

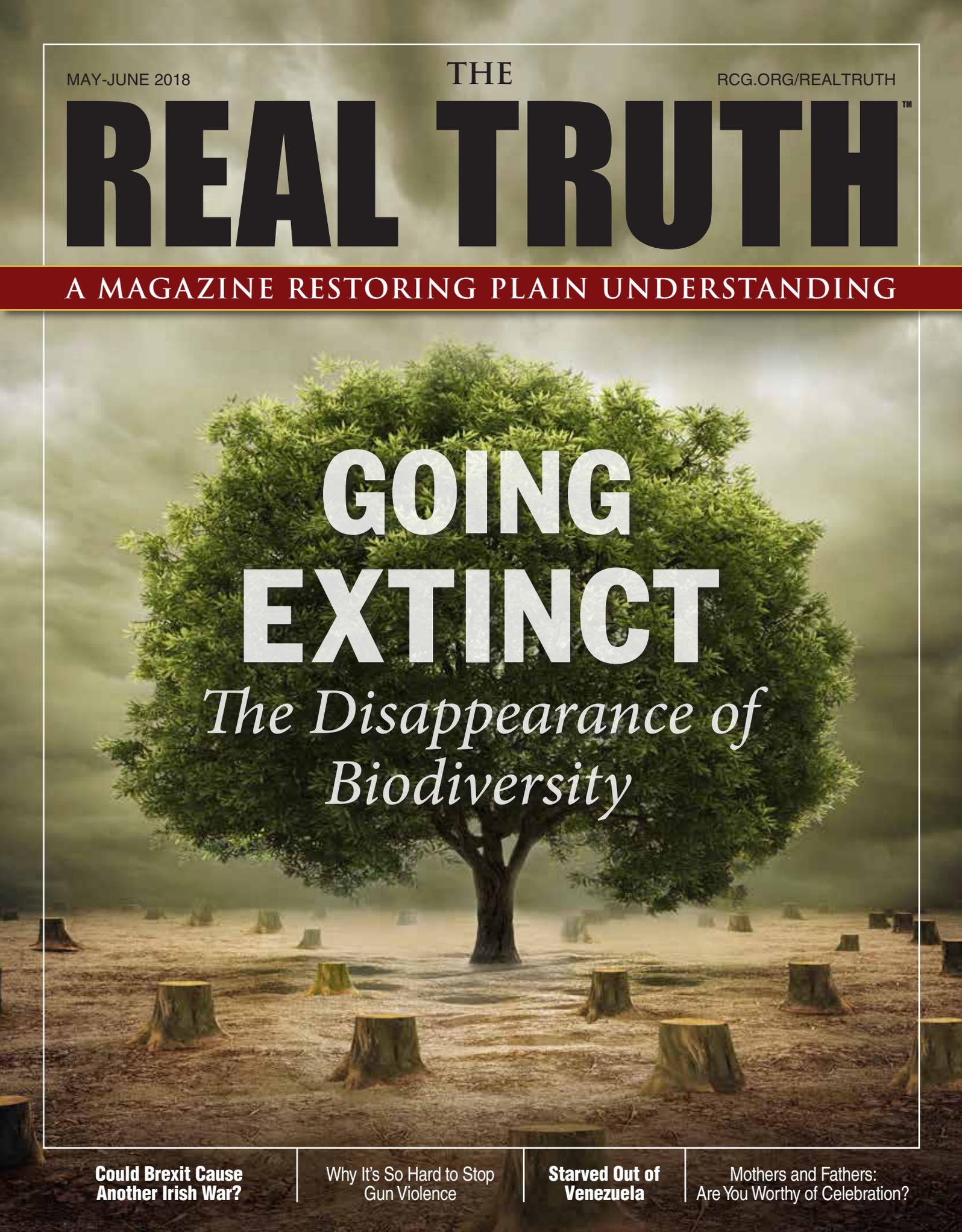
MAY-JUNE 2018

THE

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REAL TRUTH™

A MAGAZINE RESTORING PLAIN UNDERSTANDING



GOING EXTINCT

*The Disappearance of
Biodiversity*

**Could Brexit Cause
Another Irish War?**

**Why It's So Hard to Stop
Gun Violence**

**Starved Out of
Venezuela**

**Mothers and Fathers:
Are You Worthy of Celebration?**

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VOL. XVI | NO. 3 | MAY-JUNE 2018

A R T I C L E S

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■ **LEAVING HOME:** Venezuelan citizens enter Cucuta, Colombia, from San Antonio del Tachira, Venezuela, at the Simon Bolivar international bridge (July 25, 2017).

PHOTO: LUIS ACOSTA/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

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CREDITS: All photos from Getty Images unless otherwise noted. Photo illustrations on pages 16-17 by The Real Truth. Articles on pages 4-7, 10-12, 16-20, 21-25 and 30 contain information from The Associated Press.

HOW THIS MAGAZINE IS PAID FOR:
The Real Truth[™] is made possible by the voluntary, freely given tithes and offerings of the members of The Restored Church of God[®], and by the offerings and donations of co-workers and donors around the world. Contributions are gratefully welcomed and are tax deductible in the U.S. and Canada. Those who wish to voluntarily aid and support the Work of God in preaching and publishing the gospel to all nations are gladly welcomed as co-workers. Contributions may be sent to the following address:

The Real Truth
1000 Ambassador Drive
Wadsworth, OH 44281
rcg.org/realtruth

PUBLISHER/EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
DAVID C. PACK

EXECUTIVE EDITOR
JEFFREY R. AMBROSE

MANAGING EDITOR
EDWARD L. WINKFIELD

SENIOR EDITOR
BRADFORD G. SCHLEIFER

ASSOCIATE EDITOR
SAMUEL C. BAXTER

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

DAVID C. PACK
JEFFREY R. AMBROSE
SAMUEL C. BAXTER
RYAN L. CASWELL
ANDREW J. HOLCOMBE
GREGORY E. KAIDANNEK
DAVID J. LITAVSKY
KENNETH M. OREL
GARRICK R. OXLEY
JAMES F. PASTOR
BRADFORD G. SCHLEIFER
NESTOR A. TORO
F. JACO VILJOEN
VIDAL N. WACHUKU
EDWARD L. WINKFIELD

EDITORIAL ASSISTANTS
DAVID J. LITAVSKY
AISHA WILSON

ART/GRAPHICS
JODY E. LYDICK
PAULA C. RONDEAU
SARAH O. VIDAL
EILEEN M. WILLARD

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ANGELA K. BAXTER
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INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
TIMOTHY C. WILLARD

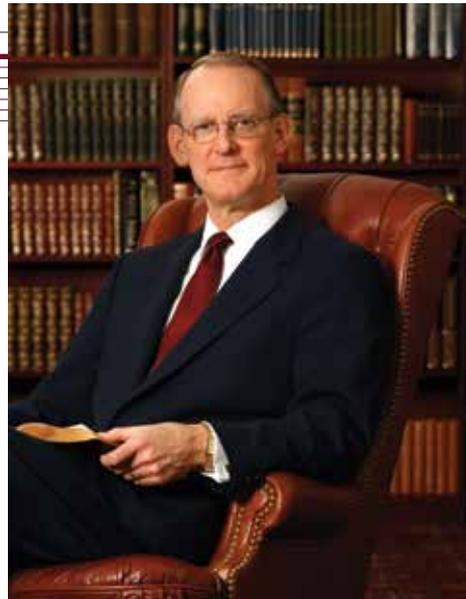
The preparation and production of this magazine involved the work of editors, proofreaders, graphic artists, illustrators, writers, researchers and those who support the Work of God.
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PERSONAL FROM

David C. Fack



Does Hell Exist?

THE IDEA OF an ever-burning hell has frightened countless millions!

What *really* happens to the wicked after death? Are they “doomed to hell,” where their “souls” roast in “torment” forever? If hell exists, and the wicked go there, *where* is it and *what* is it? And *when* do they go? What about the resurrection of the dead? And the parable of Lazarus and the rich man?

There are many popular beliefs about the fate of unrepentant sinners. Why such confusion? What are the Bible answers? Here is the *truth* about hell!

Several years ago, a well-known unrepentant mass murderer was executed. A grim-faced relative of one of his victims appeared at a press conference shortly afterwards and pronounced that the killer was now “burning in hell.” It was obvious that the relative also *wanted* this to be true just as sincerely as he *believed* his own statement. What *was* this killer’s fate? *Did* his crimes doom him to roast in hell forever? Most professing Christians would answer “yes.” But is this what the Bible teaches?

Popular Belief

The most common image of people “roasting in hell” pictures a God willing to burn people for all eternity without ever totally burning them up. Apart from what the scriptures teach, ask yourself, what kind of God is capable of this? Modern “human rights activists” recognize the terrible evil of torture—even in its *temporary* forms. Would the loving God of the Bible design an *everlasting* torture

chamber? If so, He would have to witness—for the rest of eternity—the suffering of those that He had condemned to such a “hell.”

We might also ask: How enjoyable could salvation be for the saved if they were forced to watch their children or parents—and other loved ones—screaming in pain and agony for the rest of time? Do you see the absurdity of this idea? Yet millions upon millions come to this conclusion when they accept the beliefs surrounding the popular concept of hell.

Consider what the *Encyclopedia Americana* says about hell: “As generally understood, hell is the abode of evil spirits; the infernal regions...whither lost and condemned souls go after death to suffer indescribable torments and eternal punishment...Some have thought of it as the place created by the Deity, where He punishes with inconceivable severity, and through all eternity, the souls of those who through unbelief or through the worship of false gods have angered Him. It is the place of divine revenge, untempered, never ending.” An additional quote, also from the *Encyclopedia Americana*, makes this stunning admission about the almost universal acceptance of the popular belief about hell: “The main features of hell as conceived by Hindu, Persian, Egyptian, Grecian and Christian theologians are essentially the same.”

Dante’s Inferno

Almost no one understands that it was primarily pagan poets who authored today’s widely believed concept about an underground, ever-burning hell.

Much of the tradition surrounding this subject came from Dante Alighieri's (1265-1321) famous work *Divine Comedy*. In it, he described his view of paradise, purgatory and hell. Notice this quote from a book about his life, *Dante and His Inferno*: "Of all poets of modern times, Dante Alighieri was, perhaps, the greatest educator. He possibly had a greater influence on the course of civilization than any other man since his day...He wrote, in incomprehensible verse, an imaginative and lurid account of a dismal hell—a long poem containing certain phrases which have caught the attention of the world, such as, 'all hope abandon...ye, who enter here!' This had a tremendous impression and influence on the popular Christian thought and teaching. His *Inferno* was based on Virgil and Plato."

This makes obvious where Dante got his ideas. He believed that the pagan philosophers Plato and Virgil were divinely inspired. His fascination with the Greek philosopher Plato caused him to accept Plato's ideas about the immortality of the soul as described in his famous work *Phaedo*. Here is what the *Encyclopedia Americana* says about Virgil: "Virgil, pagan Roman poet, 70-12 B.C. Belonged to the national school of pagan Roman thought, influenced by the Greek writers. Christians of the Middle Ages, including Dante, believed he had received some measure of divine inspiration."

Few know the true origin of the beliefs that they hold. Fewer still even wish to know! We have just laid bare, in the quotes above, the real origin of this belief. Did *you* realize the source of these ideas? The concept of an ever-burning hell comes from *outright paganism*! We will see that the popular version of hell has never had anything to do with the true teaching of the Bible.

A Popular Scripture

Perhaps the most familiar and often-quoted verse in the Bible is understood by almost no one. John 3:16 states,

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Millions routinely quote this verse, while ignoring an essential phrase within it.

Reread it! Those who receive salvation are promised that they "should not *perish*" but "have *eternal life*"! If hell is a place of eternal torture, then the people suffering this torment must *also* have eternal life. But the verse says, "should not *perish*." It does not say, "Should not suffer eternal life in torment." How does the word *perish* relate to the popular teaching about

“The popular version of hell has never had anything to do with the true teaching of the Bible.”

hell and hell fire? Why did God inspire John to use the word *perish* if this is not what He meant?

The Wages of Sin

If you are employed, you receive regular paychecks. They represent wages paid to you for work done. What about God? Does *He* ever pay wages for work? Notice Romans 6:23: "For the *wages* of sin is *death*; but the *gift* of God is *eternal life* through Jesus Christ our Lord." This verse exactly mirrors John 3:16! Eternal life is contrasted to DEATH—TO PERISHING! THE WAGES OF SIN IS DEATH, NOT ETERNAL TORTURE IN HELL.

There is no mystery regarding the meaning of wages that an *employer* pays an employee for his work. Why should there be confusion over the meaning of wages that *God* pays a sinner for his works? God says He

pays the wicked a paycheck of *death*—not life in a place of torment. The Bible says what it means and means what it says. It states that "scripture cannot be broken" (John 10:35) and "Your [God's] word is truth" (17:17). If we are to believe that the Bible is unbreakable truth, then we must believe that *death means death* and *life means life*! How sad that most do not understand these straightforward verses.

Before examining a number of additional verses about the subject of hell, important groundwork must be laid. The idea of an ever-burning hell is inseparable from the popular belief that all human beings have *immortal souls*. We must examine what God says about souls. It is not what you may think!

Do People Have Immortal Souls?

