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A MAGAZINE RESTORING PLAIN UNDERSTANDING



AMERICA THE BEAUTIFUL

For How Much Longer?

THE REAL TRUTH

A MAGAZINE RESTORING PLAIN UNDERSTANDING

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■ **EUROPEAN LEADERSHIP:** German Chancellor Angela Merkel (center) and Italian Prime Minister Mario Monti (right) pose with their ministers following a meeting in Rome (July 4, 2012).

PHOTO: ALBERTO PIZZOLI/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

EU Sets Plan for Fiscal Integration

Is the power bloc's latest proposal just driving the continent toward a streamlined economic system—or are these the birth pangs of a long-desired United States of Europe?

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PHOTO: THINKSTOCK

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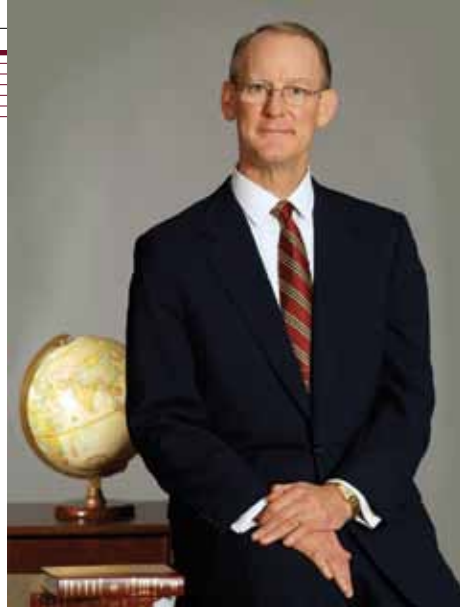
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PERSONAL FROM

David C. Fack



20 Bible Verses Christendom Ignores! – Part 1

EVERY SUNDAY, hundreds of millions who profess to be Christian assume they are being correctly taught—and that they understand and believe—the *truth of the Bible*. In reality, almost no one knows even the most basic teachings of God’s Word—or of Jesus Christ. Almost all worship Jesus according to what is commonly believed, without the slightest PROOF from their bibles. Thus, the *true* doctrines of the Bible are *unknown to Christianity*—and so is the meaning of nearly everything Jesus taught!

This is the first of two Personals covering 20 verses that virtually the whole of Christendom either misunderstands, ignores or rejects outright. Prepare to learn the TRUTH—and to be *shocked* at what you thought you knew!

Over 100 million bibles are sold or given away each year, with 92 percent of American households having one. Such statistics show it is the world’s bestseller—yet, ironically, it is also the world’s least understood book.

All the verses you are about to see are ignored and rejected by professing Christianity. Ministers and experienced Bible students know of these passages, but choose to explain them away or never speak of them.

Most religious leaders have chosen to disregard what the Bible teaches. It is as though many fear the truth, or to tell the truth! They fear being fired for teaching it—and they fear their members will leave if they do. In all cases, they fear what *men* may say or do, and give little or no thought to what *God* declares in His Word!

How the Deceit Works

The majority of ministers appear to be of God. They profess to believe God wrote the Bible. Yet, not understanding it, they twist verses to fit preconceived ideas. In fact, theological institutes and seminaries of this world have developed a systematic way—and this can be done consciously or unconsciously—of spinning or dismissing God’s *plain words* and plain meaning in favor of making passages appear to say what they need them to say. These theologians and religionists sell false teachings through use of specific verses—wrongly understood and often

taken out of context—that purportedly support their ideas. This permits them to come from a basis of supposed Bible authority for beliefs. And it helps them to much more easily snare the unwitting and unwary.

If one is properly trained and sufficiently grounded in the truth of the Bible, it is quite easy to see through and expose the deceptive logic misapplied to a verse, and to correctly explain it. The apostle Paul warned of “dishonest” people who “[handle] the word of God *deceitfully*” (II Cor. 4:2), because they, like their listeners willing to believe them, “received not the love of the *truth*” (II Thes. 2:10). *True* ministers never, under *any* circumstances, follow these practices!

What follows is simple, and the verses quoted are seen to be not open to human interpretation. While the Bible is a long and sometimes complex Book, the verses we will cover can be easily understood. The truths they bring will be impossible to miss! But understand. We only have space in most cases for the briefest explanations, yet these are enough to show the error involved. However, much more could be added.

Some background is necessary to introduce all that follows. Blame for deception cannot be laid solely at the feet of modern Christendom. There is another source, which drives the thinking of the whole world. It is key to understanding WHY basic truths of the Bible remain hidden.

(1) Revelation 12:9

This sets up the first verse Christianity just leaves out—*Revelation 12:9*. This passage requires a little longer explanation. Now let’s read it: “And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the *Devil*, and *Satan*, which *deceives the whole world*...” (Rev. 12:9).

This verse is completely ignored by professing Christianity. Have you ever heard it from the pulpit of your church? As the one who deceives all nations, including ministers, Satan holds ultimate responsibility. His deception is extremely subtle. But of course God also holds people accountable.

Ephesians references the devil’s worldwide influence: “...in time past [the apostle Paul wrote] you walked according to the course of this world, according to the *prince of the power of the air*, the spirit that now works in the children of disobedience” (2:2).

Grasp this! Satan uses the air to broadcast—through his spirit—an attitude of *disobedience*! His spirit sends moods, feelings and attitudes of hostility into people’s minds. These “work” to bring disobedience. This “airwave control” gives the devil tremendous power, allowing him to send thoughts of deceit, anger, pride, hatred, vanity, jealousy, lust, greed, envy and confusion into people’s minds!

The devil is much more powerful than most realize. Look at the position he holds, and what this permits him

to do: “...the *god of this world* has blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ...should shine unto them” (II Cor. 4:4). Satan blinds and deceives on a staggering scale. The result is a world filled with disobedience—or lawlessness! His cunning has been so seductive he has even been able to convince many that he *does not exist*!

Like Christians guided by God’s Spirit, the children of disobedience are also inspired and guided by a spirit—that of this world’s god. Satan broadcasts a spirit of rebellion *against*—and disobedience *to*—God’s Law.

The devil portrays his ministers as though they represent God and teach His truth. Notice: “...Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if *his ministers* also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness...” (II Cor. 11:14-15).

A deceived world is blissfully ignorant of this understanding, and pays the price! (Request your free copy of my booklet *Who Is the Devil?* at rcg.org/witd to understand how.)

(2) Isaiah 59:2

The second verse—*Isaiah 59:2*—is related to Revelation 12:9. Let’s read it: “...your *iniquities* have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid His face from you, that He will *not* hear” (Isa. 59:2). Mankind is cut off from God because of its sin. Adding Jeremiah 5:25 makes this clearer.

Grasp the implications: this is *not* God’s world! It is *cut off* from Him—held captive by an unseen kidnapper. All of humanity has been deceived into believing the soothing words of this great captor, thinking themselves better off under his care and leadership. Six thousand years ago, the devil first captured Adam and Eve, and, as a result, all inhabitants of Earth ever after! However, the world has remained a willing captive ever since—and remains cut off from God. (To learn more about this subject, order the free booklet *A World in Captivity* at rcg.org/awic.)

(3) I John 3:4

The third verse Christianity disregards is the definition of sin. *I John 3:4* states: “Whosoever commits sin transgresses also the law: for *sin is the transgression of the law*.” This is one of the greatest points in the Bible: the difference between what God approves and what He does not. There have been endless ideas about the definition of sin—what it is and is not. Yet the Bible defines it with surprising simplicity. When someone transgresses or breaks “the law,” he has sinned.

When one breaks man’s laws, he earns a penalty, such as a fine, jail time, or worse for capital offenses.

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THE WORLD TO COME

With David C. Pack



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The Missing Key to Egypt's Future

While citizens, news outlets, and the West desire to know where the nation is headed, nearly all overlook the most crucial piece of the puzzle.

BY SAMUEL C. BAXTER

WHEN HOSNI MUBARAK resigned from the Egyptian presidency in 2011, the West's reaction was immediate and resolute: a burning desire to proudly fly the flags of "democracy," "freedom" and "justice" over post-revolution Egypt. The nation was to become *the* success story for fledgling Arab Spring governments in the region.

Such eagerness was understandable. An outcome favorable to

Europe, the United States, and Israel had the potential to usher in an era of stability, prosperity—and even peace for the Middle East.

Yet the situation is not so simple. In reality, a Gordian knot of unknown variables complicates Egypt's future.

Take newly instated President Mohammed Morsi for example. *The New York Times* wrote, "Mr. Morsi, 60, an American-trained engineer and for-

mer lawmaker, is the first Islamist elected as head of an Arab state. He becomes Egypt's fifth president and the first from outside the military. But his victory, 16 months after the military took over on the ouster of Hosni Mubarak, is an ambiguous milestone in Egypt's promised transition to democracy."

While Mr. Morsi is the country's first freely elected head of state, many are concerned that an Islamist leader—even one with a purportedly moderate stance—could initiate the first of many more theocracies in the region.

There is also the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF). Since forming a de facto government after Mr. Mubarak's resignation, the group dissolved the entire parliament and has

■ **CRYING OUT:** Supporters of Mohammed Morsi protest against Egypt's military rulers in Tahrir Square in Cairo, Egypt (June 23, 2012).

PHOTO: DANIEL BEREHULAK/GETTY IMAGES

systematically reduced the incoming president's power. It penned a transition constitution that, with subsequent amendments, has left SCAF essentially in charge of the nation's executive and legislative branches.

Another point worrying the West is that Mohammed Morsi did not campaign on his own vision. Rather, he followed a platform set by the Muslim Brotherhood—a religious/political group with the slogan, “Islam is the answer.”

The views of Muslim Brotherhood members seem to oscillate between seemingly moderate (President Morsi has indicated he will appoint a woman and a Coptic Christian as two of his vice presidents) and inflammatory (at a political rally with Mr. Morsi in attendance, a popular Muslim preacher declared to an enthusiastic crowd, “We shall pray in Jerusalem or else we shall die as martyrs on its threshold”).

At other times, those affiliated with the Brotherhood have seemingly taken every position in between.

Public opinion regarding the two candidates was split down the middle. Mr. Morsi did win 51.7 percent of

the presidential vote, but his opponent Ahmed Shafiq—who served as prime minister under Mr. Mubarak—garnered 48.3 percent. These results are neither a landslide victory nor a confident move away from the former regime.

Each party involved in Egypt seems to have a different ideal outcome in mind. Western nations want a shining beacon of democracy to bring stability to the region. The army appears to want to continue upholding a status quo peace. And the Muslim Brotherhood wants a nation governed by traditional Islamic values.

Due to these strong, conflicting feelings about Egypt's future, few are confidently predicting where the nation is heading. As the country is a pacesetter for the region, the outcome of the entire Arab Spring movement rests on Cairo's shoulders.

Yet amid this sea of “unknowns,” almost all ignore a vital key to understanding the Middle East's future.

Slow-motion Power Grab

When Mr. Mubarak relinquished power after years of autocratic rule, the army quickly stepped in to assist in the tran-

sition process to a new government. Since then, the actions of the SCAF, led by Field Marshal Mohamed Hussein Tantawi, signal it is here to stay.

In the expansive article “Morsi in Power: a Time-line of Diminishing Presidential Prerogatives,” Egyptian paper *Al-Ahram* detailed each of the subsequent moves by the army:

■ “On 13 February [2011] the SCAF issued its first constitutional declaration in which it suspended Egypt's 1971 constitution, declared it will be managing Egypt's transition period until a parliament and a president are elected, dissolved Mubarak's parliament and gave itself the mandate to issue laws.”

■ “On the 14 June 2012, just two days before the second round of the presidential elections...the SCAF dissolved the entire lower house of parliament.” Due to this, essentially “the parliamentary buffer between the SCAF and the president [has] now been removed.”

■ Another change from the 1971 constitution was that “the president is no longer head of the police,” meaning, “the president has absolutely no control over weaponry or an armed force.”

■ Also, the “2012/13 annual state budget, which was drafted by the military-appointed cabinet, [kicked] into action on the first day of the new presidency.”

■ “One of the fears, raised by activists, is that constitutionally there will have to be presidential re-elections upon the creation of a new constitution.”

This last point means that after a new constitution is drafted—by a committee the SCAF will appoint—Mr. Morsi could face re-election.

Subtle Shifts

While the army holds sweeping power, Mohammed Morsi has many Western media outlets on his side. News agencies, which have reported almost non-stop about Egypt's “new democracy,” do not want to see the nation return to the strong-arm government favored by Mr. Mubarak.

What worries many commentators is how much of a role the Muslim Brotherhood will play during Mr.



