

MAY-JUNE 2019

THE

RCG.ORG/REALTRUTH

REAL TRUTH™

A MAGAZINE RESTORING PLAIN UNDERSTANDING



What Should 'CHURCH' Look Like TODAY?

Copying the Genius in Nature
What Biomimicry Reveals

Aging Superpower:
Is America's Military Declining?

After
Cyclone Idai

Why We Haven't Covered
the Presidential Investigation

THE
REAL TRUTH[™]
A MAGAZINE RESTORING PLAIN UNDERSTANDING

VOL. XVII | NO. 3 | MAY-JUNE 2019

A R T I C L E S

RCG.ORG/REALTRUTH



■ A woman carrying a baby on her back jumps to avoid stepping in dirty water in Beira, Mozambique (March 27, 2019).

PHOTO: AP/THEMBA HADEBE

After Cyclone Idai

United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres called Cyclone Idai, which hit Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Malawi in March, “one of the worst weather-related catastrophes in the history of Africa.” Now the threat of water-borne diseases means the crisis is far from over.

Page 12

FRONT COVER: Photo illustration by Sarah O. Vidal and Jody E. Lydick/The Real Truth.

CREDITS: All photos from Getty Images unless otherwise noted. Photo illustrations on pages 4-5 and 16 by Sarah O. Vidal/The Real Truth. Articles on pages 12-15, 23-27, and 30-31 contain information from The Associated Press.

Personal from the Editor-in-Chief
Modern Education’s Only Hope!
Page 1

Why We Haven’t Covered the Presidential Investigation
Page 3

Aging Superpower: Is America’s Military Declining?
No power in history has ever topped the United States’ military capability. Yet it is beginning to show cracks, leaving leaders concerned about its preparedness for the next war.
Page 4

What Should ‘Church’ Look Like Today?
A vast swing in culture. Rapid advancements in technology. Never-ending scandals. Ministers and parishioners are scrambling to find what “church” should look like in the 21st century.
Page 9

Copying the Genius in Nature
What Biomimicry Reveals
Scientists, engineers and architects are looking to the natural world to solve problems in their fields—and it is yielding astounding results.
Page 16

Never the Same...
Coping with the Grief of Mass Shootings
Witnessing unspeakable tragedy changes the lives of those young and old, and typically for the worse. Those left behind struggle to pick up the pieces.
Page 23

World News Desk
Page 31

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

MANAGING EDITOR
EDWARD L. WINKFIELD

SENIOR EDITOR
BRADFORD G. SCHLEIFER

ASSOCIATE EDITOR
SAMUEL C. BAXTER

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

DAVID C. PACK
SAMUEL C. BAXTER
RYAN L. CASWELL
WULPHERT DE GRAAF
ANDREW J. HOLCOMBE
GREGORY E. K AidANNEK
DAVID J. LITAVSKY
FRANK LYDICK
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

WEBSITE SERVICES
BRADFORD G. SCHLEIFER
ANGELA K. BAXTER
AMANDA B. DODD
SARAH A. WILLARD

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
TIMOTHY C. WILLARD

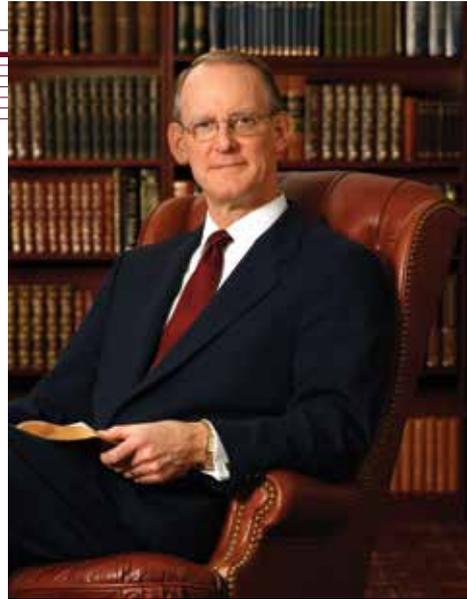
The preparation and production of this magazine involved the work of editors, proofreaders, graphic artists, illustrators, writers, researchers and those who support the Work of God.
Copyright © 2019, The Restored Church of God. Printed in the USA. All rights reserved.

The Restored Church of God is not responsible for the return of unsolicited articles and photos.

Scriptures are quoted from the King James (or Authorized) Version of the Bible, unless otherwise noted.

PERSONAL FROM

David C. Fack



Modern Education's Only Hope!

TODAY'S SYSTEM of higher education is fundamentally *broken*. The recent college admissions scandal in the United States powerfully illustrates this. A federal investigation, known as Operation Varsity Blues, uncovered college-admission cheating and bribery. The main perpetrator is alleged to have conspired with wealthy parents to help get their high-school-age children into some of America's most prestigious colleges and universities.

According to reports, the mastermind behind the ruse bribed college coaches and administrators to boost the likelihood of these children being admitted to their chosen schools by making them look like star athletes in sports they had never played. He also hired people to take college entrance exams for students and paid off insiders to make sure they had the correct answers.

In exchange for these illicit activities, some parents—including lawyers, financiers, clothing designers and Hollywood stars—spent hundreds of thousands of dollars. One paid as much as \$6.5 million! These inappro-

priate favors have resulted in widespread public outrage and felony charges for those involved.

Many were able to recognize the obvious misconduct related to college admissions that took place, but virtually no one saw the scandal's connection to the *overall crisis* within the modern educational system. The Varsity Blues scandal is only a microcosm of a much greater problem—that of the overall system utterly *FAILING* the next generation.

Confused by the conflicting influence of blinded religious leaders and deceived educators, colleges and universities have not succeeded in carrying out their greatest responsibility, which should have been to teach their students how to live, and to instill in young minds the marvelous truths of God's Word and the *SUPREME PURPOSE* for which they were born! Again, they have failed to meet the challenge!

There is a cause for the conditions of the world. Ultimately, it is found in *WRONG EDUCATION*—education based entirely on the *WRONG FOUNDATION*!

Modern education has set aside right knowledge. The education of this world is chock-full of false values, principles and the doctrines of “no absolutes” and “situation ethics.” Colleges and universities are pumping out millions of young people who have no moral compass to

direct them in making the many decisions they must face. Students leave these “education factories” with no idea whether there is a God, whether that God has a purpose, and whether they are included in it. They are ships without rudders!

Almost none know why they were born—what is the supreme purpose for human life. Most have no idea there even *is* a purpose for human existence. Philosophers are not explaining it because they do not know whether there is a purpose for your life—and if so, what it *is*. Educators are not teaching it because no one can teach what he himself has not been taught. Scientists do not speak to this subject because it lies outside their field. Moralists are ignorant—and so are the theologians of all the world’s supposed “great religions.”

Biased Against God

The nations of the world possess a vast sum of knowledge, and this fund of knowledge increases every day, but they are ignorant of the *right kind* of knowledge—*spiritually* REVEALED *knowledge*. This is because the modern system of education is morally and spiritually bankrupt! Deluded educators have been biased against God and His Word by having had the atheistic teaching of evolution funneled into their minds from childhood. They have been responsible for teaching young people for decades that there are “no absolutes” and that they must follow “situation ethics” in all circumstances. These young people have then grown up into several generations from which the world’s leaders have come.

These educators have led the world into a kind of secular humanism—where people are driven by how they *feel* rather than clear definitions of *right* and *wrong*! This has led to a level of immorality and kinds of perversion never before seen in history. But there *is* right and wrong in life—and the educators of this world have cut themselves off from this knowledge (Isa. 59:1-2). They cannot teach what they were never taught. And neither could their parents, who were also indoctrinated in the same false thinking!

If a tree is known by its fruit, look at the fruits of modern education: cynical skepticism, rejection of values, widespread immorality, drunkenness and endless partying, protests, an inordinate focus on “diversity,” political correctness, and an emphasis on being “cool” and accepted—and rebellion in general—in place of acquiring necessary important knowledge.

“The nations of the world possess a vast sum of knowledge, and this fund of knowledge increases every day, but they are ignorant of the *right kind* of knowledge—*spiritually* REVEALED *knowledge*.”

Such a system is doomed! Again, this is because the institutions of education spawn society’s leaders. It becomes clear that a cycle of worse and worse leaders is generated from a system entirely wrong from the ground up.

Most of the values that people hold were acquired during basic education. The *Encyclopaedia Britannica* 11th edition defines education as “an attempt on the part of the adult members of a human society to shape the development of the coming generation in accordance with its own ideals of life.”

The true ideals of life have been passed over by societies cut off from God. Plato, the Greek philosopher who founded the academic system, expressed

the direct aim of education in terms based upon false pagan ideas. The injection of pagan thought has been integral to education for many generations.

The greatest indictment of modern education is that moral teachings and character training have been left out of the curriculum of public schools and universities. Under the guise of separation of church and state, the Bible—God’s instruction manual for mankind—is not open to discussion. It is lampooned, ridiculed and rejected, and viewed at best as merely “Hebrew and Greek literature.” The result has been that students have not been taught *how to live*, but rather only *how to earn a living*.

Millions of students are taught that higher education exists for the purpose of cramming heads with what is largely sterile, *dead* knowledge that they must “have” in order to get ahead. True values are left out—because most have no idea that there even *are* true values. The few who may still believe that such values must exist have no idea *what* they are, have no idea of the path to building a life on values that last and that bring them the peace, happiness, financial security, success in marriage and childrearing—and the sure knowledge that they are pleasing the Creator who gave them life in the first place.

Modern education has not helped stabilize masses of youth under assault by the media and the mass disintegration of families. Without the traditional influence of unified, proper families, including the guidance of both parents and all grandparents, children lack even the basic moral compass that guided previous generations. Education stoutly refuses to address moral training.

The institutions producing the leaders of industry and society have slowly been designed to be poorly equipped to address the awesome challenges that face mankind. And, while the need has never been greater, real leaders with moral backbone have almost vanished.

According to statistics, between 60 and 80 percent of college students admit to “hooking up”—having sex

Please see **PERSONAL**, page 28

Why We Haven't Covered THE PRESIDENTIAL INVESTIGATION

BY THE REAL TRUTH STAFF

AMERICA focused on little else during the first 791 days of President Donald Trump's tenure. Every day, news anchors reported on it, print journalists wrote about it, and late-night show hosts rified about it. It was a constant, deafening roar about the presidential investigation into collusion with the Russians.

During that time, the world's largest-circulation news magazine featured the likeness of the commander-in-chief on its cover 19 times. For context, President Barack Obama only made it there 10 times in his entire eight-year tenure.

Two years and the buzzwords were Russia, collusion and impeach. Two LONG years. Those nearly 800 days had *everyone* talking about the special investigation nonstop.

Except us. We didn't write a single article about it.

Now that the probe is closed, it is a natural time to discuss why we chose to steer clear of this story. The overarching reason? It was fundamentally against what *The Real Truth* is as a magazine and those who produce it.

First, we are nonpolitical. We never take sides.

For us, reporting on the investigation into the president was a quintessential Catch-22. The vast majority of coverage on this story was negative. If we had taken our distinctive, even-handed approach to this story, we would have automatically been seen as taking the president's side...except when we would not be. Our reporters were also lumped in with the "fake news" media while covering a Trump rally in July 2017.

The hyperpartisan political divide in the U.S. only makes this worse. There is no middle ground. You are either "for us or against us." This was seen in the relentless personal attacks that, yes, flowed both ways.

The Real Truth will never call anyone out by name for their personal failings—pride, adultery, lies or greed. This includes everyone from average citizens to journalists to presidents.

Yet our views on sin are clear. We do not condone such actions. You can read our stance on these topics at rcg.org, the website of The Restored Church of God (which produces *The Real Truth*).

This magazine aims to rise above the fray to explain what the Bible—God's mind in written form—says about current events. For example, here is what God's Word commands regarding today's poisonous political environment: "Honor all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king" (1 Pet. 2:17).