Most people do not understand the relationship between physical men and souls. In Sunday school, I was taught that human beings are born with immortal souls. The common belief is that, upon death, the souls of sinners go to hell forever, since they are immortal. Is this what the Bible says? If the wages of sin is *death*, could the Bible also teach that people have immortal souls?

Genesis 2:7 says, "And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man *became* a living soul." This verse does not say that men *have* souls, but that they *are* souls. Adam became a soul—he was not given a soul. Then, almost immediately, God warned him, "And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, you shall not eat of it: for in the day that you eat thereof *you shall surely die*" (vs. 16-17). When placed together, these verses reveal that men ARE souls and that souls can DIE!

The prophet Ezekiel was inspired to write (twice): "The soul that sins, it shall die" (18:4, 20). Death is the

Please see **PERSONAL**, page 26

THE WORLD TO COME

WITH DAVID C. PACK



On *The World to Come* program, *Real Truth* Editor-in-Chief David C. Pack brings plain understanding of the *causes* behind the *bad effects* reflected in today's headlines—and points to the GOOD NEWS of the only possible solution, now just over the horizon! Watch on The Word Network or online at rcg.org/worldtoCome or youtube.com/restoredcog.

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The Word Network**



Why It's So Hard to Stop **GUN VIOLENCE**

Youth and adults alike are demanding an end to the carnage caused by firearms. Yet can they turn their hopes into political reality?

BY DAVID J. LITAVSKY



■ **ON THE STREETS:** Left, young people rally during the March for Our Lives event in Los Angeles, California (March 24, 2018). Right, protesters, many of them students, gather at Waterfront Park in San Diego, California, to raise awareness of gun violence (March 24, 2018).

PHOTOS: MARIO TAMAYO (LEFT); DANIEL KNIGHTON (RIGHT); GETTY IMAGES



THEY HAVE WALKED out, marched and demanded action across America to stop gun violence. But it is far from certain that the young people involved in the “March for Our Lives” movement will be a political force at the ballot box this fall.

Republicans are skeptical. Democrats are hopeful. And outside groups that favor gun control are not taking any chances.

Organizations aligned with Democrats on gun control are spending tens of millions of dollars to ensure that young voters’ passion and enthusiasm does not fade before the November midterm elections, when the Republican Party’s control of Congress will be put to the test.

“Other people look at those young people and think organizing them makes no sense because they don’t vote,” said Tom Steyer, the billion-

aire hedge-fund magnate-turned-liberal activist who has committed at least \$31 million this year to what is believed to be the largest youth vote organizing effort in American history. “We really believe in this generation.”

Past voting patterns show how much work Mr. Steyer and others have ahead of them. Just 15 percent of eligible voters between the ages of 18 and 20 cast ballots in the last midterm election. If the age range is expanded to between 18 and 29, the average midterm rate is no higher than 21 percent—36 percent lower than the overall average—the Cooperative Congressional Election Study found.

Is there any hope that young voters can turn the political tide and succeed in getting the U.S. government to change gun laws in an attempt to curb violence?

Record of History

The difficulty in rallying the youth to vote is nothing new. During the Vietnam War-era draft, just 54 percent

of Baby Boomers voted in the 1972 presidential election. That is just four points higher than the 50 percent voting rate for Millennials in 2016.

The Economist explained a common reason younger generations do not vote as widely. It stated that “young people today do not feel they have much of a stake in society. Having children and owning property gives you a direct interest in how schools and hospitals are run, and whether parks and libraries are maintained. But if they settle down at all, young people are waiting ever longer to do it. In 1970 the average American woman was not yet 21 years old when she first married, with children and home ownership quickly following. Today women marry at 26 on average, if they marry at all, and are likely to want a career as well as children. People who have not settled down are not much affected by political decisions, and their transient lifestyles can also make it difficult to vote.”



■ **PUSHING FOR CHANGE:** Students lead protesters during the March for Our Lives rally in Las Vegas, Nevada (March 24, 2018).

PHOTO: ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

Yet there is a problem seeing “March for Our Lives” as a purely youth-driven movement, though there are vocal young adults involved.

Look at the demographics of the crowd for the March 24 protest against gun violence in Washington, D.C., which drew anywhere from 200,000 to 800,000 people. According to *The Washington Post*: “Contrary to what’s been reported in many media accounts, the D.C. March for Our Lives crowd was not primarily made up of teenagers. Only about 10 percent of the participants were under 18.”

It continued, stating that the “average age of the adults in the crowd was just under 49 years old.”

Organizations will pump millions into rallying the youth vote, yet history is not on their side. So what about the protests themselves? Can they bring true legislative change?

Again, history tells a cynical story.

Back in 2000, about 750,000 people swarmed the capital for the biggest gun control rally in the nation’s history. It was in the wake of Colorado’s horrific Columbine massacre, during which 12 high school students and one teacher were shot dead by two teenagers wielding shotguns, handguns and numerous explosives.

That protest, dubbed the “Million Mom March,” had a similar demographic makeup to “March for Our Lives.”

Yet most today do not even remember this event took place—let alone see it as the birth of any movement. There has been minimal change to gun laws in the nearly two decades since.

Government Gridlock

Take a step back from the heated political vitriol. Despite the narratives painted in the media, no one actually wants gun violence. No one wants mass murder. No one wants to see young lives snuffed out in schools.

If we all agree that violence must be stopped, then why can we seemingly do nothing about it?

Change is *far more* complicated than most realize. Even the U.S. president, a political outsider who was moved by the Parkland, Florida, school shooting to push for sweeping changes in gun laws, quickly settled for more modest changes proposed by Congress after lacking political support.

Other suggestions for gun control show the difficulty lawmakers face in resolving the issues.

Retired Supreme Court Justice John Paul Stevens called for a repeal of the Second Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, which grants the “right of the people to keep and bear arms.” Many of those in the public rallied around this demand.

A pro-repeal writer described an America without the Second

Amendment in *Observer*: “Without federal constitutional protection, states would be free to decide for themselves what restrictions, if any, to place on gun ownership. Less populated states would be free to have liberal gun ownership, including the right to carry. More populated states would be free to create more rigid restrictions on gun ownership and even ban guns completely.”

The results seem to cater to both sides of the debate. But it is highly unlikely that the amendment would be repealed. As *NPR* put it, “The Founding Fathers were willing to be edited, it seems, but they did not want it to be easy. So they made the amending process a steep uphill climb, requiring clear national consensus to succeed,” including an unlikely two-thirds majority in the House and Senate and three-quarters majority among states.

Yet focusing on repealing the amendment may be misguided. “What neither side in the gun debate seems to realize is that at the moment, when it comes to the sort of restrictions that lie within the zone of possibility, the Second Amendment is neither an obstacle nor a protection,” *The Chicago Tribune* reported. In other words, the same legislation could be accomplished with or without the Second Amendment in place.

Another proposition is for every last person to give up their guns—lock,

stock and barrel. Take weapons out of the equation, the thinking goes, and there is very little chance of a shooting occurring.

Australia's gun buyback programs are a successful example of this. After the 1996 Port Arthur Massacre, when a gunman killed 35 people, the federal government offered to purchase guns that had been declared illegal from firearms owners. In all, more than 660,000 firearms were returned. National suicide and homicide statistics declined since then.

Many point to this as a model for the United States. Again, it sounds simple before considering that American states have already hosted gun buybacks. The first—a two-month program in 1974 in Baltimore, Maryland—did not achieve its intended effect. Already high rates of gun homicides and attacks in the city actually increased during the two months.

More recent gun retrieval efforts have been more localized in cities such as Camden, New Jersey, and Detroit, Michigan, in attempts to curb violence in those cities. Yet the number of weapons taken in were nominal and did not affect gun-related violence statistics.

An Australian opinion writer explained in *The New York Times* the different psyches of Australians and Americans when it comes to gun ownership: "We never had a revolution. We never fought foreign troops on our soil. There was no antipodean civil war. From the moment the First Fleet arrived in Botany Bay in 1788 in what is now Sydney, security was provided by the British Army."

Americans, on the other hand, have had to rely on weapons to defend themselves through the separation from England, early foreign invasions, and the Civil War. These historical experiences still stand as evidence to today's citizens that they need weapons to protect their nation, their families, themselves.

The New York Times continued: "In the United States, even if...political opposition could be overcome, such widespread appropriation of private

property and limits on personal liberties would most likely be met with fierce, even physical, resistance."

Unsolvable?

Gun violence is a real problem in the United States. Out of 195 countries, the U.S. has the 31st highest rate of deaths by gun violence at 3.85 deaths per 100,000 in 2016, according to the University of Washington's Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation. This rate is only slightly less than Iraq's rate of violent gun deaths, which is 4.28 per 100,000, and is the highest among Western countries.

Gun ownership drives up statistics of fatalities. A study in the *Annals of Internal Medicine* showed that gun owners are more likely to successfully commit homicide or suicide compulsively.

And even stable-minded gun owners are not always diligent—they fail to safeguard their weapons from teenagers, as was the case for the Parkland, Florida, shooter.

There are also weak links in government agencies responsible for keeping weapons out of the hands of those with criminal or mental health history. This was brought to light after the shooting at a church in Sutherland Springs, Texas, when the U.S. Air Force acknowledged it failed to report the perpetrator's history of domestic abuse—which would have prevented him from buying firearms.

Political motivations aside, gun control activists do recognize real problems. But little seems to change despite the efforts of politicians and protesters alike.

Pause. Think of man's worst problems. The ones that have beset him for millennia: disease, pollution, poverty, ignorance, religious confusion, war, terrorism, crime, violence, hunger, immorality, slavery, oppression, political upheaval and much more.

Regardless of attempts to solve them, from dip-

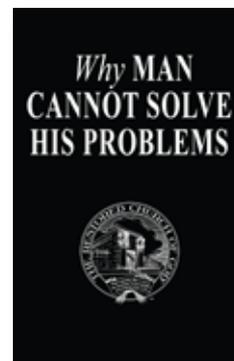
lomatic meetings to military intervention, these problems persist. More often than not, they grow *worse* and even more *complex* as time goes on. Ask yourself: Why?

"Men have created many amazing technological inventions, but they cannot create solutions to their problems," editor-in-chief of this magazine, David C. Pack, wrote in his book *Why Man Cannot Solve His 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.

"The well-known presidential historian and columnist Peggy Noonan summarized the complex, jumbled course that has been mankind's history: 'In the long ribbon of history, life has been one long stained and tangled mess, full of famine, horror, war and disease. We must have thought we had it better because man had improved. But man doesn't really 'improve,' does he? Man is man. Human nature is human nature; the impulse to destroy

coexists with the desire to build and create and make better.'"

While most do not understand why humans are, on the whole, incapable of resolving their issues, you CAN understand the reason. Continue reading Mr. Pack's book at rcg.org/uun. It will also show you that there *is* a way man can solve even his most daunting and complex problems. □



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SCIENTISTS DISCOVER MORE ABOUT YOUR BODY

HERE'S WHAT THEY CANNOT DISCOVER ABOUT YOUR MIND

WHAT HOLDS YOUR organs together? A group of researchers have discovered a part of human anatomy that does just that.

According to findings published in the journal *Scientific Reports* on March 27, the connective tissue between your body's organs have spaces that are filled with fluid, all of which is connected. This cohesive structure is found everywhere in the body—underneath the skin, surrounding muscles, and around the lungs and digestive tract.

The interstitium, as it is called, is said to contain one-third of the body's water and provide a network for fluids to be transferred between systems.

“Previously, researchers had thought these tissue layers were a dense ‘wall’ of collagen—a strong structural protein found in connective tissue,” *Live Science* reported. “But the new finding reveals that, rather than a ‘wall,’ this tissue is more like an ‘open, fluid-filled highway,’ said co-senior study author Dr. Neil Theise, a professor of pathology at New York University Langone School of Medicine. The tissue contains interconnected, fluid-filled spaces that are supported by a lattice of thick collagen ‘bundles.’”

This “organ” was only recently discovered since it could not be seen under a standard microscope, according to the researchers. “When scientists prepare tissue samples for these

slides, they treat the samples with chemicals, cut them into thin slices and dye them to highlight key features,” *Live Science* explained. “But this fixing process drains away fluid and causes the newfound fluid-filled spaces to collapse.”

Instead of traditional methods, the study's authors used a relatively new type of microscope that uses laser technology and sensors that can analyze reflected fluorescent patterns.

Although the researchers have suggested labeling it an organ, it technically does not meet all three criteria necessary to be considered one. These include that it must have more than one kind of tissue, it must be a unique unit, and it must perform a special function.

The new discovery does prove, however, that even in the 21st century scientists are finding new parts of the human body. Each finding reveals more how intricate and complex human anatomy is.

Yet this latest discovery does not even come close to what science has yet to understand about the most complex and fascinating human organs—the brain.

