrome, inflammatory bowel disease, and infectious or antibiotic-related diarrhea.

Maintaining healthy digestive enzyme and probiotic levels is better than masking symptoms of poor digestion with typical over-the-counter remedies. When it comes to enzyme and probiotic supplements, however, do your own research and seek professional advice before deciding what or how much to take.

Forget the notion that uncomfortable digestion-related symptoms are just part of getting older. While the digestive system slows down as we age, taking a few simple steps to improve your digestive health will ensure you do not have to rely on popping pills, sipping fizzy drinks, or chewing up antacid tablets to make it through the day. □

PERSONAL

Continued from page 2

(15) Mark 2:27-28

The 15th verse is Mark 2:27-28: "... The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath: therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath."

No other doctrine is as widely accepted and staunchly defended in the world of traditional Christianity than Sunday-keeping. Though few who profess to be Christian can agree on biblical teachings, they almost always agree that the Saturday Sabbath has been replaced by Sunday worship. To be accepted as mainstream, one must recognize Sunday.

If asked which day is the Christian Sabbath, most answer, "Sunday." Some falsely believe, "Jesus rose from the dead that day, so we honor Him by observing Sunday."

Numerous clever arguments exist as to why Sunday is supposedly the day Christians should assemble and worship God. This unbiblical practice has been in effect so long—over 1,600 years—and is so common that few are able—or willing—to recognize clear scriptures that reveal the *true* Sabbath day, and its permanence.

Most start with Sunday as the "Christian Sabbath" and then search for verses to support this idea—if they study at all—rather than beginning with an *open mind* and searching for clear passages on the subject, of which there are many. Even a quick study of the topic with an open mind will reveal the truth. Sadly, most are too steeped in the popular "tradition of men" to leave Sunday's powerful grip.

How many times have you glossed over Mark 2:27-28? Or have you assumed that since Jesus is Lord (or Master) of the Sabbath, He must have changed it from Saturday to Sunday? Be honest.

Jesus' statement is simple to understand when one considers who created the Sabbath day. As the Creator of all things (Col. 1:16),

and God of the Old Testament, Jesus sanctified the Sabbath. Let's read: "On the *seventh day* God ended His work which He had made; and He rested on the *seventh day* from all His work which He had made. And God blessed the *seventh day*, and sanctified it: because that in it [not Sunday] He had rested from all His work..." (Gen. 2:2-3).

Jesus is Lord of the Sabbath because He created it, and set it aside as a day of rest! No verse even hints that He designated Sunday, which is why He did not say He is "Lord of Sunday."

Some cite Matthew 12:1-8 (a parallel account of Mark 2) as proof

“Jesus is Lord of the Sabbath because He created it, and set it aside as a day of rest! No verse even hints that He designated Sunday.”

Jesus did away with the Sabbath. Yet Jesus was explaining that it is lawful for a person to satisfy immediate hunger on the Sabbath, as King David did, even though it was not lawful for anyone other than the Levites to eat the showbread. (Read I Samuel 21:1-6.)

The Pharisees concocted numerous manmade regulations governing the Sabbath that made it a *burden* on people rather than a *blessing*. This is what Christ condemned, not the day itself. How do we know? Because He stated, "The Sabbath was made *for man*, and not man for the Sabbath" (Mark 2:27).

Jesus Christ created the Sabbath for people to enjoy. The Sabbath is to serve man, not the other way around! The Pharisees made it into a day one must serve—thus making it a burden.

The only difference today is that misguided religious leaders have made it of no effect at all!

Resist shallow arguments that the Sabbath was "only for the Jews" or Jesus "did away with it"! This day has been in effect—as holy time—since the foundation of the world. Man has *no authority* to establish or take away time that God made holy.

Many will argue that they keep the Sabbath "in their hearts" or "in Jesus." Similar to other plain Bible realities, as with the Kingdom of God, the Sabbath is spiritualized away. Human reasoning permits a person to keep the Sabbath as he or she sees fit—rather than as *God commands!* (Read Exodus 20:8-11.) What God wants is ignored. They make His Law of no effect—just like the Pharisees! Recall my previous Personal.

For a fuller understanding of this topic, order my free book *Saturday or Sunday – Which Is the Sabbath?* You will be surprised where Sunday-keeping originated and who authorized it.

(16) Romans 8:14

The 16th verse virtually no one considers is Romans 8:14: "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God."

This verse defines a true Christian. And a few verses earlier it states: "You are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His" (vs. 9). A Christian is one who has the Holy Spirit. It is that simple.

How one acquires the "Spirit of Christ" begins in Mark, which we read earlier: "Repent you, and believe the gospel" (1:15).