We are to honor "all men." All means *all*. Yet notice we are also supposed to honor "the king"—those who have authority over us. We are to respect such offices.

One purpose of this verse is to show that government is important. In fact, the central message in the Bible is *all about* government. It is the gospel—the good news—of the coming Kingdom of God.

This gospel is the very best news anyone could hear. And, in a world filled with contention, conflict and hate, this positive message is what you can expect from us. □



AGING SUPERPOWER

IS AMERICA'S MILITARY DECLINING?

No power in history has ever topped the United States' military capability. Yet it is beginning to show cracks, leaving leaders concerned about its preparedness for the next war.

BY DAVID J. LITAVSKY

A GENERATION OF heroes. The face of American influence in foreign nations. The “finest fighting force in the history of the world.”

These were the phrases U.S. President Barack Obama used to describe America's Armed Forces in 2014 during a televised address at MacDill Air Force Base in Florida.

Sitting in Chicago's O'Hare airport over a thousand miles away, an *Atlantic* reporter observed the cool reaction by the public around him. After giving the address a short glance, everyone simply “went back to their smartphones and their laptops and their Cinnabons as the president droned on.”

Let's boil down this situation further...

Statement: *You are protected by not only the strongest armed force in the world, but the finest fighting force in the HISTORY of the world!*

Reaction: Shrug shoulders and mosey along.

This attitude is characteristically American. This is the way most have viewed the nation's armed forces for their entire lives—always the best, always the strongest. This is the way they assume it will always be.

Since the end of World War II, the U.S. military has stood a cut above the rest. It is ever at the cusp of modern technology with stealth bombers, nuclear submarines that have never refueled in decades at sea, and the

world's largest aircraft carriers. Its defense budget is larger than that of China, Russia, Saudi Arabia, India, France, the United Kingdom, and Japan—COMBINED.

It is only natural for citizens to cradle a deep sense of security. But there is a danger in blindly relying on its permanence.

A few generations ago, when America stood as the world's lone superpower, the public had a very different view of the country's defense. “At the end of World War II, nearly 10 percent of the entire U.S. population was on active military duty—which meant most able-bodied men of a certain age (plus the small number of women allowed to serve),” *The Atlantic* reported.



The publication explained that because of Americans' deep connection with the military, its weaknesses were more apparent: "Through the decade after World War II, when so many American families had at least one member in uniform, political and journalistic references were admiring but not awestruck. Most Americans were familiar enough with the military to respect it while being sharply aware of its shortcomings, as they were with the school system, their religion, and other important and fallible institutions.

"Now the American military is exotic territory to most of the American public."

In "today's Iraq-Afghanistan era, in which everyone 'supports' the troops

but few know very much about them," military and intelligence officials are often portrayed in media as "brave and daring," and most "lack the comfortable closeness with the military that would allow them to question its competence as they would any other institution's."

The problem with this?

As society gazes at impressive numbers and feats, cracks are slowly undermining the foundations of U.S. power.

According to conservative research and educational institute The Heritage Foundation, America's fighting force is one-third smaller than it was during the height of the Cold War, when the threat of nuclear war hung over society. Yet, it noted, that the world is still as dan-

■ Marines roll down a dirt road in an M1A1 Abrams tank during a training exercise in Morocco (2012).

gerous today. Russia, China, North Korea and terrorist groups threaten America's global authority.

Consequently, the U.S. "risks seeing its interests increasingly challenged and the world order it has led since World War II undone."

General Ray Odierno, a retired four-star general who served as chief of staff of the Army, stated in an interview with Heritage: "We simply cannot take the readiness of our force for granted. If we do not have the resources to train and equip the force, our soldiers, our young men and women, are the ones who will pay the price potentially with their lives."



The Old

The United States military has been declining in certain areas for decades.

For one, the force is shrinking in size. Data from the Center for a New American Security (CNAS) revealed: “In the mid-1950s, after the Korean War drawdown the U.S. military consisted of some 2.9 million active-duty troops. By 1975, after the Vietnam War drawdown it stood at about 2.1 million. After the end of the Cold War, it fell to some 1.4 million troops. And today, the U.S. military is manned by some 1.3 million active-duty service members.”

The declining numbers are a worrying trend when pitted against the numbers of other armies. China’s active-duty service members total more than 2 million troops.

In addition to a smaller force, weapons inventories are aging.

More statistics from CNAS paint the picture: “For example, the overall number of battle force ships in the U.S. Navy has declined dramatically

over time—from over 1,000 ships in 1955 to some 560 ships in 1975 and about 270 ships today. However, the size of the carrier force—still very much the core of the U.S. Navy—has been reduced at a more measured pace, falling from 15 in 1975 to 10 today. Similarly, while the number of Air Force fighter and attack aircraft has been cut significantly since the mid-1980s, falling from some 4,400 in 1985 to 2,500 by 2000, and to 2,000 today, the Air Force’s fleets of transport and intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) and related aircraft have been cut much more modestly—respectively, by about one-third and one-quarter since the 1980s.”

“Notably, the Air Force has witnessed a far more severe aging of its weapons inventory over the past several decades than have the other services. The impact on the Air Force can be seen especially in its combat aircraft and tanker fleets. In 1980, the average age of the Air Force’s fighter inventory was under 10 years; today the average age stands

■ Rockwell B-1 Lancer bombers in a boneyard at the Davis-Monthan Air Force Base in Tucson, Arizona (May 13, 2015).

PHOTO: BRENDAN SMIALOWSKI/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

at 24 years. Likewise, over this same period the average age of the Air Force’s bomber force has increased from under 20 years to 39 years, and its tanker fleet from about 20 years to 38 years.”

Think: Air Force pilots are using planes designed as far back as the 1970s!

One example is the B-1B “Bone” bomber, one of three strategic bombers in the U.S. Air Force fleet alongside the B-2 Spirit and the B-52 Stratofortress. All “Bone” bombers, introduced between 1986-1988, were recently grounded for the second time in less than a year because of problems with their emergency ejection system. There is no indication how long it will be before the fleet can fly again, though they are expected to remain in service until 2036.

Similar trends exist for transport ships and planes.



Lawmakers expressed concern whether “the military could get to the fight” given the 46 transport ships in the Navy’s ready reserve force has an average age of 44 years. “The steel is rotting,” retired Rear Admiral Mark Buzby, administrator of the Marine Administration, testified to lawmakers in Congress.

A chart revealed that six of these ships lost their certificate of inspection, and 13 were considered “not mission capable.”

Such facts, in the face of increasing Russian and Chinese aggression, led to President Donald Trump’s expansion of defense spending and push for completely new weaponry to replace the old.

Easier said than done.

The New

The pace at which new weapons platforms are developed and deployed has, over time, slowed significantly—and with it become more expensive.

“This trend has, again, probably been most significant in the Air Force,

particularly among combat aircraft,” CNAS reported. “Between 1946 and 1965, the Air Force deployed 15 different types of fighter and attack aircraft. By comparison, between 1966 and 1985 it introduced only five new aircraft of these types. And in the roughly 30 years since, it has introduced only two new designs—the F-22 and the F-35.”

Geopolitics threaten to derail construction of high-tech F-35 fighter jets. The U.S. halted jet deliveries to Turkey, one of the 11 countries across the globe that make parts for the aircraft, because of the Mideast nation’s plan to purchase a Russian missile system.

This move by Washington will require the aircraft’s builder, Lockheed Martin Corporation, to seek out another producer of fuselage, landing gear and cockpit displays.

“Because Turkey is not just an F-35 purchaser, but an industrial partner, blocking delivery of these systems presents a major escalation by the United States as it threat-

■ The future USS Zumwalt conducting sea tests and trials in the Atlantic Ocean (Dec. 7, 2016).

PHOTO: U.S. NAVY/GENERAL DYNAMICS BATH IRON WORKS VIA GETTY IMAGES

ens to impose serious costs on both sides,” Andrew Hunter, a fellow at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, said to *Reuters*.

One F-35 costs \$90 million to construct.

The Navy’s first ship in its \$23 billion program to construct a new class of destroyers came more than five years after it was originally scheduled to be produced.

In addition, the Zumwalt-class guided missile destroyer is not “expected to have an initial combat capability until September 2021, at least three years later than planned,” *Bloomberg* reported.

“The latest delay for the first \$7.8 billion vessel, designated the DDF-1000, may add to doubts that the Navy can build, outfit and deliver vessels on time and within cost targets.”

“The new information underscores the risks that we have reported on for many years,” Shelby Oakley, the Government Accountability Office’s supervisor for naval systems reviews, stated. “When the Navy pushes forward on lead ships without realistic cost, schedule and performance expectations, the result is ships that are late, over cost, and incomplete.”

The delay is the result of challenges constructing the first model of a new class, a limited capacity of labor in specialized fields, and the unexpected complexity of completing industrial work while crews were stationed on the ship. Each year, \$160 million is added to the cost of construction, with cumulative additional costs of \$4 billion over 11 years. This means the basic cost (\$7.8 billion) has risen to over \$13.2 billion because of delays.

Would We Win World War III?

To illustrate the implications of wanting military preparedness and capabilities, the RAND corporation ran a simulation of World War III scenarios. In the games, U.S. Armed Forces consistently experience the most losses in a conflict with Russia and China.

“We lose a lot of people. We lose a lot of equipment. We usually fail to achieve our objective of preventing aggression by the adversary,” RAND analyst David Ochmanek explained at the Center for a New American Security.

“In these simulated fights, the ‘red’ aggressor [Chinese and Russian] force often obliterates US stealth fighters on the runway, sends US warships to the depths, destroys US bases, and takes out critical US military systems,” *Business Insider* reported.

“In every case I know of, the F-35 rules the sky when it’s in the sky,” Robert Work, a former deputy secretary of defense and an experienced war-gamer, said...“But it gets killed on the ground in large numbers.”

RAND concluded that the U.S. is “at greater risk than at any time in decades.”

Unfounded Confidence

“History is replete with examples of disasters born of lack of strategic foresight,” Lani Kass, a special assistant to Air Force chief of staff Michael Moseley, stated in *Breaking Defense*.

Dr. Kass explained the dangers of baseless military confidence: “The U.S. Army after the Civil War—arguably the most experienced on the planet—spent 30 years fighting the Indians, only to later struggle to deploy a brigade to Cuba. Likewise, Britain and France let their conventional power fade—while their hubris blossomed—after post-1815 resulting in a blood bath in the Crimean War and near-existential disasters in the two World Wars that followed. In the wake of a spectacular victory in June 1967, the Israeli Defense Forces rested on its laurels, secure in the soon-to-be-proven fallacy that past successes and strategic depth would deter any emerging threat. Six years later, in October 1973, Israel fought for its very survival, having fallen victim to a strategic surprise masterfully orchestrated by seemingly defeated foes.

“The implications are clear. First, aggressors tend to assume risks that seem irrational—and, thus, improbable—to the intended victim. This leads to strategic dislocation, and, potentially, catastrophic failure. Second, credibility born of past successes rarely suffices as a deterrent. Third, hubris kills.”

A wise man once said, “Confidence in an unfaithful man in time of trouble is like a broken tooth, and a foot out of joint” (Prov. 25:19).

Another Bible scripture states the danger of unfounded self-confidence: “Let him that thinks he stands take heed lest he fall” (I Cor. 10:12). The same could be applied to Americans who believe and rely on

their armed forces. People are most vulnerable when they take their security for granted!

If Americans are to be truly confident in their nation’s might, they should know where that might comes from.

Is it from centuries of industrious labor and ingenuity? An unwavering belief in democratic values? Naturally humane and generous hearts?

Some believe it is because of the nation’s Founding Fathers’ devotion to establishing a country under God, who provided prosperity and unmatched military might that carries on to this day.

Often, this can seem the only way to explain such unprecedented power—not to mention prosperity, peace and freedoms that are unparalleled in the history of mankind.

Yet this idea can be PROVEN. The same book that exposes the danger of self-confidence also shows the *true source* of these blessings.