The scientific community continues to ponder: Why is the human brain vastly superior to those of all other animals—even those much larger in size? Why have humans been able to develop complex languages, learn to write, solve difficult multiple-stage problems, appreciate humor, formulate plans and have long-term ambitions, when it seems no animal can do any

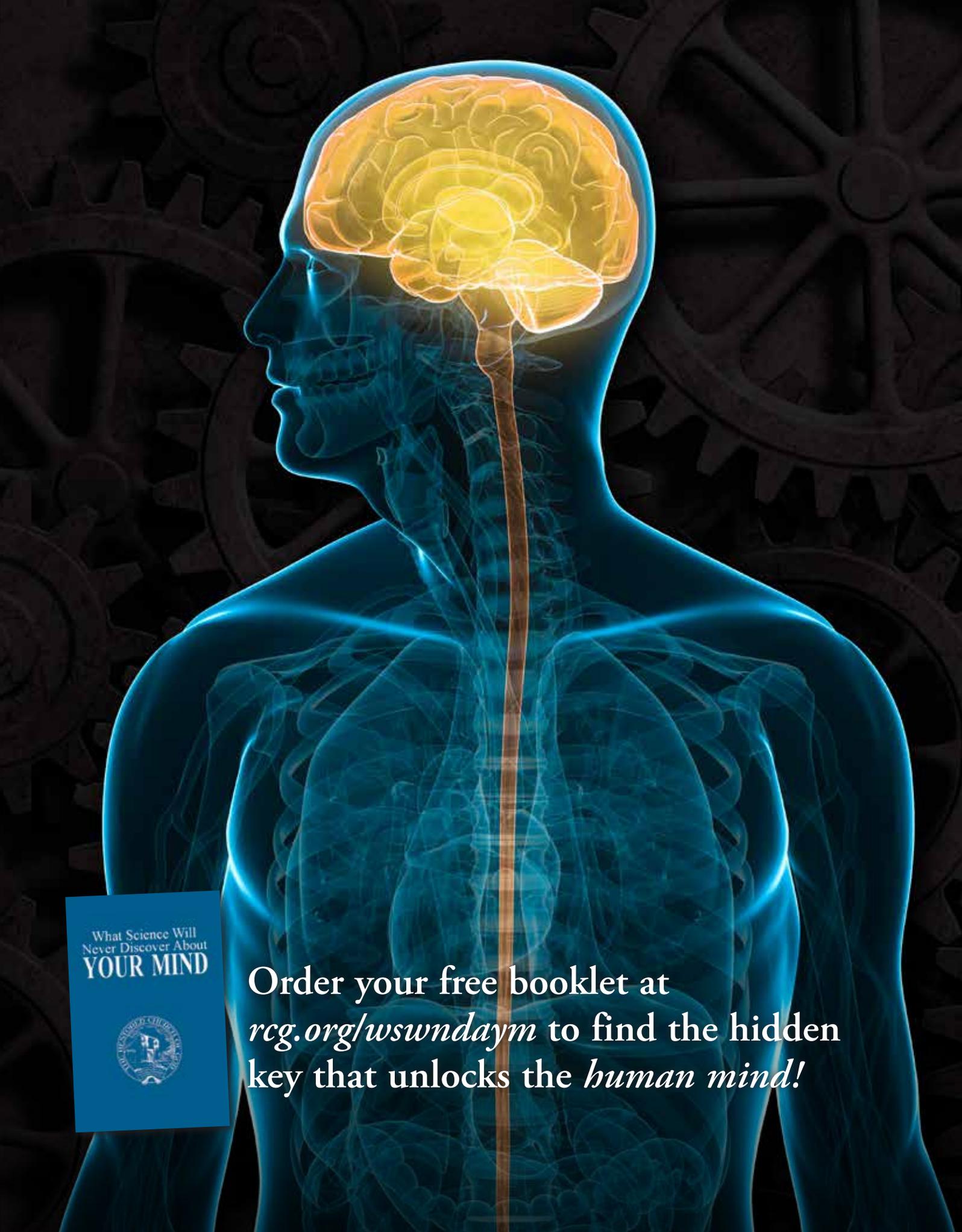
one of these? And why are we self-conscious—aware of our existence?

Australian philosopher David Chalmers pondered similar questions during a scholarly conference on consciousness at the University of Arizona in 1994, summarized by *The Guardian*: “Why aren't we just brilliant robots, capable of retaining information, of responding to noises and smells and hot saucepans, but dark inside, lacking an inner life? And how does the brain manage it? How could the [3 pound] lump of moist, pinkish-beige tissue inside your skull give rise to something as mysterious as the experience of *being* that pinkish-beige lump, and the body to which it is attached?”

“Questions like these, which straddle the border between science and philosophy, make some experts openly angry,” the article continued. “They have caused others to argue that conscious sensations, such as pain, don't really exist... or, alternatively, that plants and trees must also be conscious...Some argue that the problem marks the boundary not just of what we currently know, but of what science could ever explain.”

Philosophers and scientists do not have the answers regarding how we are able to recognize our existence—let alone *why* we exist.

But you *can* know why human beings are unique on Earth—even though the answer cannot be discovered using the scientific method. Read *What Science Will Never Discover About Your Mind* to uncover the mystery. □



What Science Will
Never Discover About
YOUR MIND



Order your free booklet at
rcg.org/wswndaym to find the hidden
key that unlocks the *human mind!*

Could Brexit Cause Another IRISH WAR?

A bloody conflict in Northern Ireland ended in 1998. Brexit negotiations have revealed the wounds are still fresh.

BY SAMUEL C. BAXTER

AFTER BRITAIN leaves the European Union in 2019, the 310-mile border between Northern Ireland and Ireland will be the United Kingdom's only land frontier with a member of the bloc.

That makes it one of the trickiest issues in the divorce negotiations—and the most sensitive, given Northern Ireland's history of violence and conflicting identities in a region where some consider themselves British and others Irish. The fact that goods and people flow freely across the border has greatly

■ **A LOOK BACK:** British army soldiers patrol in the Bogside quarter of the city of Londonderry during heavy clashes between the Catholic minority, loyal to the Irish Republican Army (IRA), and Protestants. Between 1970 and 1971, the IRA took up arms while Protestant loyalist militias attacked Catholics (Aug. 26, 1971).

PHOTO: AFP/GETTY IMAGES





helped reduce tensions since Northern Ireland's 1998 Good Friday peace accord.

Especially for younger generations, it can be easy to forget the Troubles in Northern Ireland between 1968 and 1998, during which more than 3,500 died in a conflict between those loyal to the UK and those who wanted to separate from the UK and become part of Ireland to the south.

A writer for *The Guardian* remembered growing up near the border, where "random checkpoints on the country roads were a fact of life and army foot patrols a constant."

"As the IRA bombing campaign escalated in the early 70s, the anarchy and excitement of the early Troubles gave way to an atmosphere that is hard to describe: a kind of prolonged and anxious enervation that could be fractured at any moment—by bombs going off in the town centre or the sound of gunfire in the night, in the Catholic housing estates."

A writer for *Smithsonian* magazine described how residents of Belfast, Northern Ireland's capital, were "sealed off in a patchwork of segregated neighborhoods divided by barbed wire and patrolled by masked guerrillas."

Car bombs. Gunfights. Masked guerrillas. Constant anxiety. What sounds like a nation in the Middle East today was a reality for Northern Ireland during the Troubles.

In December 2017, Britain and the EU agreed that the all-but-invisible border would remain open once Britain leaves the bloc, although they left it unclear how that would happen in practice.

The EU's chief Brexit negotiator Michel Barnier stated in the EU's draft withdrawal agreement that there were three possibilities:

■ A future free-trade agreement between Britain and the EU.

■ "Specific solutions," such as technological alternatives to a hard border, which the EU says it is still waiting for Britain to propose.

■ A "backstop solution" of effectively keeping Northern Ireland inside the EU's single market and customs

union. The EU document proposes a "common regulatory area comprising the Union and the United Kingdom in respect of Northern Ireland." It says that area would have no internal borders, and no customs duties or restrictions on imports and exports.

It is this last option that has inflamed the debate in Britain, with pro-Brexit politicians saying it would effectively impose a border between Northern Ireland and the rest of the UK, and prevent the UK from fully leaving the EU.

British Prime Minister Theresa May said the proposal would "undermine the constitutional integrity of the UK" and "no UK prime minister could ever agree to it."

Mrs. May more recently proposed a border similar to that of the United States and Canada—an idea summarily dismissed by Irish Prime Minister Leo Varadkar.

"I visited the Canada/US border back in August and saw physical infrastructure with customs posts, people in uniforms with arms and dogs and that is definitely not a solution that we could possibly entertain," he told reporters.

"Long Memory"

Those who lived through the Troubles reveal that the wounds from that conflict remain fresh—many of which have been reopened by Brexit.

Asked by *The Guardian* about the UK leaving the EU, Irish historian Roy Foster said: "The great Hubert Butler remarked in the 1950s that one could only hope that, with more pluralist attitudes north and south, the border would eventually become redundant and float away like a sticking-plaster from a wound that has healed. The combined effects of joint EU membership and the recognitions imposed by the Good Friday agreement were leading to something like that happening—a dilution of the

border, culturally, economically and socially. All this has been destroyed by Brexit."

Laurence McKeown, who took part in the infamous IRA hunger strike of 1981, also spoke with *The Guardian*.

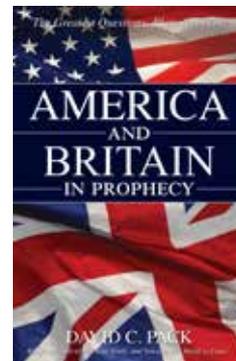
He stated: "The old border had to do with conflict rather than customs and free movement. Now, it's about the impact on cross-border businesses and the flow of people back and forth. And yet any form of a hard border would provide a viable context for dissident activity. If even one border checkpoint was to be attacked, all the rest would have to be fortified."

The same *Guardian* article quoted George Knight, a 70-year-old Protestant historian who lives near the border. He recalled the Troubles: "Those were dire times along the border. We lived through the horror and we accepted it as normal."

Asked whether he could see a hard border again, he responded: "At the moment, nothing would surprise me. There are so many possible consequences of Brexit and very few of them pertaining to Ireland were given a thought by the people who drove the decision to leave. We are separate nations with a huge common interest, but one thing that sets us [both] apart is that people here have such a long memory, because of what they lived through on this divided island, while people across the water seem to have no comprehension of that."

Ireland and the United Kingdom *do* have a "huge common interest." Yet the reason for the bond between Ireland and the UK—as well as why there is conflict between the nations—is deeper and more ancient than most realize.

For a fuller understanding of the bonds between Ireland and the UK, and what the future holds for these brother nations, read *America and Britain in Prophecy*. □



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Mothers and Fathers: *Are You Worthy of Celebration?*

EACH YEAR, when Mother's Day and Father's Day roll around, children of all ages think about their parents. Younger children may create a hand-made card with Elmer's Glue and macaroni. Adult children may think back on everything their parents did for them, take them out to a nice meal and spend quality time together.

Done right, these days contain introspection and careful thought—leading a person to more deeply appreciate his or her parents.

Yet these celebrations can provide a similar exercise for parents too. Moms and dads can look at themselves and make sure they did—and are doing—all they can to ensure their children succeed in life. These celebrations can provide a litmus test of sorts showing where you as a parent are doing well, and where to improve. Even if your children have moved out of your house years ago, the approach you continue to bring to parenthood can have a direct impact on helping them be better parents to your grandchildren.

In short, Mother's Day and Father's Day are all about relationships. And this is one of the most important skills you can teach as a parent: how to interact with *all kinds* of people and co-exist with them. If your children cannot get along with other human beings,



they are doomed to a life of terrible loneliness and misery. Of course, you must first equip yourself with the basic understanding of how to maintain good human relations, no matter the circumstances, and no matter how difficult certain people are. You will then know how to teach and advise them about all the different kinds of situations in which they could find themselves.

Building Family Relationships

There was once a time, and not long ago, when families looked forward to and enjoyed doing things together on a regular basis. Families and lives were very different from those of today. Before radio, television, movies, computers, smartphones and the endless variety of shallow magazines available today, people had much more time

for other things. Activities, recreation and many kinds of interesting pursuits were enjoyed—and enjoyed together, as a family. This included learning and playing more board games, card games, lawn games and outdoor activities. It also included picnics, hiking, camping, fishing, sightseeing, and the enjoyment of the wonders of nature as a family.

Also, families once talked much more around the dinner table, and usually for long periods of time. This was because people generally had the patience to eat more slowly (which made digestion of food better) since the conversation was stimulating. (How many families do not

even eat together anymore, or do so only rarely?)

These kinds of extended conversations were made possible because people were generally living much more interesting lives, which meant that they were reading more books—and this served to keep their fund of knowledge growing and their minds continually expanding. This made the upcoming prospect of family conversation (and it applied to *all* conversations) interesting to the point of fascinating. Of course, the idea of the whole family just sitting and reading books, as was also commonly done in the past, seems terribly old-fashioned, and would be much more difficult in the rat-race world of modern society.

Tragically, today, both parents and children, particularly teenagers, have



“Your task is to be their teacher—their mentor—the first and most important authority figure in their lives.”

largely come to see trying to do most of the above family-oriented things as each party intruding on the other's life and schedule. This means that parents are *losing* a vast number of settings and opportunities to teach their children—and today's children are paying a terrible price, making *them* the biggest losers!

Establish in your mind that you are going to swim as hard as you possibly can against the current, no matter the price that you must pay to do it! Think of your children as counting on you—TRUSTING YOU!—to teach them all the things that they must know, including basic knowledge of people and human relationships of every kind, to have any hope of successfully coping with all the unexpected things that life will throw at them. Ultimately, life is almost entirely about one's ability or inability to get along with other human beings. Yet schools do not offer classes teaching this vital understanding. The world's religions have also failed to *truly* teach these things.