■ **RIVALS:** Two file photos show Egyptian President Mohammed Morsi (left) at his office in Cairo (Nov. 28, 2011), and former prime minister and presidential candidate Ahmed Shafiq (right) in Cairo (March 10, 2012).

PHOTO: KHALED DESOUKI/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Morsi's term in office. Over the past 18 months, the group has slowly shifted its stance on a number of issues. For example, after the dissolution of the old regime, the Muslim Brotherhood assured the world that they would not pursue the presidency. Yet they eventually did.

The organization also sought to gain control of the Libyan government during the country's first parliamentary elections in five decades. The newly elected parliament is responsible for choosing the next prime minister.

"Some secular Libyans fear the Brotherhood[']s rising influence, despite promises from the Justice and Construction Party that it won't seek to impose religious views through control of the bureaucracy."

And it is hard to find a definitive answer on the organization's beliefs. *The New Yorker* stated that "Hassan al-Banna, the founder of the Muslim Brotherhood, once warned his followers that it was a mistake to be too candid, and secrecy has always characterized the society."

Since there is no parliament, Mr. Morsi has begun to work directly with the SCAF. *The Times of India* quoted Essam Haddad, who is a senior member of the Brotherhood and an aide to the president: "We are working on reaching a compromise on various items so all parties are able to work together in the future."

"We do not accept having a president without powers. The solution being worked out now is scaling back those restrictions so that President Morsi can deliver to the people what he promised," he said.

Mid-East Pacesetter

For now, the relationship between the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces and the Muslim Brotherhood remains strained at best. And *U.S. News and*

World Report stated that experts feel something has to give: "'The odds are overwhelming that the current military and Muslim Brotherhood leadership will not be around in five years time unless there is a military coup,' says Center for Strategic and International Studies analyst Anthony Cordesman.

The Muslim Brotherhood

Egypt's oldest Islamist organization, the Muslim Brotherhood, has grown into a worldwide Sunni movement with branches in more than 70 countries. Its stated goal is to create states ruled by Sharia law.

History in Egypt

1928 Founded by Hassan al-Banna to spread Islamic morals; became involved in politics to drive British from Egypt

1948 Dissolved by Egyptian government for attacking British and Jewish interests; accused of assassinating Prime Minister Mahnoud al-Nuqrashi

1952 Plays supporting role in coup ending colonial rule

1954 Banned after failed attempt to assassinate President Gamal Abdul Nasser; movement gains traction underground

1964 Writings of prominent member, Sayyid Qutb, who advocated jihad, inspire founding of radical groups, including Islamic Jihad and al-Qaida

1980s Tries to rejoin political mainstream, forming alliances with major political parties; wins seats in parliament

2005 Wins 20 percent of seats, leading President Hosni Mubarak to amend the constitution to ban religious political parties

2010-2011 Brotherhood-aligned candidates win no parliamentary seats, leading to accusations of fraud; Arab Spring protests occur, which cause ouster of Mr. Mubarak

2012 Muslim Brotherhood candidate Mohammed Morsi claims Egyptian presidency

Worldwide Presence



is in some ways to look closely at the entire Middle East.

"The biggest and most populous, and most geographically central nation in the Mid-East, Egypt—and its historical role—is referenced many times in the Bible. Egypt was the world's first recorded great empire.

And it is still the 16th most populous country in the world. History records that Noah escaped to Egypt when persecutors sought his death before the Flood. The ancient patriarch Joseph was sold into slavery there, which led to his father, Jacob, then named Israel, settling there. Certain historians believe that the patriarch Job—Joseph's nephew—built some of the pyramids. Moses was largely trained in Egypt. An infant Jesus was taken there for protection. Before the Exodus, it took many miracles to break the will of the stout-hearted Egyptians before God could deliver His people from enslavement. Egyptian arrogance caused Pharaoh to ignore all of this and lose his army in the Red Sea as God's people fled under His protection. History records Egypt never recovered.

"Ancient Israel often went to war with Egypt. The Bible records many accounts involving this country as God's servants and people came into contact with it.

"Of course, many dismiss such Bible accounts as Hebrew fables. They do not believe the miracles of Egypt—or any *other* miracles of the Bible—actually occurred. It can be proven with *unmistakable clarity*...Even the close-minded will be surprised at the stubbornness—and the power—of the facts. The authority of the Bible *can be proven*."

The World to Come broadcast "You Can Prove the Bible's Authority" pre-

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"Several political transitions likely will play out over the next decade until a regime experienced enough and capable enough comes in."

Soon after Mr. Mubarak's resignation in 2011, *Real Truth* Editor-in-Chief David C. Pack wrote this about the country: "To look closely at Egypt

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Source: Federation of American Scientists, U.S. Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, BBC
Graphic: Pat Carr

DRUG ABUSE

A Global Epidemic

Part 2: Scope of the Problem



From marijuana to meth, the impact of drugs on society is becoming more severe. But the full picture is worse than most imagine.

BY JUSTIN T. PALM

TIMES HAVE changed. The world has entered a new age of drugs. In just the last few years, drug abuse has morphed into something never seen before. The days of the pot-smoking neighbor sitting calmly in his basement have been replaced by the dangerous, psychotic meth user. Stronger forms of cocaine, marijuana and heroin are being joined by other drugs such as methamphetamine, “bath salts,” and krokodil.

Substance abuse is no longer just part of the seedy underbelly of society—it has exploded into the open streets, reaching nearly every corner of civilization. The once-silent killer is claiming more victims than ever before, and in horrific ways. Sadly, drug use continues to maintain a stranglehold on young people, stripping away their chance for stable, happy and productive lives.

Scientific knowledge combined with escapism, experimentation and sheer boredom has resulted in mankind

inventing many poisonous substances and deadlier forms of drugs. These are then mixed to create even more lethal concoctions.

Part 1 of this article series revealed the scope of worldwide drug abuse through shocking statistics. Part 2 will dig deeper, examining the effect drugs have on users, as well as their toll on families, communities and countries.

Gateway Drug

Marijuana has long been described as the “gateway” drug, meaning it leads to stronger and more dangerous illicit substances. Made from the *Cannabis sativa* plant, marijuana is composed of more than 400 chemicals. At least 60 *psychoactive* ingredients have been identified in the plant, the strongest being THC, its primary mind-altering compound. Today’s marijuana is many times more potent than in previous decades, and is so widely used that it is now brewed in teas and even mixed with wine.

In the United States, marijuana lies at the center of a heated debate over decriminalizing drugs, with more voices calling for its legalization. Drug advocates claim it is harmless, and that it provides health *advantages*. This has led to medical marijuana being legalized in many states as long as a doctor prescribes it.

But does marijuana really help the infirm?

Marijuana use has numerous side effects, including respiratory infections, impaired memory and learning, anxiety, panic, increased heart rate, a suppressed immune system, impaired thoughts and emotions, infertility, decreased motivation and con-

centration, red eyes, fatigue, mood swings, aggressiveness, irritability, decreased coordination, sleepiness, increased appetite, faulty perception, and decreased performance in school or work.

Even treating marijuana as merely a way to manage pain has unintended consequences. For example, *Los Angeles Times* reported, "A 3-year-old boy was taken to a hospital after eating his grandmother's cookies that were laced with marijuana...The child ate the 'medical marijuana stash'...and was initially unresponsive when rescuers arrived..."

Marijuana also contains cancer-causing agents. Smoking three to five marijuana joints weekly is as harmful as smoking 16 cigarettes daily, and there are 50-100 times more cancer-causing chemicals in pot smoke than in tobacco smoke. Additionally, the lungs of marijuana smokers are highly susceptible to emphysema and bronchitis.

Yet this information is not reaching the minds of American teenagers: "A government survey shows more teens are now smoking pot than cigarettes. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported... that 23 percent of high school students said they recently smoked marijuana, while 18 percent said they had puffed cigarettes...[2011] marked the first time marijuana use was clearly greater.

"An earlier survey by the University of Michigan also found that pot smoking was higher. A Michigan expert said teens today apparently see marijuana as less dangerous than cigarettes" (*The Associated Press*).

Study after study reveals that drug use is becoming much more acceptable and widespread. The voices and ad campaigns decrying marijuana abuse are being drowned out by an increasing acceptance of its use. For instance, a popular television show portrays a struggling mother of two who sells marijuana to make ends meet. The show minimizes marijuana's negative effects and makes dealing it seem "normal."

Casual use of "harmless" drugs such as marijuana *has* become the new normal.

Cocaine and Crack

Derived from the coca plant, cocaine is one of the most potent natural stimulants. In the U.S., cocaine was hailed as a "miracle drug" when it was introduced in the 1880s. Its sale was not initially restricted, and doctors used it as an anesthetic during surgeries, as well as a remedy for hay fever, seasickness and fatigue. But during the late 19th century, a wave of cocaine use hit the country, and its damaging effects became evident. In December 1914, President William Taft targeted cocaine as public enemy number one. Congress then passed the Harrison Act, which banned non-medical use of cocaine. This only forced cocaine use underground.

Cocaine makes one irritable, anxious and restless, and can lead to psychotic behavior. Yet many are hooked almost immediately because the drug causes a sudden rush of euphoria.

Many studies have documented the terrible results of cocaine use. When researchers allowed rats and monkeys to self-administer cocaine, they did little else but continuously take it. By the end of the month, the animals were dead.

Cocaine has a similar effect on people. Addicts are never satisfied, becoming drug-obsessed and forsaking everything to reach their next "high." Drug use becomes their only reason for living.

In the 1980s, a new form of cocaine emerged—crack. One of the driving forces behind crack's widespread use is its inexpensiveness and availability. Sodium bicarbonate (baking powder) is one of the ingredients used when cocaine is converted into rock crystals. (The name "crack" comes from the noises the substance makes when it is being created or smoked.)

Crack is highly addictive and more intense and damaging than cocaine. Some become addicts after their first use. One of the most unpredictable substances available, the drug

affects the respiratory, cardiovascular and central nervous systems. Crack-related deaths stem from heart attacks, strokes, brain seizures, asphyxiation or suicide. Users experience chest congestion, paranoia, delusions, chronic coughs, severe depression, memory loss, violent behavior, and suicidal urges.

Pregnant women who use crack are more likely to have miscarriages and stillbirths. Many babies born to crack addicts are premature and sickly, with various birth defects and an "inherited" addiction to crack. They are three times less likely to survive than normal newborns. Crack can also be passed to babies through the addicted mother's breast milk.

Yet beyond cocaine and crack, an even deadlier drug is growing in popularity.

Heroin

Extracted from poppy plants, heroin is one of the most abused opiates. Processed from morphine, it was first synthesized in 1874 for use by physicians who were unaware of its addictive nature. The 1914 Harrison Act also established strict control of this drug.

Pure heroin is rarely sold on the streets since it is expensive and difficult to obtain. Most is only about 5 percent pure, and is mixed with substances such as quinine, sugar, starch, strychnine and other drugs.

Heroin depresses the central nervous system, slows respiration, and retards mental functioning. Unconsciousness, drowsiness, nausea and vomiting can occur. Yet because of heroin's anesthetic properties, many users are unaware of injury because their sense of touch is numbed. Heroin users may develop infections of the heart lining and valves, liver disease, suffer collapsed veins, pulmonary complications, convulsions, have shallow breathing, contract pneumonia, and go into a coma.

Studies show that by the end of five years of heroin use, one out of six addicts is dead. Due to contamination, overdose and spread of infectious dis-

ease (through needle-sharing), heroin is one of the riskiest illicit drugs.

Within hours after heroin use, withdrawal symptoms can begin, including restlessness, muscle and body pains, and vomiting. Symptoms peak between 48 to 72 hours after the last dose, and subside after a week.

Heroin addiction is one of the most difficult dependencies to overcome. One mother began a campaign to raise awareness of heroin abuse after she lost her son to the drug. In a report by the *Wisconsin State Journal*, Carol Buege described her son's battle with heroin. When she found him lying on the bathroom floor, sick after taking heroin, she told him, "Craig, I have a really bad feeling: I think you're going to die." He died six weeks later.

The article also stated, "The drug no longer carries the back-alley junkie stigma of the 1960s. Instead, heroin users are more often like Craig, a 2006 graduate of DeForest High School, where he played varsity football and was [part of his class's] prom court. He's described by family and friends as loving, shy, funny and fearless..."

"Buege started experimenting with OxyContin with friends in the fall of 2006. By May 2008, his parents learned he had made the switch to heroin. Within a year, he was dead at age 20, one of eight Dane County residents who died from a heroin overdose in 2009. That was almost three times the number of people who died or were suspected to have died from the drug four years ago..."