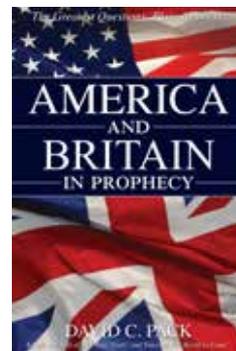
The Bible book of Genesis contains an account in which God promises special treatment to both a single nation and a company of nations (Gen. 35:11).

A significant element of this package of blessings is unprecedented military power. Notice: “The archers have sorely grieved him, and shot at him, and hated him: but his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob” (49:23-24).

This power—clearly given to the United States of America as well as Great Britain and its Commonwealth—comes from God!

As sure as these were divine blessings, just as surely they can be taken away. This is no time to rest on laurels and exercise blind confidence, because these blessings are **CONDITIONAL**.

Read *America and Britain in Prophecy* to see what this means for the country’s future. □



Order a Free Copy!
rcg.org/aabibp

What Should 'CHURCH' Look Like TODAY?

BY SAMUEL C. BAXTER



A vast swing in culture. Rapid advancements in technology. Never-ending scandals. Ministers and parishioners are scrambling to find what “church” should look like in the 21st century.

THE TERM “mission trip” typically evokes Christians going to far-flung places around the globe. These journeys often involve building a school in Haiti, working in a medical clinic in Peru, or a choir tour through Ghana. Yet there is a new destination for such evangelizers: America’s college campuses.

Young Catholics are now reaching out to students at their universities who describe themselves as “spiritual but not religious” or “nones”—those who do not identify with any religion.

“Nones” are growing rapidly in the nation. Pew Research found that over 20 percent of adults and a third of Millennials (those born 1981-1996) in the nation are unaffiliated with any religion.

The goal for these young Catholics is to make the religion more attractive to their peers. An article in *The Conversation* described these college-age proselytizers: “The missionaries are much like any other middle-class young adult in the U.S.: They live on their iPhones, drink craft beer, buy pumpkin spice lattes and love March Madness. Some even have tattoos, often with quotes from saints.”

Declines in religious participation on college campuses speaks to a much larger issue. Church growth is either negative or stagnant across the nation. *Facts & Trends* magazine reported that “between 6,000 and 10,000 churches in the U.S. are dying each year. That means around 100-200 churches will close this week.”

The number of people completely “unchurched” has doubled in the last 15 years, the latest General Social Survey found. The number jumped from 15 percent to 30 percent in that time. That is 3 in 10 people who

attended no religious services in the last year.

The survey found that 59 percent of Americans attend religious services just several times a year or less.

This is the Christian landscape in the United States. The future is bleak: Atheism among Generation Z, which comes after Millennials, is DOUBLE the general population—13 percent versus 6 percent of adults—the Barna Group found.

The researchers labeled Gen Z as “the first truly ‘post Christian’ generation.”

For decades, the U.S. has been drifting away from its Judeo-Christian identity. On top of declines in church attendance and religious affiliation, citizens report they pray less, are less inclined to believe in God, and are less likely to read the Bible than ever before.

Religious leaders are scrambling to stop the bleeding. Like the missionaries on American college campuses, many pastors and ministers are looking for something new. Shifts in society are pushing them to change their tactics, image and outlook.

Yet the flipside of this coin is that parishioners are leaving. Traditional church outlets are not speaking to them as they once did. Leaders and lay members alike are trying to figure out what “church” should look like in the 21st century.

Why the Decline?

While the problem is multifaceted, one of the greatest reasons America is becoming unchurched is the internet. A *Huffpost* article explained it this way: “Though it’s not solely responsible, the Internet—along with the way it changes the way we interrelate, communicate, seek and consume information—is certainly doing its part to contribute to the decline. And it’s not just Church that is feeling the pinch; any hierarchic system in which the institution traditionally has played the role of guard, gatekeeper or mediator is finding their authority challenged.

“As for why now, the answer is more complex than any single factor. On the

one hand, changing domestic, social and economic systems have caused us to spread out and move around far more than before. The churches, as a result, are no longer social hubs of neighborhoods any more. And along with being social hubs, churches also served as economic engines, as businesspeople networked after worship or over a potluck meal. Now we just use LinkedIn.”

In addition, the article stated, the social stigma attached to not attending church has almost totally disappeared. As fewer people attend religious services weekly, *even fewer* people will attend weekly because it is seen as OK.

Scandals are another reason for empty pews. Think of all the child abuse cases against Catholic priests. The denomination is not alone. *The Houston Chronicle* released a three-part series detailing 700 incidences of abuse over two decades in the Southern Baptist church.

Those who grew up attending Catholic, protestant or non-denominational churches often stop attending in adulthood after seeing hypocrisy, cronyism, political wrangling, and constant infighting.

According to Gallup, public trust in pastors is at an all-time low. Just 37 percent of Americans polled say clergy have high or very high honesty and ethical standards. The number was 67 percent in 1985.

Put simply: organized religion has left a bad taste in many mouths.

Efforts to Change

In an attempt to reverse the exodus away from churches, religious leaders are ready to try just about anything. There are church services held Sunday mornings at local bars (with no alcohol of course). The thought is to have a spiritual connection away from traditional worship buildings that may hold negative connotations for some.

Other options are making church more fun and adding service times to cater to the desires of congregants. There is also streaming services online. While this is a 21st century solution, it means physical attendance may remain low.

Historically, change is the name of the game when churches hit hard times. Think of the Second Vatican Council in the 1960s. The results were modernizing Catholicism with moves such as allowing Mass to be delivered in local languages versus Latin and opening up dialogue with other religions.

Yet modernizing is not a surefire solution. Instead of thinking of new, outside-the-box solutions, many look to the Bible for guidance. They examine the first-century Church to inform how their 21st-century churches should look.

The place many start is Acts 2. Verse 1 states that the entire Church was together “with one accord in one place.”

Later in the chapter it expands on this statement...

■ “And they *continued steadfastly* in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers” (vs. 42).

■ “And all that believed were together, and *had all things common*” (vs. 44).

■ “And they, *continuing daily with one accord* in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with *gladness and singleness of heart*” (vs. 46).

■ “Praising God, and *having favor with all the people*. And the Lord *added to the church daily* such as should be saved” (vs. 47).

Steadfast members! All things common! Daily fellowship! Favor within the community! Daily Church growth!

These are qualities that every religious leader longs for. What happened? The early Church was able to have “all things common,” yet today it is not uncommon for *individual* congregations to split in disagreement—never mind the differing beliefs among the myriad denominations of Christendom.

Cloudy History

History records that professing Christianity rapidly morphed away from its New Testament look. The starts of this are seen in the Bible book of III John. The elderly apostle was being opposed by Diotrephes, who “loved to have preeminence” (vs. 9).

Verse 10 showed that John was ready to cast him and his followers out of the Church—and restore the unity described in Acts 2.

Yet not too much later an utterly different form of Christianity appeared. The Lutheran historian Mosheim described an apostasy in the early Church: “Christian churches had scarcely been organized when men rose up, who, not being contented with the simplicity and purity of that religion which the Apostles taught, attempted innovations, and fashioned religion according to their own liking” (*Ecclesiastical History*).

After the original apostles died, the Church entered into what has been called the “Lost Century.”

Methodist historian Jesse Lyman Hurlbut called that period the “Age of Shadows.” He wrote that “of all periods in the history, it is the one about which we know the least... For fifty years after St. Paul’s life a curtain hangs over the church, through which we strive vainly to look; and when at last it rises, about 120 A.D. with the writings of the earliest church fathers, we find a church in many aspects very different from that in the days of St. Peter and St. Paul” (*The Story of the Christian Church*).

Again, what happened?

The answer many would say is that human nature happened. Congregations are made up of people who can dispute and disagree. Differing personalities will lead to differing organizations, the thinking goes. Yet this is disheartening. We all want what Christians had in Acts 2.

Ask: Why did this model work for the original apostles and then seem to fail forever after?

The answer is that the New Testament has a lot more to say than just the second chapter in the book of Acts. In fact, God’s Word illustrates EXACTLY what the Church should look like—then *and* now.

“I Will Build My Church”

Start with the words of Jesus Christ. He plainly stated: “I will build My

church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it” (Matt. 16:18).

Do not overcomplicate this. Jesus said He would build a Church. He said it would never be destroyed.

Notice that this is a singular Church, ONE. Think about what the Son of God meant here. Is this one, single organization? Or a loose collective of all churches in Christendom?

John 17:11 shows Christ’s hope for His Church. He prayed: “And now I am no more in the world, but these [Christians] are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep through Your own name those whom You have given Me, *that they may be one, as We are.*”

The Father and Jesus Christ are completely unified in everything they do. John 10:30 confirms this by stating simply: “I and My Father are one.”

Again, is this many organizations? Is there room for disagreement? The apostle Paul answered this in I Corinthians. There was disunity that cropped up in the congregation. A longer passage shows the stark emphasis on being completely on the same page (emphasis added).

Starting in chapter 12: “For as the body is ONE, and has many members, and all the members of that ONE body, being many, are ONE body: so also is Christ. For by ONE Spirit are we all baptized into ONE body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into ONE Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many (vs. 12-15).

Paul is keeping this simple and using repetition to make his point. He stated Jesus Christ has one body. Read the gospels—He has one body!

Continue reading: “And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? But now has God set the members every one of them in the body, as it has pleased Him. And if they were all one member, where

were the body? But now are they many members, yet but one body” (vs. 16-20).

Earlier, Paul asked a question in chapter 1, verse 13: “Is Christ divided?” The obvious answer is NO!

If there is a question that this is some sort of amorphous spiritual church body, the apostle adds more detail in Ephesians 4: “Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as you are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all” (vs. 3-6).

Verse 16 makes the point clear: “From whom THE WHOLE BODY FITLY JOINED TOGETHER AND COMPACTED by that which every joint supplies, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, makes increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.”

A physical body must be connected and whole to stay alive. God’s Word plainly states the same about Christ’s spiritual Body.

Time to ask some hard questions. Did Christ merely *hope* the Church He built would stay unified? Was His prayer to the Father ineffectual? Is His Body today a series of dismembered limbs and organs strewn the world over?

How can we reconcile modern Christendom with what God’s Word so clearly declares?

Finding God’s Church

The decline in U.S. churches should necessitate deep soul-searching on the part of religious leaders. They are in charge of those organizations and should ask: “What are we doing wrong?” But, for those who have never found a modern organization that matches what they see in the Bible, this can be a time to follow the breadcrumbs leading to a true Church home that matches what is seen in God’s Word.

Start with the word “Church.” The New Testament was originally written

Please see **CHURCH**, page 30



AFTER CYC





LONE IDAI



United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres called Cyclone Idai, which hit Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Malawi in March, “one of the worst weather-related catastrophes in the history of Africa.” Now the threat of water-borne diseases means the crisis is far from over.

■ Top left, a woman stands in front of what used to be her son’s home in Chimanimani, Zimbabwe (March 23, 2019). Top right, an aerial view of the flooding on the outskirts of Beira, Mozambique (March 20, 2019). Bottom left, an owner stays at his destroyed bar in Beira (March 23, 2019). Bottom right, a young girl diagnosed with cholera is checked by a doctor at a treatment center in Beira (March 30, 2019).

PHOTOS: AP/KB MPOFU (TOP LEFT); ADRIEN BARBIER/AFP/GETTY IMAGES (TOP RIGHT); YASUYOSHI CHIBA/AFP/GETTY IMAGES (BOTTOM LEFT); AP/TSVANGIRAYI MUKWAZHI (BOTTOM RIGHT)



CYCLONE IDAI was devastating for the more than 1.5 million people in three southern African countries, according to the UN and government officials.

“A family saw their brick house swept away from them. When they went to another house for safety, the roof collapsed,” Machiel Pouw, Save the Children’s response team leader in Mozambique, said in a statement. “Another family fled for safety in a tree. There are tens of thousands of heartbreaking stories like this, lives shattered over the past days.”

