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A MAGAZINE RESTORING PLAIN UNDERSTANDING



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VOL. X | NO. 8 | SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER 2012

A R T I C L E S

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**Eating Yourself to Death
The Junk Food Epidemic**

According to a National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey, one-third of the U.S. diet consists of junk or fast food. Why has it become so prevalent in society—and how can one resist it?

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FRONT COVER: Top, Republican presidential candidate Mitt Romney addresses a crowd during the Republican National Convention in Tampa, Florida (Aug. 30, 2012). Bottom, U.S. President Barack Obama speaks during the final day of the Democratic National Convention in Charlotte, North Carolina (Sept. 6, 2012).

PHOTOS: JEWEL SAMAD/AFP/ (TOP); JOE RAEDLE/ (BOTTOM) GETTY IMAGES

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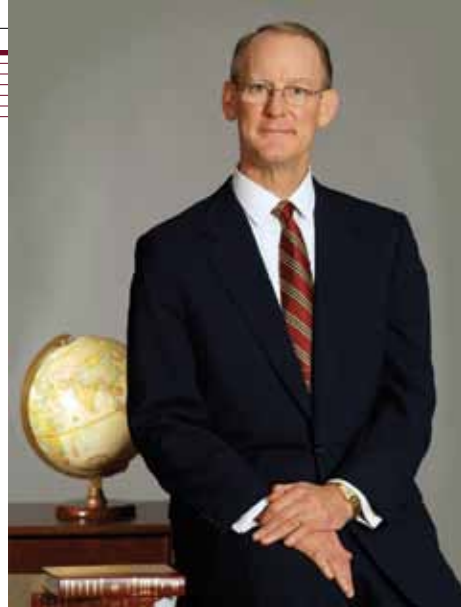
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PERSONAL FROM

David C. Fack



What Few Understand About Sex

THE WORLD HAS been ignorant of the TRUE PURPOSES of sex. The result has been untold pain and suffering for the masses! This near epidemic of misery is measured in disease, new kinds of perversion, unwanted pregnancies, often yielding abortions, illegitimate children or unwanted children in marriage, skyrocketing divorce rates, which in turn produce corresponding numbers of jumbled families, bankruptcies, court battles, and even crime.

Sadly, these conditions grow worse and more complicated, with each new generation compounding the problems and evils of the previous one.

Tragedy, unhappiness and confusion about sex and marriage have afflicted every nation of the world for thousands of years, and people have not known where to turn for the ANSWERS—the SOLUTIONS—to so many ill effects. But there *are* answers—there *are* solutions—and you can know them. What has not been known is that there is a VITAL MISSING DIMENSION to marriage and sex.

This Personal reveals it!

Sex-drenched Society

The world is now drenched—in fact, drowning—in a deluge of sex, with much or most of it having no con-

nection to any real meaning or right purpose. More than ever in history, all mankind is awash in every conceivable sexual pleasure, fantasy, perversion and pursuit—in or out of marriage, with fewer people any longer making a distinction between the two. There has come to be no end to—and virtually no limits on—advertisements, television programs, movies, books, magazines, articles, pictures and websites for every sex-related activity that the misguided creative genius of human beings could devise.

But sadly, there has been a *worldwide drought* in right understanding of marriage and sex! And almost none know why they were born—what is the SUPREME PURPOSE for human life. Most have no idea there even *is* a purpose for human existence. Believing himself to be merely the highest of the animals in an evolutionary chain, man has remained in the dark, completely unable to see a reason for sex, or for human beings existing as men and women. Yet there is an awesome purpose for humanity collectively—and you personally—and, when fully understood, it is inseparable from the purposes of sex and the marriage institution.

Recognize that you have been trained—actually *conditioned*—in wrong knowledge and values about this subject. Not only do you need to learn the truth of when and why sex—and its vital, hidden role in marriage—but you also have to be prepared to unlearn all the error that has been pumped into you about them. You must be

reconditioned to the truth. As you would with any other Bible teaching, you must be prepared to wash your mind from all assumptions, error and wrong thinking.

But before we can understand all that God teaches about the purposes of sex, we must examine what is occurring today.

“New Morality”

The sexual revolution of the latter 20th century changed the entire world—and not for the better. During this period, the idea of “sex without boundaries” exploded. The advent of cable television, the Internet, and the vast expanse of every conceivable kind of pornography it offers, and the ease with which adult videos can be obtained, have helped spread the mindset that all sex is good—in or out of marriage.

Barriers everywhere have dropped—and are still dropping as they near a complete collapse on all fronts. Every day sees new lows in immorality, perversion, debauchery and “anything goes” when it comes to sexual habits and appetites. Experimentation and indulgence have become the norm. Most have come to believe that free sex in every form—with the same or opposite sex—or both—is a simple matter of personal preference. It is as though there is no longer the slightest concern about whether sexual activity is *right* or *wrong*. Vast millions now believe that achieving sexual pleasure in any setting, for any purpose, and involving any kind of experimentation or activity (and this includes any number of men and women participating in a single sexual episode) is perfectly acceptable—and is now seen as almost a human “right” of sorts.

By every earlier human standard and definition of morality—not to mention what *God* teaches!—sexual values in the early 21st century are infinitely worse than a mere 50 years ago. Words like “shocking,” “disgusting,” “sickening” and “revolting” come to mind when one looks across the world at what is now seen to be normal conduct to young people. Even the bestiality more common in ancient times is quietly reappearing. It is not too early to ask: how soon before *this* perversity becomes at least tacitly accepted by society?

Adultery is now rampant in all Western nations, with approximately 80 percent of U.S. households experiencing and afflicted by what is being committed by one or both mates. The suffering of all kinds connected just to illicit sex by married people is staggering to consider. When will we find that 93—or even 100 percent—of couples are no longer faithful in marriage?

But conditions have gone far beyond simple adultery, which is wrong enough. Recognize that the worst kinds of perversion and sick, degenerate practices in modern society cannot even be covered in this Personal. Here is why: “For it is a shame even to speak of those

things which are done of them in secret [those practicing immorality]” (Eph. 5:12). Bear in mind that the worst things happening in the sexual arena throughout society must be excluded from mention.

Improving or Degenerating?

To some, the world exists in a state that *appears* to be improving. Achievements in science, technology, medicine and invention have led to advancements of every kind. As problems and troubles arise, man *seems* unlimited in his ability to solve them. But is he *really* solving them? Are the accompanying wounds of supposed advancement being healed by technology?

The total fund of human knowledge doubles *annually*. But is all this information improving society? Is it helping humanity to make better choices? Are human beings—as “informed” people—better off than the “ignorant and uneducated” masses of previous centuries?

One of the greatest areas in which knowledge has flourished is that of sex. A plethora of information—and “instruction”—is now available. But has this avalanche of information enabled human beings to make better decisions in their sexual practices? Has the almost total pursuit of “better sex” and just plain *more sex* improved social conditions or solved any problems? Has this knowledge stemmed the tsunami of all the negative effects that hurt and destroy so many lives? Or is it making things worse?

Most people never stop to examine the depth to which sex permeates almost every facet of society. One can no longer turn on the television (and this also applies to movies) without finding a program that has at least sexual undertones—but more often blatant messages! Magazines, beginning with the cover, are literally filled with photos, stories and features that would shock even the most liberal-minded of past generations.

The sheer *number* of articles about sex in these magazines is overwhelming. For instance, how many have titles such as “10 Ways to Please Her (or Him),” or “12 Bedroom Secrets to Use on Him (or Her),” or “6 Tips to Know When to...” etc.? Billboard-sized nudes now line the highways of some countries. I saw some while on an international trip.

And, again, there is now the Internet, and its *online magazines*, which offer a veritable buffet—an astonishing smorgasbord—of incredible sexual perversions, titillations, venues and “activities.”

Two Extremes

Throughout history, man’s attitude toward sex has ranged from Puritan censorship and prudery—including

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SYRIA'S CRISIS SET TO REDEFINE THE WORLD

An 18-month revolution in Syria is poised to bring about a new era for the Middle East—and recast the power players of the entire globe.

BY SAMUEL C. BAXTER

“SHOULD WE step in?” This has been the chief question in every national conflict since World War II.

In each instance, the West has had to decide whether to intervene or allow the sovereign state in question to sort out its own issues. The answer has varied over the decades: Kuwait, Bosnia, Somalia, Kosovo, Iraq and Afghanistan got a “yes.” Cambodia, Rwanda, Burma and Sudan a “no.”

For now, the jury is out on Syria, which has been embroiled in violence since early 2011. Most nations seem to be straddling the fence with, “We will not go in...not yet, anyway.”

Still, tragic stories continue to pour out from the Middle Eastern country: children killed in crossfire, fathers tortured, whole neighborhoods laid to

waste, violent protests morphing into all-out civil war.

What was first lumped in with other Arab Spring uprisings (think Tunisia and Egypt) has morphed into an Islamic sectarian clash. *BBC News* summarized the worsening crisis: “Thousands of Syrians have lost their lives in the escalating conflict between forces loyal to [Syrian] President al-Assad and those opposed to his rule. The bloody internal battle has forced tens of thousands to flee across the country’s borders and is now threatening to tear the nation apart.”

■ **AT THE BRINK:** Top left, fighters with the Free Syria Army pass weapons through a hole in a building before an offensive against government forces in the embattled northern city of Aleppo (Sept. 9, 2012). Bottom left, a devastated area demonstrates the destruction in the Salaheddin district of Aleppo (Sept. 6, 2012). Right, a Syrian woman walks past rubble while traveling to a food distribution center in Aleppo (Sept. 13, 2012).

PHOTOS: ZAC BAILLIE/AFP/ (TOP LEFT); ACHILLEAS ZAVALLIS/AFP/ (BOTTOM LEFT); MARCO LONGARI/AFP/ (RIGHT) GETTY IMAGES

“The uprising has its roots in protests that erupted in March 2011 in the southern city of Deraa after the arrest and torture of some teenagers who painted revolutionary slogans on a school wall. After security forces opened fire on demonstrators, killing several, more took to the streets.”

Continuing, *BBC* stated, “The unrest triggered nationwide protests demanding President Bashar al-Assad’s resignation...By July 2011, hundreds of thousands were taking to the streets in towns and cities across the country.”

Over the intervening months, Western concern has grown. Some fear Mr. Assad will dip into his stockpile of chemical weapons and use them on the rebels, or that these weapons of mass destruction will fall into terrorists’ hands. Others worry about radical Islamic forces taking over the nation.

The New York Times wrote, “As the uprising against President Bashar al-Assad’s government grinds on with no resolution in sight, Syrians involved in the armed struggle say it is becoming more radicalized: homegrown Muslim jihadists, as well as small groups of fighters from Al Qaeda, are taking a more prominent role and demanding a say in running the resistance.”

Foreign Policy dissected the brimming hostility in an article titled “Syria Is More Violent than Iraq at Its Worst.” Using numbers from the Center for Documentation of Violations in Syria, an activist website that monitors the conflict’s death toll, the publication marked 5,037 Syrian deaths in August 2012—making it the bloodiest month of the war.