Detective James Pertzborn of the DeForest Police Department recounted, "He was a good kid caught in a horrible situation. He understood his addiction. He was afraid of it. He was afraid for his friends. Yet he couldn't beat it."

While the above story is heart-wrenching, accounts of heroin overdoses are endless. Yet, as with Craig, many often start with a simple addiction—to prescription drugs.

American Epidemic

Prescription drug abuse has taken a position next to marijuana as a type of gateway to heavier illicit substances. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) found that abusing prescription painkillers is a significant health threat.

Partially as a result of the nation's overmedicated condition, access to

to 15,597, more than those from heroin and cocaine combined."

Supply of these drugs is flooding in from what are called "pill mills," fake clinics where prescriptions are easily obtained. Internet pharmacies also contribute to the supply chain.

Floyd Baker, a special agent with the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), said, "It's a lot easier to get than buying your street drugs. If a



■ **IN DEMAND:** Customers line up to buy synthetic drugs at "The Last Place On Earth" store in downtown Duluth, Minnesota (Sept. 15, 2011).

PHOTO: JIM GEHRZ/MINNEAPOLIS STAR TRIBUNE/MCT

these drugs has never been easier. Doctors are overprescribing powerful painkillers such as OxyContin and Vicodin that are easy for users to abuse. Many are given prescription drugs for legitimate reasons, but end up addicted to them. And since these drugs are legal with a prescription, they desensitize people to other drugs, clearing the way for experimentation with more substances.

Every year since 2008, prescription drug abuse has risen by around 10 percent. According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse, from 1991 to 2010, painkiller prescriptions skyrocketed from 75.5 million to 209.5 million. This increase has had deadly consequences. *Reuters* reported the following from the CDC: "From 1999 to 2009, the number of deaths from narcotic pain pills nearly quadrupled

doctor gives you an 800mg hydrocodone tablet it is safe, but when you start diluting it, mixing it with other drugs that's where the problem comes in" (*WLBT*). And since the drugs are legal with a prescription, government agencies are having a hard time stopping the abuse without also limiting access to those who actually need the medication.

The most tragic aspect of the surge in prescription drugs is its effect on babies. One report stated, "The number of babies born addicted to the class of drugs that includes prescription painkillers has nearly tripled in the past decade, according to the first national study of its kind. About 3.4 of every 1,000 infants born in a hospital in 2009 suffered from a type of drug withdrawal commonly seen in the babies of pregnant women who abuse

narcotic pain medications...” (*USA Today*). The article also revealed that this equates to one drug-addicted baby born *per hour*, with treatment costing \$720 million in 2009.

Yet the above statistics are just one result of prescription drug abuse. Thousands more stories could be told.

New Monsters

Even more lethal drugs continue to be developed and are quickly gaining popularity. In Colombia, the drug scopolamine, labeled “the Devil’s Breath,” is being used by criminals to drug victims into a trance. It reportedly can eliminate a user’s free will and wipe his memory. One drug dealer described that if it is blown in someone’s face, they can be guided to do whatever a perpetrator wants as it makes them childlike.

Bath salts (no connection to the legitimate products used to scent bath water) have also garnered media attention in the United States. The substance (MDPV) used to make the drug is currently undergoing a process of becoming illegal in Miami, as well as Canada. Physical effects of the drug include “erratic, aggressive and violent behavior, elevated heart rate, seizures, delusions, reduced appetite, and suicidal thoughts” (*Northern Life*).

In Minnesota, Hennepin’s Regional Poison Center saw an increase from five instances of bath-salt abuse in 2010 to 144 in 2011.

Additionally, a new drug called krokodil, or crocodile, is destroying hundreds of thousands of lives across Russia. Three times cheaper than heroin, the drug can be made in one’s home. Although it may be less expensive than heroin, it is far deadlier. The average heroin addict lives up to six or seven years, yet krokodil users can only expect to live two to three years.

Krokodil causes an addict’s skin to turn green and become scaly like a crocodile. After frequent use, the skin and muscle mass actually rot away until the bone is exposed. Amputations commonly occur once an addict is hospitalized.

Officials estimate that up to one million people across Russia in 2010 used the drug. So far it has only spread throughout Russia, but one German news agency reported that it had also been discovered in Bochum, Germany.

Time magazine provided this tragic account from one addict’s bout with the dangerous drug: “There is no good medical explanation for why Pavlova survived her addiction...Pavlova says she injected the drug nearly every day for six years, having learned to cook it in her brother’s kitchen... But the addiction still left some of its trademark scars. She developed a speech impediment, and her pale blue eyes have something of a lobotomy patient’s vacant gaze...”

“Besides her, Pavlova says there were about a dozen *krokodil* addicts she hung around with, including her brother. ‘Practically all of them are dead now,’ she says. ‘For some it led to

This drug is a clear example that mankind is toying with increasingly worse types of destructive substances.

Meth

Another powerful drug that wreaks havoc on the lives of whomever it touches is methamphetamine, known on the street as meth. One of the most addictive drugs known to man, the high from meth lasts 12 times longer than cocaine, and over 90 percent of addicts relapse after treatment. The United Nations estimates that around 26 million people consume methamphetamine-type stimulants globally. The 2009 National Survey on Drug Use and Health revealed that the number of Americans 12 years and older who stated that they had used meth in the past month rose 60 percent over 2008. One in 20 American college students have tried it.

Effects of meth include loss of appetite, a sense of euphoria, and increased activity. It is particularly popular in Thailand, where some bosses even give it to employees to increase productivity. But chronic use results in schizophrenia, paranoia, violent behavior, insomnia, confusion, anxiety and fatigue, picking at the

skin, auditory and visual hallucinations, preoccupation with one’s own desires, and homicidal and suicidal thoughts. Methamphetamines cause brain damage similar to that of strokes, epilepsy and Alzheimer’s disease.

Meth tricks the brain into producing huge amounts of dopamine—a “pleasure” chemical the body naturally produces. It releases 3.5 *times* more dopamine than cocaine, and *six times* what the body produces naturally.

But the higher the dopamine “climb,” the harder a user crashes. After frequent use of the drug,

■ **HARD EVIDENCE:** A detective holds two rocks of crystal meth with a street value of 83,000 New Zealand dollars alongside firearms that were confiscated in Auckland, New Zealand (Aug. 19, 2010).

PHOTO: PHIL WALTER/GETTY IMAGES



pneumonia, some got blood poisoning, some had an artery burst in their heart, some got meningitis, others simply rot.”

Please see **DRUG ABUSE**, page 23

EU Sets Plan for Fiscal Integration



Is the power bloc's latest proposal just driving the continent toward a streamlined economic system—or are these the birth pangs of a long-desired United States of Europe?

BY NESTOR A. TORO

IT WAS THE fourth “final” time European Union leaders met in a year to find a cure-all solution to the economic crisis.

As the June 28-29 EU summit approached, news of a 130-billion-euro growth plan, France calling for less austerity, Spain requesting a 100-billion-euro bailout, Cyprus becoming the fifth eurozone country to ask for economic assistance, and Greece's finance minister stepping down due to health reasons were some of the many signs that the worst was far from over.

Nonetheless, intense negotiations at the summit introduced two breakthrough strategies: easier bank access to bailout funds and a blueprint for how

Europe can achieve fiscal integration within the next decade.

The moves are big steps toward achieving what some believe is the only answer to the bloc's monetary ordeals: complete unification.

180-degree Turn?

When it comes to financial decisions, it is clear that Germany, as the EU's economic powerhouse, carries serious weight. Accordingly, Chancellor Merkel was pressured at the summit—particularly by cash-strapped Italy, Spain and France—for more solidarity.

The thought of taxpayers being further hit with a continent-wide shared debt is one Germans do not want to entertain—at least not without stronger centralized political controls in place.

“If the rest of Europe wants Germany to shoulder the burden, then it will have to be done through a decisive move towards political integration, including common defence as well as common economic policy and the loss of sovereignty to Brussels oversight,” *The Independent* reported.

At the summit, Italian Prime Minister Mario Monti, and Spanish Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy, abstained from signing a growth pact unless something was done to help lower their countries' borrowing rates. By the end of a fiery extended session, their cries for economic sympathy were assuaged by Germany.

The outcome was chronicled by *Der Spiegel*: “Merkel had made some tough and unexpected concessions after a marathon 15 hours of talks at an EU summit in Brussels...According to the agreements, euro-zone members states that fulfill the budgetary rules laid

■ **STANDING TOGETHER:** European Union leaders gather for a press photo after a meeting in Brussels (June 28, 2012).

PHOTO: JOHN THYS/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

down by the European Commission can now receive aid without agreeing to additional tough austerity measures. Strict oversight by the troika—composed of the European Commission, the European Central Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF)—will no longer apply.”

It was also agreed that the European Stability Mechanism would assist troubled eurozone banks *directly*, and bypass the need for government involvement in the distribution of funds.

While many portray the outcome as Ms. Merkel’s 180-degree turn—or even defeat—the deal did not come without German strings attached. In exchange, the bloc’s strongest economy demanded that the European Central Bank have increased supervision over the funds and the banks that receive them.

Though it could be months before such a supervisory mechanism is established, *Bloomberg* emphasized: “It’s hard to overstate the significance of what happened in Brussels...By pooling resources and authority, it represents an important step toward the kind of political union needed to make the euro area viable.”

New Economic Vision

Prior to the summit, the release of a seven-page document presented by top EU officials set the tone for the critical meeting. The paper, “Towards A Genuine Economic And Monetary Union (EMU),” champions “a vision for the future of the Economic and Monetary Union and how it can best contribute to growth, jobs and stability.”

Drawn by European Council President Herman Van Rompuy, in conjunction with European Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso, Eurogroup President Jean-Claude Juncker, and European Central Bank President Mario Draghi, the document promotes such monetary measures as sharing EU debt.

The blueprint recommends a 10-year route to fiscal unification, in which four key mechanisms are deemed “necessary for long-term stability and prosperity... and will require a lot of further work,

including possible changes to the EU treaties at some point in time.”

These “essential building blocks” are financial, budgetary and economic-policy frameworks, as well as “strengthened democratic legitimacy and accountability” to achieve better economic stability and solidarity across the 27-state bloc. During the summit, however, it was decided the model would apply only to 17 eurozone nations.

According to the *BBC*, specific proposals include:

- “Annual national budgets can be vetoed if they are likely to mean a country exceeding its debt limits.”

- “The eurozone borrowing money collectively ‘could be explored.’”

- “A single European banking regulator and a common scheme guaranteeing bank deposits.”

The *financial framework* involves commonly agreed upon limits on government debt and annual budgets for member countries. These would need to comply with “a single European banking supervision system” at both the European and national levels, with the latter having “ultimate responsibility.”

The document added that this could require the establishment of “a fiscal body, such as a treasury office.”

The *budgetary framework* deals with debt management and would “act as a fiscal backstop.”

The *economic policy framework* affects aspects of growth and jobs. According to the document, “...national policies should be orientated towards strong and sustainable economic growth and employment while promoting social cohesion.” This includes continent-wide labor regulations and taxation.

The fourth component is the need to strengthen *democratic legitimacy and accountability*.

“Building public support for European-wide decisions with a far-reaching impact on the everyday lives of citizens is essential,” the proposal stated, adding that the involvement of European and national parliaments “will be central.”

BBC reported that “European Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso said the guiding principle was that ‘greater solidarity and greater responsibility must go hand in hand’.”

The European Commission is also expected to submit additional legal proposals on “a single European banking supervision system covering all banks, a European deposit guarantee scheme and a European bank resolution scheme” before the end of this year (*Telegraph*).

Fiscal Union

The EU summit garnered mixed reactions.

Markets rallied to the news as the euro saw its biggest daily spike in eight months on June 29.

“It’s inching closer to a banking union and the closer we get to a banking union would put (the EU) well on the road to a fiscal union,” New York’s Lazard Capital Markets managing director told *Reuters*.

Before the summit, British Prime Minister David Cameron told *Guardian* that he understands “people’s concerns about Brussels getting too much power...”

After the summit, however, he said that he was pleased with some steps taken at the meeting.

Others were not. *The Wall Street Journal* reported that Finland and the Netherlands rejected “deploying the euro zone’s bailout funds to try to lower borrowing costs for countries such as Italy and Spain.”

Even with resistance from within the bloc, the summit’s developments appear to have sparked the EU to take further action to remedy its economy.

Finland’s Minister of European Affairs Alex Stubb told *Reuters* that the crisis is “forcing European leaders to take very difficult decisions and as we all know very few difficult decisions have been taken in a relaxed atmosphere.”