One of Jesus' first commands is to repent, which means to change. This is the perfect summary of Christianity. It is a life of constant change from a carnal mind to one taking on the character of God. As the second step in the Christian walk, it should now be clear why our opening verse about the gospel is crucial—that you must believe

in the only gospel Christ preached, the *Kingdom of God*.

Peter's sermon in Acts 2 adds another element: "Repent, and *be baptized* every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (vs. 38). One must be baptized to receive the Holy Spirit.

Time and again, clear verses reveal core teachings of the Bible. My booklet *What Is True Conversion?* goes much further. Request a free copy today.

(17) John 3:13

The 17th passage Christians reject flat out is John 3:13: "No man has ascended up to heaven, but He that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven."

The most universally misunderstood Bible truth is what happens when you die—whether one goes to heaven or hell for eternity, or something else. Countless millions believe—and hear their ministers preach—that we must "believe in Jesus" so we can "enter heaven" and "ride clouds, play harps, walk the streets of gold in front of the pearly gates, sit in rocking chairs," or just "roll around heaven all day."

Nearly everyone believes they will go to heaven upon death. Yet Jesus plainly declares no one has ascended there! No one means *no one!*

Now notice what Peter stated: "Let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both *dead* and *buried*, and his sepulcher is with us unto this day" (Acts 2:29). This is plain. We might ask: if David did not make it to heaven, who did, or who does?

You might next wonder, "If no one is in heaven, then what is a Christian's reward?" Jesus stated, "I go [back to heaven] to prepare a place for you" (John 14:2). Most assume He is referring to preparing a place *in* heaven. Yet in the very next verse, He said, "If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again [to Earth], and receive you unto Myself; that where I am [on Earth], there you may be also" (vs. 3). Combine this with, "Blessed are the meek: for they

shall inherit *the earth*" (Matt. 5:5), and the truth is clear.

The reward of God's saints is future rulership *on the Earth*—as "kings and priests." Reading Revelation 5:10 makes this obvious! Right now Jesus is in heaven preparing a Kingdom for His people to inherit on Earth! Christians will *not* join Jesus in heaven. He will "come again" to Earth, where they join Him!

So few understand this fundamental Bible teaching. This is because they ignore and reject plain scriptures.

Will you believe the plain words of Jesus Christ? Will you believe

“The most universally misunderstood Bible truth is what happens when you die—whether one goes to heaven or hell for eternity, or something else.”

His statement "no man has ascended up to heaven"? To learn what can be your reward—to see an incredible picture—order my free book *The Awesome Potential of Man*.

(18) John 3:3

The 18th verse Christianity dismisses is John 3:3. Its explanation is longer. Jesus told Nicodemus, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." For one to see God's Kingdom, he must be born again. There is no other way.

This confused Nicodemus. He could not understand how a human

being could experience a second birth: "Nicodemus said...How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?" (vs. 4). This is certainly a fair question, one that would naturally come to mind when learning one must be born a second time.

It is widely taught and believed that, to be a true Christian, one must be "born again" by religious experience. Millions of professing Christians define themselves as having undergone this experience, claiming it occurs when one accepts Jesus as Savior. Being born again is reduced to a *feeling*, rather than an actual birth. A series of Jesus' statements in John are used to support this popular teaching.

Jesus expounds on His verse 3 statement: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (vs. 5).

Water applies to baptism—being fully immersed in water, which symbolizes a person's old self being buried in a watery grave. The person is then raised from the water as a new man and is to live the rest of his life in obedience to God. In effect, such a person is "born of water."

This also refers to the physical birth common to all human beings. While in a mother's womb, a baby is surrounded and protected by a water-like liquid called amniotic fluid. This cushions the baby to keep it safe and protected from infection. Just before birth, this water "breaks," signaling delivery will be soon. Everyone can say he has experienced this birth. But the next one is different.

Jesus' mention of "the Spirit" references the moment of being born again, or born of the Spirit. Again, most believe this happens when one accepts Jesus, while they remain flesh and blood human beings. Jesus' next statement? "That which is born of the flesh *is flesh*; and that which is born of the Spirit *is spirit*" (vs. 6). How clear! This means it is impossible for a flesh and blood person to be born again. Those born of the flesh, or of a woman, *are* flesh—period! But those

born of the Holy Spirit *are* Spirit—period!

Jesus removes all doubt: “Marvel not that I said unto you, You must be born again. The wind blows where it lists, and you hear the sound thereof, but cannot tell whence it comes, and where it goes: *so is every one that is born of the Spirit*” (vs. 7-8).

You should not marvel either. Jesus compared those born again to wind. We can see and feel the effects of wind—trees swaying, debris being tossed through the air, etc.—but cannot see wind itself. Likewise, when an individual is born of the Spirit, other human beings will not be able to see him, because he will be composed of spirit—not flesh and blood. God is a Spirit and cannot be seen.