The vicious cyclone killed an estimated 1,000, left hundreds more missing, and stranded tens of thousands who are cut off from roads and telephones in mainly poor, rural areas. The death toll could tick higher as floodwaters drain away and reveal more bodies, some emergency

■ Top left, a woman fetches water from a dug pit in Beira, Mozambique (March 31, 2019). Top right, an elderly man lies on the ground after his bag of rice was snatched from him in a scramble for food aid in Nyamatande, Mozambique (March 26, 2019). Bottom, a boy walks with food he received from a local supermarket at an evacuation center in Dondo, Mozambique (March 27, 2019).

PHOTOS: AP/TSVANGIRAYI MUKWAZHI (TOP LEFT); AP/PHILL MAGAKOE (TOP RIGHT); YASUYOSHI CHIBA/AFP/GETTY IMAGES (BOTTOM)



responders have said. The actual number of dead may never be known.

Hardest hit was Mozambique's central port city of Beira where the airport was closed, electricity knocked out, and many homes destroyed. The storm hit Beira then moved westward into Zimbabwe and Malawi, affecting thousands more, particularly in eastern areas bordering Mozambique.

Homes, schools, businesses, hospitals and police stations were destroyed by the cyclone. Roads and bridges were swept away, slowing rescue efforts by the military, government agencies and non-governmental organizations.

The storm left people living in tent camps, schools, churches, roads and other impromptu places on higher ground. Many were left with little but their clothes, and were forced to squat over cooking fires and pick their way around stretches of increasingly dirty water or simply walking through it.

In its wake, the storm has left a new problem that could threaten many more lives—disease.

The World Health Organization said it is expecting a “spike” in diseases which tend to spread due to standing water. Residents of the camps also expressed growing concern.

“Surely when people are in a crowded place they are all vulnerable, they face difficulties such as urination and defecation,” Jose Pedro told *The Associated Press* in Beira. “So the spreading of diseases such as cholera is easy.”

There were similar concerns in southern Malawi. In the Bangula camp in Nsanje district, about 5,000 people had just a few toilets.

The toilets “are very shallow and some are already full because the area is still waterlogged,” Joseph Moyo told the Oxfam aid group.

Early cases of cholera were validated in Munhava, one of the poorest neighborhoods in the hard-hit port city of Beira, the national director of medical assistance, Ussene Isse, told reporters. The city of some 500,000

struggled to provide clean water and sanitation after Cyclone Idai slammed into the region.

“You know, cholera is an epidemic situation. When you have one case, you expect to have more cases in the community,” the director said.

The number of cholera cases quickly surged past 1,000 in the days following the storm. The sharp increase raised stakes in an already desperate fight to help hundreds of thousands of people sheltering in squalid conditions.

Cholera is a major concern for all cyclone survivors living in crowded camps, schools, churches and any land exposed by draining flood waters. The disease is spread by contaminated food and water, causes acute diarrhea and can kill within hours if not treated with oral rehydration solution or intravenous fluids in severe cases.

The World Health Organization called the spread of the bacteria a “sec-

Please see **CYCLONE IDAI**, page 30



COPYING THE GENIUS IN NATURE

What Biomimicry Reveals

Scientists, engineers and architects are looking to the natural world to solve problems in their fields—and it is yielding astounding results.

BY GREGORY E. KAIDANNEK

HUMPBACK whales improve wind power. Birds silence bullet trains. Sharks stop deadly bacteria. On the surface, these statements seem strange and unrelated. Yet these odd-couple pairings are becoming commonplace in everyday life through the design philosophy known as biomimicry.

When faced with a problem—such as how to improve energy efficiency in a home or desalinate water—biomimicry advocates examine how these same issues are addressed in nature. The Biomimicry Institute website calls it “an approach to innovation that seeks sustainable solutions to

human challenges by emulating nature’s time-tested patterns and strategies.”

One such example is improving wind turbines by modeling them after the pectoral fins of humpback whales. These creatures’ fins are uniquely shaped for lift and maneuverability. They are equipped with specialized bumps on the front edges called tubercles. *Bloomberg* reported that adding rows of similar bumps to turbine blades reduced drag and noise, and boosted the power harnessed by 20 percent.

Nature also inspired Japan’s iconic Shinkansen bullet train. The vehicle’s early design—which had a bluntly rounded nose like that of a bullet—was capable of reaching incredibly high speeds, but it encountered a

problem. Every time it would enter a tunnel, it would compress the air in the confined space and create a loud boom when it exited the other side. The nation’s strict sound pollution laws threatened to stop the train in its tracks.

A team member on the project found an unlikely source of inspiration: the kingfisher. The bird has a specialized beak that enables it to dive into water with virtually no splash. Modeling the front end of the train after the kingfisher beak not only reduced the problem of excessive train noise, but it also decreased energy usage by over 10 percent.

Colorado-based Sharklet Technologies looked to sharkskin to help healthcare facilities fight the spread of aggressive antibiotic-resis-

tant infections such as MRSA. Sharks are the only slow-moving marine animal that does not facilitate algae growth on its skin. The company mimicked the diamond-shaped pattern evident from a magnified image of the creature's skin and placed it on textured plastic.

The first Sharklet prototype reduced algae settlement by 85 percent compared to a chemically identical smooth surface. Similar results were found when it was tested against bacterial colonies. When applied to high-touch zones throughout hospitals and medical labs and devices, the new surface greatly reduced the risk of spreading infection—and the need for the use of toxic chemicals, antibiotics and antimicrobials to keep such areas clean.

The idea of biomimicry is nothing new. In the 1940s, nature inspired Velcro, a familiar fastener, which was fashioned after the common burdock burr. Centuries earlier, Leonardo da Vinci said, “Those who are inspired by a model other than nature...are laboring in vain” (*Leonardo: The Artist and the Man*). While he was referring to painting, nature did inspire many of the designs for his inventions.

Even though the idea of copying nature has been around for centuries, it is truly coming into its own today—opening up incredible possibilities for the future.

Biological Benefits

Often, applying principles seen in nature results in products and structures that require fewer raw materials to build and create less waste in the long run. This contemporary approach becomes more important when considering that while man has generally been successful at creating solutions to problems, there are usually negative side effects as a result. Solving one problem inevitably creates another.

Biomimicry can be used to break this endless cycle. One of the most promising ways to do this is to copy nature's closed-loop sustainability. Instead of using and abusing Earth's resources, we can copy natural eco-

systems that were designed to sustain themselves.

Architect Michael Pawlyn explained this approach in a lecture delivered at a TED conference in London: “The way we tend to use resources is we extract them, we turn them into short-life products and then dispose of them. Nature works very differently. In ecosystems, the waste from one organism becomes the nutrient for something else in that system. And there are some examples of projects that have deliberately tried to mimic ecosystems.”

“Applying principles seen in nature results in products and structures that require fewer raw materials to build and create less waste in the long run.”

For instance, a project called Seawater Greenhouse was inspired by the African fog-basking darkling beetle. The Biomimicry Institute stated that the insect “lives in one of the driest deserts in the world, the Namib on the southwest coast of Africa, but obtains all of the water it needs from ocean fog due to the unique surface of its back.” Each morning, the creature aims microscopic bumps on its back, which are designed to attract water, toward the oncoming fog. The water then flows into its mouth.

Mr. Pawlyn explained the success of the greenhouse: “This is a greenhouse designed for arid coastal regions, and the way it works is that you have this whole wall of evapora-

tor grills, and you trickle seawater over that so that wind blows through, it picks up a lot of moisture and is cooled in the process. So inside it's cool and humid, which means the plants need less water to grow. And then at the back of the greenhouse, it condenses a lot of that humidity as freshwater in a process that is effectively identical to the beetle.”

Upon completion, Mr. Pawlyn stated that the first Seawater Greenhouse “was producing slightly more freshwater than it needed for the plants inside.” He stated that this excess water was spread on the surrounding area, which soon greened up a section of desert area and turned “barren land back into biologically productive land.”

Allowing man to positively impact nature—while also more fully enjoying its benefits—is perhaps the greatest advantage of biomimicry. It becomes a testament to the completeness of the entire system that surrounds us. Each time the natural world is used as a blueprint for solving man's problems, the benefits are astonishing.

What Nature Reveals

Take a step back in your mind. For manmade objects, design implies there is a mind behind it. Your favorite armchair, the car you use for your daily commute, and the watch on your wrist all had teams of designers working on them. They labored to answer a series of questions: What material will make this the most comfortable? How can we make this more energy efficient? How can this be made more stylish, durable and useful?

These and many similar problems were all thought through using brainpower and critical thinking. Clearly, every chair, car and watch has a mind behind it. In addition, all of the biomimicry products mentioned earlier also had scientists, architects and engineers behind them.

It should come as no surprise, therefore, that there is also a mind behind natural wonders.

The Bible plainly identifies this mind: “Because that which may be

known of God is manifest [obvious] in them; for God has showed it unto them. For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are *clearly seen*, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse” (Rom. 1:19-20).

This passage reveals that God can be known through things that are created and seen. By studying the natural world, we can better understand His mind.

The Moffatt translation of the Bible makes this verse even plainer: “...for ever since the world was created, His invisible nature, His everlasting power and divine being, have been quite perceptible in what He has made. So they have no excuse.”

Every elegant “design solution” found in nature CLEARLY points to a Creator.

In ancient Israel, King David knew this as well. He wrote: “The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament [the sky] shows His handiwork” (Psa. 19:1). The king looked to Creation to understand the scientific laws governing the universe and the Designer who made it all.

Verses 2-3 expand on this: “Day unto day utters speech, and night unto night shows knowledge. There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard.”

David watched both day and night to learn everything he could about planetary orbits. Verses 4-6 state: “Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them has He set a tabernacle [place] for the sun, which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoices as a strong man to run a race. His [the sun’s] going forth is from the end of the heaven, and his circuit [revolution] unto the ends of it: and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof.”

These verses—along with many other Old Testament scriptures—indicate that David would have known the Earth was rotating. He poetically explained its 24-hour cycle by detailing the unbreakable relationship between day and night. He also understood that

Biomimicry in Action

Eastgate Center in Harare, Zimbabwe, uses structural principles from termite mounds to maintain indoor temperatures without conventional heating or air conditioning.



PHOTO: MANDY PATTERSON/CC BY



periods of light change with the four seasons. The king knew that there was no escaping the laws God set in motion.

For David, the vastness of the atmosphere and space—in all of its beauty, order and precision—were clear signs of an incredible Being working behind the scenes. The entire system works together with multiple processes all complementing each other. This is why he was inspired to state twice that “the fool has said in his heart [mind], there is no God” (Psa. 14:1; 53:1).

Crucial Connection

The foolishness of refusing to believe in God has grown over the years. With increased understanding of the order and complexity of the universe comes more and more proof there is a Creator at the helm.

A 2014 *Wall Street Journal* article reported: “Today there are more than 200 known parameters necessary for a planet to support life—every single one of which must be perfectly met, or the whole thing falls apart.”

The need for a God grows when one looks at the universe itself. The article continued: “The fine-tuning necessary for life to exist on a planet is nothing compared with the fine-tuning required for the universe to exist at all. For example, astrophysicists now know that the values of the four fundamental forces—gravity, the electromagnetic force, and the ‘strong’ and ‘weak’ nuclear forces—were determined less than one millionth of a second after the big bang. Alter any one value and the universe could not exist. For instance, if the ratio between the nuclear strong force and the electromagnetic force had been off by the tiniest fraction of the tiniest fraction—by even one part in 100,000,000,000,000,000—then no stars could have ever formed at all.”

Proof of God continues to mount. Professor of mathematics Dr. John Lennox of the University of Oxford wrote that “the more we get to know about our universe, the more the

hypothesis that there is a Creator God, who designed the universe for a purpose, gains in credibility as the best explanation of why we are here” (*God’s Undertaker: Has Science Buried God?*).