Pattern from the Past

Decisions at the summit show the continent wants the path of less austerity



■ **HIGH-PROFILE MEETINGS:** Top, German Chancellor Angela Merkel (left) and Italian Prime Minister Mario Monti participate in a joint press conference following a meeting in Rome (July 4, 2012). Bottom, Spanish Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy delivers a speech at a press conference on the second day of the European Union summit in Brussels (June 29, 2012).

PHOTOS: ALBERTO PIZZOLI/AFP/ (TOP); CHARLIER/AFP/ (BOTTOM) GETTY IMAGES

and more Europe. And to those willing to look into the continent’s past, this comes as no surprise.

In a *New York Times* editorial titled “Where’s Charlemagne When We Need Him?” Columbia University history professor Istvan Deak stated that “some 50 years ago, Archduke Otto Hapsburg, the last pretender to the crowns of Austria and Hungary, warned that economic cooperation alone would not

satisfy the peoples of Europe and that European unification could not succeed unless it was imbued with an abstract principle. Only something as mystical...as the Holy Roman Empire could give people hope, a sense of religious renewal and combat the pernicious effects of local interest, chauvinism, xenophobia and racism.

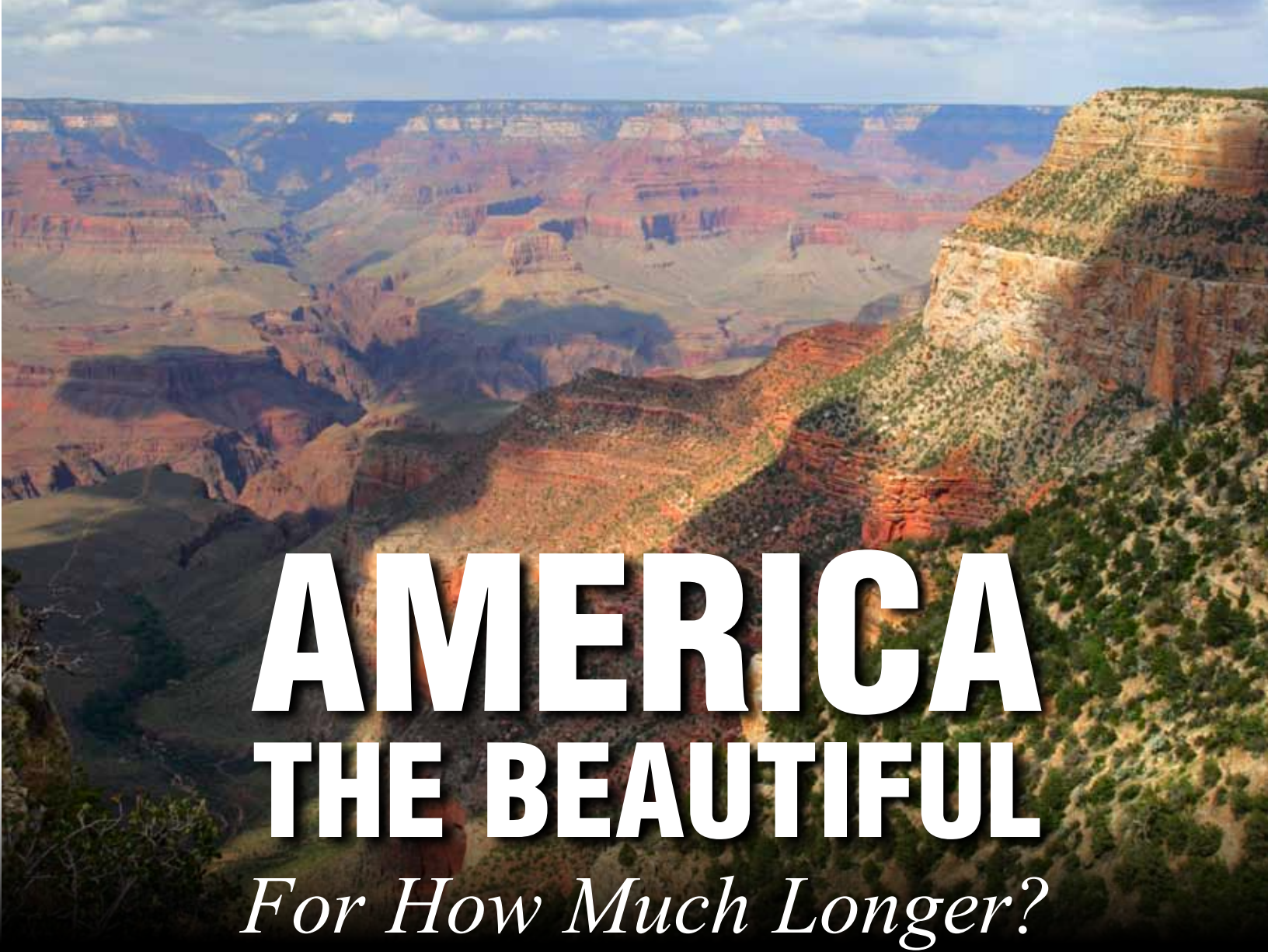
“Today’s European crisis indeed shows that great political institutions

cannot be constituted solely on a rational basis or through the bureaucracy and incrementalism of Brussels. The true purpose of the European Union is to bring about peace, prosperity and equality among the diverse regions and groups. Peace has indeed prevailed on most of the Continent, but in the last few years, with prosperity endangered, continued regional inequality has become even more blatant, while radical nationalism has raised its ugly head.”

The article continued, “Europeans must decide whether they are satisfied with a common market and currency, or whether they want to have common political, legal and cultural institutions. They need a great European Museum and Exhibit, many more pan-European music and film festivals, and the propagation of Europeanism in popular culture to shake off cynicism regarding the European project.”

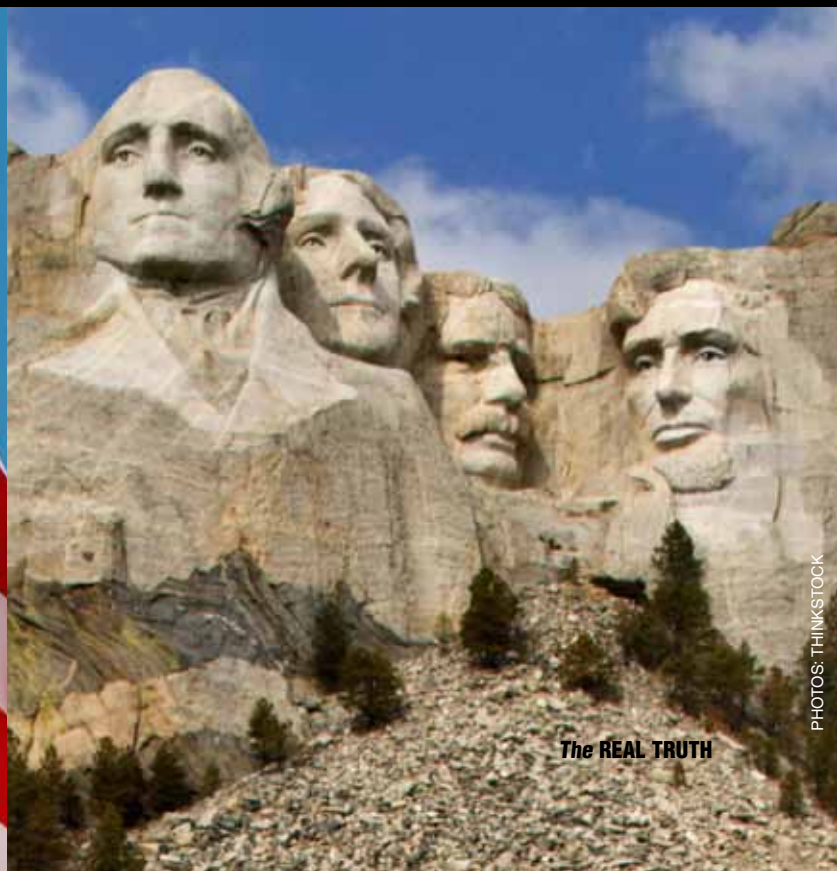
Clearly, conditions are ripe once again for the kind of unification that took place across the continent many times before. Europeans are once again calling for their leaders to return them to the times of prosperity they once enjoyed—no matter the cost.

Continue to watch Europe. If history is any guide, further integration is just around the corner. □



AMERICA THE BEAUTIFUL

For How Much Longer?



While the United States faces hard times now and in the years ahead, its land tells an amazing story.

BY JEFFREY R. AMBROSE

“THE UNITED STATES of America.” Just hearing the name evokes a host of images, emotions and reactions.

For patriotic citizens, it is the best nation of all, a beacon of freedom, a city set on a hill—as Abraham Lincoln once described it, “the last best hope of Earth.”

Among detractors inside and outside its borders, it may be called an oppressive empire, a bloated mega-consumer of natural resources, the creation of long-dead men driven by outdated ideals.

Ideology aside, an indisputable fact remains: the United States has been the most prosperous and powerful single nation in history.

How—and why—did America reach this status?

Exceptional Geography

From a physical standpoint, the qualities of the land settled by American pioneers—the mid-section of the North American continent—virtually guaranteed the nation’s eventual power and prominence.

“The Greater Mississippi Basin together with the Intracoastal Waterway has more kilometers of navigable internal waterways than the rest of the world combined,” a *Stratfor* report stated. “The American Midwest is both overlaid by this waterway and is the world’s largest contiguous piece of farmland. The U.S. Atlantic Coast possesses more major ports than the rest of the Western Hemisphere combined. Two vast oceans insulated the United States from Asian and European powers, deserts separate the United States from Mexico to the south, while lakes and forests separate the population cen-

ters in Canada from those in the United States. The United States has capital, food surpluses and physical insulation in excess of every other country in the world by an exceedingly large margin.”

Among these assets, the most important is nestled in America’s heartland—the Mississippi Basin: “The unified nature of this system greatly enhances



PHOTO: THINKSTOCK

“The American Midwest has long been the breadbasket of the country—indeed, to a degree, of the world.”

the region’s usefulness and potential economic and political power. First, shipping goods via water is an order of magnitude cheaper than shipping them via land...in the petroleum age in the United States, the cost of transport via water is roughly 10 to 30 times cheaper than overland.”

“Second, the watershed of the Greater Mississippi Basin largely overlays North America’s arable lands.

Normally, agricultural areas as large as the American Midwest are underutilized as the cost of shipping their output to more densely populated regions cuts deeply into the economics of agriculture...Massive artificial transport networks must be constructed and maintained in order for the land to reach its full potential. Not so in the case of the Greater Mississippi Basin. The vast bulk of the prime agricultural lands are within 200 kilometers of a stretch of navigable river. Road and rail are still used for collection, but nearly omnipresent river ports allow for the entirety of the basin’s farmers to easily and cheaply ship their products to markets not just in North America but all over the world.

“Third, the river network’s unity greatly eases the issue of political integration. All of the peoples of the basin are part of the same economic system, ensuring constant contact and common interests” (ibid.).

The continent seemed tailor-made to generate profit and support population growth. French statesman Alexis de Tocqueville, writing about what awaited European settlers in *Democracy in America*, described the land this way: “Those coasts so well suited for trade and industry, those deep rivers, that inexhaustible valley of the Mississippi—in short, the whole continent—seemed the yet empty cradle of a great nation.”

Complementing its unique geography, the U.S. also possesses a disproportionate share of natural resources.

Unparalleled Production

The American Midwest has long been the breadbasket of the country—indeed, to a degree, of the world. It has been asserted that, if productivity and distribution were ideal, this one nation could feed the entire world. While this is debatable, the U.S. does provide roughly half of global food aid, at a cost of \$2 billion per year.

Remarkably, the unprecedented levels of productivity that made possible

the postwar “baby boom” have seen continued expansion overall.

“According to Erik O’Donoghue and Robert Hoppe, two economists at the Department of Agriculture, in 2009 U.S. farm output was 170 percent above its level in 1948, having grown at a rate of 1.63 percent a year. Those figures understate the productivity revolution, because these increasing harvests have been delivered with fewer inputs, particularly less labor and less land.

“Tom Vilsack, the agriculture secretary, [said] that since 1980, agriculture has been ‘the second-most-productive aspect of our economy...I’m 61 years old, and in my lifetime, corn production has increased 400 percent, soybeans 1,000 percent, and wheat 100 percent’” (*Reuters*).

While this is in part due to short-sighted overuse of fertilizer and other artificial means, these are stunning figures nonetheless—difficult or impossible to achieve elsewhere.

Also, the U.S. is the world’s primary timber producer, surpassing the combined output of Russia and Canada.