We have to ask: of those who claim to be born again, are any of them spirit beings? No. They are still flesh! Sadly, they wrongly assume they are born again, despite Jesus’ plain teaching.

When is one truly born again? At the point when God changes a person to spirit! Let’s read: “As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ’s *at His coming*” (I Cor. 15:22-23). Christians are born again “at His coming”—not before!

Paul also wrote: “I show you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump [the moment of Christ’s return]: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal [body from human birth] must put on immortality [a divine body at spirit birth]” (vs. 51-53).

One verse prior, Paul had stated, “Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God...” (vs. 50). Those who believe they are born again and in the Kingdom of God now, while in the flesh, err. Human beings cannot inherit God’s Kingdom before they

have been changed—born again!—into spirit beings.

Will you believe your Bible?—or cling to traditions of men? My extensive free booklet *What Does “Born Again” Mean?* addresses every question you may have.

(19) Revelation 1:1

The 19th verse ignored by Christianity is Revelation 1:1: “The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto Him, to show unto *His servants* things which must shortly come to pass...”

Understand. The events recorded in the book of Revelation are for God’s servants to understand. Who are God’s servants? They are those who obey Him. This will become more clear.

Mark 4 and Matthew 13 add understanding to how Jesus teaches. In both places, He explained that He spoke in parables so *His servants* would understand Him—but others would not! Let’s carefully read: “When He was alone [with only the disciples], they that were about Him with the twelve asked of Him the parable. And He said unto them [not to others, or the world as a whole], unto *you* it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables: that seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand...” (Mark 4:10-12). Note exactly what Jesus said! Only *His servants* could grasp His real meaning. Others might think they do—but cannot!

Jesus Christ never leaves His followers in the dark about matters He wants them to understand. But He does record them in ways that keep them hidden from the view of all others. This will help you see why so few understand a book that has been read by so many.

Those who have God’s Spirit will understand the book of Revelation—and all truth. Read Acts 5:32 and John 16:13. Accepting these two verses is vital to every reader. All who do not obey God—however sincere in pursuing the truth of Bible proph-

ecy—or anything else—are wasting their time.

(20) Luke 21:36

The 20th verse that Christendom never speaks of is Luke 21:36—and it is powerful: “Watch you therefore, and pray always, that you may be accounted worthy to *escape all these things that shall come to pass*, and to stand before the Son of man.”

What are true Christians told to escape? Jesus foretold that immediately preceding His return great prophecies would slam into a completely unsuspecting, unprepared world. He had just said, “As a snare shall it come on *all* them that dwell on the face of the *whole earth*” (vs. 35). Many verses speak of earth-shattering events, and in much greater detail than most could dream. Yet almost none concern themselves with conditions and events that Jesus plainly states will affect everyone on the entirety of the planet—and how one can escape all that is coming.

Our websites rcg.org, realtruth.org and worldtocome.org contain a vast array of books, booklets, articles and videos that plainly explain Bible prophecy, *and* how it applies to you.

Every one of the titles mentioned throughout this article are available there as well—all free of charge!

The Bible’s meaning and purpose is always greater than what men concoct. Now ask: Why have you not been taught these 20 verses? How can such amazing understanding—so obvious in the Bible—remain hidden, and for so long? Believe me, there is much more that has been hidden that we could cover!

Your eyes have been opened to truths closed to others. Will you believe these verses—or common misconceptions and errors taught about them throughout supposed Christianity? Will you return to deception?—or act on what you have learned? The right choice means learning many more marvelous truths from God’s Instruction Manual for mankind! Get started on the journey. Time is short! □

U.S. AND BRITAIN

Continued from page 7

Not only are these centers the means through which the world conducts its trade, they are major partners with each other.

Mrs. May stated during the White House press conference: “The U.S. is the single biggest source of inward investment to the UK, and together [we have] around one trillion dollars invested in each other’s economies.”

Such dizzying prosperity has been the envy of the world.

Years ago, British imperialism prompted others to attempt to expand their spheres of influence, including Germany, Spain and France. Yet these nations came nowhere near controlling one-quarter of the Earth, never mind securing the most valuable of these lands for natural resources (e.g., Canada, South Africa, India).

The success of America’s revolt from Great Britain spurred nations around the world to pursue independence. Yet after gaining autonomy, many of those nations, including Haiti, Brazil, Argentina and Greece, never went on to experience the kind of prestige and influence that America has had.

Put all of this together: These two nations have had the greatest armies, been world leaders in agriculture, manufacturing, production, technology and trade, and held crucial strategic sea gates and defensive strongholds throughout the world. And though both nations have been repeatedly challenged, both have almost always emerged victorious.

All By Chance?