Of course, your children were born with absolutely no idea of all that they need to know about people until they are taught—by you! This means doing many kinds of things together as a family, which creates a variety of interesting settings that you can use as teaching tools.

Parents, Not Peers or Pals

Another point of understanding has to do with a vital distinction in your role

as parent and your offspring's role as children. Remember that you are the parent and they are the children. It is not your job to be merely a “buddy,” “playmate” or “friend.” Many others of their own age will serve this purpose. Your task is to be their TEACHER—their MENTOR—the first and most important authority figure in their lives. While this does not mean you remain distant, impersonal, harsh or one in whom they cannot confide or ask questions as they would to a friend—because you are some kind of a stodgy, old professor figure—it does mean that you must never forget that you produced them instead of the other way around.

The Bible's Fifth Commandment—“Honor your father and mother”—was written to *your children* and it is to be expressed *toward you*, not the other way around. The command is not “parents honor your children” (of course, you should respect them as independent human beings made in the image of God). Your children should never lose sight of the fact that you hold a very high “office” in their world. Remind them of this when you think they have forgotten it.

While your role is not to be merely “pals” with your children, remember that without a strong parent-child bond, built on the right foundation, your children will turn to physical possessions and pleasures, sometimes illicit ones, for comfort. They will also have difficulty forming strong bonds in future relationships, and this includes

both marriage and relationships with their *own* children.

It should be obvious by now that you can never allow yourself, under any circumstance, to become an “absentee parent.” While you have your own life to live, and you must never allow yourself to be a slave to your child's every whim, beck and call, you must be present and accounted for in the fullest sense throughout their lives.

Sadly today, the most “successful” families seem to be those who wish to turn their children's youngest years over to a nanny or other kind of caregiver. This means that such nannies or others who operate day care centers often become the ones who see your children speak, walk or do other things for the first time. How incredibly sad for the parents who must hear these things in reports from others, when they could have been there themselves.

There are thousands of books on how to raise children. They offer every viewpoint under the sun. However, few look to the Bible as a handbook for how to rear sons and daughters. It brings GOD's perspective on childrearing. With this in mind, let's look at the special bonds between fathers and mothers with both their sons and daughters.

Fathers and Sons

Much could be said about how young boys look up to their fathers as virtual heroes in their lives—“My dad can beat up your dad,” “My dad's better than your dad,” etc. All men are familiar with these feelings from childhood. The Proverbs state that “the glory of children are their fathers” (17:6).



Fathers, strive to always *be* a hero to your son(s). Be sure that he can always look up to your example. Remember at all times that what your son is seeing in you is largely what he will become in adulthood. It has been shown that positive father role models produce sons who are both generally more sound in thinking and better at overall problem-solving. An example of strength and maturity displayed by you will reappear later in your sons.

Recall that the apostle Paul wrote, “Fathers PROVOKE NOT your children to anger lest they be *discouraged*” (Col. 3:21), and also “fathers, PROVOKE NOT your children to *wrath*: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord” (Eph. 6:4).

These passages contain a great deal to consider, and more than can be fully explained here. However, depending upon the temperament and strength of your son, you will find that he will respond to provocation, harshness, abuse or excessive discipline with either “discouragement” (the weaker or more timid son) or “wrath” (the stronger, more emotional or more naturally self-willed son). Be careful to practice God’s balance of “nurturing” (loving instruction) and “admonition” (discipline).

Be sure to set a masculine example for your sons. They are watching more closely than you realize! In the Old Testament, King Solomon wrote, “The glory of young men is their strength” (Prov. 20:29). Reflecting a masculine example includes demonstrating a certain amount of strength that your son will want to emulate.

Also remember to treat older and younger sons in the same fashion. Do not let yourself be like the patriarch Isaac, who favored his son Esau, while his wife Rebekah favored Jacob. This resulted in unnecessary rivalry and bitterness between these brothers. This single episode, recorded in the book of Genesis, ultimately had a profound impact on the entire course of human history. Making the same mistake with your children will have no less effect, if only in the lives of your sons. Fathers (and mothers), be careful of unconsciously building a rivalry between

sons. You could be sentencing them to a spirit of competition that will last a lifetime.

Be careful, however, that you also do not ever show favoritism to sons above daughters.

Fathers and Daughters

Many studies have demonstrated the enormous importance of building and maintaining a good father-daughter relationship—and there are many reasons for this.

It has been said that girls tend to marry men who are most like their fathers. This makes being a good father more crucial than meets the eye. It is not unusual for *abused* girls to marry *abusive* men. The daughters of warm, kind, patient, wise and loving fathers generally look for the same qualities in prospective mates. And this would naturally be the kind of man fathers want their daughters to look up to. (Of course, this is also true for their sons, in reverse.) Not only do girls who have not had a close relationship with a father potentially have great difficulty in marriage, they also struggle with being comfortable in relationships with—and even being in the presence of—all men throughout the course of their lives.

Recall that Paul’s instruction to fathers had to do with their “children,” not just their *sons*. It is absolutely paramount that fathers not be harsh, mean, overly sharp or abusive to daughters. Fathers must never forget that daughters are more delicate and usually somewhat more tenderhearted than boys. Few things are more painful to observe than a huge man roaring or railing at a little, fragile girl who has made a simple, innocent mistake. Be sure that you never name-call or overreact with your daughter. While it is not always visible, the result can be devastating. A warm father-daughter relationship has been demonstrated to produce the qualities of achievement, creativity and independence in adult women.

Also, showing the right kind of fatherly affection with girls when growing up will not only teach your daughter to be affectionate, it will make her much more likely to wait until marriage to

display affection, and this includes intimate affection, only proper *within* marriage. Girls who do not feel affection and tenderness from fathers are almost invariably driven to seek it too early and outside marriage. And there will be no shortage of boys who are only too willing to satisfy your daughter’s unfulfilled “need.”

Remember, fathers, just as you hold a very special place in your heart for your little girl, she holds an equally special place in her heart for her dad. Strive to never shatter, betray, neglect or disappoint your little girl’s view of the most important man in the first third of her life—you!

Mothers and Daughters

Although applied in somewhat different ways, as with fathers and their sons, mothers and daughters also have a unique relationship.

Your daughter will learn more about TRUE WOMANHOOD—about how



to be a good wife and a good mother—from you than from anyone else in her life. Paul wrote to Titus that the older women should “teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands...” (2:4-5).

Think of this list as all the things that you as a mother should be teaching your daughters. After all, they are the ones who will be teaching

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GOING EXTINCT

THE DISAPPEARANCE OF BIODIVERSITY

With an increasing number of species dying off, it is not just plants and animals that are at risk.

BY EDWARD L. WINKFIELD

EARTH IS LOSING plants, animals and clean water at a dramatic rate, according to four recent United Nations scientific reports that provide the most comprehensive look at the state of the planet's biodiversity.

Biodiversity, which refers to all living organisms within a given area, is declining in every region of the world per the three-year study

approved by the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystems Services (IPBES). Also known as "species richness," biodiversity is measured by counting the total number of species in a specified area.

IPBES scientists meeting in Colombia issued four regional reports on how well animals and plants are doing in the Americas, Europe and

Central Asia, Africa, and the Asia-Pacific area in March 2018.

The IPBES mission, said study team chairman and prominent scientist Robert Watson, is about keeping Earth livable for humans, who rely on biodiversity for food, clean water and public health.

The organization's conclusion after three years of study? Nowhere is doing well.

"Biodiversity and nature's contributions to people sound, to many people,





academic and far removed from our daily lives,” said Dr. Watson. “Nothing could be further from the truth—they are the bedrock of our food, clean water and energy. They are at the heart not only of our survival, but of our cultures, identities and enjoyment of life.”

This threat to biodiversity “is undermining well-being across the planet, threatening us long-term on food and water,” he continued.

More is at stake than the well-being of plants and animals. Human existence is also tied to biodiversity.

Further concerning IPBES scientists was the demise in March of Africa’s last male northern white rhino. In its death, the world saw the shadow of extinction approach before its eyes. “Utter tragedy today,” British Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson tweeted in response to the animal’s death. “We can’t just sit back and watch more species disappear.”

Jan Stejskal, an official at the zoo where the rhino lived, said its death “is a cruel symbol of human disregard for nature.” Scientists hope to use in vitro fertilization to continue the species.

National Geographic detailed the significance of biodiversity: “All species are interconnected. They depend on one another. Forests provide homes for animals. Animals eat plants. The plants need healthy soil to grow. Fungi help decompose organisms to fertilize

the soil. Bees and other insects carry pollen from one plant to another, which enables the plants to reproduce. With less biodiversity, these connections weaken and sometimes break, harming all the species in the ecosystem.”

“Ecosystems with a lot of biodiversity are generally stronger and more resistant to disaster than those with fewer species.”

IPBES Executive Secretary Dr. Anne Larigauderie reinforced this connection: “Richer, more diverse ecosystems are better able to cope with disturbances—such as extreme events and the emergence of diseases. They are our ‘insurance policy’ against unforeseen disasters and, used sustainably, they also offer many of the best solutions to our most pressing challenges.”

Mankind’s continued existence is at risk. Therefore, governments, scientists and other experts must put their heads together and try to maintain a planet rich with biodiversity.

More Peril

Another species in danger is the right whale. The winter calving season for the critically endangered animal ended without a single newborn being spotted off the southeast U.S. coast, bringing the rare species a step closer to extinction.

“It’s a pivotal moment for right whales,” said Barb Zoodsma, who over-

sees the right whale recovery program in the U.S. southeast for the National Marine Fisheries Service. “If we don’t get serious and figure this out, it very well could be the beginning of the end.”

Scientists estimate only about 450 North Atlantic right whales remain, and the species suffered terribly in 2017. A total of 17 right whales washed up dead in the U.S. and Canada last year, far outpacing five births.

With future births uncertain, researchers say more needs to be done to prevent human causes of many right whale deaths. Necropsies performed on the 17 dead whales last year found at least four were struck by ships and at least two died from entanglement in fishing gear.

“Right now, the sky is falling,” said Ms. Zoodsma. “I do think we can turn this around. But it’s sort of like, what’s our willpower to do so? This is a time for all hands on deck.”

The right whale is not the only sea creature in danger. In 2015, the World Wildlife Fund reported a nearly 50 percent decline in some marine life populations between 1970 and 2012.

According to the organization, the 42-year period also saw the populations of locally and commercially fished species fall by half, with some decreasing even more. Tuna, mackerel and bonito populations, for instance, fell by 74 percent. One in four species of sharks, rays



DISAPPEARING BIODIVERSITY

The following is a summary of the IPBES's biodiversity reports for the planet's four major regions.

THE AMERICAS



The region makes up 13% of the world's human population and 40% of the world's capacity to produce nature-based materials consumed by people.



Greater than 50% of the region's population has a water security problem.

There has been a 50% decrease in renewable freshwater available per person since the 1960s.

On average, the populations of species in the area today are about 31% smaller than they were at the time of European settlement.

Projected loss by 2050.



The economic value of the region's natural, land-based contributions to people is estimated at more than \$24 trillion per year—equivalent to the region's GDP. Sixty-five percent of these contributions are in decline, with 21% declining strongly.

ASIA-PACIFIC

A total of 4.5 billion people rely on the region's biodiversity and ecosystem services for food, water, energy and health security.



Nearly 200 million people directly depend on the forest for their non-timber forest products, medicine, food, fuel as well as other subsistence needs.

Unsustainable aquaculture practices, overfishing and destructive harvesting threaten coastal and marine ecosystems. If current fishing practices continue, there will be no exploitable fish stocks in the region by 2048. Up to 90% of corals will suffer severe degradation by 2050.

 About 400 million people (out of 767 million worldwide) live below the poverty line—defined as \$1.90 per person per day.

The most threatened Asia-Pacific ecosystems:

- Forests
- Alpine ecosystems
- Inland freshwater, wetlands and coastal systems

Threatened endemic species:



8 of the world's 10 most plastic-polluted rivers in the world are in Asia—accounting for up to 95% of global load of plastics in the oceans.



The increasing variety and abundance of invasive alien species is highlighted as one of the region's most serious drivers of ecosystem change and biodiversity loss.

EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA



Even though this area is doing better than the rest of the world, 28% of the species that only live in Europe are now threatened. In the last decade, 42% of plant and animal species have declined, said Mark Rounsevell, co-chair of the IPBES.



In the European Union, only 7% of marine species and 9% of marine habitat types show a "favorable conservation status." Moreover, 27% of species assessments and 66% of habitat types assessments show an "unfavorable conservation status," with the others categorized as "unknown."



IN THE PAST DECADE:

71% Decline in fish populations

60% Decline in amphibian populations

51% Decrease in wetlands since 1970

37% Total freshwater fish species threatened with extinction

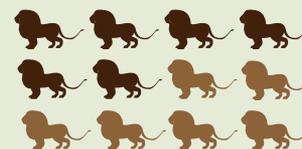
23% Total amphibian species threatened with extinction

20% Decline in arable crop species since 1950

AFRICA



Approximately 500,000 square kilometers of African land has already been degraded by overexploitation of natural resources, erosion, salinization and pollution, resulting in significant loss of nature's contributions to people.



Africa could lose half of some bird and mammal species by 2100. Already more than 20% of Africa's species are threatened, endangered or extinct.

 The population of Africa in 2050 is expected to be 2.5 billion (double the current figure).