Breathtaking Beauty

In addition to staggering productivity, America also features some of the most beautiful landscapes found anywhere. Its spacious expanse encompasses many types of terrain, from rocky coasts to dense forests, white-sand beaches to rolling hills, towering mountain ranges to wide-open prairies, soaked rainforests to parched deserts, swamplands to grassy plains.

This panorama has produced a huge tourism industry. According to the World Tourism Organization, the U.S. generated \$116.3 billion in tourism receipts in 2011, nearly double that of the second-place finisher, Spain. It also ranked second in number of international tourist arrivals, not far behind France.

According to the U.S. Travel Association, “Direct spending by resident and international travelers in the U.S. averaged \$2.2 billion a day, \$92.8 million an hour, \$1.5 million a minute and \$25,778 a second” in 2011—generating a total of \$813 billion. Add to this \$1.1 trillion in *indirect* spending and the

support of 14.4 million jobs, and this becomes a major part of the nation’s economy.

Some of the most popular natural features include:

■ **Arizona’s Grand Canyon:** Up to 18 miles wide and a mile deep, and over 270 miles long, the canyon’s striped walls, with its countless shades of earthy reds and golds, chronicle the area’s geological development.

■ **Wyoming’s Yellowstone National Park:** The world’s first National Park, it was designated by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site and a Biosphere Reserve. Half of the world’s geothermal features can be found here.

■ **New York’s Niagara Falls:** Situated on the border between the U.S. and Canada, this unique water feature is up to 110 feet tall in certain places.

■ **Alaska’s Mount McKinley:** The tallest North American mountain (20,320 feet), its vertical rise from base to peak exceeds any land-based mountain, including Mount Everest.

■ **California’s Redwood Forest:** The coastal sequoias are the world’s tallest trees, including the world-record-holding Hyperion, which reaches a towering 379 feet.

■ **Florida’s Everglades:** Approximately 1,509,000 acres of subtropical wilderness harbor hundreds of species of mammals, reptiles, birds and fish.

Underground Riches

So far only the easily visible, above-ground assets of the North American continent have been considered. But subterranean holdings have been just as valuable.

“Although it contains less than 10 percent of the world’s population, [North America] has an extraordinarily high proportion of the world’s resource wealth. It produces a substantial percentage of the world’s oil, iron ore, steel, copper, lead, and zinc. With a large percentage of the world’s coal and oil output and electrical power production, it possesses the critical elements of modern industry” (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*).

The proposed purchase of Alaska was ridiculed as “Seward’s Folly.”

Championed by Secretary of State William Seward, some Americans, including politicians, viewed it as an ill-advised pursuit of an icebox. Beyond its incredible natural beauty, abundant timber, and sprawling scale (over double the size of Texas), the giant territory quieted the naysayers with its gold deposits and oil reserves—all procured from Russia in 1867 for around two cents per acre!

America has been called the “Saudi Arabia of coal,” a fact that helped fuel its industrial revolution. And the abundance of iron ore turned steel cities such as Pittsburgh into economic engines, and impacted everything from the affordability of the automobile to the volume and superiority of American military equipment in World War II.

In 2012, a new natural gas boom seems imminent, with the controversial “fracking” technique opening new reserves for use: “...nowhere, perhaps, has the dispute over fracking grown



more heated than in the vicinity of the Marcellus Shale. According to Terry Engelder, a professor of geosciences at Penn State, the vast formation sprawling primarily beneath West Virginia, Pennsylvania and New York could produce an estimated 493 trillion cubic feet of gas over its 50- to 100-year life span. That's nowhere close to Saudi Arabia's total energy reserves, but it is enough to power every natural [gas-burning] device in the country for more than 20 years" (*Popular Mechanics*).

“High Places of the Earth”

The amazing part of America's story is that the pilgrims' arrival to this unique swath of land, and the rise of the 13 colonies from a ragtag dependency of the British crown to a superpower, was no accident—it was foretold millennia ago.

Bible readers have struggled to reconcile the following verses with the record of history: “And God said unto

him, Your name is Jacob: your name shall not be called any more Jacob, but Israel shall be your name...And God said unto him, I am God Almighty: be fruitful and multiply; A NATION and a COMPANY OF NATIONS shall be of you, and kings shall come out of your loins” (Gen. 35:10-11).

This has obviously not been fulfilled in the tiny Mediterranean state of Israel, established in 1948, though its achievements have been remarkable. Nor was it fulfilled anciently in the kingdoms of Israel and Judah. But it did come to pass—down to the last detail—in the rise of the British Empire (a company of nations) in the 19th century, followed by that of the United States (a nation), the 20th-century superpower.

The key lies in the identity of the “lost tribes” of Israel. Judah, with elements of Levi and Simeon, retained their identity through their observance of the seventh-day Sabbath, and other tenets of what is known as Judaism. But what

of the other tribes, including the birthright holders—Ephraim and Manasseh, sons of Joseph? (See Genesis 48:12-22.)

They *did* receive the birthright promises! This was tied to obedience to God's Law, including the Fourth Commandment—“Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy” (Ex. 20:8).

Specific blessings are reserved for those who do this. Consider: “If you turn away your foot from the sabbath, from doing your pleasure on My holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the LORD, honorable; and shall honor Him, not doing your own ways, nor finding your own pleasure, nor speaking your own words: then shall you delight yourself in the LORD; and I will CAUSE YOU TO RIDE UPON THE HIGH PLACES OF THE EARTH, and feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father...” (Isa. 58:13-14).

The United States has received unparalleled blessings due to the obe-





America and Britain in Prophecy

Order your free book at rcg.org/aabibp to learn what vast millions have not understood!

dience of men such as Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Israel)—from whom many of its citizens have descended. And they truly have ridden “upon the high places of the earth”!

Too Blessed?

One test of a nation’s character—as well as that of individuals—is its response to prosperity. Regrettably,

incredible prosperity in the United States has not brought out profound gratitude to, or even a genuine search for, the Source of these blessings.

In 1973, *U.S. News & World Report* quoted the late Kakuei Tanaka, Prime Minister of Japan from 1972 to 1974, as stating about Americans, “I often wonder why you worry so much about domestic problems when you have such an abundance of resources...For example, look at American agricultural productivity. It’s easy for the U.S. to expand its output whenever it chooses. We can’t do that in Japan...When I compare the situation here in Japan with the situation in your country, I think that as a nation you are too privileged...God has not been very fair in the distribution of resources.”

Unknown to Mr. Tanaka, God did not bless America because of impulse or favoritism. And despite assumptions to the contrary, these have not come to pass as the deserved result of American ingenuity, optimism or work ethic.

The God of the Bible is calling Americans to truly turn to Him—*while there is yet time*—before blessings are completely withdrawn: “If I shut up heaven that there be no rain, or if I command the locusts to devour the land, or if I send pestilence among My people; if My people, which are called by My name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land” (II Chron. 7:13-14).

The Real Truth calls on all Americans to learn their origins, and to act upon them. While the nation as a whole may never do this, individuals—including you!—can.

If you would like to learn more about the amazing historical roots of this country—and its future—request your free copy of David C. Pack’s thoroughly researched and illuminating book *America and Britain in Prophecy* at rcg.org/aabibp.

It will forever change your view of world history! □



A Pig's Tale

Millions of dollars are spent each year to discern which foods are healthy and which are not. But you can understand the truth—documented millennia ago.

BY BRADFORD G. SCHLEIFER

EACH DAY, people across the world consume three square meals intended to fuel their bodies. In the hustle and bustle of modern society, these are increasingly becoming more processed and less natural.

The result can be seen in the explosion of sickness, disease and an overall lack of good health. Yet most never make the connection between what they eat and how they feel—and are doomed to a lifetime of illness and fatigue.

Much of the problem is directly tied to ignorance of health, diet and the human body. While having a discussion relating to health and diet, one nutritionist, who developed menus for high schools, said the link between what one eats and how one feels has been blown out of proportion. She stated that the origin of sickness is unknown, which is why there are doctors.

But what have doctors and medical science been able to accomplish? They have only been able to cure a

few illnesses and diseases, and prevent even fewer! Western medicine has been designed to *react* to an illness and not help one *prevent* illnesses and maintain health. It treats the *effects* rather than the *cause*.

Yet the root of the problem lies in the cause.

Cause and Effect

Most recognize what poisons do to the body. They understand that if one consumes cyanide, he will die. Conversely, many parents tell their kids to “eat your vegetables.” But a broader connection to diet is never established. This is because man does not follow the one Book that detailed millennia ago what man should and should not eat to maintain health and avoid disease. That Book—the Bible—man’s overall instruction manual on how to live—was designed to help him lead a healthy existence, which includes never experiencing poor health.

In the third book of the Bible, a detailed set of dietary laws was established. These set the basis for which

creatures were designed to be eaten and which were meant for other purposes. While Leviticus 11 describes each of these animals in detail, this article will cover only the most popular.

The body of evidence of why certain animals were designated for meat while others were not is vast. It will change what makes up your three square meals forever.

“The Other White Meat”

One of the most popular animals bred for food is the pig. This pug-nosed “treat” is served in backyards as pork chops, at breakfast tables as bacon, or in delicacies at five-star restaurants. Powerful organizations and political lobbyists push its consumption in the media and other places. The result is that swine constitutes a large portion of the North American menu.

But is it as safe and healthy as most believe?

Much insight into the pig can be ascertained by how they are raised and what they eat. Many have heard the expression, “You are what you eat.” What a pig will eat is shocking!

A pig's digestive system—unlike a cow's—is not designed to filter toxins from its system. These toxins work their way through the pig and are deposited in the animal's flesh—especially in its fat. The pig itself is actually able to sustain very high levels of toxins. As such, it can eat just about anything. In an effort to keep feed costs down, pig farmers will purchase garbage, such as rotting meat and vegetables, to feed them—and the pigs can be sustained with it. There is nothing in the animal's digestive system, or the processing of the meat, that removes these toxins.

The time it takes for these things to be assimilated is more interesting. For most animals, this is a much slower process, taking perhaps 12 to 24 hours. This gives an animal's digestive system time to filter toxins, poisons and deadly parasites from entering the bloodstream and being deposited in its flesh. Also, because many foods can build muscle, greater time is required for that muscle to form.

The same is *not* true for a pig. Much of what it eats can be assimilated much more quickly. Not only does this mean that toxins are not filtered, but also most of the flesh takes the form of fat!

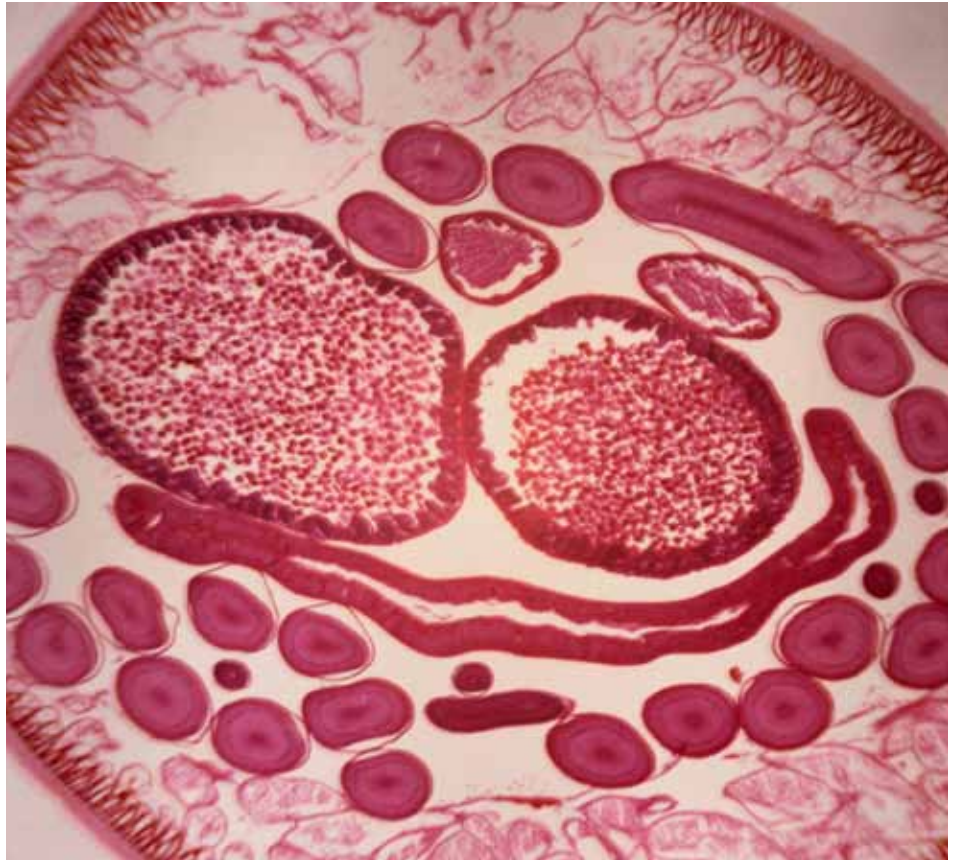
Even in humans, body fat is where most toxins are stored. Typically, when the body does not know how to deal with a substance, it surrounds it with fat and stores it to keep the rest of the body safe. The same is true in pigs. While they have other methods of dumping extremely deadly toxins from their systems, the highest concentration is in the fat tissue.