FP continued, “How do those numbers compare with the Iraqi casualties during the height of the civil war? According to the Brookings Institution’s Iraq Index...34,500 Iraqi civilians were killed in 2006, and 2,091 Iraqi military and police also lost their lives—a total of 3,049 Iraqis per month.”

“The bloodshed in Iraq is not any more tolerable because Syria is in the midst of its own tragedy; Syrians, meanwhile, don’t need such statistics

to know the extent of their suffering. However, it is a stark reminder of the human cost of the Syrian revolt, which promises to define the next era of Middle East politics in the same way that Iraq defined the last.”

So, at what point do other nations step in as NATO troops did in Libya and Afghanistan? Or form a “coalition of the willing,” such as in Iraq?

Undoubtedly, the world cannot utterly ignore an event that is set to “define the next era of Middle East politics.” Add to this that historically whoever takes a sure hand in the Mideast generally also takes a lead position on the global stage. Alexander the Great is an example of this, Europe eyed the region during the Crusades, and Napoleon pushed in that direction when taking Egypt.

And in the past four decades this trend has continued with U.S. intervention in Kuwait and Western forces in Iraq and Afghanistan.

This means events in Syria, and all other Arab Spring nations, will define not only the next era of Middle East politics—but also that of the entire world.

Wearied Watchman

Complicating matters in the Middle East is a cash-strapped and distracted United States. Decades of operating as a self-styled world policeman and the annual price tag that goes with it—the Department of Defense budgeted \$707 billion for 2012—has left the nation’s politicians and citizens weary.

Washington still has forces actively fighting in Afghanistan and is dedicated to assisting Iraqi soldiers. It has thousands of military personnel stationed across the globe—in Europe, patrolling the East Pacific, and scattered throughout the Middle East.

Business Insider noted this “weariness” among leading liberal and conservative political leaders on September 5: “Mitt Romney was the first Republican candidate for president since 1952 to make no mention of war in his convention acceptance speech. (He didn’t even mention the tens of thousands of U.S. troops cur-

rently in harm’s way.) And Barack Obama’s approach to the Middle East is mainly to ignore it and hope that the next catastrophe, whatever it may be, erupts no sooner than Nov. 7. To some extent, this desire to be rid of the nation’s commitments in the region reflects a strain of isolationism that dates back to America’s founding. Recent trends, too, have made the Mideast seem less relevant to the U.S.’s national security: The boom in domestic energy production and the prospect of the U.S.’s weaning itself from foreign oil [less than 13 percent now comes from the Middle East]; the killing of bin Laden and the apparent decline of al-Qaeda; and the argument that the U.S.’s attentions and resources would be far better spent dealing with a rising China in the Pacific.”

Due to this, the White House has ordered a strategic “pivot” of military resources to Asia.

Yet the “next catastrophe” in the Middle East struck only days after the *Business Insider* article was published. Libyan protesters attacked the U.S. embassy—killing the American ambassador and three others. Militants also overran the U.S. consulate in Egypt, and the same thing happened in Yemen the next day.

In response, the White House condemned the violence and vowed to work with Libyan officials to bring the murderers to justice.

The events herald in a new age of the Middle East. Despite outright attacks on United States embassies, the nation remains tepid toward retaking a heavy hand in the region.

This is especially true of Syria. If the U.S. deposes Mr. Assad, radical Islamists may be next in line to take the governmental reins. If Washington remains out of the picture, thousands more will die each month. If it were to declare war, it would have to deal with formidable Syrian forces and WMDs. America is still supporting Iraq and at war in Afghanistan—and it is unlikely that it will add a third front.

Washington Post contributing editor Jim Hoagland wrote, “Syria’s civil

war is the decisive event in the remaking of the Middle East that began with the self-immolation of a Tunisian fruit vendor 21 months ago. The battle for Damascus has become the fulcrum of a now fully visible Sunni-Shiite struggle over the creation and control of an Islamic political order throughout the region.

“The Pax Americana [American Peace] that has prevailed in the region since 1973—the last time a major Arab-Israeli war erupted—is rapidly eroding. American power, friendship or enmity will no longer be decisive for Egyptians, Syrians or even Saudis in the ways they have been for nearly four decades.”

Think back over the last half century. Almost every time the West—primarily meaning America—decided to intervene, the nation generally held the make-or-break vote.

With Washington being forced to turn inward to address its numerous domestic problems over the last few years, other nations have become more assertive. Despite the U.S.’s continued and undisputed military dominance, other nations have begun to act on their own.

Eastern Alliance

While most Western nations, and the new government in Egypt, are calling

for President Assad to step down—China and Russia see things differently.

Government-funded *Russia Today* outlined the Sino-Russian viewpoint, “In Syria, for example, rebels have been engaged in a protracted campaign to overthrow the government of President Bashar al-Assad. In an effort to quell the violence, Russia and China are pushing for the Kofi Annan plan, which demands that both sides enter into a ceasefire and head to the negotiating table.”

The *Telegraph* quoted Russian President Vladimir Putin: “The most important task today is ending the violence... We must urge all the warring parties, including the government and the so-called rebels, the armed opposition, to sit down at the negotiating table and decide on a future that would guarantee security for all of the stakeholders within Syria.”

Beijing has walked in lockstep with Moscow on this issue (and many others). The two nations used their seats on the United Nations Security Council to shoot down sanctions against Syria’s political elites in mid-July.

Mr. Putin summarized how his country would act in this “new era” in *Russia Today*: “A new Russia, a modern Russia behaves and will behave differently.”

The same case can be made for China, with its rapidly increasing political clout.

Over in Europe...

While no direct intervention is currently in place, individual governments have stepped forward to push their own plans for peace. *The International* wrote: “Earlier this month [September 2012] France, Syria’s old colonial master, became the first EU state to directly funnel aid to the Syrian opposition, pledging to equip rebel-held parts of the country with basic supplies such as humanitarian goods and building materials.

“To date, the EU Commission has provided around a half of all aid to Syria, on September 7 announcing a further €60 million (\$76 million) to supplement the €200 million (\$253 million) already given. The majority of this has been sent to aid groups.”

UPI reported that European Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso said the EU must take a stronger role in the Middle East to ensure a democratic Syria emerges from the conflict.

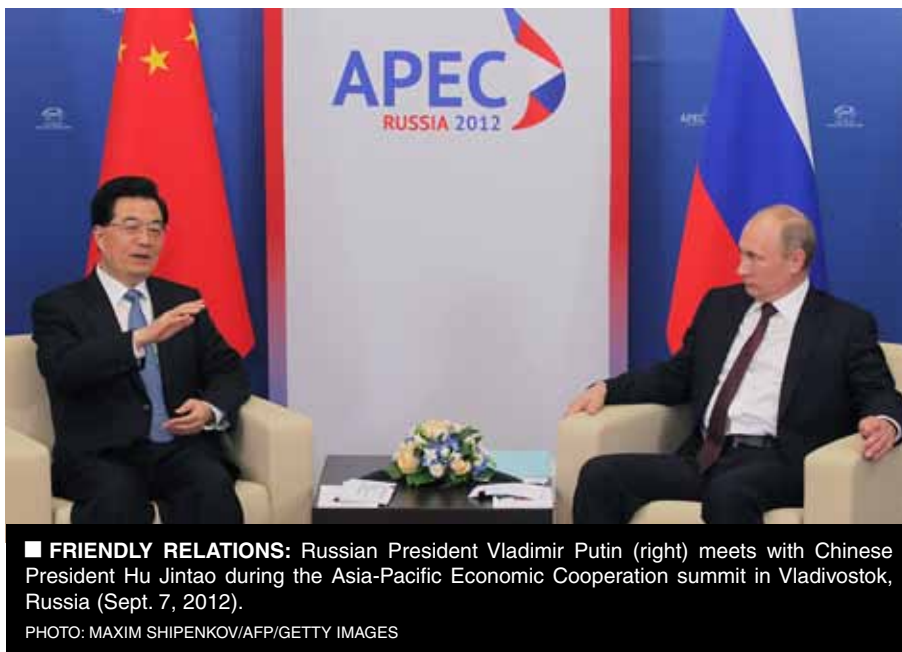
Summarizing part of his state of the EU address, the news organization continued, “More than ever... a ‘new world order’ needs an active and engaged Europe. Human rights and European values are principles that extend beyond the borders of the European Union.”

On the religious front, Pope Benedict XVI has been increasingly vocal about pursuing Middle East peace and recently visited Lebanon.

Ahead of a three-day pontifical visit, *Gulf News* wrote, “Joseph Bahout, a French professor of political science and Middle East expert, said the ‘pope arrives to a different Lebanese and regional context that is completely new, very different from that of the past.’”

The Associated Press reported on an open-air mass in Beirut, where the pontiff lamented the Syrian conflict, “which generates so much suffering.”

“Why so much horror? Why so many dead?” he said. He called on



■ **FRIENDLY RELATIONS:** Russian President Vladimir Putin (right) meets with Chinese President Hu Jintao during the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit in Vladivostok, Russia (Sept. 7, 2012).

PHOTO: MAXIM SHIPENKOV/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

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America's Most Divisive Election

Intensifying political rifts reveal much about the nation's condition.

BY NESTOR A. TORO

A BRAHAM LINCOLN spoke plainly: "A house divided against itself cannot stand."

Yet this is how the United States looks today. Sharply divided. Split on a myriad of issues. The nation seems unable to understand the direction it is going as it braces for its most divisive election.

But Lincoln had more to say in his famous Senate nomination acceptance speech quoted above: "I believe this government cannot endure permanently half slave and half free. I do not expect the Union to be dissolved—I do not

expect the house to fall—but I do expect it will cease to be divided. It will become all one thing, or all the other."

While the context for his 1858 speech was slavery, his message fits the United States today as much as it did a century and a half ago. Were Lincoln speaking about the 2012 presidential campaign, his words might well include, "I believe this government..."

■ "...cannot endure permanently half pro-austerity measures and half pro-bailouts."

■ "...cannot endure permanently half big government and half small government."

■ "...cannot endure permanently half for greenhouse gas regulations and half for coal."

■ "...cannot endure permanently half pro-life and half pro-choice."

■ "...cannot endure permanently half [insert position from the political left] and half [insert position from the political right]."

Lincoln would likely add, "I do not expect the U.S. to fall—but I do expect it will cease to be divided. It will become all one thing, or all the other."

For a "true blue" liberal, this would be music to his ears: "A left-wing president, Senate and House of

Representatives, all walking arm-in-arm, all pushing the same agenda. Finally!”

Likewise, for a dyed-in-the-wool conservative, it would seem equally attractive: “A truly united government pushing the ideals and values to which I hold true. Fantastic!”

That is, unless it was the opposite political side that became the “all one thing.”