Africans expected to live in urban & peri-urban areas:



More than 60% of the continent's people depend on natural resources for their livelihoods.



 Percentage of people facing hunger and malnutrition (2011–2013) in sub-Saharan Africa, the world's most food-deficient region.

Source: IPBES
Graphic: The Real Truth/Sarah O. Vidal

and skates were determined to be on the brink of extinction.

Most of the sharp drops in marine populations were due to the global problem of overfishing, the authors of the report said.

Declines in the Pacific Ocean are particularly concerning. Asian customs such as “shark-finning”—which involves removing the fins of a shark and throwing its body back into the water—took a major toll. If trends continue, 25 percent of shark species could be extinct in 10 years.

Plant Diversity

Biodiversity, and efforts by scientists to keep species in existence, is not just about helping animals. It is also about preserving plants.

Take the influence of diverse plant life on humanity for instance. *National Geographic* stated that plants “help humans by giving off oxygen. They also provide food, shade, construction material, medicines, and fiber for clothing and paper. The root system of plants helps prevent flooding. Plants, fungi, and animals such as worms keep soil fertile and water clean. As biodiversity decreases, these systems break down.

“Hundreds of industries rely on plant biodiversity. Agriculture, construction, medical and pharmaceutical, fashion, tourism, and hospitality all depend on

■ **LAST OF A KIND:** A caregiver crouches next to Najin, one of only two remaining female northern white rhinoceros, at the Ol Pejeta Conservancy in Kenya (Dec. 5, 2016).

PHOTO: TONY KARUMBA/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

plants for their success. When the biodiversity of an ecosystem is interrupted or destroyed, the economic impact on the local community could be enormous.”

Biodiversity directly affects global food production and nutrition, which is key to feeding an ever-growing population. Many small-scale farming operations have long pursued diversity within agricultural systems as farmers recognize that diverse crops are more resistant to severe weather events or other disturbances.

Yet industrialized food production has led to a reduction in the number of species being grown in fields. The main goal has become achieving maximum yields for maximum profits.

“Germany’s Federal Agency for Nature Conservation (BfN) estimates that there has been a 90-percent decrease in the number of crop species since the beginning of the 20th century. Farm animals have suffered a similar fate: In the last 100 years, around 1,000 of the 6,500 known species have become extinct worldwide” (*Deutsche Welle*).

Rice, maize, soybeans and wheat—which make up more than 90 percent of global crop production—have all been affected. “And among those, there are very few sub-species still being planted,” Andreas Krug, who heads the BfN’s Sustainable Agriculture division, told the paper.

Of Germany’s 400 species of wheat, only 30 are commercially viable.

Land being used for mass production also suffers from water with high

levels of nitrates and pesticides as well as erosion, which all leads to a loss of arable land according to Mr. Krug.

The IPBES reports biodiversity and nature’s ability to contribute to people are “being degraded, reduced and lost due to a number of common pressures” in every region. These pressures include “habitat stress; overexploitation and unsustainable use of natural resources; air, land and water pollution; increasing numbers and impact of invasive alien species and climate change, among others.”

Impact by People

Though extinction can occur naturally, scientists estimate that human activity is causing species to die out at hundreds of times the natural rate.

National Geographic reported a major reason for this is the destruction of species’ natural habitat. Forests are irresponsibly cut for lumber and firewood. Previously untouched land is being developed to plant crops, and build houses and factories. Fields, forests and wetlands where plants and animals thrived are disappearing. Pollution, overfishing and overhunting are also having a negative impact.

Industrialized meat production has led to a rising demand for animal feed, especially maize and soybeans. Agricultural economist Ernst Berg told *Deutsche Welle* that global economic growth has “led to a change in eating habits. People consume more meat and dairy and less plant-based food.”



“Though extinction can occur naturally, scientists estimate that human activity is causing species to die out at hundreds of times the natural rate.”

The newspaper reported that it takes 20 times more land to produce 100 grams of meat than the equivalent amount of grain. The available land for this increase is being reduced to make way for more housing, roads and other developments. In addition, a certain percentage of the arable land must lie fallow to avoid soil erosion.

People can also detrimentally affect biodiversity by introducing non-native species to new areas. These alien species often destroy native species over time. Brown tree snakes, for instance, which were accidentally brought into Guam in the 1950s, soon multiplied and caused the extinction of nine of the island's 11 native forest-dwelling bird species. Another example is the Asia emerald ash borer's decimation of ash trees in North America.

All this is a side effect of the world getting wealthier and more crowded, Dr. Watson of the IPBES concluded. Humans need more food, more clean water, more energy and more land. And the way society has tried to achieve that has cut down on biodiversity, he said.

Crucial habitat has been cut apart, alien species have invaded places, chemicals have hurt plants and animals, wetlands and mangroves that clean up pollution are disappearing, and the world's waters are overfished, Dr. Watson said.

"We keep making choices to borrow from the future to live well today," said Jake Rice, Canada's chief government scientist for fisheries and oceans, who co-chaired the IPBES Americas report.

Duke University conservationist Stuart Pimm, who was not on the IPBES study team, said the reports make sense and are based on well-established scientific data.

"Are things pretty dire? Yes," he said.

Attempts to Resolve

Even though biodiversity is dropping rapidly, mankind *is* trying to turn the tide. The fact that there is an IPBES, an international body with representatives from 128 member states, helps prove this.

There has even been some success in the fight to preserve species richness.

For example, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced earlier this year that it may reclassify the humpback chub from "endangered" to "threatened" within the next 12 months.

The fish, which has a fleshy bump behind its head and was first considered endangered in the late 1960s, was on the brink of extinction. As dams were built to control waters in its habitat, turning the once warm and muddy waters cold and clear, the fish struggled to survive. Invasive species also preyed on it.

As a result, the number of adult humpback chub in the Grand Canyon area went from nearly 11,000 in 1989 to less than half that number a decade later before stabilizing around 2008. A decade later, the Grand Canyon has the largest population with about 12,000 adults.

"It took a long period of time for us to understand how a species like this behaves in the system," said Tom Chart, director of the Upper Colorado River Endangered Fish Recovery Program.

"It's kind of putting these puzzle pieces together to understand it," he said.

Full recovery of the species, however, will take more work. And therein lies the problem.

The humpback chub is only one of countless species in an intricate worldwide ecosystem. The new and emerging problems threatening species globally far outpace the available resources to keep them at bay.

At times, elaborate and sincere efforts to preserve a species are deemed successful yet end up causing other, unforeseen threats. Wildlife officials in the state of Oregon are experiencing this firsthand as they attempt to evict federally protected sea lions from an inland river where they feast on salmon and steelhead that are listed under the Endangered Species Act.

The bizarre survival war has intensified recently as the sea lion population rebounds and fish populations decline in the Pacific Northwest, leaving wildlife service staff at their wits end.

Case in point: The wildlife service recently spent two days trapping and relocating a sea lion. They transported it

130 miles from an Oregon river where it was eating the fish to release it in the Pacific Ocean. The dog-faced pinniped then proceeded to swim right back to the Oregon river where it started, hungry for more fish.

The population of sea lions, which were hunted for their thick fur, dropped dramatically before they rebounded from 30,000 in the late 1960s to about 300,000 today due to the 1972 Marine Mammal Protection Act.

As their numbers increased, sea lions ventured farther upstream in Oregon and Washington state rivers and tributaries, eating protected fish species. In Oregon, sea lions intercept protected fish that are on their way to spawning grounds in the Willamette River south of Portland. Last winter, a record-low 512 wild winter steelhead completed the journey, said Shaun Clements, the state wildlife agency's senior policy adviser.

Less than 30 years ago, that number was more than 15,000, according to state numbers.

"We're estimating that there's a 90 percent probability that one of the populations [of fish] in the Willamette River could go extinct if sea lion predation continues unchecked," Dr. Clements said. "Of all the adults that are returning to the falls here, a quarter of them are getting eaten."

Oregon wildlife managers say sea lions are beginning to move into even smaller tributaries where they had never been seen before and where some of the healthiest stocks of the threatened fish exist. The mammals also have been spotted in small rivers in Washington that are home to fragile fish populations.

"You're pitting this protected population that has been fully recovered against these Endangered Species Act-listed fish," Doug Hatch, a senior fisheries scientist with the Columbia River Intertribal Fish Commission, said.

Oregon wildlife management's costly and well-meaning efforts to trap and haul sea lions to the ocean can seem futile in the face of this conundrum.

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STARVED OUT OF VENEZUELA

Millions are fleeing their oil-rich South American home in search of food and stability.

BY NESTOR A. TORO

AFTER SECURING the Venezuelan presidency with 50.6 percent of the vote in 2013, Nicolas Maduro pledged: “I am ensuring the legacy of my commander, [the then-deceased predecessor Hugo] Chavez, the eternal father.”

More than a year from when those words were uttered, the true legacy of Chavez’s social revolution was already well underway: a ghastly economic collapse that is now worse than the Great Depression in the United States during the 1930s.

Dropping oil revenues—realize that the nation holds the largest oil reservoirs on Earth—and poor fiscal management has led to vast national debt accrual and the world’s highest hyperinflation.

Mr. Maduro is pushing for radical economic restructuring, including the recent inception of oil-backed “petro” cryptocurrency, and November’s introduction of a 100,000 bolivar paper bill.

“The International Monetary Fund estimates an economic contraction of 15%, which means that by the end of 2018 the economy will be half of what it was in 2013” *The Wall Street Journal* reported. “And inflation will hit 13,000%.”

The paper added: “One U.S. dollar now fetches around 236,000 bolivars on the street, around 80 times what it bought at the start of last year. Five years ago, that could buy a small

■ **MASS EXODUS:** Venezuelan citizens queue to cross the Simon Bolivar international bridge from San Antonio del Tachira, Venezuela, to Cucuta, Colombia (July 25, 2017).

PHOTO: LUIS ACOSTA/AFP/GETTY IMAGES



apartment; now it barely covers an appetizer at lunch.”

A BBC video from February 2018 titled “Begging for food in Venezuela” shows how the most vulnerable were impacted in the last five years: “The economic collapse has left an unsettling sight [the commentator stated]: extremely thin children who don’t know when they’ll eat next,” as the video displays two skinny girls playing outside.

An interviewer asked the mother, “Do you know what you will eat tomorrow?” She replied, “No idea,” while holding another baby in her arms.

The clip went on to show a child named Moises, who looks like “a newborn, but he’s two,” Lilliana, who “looks like she’s two, but she’s 5,” and a 4-to-5-year-old looking Jose, who is “almost eight,” due to stunting.

Venezuelans on average lost 24 pounds of body weight in 2017, according to an annual university study and estimates by the country’s opposition-led National Assembly, reported on by Reuters.

Another story by the same news organization showed footage of dire conditions in a local zoo in the state of Zulia, which “may have sacrificed emaciated animals and fed them to healthier ones as the country struggles with chronic food shortages, zoo workers report.

“The chaotic collapse of the country has created chronic food shortages that have fueled malnutrition and left millions seeking food anywhere they can find it, including in trash cans and dumpsters.”

Such images were unthinkable back in the 1970s, around the time of the nationalization of Venezuela’s oil industry. Back then, the phrase *ta’barato dame dos!* (it’s cheap, give me two!) became popularized among many Venezuelans, referring to how they would travel abroad and buy double the things they liked.

Yet the nation’s riches were fleeting, like a Mega Millions lottery winner who still manages to wind up poor.

These days, the Venezuelan minimum wage is hovering around \$3. Yet that is not per hour or even per day—

that is pay for a month! The dreadful conditions in the country are driving an exodus that is destabilizing the South American nation of nearly 32 million as well as surrounding nations.

Political Repression

Venezuela’s dangerous political climate is another factor in people’s decision to leave. “In May 2017, thousands of Venezuelans took to the streets to protest the humanitarian crisis and the political changes after socialist President Nicolas Maduro stripped the opposition-ruled Congress of power,” *Deutsche Welle* stated.

“I marched several times, and each day police forces were more repressive,” a woman told the paper. “A policeman shot my brother-in-law at point-blank range with a pellet. I couldn’t leave my office to help him because police were shooting at passers-by.”

The news outlet continued: “In November 2017, the NGOs Human Rights Watch (HRW) and Penal Forum published a joint report on the human rights violations committed by Venezuelan armed forces during the

■ **DESCENT INTO POVERTY:** Left, people receive food distributed during an annual Catholic procession (Jan. 14, 2018). Center top, a woman picks vegetables from a near-empty shelf at a supermarket in Caracas (Jan. 11, 2018). Center bottom, Venezuelan opposition activists carry out a demonstration to remember victims of past protests, in Caracas (Aug. 30, 2017). Right, Venezuelans cross the Simon Bolivar international bridge into Colombia (July 25, 2017).

PHOTOS: JUAN BARRETO/ (LEFT, CENTER TOP); FEDERICO PARRA/ (CENTER BOTTOM); LUIS ACOSTA/ (RIGHT); AFP/GETTY IMAGES



protests last May and in the months that followed. Tear gas, water cannon and pellets were systematically used. The rubber pellets were often even filled with marbles, broken glass or metal bolts to cause injury and pain.

“The protests were repressed more brutally than before,” a senior HRW Americas researcher told *Deutsche Welle*. “Just look at the numbers: In 2014, 43 people died in the protests and 800 were injured. In 2017, 124 people died and 2,000 were injured.”