The *why* behind America and Britain’s meteoric rise is one of the greatest questions of world history. Was it chance?

Jared Diamond, a professor of geography, attempted to answer a similar question in his Pulitzer Prize-winning book *Guns, Germs, and Steel*. He asked, “Why did wealth and power become distributed as they now are, rather than in some other way?” Also, “Why did human development proceed at such different rates on different continents?”

An overly simplified version of his answer is that it was all *by chance*. The peoples that just happened to be in the right place at the right time grew into global powerhouses.

His research showed that peoples who originated in the Fertile Crescent—which was home to many hearty farm crops—have a particular leg up. (Regular readers of *The Real Truth* know the ancestors of Americans and Britons are among these peoples as many from this region moved to Europe and even further westward.)



■ **GLOBAL INFLUENCE:** Top left, a British state-of-the-art supersonic stealth strike fighter F-35B Lightning II (left) is accompanied by a United States Marine Corps F-35B aircraft (right) over the North Sea (July 1, 2016). Top right, Supreme Commander of the Allied Expeditionary Forces Dwight D. Eisenhower speaks with British Field Marshal Bernard Montgomery (far right) regarding the invasion plans of Normandy after Allied forces stormed the beaches on D-Day (June 6, 1944). Bottom left, traders work on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange, which is by far the world’s largest stock exchange (Jan. 31, 2017). Bottom right, workers walk past the Bank of England, which is the central bank of England and has become a model for modern central banks, in London’s financial district (Jan. 24, 2017). London is the financial capital of the world, with the United Kingdom making up 41 percent of the global market.

PHOTOS: MATT CARDY/ (TOP LEFT); POPPERFOTO/ (TOP RIGHT); BRYAN R. SMITH/AFP/ (BOTTOM LEFT); STEPHEN CHERNIN/ (BOTTOM RIGHT); GETTY IMAGES



Dr. Diamond pointed out that farming and animal husbandry allowed villagers to put their time into advancing technology rather than spending their days hunting and gathering food.

Also, living and working with domesticated animals builds up humans' immune systems. Those in the Fertile Crescent had the big four: cows, pigs, goats and sheep.

This was not the case for most of the rest of the world. No large livestock originated in Indonesia, Australia and Sub-Saharan Africa. South America? Just the humble llama. Europe and China had a few, but none of the big four.

According to Dr. Diamond, lack of animal domestication is why many Incans and Aztecs died from disease when the Spanish conquistadors arrived in Central and South America.

From a scholarly standpoint, it *appears* the U.S. and the UK were simply mega-millionaire winners in the lottery of life. Yet this does not even begin to tell the whole story.

Deep Roots

While there are always pushes to secularize the U.S., it has undeniable Judeo-Christian ties. Consider America's biblical roots—found on its currency (“In God We Trust”), in the Pledge of Allegiance (“under God”), and sprinkled throughout laws (for example, bankruptcy regulations borrow from the seventh year of release found in Deuteronomy 15). It is also evidenced by the countless churches throughout the nation.

Britain is similar. Connections to the Old Testament and ancient Israel are littered through its cultural heritage—its music in particular.

One popular song titled “Jerusalem” muses about a non-biblical legend of a young Jesus Christ coming to visit Britain with Joseph of Arimathea: “And did those feet in ancient time, walk upon England's mountains green?”

Based on a poem by William Blake, the words indicate a desire to build a city of peace in England: “I will not cease from Mental Fight...Till we have built Jerusalem, in England's green and pleasant Land.”

There is also the Welsh hymn “Bread of Heaven.” A literal translation of the lyrics reveals it is about ancient Israel traveling to the Promised Land. It asks God to “guide me through the wilderness,” “give me manna,” and provide drink from “the sweet springs which gush forth from the rock.” Another translation calls this “the Rock that is.”

These two hymns are often sung at royal weddings and funerals—and even sporting events. There has even been a campaign to have “Jerusalem” replace “God Save the Queen” as Great Britain's national anthem.

Yet *WHY* are these two nations so tied to the Bible? The very Book holds the answer.

Even Deeper

The Bible makes plain why America and Britain rose to great heights. In the Old Testament, the Creator bestowed a special blessing upon the patriarch Abraham for his obedience. This decree passed to his son Isaac, then Jacob, who was told his descendants would become “a NATION and a COMPANY OF NATIONS” (Gen. 35:11).

This birthright blessing was then passed to Jacob's grandsons Ephraim and Manasseh, the sons of Joseph. It was this pair of brothers that would later emerge to become the single-greatest nation and biggest-ever company of nations of all time: the United States of America and the British Empire.

Ask yourself: What other pair of related nations have become the single greatest nation of all time *and* the single greatest empire of all time?

THE ANSWER IS OBVIOUS. Also, you now know why Britain and the U.S. have a special relationship—they *are* brothers!