The vehement division of the mid-1800s proved Lincoln’s words. America did become “all one thing.” Yet this was the result of a horrific civil war that ended with hundreds of thousands of casualties. Without bloodshed, the country simply was unable to agree!

Today’s divided political players should learn from this lesson of history. The U.S. may not have yet come to citizens bearing arms against one another, but the nation is inextricably divided, with the seeds of hostility appearing nationwide.

As it was during Lincoln’s time, the country today is not sure where it stands. Disagreement abounds. Politicians cannot work together. Citizens vehemently hold to their viewpoints and denigrate the opposition at every turn. The nation is rushing headlong toward political conflict, unable to agree on *any* issue—how to handle debt, unemployment, taxes, gun control, healthcare or religion.

In his book *Our Divided Political Heart*, Eugene Joseph Dionne Jr., a senior fellow at The Brookings Institution think tank and *Washington Post* columnist, wrote: “Underlying our political impasse is a lost sense of national balance that in turn reflects a loss of historical memory. *Americans disagree about who we are because we can’t agree about who we’ve been.* We are at odds over the meaning of our own history, over the sources of our national strength, and over what it is, philosophically and spiritually, that makes us ‘Americans.’”

Unquestionably, the 2012 presidential election will drastically impact the United States. But choosing who will sit in the White House for the

next term is not America’s greatest battle. After November, a much more difficult reality awaits the winner—that of “a house divided against itself.”

“Hands off our Medicare!”

“I’m hoping he makes it very clear on his Medicare stand,” a senior gentleman told *The Real Truth* in a calm, yet firm voice. His wife agreed, “Of course we are the older Americans, we lived through the 50s and 60s so we know what the good times are... But now there is so much division and hatred and fear in this country, it’s terrible...”

Their words resonated with several other anxiety-ridden attendees of a rally for Republican vice-presidential nominee Paul Ryan on a warm mid-August morning at the Walsh University Alumni Arena in Canton, Ohio.

“What I seek is the truth,” a lady of Argentinian descent expressed with earnest concern. “I already lived under dictatorship, I already lived under the military junta...under [Juan Domingo] Peron’s socialism, and then I already listened to all the demagoguery I have to hear...So what I want to know is if it is more about lies, or is it really as they say, that they want to relive what is the American dream?”

Fears seemed to be quickly assuaged, as the crowd cheered with enthusiasm during the candidate’s speech—a GOP-lensed criticism of the current administration. “The president was talking about Medicare,” said Mr. Ryan at the event, turning to the crowd and raising his eyebrows with a quiet assurance, “I’m excited about this.”

He followed with a phrase that rode a wave of applause: “This is a debate we want to have; this is a debate we need to have; this is a debate we are going to win!”

But the excitement quickly morphed into anger as attendees exited the arena. Outside, anti-Romney/Ryan protesters lined the road, totting signs and yelling, “Hands off our Medicare!”

The scene soon turned into a war of words, as various Romney/Ryan supporters joined the fray from the opposite side of the road. Both sides passionately yelled themselves into a cacophony that was ornamented by random car honking. At its climax, chants of “Freedom!” and “Hands off our Medicare!” along with an assortment of condescending statements from both sides such as “Get a job!” clashed loudly.

To bystanders, either side of the road could have passed for Democrat or Republican. They were pitted against each other for the same cause:

■ **MAKING A DECISION:** A crowd listens intently as vice presidential nominee Paul Ryan details his political policy ideas soon after being selected to run with Republican presidential candidate Mitt Romney in Canton, Ohio (Aug. 16, 2012).

PHOTO: STACEY L. PALM/THE REAL TRUTH



saving Medicare. Watching it was like listening to two different verses of the same tune sung simultaneously.

Even as the informal debate began to wind down, the voice of die-hard shouters could still be heard: “This is what freedom looks like!” a woman bellowed out, while a man on the other side spat back, “Freedom is America!”

Again, how can these two sides get along—even after the election?

Partisanship-mania

Similar discord continued weeks later at the Republican and Democratic National conventions. As if launching fiery attacks at each other were not enough, each party had its own share of in-house political blazes (between Ron Paul and Mitt Romney supporters, a Democratic platform blunder regarding Israel’s capital and God, etc.).

The conferences were microcosms of the national mood. A *Washington Post* article titled “Partisanship doesn’t seem worse. It is worse,” featured a Pew Research poll showing the extent of the divide: “In 1999, the average percentage point difference between Republicans and Democrats on 48 values question[s] in Pew polling was 11 percent. (In 1997, it was just a nine-percent difference.) By 2012, that difference had soared to 18 points.”

But the trend was not exclusive to Reds and Blues only. The article added, “...the Pew poll finds that the rise of partisanship extends to independents as well. ‘Even when the definition of the party bases is extended to include these leaning independents, the values gap has doubled between 1987 and 2012,’ according to a memo released by Pew describing the findings.”

The newspaper concluded, “What does all of this partisanship forebode for the...2012 campaign? Nothing good—unless you like nasty and vitriolic campaigns.”

Terms of Disagreement

Imagine if there were a “2012 Presidential Campaign Glossary.” It would be saturated with hot debate terms, such as “a moribund economy,”

“mounting debt,” “family planning,” “same-sex marriage,” “gun control,” “hyperunemployment,” “entitlement,” “tax cuts,” “tax hikes,” “pork-barrel spending,” “healthcare overhaul,” “Medicare,” “spiking energy prices,” “terrorism crisis,” “declining U.S. international profile,” “Iraq,” “Afghanistan,” “Israel,” “Russia,” “China,” “Iran” and much more.

If you picked an entry from above, definitions would vary, depending on which “edition” you had.

Take Medicare for instance. The Republican edition would define it as: “a benefit program headed for bankruptcy (largely thanks to Democrats), which must be transformed into a private-sector-funded premium support program.” Yet the Democrat edition would define it as: “a benefit program headed for bankruptcy (largely thanks to Republicans), which must be regulated under new policies such as the Affordable Care Act (ACA) to lower costs.”

Each side sees the program in trouble. Both propose solutions. Yet each side lampoons and boycotts the other’s proposal.

Analyzing the dilemma, The Brookings Institution stated: “Since Democrats mistrust the private sector in health care as much as Republicans mistrust the government, they predict that premium support will cause providers to profit and seniors to suffer. Ironically, Democrats favor competition among private plans in the ACA, but oppose it in Medicare, while Republicans push competition in Medicare but want to repeal the ACA. But who expects campaign politics to be logical?”

In even clearer language, *FactCheck.org* stated: “The Obama campaign is trying to peg Mitt Romney and Paul Ryan as the guys who will ‘end Medicare as we know it,’ and make seniors pay thousands more for health care. The Romney campaign is trying to paint President Barack Obama as the one who is ‘raiding Medicare,’ and cutting benefits for current seniors. But the reality is that both campaigns propose cutting the

growth in future Medicare spending—for good reason—and each is trying to scare seniors about the other campaign’s plan.”

Disunited Leaders

Now back to the “2012 Presidential Campaign Glossary.” One term in which both sides could “agree” would be: *unity*. Both Republicans and Democrats would define it as: “an ideal condition only partially achievable in modern politics; the opposite of debate—and there is no democracy without debate.”

Yet the give and take of traditional debating and voting appears to be reaching the end of its rope when it comes to many of today’s complex issues. Politicians are less able to compromise without causing uproar and upsetting voters. If agreeing with the other side means losing votes, “agreeing to disagree” is often the preferred choice.

A *USA Today* report based on U.S. House Clerk’s office records since 1947, referred to the 112th Congress, from 2011 to 2012, as the “least productive two-year gathering on Capitol Hill since the end of World War II.”

“Just 61 bills have become law to date in 2012 out of 3,914 bills that have been introduced by lawmakers, or less than 2% of all proposed laws. In 2011, after Republicans took control of the U.S. House, Congress passed just 90 bills into law. The only other year in which Congress failed to pass at least 125 laws was 1995... Not even the 80th Congress, which President Truman called the ‘do-nothing Congress’ in 1948, passed as few laws as the current one, records show.”

By September 11, however, as Congress returned from a five-week recess, all legislators were expected to agree upon one bill: “The one must-pass measure—a short-term continuing resolution to fund federal agencies—will avoid any pre-election talk of a government shutdown, with which neither party wants to be tagged,” *CNN* stated.

The article added, “Issues on which the divided Congress has not found



■ **HEATED EXCHANGE:** Supporters of Republican presidential candidate Mitt Romney demonstrate against backers of President Barack Obama stationed on the opposite side of the road following a rally for vice presidential candidate Paul Ryan in Canton, Ohio (Aug. 16, 2012).

PHOTO: STACEY L. PALM/THE REAL TRUTH

consensus include the Dec. 31 expiration of the Bush tax cuts and a budget plan to replace \$109 billion in automatic spending cuts, a drought-relief plan passed by the House but not the Senate, the extension of the Senate-passed federal farm bill that is languishing in the House and a bill to overhaul the U.S. Postal Service.”

Such political misdirection leads to a dead end. Why can they not agree?

The answer is that where principles and beliefs do not derive from a plain understanding of what is *right* and *wrong*, there is no common ground.

Right and Wrong

Put differently, if what is deemed “right” and “wrong” is not the same to conservatives and liberals, they will never agree.

Think. In Lincoln’s time, the North thought slavery was the wrong thing to do, while the South thought it was right. The nation was split in half. Soldiers went as far as fighting their own brothers to death for what they thought to be the *right* thing to do. No one goes to those extremes for what they think is wrong.

Both Republicans and Democrats consider slavery wrong today. A bill promoting slavery would not even be proposed in today’s Congress, and

there would be no debating and voting on it because it would be a clearly wrong bill. Everyone would understand that and agree.

Yet the issues of today are a different matter. President Obama believes same-sex marriage is right. Presidential candidate Romney thinks it is wrong.

Such is the case with issue after issue. Finding *common ground* hangs largely on whether or not two sides agree on something to be the right thing to do. If that basis is absent, lasting peace is impossible.

Common Ground

But what is common ground? *Merriam-Webster’s Dictionary* defines it as “a basis of mutual interest or agreement.” Looking at how the same dictionary defines each word is also insightful.

■ **Common:** “of or relating to a community at large: public...known to the community...belonging to or shared by two or more individuals or things or by all members of a group...”

■ **Ground:** “a basis for belief, action, or argument...a fundamental logical condition...a basic metaphysical cause...”

With that in mind, the common ground concept has more meaning. As a house must stand on solid ground or

else collapse, so does America. This 300-million-people household is in desperate need of finding solid COMMON GROUND on which to stand.

In other words, to be truly united, the nation must stand on well-defined beliefs across the board!

Think of the Pledge of Allegiance. Ask 10 Republicans how each thinks “One nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all” applies to Medicare, or any other previously listed issue. You will get 10 different answers. Then try the same with 10 Democrats.

Ask: how can the U.S. function if the terms “one,” “God,” “indivisible,” “liberty” and “justice” are all subject to personal interpretation?