In addition, a March 1950 *Reader's Digest* article stated that pork contains “myriads of baffling and sinister parasites.”

Dr. Maurice C. Hall, a zoology chief at the United States Bureau of Animal Industry, stated in the same article, “It appears to be a legitimate demand that, when a man exchanges dollars for pork, he should not do it, on the basis that he may be purchasing his death warrant.”

While some claim that this has changed as a result of increased scientific understanding of pathogens, the fact remains that pigs were never meant to be eaten.

reason pigs can eat poisonous snakes that would kill other creatures and not be affected themselves. These ducts, however, will often become “plugged” from the amount of toxins pigs must



■ **CLOSE UP:** This image shows a roundworm inside of a cell under a microscope.

PHOTO: DUNCAN SMITH/GETTY IMAGES/THINKSTOCK

Cleaners—Not Clean Meat

Pigs are designed as natural vacuum cleaners. They will eat just about anything—garbage, carcasses or even their own urine and feces. Most of this consumption causes no harm to pigs. They were *designed* to do such things. They are so efficient at this task that when land is cleared for a golf course, pigs are often let loose to eat all the poisonous snakes—with no harm to the pigs.

Every animal has its purpose. Scavengers, such as pigs, are designed to clean—not to be eaten!

Some of the “cleaning” features of the pig are remarkable. One is located under its hooves. Often referred to as poison ducts or running sores, these “sores” act as a conduit for poisons to ooze from the pig's body. This is one

excrete from their bodies. If this is the case, a farmer must quickly slaughter the pig and send it to market before it dies. Accordingly, the meat from such an animal is riddled with parasites and toxins.

The toxicity of the pig is not just limited to its meat and organs. Even its saliva can be horribly infectious. In fact, one disease, called “mad itch,” will cause a cow to rub all the skin from its mouth—to the point of killing itself. All that is required for cows to contract this disease is to come in contact with the residue of a pig's saliva on shared food supplies!

Worm Civilizations

Inside the pig is an abundance of parasites. For instance, the animal can sustain 19 different kinds of worms in

its body. Some have minor effects on humans, but others last longer.

The parasite that is most widely known causes trichinosis, a disorder that results from an infestation of roundworms.

Like most parasitic organisms, this worm is contracted when one consumes meat containing trichinae larva. Once in the intestine, the larvae hatch and grow into adult roundworms. These roundworms then produce offspring that can burrow through the intestinal wall. From this point, they enter the lymphatic system and can move throughout the body via the bloodstream. They then implant themselves in tissues that allow them to grow.

Those infected with trichinosis can experience a wide range of symptoms—abdominal discomfort, cramping, diarrhea, muscle pain (especially muscle pain with breathing, chewing or using large muscles), and fever. If the damage to the tissue is severe, the long-term problems are never-ending.

So-called experts argue that properly cooking pork at 167 degrees Fahrenheit will destroy the bacteria and parasites in it. Most who cook pork, however, are not as careful as those conducting a laboratory study. Simple organisms such as these worms are remarkably resilient, so just cooking the meat does not necessarily make it safe.

Some of these parasites, such as trichinosis, can also be incredibly hard to detect. Former state senator and chairman of the New York Trichinosis Commission, Thomas C. Desmond, stated in *Reader's Digest*, "Physicians have confused trichinosis with some 50 ailments, ranging from typhoid fever to acute alcoholism. That pain in your arm or leg may be arthritis or rheumatism, but it may be trichinosis. That pain in your back may mean a gall-bladder involvement, but it may mean trichinosis."

Further demonstrating this, the National Center for Biotechnology Information said, "...the anticipated 120,000 to 300,000 human infections each year turn into only approximately 100 reported cases, probably because

of the difficulties in diagnosing the disease, the under-reporting of the disease by physicians, and a high proportion of subclinical infections resulting from the consumption of infected swine containing less than one *Trichinella* larva per gram of pork."

"Most people with the disease are unaware that they have even been infected. It is estimated that between 150,000 and 300,000 people in the United States become infected yearly, so that at any given time, 1.5 million people have *T. spiralis* infections. Most of these people have such light cases that trichinosis is never identified. Worm burden is measured in larvae per gram of muscle tissue; people with 10 or fewer larvae per gram of muscle tissue usually have no significant symptoms. When the number climbs to 100 larvae per gram of muscle tissue, the symptoms become noticeable. People with over 1000 larvae per gram of muscle tissue are usually extremely ill, and often die" (*Gale Encyclopedia of Medicine*).

Although there are test regulations established to stem infection, according to the United States Department of Agriculture, only "a minimum of 1 gram is tested and the sensitivity of this test is approximately 3 larvae per gram of tissue." This means that in a three ounce piece of pork, you could be consuming up to 170 worms!

In addition to this, there is no requirement for regular testing in the U.S., "nor do most states require reporting of trichinae infection in pigs if found" (*ibid.*).

And this is just *one* of the 19 parasites found in pork!

Other Toxic Creatures

Although the focus of this article has been on the most popular of unclean meats, there are many reasons why certain birds, seafood and other creatures are also unhealthy. One example is that of clams and oysters. Typically, these shellfish are eaten raw. A study conducted by researchers from the University of Arizona on "oysters from so-called certified-safe beds discovered that 9 percent were contaminated with *Salmonella* bacteria." The study's

author also told *ABC News* that "*E. coli* [was found] in 100 percent of Gulf Coast locations, and in high amounts."

In addition, such bottom-feeding creatures are typically saturated with heavy metals, such as mercury.

Another example is armadillos. Not only are these creatures unclean to eat, but studies also show they may even be dangerous to handle, as they may serve as reservoirs for leprosy.

One final study also bears some investigation. Though it was conducted many decades ago, a modern "update" of this study, with a more exact toxicology analysis, would show similar results.

A 1953 study published in the "Bulletin of the History of Medicine," and written by Dr. David Macht, M.D., tested a variety of biblically clean and unclean animals for levels of toxicity. His findings confirmed everything covered so far. Every animal that the Bible declared as clean was found to be non-toxic. Conversely, each animal declared as unclean was found to be toxic and inedible based on these tests. Keep in mind that this study took place in a much less toxic society, so the same animals would be much more toxic today!

Time and again, study of these scavengers show that they are well-designed to clean, but they are not clean to eat. Just as you would not go into a sewage plant for dinner, you should not eat these natural sewage processors!

It takes little investigation to learn why the Bible teaches what it has for thousands of years. God declares certain animals unclean and they are designated as such for a reason.

The Bible itself has *never* wavered on these teachings. If you look at the first book of the Bible—Genesis—you will find that Noah was instructed to take seven pairs of clean animals and one pair of unclean. Even then, God wanted man to eat what was created to be food and not eat things that would poison him.

This is particularly important in the context of the account of the Flood found in the Old Testament. God was cleansing the world to start anew. He could have easily allowed

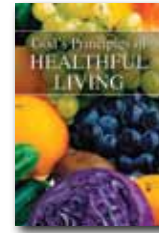
for anything to be eaten if that was His choice. But He inspired this grouping of animals and the recording of it in Genesis 7:2 as a lesson for mankind today.

For centuries, the Bible has been discounted as either a book of “stories” or some “good concepts”—it is not *believed* for what it says! Man ignores its plain teachings—including that of clean and unclean meats.

Before science could prove it to be true, God’s Word told the truth. And this is only the tip of the iceberg. If you follow the laws that God set forth regarding diet, not only will you please the Creator of the universe, but you will also enjoy boundless energy and solid health.

But do not stop there. Dig deeper into God’s Word. What you discover will most certainly surprise you!

To learn more about the biblical teaching of clean and unclean meats and how to live a healthier lifestyle,



request the free article “Are *All* Animals Good Food?” at rcg.org/aaagf, as well as the free booklet *God’s Principles of Healthful Living* at rcg.org/glohl. □

EGYPT

Continued from page 6

sented by Mr. Pack at worldtocome.org addresses this topic in detail.

Yet the Bible—the missing KEY to understanding Egypt’s future—reveals much more. It outlines the role the nation will play in a foretold entity called “the king of the south,” which is a lead player in a long prophecy found in chapter 11 of the Old Testament book of Daniel.

Peaceful Future?

Historical tensions between Egypt and Israel can essentially be boiled

down to the clash between Islam and Judaism, which can be likened to the sibling rivalry of Ishmael and Isaac, both sons of the Old Testament patriarch Abraham.

While most self-appointed Bible prophecy experts seem to relish outlining scenarios where Islamists “get what is coming to them” in their convoluted interpretations of God’s Word, the inventions of such authors and preachers never point to a positive future for Egypt and Israel.

But God’s Word does! Isaiah 19:23-25 states, “In that day shall Israel be [close allies] with Egypt and with Assyria, even a blessing in the midst of the land: whom the LORD

of hosts shall bless, saying, Blessed be Egypt My people, and Assyria the work of My hands, and Israel My inheritance.”

In this last verse, the God of Abraham calls Israel *and* Egypt His people.

But this is clearly a future scenario. Events today are rushing toward other prophecies involving the nation’s future.



To learn what is to come for Egypt and the entire region, order a free copy of David C. Pack’s *The Mid-East in Bible Prophecy* at rcg.org/tmeibp. □

■ **NEW POSITION:** President Mohammed Morsi delivers a speech in Cairo after being sworn in as Egypt’s first freely elected leader (June 30, 2012).

PHOTO: AHMAD ABDUL FATAH/AFP/GETTY IMAGES



DRUG ABUSE

Continued from page 10

dopamine-producing neurons overload and the individual is no longer able to feel pleasure. Ironically, and sadly, the pursuit of extreme pleasure leads to greatly *decreased* pleasure.

One couple described the effect meth had on their son. He had been in jail scores of times. Sadly, his parents were always relieved when they received a phone call informing them that their son was incarcerated again. Why? Because if he was in jail, it meant he was not roaming the streets or dead from an overdose. The son had wasted 20 years of his life abusing meth, but was able to kick his addiction.

While the account had a happy ending, most end badly.

The following stories come from one of the many anti-meth websites and reveal the pain that comes from those who are addicted:

"I'm a 24-year old mother. I've been clean for about a year but I don't feel clean at all...I feel disgusting. Even though I quit smoking meth my teeth still break and fall out frequently. I hate myself for ruining my body and my relationship with my family. I started smoking with my best friend in 2009 after a bad breakup. I didn't wanna be alone and when you're able to get massive amounts of meth given to you, you're never alone. Always had a smoke buddy. Was usually my best friend...we had unlimited funds and unlimited dope. I thought I wasn't doing [a lot] because I'd only use on weekends when my child was with her dad. But I was. I was short tempered and paranoid. We had cameras set up at her [apartment]...The cops visited her often. I was always glued to the window...If I could go back and say one thing to myself I'd say run! My teeth are rotting out of my head. I'm fat. My metabolism is shot. I still hear things. I have anxiety attacks. And I only did it for a year. I've been too [embarrassed] to tell my story. But it feels good to finally get it out" (*kci.org*).

The next account demonstrates the utter hopelessness of meth addiction: "This is just my short story about meth taking control of my whole city. It is literally stealing children away from their parents...a number of people, including me, are losing everything for that next hit. I'm 23 now, and since the age of 19 when I found IV use and meth I have probably smashed a... needle...in my arm between 2,000-3,000 times. Due to a car accident at the age of 19, I have been [paid] close to a quarter of a million dollars in compensation. And to my name right now, I have nothing but debt. I should be near set up at this point in my life. But instead I'm sucking the last bit of hope out of my [mother]. She has stood by me through ALL of the stealing and the lying, something that my girlfriend of five years only recently found out she could no longer do..."