This evidence, coupled with the endless wonders seen in nature, all point to God. His Creation allows man to better understand His mind—how He thinks. It shows He is a God of order, simplicity and elegance. Just as man thinks through design problems, the Creator did the same.

“The need for a God grows when one looks at the universe itself... ‘The fine-tuning necessary for life to exist on a planet is nothing compared with the fine-tuning required for the universe to exist at all.’”

Yet God solving “design problems” in nature was really just Him creatively employing the laws of science—physical laws He laid out from the beginning.

Physical laws that govern time and space, such as gravity, were set in order since Creation. Everything we do in our physical existence must operate within their confines.

These are immutable laws. For example, if you attempt to “break” the law of gravity by jumping off a tall building, it will not end well. From an

early age, skinned knees, bruises and even broken bones teach us to abide by this *physical* law.

Yet, unknown to most, God also made *spiritual* laws governing how to live. This is why Psalm 19 talks about the physical world and neatly transitions into the spiritual. Recall that in verses 1-6, King David wrote about the heavens, day, night, sun and Earth.

Then in verses 7-8 he stated: “The *law* of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul [keeping the law is life-changing]: the *testimony* of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple [you can count on what God says]. The *statutes* of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart [keeping them brings joy]: the *commandment* of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes [keeping them opens a person’s eyes to see his ultimate purpose].”

God’s perfect laws, statutes, commandments and testimonies were put into place *for us*. They were made for our benefit! Following them yields positive effects—ensuring we lead happy, healthy, productive lives.

God’s Mind and Laws

These all-important laws are meant to teach us to govern how we think and behave. The eternal God who was there from the beginning (John 1:1) describes Himself as love (I John 4:8).

Yet the same Being also inspired the apostle Paul to record that love is the fulfilling of the Law (Rom. 13:10).

Paul was not talking about the laws associated with the four fundamental forces of nature—gravity, electromagnetics, strong force or weak force—he was referring to the fundamental LAWS OF GOD!

The Ten Commandments over-arch all of God’s laws. They provide a blueprint for how humans should govern their thoughts and actions. (See Exodus 20 and Matthew 22:36-40.) The first four, which start with, “You shall have no other gods before Me,” can be summarized as how we



6,000 Years Ago— or 460 Million?

Geologists record that trilobites appeared during the Cambrian era—more than 500 million years ago—and existed for hundreds of millions of years more before they went extinct.

What does the Bible say about such prehistoric creatures? Does their existence disprove—or does it actually prove—the validity of Scripture? Read the article “Is the Earth 6,000 Years Old?” for the answer!

rcg.org/realtruth

should manage our relationship with God. The remaining six teach us how to behave in relationships with our fellow man—including directives to honor parents and avoid adultery, murder and stealing.

Together, the Ten Commandments describe how we should practice love toward God *and* man. These are the foundational guide to *all* other laws mentioned throughout Scripture. Put another way, every other rule or guideline fits into these 10 *by design*.

These spiritual laws have been in place since man drew his first breath. Romans 7:12 states, “Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment, holy, and just, and good.”

Verse 14 adds that it is “spiritual.” Just as man can understand God’s mind and character through physical laws, he can also understand the Creator through spiritual laws. In other words, God is holy, just, good and spiritual. He is also eternal (Psa. 111:3) and perfect (19:7).

Again, these laws reveal the character and mind of the One who created them and put them into motion. By applying them in your life, you can better understand your Creator—and become more like Him.

Getting to Know God

The beginning of the Bible reveals that man was fashioned after God’s image and likeness (Gen. 1:26). Yet we were made incomplete—again, by design!

Humanity is on a totally different wavelength than God when it comes to spiritual matters (Eph. 2:2). We continually attempt to solve our biggest problems through our *own* analysis and experimentation within Creation while denying the God who made it in the first place. As a result of not following His Law, man has experienced countless negative consequences over millennia (Rom. 6:23). This has also led many to completely miss out on understanding the reason for their existence (Isa. 59:1-2).

Yet you can know why you were born. It begins with recognizing a fundamental principle of human nature. God summarizes this in Isaiah 55:8-9: “For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways...For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.”

Without turning to God, we cannot understand the right way to live! The physical side of this can be seen in man’s record of pollution and destruction of this planet. Yet by turning to God’s Creation through principles such as biomimicry, man is discovering that God’s Way leads us to live more sustainably.

The same is true spiritually. Without God’s Law, man’s record is one of war, hatred, vanity, jealousy, lust and greed. No good thing comes from these motivations!

Imagine if everyone sought out God’s Way in their lives. If they followed Jesus Christ’s instruction in Matthew 22:37 and Mark 12:30, the first four commandments—love toward God—would become commonplace. As a result, everyone would understand the Family of God and their place in it. There would be no other forms of religion or accompanying hatred between them. Foul language would never be heard again. People everywhere would come together in peace and safety to worship God on His chosen day.

What if everyone kept the other six commandments and showed love toward his neighbor? Children would follow the rules while living with happily married, faithful parents. War and terrorism would be a thing of the past. Never again would anyone’s home be broken into, nor would we ever hear government propaganda. False advertising would become ancient history. People would be content and satisfied, never again feeling compelled to “keep up with the Jones’s.”

To most, the above scenarios seem idealistic and impossible. Yet think: If God created laws for His Creation to

follow, it must be possible. Therefore, so would be the resultant effects.

While you were created incomplete, you need not remain this way! With God’s help, you can discover the final missing design element.

To do so, you must be willing to put aside ways that *seem* right and admit that they only produce bad results (Prov. 14:12). This means following the blueprints crafted by the original Designer and getting to know Him.

The apostle John explained exactly how to do this, “And hereby we do know that we know Him, if we KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS” (I John 2:3). Plainly stated, to know God we must keep His Law!

God is calling some and revealing His wonderful truth to a few now (John 6:44). Some are being given the opportunity to understand the Mind that created them. These individuals are now living the way of peace, happiness, prosperity and abundant living!

Our Creator wants us to know His will—His thoughts! He desires for “all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth” (I Tim. 2:4).

Every day, we experience the wonderful results of physical Creation, and are governed by its laws. Increasingly, man is discovering the keys to perfect design and function and putting them to work through biomimicry. We study nature, copy it, and harness its powerful blueprints to solve our most challenging physical problems—all in hopes of enhancing our existence. Yet the big picture is completely overlooked.

The only way we will ever solve our worst problems—which are spiritual in nature—is to start seeing the “forest for the trees.” We must study, copy and put God’s ultimate *spiritual* Law to the test. We must determine to get to know the Mind that designed and created everything.

To learn more, watch the three-part *World to Come* video series “What If the World Obeyed the 10 Commandments?” at rcg.org. □



AN ADORABLE girl in a grainy photo. The longer you stare, the more difficult it is to understand why—at only 6 years of age—she and 19 other children were fatally shot in the Sandy Hook Elementary School massacre.

That image brings us *ever so slightly* into the nightmare of that girl's father. He chose to end his life six years after the shooting. Jeremy Richman apparently felt that death was the only way to deal with the loss of his daughter, Avielle.

Long after tragedies such as Sandy Hook and the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School mass shootings, survivors remain broken over the deaths of their loved ones. For some, the burden is just too much to bear.

Richman committed suicide in March, only days after two Stoneman Douglas students took their own lives. After the suicides, officials in Parkland, Florida, renewed their focus on suicide prevention and mental health resources still in place 13 months after a 19-year-old gunman killed 17 people at the high school.

Mental health experts say the recent string of suicides is tragic but unsurprising.

"One of the big risk factors for suicide is exposure to violence," said Dr. Louis Kraus, chief of child and adolescent psychiatry at Rush University Medical Center in Chicago.

Even if they were not hit by bullets or did not see shots fired, "anyone who was at that school is at risk," Dr. Kraus said, and should be screened.

"The scars simply don't go away with a fresh coat of paint," he said.

In Newtown, Connecticut, where 20 first-graders and six staff members died at Sandy Hook Elementary back in 2012, the body of 49-year-old Jeremy Richman was found outside his office.

■ The mother of Benjamin Wheeler, a victim of the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting, attends a news conference in Newtown, Connecticut (Jan. 13, 2013).

PHOTO: DON EMMERT/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

NEVER THE SAME *Coping with the Grief of Mass Shootings*

Witnessing unspeakable tragedy changes the lives of those young and old, and typically for the worse. Those left behind struggle to pick up the pieces.

BY EDWARD L. WINKFIELD

Richman visited Florida only a week prior to ending his life to meet with the parents of Stoneman Douglas victims. Richman, a neuroscientist, and his wife oversaw The Avielle Foundation, a group they started and dedicated to preventing violence by better understanding brain health.

“Our hearts are shattered, and our heads are struggling to comprehend,” the foundation said in a statement. “Tragically, his death speaks to how insidious and formidable a challenge brain health can be and how critical it is for all of us to seek help for ourselves, our loved ones and anyone who we suspect may be in need.”

The Resiliency Center of Newtown was set up shortly after the shooting as a place for therapy and for people to gather to talk. Richman worked with the center in providing “brain health” first aid for children and others.

His friend Stephanie Cinque, the center’s executive director, said people are angry, sad and shocked by his death.

“There’s mixed feelings throughout town,” she said. “Grief is complicated. It’s very sad for the family, the children, the entire community.”

The emotional scars from mass shootings can last long after the tragic event. They can also crush a person’s faith in the direction of society.

Long Shadow

Sydney Aiello was one of the two Stoneman Douglas students who com-

mitted suicide. Her mother Cara Aiello told reporters that her 18-year-old daughter had suffered from survivor’s guilt after her friend died in the attack.

Before taking her life, Sydney had been diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder and struggled to attend college because she feared being in a classroom, but never asked for help, her mother said. Just days after Sydney’s death, another apparent suicide of a Stoneman Douglas student was confirmed by Coral Spring police officials.

Community leaders, government officials, parents, police and others held an emergency meeting after the second student death to get out in front of what they hope is not a disturbing trend.

In the meantime, the three suicides associated with high profile school shootings only add to a rising nationwide concern: More than 47,000 U.S. suicides occurred in 2017, at the highest rate in at least half a century—14 per 100,000. Suicide is the second-leading cause of death among U.S. teenagers.

Tragedy leaves more tragedy in its wake.

A 16-year-old Stoneman Douglas sophomore who was in a classroom where three students died on February 14, 2018, admitted trying to kill herself four times before she entered therapy.

The girl said she fears not every Stoneman Douglas student who needs counseling is getting it and noted that

some teachers seem uncomfortable talking about suicide and simply want to move on.

Yet every mass shooting casts a long shadow. The Las Vegas attack in October 2017, which left 59 dead and more than 850 wounded, brought back horrific memories for other mass shooting victims and families trying to move forward. One victim, who was shot six times during the nightclub massacre in Orlando, Florida, says he is forced to relive his own tragedy with each new incident.

“Ambulances, police, even glass, as well, is a trigger. Little specific things, sometimes you forget about, and when you see it, you remember,” he said. The Orlando shooting left 49 people dead and dozens more injured.

The experience is similar for Austin Eubanks, just 17 when shot in the hand and knee when two classmates went on a rampage at Columbine High School. His best friend was one of 13 killed in the 1999 attack in Colorado. Mr. Eubanks’ physical injuries healed quickly, but he turned to opioid painkillers to dull the psychological pain and spent 11 years fighting addiction.

Ultimately, Mr. Eubanks said he learned that “you have to find the courage to lean into the pain. In order to heal it you have to feel it. You have to know you will come out the other side.”

Mr. Eubanks says the emotional fallout spreads far beyond the victims

DEADLIEST MASS SHOOTINGS IN U.S. HISTORY

For decades, mass shootings—defined as the murder of three or more people—have been a tragically regular occurrence in the U.S. Each event scars survivors and loved ones left behind.

AUGUST 1, 1966

University of Texas Tower

An ex-Marine killed 16 people (including an unborn child) and injured 31 shooting people inside and from atop a tower on campus. The shooter went on for 96 minutes before being stopped by police.