Just as the United States cannot exist without first being UNITED, none of these issues can be fully addressed until leaders first come to grips with exactly who they are, and on what it is they believe—their common ground—as the representative group of the nation. Likewise, if America continues to *stand* as a superpower, it must be clear for what it STANDS. Not having a publicly agreed on set of values means everyone is in a constant state of compromise.

In such an environment, there is not much room for “United We Stand.” Instead, the house is now becoming so divided, one has to wonder HOW MUCH LONGER it can stand!

Ungovernable Nation?

Rewind the U.S. political time machine to its earliest presidential race. In those days, the runner-up to the elected president became vice president. George Washington (a farmer and soldier, with no formal schooling and no political party affiliation) and John Adams (a lawyer, Harvard graduate, and Federalist) had to find enough *common ground* to achieve one of the hardest endeavors: lead and keep a newly born country alive.

Fast-forward a handful of years and Adams is in a similar predicament as president. Jefferson—a Democrat—is his runner-up.

While each of these leaders had different views on how to run the young nation, they also had similar principles, and a similar vision: an independent—UNITED—States of America. What that meant to them was not left to interpretation. Notice the opening words of the U.S. Constitution: “We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.” Notice the terms *Union*, *Justice*, *Common*, *General*, *Blessings of Liberty*, and *United*. In all of these, COMMON GROUND is implied!

And politics were no rosier then. Tactics have always been the same—rhetoric and division are as old as democracy itself. Still unlike today’s extreme bigotry, left and right ideologies were not downright opposed. A nation could not have afforded such internal division and won a revolutionary war at the same time.

Such camaraderie is now inconceivable. Can you picture an Obama-Ryan or Romney-Biden ticket today?

The record of the last two years after Republicans gained control of the House of Representatives shows what would get accomplished: “Whatever Obama was for, whatever he undertook, whatever he proposed—all of it was seen as undermining traditional American liberties and moving the country toward some ill-defined socialism. Whatever else they did, Republicans would make sure they prevented Obama from accomplishing anything more. Over and over, they vowed to make him a one-term president. The result was an ugliness in Washington typified by the debilitating debt ceiling fight in the summer of 2011. It fed a worldwide sense that the United States could no longer govern itself” (*Our Divided Political Heart*).

The picture is clear: without a common set of beliefs America is ungovernable. And as the moral



■ **FACE OFF:** Protesters hold signs in support of President Barack Obama’s policies across the street from a rally held for vice presidential candidate Paul Ryan in Canton, Ohio (Aug. 16, 2012).

PHOTO: STACEY L. PALM/THE REAL TRUTH

compass goes haywire, so goes the nation. To Washington, Adams and Jefferson, the presidency concerned how to build America on solid, *common ground*. For the nation’s next elected president, it is more about how to save it from falling apart.

Basic Principle

Recall Lincoln’s speech. Continuing with the analogy of a house, he spoke of seeing “a lot of framed timbers, different portions of which we know have been gotten out at different times and places and by different workmen—Stephen, Franklin, Roger and James...or, if a single piece be lacking, we see the place in the frame exactly fitted and prepared yet to bring such piece in—in such a case we find it impossible not to believe that Stephen and Franklin and Roger and James all understood one another from the beginning, and all worked upon a common plan or draft drawn up before the first blow was struck...”

Throughout his analogy, Abraham Lincoln alluded to the Bible. Unity is a basic biblical principle—one America either never knew very well, or simply forgot.

In the Old Testament, the prophet Amos wrote, “Can two walk together, except they be agreed?” (3:3). The

answer is so basic! Also in the New Testament, the apostle Paul instructed: “...that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment” (I Cor. 1:10).

That is *God’s* definition of unity.

Under such conditions, there is no room for debate, no attack ads, and no division whatsoever.

The antidote for America’s current state of division is plain. It must learn to “walk together,” “in the same mind and in the same judgment”—on COMMON GROUND—with God. Only when the whole nation’s “basis of mutual interest or agreement” completely aligns with God’s, will it be fully blessed and truly united.

Sound impossible? What you may not know is that the same Book alluded to by Lincoln states it *will* happen soon, albeit not under man’s government. To learn how, order your free copy of the book *America and Britain in Prophecy* at rcg.org/aabibp.

Any other approach will only lead to more division. Or as Jesus Christ plainly stated in Matthew 12:25, “Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand.” □



Eating Yourself to Death

The Junk Food Epidemic



12



The REAL TRUTH

According to a National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey, one-third of the U.S. diet consists of junk or fast food. Why has it become so prevalent in society—and how can one resist it?

BY KENNETH M. OREL

IN 1976, a satirical song titled “Junk Food Junkie” hit the airwaves. The lyrics, penned by Larry Groce, started: “*You know I love that organic cooking, I always ask for more, and they call me Mr. Natural, on down to the health food store.*”

But as the song develops, listeners discover something disturbing about “Mr. Natural.”

“Oh, but at night I take out my strongbox, that I keep under lock and key, and I take it off to my closet, where nobody else can see...then I pull out a Hostess Twinkie, and I pop it in my mouth.”

“Mr. Natural” leads a double life, eating healthy food during the day and junk food at night.

Later, the song states, “*Ah, but when that clock strikes midnight, and I’m all by myself, I work that combination on my secret hideaway shelf, and I pull out some Fritos corn chips, Dr. Pepper and an ole Moon Pie, then I sit back in glorious expectation, of a genuine junk food high.*”

“Mr. Natural” cannot resist satisfying his secret cravings for sugary desserts filled with frosting and salty deep-fried chips.

“Oh, folks but lately I have been spotted, with a Big Mac on my breath, stumbling into a Colonel Sanders, with a face as white as death, I’m afraid someday they’ll find me, just stretched out on my bed, with a handful of Pringles potato chips, and a Ding Dong by my head.”

While many know that junk food and fast food are associated with an increase in obesity, heart disease, high blood pressure, cancer, tooth decay, and other maladies, and that vegetables and fruit are what they *should* eat, the popularity of fast food—more aptly labeled “junk” food—continues to grow. These salty snack foods, candy, gum, sugary desserts, fried fast food, and carbonated beverages are some of the “major” food groups within this category. Generally, these contain minimal amounts of protein, vitamins, minerals, fiber and lots of calories from sugar or fat.

Deep down, most desire to be “Mr. Healthy”—eat balanced meals, have a chiseled physique like their favorite athletes, and be able to shop at any clothing store. But with the hustle and bustle of everyday life, money tight, and the allure of a grilled burger calling your name, what is a junk-food junkie to do?

Quick Fix

As any busy person knows, eating healthy may not always seem realistic. Children need to be ferried to soccer and ballet practice. There are work projects, laundry, family crises, changing the car’s oil—all of which have to be done. Quality options are often substituted with highly processed boxed meals.

Not to mention that depending on where you live, eating right may appear virtually impossible. A drive down a main street of any sized town or city engulfs the senses in an onslaught of bright colors, flashing signs, and entic-

ing slogans all designed to make you crave a quick-fix meal.

“Over the last three decades, fast food has infiltrated every nook and cranny of American society,” Eric Schlosser wrote in *Fast Food Nation*. “An industry that began with a handful of modest hot dog and hamburger stands in southern California has spread to every corner of the nation, selling a broad range of foods wherever paying customers may be found. Fast food is now served at restaurants and drive-throughs, at stadiums, airports, zoos, high schools, elementary schools, and universities, on cruise ships, trains, and airplanes, at K-Marts, Wal-Marts, gas stations, and even at hospital cafeterias. In 1970, Americans spent about \$6 billion on fast food; in 2000, they spent more than \$110 billion. Americans now spend more money on fast food than on higher education, personal computers, computer software, or new cars. They spend more on fast food than on movies, books, magazines, newspapers, videos, and recorded music—combined.

“Pull open the glass door, feel the rush of cool air, walk in, get on line, study the backlit color photographs above the counter, place your order, hand over a few dollars, watch teenagers in uniforms pushing various buttons, and moments later take hold of a plastic tray full of food wrapped in colored paper and cardboard. The whole experience of buying fast food has become so routine, so thoroughly unexceptional and mundane, that it is now taken for granted, like brushing your teeth or stopping for a red light. It has become a social custom as American as a small, rectangular, hand-held, frozen, and reheated apple pie.”

Blame Game

When it comes to dealing with the increase in fast food—and the associated obesity epidemic—there is a lot of blame to go around. There are food manufacturers and their sly production

■ **CALORIE OVERLOAD:** Top, junk food sits on a table in Melbourne, Australia (March 6, 2012). Bottom left, a pizza box is left open. Bottom right, a sign for large sweetened drinks hangs on a window in New York City (June 1, 2012).

PHOTOS: SCOTT BARBOUR/GETTY IMAGES (TOP); THINKSTOCK (BOTTOM LEFT); SPENCER PLATT/GETTY IMAGES (BOTTOM RIGHT)

techniques, unscrupulous advertisers who know their claims are half-truths at best, calculating retail marketers who understand that placing junk food next to a checkout line will elicit a young child's fury and Mom's lust for that "King-sized" candy bar.

"If you have gained a lot of unwanted pounds at any time during the last 30-odd years, you may be relieved to know that you are probably not to blame. At least not entirely," health columnist Jane E. Brody wrote in a *New York Times* editorial.

"Many environmental forces, from economic interests of the food and beverage industries to the way our cities and towns are built, have conspired to subvert the body's natural ability to match calories in with calories out."

Ms. Brody continues, "When I was growing up in the 1940s and '50s, I had to walk or bike many blocks to buy an ice cream cone. There were no vending machines dispensing candy and soda, and no fast-food emporiums or shopping malls with food courts. Nor were we constantly bombarded with televised commercials for prepared foods and drinks laden with calories of fats and sugars.

"Yes, we kids had our milk and cookies after school, but then we went out to run around and play until dark. Television watching...was mostly a weekend family affair, not a nightly ritual with constant nosing.

"Most meals were prepared and eaten at home, even when both parents worked (as mine did). Eating out was a special event. 'Convenience' foods were canned fruits and vegetables, not frozen lasagna or Tater Tots. A typical breakfast was hot or cold cereal sweetened with raisins or fresh fruit, not a Pop-Tart, jelly doughnut or 500-calorie bagel with 200 calories of cream cheese.

"Before a mass exodus to the suburbs left hordes of Americans totally car-dependent, most people lived in cities and towns where feet served as a main means of transportation."

Later she adds, "As more women entered the work force, the food industry, noting a growing new market, mass-produced convenience foods with palate appeal. The foods were rich in sugar, salt and fat..."



"Manufacturers have found a way to cause you to keep coming back for more by including certain additives and chemicals that create an addiction to their products."

Partly due to convenience foods, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported that obesity is fast approaching the most common preventable cause of death—a close second behind tobacco. Obesity can cause many other health complications, including cardiovascular disease, high cholesterol, diabetes, heart disease, heart attacks, strokes, sleep apnea, and others.