Yet history and the Bible provide even more proof. Notice what God told Abraham: “That in blessing I will bless you, and in multiplying I will multiply your seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and your seed shall possess the gate [sea gates!] of his enemies; and in your seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because you have obeyed My voice” (Gen. 22:17-18).

Jacob was told: “Therefore God give you of the dew of heaven, and the [fertile places] of the earth, and plenty of corn and wine” (27:28).

Think of the abundance both the U.S. and UK enjoy!

There is a problem, though. While some in these nations do acknowledge that God has blessed them, most think it is by their own might and power that these brother nations rose to prominence. Worse, few in either group will do what Abraham did—OBEY.

God knows this is part of human nature. Notice what He warned in Deuteronomy 8: “Beware that you forget not the LORD your God, *in not keeping His commandments, and His judgments, and His statutes...* Lest when you have eaten and are full, and have built goodly houses, and dwelt therein; and when your herds and your flocks multiply, and your silver and your gold is multiplied, and all that you have is multiplied; then your heart be lifted up, and you forget the LORD your God...” (vs. 11-14).

As a whole, the Anglo-Saxon peoples have “eaten and are full,” they “have built goodly houses,” and their “herds,” “flocks,” “silver” and “gold” have multiplied beyond imagination.

The result is *exactly* what God said it would be. We as nations have forgotten Him. We have not kept His commandments, judgments and statutes.

But here is the irony: America and Britain *think* God's blessings will continue indefinitely. Yet they are solely due to promises made to a faithful man thousands of years ago—and will not last forever.

If these fraternal nations truly want to lead the world as they advance into the future, they must recognize where their prominence comes from and wholeheartedly submit to the Being who brought it about in the first place.

To learn more of the Bible's story about the U.S. and UK—and what the next few years will bring—read David C. Pack's eye-opening book *America and Britain in Prophecy* at rcg.org/aabibp. □

HEROIN

Continued from page 12

dosing again. One health official told *STAT* that he had witnessed people overdose, be revived, then show up again the next day, blue in the face from another overdose.

One of the saddest parts, though, is the fact that many of them are parents, which, he said, seems irrelevant to those who are hopelessly hooked.

“When they are looking at their children, and their children are not enough to make them stop, what really can you say to them?” he told *STAT*.

These are just some of the awful details of what leaders and other official face. Addicts, no matter how hard they

try, cannot get clean. Even those who have gone months or years without abusing often fall back into the trap of dependence. Those charged with resolving the crisis are left to throw all sorts of ideas at the wall in hopes of pinpointing a solution that finally sticks.

Harm Reduction

An emerging trend in combatting heroin addiction is to replace the traditional approach of abstinence—which involves a complete cessation of heroin use by addicts—with that of “harm reduction.”

Two versions of this controversial approach are often used to combat abuse. One involves lessening the usage of the harmful substance with the goal of slowly reducing dependence. The

second involves decreasing the “surrounding effects” of drug addiction—without reducing the use of the harmful substance itself.

Methadone clinics are a good example of the first version of harm reduction therapy. Methadone is a synthetic opiate shown to reduce heroin withdrawal symptoms for 24 to 36 hours per dose. The medication, usually dispensed in liquid form, is taken once per day and only available through licensed clinics. Those in treatment, which can go on for years, say that methadone drastically reduces their chance of relapse and is often the bridge they need to slowly wean themselves off heroin.

But these clinics, which are beginning to treat those hooked to opioid-based pain meds as well, are not a panacea. Depending on the clinic’s location, addicts may have to travel great distances to receive their daily dosage. And as the number of patients treated by clinics grows, addicts find it more difficult to make treatment a part of their daily routines.

“Like the morning rush at a Starbucks cafe, cars, pickups and sport utility vehicles start packing into the Volunteer Treatment Center’s parking lots while it’s still dark,” *Times Free Press* reported. “The clinic...opens at 5:30 a.m. seven days a week. Drug treatment clinics open early in the morning so that patients can take their medicine before work. Patients line up inside the clinic and watch red and green lights over a row of private booths staffed by licensed practical nurses.

“When one patient is done, the green light comes on and the next person enters and closes the door...[Through] an opening in a window inside the booth, the nurse hands over the methadone...in tablet or liquid form. The nurse makes sure the patient downs the dose. Traveling to the clinic every morning to take methadone isn’t convenient for most patients.”

Perhaps the biggest challenge with methadone clinics, however, is that most people simply do not want them in their neighborhoods. There is a negative stigma attached to having a drug clinic in the community and most facili-

■ **ON THE STREETS:** A 32-year-old former aircraft technician and his girlfriend, both addicted to heroin, live and sleep under a bridge in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania (July 12, 2016). The city has a growing population of heroin addicts.