The same article continued: “The HRW report also mentions several cases of torture in detention centers. It says men, women and teenagers were subjected to electric shocks, ruthless beatings, sexual abuse and asphyxiation and detained along with dozens of others in small, unventilated cells with a minimum amount of water and food.”

Freedom of speech has also been significantly suppressed. According to *Nieman Reports*: “In the 18 years since Hugo Chavez came to power, winning an election six years after he led an unsuccessful military coup to overthrow centrist president Carlos Andres Perez in 1992, five television channels have been closed and nine removed from cable television subscription services; 62 radio stations have gone off the air because of official prohibitions;

and the government has fined media outlets 32 times.”

Local journalists have resorted to unconventional means to spread news as a way to counteract censorship. An example is the popularization of “El Bus TV,” in which a handful of journalists deliver news to passengers while riding the city bus, one of them holding a makeshift carboard TV screen around the “news anchor” who speaks.

South American Refugees

When hearing the term “refugee crisis,” most think of Syria or South Sudan, not Venezuela. *How could that be? Not here in the Western Hemisphere*, the thinking may go.

In February, *CNBC* reported that though Syria’s civil war resulted in what has been called the world’s largest refugee crisis, another humanitarian calamity may soon surpass it.

“The millions of Venezuelans fleeing their turmoil-hit nation could eventually overshadow the number of Syrian refugees, according to an economist.

“The next refugee crisis is not being driven by a violent war but by a socioeconomic disaster of magnitudes hardly seen before,” Dany Bahar, a fellow at the Brookings Institute, said referring to Venezuela.

While observers may still be hesitant to refer to the migration as a “crisis,” several neighboring nations already know the situation is dire. They are feeling the weight of upwards of 4 million people who have fled Venezuela.

For instance, Colombian deportation operations—after suspending temporary visas for Venezuelans—“are sending as many as 100 migrants a day back to Venezuela,” *The Washington Post* stated. The article described how a woman named Andie “was detained by police, [and] they loaded her onto a truck. About 15 minutes later, she and three dozen other migrants were released at a border bridge swarming with mosquitoes.

“One by one, the migrants walked back toward Venezuela as the Colombian officers watched. And then only Andie was left.

“‘You have to go,’ said a female officer. More than a dozen Colombian officers surrounded the thin Venezuelan.

“‘I can’t,’ Andie said, her voice breaking. ‘Please. I’m pregnant, and we won’t survive there.’

“The officer paused.

“‘I’m sorry, honey, but you need to go back.’

“Andie nodded, then turned. Sobbing and clutching her stomach, she walked across the bridge.”



This anecdote represents a reversal from the 1970s and '80s when many Colombians fled to Venezuela in search for jobs, security and stability.

Other countries taking a large influx of Venezuelan expats include Brazil, Peru, Curacao, Trinidad, Spain and the United States. To complicate matters, this is happening at a time in which several of these countries impacted, particularly within South America, are either facing their own internal challenges, or an election year. Colombia, Brazil, Mexico and Venezuela itself, among others, are all holding elections in 2018. No doubt, the Venezuelan diaspora will be a sensitive topic in these campaigns. This is significant because some leaders who currently support receiving more Venezuelans may be replaced, while some who are reluctant to the influx may remain in power.

The logistic, political, health, and economic ramifications of assimilating such large numbers are yet to be fully seen.

Famed Social Program Harmed

Another area hit by the problems in Venezuela is its world-renowned music program: El Sistema.

In an interview at the music network's headquarters in the capital Caracas, executive director Eduardo Mendez said the program must overcome the crippling economic crisis that has forced hundreds of musicians to leave the country.

El Sistema is one of Venezuela's showpiece government-run programs boasting around 300 music schools that connect children, many of modest means, with classical music. It has also produced a crop of world-renowned musicians, including Los Angeles Philharmonic music director Gustavo Dudamel.

Executive director Eduardo Mendez told *The Associated Press* that 8 percent of the program's teachers have recently left the country to seek a better life abroad. The network's marquee Simon Bolivar Youth Orchestra has lost 42 percent of its musicians over the past six

months, though most of the vacancies have been filled with younger musicians.

"It hasn't been easy to convince people to stay," Mr. Mendez said. "Many of these people are leaving in search of economic stability."

But Mr. Mendez will also have to avoid conflicts with El Sistema's benefactor, Venezuela's socialist government. The state has been accused by critics of using the music program as a propaganda tool.

Tensions between El Sistema and Venezuelan officials surfaced last year when Gustavo Dudamel criticized actions by President Nicolas Maduro that led to the installation of a constituent assembly dominated by government supporters. This is seen by critics as another step toward dictatorship.

Mr. Maduro asked Mr. Dudamel to "not attack those of us who have been crucial to the expansion of the [musical] movement."

Shortly after the heated exchange, Venezuelan officials suspended two tours by El Sistema ensembles through

■ **FIRE AND FAMINE:** Left, a protester catches fire amid violent clashes with riot police during a protest against President Nicolas Maduro, in Caracas (May 3, 2017). Center top, people scrounge for food outside a looted supermarket in Caracas (April 21, 2017). Center bottom, Venezuelans rest in Cucuta, Colombia, after crossing the border (July 25, 2017). Right, an opposition activist stands in front of a flag during a protest against the newly inaugurated Constituent Assembly in Caracas (Aug. 4, 2017).

PHOTOS: RONALDO SCHEMIDT/AFP/WORLD PRESS PHOTO VIA AP (LEFT); RONALDO SCHEMIDT/AFP/GETTY IMAGES (CENTER TOP AND BOTTOM); LUIS ACOSTA/AFP/GETTY IMAGES (BOTTOM LEFT)



the United States and Asia, which were going to be conducted by Mr. Dudamel. No explanation was given for the cancellations.

Intervention Underway

About a half million Venezuelans are estimated to have fled their country between 2016 and 2017. *The Council on Foreign Relations* stated: “Observers have characterized the situation in Venezuela as a humanitarian crisis. In 2016, the Venezuelan Pharmaceutical Federation estimated that 85 percent of basic medicines were unavailable or difficult to obtain. Hospitals lack supplies like antibiotics, gauze, and soap. Infant mortality in 2016 increased 30 percent and maternal mortality 65 percent over two years prior, according to government figures. Diseases like diphtheria and malaria, previously eliminated from the country, have reemerged.

“Poverty has also spiked. In 2016, a local university study found that more than 87 percent of the population said it did not have enough money to buy necessary food. Another study found that 30 percent of school-aged children were malnourished. According to a 2016 report from Human Rights Watch, the Maduro administration ‘has vehemently denied the extent of the need for help and has blocked an effort by the

opposition-led National Assembly to seek international assistance.”

At the March G20 summit in Argentina, senior officials of several nations proposed that international lending institutions, such as the International Monetary Fund, move to help governments affected by the flood of Venezuelans fleeing their crisis-ravaged homeland, Argentina’s Finance Ministry said in a statement.

Meanwhile, Venezuelan gas prices remain the cheapest in the world. But what good is filling up your motorcycle if you cannot fill up your stomach?

There is no simple answer to Venezuela’s worsening crisis and to stopping the mass departure of its people. Too much damage has been done. The legacy of its leadership system has been disastrous.

Guido Nunez-Mujica, the founder of Salto, an organization that has helped a number of people leave Venezuela, told *TED Fellows*: “I am very pessimistic about Venezuela. I see no solution. The government is made up of people who retain power by using fear and hunger as political tools...The country’s oil production capacity is down. Maybe by the time we have a change of government, sustainable power will have displaced fossil fuels in many areas, and the income from oil will be very small

compared to now. There will be suffering, there will be mass death, there will be famine.

“There is not a lot I can do. I cannot solve this situation. No individual can...Mass emigration out of Venezuela has already started. We aim to help as many people as we can so they can also help others. In the future, we will have Venezuelans in many places doing well, educated and prosperous, ready to rebuild when the time comes.”

“I see no solution.” This pessimistic outlook is truly bad news for the country’s downtrodden citizens today. They desperately need good news—a message of a positive change and a prosperous future.

Few know that there *is* VERY GOOD news coming! It is hidden from mankind today because it is wrapped up in little-understood biblical term: the gospel.

This Bible term simply means “good news.” Far from being an archaic message to people of ancient times or just to Christians, it actually involves AWESOME solutions to the problems plaguing the world.

Read *What Is the Kingdom of God?* at rcg.org/witkog to learn the best news Venezuelans—and the entire world—could ever hear. □



PERSONAL

Continued from page 2

absence of life. It is the discontinuance—the cessation—of life. Death is not life in another place. It is not leaving “this *life*” for “another *life*”—the “next *life*.”

Further, on the subject of whether or not the soul can die, consider Matthew 10:28: “And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear Him [God] which is *able to destroy* both *soul* and *body in hell*.” The Bible says that souls

but are really still alive, then they must be capable of some kind of intelligent *thought*. They must at least be conscious of their surroundings. Let’s consider a series of scriptures.

First, notice Psalm 146:3-4: “Put not your trust...in the son of man...His breath goes forth, he returns to his earth; in that very day *his thoughts perish*.” When people die, their thoughts end immediately—“in that very day.” That is what it says. This verse is not compatible with the idea that the dead are consciously suffering in a place of torment. We could suppose that, if they are suffering, they do not have *knowledge* that

Some who willingly ignore the message of Scripture allege that only mortal thoughts “perish,” in the sense that the dead leave this earthly realm and experience some mysterious, different kind of thought than they previously knew. Is this true? Of course, this is ridiculous, and the Bible does not say this, but we should at least examine the idea. Now consider an even more direct verse: “For the living know that they shall die: *but the dead know not any thing...*” (Ecc. 9:5).

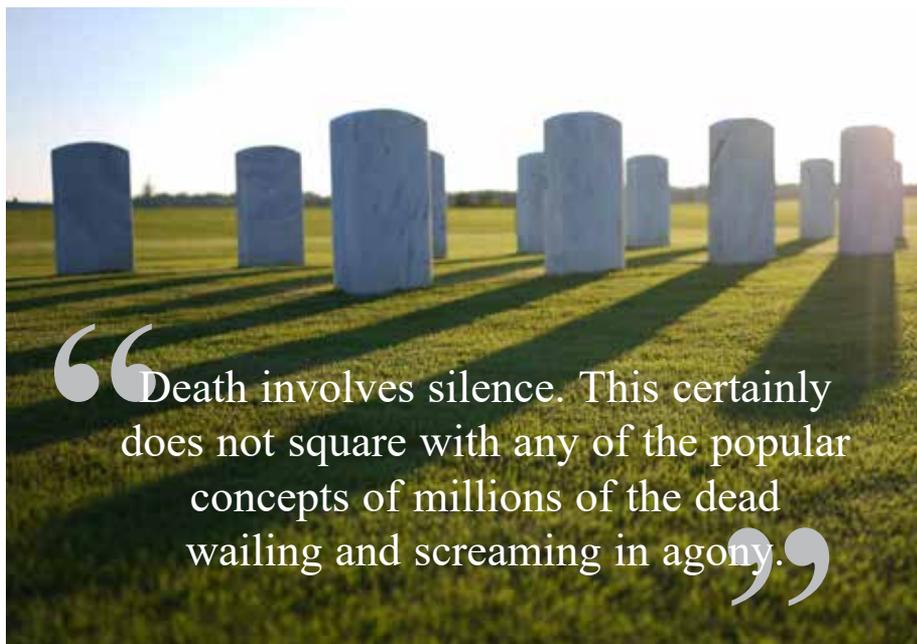
To the honest reader, there is no mistaking the plain meaning here!

Solomon recorded, “For that which befalls the sons of men befalls beasts; even one thing befalls them: *as the one dies, so dies the other*; yes, they have all one breath; so that *a man has no preeminence above a beast...* All go unto one place; *all* are of the dust, and *all* turn to dust again” (Ecc. 3:19-20).

Now consider Psalm 115:17: “The dead praise not the LORD, neither *any* that go down *into silence*.” Death involves “silence.” This certainly does not square with any of the popular concepts of millions of the dead wailing and screaming in agony. Such a scene could never be described as SILENCE! And, if many of the dead go to heaven, why are they not praising God?

Psalm 6:5 further explains that the dead do not experience conscious memory: “For in death there is *no remembrance of You*: in the grave who shall give You thanks?” Could anyone seriously suggest that the dead, suffering in hell, could experience the normal range of human memories *but not be cognizant of God*—not remember Him? Would God put people in “hell” and then leave them there suffering, forever wondering how they had gotten there and who had put them there—because they have “no remembrance” of anything related to God? Remember to let the Bible interpret the Bible. Always keep its truth simple, and the deceptive ideas of men will fall like a house of cards.

To delve more deeply into these subjects, visit rcg.org to read *The Truth About Hell* and *Is There Life After Death?* □



“Death involves silence. This certainly does not square with any of the popular concepts of millions of the dead wailing and screaming in agony.”

can be DESTROYED! According to this verse, they can be destroyed as much as *bodies* can. We all recognize that bodies eventually die and that, when they do, they naturally decompose and are completely “destroyed” due to the process of natural corruption. Any undertaker recognizes this. This verse introduces the understanding that God does the *destroying* of souls IN HELL! Bodies can die and be destroyed in many different ways. However, souls are destroyed in hell by God.

Are the Dead Conscious?