"I just pray that the chemicals produced that factor in meth's potency become a lot harder to get a hold of. It's the only realistic dream of slowing down this horrifically fast-paced life sucker...In my perfect world ALL drugs that altered one's state would be unavailable and unheard of...Oh how I hope that this is the only place in life where meth is available. If I have to leave my place on this earth behind one day, I do not want to be putting up with meth...in an afterlife or whatever comes next. I just hope the world gets better... Meth is a destroyer. And...it's basically unbeatable. Well us as individuals have the opportunity to beat it, but we cannot beat the stranglehold meth has on the world, even in my entire lifetime..."

These stories show how horrible meth's effects can be on individuals and families. But to truly grasp the scope of the problem, multiply just one of these accounts by 26 million—the estimated number of people who are using meth or similar drugs around the world. Only then does the picture come into greater focus.

Homemade Drug

To feed America's growing meth appetite, labs began popping up across the country in recent years. Its ingredients

are all legal and inexpensive, as reported by *The Associated Press*.

Notice the following account regarding the proliferation of meth labs in the United States: "Methamphetamine lab seizures rose nationally again in 2011, further evidence the powerfully addictive and dangerous drug is maintaining a tight grip on the nation's heartland, according to an *Associated Press* survey of the nation's top meth-producing states. Missouri regained the top national spot for lab seizures in 2011 with 2,096...Tennessee was second with 1,687, followed by Indiana with 1,437, Kentucky with 1,188 and Oklahoma with 902.

"Combined, the numbers indicate nationwide meth lab seizures rose at least 8.3 percent in 2011 compared with 2010.

"Experts blame the continued increase on the drug's addictive-ness and the growing popularity of the meth-making shortcut known as 'shake-and-bake,' in which the drug is concocted quickly in a soda bottle. The method results in smaller labs, but more of them.

"Clandestine meth labs are most common in the Midwest and South. U.S. users who don't make the drug themselves get it from Mexico, but experts say the drug made in home-made labs is more addictive than the often-diluted product that crosses the border.

"When they're manufacturing it locally they're making the purest form and the strongest form they can make," said Sgt. Niki Crawford of the Indiana State Police Meth Suppression Team."

One problem associated with meth is the cost of cleaning up a lab once it is seized: "...programs helped...states continue with busts after millions of dollars in federal funding set aside for cleanup suddenly was cut in February 2011. Many local police agencies in states without their own programs all but stopped seeking out meth labs because the local governments couldn't afford cleanup costs" (*ibid.*).

Think of the awful environment in which children of meth addicts are forced to grow up. The meth lab inside

a home creates such a toxic zone that once one is discovered by authorities, the house often cannot be salvaged and becomes condemned.

Yet meth use is not confined to the United States. South of the border, in February 2012, Mexican authorities seized the largest meth stash ever—15 tons, equal to roughly 13 million doses, over double the amount of meth seized at the Mexican border in 2011. The drugs were discovered at a ranch near Guadalajara, and had a street value of four billion dollars.

Rusty Payne, a spokesman for the DEA, stated in *The New York Times*, “The big thing it shows is the sheer capacity that these superlabs have in Mexico...When we see one lab with the capability to produce such a mass tonnage of meth, it begs a question: What else is out there?”

Eric Olson, an expert with the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, summarized the ultimate effect of this drug bust: “It’s important to keep the seizure in perspective...It’s huge. Eye-popping. But seizures, even huge ones, don’t generally change the demand for the drug in the long run. If a seizure of this magnitude raises the street price, consumption may go down for a time, but it is only a matter of time until the market adjusts and the supply comes back up” (ibid.).

This cycle of drug seizures can be likened to someone pulling their finger out of a bucket of water, with the water simply filling in around the empty space. As soon as illegal materials are captured and destroyed, more are produced for the market.

As more lives are lost, more people become addicted, bigger stockpiles are seized, and more money is spent to combat it, there seems to be no end in sight to the illegal drug trade.

Every Corner

When it comes to drug abuse, every country has a story to tell. Take for instance the streets of Dublin,

Ireland. Drug deals occur in broad daylight on O’Connell Street, one of the city’s main shopping areas. Ireland’s *Evening Herald* newspaper reported, “The crisis on our streets was highlighted...by the savage nose-bite attack on [a woman]...Gardai [police] are struggling to cope with



“In a world filled with so many ever-worsening problems, more people are turning to drugs to escape reality.”

the extraordinary level of drug dealing and binge drinking that is horrifying tourists.”

“An estimated 1,500 heroin users roam the inner city every week after receiving their dose of methadone in one of six clinics. Fianna Fail Justice Spokesperson Dara Calleary believes the drug problem in the city has become an ‘epidemic.’”

In Yemen, severe water shortages are looming, threatening to bring widespread famine. Incredibly, *United Press International* revealed that the Middle Eastern nation is using more water to grow drugs than it uses for food. “The water problem, hidden by the security crises, was worsened because Yemenis use 40 percent of their available water to grow qat, a mildly narcotic plant

that’s the country’s largest cash crop and highly prized across the Arabian Peninsula. That’s far more than they allocate to grow food.”

This is just one example of the effects the illicit drug trade has on a national scale. The country is risking its future to make easy money exporting drugs. Is it any wonder a United Nations Commission on drug policy declared that the war against drugs has “failed”?

A report by the Congressional Research Service as published by *GlobalPost* revealed the worldwide nature of the drug trade: “Many have concluded that there’s no way to defeat what is essentially a dynamic global commodities market...Marijuana, cocaine, methamphetamine, heroin—they are global commodities markets much in the same way that alcohol, tobacco, sugar or coffee are.”

“So long as there is a demand, especially a significant demand in a country like the United States, there will be a supply. The demand is growing worldwide in many respects.”

Why is drug use exploding out of control—with the effects more harmful than ever and the problem unstoppable and unsolvable?

Why are so many young people unable to refrain from falling into addictions?

In a world filled with so many ever-worsening problems, more people are turning to drugs to escape reality. They are reaching for a lifeline out of the confusion around them, but end up searching in the wrong places.

What is humanity collectively doing to combat this problem? Is there a real, workable solution on the horizon? Will the stories of teenage overdoses and awful, lifelong addictions ever fade into history—or will they only be replaced by more stories of the effects of drugs?

Part 3 will answer these questions and examine the solutions mankind has attempted in controlling drug abuse, along with how the age-old problem will ultimately be solved. □

PERSONAL

Continued from page 2

Likewise, when we violate the laws of God, the Bible says we earn a penalty: "...the wages of sin is death..." (Rom. 6:23). Wages are something you earn as a payment for what you have done. If you sin—break God's Law—you will die *eternally*. Suddenly, knowing what constitutes "God's law" is of extreme importance!

The subject of what *is* God's Law has been twisted and mangled. Greater Churchianity, as it has been called, has blurred this concept beyond recognition. However, this need not be complicated. This leads us to the next few verses that Christianity just blows off.

(4) Matthew 5:17

The fourth verse never talked about in Christendom is *Matthew 5:17*, where Jesus said, "Think *not* that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to *fulfill*."

The word "fulfill" means to "verify...fully preach, perfect...fill (up)...(make) full" (*Strong's Exhaustive Concordance*). In other words, Jesus came to *verify* and *perfect* the Ten Commandments—to expand their meaning. *Matthew 5* is then filled with examples of how the Ten Commandments have been made even more binding today. For instance, Jesus said, "...it was said by them of old time, You shall not kill...but I say...That whosoever is *angry* with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment..." (vs. 21-22). Instead of abolishing the commandments, Jesus *magnified* them (*Isa. 42:21*).

Ministers of this world twist these and other scriptures to sidestep and reject Jesus' plain meaning about the importance of keeping God's Law. They dismiss clear verses, such as Paul's statement, "Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yes, we *establish* the law" (*Rom. 3:31*).

(5) I John 5:3

This leads to the fifth overlooked verse—and it is crucial. *I John 5:3*: "For

this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments: and His commandments are not grievous [burdensome]." Many who claim to have love believe God's Commandments *are* grievous. God declares otherwise! Paul called God's Law "holy," "just," "good" and "spiritual" (*Rom. 7:12, 14*). The Psalms say it is "*perfect...sure...right*" and "*pure*" (*19:7-8*).

Blessings flow from keeping God's commands. Ancient Israel was instructed to keep them, because—with the whole Bible—they form His Instruction Manual on how to live. God's Word reveals the only way to achieve a truly successful, happy and abundant life!

(6) Romans 13:10

The sixth verse takes this connection further. *Romans 13:10*: "Love works no ill to his neighbor: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law." Understand. The Bible defines love as *obedience* to God's Law. It is that simple. There is no ambiguity or confusion! Yet most are ignorant of the true definition of love. Ministers everywhere speak endlessly about God's love, while completely missing all of the vital scriptures that define it.

Jesus also said, "If you love Me, *keep My commandments*" (*John 14:15*). Nowhere does Jesus say, "He who professes to love Me—yet breaks My commandments—still loves Me." If you are among the two billion who profess to be Christian, and someone asked you whether you love Jesus Christ, you would surely answer *yes*. But how would you *PROVE* it? What *evidence* could you provide?

To most, love is little more than a vague idea that cannot be defined. Ask 100 people to define love, and you will get 100 different responses—everything from a "feeling in the heart" to "just doing good." A wide range of

ideas exist, because few consult the ONLY SOURCE that provides an absolute definition.

The first four commandments—not serving false gods, not making or worshipping images (idols) of God, not taking God's name in vain, and observing the Sabbath—reveal how to love God. The remaining six—honor father and mother, do not kill, commit adultery, steal, bear false witness, or covet—reveal how to love other human beings. When one obeys God's Law, he *automatically* practices love—toward God and others. Love is easily demonstrated because action is required.

When one obeys any of the last six commandments, he—knowingly or not—is outwardly indicating love toward his fellow man. Consider adultery. Though vast numbers break the Seventh Commandment, most would agree adultery is not showing love toward one's spouse. Now think of the devastation that results: broken trust, marriages, homes, relationships with children, and more. Conversely, by faithfulness, spouses show love toward each other.

Similarly, obeying the first four commands shows love toward God. Sadly, most do not even know these laws—and thus do not truly love God, despite what they may proclaim.

(7) Mark 7:6-9

The seventh passage that most outright reject is *Mark 7:6-9*. As you read, ask if you have ever heard it quoted by a minister. Jesus said this to the Pharisees, "...Isaiah prophesied of you *hypocrites*, as it is written, This people honor Me with their lips, but their *heart* is far from Me. Howbeit *in vain* do they worship Me, teaching for doctrines the *commandments of men*" (vs. 6-7). He added, "For laying aside the commandment of God, you hold the *tradition of men*, as



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the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things you do... Full well you *reject* the commandment of God, that you may keep your *own tradition*" (vs. 8-9).

This is a strong indictment of the religious elite of that time! Jesus stated that the Pharisees professed to worship God, but inside they were far from Him. The context was that they sought opportunity to accuse Him and His disciples of breaking their tradition—the “commandments of men”—merely because they did not wash their hands when they ate. The disciples were not breaking any laws of God. Jesus labeled the Pharisees’ worship “vain,” meaning to no purpose, fruitless.

Think. Jesus said the Pharisees’ worship was pointless! They certainly believed they were worshipping God, but Jesus revealed otherwise. The Pharisees obeyed religious laws of *men* rather than *God’s* Law. They were hypocrites—appearing to be pious, while being inwardly “full of dead men’s bones” (Matt. 23:27).

While God does authorize use of traditions (II Thes. 2:15), they never supplant or contradict His laws. The Pharisees, like so many today, claimed to know God. The apostle John wrote, “He that says, I know Him, and *keeps not His commandments*, is a *liar*, and the truth is not in him” (I John 2:4).

Today’s religious elite reject God’s instructions and instead teach and hold to popular traditions: Christmas, Easter, Halloween, Sunday-keeping, the false trinitarian god, the false gospel about Jesus instead of the kingdom of God, the fictions that God’s Law was “nailed to the cross,” tithing was “done away,” the saved go to heaven, and a host of other beliefs. In fact, virtually all the teachings of orthodox Christianity are *manmade*! (To learn more, request the following free books and booklets all found at rcg.org/books. They present the *truth* of men’s holidays, and that of many other doctrines. You will be astounded by the Bible’s clear teachings on a host of topics: *The Ten Commandments – “Nailed to the Cross” or Required for Salvation?*; *The Trinity – Is God Three-In-One?*;

Saturday or Sunday – Which Is the Sabbath?; *God’s Holy Days or Pagan Holidays*; *Which Is the True Gospel?*; *Do the Saved Go to Heaven?*; and *End All Your Financial Worries.*)

As with the Pharisees, the world’s ministers preach false doctrines and lead people away from God. If Jesus were here today, He would indict these ministers in the same manner! Ask yourself whether *you* are worshipping Jesus Christ in vain. Do not assume His warning only applies to others. Assume it could mean *YOU*! Investigate *WHY* you believe as you do—*WHY* you observe popular traditions.