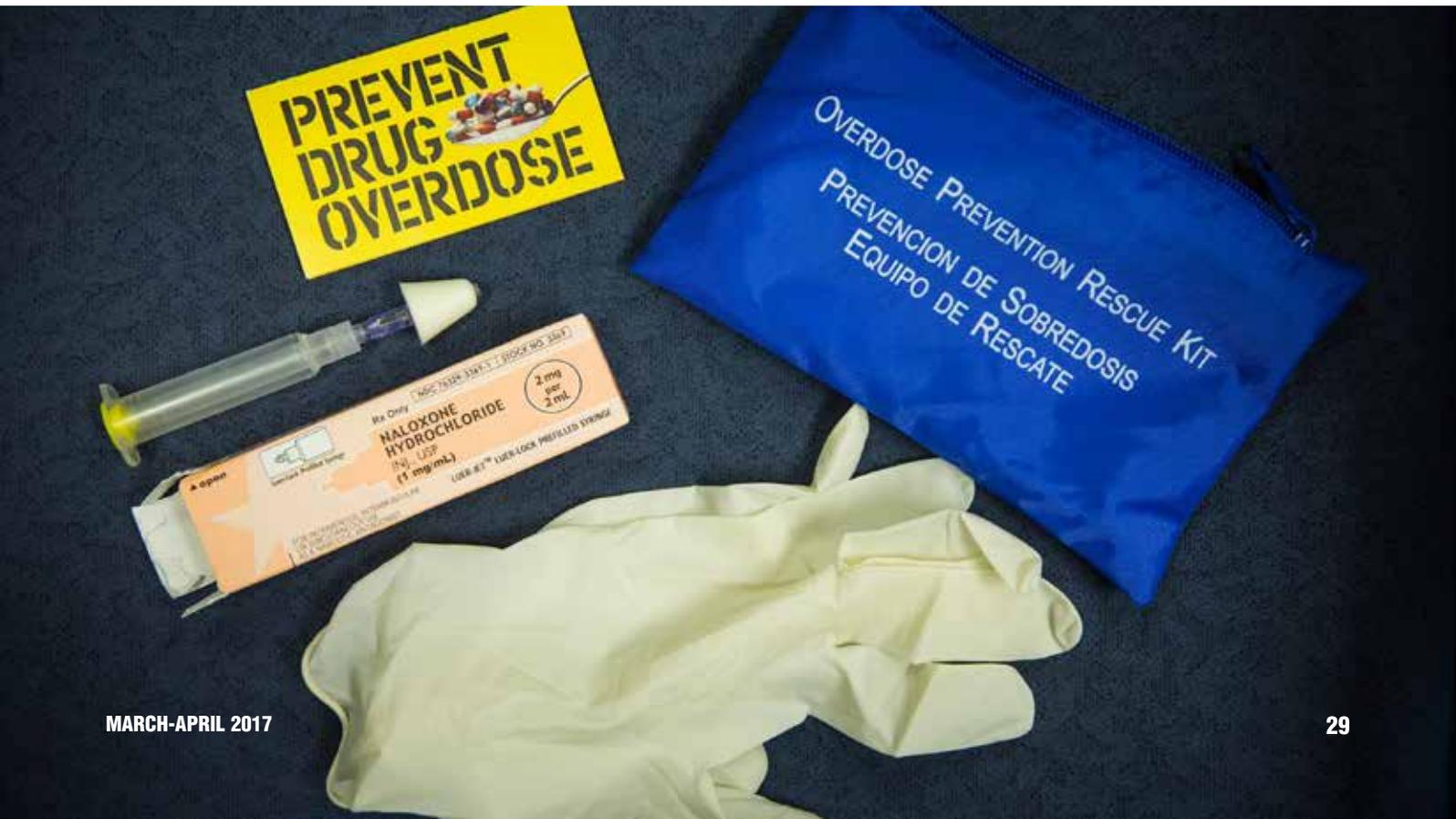
PHOTO: CAROLYN COLE/LOS ANGELES TIMES/TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE





■ **NEW FRONT LINE:** Top, traffic moves through downtown streets in New London, Connecticut, a city struggling with an epidemic of opioid painkiller and heroin overdoses (March 14, 2016). The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported that 390 people died from heroin overdose in the state of Connecticut in 2015, a 27 percent increase over 2014. Bottom, kits of naloxone are used by emergency personnel when dealing with cases of heroin overdose. A state law, which went into effect in October 2016, requires all Connecticut towns to equip their first responder agencies with the drug.

PHOTOS: JOHN MOORE/ (TOP); ANDREW BURTON/ (BOTTOM); GETTY IMAGES



ties are prone to loitering addicts who commit other crimes such as theft.