Human minds are differentiated from animal brains by intelligent thought. Presumably, if the dead are not dead,

they are. They are unaware of what is happening to them. Ask yourself: What would be the point of their suffering? It would be as though they were in a coma—i.e., completely unaware of what is going on around them—while their sensory nervous system is feeling the tremendous pain sensation of burning. How would this work?

Use the following analogy. If someone is to undergo major surgery, they are anesthetized—they are made to be unconscious—so that they will *not* experience pain. Medical doctors understand this—WHY DON’T THEOLOGIANS AND RELIGIONISTS? Why do they deny the plain statements of the Bible?

PARENTS

Continued from page 15

your granddaughters, and you will be amazed later at how you may hear your voice coming from your grown daughters.

Mothers, teach your daughters all the aspects of *true* femininity, a quality now almost entirely lost today. Paul's instruction speaks more to this than meets the eye. Many women today are "mannish" to the point of being outright masculine. This is often because they value a career outside the home in which they must compete and strive to succeed in what has generally been called "a man's world," which in turn detracts from their God-given role as a "keeper at home." If you are overly focused on a career outside the home, you may be setting your daughter up to want to do the same.

It is interesting that large numbers of mothers have been returning home from the work-a-day world to be "stay-at-home" moms once again. It has been estimated that 85 percent of all mothers are now back in the home, either full or part-time, with husbands again bringing home most of the income.

Be sure to take a very keen interest in your daughter's activities, and this includes involving her in all the elements of homemaking that so many women today seem to shun—cooking, sewing, decorating, house cleaning and so much more. Be sure your daughter understands that these things are important—and that the world around her no longer values them, because it is confused, misguided and cut off from God. She must know and understand *why* she is different.

Mothers and Sons

Every mother understands the extraordinary relationship she has with her sons, beginning from the moment they are born. Similarly—and both sides of this relationship directly parallel fathers and daughters—sons usually retain a very special soft spot in their heart for their mother throughout life,

and this even continues after their mother's death.

Mothers, recognize that you have a great deal to teach your sons about how to select a mate. (Take time to read Proverbs 31, and notice who wrote it.) Like daughters marrying men similar to their fathers, sons often unconsciously look for women similar to their mothers. Be sure that what your son is looking for is a reflection of a *wonderful* example to him, instead of for something less, because *you* have been something less.

Sons are often so devoted to their mothers that they try to remake their wives into a clone of her. Mothers, be sure to teach your son to love and appreciate the woman he marries for what she is, not for what he expects her to be, after he "remakes" her. Teach him the most important qualities that he should be looking for in the woman who will become the mother of his children. (Of course, this works in the same way with fathers and daughters.)

Require Siblings to Get Along

One of the greatest frustrations of parents is that their children continually fight—and over almost every kind of issue and possession. What is often referred to as "sibling rivalry" is nothing more than raw human nature—vanity, jealousy, lust and greed—allowed to remain unchecked in your children. This pattern usually begins at a very early age, and has to be addressed when it first appears. Many parents are worn out by the constant fighting, bickering and yelling between children in the household. Tragically, most parents have no idea what to do about it, let alone what causes it.

Teach your children from the very earliest age the importance of getting along with brothers and sisters. This naturally begins with the firstborn, who may see a little brother or sister as competition sent to take away part of his world—including toys, other possessions and attention from parents who once had more time for *him*.

Explaining that the greatest happiness comes from *sharing*—from GIVING to others—is teaching your

children one of the most important principles they will learn throughout their lives. Human nature is selfish, greedy and grasping, and is only interested in receiving, not giving—unless you *train* this out of your children's thinking. Your children must know that if they do not share, things will be taken away from them so they (at least temporarily) do not have to worry about sharing. If this does not work, isolate your child for a time, reminding him or her that it is critical that one be able to get along with others in *every* circumstance, and that sharing can also mean going without (through giving) if someone else is in need.

Another part of this principle is teaching your children to be considerate of other people. Christianity is practicing the "give" way of life instead of the "get" way. Actively teach your children to consider the needs and feelings of others. This practice starts with brothers and sisters, but extends to all the other people they will come in contact with. Be sure your children have heard this principle repeated so often that it becomes virtually second nature to them.

Explain How to Choose Friends

The previous point introduces an important and related topic, that of how your children choose friends and associates. Again, since "evil companions corrupt good conduct"—and some translations substitute "conduct" or "behavior" for "*manners*" in Paul's explanation—the wrong choice of friends, or even casual acquaintances, can ultimately destroy your children's character. This can potentially ruin their reputation, and possibly lead them into actions that could send their life down the drain.

Notice the overall principle contained in this Proverb: "Make no friendship with an angry man; and with a furious man you shall not go: lest you learn his ways, and get a snare to your soul" (22:24-25).

Consider all that this exhortation from Solomon—but actually directly from the mind of God—means to your children. It has been said, "Put a good boy with a bad boy and you will wind

up with two bad boys every time!” This may be more true in this generation than in any previous age, simply because the young people surrounding your children today exert every conceivable kind of wrong influence on them.

Now consider the following point in light of all that you have read thus far: It has probably become painfully apparent to you that there are far fewer children and teenagers today who would be able to be appropriate friends to a young person who is striving to obey and represent God—and, of course, this should be *your* child! But you must teach your children to accept this reality, which this world forces upon them.

Have no doubt that your children’s friends will influence them, and will potentially *change* them. Although there can be wonderful exceptions to this rule, today it is usually not for the better. You must be actively involved—and very diligent in monitoring—your children’s selection of companions. And recognize that who your children want to be around may be a statement about what is *already* occurring under the surface of their character of which you may not be aware. By the time you discover what is happening, your children could be further down the road of wrong conduct and wrong companions than you think, and much more difficult, or even impossible, to guide back to right thinking. I have seen many situations in which a parent’s battle to protect his or her child had been lost before the parent even knew that a shot had been fired.

Finally, recognize that your child could also suddenly become attracted to a friend of the opposite sex and could quickly fast-forward to a decision to want to marry this person (at a later date)—and you were unaware that anything was happening. When the dangers of fornication and religious differences are factored in, this is a recipe for disaster. If this occurs, absolutely require your child to end the relationship *immediately!*

Teach your children to look for friends who exhibit as many as possible of the kinds of things that you are

teaching them. Of course, they must understand that no human being is perfect, and that little flaws must be overlooked and forgiven. Be sure, however, that you personally meet their friends, and that these friends spend a certain amount of time *in your home*.

Constantly be aware of who your children are spending time with. Too much is at stake to do less. This means actively teaching them *how* to select friends, including what can be at stake if they make the *wrong* decisions.

Explain How to Deal with Difficult People

Life sometimes involves interacting with difficult people. Inevitably, everyone will have to deal with such individuals. This can be complicated when those individuals are in positions of authority. Your children must be equipped to handle these situations.

For instance, explain to your children how to deal with people who lose their temper. Make them aware of passages such as the following: “A soft answer *turns away* wrath: but grievous words stir up anger” (Prov. 15:1), and that “by long forbearing is a prince persuaded, and a soft tongue breaks the *bone*” (25:15). The meaning here is that bones are the hardest part of the body, and that patient, calm, measured responses ultimately lead to the best results in diffusing even the hardest mindsets.

Your children will encounter a great many rude, angry, impatient and even hostile people over the course of a lifetime. Some will be absolutely belligerent and almost impossible to deal with. And these will often appear at times when it is least expected. Everyone can deal with people who are pleasant, courteous, thoughtful and patient. These are never the people who test our character and attitude. The test comes when facing *wrong* attitudes in people. Your children must know what to do, and this means you must teach them.

Try to constantly emphasize the value of being diplomatic in moments of tension, friction and difficulty.

Help your children to understand and practice Christ’s words: “Blessed are the peacemakers...” (Matt. 5:9). There are ways to defuse tension and alleviate difficulty. Teach your children to listen and not react suddenly, to use kindness, to apologize when necessary, to share, to not be defensive, among others. These are skills of diplomatic human relations that you can and must instill in them.

Most children today are tactless—and, if you are not careful, *your* children will grow up to be the very people that you are training them to deal with. Your children will naturally absorb the conduct and tendencies of these children of the modern society. Careful training, coupled with presenting a good example of public relations for your child to copy, will instill the ability to be diplomatic in all but the most impossible circumstances.

There Is More!

Everything you have read in this article was adapted from the book *Train Your Children God’s Way* by David C. Pack. It contains time-tested ways to ensure you are the very best mother or father possible.

The book takes into account modern society and the stark reality that the family unit is under assault from an ever-increasing array of forces.

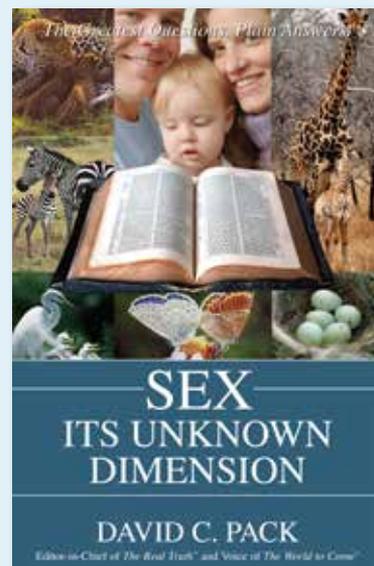
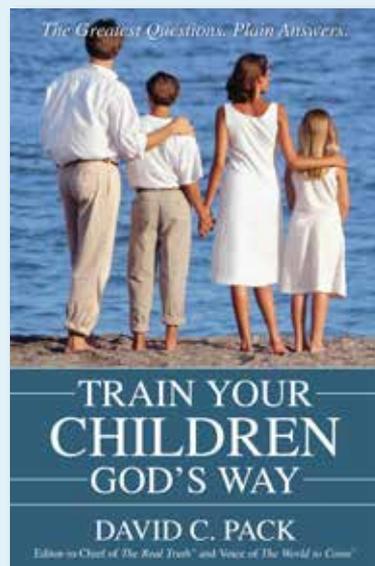
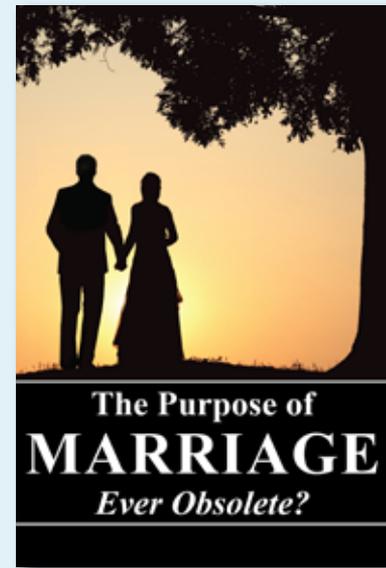
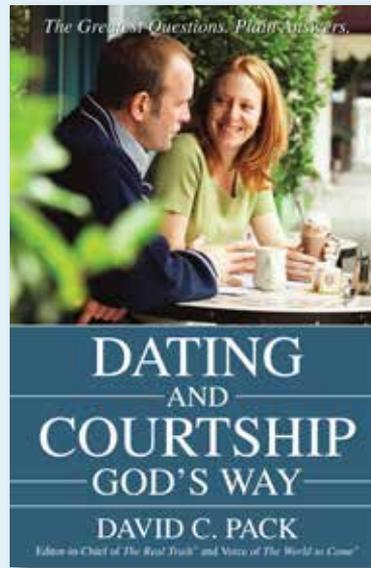
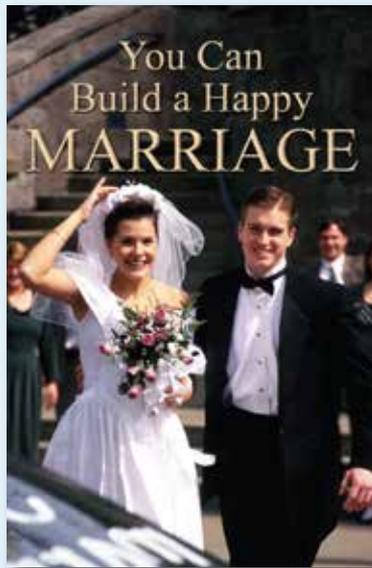
Raising children in the modern age is incredibly difficult. Yet God commands parents: “Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it” (Prov. 22:6).

Ask: How can parents—one alone or two working together—do this? What chance do they have of rearing balanced, moral children in today’s wild, immoral world? What should children be taught? How should they be instructed? And can you be sure that what you teach your children will stay with them for life?

Train Your Children God’s Way answers these and other vital questions—backed with Bible proof. To read the rest of the free book, visit rcg.org/tuyc. □

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EXTINCT

Continued from page 20

According to Dr. Watson of the IPBES, the outlook is bleak if society does not change.

“Some species are threatened with extinctions. Others, just pure numbers will go down,” Dr. Watson said. “It will be a lonelier place relative to our natural world. It’s a moral issue. Do we humans have a right to make them go extinct?”

But, we must ask, is it more than just a moral issue?

Human Survival

Over the years, scientists have identified 1.75 million different species. This number includes 950,000 species of insects, 270,000 species of plants, 19,000 species of fish, 9,000 species of birds, and 4,000 species of mammals.

Experts recognize this represents only a fraction of the total number of species on Earth. Millions more are yet to be discovered and named. Yet the number of species we do know about is dwindling little by little and much of it due to human causes.

This is the opposite of what was intended.