The surgeon general reported "even moderate weight excess (10 to 20 pounds for a person of average height) increases the risk of death, particularly among adults aged 30 to 64 years. Individuals who are obese have a 50 to 100% increased risk of premature death from all causes, compared to individuals with a healthy weight."

Much of this, health experts say,

is related to the increase of processed food.

Recall the Twinkie Mr. Groce sang about. The additive that gives them their smooth feel—cellulose gum—is also used in rocket fuel. The gooey pastry eaten for breakfast? Most likely it contains alloxen, a byproduct of white flour. It has been shown to destroy the pancreatic beta cells of healthy experimental animals. The white biscuit sauce slathered on top of a piece of fried chicken? It could have been created with corn dextrin, a common thickener used in most fast food that is also present in the glue on envelopes and postage stamps—and is even put in explosives.

Similarly, the list of other ingredients in what is labeled "food" would shock you. Manufacturers have found a way to cause you to keep coming back for more by including certain additives and chemicals that create an addiction to their products.

In a *60 Minutes* broadcast that aired on November 27, 2011, an industry "cloaked in secrecy" was introduced to the world. This little known, multibillion-dollar business creates natural and artificial flavorings that cause consumers to keep coming back. Scientists, called flavorists, work in labs testing and creating flavors to make food "taste" better.

When these scientists find something they like, they extract flavor molecules from anywhere they can be found and then "mimic Mother Nature's molecules with chemicals," according to the program.

Why do they do this? To "improve" on the original taste. This industry's main goal is to develop "a flavor so good you can't resist it," which will create an addiction to the taste so you keep coming back for more.

In addition, foods that are mass produced can be more quickly processed, more efficiently packaged and sold, and stay on the store shelves longer. This all amounts to more profits for the food manufacturers but less nutrition for you.

Even if you opt for so-called healthier fast-food, these are sometimes worse. One popular fast food chain added several salads to their menu, but after throwing iceberg lettuce, a couple of cherry tomatoes, and some shredded carrots in a bowl, then adding chicken, bacon, cheese, dressing and croutons—their “healthy” salad amounted to over 800 calories—and a whopping 53 grams of fat!

As the American way of life is exported across the globe, many are blaming the United States for their own nations’ expanding waistlines.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), one billion adults are overweight (300 million are obese), and unless something changes soon, this figure will surpass 1.5 billion by 2015. WHO also reported that at least 2.6 million people die each year as a result of being overweight or obese. Over 42 million children under 5 years of age are overweight.

Entire countries are literally eating themselves to death through a regular diet of junk!

While the blame game could go on forever—science calls it a disease, doctors recommend surgery for it, evolutionists claim overeating is a left-over characteristic from man’s hunter/gatherer days—ultimately the only one who is responsible for putting a stop to it, through monitoring what is on your plate, is *you*.

Fuel for Life

The modern world embodies a rushed existence. Attention spans are shorter. Time has become increasingly precious, with many not wanting to waste a single second. Almost all push the limits and sleep less, looking for any shortcut to get more out of each day.

Where does a healthy diet fit into all of this? “Nowhere,” most conclude,

and the first place they cut corners is with their diets.

Realize, however, that what you put into your mouth is the *fuel* for your body. Consider. You would never pour sand into the gas tank of your car. If you did, you would go nowhere—and *fast!*

Eating junk food is similar, but the effects take longer to become obvious than sand for fuel. Realize what the ingredients contained in overly processed products are doing to your internal organs. Many of the calories in junk food come from dietary fat, starchy carbohydrates, and sugar. This results in excess fat in the body. Excess fat wreaks havoc on the body’s very delicate and complex internal system.

John Hopkins Medical Institution wrote about a recent study of 7,000 men and women by the Multiethnic Study of Atherosclerosis (MESA). It was discovered that obesity doubles the chances of someone developing heart failure. A senior researcher stated, “Even if obese people feel otherwise healthy, there are measurable and early chemical signs of damage to their heart, beyond the well-known implications for diabetes and high blood pressure.”

Those who survive almost exclusively on a junk food diet may appear to be fine, yet the real harm is taking place inside the body. Even those who are not drastically overweight can still be eating themselves to death.

Think of the chemicals mentioned earlier—cellulose gum, alloxen, corn dextrin, and many others. Consuming these is no better than trying to run a car engine on sand.

The body needs certain vitamins and minerals to function properly. Unlike automobiles, though, the human body can put up with a lot of abuse before it quits running.

When you eat a poor diet, you severely impair the body’s ability—through its immune system—to fight off toxins and diseased cells. Yet the negative effects of wrong eating often take years to manifest themselves.

This is where cancer comes in. Consuming junk food is now recog-

nized as a main contributing factor to the development of cancerous cells.

Obviously, concluding that a healthy diet is impossible in today’s society is not a viable approach. You cannot cut corners on what you eat. You need healthful food to think, work and thrive!

Standing in Your Way

Most realize they need to consume healthful foods, and in moderation. Yet there are a few major roadblocks.

First is the societal demand for quick fixes. For junk food, there are surgeries such as stapled stomachs and gastric banding. Neither of these address eating habits, and many people—due to poor diet and lack of exercise—gain back the weight lost from these extreme procedures. All they have left to show for it is a hefty medical bill!

Also, society tends toward extremes. Everyone has probably met a “health food nut” who prides himself on growing his own wheatgrass, insists on rudely bringing up your food-choice shortfalls at every turn, and would never “stoop so low” as to allow anything non-organic to pass through his lips. And he haughtily makes sure you know it. Despite all this talk of “health,” he seems chronically underweight and pale. Something is definitely wrong.

Then there is the other side. This fellow chows down takeout at every meal. His decisions at lunch consists of which value meal number to select—“Should I have the two hamburger patties or just one? Large fries or *extra* large?”—and he will not eat it if it is not deep-fried, fat-filled and drizzled in ketchup.

Missing in both of these instances is balance. One is so “health conscious” he is not eating *enough* of certain foods. The other gorges every chance he gets. Neither extreme is good.

Determine to Change

“In the daytime I’m Mr. Natural, just as healthy as I can be, but at night I’m a junk food junkie...”



PHOTO: THINKSTOCK

Kicking the junk food habit is hard. The creator of “Junk Food Junkie” was himself an addict.

“That’s the way I always ate when I was a kid,” Mr. Groce said in the book *The Wacky Top 40*. “No matter how hard my mother tried, I ended up eating a peanut butter sandwich and Fritos and drinking Dr. Pepper. That was pretty much the staple.”

Whatever condition you find yourself in, it is never too late to turn things around. All it takes is some knowledge and commitment. Only you can make the tough choices necessary to break free from a damaging addiction.

If your health is a mess, chances are your diet is a mess. This comes back to the fuel idea. What you put in your body directly relates to your health. Good food builds good health. Junk food, bad health.

This is an example of the principle of “cause and effect.” For every *effect*, there is a *cause*. You may be in the condition (effects) you find yourself in today because of the sum total of poor and ill-informed choices (causes) made over the course of time. Do not be discouraged. If you have made poor choices in the past, it should not affect your resolve to change.

Whether food is helpful or harmful depends on the laws of nature. Something that your body can fully digest and use will bring vibrant health.

Something that is junk will only lead to lethargy and disease.

Take control of your life and start today. You choose how you will fuel your body. To help you get started:

- Stay away from highly processed foods, sugar, artificial sweeteners, refined grains, trans fats, and products that have a lot of salt.

- Limit the amount of beef in your diet. According to a U.S. National Cancer Institute study, “Diets high in red meat and in processed meat shorten life span not just from cancer and heart disease but from Alzheimer’s, stomach ulcers and an array of other conditions as well” (*HealthDay News*). Try substituting beef with fish, turkey or even bison.

- The more raw, unprocessed foods you eat, the better your body will function. Fruits and vegetables, whole grains and herbs have tremendous health and natural-healing benefits. Natural foods play important roles in your body: fruits cleanse, vegetables build, grains sustain, and herbs help heal.

Many conclude nature’s health principles are just that—*nature’s*. But when fully understood, these rules for an abundant existence came from a Creator. This Supreme Being wants all mankind to lead happy, abundant lives,

as it states in His Word, the Bible, “Beloved, I wish above all things that you may prosper and be in health, even as your soul prospers” (III John 1:2).

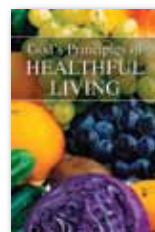
To learn much more about how to be truly healthy, request a free copy of the booklet *God’s Principles of Healthful Living* at rcg.org/glohl. This informative publication will answer questions such as: Why is *rest* so important? How can we *minimize* toxins? Does hygiene matter? Do nutritional supplements help? What about herbs and the benefits of herbal remedies?

You will also learn how to “reactivate” your body, the benefits of wholesome foods, the dangerous toxins in our food and environment, how rest and sleep rejuvenates your body, the multiple benefits of physical fasting, and so much more.

Changing your life will be difficult. Even songwriter Larry Groce acknowledged this in an interview: “I know a lot of people think junk food isn’t nutritious—but I don’t know anyone who doesn’t agree that it tastes good” (*The Wacky Top 40*).

Yet, given the knowledge gleaned from this article, how can you continue on the path you are on?

If you follow the Creator’s principles of health, you can kick the habit of being a junk food junkie! □



UN Commission Proposes Legalizing Prostitution

Will the international body's latest recommendation to curb HIV/AIDS really work?

PROSTITUTION should be legalized worldwide, a United Nations-backed panel of experts concluded. The goal: decrease the spread of HIV/AIDS.

Based on firsthand accounts from over 1,000 people in 140 countries, and 18 months of research and analysis, The Global Commission on HIV and the Law warned that its most recent proposal “may make a great many people uncomfortable—hopefully uncomfortable enough to take action.”

Some of the panel's most controversial recommendations include: “Work with the guardians of customary and religious law to promote traditions and religious practice that promote rights and acceptance of diversity and that protect privacy,” and, “Decriminalise private and consensual adult sexual behaviours, including same-sex sexual acts and voluntary sex work.”

According to the commissioners, laws against prostitution are “bad laws” that “criminalize and dehumanize populations at the most risk for contracting HIV.” And they defend the notion that governments should regulate prostitution if it is legalized: “Rather than punishing consenting adults involved in sex work, countries must ensure safe working conditions and offer sex workers and their clients’ access to effective HIV health services.”

Prostitution has been legally recognized as a profession for years in Germany—where laws exist that

deny unemployment benefits to women under age 55 who refuse to take jobs in the sex industry—and also in the Netherlands. Canada has ruled that anti-prostitution laws are unconstitutional.

It is estimated that there are approximately 40 million prostitutes worldwide. The report added that The International Labour Organization “recommended that sex work be recognised as an occupation so that it can be regulated in ways that protect workers and customers.”

Could legalizing the “oldest profession” be what the world needs to slow the spread of HIV/AIDS?

No Favorites

A brief look at prostitution tells a different story.