JULY 18, 1984

San Ysidro Massacre

A San Diego resident killed 21 and injured 19 at a McDonald’s restaurant before being gunned down by a sniper.

OCTOBER 16, 1991

Luby’s Cafeteria

At Luby’s Cafeteria in Killeen, Texas, an unemployed former Marine killed 23 and injured 27, mostly women. He took his own life during a shootout with police.

APRIL 20, 1999

Columbine High School

Two 12th grade students murdered 13 people, including a teacher and 12 students, and injured 24, before shooting themselves. Although the motive is unclear, both students had planned the shooting for about a year and intended to cause a record number of casualties.

to families, the rescuers and the medical professionals.

“The ripple effects of these are tremendous,” he said.

Anxious parents spoke of fears and frustration in trying to get their children help after Parkland.

Lisette Rozenblat recalled how her 16-year-old daughter was in the freshman building the gunman attacked the Florida school.

“My daughter doesn’t want to go to therapy anymore either. I have to make the appointments...and she’s like, ‘oh can we reschedule,’” Mrs. Rozenblat said. “They don’t want to talk about it, but we know better. Sooner or later it’s going to catch up to them.”

Other parents also said they feel helpless because of the difficulty of forcing kids to get help.

“My son doesn’t want to discuss it at all either,” said Joe Safonte, whose 17-year-old narrowly missed an encounter with the gunman.

His son stopped therapy after six months, saying it was not helping anymore, according to Mr. Safonte. But just last week, the father noted, his son was terrified when an alarm went off in their hotel room.

“Maybe it’s time to go back,” he said.

The Avielle Foundation posted a statement on their website following the death of their founder Jeremy Richman. The text appeared next to a black-and-white photo of him wearing a “Be Human” shirt and lecturing

others about coping with the loss of a loved one. An excerpt from the announcement illustrates the despair and helplessness felt by those associated with mass shootings.

“Our hearts are shattered and our heads are struggling to comprehend. Jeremy was a champion father, hus-

band, neuroscientist, and for the past seven years a crusader on a mission to help uncover the neurological underpinnings of violence through the Avielle Foundation he and his wife Jennifer Hensel founded after the death of their daughter Avielle at Sandy Hook Elementary School.”



■ Virginia Tech student Colin Goddard, who was shot three times, lies in a hospital bed in Blacksburg, Virginia (April 19, 2007).

PHOTO: CHARLES OMMANNEY/GETTY IMAGES

APRIL 16, 2007

Virginia Tech

An undergraduate student shot 32 students and injured 23 others before shooting himself, resulting in the deadliest school shooting in U.S. history. In a manifesto sent to *NBC News*, the perpetrator expressed hatred toward wealthy people.

APRIL 3, 2009

Binghamton

At the American Civic Association Immigration Center in New York, a 41-year-old man shot and killed 14 and injured 4 in an ESL class. He committed suicide upon the arrival of police.

NOVEMBER 5, 2009

Fort Hood

An Army major and psychiatrist fatally shot 14 people, including an unborn child, and injured 32 others at a military base. He specifically targeted military personnel. The shootings have been described as a terrorist attack as the perpetrator was a radicalized Muslim.

JULY 20, 2012

Aurora

A man killed 12 people and injured 70 others at a movie theater. The shooter claimed to be mentally ill and suffer from schizoaffective disorder, but authorities stated he was legally sane during the shootings.

DECEMBER 14, 2012

Sandy Hook Elementary School

A 20-year-old male fatally shot 20 children between the ages of 6 and 7. Six adult staff were also shot dead. Prior to his arrival at the school, he had killed his mother. He committed suicide when first responders arrived, bringing the total casualties to 28 dead and 2 injured.

After detailing more about all Richman helped accomplish with the foundation, the statement summarized how the group will move forward: “Jeremy’s mission will be carried on by the many who love him, including many who share the heartache and trauma that he has suffered since

December 14, 2012. We are crushed to pieces, but this important work will continue, because, as Jeremy would say, we have to.”

What Is Really Happening

The core of what Jeremy Richman searched for and the natural question

for anyone seeking to fix the problem of mass shootings is, why? Why are some motivated to mercilessly take young lives who have done no harm?

And, despite our continued best efforts, why can we not stop them?

Politicians, law enforcement, and religious counselors cannot seem to provide adequate explanations. At best, they address the effects and not the cause.

The ultimate question: WHY WOULD GOD ALLOW THIS?

You do not have to be left wondering what is going on in this dark world that is only getting darker. Though a myriad of problems exist, there is one true cause.

The Real Truth Editor-in-Chief David Pack addressed this in *A World in Captivity*.

“How did the world come to be the way that it is? Why is it in such a state of confusion, suffering and ignorance? Why can’t governments get along—avoid war—find peace—reach agreement? Why such constant instability, scandal and division



■ Neil Heslin, father of 6-year-old victim of the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting Jesse Lewis, testifies during a hearing before the Senate Judiciary Committee in Washington, D.C. (Feb. 27, 2013).

PHOTO: ALEX WONG/GETTY IMAGES

DEADLIEST MASS SHOOTINGS (CONTINUED)



PHOTO: DAVID BECKER/GETTY IMAGES

SEPTEMBER 16, 2013

Washington Navy Yard

A former Navy officer murdered 12 and wounded 8 at the Naval Sea Systems Command in Washington, D.C., before being killed by police.

DECEMBER 2, 2015

San Bernardino

A married couple inspired by terrorist groups killed 14 and wounded 24 at the Inland Regional Center in San Bernardino, California. The pair was killed by police after a pursuit and five-minute shootout.

JUNE 12, 2016

Orlando

A 29-year-old security guard shot and killed 49 and wounded 53 inside a nightclub in Orlando, Florida. During the attack, the shooter swore allegiance to ISIS.

OCTOBER 1, 2017

Las Vegas

A 69-year-old man opened fire from a hotel room upon concertgoers attending a music festival in Las Vegas, killing 58 and injuring 851. The perpetrator was later found dead in his room from a self-inflicted gunshot wound. It was the deadliest mass shooting by a lone attacker in the U.S.

among leaders and seemingly endless revolutions and military coups? Why is there no shortage of demagogues, dictators and revolutionaries, who always promise to make things better, yet are only able to preside over a continual worsening of problems and conditions?

“Despite these conditions, most theologians, religionists and ministers blindly assume that this is God’s world—that it reflects His guidance, His Way.”

Read that last sentence again. It begins to explain why tragic incidents, such as mass shootings and other violent acts, are *perplexing* and DEVASTATING society. Why does God allow such violence and the trauma that *ruins* the lives of those involved?

What you are about to read may shock you. It typically does surprise those who read and understand it for the first time.

Even though God created the world and all that dwell upon it, this is *not* currently His world. The God of the universe—for His own great purpose—has relinquished control of this world to another being. Read for yourself: “But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: in whom the *god of this world* hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them” (II Cor. 4:3-4).

The God of the Bible calls Satan the “god of this world.” John 12:31,

14:30 and 16:11 label the devil as the “prince of this world.” The devil even offered Jesus Christ control of the world’s kingdoms (Matt. 4:8-9) because he owned them!

Put together, you can see that Satan has tremendous sway over modern events. This, along with the devil’s murderous character (John 8:44), explains the violence and depravity occurring.

Virtually all mankind is blinded to the fact that this supernatural being is the mastermind behind the world’s slaughter. Revelation 12:9 says Satan “deceives the *whole* world.” This not only emphasizes his power, it also explains why the vast majority do not even believe Satan exists—let alone rules the entire planet.

A World in Captivity details how Satan rebelled against God’s government *prior* to the Creation account in Genesis 1. Isaiah 14:12-14 reveals that he had ruled the Earth, and Ezekiel 28:15 shows that he was a created being—a great, perfect archangel. Yet he turned bitter against his Creator, and his mind became warped, twisted and evil.

The bad news is that same being remains ruler over Earth today.

The good news is he will be removed and replaced by Jesus Christ, who qualified to replace him during His earthly ministry, death and resurrection. Christ said: “All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth” (Matt. 28:18), and “all things” were put under Him (I Cor. 15:27).

As with tragedies seen today, why would God allow Satan to rule? This is part of His great purpose for mankind. The Creator is allowing space for humanity to see that the devil’s and its own ways do not work—they just bring pain, misery and death.

The book of II Peter explains God’s thinking: “The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, *not willing that any should perish*, but that all should come to repentance.”

God does not want ANYONE to perish eternally! Those who have died in tragic shootings or the aftermath are included—and all will have a chance to enjoy the culmination of God’s Plan.

Notice Revelation 21: “And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away” (vs. 14).

Understanding the origin of mankind’s problems will not completely remove the misery from mass shootings. However, it does begin to give those left behind answers.

For more on the big picture related to what ails the world, read all of *A World in Captivity*. (The booklet is available free at rcg.org/awic.) It not only discusses more on the cause of the problems in this world, it also reveals the awesome, ULTIMATE solutions for which all mankind longs. □

NOVEMBER 5, 2017

Sutherland Springs

A former Air Force officer murdered 26 and injured 20 people at a Baptist church in Sutherland Springs, Texas.

FEBRUARY 14, 2018

Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School

An expelled 19-year-old student gunned down 17 students and staff and wounded 17 at a high school in Parkland, Florida. Several survivors have struggled with PTSD, and two committed suicide in 2019.

MAY 18, 2018

Santa Fe High School

A 17-year-old honor roll student began shooting students in an art class at Santa Fe High School in Texas, killing 10 and wounding 13.

OCTOBER 27, 2018

Pittsburg Synagogue

A gunman entered a Jewish synagogue and began firing while religious services were being held. Eleven were killed and 7 injured. The shooter had previously expressed anti-Semitic views through social media.

NOVEMBER 7, 2018

Thousand Oaks

At the Borderline Bar and Grill in Thousand Oaks, California, a 28-year-old Marine Corps veteran killed 12 and injured 25 before shooting himself. Authorities believe the shooter suffered PTSD, although the motive for the massacre is unclear.

PERSONAL

Continued from page 2

with either casual acquaintances, near strangers, or complete strangers. In other words, as many as four out of five will sleep with others they barely know or *do not know at all*. One in four has a sexually transmitted disease.

Forty percent of U.S. college students—two in five!—are now considered alcoholics. How many others drink too much? Most binge-drink at least once per month. The average *male student* (not the average college alcoholic) has 82 drinks per month. The average woman has 59. And over three million of them drive drunk on America's roads each year.

A third of college students have tried marijuana. Fifty to 60 percent admit to abusing prescription drugs such as Adderall and Ritalin.

Studies also show that students only spend an average of 7.2 hours per week studying. With the addition of classes and certain other academic activities, the number reaches 30 hours. But they spend 10-plus hours “partying,” and another 30 hours in recreation. In other words, about 18 percent of a student's time is dedicated to education, with only 4 percent in active application.

Seventy percent of college students admit to serious cheating. Forty percent admit to outright stealing the right answers. These numbers are staggering—and they represent just those who *admitted* it! How many more did not? Just recall the college admissions scandal that we opened with.

Shockingly, professors are increasingly posting both the questions *and* answers for final exams before they are administered, stating that too many students would fail otherwise! Some professors who have taught the same

material for years observe that the exams that once resulted in the standard bell curve—a few As, a few Fs, and everyone else in between—now often result in the majority of a class *failing*.

Jesus said, “You shall know them by their fruits” (Matt. 7:16) and “...by their fruits you shall know them” (vs. 20). These are the fruits of today's “higher education”!

Modern education is now corrupting its last generation—with religion having done little or nothing to stop it!

Universal Re-education Ahead

Estimates show that approximately 20 percent of all human beings cannot read or write. After Christ returns and the Kingdom of God is established, replacing mankind's failed systems, basic education will become absolutely essential for almost a quarter of all people on Earth.