Another harm reduction approach is known as Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion (LEAD). According to the program's website, it "allows law enforcement officers to redirect low-level offenders engaged in drug or prostitution activity to community-based services, instead of jail and prosecution."

Under the LEAD program, city government officials, police officers, prosecutors and social workers work closely together to keep addicts out of the criminal justice system. Participants receive food, clothing, shelter and job training. Those administering the program say relapses are expected.

Naturally, many are concerned that programs like LEAD enable addicts and do not incentivize change. They assert the program stops just short of the decriminalization of heroin. Proponents of the program say they want to keep addicts safe until they are ready to change.

Another concern with LEAD is cost. The program started up with \$4 million in private funding in the city of Seattle alone, which covered about 300 participants. Yet private money ran out in 2015, leaving taxpayers to fill the gap. Opponents believe that implementing a similar program with many times this number of addicts across the country may not be sustainable.

At the far end of the harm reduction approach is the call for supervised heroin injection sites. This means users would take heroin at taxpayer-funded facilities where a nurse would supervise—and be available to deliver an overdose antidote if necessary. Those promoting the program say the facilities would offer clean needles and access to treatment and recovery programs.

These heroin injection sites, already implemented in Canada, Australia and parts of Europe, have received mixed reviews. A major problem is that facility officials turn a blind eye to illegal drug use. There is also the risk of facilities being exposed to lawsuits in the case of death or serious injury.

Some government officials say it is worth the risk given all the ancillary problems associated with heroin addiction. They believe they can avoid many of the necessary legal and political hurdles for approval if heroin addiction were to be designated an "epidemic" by state health officials.

Opponents remain adamant, however, that these supervised facilities are a bad idea.

"The goal here should be getting people off drugs, not doing what we can to make it easy for people to continue to do them," an attorney and adviser for Drug Free America Foundation, Inc. told *Fox News*.

Another panelist added: "In a way it is giving up on these heroin addicts, in the short term maybe they are giving up the dirty needles, but are they really addressing the underlying cause of the addiction, figuring out a way to get sober?"

Mankind's Conundrum

People are inclined to abuse drugs for varying reasons. Often a person begins to use them to simply alleviate pain from injury or illness. Others seek them as an escape from troubles. Initial drug use also often involves peer pressure, experimentation, seeking recreation, or self-medication.

Regardless, the real problem is addiction and all the negative effects that flow from it.

Ideally, the best way to avoid heroin addiction is to convince everyone to never start. Yet this is an impossible scenario.

While mankind has the ability to make incredible advancements in science, industry and technology, it does not have the ability to solve the kinds of problems, such as the modern drug dilemma, which it faces.

Consider this quote from *Why Man Cannot Solve His Problems* written by David C. Pack, publisher/editor-in-chief of this magazine: "Men have created many amazing technological inventions, but they cannot create solutions to their problems. Mankind has harnessed the power of computers to help process vast amounts of information, but

human beings cannot correctly process their personal problems. Scientists have discovered much about the size, magnificence and precision of the universe, but they cannot discover the way to peace. Astronomers can find majestic, beautiful new galaxies throughout the universe, but they cannot find a way to preserve the beauty and majesty of earth. Scientists have also unleashed the power of the atom, but they are powerless to unleash answers to life's greatest questions. Educators have taught millions how to earn a living, but not how to live."

Mr. Pack continued by repeating and elaborating on a little-known but important principle from the biblical prophet Jeremiah: "O LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself: *it is not in man that walks to direct his steps*" (10:23).

"This is another incredible statement," Mr. Pack continues. "When confronted with problems or important decisions, men simply DO NOT KNOW WHAT TO DO! They are at a loss for *how* to correctly address and solve the challenges, difficulties and problems they face in their personal lives."

As powerful and knowledgeable as man is, he is ultimately unable to direct his own steps. Yes, his knowledge has gotten him far, but there are certain problems that even he cannot overcome.

The heroin crisis is a prime example. Heroin and other drug abuse has become so out of control that we have resorted to just letting it go. Though programs like "harm reduction" have the sincere goal of helping people, they are just fancy-sounding ways of allowing drug abuse to continue since it cannot be stopped.

Solutions for the heroin problem are beyond our capacity. While this article does not discuss resolving the crisis, Mr. Pack's book reveals how it will eventually be stopped and how those now experiencing addiction will one day find the happiness and satisfaction that they so strongly desire.