“If you have ever seen prostitution up close, you know it is not pretty. Not at all,” *The Washington Times* stated. “People become prostitutes as a last resort. It places them in danger every day, is traumatic, and forces them to engage in unwanted sex many times throughout the day. No one grows up hoping to become a prostitute, and no parents secretly pray that their sons or daughters will pass middle school so they can hit the streets and sell their bodies.”

The article added, “Lynn and Rick Fred, the parents of a young woman who was a prostitute in Canada and who was murdered by a customer, strongly oppose legalizing prostitution. They point out, ‘To think the best we can do for these women is giving them a safe place to sell their bodies is a joke. There is no such

thing as a “clean safe place” to be abused in.”

This lifestyle involves other problems that exacerbate the risk of HIV/AIDS contagion.

According to AVERT, a UK-based international HIV and AIDS organization, “The factors that put sex workers at risk vary between countries. In some places, sex workers commonly use drugs and share needles.”

The charity also stressed an often overlooked factor: “The clients of sex workers are often referred to as a ‘bridge’ population for the transmission of HIV, meaning that they act as a link between high risk groups and the general population.”

In other words, HIV can be transmitted from a legal or illegal prostitute just as it can be passed on by a married individual who has “occasional” sex with a prostitute.

HIV/AIDS plays no favorites.

Role of Religion

As the HIV/AIDS epidemic continues to spread and injure the health of this world's population, the United Nations and health organizations are often found scrambling to find ways to control it. Religious groups often also attempt to help. The Global Commission on HIV and the Law report critiques their approach: “Religious institutions have often been at the forefront of caring for people living with HIV, and some play important roles in prevention. But narrow and punitive interpretations of religion—especially in concert with law—can also make those most at risk more vulnerable by condemning

and criminalising their identities and behaviours.”

In other words, it is okay for religion to get involved, as long as it does not bring up the “s” word—sin.

Of all people, religious leaders should be the ones teaching that there is right and wrong in sexuality. This does not mean that there are “right” and “wrong” ways to engage in prostitution, or that it should be legal-

stance on prostitution: “Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself *unspotted* from the world” (Jms. 1:27).

To be unspotted from the world, one has to stay away from the world’s corrupt ways, including prostitution. Moreover, in this verse, a meaning for the Greek word translated “unspot-

her, “Neither do I condemn you: go, and *sin no more*” (vs. 11).

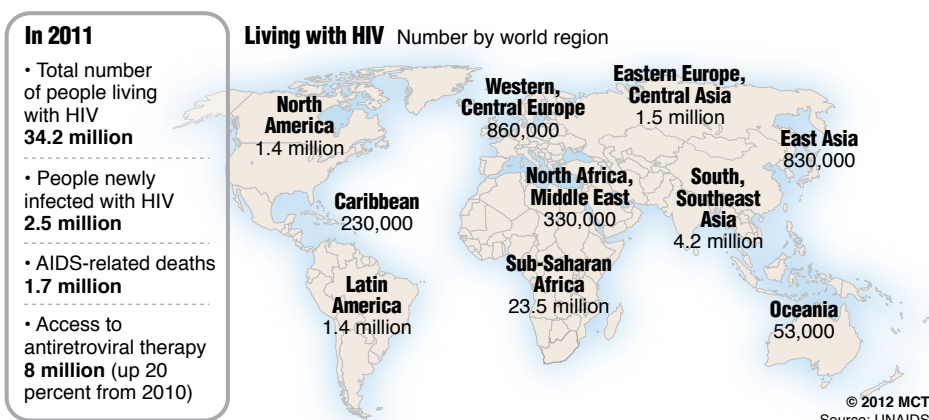
Sin—the transgression of God’s Law (I John 3:4)—brings consequences (Rom. 6:23). Jesus’ plain statement reveals the ultimate cure not just for HIV/AIDS, but for ALL diseases: SIN NO MORE!

While “experts” may consider legalizing prostitution as a just and humanitarian move that must be embraced and promoted by nations, God says, “Righteousness exalts a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people” (Prov. 14:34).

Conversely, God ties healing to obedience to Him: “You shall therefore keep the commandments [including the Seventh Commandment, which prohibits committing adultery], and the statutes, and the judgments, which I command you this day, to do them...if you hearken to these judgments, and keep, and do them, that the LORD your God...will love you, and bless you...the LORD will take away

Update on AIDS epidemic

A new UNAIDS report says the number of new HIV infections worldwide has dropped slightly, and more people than ever before are living with HIV as a result of antiretroviral drugs.



ized—but rather that prostitution is simply wrong, and not why sex was created. (Read the Personal in this issue for more information.)

The God of the Bible is plain: “There shall be no whore of the daughters of Israel, nor a sodomite of the sons of Israel” (Deut. 23:17).

While the Bible does make “a great many people uncomfortable,” it is designed so that they are “uncomfortable enough to take action.” And if people “took action” in this way—paying attention to its principles and guidance—problems such as HIV would not only improve, they would also be eliminated!

When properly understood, true religion is designed to *lead* mankind to solve its problems by pointing to the root of problems—sin—not treating the effects. God’s Word, not man’s organizations, defines what religion is, and what should always be its

ted” is “free from vice, unsullied” (*Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*).

The English word *vice* can also mean: “moral depravity or corruption...a moral fault...sexual immorality; especially: prostitution” (*Merriam-Webster’s Dictionary*).

Read the last phrase of the verse again in this light: “to keep himself [free from moral depravity or corruption, moral fault, sexual immorality; especially: prostitution] from the world.”

Only Cure

Jesus Christ reiterated this in a famous biblical account with a woman caught having extramarital sex—an offense punishable by death at the time. After He convicted her accusers with the famed statement: “He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her” (John 8:7), He also told

from you *all sickness, and will put none of the evil diseases...upon you; but will lay them upon all them that hate you*” (Deut. 7:11, 12, 13, 15).

While no medical, scientific or human rights authority can make such straightforward promises, the God who declares it is He “who heals *all* your diseases” (Psa. 103:3) and for whom it is impossible to lie (Heb. 6:18) does—and He means them.

If the world would simply believe the promises of God, it would bring positive—and widespread—change to Earth.

Most scoff at this idea. Yet there is much more to the subject—and it is all backed up by rock-solid PROOF. Order the free booklets *Why Man Cannot Solve His Problems* at rcg.org/uun and *The Truth About Healing* at rcg.org/ttahe to learn how you can enact true change in your life—and claim God’s promises. □

SYRIA

Continued from page 6

Middle East Christians to do their part to end the region's "grim trail of death and destruction."

"I appeal to you all to be peacemakers," the pope stated.

...to the South

The West is not the only power bloc that wants Mr. Assad deposed. A newly formed Islamic quartet of nations has another agenda. *AP* wrote, "Diplomats from Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Iran and Egypt [gathered for a meeting as] a quartet of regional heavyweights aiming to work out a resolution for Syria's civil war.

"The quartet is an initiative put forward by Egypt's new president aiming to bring together key supporters of the Syrian rebellion—Saudi Arabia and Turkey, as well as Egypt itself—with Iran, the biggest regional ally of Syrian President Bashar Assad."

Yet this Islamic group of four may quickly become a trio due to sectarian differences.

"The new quartet may also have trouble reaching common ground. Sunni-led Egypt, Turkey and Saudi Arabia have called on Assad to step down; Shiite Iran has firmly stood by Assad," *AP* continued. "Saudi Arabia and Iran are also bitter rivals with longstanding disagreements over Gulf security issues."

"Egyptian President Mohammed Morsi appears to be hoping that bringing Iran into the quartet can eventually sway it to accept an alternative to Assad and put its weight behind a peace initiative. Last month, he went to Tehran for an international conference and gave a full-throated call for the world to back the Syrian opposition, startling his Iranian hosts."

"Egypt is hoping the group can find consensus on an initiative calling for an immediate end to violence, maintaining the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Syria, supporting Brahimi's mission and launching a

political process with various spectrums of Syrian society, the ministry said in a statement."

Cairo's main goal seems to be ousting Mr. Assad and adding another nation to its growing ranks of Arab Spring allies—no doubt hoping to reshape Syria as another Islamic democracy.

North, South and East

As the West continues its slow bow from the world stage, other nations will continue to rise in prominence. These events will accelerate. Unknown to almost all, this new era of the Middle East—and the rising alliances across the globe—was detailed long ago.

The Bible (though dismissed by many as a collection of Hebrew fables and pseudo history) speaks of three power blocs in this modern age that will vie for influence. Two are symbolically known as the "king of the north" and the "king of the south" (Dan. 11).

A third power is described in the New Testament book of Revelation as "the kings of the east" (16:12). This will be a confederation of Asian nations, with China and Russia working together.

Amid these compass directions—north, south and east—one is conspicuously missing, west. The U.S. and Western European nations will continue

their steady decline from prominence until they cease to be global powers.

Events in Syria—and the world—will continue to play out exactly as scripted in Bible prophecy. *The Real Truth* Editor-in-Chief David C. Pack wrote in his book *The Bible's Greatest Prophecies Unlocked! – A Voice Cries Out*, "Turmoil, fear and confusion now grip all nations of the world. Terrorism, economic upheaval and resultant widespread uncertainty are everywhere. Many sense that the differences between and within nations are intensifying and are threatening to spin out of control. New and different power blocs are forming, with traditional alliances wavering, waning or disappearing.

"Ominous signs of grave difficulty in resolving humanity's most fundamental problems abound. Many sense that the world is hurtling toward trouble, even possibly terrible calamity. Disease, famine and war sweep the planet as never before. New diseases are continually emerging and old ones are re-emerging worse than ever. Famine now decimates entire segments of local populations. Weapons of mass destruction, so incomprehensibly lethal and devastating that they boggle the mind, now threaten humanity—also as never before. Many nations are learning to live 'on alert' to terrorist cells, which can strike anywhere without notice.

"World conditions, events and trends speak daily in frightening terms about how things could quickly turn in the wrong direction. The future of nations, including the greatest nations, hangs in the balance. History shows that all the great civilizations eventually crashed, having become decadent, awash in material prosperity and greed—and educated in wrong knowledge. This can happen again!"

The Bible's Greatest Prophecies Unlocked! is available at rcg.org/gpu for free online reading and electronic download. This book explains in crystal-clear language exactly what is over the horizon for the world. Begin reading today to learn the exciting—yet sobering—details of what is coming! □

■ **CALLING FOR PEACE:** Lebanese President Michel Sleiman (second from left) looks on as Muslim leaders welcome Pope Benedict XVI at Beirut's international airport (Sept. 14, 2012).
PHOTO: ANWAR AMRO/AFP/GETTY IMAGES



PERSONAL

Continued from page 2

repression, and even forbidding the mere mention of the subject—to the “new morality,” in which unbridled promiscuity reigns.

Just as the old morality with its “sex is shameful” approach failed to yield happy, fulfilling marriages, the new one has likewise failed in this quest. The “new morality”—meaning without *any* morality—has caused marriages and the social fabric of nearly every Western nation to further deteriorate. *Why* has this happened? Each of these extremes, along with man’s entire spectrum of knowledge, is missing a vital dimension, long since dismissed by professors of higher learning. Knowledge of this unknown dimension would rectify the ignorance and confusion that dominate this age.