Binge Drinking Among Young

More than 38 million American adults binge drink about four times a month. Some of the demographics of that activity:

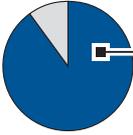
Number of drinks that brings a person's blood alcohol concentration to 0.08 percent or higher:

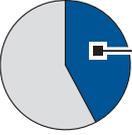
For men  **5 drinks** in about 2 hours

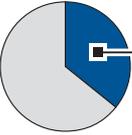
For women  **4 drinks** in about 2 hours

18-34

U.S. age group with the most binge drinkers

 **About 90%** of the alcohol youth under the age of 21 drink is during binge drinking

 **42.2%** of full-time college students ages 18 to 22 were binge drinkers in 2010

 **35.6%** of non-college students in that age group were binge drinkers in 2010

1,700 College students die each year from alcohol-related causes—1,300 of these from drinking and driving

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, U.S. Department of Education, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Graphic: Chicago Tribune

© 2012 MCT



The rest of mankind has been “educated.” This means that they have been steeped in the world’s false values, pagan religions and customs, the atheistic concept of evolution—and all the ways of Satan’s nature instilled into people as human nature. They have much to *unlearn*. They will not have to receive basic education as much as they will have to be *re-educated!* People will learn that much of the knowledge they swallowed as fact was little more than false indoctrination and propaganda.

Humanity will have to learn that there is right knowledge and there is wrong knowledge—and how to know the difference. People will also learn the difference between spiritual and physical knowledge. It will be universally taught that the *Bible* is the foundation of all knowledge. (Satan is the true father of today’s education.) At that time, men will learn that they

can no longer eat of the Genesis 2 “tree of the knowledge of good and evil” (vs. 9, 17), which is rooted in their thinking.

All true knowledge comes from God—and mankind will understand that peace, happiness, abundance and universal health and prosperity spring from divine revelation. The fable that mankind is continually evolving into a “higher order” will be debunked and replaced with the knowledge that for 6,000 years man continually became more degenerate, decadent and depraved—in conduct and thought.

Life is a process of education—learning to develop character by obedience to God’s laws, which in turn yields every good, fulfilling and favorable result. Education in **THE WORLD TOMORROW** will explain how to live—and how to learn a productive trade. Of course, all academic subjects, including wholesome art and music coupled with science and mathematics and a host of other necessary and important academic disciplines, will produce well-rounded people. Life will become invigorating, exciting and fulfilling.

All error will be exposed for what it is. The truth of every matter—in every field of knowledge—will be taught in place of error. Manmade definitions of political correctness, situation ethics, human rights, discrimination, alternative lifestyles, and proper education will be scrapped and replaced with God’s definitions.

The Only Way

The jury has come in. Modern education has failed, and it is too late to do anything about this corrupt system. Rotten from the beginning, it was based on the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, which was forbidden by God from Creation. The Restored Church of God, through the vastness of its available free literature, as the largest religious publishing operation in the world, is teaching—re-educating!—great numbers in every nation and territory of the world with the *truth* of God’s Word. The missing dimension of true—spiritual—

knowledge is being disseminated to a world desperately in need of it, and in advance of when Christ will administer God’s government and truth to all nations.

Every human being was created to live a life of radiant happiness. Yet millions today view Christianity as little more than a series of “Thou shalt *nots*,” rather than **THE PATH** to enjoying a wonderful, abundant life. These same millions often think of sin as the fun that will end if they obey God. They think that “accepting Jesus” also means accepting a life of almost morbid gloom and doom. Most have thought Christianity primarily means an *end* to fun, pleasure, excitement, thrills and leading an interesting life.

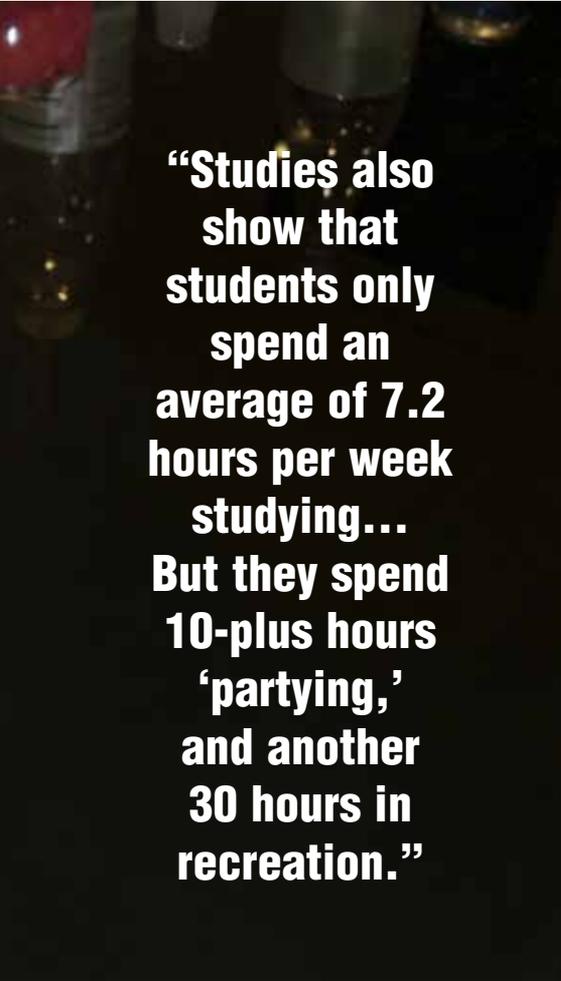
All of this wrong “education” exists because almost no one equates Christianity with enjoying a true zest for life!

God’s Educational Philosophy

In a proper education system, students are educated on the true purpose of life, based on the authority of the Word of God—the foundation of all knowledge. In place of the wholly materialistic focus of this world’s colleges and universities, God’s Way balances physical pursuits with spiritual instruction, and the all-important teaching of right character. Social and cultural enrichment as well as personality development will never be neglected.

In the right system, students are taught the rules of, and importance of, good health. And they are taught how to properly date and court on the way to a happy marriage, one that will include respectful, obedient children. They learn to live and reflect the abundant life. Finally, they are taught the all-important principles of real, effective, *true* leadership. This permits them to live—and **TEACH!**—the give way of life to the full.

God’s future educational system will teach students not only how to earn a living, but also how to *live*. To learn much more, read my free book *Tomorrow’s Wonderful World – An Inside View!* at rcg.org/tww. □



“Studies also show that students only spend an average of 7.2 hours per week studying... But they spend 10-plus hours ‘partying,’ and another 30 hours in recreation.”

CYCLONE IDAI

Continued from page 15

ond disaster” if the waterborne disease expands in the devastated region. The WHO initially sent 900,000 oral cholera vaccines to cope with the potential outbreak.

During the height of the crisis, some people in the city resorted to drinking stagnant water by the side of the road, increasing the chances of diarrhea, the medical charity Doctors Without Borders said. Other people were drinking from contaminated wells.

“The scale of extreme damage will likely lead to a dramatic increase of waterborne diseases, skin infections, respiratory tract infections and malaria in the coming days and weeks,” said Gert Verdonck, the

group’s emergency coordinator in Beira.

Relief operations made great efforts to deliver aid to the city that remained largely reachable only by air and sea. More challenging was reaching rural communities, some of them without contact with the outside world.

In Chimanimani, Philemon Dada began rebuilding his life in what was once a picturesque town. With a machete and a hoe, he salvaged poles from the mud to construct a hut to shelter his family, a first step in what he sees as a long and backbreaking journey to rebuild a life shattered by Cyclone Idai.

He is one of many villagers trying to pick up the pieces in Chimanimani after losing homes, livestock and, in many instances, family members. Some have been taken in by neigh-

bors and others are sheltering with church pastors.

“I can say I am a bit lucky. My wife and son are still here with me but for everything else, I have to start from scratch,” he said.

Mr. Dada had a few food items handed out by the Zimbabwe military, but he knew that would not last long and he was eager to start growing crops again. Like many people here, he survives on agriculture.

“My bean crop was ready for harvesting before the cyclone, the maize was close. I am back to zero,” he said.

He is particularly pained by his two prized bulls that did the heavy work of drawing the plow for his field. They died in the floods.

“It may take a year, maybe even more years just to get back on my feet,” he said. □

CHURCH

Continued from page 11

in Greek. The English word “Church” is translated from the Greek word *ekklesia*, which means “called out ones.”

Specifically, *Strong’s Dictionary* states this term can mean “a calling out”—“especially a religious congregation.”

The Church is the household of God (Eph. 2:19). It is a spiritual family made up of brothers and sisters. It is a building growing and taking shape to be a holy temple completed when Christ returns to rule all nations.

These “called out ones” are unified in doctrines and beliefs. They are also unified with Christ as the Head by only teaching what He taught in His Word—never doctrines born from the ideas of men.

Christ is clear in Matthew 15:9 where He condemned manmade belief systems: “But in vain they do worship Me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.”

Put this all together. The Church Jesus built is unified with one purpose

and drive. It teaches only what the Bible does.

Another clear earmark of this singular organization: Throughout the New Testament, there is one name for this Church. Twelve verses use a form of the name “Church of God.”

Here are a few:

■ Acts 20:28: An instruction is given to elders to “feed THE CHURCH OF GOD.”

■ I Corinthians 10:32: “Give none offense, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to THE CHURCH OF GOD.”

■ I Corinthians 11:22: “...or despise you THE CHURCH OF GOD, and shame them that have not?”

Search out these verses in your Bible. Over and over again, the Church is called the “Church of God”—and sometimes the “Church of God at...” to represent a specific congregation or the “Churches of God” to represent a few congregations.

“Church of God” is the clear pattern as the name for Christ’s Body. Today this organization must add a little more to the name to distinguish itself corporately. An example from the 20th century is the Worldwide

Church of God, which was the predecessor to the publisher of this magazine, The Restored Church of God.

This organization is the Church Jesus said He would build!

YET DO NOT TAKE OUR WORD FOR IT. God tells everyone who follows Him: “Prove all things; hold fast that which is good” (I Thes. 5:21). Go to rcg.org and read what we teach—pull out your Bible and prove it for yourself. Keep an open mind. If it differs from what you have previously learned, see if it matches what *God* says in *His* Word.

God’s Church has dedicated, converted, fully trained and ordained ministers throughout the globe. They are ready to answer any questions you may have. However, you must request it! (You can do so on our website.)

Jesus said, “Go not from house to house” (Luke 10:7). None of the early apostles ever approached anyone unless the person expressed interest and initiated the contact. The same is true today.

Use your Bible. Look deeply into these things—and PROVE for yourself what God’s Church looks like today! □

ECONOMY & PERSONAL FINANCE

Why College Students Take on Loans They Cannot Repay

Students take on college debt with the best of intentions. They have been told that a college degree is a ticket to success. That they should pursue their dreams. That student debt is good debt.

But how do smart students wind up with debt they cannot repay? Here are three reasons, plus ways to avoid these financial traps.

They Are Told It Is “Good Debt”

In high school, students hear that they should earn a college degree to have a well-paying, successful career.

“We as a society kind of have this compulsory higher education,” says debt author Daniel T. Kirsch. “We’re encouraging everyone to take out debt and calling it ‘good debt.’”

But student debt is not good when your degree does not lead to a job that earns enough to repay it.

This is the case for 36-year-old Jennifer Atkins of Jacksonville, Florida. A first-generation college student, she believed a university diploma would help her get ahead.

“I had the mentality back then that I was doing what I was supposed to do in life,” says Ms. Atkins, who earned three degrees, including a master of nonprofit management in 2014.

Now, Ms. Atkins has two kids, over \$100,000 in student loan debt and is unemployed. She quit her job in 2017 due to complications with her second pregnancy and has not found a job lucrative enough to justify paying for child care.

Limit borrowing so that future monthly payments do not consume over 10 percent of take-home pay. By that standard, someone expecting to earn \$50,000 a year could afford a monthly payment of about \$279, according to NerdWallet’s student loan affordability calculator. At the current undergraduate federal student loan interest rate of 5.05 percent, that payment would support college debt of about \$26,000.