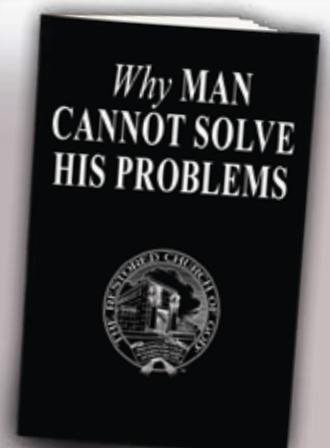
To learn more, read *Why Man Cannot Solve His Problems* free of charge at rcg.org/uun. The ultimate solution is just over the horizon. □

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SOUTH AMERICA

Chile Suffers Worst Wildfires in History

At least 11 people were killed, thousands left homeless, and entire villages destroyed after the most destructive wildfires in Chile's history tore through the center of the country in January. At their peak, the more than 130 separate fires encompassed an area three times the size of New York City.

Deutsche Welle reported: "Since July 2016, more than 5,860 square kilometers (3,641 square miles) of forest and agricultural land have been destroyed by fires, including more than 3,700 square kilometers scorched since the beginning of the year."

In one town, 1,000 homes were burned during the latest incident.

Unseasonably high temperatures, windy conditions, and an ongoing drought in the area stymied efforts to stop the fires.

The most recent blazes have not only prompted at least 13 nations to send humanitarian assistance, but they have also affected the local economy.

"Felipe Neira, president of Itata Valley winemakers association, said in a telephone interview that the industry, which is mostly concentrated in central Chile, so far had lost about 100 acres of vineyards to the fires but that 1,250 acres were in jeopardy," according to *The Los Angeles Times*.

"Our wine heritage is burning up," Mr. Neira said.

In addition, the timber industry has been affected.

"Over 40,000 hectares of the impacted land is used by forestry companies who feed the wood, pulp and paper industry, Chile's second-largest export industry after copper," *Reuters* reported. "There are a total of some 2.4 million hectares of plantations in the nation."

"It is still not possible to determine the economic damage caused by these fires, as they have destroyed woods in different stages of growth and forestry management, and there has also been loss of infrastructure and installations," industry group CORMA told the news outlet. □



■ **FIGHTING THE INFERNO:** Individuals work to put out a forest fire in Hualqui, Chile (Jan. 27, 2017).

PHOTO: GUILLERMO SALGADO/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Survey: Two-thirds of UK Children Are Constantly Worried

Nearly two out of three school children ages 10 and 11 suffer anxiety “all the time,” a study by a British mental health charity found.

Students’ top concerns involved difficulties with family and friends, as well as fear of failing at school.

Of those facing anxiety, 40 percent felt their worries distracted them from school work. Another 21 percent said they do not know what to do to cope with stress.

BBC News reported that one student attempted multiple times to flee his school through a window, feeling unable to complete his school work.

The statistics also reveal gender differences, as 36 percent of girls worried about being bullied compared with 22 percent of boys. Also, 28 percent of girls were constantly concerned about their looks, compared to 18 percent of boys.

Boys, however, were more likely to worry about becoming angry than girls. Twenty-four percent of boys stated anger as their concern compared to 16 percent of girls.

Anxiety among primary school students is typically ignored, according to Catherine Roche, the chief executive of the charity. “But in reality,” she stated to *BBC News*, “we know that young children can worry about a lot of things, whether it’s something going on at home, with their friends, or even about bad things happening in the world.”

“It’s perfectly normal to worry from time to time, but if these worries become more serious or persistent, it’s important that children know where they can turn for help.

“Schools and families play a crucial role in ensuring that children learn to look out for each other and know how to get help if they need it.” □



SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Human-Animal Hybrid Development Sparks Ethical Debate

Scientists at the Salk Institute for Biological Studies developed the first human-animal hybrid, consisting of human cells growing inside a pig embryo.

Labeled a “chimera” after the ancient mythological multi-animal hybrid, the breakthrough is considered a first step toward growing human organs inside animals that could be harvested for organ transplants.

National Geographic reported: “The project proves that human cells can be introduced into a non-human organism, survive, and even grow inside a host animal, in this case, pigs.”

Despite the advancement, scientists share concerns of whether it will ultimately be successful. The magazine continued: “When scientists discovered stem cells, the master cells that can produce any kind of body tissue, they seemed to contain infinite scientific promise. But convincing those cells to grow into the right kinds of tissues and organs is difficult.”

Ke Cheng, a stem cell expert at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and North Carolina State University, believes human organs grown from pig embryos would be rejected if put into human bodies.

Juan Carlos Izpisua Belmonte, a professor at the Salk Institute, “agrees, noting that it could take years to use the process to create functioning human organs,” *National Geographic* continued.

Other experts are concerned the development could lead to a breach of ethics. According to *Tech Times*, bioethics professor Insoo Hyun from Case Western Reserve University said that researchers “do not exactly know what effect these experiments will have in terms of animal suffering.” He also expressed concern that “scientists may be ‘flirting’ with a line of human dignity that they do not want to cross, even if the medical or scientific value is quite high.” □



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