The “new morality” was given much press in the 1960s, as it promoted drugs, fornication, adultery, the hippie lifestyle, and hostility toward the “establishment.” Its hedonistic motto was, “Make love, not war.” Yet this movement failed to produce happy, stable, fulfilled marriages.

No wonder. Whenever such movements have attempted to amend moral codes, they only result in separating man further from his Maker’s originally intended purposes and bring more harmful effects.

Due to the countless thousands of books that now abound on sex, people understand the detailed anatomy of the sexes better than any previous generation. Yet none of these books equip them to grasp the mental-spiritual understanding regarding the TRUE PURPOSE of sex. Without it, people are easily sold on poisonous attitudes promoted in the mass media, which has played the most critical role in eroding moral purity. And once this threshold is breached, many rush to indulge in conduct that results in long-term damage to both mind and body.

Here is how two network television spokesmen revealed what is happening in *USA Today*: “We don’t

want to be out of touch with the way society is going,” said one. And, “The line moves every day, so you got to move with it. You can’t put the genie back in the bottle,” said the other. At least he spoke the truth.

Prophesied Time

God foretold that “in the last days... men shall be...lovers of *pleasures* more than lovers of God” and “without natural affection” (II Tim. 3:1-2, 4, 3). In the age of gross materialism, mixed with rank hedonism, the three “Ls” of *leisure*, *luxury* and *license* have come to dominate the thinking of whole societies and nations.

The Bible is filled with scriptures describing the sexual saturation of wrong conduct and thinking in the modern age. God pulls no punches in labeling many kinds of behavior as sin. Let’s see how He describes basic human nature, if left to itself. Sex-related sins and perversions are usually listed first.

The apostle Paul repeatedly described behavior that disqualifies people from receiving eternal life in God’s kingdom. Notice this: “Now the works of the flesh are manifest [the Greek means “obvious”—and they are!], which are these; adultery, *fornication*, *uncleanness*, *lasciviousness*...drunkenness, *revellings*, and such like...they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God” (Gal. 5:19, 21).

Here is what Christ Himself said when describing the basic elements of the human nature found within every person: “That which comes out of the man, that defiles the man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, *adulteries*, *fornications*...wickedness, deceit, *lasciviousness*...[and others]” (Mark 7:20-22).

These are powerful indictments. God takes very seriously the misuse of one’s body for personal indulgence, which was given solely for His Supreme Purpose.

Incredible Purpose Revealed!

This Personal is for those who will consider what Almighty God instructs,

not for the *unwilling*. God reveals that marriage and sex have a marvelous purpose completely beyond the bounds of human imagination. After learning God’s explanation, you can judge whether it makes more sense than what is offered by evolutionists and traditional Christianity.

Remember, if you will not accept God’s revealed Word, you are left with no choice but to be ignorant of how and when marriage began, and of the purposes of sex. You must accept that marriage is either a human invention on the road of evolution, or a falsehood of religion—that it is for no purpose other than procreation, and even, according to one church, that celibacy is a “higher calling.” These are your only options!

Where then can men find this missing spiritual knowledge, so lacking in all the publications that stress only the physical aspects of sex? Generally these are focused on the endless means and techniques to titillate and maximize sexual pleasure.

We offer a book unlike any other about sex. Titled *Sex – Its Unknown Dimension*, it is filled with information about a world gone mad over sex, why sex is necessary, the important differences between humans and animals, the amazing male and female biology and function, sex in marriage as God intended, the wedding night, how to teach children and teens about sex, exactly what is the unknown dimension of sex—and much, much more. You will want to read it. Order your free copy at reg.org/siud.

One Source Reveals Answers

God knew there must be a *source* that plainly reveals and defines morality and proper human conduct. Again, the true understanding of this unknown dimension is found in the Bible—the Word of God. No other source reveals it. To understand *why* God created sex, we must look to the Bible.

Man was created after the God-kind—in His image and likeness. Notice: “And God said, Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness...” (Gen. 1:26). The account con-

tinues: "...male and female created He them. And God blessed them..." (vs. 27-28).

This passage makes *God* the Author of sex, and the sole authority on it. Sex is the product of God's design and creative forethought, and is not, *as some religionists think*, a mischievous stunt in which the devil somehow "marred" God's otherwise perfect Creation. As He had done with every other aspect of His Creation, God concluded that the creation of male and female—including sex!—"was *very good*" (vs. 31).

God instructed Adam and Eve about the proper function of sex within their unique roles as male and female—husband and wife. Though the Genesis account gives only highlights, God reveals the vital, hidden dimension in sex in various other scriptures throughout the Bible.

Man was created from clay—from physical matter. Yet the Master Potter is forming something far more enduring than the mere physical elements and chemicals of which the human body is composed. The Creator's ultimate goal is to spiritually develop His holy, righteous character within all human beings. For now, God has called a tiny few to see His truth. But ultimately, He will offer all men—past, present and future—the opportunity to build His godly character within them. This spiritual process involves choosing to follow the right path and using self-discipline—through the power of God's Spirit—to reject the former paths of human nature and worldliness.

Despite God's instruction, Adam and Eve rebelled, rejecting the only way that would have brought bless-

ings. Humanity has followed—most usually directly choosing—the same course ever since. This spiritually revealed knowledge included the right, wholesome, God-intended purpose of sex and command to "be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth" (Gen. 1:28).

Spiritual Parallels to Human Reproduction

As with the animal kingdom, one purpose of sex between human beings *is* reproduction. But this is not the *only* purpose. The pattern of human reproduction—including the fascinating significance of conception (or begettal) and birth—parallels a spiritual plane that does not apply to the animal or plant kingdoms.

The devil has gone to great lengths to corrupt this world and to hide the true meaning found in the proper purpose and understanding of sex and reproduction. Unknown is also how these parallel the process of spiritual growth and the development of godly character—the only path by which men can be born into the Family of God. Satan has blurred, disguised and suppressed this truth through numerous means, but primarily through the "hush-hush" Victorian prudery of the old morality and the reckless promiscuity and accompanying kaleidoscope of perversity of the new morality.

Here is the very briefest synopsis and sampling that space permits of only a few points thoroughly covered in the book mentioned earlier:

Consider. In human reproduction, after a male sperm cell has joined with an egg cell, life is imparted to the egg.

At this stage, human life has been begotten and at this point it is considered an *embryo*. After the first nine weeks or so, the unborn child developing in the womb is called a *fetus*. Over several months, the begotten fetus grows—from nutrition taken in by the mother—until it has developed and matured sufficiently to be born as a new, little, separate person.

In John 3, Jesus explained to Nicodemus, "Except a man be *born again*, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (vs. 3). Nicodemus knew Christ meant literally another birth—not merely the undergoing of a "religious experience."

Jesus further explained, "That which is born of the flesh *is flesh*; and that which is born of the Spirit *is spirit*" (vs. 6). Christ was not referring to people being reborn as physical, mortal human beings. Rather, He was speaking of a *spiritual* birth—of men being born as spirit beings into the kingdom of God, the God Family. Just as a human is begotten of his physical father, one must, in order to be born into the spirit realm, also be begotten of the spiritual Father.

Much can be learned through a comparison of the human stages of begettal, gestation and physical birth with the growth process of spiritual birth.

First, the human egg has a relatively short life of about 24 hours, unless a male sperm cell has joined the egg cell. Likewise, human life lasts only about 70 or so years—which is very short compared to eternity.

Second, the male sperm unites with the female ovum. Similarly, just as the spirit in man combines with the physi-

You Can Build a Happy Marriage

Order your free booklet at rcg.org/ycbahm to learn how to experience a truly successful marriage!



cal brain to form the human mind, the Spirit of God unites with the human spirit. Notice: “*The Spirit [the Holy Spirit]...bears witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God*” (Rom. 8:16).

Third, as with the fertilized human egg, life can be imparted to people through the begettal process of the Holy Spirit—which is actually an “earnest” or down payment of eternal life from the Father (Eph. 1:13-14; II Cor. 1:22; 5:5). Romans 8:14 shows that those who have the Spirit of God are literally sons of God (not yet born). II Peter 1:4 reveals that God the Father uses His Spirit to impart His divine nature within His spiritually begotten sons.

Fourth, as the human sperm cell is the smallest of all cells, the initial measure of God’s Spirit that one receives is very small—perhaps only a tiny percent of one’s full potential. During this life, spiritual babes in Christ must develop and grow, much like a fetus, in order to be born spiritually—to become spirit beings and receive eternal inheritance. Notice: “And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ...that we may be also glorified together” (Rom. 8:17).

As with newborns, this growth process begins with spiritual milk: “As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that you may grow thereby: if so be you have tasted that the Lord is gracious” (I Pet. 2:2-3).

The purpose of sex is directly connected to the nature of God’s kingdom—the governing Family of God!

I repeat, the human family was instituted by God for an AWESOME PURPOSE: training us—preparing us to join the ultimate family—the *God Family*—upon resurrection and change from human flesh to spirit. (Carefully read I Corinthians 15:48-54.)

Relationships Based on Love

Every healthy family relationship is based on love. And love is the foundation of God’s character—the definition of His nature. The apostle John twice recorded, “*God is love*” (I John 4:8, 16). Love is not merely something God *has*, but is rather what He *is*. This love

binds together the members of the God Family—currently the Father and Jesus Christ.

Marriage between a man and woman is also designed to be based on love, as a reflection of Christ’s relationship with His true Church. Let’s read: “Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it...So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies...For *this cause* shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh” (Eph. 5:25, 28, 31).

Stated plainly, the “*cause*” of marriage is *love*!

Also, sex itself is set forth as another cause for marriage—directly interconnected with love—in the Genesis account of the creation of Adam and Eve. Christ confirms this in the New Testament: “...He which made them at the beginning made them male and female, and said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they two shall be one flesh...” (Matt. 19:4-5). The phrase “one flesh” is a direct reference to the sex act within marriage.

These two causes—love and sex—are inseparable within God’s intended design and purpose. Love between spouses is expressed through the means of sex, and God uses marital sex to ingrain the principle of love!

The all-powerful, living God is expanding His divine Family by creating His righteous character in humans. This is the all-important purpose behind sex and the family relationship. All true Christians are spiritually begotten at baptism and carry the potential to then be born of God into the kingdom of God.

Greatest Picture

In summary, recognize that two important purposes in regard to sex fit within this plan for mankind.

First, God designed sex to symbolize physical life. This is because it is through reproduction that human life is begotten. Second, He authored sex to be an expression of marital love. Sex is both a physical type of life and

the greatest expression of love. Also, as reproducing physically typifies the process of spiritual begettal, love in marriage is a type of Christ’s loving relationship with His Church.