God created nature, with all its abundant biodiversity. He commanded the soil to bring forth various grasses, herbs, and fruit trees. He made the waters teem with sea creatures, filled the air with birds and covered the land with animals and insects (Gen. 1:11-12, 20-25). He caused this amazing creation to occur and in every case after completing each step declared it “good.” This confirms that all species were designed to interact with each other flawlessly. This was all done for a reason.

Natural diversity was created in part for us to witness and to help us understand God’s mind on the origin and importance of this perfect ecosystem and thus better understand Him.

Notice: “But ask now the beasts, and they will teach you; and the fowls of the air, and they will tell you: or speak to the earth, and it will teach you: and the fishes of the sea will declare unto you. Who knows not in all these that the hand



■ **FINS FOR SALE:** A vendor works next to a display of dried shark fins in a Hong Kong shop (March 6, 2017). An estimated 25 percent of shark species could be extinct in 10 years if overfishing of sharks in the Pacific continues.

PHOTO: ANTHONY WALLACE/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

of the LORD has [made] this? In whose hand is the soul of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind” (Job 12:7-10).

However, God created the vast variety of plants, flowers, land animals and sea animals with all their defining and unique characteristics for another reason. He did it to help ensure the survival of His most precious creation—mankind.

After man was formed, he was told by God to “be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moves upon the earth” (Gen. 1:28). He was further told that “every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat” (vs. 29).

God devised a system to provide animals and humans with an abundant food supply: “every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creeps upon the earth, wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for meat: and it was so” (vs. 30).

This perfect system—with its biodiversity—was clearly made to ultimately provide mankind food, sustenance, medicine, shelter, air to breath and more. This is biodiversity’s most important role.

The created world, with all its diversity and abundance, was not meant to subsist on its own. To help ensure man’s proliferation and survival, God left Creation to him to exercise “dominion over the works of [God’s] hands” (Psa. 8:6). Like the much smaller garden area originally assigned to the first two human beings, man was to “dress and keep” (Gen. 2:15) the areas in which he lived. Human beings were to not only benefit from their natural habitat, but also help it to flourish based on principles established by God.

Yet in trying to flourish in its own way, mankind is causing irreparable damage to the Earth’s biodiversity and thus doing the *opposite* of what God wanted. In pursuing their own goals, human beings are destroying their life source and threatening their own survival.

This is all quite different from what God purposed for man when placing him on a biodiverse planet! God’s intent is far beyond the prevailing thinking. The Creator of all things wants everyone to know what He has in store for us.

For more on this intricate plan, read our popular and informative book *The Awesome Potential of Man* available at rcg.org/tapom. It sheds more light on the future God has for His most important creation and will help you understand what lies ahead. □

HEALTH ISSUES

Study: Commercial Pesticides Are More Toxic than They Seem

Ingredients used in commercially sold pesticides are associated with risks of which most consumers are unaware, according to a review published in *Frontiers in Public Health*.

Secondary ingredients in pesticides known as “adjuvants” help regulate the

active ingredients in pesticide formulas. However, these adjuvants are in some cases as toxic or more toxic than active ingredients.

“Currently, the health risk assessment of pesticides in the European Union and in the United States focus-

es almost exclusively on the stated active principle,” the researchers explained in their published work. “Nonetheless, adjuvants can also be toxic in their own right with numerous negative health effects having been reported in humans and on the environment.”

In addition, the researchers continued, “studies have revealed that these supposedly ‘inert’ diluents can be more toxic than the regulated active pesticide principles.”

These toxic ingredients, which are used in farming and end up in food and water, have shown negative effects on human populations. Though research on the long-term effects of adjuvants is limited, the study’s researchers stated that “people exposed to supposedly inert ingredients such as solvents or petroleum distillates present a higher risk of their children developing hypospadias and present more allergic and non-allergic wheeze.” □



■ **CAUGHT:** A suspect is taken into a police van after being arrested for alleged possession of an illegal knife in London, England (July 12, 2017).

PHOTO: CARL COURT/GETTY IMAGES

CRIME & PUNISHMENT

London Murder Rate Surpasses NYC

For the first time in modern history, the murder rate for Britain’s capital surpassed that of New York City.

A total of 44 murder investigations were conducted in London from January to March of this year—already more than one-third the number of homicides that occurred in one year from April 1, 2016, to March 31, 2017, according to statistics from the London Metropolitan Police.

The New York City Police Department looked into 18 killings in January, declining to 11 in February, and up to 21 in March. For London, the number of murder investigations was eight in January, 15 in February, and 22 in March.

Most of the London murders—31 of the 44 investigated—were the

result of knife stabbings. The number of fatal and non-fatal stabbings has increased despite a citywide effort to take knives off London’s streets. In July 2015, the Metropolitan Police launched Operation Sceptre “with the aim of reducing knife crime and the number of families affected by knife crime across the whole of London,” according to its website.

In total, the operation has conducted nearly 5,800 sweeps and confiscated almost 400 weapons. Yet total crimes involving knives in London increased 34 percent from 2016 to 13,000 in 2017.

A former London police officer told *BBC News* the statistics are proof that “London’s violent traits have become a virus.” □

INTERNATIONAL

Is Russia Targeting Undersea Cables Linking the World?



■ **SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY:** The Russian research vessel Yantar is shown docked in Buenos Aires, Argentina (2018). Russian ships are lurking around underwater communications cables, worrying the U.S. and its allies the Kremlin might be taking information warfare to new depths.

PHOTO: GONZALO MORTOLA VIA AP

WASHINGTON (AP) – Russian ships are skulking around underwater communications cables, causing the U.S. and its allies to worry the Kremlin might be taking information warfare to new depths.

Is Moscow interested in cutting or tapping the cables? Does it want the West to worry it might? Is there a more innocent explanation? Unsurprisingly, Russia is not saying.

But whatever Moscow's intentions, U.S. and Western officials are increasingly troubled by their rival's interest in the 400 fiber-optic cables that carry most of the world's calls, emails and texts, as well as \$10 trillion worth of daily financial transactions.

"We've seen activity in the Russian navy, and particularly undersea in their submarine activity, that we haven't seen since the '80s," General Curtis Scaparrotti, commander of the U.S. European Command, told Congress this month.

Without undersea cables, a bank in Asian countries could not send money

to Saudi Arabia to pay for oil. U.S. military leaders would struggle to communicate with troops fighting extremists in Afghanistan and the Middle East. A student in Europe would not be able to Skype his parents in the United States.

All this information is transmitted along tiny glass fibers encased in undersea cables that, in some cases, are little bigger than a garden hose. All told, there are 620,000 miles of fiber-optic cable running under the sea, enough to loop around the Earth nearly 25 times.

Most lines are owned by private telecommunications companies, including giants like Google and Microsoft. Their locations are easily identified on public maps, with swirling lines that look like spaghetti. While cutting one cable might have limited impact, severing several simultaneously or at choke points could cause a major outage.

The Russians "are doing their homework and, in the event of a crisis or conflict with them, they might do rotten

things to us," said Michael Kofman, a Russian military expert at nonprofit research group CNA Corp.

It is not Moscow's warfighting ships and submarines that are making NATO and U.S. officials uneasy. It is Russia's Main Directorate of Deep Sea Research, whose specialized surface ships, submarines, underwater drones and mini subs conduct reconnaissance, underwater salvage and other work.

One ship run by the directorate is the Yantar. It is a modest, 354-foot oceanographic vessel that holds a crew of about 60. It most recently was off South America's coast helping Argentina search for a lost submarine.

Parlamentskaya Gazeta, the Russian parliament's publication, said last October the Yantar has equipment "designed for deep-sea tracking" and "connecting to top-secret communication cables." The publication said that in September 2015, the Yantar was near Kings Bay, Georgia, home to a U.S. submarine base, "collecting information about the equipment on American sub-

marines, including underwater sensors and the unified [U.S. military] information network.” *Rossiya*, a Russian state TV network, has said the Yantar can not only connect to top-secret cables, but could cut them and “jam underwater sensors with a special system.”

Russia’s Defense Ministry did not respond to a request for comment.

There is no hard evidence that the ship is engaged in nefarious activity, said Steffan Watkins, an information technology security consultant in Canada tracking the ship. But he wonders what the ship is doing when it is stopped over critical cables or when its Automatic Identification System tracking transponder is not on.

Of the Yantar’s crew, he said: “I don’t think these are the actual guys who are doing any sabotage. I think they’re laying the groundwork for future operations.”

The Yantar’s movements have previously raised eyebrows.

On October 18, 2016, a Syrian telecom company ordered emergency maintenance to repair a cable in the Mediterranean that provides internet connectivity to several countries, including Syria, Libya and Lebanon. The Yantar arrived in the area the day before the four-day maintenance began. It left two days before the maintenance ended. It is unknown what work it did while there.

Mr. Watkins described another episode on November 5, 2016, when a submarine cable linking Persian Gulf nations experienced outages in Iran. Hours later, the Yantar left Oman and headed to an area about 60 miles west of the Iranian port city of Bushehr, where the cable runs ashore. Connectivity was restored just hours before the Yantar arrived on November

9. The boat stayed stationary over the site for several more days.

Undersea cables have been targets before.

At the beginning of World War I, Britain cut a handful of German underwater communications cables and tapped the rerouted traffic for intelligence. In the Cold War, the U.S. Navy sent American divers deep into the Sea of Okhotsk off the Russian coast to install a device to record Soviet com-

service for several months. And in 2013, Egyptian officials arrested three scuba divers off Alexandria for attempting to cut a cable stretching from France to Singapore. Five years on, questions remain about the attack on a cable responsible for about a third of all internet traffic between Egypt and Europe.

Despite the relatively few publicly known incidents of sabotage, most outages are due to accidents.

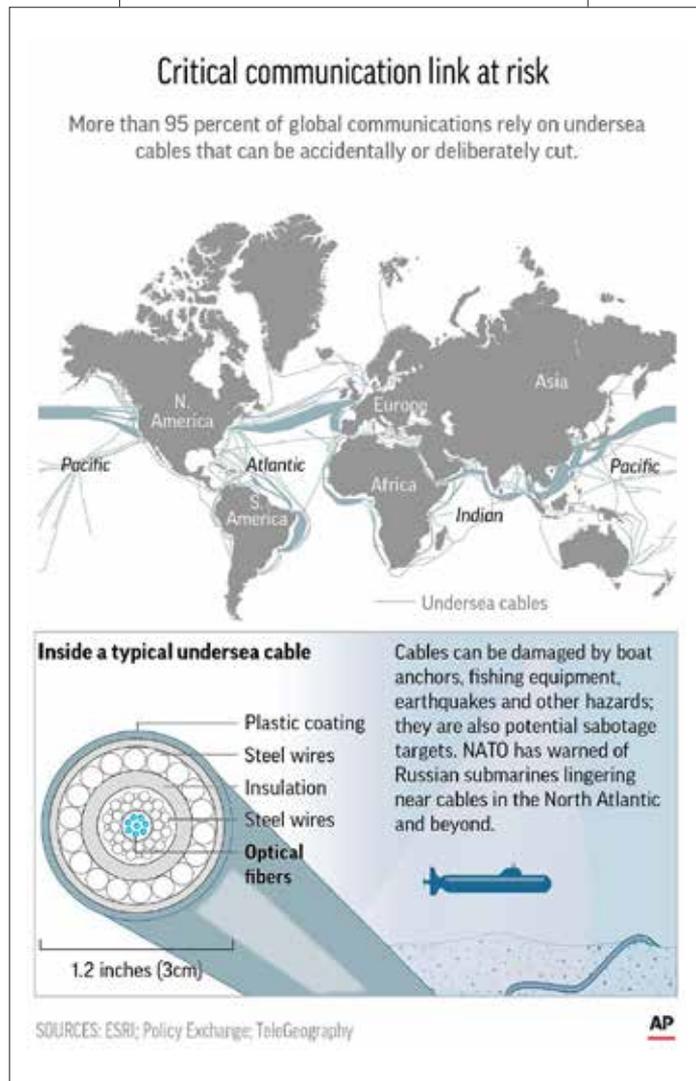
Two hundred or so cable-related outages take place each year. Most occur when ship anchors snap cables or commercial fishing equipment snags the lines. Others break during tsunamis, earthquakes and other natural disasters.

But even accidental cuts can harm U.S. military operations.

In 2008, unmanned U.S. surveillance flights in Iraq nearly screeched to a halt one day at Balad Air Base not because of enemy mortar attacks or dusty winds. An anchor had snagged a cable hundreds of miles away from the base, situated in the “Sunni Triangle” northwest of Baghdad.

The severed cable had linked controllers based in the United States with unmanned aircraft flying intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance missions for coalition forces in the skies over Iraq, explained Retired Air Force Colonel Dave Lujan of Hampton, Virginia.

“Say you’re operating a remote-controlled car and all of a sudden you can’t control it,” said Mr. Lujan, who was deputy commander of the 332nd Expeditionary Operations Group at the base when the outage lasted for two to three days. “That’s a big impact,” he said, describing how U.S. pilots had to fly the missions instead. □



munications, hoping to learn more about the USSR’s submarine-launched nuclear capability.

In 2007, Vietnamese authorities confiscated ships carrying miles of fiber-optic cable that thieves salvaged from the sea for profit. The heist disrupted



“WE SHALL BEAT OUR SWORDS INTO PLOWSHARES”

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