The Loans Do Not Seem Real

Some students are willing to take on large amounts of college debt because they do not connect with the reality that they will eventually have to repay it with interest. This aligns with what behavioral economists call “present bias,” the idea that people often make choices that benefit them in the short term and overlook future consequences.

Ms. Atkins remembers accepting student loans in small increments throughout 10 years of higher education—\$3,000 here, \$5,000 there. She worked throughout school, but the loans were crucial to making ends meet.

“None of it was real to me back then,” Ms. Atkins says. “I had no problem clicking ‘accept’ on those student loans.”

In hindsight, Ms. Atkins says she wishes she had had a mandatory career counseling session to walk her through the numbers and understand her debt in the context of her future earnings and expenses.

Such counseling may have helped. Imagining our future selves can help us overcome present bias, says Jeff Kreisler, co-author of the behavioral economics book, “Dollars and Sense.”

“If you make the future more specific, then you can connect to it,” he says.

Do the math as you go. Every dollar you borrow will have to be repaid with interest. But you can choose to borrow less than you are offered. It may be tempting to accept the full amount, but you will have a lower monthly payment in the future if you borrow only enough to cover tuition and basic living costs.

They Lack Information

In many cases, students lack the financial educa-

tion needed to make borrowing decisions.

Susan Dawson, 47, who has a PhD in history and works as a historian for a federal agency, can afford her student loan payments thanks to a second job teaching online classes and a federal repayment plan that caps her monthly payments at a percentage of her income. But she says if she had known the earning potential in her field, she would have chosen a different career.

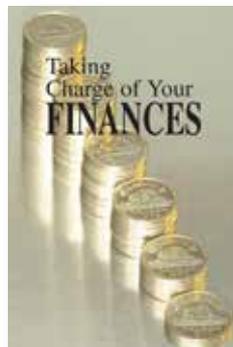
“I feel stupid because I did not know what questions to ask,” says Ms. Dawson, who has a six-figure student loan balance, and lives and works in Washington, D.C.

Things she wishes she had asked about include:

- Typical earnings in her field.
- Her future monthly student loan payments.
- How student loan interest works.

Here are some resources to help with student loan planning: Check the Bureau of Labor Statistics’ Occupational Outlook Handbook to research wages and education requirements for various fields. Use a student loan calculator to estimate future monthly payments. Interest accrues while you are in school—unless you have subsidized loans—but you can pay the interest during school to keep your balance from ballooning.

Student loans are just one form of debt burdening consumers to the point of hopelessness. Though owing vast sums of money is tough, it is not a financial death sentence. You can work your way out of it. A good place to start is reading our booklet *Taking Charge of Your Finances*. The principles it covers have helped countless others turn their financial situation around. □



Order a Free Copy!
reg.org/tcoyf

HEALTH ISSUES

Attacks Could Reverse Gains in Congo Ebola Fight

■ Health workers move a patient to a hospital after he was cleared of having Ebola in Butembo, Democratic Republic of Congo (Nov. 4, 2018).
PHOTO: JOHN WESSELS/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Geneva (AP) – Attacks on Ebola treatment centers in eastern Congo threaten to reverse the gains being made against the current outbreak of the deadly virus, the director-general of the World Health Organization said as a fourth assault on a health center was reported.

Nearly 600 people have died from Ebola in the volatile region, making it the second most deadly in history.

Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, who had just returned from a visit to the affected areas in Congo, insisted that efforts to contain Ebola are succeeding. He said that the WHO hopes the outbreak will be brought to an end in the next six months.

His optimistic assessment starkly contrasted one offered a week prior by the head of Doctors Without Borders, which has had to pull out of two Ebola

centers following attacks. Eastern Congo is home to a myriad of armed groups, and the Ebola epidemic has deepened the political and economic grievances of many in the area.

Doctors Without Borders said that some 43 percent of new cases in the epicenter towns of Katwa and Butembo had no known links to other cases. That means the vigorous efforts to track the contacts of the sick are not entirely successful.

And more than 40 percent of the deaths are still taking place in communities rather than at Ebola treatment centers. The bodies of victims are highly contagious, and the aid group said that figure shows community mistrust is still widespread.

Doctors Without Borders described conditions at the epicenter in Congo as “toxic,” saying that government secu-

rity forces were complicating the effort by trying to force people into treatment centers.

Amid the backlash against the Ebola response, four health centers had been attacked. In a March 14 incident, one person was killed and another wounded, according to Richard Nyembo, a local administrator for Lubero province. The violence erupted in Mamboa, about 30 miles from Butembo, one of the current disease hotspots noted by the WHO. The attackers targeted an Ebola transit center, where suspected cases are evaluated and then referred to treatment centers in the area.

Congo has seen periodic outbreaks of the Ebola virus since it was first identified in 1976. At least 584 people have died among the 927 confirmed and probable cases in this outbreak. □

INTERNATIONAL

Can Peace Deal with Taliban Resolve Afghanistan Crises?

Kabul (AP) – Afghanistan will remain dependent on international donors and foreign help even after a peace deal with the Taliban is reached, a U.S. watchdog said.

The warning by Washington's Special Inspector General for Afghan Reconstruction, or SIGAR, which monitors billions of dollars in U.S. aid to the country, came in a new report identifying main high-risk areas for Afghanistan.

John F. Sopko, head of SIGAR, urged policymakers to plan for the "day after," saying a peace agreement will not automatically resolve Afghanistan's many crises.

"Should peace come, if that peace is to be sustainable, it will come at an additional price that only external donors can afford," Mr. Sopko said, according to a statement emailed to *The Associated Press* ahead of the report's release.

The report said the main points of concern include widespread insecurity, underdeveloped civil policing capability, endemic corruption, a sluggish economy, the Taliban-run narcotics trade and threats to women's rights.

Over the past months, the Trump administration has stepped up efforts to resolve Afghanistan's 17-year war—America's longest conflict—and U.S. special envoy Zalmay Khalilzad has held several rounds of peace talks with the Taliban, with both sides citing progress in the negotiations.

Despite the talks, the Taliban stage near-daily attacks on Afghan forces, inflicting staggering casualties, and now hold sway over half of the country. Also, the insurgents refuse to talk directly with the government in Kabul, considering it a U.S. puppet.

If a peace deal is struck, SIGAR said another concern would be the reintegration of as many as 60,000 heavily armed Taliban fighters and their families back into Afghan society.

Donor countries are expected to finance approximately 51 percent of Afghanistan's 2019 government spending of \$5 billion. Yet the Afghan government's capabilities are generally weak and it often lacks the capacity to manage and account for donor funds, the report said. □

■ Afghan security forces gather at the site of a powerful truck bomb attack a day after it detonated near a foreign compound in Kabul (Jan. 15, 2019).

PHOTO: WAKIL KOHSAR/AFP/GETTY IMAGES



HEALTH ISSUES

Comeback of Victorian-era Diseases Concerns UK Health Officials

Scarlet fever, whooping cough and gout. These conditions were thought to be from a bygone era of widespread malnutrition in the United Kingdom.

However, new data from the UK National Health Service shows that diagnoses of these conditions have been increasing since 2010, concerning health officials across the nation.

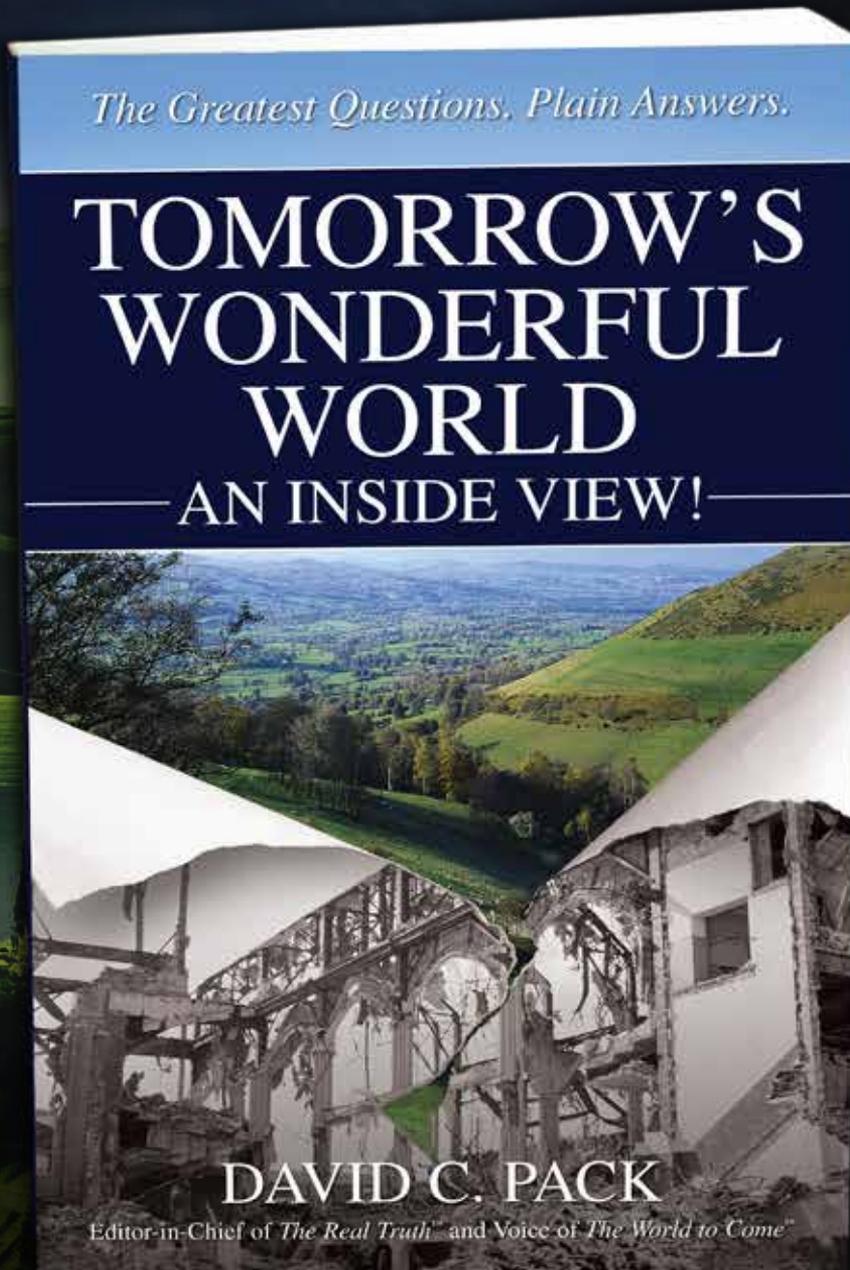
The data shows that diagnoses of scarlet fever, which was a leading cause of infant death in the 1900s, increased 208 percent from 429 in 2010-2011 to 1,321 in 2017-2018. Incidences of whooping cough, which was virtually nonexistent after a nationwide vaccination program in the 1950s, increased 59 percent from 2010 to 2018. Hospital admissions for malnutrition increased 54 percent during the same period, and diagnoses of gout went up 38 percent during this time.

"It's very concerning that these conditions, associated with a bygone era, seem to be on the resurgence," Dr. Helen Donovan, the head of public health at the Royal College of Nursing, said in a public statement.

Government austerity measures have been at least partially blamed for lagging health coverage across the nation.

Dr. Donovan continued: "There are many reasons behind this but one thing that cannot be ignored is the effect of sustained cuts to local authority public health budgets which have caused the services that screen, prevent and protect against illness, and promote good hygiene to be scaled back." □

Where Will We Be in 35 Years?



Almost all forecasts for the future are bleak—overpopulation, crippling pollution, skyrocketing obesity rates, disappearing coastlines, constant extreme weather—yet this is *not* what the Bible says Earth will be like! Yes, there are trying times ahead, but man's ultimate future is BRIGHT. You can know what the coming decades will bring—and in crystal-clear, astonishing detail. The book *Tomorrow's Wonderful World – An Inside View!* offers a preview of what God's Word says is coming for the entire globe. Order your free copy at rcg.org/tww.