If you are currently going through troubles in your marriage, it is not too late to change your attitude and begin following God’s *GIVE* way of life. Most marriages become unhappy when wrong attitudes enter. Do not seek only what you can *get* out of a relationship, but what you can *give back*. Do not miss the opportunity that marriage provides to truly give of yourself and to practice Acts 20:35. (You may also wish to order my free booklet *You Can Build a Happy Marriage* at rcg.org/ycbalm.)

If you are still single, or have perhaps gone through a divorce, study and understand God’s *correct* purposes of sex. Ensure that your thoughts and conduct are aligned with His will. Trust Him to guide and direct the selection of a husband or wife when the time is right.

The Restored Church of God, which publishes this magazine, offers more helpful material—and *all free!*—on dating, courtship, marriage, sex and the family than anywhere else. The one Church that Jesus Christ built (Matt. 16:18) could not do less.

Again, the place to start regarding the subject of sex is the essential book *Sex – Its Unknown Dimension*, which can be ordered for free at rcg.org/siud. Filled with fascinating information, millions have read it.

You may wish to explore our vast library of literature and broadcasts available on rcg.org and worldtocomer.org—covering every conceivable facet of these subjects! It will answer the questions on your mind. In fact, you will see there is not one subject of importance—on *any* topic of Bible truth—that is missing.

By equipping yourself with this precious knowledge and following God’s laws, you can truly grasp His purposes for sex and experience *all* the wonderful blessings and benefits a loving God provided for His creation. □

MIDDLE EAST

American Envoy Killed in Arab Uprising

■ **MOB VIOLENCE:** Left, buildings and cars are engulfed in flames after being set on fire inside the U.S. consulate compound in Benghazi, Libya (Sept. 11, 2012). Right, Egyptian protesters tear down the U.S. flag at the U.S. embassy in Cairo, Egypt (Sept. 11, 2012).

PHOTOS: STR/AFP/ (LEFT); AFP/ (RIGHT) GETTY IMAGES

A surge of anti-American violence in three Arab countries on September 11 resulted in the death of four Americans, including Foreign Service Officer Sean Smith and Ambassador Christopher Stevens.

“Gunmen attacked and set fire to the U.S. consulate in the eastern city of Benghazi, the cradle of last year’s U.S.-backed uprising against Muammar Gaddafi’s 42-year rule,” *Reuters* reported. “Another assault was mounted on the U.S. embassy in Cairo... Violence also threatened to spread to other Muslim countries. By nightfall on [September 12], 24 hours after the attacks in Egypt and Libya, police were firing teargas at angry demonstrators outside the U.S. embassy in Tunisia.”

Violent protests also occurred at the consulate in Yemen, but did not result in any deaths.

The Americans were killed in Libya’s second-largest city “in protests that used as their pretext a hitherto unknown amateur film designed to insult the prophet Muhammad,” *The Christian Science Monitor* stated.

In response, United States President Barack Obama issued a public statement in which he said that the U.S. “condemns in the strongest terms this outrageous and shocking attack,” and gave orders to “increase our security at diplomatic posts around the world.” He also “confirmed that a 50-strong US marine antiterrorist security team had been dispatched to Libya to

bolster security and aid efforts to find those responsible,” according to *Telegraph*.

After the attacks, “A member of the Senate intelligence committee... raised the possibility that attacks on U.S. diplomatic missions in the Middle East and North Africa... were connected to al Qaeda,” *The Washington Times* reported. “[Senator] Bill Nelson, Florida Democrat, said the attacks ‘have the markings of revenge by al Qaeda.’ He said they could be connected to the killing in June of Abu Yahya al-Libi, a top leader of the terrorist network.”

Ambassador Stevens is the first U.S. diplomat to be killed in the line of duty since 1979. □

HEALTH

West Nile Virus Outbreak Plagues America

More than 118 people have died and at least 2,636 have been infected across 48 states in what is on track to become the deadliest West Nile virus outbreak to strike the country in 13 years. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the rate of infection in August was almost four times the normal average.

“I woke up with a headache like I have never come close to feeling before,” an infected man who spent a week at the hospital battling high fever and meningitis (inflammation of the membrane that surrounds the brain and spinal cord) told Minnesota television station *WDAY TV*. “The pain was immense. I knew I was in trouble.”

The unusual 2012 weather has provided the prime conditions for illness. While it is mainly an avian disease, mosquitoes bite infected birds, then pass it on to humans and animals.

“Normally, the number of mosquitoes decreases greatly during the cold months, with a small proportion of mosquitoes surviving, or ‘overwintering.’” New Jersey Center for Public Health Preparedness director, Dr. George DiFerdinando Jr., said in a statement. “This year, with a mild winter, most mosquitos survived and so we’re seeing a bumper crop.”

About 75 percent of reported cases have occurred in Texas, Mississippi, Louisiana, South Dakota, and Oklahoma, with the CDC stating that as many as 53 percent of the 1,405 documented cases “were classified as neuroinvasive disease (such as meningitis or encephalitis)” while 1,231 or 47 percent were non-neuroinvasive, with less serious implications.

With such high rates of infection, the CDC believes that 2012 is poised to surpass 2003, the worst West Nile virus year in the nation’s history, during which a total of 9,862 people were infected and 264 died.

Texas is experiencing the brunt of the outbreak. The state has had at least 552 cases and 21 confirmed deaths, prompting intense fumigation operations in the Dallas region.

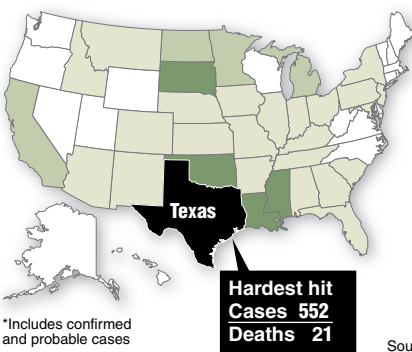
Voice of America reported, “The aerial and ground fumigation programs are blanketing around 1,400 square kilometers of the county, but don’t target all mosquitoes...”

Mapping West Nile

This year’s outbreak of mosquito-borne West Nile—nearly 2,636 cases to date—is the worst since 2004.

Cases by State*

None 1-10 11-25 26-60 More than 60



*Includes confirmed and probable cases
NOTE: Alaska and Hawaii not to scale

About West Nile

- **Neuroinvasive**
More severe form; affects central nervous system; includes meningitis and encephalitis
- **Non-neuroinvasive**
Less severe form; does not affect central nervous system; causes West Nile fever

© 2012 MCT
Source: U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
Graphic: Pat Carr

Weekend rains halted some of the spraying efforts and left puddles of water where more mosquitoes can breed.”

And the outbreak is “far from over,” an article on *WebMD* stated. “Right now, the U.S. is in the middle of mosquito season—and nearly all West Nile virus infections come from mosquito bites. Case counts usually rise through September.”

Authorities are also concerned that the virus could make a comeback in Canada, where a person from Calgary, Alberta, was the first in the country to become infected with the virus in two years. □

RELIGION

Pope: Middle East Key to World Peace

As part of a Middle East peace mission, the pope visited Lebanon for three days, meeting with Lebanese authorities and Christians from surrounding countries.

“I am not unaware of the often dramatic situation endured by the populations of this region which has been for too long torn by incessant conflict,” Benedict XVI stated in an *Associated Press* article. “I understand the anguish of many Middle Easterners steeped daily in sufferings of every kind, which afflict sadly, and sometimes mortally, their personal and family life.”

Before his visit, *Catholic News* reported that “the Lebanon-based leader of the Melkite Greek Catholic Church released his prepared welcoming remarks for the pope, including a call for the Vatican to use its ‘moral and diplomatic leadership’ in support of ‘international recognition of the Palestinian state.’ According to the remarks by Patriarch Gregorios III, such recognition ‘would be the most precious good that could be won for the Arab world in all its Christian and Muslim denominations.’”

In addition, the media outlet stated that the pontiff stressed that bringing “stable and lasting peace” to the region was vital for the entire world to obtain it: “We must not resign ourselves to the violence and aggravation of tensions,” the pope stated. “Commitment to dialogue and reconciliation should be a priority for all the parties involved, and should be supported by the international community.” □

ECONOMY

Eurozone Creditors Contemplate Six-day Workweek for Greece

Greeks may need to work six days a week to increase their competitiveness, according to a leaked eurozone document that calls for change in the country's five-day work schedule.

"Under a heading 'increase flexibility of work schedules' the Troika—which is composed of officials from the European Commission, European Central Bank (ECB) and International Monetary Fund (IMF)—states that the country should 'increase the number of maximum working days to six days across all sectors,'" *EUobserver* reported. "It adds that the government should also reduce daily rest between shifts to the 11 hours minimum and scrap restrictions on the length of shifts."

According to the most recent figures provided in an article by *Financial Times*, Greek unemployment was 24.4 percent in June, compared to 23.1 percent in May. More than 1.2 million people across the country of 10 million are out of work.

The letter was sent to Greek finance and labor ministries prior to eurozone inspections in the country, which will determine whether Greece should receive its second 31 billion euro EU bailout installment.

"After a long delay caused by months of political paralysis in Greece, the troika inspectors return to Athens... to scrutinise Greek observance of its bailout terms," *Guardian* stated. "They are expected to deliver a verdict next month that will determine whether Greece is ultimately allowed to remain in the single currency."

The article added, "Although statements on Greece in Berlin, Paris and Brussels have been more upbeat... there is strong speculation in Berlin and Brussels that Greece may have to exit the euro, but not until after the US elections in November." □



PHOTO: THINKSTOCK

AMERICAS

U.S. Neighborhoods Invaded by Bears

Across the drought-stricken Western United States, black bears are dropping into communities and rummaging through neighborhoods in search of food.

Colorado Parks and Wildlife terrestrial biologist Shannon Schwab told *Summit Daily News*, "Last year there were ample food resources available... When there is a lot of food, bears will reproduce accordingly. Because of that, last year we saw a lot of bear cubs being born. This year there is less food due to the drought, and bears that were born last year are teenage bears that don't necessarily have experience dealing with humans."

During August, Aspen, Colorado, police recorded a 668 percent increase in bear-related calls, *The Aspen Times* reported. These amounted to a total of 292, compared to 38 calls received last year at the same time.

While bear encounters have only caused one death so far this summer, "The bad news... is that human foods get them accustomed

to people, which inevitably leads to trouble," *ABC News* stated.

According to the media outlet, a woman in Eagle, Colorado "endured five separate bear invasions in her home this year, including one face-to-face encounter on her back porch. The bear tore its claws into a back door trying to escape, leaving behind serious damage."

A black bear also entered a chocolate shop in Colorado: "Surveillance video showed the bear taking and eating confectionery which included English toffee and peanut butter cups," *BBC* reported. "He made seven trips to the shop in about 15 minutes, finally leaving after a passing car apparently scared him away."

As fall season approaches, bears, which typically consume up to 10 times what a human eats daily, spend up to 20 hours foraging for food to increase their weight before hibernating for the winter.

"In other words," *ABC News* stated, "the problem is about to get worse." □

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