(8) James 2

The eighth passage rarely even mentioned by ministers is in *James 2*. First, understand that some assert that keeping the Ten Commandments is “legalistic” merely because salvation is by grace. How do grace and *obedience to God* connect to salvation? And does obeying the Law—your works—mean you are trying to earn salvation?

Read James: “Even so faith, if it has not works, is dead, being alone... You have faith, and I have works: show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith *by* my works... But will you know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?” (2:17-18, 20).

In regard to the Old Testament patriarch Abraham, verse 22 states, “See you how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect?”

Most assume that grace and works are mutually exclusive. The Bible says no such thing. In fact, God’s Word demonstrates *both* are required.

Think of salvation in this way. A wealthy father approaches his son heading off to college with this offer: “Son, upon graduation, I will give you one million dollars if you maintain a B average, never get drunk, and never cut classes.”

Ask: if the young man meets these conditions, will he receive the million dollars? Yes! Has his conduct earned him the money? No! Of course not. He merely did what all young men should do at college. Yet he would not receive

the million dollars if he did not meet the preconditions—the *qualifiers*!

Salvation is the same. Of course God offers far more than a million dollars, but only those who obey Him—who qualify—may receive His offer. Why cannot millions of Christians understand such basic logic?

There is nothing one can do to earn salvation. It is completely a gift from God. No amount of commandment-keeping can atone for violating God’s Law. Only Jesus’ blood can do this. However, reward in the next life, after receiving salvation, is determined by your works. The commandments describe personal responsibility—what you must do. Yet, when fully understood, obedience is not you doing it, but rather Christ in you who will keep the same commandments He did when in the flesh 2,000 years ago!

Do not accept the reasoning of men. Examine the pages of your Bible.

Another passage clarifies grace and works: “But God... is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us [Paul wrote], even when we were dead in sins, has quickened us together with Christ... and has raised us up together... For by grace are you saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God”—this is true!—“not of works, lest any man should boast”—again, true! Yet—“for we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus *unto good works*, which God has before ordained that we should *walk in them*” (Eph. 2:4-6, 8-10).

All of James 2 discusses how faith and works go hand-in-hand toward achieving salvation and eternal reward. Christians demonstrate faith in God by doing good works and keeping His Law. Yet it requires Christ’s faith working in them to succeed.

(9) Matthew 4:4

The ninth verse is *Matthew 4:4*: “... Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.” Most Christians do not study their bibles, never mind diligently. They do not use God’s Word as an Instruction Manual for mankind.

They do not live the Bible. They do not “study to show [themselves] approved unto God” or “rightly divide the word of truth” (II Tim. 2:15). If they did, especially this world’s ministers, articles like this would be unnecessary. Everyone would already understand all these verses.

Fifty years ago, a newspaper article exposed Christians’ ignorance of the Bible. But since then, this has worsened.

The article stated, “Some months ago, a Protestant pastor administered a Bible quiz to the members of his congregation. The questions were very simple. Anyone with a general knowledge of the Bible should have been able to answer all of them easily. The results staggered the pastor. Only five percent of his flock made a commendable grade on the test. Fifteen percent failed to give a single correct answer. Sixty percent were unable to name the four Gospels. Seventy-five percent could not identify Calvary (Golgotha) as the place where Jesus was crucified...The vast majority of Americans today are Bible illiterates. They simply have never read the book which they profess to regard as the ‘Word of God’” (*United Press International*). So sadly true!

The reporter concluded, “A great many people have turned away from the Bible because when they do try to read it, they find they cannot understand it... To the modern reader, it has a remote and antiquarian flavor. It is likely to leave him with the impression the Bible is an ancient history book that has no real relevance to his life here and now” (*ibid.*).

Society almost considers biblical knowledge irrelevant. J.B. Phillips, of the Phillips Bible translation, wrote: “It is one of the curious phenomena of modern times that it is considered perfectly respectable to be abysmally ignorant of the Christian faith. Men and women who would be deeply ashamed of having their ignorance exposed in matters of poetry, music, or painting, for example, are not in the least perturbed to be found ignorant of the New Testament” (*The Young Church in Action*). I would add they are even more ignorant of the Old Testament.

A true Christian does not let his Bible gather dust on a shelf. He is daily studying it—every word from God’s mouth. (To learn *how* to study, order the free article “The Rules of Effective Bible Study” at rcg.org/troebbs.)

(10) Matthew 24:4-5

The 10th passage that is ignored by virtually every professing Christian relates to this entire article. In *Matthew 24:4-5*, Jesus warned, “Take heed that no man *deceive* you. For many shall come in My name, saying, I am Christ; and shall *deceive many*.” The first “many” here are the vast majority of thought-to-be Christian ministers who proclaim Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah, but who do not believe or teach what He taught. Neither do they come with His authority.

Six verses later, Jesus added, “... *many* false prophets shall rise, and shall *deceive many*” (vs. 11). Not only would false prophets deceive the great majority, they would also infiltrate the true Church, Christ warned, causing many true Christians to fall away. During the last days, false prophets were foretold to increase in number and in their power to deceive. Here is Jesus’ chilling warning: “For there shall arise *false Christs*, and *false prophets*, and shall show great signs and wonders...” (vs. 24).

You must understand the power, influence and grave danger presented by false prophets and false teachers—and grasp what it means for you. There are many deceivers at work today. But how many are taking heed, as Jesus said? How many are doing their homework on something so vital? How many are carefully examining those *claiming to represent God*?

The Bible says prophets fall into one of two categories—true or false. All—past, present or future—are one or the other. They cannot be both, and they cannot be in-between. Within the category of *false* prophets are two types: those who claim to be prophets, but falsely foretell events, not being inspired by the true God—and those who do not necessarily claim to be prophets, but who teach falsely about prophecy—and

for that matter any other aspect of God’s Word. The latter would include false teachers and false ministers. Like false prophets, false teachers assert they are vested with God’s authority. Rather than falsely prophesying future events, they teach false doctrines supposedly from the Bible. Therefore, Jesus’ warnings also apply to false teachers, who work in the same way.

Understand. On the surface, false prophets rarely appear to be what they are. They are incredibly seductive and seem to be men of God. We have seen that effective deceivers have the ability to almost miraculously transform themselves into something they are not. This is how they are able to deceive so many. Think of popular televangelists and religious personalities. The most famous are invariably the smoothest in style, tone, emphasis, body language, and word choice. These men come off as sincere and believable. The result is that thousands sit in stadiums mesmerized by these religious actors. In fact, some could win Academy Awards if they *were* actors.

The New Testament describes how false ministers and false prophets attempt to confuse even God’s people. Therefore, God must show exactly how to distinguish the true from the false—the genuine from the impostors. Many verses do this. God allows no room for doubt or confusion. Jesus said, “Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves” (Matt. 7:15). If such men *appeared* as vicious wolves, who would follow them? Because they can portray themselves as men of God—some *masterfully*—fooling many is easier than taking candy from a baby.

Do not let them fool you!

We have examined 10 verses that should now be impossible to misunderstand. While the Christian world either rejects, never discusses, or spiritualizes away their true meaning, you should not.

Part 2 will examine 10 more verses that Christianity ignores. Do not miss it.

In the meantime, you may want to order my free book *The Bible’s Difficult Scriptures Explained!* at rcg.org/tbdse. □

WEATHER & ENVIRONMENT

Wildfires Scorch Western United States

State and federal resources have been stretched to the limit as 45 blazes, which claimed at least six lives and forced thousands of residents to flee, continue to affect nine states.

“Drought, rising temperatures, a century of fire suppression policies that allowed many forested areas to grow unnaturally thick with fuel, and more and more people living on the wilderness edge have thrust the West into this new era of bigger and fiercer burns,” *Los Angeles Times* reported. “The amount of land charred every year has soared compared with previous decades.

“Since 2000, it has not been uncommon for wildfire seasons to end with a tally of 7 million to 9 million blackened acres nationally. Though total burned acreage dropped during a few years of milder weather, it spiraled again last year when flames galloped across parched Texas.”

Over just three days in June 2012, a blaze in New Mexico, the largest in the state’s history, consumed 54 square miles of forest in Lincoln National Park.



■ **AFTERMATH:** An entire neighborhood with the exception of a few homes lies in ruins after the Waldo Canyon fire swept through Colorado Springs, Colorado (June 30, 2012). PHOTO: SPENCER PLATT/GETTY IMAGES

Colorado has also suffered the worst fires since record-keeping began in the state.

“In Colorado alone, three fires have destroyed more than 600 homes and killed six residents,” *The Associated Press* reported.

“We’re really just at the start of our severe fire season,” Carole Walker, executive director of the Rocky Mountain Insurance Information Association told *Insurance Journal*. “Given our fire danger I wouldn’t be surprised if it becomes a tragically historic season.” □

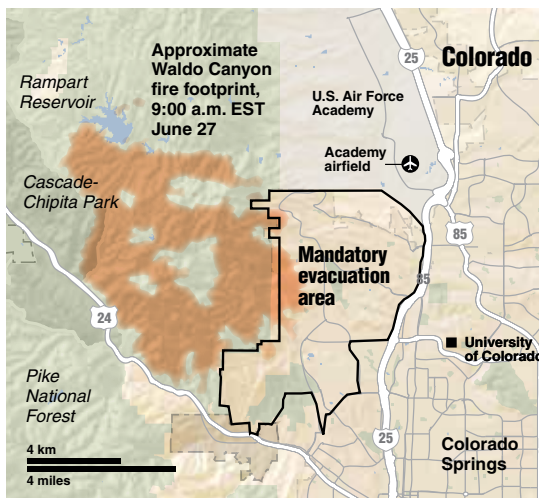


■ **ABLAZE:** Flames consume a tree along the north side of U.S. Highway 24 near the Waldo Canyon trailhead in Colorado Springs, Colorado (June 26, 2012).

PHOTO: CHRISTIAN MURDOCK/COLORADO SPRINGS GAZETTE/MCT

Colorado in Flames

Major fires burned out of control near Fort Collins and Boulder.



Source: InciWeb, Google maps, ESRI, TeleAtlas, USGS
Graphic: Los Angeles Times



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AMERICAS

Mexico Elects New President

Enrique Pena Nieto of the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) was elected as Mexico's new president on July 1, 2012. The nation is just one of at least 26 that will experience some kind of leadership changes this year.

Polls indicate Mr. Pena Nieto held an estimated lead of about seven points over the strongest opponent, Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador.

The PRI's win has revived fears that it could achieve another decades-long grip on political power.

"Pena Nieto's Institutional Revolutionary Party...ran Mexico for 71 unbroken years of autocratic rule that ended in 2000, and it was accused of systemic corruption that included payoffs from drug lords in exchange for protection," *The Associated Press* stated.

In his acceptance address, published in Spanish by *El Universal*, Mr. Pena Nieto determined to clear up the past and assured his administration would be a "time to look forward." He pledged to develop a nation where everyone can "write their personal success story" (as translated by *The Real Truth*).

One of the biggest challenges for the new leader will be controlling the drug war, which has caused approximately 50,000 deaths.



■ **NEW LEADERSHIP:** The Mexican president-elect, Enrique Pena Nieto, speaks during a meeting with the international press in Mexico City (July 2, 2012).

PHOTO: YURI CORTEZ/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

In addition, almost half of Mexico's population is under the poverty level and many do not pay taxes. Analysts say new fiscal, employment and educational reforms are necessary to close the gap.

"Mexicans have given our party another chance," Mr. Pena Nieto said in the *Telegraph*. "We are going to honour it with results." □

Mexican Presidential Election

Percentage of votes won, based on 85 percent of returns



NOTE: Results for other parties not shown

2012 MCT
Source: Reuters, MCT Photo Service

DISEASE

Scientists: Bird Flu Pandemic Only "Three Mutations" Away

Avian influenza may be just "three mutations" away from being transmittable via human-to-human contact, a Cambridge University study revealed. Currently, the H5N1 virus strain can only be contracted from infected birds.

As of this writing, the World Health Organization reported 606 human cases of bird flu since records began in 2003. During that period, the deadly strain killed 357.

Researchers found that the evolution of the virus could occur in a single person, but cannot as of yet accurately predict when this will happen.

A press release from the university quoted Professor Derek Smith, who co-authored the study: "With the information we have, it is impossible to say what the exact risk is of the virus becoming airborne transmissible among humans. However, the results suggest that the remaining three mutations could evolve in a single human host, making a virus evolving in nature a potentially serious threat." □



PHOTO: THINKSTOCK

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